

Handout 1

Exercise 1

Read the persuasive paragraph and answer the questions in the next page.

This task will help you notice the key features of the paragraph.¹

Girls Should Learn Alone

Girls should learn separately from boys because such girls become more self-confident and perform better in math and science. First of all, girls in single-sex classes develop lasting confidence in themselves. A good case in point is myself. When I was younger, I attended a girls-only high school in Ecuador. Indeed, without boys in class, the girls were less shy. These girls felt free to express themselves and take risks. Personally, I started to participate in class more, and the more I did, the more confident I became. In addition, statistics show that girls in single-sex classes do better in math and science demonstrating more positive attitudes to these subjects. For instance, the HERI study found that SAT scores on math and verbal skills were over 40 points higher for girls in single-sex education (Sax *et al.*, 2013). However, some critics of single-sex classrooms argue that such education is dangerous because it reinforces gender stereotypes. Still, some research has shown that students behave in less stereotypical way. For example, Park, Behrman and Choi looked at girls in single-sex and coed physics classes. The researchers found that the girls in single-sex classrooms "were less likely to regard physics as boys' subject, compared to girls who had been randomly assigned to the coed classroom " (Park, Behrman and Choi, 2012, p. 166). To summarize, the single-sex environment allowed girls to improve their self-reliance, as well as math and science capabilities.

References

Park, H., Behrman, J. R., & Choi, J. (2012). Single-Sex Education: Positive Effects. *Science*, 335(6065), 165–166. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.335.6065.165-b>

Sax, L. J., *et al.* (2013). The Role of Single-Sex Education in the Academic Engagement of College-Bound Women: A Multilevel Analysis. *Teachers College Record*, 115-116. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Role-of-Single-Sex-Education-in-the-Academic-of-Sax-Riggers/eda55c810f8bb565836449f5292f694cd35aed24>

¹ Adapted from: Bauer, J., Boyle M.S., Stapleton, S. (2016). Final Draft 4. Student's book. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Questions

1. Find the paragraph head. What is the topic of the paragraph? What is the controlling idea of the paragraph? Is the author for or against single-sex classrooms?
2. What kind of details does the writer use to support her opinion (a personal anecdote, research, statistics or expert's opinion)? What detail is the strongest one?
3. What is the sentence that the writer uses to provide a counterargument?
4. What are the sentences that the writer uses to refute the counterargument?
5. Find a quotation in the paragraph. Why does the author use the quotation?
6. What transitions does the writer use to introduce each supporting point?
7. What transitions does the writer use to prove each argument with details (evidences)?
8. What transition does the writer use to show a counterargument?
9. What transition does the writer use to refute the counterargument?
10. What transition does the writer use to conclude the paragraph?
11. What is the purpose of (Sax *et al.*, 2013) and (Park, Behrman and Choi, 2012, p. 166) in this paragraph?
12. What is the purpose of the Reference section?

Exercise 2

Read the persuasive paragraph again.

Fill the blanks in the outline for " Girls Should Learn Alone".

Use the phrases in the box.

Statistics
A personal story
A research by Park, Behrman and Choi
Single-sex education reinforces gender stereotypes

PARAGRAPH OUTLINE	
Paragraph head	Girls should learn separately from boys because such girls become more self-confident and perform better in math and science.
Argument 1	Girls in single-sex classes develop a lasting confidence in themselves.
Detail (evidence)
Argument 2	Girls in single-sex classes do better in math and science
Detail (evidence)
Counterargument
Refutation	Some research prove otherwise
Detail (evidence)
Concluding sentence	In other words, the single-sex environment allowed girls to improve their self-reliance, as well as math and science capabilities.