**Essay Writing - Workbook**

Exercise 1

Guess the Pattern

1. Which type of essay will this paragraph be part of?

People looking to lose weight have a few options: exercise, diet, weight loss pills, and surgery. Exercising involves going to a gym, working out at home, or joining some sort of class or sports team. Those who are dieting can talk to a doctor about a plan for them. Weight loss pills can be taken, if proper precautions and directions are followed. Individuals who are severely overweight can talk to a doctor about having surgery to lose the weight that they need.

Answer:

1. Which type of essay will this paragraph be part of?

This morning was crazy. My alarm clock was set for PM instead of AM, so I woke up really late. I just threw on some clothes and ran out the door. I rode my bike as fast as I could and thought that I was going to be late for sure, but when I got there everyone was outside and there were firetrucks all lined up in front of school. I guess somebody pulled the fire alarm before class started. It worked out though, because nobody really noticed or minded that I was tardy.

Answer:

1. Which type of essay will this paragraph be part of?

Linux and Windows are both operating systems.  Computers use them to run programs.  Linux is totally free and open source, so users can improve or otherwise modify the source code.  Windows is proprietary, so it costs money to use and users are prohibited from altering the source code.

Answer:

1. Which type of essay will this paragraph be part of?

The dodo bird used to roam in large flocks across America. Interestingly, the dodo wasn’t startled by gun shot. Because of this, frontiersmen would kill entire flocks in one sitting. Unable to sustain these attacks, the dodo was hunted to extinction.

Answer:

1. Which type of essay will this paragraph be part of?

Thousands of people die each year in car accidents involving drugs or alcohol. Lives could be saved if our town adopts a free public taxi service. By providing such a service, we could prevent intoxicated drivers from endangering themselves or others.

Answer:

**Exercise 2**

Examine the comparison or contrast essays that follow, and decide whether the authors used block arrangement or point-by-point (or alternating) arrangement. Notice how other authors structure their essays. Five paragraphs or four? Block arrangement or point-by-point arrangement? Noticing these things will help you become a better, more conscious reader and writer.

**Essay 1**

Vacationing at the Beach or in the Mountains

People are always looking forward to their vacation period. There are many options where to choose. I think that the two most common places people choose for taking a vacation are the beaches and the mountains. Both places offer a variety of fun activities. The beach offers activities that the mountain cannot offer and vice versa. The mountain and the beach are totally different. The purpose of this essay is to contrast the climate, types of activities and locations of beaches and mountains.

I’m going to discuss mountains first. The three aspects I’m going to discuss are climate, types of activities and location. Climate is always important in order to enjoy vacations. If a person dislikes cold weather, he or she might have a hard time in the mountains. The cold climate in the mountains is the first barrier to enjoying them, but the climate and the temperature of these zones also determine the types of activities they offer. Snowboarding, mountain climbing, mountain biking, hiking, and skiing are some activities people can enjoy when going to the mountains. There are many regions that have mountains where people can go and have a great vacation. Canada is a country located in North America and contains many mountain vacation sites where people can go and have fun.

I’m going to discuss the beach second. The three aspects I’m going to discuss are climate, types of activities and location. Warm climate is one of the most important features that the beach has. Sun and fun are two words that describe the beach. The temperature in those places is always hot. The sea and the warm climate determine the activities that are available at the beach. People can swim, play volleyball, play soccer, and ride water bikes. In most coastal sites, there are discos and restaurants where people can dance or party throughout the night. Mexico offers many amazing coastal sites to visit. Acapulco and Cancun are two of the most beautiful and famous beaches in the word.

It doesn’t matter what place a person decides to choose. The fun is 100% guaranteed. People often choose one of these two options to spend their vacations. Depending on what the person likes is what he or she will choose. I like the beach better than the mountains, but sometimes it is better to take a risk and try a different place to enjoy. (399 words)

**Essay 2**

The following essay contrasts eating fresh foods and canned foods. Is its organization block or point-by-point? How many paragraphs does it contain? How many "differences" between fresh foods and canned foods does the author discuss?

**Consuming Fresh Foods Instead of Canned Foods**

Eating is an activity that we as humans do at least two times a day. We live in a world where the variety of food is immense, and we are responsible for what we eat. We decide what we are about to eat and how it will affect our bodies. The purpose of this essay is to compare and contrast the differences between eating fresh foods instead of canned foods. The three main differences are flavor, health benefits, and cost.

The most notable difference between these two kinds of foods is their flavor. Fresh foods have great flavor and taste because they keep all their natural conditions. Canned foods however, lack a lot of its flavor characteristics because there are some other chemical products added to the natural foods. It is logical that the fresh foods will have a greater taste and flavor when consumed just because of the time in which they have been prepared.

Comparing both types of foods we notice another difference. There is a health factor that affects both of them. Canned foods lose some of the original fresh food nutrients when stored, and also it has to be tinned with many conservatives and chemical factors that prolong the shelf life and apparent freshness of the food but could also become toxic if consumed too often.

Yet another difference between these two types of foods is the cost. Canned foods are much more expensive than fresh foods. Here the benefit of buying tinned foods is that they are easier to find, for example, in a supermarket instead of the market like the fresh foods, and they require less work to prepare than fresh foods, just open and serve.

Here are the main three differences between buying fresh foods and buying canned foods. As we can see it comes down to a personal choice, based on the time each person has, the money and the importance he/she gives to his/her nutrition and health. Therefore it is important that you consider your possibilities and choose the best type of foods for your convenience and lifestyle. (347 words)

Answer Key

Exercise 1

1. Classification
2. Sequencing
3. Compare and Contrast
4. Cause and Effect
5. Problem and Solution

Exercise 2

Essay 1 is four paragraphs, (1) an introduction, (2) a paragraph about vacationing in the mountains, (3) a paragraph about vacationing at the beach, and (4) a conclusion. This is the block arrangement, the first block containing information about mountains and the second block containing information about the beach.

Essay 2 is the "classic" five paragraph essay that all non-native speakers of English should learn to write. This essay also contains the "classic" point-by-point organization, each point stated and developed in a single paragraph. The essay contains five paragraphs that contrast three differences between fresh and canned foods. The essay includes (1) an introduction, (2) the development of the first difference (flavor), (3) the development of the second difference (health benefits), (4) the development of the third difference (cost), and (5) a conclusion. In the true classic tradition, the three main differences in this contrast essay—flavor, health benefits, and cost—are stated both in the introduction and the conclusion as well.