

Writing lesson 6
Practice 1: First year

Read each *topic sentence*. Write the corresponding *main idea* to the left of each sentence. Use the words in the box.

spring school	summer soccer	fall guitar	winter video games
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1. _____: Flowers and insects come out after winter ends.
2. _____: Many trees change color beginning in late September.
3. _____: I'm trying to learn to play simple songs on my new instrument.
4. _____: Sledding and ice skating are fun in the cold weather.
5. _____: I spend a lot of time playing Nintendo Wii instead of doing my homework.
6. _____: I like to go swimming when it's hot and sunny.
7. _____: I don't know what grade I will get in math this quarter.
8. _____: I want to run faster and shoot the ball more accurately.

Find what is missing: Read each short paragraph. Think about what part of the paragraph is not included. Write it on the line. Use the terms from the box on page 1.

Paragraph 1:

Why Have a Hobby?

There are many reasons to have a hobby. First, you experience satisfaction from improving your abilities. When you learn a new hobby or practice a familiar one, you develop stronger skills and you feel better about yourself. Also, hobbies are a fun way to spend time, and doing them makes your life more enjoyable. All these benefits make hobbies good to try.

This paragraph is missing: _____



Paragraph 2:

Why Have a Hobby?

First, you experience satisfaction from improving your abilities. When you learn a new hobby or practice a familiar one, you develop stronger skills and you feel better about yourself. Also, hobbies are a fun way to spend time, and doing them makes your life more enjoyable. All these benefits make hobbies good to try.

This paragraph is missing: _____

Paragraph 3:

Why Have a Hobby?

There are many reasons to have a hobby. First, you experience satisfaction from improving your abilities. When you learn a new hobby or practice a familiar one, you develop stronger skills and you feel better about yourself. Also, hobbies are a fun way to spend time, and doing them makes your life more enjoyable.

This paragraph is missing: _____

Paragraph 4:

Why Have a Hobby?

There are many reasons to have a hobby. All these benefits make hobbies good to try.

This paragraph is missing: _____

Paragraph 5:

There are many reasons to have a hobby. First, you experience satisfaction from improving your abilities. When you learn a new hobby or practice a familiar one, you develop stronger skills and you feel better about yourself. Also, hobbies are a fun way to spend time, and doing them makes your life more enjoyable. All these benefits make hobbies good to try.

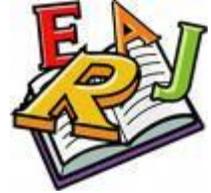
This paragraph is missing: _____

- III. Which sentence doesn't belong? Read each paragraph. One sentence does not belong in the paragraph **because it does not support the main idea**. Cross it out of the paragraph.

Paragraph 1:

WHY LEARN ENGLISH?

There are many reasons to learn English. First, if you live in the United States, you will be able to communicate with most of the people around you. Getting an education will be easier after you can read, write and speak in English. Finding a good job in the U.S. will be simpler and faster if you have strong English skills. Also, English is spoken in most countries around the world, so you will benefit wherever you live. My first language is Spanish. All of these benefits make learning English a good idea.



Paragraph 2:

About Me

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Jose Duarte. I am from the Dominican Republic. I speak Spanish and English fluently. I am 45 years old and I am married with three children. I work for the Boston Public Schools. I have lived in the United States for twenty years. Most of my family still lives in the Dominican Republic, so I go visit them as much as I can. Airplane tickets are expensive. I enjoy baseball, soccer, dancing and playing guitar. This is a little information about me.

Paragraph 3:

Barack Obama



Many people are curious about Barack Obama. His full name is Barack Hussein Obama. He was born on August 4, 1961 in Hawaii. His mother was from Kansas and his father was from Kenya. He has lived in Los Angeles, California; New York City; Cambridge, Massachusetts and Chicago, Illinois, where he was first a lawyer, then a state senator and finally a U.S. senator. Some people don't like him, so they didn't vote for him. He is married and has two daughters. Today he is the President-elect of the United States of America, and the first African American to be elected President of the United States. His term of office as the forty-fourth U.S. president will begin on January 20, 2009. His election is very important to the people of the United States.

Paragraph 4:

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is a federal holiday in the United States. Traditionally, it is a time to give thanks to God for the harvest and express appreciation for the good things we have in our lives. It is a holiday celebrated primarily in the United States. While religious in origin, Thanksgiving is now mostly identified as a national holiday for everyone American. The traditional "first Thanksgiving" is believed to have occurred at the site of Plymouth Plantation, in 1621. Today, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November in the United States. Thanksgiving dinner is held on this day, usually as a gathering of family members and friends. My mother never eats turkey because she doesn't like the flavor. For most Americans, this holiday is a traditional time for giving thanks for the people and things we love most.



Paragraph 5:

Halloween



Halloween (or Hallowe'en) is a holiday celebrated on October 31. It has its origins in the Celtic festival of Samhain and the Christian holy day of All Saints. It is not considered a religious holiday. Irish immigrants carried versions of the Halloween tradition to North America beginning in 1846. Some children eat too much candy. The day is often associated with the colors orange and black, and is usually represented by symbols like the jack-o'-lantern. Halloween activities include trick-or-treating, ghost tours, bonfires, costume parties, visiting haunted attractions, carving jack-o'-lanterns, reading scary stories, and watching horror movies. Halloween is a popular time of year.

Paragraph 6:

Massachusetts



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is a state located in the New England region of the northeastern United States. It borders Rhode Island and Connecticut to the south, New York to the west, and Vermont and New Hampshire to the north. Most of its population of 6.4 million live in the city of Boston and the area around it. The eastern half of this small state is mostly urban and suburban, while western Massachusetts is mostly farmland. Many farms around the world have cows, horses and sheep. Massachusetts has the largest population of the six New England states. It ranks third among U.S. states in overall population density. The state is an integral part of the northeastern portion of the country.

Production:

write a paragraph about any of the following topics:

The reasons why some students cheat on the exam

- The importance of education in people's lives.
- The importance/ (some benefits) of learning languages, especially English
- Some advantages of the Internet.
- Some disadvantages of using mobile phones.
- The qualities/ assets of a successful student

Practice: FOR AND AGAINST PARAGRAPHS

Read the introduction and conclusion of this essay and then write the body paragraphs to complete it.

Topic:	Smoking should be banned in public places. Discuss.
Introduction:	Smoking has long been known to cause cancer, heart disease and other medical problems. Science is now showing that passive smoking, or inhaling someone else's second hand smoke can be just as damaging. The question then arises as to whether people should be banned from smoking in public places to protect others.
For:	
Against:	
Conclusion:	While there are concerns about the economic impact of a smoking ban on the entertainment industry and about the restriction of the civil liberties of smokers, in my opinion there should be a ban on smoking in public places. Those who do not smoke should not be subjected to the discomfort and health risks of second hand smoke, nor should they have to avoid public places in order to eliminate those risks.



Now reverse the process: read the body paragraphs and write an introduction and conclusion to complete the essay.

Topic: School uniforms should be compulsory. Discuss.

Introduction:

For: There are number of advantages to school uniforms. When all students must wear the same clothes, there is no difficulty in deciding what to wear each day. Furthermore, there is no competition amongst students to be more fashionable and in fact the uniform can help students to fit in and feel like they belong. In addition, a school uniform creates a sense of school identity and unity, looks neat, and can contribute to school discipline and standards.

Against: On the other hand, some students feel that making all pupils wear a school uniform restricts their freedom of expression. This is especially true for teenagers, who use clothing to express their personality. Another argument against compulsory uniforms is the cost to parents. There are many parents who struggle financially and for whom the high cost of uniforms is an extra burden. They already have to buy street clothes for their children, and if these could be worn to school, they would not have to spend money on extra clothes for school.

Conclusion:



Planning your Paragraph



Now that you have brainstormed your ideas, you can plan your paragraph. This means putting your ideas in order and, perhaps, adding some notes about supporting material, (examples, facts, statistics, etc.), to make your paragraph more interesting.

How to plan effectively

The most important thing to remember when you plan a paragraph is that the **flow of ideas** should be **logical and easy for the reader to understand**. A simple but **effective** way to plan is to **number your ideas on your mind map**. You can also **add notes about supporting material in a different color**. Please see the example below.

Sometimes you will find that your paragraph won't fit neatly into one of the above categories. It is always possible to use a combination of the above. For example, the way I've ordered the paragraph plan on the left is a combination of "General > specific" and "In order of importance." I have planned to put the most important thing at the end of the paragraph to give it more

Ways of Organizing your Ideas

The most effective way of organizing your ideas will be different for different topics.

In the case of a paragraph about your last vacation you may want to order your ideas chronologically, but in a paragraph about your musical tastes you are more likely to list your ideas.

Here are some different ways of ordering your ideas:

- ☆ Listing
- ☆ Chronological order (in order of time)
- ☆ Spatial order (focusing on each space in turn)
- ☆ In order of importance
- ☆ Cause and effect
- ☆ General > specific

Now it's your turn...

Descriptive Paragraphs

What I am doing now to help realize my dream

- studying English hard
- saving a little money from my part-time job each week

Why Australia?

- my uncle did it & his stories and photos are amazing
- beautiful nature & amazing wildlife
- English-speaking country

What is it?

- to go to Australia for a gap year



My Future Dream.

What I will need to do to make my dream come true

- find a travel companion
- get good grades in school so I can persuade my parents to let me go
- research on the Internet

What I want to do there

- travel
- adventure sports
- see wildlife
- sightseeing
- hiking
- Christmas on the beach
- see some Aboriginal art

Supporting Material

- ☆ fairly easy to get a Working Holiday Visa and seasonal work there
- ☆ scuba diving, bungee jumping, surfing, rock climbing - on Ayers Rock!!!
- ☆ places to stay, health and safety information, visa information, available work, things to do there
- ☆ kangaroos, koalas, swimming with dolphins and whale sharks
- ☆ Harbour Bridge & Sydney Opera House, Ayers Rock, Great Barrier Reef