

**The University of Damascus
Open-Learning Centre
The Department of Translation**



Essay Reading Comprehension

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Essay Reading Comprehension

A textbook of articles with pre-reading and post-reading exercises, with special focus on essay reading comprehension

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Introduction

Essay Reading Comprehension, first edition, is a textbook/workbook for intermediate to advanced students of Translation at the Open-Learning Centre, Damascus University. It has been written with the aim of expanding students' scope and familiarising them with a variety of topics, and semantic and structural features. Reading comprehension is clearly the first, and most important, step to a good translation. Translation is a complex process of understanding and analysing the source text in order to reproduce it as the target, or translated, text. The apprehension of the source text is dependent on the translator's knowledge, not only of the linguistic and structural properties of the text, but also of the semantic and cultural considerations.

It is the aim of this book to achieve precisely this goal, alongside cultivating the students' reading skills and strategies. As the title suggests, one genre of writing is the focus of this book: the essay. Students are provided with

essays addressing a host of cultural, educational, and general topics relevant to their knowledge in a rapidly changing world. Recognition of the essay structure is essential to a successful reading strategy, and to understanding the way ideas are organised in a certain way. This skilful reader would also be better equipped to produce target texts, when translating, that have the essay structure and which follow coherent and recognised methods of organisation.

The Layout of the Book

Drawing on the students' previous knowledge of essay structures, the first part of this book is mainly devoted to analysing various kinds of essay writing. It is therefore divided into four sections, each dealing with one kind of essay and giving a model essay for practice. We did not want this book to clash with other modules currently taught in the Open-Learning centre, and which mainly revolve around the theory and practice of the 'Essay' genre. It is for this reason that we decided to give very

brief expository overviews of four kinds of essays, deemed most common in the academic and otherwise fields. Focus in these sections is rather on task-based exercises.

The second part of the book aims to put into practice the rules and theory mentioned in the first part. It is comprised of selected readings on a variety of topics. Careful attention was given to selecting up-to-date themes, particularly some controversial issues which are the subject of current debates worldwide. This part has been refocused around three main themes: Culture and Society, Human Health, and Ecology. These units consist of a number of essays, each of which is preceded by pre-reading exercises. These serve as warm-up and brainstorming activities to prepare the students for the reading experience by highlighting relevant linguistic structures, idioms and vocabulary, and by contextualising the topic of the text. The texts are then followed by comprehension questions to test the students' understanding of the text, along with a variety of tasks specially designed to cultivate the students' reading skills,

and guide them in analysing and exploring texts, and in building up their reservoir of vocabulary. And since this book aims to use the essay structure as a guide to a better understanding of the development of ideas and to assimilating the message of the text, a task consisting of a number of questions and exercises is included in every unit to test the students' recognition of organisation methods, main ideas, and essay outline.

The Student's Role

The students are highly encouraged to use the pre-reading exercises to broaden their scope of the subject and to participate, where possible, in discussions that would prepare them well for reading the text. In some reading exercises, the students are given the chance to skim or scan the texts, an effective strategy which prompts the students to explore the linguistic and semantic features of the essay, without consulting a dictionary at this point, to decipher the meanings. The tasks following the text (comprehension questions, paraphrasing of ideas, guessing the meanings of words from the context, etc.) would then alert the students

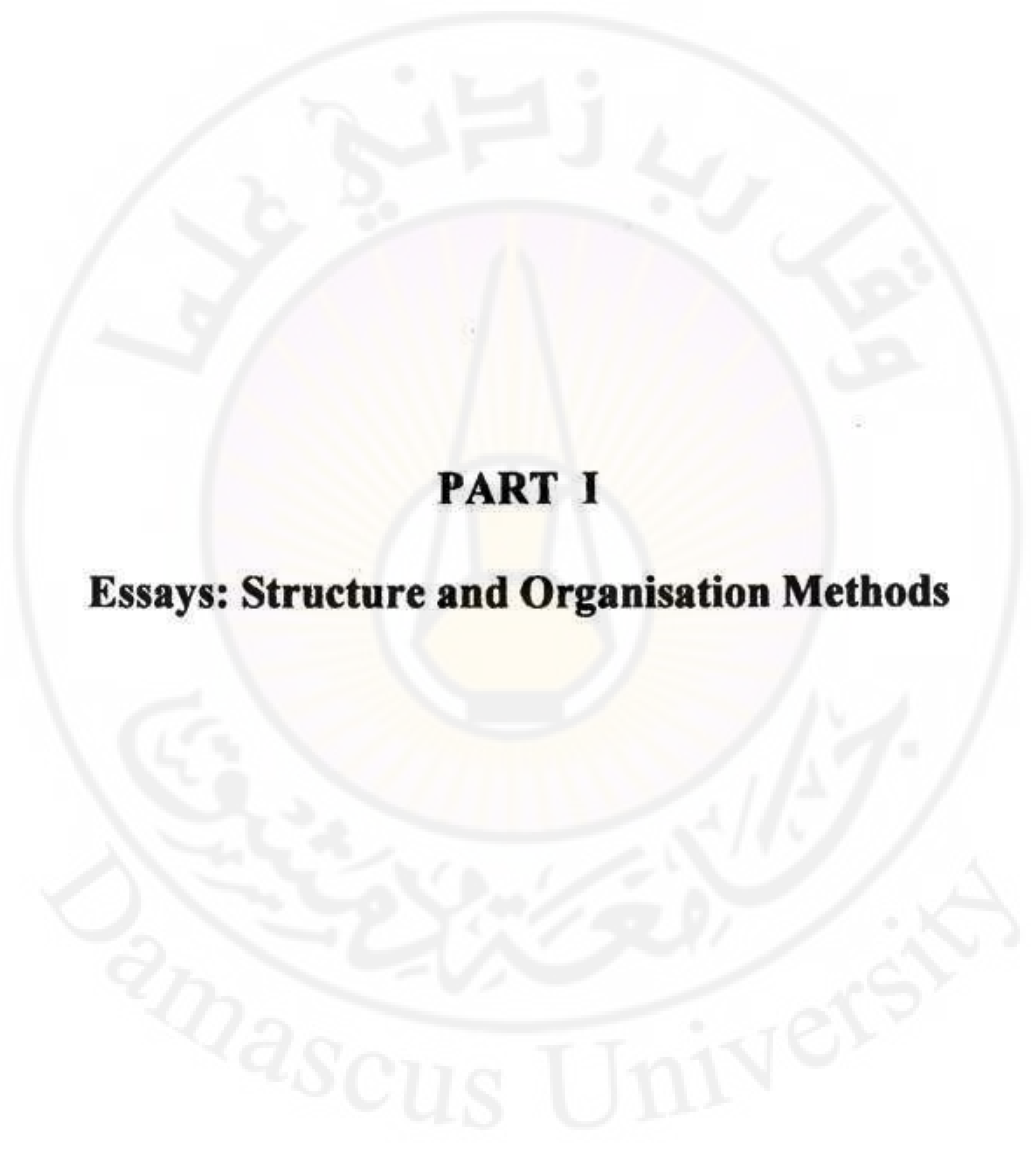
to certain important features of the text. By doing the pre-reading exercises at home and scanning/skimmming the text, the students would be prepared to participate in class discussions, raise questions, and make the most of class work. The session would then prove more informative and rewarding.

Acknowledgement

We'd like to express our gratitude to the University of Damascus, Open-Learning Centre for giving us the opportunity to design a module that would, it is hoped, meet the cultural needs of our students.

Finally, we hope that we have managed through this book to achieve the dual function of instructing and entertaining the students.

Dr Jumana Al-Dahhak
& Dr T S Toumajian
(January 5, 2003)

The logo of Damascus University is a circular emblem. It features a central yellow lamp with a flame, emitting rays of light. The lamp is set against a light purple background. The emblem is surrounded by a circular border containing Arabic calligraphy. The text at the top reads 'وقل رب زدني علما' and the text at the bottom reads 'جامعة دمشق'.

PART I

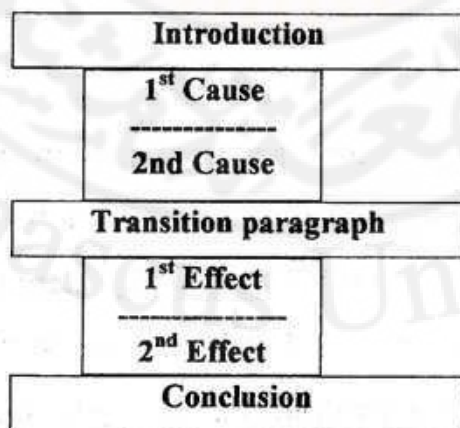
Essays: Structure and Organisation Methods

Unit one

Cause and Effect Essay

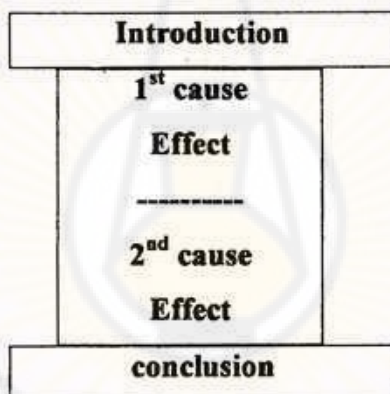
A common method of analysing a topic is by presenting its causes and/or effects. An essay which follows this method is called a cause and effect essay. This essay starts by identifying a problem, an event, a scientific principle, or a cultural practice. Then causes and/or effects are discussed. One organisation method used in a cause and effect essay is called *Block Organisation*: causes are grouped in one paragraph and effects are presented in another paragraph, as the diagram below shows.

BLOCK ORGANISATION



Another method is called *Chain Organisation*: every body paragraph is devoted to one cause of the problem or subject and its effect, as the diagram below shows. The final method is *Climax Organisation*: causes and effects are ordered according to importance, with the most important appearing last.

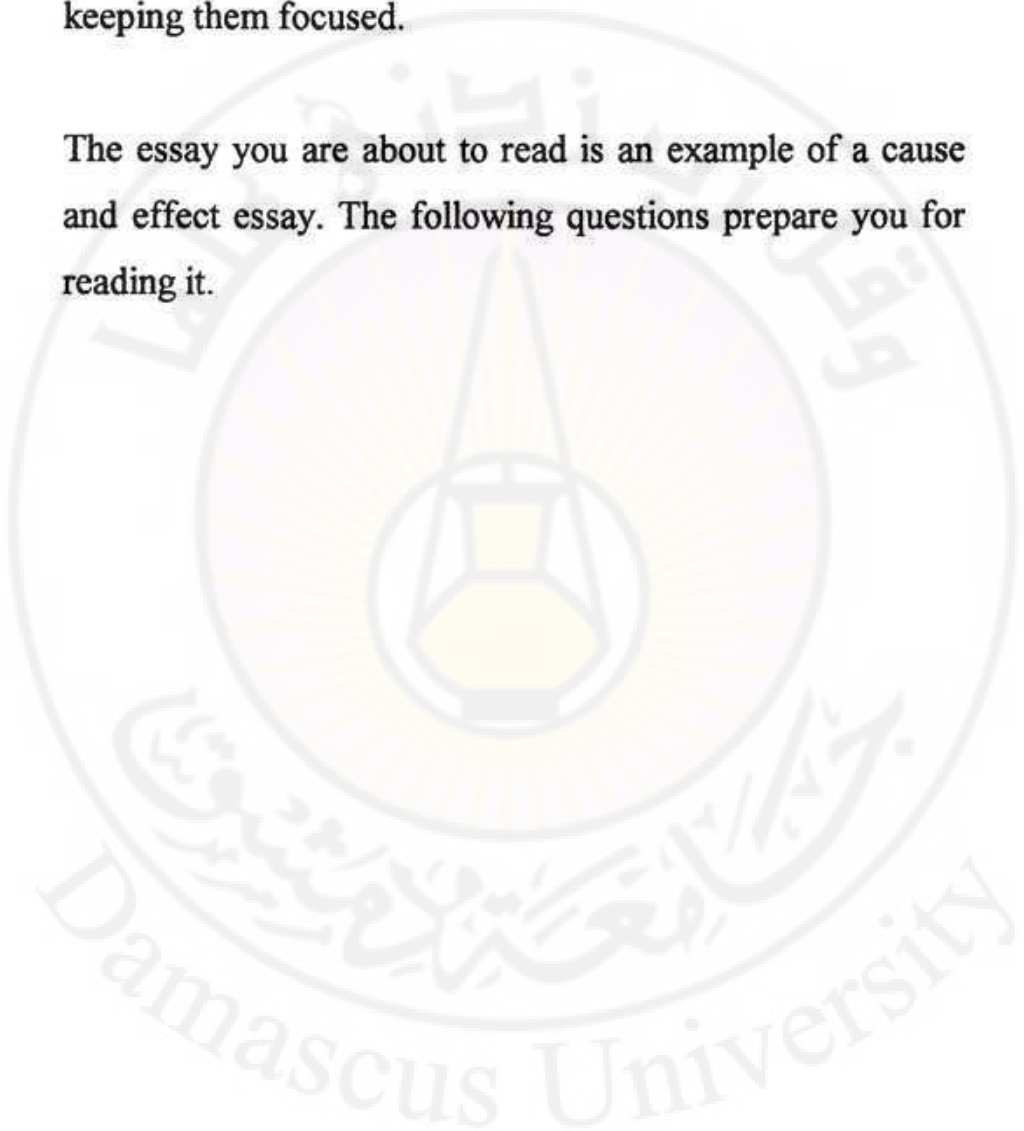
CHAIN ORGANISATION



The order chosen for an essay depends on the topic. Certain methods of organisation would be more suitable to use in a topic than in another. Generally speaking, chain organisation is the appropriate order for direct causes which are closely related to their effects. Discussing them

in the same paragraph would draw the readers' attention to the close link between the cause and its effect, thus keeping them focused.

The essay you are about to read is an example of a cause and effect essay. The following questions prepare you for reading it.



1. Men's Work?

Pre-reading exercises

I. Before reading the text, answer the following questions.

1. Do you think that the terms 'men's work' and 'women's work' are valid and realistic? If so, what is the basis for this division of labour?

2. What do the letters MBA stand for?

3. What is more important to a businessman: education or experience? Why?

4. If you were to deal with a business partner, would you prefer a businessman or a businesswoman? Why?

II. Scan the text to find the following information:

1. Percentage of women in business schools in 2002-

03: _____

2. Who is Kristine Laca?

3. Cost of a two-year MBA course:

4. Where is IMD?

Men's Work?

Why more women don't go to business school.

1. Where have all the women gone? Plenty to law school and medical school, where they typically equal, at least in America, the number of men. But business school? Here is an oddity. Business schools have bust a gut to persuade women to take MBAs, but with disappointing results. In 1988-89 women accounted for 28.6% of first-year students enrolled on MBA programmes at the 20 schools that topped *Business Week's* annual ratings; in 2002-02, 30.3%. This year, says Kristine Laca, head of admissions at the Tuck business school at Dartmouth, women's enrolments are down right across the industry.
2. The disappointing numbers are not confined to America. At the London Business School, 26% of current first-year MBAs and 29% of second years are women. Everywhere, numbers are low despite strenuous efforts by many business schools to attract more women.

3. A group of business schools and companies has reacted by setting up the Forté Foundation, based at the University of Michigan, to try to discover why more women do not apply. One issue seems to be cost, says Jeanne Wilt, who established the foundation. A two-year MBA course at a top school typically costs about \$100,000, even without counting lost earnings. Some women will forgo a place at a top school for a full scholarship at a lesser school. Moreover, three to five years after leaving, women MBAs typically earn less than their male counterparts do.
4. Women seem to drop out of business careers in their 20s. At IMD in Lausanne, which usually takes students aged about 30 rather than (as at American schools) 26, only 16% of those on the one-year MBA programme are women. Yet IMD says it takes a representative proportion of women at the appropriate level in business.

5. Business also seems to have an image problem with women. "They worry that business is not a caring profession," says Constance Helfat, Tuck's professor of strategy and technology. "But then, neither is law." Ms Wilt says that women worry about long working hours, a lack of ethics and an absence of role models.
6. But could it be that women know something that men don't? After all, women get 30% of MBAs, but they own 38% of America's businesses. And they may soon own more. Ms Helfat thinks that women in business are more likely than men to start their own companies. Maybe the truth is that you can be a good businesswoman without an MBA—but not a good businessman.

(The Economist, Vol. 367, No. 8328. June 14, 2003)

Comprehension Questions:

1. According to the text, what is strange about business school enrolments?

2. How did business schools react to this problem?

3. What is the first reason, according to Jeanne Wilt, which deters women from applying to MBAs?

4. What is meant by "image problem with women"?

5. What is the conclusion to this text?

Guessing the meanings of words from the context

One way of understanding a new word is by breaking it apart into smaller words, prefixes and suffixes. If this does not work, then you will simply have to guess a likely meaning to fit the context.

Circle the vocabulary or expression that is closest in meaning to the underlined words from the text.

1. Business schools have bust a gut to persuade women to take MBAs, but with disappointing results.
A. closed their doors. B. given up.
C. made great efforts. D. felt disappointed.

2. In 1988-89 women accounted for 28.6% of first-year students enrolled on MBA programmes at the 20 schools that topped *Business Week's* annual ratings.
A. represented. B. were responsible for.
C. calculated. D. revealed.

3. Everywhere, numbers are low despite strenuous efforts by many business schools to attract more women.
- A. useless. B. showing energy and determinism.
C. lacking determination. D. complicated.
4. Women seem to drop out of business careers in their 20s.
- A. enroll. B. leave before finishing.
C. stop for a while. D. graduate.
5. Ms Wilt says that women worry about long working hours, a lack of ethics and an absence of role models.
- A. an exemplary person who can be copied.
B. ideal role to play.
C. inspiration.
D. teacher.

Understanding essay structure

1. Titles should normally be eye-catching. They are also meant to reflect the main topic of the essay or text.

What do you think of the title to the reading extract?

Can you think of an alternative?

2. How many paragraphs does this essay consist of?

3. What is the function of the first paragraph?

4. Every essay has a thesis statement: a sentence that conveys the main idea of the whole essay and smoothes the process of reading. Can you locate the thesis statement in this essay?

5. Body paragraphs develop the thesis statement by giving more details, reasons or examples. Each paragraph develops one topic. Find the topic sentences for each of the body paragraphs in the essay.

6. A paragraph would normally start with a topic sentence followed by supporting sentences, i.e., sentences which give further details and develop the main topic sentence. Supporting sentences are divided into two kinds: major supporting sentences and minor supporting sentences. *Major supporting sentences* support the topic sentence; *minor supporting sentences* develop the major supporting ones and are the least general sentences in the paragraph.

Example: In paragraph 3, the sentences are organised into the following order:

The first sentence is the topic sentence:

'A group of business schools and companies ...why more women do not apply.'

The second sentence is the first major support:

'One issue seems to be cost, says Jeanne Wilt, who established the foundation.'

The next two sentences are the minor support:

'A two-year MBA course at a top school typically costs about \$100,000, even without counting lost earnings. Some women will forgo a place at a top school for a full scholarship at a lesser school.'

The last sentence is the final major support:

'Moreover, three to five years after leaving, women MBAs typically earn less than their male counterparts do.'

Now examine the structure of paragraph 4 in the same way. (Write in key words of sentences)

7. A concluding paragraph can have one of three functions: a) to restate the topic of the essay; b) to give a summary of the essay; and c) to give a final comment on the topic or argument.

Look at the conclusion of the essay and decide which type of concluding paragraph it is. Give evidence.

8. What is the problem being discussed in this essay?

9. Does this essay provide the reader with causes or effects of the problem? Or both? State them briefly.

10. What method of organisation does this essay follow?

11. Do you think it was effective?

Unit Two

Classification Essay

We usually tend to examine people, objects, values, or ideas by dividing them into categories. We might divide people, for example, according to age into five categories: child, teenager, young adult, middle-aged adult, and elderly. We could also divide them according to social class into low class, low middle class, middle class, upper middle class, high class. There are of course many categories to divide people by, and this applies to all other objects or values or ideas. Think of subjects in the university, for example, students, teachers. You would find that they can be divided into many categories with different classification principles. In other words, what we do is select a certain classification principle (age and social class in the people classification example) and divide the subject accordingly.

This is precisely what a classification essay is about. A subject is defined, one – only one – classification principle

is stated in the introductory paragraph. The body paragraphs would then explain or illustrate the categories of classification, each in a separate paragraph. A good and effective essay would follow a logical order in defining and illustrating the categories.

The essay you are about to read is an example of a classification essay. The following questions prepare you for reading it.

2. Plagiarism in the Academic Community

Pre-reading exercises

1. Before reading the text, answer the following questions.

1. Do you feel upset upon discovering that a song you like listening to is wholly or partly copied from another song? Why?

2. Copyright law has recently been introduced in Syria. What do you know of this law?

3. Are you with or against this legal protection of mental or artistic property? Justify your attitude.

4. If you were a teacher marking your students' research papers, would you heavily penalise a student who had copied the words or ideas of a writer without acknowledging them? Why?

Plagiarism in the Academic Community

1. Scholars, writers, and teachers in the modern academic community have strong feelings about acknowledging the use of another person's ideas. In the English-speaking world, the term *plagiarism* is used to label the practice of not giving credit for the source of one's ideas. Simply stated, plagiarism is the unlawful appropriation and publication as one's own, of the ideas, or the expression of ideas (literary, artistic, musical, mechanical, etc.) of another. From an ancient Latin word meaning to kidnap or steal the child or slave of another, plagiarism is universally condemned in the modern academic world. It is equivalent to stealing the livelihood or savings of a worker, for it robs the original writer or scholar of the ideas and words by which he makes a living.
2. The penalties of plagiarism vary from situation to situation. In many universities, the punishment may range from failure in a particular course to

expulsion from the university. In the literary world, where writers are protected from plagiarism by international copyright laws, the penalty may range from a small fine to imprisonment and a ruined career. Protection of scholars and writers, through the copyright laws and through the social pressures of the academic and literary communities, is a relatively recent concept. Such social pressures and copyright laws require writers to give scrupulous attention to documentation of their sources.

3. Students, as inexperienced scholars themselves, must avoid various types of plagiarism by being self-critical in their use of other scholars' ideas and by giving appropriate credit for the source of borrowed ideas and words. There are at least three classifications of plagiarism as it is revealed in students' inexactness in identifying sources properly. These categories are plagiarism by accident, by ignorance, and by intention.
4. Plagiarism by accident, or oversight, sometimes is the result of the writer's inability to decide or

remember where the idea came from. He may have read it long ago, heard it in a lecture since forgotten, or acquired it second-hand or third-hand from discussions with colleagues. He may also have difficulty in deciding whether the idea is such common knowledge that no reference to the original source is needed. Although this type of plagiarism is the least serious, it must be guarded against. If the idea, or the words used to express it, is unique, the writer must make an effort to identify the source.

5. Plagiarism through ignorance is simply a way of saying that inexperienced writers often do not know how or when to acknowledge their sources. The techniques for documentation – note-taking, quoting, footnoting, listing bibliography – are easily learned and can prevent the writer from making unknowing mistakes or omissions in his references. Although there is no copyright in news, or in ideas, only in the expression of them, the writer cannot plead ignorance when his sources for ideas are challenged.

6. The most serious kind of academic thievery is plagiarism by intention. The writer, limited by his laziness and dullness, copies the thoughts and languages of others and claims them for his own. He not only steals, he tries to deceive the reader into believing the ideas are original. Such words as *immoral*, *dishonest*, *offensive*, and *despicable* are used to describe the practice of plagiarism by intention.
7. The opposite of plagiarism is acknowledgment. All mature and trustworthy writers make use of the ideas of others but they are careful to acknowledge their indebtedness to their sources. Students, as developing scholars, writers, teachers, and professional leaders, should recognize and assume their responsibility to document all sources from which language and thoughts are borrowed. Other members of the profession will not only respect the scholarship; they will admire the humility and honesty.

(Adapted from *From Paragraph to Essay*)

Comprehension Exercises

I. Decide whether the following statements are True (T) or False (F).

1. _____ Plagiarism is strictly speaking a literary term.
2. _____ University students who commit plagiarism are penalized by failure or dismissal.
3. _____ Students should be critical of the authors they use their ideas.
4. _____ It is sometimes difficult to decide whether an idea requires acknowledgement or not.
5. _____ One way of acknowledging sources is by including lists of references.
6. _____ Deliberate plagiarism is merely an act of self-deception.
7. _____ It is wrong to use the ideas of other writers.

Guessing the meanings of words from the context

1. Circle the vocabulary or expression that is closest in meaning to the underlined words from the text.

1. From an ancient Latin word meaning to kidnap or steal the child or slave of another, plagiarism is universally condemned in the modern academic world.

A. rob a person B. take a person away by force
C. kill a person D. ruin a person

2. The penalties of plagiarism vary from situation to situation.

A. punishments B. rewards
C. difficulties D. charges

3. Plagiarism by accident, or oversight, sometimes is the result of the writer's inability to decide or remember where the idea came from.

A. overlooking B. careful act
C. intention D. ignorance

4. The writer... copies the thoughts and languages of others and claims them for his own.

- A. replaces them by his ideas
- B. rewrites them
- C. pretends he is the real author
- D. acknowledges them

5. Students... should recognize and assume their responsibility to document all sources from which language and thoughts are borrowed.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| A. reject | B. avoid |
| C. take and practise | D. continue |

Understanding Essay Structure

1. The topic of this essay is plagiarism. How does the writer develop this topic? (i.e., what aspects of the problem are given?)

2. Writers, generally, introduce their topics either by
a) narrating a story or anecdote; b) presenting facts
or statistics; c) by giving a historical review; or d)
starting out with general ideas and narrowing them
down into more specific ones.

What kind of introduction is the first paragraph?

3. Which paragraphs correspond to the following
topics in the essay? Write down the paragraph
number in the space provided.

___ Mature writers acknowledge their sources.

___ Students lack experience in documentation.

___ The punishments imposed on plagiarists in the
academic and literary world.

___ Deliberate plagiarism

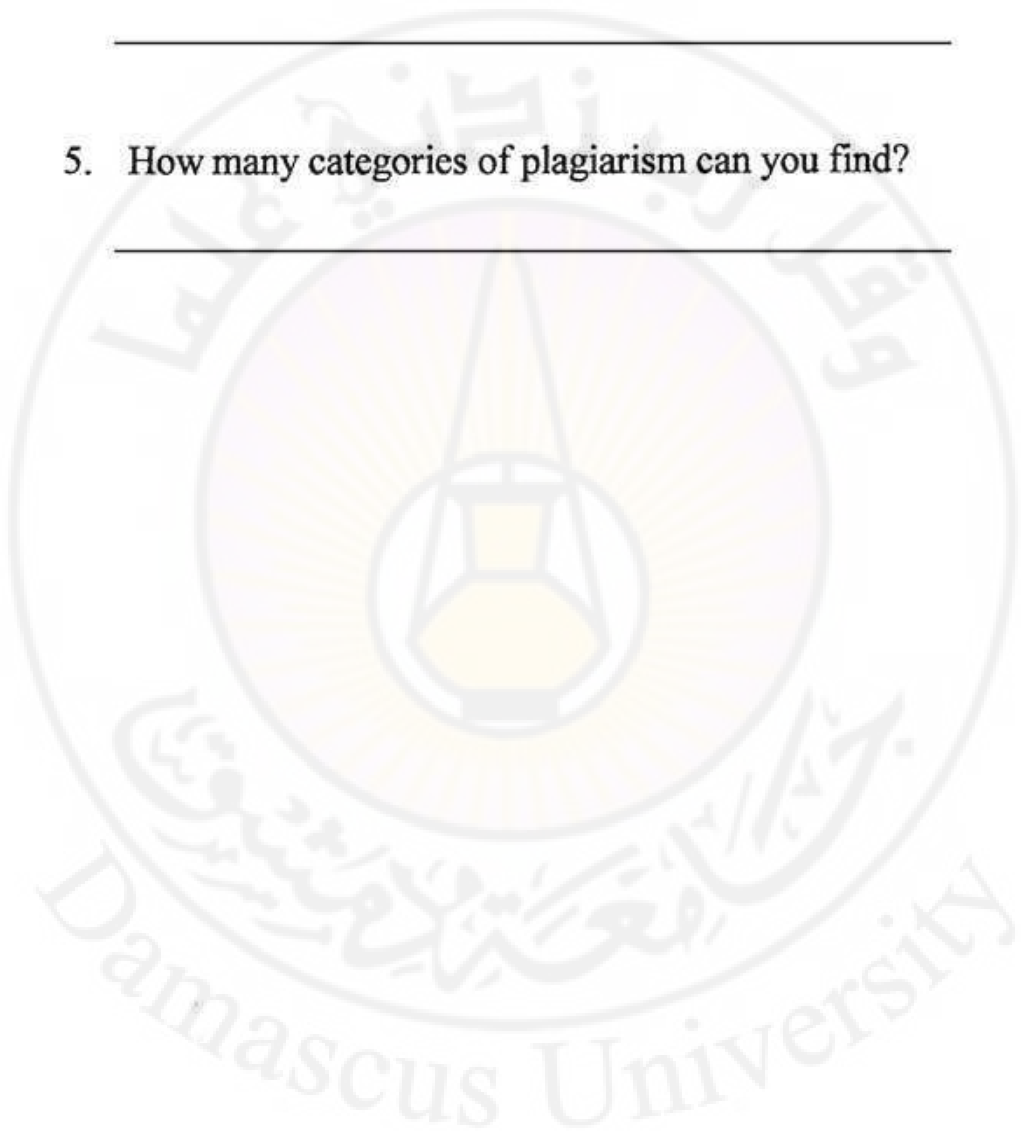
___ What is plagiarism?

___ Committing academic thievery unknowingly.

___ Plagiarism out of ignorance.

4. What is the classification principle in this essay?
Can you find more than one?

5. How many categories of plagiarism can you find?



Unit Three

Narrative Essay

Narration is story writing. A narrative essay tells a story or an event and, sometimes, its impact on the present. The order followed in a narrative essay is, simply, the time order the events happened. Establishing the setting of the action, namely where and when it happened, is also important to get the reader involved in the action. The essay usually moves towards the climax, or peak, of the action, and ends with the resolution of tension or conflict. It is in other words similar in structure to a short story. Some writers choose to include some amount of dialogue in their essays, as this gives the essay a sense of immediacy and closeness, and makes the readers feel that they are close to the characters. The essay is therefore divided into paragraphs, each devoted to an action or a significant detail.

The essay you are about to read is an example of a narrative essay. The following questions prepare you for reading it.



3. Meet the Pasta Police

Pre-reading Exercises:

1. Before reading the text, answer the following questions.

1. Is there a 'pasta police'? What do you think it means?

2. The Italian cuisine is most famous nowadays. Do you think that any pasta dish or pizza you eat is genuinely Italian? Why?

3. Should the Italians protect their cuisine from imitation and fraud? How?

II. Scan the text to find the following information:

1. Names of two Italian meals:

2. Approximate number of Italian restaurants worldwide:

3. What is DNV?

4. How much will restaurants have to pay for the first inspection? _____

Meet the Pasta Police

1. After a fitful sleep, Pomarico Benedetto rose last Wednesday at 7 a.m. and put on a bright blue suit. He'd been preparing for this day since May, when he'd asked the Italian government to determine whether his Ristorante da Beni outside Brussels is a "real" Italian restaurant. Merely serving *tagliatelle al pesto* or *tiramisu*, it turns out, is no longer enough to qualify; last fall, the Ministry of Agriculture and the International Association of Italian Restaurants announced that they would begin issuing authenticity certificates to Italian restaurants (there are some 60,000 worldwide, according to the Italian Federation of Bars and Catering) that pass rigorous inspection. Benedetto petitioned for an inspection because he wants would-be customers to know he proudly serves the real thing. And so he became one of the first test cases in Italy's unusual campaign to regain control of its "brand."

2 "Look, look at this terrace, I want to show you," he says, rushing out to the small garden. There's a Virgin Mary shrine carved into the wall. Tomatoes are growing beside eggplants. Inside, Bunches of plastic grapes line the walls. As Benedetto whips through the restaurant, carrying a giant prosciutto and making espresso, he sings – in Italian, of course. His wife smiles at him from beside the wood-burning pizza oven. This is an Italian restaurant.

3. But it's not for me to say. The Italians arrive at 10 a.m. The auditor, Sergio Trombetta from Rome, sets up at a table in the back. (Trombetta works for DNV, a certification company the government hired to do the audits and which is, interestingly, based in Norway.) Benedetto and his wife sit beside him, a thick file of newspaper clippings and notes from happy customers at the ready.

4. Trombetta then tours the kitchen and the wine cellar, nodding, asking questions,

professionally reserved. At least 80% of the dishes must be traditional Italian recipes. The head chef must have formal schooling in Italian cooking or have spent at least six months training at a restaurant in Italy. At least one staff member must speak Italian. Sixty percent of the wine, cheeses, meats and biscuits must be Italian. All peeled tomatoes must come from Italy. In fact, it becomes clear that authenticity mostly means buying Made-in-Italy goods – this is an unabashed promotion of Italian exports. "It's not Italy against Spain or France," says Stefamo Crea, head of DNV's food certification unit, who has also come to da Beni today. "It's each country protecting its own." Italians, he says, are tired of the frauds perpetrated in their name – spaghetti on toast, with meatballs, from a can. "We don't say the chef has to be Italian – just of the Italian school," says Crea. "If the French were certifying restaurants, the chef would need to be French, full stop."

5. After a pilot project in Belgium and

Luxembourg, the inspection roll out through France, Germany, the U.K., Scandinavia, the Netherlands, America and Japan. Restaurants will have to pay €3,000 to €4,000 for the first inspection and €1,000 for yearly follow-ups. "I don't think anyone will do it," says Alfonso Manzi, owner of another Brussels restaurant that has passed inspection. If enough restaurants sign up, the results will be published by mid-2004 in a guide to certified restaurants.

6. Finally, Trombetta begins writing his report. Benedetto has passed, with the condition that he fix one "minor nonconformity." He lacks sufficient evidence to prove that his salami, pork and ham are really Italian. Once he supplies this, he will receive the certificate – the same conditional approval received by about 60% of the 40 restaurants that have so far been assessed. Almost all have since complied and won the plaque. Only five or six have backed out. None has failed outright.

7. Benedetto, however, is devastated. He stands up, calls up his supplier, and bawls her out for not detailing the provenance of the meat. "I need this right now. If I do not get it, I will not pay you. That's it. It's over". He hangs up and, in rapid-fire Italian, presents his defense to Trombetta, accompanied by enough hand gestures to power a puppet show.
8. Finally, we eat. Surprisingly, tasting is not part of the inspection. It is too subjective, Crea says. But Benedetto insists. And neither Crea nor Trombetta can find fault with his excellent pizza, spaghetti *vongole* and grilled swordfish. "It was no different from Italy," Crea declares. After the *limoncello*, Benedetto appears and presents a fax, with a flourish. After several phone calls, hands flying, he has extracted a letter from the supplier promising that all the meat is from Italy. Then Benedetto, smiling and shouting good wishes, shows us to the door of his authentic Italian restaurant.

(Adapted from *Time*, Vol. 162, No 14, Oct.13, 2003)

Comprehension Questions:

I. Based on your reading of the text, answer the following questions.

1. Which restaurants can get an authenticity certificate?

2. Why does Benedetto apply for an inspection?

3. Why does the writer say in paragraph 2 'This is an Italian restaurant'? What proof does he give?

4. What do Benedetto and his wife show the auditor? Why?

5. What prerequisites should the restaurants have in order to be granted authenticity certificate?

6. What 'minor nonconformity' should Benedetto fix before passing inspection?

II. Put + in front of prerequisites of authenticity certificate, and 0 in front of unnecessary or false ones.

_____ If the chef can make Italian dishes, formal schooling is not necessary.

_____ At least 80% of the dishes must be Italian.

_____ If the restaurant is in a country other than Italy, it is not necessary for the staff to know Italian.

_____ It is necessary for the restaurant to use Italian-made or grown ingredients.

_____ The chef must be Italian.

III. Fill in the blanks with appropriate words to complete the following summary of the reading selection. More than one word could be used in some blanks.

Promarico Benedetto is the owner of an Italian restaurant outside Brussels. He had _____ an inspection by a certification company _____ by the Italian government. The _____ arrived at 10 a.m. and was shown _____ and notes from happy customers. Trombetta had a _____ in the kitchen and wine cellar to do _____ there. In his report, he _____ that Benedetto's restaurant be given the _____ only when he proves that his salami, pork, and ham are Italian. Benedetto felt _____. He rang his _____ and insisted that she send him _____ to prove that the meat is Italian. Benedetto invited Trombetta to an Italian meal at his restaurant. The meal was _____ and _____ to a meal in Italy. The supplier sent him a letter promising that all meat is Italian. As a _____, Benedetto's restaurant was declared an _____ Italian restaurant.

Understanding Essay Structure:

1. The thesis statement in a narrative essay should give a clue as to the main event. What is the thesis statement in this essay?
-

2. The essay is not strictly narrative. In some paragraphs you find the writer offering descriptive material. Give an example of an interruption in the flow of the essay.
-

3. What is the setting of the action? Does this narrative essay state it clearly?
-

4. Locate one paragraph where you have dialogue. What function does it have?
-

5. What is the climax of the essay? Where does it occur?

6. What is the resolution of the problem?

7. In narratives, transitional expressions of chronological order are used to highlight the movement of action. Examples of such transitional expressions are: first, then, next, later on, after, when, finally...etc. Underline the transitional expressions in this essay.

8. What is the writer's point of view? Is he with or against inspection? How do you know?

Unit Four

Argumentative Essay

An argumentative essay is one where the writer argues for or against a certain issue. The aim is to make a point, trying to persuade the audience and change their views, behaviour, attitudes, etc. A good and effective argumentative essay is one where logical order and discussion of ideas is followed in order to leave a good impact.

Below is an example of an argumentative essay. Follow the prereading exercises and then read the text.

4. Video Games and Desensitisation to Violence

Pre-reading exercises:

1. What is the meaning of 'desensitisation'? (One way of guessing the meaning of a polysyllabic word like this one is by breaking it down into its root, suffixes, and prefixes).

2. Read the title again. What will the essay be about?

3. Sometimes we hear people say that modern culture is actually a culture of violence. What is meant by this? Do you agree with it?

4. Is there any relationship between violence and social class or education? Explain.

Video Games and Desensitisation to Violence

1. Before trying to determine whether desensitisation to violence and video games are correlated in any way, we should mention first what is usually meant by 'desensitisation to violence'. Young people becoming desensitized to violence means that they gradually become insensitive to violent scenes and violence in general. The dominant argument in this respect is that children perceive screen violence as play or spectacle and somehow become immune to the horror of violence which makes them as a result less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others, or even aggressive towards others.
2. It seems that there is no controversy concerning the effects of violence viewing on young people. Most scientists agree that there are negative effects from exposure to media violence

and one such effect is desensitisation to violence. However nobody ever distinguishes between actual violence and fictional or simulated one, as is the case with video games. Do they really believe that the teenager, who laughs while seeing a game character being relentlessly beaten, is equally insensitive when he sees his mother, for example, being beaten by his father? Is there some kind of selective insensitivity then?

3. Aggressiveness is not a learned thing. It is an instinctive response to real or feared dangers that threaten an individual's life and happiness. People never become aggressive because they saw similar behavior on screen. They are aggressive if and when they have a reason to be. If, for instance, they feel threatened, or are actually attacked or insulted, and if they have enemies or rivals or competitors whom they hate and want to harm or to defeat. Also if they are cheated or betrayed. If

aggression is not normal reaction in all these cases, then what is?

4. The way aggressiveness is expressed depends mainly on the individual's cultural level. The lower their culture, the more likely they would be to express aggressiveness by exercising physical force. In this case media may be useful to them in providing new fighting tricks and techniques. However, these people would look for this kind of information anyway, even if it wasn't offered by the media so abundantly. People of a higher culture, on the other hand, are more likely to cope with conflict situations using reason. They have less reason to be aggressive but when they are they express their aggressiveness by means of verbal violence which, of course, is never to be found in video games. A civilized person would never resolve conflict using his fists even if he had previously killed some thousand little men in Streetfighter or Mortal Combat or whatever fighting game.

5. Although a very young medium, video games are popular among children, teenagers, even adults. They are considered a part of low culture but, as I see it, they are here to serve a need: the need for a substitute for the lost physical activity in modern society. Video games are actually simulated physical activity where the player is not doing the muscles part of action but only the brain part of it. Titles like: Streetfighter, Medal of Honor, Allied Assault, Grand Theft Auto, Doom are indicative of their content. In all these games the player is required to fight, outsmart, and defeat an enemy. The enemy is usually human (soldiers, spies, gangsters, knights, evil people) but there are also aliens, ghosts, creatures and other things. Every possible form of fighting is used: martial arts, gun fighting, air fighting, submarine fighting, spacecraft fighting, anything we can imagine. Yet all this mayhem has nothing to do with violence. Violence means harm, pain, suffering. There are no such elements in video

shown and the victim can be completely run over and then pop back up without harm. The characters do not look realistic either by technical or by artistic standards. They are not given a substantial personality and they lack real life motivations and emotions. They remind more of toys than of living creatures. The player cannot get emotionally involved (nobody cries when playing Max Payne, although the game's story is supposed to be very tragic). After all, the game is there to be played, not to be watched, and fighting is just an excuse for practicing quick response, accuracy, strategy, and other skills. But if it was to be watched, one would see in it images, colors, motion, speed, sounds, special effects and music; definitely not violence and pain. In any case, the result of all this "violent" experience is a happy player who has had a very good time testing his reflexes and practicing various skills, while at the same time, nobody got hurt, nobody got sad, nobody lost anything.

6. By this, I don't mean that simulated violence is a good or even acceptable subject for games or films, but this is a completely different matter having to do with the poverty of original ideas and inadequacy of dominant value systems, characteristic of our society and not with the mechanisms behind insensitive or violent behavior.

(Anonymous)

Comprehension Questions:

I. Based on your reading of the text, answer the following questions.

1. What is the meaning of ‘desensitisation to violence’?

2. How does the writer view aggressiveness?

3. What is the factor that influences the expression of aggression? How?

4. What need are video games meant to serve, according to the writer?

5. What does the violent experience result in?

6. What is the writer’s conclusion? Do you agree with it?

II. Decide whether the following statements are True (T) or False (F).

_____ It is believed that children who play violent video games become immune to violence.

_____ Scientists agree on the negative effects of media violence, except for desensitisation to violence.

_____ People could become aggressive because they had seen similar violence on TV.

_____ People of a higher culture normally use verbal violence.

_____ The fighting in video games is the same as real violence.

Guessing the meanings of words from the context

Circle the vocabulary or expression that is closest in meaning to the underlined words from the text.

1. Before trying to determine whether desensitisation to violence and video games are correlated in any way...

A. contrasted

B. compared

C. related

C. the same

2. It is an instinctive response to real or feared dangers that threaten an individual's life and happiness.

A. innate

B. learned

C. fictional

D. unrealistic

3. Video games are actually simulated physical activity where the player is not doing the muscles part of action but only the brain part of it.

A. imitated

B. real

C. provocative

D. emotional

4. Yet all this mayhem has nothing to do with violence.

A. order

B. destruction

C. system

D. discipline

5. ..the result of all this “violent” experience is a happy player who has had a very good time testing his reflexes and practicing various skills..

A. feelings

B. effects

C. automatic responses

D. reflection

Understanding Essay Structure

1. What is the thesis statement?

2. This is an example of an argumentative essay. Do you feel that the writer succeeded in making his point and persuading you? Why or why not?

3. What is the link between the thesis statement and the topic of this essay? How do the paragraphs lead from it?

4. Examine the sentence order of paragraph 4 (Topic sentence, supporting sentences), then fill in the outline below with key words from relevant sentences.

Paragraph 4:

Topic sentence: _____

Major support 1: The lowerphysical force.

Minor support(s) _____

Major support 2 _____

Minor support(s) _____

- A civilized person...fighting game.

5. What kind of conclusion does the essay offer?
(summary, restatement, writer's opinion?)

PART II

Selected Texts for Practice



Unit One
Culture and Society

1. Shoot'em up

Pre-reading exercises

1. You have read an article in the first part of this book on the disadvantages of video games. In your opinion, what are the advantages of video games?

2. Do you think that video games are, strictly speaking, children games?

3. Skim the text in one minute. Write three important questions about the topic that you think the text will answer.

A. _____?

B. _____?

C. _____?

Shoot'em up

Playing action games improves visual skills

1. Nothing, it seems, is without some redeeming value. Writing in *Nature*, Shawn Green and Daphne Bavelier, of the University of Rochester, in New York state, report the results of a series of tests they performed on two groups of people. One group consisted of experienced players of video games. The other consisted of non-players. It seems that playing games of the sort most censured by parents and moralists – action games such as "Grand Theft Auto III" – improves a person's visual perception.
2. The first two tests measured the ability to pay attention. One asked the subjects to work out which small shape was within a circle, in the presence of a large "distractor" shape. The other asked them to count the number of squares on a screen. Both tests showed that players pay better attention than non-players, at least within a narrow field of view.

3. That is not surprising, because video games tend to have just such a restricted field of view. In a third test, however, the subjects had to find a small target (a triangle within a circle) in an extensive field of squares. This test showed that players did much better than non-players even when a wide field of view was involved, a result which suggests that their skills are being generalized.
4. Mr Green also looked at whether the rapid pace of action games improved the ability to avoid attention bottlenecks. An example of a bottleneck is when people have difficulty detecting a second target if it appears on screen a few tenths of a second after an initial one. Regular players could, indeed, detect a second target almost twice as often as non-players.
5. Sceptics might argue that video-game players did better on the tests because of pre-existing differences. Mr Green therefore took another group of novices and trained them for an hour a day over the course of ten days. Half the group played "medal of Honour", an action game. The other half played

"Tetris", a puzzle game. After the training period, the "Tetris" players had not notably improved on the tests, but the "Medal of Honour" players had. Mr Green supposed that this is because action games require players to do a lot of things at once – look for new enemies, shoot old ones, dodge bullets and so on. "Tetris" players, by contrast, have to focus on a specific task – getting the block in the gap.

4. This, surely, will please armies, air forces and sports teams, which require people to make split-second decisions based on a rich, wide visual field. Whether parents will welcome their children's arguments that video games are good for you is, of course, another question entirely.

(*The Economist*, Vol. 367, No. 8326. May 31, 2003)

Comprehension Questions:

1. What was the study sample? In other words, who was the study performed on?

2. What was the objective of the first two tests? And what did they reveal?

3. What is the meaning of 'attention bottleneck'?

4. What do sceptics argue?

5. What advantage did action game players have over puzzle game players?

6. Why would armies, air forces, and sports teams be pleased with the findings of the study? Is it the same for parents, do you think?

Vocabulary

I. Follow the clues to find the words and phrases in the article.

1. A noun in paragraph 1 used to refer to people who adopt and teach good morals:

2. A noun in the paragraph 2 which refers to study samples, or participants, in experiments:

3. A verb in the past participle, meaning brought to general use:

4. A verb in paragraph 4 meaning to discover or perceive:

5. A noun in paragraph 5 which refers to people who generally doubt accepted opinions:

6. A noun in paragraph 5 which refers to beginners:

II. Find specific facts and examples from the article to support the following general ideas:

1. Players pay better attention than non-players in a narrow field of view.

2. Players' skills are generalised.

3. Players of action games could avoid bottlenecks better than non-players.

III. What is the significance of the title 'Shoot'em up'? What does it refer to?

Understanding Essay Structure

1. What is the thesis statement to this essay?

2. What kind of essay is this? How do you know?

3. Is it an effective method of organization?

4. Based on the kinds of conclusions that were introduced in the first unit, what kind of conclusion does this essay have?

5. As discussed in the first unit, body paragraphs normally follow a consistent pattern: a topic sentence followed by major supporting sentences and minor supporting sentences and, sometimes, a concluding sentence. Understanding the outline of an essay helps make the reading process more lucid and smooth.

Below is part of an outline of the essay. Complete it by writing in the key words from each body paragraph.

Outline:

Title: Shoot'em up

I. Introduction:

Thesis statement: It seems that playing games of the sort ... person's visual perception.

II. Body:

Paragraph 1:

Topic sentence: The first two ... attention

Major support 1: One asked ... shape.

Major support 2: The other ... screen.

Concluding sentence: Both tests ... view.

Paragraph 2:

Topic sentence: _____

Major support 1: _____

Concluding sentence: _____

Paragraph 3:

Topic sentence: _____

Major support 1: _____

Concluding sentence: _____

Paragraph 4:

Topic sentence: _____

Major support 1: _____

Minor support: _____

Major support 2: _____

Minor support: _____

III. Conclusion:

2. A Suitable Price

Pre-reading Exercises:

1. Read the title and the subtitle. Can you predict what the article is going to deal with?

2. What do you know of marriage traditions in India? Is marriage easier for the man or the woman there? Why?

3. What about marriage traditions in Syria? Is dowry high in all regions? And who is it usually paid to?

4. Skim the article in one minute. Write down three questions that you think the text would answer.

A. _____?

B. _____?

C. _____?

A Suitable Price

The rising cost of marrying up

1. India discovered a new heroine last month when Nisha Sharma, a 21-year-old software engineering student, called off her wedding near Delhi after learning that her would-be in-laws were demanding an extra \$25,000 dowry payment on her wedding day. Miss Sharma's defiance in the face of an ancient dowry tradition, which has caused the price of a husband to soar –sometimes to as much as \$100,000, and often to several times the bride's family's annual income – made her the toast of Indian editorialists and won her newspaper spreads around the world.
2. Miss Sharma's notoriety may now be fading, but an interesting question remains: why are dowries so high in the first place? Rapid economic growth and modernization (not to mention the law) should by now be starting to put paid to the dowry system in India much as they did long ago in Europe. But not only has the practice persisted in India, the amounts required to

lure a man to the altar have grown far faster than can be explained merely by economic growth.

3. A new study, by Siwan Anderson, an economist at the University of Tilburg in the Netherlands, offers an answer. It argues that the continuing importance of caste continues to fuel dowry inflation. Economic growth has not only made average wealth rise, but, crucially, has increased the range of inequality of income within each caste.

4. Despite attempts to chip away at caste, through job-promotion programmes and greater access to education, it remains a powerful source of status. So, argues the paper, women are still competing for the limited pool of men in castes above their own. Marrying up, in status rather than in wealth, is still something India's brides are willing to pay for. An increasing income spread makes it possible for the price of a scarce resource, in this case a high-caste husband, to be bid up much higher than it would if incomes were more uniform.

(The Economist, Vol. 367, No. 8328. June 14, 2003)

Comprehension Questions:

I. Based on your reading of the text, answer the following questions.

1. Who is Nisha Sharma?

2. Why did she call off her wedding?

3. What did this decision bring her?

4. What effect did economic growth have on dowries in Europe?

5. What is the main cause of dowry inflation according to Siwan Anderson?

6. What do many Indian brides seek?

II. Decide whether the following statements are True (T) or False (F).

_____ Nisha Sharma called off her wedding because she could not pay the dowry.

_____ Despite the high dowries in India, they are still affordable.

_____ Modernisation is one cause of dowry inflation.

_____ Social classes are homogenous in terms of wealth and income

_____ A high-caste husband is easily attainable in India.

Guessing the meanings of words from the context

Circle the vocabulary or expression that is closest in meaning to the underlined words from the text.

1. Nisha Sharma... called off her wedding near Delhi after learning that her would-be in-laws were demanding an extra \$25,000 dowry payment on her wedding day.

called off

A. postponed

B. cancelled

C. delayed

D. stopped

would-be

A. becoming

B. hoped for

C. prospective

D. waited for

2. ...the amounts required to lure a man to the altar have grown far faster than can be explained merely by economic growth.

A. tempt

B. call

C. bring

D. take

3. It argues that the continuing importance of caste continues to fuel dowry inflation.

A. reputation

B. wealth

C. prestige

D. social status

4. An increasing income spread makes it possible for the price of a scarce resource, in this case a high-caste husband, to be bid up much higher than it would if incomes were more uniform.

A. homogenous

B. different

C. varying

D. unique

Understanding essay structure

1. Match the paragraphs in the essay with their topics.

Write the number of the paragraphs on the lines.

_____ Indian women's attraction to high-caste husbands

_____ Causes of dowry inflation in India

_____ An Indian heroine defies marriage traditions in India.

_____ The findings of a Netherland Study.

2. What is the main idea of this essay? Choose from the following.

A. Nisha Sharma, an Indian student, calls off her wedding.

B. A study by the University of Tilburg reveals that economic growth has increased the range of difference in income in each caste.

C. Dowry inflation in India is closely related to caste.

3. 'A Suitable Price' presents a problem and analyses it. What kind of essay is it?

4. What method of organization does it follow? Give evidence.

3. Holidays in Europe

Pre-reading exercises:

I. Before reading the text, answer the following questions.

1. What is the average holiday entitlement in Syria? Do you think it is sufficient?

2. Skim the essay quickly, then write down three questions that you think the essay will answer.

A. _____?

B. _____?

C. _____?

II. Scan the essay to find the following:

- a. The title of an Italian newspaper: _____
- b. The title of a French newspaper: _____
- c. What does WTO refer to? _____
- d. How many days do Germans get on average for their holidays? _____

Holidays in Europe

Does it matter that Europeans have longer holidays than Americans?

1. The United States may have a beefier economy, better universities, a more potent popular culture and an incomparably mightier military, but Europeans are quietly confident that they have the edge in one crucial respect. They enjoy longer holidays.
2. The figures are striking. The *Los Angeles* recently reported that Americans have an average holiday entitlement of 16 days a year – but most only take 14. In Europe, by contrast, at least a month of paid vocation is viewed as an inalienable right. The Italians get 42 days of holiday a year; the French 37; the Germans 35. Even the British get an average of 28 days off a year.
3. In August, the height of the holiday season, much of Europe simply closes down... August is one big

blank space. There is simply no point in trying to get anyone to do any work. Taking a long summer holiday is so crucial to European self-esteem that a survey published this week in *Il Messagero*, an Italian newspaper, found that although 19% of Italians will not be going away on holiday this year, more than a third of the stay-at-homes intended to pretend that they were going away. Considerable numbers were prepared to buy tanning machines and to take the pets to the neighbours to keep up appearances.

4. One man's leisure, however, is another man's living. Tourism and travel are, by some measures, the world's largest industry – and Europe boasts of being the world's most popular destination. Figures from the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) suggest that most international tourists travel to or within Europe. Europe is said to have a 58% share of the world tourism market. Of the top eight destinations, five are in Europe; France tops the list, followed by Spain, the United States and Italy. Some 80% of holiday-makers within the European Union are from other parts of the

EU. France's top place owes much to the country's inherent attractions but also quite a lot to its geographical position. Every Dutch or Belgian caravan thundering through France towards the beaches of Spain adds to the figure of foreign visitors to France.

5. Still, there is no doubting the economic weight of tourism in Europe. Indeed, any sign that the flow of tourists is slowing is greeted with neurotic headlines. *Libération*, a left-wing French newspaper, recently devoted its first three pages to a long lament about the decline in the number of American tourists visiting France.

6. Yet, while Europe cannot live without tourists, it sometimes finds it hard to live with them. The city authorities in Venice are so fed up with some visitors' behaviour that they have just announced a list of ten offences for which they will impose on-the-spot fines. They include walking around bare-chested and bathing in fountains. Spaniards and Greeks find the hordes of riotous, boozy young Britons that descend

on them each summer a mixed blessing.

7. Such excesses of mass tourism will certainly do nothing to puncture Europe's love affair with the long holiday. Those unfortunate souls charged with managing the European economy are having to factor holidays into their thinking. ... An account of a study by an American economist [in recent editions of *The Economist*] suggests that a large part of the wealth gap per head between Europeans and American could be put down to European's preference for taking longer holidays.

(Adapted from *The Economist*, Vol. 368, No. 8336. Aug 9, 2003)

Comprehension Questions:

I. Based on your reading of the text, answer the following questions.

1. How do Europeans view their holiday entitlement?

2. Why does much of Europe close down in August?

3. Why would Italians pretend that they are going away on holidays when they are not?

4. What is one important advantage of long European holidays?

5. Why would newspapers lament the decline in the numbers of tourists?

6. Why are British tourists regarded by the Greeks and Spaniards as a 'mixed blessing'? Use your own words.

7. What does the American economist believe the wealth gap between Europe and America to be the result of?

8. Based on your reading of the text, do you think the writer is with or against having long holidays? Give evidence.

II. Decide whether the following statements are True (T) or False (F).

___ Americans are entitled to 14 days of holiday a year.

___ Many Italians buy tanning machines to pretend they were away on holiday

___ France is the top destination partly because tourists pass through it on their way to Spain, which increases the number of visitors to it.

___ A possible decline in the number of tourists is not normally highlighted in newspapers.

___ Authorities in Venice are lenient with foreign tourists.

Paraphrasing ideas:

Show that you have grasped the ideas of 'Holidays in Europe' by restating them in your own words.

1. The United States may have a beefier economy, better universities, a more potent popular culture and an incomparably mightier military, but Europeans are quietly confident that they have the edge in one crucial respect.
-
-

2. In Europe, by contrast, at least a month of paid vocation is viewed as an inalienable right.
-

3. There is simply no point in trying to get anyone to do any work.
-

4. Indeed, any sign that the flow of tourists is slowing is greeted with neurotic headlines.
-

5. Such excesses of mass tourism will certainly do nothing to puncture Europe's love affair with the long holiday.
-

Understanding Essay Structure:

1. Look at the way the writer introduces his essay. What kind of introduction is it?
-

2. What is the thesis statement?
-

3. Do you think the thesis statement was developed in a coherent and logical way? Explain.
-
-

4. Examine the structure of paragraphs 5 and 6. Decide the function of each sentence, starting with the topic sentence, and proceeding to major and minor supporting sentences. Fill in the table below with key words from the relevant sentences.

<i>Paragraph</i>	<i>Topic sentence</i>	<i>Major supporting sentence(s)</i>	<i>Minor supporting sentences</i>
Paragraph Number 5			
Paragraph Number 6			

4. A Deadly Delivery

Pre-reading exercises:

1. Do you think that criminal behaviour is inherited or acquired? Justify your answer.

2. Is it possible to tell whether someone could commit a crime or not? What indicators would you rely on in your prediction?

3. Do you believe criminals who claim they are innocent? Why?

A Deadly Delivery

1. Brian Wells' goals in life didn't seem to extend much beyond finding the address for his next pizza delivery. He was a 46-year-old solitary man whose only regular houseguest was his mom, with whom he shared Sunday steak dinners. He was so reluctant about calling attention to himself that he had the hubcaps removed from his car because they were too flashy. He cared for three cats that he simply called Kitty. And every morning for five years, as regular as clock hands, he waved the same unsmiling hello to the clerks in the health-food shop next to Mama Mia's, the pizzeria that employed him.

2. Wells worked for much of the last dozen of years of his life as a pizza-delivery man in and around Erie, a blue-collar town of 100,000 midway between Cleveland, Ohio, and Buffalo, N.Y. One of seven children, Wells was a high school dropout. He was a withdrawn but likeable man, friends say, a guy who wore a T shirt and jeans nearly every day. He often

passed the time between delivery thumbing through newspapers.

3. Wells lived alone in a small rented white A-framed house, where he did little but tend to his cats, watch rented movies, and, in the winter, help his neighbours shovel snow. His take-home pay was usually only a few hundred dollars a week, but the week he died, he made his last regular payment on a loan extended by a friend to help him buy the Geo Metro he drove. He played the lottery regularly and once collected a \$250 payout, which he talked about for weeks. His only vice seemed to be liquor: he'd ask for permission an hour before his quitting time to go and get a bottle from the nearest store to take home with him. But if he got a call, he'd deliver a pizza wherever, no matter how far. He never missed a day of work.

4. That kind of diligence may be a clue to what transpired on his final day. At Mam Mia's, Wells received a call around 2 p.m. for two sausage pies to be delivered to an address about three kilometers

away. The delivery address turned out to be on a pitted dirt road leading into secluded woods. At 2.40 Wells turned up at a nearby PNC Bank branch, waited in the queue. He presented the teller with a note demanding \$250,000 and lifted his shirt to reveal a bomb locked around his neck.

5. Wells fled away but was stopped and pulled from his car seconds later by passing state troopers alerted by 911 callers in the bank. As he sat handcuffed and cross-legged on the ground, Wells warned troopers there was a bomb beneath his shirt and pleaded for help in getting it off. Officers backed off to summon the bomb squad, and as minutes ticked away, he became increasingly agitated and desperate. "I don't have a lot of time," he said. "It's gonna go off." And then, referring to a mysterious "he," Wells added, "He pulled a key out and started a timer. I heard the thing ticking when he did it." Wells never said who "he" was. Moments after that there came a sharp blast, and Wells slumped over, dead.

6. Police are puzzled by Wells' statements. They are investigating whether Wells was forced into a crime and made its only victim, whether he was an accomplice, or whether he acted alone. A note found in his car, reportedly instructed him to deliver the money to three locations.
7. One of Wells' colleagues says that he was frail. If someone grabbed him and put that thing on him, he wouldn't put up a fight".
8. And that's the message he seemed desperate to send in the last minutes of his life. As he sat on the ground, waiting for the bomb squad to arrive, one of the last things Wells could be heard saying was, "It's not me. I didn't do it."

(Adapted from *Time*, Vol. 162, No. 10. Sept 15, 2003)

Comprehension Questions:

I. Based on your reading of the text, answer the following questions.

1. What kind of person is Brian Wells? Describe him in your own words.

2. What was his job?

3. Was Wells well educated? Give evidence from the text.

4. Why did Wells make a payment the week he died?

5. How did the police know of the robbery?

6. What made the police suspicious of Wells's involvement in the crime?

II. Fill in the blanks with appropriate words to complete the following summary of the reading selection. More than one word could be used in some blanks.

Brian Wells worked as a _____ man in Erie. He was 46, a solitary, _____ man whose only company was made up of _____ and his _____ who visited him every Sunday. One day, Wells received a call for a _____ of two sausage pies. A few minutes later, he appeared at a _____ in a bank in Erie and _____ \$250,000. He _____ but the police arrested him later that day. He warned the police that a _____ was locked around his neck. He _____ that they get it off. Minutes later it went off and Wells was instantly killed. The police had some raised questions after Wells _____ a mysterious "he" who had _____ the key of the bomb. The police were _____ whether Wells was forced into the crime.

Understanding Essay Structure:

1. What is the function of the first paragraph in this narrative?

2. Does the essay state the setting clearly? What function does this have?

3. Why do we have some sentences of dialogue here? Who says them? What do they give the reader?

4. Where is the climax here? How is it resolved?

Unit Two
Human Health

1. Panic Attacks

Pre-reading exercises

I. Before reading the text, think of answers to the following questions.

1. What is the first thing you would do in an emergency?

2. What is the emergency telephone number in Syria?

3. Is there one number for police, fire, and ambulance services in Syria? Is this good or not?

4. How do you rate the efficiency and performance of emergency services in your region?

5. It is generally accepted as a commonplace that mobiles are most useful in emergencies. Can you think of any disadvantage mobiles have in cases of emergency?

II. Scan the article to find the following:

1. Emergency telephone number in Britain: _____
2. The current annual number of emergency inquiries to the Wiltshire police: _____
3. The percentage of emergency calls made from mobile phones: _____
4. Another number silent 999 callers need to dial is: _____
5. Oftel is: _____

Panic Attacks

The emergency services struggle with success

1. Public awareness is a good thing, but it can be overdone. Britain's police, fire, and ambulance services are all reachable under the easily remembered emergency number 999. But overuse of the number is becoming a pestilential problem.
2. The number of 999 calls dialed has risen steadily in the past ten years, and has almost doubled since 1997. Peaceful rural areas have seen some of the greatest increases. The annual number of emergency inquiries to the Wiltshire police has risen from 54,000 to 126,000 in the past three years, for example. Not surprisingly, responding properly to so many calls is impossible. Tabloid newspapers have lately been regaling readers with lurid stories about public-spirited citizens who bravely tackle criminals only to wait hours for the police to arrive.
3. Mobile phones, from which around 60% of all emergency calls are dialed, are partly to blame for

the crash. Motorway crashes and roadside fires produce dozens of "good Samaritan" calls from drivers who, ten years ago, would have been forced to pull off the road to find a phone (not many did). Another menace is the so-called "silent call". The software that locks a mobile phone keyboard when carried in a pocket or handbag still allows 999 calls. Chance knocks on the keys produce tens of thousands of unintended calls, all costing time and effort to deal with

4. There are some answers. Mobile phone providers, stung by a recent increase in the charge they have to pay BT for routing emergency calls, have worked to reduce the number of accidental misdials. Some control centres have installed software that prompts silent 999 diallers to confirm their emergency status by pressing another number – usually 55. Very few do so, and the other calls are discarded.

5. Yet the tide of diallers in a genuine panic continues to swell. One cause is the difficulty of reaching everyday public services. Henry Guly, a

consultant in the accident and emergency department of Derriford Hospital, in Plymouth, says that many of the people that summon ambulances try first to ring their normal doctor, only to hear a recorded message telling them to ring 999 in emergency. "There has been a transfer of workload from general practitioners to the ambulance service," he says. "We are seeing more patients, and they are older and sicker."

6. One idea suggested to Ofcom, the telecommunications regulator, is to introduce a standard non-emergency number, along the lines of 311 in the United States. To judge by the success of NHS Direct, which offers health-care advice over the phone, this would go down and well with the public. But without a lot of effort to make it work, it won't cut the emergency services' burden. Gloucestershire police, who have just registered their busiest month ever, found their non-emergency lines swamped by callers who couldn't get through, and so hung up and dialed 999 anyway.

(The Economist, Vol. 368, No 8339. August 30, 2003)

Comprehension Questions:

1. What is the problem with the emergency number in Britain?

2. Where was the rise in inquiries most noticeable?

3. What is the meaning of 'silent call'? Define it using your own words.

4. How did mobile phone providers solve the problem of 'silent calls'?

5. Why do many people who ring their doctors in emergencies end up calling 999?

6. What does a standard non-emergency number mean?

II. Show that you have grasped the ideas of 'Panic Attacks' by restating them in your own words.

1. But overuse of the number is becoming a pestilential problem.

2. Tabloid newspapers have lately been regaling readers with lurid stories about public-spirited citizens who bravely tackle criminals only to wait hours for the police to arrive.

3. Chance knocks on the keys produce tens of thousands of unintended calls, all costing time and effort to deal with.

4. Yet the tide of diallers in a genuine panic continues to swell.

5. There has been a transfer of workload from general practitioners to the ambulance service.

III. Find specific statistics, numbers, or examples in the text to support these general ideas.

1. Emergency calls have mostly increased in rural areas.

2. Mobile phones are partly to blame for the rise in emergency calls.

3. There has been a transfer of workload from general practitioners to the ambulance service.

4. The emergency services in Gloucestershire are burdened.

Understanding Essay Structure:

1. What kind of essay is 'Panic Attacks'? Explain.

2. Introductory paragraphs vary in organisation of ideas, as was mentioned in unit one. What kind of introduction is the first paragraph?

3. Below is part of an outline of the essay. Complete it by writing in the key words from each body paragraph.

Introduction

Thesis statement: But overuse of the number is becoming a pestilential problem.

Body

Paragraph 1:

Topic sentence: _____

Major support 1: _____

Minor support: _____

Major support 2: _____

Minor support: _____

Paragraph 2:

Topic sentence: _____

Major support 1: _____

Major support 2: _____

Minor support(s): _____

Paragraph 3:

Topic sentence: _____

Major support: _____

Minor support(s): _____

Paragraph 4:

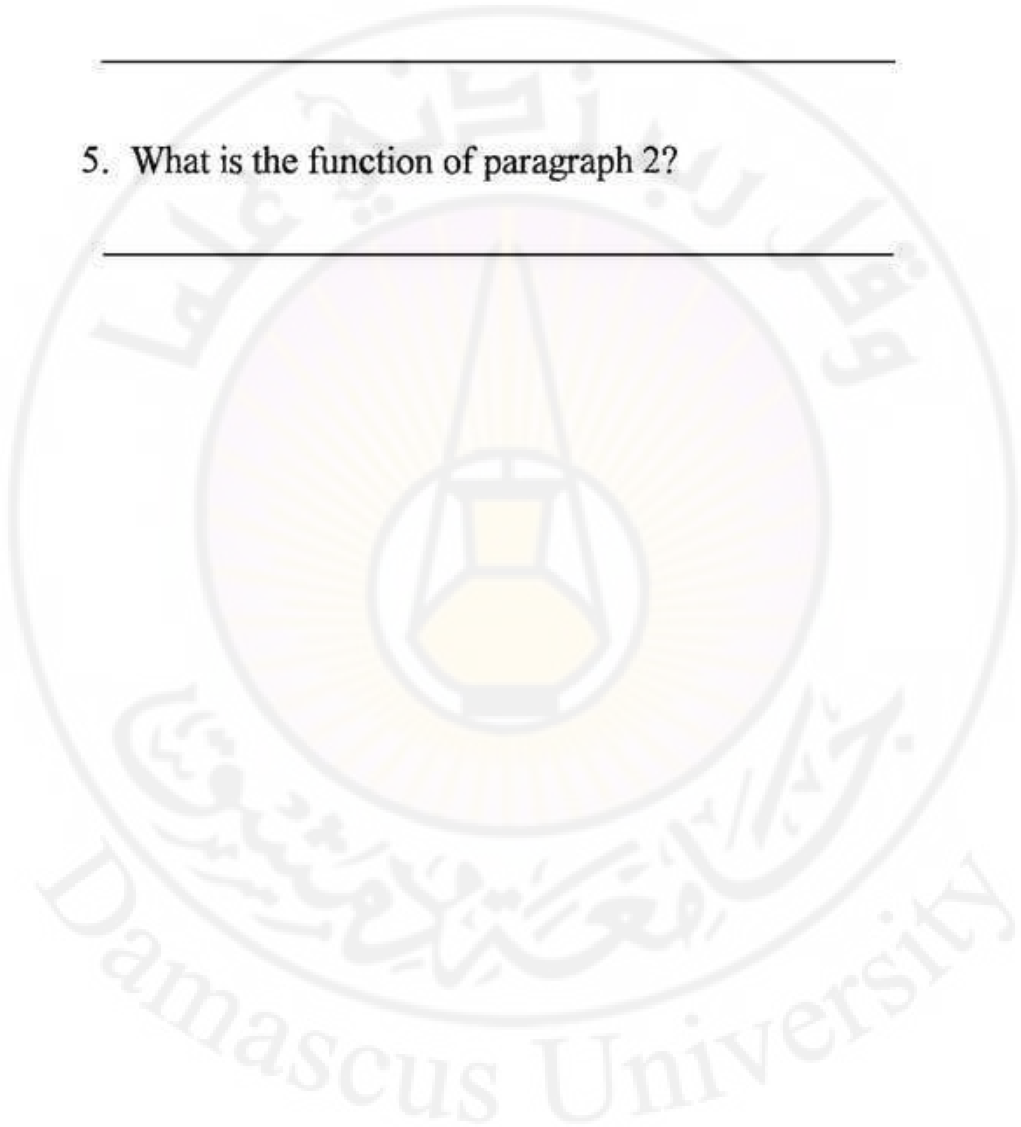
Topic sentence: _____

Major support: _____

Minor support(s): _____

4. What do paragraphs 3 and 4 have in common in terms of the topic?

5. What is the function of paragraph 2?



2. Causing trouble

Pre-reading exercises:

1. What are the risks of long air travel?

2. Suppose you had to travel by air for 10 or more hours non-stop. What precautionary measures would you take to keep yourself in shape?

3. There has been recent debate over whether long air travel is related to thrombosis. If such link is proved, what do you think airlines would do?

Causing Trouble

Does air travel cause dangerous blood clots?

1. One of life's quietly satisfying moments is boarding a long-haul flight and turning left. Although air travel has lost much of its glamour, flying first or business class is still a relief to the senses, compared with the rigours of economy further aft. The space and relative quiet at the front of the plane certainly make flying a more pleasant experience, but they do not necessarily make it safer.
2. An issue is travel-related deep-vein thrombosis (DVT), otherwise known as economy-class syndrome. DVT describes the formation of clots known as thrombi in the blood vessels of various parts of the body, such as the lower leg. Clotting is a normal response to injury, and the body is continuously forming and removing clots that cause no obvious harm. Abnormal formation of clots, however, can lead to cramps, pain and swelling in the tissue affected. Far more serious is the possibility that the

clot, or a piece of it, splits off and starts racing round the circulatory system. If this breakaway clot, called an embolus, gets stuck in a delicate part of the body, such as the lungs, it can kill.

3. Since the 1950s, doctors have documented cases of patients with a history of air travel also developing DVT. More recently, there have been dramatic cases of passengers dropping dead once off the flight. Journalists – who spend a lot of time on aeroplanes but rarely, alas, in business or first class – have been quick to pin the blame on the mile-high stuffy, cramped, immobile and dehydrating conditions of the "cattle compartment".
4. Yet an association between flying and DVT does not necessarily mean that the one causes the other. Perhaps those who come down with DVT after travel already had the problem, undiagnosed, before they stepped on board? Pinning down the nature of any link requires large numbers of passengers and thorough testing both before and after they fly. ...
5. Although many researchers agree that air travel

affects the body's biochemically complex clotting system, but that the chances of an "average" passenger – that is, one without a pronounced risk of DVT on the ground – actually developing thrombi from air travel is small, the precise frequency of such thrombi is still fiercely debated. And nobody knows exactly what the trigger might be or how it is translated biochemically into a clot.

6. To tackle some of these questions, the World Health Organization is trying to get an international study with thousands of passengers off the ground. But it will not be easy, Says Dr Jakobson. Besides various technical problems, such as getting enough standardized equipment to different airports, persuading grumpy passengers trundling off a long-haul flight to hang around for testing is hard, even when they are rewarded with air miles, as they were in a South African study.
7. And then there are commercial interests at stake. Carriers are keen to play down the whole notion of air-travel-related DVT. Some do, of course, hedge their bets by recommending that passengers drink lots of

fluids and twiddle their toes, but there is not enough scientific evidence to know whether this makes a difference. On the other side drug companies makers stand to make money if air-related DVT takes off, as it were. Many of the academic studies in this field are partly supported by companies, so the results are often dogged by claims of conflicts of interest.

8. And as always, there are the lawyers to consider. So far, few of the lawsuits lodged by passengers against airlines, holding them responsible for DVT, have made much headway. Last week, for example, the English Court of Appeal turned down an attempt by 24 passengers to sue 18 airlines. The judges maintained that the Warsaw Convention, which governs the liability of airlines flying internationally, does not permit their suits. But in the same week, in California, a federal judge allowed a case to inch a little closer to trial. If it gets its day in court, field studies looking at DVT and air travel will be important evidence, but, given the current state of disagreement, far from conclusive.

(Adapted from *The Economist*, Vol. 368, No. 8332. July 12, 2003)

Comprehension Questions:

1. What is deep-vein thrombosis?

2. What are possible consequences of abnormal clotting?

3. What alerted doctors to the link between travel and DVT?

4. What does "cattle compartment" refer to?

5. What would a study of the link between travel and DVT require?

6. What are the problems facing the project of carrying out an international study?

7. Briefly, describe how each of the following would react to air-travel-related DVT:

a. Carriers: _____

b. Drug companies: _____

c. Lawyers: _____

Guessing the meanings of words from the context:

I. Circle the vocabulary or expression that is closest in meaning to the underlined words from the text.

1. Although air travel has lost much of its glamour, flying first or business class is still a relief to the senses...

A. attraction

B. glory

C. difficulty

D. colour

2. Far more serious is the possibility that the clot, or a piece of it, splits off and starts racing round the circulatory system.

A. combines with

B. separates from

C. expands

D. disappears

3. Journalists... have been quick to pin the blame on ...immobile and dehydrating conditions of the "cattle compartment".
- A. causing much water
 - B. taking away oxygen
 - C. causing loss of water
 - D. producing carbon dioxide
4. Besides various technical problems, such as getting enough standardized equipment to different airports...
- A. having different features and criteria
 - B. having super performance
 - C. having the same features and criteria
 - D. carefully designed
5. And then there are commercial interests at stake. Carriers are keen to play down the whole notion of air-travel-related DVT.
- A. exaggerate
 - B. make it look more important
 - C. reject
 - D. make it look less important

II. Choose the best way of finishing each statement, based on your reading of the text.

- a. Flying first or business class is such a satisfying and enjoyable experience, unlike

- b. The formation of clots is normal when

- c. Most of the blame for developing DVT among some passengers is laid on

- d. Doctors seem to agree that air travel

- e. Airlines try to represent the risk of DVT as a minor problem and advise the passengers instead to

Understanding Essay Structure:

1. What kind of essay is 'Causing Trouble'? Examine the way the problem is analysed to determine what kind of essay it is.

2. What is the thesis statement?

3. How does the writer develop the thesis statement?
Look at each of the paragraphs to describe the method of organisation.

Main Ideas:

Match the paragraphs in the essay with their topics. Write the number of the paragraphs on the lines.

- _____ What is DVT?
- _____ DVT and the law
- _____ Debate over the causes of DVT
- _____ Commercial interests and DVT
- _____ Link between DVT and travel
- _____ An international study of DVT
- _____ Cases of travelers developing DVT
- _____ Air travel: comfort and safety.

3. The Obesity Industry

Pre-reading exercises:

Before reading the text, answer the following questions.

1. Do you care about the nutritional value of the food you order in restaurants? Why, or why not?

2. Why do you think obesity is so high in America?

3. Do you think that nowadays fat people suffer in society (finding clothes that fit them, comfortable seats in airports and aeroplanes, etc)? Give examples.

4. What does the title mean to you?

5. Skim the essay in one minute, then write down three questions that you think the text might answer.
 - a. _____?
 - b. _____?
 - c. _____?

The Obesity Industry

Fat profits in fat people?

1. The latest accessory for waiters at some restaurants in America is a handheld computer. This is not, as you might expect, to transmit orders instantly via a wireless network to the kitchen for even faster food, but to calculate for customers the amount of fats and carbohydrates in their entrées. As people everywhere get bigger, all manners of business are addressing the threat, and opportunity, in what the World Health Organisation calls "globesity".
2. Fat is no longer just a problem in America, where nearly one-third of adults are thought to be obese. Millions more are overweight, though not (yet) heavy enough to qualify as obese. There are now an estimated 300m obese adults worldwide, up from 200m in 1995. In a decade or so, even countries not now associated with bulky populations, such as France and Japan, could have a big problem.

3. The business implications are also enormous. American girls today shop for clothes that are roughly two sizes bigger than those worn by their mothers. Seats in public places such as sports arenas are being made bigger, as are those in aircraft. Drug firms are searching for miracle slimming drugs and the latest dieting fads become best-sellers.
4. Some food firms have announced plans that could affect the health both of their customers and of their profits. Burger King launched its first product aimed at people watching their waistline: a low-fat chicken sandwich. It hopes to reverse a six-year slide in sales, in part due to competitions from chains such as Subway that offer "healthier" alternatives to burgers and fries. McDonald's, having put salads on its menu as part of a global makeover, has signed up Bob Greene, an exercise guru best known as Oprah Winfrey's personal trainer. He will promote a new chicken-based meal called "Go Active" which comes with exercise tips and a clip-on pedometer to encourage customers to walk more. Next year, Kraft

Foods, American's biggest food firm, will trim its portion sizes and provide more nutritional information.

5. How will consumers react? New research shows that most Americans are well aware of the risks of obesity. But people are not prepared to give up taste as their solution to this problem. One of the most striking findings of a new study on globesity by Euro RSCG Tatham Partners, which is part of an international marketing group, is that some 90% of American consumers believe they are personally accountable for their weight. Only a few blame fast-food firms. This does not remove the threat of litigation. But it does suggest that most Americans think it was right for a federal court to dismiss a lawsuit from two teenagers who blamed McDonald's for making them fat.
6. The recent explosion in the popularity of low-carbohydrate slimming methods, such as the Atkins and South Beach diets, and the launch of a host of new low-carb food products, further illustrates that, if

firms can come up with easy and tasty ways to lose weight, then people will rush to try them. The Atkins diet, for example, excludes carbohydrates, but allows dieters to stuff themselves with steaks and other fat-rich, protein-rich foods.

7. Americans have certainly woken up to the threat of obesity. Yet it is believed that selling people more healthy lifestyles will be difficult. The study confirmed that, despite the very high level of consumer awareness about the problems of being overweight, people struggle to do something practical about it. Crucially, that was even true of so-called "prosumers", some 20% of this sample. These people tend to be better educated and are of particular interest to marketing experts because, savvy and adventurous, they set purchasing trends. "Consume less, consume better and exercise more isn't about to become a mass-market trend anytime soon," argues the report.
8. The obvious conclusion: a growing herd of fat people will provide lots of demands for firms supplying everything from bigger towels to bigger beds, and,

alas, bigger coffins. Demands for adult-sized electric tricycles may grow as some of the obese find it hard to walk. In health care, much will change. Some hospitals, for instance, are finding some obese people cannot be squeezed into MRI machines for scans.

9. Drugs firms are targeting fat. Shares in Alizyme, a British biotech firm, have soared recently after it said clinical trials showed its new anti-obesity drug to be as good as rival products, but with fewer side effects. Surgery, and eventually genetic manipulation, could become common forms of treatment. Liposuction is but a start. Firms are scrambling to develop additives to make diet foods taste better, by blocking bitter tastes. Expect the globesity business to grow fast, then, along with its expanding customers.

(Adapted from *The Economist*, Vol. 368, No. 8343. Sept. 27, 2003)

Comprehension Questions:

1. Why would waiters in America hold handheld computers?

2. Why would France and Japan have a big problem in a decade's time?

3. What does 'globesity' mean?

4. How is obesity reflected in business? (i.e., what are the business implications associated with it)?

5. Why have good firms like Burger King and McDonald's launched healthy meals programmes?

6. What is a surprising finding of the study on 'globesity'?

7. Why don't Americans stick to slimming diets?

8. Who are 'prosumers'?

Paraphrasing Ideas:

Show that you have grasped the ideas of 'The Obesity Industry' by restating them in your own words.

1. As people everywhere get bigger, all manner of business are addressing the threat, and opportunity, in what the World Health Organisation calls "globesity".
-
-

2. It hopes to reverse a six-year slide in sales, in part due to competitions from chains such as Subway that offer "healthier" alternatives to burgers and fries.
-
-

3. The recent explosion in the popularity of low-carbohydrate slimming methods, such as the Atkins and South Beach diets, and the launch of a host of new low-carb food products, further illustrates that, if firms can come up with easy and tasty ways to lose weight, then people will rush to try them.
-
-

4. Firms are scrambling to develop additives to make diet foods taste better, by blocking bitter tastes.
-

Vocabulary:

Find words from the text that mean the following:

1. Paragraph 1: extra peace of decoration _____
2. Paragraph 3: a product that is popular and bought by customers _____
3. Paragraph 4: related to necessary knowledge about healthy food _____
4. Paragraph 5: responsible for _____
5. Paragraph 6: group or collection of _____
6. Paragraph 9: control, use, play with _____

Understanding Essay Structure:

1. What is the thesis statement?

2. What does the essay foreground: the causes or effects of obesity?

3. What method of organisation does this essay follow?
Give examples.

4. Based on your understanding of the topics of paragraphs, think of suitable headings for each.

5. What conclusion does the writer reach? Do you agree with it?

6. The writer does not state his opinion openly. Did you feel he was with or against the obesity business? What clues did you have?



4. Depleted Uranium and Kidney Failure

Pre-reading exercises:

1. Before reading the text, answer the following questions.

1. In what respect are modern wars different from wars in the past? Which have proved more serious?

2. In recent wars launched by US and NATO, depleted uranium was heavily used. What do you know of this material?

3. What threat does depleted uranium pose to human health and the environment?

4. Do you think the soldiers using depleted uranium know of its far-reaching consequences? Are they well protected?

II. Scan the text to find the following information.

1. How much uranium was fired in the last decade?

2. How many experts does the Royal Society's team include?

3. How many veterans have been so far assessed?

Depleted Uranium and Kidney Failure

1. Depleted uranium (DU) is one of the most recent war innovations. The high density of DU helps shells pierce armour and about 270 tonnes of it have been fired during wars in the Gulf and the Balkans in the last decade. Arguments over the potential risks to human health and the environment have raged ever since.
2. The Royal Society, One of the premier scientific bodies in the United Kingdom, published a report on the radiological hazards in 2001, which concluded that troops in a tank who survived being hit by a DU shell could double their risk of dying from lung cancer. Now the society's team of 11 experts has produced a second report on the chemical and long-term environmental risks.
3. It concludes that most soldiers would not take in enough DU to damage their kidneys. But it points out that those in hit tanks, or who spend time cleaning them

up, could suffer heavy metal poisoning. "Kidney uranium levels in some of these soldiers could be very high and would probably lead to kidney failure within a few days of exposure," the report warns. There is also a danger of damage to reproductive health, which has been observed in mice.

4. DU shells in the ground could contaminate the soil, food and water of communities that return to live on the battlefields, the report says. This may be enough to harm local children, particularly if they swallow soil.

5. But the report is dismissed by anti-DU campaigners who think that the risks are worse than the Royal Society thinks. "This is an attempt to give a scientific imprimatur to the stance of the government, which is unacceptable," argues Malcolm Hooper, a medical chemist from the University of Sunderland who advises the British Gulf War veterans.

6. He says it is wrong to separate the chemical and radiological effects. He has been told that three out of the 3000 veterans so far assessed by the UK

government's programme have kidney cancer. This is 12 times the rate amongst civilians and indicates that the radiation emitted by DU is causing more problems than its chemical toxicity.

7. The debate over the harmful effects of DU over human health and environmental sustainability goes on unabated. The question remains as to whether the superpowers would cease to use DU in wars until conclusive evidence of its risks is produced.

(Online, www.english.aljazeera.net)

Comprehension Questions:

1. Why is depleted uranium used in wars nowadays?

2. Why did the Royal Society publish two reports?

3. What conclusion was reached in the second report?

4. What health risks does the report refer to?

5. Could the environment be affected by depleted uranium? How?

6. What was anti-4DU campaigners' reaction to the report?

7. How many veterans have kidney cancer? What does this rate indicate?

Guessing the meanings of words from the context:

I. Circle the vocabulary or expression that is closest in meaning to the underlined words from the text.

1. The high density of DU helps shells pierce armour...

A. destroy

B. make a hole in

C. reach

D. protect

2. Arguments over the potential risks to human health and the environment have raged ever since.

A. serious

B. light

C. possible to develop

D. partial

3. There is also a danger of damage to reproductive health, which has been observed in mice.

A. connected with reproducing babies.

B. Recovery C. respiratory D. medical

4. DU shells in the ground could contaminate the soil,
food and water of communities ...
- A. destroy B. sterilise
C. pollute D. fertilise
5. But the report is dismissed by anti-DU campaigners
who think that the risks are worse than the Royal
Society thinks.
- A. rejected B. accepted
C. despised D. fired
6. He has been told that three out of the 3000 veterans so
far assessed by the UK government's programme
have kidney cancer.
- A. doctors B. patients
C. victims D. soldiers

II. Choose the best way of finishing each statement, based on your reading of the text.

1. Because of DU's high density and effectiveness in war,

2. The 2001-report by the Royal Society was mainly

3. Children could be under the risk of _____

4. The report was dismissed by anti-DU campaigners because _____

5. According to anti-DU campaigners, the chemical toxicity of DU is outweighed by _____

Understanding Essay Structure:

1. What aspects of DU are highlighted?

2. What kind of essay is this?

3. What kind of introduction is the first paragraph?

4. What kind of conclusion is the last paragraph?

5. Below are the main ideas of each of the paragraphs of this essay. Write down the paragraph number in the space provided.

- _____ Rejection of the Royal Society report
- _____ Depleted Uranium: effective and dangerous
- _____ DU and risks to health
- _____ Radiological hazards of DU
- _____ Debate unresolved
- _____ Chemical and radiological effects are linked
- _____ DU and the environment

The background of the slide features a large, faint watermark of the Damascus University logo. The logo is circular, with the Arabic text "جامعة دمشق" (University of Damascus) at the top and "Damascus University" at the bottom. In the center is a stylized sun or starburst design.

Unit Three

Ecology

1. Ozone Hole and the Future

Pre-reading exercise:

1. What is the ozone layer? What function does it have, if any?

2. What is the cause(s) of the ozone hole?

3. Do you think this hole could decrease? How?

4. Can individuals do anything to help in the 'recovery' of the ozone layer?

5. Skim the reading selection in one minute, then write down three questions that you think the text might answer.

A _____ ?

B _____ ?

C _____ ?

Ozone Hole and the Future

1. The huge size of the hole in the ozone layer is at a record level measuring 28 million square kilometres, according to the World Meteorological Organisation. Three times the size of the United States, the ozone hole has continued to grow over the last few weeks and is set to reach a maximum size in late September, 2003. The consequences are likely to be serious and far-reaching.
2. WMO Professor Obasi warned that the most immediate threat to humankind relate to increased variability in the intensity and frequency of storms, floods and droughts, heat waves in major urban areas and the impact of sea-level rise on low-lying coastal regions.
3. Over the last ten years, the number of disasters of hydrometeorological origin has increased significantly. Worldwide, recurrent drought and desertification seriously threaten the livelihood of over 1.7 billion

people who depend on land for most of their needs. The 1997/1998 El Niño event, the strongest of the last century, is estimated to have affected 110 million people and cost the global economy nearly \$100 billion.

4. Statistics compiled from insurance companies for the period 1950-1999 show that the major natural catastrophes caused estimated economic losses of nearly \$1 trillion. A leading reinsurance company estimates global warming impacts could cost an additional \$300 billion annually by 2050. Worse, the size of the hole has not decreased despite reductions in ozone-depleting chemicals.
5. However, measurements show that most of these chemicals are decreasing in the lower atmosphere and appear to have reached their peak in the critically important layer in the stratosphere.
6. There is a delay in chemical cleansing the ozone layer, and it is expected to require years

before the stratosphere returns to pre-ozone hole conditions. Complete recovery of the ozone layer will require the enforcement of international agreements for many years to come.

(Online. www.guardian.co.uk)

Comprehension Questions:

1. How big is the ozone hole? Is it serious?

2. What is the most serious consequence of this hole?

3. What do natural disasters incur in terms of world economy? Give examples.

4. What is the reassuring news that this report gives of the future of the current condition?

5. What does the return to pre-ozone hole condition require? How long would it take?

Paraphrasing Ideas:

Show that you have grasped the ideas of 'Ozone Hole and the Future' by restating them in your own words.

1. Three times the size of the United States, the ozone hole has continued to grow over the last few weeks and is set to reach a maximum size in late September, 2003.

2. Worldwide, recurrent drought and desertification seriously threaten the livelihood of over 1.7 billion people who depend on land for most of their needs.

3. Worse, the size of the hole has not decreased despite reductions in ozone-depleting chemicals.

4. Complete recovery of the ozone layer will require the enforcement of international agreements for many years to come.
-
-

Vocabulary:

Find words from the text that mean the following.

1. Paragraph 1: highest, unprecedented _____
2. Paragraph 2: changeability _____
3. Paragraph 3: repeated, happening again and again

4. Paragraph 3: becoming a desert _____
5. Paragraph 4: impacts _____

Understanding Essay Structure:

1. What is the thesis statement?

2. What kind of introduction is the first paragraph?

3. How do the paragraphs develop the thesis statement?

4. Based on your understanding of the topic of body paragraph, think of proper headings for each.

5. Below is part of an outline of paragraph 3. Fill it in with key words of sentences.

Paragraph 3:

Topic sentence: _____

Major support: _____

Minor support: _____

2. The Dead Sea is dying

Pre-reading exercises:

1. The Dead Sea is one of the world's most important natural wonders. What do you know of it? Why is it so peculiar?

2. Do you think that pollution affects the Dead Sea? How?

3. People who suffer from rheumatic pain or arthritis are usually advised to bathe in the Dead Sea or at least to use the sand as healer. Why?

4. Read the title. What do you think this essay is about?

The Dead Sea is dying

1. The Dead Sea has been quietly shrinking for 50 years, raising concern for the future of a unique natural wonder of the world. The world's saltiest body of water has fallen from 390 metres to 417 metres below sea level. The drop has accelerated to a metre a year recently, erasing a third of its ancient 950 square km size.
2. Modern economics are to blame – particularly tributaries feeding the sea being diverted to Israeli farmland. Potash-mining at the sea's southern basin has also caused increased evaporation.
3. But the shrinking sea has now become an economic liability. Hotels and health spas built along the beach are now stranded a kilometre or more from the water's edge. One Swiss tourist says, "It's over twice the distance out today. It's sad that another rare preserve of nature is vanishing ... If the sea keeps going down, will people like us keep coming?"

4. The Dead Sea's retreat can also be extremely dangerous. More than 1000 "sinkholes" up to 20 metres deep and 25 metres across have been created so far. Caused by dissolution of salt strata in underground fresh water replacing departed salt water, sinkholes have swallowed up groves of date palms, shut down Ein Gedi's tourist campsite and a nearby army base and scuttled a 5000-room hotel project.
5. A regional geologist and environmental consultant noted that a crater has been created in the asphalt. As a result, a campsite was closed after the earth trembled and the road to the site suddenly caved in right behind a passing bus full of Danish tourists. A camp staffer and a worker at Ain Qadi's nearby palm plantation were sucked into collapsing sinkholes and injured. Sinkholes appearing on the Jordanian shore have forced the evacuation of more than 3000 people. Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of hotel-spa complexes in the planning could

be at risk.

6. If nothing is done, it is feared that by 2050 there will be just a small spot of water and an economic and ecological disaster. The secretary general of the Jordan Valley Water Authority said they were raising the red flag to the international community to help them save what is really a world heritage site, belonging not just to Jordan.

7. They have begun to consider a "Red-Dead" solution - a canal to pump water from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea. But huge costs, and the risk of damaging the Red's famed coral reefs and diluting the Dead's medicinal minerals, stand in the way. The World Bank has prepared a draft for a feasibility study. Once approved by the government, donor funding would be sought. Studies and construction could take a decade and cost several billion dollars, part of that for desalination plants that Jordan sees as a vital spin-off to relieve its severe shortage of drinking water.

8. One of the main concerns about this project is that drawing off water on a large scale from the Red Sea could alter its currents and threaten its coral reefs. The Red's riot of tropical reef fish is a big tourist draw. The Environmentalist Friends of the Earth group said that stretching a salt-water pipeline through an earthquake-prone region was another worry. If the pipeline leaked, it would contaminate fresh water aquifers. And Red Sea water could well destroy the medicinal value of the Dead Sea derived from its high salinity. Furthermore, the Dead Sea could turn pink or white from the chemical change incurred in mixing two different kinds of water. That would be a real turn-off to visitors.
9. Environmentalists are pressing to have UNESCO declare the Dead Sea a World Heritage Site or Biosphere Reserve, which would curb commercial development which, they say, has been hastening its demise.

(Online. www.english.aljazeera.net)

Comprehension Questions:

I. Based on your reading of the text, answer the following questions.

1. Why is concern rising over the safety of the Dead Sea?

2. What is the cause of this phenomenon?

3. Explain in your own words how the Dead Sea has become an economic liability.

4. What causes 'sinkholes'?

5. What is the 'Read-Dead' solution?

6. What are the main concerns about this project? List them briefly.

II. Decide whether the following statements are True (T) or False (F).

- _____ The drop in the Dead Sea level has recently slowed down to a metre a year which is a lot better than earlier.
- _____ Because of the gradual drop, hotels and spas are retreating from the sea quickly.
- _____ A camp staffer and a worker at Ain Qadi's palm plantation were killed when sucked in by a sinkhole.
- _____ The Jordan Valley Water Authority is attempting to stop the international community interfering in the future of the Dead Sea.
- _____ The World Bank has approved a feasibility study and donor funding has been secured.
- _____ Coral reefs in the Red Sea are the reason why so many tourists come to the Red Sea.
- _____ Declaring the Dead Sea a biosphere reserve would encourage more economic projects.

Guessing the meanings of words from the context

Circle the vocabulary or expression that is closest in meaning to the underlined words from the text.

1. Modern economics are to blame – particularly tributaries feeding the sea being diverted to Israeli farmland.

A. rivers or streams

B. factories

C. branches of trees

D. water pipes

2. Caused by dissolution of salt strata in underground fresh water replacing departed salt water, sinkholes have swallowed up groves of date palms...

A. particles

B. layers

C. rocks

D. areas

3. A regional geologist and environmental consultant noted that a crater has been created in the asphalt.

A. crack

B. river

C. big hole

D. damage

4. Sinkholes appearing on the Jordanian shore have forced the evacuation of more than 3000 people.
- A. unemployment B. departure
C. injury D. replacement
5. ...part of that for desalination plants that Jordan sees as a vital spin-off to relieve its severe shortage of drinking water.
- A. fruit B. removing salt from water
C. water D. cleansing
6. ...the Dead Sea could turn pink or white from the chemical change incurred in mixing two different kinds of water.
- A. caused by B. meaning that
C. dealing with D. experimented

7. Environmentalists are pressing to have UNESCO declare the Dead Sea a World Heritage Site .. which would curb commercial development ...
- A. allow B. control or limit
C. encourage D. stop

Understanding Essay Structure:

1. What kind of introduction is the first paragraph? (anecdotal, historical, giving statistics, general-to-specific)

2. What kind of essay is this? How is the problem developed?

3. Based on your understanding of the topics of paragraphs, write down possible headlines for each.

4. Below is part of an outline of paragraph 8. Write in key words from sentences.

Paragraph 8:

Topic sentence:

Major support 1: _____

Major support 2: The Environmentalist...worry.

Minor support(s): _____

Concluding sentence: _____

3. Saving Venice

Pre-reading exercises:

1. Before reading the text, answer the following questions.

1. What image would jump to your mind once Venice is mentioned?

2. If you were given the opportunity, would you live in Venice? Why, or why not?

3. Have you recently heard of any problems threatening this historic city? What are they, if any?

II. Scan the text to find the following information:

1. How many times did Venice flood in the 1980s?

2. When did the city have its disastrous flood?

3. When was the idea of barriers first proposed?

4. How much will the gates cost?

5. What is the current population of Venice?

Saving Venice

1. Anyone considering a trip to Venice in the next few months would be wise to pack wellington boots. Between now and April the lowest parts of the city will be regularly inundated.
2. High water is an increasingly frequent problem. Besides the inconvenience this brings to Venetians and tourists, salty water lapping above Venice's foundations is eating away at the fabric and treasures of this unique and historic city. But for decades there has been an acrimonious debate about what exactly should be done and little routine maintenance work on the structure of the city.
3. To grasp the problem, the popular tourist destination of St Mark's Square is an excellent place to start. One of the lowest, and oldest, points in the city, it is home to treasures such as St Mark's Basilica. In the first decade of the 20th century, the square flooded less than ten times a year. By the 1980s it was flooding 40 times a year, and today it

floods some 60 times a year. Severe inundations, when more than 90% of the city's surface is under water, are becoming more frequent. Another disastrous flood, such as the one the city suffered in 1966, may only be a matter of time.

4. The real root of Venice's problem with high water appears to be that sea levels are rising fast. The city's total movement with regard to sea level is about 2.3mm a year. Compounding the effects of this problem, changes have been made to the structure of the lagoon which have reduced its natural protection against high water.
5. One suggested solution is a barrier that will prevent the high tides from entering Venice's lagoon in the first place. The idea is by no means unique. Flood and storm barriers against the sea are now common in various places around the world. London and St Petersburg have such barriers.
6. Nor is the idea of a barrier for Venice new. Dr Frasseto proposed it in the 1970s. But it took more than a decade for the idea to be accepted, and another two decades before work on a breakwater started this

May. Construction will take a decade to complete.

7. The nearly €3billion scheme will comprise about 80 hollow gates embedded in the seabed at the three inlets to Venice's lagoon. When not needed, the gates will rest on the seabed, full of water. But when high tides threaten the city, compressed air will force water out of the gates. This will cause them to rise and act as a barrier to water trying to enter the lagoon.

8. The question of whether the gates will justify their cost has been fiercely debated by Venetians themselves. Bedevilling that debate is the fact that there are no agreed estimates of the cost of flooding and the savings the gates will bring. And not everyone is convinced the gates are a good idea. For one thing, they will require an estimated €9m each year to operate – money that might be spent on other flood protection measures. For another, since the 1996 flood, many changes have been made that have reduced the damage from high water. Electrical junction boxes have been moved out of the reach of even the highest tides, and the ground floors of many

buildings have been abandoned.

9. Also much routine maintenance work is now under way to raise, where possible, pavements to act as a barrier to high water. And the damaged foundations of Venice's 45km of canals, and the buildings that line them, are being repaired and waterproofed.
10. However, the most serious objections to the gates have always been environmental. The population of Venice and its accompanying urban sprawl on the mainland pour their sewage directly into the lagoon – relying on twice-daily tides to flush this into the Adriatic. This flushing was rapid enough to avoid over-fertilisation of the lagoon until the 1980s, when massive and persistent blooms of algae broke out. Steps were then taken to reduce nutrient run-off into the lagoon from industry, agriculture and sewage, and the blooms stopped. But some worry that if the gates are now closed, even briefly, the balance will be upset again and the lagoon will stagnate.
11. As a result, the group of engineering and

construction companies that are building the gates Consorzio Venezia Nuova (CVN) – have been told that the gates must reduce water exchange between the lagoon and the Adriatic by only 5%. Many believe that the gates are unlikely to cause stagnation anyway. They say that they will be closed for short periods of time and only during the winter when the water temperature and light are too low for algal blooms.

12. Looking ahead, it is hoped that the gates will go some way towards addressing Venice's other basic problem– its loss of residents. Venetians have been leaving the city in droves – its population of 60,000 is now half of what it was only a few decades ago. If the gates stop the continual flooding of the city, it will make a big psychological change to the city. Venice might then become a city where more people will want to live, invest and do business, rather than just visit. Although the future holds much promise, it is too early to say whether Venetians will ever be high and dry again.

(Adapted from *The Economist*, Vol. 368, No. 8343, Sept. 27, 2003)

Comprehension Questions:

I. Based on your reading of the text, answer the following questions.

1. Why does the writer advise visitors to Venice to pack wellington boots?

2. What is another serious risk of floods besides inconvenience to residents and tourists?

3. Why is St Mark's Square an excellent place to start exploring the problem?

4. What is the real cause behind Venice's flooding?

5. What would the barriers do?

6. Describe in your own words the gates and how they would function.

7. What objection do people have to the gates with regard to cost?

8. What is the benefit of flushing in the lagoon?

II. Decide whether the following statements are True (T) or False (F).

_____ Venetians are not bothered by floods but are worried over the erosion of their historic treasures.

_____ It is predicted that a disastrous flood will happen sometime in the future.

_____ Using barriers against the high tides of the sea is an original, unprecedented idea.

_____ Gates will be removed if not needed and brought back in at times of flooding.

_____ Constructing the gates will have more incurring costs.

_____ Over-fertilisation in the lagoon is prevented by the twice-daily tides.

Guessing the meanings of words from the context

Circle the vocabulary or expression that is closest in meaning to the underlined words from the text.

1. Between now and April the lowest parts of the city will be regularly inundated.
A. covered B. flooded
C. saved D. destroyed
2. Besides the inconvenience this brings to Venetians and tourists, salty water lapping above Venice's foundations is eating away at the fabric and treasures of this unique and historic city.

Inconvenience:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| A. problem | B. destruction |
| C. feeling of uneasiness | D. anger |

eating away

- | | |
|------------|-----------------------|
| A. eroding | B. killing |
| C. keeping | D. ruining completely |

3. The idea is by no means unique. Flood and storm barriers against the sea are now common in various places around the world.

- A. strange B. original
C. argued D. old

4. The nearly €3billion scheme will comprise about 80 hollow gates embedded in the seabed at the three inlets to Venice's lagoon.

- A. laid over B. built on
C. constructed near D. laid inside

5. Many believe that the gates are unlikely to cause stagnation anyway.

- A. rapid movement B. tide
C. unchanging condition D. non-fertilisation

6. ...it is too early to say whether Venetians will ever be high and dry again.

- A. in a good situation B. out of water
C. outside the city D. in a difficult situation

Understanding Essay Structure

1. What is the thesis statement?

2. How does the writer develop the thesis? (i.e., how do the body paragraphs lead from the introduction)?

3. Write an outline for paragraph 8. Divide it into sentences (topic sentence, major and minor supporting sentences, and, if any, concluding sentence).

4. What kind of conclusion does the essay offer?

5. This essay is unique in that it uses two organisation methods, or roughly speaking, is made up of two kinds of essay. What are they? Give evidence.

Further Reading

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