



**Современный  
Гуманитарный  
Университет**

**Дистанционное образование**

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Рабочий учебник

Фамилия, имя, отчество \_\_\_\_\_

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Номер контракта \_\_\_\_\_

**ИСКУССТВО РЕЧИ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ  
ЯЗЫКЕ**

ЮНИТА 1

НАПИСАНИЕ ЭССЕ

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Рекомендовано Министерством  
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студентов высших учебных заведений

# **ИСКУССТВО РЕЧИ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ**

Юнита 1. Написание эссе.

Юнита 2. Публичное выступление как форма коммуникации.

Юнита 3. Составление сообщения.

## **ЮНИТА 1**

Спецкурс посвящен изучению проблемы искусства письменной и устной речи на английском языке. В данной юните рассматриваются основы работы над эссе.

Для студентов факультета лингвистики СГУ

Юнита соответствует профессиональной образовательной программе №1

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\* Глоссарий расположен в середине учебного пособия и предназначен для самостоятельного заучивания новых понятий.

## **ТЕМАТИЧЕСКИЙ ПЛАН**

The process of writing. Writing and reading. A descriptive essay: impressions, images and appeal to the reader's senses. Writing a description of place.

Writing a definition. Writing a process essay. Writing a classification. Principles of classification. Writing an essay of comparison / contrast. The basis of comparison / contrast.

Causal analysis. Cause – Effect relationship.

Writing a narrative essay. Time relationship in an essay. Wording and grammar in essay writing.

# ЛИТЕРАТУРА

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Примечание. Знаком (\*) отмечены работы, на основе которых составлен научный обзор.

## ПЕРЕЧЕНЬ УМЕНИЙ

№	Умение	Содержание
1	Составление формального определения из набора слов	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Прочитайте набор слов.</li> <li>2. Вспомните основную структуру формального определения.</li> <li>3. Выделите в наборе слов "concept".</li> <li>4. Выделите в наборе слов "class".</li> <li>5. Выделите в наборе слов "special features".</li> <li>6. Составьте формальное определение в соответствии с его структурой: (concept) is a (class) which (special features).</li> </ol>
2	Изменение структуры "причина-эффект" предложения на структуру "эффект причина".	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Прочитайте предложение и переведите его на русский язык.</li> <li>2. Определите предложение (часть предложения), содержащее причину.</li> <li>3. Определите предложение (часть предложения), содержащее эффект.</li> <li>4. Измените структуру предложения: сначала предложение (часть предложения), содержащее эффект, а затем предложение (часть предложения), содержащее причину.</li> <li>5. Переведите предложение на русский язык.</li> </ol>
3	Составление naming definition из formal definition.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Прочитайте формальное определение.</li> <li>2. Определите структуру формального определения.</li> <li>3. Вспомните структуру naming definition.</li> <li>4. Определите части формального определения, соответствующие частям naming definition.</li> <li>5. Расположите слова (части формального определения) в порядке, соответствующем структуре naming definition.</li> </ol>
4	Составление расширенного определения к формальному	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Прочитайте формальное определение.</li> <li>2. Вспомните структуру, используемую для расширения формального определения.</li> <li>3. Составьте предложение в соответствии со второй частью структуры, описывающей, каким образом может быть использовано понятие формального определения.</li> <li>4. Добавьте составленное предложение к формальному определению.</li> </ol>

## ПРИМЕРЫ ВЫПОЛНЕНИЯ УПРАЖНЕНИЙ НА УМЕНИЯ

1. Составьте формальное определение из следующего набора слов:  
*used in manufacture of clothes, cotton, plant.*
  1. Used in manufacture of clothes, cotton, plant
  2. (Concept) is a (class) which (special features)
  3. Cotton
  4. Plant
  5. Used in manufacture of clothes
  6. Cotton is a plant which is used in manufacture of clothes.
2. Измените структуру предложения с «причина-эффект» на «эффект-причина»: *Because of his depression, he overate.*
  1. Because of his depression, he overate. / Из-за своей депрессии он переел.
  2. Because of his depression.
  3. He overate.
  4. He overate because of his depression.
  5. Он переел из-за своей депрессии.
3. Составьте *naming definition* из *formal definition*: a dentist is a person who takes care of people's teeth.
  1. A dentist is a person who takes care of people's teeth.
  2. Concept - a dentist  
Class - a person  
Special feature - takes care of people's teeth.
  3. (Class) {who, which} (special feature(s)) is {called, known as, etc.} (concept).
  4. Class - a person  
Special feature - takes care of people's teeth  
Concept - a dentist
  5. A person who takes care of people's teeth is a dentist.
4. Составьте *расширенное определение к формальному*: Aluminum is a metal which is light in weight.
  1. Aluminum is a metal which is light in weight.
  2. Definition {Therefore, Consequently, As a result} *it is used / one of its main uses is.*
  3. Therefore, it is used in the manufacture of aircraft.
  4. Aluminum is a metal which is light in weight. Therefore, it is used in the manufacture of aircraft.

## 1. PREFACE

Reading is a process; so is writing. By “process” we mean that both require the taking of sequential steps over a lapse of time. We have already pointed out that virtually all writers are habitual readers. And while not all readers are habitual writers, it is still a pragmatic truth that habitual readers usually make better writers. Nor should this revelation be a surprise, since most learned processes improve with practice. The archer who shoots regularly is more likely to hit the bull’s-eye reliably than is the one who hasn’t touched a bow in years, and there is no magic or happenstance whatever in any of this. Practice, if it does not always make perfect, certainly does make better.

We bring all this up, at the risk of sounding inanely elementary, to point out another truth: Often, many students who think they cannot write well just do not understand the writing process. It is not that they cannot write, but simply that they do not know how to write and have a mistaken idea about what the writing process entails. Over and over again teachers have found this to be true.

For example, many beginning writers will take one swipe at composing an essay, be dissatisfied, and interpret the outcome as damning evidence that they have no gift for writing. Professional writers, on the other hand, understand that writing is typically done in numerous sittings and passes over the interval of days, weeks, even months or years, depending on the length of the assignment. This essay you are now reading, for example, was composed over days, revised and reread numerous times, tinkered with, changed, and edited in several passes. And all this was done not because the writer is inept or neurotic, but because this stop-and-go method is part of the typical and expected writing process.

## Reading and Writing

One study looked at how amateur and professional writers work and found a single surprising difference centred around how they react when stuck in the middle of writing. The amateurs, when stuck, nibble on the tip of their pen, beat a tattoo with the ballpoint on the desktop, and stare aimlessly around the room with glassy eyes. The stuck professionals, on the other hand, go back to the first word and reread what they had written, making revisions and changes in the text as they read. By the time they’ve reached the logjam they usually have a good idea where they went wrong and what to



do. If they're still stuck, they reread the material again, doing so over and over until they become unstuck.

For all writers, amateurs as well as professionals, periodically bogging down on the page is an inevitable part of the whole writing process. But how you view and react to this certain event is likely to affect your composition efforts drastically. If you see it as a necessary and usual part of the writing process and remain untroubled by it, you most likely will profit from the experience of rereading and taking a closer look at your work. On the other hand, if you mistake being temporarily stuck as yet another sign of your writing ineptness, this falsely negative attitude will make writing only harder labour.

## **Writing as an Individualistic Act**

The writing process is, above all, an individualistic act, even an idiosyncratic one. What works for one writer often will not work for the other. Some writers like to generate an outline, a plan, and follow it to the letter as they write. Other writers prefer just to sit and write, spending their time on revising and doctoring the shape of the essay during the act of composing it. Neither method is particularly right or wrong. If one method works especially well for you, use it.

However, experienced writers know that the best writing is preceded always by exhaustive reading about the subject, that it is impossible even for seasoned professionals to write well about a subject they do not truly know. Yet every year many students will attempt to put pen to paper about topics and subjects they only vaguely understand, subsequently blaming the unhappy results on imagined bad writing skills.

Reading about a subject should always precede writing about it. Consider different opinions and perspectives. Make notes about your reactions to your reading. Once you start the actual writing, you should also incessantly reread your own text as a prelude to rewriting it. Professional writers habitually reread and rewrite their work. They reread to assess how their words might strike an audience, to gauge clarity, persuasiveness, and conviction; they rewrite to find a slightly better word, to create an improved sentence, to structure a stronger paragraph. The process is akin to systematic whittling of a stubborn piece of wood. Gradually, the repeated rereading and rewriting will yield a sharper, better, and more readable page.

Read before you write; read while you write; read after you write: That is what anyone who wishes to write well must do, repetitively and continuously. Writing is not an isolated skill that pops up like a convenient, nomadic muse just as you sit at your desk, pen and paper in hand, ready to begin. It is rather more like the seed planted many moons before and

cultivated through countless hours spent in solitude with writers and books. It blossoms through care, labor, habit, and practice. It is a skill learned by trial and error, and by mimicry. Those who write best of all are always numbered among the best, the most industrious, the most persistent readers.

## 2. HOW TO WRITE A DESCRIPTION

Focus, or concentration, contributes more to vivid written description than either the size of the writer's vocabulary or the splattering of adjectives across the page. Here is an example of what we mean. The author is describing a medieval inn partly through the eyes, but mainly through the nose, of a weary traveller:

In one corner was a travelling family, a large one; thence flowed into the common stock the peculiar sickly smell of neglected brats. Garlic filled up the interstices of the air. And all this with closed window, and intense heat of the central furnace, and the breath of at least forty persons.

They had just supped.

Now Gerard, like most artists, had sensitive organs, and the potent effluvia struck dismay into him. But the rain lashed him outside, and the light and the fire tempted him in.

He could not force his way all at once through the palpable perfumes, but he returned to the light again and again like a singed moth. At last he discovered that the various smells did not entirely mix, no fiend being there to stir them around. Odour of family predominated in two corners; stewed rustic reigned supreme in the centre; and garlic in the noisy group by the window. He found, too, by hasty analysis, that of these the garlic described the smallest aerial orbit, and the scent of reeking rustic darted farthest—a flavour as if ancient goats, or the fathers of all foxes, had been drawn through a river, and were here dried by Nebuchadnezzar.

CHARLES READE, *The Cloister and the Hearth*

The essential characteristic of this vivid description is its focus. Instead of trying to give us a sweeping view of the dingy inn, the writer zooms in on how awful it smells. The stink of the inn is the *dominant impression* of this description; the writer's every word, image, and metaphor aims only to direct this stench to our nostrils.

### Focus on a Dominant Impression

Vivid descriptions invariably focus on a single dominant impression and unremittingly deliver it. Nothing distracts from the dominant impression;

every word and image is devoted to rendering it keener and sharper. By *dominant impression*, we mean a feature of the scene that is characteristic of it. Not all scenes have strikingly characteristic features, and writers must often steep themselves in the aura of a place before they can sum up its dominant impression. Yet some scenes possess a dominant impression that leaps out at you. For example, a freeway at rush hour is anything but a placid scene. Usually it is a tangled skein of motorists jockeying for position or nosing from one lane to another. To describe a freeway scene at rush hour, you should word your dominant impression so as to portray the madcap antics of the drivers, the choking fumes of the cars, the background grind and roar of traffic. You might write, as your dominant impression, “The San Diego Freeway at rush hour is a bedlam of traffic noise, choking fumes, and aggressive drivers.” Then you would support that dominant impression with specific images and details.

The dominant impression of your description should be the heart of the person, place, or scene you are attempting to describe. If you are describing an elderly aunt who is dull, use her dullness as your dominant impression. If you are writing a description of a Christmas shopping scene, word your dominant impression to portray the frazzled throng of weary shoppers, the harried salesclerks, the dazzling glitter of Christmas lights. What you must avoid in your dominant impression is the mention of every speck in the scene you are describing. For example, among the streaming throngs in the department store at Christmas, there are bound to be a few souls who are calm and composed and seemingly immune to the shopping frenzy. But since these wise few are not at all representative of the overall scene, you should leave them out lest they dilute the description. So if your sister is basically a bundle of nerves, that is how you should paint her on the page—even if you have glimpsed her occasionally in rare moments of serenity.

## Use Images in Your Descriptions

Most of us know the basics about imagery, especially the **simile** and the **metaphor**. We know that the *simile* is an image based on an explicit comparison. For example, Flannery O'Connor describes the crest of a peabiddy with this simile: “This looks at first like a bug’s antennae and later like the head feathers of an Indian.” On the other hand, we also know that the *metaphor* is an image based on an indirect comparison with no obvious linking word—such as *as* or *like*—used to cement it. For example, in “Once More to the Lake,” E. B. White uses metaphors to describe a thunderstorm: “Then the kettle drum, then the snare, then the bass drum and the cymbals, then crackling light against the dark, and the gods grinning and licking their chops in the hills.” This is how a thunderstorm seems to the writer: it makes noises *like* many drums and flashes wicked lights against the hills that look

*like* gods licking their chops. Even though the writer omits the *like* that might have made the comparison explicit, we still get the picture.

Aside from these basic images, which every writer occasionally uses, there are certain hard-won lessons about descriptive imagery that can be imparted. The first is that vivid images do not miraculously drip off the pen but are usually the result of the writer's reworking the material repeatedly. If nothing original or fresh occurs to you after sitting at your desk for a scant few minutes of trying to write a description, all it means is that you have not sat long enough or tried hard enough. Reread what you have written. Try to picture in your mind the person, place, or thing you are struggling to describe. Cut a word here, replace another there. Persistently scratch away at what you have written, and soon you will be astonished at how much better it begins to get.

The second lesson to impart about writing vivid images is summed up in the adage, "Less is more." Overdoing a descriptive passage is not just possible, it is quite likely. If you are unhappy with a description you have written, instead of stuffing it with more adjectives, try taking some out. Here is an example of a bloated and overdone description. The speaker is trying his utmost to describe his feelings as he says goodbye to his sweetheart:

... I am just in time to hear the toll of a parting bell strike its heavy weight of appalling softness against the weakest fibres of a heart of love, arousing and tickling its dormant action, thrusting the dart of evident separation deeper into its tubes of tenderness, and fanning the flame, already unextinguishable, into volumes of blaze.

AMANDA MCKITTRICK ROS, *Delina Delaney*

This is, of course, wretched stuff. One can see the writer hyperventilating at the pen as she tries desperately to infuse her hero's words with passion. She fails miserably from too much effort.

## **Appeal to All the Reader's Senses**

Most of us are so unabashedly visual that we are tempted to deliver only looks in our descriptions. But there is usually much more to a scene than its looks. You might also write about how it sounds, smells, or feels to the touch. The best descriptions draw on all kinds of images and appeal to as many senses as are appropriate. Here is an example. The writer is describing a World War I troop train leaving an African station at night carrying soldiers to the front:

... The men began to sing the jingle that was so popular then—"Marching to Tabora"; and the shouts and cheers, the whistles, the hissing

and chugging of the engine, filled the station as a kettle fills with steam. Everything seemed to bubble over; men waved from windows; Dick gave a hunting cry; the red hair of Pioneer Mary flared under a lamp; the guard jumped into his moving van; and we watched the rear light of the last coach vanish, and heard the chugging die away. A plume of sparks, a long coil of dancing fireflies, spread across the black ancient shoulder of the crater Menegai; and gradually the vast digesting dark of Africa swallowed up all traces of that audacious grub, the hurrying train.

ELSPETH HUXLEY, *The Flame Trees of Thika*

This description is a mixture of appeals to our senses of sight and sound. The men sing and cheer, the engine chugs and hisses. We see Pioneer Mary's red hair and the sparks from the train's engine. We are regaled with a clever simile, "filled the station as a kettle fills with steam" and treated to a riveting metaphor, "the vast digesting dark of Africa swallowed up all traces of that audacious grub, the hurrying train." Did the author really just sit down and calmly mine this rich descriptive vein without effort? We do not know for certain, but most likely not. If her experience is at all typical, she hit this mother lode of imagery only after persistent and labored digging.

### 3. SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS

#### Introduction

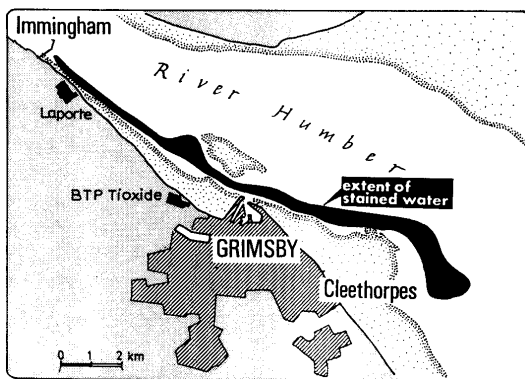
Very often we have to describe in writing the location of a place, how a place is laid out or how objects are connected (as in equipment for an experiment). In this section we will look at some of the ways of describing spatial relationships. *Spatial descriptions* are often accompanied by a visual aid, such as a plan, map, or diagram.

#### Task 1

*Read the following text by yourself and then look at the map which accompanies it. With a partner, discuss the text and the map and decide whether the map helps you to understand the text.*

#### Acidic Pollution

The discharge of waste from the production of titanium dioxide along the Humber estuary in Britain causes serious acidification of local waters, wipes out aquatic organisms and pollutes the beaches of Cleethorpes with acid and iron. The two main titanium dioxide plants in Britain are BTP Tioxide of Grimsby and LaPorte Industries of Stallingborough - both of them on the Humber estuary. Between them they discharge more than 60,000 m<sup>3</sup> of acidic waste daily. As a result, a long strip of land along the south bank of the



estuary from Immingham to Cleethorpes has a brownish-red colour from the discharge.  
(*New Scientist*)

Not all texts describing spatial relations are accompanied by a map. For example, the writer of the following text, 'The Abraham Moss Centre', did not include a map. The text describes the location of a school and is part of the introduction to an educational research project.

## Task 2

Read the passage and then:

- make a note of the expressions which tell the reader where a place is;
- using the information in the text, draw a simple map of the area;
- say what you think the writer's aim was in producing this description;
- say whether you can draw an accurate map on the basis of the information provided in the passage.

### *The Abraham Moss Centre*

The Abraham Moss Centre is a low, white complex of buildings on the borders of Cheetham and Crumpsall, just to the north of the centre of Manchester. Although the site itself was industrial wasteland, it is in the heart of a residential district. Along one side of it runs a railway, but in every other direction it is surrounded by semi-detached and terraced housing of the inter-war years. Both Cheetham and Crumpsall were fairly prosperous Victorian developments, but Cheetham in particular has undergone extensive redevelopment.

(A.D. Edwards and V.J. Furlong *The Language of Teaching*)

Some of the expressions in the above text tell you *what* various places are, or were:

'The Abraham Moss Centre is a *low, white complex of buildings*'.

Other expressions tell you *where* various places are, or were:

'The Abraham Moss Centre . . . buildings *on the borders of Cheetham and Crumpsall*'.

### Task 3

a) Add as many expressions of spatial relationships as you can to this illustration. Some you could use are:

opposite  
between  
beside  
behind  
(etc.)

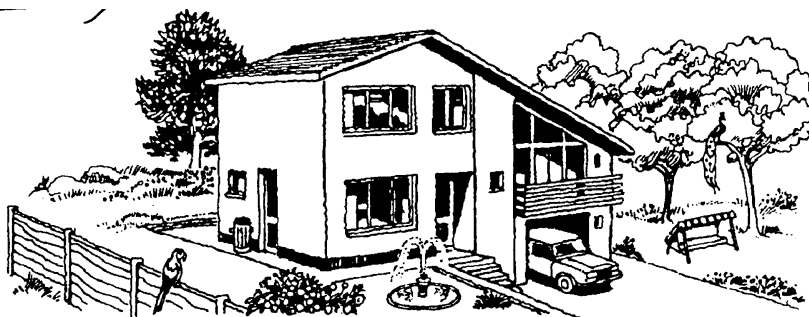
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b) Write four sentences to describe some spatial relationships between objects in the illustration, for example:

The fountain is *in front of* the house.

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### About Writing

There are basically two ways of organising a description of a place. One way is to describe it as if it was being seen from the air (*a bird's eye view*). The other is to describe it from the point of view of a journey through it (*a pedestrian's view*). The description may need to be very detailed as, for example, when a novelist is describing a scene; or it can be rather general, as when a student is describing a geographical area as background to an

agricultural experiment; or it can be very technical, as when an entomologist is describing the marking on a rare butterfly.

### Task 4

*Read this text, which describes a geographical area of East Africa, and then, working with another student:*

a) decide whether it is written from a bird's eye view or from a pedestrian's view;

*b) draw an outline map of the area to accompany the text;*

c) decide what changes you would need to make in the text if you rewrote it from the other point of view.

As the Rift Valley sweeps northwards out of Kenya and into Ethiopia, it forms the spectacular Lake Turkana basin. The long, shallow waters of the lake, which stretches 155 miles north to south and up to 35 miles east to west, sparkle green in the tropical sun: someone called it the Jade Sea, a very apt name. At the south a barrier of small volcanic hills prevents the lake spreading further down into the arid lands of northern Kenya. From the west side rises the Rift Valley wall, a range of mountains with some peaks of more than 5000 feet. This is the land of the Turkana people, a tall, elegant pastoralist tribe. Beyond are the mountains and forests of Uganda. Pouring its silt-laden waters into the north end of the lake is the River Omo, a huge river that drains the Ethiopian Highlands to the north, and meanders tortuously as it nears its end at the border with Kenya where it reaches the Jade Sea. Where the river reaches the lake the sudden barrier to its progress forces it to dump its burden of silt, so creating an enormous delta.

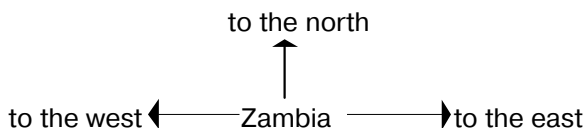
(Adapted from R. Leakey and R. Lewin *People of the Lake*)

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



## Using Grammar in Writing

The most important information in a sentence very often appears at the beginning. This information may tell us what the sentence is about. For example, the sentence 'Zambia is a landlocked country' seems to be about Zambia. In this case 'Zambia' is also the subject of the sentence. However, in the sentence 'To the north lies Tanzania', 'To the north' is not the subject but is very important information as it locates the position of Tanzania in terms of some reference point which we already know.



The organising principle here is the points of the compass.

### Task 5

*Look at the following short texts and decide which is easier to understand.*

i) I live in Edinburgh. The capital of Scotland is Edinburgh. A part of the British Isles is Scotland.

ii) I live in Edinburgh. It is the capital of Scotland. Scotland is part of the British Isles.

Text (ii) is easier to understand because the writer uses the beginning of each sentence to lead into the next, guiding us through the text in a logical way.

I -> Edinburgh -> It (Edinburgh) -> Scotland -> Scotland -> British Isles

The organising principle here is from part to whole.

In spatial descriptions you will find that locational expressions often appear at the beginning of sentences in the text (e.g. *Beside the river. Further south*, etc.).

### Task 6

*Read the spatial description which follows and underline the locational expressions that are used to guide the reader through the description.*

## Cairo: the Modern City

The hub of the modern city of Cairo is the spacious Midan el-Tahrir (Liberation Square). Here all the city's main traffic arteries meet. — To

the SW\* of the square are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Government Buildings, to the SE the American University and the National Assembly. To the NW of the square is the large range of buildings occupied by the Egyptian Museum, which has the world's largest and finest collection of Egyptian and Greco-Roman antiquities. Just beyond the Egyptian Museum the Corniche el-Nil along the bank of the Nile is lined by large modern hotels and prestige buildings. In Shari Oasr el-Aini, which runs S from Midan el-Tahrir, is the Ethnological Museum, and in Shari el-Sheikh Rihan the Geological Museum. — To the NE of the Midan el-Tahrir are the main commercial and shopping districts of the modern city, which are entirely European in character. The goods sold in the shops here are marked with fixed prices, which cannot be reduced by bargaining like prices in the bazaars.

\* SW = south west; NE = north east, etc. (*Baedeker's AA Egypt*)

Descriptions of spatial locations are normally organised according to conventional ways of looking at scenes. The most common conventions are:

general to particular

whole to part

large to small

outside to inside

top to bottom

left to right

The main point here is to be consistent. If you choose a particular convention, use it throughout so as not to confuse the reader.

## 4. HOW TO WRITE A DEFINITION

Even if you never have formally defined a word in writing, it is certain you at some time or another have informally defined a word in speech. This definition may have been as simple as explaining to someone unfamiliar with basketball what a “slam-dunk” is. Or you may have had to clarify for a heartbroken wooer what you meant when you blurted out that you were not “in love.”

The formal definition practiced in essays is not vastly unlike these hasty oral definitions we all must tackle occasionally in daily life. In both cases we say what we mean by a certain abstract word, phrase, or term. For usually it is the abstract word, the one with no tangible object behind it, that requires defining. A concrete word may mystify a reader or listener, but only if the object behind it cannot be produced. To define *apple* to a person who has never seen one only requires plunking down the fruit on the table. With an abstract word such as *love*, however, there is nothing to plunk down. You

can only elaborate with more words on what you mean by *love* until satisfied that your reader or listener cannot mistake the definition you intend for that bottomless word.

Formal or informal, most definitions are lexical. Typically, a lexical definition—the kind found in dictionaries—specifies the category to which a word belongs while setting it apart from others in that same category. For example, *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines *love* as “a deep and tender feeling of affection for or attachment or devotion to a person or persons. ...” This tells us that *love* belongs to the category of *feelings* but differs from other feelings in its depth, tenderness, and devotion to persons. The definition you include in an essay will invariably begin as a lexical definition. You may write that “ ‘The slam-dunk ‘ is a basketball shot in which ...” and then show how the “slam-dunk” differs from other basketball shots. Once that is done, however, you must flesh out your definition by one or all of the following methods.

## Begin with an Etymological Explanation

The *etymology* of a word is its earliest meaning and all good dictionaries routinely list it in brackets after the word. For example, *Webster's New World Dictionary* provides the following bracketed etymology for *inamorata*: “[It ., fem. of innamorato, lover, orig. pp. of innamorare, to fall in love. ...] This tells us that *inamorata* came into English from the Italian feminine form of *innamorato*, which means “lover,” and that *innamorato* was originally the past participle of the Italian verb meaning “to fall in love.”

Does this sort of information help in defining a word? Not always, but it can, especially if the word has a rich etymological history. Here is an example of how etymology may be used in a definition:

There are life-forms which, in the course of evolution, have developed poisons designed to kill, or to prevent themselves from being eaten. Venoms are produced by a variety of animals from jellyfish to reptiles. Plants develop a variety of poisonous substances designed to taste bad to an animal that nibbles and to kill if the animal persists.

Pride of place, however, must be taken by the product of a bacterium which is to be found everywhere and which harms no one—ordinarily. It is *Clostridium botulinum*. “Clostridium” is Latin for “little spindle,” which describes its shape, and “botulinum” is from the Latin word *botulus*, which means “sausage,” where it has sometimes been detected.

ISAAC ASIMOV, “*World's Deadliest Poison....  
The Botulin Spore*,” *Science Digest*, January 1972.

In this case, the etymology tells us where the bacterium has been found and what it looks like—useful preliminary information for a definition.

Whether or not citing etymology in a definition is worth the trouble depends on the word. Newer words tend to have dull etymologies not worth the mention. For example, the etymology of *hype* is listed in Webster's *New World Dictionary* as "a clipped form of hypodermic." But hype, in its present meaning, is so far removed from *hypodermic* that citing this etymology would be pointless. Use common sense. If the etymology of the word adds to your definition, include it. Otherwise, ignore it altogether.

## **Elaborate on Your Definition with Examples**

Examples can clarify an abstract term by demonstrating its practical effects. A case in point is "What Is Poverty?"<sup>1</sup> an essay in which the writer overwhelms us with scads of instances and illustrations about her own suffering under poverty. She shows us her dirty, smelly self; her shabby home; her neglected and worm-riddled children. She tells us how she scrimped to buy a jar of Vaseline to soothe her baby's diaper rash but had to pass up the purchase because the price had risen two cents. She shares her drab and cheerless life with us: from the indifference and callousness she suffers from welfare workers to the sexual harassment she must endure from a neighbor in exchange for a ride to the health clinic. These examples contribute a seamy and shocking intimacy to the meaning of *poverty*.

## **Say What the Term Does Not Mean**

Sometimes it is helpful to define a word by saying what it does not mean. Many writers practice this technique as an aside. For example, Frank DeFord begins a definition of *cystic fibrosis* by saying, "It [cystic fibrosis] has nothing to do with cysts." But a more elaborate practice of this technique involves saying at length what the defined term is not. Here is an example from an essay defining a sophisticated man:

Now, here we have come to the crux of the situation, for I maintain that a man who has never traveled in other countries and been exposed to other societies cannot be sophisticated. I am not speaking of package tours or cruise trips, but of a reasonable familiarity with foreign cities and peoples of arts and customs; an education reading alone cannot provide. For sophistication to me suggests, primarily, a refinement of the senses. The eye that has not appreciated Michelangelo's David in Florence or the cathedral of Chartres is not a sophisticated eye; nor is the tongue that

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<sup>1</sup> From Reading, Writing, 1992. P. 193.

has not tasted the best fettucine in Rome or the best wine in Paris. The hand that has not felt the rough heat of an ancient wall in Siena or the sweating cold of a Salzburg stein of beer is an innocent hand. So are the fingers that have not traveled, in conscious and specific savoring, over the contours of many different women.

MARYA MANNES, "*The Sophisticated Man*"

To say what a word does not mean often requires contrasting it with another word of similar meaning. For example, a student wrote a paper for us defining love in which she drew a contrast between *love* and *infatuation*:

Love, however, is not the same as infatuation. Love is different from infatuation in that it lasts longer and is more profound and caring. Infatuation is only the passion of the moment or the feeling aroused by someone's popularity or looks. It may be based on nothing more than sexual attraction. Usually, infatuation is the brief whirlwind affair that blows fast and furious for a while. But love is not necessarily fast or furious, and it is never based only on physical attraction or sexuality. Love means caring deeply for another to the point that you would do anything, even give up your own life, for that person. In religion, love is symbolized by the life and the crucifixion of Jesus. On the battlefield, it is told in countless stories about one soldier dying in place of another. In everyday life, it is a willingness to sacrifice personal wants and happiness for the happiness of the other.

Your definition essay is finished when you are satisfied that no one reading it could mistake the meaning you attach to the word, phrase, or term. In complexity and length, therefore, your essay will naturally vary with the word you are attempting to define. Some simple and straightforward words such as *slam-dunk* or *drudgery* or *routine* can be put to bed in a few paragraphs. Such complex terms as *freedom* or *dignity* or *self-determination* will require many detailed examples, greater amplification, and more ink.

## 5. CLASS RELATIONSHIPS DEFINITION

### Introduction

When we write we have to take into account the fact that our reader may not always understand the meaning of the more specialised words and expressions we wish to use. If we think this is the case, we will supply the reader with our definition of these terms. Here are some examples of writers defining terms for the reader:

1. In writing a paper on noise pollution, the writer needs to define the technical term 'perceived noise decibels' (PNdB):

. . . aircraft noise is measured in PNdB (perceived noise decibels)  
- a unit which measures all the different sounds that make up a noise, and gives most importance to those that people actually find most annoying when they hear them.

2. Some words have different meanings in different special subjects, or have different meanings in different areas of one subject. These are often particularly difficult for the reader. In this example, the fairly common word 'interaction' is defined by the writer to make sure that both he and his readers are talking and thinking about the same thing:

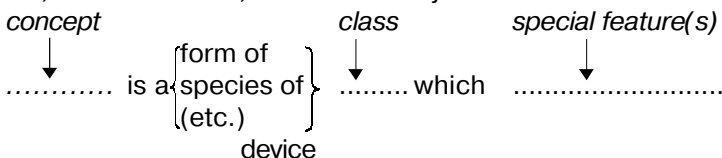
It will be convenient to end this introduction with some definitions that are implied in what has gone before and required for what is to follow. For the purpose of this report, *interaction* (that is, face-to-face interaction) may be roughly defined as the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence.

### **Task 1**

*Discuss the following sentences with a partner and decide which are acceptable definitions. Try to work out why the other definitions are not acceptable.*

- a) A capital city is like London.
- b) A man is an animal with eight fingers and two thumbs.
- c) Biochemistry is the study of biochemistry.
- d) Socialism is what they have in the USSR.
- e) Rust is a reddish brown coating formed on iron by the action of water and air.

Defining concrete terms is usually relatively easy. Such terms as 'copper', 'thermometer', etc. can usually be defined in the following way:



This definition structure is known as a **formal definition**.

## Task 2

*These formal definitions have their parts mixed up. See if you can rewrite them correctly. Check your rewritten sentences with one or two other students.*

	<i>concept</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>a/an/the</i>	<i>class</i>	<i>wh-word. . .</i>
a)	a dentist	is	a	place	which is used in the manufacture of cloth
b)	copper	is	a	political system	which has four equal sides and four right angles
c)	an atom	is	a	plant	who takes care of people's teeth
d)	cotton	is	a	figure	which aims at public ownership of the means of production
e)	a restaurant	is	a	person	where food is bought and eaten
f)	a square	is	a	substance	that still has the same qualities, and can combine with other substances
g)	socialism	is	the	smallest piece of a simple substance	which is easily shaped, and allows heat and electricity to pass through it

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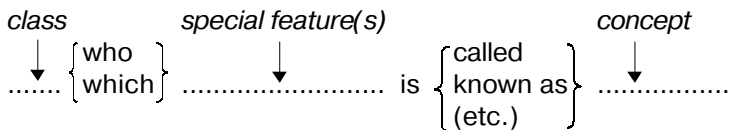
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Another definition structure, the *naming* definition, has the same parts but in a different order:



e.g. A person who studies living organisms is called a biologist. A book which has soft covers and is relatively cheap is known as a paperback.

Many definitions can be written both ways.

### Task 3

*Not all the formal definitions in Task 2 can be rewritten as naming definitions. Rewrite those that can and suggest reasons why the remainder would make unsatisfactory naming definitions.*

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### Task 4

*Think of three ordinary subjects that you use or see every day. For each of them write both kinds of definition. Test them out on another student by blanking out the 'concept' word(s) and seeing whether she or he knows what you have defined.*

e.g. A writing instrument which contains a lead and can be erased  
by a rubber is called a ... (pencil)

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In academic writing we tend to draw on other people's definitions of particular terms in order to help establish our own definition. When we follow this procedure we are obliged to make clear to the reader how we are using another writer's definition, i.e. do we accept it / accept part of it / reject it etc.?

## Using Grammar in Writing

It is often necessary to expand the defining description of a concept by adding extra information to the definition. This can be done by using brackets or dashes. Study the examples.

1. A prehistoric animal is an animal which lived in a time before recorded history. A prehistoric animal (a brontosaurus, a pterodactyl, a mammoth, etc.) is an animal which lived in a time before recorded history.

2. Courtship is an innate pattern of behaviour which certain vertebrates carry out before mating.



Courtship is an innate pattern of behaviour - such as dancing, preening, or bringing nesting materials - which certain vertebrates carry out before mating.

The additional information should be placed near the main information it clarifies.

**Task 5**

Use the information below these sentences to write expanded definitions of each underlined concept.

- a) *Tungsten* is a metal which retains hardness at red heat.  
add: used in filaments in electric light bulbs

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- b) A *conversation* is a social event.  
add: two or more people speaking to each other

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**Task 6**

Expand these definitions by adding your own examples; discuss the possibilities with another student.

- a) Cereal is a plant which is grown to produce food.

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- b) A gas is a substance which is neither solid nor liquid.

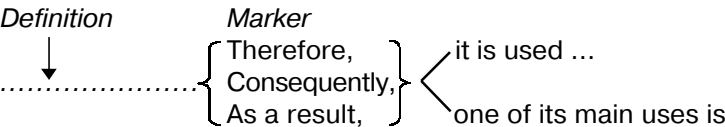
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A definition can also be expanded by giving an example of the use of the object or idea being defined, as in the example below:

Aluminium is a metal which is light in weight. *Consequently, it is used in the manufacture of aircraft.*

When you expand a definition by giving an example of its use, you can use the following pattern:



The decision whether to use a marker or not will depend on whether or not you think the reader needs to be *explicitly* told of the relationship between the definition and its use: in this case, that one is an effect of the other.

### **Task 7**

*Expand the following definitions by giving an example showing how the item being defined is used.*

- a) Glass is a substance which has the property of being transparent.

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- b) Stainless steel is an alloy which is resistant to corrosion.

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- c) A thermometer is a device for measuring temperature.

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A definition can also be expanded by stating the main characteristics of the object or concept, as in the example below:

Aluminium is a metal which is used in the manufacture of aircraft. *It is very light and resistant to corrosion.*

When you expand a definition by stating its characteristics, you may use explicit markers to show the relationship between the definition and its expansion:

Aluminium is a metal which is used in the manufacture of aircraft *because* it is very light and resistant to corrosion.

In this case, one is a reason for the other.

### **Task 8**

*Expand the following definitions by stating the main characteristics of each item being defined.*

- a) Tobacco is a drug which is commonly used by human beings.

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- b) Cloth is a material made by weaving fibres such as wool, silk or cotton.

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- c) Binocular vision is that type of vision which allows distances to be judged and shapes to be perceived in depth.

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In writing expanded definitions, *relative clauses* are very useful. Relative clauses allow a writer to avoid writing a series of very short sentences. They also allow the writer to show clearly which information she or he thinks is the most important and which is secondary. The information in the relative clause is always the secondary information. Look at these examples:

1. Aluminium, which is light and resistant to corrosion, is used in the manufacture of aircraft.

2. Aluminium, which is used in the manufacture of aircraft, is light and resistant to corrosion.

In the first example the *use* is the most important aspect for the writer, while in the second example the *characteristics* are most important.

### **Task 9**

*Use the notes, and other information if you wish, to write expanded definitions of each of the items in italics, using relative clause structures.*

- a) *caffeine* — substance — addictive — powerful effect on the heart — found in coffee

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- b) substance - not animal or plant - naturally occurring — includes ores, petroleum, natural gas and coal - often obtained by mining — *mineral*

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- c) *spacecraft* - vehicle - rocket engine - for travelling in space - capable of carrying astronauts - also known as spaceship - may carry missiles

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### **Task 10**

*Complete the following short texts with the alternative that seems preferable to you.*

- a) Experimental psychology traditionally was interested in relationships between events. As a matter of fact ...

- i) the forming of associations between one stimulus and another was defined by such psychologists as learning.
  - ii) learning was defined by such psychologists as a matter of forming associations between one stimulus and another.
- b) People should use potassium bromide only under a doctor's direction because this form of bromide may cause skin rashes. It can also disturb the mind. ...
- i) Silver bromide is a form of bromide used in photography to make plates and film more sensitive to light.
  - ii) In photography, a form of bromide called silver bromide is used to make plates and film more sensitive to light.
- c) Brocade designs are woven by hand or machine into cloth to make fabrics for bedspreads, curtains, etc. ...
- i) cloth that has designs woven into it with heavy yarns is called brocade.
  - ii) Brocade is a cloth that has designs woven into it with heavy yarns.
- d) Bubble gum (. . .) is a major cause of tooth decay among children.
- i) bubble gum is a form of chewing gum
  - ii) a form of chewing gum

## **6. HOW TO WRITE A PROCESS ESSAY**

The process essay is regarded as so elementary a form that many English departments do not even teach it. But as any harassed consumer who has ever struggled to assemble even a child's toy from the written instructions can tell you, process instructions and essays are seldom clear and often maddeningly dense. (Remember that frustrating Christmas Eve, those impossible dollhouse instructions, and the overwhelming urge to *murder* the writer?)

Basically, the process essay is a *how-to* essay with step-by-step advice or instructions on how to do something. Most such essays actually contain the term "how to" in their titles and generally follow a sequential explanation of the steps in the process. Sometimes an essayist follows a process not to instruct a reader in how to do it but rather to say how it typically is done.

### **Begin with a Clear Statement of What You Are Explaining**

Tell the reader exactly what you are going to explain. Spare no detail, for it is essential that the reader know where the essay is leading. "Let us see how dictionaries are made and how the editors arrive at definitions," the

writer tells us in “How Dictionaries Are Made.” “Almost anyone can substantially reduce his exposure to cold germs and increase his resistance to them,” is the opening statement of “How to Fight Cold-Prone-ness.” Then the author tells us how to proceed in the fight against colds.

If you are instructing the reader in how to hoist a sail, how to make a quilt, how to perform the Heimlich maneuver—say so and plainly. Nor does it hurt to say what you are *not* going to explain, as this student did in an essay on how to sail upwind:

The purpose of this essay is to give instructions on how to sail a boat upwind. My essay assumes a boat with a fixed keel that is rigged as a sloop. Since sailing a centerboard boat or a two-master rigged either as a ketch or a yawl requires slightly different skills, I will not cover these kinds of boats in this essay.

This is the sort of finite statement of purpose that helps give the reader a precise idea of where an essay is heading.

## **Make Each Step of the Process Clear**

While it is always important to link the ideas of an essay with adequate transitions, it is never more so than in the process essay. Generally, the easiest way is to mark the steps of process instructions by numbering them or using headings as Eichenlaub does in “How to Fight Cold-Prone-ness.” This may strike you as “cookbookish” and rather inelegant, but it works.

Also, you can mark the steps of a process explanation with strong transitions, and one of the strongest transitions you can use for this purpose is a new paragraph. You even can begin this new paragraph with an opening sentence that, like a grappling hook, seizes your next topic or step. Here are some examples from “Behind the Formaldehyde Curtain”:

The body is first laid out in the undertaker’s morgue—or rather, Mr. Jones is reposing in the preparation room—to be readied to bid the world farewell. (paragraph 7)

The next step is to have at Mr. Jones with a thing called a trocar. (paragraph 13)

The embalmer, having allowed an appropriate interval to elapse, returns to the attack, but now he brings into play the skill and equipment of sculptor and cosmetician. (paragraph 15)

Although grim, this process is depicted in unmistakable steps marked by clean transitions.

## **Explain from the Viewpoint of the Innocent**

Making unwarranted assumptions about what a reader knows is bad enough in any essay, but generally fatal to the clarity of a process essay. The reader knows nothing about the process; the reader does not understand insider's jargon—these are the only two safe assumptions a process essayist can make. Steps that may seem plain and obvious to you are likely to mystify a beginner. Be careful, then, to explain in detail every single step, to bridge even obvious gaps between the steps, and to take nothing for granted in explaining a process. If bored, your reader can always skim over the obvious. But the baffled reader can only pore over the material while vainly scratching for a glimmer of understanding. Here is a snippet from a process essay that assumes too much:

The boat heels when sailed into the wind because of complex forces of the wind acting against the sail, making it behave like an airfoil. The sail fills up on the windward side while air rushes past the leeward side creating a vacuum. Directional stability is threatened by the force of the heel, and if the center of effort of the boat is not improperly distributed, the boat will develop strong characteristics of lee helm ...

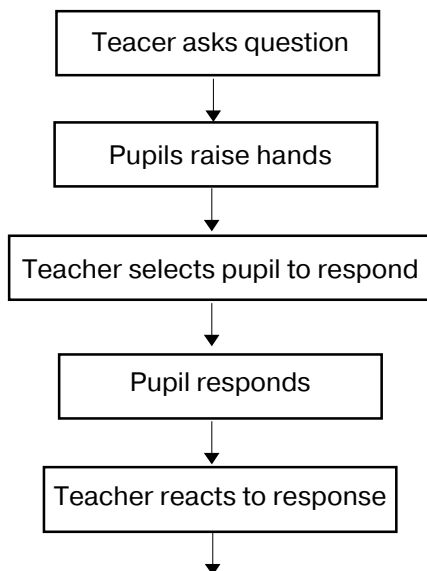
Although this passage might mean volumes to a sailor, to a naive reader it is incomprehensible in its denseness. What is “directional stability”? What does the writer mean by “center of effort,” and how can it be “improperly distributed”? What is “lee helm”? Not one of these terms has been explained—up to now—yet the writer blithely assumes the reader will grasp them. This is the kind of mistake writers of instructional manuals typically make, leaving consumers either to mangle the disassembled product, or to trash the manual.

## **7. LINEAR RELATIONSHIPS. PROCESS**

### **Introduction**

A process, like a chronological sequence, involves linear relationships. We think of processes as moving forward in a logical, step-by-step sequence. A process can usually be presented as a flow diagram. Look at this example:

## Teacher Questioning



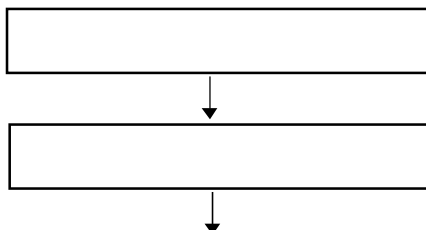
### Task 1

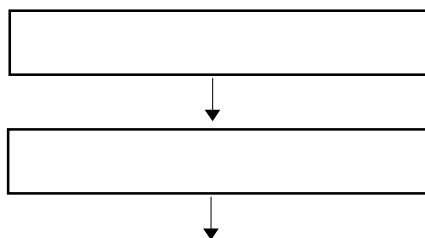
Show the following partial process as a flow diagram by filling in the boxes.

### Computing

To begin the process, information in a specially coded form is fed into the input unit. Next it is 'read' by a device which turns it into a series of electric impulses. The computer then 'writes' down this information, that is, transfers it to a storage unit. After this, depending on whether the information is data or instructions, further stages take place.

(R. Dale and I. Williamson *The Myth of the Micro*)



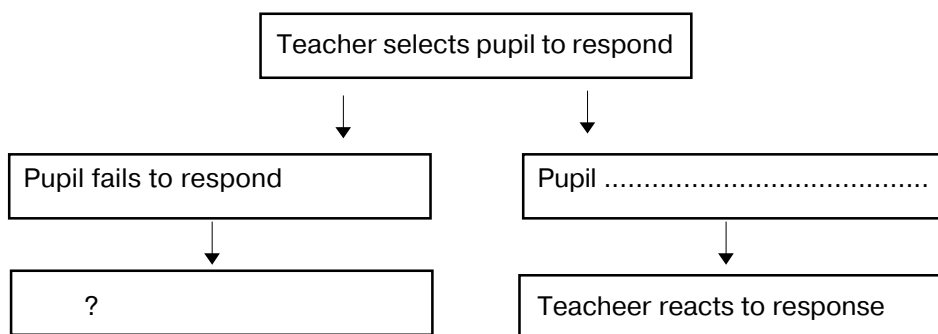


*(further stages)*

When you write up a process in a text, it will normally be in natural time order, i.e. starting at the beginning of the process and continuing step by step to the end, as in the example above.

### **Task 2**

Use the flow diagram showing ‘Teacher Questioning’ as your basis for a text describing the process by which teachers ask and pupils answer questions. Then use the addition to the flow diagram, shown below, to add to your text a description of another possible part of the same process.



## **About Writing**

One obvious way of writing up a process would be to produce one sentence for each step in the process. This would give a text of five sentences for the text on computing, and seven sentences for Task 2. However, such a text would often seem very inexperienced and boring; every sentence would state one step, and every sentence would have the same shape as the others. We often put several steps into one sentence, and we mark the steps to make them clear for the reader if we think it might be necessary.



When writing, as well as asking ‘Have I got the information across?’, you also have to ask ‘Have I got the information across in a clear and interesting form?’ To help yourself answer these questions, keep in mind the following principles of communication.

- 1. *The clarity principle*  
Make everything clear to your reader.
- 2. *The reality principle*  
Assume that your reader has a knowledge of the world and does not have to be told everything.

When judging whether you have been successful in conveying information about a process, the decisions you make about whether to use *sequencers*, and which ones to use, will be particularly important. Sequencers, such as *then*, *next*, *after this*, make clear the sequence in which events, or stages in a process, occur.

The table below gives some common sequencers used when describing a process:

<i>Beginning</i>	<i>Middle steps</i>	<i>End</i>
First	Second(ly)	Lastly
Firstly	Third(ly) (etc.)	Finally
To begin with	Next	
Initially	Then	
	Subsequently	
	After this	
	Before this	
	At the same time	
	(etc.)	

The sequencers are usually placed at, or near, the beginning of a sentence. This is quite logical when you consider that sequencers only work as signposts for the reader if they give *advance* warning of the need to recognise relationships.

Using the clarity principle, you might decide to use a sequencer to make each step of the process clear. On the other hand, using the reality principle, you might decide that sequencers are not needed because the process is described in natural time order and the reader’s knowledge of the world will make the sequence clear to her or him.

**Task 3**

Look at the text below, and with a partner discuss which, if any, of the sequencers it contains are really necessary and if any are, why?

One of the earliest attempts at solar heating was the Dover House, designed by Dr Maria Tilkes and Eleanor Raymond, and built in 1949. In this house, energy from the sun is absorbed by a large area of blackened metal sheets covered by double plates of glass. *Next*, the heat is carried away by air circulating behind the metal sheets. *After this*, it is stored chemically in large tanks containing Glauber's salt, a given volume of which can hold eight and a half times more heat than water. *Finally*, a fan blows the hot air from the storage to the various rooms in the house.

(Adapted from D. Dickson *Alternative Technology and the Politics of Technical Change*)

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In general, readers expect that a process description will follow natural time order. When this happens, the reality principle suggests that there is little need for explicit sequencers. However, there are cases where the use of sequencers is absolutely necessary - when a writer leaves the real sequence in order to highlight an important point (i.e. when the process is not described in the order that it actually occurs in). In such cases, the clarity principle demands that sequencers make the correct order explicit.

#### **Task 4**

*The following text describes the process of making new laws in the United Kingdom; it is a more detailed description than most of those you have met so far. Notice that the first paragraph is introductory, and the description of the process does not begin until the second paragraph. Read the text carefully and underline all the sequencers, of any type, that you find in it.*

### **How Parliament Makes New Laws**

1. New laws can originate in either the House of Lords or the House of Commons. A law which is being proposed is called a 'bill' until it is passed; then it becomes an 'act' of parliament.

2. To begin with the bill goes through the first reading. This just means that the title of the bill is announced and a time is set for it to be discussed. After this the second reading is really a debate. The bill may be rejected at this stage. If it is an important bill its rejection may cause the government to resign. On the other hand it may be passed, or there may be no vote. When this happens, it goes to the committee stage,

where a small group of members (perhaps between 30 and 50), meet and discuss it in detail. When the committee has finished its work, it reports the bill with all the changes that have been made, to the House. This is called the report stage. The bill is discussed again, and more changes can be made. Then the bill is taken for its third reading, and a vote is taken. When it is passed, it goes to the other House, i.e. not the one it originated in. So if a bill started in the House of Commons it would at this point go to the House of Lords.

3. When the bill has been passed by both Houses, it goes to the Queen for the Royal Assent. A bill may not become law until the Royal Assent has been given, but this does not mean that the Queen decides on what will become law and what will not. It is understood that the Queen will always accept bills which have been passed by both Houses. When the Queen's consent has been given, the bill becomes an act, and everyone that it affects must obey the new law.

## **8. HOW TO WRITE A CLASSIFICATION**

Classification, also known as division, is familiar and useful to virtually everyone and is employed to various effects by different disciplines. Basically, *classification* means to subdivide a subject into its types, kinds, divisions, or groups. In the life sciences, classification is used to sort animals and plants into genera and species. In anthropology, it is used to group the artifacts of early peoples by developmental techniques. In criticism, it is used to divide English literature into such periods as the Neoclassical, the Romantic, or the Victorian, each of which has distinctly identifying characteristics.

Indeed, an essential hallmark of a logical classification is the use of some distinguishing feature to separate one set of items from another. A type or group can have no meaning if its members do not share some exclusive trait or characteristic not present in others. Thus, in English literature the restraint and formalism in the work of Alexander Pope identify him as belonging to the neoclassical poets, who stressed form and structure over sentiment. A poet like William Wordsworth, whose work reflects a loose and unstructured form but revels in sentiment, would be excluded automatically from that group.

In freshman composition classes, the classification assignment is mainly intended as an exercise in informal thinking. More often than not, it will ask you to exercise some disciplined thought about an event or circumstance from everyday life with which you are likely to be familiar. Classification enables us to see things clearer—to identify the pattern behind

seemingly random events or occurrences and therefore to better control their impact on our lives.

## **Choose a Single Principle for the Classification**

By the principle of a classification, we mean the distinguishing feature used to determine membership in its types, kinds, or groups. For example, to classify your nonrelatives you might use their degree of closeness to you as a classifying principle, arriving at the categories of acquaintances, friends, and intimates. A psychologist might classify people by their body type, be it endomorph, mesomorph, or ectomorph. A geographer might classify the climatic regions of the earth by average annual rainfall. In each case, the classification yields types whose members are all selected by the same single principle.

The principle used to make a classification cannot be trivial, however, or the resulting categories will be meaningless. For example, pharmacology classifies drugs into chemical groups based on their effectiveness in treating certain diseases. That is a significant principle, since it is plainly important for a physician to know which disease can be treated by which drug. On the other hand, a classification of drugs based only on weight correspondingly would be useless and worthless. Similarly, if you wrote an essay classifying your acquaintances by their height, the result most likely would be pointless since height is a random quality that can reveal nothing significant about your choice and range of friendships.

To classify properly, then, your types or groups must result from sorting by means of a significant single principle, and the principle applied must yield pure and important groups or types. An essay classifying rocks according to whether or not they can be skipped across water is of no use to a geologist. On the other hand, an essay classifying rocks by their likely origin or chemical composition could be very useful. One student wrote an essay classifying the life forms found in a tide pool by their colour—a trivial principle that resulted in trivial types. Another student classified these same life forms by their method of propulsion in the water—yielding creatures that floated (plankton and various protozoa), swam (fish and other aquatic animals), crawled (types of crustaceans), or were permanently attached to a rock or reef (members of the Cirripedia subclass of shellfish). The result was both a useful classification and an inventive essay.

## **Keep Your Categories Intact and Separate**

The categories of a classification must not overlap or contain items already contained within another entry. For example, an essay classifying

your nonrelatives by their degree of closeness to you would be flawed if it listed coworkers as a separate category along with acquaintances, friends, and intimates (a coworker could also be an acquaintance, friend, or even an intimate). Here is an excerpt from a classification whose categories overlap:

*Unhappy union workers have four avenues for making their opposition or wishes known to management: protest voiced by the union, organised response to the company, job slowdown, and outright strike. The first of these, protest voiced by the union spokesperson, is likely.*

By “organised response to the company,” the student meant a course of action already subsumed under job slowdown or outright strike.

## **Make the Classification Complete**

A classification is incomplete if it leaves out an important category or type. If you wrote an essay about types of treatment available for corns and calluses of the feet and stated there were two— better-fitting shoes and ointments for softening the affected areas— you would be omitting an important third alternative: surgical removal of corns and calluses. With some classifications, however, especially those based on personal observation or opinion, incompleteness is not and cannot be an issue. For example, Max Eastman wrote an essay in which he argued that there were two types of human nature—the poetic and the practical. But is this true? And can a contrary position/ever be proved? How many types of human nature are there, and how may that alleged number be demonstrated with verifiable certainty? The answer is that no one knows, and that it cannot be. Nor, for that matter, should one even try to drag science or certainty into that kind of speculation. Internal consistency and a forceful presentation is all one can expect from a classifying essay about such a speculative topic.

## **Give Equal Space to Equal Entries**

For the sake of symmetry, a classifying essay must give approximately equal treatment to every category. If you are classifying addictive drugs into four types—narcotics, depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens—you are obliged to write evenly and equally about all four. To spend four pages on narcotics and dismiss the remaining three in a paragraph is to write a badly unbalanced essay that will leave a reader puzzling over its focus.

Remember that classification is chiefly an exercise in thinking. If you have not thought carefully about your categories, if you have been careless in selecting a classifying principle to apply to your subject, your essay is likely to reflect these weaknesses. Time devoted to prethinking and prewriting the classification essay is generally time well spent.

## 9. CLASS RELATIONSHIPS CLASSIFICATION

### Introduction

People try to organise the world around them. One of the ways they do this is by looking for relationships among objects or ideas, and classifying them into groups according to their similarities and differences.

#### **Task 1**

*The following is a set of English words given in no particular order (i.e. a list). Turn this list into a classification by ordering the words into groups. Be prepared to explain why you grouped them as you did:*

lecturer	sleep	manager
son	intelligent	happy
enthuse	dream	scientist
old	sick	printer

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You may have noticed that these data can be classified in several ways. The way you classify depends on what characteristics you think are important. In biology particular characteristics, such as the possession of bones, are used to define groups. Thus, for instance, animals with bones are generally classified as vertebrates. However, if we decided on some other characteristic (e.g. the possession of eyes) we should define a completely different group that included most (but not all) vertebrates, most insects, most crustaceans, some molluscs and some other invertebrates. A common way of classifying data is through a tree diagram.

#### **Task 2**

*The following sentences form a text which refers to the classification chart on page 39. However, except for the first sentence, they are not in the most logical order. Work with another student to try to agree on the best order for the numbered sentences, to form a complete text which fits the organisation of the classification chart.*

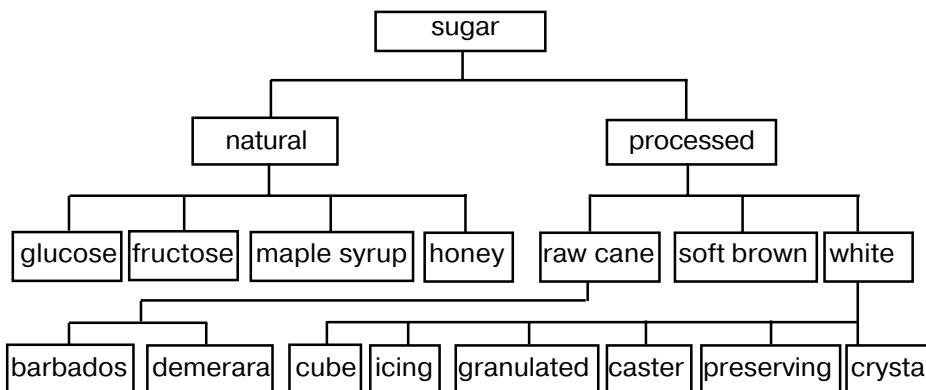
*There are two classes of sugars, natural sugars and processed sugars.*

- i) Fructose and glucose are difficult to buy on their own.
- ii) Raw cane sugar, white sugar and soft brown sugar are produced at different stages in the refining process.

- iii) The most widely consumed sugars are the end-product of the process, the white sugars.
- iv) Maple syrup, which is mostly sucrose and water, is very popular in North America. In Britain, you can buy it in health food shops.
- v) Soft brown sugar is made from either raw cane or white sugar, with molasses, treacle or syrup added.
- vi) Natural sugars are, however, of little significance to the consumer compared with the processed sugars.
- vii) There are two types, Barbados and demerara.
- viii) Honey is available in many forms, but they are all essentially the same, varying only in flavour and price.
- ix) Processed sugars can be classified according to the stage in the process at which they are produced.
- x) Raw cane sugar is an early stage in the process of making white sugar.

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10	
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**DIAGRAM 1.**



## About Writing

Decisions about what characteristics to use in forming a classification are usually partly based on convention (how others did it), and mainly based on your purpose in making the classification.

# Using Grammar in Writing

You should have noticed in this section so far that when we classify, we arrange members of a group, rather than parts relative to a whole. The tables below show some of the most common language used in sentences which have classification as their purpose.

1.

There are

The

} Y {

types

kinds

classes

categories

} of X {

: A, B and C.

. These are A, B and C.

are A, B and C.

2.

X

consists of

can be divided into

} Y {

categories

classes

kinds

types

}

. These are A, B and C.

: A, B and C.

3.

A, B and C are

classes

kinds

types

categories

## Task 3

The table shows three major types of headaches and their symptoms. Write a text classifying the headaches, using the language of tables 1–3 above.

High Blood Pressure	Pain in forehead, sweating, anxiety, nausea, vomiting, confusion.
Allergy	Pressure on both sides of head, in forehead and behind eyes, sneezing, watery eyes.
Sinus	Frontal sinuses (forehead behind eyebrows): pain in forehead, temples, eyes; maxillary sinuses (cheekbones): pain in face, then forehead, upper jaw.

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## 10. HOW TO WRITE A COMPARISON/CONTRAST

Consciously or unconsciously, we spend many of our waking hours engaged in the common thought process known as comparison/contrast. When we *compare*, we look for similarities between two subjects; when we *contrast*, we focus on finding their dissimilarities. But as a practical matter, most comparisons involve a dual search for both likenesses and unlikenesses and seldom are concentrated exclusively on uncovering one or the other. We compare shoes in a store, actors in a play, apartments and houses we have lived in, instructors we have had, books we have read, and parties we have attended. Comparing is fundamental to virtually every judgment, decision, or opinion we form throughout the course of daily life.

The written comparison differs from the mental comparison of daily life in degree rather than in kind. It is likely to be more systematically made, with more forethought, and with greater care and precision. Yet it is essentially the same thought process, involving the scrutiny of two items, ideas, events, people, objects, or concepts for their similarities and differences.

### Choose the Basis of Your Comparison/Contrast

While *comparison*, strictly considered, means showing likenesses between two items, and *contrast* means showing differences, the term *comparison* is commonly used as a catchword for either approach. The basis of a comparison is simply the gauge you use to match up your two subjects. You might compare two friends on the bases of personality, personal appearance, and religious belief. You might compare an apple with an orange for composition of healthful fiber, for cost per pound, or for vitamin C content. To be fair and logical, a comparison/contrast must be made on bases by which the compared items can be judged impartially and equally. You cannot compare one writer's essays with another writer's poetry, but you can compare their literary outputs on the basis of similarity of theme.

Choosing the bases of your comparison/contrast essay requires a great deal of initial prethinking. You should first discern what the bases of your comparison are to be and then list them. If you have the temperament for detailed planning, draw two columns side by side and label each with the name of the item being compared. In the left margin, write down the bases of

your comparison/contrast. Then simply fill in the blanks, moving from one column to the other. A chart comparing sailboats with power boats might look like this:

Bases	Sailboats	Powerboats
Cost:		
Ease of operation:		
Recreational use:		

The chart is a rough comparison/contrast list for sailboats and powerboats structured on the bases of cost, ease of operation, and recreational use. To plan your comparison/contrast, you merely fill in the blanks under the respective headings (sailboats and powerboats), listing how they compare to or differ from your three chosen bases.

Many writers automatically begin a comparison/contrast by immediately declaring its basis. Consider an example:

I am quite positive that of the two, humor is the more comfortable and livable quality. Humorous persons, if their gift is genuine and not a mere shine upon the surface, are always agreeable companions and they sit through the evening best. They have pleasant mouths turned up at the corners. To these corners the great Master of marionettes has fixed strings, and he holds them in his nimblest fingers to twitch them at the slightest jest. But the mouth of the merely witty man is hard and sour until the moment of its discharge. Nor is the flash from a witty man always comforting, whereas a humorous man radiates a general pleasure and is like another candle in the room.

CHARLES BROOKS, “*On the Difference Between Wit and Humor*”

The comparison/contrast in this paragraph between wit and humor is made on the basis of what the writer calls their “more comfortable and livable quality.”

**Use Words and Phrases That Clearly Draw a Comparison/Contrast**

Strict comparisons are drawn by using such words and phrases as *like*, *similar to*, *in comparison*, *likewise*. Contrasts are etched by using such words and phrases as *in contrast*, *yet*, *however*, *but*, *on the other hand*, *on the contrary*, *although*, and *otherwise*. Any comparison/contrast may be given a graceful and elegant turn if you are deft in the use of appropriate words and phrases. The following is an example:

Lenin, with whom I had a long conversation in Moscow in 1920, was, superficially, very *unlike* Gladstone, *and yet*, allowing for the difference in time and place and creed, the two men *had much in common*. *To begin with the differences*: Lenin was cruel, which Gladstone was not; Lenin had no respect for tradition, *whereas* Gladstone had a great deal; Lenin considered all means legitimate for securing the victory of his party, *whereas for* Gladstone politics was a game with certain rules that must be observed [italics added ].

BERTRAND RUSSELL, "*Lenin and Gladstone*"

The italicized expressions mark the twists and turns in the author's unfolding thoughts.

## **Draw the Comparison/Contrast Either Between or Within Paragraphs**

The foregoing excerpt is an example of a comparison/contrast drawn wholly within a single paragraph. This kind of organisation is used mainly in brief comparisons or in comparisons that touch lightly on several minor points of similarity or difference between subjects. A comparison also may be organised in separate paragraphs that alternately match up compared subjects on a particular basis. Here is an example:

Ross was an oak of prudence and industry. He rarely drank and never smoked. He excelled at everything he did. He had married his hometown sweetheart, was proudly faithful to her and produced four fine children. After a sampling of success on both coasts he had gone home to the Indiana of his parents and childhood friends.

Tom Heggen had a taste for low life. He had been divorced, had no children and shared bachelor quarters in New York with an ex-actor and screenwriter, Dorothy Parker's estranged husband, Alan Campbell. Tom was a drinker and a pill addict. He turned up regularly at the fashionable restaurant "21," usually bringing along a new girl, a dancer or an actress.

JOHN LEGGETT, "*Ross and Tom*"

The lifestyles of these two writers form the basis of comparison and each comparison forms a separate paragraph.

The decision on whether to draw a comparison within a single paragraph or between separate paragraphs depends largely on personal style and on the complexity of the basis used to compare the two subjects. You may use either method, both, or alternate them and so add a touch of variety to your essay.

## Deal Fairly and Equally with Both Sides

Although perhaps too obvious to be highlighted as a separate point, it is an odd fact that many otherwise good comparisons are ruined by the writer's slighting one side while lopsidedly favouring the other. Fairness requires that you expend equal amounts of ink on both sides of a comparison. If you are comparing Samuel Johnson's dictionary of the English language with Noah Webster's later effort in North America, you should not write two pages on Johnson's work and only one on Webster's. Nor will you be tempted to make this mistake if you plan your essay with the chart recommended earlier.

## 11. ORGANISING TEXTS GENERAL-SPECIFIC

### Introduction

So far, we have concentrated on a number of purposes for which writing is used. We have examined some functions of informational writing, such as defining, and describing spatial relations, and have practised some organisational and grammatical areas which are particularly useful in expressing such ideas.

In this section we are going to study an organisational principle of informational writing which can be used in organising texts which have a wide variety of purposes. This is the *general-specific* pattern.

Generalisations are very important in writing. The sentence you have just read is a generalisation and exemplifies one important function of generalisations: they are very useful in starting off a piece of writing / paragraph.

### Task 1

*With a partner, look at the following statements and identify:*

- a) the most general statement;*
- b) the most specific statement.*

- i) The results of an Edinburgh survey show that good language learners cope effectively with the emotional and motivational problems of language learning.
- ii) Most surveys show that many good language learners select goals and subgoals for themselves.
- iii) The majority of good language learners in the Edinburgh survey see language learning as a social process.
- iv) In a survey of good language learners taken in Edinburgh, 52%

said they found talking to themselves to be a good way of learning how to talk in a foreign language.

- v) One good learner, interviewed in the Edinburgh survey, claimed to have learned his English from watching television.

Generalisations allow a writer to introduce many points of detail in one statement (the generalisation). Some or all of these can be developed later in the text, using information structures appropriate to the task, e.g. classifying, defining.

## **Task 2**

*Compose generalisations to cover the following sets of details.*

- a) Humans eat beef, pork, mutton, fish, fowl, etc.

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- b) Hinduism is a religion. Buddhism is a religion. Islam is a religion. Christianity is a religion.

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- c) Townsend's extensive study of poverty in the United Kingdom indicated that 57.2 per cent of those in households in poverty were women. In 1971 only 28 per cent of female employees, as against 62 per cent of male employees, were covered by an occupational pension scheme.

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- d) Computers are good at solving numerical problems. Computers are not good at tasks requiring common sense. Computers are good at selecting information. Computers are not good at tasks requiring imagination.

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## About Writing

Generalisations are very powerful statements in that they can represent a large number of specific details. However, this necessarily means that they are rather vague. For example, if you read the generalisation 'Reactions against technology are not new', you would expect the writer to support the generalisation with some examples of 'old' reactions against technology. The text would have a *general-specific* pattern.

### Task 3

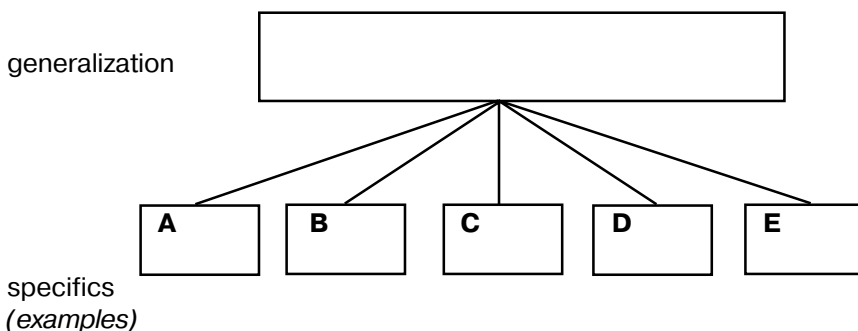
Read this text and complete the diagram by filling in the numbers of appropriate sentences. You may need to use some numbers more than once.

## Uses of Computers

(1) There are some tasks for which computers are eminently suited, and others at which they are no good at all. (2) We know that they are very good at carrying out large computations -number crunching. (3) They are very good at storing information (a passive task), and selecting parts of it (an active task). (4) They are very good at trying an enormous number of possible combinations of conditions because they can sift through the possibilities at immense speed.

(5) Computers can run highly complex process plants in industry, for example, in chemical works. (6) Raw materials are fed in at one end, and a product emerges at the other; in between there may be an infinity of combinations of temperatures, pressures and intermediate products, maintaining the balance of which is essential to getting what you want out of the plant. (7) The whole process can be controlled by a computer, which monitors the variables, and makes adjustments accordingly.

(R. Dale and I. Williamson. *The Myth of the Micro*)



#### Task 4

Rearrange the following sentences so that the resultant text follows a general-specific pattern.

i) The defeat of France in the Napoleonic Wars is claimed to have been followed by a period of rampant mysticism including a wide resurgence of interest in astrology.

ii) George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, an equally damning indictment of the totalitarian possibilities contained in advanced technology, was written in the years immediately following the Second World War.

iii) Reactions against technology are not new.

iv) Throughout history man has been warned that he was creating forces he would be unable to control, that machines would eventually take over the planet and demand the total obedience of the human race (if, indeed, it was still allowed to exist), that to place one's faith in science and technology was to make a pact, like Faust, with the devil.

v) Opposition to reason and to rationality, frequently embracing attacks on science and technology, has in particular been experienced by societies that have suffered a major upheaval or catastrophe.

vi) Oswald Spengler captured the imagination of a defeated Germany in 1920 with the publication of his *Decline of the West* and his prediction that 'Faustian man will be dragged to death by his own machine'.

(D. Dickson. *Alternative Technology*)

1		2		3		4		5		6	
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Notice that, in this text (when the sentences have been rearranged), there is more than one sentence of generalisation before the examples appear. The general sentences become more and more concrete until the specific examples are introduced by the phrase 'in particular'.

### Using Grammar in Writing

In written English, the order in which groups of words appear makes a difference, sometimes a dramatic difference, to meaning. In speaking, we can make our meaning clear by repeating the same idea in different words, or by putting voice stress on certain words, but when we write, the words as they appear must be clear. Sometimes it is difficult to decide what word order to use, especially when referring to several things in the same sentence. Look at this example:

*The morning when we were due to leave came at last.*

*The morning came at last when we were due to leave.*

In speech, you could say either sentence and the hearer would probably know what you meant. In writing, however, you cannot take such a

chance on being understood - only the first sentence is absolutely clear. A simple principle to help you decide on the order of word groups is: What is most closely related in meaning should be closest within the sentence.

### **Task 5**

*Explain to a partner the differences in meaning between the two sentences in each of the following pairs.*

- a) Mary opened the door for the postman in a nightdress. Mary, in a nightdress, opened the door for the postman.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) We rent rooms on the beach here. We rent rooms here on the beach.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) By far the most widespread chemical elements are oxygen and silicon in the Earth's crust.  
By far the most widespread chemical elements in the Earth's crust are oxygen and silicon.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes more than one word-group order may be acceptable. In the sentence 'I watched him enter the bank through my binoculars', the correct order may be either:

- 1. Through my binoculars                      I watched him      enter the bank.  
or
- 2. I watched him                      through my binoculars      enter the bank.

Here 1 is better because 'I watched him' is closely related to *both* the other word groups. However, 1 gives emphasis to 'my binoculars' rather than 'I watched him', because the first part of an English sentence is considered emphatic: if you wanted to emphasise 'I watched him' you would choose 2.

### **Task 6**

*Underneath the following six sentences you will find six groups of words. Correctly add a different word group to each of the six sentences, making sure you follow the principle of word-group order given above.*

- a) He could not find a job.
- b) In underdeveloped countries, the shortfall in food production in relation to population growth increases more and more.
- c) The use of robots may change the workers' views.
- d) People who tell you what you already know are bores.



- e) The Trustees have decided to make available a sum of money for a travelling scholarship.
- f) Coale and Hoover estimate that the proportion of children under fifteen in India in 1984 will be a third of the total population of the subcontinent.

_____ <i>in increasing numbers</i>	_____ <i>taking a low estimate only</i>
<u>a</u> _____ <i>being over fifty</i>	_____ <i>such as those on the Indian subcontinent</i>
_____ <i>at great length</i>	_____ <i>each year</i>

When making decisions about the order of words in a sentence, it is also necessary to plan how the sentence will fit in with the preceding ones. Look at these two versions of the same text.

1. John was born in 1930. He lost his job this year. Being over 50, he cannot easily find another.
2. John was born in 1930. He lost his job this year. He cannot easily find another, being over 50.

Text 1 is preferable to text 2 for two reasons:

- 'Being over 50' is known information (born in 1930) and known information is usually placed at the beginning of a sentence.
- Text 2 has every sentence beginning with John; it lacks variety.

### **Task 7**

*Add the following expressions to the text below. The letter before each expression tells you to which sentence it belongs. Punctuate the completed text as necessary by adding capital letters, commas, etc.*

- a) as Egypt's population continues to expand
- b) from 1960 to 1976
- c) (both birth and death rates are lower than in rural areas)
- d) in the areas
- e) meanwhile
- f) by the year 2.000
- g) by 2025
- h) but

## **Cairo Population Outlook**

- (a) The urban centres suffer the additional burden of migration from the rural areas. (b) The percentage of Egypt's population living in Cairo rose from 14% to 22%, about half of the country's urban population. (c) The natural increase in Cairo is 2.5% annually, with migration adding

(Cairo Today)

[illegible]

## Introduction

## Task 1

*For displaying similarities and differences, the matrix is very useful. Look at this example, then make the comparisons and contrasts requested below.*

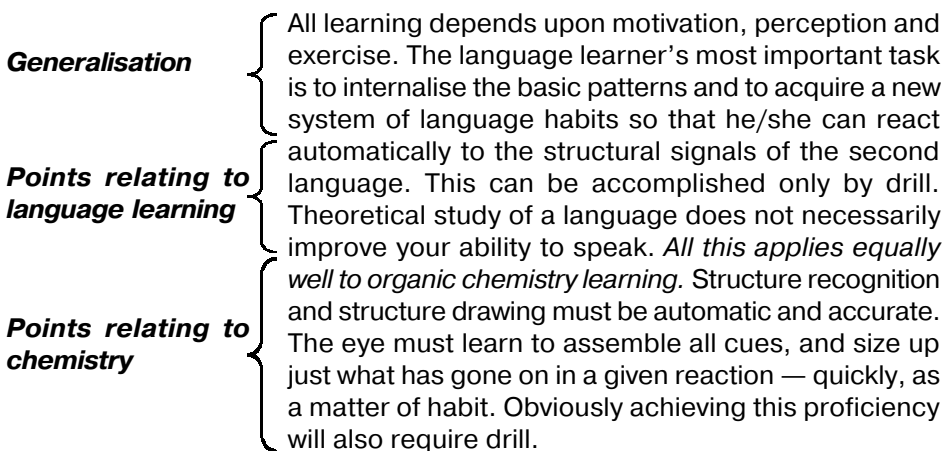
<i>make</i>	<i>price</i>	<i>country of origin</i>	<i>engine size</i>	<i>m.p.g.*</i>
Toyota	£5,200	Japan	999 cc	48
Volkswagen	£6,000	West Germany	1272 cc	40
Ford	£4,900	USA	1118 cc	48
Nissan	£5,200	Japan	988 cc	52

\*m.p.g. = miles per gallon

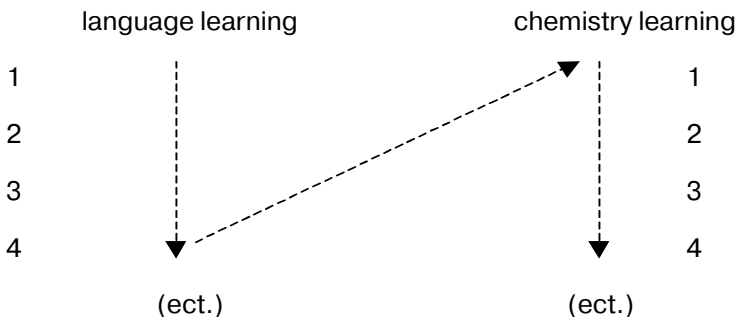
- Which two cars have the same petrol consumption?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Which two cars have the most characteristics in common?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Which two cars have the most differing characteristics?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Which Japanese car would be the better value?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Which car would be the best value?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## About Writing

There are two main ways of logically developing a description based on comparison/contrast. The following text uses the first of these patterns, as you can see from the diagram on page 52.



## Pattern 1



As can be seen from the diagram, the text first deals with language learning, giving all the available information, and then shows its similarity to the learning of organic chemistry, giving all the available information on that. The linking expression 'All this applies equally . . .' shows the comparison relationship between the two sets of details.

The next text, in contrast, is organised according to the second pattern, making its comparisons point by point, in pairs:

### **Generalisation**

#### **management (1)**

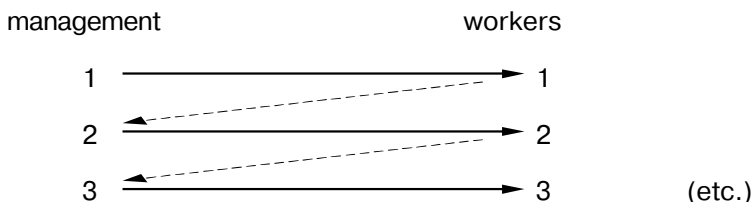
#### **strikers (1)**

#### **management (2)**

#### **strikers (2)**

Television is generally biased against the workers. You can prove this any night by watching the news. When a strike is reported, a management representative will be interviewed in favourable surroundings (e.g. in his office). The strikers, however, will be interviewed all together out in the open. The manager will emerge as a polite, responsible, authoritative person, whereas the workers will emerge as people who shout and who all speak at the same time (as impolite and aggressive).

## Pattern 2



Whereas Pattern 1 moves vertically, Pattern 2 moves horizontally. Both patterns are equally acceptable, depending on the type and purpose of the text you are writing. Some people find Pattern 2 clearer because of the way it keeps reminding you of the comparison/contrast relationship. Sometimes, however, such continual reminders can become boring for the reader.

**Task 2**

Look again at the matrix (Task 1) showing the price, engine size and m.p.g. of four cars.

a) Which organisational pattern would lead to the most easily understood text about the cars?

b) Write a text which makes clear the relative economy of the cars.

c) Compare your text with that of another student.

When you compare or contrast two or more items, you need to have a *measure* or *measures* on which to base each comparison/contrast. For example, in the ‘cars’ matrix the measures were price, country of origin, engine size and m.p.g.

**Task 3**

Study the following matrix, which shows the desirable and undesirable effects of some of the scientific developments of the last hundred years. Then write a text in which you discuss the desirability of innovation. Use examples from the table to support your arguments. Use either Pattern 1 or Pattern 2.

Innovation	Long-term effects of innovation	
	desirable	undesirable
a) antibiotics	diphtheria and other infections controlled	development of resistant strains of bacteria
b) nuclear power	long-term energy supply assured	risk of radiation from system faults, leakage of stored wastes

<i>Innovation</i>	<i>Long-term effects of innovation</i>	
	<i>desirable</i>	<i>undesirable</i>
c) juggernaut lorries	reduced haulage costs	congestion on narrow roads and in towns, noise
d) high-rise flats	higher densities of housing made possible	loneliness, communities broken up, vandalism

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## Using Grammar in Writing

There are many ways of expressing comparison and contrast; which way you use depends on your purpose. Let us compare the following sentences:

1. *The Ford Sierra is cheaper than the Volkswagen Scirocco.*
2. *The Ford Sierra costs £6,600 whereas the Volkswagen Scirocco costs £7,100.*

Both sentences say that the Ford Sierra is cheaper than the Volkswagen. However, they do this in different ways. Sentence 1 directly states that the Ford is cheaper than the Volkswagen but gives no evidence in the form of prices, whereas sentence 2 gives us the prices and indirectly states that the Ford is cheaper. Sentence 1 would be appropriate if the prices were already known to the reader (perhaps given in a table). Sentence 2 would be appropriate if the prices were not already known.

### Task 4

*Study the following sentences and:*

- a) circle the markers of comparison/contrast, as in the example below;
- b) *add at least two other sentences of your own, using different markers;*  
(Markers are the words that tell you this is a comparison/contrast.)
- c) read the sentences some other students have written.

### Comparison

- i) **Both** tobacco **and** alcohol are injurious to health.
- ii) One language is as good as another.
- iii) Cairo is no bigger than many European cities.
- iv) This book is the same price as many others.
- v) \_\_\_\_\_
- vi) \_\_\_\_\_
- vii) \_\_\_\_\_

### Contrast

- i) Arabic is read from right to left **whereas** English is read from left to right.
- ii) The Eiffel Tower is higher than the highest pyramid.
- iii) While taxis are expensive, public transport is cheap.
- iv) Cairo differs from London in density of population.
- v) \_\_\_\_\_
- vi) \_\_\_\_\_
- vii) \_\_\_\_\_

In the sentences above you have seen examples of comparison and of contrast within sentence structures. Table 1 on this page shows the common ways in which comparisons or contrasts can be expressed within sentences.

**TABLE 1**

Comparison within sentences		Contrast within sentences	
A is unlike B A and B are similar A is similar to B A resembles B	with respect to cost.	A is like B A and B differ A is different from B A contrasts with B	with respect to cost.
Both A and B cost £100. A is as costly as B. A is no more expensive than B. A costs the same as B.		A costs £100 whereas B costs £150. A costs £100, while B costs £150. A costs £100, but B costs £150. B is more expensive than A. A is not as expensive as B.	

As Table 2 shows, comparisons and contrasts can be made between sentences as well.

**TABLE 2**

<i>Comparison between sentences</i>	<i>Contrast between sentences</i>
<p>A is expensive to buy. <i>Similarly</i>, it is expensive to operate.</p> <p>A is expensive to buy. <i>Likewise</i>, it is expensive to operate.</p> <p>A is expensive to buy. <i>Correspondingly</i>, it is expensive</p>	<p>A is expensive to buy. <i>On the other hand</i>, it is cheap to operate.</p> <p>A is expensive to buy. <i>In contrast</i>, it is cheap to operate.</p> <p>A is expensive to buy. <i>Conversely</i>, it is cheap to operate.</p>

**Task 5**

*Study the following sentences and:*

- a) circle the markers of comparison/contrast;*
- b) write at least two other pairs of sentences, using different markers;*
- c) read the sentences some other students have written.*

*Comparison*

- i) Learning to drive a car requires a lot of patience. Similarly, learning a language requires a considerable amount of patience.
- ii) Edinburgh as a major tourist centre invests large sums of money in preserving its ancient buildings. Cairo, likewise, has discovered that well-preserved ancient buildings are a considerable tourist attraction.

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*Contrast*

- i) Japanese industry invests considerable sums of money in research and development. In contrast, British investment in this area is low.
- ii) The majority of Egyptians practise Islam. On the other hand, there is also a large Christian minority.

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### **Task 6**

*With a partner, look again at the text you wrote on the desirable and undesirable effects of scientific developments (Task 3). Discuss how your text can be improved by using suitable grammar techniques and logical connectors to make the information clearer. Then rewrite your text individually.*

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### **Task 7**

*You are going to read a text which contrasts the 'Western' idea of personal space with that of 'Easterners'. However, you only see one sentence at a time, and you must build up the text yourself by choosing the sentence which fits best with what comes before.*

*Read the beginning of the text and choose one sentence from the two which follow it. Keep choosing one sentence from each two, continuing the text as you think the writer might have written it.*

#### *Personal Space and Culture*

Hall (1959) and others have commented on the different sense of space that Westerners and Easterners entertain.

*(continue with one of the following)*

- a) When they speak with each other, Easterners tend to stand closer.
- b) Easterners tend to stand closer when they speak to each other.

*(continue with one of the following)*

- c) Westerners carry with them a spatial cocoon, on the other hand, that they do not like to see violated.
- d) Westerners, on the other hand, carry with them a spatial cocoon that they do not like to see violated.

*(continue with one of the following)*

- e) By a system of keeping reasonable distances between themselves and others, Westerners fill up beaches, buses — all public places in fact.

- f) Westerners fill up beaches, buses — all public places in fact — by a system of keeping reasonable distances between themselves and others.

*(continue with one of the following)*

- g) Deliberately choosing places near each other and even near crowded food stands or exits, an Egyptian beach fills up by “clumps”.
- h) An Egyptian beach fills up by “clumps”, people deliberately choosing places near each other and even near crowded food stands or exits.

*(continue with one of the following)*

- i) They enjoy the movement around them of other people and like to watch and interact with their neighbours.
- j) Other people moving around them they enjoy and like to watch and interact with their neighbours.

*(continue with one of the following)*

- k) By not speaking to those around them, Westerners forced to sit near each other effect privacy.
- l) Westerners forced to sit near each other effect privacy by not speaking to those around them.

*(continue with one of the following)*

- m) During illness the Westerner’s desire for privacy becomes strongest.
- n) The Westerner’s desire for privacy becomes strongest during illness.

*(continue with one of the following)*

- o) Then dominating the social context is his or her need to retreat and “sleep it off”.
- p) Then his or her need to retreat and “sleep it off” dominates the social context.

*(continue with one of the following)*

- q) Egyptians, as might be expected, feel differently.
- r) Egyptians feel differently, as might be expected.

*(continue with one of the following)*

- s) They want the support of others, when they feel most vulnerable.

t) When they feel most vulnerable, they want the support of others.

(Adapted from A.B. Rugh *Family in Contemporary Egypt*)

### 13. HOW TO WRITE A CAUSAL ANALYSIS

The *causal analysis essay* either explains cause or predicts effect. *Explaining cause* means analysing the reasons underlying an event that already has occurred. Predicting effect means gauging the consequences of an event that has yet to occur. The following schematic clarifies the difference between cause and effect:

Cause (past) <— Situation —> Effect (future)

A causal analysis to explain the sinking of the *Titanic* therefore would inquire into why the ocean liner struck the iceberg, why the water-tight compartments failed to keep her afloat, and why she did not carry enough lifeboats to save all the passengers. On the other hand, if you wrote an essay based on the question “What are the likely consequences of a modern ocean liner striking an iceberg in the North Atlantic?” you would be analysing effect.

The essay that analyses cause or predicts effect (*causal analysis* is a blanket term that refers to both) is an exercise in thinking and is thus prone to numerous logical flaws. Cause is no easy subject, neither is effect. Both are abstract concepts that require of the writer a careful and methodical turn of mind.

#### Be Specific in Your Analysis but Not Dogmatic

A *common mistake in analysing cause* is the confusion of dogmatic beliefs with genuine answers. Some people think that excessive television viewing is the cause of violent behavior, that declining church membership is the prime reason behind the epidemic of failed marriages, that sparing the rod inevitably spoils the child. We do not know if any of these assertions is true; definitive scientific answers are still pending. So if you wrote a paper flatly supporting any one of these assertions without providing substantial evidence for your position, you would have based the thesis mainly on dogmatic belief.

In fact, complex problems are seldom resolved by dogma. Because most events have not one cause but several converging causes, it is a simplistic misunderstanding of reality to think otherwise. The following paragraph, for example, rashly asserts an insupportable cause for the declining birthrate:

Abortion has led to consequences that were unforeseen in *Roe V. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision that legalised abortions. Abortion led to a decline in birthrate from 72.5 million during the postwar period to 56.6 million between 1965 and 1980. Because of abortion, between 1975 and 1985 there was a 13% drop in the number of schoolchildren between the ages of 6 and 18. One demographic analyst predicts that because of the decline in birthrate, during the 1990s the housing industry will be “tearing its hair out.” He also predicts enormous problems with the funding of Social Security.

But blaming the decline in U.S. birthrate solely on abortion ignores other significant causes: the advent of the pill and of other effective contraceptive means; the increase in career opportunities for women, which has led many to postpone childbearing; and the shift away from the traditional family.

As a model for asserting cause, we recommend the cautious and delicate reasoning in Oliver Sacks’s essay, “The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat”. In struggling to grasp the causes behind the evolution of a brain-damaged patient’s art form from representational to abstract, Sacks reports that the patient’s wife bluntly told him: “Ach, you doctors, you’re such philistines! Can you not see *artistic development*—how he renounced the realism of his earlier years, and advanced into abstract, non-representational art?” Consider how Sacks ponders the causes behind the strange evolution of the patient’s art:

And yet, I wondered, was she not partly right? For there is often a struggle, and sometimes, even more interestingly, a collusion between the powers of pathology and creation. Perhaps, in his cubist period, there might have been both artistic and pathological development, colluding to engender an original form; for, as he lost the concrete, so he might have gained in the abstract, developing a greater sensitivity to all the structural elements of line, boundary, contour—an almost Picasso-like power to see, and equally depict, those abstract organisations embedded in, and normally lost in, the concrete.... Though in the final pictures, I feared, there was only chaos and agnosia.

OLIVER SACKS, “*The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*”

Here we get no dogmatic assertions, but a careful weighing of probable causes.

Being cautious does not mean being wishy-washy, straddling the fence, or loading your prose with a wagon train of qualifiers (humble hedgers) such as *In my opinion’s*, *I think’s*, and *It is only my personal view’s*.

Mainly, it means sticking to the tale told by the evidence and drawing no hasty conclusions based solely on personal and insupportable belief.

## **Use Words and Phrases That Indicate a Cause or Effect Relationship**

If you are analysing cause, you should come right out and say so by using various phrases and expressions that make plain your purpose and thinking. Such words and phrases as *because*, *reason why*, *the effect of*, and so on, can make clear to the reader what you are about. Consider this passage, for example, in which the writer uses the italicised phrases and their words to clarify the intent of the essay:

Anyone who claims that it is impossible to get rid of the random violence of today's mean streets may be telling the truth, but is also missing the point. Street crime may be normal in the U.S., but it is not inevitable at such advanced levels, and the fact is that *there are specific reasons* for the nation's incapacity to keep its street crime down. Almost all *these reasons can be traced* to the American criminal justice system. It is not that there are no mechanisms in place to deal with American crime, merely that the existing ones are impractical, inefficient, anachronistic, uncooperative, and often lead to as much civic destruction as they are meant to curtail.

*Why does the system fail?* For one thing, the ...

ROGER ROSENBLATT, *"Why The Justice System Fails"*

It also does no harm to specify in the working title that your essay is an attempt at causal analysis. In the preceding example it is evident from the title that reasons will be given for the breakdown of the criminal justice system. Effective titles can contribute markedly to a reader's understanding of a writer's purpose, and thus make an essay easier to follow.

## **Focus on the Immediate Rather Than the Remote Cause**

The poet may well be right that we cannot pluck a flower without disturbing a star. Many Eastern religions adhere to just such unseen relationships between and among all things—a view that tends considerably to muddle our Western view of proximate and actual causation. However, if such invisible bonds exist, their effect appears so inconsequential that one may safely spend a lifetime uprooting row after row of flowers without causing the faintest heavenly quiver.

Common sense therefore suggests that any causal analysis be focused on the nearest reasonable and available cause that explains an event or effect, giving only occasional honorable mention to more distant possibilities. For example, you may argue that one reason for a midair collision between a commercial jet and a private plane is the FAA's firing of hundreds of striking experienced controllers and replacing them with newly trained recruits. Even so, the more immediate cause may be the pilot error that brought the private aircraft blundering into the restricted airspace properly occupied by the commercial jet. But for that blunder, the collision would not have occurred. Perhaps a more experienced controller would have spotted the converging aircraft and prevented the disaster. *Perhaps*, however, is only speculation. What is definitely known and established is that many other aircraft, under the guidance of the new controllers, have passed one another safely in the skies. That these two collided must be, therefore, the result of something more immediate (a more proximate cause) than the air traffic controllers' inexperience. To determine that *thing* and explain it is to focus your analysis properly, and your essay, on the immediate rather than the remote cause.

## **14. LINEAR RELATIONSHIPS. CAUSE <-> EFFECT**

### **Introduction**

The attempt to analyse cause and effect is at the heart of all scientific disciplines. It is also a central concern of our daily lives. We see effects all the time: causes are harder to identify. Parents try to discover the cause of their children's behaviour (effects); political and economic experts speculate about the cause(s) of unemployment; the effects of drought in Africa are easy to see, but experts do not agree about the cause.

Cause and effect is a linear relationship; in real life causes always precede effects, as the following example shows.

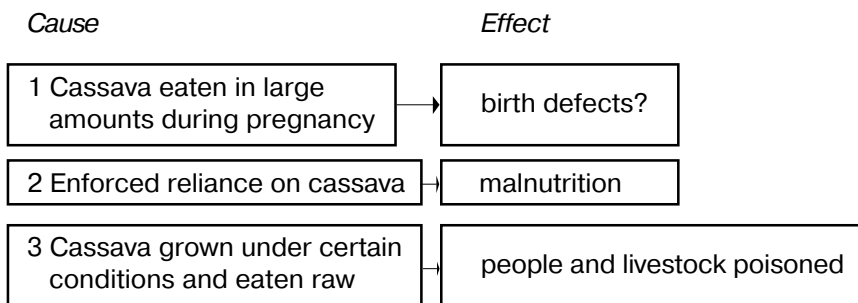
### **Is Cassava at the Root of Birth Defects?**

Cassava is the staple food of millions of people in Africa, Asia and South and Central America. Its swollen tuberous root can be boiled and mashed or grated to produce a meal known as "farinha" in Brazil and "garri" in Nigeria, which can be cooked in small cakes. The root is also the source of the manufactured commodity, tapioca. A plot of cassava can be insurance against famine, because the crop can be left in the ground for two or three years without deterioration of the tubers and be almost immune to locust attack. But recent findings suggest that cassava may be responsible for birth defects.

It has other serious disadvantages. The tubers consist almost entirely of starch and are particularly low in protein, so enforced reliance on cassava leads to serious malnutrition. To make matters worse, some varieties, when grown under certain conditions of soil and climate, develop a high prussic acid content and become extremely poisonous to people and livestock if eaten raw. These tubers have to be laboriously prepared for consumption by prolonged and repeated boiling.

The new danger has emerged over the past few years in Nigeria. Doctors have begun to suspect that cassava, if eaten in large amounts during pregnancy, may cause deformities in the developing fetus; there appears to be a correlation between the cassava intake of pregnant women and the occurrence of various kinds of brain or other neuronal malformations in their babies.

*(New Scientist)*



### **Task 1**

*Make a note of four expressions used by the writer in the 'Cassava' text to show a causal relationship.*

## **About Writing**

Causes are very difficult to pin down with any degree of certainty. Firstly, the existence of a clear time relationship between two events (two events happening during the same period of time) does not necessarily mean that one is the cause of the other. Secondly, it is easy to confuse effect with cause. Even if the two events are so closely related in time that we can show that relationship statistically (i.e. we have a statistical correlation) it may be that both events are effects of the same cause: we must be careful not to make assumptions.

## Task 2

Discuss the following in groups of three or four students.

a) There is a high positive statistical correlation between the asphalt on city streets being soft and people suffering from heatstroke. Does soft asphalt somehow cause heatstroke? If not, what *is* the relationship?

b) There is a high positive statistical correlation between the number of storks seen nesting in French villages and the number of births (human) recorded in the same communities. Do storks somehow cause babies to be born? Is there any cause <-> effect relationship here?

c) Many pop stars suffer from partial deafness. Does poor hearing cause them to become pop stars? If not, what *is* the relationship?

This difficulty in assigning cause and effect is reflected in the fourth basic principle of communication:

*The honesty principle*

Only say (or write) that for which you have evidence.

When you examine it, it is a very sensible principle, but one which is not always observed by many writers who prefer sweeping statements to carefully considered conclusions. An example of the honesty principle at work can be seen in the following conclusion from the text 'Is Cassava at the Root of Birth Defects?'

'But recent findings *suggest* that cassava *may be responsible* for birth defects.'

The use of the expressions *suggest* and *may be responsible* show that the writer's evidence is not 100% certain and, quite rightly, he does not attempt to draw conclusions which he cannot support: he is being honest with his readers. We have all observed someone, when speaking, 'bend' the truth to make their own position seem more favourable. They are much less likely to do this in writing, because the written word can more easily be held against them later.

Writers rarely actually lie, but the grammar of English makes it quite easy for them to vary their degree of commitment to the truth of a statement.

## Task 3

a) Decide on an order for the sentences below, starting with the one which shows the most commitment to the statement and ending with the one which shows the least commitment.



- vi) It is said that the earth is round.

1		2		3		4		5		6	
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*it is different.*

writers to state their **degree of certainty or degree of commitment.**

Degree of certainty/commitment	Verbs	Adverbs
complete	is (not)  will (not) must (not)	certainly definitely clearly undoubtedly actually
partial <div> <pre> graph LR     A[partial] --&gt; B[strong]     A --&gt; C[less strong]           </pre> </div>	can/cannot could (not) should (not) may (not) might (not)	probably (is) likely/unlikely presumably possibly perhaps
impersonal (i.e. no commitment of self)	It is said that. . . X reports that. . . There is evidence to suggest that. . . (etc.)	

### Task 4

*Rewrite each sentence to 'conform with the honesty principle, i.e. so that its degree of personal or impersonal commitment agrees with reality. Check your rewritten sentences with those of another student.*

- iii) It is likely that inflation will fall to under 1% before the end of the year.

- iv) Launching our nuclear waste into the atmosphere cannot cause any pollution for at least a million years.
- v) Eating apples makes you thin. I know that because my friend eats apples all the time and she is very thin.

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## Using Grammar in Writing

You will have seen several ways of expressing cause <-> effect relationships already in this section. In English, either the cause or the effect can be placed first in the sentence.

### Task 5

*Read the following text and note down three expressions used by the writer to show causality. Label cause (C) and effect (E) in each case to show which comes first in the sentence.*

## Pulmonary Tuberculosis

Pulmonary Tuberculosis is caused by infection of the lungs with the tubercle bacillus. Pulmonary lesions are due almost entirely to the human form of the tubercle bacillus, as distinct from the bovine type, which is mainly responsible for glandular and bovine tuberculosis. The bacilli lodge in the lungs and set up a chronic inflammation of a specific type. They produce areas of infiltration which have a characteristic tubercle formation; hence the name for the organism.

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### Task 6

*In the text in Task 5 there are also some cause <-> effect relationships which are not clearly marked by cause <-> effect expressions. Find these*

*relationships and rewrite the sentences which contain them so that the cause and effect are clearly marked.*

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Cause and effect are obviously closely related. The following sentences contain the same expression, yet one focuses on cause while the other focuses on effect.

- 1. Because of his depression, he overate.  
(cause of) (effect)
- 2. He overate because of his depression.  
(effect of) (cause)

When you write about cause <-> effect, you can decide for yourself whether the cause or the effect is most important to you, and that is what you will focus on.

There are many ways of expressing causal relations in English. The simplest way of showing cause is:

- because* + clause (contains verb)  
e.g. The war started *because the economic situation was desperate*.
- because off/on account of* + phrase (no verb)  
e.g. The war started *because off/on account of the desperate economic situation*.

In speech *because* is the most common way of expressing causal relationships. However, writers use a wide variety of expressions for these relationships.

## 15. HOW TO WRITE WITH EXAMPLES

Primarily of two types, the *example* is a kind of specific detail used to support a writer’s claims. First, there is the brief *example*, mentioned in passing, that adds a dollop of fact and substance to a writer’s opinion. Consider this paragraph:

“Women’s language” shows up in all levels of English. For example, women are encouraged and allowed to make far more precise discriminations in naming colours than men do. Words like “mauve, beige, ecru, aquamarine, lavender” and so on, are unremarkable in a woman’s

active vocabulary, but largely absent from that of most men. I know of no evidence suggesting that women actually see a wider range of colours than men do. It is simply that fine discriminations of this sort are relevant to women's vocabularies, but not to men's; to men, who control most of the interesting affairs of the world, such distinctions are trivial—irrelevant.

ROBIN LAKOFF, "*Women's Language*"

The example is brief, to the point, and gives instances of the kinds of colour words women routinely use but men don't.

Second, there is the *extended example* that consumes entire paragraphs or more in pursuit of explanation. Here is such a case:

Sometimes a writer will contradict what he has already written, and in that case the only thing to do is to investigate what has changed his point of view. For instance, in 1608 Captain John Smith issued a description of his capture by Powhatan, and he made it clear that the Indian chief had treated him with unwavering courtesy and hospitality. In 1624 the story was repeated in Smith's *General History of Virginia*, but the writer's circumstances had changed. Smith needed money, "having a prince's mind imprisoned in a poor man's purse," and he wanted the book to be profitable. Powhatan's daughter, the princess Pocahontas, had recently been in the news, for her visit to England had aroused a great deal of interest among the sort of people that Smith hoped would buy his book. So Smith supplied a new version of the story, in which the once-hospitable Powhatan would have permitted the hero's brains to be dashed out if Pocahontas had not saved his life. It was the second story that achieved fame, and of course it may have been true. But it is impossible to trust it because the desire of the writer is so obviously involved; as Smith said in his prospectus, he needed money and hoped that the book would give "satisfaction."

MARCHETTE CHUTE, "*Getting at the Truth*"

Most of the paragraph is an extended example that amply supports the topic sentence: "Sometimes a writer will contradict what he has already written, and in that case the only thing to do is to investigate what has changed his point of view."

Examples of either kind are used mainly to support generalisations or claims made by a writer about a group, a trend, or a type. But not every assertion or opinion a writer makes needs to be propped up by an example. Modest statements of indisputable fact can stand uncontested or be elaborated on without the formal underpinning of an example. Here the

phrase “for instance” is inappropriate because no example follows, only elaboration.

Without a knowledge of mythology, much of the best literature of our English language cannot be understood. For instance, it cannot be appreciated fully.

Yet “it cannot be appreciated fully” is not really an example, but merely an additional statement of fact. To be an example, the cited material must be a fairly detailed and representative instance that supports the writer’s view. Examples should always be smaller assertions than the statement they are intended to support. Nor will writing “for example” before an assertion automatically make it an example.

When to cite or not to cite an example is a judgment call for every writer. A rule of thumb is that you should give examples whenever making some fairly broad claim or asserting a generality about a type, trend, or group. So if you wrote, “Hot dogs are bad for my digestion,” that statement will need elaboration but not necessarily in the form of an extended example. You might go on to state, “They often contain heavy starches and artificial flavourings.” On the other hand, if you asserted, “Many fast foods are innately unhealthy,” that is a generalisation about a group—fast foods—and should be supported by examples. Perhaps, “For instance, hot dogs are known to cause digestive problems in the elderly and potato chips are loaded with cholesterol. . . .” Similarly, in the preceding extract the writer’s topic sentence made this rather general claim: “Sometimes a writer will contradict what he has already written, and in that case the only thing to do is to investigate what has changed his point of view.” This claim is broad enough to require support by example and should be worded so that the reader immediately wonders: Really? How do writers sometimes contradict what they have already written? And so the stage is set for an example.

## **Vary the Introductions to Your Examples**

Many writers will automatically write “for example” every time they give an example; although a perfectly useful and handy prefatory remark, overuse makes it predictable and drab. By varying your introductions, you can present your examples with occasional flair and wit. A case in point is John Taylor’s essay, “Don’t Blame Me.” He introduces one example by simply writing, “Take the frat-house drug busts in March at the University of Virginia” (paragraph 6). Later, he introduces another example more formally with, “To give but one example . . .” (paragraph 8). Others essayists in this section are equally ingenious. In “Advertisements for Oneself,” the author introduces

examples variously: “Sometimes the ads are quirkily self-conscious” (paragraph 3); “Humor helps, especially in the form that usually gives off the flat glare of . . .” (paragraph 6), which is followed by quotations from humorous ads. Often no prefatory remark is even necessary, especially when it is contextually clear that the material to follow is an example. Reading “Don’t Blame Me” provides many instances of examples that are not formally introduced.

Of course, the point is not to quibble about how an example may be introduced, but merely to suggest alternatives to the cut-and-dried “for example” that most of us immediately think of. So if you can, vary the introductions to your examples; more importantly, however, use examples that are always enlightening and appropriate.

## **Give Appropriate Examples Only**

The example itself is not a point, but a series of facts or an anecdote quoted in support of a point. And it should always directly and palpably support the point you are making. In selecting examples, use common sense. Basically, any cited example should be both appropriate to your point and representative of it. So, if you are writing an essay about the hardships to which dorm students are subjected, an example of your mother’s unreasonable restrictions on dating will not support that point since your mother regulates *your* behavior only. However, if the plumbing is always clogging up or the furnace always conking out, you can comfortably cite such failures as typical examples of the hardships suffered in your dorm.

## **Find Your Examples Before You Begin Writing**

If you know your subject extraordinarily well, this advice is not for you, since examples and facts about it are on the tip of your pen. But most of us are often called on to write about subjects we know only casually and must learn about through research. In such cases, examples ordinarily are found in the preparatory legwork a writer must complete before actually beginning to write. Examples accumulate in the notes and jottings a writer makes during preliminary reading and research. If you neglect such preliminaries and still expect examples to pop into your head while scribbling at your desk, chances are excellent that none will appear. The writer who wails, “I can’t think of anything to say,” is actually saying, “I don’t know enough about this subject.” Make it a point to know enough about your subject and you will rarely find yourself in that unhappy predicament. Do your homework on the subject, familiarise yourself with the literature written about it, and you will almost always enjoy an abundant stock of useful quotable examples at your fingertips.

## 16. HOW TO WRITE A NARRATION

In its most common form, the narration is a story: It has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Something happens and someone is affected. Things are not exactly the same at the end of the story as they were at the start. If they are, the story is either silly and boring or its teller is playing with our expectations. For most of us do indeed have strong expectations about narration. We expect events to occur in a plot based on a climactic sequence; we expect characters to behave with reasonable consistency; and, most of all, we expect to be entertained—whether amused, aroused, or scared out of our wits.

Virtually every reader is familiar with the *common forms of narration*: novel, short story, fable, anecdote, and fairy tale. But there are also less familiar and factual instances of narration, such as the minutes of a meeting or a police report. What such forms share with, say, a novel is the relating of events in some significant and patterned sequence. For the focus of all good narratives is on the connection between successive events and actions. Events flow, action follows action, cause triggers effect, and everything is related by the storyteller in some rational sequence. This telling of events by sequence is a feature unique to the narrative form and distinguishes it, for example, from a causal analysis.

### Decide on Your Point of View

All narrations are either subjective or objective. A *subjective narration* relates your own experience from the I point of view. Here is an example from a student paper: “I recently visited a retirement home and had an experience that taught *me* that growing old gracefully is an art.” On the other hand, an *objective narration* tells someone else’s story using the third person pronouns *he* or *she*: “Kim Pham, an immigrant from Vietnam, worked in a basement sewing uniforms in order to pay for her tuition. One evening she....”

The point of view you should use will depend on the intent of your narration. Telling your own story will necessarily entail use of the subjective point of view; telling someone else’s, the objective. Many instructors, however, discourage subjective writing on the ground that its excessively personal nature does not adequately prepare a student for the kind of writing the workplace demands. Before beginning your narration, then, be sure you are permitted to use either point of view.

### Make a Point

All good narratives make a point. But this point does not have to be profound, preachy, or moralistic. Nor does it have to be an ideological and

farfetched declaration, such as “Communists deserve to go to hell” or “Eat vegetables lest you die.” However, your narration must have a point—be it simple or deep, hinted or trumpeted. Your first date was a repulsive experience; skydiving is not for timid souls; catching a rainbow in a photograph of Stonehenge was a thrilling accomplishment—each of these modest assertions could easily be the point of a separate narration. Proving this point, called the theme, is what endows the narration with movement.

For example, let us take a narration on the perennial theme of how you spent your summer vacation. Your last summer vacation was intolerable and wretched. You hated it. Of all the summer vacations in your life, it was the most beastly. That is your beginning point; you put it down in a thesis:

Last summer was the most dreadful, horrible, and boring summer of my life.

You are off to a good start because you have made an unmistakable point. All you need to do now is dress up the paragraph a little and add impact to your thesis. Your feeling of gloom about last summer is the beginning of your narration. Now comes its body. Here is what one student wrote:

What hurts most in retrospect is that I had such high expectations. I would fly to Chicago, work as an intern on a local newspaper, meet fascinating strangers who would soon turn into intimate friends with whom I would have scintillating discussions. Instead, I had to work as a short-order cook in a dingy coffee-shop.

## **Include Only Significant Details**

In the body of the narration you must share with the reader every significant moment of torment, woe, and grief inflicted by that dreadful summer. Notice that we said every *significant* moment. The hangnail you suffered in July does not qualify. Writing a paragraph *on* how you butted your head against the kitchen cabinet one day in August will only make your reader fidgety (unless, of course, you knocked yourself unconscious and ended up in the hospital with a concussion). The trick in the middle of this narration is to focus only on major traumas that prove your point—namely, that last summer was a horror. If you have no traumas worth relating, if somehow your memories of last summer seem trivial and petty, then you are making the wrong point. “My last summer was the most trivial and petty I’ve ever lived through” is really what your narration ought to be about.



## **Pace Your Narrative**

*Pacing* means focusing the narration only on major episodes and events that prove its point. Uneventful stretches of time are summarily dismissed. “Time passed,” writes an author in a story, “and puff! a year goes up in smoke.” Of course, as everyone who has ever watched the clock ticking away knows, life is not lived that way. But life is narrated that way. For a good narration expends ink only on those periods of time in which episodes, events, and incidents relevant to its point occurred. So about your boring summer, you might write:

July passed in a daze of hourly drudgery and toil. I worked overtime everyday in the restaurant, fried my quota of 500 eggs, and returned home after twelve hours in the kitchen splattered with grease and grime, looking as scruffy and wilted as a basted rasher of bacon. The first two weeks I spent a lot of time with Marylou, but then she left and I sank to my chin in the hole of boredom. I tried to read, but couldn’t stand the tedious details of a Henry James novel. I rented videos and fell asleep because they were so insipid. I went for lonely walks. . . .

Abandoning Marylou so abruptly may strike you as unjust; if you feel strongly about the slight, you should change the point of your narration. But given your current point—that the summer was dreadfully boring—Marylou is an intrusion you must dispose of quickly through pacing.

Pacing also entails relating the incidents of your narrative in a climactic sequence. For example, if being evicted by your crotchety landlady was the worst moment of that dreadful summer, save that episode for last: telling it first will blunt the climax. After making the reader feel every pebble of boredom and bad luck pelting down on your head, you let fall the tree limb of eviction. Then you end your narration. To do otherwise—to drop the limb first and do the pelting after—would ruin the climactic effect your narration might otherwise have had.

## **Plan Your Narrative**

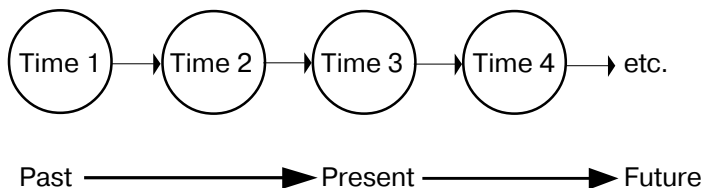
Although many writers plot their narratives down to the villain’s last leer, we do not recommend such rigid planning for everyone. Some of us simply do not write well when confined by a hidebound plan. But it can be helpful to make a thumbnail sketch of the narration, if only to remind you of what comes next. Begin by jotting down your main point: working in a gas station is a course in human relations; some relatives can be demonic; contrary to popular belief, dogs are bungling brutes. Write this at the top of a

piece of scratch paper; keep it under your nose as you write. Occasionally, glance at what is written there; remind yourself of the thesis. Under your main point, arrange the events of your story in climactic order. Narrate them that way, saving the worst or the best for last. And when you are finished, be sure to reread what you have written to see if it indeed proves your announced point. Nothing is so irksome as a narration in which the writer promises to tell one story but ends up telling another.

## 17. LINEAR RELATIONSHIPS. TIME

### Introduction

Every writer sometimes needs to write a time-based (chronological) sequence. Of course, historians do this often, but whether or not you are a historian you will occasionally want to describe a sequence of events in your writing. Chronological sequences can be written in different ways. In Western culture we normally think of time as moving forward in a straight line, and an expected chronological sequence follows this view of time and can be illustrated as follows:



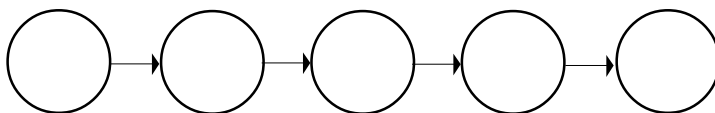
Time 1 is in the past, while Time 2 is also in the past but nearer the present than Time 1, and so on.

#### **Task 1**

*Read the following text and use dates to complete the simple diagram which follows.*

### **By Their Garbage Shall They Be Known**

As long ago as 1779 John Frere, High Sheriff of Suffolk, MP for Norwich, an English country gentleman, discovered at Hoxne, Suffolk, several bones from extinct animals associated with Stone Age flint implements. He published his findings in 1800. Frere's report was not really appreciated for another 60 years. But now Frere is known as the "founder of prehistoric archaeology".



## About Writing

As we live our daily lives, we see time as moving in one direction — past us into history, as we appear to move forward into the future. There is nothing we can do to change our relationship to time. However, when we write we can manipulate time if we wish, and move the writing backwards and forwards through time according to our purpose in writing.

### Task 2

*Read the following text and agree on answers to the questions below with one or two other students.*

## An Emigrant's Story

In 1847, Michael Moore, a poverty-stricken seventeen-year-old farm worker left Ireland for America. What the future held in store for him, he did not know. However, he did know that it could not be any worse than the past. He had grown up during the Great Famine in Ireland and had known what it was to be very hungry. He had watched his mother die of typhus a month before; his father had died a year after Michael was born. There was nothing now to keep him in Ireland and so, on a bright June morning, he stepped on board a ship bound for America. In years to come he would remember this moment.

- a) Why do you think the writer starts with 1847 and then goes back into the past rather than starting in the past and ending up with 1847?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) If the text were in the expected sequence, what verb tense would you expect to find used?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c) Which of the following tenses are used in the text? Present / present perfect / past / past perfect?  
\_\_\_\_\_

The writer of the above passage develops an unexpected sequence because he wants to highlight the fact that Michael Moore was forced to

leave Ireland for America. The way Michael Moore's leaving is highlighted also captures our attention and makes us want to find out why he was leaving and why he was poverty-stricken. In general, writers use *unexpected* chronological sequences when they want to emphasise something *other than time*.

## Using Grammar in Writing

You will have noticed that certain expressions like *in 1965*, *For centuries* and *in the sixties* help you recognise the natural time relationships between events. In general the verb form tells a reader that the writer is talking about the past, present or future, for example:

*I walked to the University* = past

while a time expression indicates a more specific time in the past, present or future, for example:

*I walked to the University yesterday* = past + particular time in past

The more unusual the time sequence used in a text, the more you can expect to find specific time expressions to help you work out the time relationships. Here are some common time expressions which either mark a specific time (1) or show the relationship between times (2).

1. *Time Indicators* then, just then, at that time, in those days, last Friday, next Easter, in 1983, active beginning of June, at four o'clock, five years ago, (etc.)
2. *Time Relators*

until (then), by (then), before (then), up to that time,	in
Time before	the weeks/months/years leading up to, prior to, (etc.)
At the same	in the meantime, at that (very) moment, simultaneously,
time as	all the while, (etc.)
Time after	subsequently, afterwards, then, next, presently, after a while, later (on), in due course, eventually, finally, at last, in the long run, (etc.)

### Task 3

*Rewrite the text below so that instead of the time sequence 1948 – > 1963 – > 1969 it shows the sequence 1948 ->1969 ->1963.*

In 1948, William Shockley working in the laboratory of the Bell Telephone Company produced the first transistor. Years later, in 1963, Robert Noyce managed to put more than one transistor on the same small piece of silicon - integrating first two, then tens of transistors into complex

current patterns and forming the basis of the integrated-circuit industry. Soon afterwards, in 1969, Ted Hoff, a research worker at Intel worked out a design which, for the first time, would put the complete workings of a basic computer processor on just one chip slightly less than a sixth of an inch long and an eighth of an inch wide.

(Adapted from CSE Microelectronics Group *Microelectronics*)

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## 18. ORGANISING TEXTS. STRUCTURING TEXTS

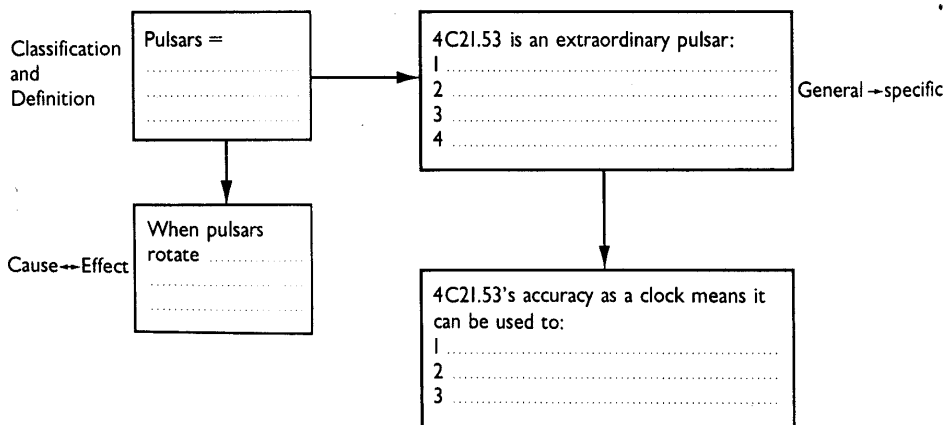
### Introduction

Various ways of organising information into classifications, descriptions of processes, etc. were tried out in Part I. While all these information structures are important, they usually appear *within* larger texts rather than forming the basis for a complete text. Most texts have a complex structure that includes definitions, classifications, comparisons, etc., but as elements within the text, which has a larger overall purpose, usually to instruct or to inform. The way a complete text is organised will depend on the overall goal, the writer's prediction of the ability and knowledge of the reader, and the specific topic being written about.

#### **Task 1**

*This text, which is about pulsars, is taken from the Sunday Times (London). As you can see from the heading, it is about a topic in astronomy, but because it is intended for a general audience of intelligent adults and not for astronomers you can expect it not to be very technical. The purpose of the article is to give information in an interesting way.*

*First, read the article. (Don't expect to have complete comprehension - a general understanding is sufficient.) Then complete the diagram using information from the text.*



## ASTRONOMY

### The Star That Tells the Time

A TINY STAR discovered three months ago looks like becoming the most accurate dock known to science, more precise than even the atomic docks used as international time standards. Astronomers are looking into the possibilities of using it to fix the position of the earth with unprecedented accuracy, refine estimates of the masses of the outer planets, and detect so far hypothetical gravity waves.

The star was first recorded as 4C21.53 by radio astronomers at Cambridge some years ago, but it was not until last November that Donald Backer, of the University of California, discovered it was a pulsar, a type of star that sends out regular pulses of radio waves. Pulsars are the remains of supernovae (exploding stars) and matter in them is at an almost unimaginable state of compression in which a piece the size of a marble would weigh a thousand million tons. As the stars rotate, they send out beams of radio waves that sweep across the galaxy like the beam of a lighthouse.

However, 4C21.53 is an extra-ordinary object even by pulsar standards.

- It rotates 642 times a second, far faster than any other known pulsar.
- Although it is only about 10 kilometres across, its rotation is so rapid that its equator moves at a fifth of the speed of light.
- Its surface gravity is a million million million times that on earth, yet it is barely enough to hold the star together. If it turned only about three times faster it would break up.

• It has so far shown none of the small fluctuations in pulse rate characteristic of other pulsars. Hence its exceptional accuracy as a clock.

«The pulses are like a series of fence posts in space-time,» says Professor Antony Hewish, the Cambridge radio astronomer who won the Nobel Prize in 1974 for the discovery of pulsars. «They might be used in a number of ways.

«For instance the earth's orbit is not a smooth ellipse. It is actually very complicated because of the effects of the other planets, and we cannot fix its position to better than a few kilometres. With the pulsar clock we could do better and then it would be possible to calculate the masses of the outer planets more accurately than at present. A quite different application would be the detection of gravity waves, which a lot of people have looked for, so far without success.»

**Bryan Silcock**  
**(Sunday Times)**

## **Task 2**

*Compare the way you filled in the boxes in Task 1 with another student's response, and try to reach an agreement about which is correct if you did not agree. Then write up what is in the boxes as a complete text. Try not to look at the original text while you are doing that.*

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## **Task 3**

*Oral rehydration therapy (ORT) is a very cheap way of helping some of the world's poorest people. This text about ORT has had its sentences typed in the wrong order. Work with a partner to decide on the correct order for the sentences. Make notes to remind yourselves what led you to choose the order you did.*

- i) These deaths need not have occurred.
- ii) In 1984 alone, about half a million children were saved by this revolutionary technique.

- iii) ORT, simply a drink of water, sugar and salt, costs practically nothing, and is simple enough for any parent to prepare.
- iv) Each year, more than four million young children die from diarrheal dehydration.
- v) Today, 38 nations have begun large-scale production of oral rehydration salts.
- vi) A revolutionary, low cost technique called oral rehydration therapy (ORT) could probably have saved their lives.
- vii) Over the next five years, ORT could spread to half the world's families, saving the lives of some two million children each year.

1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
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## Text Structure

While informational texts in English use different combinations of the types of writing you have studied before, the structure of the text as a whole remains much the same. If this was not true it would be extremely difficult to read and write texts, since nothing would ever become predictable.

### Task 4

*The lines of this traditional nursery rhyme have been disorganised; try to rewrite it with the lines in their correct order. If there are generally recognisable structures for texts, it should be possible to agree on a sensible version of this text. Work with a partner, and check your recomposition with another pair of students afterwards.*

The Queen of Hearts  
And took them clean away  
He stole the tarts

The Knave\* of Hearts  
And beat the Knave full sore  
Called for the tarts

The Knave of Hearts  
All on a summer's day  
She made some tarts

The King of Hearts  
And vowed he'd steal no more  
Brought back the tarts.





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## **A Green Earth or a Dry Desert?**

### ***There may still be time to choose***

FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS, the tropical rain forests of South East Asia, South America, and Africa have been the earth's natural chemical laboratories, botanic gardens and zoos.

Today we are destroying them at such a rate that within 25 years only fragments will remain of the vast forests of Malaysia and Indonesia.

Because they grow mostly in poor tropical soil, relying upon a natural cycle between trees and animals for nourishment and replenishment, the forests cannot be replaced.

When the trees are felled, soil erosion begins and within a few years, the whole area that was once forest becomes wasteland.

We shall have lost for ever the earth's greatest treasure house of plants and animals; perhaps our most valuable resource for the future. And it is happening in areas where poverty already verges upon starvation. It is perhaps the world's most urgent conservation problem. The destruction is happening through ignorance, shortsightedness and ever increasing consumer demand. But it can be stopped if enough of us show enough concern.

## **How You Can Help**

In 1980 WWF and other international conservation bodies published the World Conservation Strategy. It is a programme for developing the world's natural resources without destroying them.

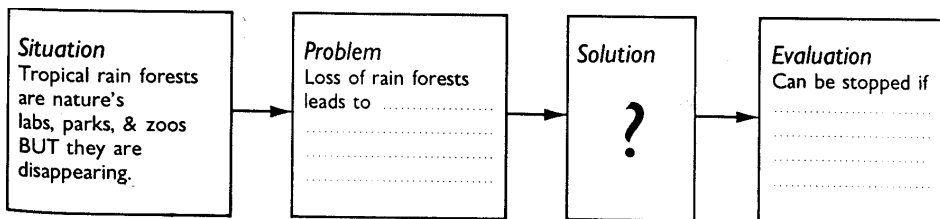
You can become part of a world movement which will see this plan become reality.

Join the World Wildlife Fund now. We need your voice and your financial support. Get in touch with your local WWF office for membership details or send your contribution direct to World Wildlife Fund at the address below. It may be the most important letter you'll ever write.



**WORLD WILDLIFE FUND - UK, PANDA  
HOUSE, 11-13 OCKFORDROAD,  
GODALMING, SURREY GU7 1QU.  
FOR WORLD CONSERVATION**

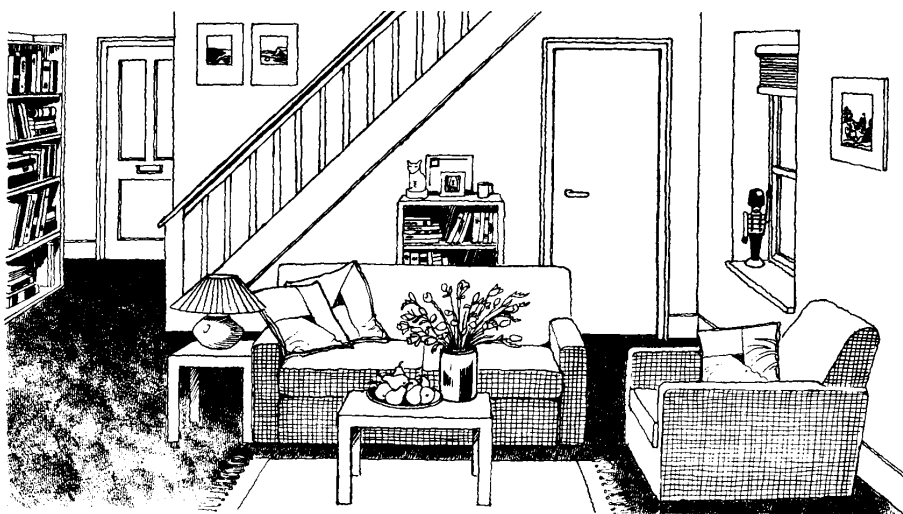
*(New Scientist)*



## 19. CREATIVE TASKS / ТВОРЧЕСКИЕ ЗАДАНИЯ

### TASK 1.

*Imagine you are a dramatist. You have just written a drama, the major portion of which is set in a living room just like the one pictured below. Because dramatists never use pictures in their scripts, you have to write up the stage scene. Organise the description from the audience's viewpoint (near to far). Begin your description: We are looking at a living room...*



[illegible]

## TASK 2.

Choose a classification basis for the people shown. Draw a simple tree diagram showing your classification, and then write a short text explaining the classification.



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**TASK 3.**

*In groups of three, choose a generalisation you feel you can support from the following list:*

No man is an island.

If something can go wrong, it will.

The grass always looks greener on the other side of the hill.

All people are equal.

*As a group write down as many ideas as you can that are relevant to the generalisation. Try to group these ideas, defining them if necessary. Discuss how you might use them to write a text on your chosen topic. Finally write your own text individually.*

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines, typical of notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

### ***TASK 4.***

*Read the text, which appeared in the Sunday Times magazine and is about a paralysed woman's daily life. Then discuss the answers to these questions with a partner, or make notes.*

1. The title of the text is “A Life in the Day of...”  
A more normal title might be “A Day in the Life of...”: can you suggest why this rather strange title was chosen?

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2. Because the text is about what Ann Armstrong does every day, you probably expected to find a lot of verbs in the present tense (e.g. I wake up... I eat..., etc.). Does the writer use only verbs in the present tense? If not, what types of information do the sentences which use other tenses give us?

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3. Why do you think the writer does not just present us with a list of sentences telling us what Ann Armstrong does every day?

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4. When you have answered the other questions, write your own text about “A Life in the Day of (yourself) ”.

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

***Ann Armstrong talks about life on a respirator.***

## A LIFE IN THE DAY OF ANN ARMSTRONG

Ann Armstrong, paralysed by polio, has spent the last 30 years on a respirator. She founded the magazine RESPONAUT in 1963 to enable disabled and non disabled people to speak for themselves and bring about changes in the traditional image, language and lifestyles of the people concerned. She is married with two sons and lives in Newbury, Berkshire, with her husband Ken.

I love to wake up each morning to the sound of my husband's voice asking me, «Tea?» My reply is always an enthusiastic «Please». He supports my head in a comfortable position which enables me to drink from the cup that he holds to my lips. He is expert at this. We never spill a drop between us.

Thirty years ago, when I was a young and active mother of two small boys, Brian and Andrew, Ken had stood beside my bed with an early-morning cup of tea, wondering why I did not take it from him as usual. I wondered about that myself. Then I realised I could not move. I lay quietly waiting for my body to obey my brain. It seemed to be taking an interminable time. I was being distracted by the “granddaddy” of all headaches. It felt as though someone was thumping the back of my head and neck with a sledgehammer and I could not put up my hand to defend myself.

Willingly, I allowed myself to be strapped on to a stretcher and rushed by ambulance along the jolting road from Newbury to Reading Isolation Hospital. The journey could have done me no good at all, but I needed to be slammed into an iron lung fast, so that my breathing could be done for me mechanically. My total repertoire of abilities had been locked in by catastrophic polio.

A respirator has “breathed” me ever since. Down all those years the whooshing ship’s engine kind of sound has gone on and on and on. At first it interfered with my thoughts and I kept remembering poems about the sea. Now I have learned to ignore it. Having dictated articles for national newspapers such as *The Times* and edited a magazine, *Responaut*, for disabled people, their families, engineers and medical staff for the 25 years since I founded it, I plan to spend the next 25 years tapping out books on my computer by sending it morse instructions with my toe.

The trick of surviving serenely the hateful reality of waking up each morning to the unbelievable fact that I still cannot move or breathe, is to take my cup for the day in small sips. I do not face in my mind the thought of another 30 years in one big, black immovable block - that way lies depression - but I can accept one more minute, one more hour or even one more day, especially if I can see a way through to being useful to the community to which I belong.

As I dare not catch cold, few visitors are allowed during the winter, so Ken has moved the bird-table close to my window. I can now share the antics of our mixed bag of wild birds - acrobatic blue tits, squabbling starlings and sparrows, bossy blackbirds and robins.

I have seen far too much of our excellent doctor these past few months. I am just recovering from a virus infection of my kidneys and throat. The medicine I drank so eagerly made my ears ring, so I stopped taking it. It was 50 per cent aspirin and known to cause tinnitus. I wonder how Jack Ashley puts up with this dreadful noise in his ears all the time? I found it hard to concentrate. I can only marvel at the superb introduction he has written for my new book, *Breath of Life*.

The postman pushes through my letter-box packages and letters from distant friends in Canada, America, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Africa and both sides of the Iron Curtain. Ken opens the envelopes and hangs the letters up in front of me so that I can read them. I dictate a few words of reply and, before he leaves for work at the Council offices. Ken makes notes on the backs of the letters while waiting for Pam to arrive to take over the morning shift.

I delegate the domestic details to her and she fills the house with the smell of toast. This sharpens the appetite of my physiotherapist who arrives just as I am chewing my last crust. My physiotherapist keeps me stretched and supple. At this stage we do not look for any return of movement to my



muscles. I am always hopeful, but I have had to accept that if my condition does not deteriorate, then that is progress.

The physiotherapist hands me back to Pam and we swallow a quick hot drink before the nurses come buzzing at the door. Two call every morning to “breathe” me under the positive pressure mask, so that they can remove my cuirass [harness]. Then they treat the places where it bites me and I can do my daily breathing exercises to wash out excess carbon dioxide. I find all this activity very strenuous and am glad when it is over and I can settle down to computing a few ideas for my next book.

More cooking aromas drift in from the kitchen and Pam brings my lunch. I must not talk. My machine goes on breathing me relentlessly whether I need to swallow or not. I have swallowing difficulties and must make absolutely sure I despatch morsels of chewed food to my stomach only when my respiratory tract is closed. Carol takes over from Pam. There will be even more aromatic smells from the kitchen as she cooks one of her famous curries. Meanwhile, Jean is desperately beaver away despatching the complimentary copies of our most recent issue of the *Responaut*.

In the evening Ken has to attend a council meeting. Rosemary arrives to type out the notes for my latest article and plans for the next *Responaut*. I switch on Radio 3 by pushing with my toe a button on the control panel at the foot of my bed. This gives me command over the television, radio, lamp, overhead light, computer, tape recorder, electric blanket and a series of battery-fed bells to various parts of the house. I can never be left alone and these bells are for summoning help when a second person is needed.

Ken arrives home about 9.30 pm and takes over from Rosemary. We usually make or take phonecalls to or from our sons at this time. This brings them very close, now that they live away.

Ken will not eat his supper until he has completed my tucking-up routine. He rubs and exercises my limbs, settles me on a bedpan, then makes me straight in the bed, shakes up and rearranges my supporting cushions, washes where necessary, cleans my teeth, brushes and combs my hair, adjusts my cuirass, checks the air pressure and so on. The morning routine will be much the same.

It is bedtime. I have managed another productive day. I answered several letters, drafted a clutch of paragraphs for my next book, brought my diary up to date, made out a programme for this year’s usual 10 meetings here of the Writers’ Workshop, planned and listed jobs and meals, priced shopping lists for next week, arranged the helpers’ rota and coped with all the demands on my day with much help from my friends.

I go to sleep. I am never disabled in my dreams...

*Does viewing violence on television lead to a more violent society?*

2. Use the discussion to help you plan and write an answer to the question, focusing in particular on possible causes and effects. Be careful to observe the honesty principle, since you will have to take into account more than one point of view about this question.

B. Violence on television is different from real violence in that it is heavily ritualised. We know as we approve of the death of the villain under a hail of police bullets, that we would not approve in the same way if a real-life villain were shot in front of us in real life.

D. I have read about studies which indicate that exposure to violence in the context of a TV drama decreases emotional responsiveness to real-life aggression in news films in both children and adults.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## APPENDIX ONE

### THE FAT GIRL

**Andre Dubus**

*Andre Dubus (b. 1936), American writer, has taught at Bradford College, Bradford, Massachusetts, and is frequently a visiting professor of writing at other colleges and universities. His stories have been published in various literary magazines such as Sewanee Review, Cariton Miscellany, and North American Review. His first novel, The Lieutenant, was greeted with rave reviews. Among his other work are the short-story collections Separate Flights (1975), Finding a Girl in America (1980), We Don't Live Here Anymore (1984), and Land Where My Fathers Died (limited edition, 1984).*

#### Preparing to Read This Selection Critically

«The Fat Girl» explores the social consequences of obesity in a society that worships thinness. Louise, we are told, began secretly to engorge herself at age nine and became fat. From this beginning we are treated in painful detail to the social consequences and shunning that inevitably follow. Ask yourself, as you read, why Louise became fat, whether her obesity was caused by a faulty metabolism or by overindulging parents. Also ask yourself whether Louise is depicted as a sharply drawn character or serves as a stick figure used to make a point about obesity in American society. Pay particular attention to the meaning that food seems to acquire for Louise as she develops and grows. Is this portrait of a fat person representative of the way the obese among us are treated or do you think it exaggerated?

1. Her name was Louise. Once when she was sixteen a boy kissed her at a barbecue; he was drunk and he jammed his tongue into her mouth and ran his hands up and down her hips. Her father kissed her often. He was thin and kind and she could see in his eyes when he looked at her the lights of love and pity.
2. It started when Louise was nine. You must start watching what you eat, her mother would say. I can see you have my metabolism. Louise also had her mother's pale blonde hair. Her mother was slim and pretty, carried herself erectly, and ate very little. The two of them would eat bare lunches, while her older brother ate sandwiches and potato chips, and then her mother would sit smoking while Louise eyed the bread box, the pantry, the refrigerator. Wasn't that good, her mother would say. In five years you'll be in high school and if you're «fat the boys won't like you; they won't ask you

out». Boys were as far away as five years, and she would go to her room and wait for nearly an hour until she knew her mother was no longer thinking of her, then she would creep into the kitchen and, listening to her mother talking on the phone, or her footsteps upstairs, she would open the bread box, the pantry, the jar of peanut butter. She would put the sandwich under her shirt and go outside or to the bathroom to eat it.

3. Her father was a lawyer and made a lot of money and came home looking pale and happy. Martinis put colour back in his face, and at dinner he talked to his wife and two children. Oh give her a potato, he would say to Louise's mother. She's a growing girl. Her mother's voice then became tense: If she has a potato she shouldn't have dessert. She should have both, her father would say, and he would reach over and touch Louise's cheek or hand or arm.

4. In high school she had two girl friends and at night and on week-ends they rode in a car or went to movies. In movies she was fascinated by fat actresses. She wondered why they were fat. She knew why she was fat: she was fat because she was Louise. Because God had made her that way. Because she wasn't like her friends Joan and Marjorie, who drank milk shakes after school and were all bones and tight skin. But what about those actresses, with their talents, with their broad and profound faces? Did they eat as heedlessly as Bishop Humphries and his wife who sometimes came to dinner and, as Louise's mother said, gorged between amenities? Or did they try to lose weight, did they go about hungry and angry and thinking of food? She thought of them eating lean meats and salads with friends, and then going home and building strange large sandwiches with French bread. But mostly she believed they did not go through these failures; they were fat because they chose to be. And she was certain of something else too: she could see it in their faces: they did not eat secretly. Which she did: her creeping to the kitchen when she was nine became, in high school, a ritual of deceit and pleasure. She was a furtive eater of sweets. Even her two friends did not know her secret.

5. Joan was thin, gangling, and flat-chested; she was attractive enough and all she needed was someone to take a second look at her face, but the school was large and there were pretty girls in every classroom and walking all the corridors, so no one ever needed to take a second look at Joan. Marjorie was thin too, an intense, heavy-smoking girl with brittle laughter. She was very intelligent, and with boys she was shy because she knew she made them uncomfortable, and because she was smarter than they were and so could not understand or could not believe the levels they lived on. She was to have a nervous breakdown before earning her Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of California, where she met and married a physicist. By that time much had happened to her and she never thought of Louise. Joan would finally stop growing and begin moving with grace and confidence. In college

she would have two lovers and then several more during the six years she spent in Boston before marrying a middle-aged editor who had two sons in their early teens, who drank too much, who was tenderly, boyishly grateful for her love, and whose wife had been killed while rock-climbing in New Hampshire with her lover. She would not think of Louise either, except in an earlier time, when lovers were still new to her and she was ecstatically surprised each time one of them loved her and, sometimes at night, lying in a man's arms, she would tell how in high school no one dated her, she had been thin and plain (she would still believe that: that she had been plain; it had never been true) and so had been forced into the weekend and night-time company of a neurotic smart girl and a shy fat girl. She would say this with self-pity exaggerated by Scotch and her need to be more deeply loved by the man who held her.

6. She never eats, Joan and Marjorie said of Louise. They ate lunch with her at school, watched her refusing potatoes, ravioli, friend fish. Sometimes she got through the cafeteria line with only a salad. That is how they would remember her: a girl whose hapless body was destined to be fat. No one saw the sandwiches she made and took to her room when she came home from school. No one saw the store of Milky Ways, Butterfingers, Almond Joys, and Her-sheys far back on her closet shelf, behind the stuffed animals of her childhood. She was not a hypocrite. When she was out of the house she truly believed she was dieting; she forgot about the candy, as a man speaking into his office dictaphone may forget the lewd photographs hidden in an old shoe in his closet. At other times, away from home, she thought of the waiting candy with near lust. One night driving home from a movie, Marjorie said: "You're lucky you don't smoke; it's incredible what I go through to hide it from my parents." Louise turned to her a smile which was elusive and mysterious; she yearned to be home in bed, eating chocolate in the dark. She did not need to smoke; she already had a vice that was insular and destructive.

7. She brought it with her to college. She thought she would leave it behind. A move from one place to another, a new room without the haunted closet shelf, would do for her what she could not do for herself. She packed her large dresses and went. For two weeks she was busy with registration, with shyness, with classes; then she began to feel at home. Her room was no longer like a motel. Its walls had stopped watching her, she felt they were her friends, and she gave them her secret. Away from her mother, she did not have to be as elaborate; she kept the candy in her drawer now.

8. The school was in Massachusetts, a girls' school. When she chose it, when she and her father and mother talked about it in the evenings, everyone so carefully avoided the word boys that sometimes the conversations seemed to be about nothing but boys. There are no boys there, the neuter words said; you will not have to contend with that. In her father's eyes were pity and

encouragement; in her mother's was disappointment, and her voice was crisp. They spoke of courses, of small classes where Louise would get more attention. She imagined herself in those small classes; she saw herself as a teacher would see her, as the other girls would; she would get no attention.

9. The girls at the school were from wealthy families, but most of them wore the uniform of another class: blue jeans and work shirts, and many wore overalls. Louise bought some overalls, washed them until the dark blue faded, and wore them to classes. In the cafeteria she ate as she had in high school, not to lose weight nor even to sustain her lie, but because eating lightly in public had become as habitual as good manners. Everyone had to take gym, and in the locker room with the other girls, and wearing shorts on the volleyball and badminton courts, she hated her body. She liked her body most when she was unaware of it: in bed at night, as sleep gently took her out of her day, out of herself. And she liked parts of her body. She liked her brown eyes and sometimes looked at them in the mirror: they were not shallow eyes, she thought; they were indeed windows of a tender soul, a good heart. She liked her lips and nose, and her chin, finely shaped between her wide and sagging cheeks. Most of all she liked her long pale blonde hair, she liked washing and drying it and lying naked on her bed, smelling of shampoo, and feeling the soft hair at her neck and shoulders and back.

10. Her friend at college was Carrie, who was thin and wore thick glasses and often at night she cried in Louise's room. She did not know why she was crying. She was crying, she said, because she was unhappy. She could say no more. Louise said she was unhappy too, and Carrie moved in with her. One night Carrie talked for hours, sadly and bitterly, about her parents and what they did to each other. When she finished she hugged Louise and they went to bed. Then in the dark Carrie spoke across the room: "Louise? I just wanted to tell you. One night last week I woke up and smelled chocolate. You were eating chocolate, in your bed. I wish you'd eat it in front of me, Louise, whenever you feel like it."

11. Stiffened in her bed, Louise could think of nothing to say. In the silence she was afraid Carrie would think she was asleep and would tell her again in the morning or tomorrow night. Finally she said Okay. Then after a moment she told Carrie if she ever wanted any she could feel free to help herself; the candy was in the top drawer. Then she said thank you.

12. They were roommates for four years and in the summers they exchanged letters. Each fall they greeted with embraces, laughter, tears, and moved into their old room, which had been stripped and cleansed of them for the summer. Neither girl enjoyed summer. Carrie did not like being at home because her parents did not love each other. Louise lived in a small city in Louisiana. She did not like summer because she had lost touch with Joan and Marjorie; they saw each other, but it was not the same. She liked being with her father but with no one else. The flicker of disappointment in her mother's

eyes at the airport was a vanguard of the army of relatives and acquaintances who awaited her: they would see her on the streets, in stores, at the country club, in her home, and in theirs; in the first moments of greeting, their eyes would tell her she was still fat Louise, who had been fat as long as they could remember, who had gone to college and returned as fat as ever. Then their eyes dismissed her, and she longed for school and Carrie, and she wrote letters to her friend. But that saddened her too. It wasn't simply that Carrie was her only friend, and when they finished college they might never see each other again. It was that her existence in the world was so divided; it had begun when she was a child creeping to the kitchen; now that division was much sharper, and her friendship with Carrie seemed disproportionate and perilous. The world she was destined to live in had nothing to do with the intimate nights in their room at school.

13. In the summer before their senior year, Carrie fell in love. She wrote to Louise about him, but she did not write much, and this hurt Louise more than if Carrie had shown the joy her writing tried to conceal. That fall they returned to their room; they were still close and warm, Carrie still needed Louise's ears and heart at night as she spoke of her parents and her recurring malaise whose source the two friends never discovered. But on most week-ends Carrie left, and caught a bus to Boston where her boyfriend studied music. During the week she often spoke hesitantly of sex; she was not sure if she liked it. But Louise, eating candy and listening, did not know whether Carrie was telling the truth or whether, as in her letters of the past summer, Carrie was keeping from her those delights she may never experience.

14. Then one Sunday night when Carrie had just returned from Boston and was unpacking her overnight bag, she looked at Louise and said: "I was thinking about you. On the bus coming home tonight." Looking at Carrie's concerned, determined face, Louise prepared herself for humiliation. "I was thinking about when we graduate. What you're going to do. What's to become of you I want you to be loved the way I love you. Louise, if I help you, really help you, will you go on a diet?"

15. Louise entered a period of her life she would remember always, the way some people remember having endured poverty. Her diet did not begin the next day. Carrie told her to eat on Monday as though it were the last day of her life. So for the first time since grammar school Louise went into a school cafeteria and ate everything she wanted. At breakfast and lunch and dinner she glanced around the table to see if the other girls noticed the food on her tray. They did not. She felt there was a lesson in this, but it lay beyond her grasp. That night in their room she ate the four remaining candy bars. During the day Carrie rented a small refrigerator, bought an electric skillet, an electric broiler, and bathroom scales.

16. On Tuesday morning Louise stood on the scales, and Carrie wrote in her notebook: *October 14: 184 lbs.* Then she made Louise a cup of black coffee and scrambled one egg and sat with her while she ate. When Carrie went to the dining room for breakfast, Louise walked about the campus for thirty minutes. That was part of the plan. The campus was pretty, on its lawns grew at least one of every tree native to New England, and in the warm morning sun Louise felt a new hope. At noon they met in their room, and Carrie broiled her a piece of hamburger and served it with lettuce. Then while Carrie ate in the dining room Louise walked again. She was weak with hunger and she felt queasy. During her afternoon classes she was nervous and tense, and she chewed her pencil and tapped her heels on the floor and tightened her calves. When she returned to her room late that afternoon, she was so glad to see Carrie that she embraced her; she had felt she could not bear another minute of hunger, but now with Carrie she knew she could make it at least through tonight. Then she would sleep and face tomorrow when it came. Carrie broiled her a steak and served it with lettuce. Louise studied while Carrie ate dinner, then they went for a walk.

17. That was her ritual and her diet for the rest of the year, Carrie alternating fish and chicken breasts with the steaks for dinner, and every day was nearly as bad as the first. In the evenings she was irritable. In all her life she had never been afflicted by ill temper and she looked upon it now as a demon which, along with hunger, was taking possession of her soul. Often she spoke sharply to Carrie. One night during their after-dinner walk Carrie talked sadly of night, of how darkness made her more aware of herself, and at night she did not know why she was in college, why she studied, why she was walking the earth with other people. They were standing on a wooden foot bridge, looking down at a dark pond. Carrie kept talking; perhaps soon she would cry. Suddenly Louise said: 'I'm sick of lettuce. I never want to see a piece of lettuce for the rest of my life. I hate it. We shouldn't even buy it, it's immoral.'

18. Carrie was quiet. Louise glanced at her, and the pain and irritation in Carrie's face soothed her. Then she was ashamed. Before she could say she was sorry, Carrie turned to her and said gently: 'I know. I know how terrible it is.'

19. Carrie did all the shopping, telling Louise she knew how hard it was to go into a supermarket when you were hungry. And Louise was always hungry. She drank diet soft drinks and started smoking Carrie's cigarettes, learned to enjoy inhaling, thought of cancer and emphysema but they were as far away as those boys her mother had talked about when she was nine. By Thanksgiving she was smoking over a pack a day and her weight in Carrie's notebook was one hundred and sixty-two pounds. Carrie was afraid if Louise went home at Thanksgiving she would lapse from the diet, so Louise spent the vacation with Carrie, in Philadelphia. Carrie wrote her family about the



diet, and told Louise that she had. On the phone to Philadelphia, Louise said: 'I feel like a bedwetter. When I was a little girl I had a friend who used to come spend the night and Mother would put a rubber sheet on the bed and we all pretended there wasn't a rubber sheet and that she hadn't wet the bed. Even me, and I slept with her.' At Thanksgiving dinner she lowered her eyes as Carrie's father put two slices of white meat on her plate and passed it to her over the bowls of steaming food.

20. When she went home at Christmas she weighed a hundred and fifty-five pounds; at the airport her mother marvelled. Her father laughed and hugged her and said: 'But now there's less of you to love.' He was troubled by her smoking but only mentioned it once; he told her she was beautiful and, as always, his eyes bathed her with love. During the long vacation her mother cooked for her as Carrie had, and Louise returned to school weighing a hundred and forty-six pounds.

21. Flying north on the plane she warmly recalled the surprised and congratulatory eyes of her relatives and acquaintances. She had not seen Joan or Marjorie. She thought of returning home in May, weighing the hundred and fifteen pounds which Carrie had in October set as their goal. Looking toward the stoic days ahead, she felt strong. She thought of those hungry days of fall and early winter (and now: she was hungry now: with almost a frown, almost a brusque shake of the head, she refused peanuts from the stewardess): those first weeks of the diet when she was the pawn of an irascibility which still, conditioned to her ritual as she was, could at any moment take command of her. She thought of the nights of trying to sleep while her stomach growled. She thought of her addiction to cigarettes. She thought of the people at school: not one teacher, not one girl, had spoken to her about her loss of weight, not even about her absence from meals. And without warning her spirit collapsed. She did not feel strong, she did not feel she was committed to and within reach of achieving a valuable goal. She felt that somehow she had lost more than pounds of fat; that some time during her dieting she had lost herself too. She tried to remember what it had felt like to be Louise before she had started living on meat and fish, as an unhappy adult may look sadly in the memory of childhood for lost virtues and hopes. She looked down at the earth far below, and it seemed to her that her soul, like her body aboard the plane, was in some rootless flight. She neither knew its destination nor where it had departed from; it was on some passage she could not even define.

22. During the next few weeks she lost weight more slowly and once for eight days Carrie's daily recording stayed at a hundred and thirty-six. Louise woke in the morning thinking of one hundred and thirty-six and then she stood on the scales and they echoed her. She became obsessed with that number, and there wasn't a day when she didn't say it aloud, and through the days and nights the number stayed in her mind, and if a teacher had spoken

those digits in a classroom she would have opened her mouth to speak. What if that's me, she said to Carrie. I mean what if a hundred and thirty-six is my real weight and I just can't lose anymore. Walking hand-in-hand with her despair was a longing for this to be true, and that longing angered her and wearied her, and every day she was gloomy. On the ninth day she weighed a hundred and thirty-five and a half pounds. She was not relieved; she thought bitterly of the months ahead, the shedding of the last twenty and a half pounds.

23. On Easter Sunday, which she spent at Carrie's, she weighed one hundred and twenty pounds, and she ate one slice of glazed pineapple with her ham and lettuce. She did not enjoy it: she felt she was being friendly with a recalcitrant enemy who had once tried to destroy her. Carrie's parents were laudative. She liked them and she wished they would touch sometimes, and look at each other when they spoke. She guessed they would divorce when Carrie left home, and she vowed that her own marriage would be one of affection and tenderness. She could think about that now: marriage. At school she had read in a Boston paper that this summer the cicadas would come out of their seventeen year hibernation on Cape Cod, for a month they would mate and then die, leaving their young to burrow into the ground where they would stay for seventeen years. That's me, she had said to Carrie. Only my hibernation lasted twenty-one years.

24. Often her mother asked in letters and on the phone about the diet, but Louise answered vaguely. When she flew home in late May she weighed a hundred and thirteen pounds, and at the airport her mother cried and hugged her and said again and again: You're so *beautiful*. Her father blushed and bought her a martini. For days her relatives and acquaintances congratulated her, and the applause in their eyes lasted the entire summer, and she loved their eyes, and swam in the country club pool, the first time she had done this since she was a child.

25. She lived at home and ate the way her mother did and every morning she weighed herself on the scales in her bathroom. Her mother liked to take her shopping and buy her dresses and they put her old ones in the Goodwill box at the shopping center; Louise thought of them existing on the body of a poor woman whose cheap meals kept her fat. Louise's mother had a photographer come to the house, and Louise posed on the couch and standing beneath a live oak and sitting in a wicker lawn chair next to an azalea bush. The new clothes and the photographer made her feel she was going to another country or becoming a citizen of a new one. In the fall she took a job of no consequence, to give herself something to do.

26. Also in the fall a young lawyer joined her father's firm, he came one night to dinner, and they started seeing each other. He was the first man outside her family to kiss her since the barbecue when she was sixteen. Louise celebrated Thanksgiving not with rice dressing and candied sweet

potatoes and mince meat and pumpkin pies, but by giving Richard her virginity which she realised, at the very last moment of its existence, she had embarked on giving him over thirteen months ago, on that Tuesday in October when Carrie had made her a cup of black coffee and scrambled one egg. She wrote this to Carrie, who replied happily by return mail. She also, through glance and smile and innuendo, tried to tell her mother too. But finally she controlled that impulse, because Richard felt guilty about making love with the daughter of his partner and friend. In the spring they married. The wedding was a large one, in the Episcopal church, and Carrie flew from Boston to be maid of honor. Her parents had recently separated and she was living with the musician and was still victim of her unpredictable malaise. It overcame her on the night before the wedding, so Louise was up with her until past three and woke next morning from a sleep so heavy that she did not want to leave it.

27. Richard was a lean, tall, energetic man with the metabolism of a pencil sharpener. Louise fed him everything he wanted. He liked Italian food and she got recipes from her mother and watched him eating spaghetti with the sauce she had only tasted, and ravioli and lasagna, while she ate antipasto with her chianti. He made a lot of money and borrowed more and they bought a house whose lawn sloped down to the shore of a lake; they had a wharf and a boathouse, and Richard bought a boat and they took friends waterskiing. Richard bought her a car and they spent his vacations in Mexico, Canada, the Bahamas, and in the fifth year of their marriage they went to Europe and, according to their plan, she conceived a child in Paris. On the plane back, as she looked out the window and beyond the sparkling sea and saw her country, she felt that it was waiting for her, as her home by the lake was, and her parents, and her good friends who rode in the boat and waterskied; she thought of the accumulated warmth and pelf of her marriage, and how by slimming her body she had bought into the pleasures of the nation. She felt cunning, and she smiled to herself, and took Richard's hand.

28. But these moments of triumph were sparse. On most days she went about her routine of leisure with a sense of certainty about herself that came merely from not thinking. But there were times, with her friends, or with Richard, or alone in the house, when she was suddenly assaulted by the feeling that she had taken the wrong train and arrived at a place where no one knew her, and where she ought not to be. Often, in bed with Richard, she talked of being fat: 'I was the one who started the friendship with Carrie, I chose her, I started the conversations. When I understood that she was my friend I understood something else: I had chosen her for the same reason I'd chosen Joan and Marjorie. They were all thin. I was always thinking about what people saw when they looked at me and I didn't want them to see two fat girls. When I was alone I didn't mind being fat but then I'd have to leave the house again and then I didn't want to look like me. But at home I didn't

mind except when I was getting dressed to go out of the house and when Mother looked at me. But I stopped looking at her when she looked at me. And in college I felt good with Carrie; there weren't any boys and I didn't have any other friends and so when I wasn't with Carrie I thought about her and I tried to ignore the other people around me, I tried to make them not exist. A lot of the time I could do that. It was strange, and I felt like a spy.'

29. If Richard was bored by her repetition he pretended not to be. But she knew the story meant very little to him. She could have been telling him of a childhood illness, or wearing braces, or a broken heart at sixteen. He could not see her as she was when she was fat. She felt as though she were trying to tell a foreign lover about her life in the United States, and if only she could command the language he would know and love all of her and she would feel complete. Some of the acquaintances of her childhood were her friends now, and even they did not seem to remember her when she was fat.

30. Now her body was growing again, and when she put on a maternity dress for the first time she shivered with fear. Richard did not smoke and he asked her, in a voice just short of demand, to stop during her pregnancy. She did. She ate carrots and celery instead of smoking, and at cocktail parties she tried to eat nothing, but after her first drink she ate nuts and cheese and crackers and dips. Always at these parties Richard had talked with his friends and she had rarely spoken to him until they drove home. But now when he noticed her at the hors d'oeuvres table he crossed the room and, smiling, led her back to his group. His smile and his hand on her arm told her he was doing his clumsy, husbandly best to help her through a time of female mystery.

31. She was gaining weight but she told herself it was only the baby, and would leave with its birth. But at other times she knew quite clearly that she was losing the discipline she had fought so hard to gain during her last year with Carrie. She was hungry now as she had been in college, and she ate between meals and after dinner and tried to eat only carrots and celery, but she grew to hate them, and her desire for sweets was as vicious as it had been long ago. At home she ate bread and jam and when she shopped for groceries she bought a candy bar and ate it driving home and put the wrapper in her purse and then in the garbage can under the sink. Her cheeks had filled out, there was loose flesh under her chin, her arms and legs were plump, and her mother was concerned. So was Richard. One night when she brought pie and milk to the living room where they were watching television, he said: 'You already had a piece. At dinner.'

32. She did not look at him.

33. 'You're gaining weight. It's not all water, either. It's fat. It'll be summertime. You'll want to get into your bathing suit.'

34. The pie was cherry. She looked at it as her fork cut through it; she speared the piece and rubbed it in the red juice on the plate before lifting it to her mouth.

35. 'You never used to eat pie,' he said. 'I just think you ought to watch it a bit. It's going to be tough on you this summer.'

36. In her seventh month, with a delight reminiscent of climbing the stairs to Richard's apartment before they were married, she returned to her world of secret gratification. She began hiding candy in her underwear drawer. She ate it during the day and at night while Richard slept, and at breakfast she was distracted, waiting for him to leave.

37. She gave birth to a son, brought him home, and nursed both him and her appetites. During this time of celibacy she enjoyed her body through her son's mouth; while he suckled she stroked his small head and back. She was hiding candy but she did not conceal her other indulgences: she was smoking again but still she ate between meals, and at dinner she ate what Richard did, and coldly he watched her, he grew petulant, and when the date marking the end of their celibacy came they let it pass. Often in the afternoons her mother visited and scolded her and Louise sat looking at the baby and said nothing until finally, to end it, she promised to diet. When her mother and father came for dinners, her father kissed her and held the baby and her mother said nothing about Louise's body, and her voice was tense. Returning from work in the evenings Richard looked at a soiled plate and glass on the table beside her chair as if detecting traces of infidelity, and at every dinner they fought.

38. 'Look at you,' he said. 'Lasagna, for God's sake. When are you going to start? It's not simply that you haven't lost any weight. You're gaining. I can see it. I can feel it when you get in bed. Pretty soon you'll weigh more than I do and I'll be sleeping on a trampoline.'

39. 'You never touch me anymore.'

40. 'I don't want to touch you. Why should I? Have you *looked* at yourself?'

41. 'You're cruel,' she said. 'I never knew how cruel you were.'

42. She ate, watching him. He did not look at her. Glaring at his plate, he worked with fork and knife like a hurried man at a lunch counter.

43. 'I bet you didn't either,' she said.

44. That night when he was asleep she took a Milky Way to the bathroom. For a while she stood eating in the dark, then she turned on the light. Chewing, she looked at herself in the mirror; she looked at her eyes and hair. Then she stood on the scales and looking at the numbers between her feet, one hundred and sixty-two, she remembered when she had weighed a hundred and thirty-six pounds for eight days. Her memory of those eight days was fond and amusing, as though she were recalling an Easter egg hunt when she was six. She stepped off the scales and pushed them under the lavatory and did not stand on them again.

45. It was summer and she bought loose dresses and when Richard took friends out on the boat she did not wear a bathing suit or shorts; her friends gave her mischievous glances, and Richard did not look at her. She stopped riding on the boat. She told them she wanted to stay with the baby, and she sat inside holding him until she heard the boat leave the wharf. Then she took him to the front lawn and walked with him in the shade of the trees and talked to him about the blue jays and mockingbirds and cardinals she saw on their branches. Sometimes she stopped and watched the boat out on the lake and the friend skiing behind it.

46. Every day Richard quarreled, and because his rage went no further than her weight and shape, she felt excluded from it, and she remained calm within layers of flesh and spirit, and watched his frustration, his impotence. He truly believed they were arguing about her weight. She knew better: she knew that beneath the argument lay the question of who Richard was. She thought of him smiling at the wheel of his boat, and long ago courting his slender girl, the daughter of his partner and friend. She thought of Carrie telling her of smelling chocolate in the dark and, after that, watching her eat it night after night. She smiled at Richard, teasing his anger.

47. He is angry now. He stands in the center of the living room, raging at her, and he wakes the baby. Beneath Richard's voice she hears the soft crying, feels it in her heart, and quietly she rises from her chair and goes upstairs to the child's room and takes him from the crib. She brings him to the living room and sits holding him in her lap, pressing him gently against the folds of fat at her waist. Now Richard is pleading with her. Louise thinks tenderly of Carrie broiling meat and fish in their room, and walking with her in the evenings. She wonders if Carrie still has the malaise. Perhaps she will come for a visit. In Louise's arms now the boy sleeps.

48. 'I'll help you,' Richard says. 'I'll eat the same things you eat.'

49. But his face does not approach the compassion and determination and love she had seen in Carrie's during what she now recognises as the worst year of her life. She can remember nothing about that year except hunger, and the meals in her room. She is hungry now. When she puts the boy to bed she will get a candy bar from her room. She will eat it here, in front of Richard. This room will be hers soon. She considers the possibilities: all these rooms and the lawn where she can do whatever she wishes. She knows he will leave soon. It has been in his eyes all summer. She stands, using one hand to pull herself out of the chair. She carries the boy to his crib, feels him against her large breasts, feels that his sleeping body touches her soul. With a surge of vindication and relief she holds him. Then she kisses his forehead and places him in the crib. She goes to the bedroom and in the dark takes a bar of candy from her drawer. Slowly she descends the stairs. She knows Richard is waiting but she feels his departure so happily

that, when she enters the living room, unwrapping the candy, she is surprised to see him standing there.

**Thinking Critically About This Reading**

- 1. What underlying social attitudes toward fat people are implicitly reflected in this story?

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- 2. What is Louise like, aside from being fat?

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- 3. Why does Louise eat to excess? In the depiction of her character, what does the author imply about obesity?

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- 4. If you were grossly overweight, how would you expect society to treat you, and what would you do about it?

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- 5. How do you think the story would have unfolded and what do you think its outcome would have been had Louise been a man?

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**Understanding the Writer’s Process**

- 1. In paragraph 2, the author cites some comments addressed to Louise by her mother, but omits the quotation marks. What point is implicitly made by this omission?

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2. How many times do you suppose the exchange reported in paragraph 3 took place between Louise's mother and father, and how do you know?  

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3. In describing Louise's two girl friends in paragraph 5, what point about Louise is the author indirectly making?  

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4. What technique of fiction is prominently at work in the brief paragraph 7?  

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5. In paragraph 9 the author tells us that the girls at the private college in Massachusetts were wealthy but wore «the uniform of another class.» What class does he mean? What does this information tell us about the school?  

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### **Examining the Writer's Language**

1. Define the meanings of the following words used in this essay: untrammelled (paragraph 5), insular (6), malaise (13), stoic (21), irascibility (21), recalcitrant (23), innuendo (26), pelf (27).  

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2. In his description in paragraph 6 of the candy Louise eats, how does the author underscore the depth and strength of her secret passion?  

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3. The author writes in paragraph 6 that Louise «yearned to be home in bed, eating chocolate in the dark.» What does this sentence slyly suggest about her passion for food?  

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4. In paragraph 17, Louise snaps at Carrie about lettuce, «We shouldn't even buy it, it's immoral.» Why does she regard lettuce as immoral? To what is she alluding?  

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5. In paragraph 46 we are told about the quarrels between Louise and Richard: «He truly believed they were arguing about her weight. She knew better: she knew that beneath the argument lay the question of who Richard was.» What does this last sentence mean?

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## Suggestions for Writing

1. Write an essay exploring the stereotypes and myths our society generally holds about fat people.

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

2. After doing some preliminary research, write an essay on the medical and psychological causes of obesity.

[illegible]

## Writing Assignment Based on «The Fat Girl»

With the vivid descriptions of «The Fat Girl» in mind, describe an animal, a person, a place, or a thing that you have closely observed. Be sure your description uses a dominant impression that your details and images support.

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**ИСКУССТВО РЕЧИ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ**  
**ЮНИТА 1**  
**НАПИСАНИЕ ЭССЕ**

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