ECCE Writing Handbook
for Teachers
We would like to thank the following faculty for contributing materials and their expertise.
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WHY USE THE ECCE WRITING HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS?

Teaching writing can be challenging for all teachers. It is a complex decision-making process involving careful selection of the appropriate prompt, devising ways to help students think about a topic, and providing a relevant language focus. Assessing students' writing and supplying useful feedback also requires informed decisions about the level of competence necessary for meaningful communication in writing and finally the nature of the feedback provided for the students.

What do teachers need to know to help students develop effective writing skills for a specific writing task?

- a thorough understanding of the task itself:
  - purpose and audience
  - ideas to help students plan a task
  - understanding the components of well-organized writing
    - introduction and conclusion
    - thesis statement
    - topic sentences
  - insights on appropriate rhetorical organization
  - knowledge of the topic and topic-related vocabulary
  - cohesion in texts:
    - understanding the use of linking words
    - understanding of different types of sentence structure
    - linking of sentences
    - paragraph development
  - how to respond to students' writing
    - awareness of LI interference
    - informed judgments about what to correct and how to correct

Finally, teachers should be familiar with the scoring rubrics of standardized tests and use modified versions of the rubrics for assessing their students' writing to provide them with effective feedback.

Acquiring all this knowledge to teach writing requires a great deal of practice on the part of the teacher to understand features of effective communication, and to use the appropriate classroom procedures that will help students develop the skills they need for any examination writing task. We therefore hope that the materials that we have developed in collaboration with experienced teachers at the Hellenic American Union will contribute to other teachers' awareness of the following components of the ECCE tasks: role of the ECCE writing prompts as a stimulus for writing; organization of the content for the two tasks; feedback on errors and assessment of the students' performance.

HOW TO USE THE TEACHER'S HANDBOOK FOR ECCE WRITING

The handbook is intended solely for teachers although some of the ideas in the activities may be used for students. Each section focuses on different elements of the writing task. Teachers may work on specific sections from anywhere in the book or begin with the first section and gradually work their way through all the sections. It is intended primarily for self study, but can also be used by teacher trainers for methodology sessions on the teaching of writing. A key is provided for all the activities at the end of the book.

At the beginning of each section there is an explanation of why teachers need to focus on specific elements of the writing task, followed by a demonstration activity which raises teachers' awareness of specific features of each of the elements. The teacher is then given the opportunity to practice analyzing prompts, preparing outlines for letters and essays, identifying errors from samples of students' writing and finally assessing the level of writing competence using teacher versions of the ECCE scoring rubrics.

As we know, students need practice to improve their writing, but teachers also need practice in the skills that we expect our students to develop. These materials therefore not only help teachers with ideas for classroom practice, but also assist them in becoming good writers themselves. Teachers with good writing skills are more likely to be effective writing teachers. Equally important however is that these teachers will be able to participate in other professional and academic communities where effective communication in writing is highly valued. This will benefit teachers who wish to develop materials, present at conferences, engage in further studies or take on administrative responsibilities.

We hope you will find this book useful and that it will be a valuable aid in planning, teaching and giving feedback on writing. We also hope that it will provide a focus for you to reflect on your own writing skills, helping you to become successful participants of the professional and academic communities related to the field of language teaching.

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Selecting the Appropriate Stimulus and Prompt

INTRODUCTION

Clear, well-organized and fully developed letters and essays depend on carefully selected, well-formulated stimuli and prompts. This will give the learner confidence and a sense of direction. Occasionally, course books have inappropriate stimuli and prompts and it is important for the teacher to be able to recognize them.

An appropriate stimulus for the ECCE (B2) level is a topic related to issues of general interest. The language level should be low-intermediate – slightly below the level of the student - so that it is accessible to the students. A good stimulus should not be unnecessarily long because it may cause confusion and detract the students’ attention from the main focus. It should not be extremely short either because it won’t provide students with enough information and guidelines to help them develop their letter or essay.

The stimulus should reflect real life that activates background knowledge, often an excerpt from a newspaper or magazine. The prompts should be realistic and related to the stimulus. The letter task should specify who is writing, to whom and for what purpose, and it should address the main question which is stated or implied in the stimulus. The essay task should not be too general or too rigid and it should also be related to the stimulus.

An example of appropriate stimulus & prompts

Task 1: Letter
Do you agree with the principal's decision, or do you think the trip should still take place? Write a letter to the editor explaining your view. Discuss this issue making specific references to student behavior, supervision, and the usefulness of the trip. Start your letter, “Dear Editor,”

Task 2: Essay
Do you think school trips should be educational or recreational? Explain what can contribute to their success and how safety and proper behavior can be promoted. Provide specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

GUIDELINES TO SELECTING APPROPRIATE STIMULI AND PROMPTS
WITH SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

The following questions are based on the criteria for choosing appropriate stimuli and prompts. These can be used as a guide to help teachers/students choose good prompts and stimuli.

Selecting the Right Stimuli & Prompts—Criteria Checklist

- Is the language at the lower-intermediate level?
- Is the topic appropriate to the level of the students?
- Are they the right length?
- Is the information clear and accessible to the students?
- Is there a main focus?
- Does the stimulus activate background knowledge?
- When reading the stimulus, can the students predict probable letter and essay tasks?
- Could the stimulus be an excerpt from a newspaper or magazine?
- Are the writing tasks realistic?
- Are the writing tasks related to the stimulus?
- Is the letter task based on the focus question?
- Does the letter task specify who is writing, to whom and for what purpose?
- Is the essay task related to the stimulus?
- Is the essay task too general or too rigid?
Examples of Inappropriate Stimuli with Inadequate Prompts

The two stimuli and prompts that follow exemplify inappropriate stimuli and inadequate prompts. The topics are appropriate, however. In this case both the stimuli and the prompts can be improved or replaced with ones that are consistent with the criteria for writing good stimulus and prompts.

Example 1:

THE VALUE OF MONEY

‘Money makes the world go round’ and ‘money doesn’t grow on trees’ are two phrases we are all familiar with. Money is often the main focus of movies where people either gain a fortune or squander their riches overnight. Obviously, the former have happier endings. Young people are impressed by fame and money, but they don’t know the meaning of money and how difficult it is to earn a lot of money.

Task 1: Letter
This article appeared in the Newtown Times. Write a letter to the editor expressing how you feel about money.

Task 2: Essay
Is money as important as values? Express your opinion using specific examples.

What is appropriate about this stimulus?
- It is the right length
- The general topic (money) is appropriate for ECCE-level students
- The vocabulary items - other than the word squander - are ECCE level
- The different pieces of information are clearly presented

Why is the stimulus inappropriate?
- Two idiomatic expressions are used, which can lead to misinterpretation of the stimulus
- The stimulus lacks focus. Practically every sentence focuses on a different aspect of money, causing the following problems:
  - a) the stimulus is too incoherent to be a newspaper excerpt
  - b) it could not be used to activate background knowledge because it focuses on several aspects of money: money as a driving force (money makes the world go round), money as something that must be earned (money doesn’t grow on trees), money as a catchy movie theme—from poverty to riches or vice versa (people either gain a fortune or squander their money overnight), the effect that money has on young people (young people are impressed by fame and money), the pipedream of becoming rich (how difficult it is to earn a lot of money)
  - c) the students can’t predict probable letter and essay prompts by reading the stimulus

What makes the letter prompt inadequate?
- It is not well thought-out
- It is too general. It lacks focus so the students are not guided in any way. What aspect of money are they supposed to focus on? How will they organize and develop their essay?

What makes the essay prompt inadequate?
- There is no reference to values in the stimulus
- The students are expected to compare and contrast two general topics (money and values). There is nothing in the stimulus to guide them nor is there anything in the task.
- The students are asked to express their opinion using specific examples instead of being asked to use specific reasons

Suggestions for Improving the Stimulus & Prompts

The broad topic (money) can still be used, but a new stimulus and prompt that are consistent with the criteria must be designed. They should be accessible to both teenagers and adults.

An example of a revised stimulus & prompts:

DEVELOPING GOOD SPENDING HABITS

According to some experts, children should not be given money for personal expenses other than an agreed upon weekly allowance. They claim that this helps children to become more responsible. It also helps them develop good spending habits which will help them control their expenses and manage their money effectively in the future. The editor of the Newtown Times wants to know how people of different age groups feel about this issue.
Task 1: Letter
Do you agree with these experts' opinion that good spending habits can be developed at a young age? Write a letter to the Newtown Times explaining your view. Give specific examples of how putting limits on young people's spending can or cannot be beneficial. Start your letter, “Dear Editor,”

Task 2: Essay
Do you think parents can help their children develop good spending habits? If so, what approach should they use? Can their own spending habits affect their children? Give specific examples to support your opinion.

Example 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VOLUNTEERISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locally recruited volunteers are the backbone of community initiatives and contribute to their successful day to day operation. They are dedicated people who have a clear vision of what a particular community initiative intends to achieve, and they will go to great lengths to facilitate its realization.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Task 1: Letter
Write a letter explaining why you want to become a volunteer.

Task 2: Essay
What are the advantages and disadvantages of a volunteer army? Give specific examples to support your opinion.

What is appropriate about the “Volunteerism” stimulus?
- It is the right length
- It is coherent and cohesive
- There is a main focus (the contribution of dedicated local volunteers to the community is invaluable)

What makes the stimulus inappropriate?
- The heading is too general. It is not related to the main focus of the stimulus
- Vocabulary is too sophisticated for ECCE-level. The students have to decipher the stimulus first (locally recruited volunteers, backbone of community initiatives, go to great lengths to facilitate its realization) in order to understand what the main focus is.

What makes the letter prompt inadequate?
- It is not stated who the recipient of the letter is
- The stimulus focuses on the importance of local volunteers, but the task is about wanting to be a volunteer in general. What kind of volunteer? There are volunteer opportunities on the local, national and international level. The students are not guided in any way.

What makes the essay prompt inadequate?
- The task is not related to the stimulus in any way. The only common point between the essay task and the stimulus is the word volunteer, but the meaning is different in the two different contexts.
- Students are not given any guidance. They may lack the background knowledge to fully develop this topic.

Suggestions for Improving the Stimulus & Prompts
Community-based volunteering can still be the focus in the new stimulus---the need for more volunteer opportunities and for more volunteers. Examples of volunteer opportunities should be cited in the prompt to help activate the students' background knowledge.

An example of revised stimulus & prompts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The recipient of a volunteer service award stated recently that volunteering is beneficial to the community and rewarding to the volunteer. She stressed the need for more volunteer opportunities and urged young people and retired citizens to become involved in keeping the community clean and green and in helping those in need such as the elderly, people with special needs or immigrant school-age children. The editor of the Newtown Times wants to know how its readers feel about community-based volunteering.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Task 1: Letter
Do you agree with this volunteer service award recipient that volunteering is beneficial to the community and rewarding
to the volunteers? Write a letter to the Newtown Times explaining your view. Provide reasons and specific examples to support your opinion. Start your letter, “Dear Editor,”

Task 2: Essay
What kind of volunteer opportunities do you think should be available in your area? Should the focus be on environmental protection or on helping those in need? State your opinion referring to volunteer opportunities that would be appropriate for volunteers of different age groups.

OVER TO YOU

- Read the following 2 activities with stimuli and prompts
- Use the criteria checklist to decide whether they are appropriate or need improvement
- Provide a rationale for your decision
- Suggested answers are in the key at the back of the book

Activity 1:

**SEAT BELT CAMPAIGN**

TV and radio spots are used to make drivers more aware of the dangers of not wearing a seat belt. “Use your seat belt or expect to get a ticket” warnings are also a part of seat belt campaigns such as “Click it or Ticket” in the USA. Many people agree that drivers not wearing seat belts should pay a fine, but others believe that forcing adults to wear a seat belt is wrong because it violates their personal rights. The editor of the Newtown Times would like to know how its readers feel about this issue.

**Task 1: Letter**
Do you believe drivers not wearing a seat belt should be punished, or is the decision to wear or not to wear a seat belt a matter of personal choice? What effect could punishment have on drivers? Write a letter to the editor explaining your view. Start your letter, “Dear Editor,”

**Task 2: Essay**
What measures do you think should be taken by the government to promote road safety? Can both road safety advertisements and strict punishments be effective? Explain your point of view using specific examples.

1. Is the stimulus appropriate? Why or why not? Give reasons.
4. Are there any suggestions for improving the stimulus and prompts?

Activity 2:

Read the following stimulus and prompts and use the criteria checklist to decide whether they are appropriate or need improvement. Provide a rationale for your decision. A key is provided at the end of the book.

**LIVING ARRANGEMENTS**

In some societies, family cohesion is taken for granted and multigenerational households as opposed to nuclear families are the cultural norm. However, according to census data in industrialized countries, there is an increase in the number of senior citizens moving in with their married children and an increase in the number of people with young or even post adolescent children who are abandoning the idea of a nuclear family and are returning to grandparent-headed households. In a recent survey, people for whom living in a three-generation household was a new experience were asked to explain how they felt about it. Some focused on the advantages while others expressed doubts whether this living arrangement could really work.

**Task 1: Letter**
What advantages and disadvantages concerning their living arrangements do you think were mentioned by the people surveyed? Write a letter explaining your opinion.

**Task 2: Essay**
What are the advantages of three-generations living under the same roof? Give specific examples to support your opinion.

1) Is the stimulus appropriate? Why or why not? Give reasons.
2) Is the letter prompt adequate? Why or why not? Give reasons.
3) Is the essay prompt adequate? Why or why not? Give reasons.
4) Are there any suggestions for improving the stimulus & prompts?
INTRODUCTION

Candidates often do not read the stimulus and prompts carefully enough. This leads them to make false assumptions about what the prompt is asking them to do so their writing is off topic. This is often the source of failure for candidates who are over confident but lack understanding, or the nervous candidate who plunges into the writing task for fear of wasting time reading. The stimulus and the prompt have important information on how to structure either the essay or the letter to the editor. For example – first explain your view and give specific examples or explain and describe your actions. The following activities will help you raise your students’ awareness of how to read and understand a stimulus and a prompt.

ANALYSIS OF A STIMULUS & PROMPTS

The following stimulus and prompt comes from the December 2006 ECCE. It begins with a short excerpt from a newspaper (the stimulus) and candidates can choose to write either an essay or a letter response (the prompts). The stimulus discusses the problem of traffic and pollution in cities. It informs the reader of the problem the city officials are facing. It does not refer to any specific city, allowing the candidates to adapt the situation to their own frame of reference.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN

Many people who work and shop in the central area of the city drive cars to get there instead of using public transportation (buses, trains, etc.). This causes traffic and pollution problems. City officials want more people to take public transportation. They want to find out from citizens what can be done to make people leave their cars at home.

ELI News Service

Task 1: Letter

Write a letter explaining how to increase the use of public transportation. Explain why many people are not using public transportation now. Describe specific actions the city can take to improve the situation. Start your letter, “Dear City Officials,”

Task 2: Essay

If you could drive your own car or take public transportation to get to your school or workplace, which would you choose? What factors would affect your decision? Give details to explain your choice.

Both prompts are related to the use of private and public transportation and the reasons people choose one over the other. Thus they are thematically linked to the stimulus.

What are candidates asked to do in the letter prompt?

Write a letter to the city officials, explaining:

- Why people use their cars and don’t use public transportation?
- What can the city do to increase the use of public transportation? Students must provide more than one solution (‘Describe specific actions’) and to be concrete about their suggestion (‘Describe specific actions’).

Candidates are not asked to write to the newspaper editors. Candidates are not being asked to just explain / describe the problem of pollution and congestion in their city. Candidates are not being asked to simply justify the choices of those who use private transportation.

What are candidates asked to do in the essay prompt?

Write an essay about:

- How they would get to work or school if, hypothetically, they could drive their own car or take public transportation
- Explain why (factors that would affect your decision) they would choose this means of transportation, and to provide details (explaining your choice)

Candidates are not asked to write about what they already do and why (‘If you could...’), but to explain what they would do if they had the choice.
In order to help candidates understand the stimulus and prompts, teachers can work on example stimuli and prompts to help their students develop skills of:

- Thinking through the specific topic, rather than just plunging in
- Understand exactly what they are being asked to do

**Activity 1: Practice on focus questions related to the stimulus & prompts**

Distribute the stimulus & prompts mentioned above, and ask:

**Task 1: Letter**
- Who is the letter from? – *A concerned private citizen with an opinion*
- Who is the letter to? – *The city officials*
- Why are you writing? – (1) *To inform city officials why people don’t use public transportation and (2) to propose some possible solutions.*

**Task 2: Essay**
- What is the main question of the essay prompt? – *Would you prefer to travel to work or school by private car or public transport? Why?*
- What else does it ask for? – *Give details to explain your choice*

These are the basic questions students should ask themselves whenever faced with a writing task. If they have a clear picture of what they are being asked to do, they will be much more likely to produce passing grade work.

**Activity 2: Gapped stimulus & prompts**

Remove certain words from the text of the stimulus & prompts. These words should be the words that the students may not know, or that may confuse them at first glance.

- **Main idea:** At first, students are not expected to fill in the missing words (as in a cloze exercise) but to explain the main idea of the prompt to the teacher.
- **Fill in the gaps:** Then, on a second reading, students fill in the gaps with words that best complete the sentences. The aim is not to complete the text exactly as it is, so that it has the same meaning and is comprehensible to the students.

This exercise will help students overcome their fear of unknown words within the prompt, and encourage them apply good reading practices to the prompt.

**Example:** Students should be able to work out the main idea of the prompt, even though the heading is now missing. The opposing referent ‘instead’ should point them to the fact that the use of cars is in contrast to the use of buses, trains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK 1: LETTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write a letter explaining how to ________ the use of ________. Explain why many people are not using ________ now. Describe specific ________ the city can take to ________ the situation. Start your letter, “Dear City Officials.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK 2: ESSAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you could drive your own car or take ________ to get to your school or workplace, which would you choose? What ________ would affect your decision? Give ________ to explain your choice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activity 3: Sentence by sentence discussion of stimulus**

Write one sentence of the stimulus at a time on the board, asking questions before continuing to the next sentence. This will encourage candidates to read the stimulus carefully, looking for clues and ideas within the stimulus to help them with their writing.

- After writing sentence 1: “Do you go by car or public transport when you want to shop or work in the city centre? Why?”
After writing sentence 2: “What do traffic and pollution problems lead to?”
After writing sentence 3: “Why do you think city officials want more people to take public transportation?”

Activity 4: Reading comprehension exercise.
Treat the stimulus as a reading lesson, as follows:
- **Warm up**: Before reading the stimulus:
  - elicit vocabulary
  - personalize the topic to activate the students’ background knowledge on the prompt (generates interest)
- **While reading**:
  - 1st reading: read for the gist of the stimulus
  - 2nd reading: read for details.
- **Post reading**: Students and teacher discuss implications of stimulus and application to their frame of reference.

Example: Narrate a story from your own experience about being late for something important due to traffic.
- Ask students if they have had a similar experience.
- Ask students what other problems traffic causes.
- Ask for some suggestions about solutions to these problems.

Then give students the prompt to read and:
- Ask a gist question (e.g. what problem is the prompt talking about?)
- Ask students to read the prompt a second time
- Ask some detail questions (e.g. who is concerned about the problem of pollution and traffic, according to the prompt? Who is the letter to? Does the essay want you to describe how you go to work?)

Post Reading Role Play: (Groups)
- Group A: Judges
- Groups B, C, etc: City officials, who are competing to come up with the best solution to the problem (in order to get the most votes
  - So Group B will have one solution, and Group C another solution, etc.
  - Each group must give a convincing presentation to the judges.
- After the debate judges decide which suggestion has the most merit and why.

OVER TO YOU

The following stimulus and prompts come from the December 2006 ECCE. How would you exploit the following prompt as a teacher?
- Use the sample activities 1-4 above and modify to fit this prompt.
- Suggested answers are in the key at the back of the book
- Use the following stimulus and prompts to create these activities:

### U.S. DEBATE: REBUILD NEW ORLEANS?

In 2005, the city of New Orleans was destroyed by a hurricane and the flooding that followed it. Now, people are debating whether or not to rebuild the city in the same place—where a similar disaster could happen again.

- **Task 1: Letter**
  The editors of the City Times are seeking their readers’ opinions about rebuilding after a disaster. If a disaster like this happened in your city, what do you think should be done? Should the city be rebuilt in the same place? Or should residents move away? Explain your opinion. Start your letter, “Dear Editor”

- **Task 2: Essay**
  Should public and private resources be used to support development in locations where natural disasters, such as floods, forest fires, and volcano eruptions, could occur? Explain your views. Give specific reasons and examples

*Modify Activities 1 – 4 on pages 10 & 11 ??????????????????????????????????????????????????
INTRODUCTION

Students will be on their own in the examination room when they write their essays or letters, so it is important that students learn to develop their own ideas. Like driving a car, this is not something that happens over night, but needs to be taught. The exercises that follow are for in-class learning so that by the time of the exam, your students will be confident in their ability to come up with their own ideas and develop them. Remember: It is vital that students become independent learners.

Once students have understood the stimulus & prompt and selected the task, there are certain steps involved in writing during the exam:

1. Quick brainstorming
2. Write a thesis statement (See Organizing Writing)
3. Develop a brief outline to help with organization

QUICK BRAINSTORMING

A quick brainstorm has a definite focus - that is developing specific ideas concerning the topic. The idea behind brainstorming is to come up with ideas without worrying about organization at this point (that comes during outlining). While brainstorming, it is important to be free to come up with ideas about the topic, no matter how strange it might seem to be.

A good way to initiate the brainstorming process is to question the task itself

- What is being asked?
- Why is it being asked?
- Can I adopt my own point of view or does the task dictate one for me?
- If my opinion is asked for: What is my opinion on that topic?
- Why do I believe that?
- What are my main arguments that support my opinion?
- How can I further explain my arguments?
- What examples can I think of to illustrate my beliefs?

DEVELOPING A BRIEF OUTLINE

Writing involves coordinating ideas into several paragraphs so developing a brief outline of selected brainstorm ideas helps writers produce well organized, coherent and cohesive writing.

Think of an outline as a road map. A road map shows you the way to your destination and keeps you from getting lost. Similarly, a good outline helps you organize your letter or essay, ensures that what you write supports your thesis, and protects you from digressions since you will have listed the important points you want to cover in your outline. One of the most useful things about an outline is that it will quickly reveal what needs to be included in the letter or essay to successfully get the message across.

Students should begin practicing brainstorming and outlining in class, months, if not years, before the exam. That way brainstorming and outlining will become an automatic and spontaneous process in exam conditions.

First this can be done as an all-class activity, then on an individual basis. By exam time, students must be able to summarize the main point of each body paragraph along with their supporting ideas in one word or phrase to form a tree. They will not have time to write out an entire topic sentence.

Structuring an Outline

Structuring an outline is about making connections between your ideas, and grouping them into sub-topics. An outline should both look - and function - like a tree.
First you start with the introduction and write out your thesis statement, the trunk of the tree. This is in response to what you are asked to do in the prompt. Your thesis statement serves as a contract between you and the reader so each main idea should be connected to the thesis statement and each point in your outline should connect with the next point you have to make.

Then you need to brainstorm and list two or three main points - depending on how many body paragraphs the letter or essay will have - that directly support your thesis, the main branches of the tree. Each one of these main points serves as a topic sentence in each one of the main body paragraphs.

Each topic sentence needs to be further developed with supporting points: examples, reasons, facts, etc. that further explain or illustrate your main points. These are the smaller branches of the tree.

You need to work through each point carefully and arrange them so they flow logically until you reach the conclusion. Your points need to be categorized according to their importance, and move from the more general ideas to the most specific ones.

Then you will reach the conclusion, the roots of the tree, which not only ties up the main points of the essay or letter but also provides the reader with food for thought. Remember that new ideas should not be introduced in the conclusion.

**SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPING AN OUTLINE**

**Stimulus & Prompts 1:**

**MINISTRY ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

The Ministry of Education has recently decided to make changes to the school curriculum. One of the proposed changes is that less emphasis should be placed on gymnastics, music, and art and more on subjects such as math and physics. Some teachers, students, and parents are against the decision. However, others are in favor of it.

Task 1: Letter

You and your classmates have been discussing the article, which appeared in your local newspaper. As a representative of your school, you believe that it is necessary for you to express your opinion on the Ministry’s decision, and how it will affect the students. Write a letter to the editor expressing your opinion and why you feel that way. Begin your letter, “Dear Editor.”

Task 2: Essay

Many teachers and parents believe that students should spend more time at school on lessons that will help them in their future career than spend time on lessons that may not help them in the future. Should students study only subjects that will help them find a job? Discuss your opinion, supporting it with examples.

**Sample Letter Outline**

**Why am I writing the letter?**

To express my opinion about the proposed changes

**What are the proposed changes?**

Less emphasis should be placed on gymnastics, music, and art and more on subjects such as math and physics.

**What do I believe?**

I disagree. Students should have a well-rounded education.

**Why do I believe this?**

- It broadens students’ horizons. *Why? How?*
  - Literature, critical thinking and enhances imagination.
  - Might discover special talents

- A well-rounded education can help with social interaction. *How?*
  - Knowledge on various subjects helps a person participate in social interactions

**How will it affect the students?**

- Partially educated *(what do I mean?)*
  - Know a lot about one thing only
  - Too early to decide about their future

- Students need to realize the importance of exercising
  - It is essential for good health
  - School dull without sports
Sample Essay Outline

Should Students study only subjects that will help them find a job?
I disagree. Students need to have a well-rounded education.

Why do I believe this?
- Broadens Students horizons. **Why? How?**
  - Literature, critical thinking and enhances imagination.
  - Might discover any special talents

- Education not specialization. **Why?**
  - Too early to decide about future
  - Need to realize the importance of exercising

- Well-rounded education can help with social interaction. **How?**
  - Knowledge of various subjects helps a person participate in social interactions

At exam time students will not have time to create an elaborate outline. So they need instruction on what to ask themselves, to create a tree to remind them of the organization of their writing. You might want to refer students to the example below.

Sample Tree Outline

- Well-rounded Education
  - Broaden horizons
  - High school no specialization
  - Social interaction

- Literature: imagination
- New talents
- Early to decide
- Exercising - important
- Topics for discussions

A sample letter and essay, using these outlines can be found in the Key on page 47.

Stimulus & Prompts 2:

**CITY ANNOUNCES FINES FOR THOSE WHO DON'T RECYCLE**

More land is needed for garbage that is being thrown away every day. In an attempt to try to make people reduce the garbage that they throw away and to increase recycling, the government is thinking about fining each citizen for garbage that exceeds a certain amount.

Task 1: Letter
This article appeared in your local paper and you and your friends have been discussing it. You think that the government’s decision will have both advantages and disadvantages. Write a letter stating your opinion to the editor of the newspaper. Begin your letter, “Dear Editor.”

Task 2: Essay
Even though there are many recycle bins all over your city/town, not many people are actually recycling. What are some of the reasons why many people still do not recycle and what can be done to encourage people to recycle? Discuss your opinions, supporting it with examples.

Sample Letter Outline

Who am I writing the letter to and why?
To the editor, to discuss the advantages and the disadvantages of the government’s decision.

What is the government’s decision?
To fine every citizen who throws away a lot of garbage
Do I agree with this decision? Why what good could come out of it?
- I agree. The amount of garbage will be reduced
  - People will be more careful: reuse plastic containers for ex.
  - People will start recycling

Do I have any second thoughts about this decision? Why? What might be some of the drawbacks?
- Not always possible to control the amount of garbage you produce. (Why?)
  - Little children example: diapers
  - Guests staying over
  - Special occasions: dinner parties, celebrations

Sample Essay Outline

Do people recycle?
Most of them don’t.

Why? What are some of the reasons why many people do not recycle?
- Not well informed (what do I mean?)
  - Don’t know the benefits to the environment of recycling
  - Not sure what can be recycled or not

What can be done to encourage people to recycle?
- Better informed (what do I mean?)
  - Become aware of the benefits of recycling
  - Explain what can be recycled
  - Organize school campaigns to inform young students
- Award the citizens who recycle (why)
  - More people will be motivated

OVER TO YOU

- Practice the process of making quick and brief outlines
- Suggested answers are in the key at the back of the book.

Stimulus & Prompts 3:

CITY SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR
COMMUNITY-MINDED CITIZENS

The mayor has decided to award the citizen who has contributed the most to the community. The World Times is seeking suggestions from the community about who should be nominated. If you know of someone who you think should be considered, please send us a letter.

Task 1: Letter
This article appeared in your local paper and you and your friends have been discussing it. Write a letter to the editor to nominate a person for the award. Describe this person’s work and explain why he or she should receive the award. Begin your letter, “Dear Editor.”

Task 2: Essay
Should people who contribute to the community be given an award? If you agree, what award would be appropriate for such a case? If not, why do you disagree?

Activity 1: Practice answering questions about the letter prompt
- Who am I writing the letter to?
- Why am I writing this letter?
- Who do I recommend?
- Why do I recommend this person?
- Why do I consider her/his work important?

Activity 2: Practice answering questions about the essay prompt
- Should people who contribute to the community be given an award?
Stimulus & Prompts 4: WORLD CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

The editor of our newspaper has decided to start a column describing customs and traditions of various countries around the world. The column will be entitled World Customs and Traditions through the Centuries. The editor is seeking suggestions from the community. If you know of any unusual or interesting customs, please let us know about them.

Task 1: Letter
This article appeared in your local paper and you and your friends have been discussing it. Write a letter to the editor. Describe a custom that you consider to be important and explain why it is important for your country. Begin your letter, “Dear Editor.”

Task 2: Essay
Are customs important for our national identity? If yes, how can we preserve them and pass them on to the next generations? If not, why are they not important?

Activity 3: Ask and answer questions for letter outline.
- Complete the following questions and
- Answer them
- Develop an outline for the letter.

Who ________________________________ and ________________________________?
Which ________________________________?
Why ________________________________?

Activity 4: Ask and answer questions for essay outline
- Complete the following questions and
- Answer them and include any further questions your answers might generate
- Develop an outline for the essay.

Are customs _________________________________________________________________?
How can _________________________________________________________________?

Stimulus & Prompts 5: SURVEY ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

According to a recent survey, a vast majority of employees are dissatisfied with their current work. Counselors claim that, nowadays, people’s criteria for choosing a job are mainly based on the money they will earn and the status that comes with it and not on whether such a job will make them happy.

Task 1: Letter
Write a letter to the Editor of the World Times. Express your opinion on the issue of job satisfaction. State what problems can arise when people are dissatisfied with their job.

Task 2: Essay
What is more important when looking for a job, the money and the status that comes with it or job fulfillment? What is more important to you? Be specific.

Activity 5: Create a quick and brief outline for letter
- Create questions
- Answer them and
- Include any further questions your answers might generate
- Develop an outline for the letter.

Activity 6: Create a quick and brief outline for essay
- Create questions
Whether students select a topic themselves or are assigned one, once they have a topic, they should start thinking about how to organize their writing. In order for them to be able to do this they need to be familiarized with the process of writing and the rhetorical organization of an essay or letter.

GUIDELINES FOR RHETORICAL ORGANIZATION

*Note the following guidelines refer to essays, but the rhetorical organization for letters is the same.*

All writing has three main parts:

I. The **introductory paragraph** consists of two parts:
   - a few general statements about your subject to attract your reader’s attention
   - a thesis statement to state the topic of the essay

II. The **body** consists of two or more paragraphs. Each paragraph has one main point related to your thesis statement, so the number of paragraphs in the body will vary with the number of main points.

III. The **conclusion** is:
   - a summary or review of the main points discussed in the body and
   - a final comment.

I. **The Introductory Paragraph**
   - The introductory paragraph has four purposes:
     - It should arouse the reader’s interest in the topic
     - It introduces the topic of the essay
     - It gives a general background of the topic
     - It sometimes indicates the overall “plan” of the essay
   - It has two parts:
     1. **General statements**
        - Introduce the topic of the essay
        - Give background information on the topic

     The first sentence in an introductory paragraph should be a very general comment about the subject. Its purpose is to attract the reader’s attention and to give background information on the topic. Each following sentence should become more specific and finally lead into the thesis statement.

     2. **Thesis statement**
        - states the main topic
        - lists the main points of the topic
        - may indicate the “plan” of the paper
        - is usually the last sentence in the introductory paragraph

     The thesis statement is the most important sentence in the introduction. It states the specific topic (the main idea) and your attitude, stance, or approach to the idea. It may mention the main points that will be discussed in the body of the essay.

Avoid these ineffective introductions
- Repetition of the assignment. An introductory paragraph should never refer back to the title, e.g. “This topic is very interesting....” Move directly to the position you take about the assignment.
II. The Body of the Essay

The body is organized into separate paragraphs related to the topic of the essay. A paragraph is a basic unit of organization in writing in which a group of related sentences develops one main point.

- **A paragraph contains three parts:**
  - 1. **A topic sentence** which states the main idea of the paragraph. Just as the thesis statement controls the content of the body paragraphs of an essay, the topic sentence controls the content of the sentences in the paragraph.
  - 2. **Supporting sentences** develop the topic sentence. That is, they explain, describe or discuss the topic sentence by giving reasons, examples, and facts.
  - 3. The (optional) **concluding sentence** signals the end of the paragraph and leaves the reader with important points to remember, or leads into the topic of the next paragraph.

- Ways of arranging information *within and between* paragraphs:
  - Order of time (chronology)
  - Order of space (descriptions of a location or a scene)
  - Order of climax (building towards a conclusion)
  - Order of importance (from least to most important, or most to least important)

- A good paragraph also contains the elements of **unity and cohesion**.
  - **Unity** means that you discuss only one main idea in a paragraph. The main idea is stated in the topic sentence, and then each and every supporting sentence develops that idea.
  - **Cohesion** means that your paragraph is easy to read and understand because (1) your supporting sentences are in some kind of logical order and (2) the relationship between your ideas are connected by the use of appropriate transition signals. (See Achieving Cohesion)

III. The Concluding Paragraph

The conclusion is a very important part of the essay, where you tell the reader that you have completed the essay. This is achieved by writing a summary of the main points discussed in the body of the essay. Then you add your final comments on the subject - “food for thought” for the reader. Since this is your last opportunity to make your point, you should write a strong effective final comment that the reader will remember such as: ask a provocative question, use a quotation, evoke a vivid image, call for some sort of action, end with a warning, universalize (compare to other situations), suggest results or consequences. Try to refer back to the introductory paragraph, either with key words or parallel concepts and images, in order to tie the whole essay together.

- The concluding paragraph consists of:
  - A summary of the main points
  - Your final comment on the subject, based on the information you have provided

**Avoid these weak conclusions:**
A poor conclusion can water down the effects of even carefully developed essay. Here are some types of conclusions you should avoid:

- **Repetition of the thesis.** In a short essay, don’t insult your reader’s intelligence and attention span by simply repeating your thesis statement.
- **Apology for the argument.** If you have taken enough time to think and write about your topic, you have no reason to apologize for your efforts.
- **Introduction of a new topic of a new line of reasoning.** Don’t lead readers to believe that you will now begin a new discussion. The object of the conclusion is to end an essay, not begin a new one.

Once the students have selected which prompt to respond to they need to form their thesis statement which will be in response to the main question in the task. The **thesis statement** is the controlling idea and forms the back bone of well-structured writing. It should be broad enough so that it can be developed. A thesis statement that is too vague or too specific is difficult to develop it. For learners of writing in a foreign language, the thesis statement should be in the introductory paragraph, usually the last sentence.
Once the students have decided on their thesis statement they need to start thinking about how they will develop their essay. In other words they need to think of main ideas that will help them support their thesis statement in the body paragraphs. These main ideas will serve as topic sentences in the body paragraphs. A topic sentence, usually the first sentence in a general-to-specific paragraph, announces the topic and the controlling idea – or focus - of that paragraph, which the rest of the paragraph will explain or justify. A topic sentence should directly support and explain a writer’s thesis statement and at the same time require some development.

**Supporting detail** are the remaining sentences in a paragraph that support and illustrate the topic sentence of the paragraph. An effective way to expand topic sentences is to run through a list of wh- questions – who? what? when? where? how? and why? - that any curious paparazzi would ask if they interviewed a celebrity. Another way is to think of an example which could be used to illustrate the topic of the paragraph.

**SAMPLE ACTIVITIES TO UNDERSTAND RHETORICAL ORGANIZATION**

**Analysis of Model Essay**

Go through this model composition to see how the thesis statement, the topic sentences and the supporting detail effectively add to the rhetorical organization of this essay.

I think most people would certainly not agree with traditionalists’ view of working mothers. In fact, I think it is absolutely outrageous to suggest that children of working mothers perform less well in school and are more likely to take drugs and get into trouble with the police. My mother has worked since I was two years old and my experience has been the total opposite. I am doing very well in university and I certainly have never been involved with the police.

In my opinion, there are advantages to having a working mother. I know my mother works really hard but she has an interesting job and is always learning new things, which has always been a great help to me. For example, when she learnt how to use a computer she was able to give me advice on the presentation of my assignments for school, which helped me to get better grades. She always made sure that she spent time with me on the weekends. We sometimes played tennis or went to the cinema and she never complained when I invited friends around. Besides all this, my mother could afford special treats when she got her bonus. One year we went to Disney World, which was a great experience.

Of course, I sometimes missed my mother when she was working especially when I used to come home to an empty house after school. But I soon snapped out of it and played my favorite music really loud or watched a video until it was time to do my homework. When she got home eventually we had a lot to talk about. Naturally, I complained when she asked me to help with getting the dinner ready but deep down I knew that I had to get used to doing these things as some day I would be responsible for looking after my own family.

All in all, I am really glad that my mother works. She looked after me well but at the same time encouraged me to be independent. I feel that my life is much richer because of her and not just in the material sense. I consider myself fortunate and hope that others consider me a responsible member of society.

This model essay is taken from *Build Up Your Competency* (1997) Athens. Hellenic American Union: Unit 5: Organizing Your Writing
Understanding Thesis Statements, Topic Sentences and Supporting Detail

Task 1: Letter
Do you agree with the local school board’s decision or do you think family counseling services are unnecessary? What effect do you think these services will have on students’ school life and performance? Write a letter to the editor of Local News expressing your views and giving examples. Start your letter with “Dear Editor,”

Task 2: Essay
Some schools in the United States offer free counseling services to their students and their family to help them overcome problems that influence their performance at school. What are some of the problems family counseling can help with? What do you think are some of the benefits of such services? Discuss the reasons for your views giving examples.

Activity 1: Understanding Appropriate Introductory Paragraphs with Thesis Statement (Letter)

Look at the following opening paragraphs of the letter.

- Decide which paragraph best addresses the prompt.
- Underline the thesis statement
- Explain why the other paragraphs are not appropriate for this prompt.

A: Dear Editor,
I read your article in the newspaper. My name is George Xanthipis and I have discussed this issue with some of my classmates and we all agree with the school board’s decision.

B: Dear Editor,
I am a high school student and read your article about the local school board’s decision to provide students and their parents free counseling services. I believe this decision has come at the right time. With the various problems teenagers have, both at school and in their personal life, counseling will be a great benefit to improving students’ performance.

C: Dear Editor,
I read your article about the school board’s decision to offer free counseling services to secondary school students and their parents. I am a high school student and at the moment I have a lot of problems at school. My teachers are very helpful and understanding and I would like to thank them for that but I would like to know how this new service will help me improve my grades at school.

D: Dear Editor,
I am a high school student and I am writing to express my views on the local school board’s decision to offer free counseling services to students and their parents. In my opinion, there are a lot of students who are doing poorly at school because of various problems.

Appropriate introductory paragraph with thesis statement
B: Dear Editor,
I am a high school student and read your article about the local school board’s decision to provide students and their parents free counseling services. I believe this decision has come at the right time. With the various problems teenagers have, both at school and in their personal life, counseling will be a great benefit to improving students’ performance.

This opening paragraph first announces who is writing and why. Then it answers the first question in the prompt: Do you agree with the local school board’s decision or do you think family counseling services are unnecessary? Then it responds to the second question in prompt: What effect do you think these services will have on students’ school life and performance? This lets the reader know what the letter will be about.

Inadequate thesis statements
A: This opening paragraph does not mention the local board’s decision (free family counselling services at secondary
schools) and although it presents the writer’s opinion, it does not mention the points that the writer will discuss in the main body of the letter.

C: This opening paragraph contains an inappropriate thesis statement. The reader understands that the writer will present the problems he/she faces at school, discuss the help he has been able to receive from his/her teachers and then try to get more information on how the family counseling services provided by the school will help him become a better student.

D: This opening paragraph contains an inappropriate thesis statement. The reader understands that the writer will only discuss some of the problems teenage students face. This thesis statement is off topic.

Activity 2: Understanding Appropriate Topic Sentences

Now choose the most appropriate topic sentences for each of the two main body paragraphs.

Explain why the other choices are inappropriate

A: Today’s teenagers have a lot of problems which their parents, their school or their teachers are sometimes unable to help them with.

B: For example, students will get help with their personal problems.

C: There are students who find it difficult to cope with changes that happen in their personal life, such as changing neighborhood and moving to a new school.

D: Free family counseling will have many benefits for students and their performance in class.

E: Students who have discipline problems will learn how to become more cooperative in class.

Appropriate topic sentences

A: Today’s teenagers have a lot of problems which their parents, their school or their teachers are sometimes unable to help them with.

This topic sentence presents the main idea of the second paragraph (first body paragraph) about the various problems teenagers face. This is the first point mentioned in the thesis statement.

D: Free family counseling will have many benefits for students and their performance in class.

This topic sentence is appropriate for the third paragraph (second body paragraph), about the benefits of counseling. This is the second point mentioned in the thesis statement.

Inadequate topic sentences

B: A topic sentence would not begin with “for example” it is an example of a supporting statement.

C: This is a supporting statement that mentions one kind of personal problem that young students may have and gives a specific example.

E: This is also a supporting statement. It explains one of the benefits of family counseling services.

Activity 3: Understanding Appropriate Supporting Statements

Now choose the sentences that support the topic best. Indicate which of the two topic sentences they support.

A: Students who have problems studying will learn good study skills and those who are stressed about school will be taught ways of handling their feelings of anxiety better.

B: Last but not least, the teachers will also have the support they need in handling student problems.

C: For example, some of my classmates have discipline problems.

D: They do not get much support at home since their parents work hard and do not have much time to devote to them.
General Comments on Appropriate Supporting Statements

A: Students who have problems studying will learn good study skills and those who are stressed about school will be taught ways of handling their feelings of anxiety better.
This is a supporting statement for the third paragraph (second body paragraph) of the letter. It mentions how counseling services can help those with problems.

B: Last but not least, the teachers will also have the support they need in handling student problems.
This is a supporting statement for the third paragraph (second body paragraph) of the letter. It is another benefit of counseling.

C: For example, some of my classmates have discipline problems.
This is a supporting statement for the second paragraph (first body paragraph) of the letter. It gives an example of a problem students may have at school.

D: They do not get much support at home since their parents work hard and do not have much time to devote to them.
This is a good supporting statement for the second paragraph (first body paragraph) of the letter. It expands on an example of the problems students have at school.

Complete Sample Letter

Dear Editor,

I am a high school student and read your article about the local school board’s decision to provide students and their parents free counseling services. I believe this decision has come at the right time. With the various problems teenagers have, both at school and in their personal life, counseling will be a great benefit to improving students’ performance.

Today’s teenagers have a lot of problems which their parents, their school or their teachers are sometimes unable to help them with. For example, some of my classmates have discipline problems. This disrupts the class creating a bad atmosphere in which to learn. Also, there are a few students in my class that lack focus and do not know how to study effectively. They do not get much support at home since their parents work hard and do not have much time to devote to them.

Free family counseling will have many benefits for students and their performance in class. The school therapist will help students with discipline problems become more cooperative in class. This would benefit these students and improve the class atmosphere. Students who have problems studying will learn good study skills and those who are stressed about school will be taught ways of handling their feelings of anxiety better. Also, students with personal problems will get the psychological support they need so that they can become happier students and fit into the class better. Last but not least, the teachers will also have the support they need in handling student problems.

I think this was a wise decision that the school board has made, as many students with problems will be able to get free professional right at their school. The result will be happier students, better class atmosphere, and improved teacher and student performance. Everyone will have better opportunities for having a happier and more productive school life.

Effective conclusion, summing up the main ideas and ending the letter

OVER TO YOU

- Now we will go through the same procedure for Task 2: Essay
- You will see how the organization is the same.
- Suggested answers are in the key at the back of the book.

Task 2: Essay

Some schools in the United States offer free counseling services to their students and their family to help them overcome problems that influence their performance at school. What are some of the problems family counseling can help with? What do you think are some of the benefits of such services? Discuss the reasons for your views giving examples.

Activity 1: Introductory Paragraph with Thesis Statement

- Look at the following opening paragraphs
- Decide which paragraph best addresses the prompt
- Underline the thesis statement
- Explain why the other paragraphs are not appropriate
A: Students sometimes have problems which may affect their performance at school. When problems are difficult to solve even with the help of their parents, friends, or teachers, then they may need the help of a therapist. It may be difficult to find a therapist and it is also expensive. Having free family counseling at school would help give students the extra support they need to overcome their problems and to do better in school.

B: The personal problems students have sometimes can influence how they do at school. In my opinion, these problems cannot be solved by the students, teachers, or even their parents sometimes, and they require the attention of a trained professional.

C: What can teenage students do to overcome the problems they have at school? They cannot do very much if the problems are difficult and persist. Their teachers, of course, want all their students to do well at school, so they can send them to the school therapist for counseling services.

D: Students have a lot of problems that they cannot solve very well on their own, so a therapist in the school would help them with their problems.

Activity 2: Topic sentences
- Now choose the most appropriate topic sentences for each of the two main body paragraphs.
- Explain why the other topic sentences are inappropriate.

A: In my opinion, students should see the principal or the teachers when they have serious school problems that they or their parents, cannot solve, but what can the principal or the teachers do about these problems?

B: Students should take advantage of the school’s free counseling services when they are facing problems with their teachers or their classmates that prevent them from doing well at school.

C: Teenagers have many problems that may keep them from doing their best at school.

D: I think that free counseling services would benefit not only students but parents and teachers too.

Activity 3: Supporting statements
- Now choose the most appropriate supporting statements.
- Indicate which of the two topic sentences they support.

A: They may also have problems with one of their subjects or their teacher.

B: The school therapist could also work with parents and teachers to help them understand the kinds of problems that teenagers have.

C: For example, if they break up with their boy or girl friend.

D: They would be happier which should make them better students.

Activity 4: Write the essay
- Now write an essay using the appropriate thesis statement, topic sentences and supporting statements. You will need to add more supporting statements and a conclusion.

Activity 5: Model letter
- Identify the thesis statement, the topic sentences and the supporting statements.

Dear Sir,

On behalf of my classmates from 10th grade, Marathon High School, I would like to express our opinion on your proposal to make the teaching of English mandatory in all European high schools.

We think this is basically a good idea that will help us develop a successful career. We know that in the world of business, international law, technology and medicine, English is the language of communication. We need at least one common language to learn about research and development in other countries. It would be impossible to learn a number of foreign languages to get the information we need. Besides, our school curriculum is already very demanding as we have many subjects to study in order to get our high school diploma.

However, we feel that although English is important for global communication, other foreign languages are also important for our future careers. Some of my classmates intend to go to Italy, France or Germany for part of their studies. Of course, they understand the importance of learning English and wish to continue their English lessons but they would also like to have the opportunity to study at least one other foreign language.
We would like English to be a mandatory subject but we think that students should be allowed to choose at least one other foreign language. Those students who only wish to learn English should be given the opportunity to study another subject from either the sciences or the humanities.

We hope that you will consider our suggestions and communicate how we feel to students in other countries. Everywhere in the world students have different needs and plans for continuing their education. It is important that all schools meet the students’ needs and help them to develop a successful career.

This model letter is taken from Build Up Your Competency (1997) Athens. Hellenic American Union: Unit 11: Writing a Letter

Achieving Cohesion

INTRODUCTION

Cohesion gives clarity to a sentence, making clear the relation between the parts of the sentence, between sentences, or between paragraphs. Texts which lack cohesion seem abrupt and jumpy as the ideas expressed are not linked together and there are no signposts to the reader to show where the text is heading. Cohesion is achieved not just through linking words and expressions, but also through reference words – words which refer to other places in the text, such as pronouns. The use of cohesive devices connects the text together to give it coherence.

In this section, you will first look at some useful linking and reference words, then a model text, with an analysis of the cohesive features of this text, followed by two texts designed to give practice at the identification and production of cohesive devices.

SOME USEFUL LINKING WORDS

Addition: Indicates continuation
and, too, also, furthermore, moreover, in addition, besides, in the same way, again, another, a similar...

Opposition: Indicates contrast
but, yet, however, nevertheless, still, though, although, whereas, in contrast, rather, instead, on the other hand...

Exemplification. Indicates shift from a more general/abstract idea to a more specific/concrete idea.
for example, for instance, after all, an illustration of, even, indeed, in fact, it is true, of course, specifically, to be specific, that is, to illustrate,...

Identity. Indicates sameness.
that is, that is to say, in other words, ...

Concession. Indicates a willingness to consider the other side.
I admit, true, of course, naturally, some (people) believe, it has been claimed that, once it was believed, there are those who would say...

Cause/Reason
for, because, since, as, as a result of, because of...

Effect/Result
as a result, therefore, so, the cause of, the reason for, accordingly, consequently...

Comparison
similarly, likewise, also, too, and, as, just as, like, just like, in the same way, both...and, not only...but also

Contrast
however, in contrast, in (by) comparison, on the other hand, but, different from, unlike, despite, at any rate,

Alternative
otherwise, or, if, unless

Summary
actually, fortunately, in brief, in conclusion, in short, the whole, to summarize, to conclude

SOME USEFUL REFERENCE WORDS

Pronouns
he, him, she, her, it, they, them, etc

Demonstratives
this, that, these, those

Other
another, other, such, etc.
Activity 1: Analysis of Cohesive Devices

- Read the prompt and question below.
- Then read the letter which was written in reply.
- Does the letter seem to flow smoothly?
- What helps this smooth flow?
- Identify as many features as you can.
- Finally look at the same text again which has been annotated to show these features.

**NO GIFT FOR TEACHERS**

Recently, a teacher at City Elementary School received a very expensive present from one of her students: two airplanes tickets to Hawaii. In reaction, the school officials announced that they will no longer allow teachers to accept any gifts from students. Some parents and teachers oppose the new policy and are planning a public meeting to discuss it. The City Times wants to know how its readers feel about the issue.

**Task 1: Letter**

Do you support the new policy at City Elementary School? Write a letter to the editor explaining your view. Give specific examples of how this policy could be beneficial or harmful. Start your letter, “Dear Editor.”

**Task 2: Essay**

In many places, it is common for students to give their teachers gifts. Should this be allowed? How might it affect students, teachers, and parents? Discuss this issue using specific examples to illustrate and to support your view.

**Sample Annotated Letter**

Dear Editor,

I would like to offer my opinion in response to your article in The City Times about giving gifts to teachers. It is traditional in many countries for students to give their teachers gifts as a way to show that they are doing a good job and makes them feel that their work has been noticed. However, the traditional gift is usually an apple, or perhaps some flowers or chocolates. When we hear of students giving teachers an expensive gift such as airplane tickets, it makes us wonder how those teachers can be fair when they give a mark for a test. Can you really fail a student when you are reading their test on a holiday that their parents have paid for?

There are also other sides to the problem. If the parents of one student give an expensive gift, perhaps other parents will feel that they should do so too, so as to give their child a better chance. This would lead to competition between parents, but would certainly not lead to better teaching. I think the best solution is to ask teachers not to accept expensive gifts, but students should be allowed to show their enjoyment of their lessons with little things they buy out of their own money.

Regards,

**Short reference to the question which defines the topic of the text.**

**Use of demonstrative to avoid repetition of students giving their teachers gifts and links the two sentences.**

**This linking word helps the reader to understand that there will be a contrast between the previous information and what follows.**

**At the beginning of the second paragraph, ‘traditional’ is used in a general sense. Here, it is more specific. The repetition of the word helps link the two paragraphs using lexical cohesion.**

**The writer is contrasting ‘expensive’ with the inexpensive examples of the previous sentence.**

**The ‘student’ here is defined by the information in the same sentence which follows.**

‘his’ and ‘his’ refer to the student. It is more common to avoid ‘his’ or ‘her’, ‘he’ or ‘she’, when the sex of the person is unknown and to replace these pronouns with ‘their’, ‘they’, etc.

‘It’ refers to the entire previous clause.

‘This’ refers to the entire previous sentence and links the next sentence to it.

‘do so’ replaces ‘give an expensive gift’.

This refers to the teachers who have been given expensive gifts.

The previous paragraph begins with a reference to a problem and this paragraph links to it by beginning with a solution.

‘other’ contrasts with ‘the parents of one student’.

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OVER TO YOU

Suggested answers are in the key at the back of the book.

Activity 1: Reference Words
Read the letter below.

Some of the words have been put in boxes. Find which words these referents refer to.

What do you notice about the highlighted words? How do these connect ideas within sentences and between sentences?

Task 1: Letter
Do you support the new policy at City Elementary School? Write a letter to the editor explaining your view. Give specific examples of how this policy could be beneficial or harmful. Start your letter, “Dear Editor.”

Dear Editor,

I’m writing to say why I think students should be able to give gifts to teachers.

I’m a student in Senior High School and next week I have very important examinations. If I do well in these, then I’ll be able to go to university to study to become a vet. This has been my dream ever since I was a young child and that’s why I’ve been studying so hard.

Unfortunately, two months ago I was in a car accident and I hurt my back, which meant I couldn’t go to school. My parents thought I was crying because of the pain, but it wasn’t that. I was afraid that I wouldn’t pass the exams and then my dream would be over.

Luckily, when my parents told my teachers at school how unhappy I was, they understood my problem. One of them lives near my house and she came every day to help me with the lessons and to look at my homework. Not only was she so kind, but she never asked us for anything.

My family is not rich, but if I could buy my teacher a present, I’d buy her the best thing I could find. I think that teachers do their job because they love it and not because of money or gifts. In my opinion, students should be allowed to say ‘thank you’ to the people who work so hard for them because they deserve it and I don’t think we can ever give them too much.

Regards,

Activity 2: Linking Words
In the letter below, some connectors between ideas within sentences and between sentences have been removed.

Choose from the list and insert the appropriate connectors.

Some of the text is underlined. Replace the underlined text with appropriate reference words.

Dear Editor,

I was shocked when I read that a teacher was given airplane tickets as a gift and I would like to express my opinion. Teachers at our schools are very well paid, compared to workers who are not teachers. Teachers don’t teach all day, (1) ______ teachers do have to prepare lessons and mark homework, (2) ______, but teachers (3) ______ get very long summer holidays, (4) ______ holidays at Christmas and Easter. The fact that teachers are very well paid and have long holidays means that teachers don’t need any extra money or gifts to make teachers’ life better.

(5) ______, if one student gives teachers an expensive gift, (6) ______ teachers might expect students who are not the student who gave an expensive gift to give valuable gifts (7) ______. It could become a duty for all the students to give an expensive gift (8) ______ students who can’t afford to give an expensive gift might be punished by getting bad marks for their homework and for tests.

All the fact that students give expensive gifts means that there is a danger students might be judged on the value of the gifts students give (9) ______ students’ hard work and the attention students pay to students’ lessons. I think students giving gifts to their teachers is not what we want for our children’s future and (10) ______ my opinion on students giving gifts to their teachers I support the ban on giving gifts to teachers.

Regards,

although Firstly then instead of in addition
because of also and on the whole however
finally as well as despite this not only this as well
Giving Feedback on Content, Development & Organization

Stage 1

INTRODUCTION

Writing drafts is part of the writing process and students need to get accustomed to the various stages involved in writing an essay or letter:

Stage 1: Students write their first draft
Teachers respond to it focusing on content, development & organization

Stage 2: Students write their second draft
Teachers respond to it focusing on language problems

Stage 3: Students write their final draft
Teachers evaluate it

RESPONDING TO CONTENT, DEVELOPMENT & ORGANIZATION

Response to the first draft should focus on content, organization and topic development rather than on language errors, unless they obscure meaning and interfere somehow with content development. An effective way to check and at the same time prompt your students to edit their work in terms of content, development, and organization would be by asking them questions rather than rewriting the entire essay for them. Teachers themselves need to ask themselves a number of questions while editing their students’ first draft. You might want to refer to the following list of questions or create your own:

Introduction
► Is the focus question of the topic addressed?
► Is there a thesis statement?
► Is the controlling idea clear?

The Body
► Check each paragraph.
► Is there a clear topic sentence?
► Is the topic sentence general enough to allow for further development?
► Do the supporting details fit the topic sentence?
► Is there enough support?
► Is there any irrelevant material?
► Are the paragraphs well organized?

The Conclusion
► Is the topic re-stated without being repeated?
► Are the main arguments re-stated without being repeated?
► Is there any irrelevant material?

SAMPLE ACTIVITY ON GIVING FEEDBACK ON CONTENT, DEVELOPMENT & ORGANIZATION

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN

Many people who work and shop in the central area of the city drive cars to get to there instead of using public transportation (buses, trains, etc.). This causes traffic and pollution problems. City officials want more people to take public transportation. They want to find out from citizens what can be done to make people leave their cars at home.

ELI News Service

Task 1: Letter
Write a letter explaining how to increase the use of public transportation. Explain why many people are not using public transportation now. Describe specific actions the city can take to improve the situation. Start your letter, “Dear City Officials.”

Task 2: Essay
If you could drive your own car or take public transportation to get to your school or workplace, which would you choose? What factors would affect your decision? Give details to explain your choice.
Sample Editing Activity:

Dear city officials,

I am a seventeen year old student and I am writing because of the article that I read for the Public transportation campaign. I want to express my opinion about these very serious problem.

Firstly, many people don't use public transportation because it is never on time and nowadays the rhythm of life is fast and all the people run because they have many things to do. Also I believe that the public transportation is not enough for my city because there are a lot of places that you can't go with buses or trams you need a car.

Secondly, I have to mention that it is very important to inform people better about the pollution problems that we had. So you can start to stack posters all over the city with the public transportation and how this can be one solution for the pollution problem. Because if everybody use the public transportation we will not have a traffic or such a polluted environment.

In conclusion my opinion is that you have to make the transportation biggest and make them be on time, inform all the people about that and maybe it will be a solution for the environment and for our lives because we spend lots of hours in the roads and the reason is the traffic jam.

Yours sincerely,

Which problem are you referring to?
How is this topic sentence general enough? How can you further develop it?
What do you mean transportation isn't enough?
Why don't you separate this from the rest of the sentence as you are introducing another reason?
Why is it important to inform people about the pollution problems? What pollution problems are you referring to? How does this topic sentence support your thesis statement in the introductory paragraph?
Why do they need to do that? Can you suggest any other actions the city officials can take to encourage people to use public transportation?
What do you mean when you say "biggest"?
Can you rephrase it so you don't repeat it?
What exactly do you mean? What does that refer to?

OVER TO YOU

- Suggested answers are in the key at the back of the book.

Task 1: Letter
Write a letter explaining how to increase the use of public transportation. Explain why many people are not using public transportation now. Describe specific actions the city can take to improve the situation. Start your letter, “Dear City Officials.”

Activity 1: Editing Content, Development & Organization
- Edit this essay in terms of content, development and organization.
- Remember you are not to focus on grammar and vocabulary at this point.

Dear City Officials,

I am eighteen years old and I use every day the public transportation for to go in my college.

However, I know that many people are not using public transportation. I believe that this happen because they believe that with car leave quickly. This reason isn't truth because there are many cars as result to there is traffic and finally they don't leave quickly on their work.

The city can do specific actions for to improve the situation. The city can do the tickets more cheaper. With this actions all of people will can buy tickets and will use public transportation. Also, The people can understand that with the car we polluted the atmosphere.

In conclusion, If we use public transportation, we will improve the quality in our in our life.

Your Sincerely,
Giving Feedback on Language Errors
Stage 2

INTRODUCTION

It is true that students tend to believe that a good teacher corrects all their language errors. It is also true that these errors are more easily and quickly spotted and corrected than mistakes of content, organization, and overall communicative effectiveness. However, correcting all language mistakes can be discouraging, demoralizing and therefore ineffective, not to mention time-consuming for the teacher. Besides that, correcting all language mistakes can shift both learners’ and teachers’ attention away from other equally important aspects of the content and organization. Therefore, it is advisable to:

- respond to the first draft focusing on content, organization and topic development rather than on language errors, unless they obscure meaning (Stage 1)
- respond to the second draft focusing on specific language related problems by involving learners in self-correction, or peer-correction using symbols and instructor-initiated comments and correct errors selectively (Stage 2)

RESPONDING TO LANGUAGE ERRORS

How can we correct errors selectively?
Selective error correction addresses only those mistakes that affect meaning and impede comprehensibility and those which are very basic and systematic errors. Instead of correcting all the mistakes in a piece of writing, the teacher can address only certain areas, such as tenses or articles, either because this is where the students particularly need help or because the teacher - along with the students - has decided to focus attention on these aspects for the time being.

How can we correct students’ work?
There are a number of interdependent and effective ways of making correction a valuable learning experience:

I. Correction symbols & marks
Correction symbols are used to guide students in self-correction. This encourages students to reflect on their mistakes and aim to correct them themselves. This technique helps lead the way towards your students becoming autonomous and independent writers.

You may want to use the symbols in the chart below or create your own:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMBOL</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Wrong form or use of tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WO</td>
<td>Wrong word order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WW</td>
<td>Wrong word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WF</td>
<td>Wrong word form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP</td>
<td>Wrong Preposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV</td>
<td>Subject-verb agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS</td>
<td>Repeated subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Grammar mistake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^</td>
<td>There is something missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Omit; this is not necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Punctuation mistake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp</td>
<td>Spelling mistake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E?</td>
<td>Awkward expression; find a better expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M?</td>
<td>The meaning is unclear; you can ask me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Training students to use the symbols
Learners need understand how to use the correction symbols in order to benefit from them. You can use the chart below (the same as the previous one with examples) or create your own. Make sure each student has a copy of the chart with their books.
The use of the correction symbols can be introduced in the following order:

- Give learners examples of incorrect sentences with the corresponding symbols.
- Have learners collaboratively (pairs or groups) mark the symbols on a letter or essay and receive feedback from the teacher.
- Write the symbols on the board. Have pairs of students exchange a piece writing, and peer correct using the symbols.

**Additional techniques of error correction**

The teacher can gradually introduce other ways of feedback on language errors which encourage learner autonomy and independence by using the following sequence of techniques:

- Underline the mistakes and write the corresponding symbols in the margin
- Underline the mistake without writing any symbols
- Write the symbol in the margin next to the line where the mistake occurs so that the learners can spot the error
- Make a mark, e.g. a tick or a cross, in the margin next to the line for every mistake there is in that line
- Make a mark in the margin with no indication about the number of mistakes in that line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMBOL</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Wrong form or use of tense</td>
<td>I have finished school and I knew how important. .....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WO</td>
<td>Wrong word order</td>
<td>I like very much playing basketball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WW</td>
<td>Wrong word</td>
<td>He said me the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WF</td>
<td>Wrong word form</td>
<td>...we will be prepared for the finally test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP</td>
<td>Wrong Preposition</td>
<td>...they won't focus in lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV</td>
<td>Subject-verb agreement</td>
<td>Every college student have the opportunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS</td>
<td>Repeated subject</td>
<td>...it is true that students they are not spending enough time ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Grammar mistake</td>
<td>The government must to invest more money in education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^</td>
<td>There is something missing</td>
<td>I think that ^ will help the students build.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Omit; this is not necessary</td>
<td>...they have the opportunity to do play sports and listen to music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Punctuation mistake</td>
<td>It will be less time for children for their activities sports dancing!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp</td>
<td>Spelling mistake</td>
<td>We belive that it is good for teachers to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Awkward expression; find a better expression</td>
<td>In my opinion, the truth and the right decision are in the middle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M ?</td>
<td>The meaning is unclear; you can ask me</td>
<td>We believe that our convince of the problem that will happen of the Minister's decision will be in place, the Minister of education will be more careful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**II. Comments**

Providing learners with comments in the margin or at the end of their work concerning the grammar and language is appropriate when errors are systematic. This procedure is especially useful for drawing attention to recurring errors in a particular area.

**Comments may include:**

- **Reformulation of errors** to show students how to write something accurately. Reformulation is appropriate when it’s difficult for learners to self-correct using the correction symbols. For example, if the student writes: ‘I lost the bus’, the teacher could reformulate by writing: ‘Do you mean you missed the bus?’ Reformulation may be followed by a suggestion to find and correct similar mistakes in their piece of writing.

- **Guiding question comments** can be accompanied by referring students to a dictionary or a grammar book. For instance, if the student writes: ‘I am not interested about dance but I’m really interested about soccer’ the teacher can write a comment or ask a guiding question like the following: ‘What preposition is interested followed by? Have a look at interested in your dictionary’ or if the student writes: ‘At the end of the day I was going to my home very tired and I was sleeping’ the teacher can suggest: ‘Be careful with your use of past tense verbs. When should you use the past simple and the past continuous? Have a look at chapter X of your grammar book.’

**III. Remedial Teaching**

When several students make the same type of mistake, then remedial teaching can be very helpful. One way to do this is to make a note of class errors that you pick up in their writing. Put the sentences on the board, and have students
identify and correct the errors. (They love to do this!) Also, it is advisable that the teacher keep a record of the basic
and repetitive mistakes that are made by most of the students. Then develop activities for remedial teaching on this
particular grammar or vocabulary problem.

OVER TO YOU

- Use the following prompt for Activities 1-4
- Suggested answers are in the key at the back of the book

**THE CITY TIMES**
LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY TO BE INCREASED

The Ministry of Education has recently decided to increase the school day by one hour. In return for the longer school day,
the ministry will extend summer vacation by one week. The new change will be in place by the next school year. Some
teachers, students, and parents are strongly against the longer school day. However, others think more time spent in school
will improve the level of education in the country.

*ELI News Service*

**Task 1: Letter**
You and your classmates have been discussing the article, which appeared in your local newspaper. You feel it is
important to let the community know how students feel about the decision announced in the article, and how it will affect
them. You are the class representative. Write a letter stating your opinions and those of your classmates to the editor of
the newspaper. Begin your letter, “Dear Editor.”

**Task 2: Essay**
In many countries there is the belief that children are not spending enough time in school. Given the demands of society,
some people think that children need to have more education than ever before. One way to educate children better is to
require them to spend more time in school. Would lengthening the school day improve the quality of education in your
country? Discuss your opinion, supporting it with examples.

**Activity 1: Practicing Correction Symbols**
- Use the correction symbols to correct the following sentences.
- You may write the symbol above or next to the place in writing where the problem occurs.

1. This change will creative positive react.
2. But if the teacher help…….
3. It's a phenomenon which becomes common over the last years
4. Finally, education is very important from students
5. Today we need education more and better….
6. I believe this suggestion it is not beneficial.
7. And if it’s happen like this the students it is sure that they didn’t understand anything in class……
8. …teachers can include more hours in school period.
9. Young people cannot to spent….
10. …more hours at school might be boring or tiring for the students.
11. Also, a lot of students have to do something….
12. Secondly I believe that it’s very important for students…..
13. Also, they spend all their free time with the result to haven’t interests.
14. The new law will not do any difference.
15. Nowadays, the disadvantages now to living in a big city are many.
Activity 2: Using Correction Symbols

Paragraphs 1 & 2: Correction symbols have been added to these two paragraphs, examine how the learner would correct their errors. Note there is a reformulation comment in the first paragraph.

Paragraphs 3 & 4: Add the correction symbols that would guide the learner to correct the mistakes in these two paragraphs.

You may want to reformulate inaccurate phrases or sentences where you feel the correction symbols wouldn’t provide adequate guidance to the learner.

Dear Editor,

I am a [student] of a highschool and I’m writing on behalf of my classmates. Few days ago my classmates and I [read your newspaper “THE CITY TIMES” and] will found the decision of the Ministry of Education quite good.

Today we [read more and better education than the old time cause the circumstances demanded that. New discoveries happening every day, the things sciences changing and when we will ready for a job must be prepare for all this. After all isn’t so bad a hour daily when we will all extra week for resting the summer. It’s for are own good cause we will learnt more.]

I don’t see any serious reason to disagree teachers and parents with that. At the haging maybe will be a little difficult and tiring but it’s seems very beneficial. This extra hour daily must be for globally education I think and the children can have dialogues between the teachers. With this way the children will felt better in the class, listen better to others students in the class and learn more for the life.

Thank you who reading our letter and we hope to publish that. The education need many refreshing changes in our country. Let’s be the first ones.

Your faithfully,

Activity 3: Writing Guided Question Comments

Look at the letter again and answer the following questions:

Which errors did you choose to treat by making reformulation comments and why?

Paragraphs 1 & 2: Read the suggested guided writing comments concerning two of the areas that need to be addressed: form and use of tenses, use of articles.

Paragraphs 3 & 4: Then, use the space below to write additional guided question comments for the rest of the systematic errors in the letter.

Paragraphs 1 & 2: guided question comments:

- Your original suggestion concerning the use of this extra hour supports your opinion. That’s great!
- .... How about the language of your letter? Use the correction symbols and my comments below to correct your mistakes so that it’s easier for the reader to understand your ideas.

7. Be careful with the use and form of tenses. Take a look at the overview of tenses in Blue Azar, Chapter 1, pp. 6-7. Notice the form of the tenses and the timelines and then go over the verbs you’ve used and make the necessary changes.

8. Note that no article (the/a) is used to make generalizations with plural count nouns (the/a sciences) and with non count nouns (the/a education). ‘The’ is used when both the speaker and the listener are thinking about the same specific thing, e.g. Things are changing. Education needs to change too. Go over your letter and check whether you have used the articles appropriately.

Paragraphs 3 & 4: Your turn - guided question comments

I’m sure that your final draft will be even better. I’m looking forward to it.
Activity 4: Marking an essay and making comments

- Read the essay below and write symbols which would guide the student to notice and self-correct their mistakes.
- Be sure to reformulate where you see it’s necessary
- Then make appropriate guided question comments to address systematic errors

It is true that in many countries it is believed that students aren’t spend the time which needs in the school. The community know how important is children to have more education. The society demands are given a percent at people believe that children must have more education than ever before. One solution is a longer school day. But I don’t agree with this because I find it wrong.

I’m strongly against of this because if children want to be educated they will learn more, they’ll try to gain knowledge by themselves. One extra hour will make the children more anxious and tiring. For example now children have many obligations except for school, so this extra hour will make them stressed and burnt out. The consequences of this change will be so bad and destroying for students. If the Ministry decide to increase the school day, young people won’t have time to spent on sports and hobbies.

I think that my opinion is valid because nowadays the students have so many lessons and extra activities. So if they will have more this will be very hard for them. This will be a disaster! For example, I have a friend who is a very good student. She’s so anxious with lessons and thinks if she had more lessons she would be mad. Of course, this chance will influence the teachers too. They won’t have enough time for them and they’ll be easily tired because they will work more hours.

In a few words if Ministry of Education will decide to increase the school day, students and teachers will have many problems in the future. Student won’t improve in lessons and teachers will be more tired. It is important to find the community a right way to cover the material in a better way and to give more money for the education.

Evaluating Writing

Stage 3

INTRODUCTION

Scoring ECCE writing tasks entails more than just assigning the appropriate grades to the students’ compositions. Students at this level cannot be expected to understand in great depth each descriptor in the Scoring Criteria for ECCE Writing Section Rubric.

In this section you will find:

- Teacher’s Minimum Criteria Checklist for Scoring ECCE Writing
- Student-Friendly Feedback Scoring Criteria for ECCE Writing
- Essays to practice applying the Student-Friendly Feedback Scoring Criteria for ECCE Writing
- Official ELI-UM Scoring Criteria for ECCE Writing Section

Before you provide feedback to your students, you can use the Teacher’s Minimum Criteria Checklist for Scoring ECCE Writing to decide whether the students actually meet the minimum criteria for an appropriate letter or essay. Then you can use the Student-Friendly Feedback Scoring Criteria for ECCE Writing from which you can select the appropriate descriptors to provide your students with feedback that they will be able to understand. Indirectly, students will be exposed to the writing criteria that will be used to assess their writing.

By receiving feedback on the different aspects of their writing, students become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and will be able to focus on the areas that need improvement. Students need to be aware that writing at this level is more than writing grammatically correct sentences and emphasis should also be placed equally on the following areas: Content and Development, Organization and Connection of Ideas, Linguistic Range and Control, and Communicative Effect.

TEACHER’S MINIMUM CRITERIA CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING STUDENTS’ WRITING

- Has the student understood the prompt?
- Has the student answered the focus question?
- Is the text well organized:
  - Is there an introduction & conclusion
  - Is there a thesis statement?
  - Does each body paragraph focus on one topic
### STUDENT-FRIENDLY FEEDBACK SCORING CRITERIA for ECCE WRITING SECTION

A modified version of the official scoring rubrics for the ECCE from the University of Michigan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content and Development</th>
<th>Organization &amp; Connection of Ideas</th>
<th>Linguistic Range &amp; Control</th>
<th>Communicative Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **A**
  - You have well thought-out arguments and original supporting details.
  - You present your ideas and arguments in a well-organized and logical way.
  - You use a variety of connectors successfully.
| **B**
  - You use good arguments and appropriate supporting details.
  - You present your ideas and arguments clearly.
  - You use connectors correctly so that your reader understands what you have to write.
| **C**
  - You use some arguments to develop the topic and some supporting details. However, you have included some phrases from the prompt instead of using your own words.
  - You present your ideas and arguments in a clear and reasonable way.
  - You use connectors correctly, but they are not always needed in the text.
| **D**
  - You do not develop your arguments enough. Your ideas are few or mostly copied from the prompt.
  - Some of your ideas are not related to the topic.
  - Your ideas are not always logically connected, even though you use some standard connectors.
| **E**
  - You have not developed the topic. Your ideas are not connected to the topic.
  - You have copied directly from the prompt.
  - Your ideas are not organized.
| **You use many different grammar structures and vocabulary correctly.**
**You make very few mistakes and these mistakes are not important for communication.**
**Your writing shows that you have clearly thought about the purpose of your text and who the reader is so that you have a positive effect on the reader.**
**Your writing shows that you have thought about the purpose of your text and who the reader is and this helps the reader understand your ideas and arguments.**
**Your writing shows that you have understood the purpose of your writing and who the reader is and the reader is able to understand your ideas and arguments most of the times.**
**Your writing shows that you seem to have misunderstood why you are the writing the text and who you are writing to. As a result this may prevent the reader from understanding your ideas.**
**Your writing is full of mistakes and the reader cannot understand what you want to write.**
**It is clear that you have not understood why you are writing the text and to who your writing is to.**
Task 1: Letter
Write a letter explaining how to increase the use of public transportation. Explain why many people are not using public transportation now. Describe specific actions the city can take to improve the situation. Start your letter, “Dear City Officials.”

Task 2: Essay
If you could drive your own car or take public transportation to get to your school or workplace, which would you choose? What factors would affect your decision? Give details to explain your choice.

Activity 1: Benchmarked Student-Friendly Feedback on Letter
Dear City Officials,

I am 14 years old boy and I like to talk you my opinion on this problem. I believe that the Officials of City must enforced new laws for this problem.

My opinion is that the officials of city must make new laws which left cars and motos, to be on road not so often. Also to not used in the city so much cars and motos. If they do not do that the pollution is gone to be.

I think that the new laws must left the vehicles which are not public to be drived on the city two days on the week. Also, to not be on the city so much cars and motos but to be for example: 5.000 cars and 2.500 motos.

To finish I believe that the city officials must enforced the laws quickly because the problem of traffic and pollution maybe will be, bigger at the future than now. If they enforced the laws, then the people will be o for shopping and for athen works with public transportation and not with cars and motorbikes. I hope to think well my opinion.

Yours Sincerely,

Feedback: Although your introductory paragraph shows you have understood the purpose of your writing and you give your opinion on the issue, you do not develop your arguments enough. Your ideas are few. Your ideas are not always logically connected, even though you use some standard connectors. You do not use enough grammatical structures or words to express your ideas. You make so many mistakes that it is very difficult for the reader to understand what you want to write.

Activity 2: Benchmarked Student-Friendly Feedback on Essay
I am a fifteen-year-old student and when I heard about the public transportation campaign. I was curious to see, how the City Officials are going to convince people who have a driver’s licence to use public transportation. Personally if I could either drive my own car or take public transportation to get to my school, I would choose my car.

I believe that most of the people that you would ask would give you the same answer as I did. And that’s why because the public transportation is not organized. Another reason is that the buses, trains and generally the most of the public means of transportation is in a bad condition.

You can see broken sits or painted windows. Is just awful for example the buses are never on time. They can be an hour late or even more. And people have to go to their jobs on time. The boss will not care if the bus was not on time. In addition the car is always there, waiting for you.

For example, last week I woke up at seven o’clock and would take the bus to school. But the bus never came so I had to take a taxi. I was late to school and I didn’t make it to get in the finish hour of class.

To sum up the public transportation must become more organized. Until then, people would prefer to go to their jobs by their cars and not be late every time because the bus is late.

Feedback: You use some arguments to develop the topic and some supporting details. You present your ideas clearly. Your use of connectors is mostly correct. You have enough grammatical structures and vocabulary needed for the task. Your mistakes do not confuse the reader. Your writing shows that you have understood the purpose of your writing and who the reader is and the reader is able to understand your ideas and arguments most of the times.

Activity 3: Benchmarked Student-Friendly Feedback on Essay
In Athens one of the most problem is traffic jam. Many people who work and shop in the central area of the city drive cars to get there instead of using public transportation as a result, traffic. Some people drive yours own cars or some else take public transportation to get to yours workplaces or school, chirders.

My opinion is, if take car or public transportation, again will late in schools or workplaces. Cars, are that where begun the traffic. Is was
better to all people used the transportation for everyone, who want to go. So, only with trains, buses, or taxi there aren't traffic and all people, will went to jobs on time. I believe that, cars are problem. I, for everyone, area, I used to transportation, (metro), because if I take my car, must started from home 2 hours before to arrived on my school or my workplace. If all Athens people done this the traffic jam there aren't, and we haven't problems, and accidents, because, the most of accidents are result, of traffic. Many people, borroed to take transportation, to wait on station of busses and prefer to went with their cars. Also, I want to tell, for young people, cars are usefull, if could drive, or their child, may to went them everywhere they need. Only, for this case cars need.

In conclusion, I want to refer that, people stopped to used cars for workplaces, or children, in ages eighteen, who take a diploma, and no very well driver, because those are dangerous on big road and have accidenty. So, why there are transportation? For used them with out traffic.

Feedback: Your text is full of mistakes and the reader cannot understand what you want to write. Your ideas are not organized. Your ideas are not connected and the linkers you use confuse the reader.

OVER TO YOU

- Use the following stimulus & prompts for Activities 1 & 2 on giving feedback
- Suggested answers are in the key at the back of the book

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**NO GIFT FOR TEACHERS**

Recently, a teacher at City Elementary School received a very expensive present from one of her students: two airplanes tickets to Hawaii. In reaction, the school officials announced that they will no longer allow teachers to accept any gifts from students. Some parents and teachers oppose the new policy and are planning a public meeting to discuss it. The City Times wants to know how its readers feel about the issue.

*ELI News Service*

**Task 1: Letter**

Do you support the new policy at City Elementary School? Write a letter to the editor explaining your view. Give specific examples of how this policy could be beneficial or harmful. Start your letter, "Dear Editor."

**Task 2: Essay**

In many places, it is common for students to give their teachers gifts. Should this be allowed? How might it affect students, teachers, and parents? Discuss this issue using specific examples to illustrate and to support your view.

**Activity 1: Giving Feedback on the Essay**

- Look at the following essay and decide which Student-Friendly Feedback Scoring Criteria is appropriate (I or II) for each descriptor.

In many places, it is common for students to give their teachers gifts. In my opinion, this should not be allowed because it might affect students, teachers, and parents.

First of all, when a student gives one of his teachers a gift, other students might believe that he is only doing that to get higher grades. In that occasion, the other students who are not able to buy gifts for their teachers usually get annoyed at both the student and the teacher. Not only will this student be considered the rich boy but also it is likely that he will lose most of his friends. Secondly, a teacher might feel uncomfortable with his other students if he receives gifts from one of them. But also some parents might assume that if their child gives the teacher a gift, their child receives a better mark. Thirdly, parents can be affected.

I remember once when a friend of mine gave some flowers and chocolates to his teacher. She replied that it was very sweet of him. But when the other students told that their parents about it, they all contacted the headmaster to complain.

To sum up, I believe that students should not give their teachers gifts because you can never know the reaction of other people. All parents, students, and teachers can be affected by such gift giving. Teachers should no longer be allowed to accept any gifts from students.
ECCE Writing Handbook for Teachers

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<td>• Relevance of content to task</td>
<td>• Arrangement of content</td>
<td>• Variety and precision of grammar and vocabulary</td>
<td>• How well communicative goals are achieved</td>
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<td>• Quality of ideas used to develop the response</td>
<td>• How language is used to link ideas</td>
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<td>You use good arguments and appropriate supporting details.</td>
<td>You present your ideas and arguments clearly.</td>
<td>You use different grammar structures and many good relevant words.</td>
<td>Your writing shows that you have thought about the purpose of your text and who the reader is and this helps the reader understand your ideas and arguments.</td>
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<td>You use some arguments to develop the topic and some supporting details. However, you have included some phrases from the prompt instead of using your own words.</td>
<td>You use connectors correctly so that your reader understands what you have to write.</td>
<td>You make only a few mistakes.</td>
<td>Your writing shows that you have understood the purpose of your writing and who the reader is and the reader is able to understand your ideas and arguments most of the times.</td>
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Now you decide:

Activity 1:
1. Content and Development
2. Organization and Connection of Ideas
3. Linguistic Range and Control
4. Communicative Effect

Activity 2: Giving Feedback on the Letter

Look at the following letter and decide which Student-Friendly Feedback Scoring Criteria is appropriate (I or II) for each descriptor.

Dear Editor,

My name is ****************** and I would like to express my opinion about the new policy at the City Elementary School. I think this is a great idea to check the process of bribe at schools. I know a lot of pupils that used gifts and money for receiving better marks or to know the topics and tasks before exams. This is unbelievable. Of course, it is not allowed in the system of education.

Sometimes some rich people want simply to thank teachers for their well done difficult job. But it is not necessary to make gifts like airplane tickets to Hawaii. Flowers or sweets will be better choice.

When I was in Elementary school we had the tradition to make presents to our teachers after graduate in case to show how much we love them and need them. I think, that the new policy at City Elementary School and the people who will work there need to be very careful and compare which present or gift is bribe and which gift means: My dear teacher. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

This issue is very difficult because nobody never can ban showing love and respect teacher’s job.

I wish good luck to the people from the new police and I think that their job will be very useful and beneficial.

Sincerely yours,

I
II

1. Content and Development
2. Organization and Connection of Ideas
3. Linguistic Range and Control
4. Communicative Effect
2. Organization and Connection of Ideas
- Arrangement of content
- How language is used to link ideas

| You present your ideas and arguments clearly. | You present your ideas and arguments in a very basic way. |
| You use connectors correctly, but they are not always needed in the text. | Your ideas are not always logically connected, even though you use some standard connectors. |

3. Linguistic Range and Control
- Variety and precision of grammar and vocabulary

| You have enough grammatical structures and vocabulary needed for the task. | You do not use enough grammatical structures or words to express your ideas. |
| Your mistakes do not confuse the reader. | You make so many mistakes that it is very difficult for the reader to understand what you want to write. |

4. Communicative Effect
- How well communicative goals are achieved

| Your writing shows that you have understood the purpose of your writing and who the reader is and the reader is able to understand your ideas and arguments most of the times. | Your writing shows that you seem to have misunderstood why you are the writing the text and who you are writing to. As a result this may prevent the reader from understanding your ideas. |

Now you decide

1. Content and Development
2. Organization and Connection of Ideas
3. Linguistic Range and Control
4. Communicative Effect

Key to OVER TO YOU Activities

SELECTING THE APPROPRIATE STIMULUS & PROMPT: Suggested Answers

Activity 1: The Seat Belt Campaign
The stimulus and prompts are appropriate and consistent with the Guidelines.

Activity 2: Living Arrangements
General comment
The topic (three-generation families) is appropriate for ECCE level students

What makes the stimulus inappropriate?
- The heading is too general.
- It doesn’t help the students focus on the topic at hand.
- The stimulus is unnecessarily long and it gives the impression of a cut-and-paste text.
- The ideas expressed and the vocabulary in the first part of the stimulus are more sophisticated compared to the second part.
- The first part of the stimulus detracts attention from the second part where the main focus is.

What makes the letter task inadequate?
- The students are not told who they are writing to.
- The students are asked to guess what the people surveyed said about the advantages and disadvantages of three generations living under the same roof, instead of being asked to express their own opinion on this matter.
What makes the essay task inadequate?
- The students are not given a choice.
- It is taken for granted that students are in favor of the idea of three generations living under the same roof.
- Students are also not given any guidance to help them come up with ideas.

Suggestions for improving the stimulus & prompts
The revised stimulus could be the second part of the original stimulus with a few changes.
A more appropriate heading would be “Three Generation Families” and an example of the revised stimulus could be as follows:

The letter should address the main focus of the prompt. The students should be asked to express their own opinion about the issue.

Example of revised letter:
Do you think three generations can or cannot live under the same roof in harmony? What can contribute to the success or failure of such a living arrangement? Use specific examples to refer to matters of privacy, financial issues or age-related conflicts. Start your letter, Dear Editor

The essay should not force the students to develop a point of view that they may not agree with.

Example of revised essay:
What might cause people who already live independently with their families move back into their parents’ home or older parents move in with their married children? What are the advantages of such a living arrangement? What are possible causes of conflict? Support your opinion giving specific reasons and examples.

UNDERSTANDING THE STIMULUS & PROMPTS:  Suggested Answers

Activity 1: Practice on focus questions related to the prompt.
After distributing the stimulus & prompts, the teacher asks:

Task 1
- Who is the letter from? – A reader of the city times, a private citizen, possibly a resident of a city which is at risk from natural disasters.
- Who is the letter to? – The editor of the city times and ultimately the readership of the newspaper.
- Why are you writing? – To voice an opinion on the relocation or rebuilding of your city after a hypothetical natural disaster.

Task 2
- What is the focus question of the essay prompt? – Should the government and businesses give money to develop in areas at risk from natural disasters? Why or why not?
- What else does it ask for? – Specific reasons and examples

Activity 2: Gapped prompt & stimulus
Instructions to students: In the following text some words have been removed. Try to guess the missing words from the context. What is the text about? Now look at the first task. Who do you think wants the readers write to them? What are they asking the reader for? What are the possible suggestions, according to the task? Now look at the second task. What is it asking you to write about? What does it want you to explain? What specific information does it want?

THE CITY TIMES
U.S. DEBATE: REBUILD NEW ORLEANS?

In 2005, the city of New Orleans ________ by a hurricane and the ________ that followed it. Now, people are ________ whether or not to rebuild the city in the same place -where a similar ________ could happen again.

ELI News Service

Task 1: Letter
The ________ of the City Times are ________ their readers’ opinions about rebuilding after a disaster. If a disaster like this happened in your ________, what do you think should be done? Should the city be ________ in the same place? Or should ________ move away? Explain your opinion. Start your letter, “Dear Editor”

Task 2: Essay:
Should public and private ________ be used to support development in locations where ________, such as floods,
Activity 3: Sentence by sentence discussion
The teacher writes each sentence one by one on the board, but asks a question before moving on to the next sentence.

9. Do you know what happened to New Orleans in 2005? What happened afterwards?
10. Why do you think people might not want to rebuild the city in the same location? Why might some people disagree?

Task 1
5. What do you think the editors of a city newspaper might be interested in hearing about from their readers in relation to a natural disaster?
6. Could such a thing happen in your city?
7. What do you think people should do after such an event?
8. Would you be afraid to stay?

Task 2
1. Who do you think protects people or helps them after disasters occur?
2. How many natural disasters can you think of? Where do these natural disasters occur? Who protects the people who live there? How?

Activity 4: Reading comprehension exercise.
Warm up: the teacher asks students about where they live. Is there anywhere they would prefer to live? Is there anywhere they would never live? Why not? The teacher tries to direct students to think of places which are dangerous or at risk from natural disasters. Once students have mentioned this, the teacher asks about natural disasters and where they occur. The teacher asks students about recent disasters, and the damage caused.

While reading: the teacher then gives students the stimulus to read and asks gist question; what problem is the stimulus discussing? The teacher then asks students to read the stimulus and the prompt a second time and to answer some detail questions. (e.g. Which city was struck by a hurricane in 2005? What happened after the hurricane? What are people wondering about? (task 1) What do the editors of the city times want? What are the two possibilities for residents of a city after it has been hit by a natural disaster? (task 2) What other examples of natural disasters are mentioned apart from hurricanes? etc)

Post reading: Teacher gets students in groups for a role play. Group one will play the residents of the city who wish to rebuild their homes in New Orleans after the hurricane. Group two are the city officials who want to relocate the city to a safer place. Group three are a consortium of property developers who must be persuaded by either group one or two to help with the relocation or the rebuilding of the city. The success of either group one or two will be based on how effectively they can persuade group three to support their proposal.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF BRAINSTORMING & OUTLINING:

Suggested Answers

Sample Letter: Prompt 1
Dear Editor,

I am writing to express our opinion about the Ministry’s decision to place more emphasis on the sciences. My classmates and I strongly believe that high school students should receive a well-rounded education.

A well-rounded education is essential at this age as it helps broaden our horizons. All subjects are important and they offer us different things. Literature for example, can enhance our imagination and help us develop our critical thinking when our teachers help us decode an author’s symbolic language. Not all of us want to be scientists so subjects like music or art can help some of us discover any special talents we might have. General knowledge helps us expand our knowledge of the world which in turn helps us participate in social interactions since we will be educated enough to exchange information with other people.

If the Ministry decides to focus more on the sciences then we feel we will be at a disadvantage as we will be partially educated. How can knowing a lot about one thing help us with our future? How can we choose the right profession if we have never been given the chance to study anything else apart from the sciences? Doctors also emphasize how important exercising is for good health, but how will we realize the importance of exercising unless we learn to love sports from a very young age? Besides, school would be really dull without sports. After all, we are still children and we need to have fun, otherwise we will lose interest in school very soon.

Schools should not become factories which just produce good specialists. Our world needs educated people and as high school students we feel we need to receive a well-rounded education which will truly educate us and help us develop our personalities.
Sincerely,

Sample Essay: Prompt 1
The Ministry has decided to place more emphasis on teaching the sciences as they feel that those subjects will help high school students later on in their lives when they choose their careers. However, I feel that high school students should receive a well-rounded education.

A well-rounded education is essential at this age as it helps students broaden their horizons. All subjects are equally important and offer students different things. Literature for example, can enhance their imagination and help develop their critical thinking when teachers help students decode an author’s symbolic language. Not all teenagers want to be scientists so subjects like music or art can help some of them discover any special talents they might have.

If the Ministry proceeds with its plan to focus more on the sciences then students will be at a disadvantage. Education must not mean specialization at this age. How can knowing a lot about one thing only help them with their future? How can students choose the right profession if they have never been given the chance to study anything else apart from the sciences? Doctors also emphasize how important exercising is for good health, but how will young students realize the importance of exercising unless they learn to love sports from a very young age?

General knowledge will help students participate in social interactions since they will be educated enough to exchange information with other people. Schools should not just create successful scientists but also social human beings with their unique personalities who will be able to contribute to their society.

Schools should not become factories which will just produce good specialists. Our world needs educated people and high school students need to receive a well-rounded education which will truly educate them and help them develop their personalities.

Activity 1: Practice answering questions about the letter outline (Prompt 3)
• Who am I writing the letter to?
  o To the editor of the newspaper.
• Why am I writing this letter?
  o To nominate “the citizen of the year”
• Who do I recommend?
  o My father (what does he do?) A musician
• Why do I recommend him?
  o Works with children with special needs in the afternoons (what exactly does he do?)
    ▪ plays with them
    ▪ teaches them how to play the guitar
    ▪ organizes concerts with local popular singers
• Why do I consider his work important?
• Because these children are in a foster home (what do I mean?)
  o most of them have never met their parents
  o good to feel loved

Activity 2: Practice answering questions about the essay outline (Prompt 3)
• Should people who contribute to the community be given an award?
  o Yes
• (Why?)
  o Their work is appreciated (what do I mean?)
    ▪ Besides self fulfillment they know that other people know about their work and they are admired for that
  o Motivates more people to do the same (what do I mean?)
    ▪ Other people learn about volunteer work and decide to the same
    ▪ Become role models for younger people
• What award would be appropriate for such a case?
ECCE Writing Handbook for Teachers

- Not money, sth symbolic (Why not money?)
  - Volunteer work vs paid job
  - Happiness offered should motivate other people not money

Activity 3: Ask and answer questions for letter outline (Prompt 4)

- Who am I writing the letter to and why?
  - To the editor to describe a custom and explain why I think it is important for my country.
- Which custom am I going to write about?
  - Carol singing (what exactly is that?)
    - Children go from house to house singing the Christmas carols or on New Year’s Eve carols about the new year, or on Good Friday a song about Jesus’ crucifixion
    - People give them money or special sweets according to the occasion
- Why is this custom important?
  - Children learn about our religion and traditions through the carols (why is this important?)
  - Future generations know about our traditions
  - Future generations pass our traditions to the next generations

Activity 4: Ask & answer questions for the essay outline (Prompt 4)

- Are customs important for our national identity?
  - Extremely important. (Why?)
    - Differentiate each nation (How? Why?)
      - cultural, historical and religious elements (Example?)
        1. Red eggs for the Greeks symbolize Christ’s blood, for other countries the coming of spring
- How can we preserve our customs and pass them on to the next generations?
  - Younger generations should be involved (What do I mean?)
    - Parents should explain and involve their children in their countries’ customs (Why? How?)
      - If children know what a custom symbolizes they will pass it on to the next generation (Example?)
        1. What Christmas Tree symbolizes, when we decorate it and ask children to help decorate it

Activity 5: Create a quick and brief outline for letter (Prompt 5)

- Who?
  - Editor
- Why?
  - Opinion/job satisfaction
- Issue?
  - Money & status over happiness
- Opinion? (First body paragraph)
  - Agree (Why? What makes me believe that?)
    - Job security (what do I mean?)
      1. civil servant jobs popular
    - Status jobs popular=educated
      1. doctor, lawyer
- What else important?
  - Job prospects – military easy
- Problems with job dissatisfaction? (Second body paragraph)
  - Miserable/affect private life (what do I mean?)
    - Tired/stay at home
    - Low self esteem
    - Lonely
  - No interest in work (What do I mean?)
    - not productive = dissatisfied customers

Activity 6: Create a quick and brief outline for essay (Prompt 5)

- Issue?
  - Money & status over happiness
- More important (in general/my opinion)? (First body paragraph) – [This first part is almost the same as the letter in this case]
  - Money/status (Why? What makes me believe that?)
Job security (what do I mean?)
  1. civil servant jobs popular
  2. Status jobs popular = educated
     1. doctor, lawyer

What else important?
  o Job prospects – military easy/popular

More important to me? (Second body paragraph)
  o Job satisfaction (Why? How can I prove it?)
    ▪ Happiness/wellbeing important
    ▪ Ex: I teach – little money
      1. summers off
      2. time for friends/family
      3. love work

ORGANIZING WRITING: Suggested Answers

Activity 1: Appropriate Introductory Paragraph with Thesis Statement
A: Students sometimes have problems which may affect their performance at school. When problems are difficult to solve even with the help of their parents, friends, or teachers, then they may need the help of a therapist. It may be difficult to find a therapist and it is also expensive. Having free family counseling at school would help give students the extra support they need to overcome their problems and to do better in school.

This opening paragraph starts by discussing the issue and lets the reader know what will be discussed in the essay. The thesis statement alerts the reader to the fact that it will discuss students problems and by inference that there will be benefits.

Inadequate Introductory Paragraphs
B: The thesis statement does not fully address the topic of the task. The reader understands that the writer will discuss the reasons why students’ problems must be dealt with by a specialist: “…they require the attention of a trained professional.”

C: The thesis statement does not fully address the topic of the task. It mentions the kinds of problems that students may require professional help with, but makes no mention as to the benefits. The reader understands that the writer will discuss the various problems that students may have and the reasons why concerned teachers should ask students who have serious problems to use the school’s counseling services: “Their teachers, of course, want all their students to do well at school, so they can send them to the school therapist.”

D: This paragraph has an attempt at a thesis statement, although it is weak. There are no introductory sentences to get the readers attention.

Activity 2: Appropriate Topic Sentences
C: Teenagers have many problems that may keep them from doing their best at school.

This is an appropriate topic sentence for the second paragraph (first body paragraph) of the essay. The writer will discuss some of the problems students have.

D: I think that free counseling services would benefit not only students but parents and teachers too.

This is an appropriate topic sentence for the third paragraph (second body paragraph) of the essay. The writer will discuss the benefits of free family counseling services.

Inadequate Topic Sentences
A: This topic sentence is inadequate for either paragraph. The reader understands that the writer will discuss why principals and teachers should handle the problems that teenage students may face which their parents cannot help them with. But as the writer does not seem to think that principals and teachers are capable of doing this (“…but what can the principal or the teachers do about these problems?”) he will probably discuss the reasons why it is important for schools for have trained professionals on staff.

B: This does not directly address the issues of either what problems students have, or what benefits counseling might offer.
Activity 3: Appropriate Supporting Statements

A: They may also have problems with a one of their subjects or their teacher.
This is appropriate for the second paragraph (first body paragraph) of the essay. It mentions one kind of problem teenagers have.

B: The school therapist could also work with parents and teachers to help them understand the kinds of problems that teenagers have.
This is appropriate for the third paragraph (second body paragraph) of the essay. While it mentions problems, it is talking about the benefits of counseling.

C: For example, if they break up with their boy or girl friend.
This is appropriate for the second paragraph (first body paragraph) of the essay. It gives an example of one of the problems teenage students have with their friends.

D: They would be happier which should make them better students.
This is appropriate for the third paragraph (second body paragraph) of the essay. It gives a result of the benefits of counseling.

Activity 4: Completed Essay

Students sometimes have problems which may affect their performance at school. When problems are difficult to solve even with the help of their parents, friends, or teachers, then they may need the help of a therapist. It may be difficult to find a therapist and it is also expensive. Having free family counseling at school would help give students the extra support they need to overcome their problems and to do better in school.

Teenagers have many problems that may keep them from doing their best at school. They might have problems with their friends that are difficult to discuss with their parents. For example, if they break up with their boy or girl friend. They may also have problems with a one of their subjects or their teacher. This may be difficult for their parents or teacher to understand. Sometimes there are personal problems at home, like not getting along with a brother or sister, which could upset the student and affect their performance at school.

I think that free counseling services would benefit not only students but parents and teachers too. Students can get advice on how to deal with whatever is bothering them. They would be happier which should make them better students. The school therapist could also work with parents and teachers to help them understand the kinds of problems that teenagers have. This will help the teachers do their job more effectively and parents will know that they can get the professional help their children need.

Teenagers may have problems that influence how they do at school. Sometimes these problems cannot easily be solved even with the help of parents, friends or teachers. With free family counseling services students would be happier and more productive. This would help them take their education seriously so that they can become valuable members of their community.
Activity 5: Identifying parts of a letter

Dear Sir,

On behalf of my classmates from 10th grade, Marathon High School, I would like to express our opinion on your proposal to make the teaching of English mandatory in all European high schools.

We think this is basically a good idea that will help us develop a successful career. We know that in the world of business, international law, technology and medicine, English is the language of communication. We need at least one common language to learn about research and development in other countries. It would be impossible to learn a number of foreign languages to get the information we need. Besides, our school curriculum is already very demanding as we have many subjects to study in order to get our high school diploma.

However, we feel that although English is important for global communication, other foreign languages are also important for our future careers. Some of my classmates intend to go to Italy, France or Germany for part of their studies. Of course, they understand the importance of learning English and wish to continue their English lessons but they would also like to have the opportunity to study at least one other foreign language.

We would like English to be a mandatory subject but we think that students should be allowed to choose at least one other foreign language. Those students who only wish to learn English should be given the opportunity to study another subject from either the sciences or the humanities.

We hope that you will consider our suggestions and communicate how we feel to students in other countries. Everywhere in the world students have different needs and plans for continuing their education. It is important that all schools meet the students’ needs and help them to develop a successful career.

Sincerely,
Dear Editor,

I'm writing to say why I think students should be able to give gifts to teachers.

I'm a student in Senior High School and next week I have very important examinations. If I do well in these then I'll be able to go to university to study to become a vet. This has been my dream ever since I was a young child and that's why I've been studying so hard.

Unfortunately, two months ago I was in a car accident and I hurt my back, which meant I couldn't go to school. My parents thought I was crying because of the pain but it wasn't that. I was afraid that I wouldn't pass the exams and then my dream would be over.

Luckily, when my parents told my teachers at school how unhappy I was, they understood my problem. One of them lives near my house and she came every day to help me with the lessons and to look at my homework. Not only was she so kind, but she never asked us for anything.

My family is not rich, but if I could buy my teacher a present, I'd buy her the best thing I could find. I think that teachers do their job because they love it and not because of money or gifts. In my opinion, I think students should be allowed to say 'thank you' to the people who work so hard for them because they deserve it and I don't think we can ever give them too much.

Regards,
Activity 2: Linking Words

Dear Editor,

I was shocked when I read that a teacher was given airplane tickets as a gift and I would like to express my opinion.

Teachers at our schools are very well paid, compared to other workers. They don't teach all day, although they do have to prepare lessons and mark homework. Not only this, but they also get very long summer holidays, as well as holidays at Christmas and Easter. This means that they don't need any extra money or gifts to make their life better.

However, if one student gives them an expensive gift, then they might expect others to give valuable gifts as well. It could become a duty for all the students to give something expensive and those who can't afford it might be punished by getting bad marks for their homework and for tests.

All this means that there is a danger students might be judged on the value of the gifts they give instead of their hard work and the attention they pay to their lessons. I think this situation is not what we want for our children's future and because of this I support the ban on giving gifts to teachers.

Regards,

GIVING FEEDBACK ON CONTENT, DEVELOPMENT & ORGANIZATION:
Suggested Answers

Activity 1: Editing Content, Development & Organization

Dear City Officials,

I am eighteen years old and I use every day the public transportation for to go in my college. However, I know that many people are not using public transportation. I believe that this happen because they believe that with car leave quickly. This reason isn’t truth because there are many cars as result to there is traffic and finally they don’t leave quickly on their work.

The city can do specific actions for to improve the situation. The city can do the tickets more cheaper. With this actions all of people will can buy tickets and will use public transportation. Also, The people can understand that with the car we pollited the atmosphaire.

In conclusion, If we use public transportation, we will improve the quality in our in our life.

Your Sincerely,
### Activity 1: Practicing Correction Symbols

1. This change will **creative** positive react.

2. But if the teacher **help**

3. It's a phenomenon which **becomes** common over the last years.

4. Finally, education is very important **from** students.

5. Today we need **education** more and better....

6. I believe this suggestion **it** is not beneficial.

7. **And if it's happen like this the students** it is sure that they didn't understand anything in class.

8. ....teachers can include more hours in **school period**.

9. Young people cannot **to spend**

10. .....more hours at school might be boring or tiring for **the students**.

11. Also, a lot of students have to do **something**....

12. Secondly I believe that it's very important for students.....

13. Also, they spend all their free time with the result **to haven't interests**.

14. The new law will not **do** any difference.

15. Nowadays, the disadvantages now to living in a big city are many.

### Activity 2: Writing Guided Question Comments

**Suggested Guided Question Comments for Paragraphs 3 & 4:**

3. What goes first in a statement (not a question) in English: the subject or the verb? What is correct: An hour daily isn’t so bad or isn’t so bad an hour daily?

4. Watch out for spelling mistakes. Proofread your work to avoid careless mistakes, such as children and use your dictionary to look up words you are not sure how to spell.

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**Dear Editor**

I am a student of a highschool and I’m writing on behalf of my classmates. Few days ago my classmates and I read we read your article on your newspaper "THE CITY TIMES" and will found the decision of the Ministry of Education quite good.

Today we need more and better education than the old time cause the circumstances demanded that. New discoveries happening every day, the things at all the sciences changing and when we will ready for a job must be prepare for all this. After all isn’t so bad a hour daily when we will have all extra week for resting the summer. It’s for own good cause we will learnt more.

I don’t see any serious reason to disagree teachers and parents with that. At the beging maybe will be a little difficult and tiring but it’s seems very beneficial. This extra hour daily must be for a globaly education I think and the children can have dialogues between the teachers. With this way the children will felt better in the class, listen better to other students and learn more for the life.

Thank you reading our letter and we hope to publish that. The education need many refreshing changes in our country. Let’s be the first ones.

Yours faithfully,
5. Be careful with how you use ‘that’:
This is my umbrella. That’s your umbrella by the door. But:
Where is the letter? I put it on your desk.
‘That’ refers to a person or thing far from you. ‘It’ is used in the place of a noun. Go over your letter and check whether you have used ‘that’ appropriately.

- I’m sure that your final draft will be even better. I’m looking forward to it.

- Systematic errors the student has made in this letter:
  - Verb form and use of tenses
  - Use of articles
  - Subject-verb order
  - Spelling errors and mistakes
  - Use of demonstrative ‘that’ instead of referent ‘it’

NOTE: When the systematic errors of this particular student are mistakes many students in the same class make, remedial teaching should be used instead, or in addition to, writing comments.

Activity 4: Marking an Essay and Making Comments

It is true that in many countries it is believed that students aren’t spend the time which needs in the school. The community knows how important it is to have more education. The society demands are given a percent at people believe that children must have more education than ever before. One solution is a longer school day. But I don’t agree with this because I find it wrong.

I’m strongly against of this because if children want to be educated they will learn more, *they’ll* try to gain knowledge by themselves. One extra hour will make the children more anxious and tiring. For example now children have many obligations except for school, so this extra hour will make them stressed and burnt out. The consequences of this change will be so bad and destroying for students. If the Ministry decide to increase the school day, young people won’t time to spent on sports and hobbies.

I think that my opinion is valid because nowadays the students have so many lessons and extra activities. So if they will spend more time at school this will be so hard for them. This will be a disaster! For example, I have a friend who is a very good student. She’s so anxious with lessons and thinks if she had more lessons she would be mad. Of course, this chance will influence the teachers too. They won’t have enough time for them and they’ll get tired easily because they’ll work more hours.

In a few words if the Ministry of Education will decide to increase the school day, students and teachers will have many problems in the future. Student won’t improve in lessons and teachers will be more tired. It is important to find the community a right way to cover the material in a better way and to give more money for the education.

Comments:
Overall, your essay is well thought-out and your opinion is mostly clear. That’s great! Use the correction symbols and my comments below to correct your mistakes so that your ideas are clearer.

1. Be careful with the use of “so”. It introduces cause and effect. e.g. The apartment was so expensive that he couldn’t afford to buy it. Take a look at the use of it in Blue Azar, Chapter 19, p.391. You may also wish to check out the use of very and too in Blue Azar, Chapter 15, p.330. Then go over your errors and make the necessary changes.

2. Note that no article (the/a) is used to make generalizations with plural count nouns (the/a sciences) and with non count nouns (the/a education). The ‘a’ is used when both the speaker and the listener are thinking about the same specific thing. e.g. Things are changing. Education needs to change too. Go over your letter and check whether you have used the articles appropriately.

I’m sure that your final draft will be even better. I’m looking forward to it.

NOTE: When the systematic errors of this particular student are mistakes many students in the same class make, remedial teaching should be used instead of writing comments below each student’s piece of writing. Comments should be written only for systematic errors students make individually.
EVALUATING STUDENTS’ WRITING: Suggested Answers

**Activity 1: Giving Feedback on the Essay**
1. Content and Development
2. Organization and Connection of Ideas
3. Linguistic Range and Control
4. Communicative Effect

**Activity 2: Giving Feedback on the Letter**
1. Content and Development
2. Organization and Connection of Ideas
3. Linguistic Range and Control
4. Communicative Effect