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COURSE PAPER

on theme “Writing cause-effect essay”

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Introduction

Written communication has become extremely important for interaction in the modern world with the instant technological development. Recently writing assessments and essays have become a vital part of a formal education. Secondary students are taught to structure their compositions in order to improve their writing skills. Both in secondary and tertiary education, essays are used to judge the mastery and comprehension of material. Students are asked to explain, comment on or assess a topic of study in the form of an essay.

What is an essay? Essay is a short piece of writing on a particular subject which presents the author's point of view. It is an organized set of ideas and reflections. This presentation of views must be done in a logical and factual manner with the

use of the first person often discouraged. The leading essayist Aldous Huxley defines essay in the following way - "Like the novel, the essay is a literary device for saying almost everything about almost anything, usually on a certain topic. By tradition, almost by definition, the essay is a short piece, and it is therefore impossible to give all things full play within the limits of a single essay. But a collection of essays can cover almost as much ground, and cover it almost as thoroughly, as can a long novel". The word "essay" originated from French word "essai" which means "effort, sketch". It reflects the essence of this notion. It is a personal attempt to give a challenging sketch on certain issues. Every attempt is different and presents versatile ideas, but people must not be afraid of writing even knowing that it is too complicated to express themselves in a proper way.

Essay should be structured in various sections that make it easy for the readers to read and follow the author's thoughts clearly. To show your grasp of the ideas studied learners have to express them in their own words. Writing essays is not the easy task. Nevertheless, it is a good way to stimulate learning and critical thinking that makes writing a valuable part of any language course. It enables learners to display the skills and abilities which they possess and remaining an important method of assessment, helps to discriminate between students, to test their intellectual capabilities. Raimes points out "Writing helps students to learn. Firstly, it reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that teachers have been teaching their students. Secondly, when students write, they also have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned. Thirdly, when students write, they necessarily become very involved with the new language [14, p.58]

Professor Roy Wilkinson has identified a pyramid of skills which teachers try to test with the help of essay assignment.

Tarvers explains that "Writing is a powerful instrument of thought. In the act of composing, writers learn about themselves and their world and communicate their insights to others. Writing confers the power to grow personally and to effect change in the world" [18, p.45] Moreover, the skill of writing essays is an essential

tool in achieving the desirable grade in the courses studied. The basic essay-writing skills are not that difficult to acquire. The reason why so many students fail to do this is that not enough attention has been paid to teaching them. It is inevitable that schools, colleges and universities spend most of their time teaching the core subject-matter of a course, but hardly any time in advising students how to put their ideas down on paper in the form of an essay. Hedge points out that writing has been a neglected area of English language teaching for some years [11, p.101]. However, when people write down an account of ideas for others to read, they have to explain themselves particularly carefully. The leaps made while talking are not allowed. This makes writing probably the most challenging aspect of studying. White and Amdt promote that “Writing is a form of problem-solving which involves such processes as generating ideas, discovering a voice with which to write, planning, goal-setting, monitoring and evaluating what is going to be written as well as what has been written and searching for language with which to express exact meanings” [20, p.92]. The difficulties in writing essays as well as the process of teaching writing essays show the object of this course paper. The subject lies in the set of skills and hints for teaching learners to write better compositions. This coursework comprises the following tasks:

- to specify the structure of the essay and stages in writing it;
- to clarify the skills and habits necessary for the learners to write properly, clearly and persuasively, and to present the viewpoint forcefully in writing;
- to show the importance of practicing writing topic and concluding sentences, organizing the paragraphs coherently, using appropriate vocabulary, transitional devices and grammar;
- to apply key writing structures to learners’ writing;
- to develop strategies for writing, revising, and editing texts that are based on audience and purpose;
- to make students aware of the impact of their choice of words, sentences and organizational techniques on the effectiveness of writing.

Learning solid essay writing skills while in school is the foundation for even the most basic education. Thus, many students do not have the slightest idea on how to begin a creative writing and how to express their thoughts. It is important for learners not to suppress their ideas, they should think widely, in various directions. The practical value lies in helping people to order their essays, to display their knowledge in the well-structured way due to the standards of essay writing, to provoke the learners to write and to believe in their own abilities, the originality and validity of their thoughts. In addition to this, essay writing is a part of a sequence designed to develop specific discourse skills.

1. Chapter 1. Fundamental considerations in teaching writing essays

1.1 The importance of writing essays

Language learning requires mastering the four basic skills a language consists of. Thus there is not only the awareness of grammatical, lexical or syntactic rules needed but the writing process demands also mental power of the writer. Writing is an effective tool to use for different purposes from sharing ideas, corresponding to persuading others. Through writing people articulate their ideas in another way than in speaking, their written product can be much more expressive and powerful. Written works are permanent; they may have an impact much later in time. Tarvers claims that “The purposes for writing vary widely, from discovering the writer’s own feelings, to persuading others to a course of action, recreating experience imaginatively, reporting the results of observation, and more” [18, p.48]. Having such potential, learners should be taught all the necessary rules and conventions of writing as a skill to express themselves in the most appropriate way. Therefore writing deserves an equal part in the classroom of learning language skills. Nowadays more attention is paid to speaking and listening, developing writing skills seem to be a deprived area. White mentions that “For some time, under the influence of the audio-lingual approach to language teaching, it has been conventional wisdom to regard speech as being of primary importance, with writing being placed a poor second. Writing was regarded as being a somewhat

inferior form of the language” [20, p.57]. It is no longer seen as simply a means to retell or recount information, but as a unique way to internalize and expand upon specific knowledge, to retain the information, integrate it into the existing knowledge. Neither a multiple choice test nor short answer quiz can provide students with the opportunities to develop the kind of critical evaluative skills a thorough writing assignment can. Robert Kellogg states " [Writing] is a vehicle for expanding and transforming one's own knowledge base. [It] not only demands thinking, it is also a means for thinking. By writing about a subject, one learns what one thinks about the subject. This property of transforming knowledge is a fundamental component of writing skill" [12, p.214]. Writing essays teaches students to research, plan, organize and structure their activities.

1.2 Basic principles of teaching writing essays: writing techniques and stages

Writing is an exercise of mind requiring the mastery of techniques anyone can learn. While one system may work better for some and worse for others; there are several general rules to stick to. There are many aspects that a student will have to keep in mind. The first important thing to do is to examine the title of the topic. It can be assigned or not. Sometimes it is easier to have the topic given by the teacher. On the other hand, it may be an advantage to take the topic you want. Both have their pros and cons because there are so many things to write about that you may get lost. When the topic has been assigned, you have some definite sphere to work on. Each topic can be seen from various viewpoints. The student, however, should choose the one which is neither too narrow (it will not have enough ideas to write about) nor too broad. *Medecine* is too general. You can take only one aspect to discuss - *Euthanasia in medical practice* . Then you must think about the purpose and the audience of the essay. The writer should understand the key words which will help to gather thoughts, to decide on the writing style and give some hints. It is a good rule always to write the title of the essay across the top of the opening page. It reminds you what you are supposed to be doing. An essay can be good in almost every other way and may be judged poor because it ignores the

issues presented in the title. You are never just asked to write all you know about a subject, or simply describe something. You are set a specific problem to reflect upon in the light of what you have been studying. Everything you say in the essay should be relevant to that task. You have to convince your readers that the point has some bearing on the title.

Successful academic writing takes much more than just excellent writing skills and understanding of the topic. The whole secret lies in proper organization of an essay and following a certain writing procedures. The essay goal is to convey information, including the fact that you can write well. But it will not be achieved if the readers do not understand the first few sentences or paragraphs, and stop reading, or if they finish reading but fail to grasp the message. Learning how to be a clear and accurate writer will help to make your essay readable and understandable. There are some guidelines which show how to clarify writing. Moreover, it is important to recognize that you must commit yourself to a process. A finished paper is the result of the complex interaction of activities that include several stages of development (see Table1), but some of them can be omitted. Nevertheless, these stages are believed to reflect generally how successful writing develops.

The following prewriting techniques can be listed:

1. Freewriting



2. Brainstorming or listing

3. Concept mapping/webbing by Lauren Starkey

4. Taking stock with the 5Ws (*How To Write Great Essays*)

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5. Reading good writing
 6. Discussion
 7. Outlining by James D. Williams
 8. Talk-write (*Preparing To Teach Writing*)
 9. Metaphor

Depending on your topic some invention techniques may work better than others. The overall goal when using any method is to discover unique ideas.

Freewriting presupposes spending a predetermined period of time writing nonstop for 5, 10, or 15 minutes, focusing on a specific topic. It works best when you write in full sentences, but phrases are also effective. The key is to keep writing without regard for grammar, spelling, or worthiness of ideas. During this period, students keep generating words, even if they cannot think of anything meaningful to say. Sometimes freewriting is combined with an activity called looping, in which students stop freewriting after 5 minutes and reread what they have produced. If they find a good idea on the page, they use it as the basis for another freewriting period.

Brainstorming means jotting down concepts, individual thoughts or ideas that come into your head associated with the given topic, in note form and in random order. It involves creating a list. It will be especially helpful when you have to establish a point of view on a topic and support your position.

Mapping and webbing are visual organizers that allow you to see easily the relationships between a number of diverse ideas and are best used for exploring topics that are not complex. Put your central idea or subject in the middle, and add subtopics or related ideas around it in any order. Or draw a box with your subject written in it, and continue adding boxes, connected to each other by lines, showing the development of your idea.

Discussion provides multiple points of view on a given topic. Teachers usually initiate it by asking the class questions regarding how to proceed. Discussions tend to be most helpful when they occur a day or so after students receive an assignment. The time in between allows students to begin formulating a plan that they can modify and enrich through the discussion.

Talk-write technique is based on the perception that speaking, listening, reading, writing and thinking are intimately related and mutually reinforcing. It involves asking students to construct a plan mentally and to deliver an oral composition to the class. Classmates provide suggestions and comments designed to help improve and elaborate the plan. The next step is to begin writing. It is usually easier as a result and tends to be more successful because a person has to understand a topic to explain it to others. A valuable benefit is that making such oral presentations is likely to increase one's self-confidence about speaking in public [] Zoellner

→ Metaphor is a feature of style. However, it can be a powerful model-building device that helps students generate ideas and information. The novelist Richard Wright left in his *Black Boy* a valuable record of how metaphor can work as an invention technique. In the first draft of this essay Wright listed a number of books that had influenced him, and then he stated that "these books were like eyeglasses, enabling me to see my environment", then he changed from "eyeglasses" to "eyes" (11draft) books were no longer "eyes" but "windows" (final draft). He told, for example, that the books that influenced him were "eyes" through which he could see the world as the authors saw it, enabling him to "understand and grasp" his own experiences. It allowed Wright to become the agent of seeing and not the others' sight beneficiary.

1.3 Organization of the cause-effective essays. Essay structure

Not only writing stages and techniques are important, but also there are problems with syntactic organization of a text and cohesion which are the basis for writing.

Byrne describes that "Writing is learned through a process of instruction - we have to master the written form of the language and to learn certain structures which are

less used in speech, or perhaps not used at all. We also have to learn how to organize our ideas in such a way that they can be understood by a reader” [3, p.98]

Learners should pay special attention to the structure and organization of the essay. It can take many forms. Understanding how the movement of thought is managed through an essay has a profound impact on its overall cogency and ability to impress. Teacher should teach students step by step how to express their thoughts on the paper, in which order, what linking words to use, what common mistakes to avoid. If you want to teach somebody to write different things, your task is to make the process of writing interesting. The problem is that very often people imagine essays just in form of boring, serious writings on scientific or educational topics. As the result, they have no desire to do such things or to learn how to do them. At first, learners can try writing without any plans, so that to be used to putting ideas into the written form. Show that essay topics can be various. Teach people creativity; show them how to use imagination. Slowly you should make this process more complex. Try to teach them to recognize topic sentences and to write their own, to conduct a substantial research on the topic, back up statements with samples, introduce how to organize paragraphs in a coherent way, what vocabulary to use; give them samples of the essays to study and then ask different questions related to them etc. When learners go through various examples of essays, these will serve as guides and help in writing the assigned task. Give them a hint to successful writing by introducing the structure of the essay which should be preserved. It is difficult for creative mind to be made to write within some definite framework; it is suppressed by structural dependence. Notwithstanding, it may be a very easy task if you are taught at the beginning of your learning process to use various writing techniques and structural models, to express yourself according to some general rules in writing essays. Structure is important in essay. It will help to follow dynamic interchange of author's arguments, supporting evidence and questions. The reader will be able to grasp the message encoded by the writer. The essay must have at least three paragraphs. Academic writing, however, usually comprises five paragraphs organized in a

coherent way: introduction, body with mainly three paragraphs, and conclusion. Each paragraph should have a clear, singular focus. One of the commonest students' errors in writing essays is shifting topics within the same paragraph, rather than continuing to develop the idea they began with. If you want to start a new topic, begin a new paragraph instead. →→ Paragraph usually consists of the topic sentence, the supporting sentences and the concluding one. A topic sentence is generally the first sentence of the paragraph. It is concise and emphatic. Topic sentence contains the main idea of the paragraph, thus orienting the reader to the purpose of this piece of writing. To attract attention they sometimes appear in the form of rhetorical questions. When you use topic sentences, your reader will find it easier to follow your thoughts and arguments. Supporting sentences illustrate the main idea with examples and explanations, give details, elaborate on causes and effects, comparison and contrasts, anticipate and respond to counterarguments. The concluding sentence finishes the paragraph by giving the final comment. The following exercise can help in teaching students to distinguish these types of sentences.

Find the topic, concluding and supporting sentences in the paragraph given:

A stitch in time saves nine. My mother, who likes sewing, used this simple saying to teach me the value of working on problems when they are still small. Originally, the saying referred to sewing - if you have a small hole in a shirt? You can repair it with one stitch. But if you wait, the hole will get larger, and it will take you nine stitches. This simple example reminds me to take care of small problems before they become big problems.

When the learners know how to form topic, supporting and concluding sentences, they are ready to start to write introduction. It is the first and very important paragraph in the essay. It is here that the writer will have to get the attention of the reader, introduce him to the theme and focus his attention on the main argument by presenting a thesis statement. The introduction should always begin with something interesting. The writer may begin his essay by giving an anecdote, posing a question to his readers, presenting some interesting facts or by

an exciting quotation relevant to the essay. The topic should be introduced clearly. You must avoid repeating the exact words of the topic, paraphrasing them will display your language skills. Concerning grammar the introduction will normally be in the present tense (e. g. people complain), or the present continuous (people are gradually becoming aware), or in the present perfect tense (people have pointed out). It is normally organized by giving first general ideas and leading to the more specific one, which is the thesis statement. The latter should indicate the point of discussion. For example, if you write an essay on hunger, you might say: *World hunger has many causes and effects*. This is a weak thesis statement for two major reasons. First, "world hunger" can't be discussed thoroughly in five or ten pages. Second, "many causes and effects" is vague. You should be able to identify specific causes and effects. *Hunger persists in Africa because jobs are scarce and farming in the infertile soil is rarely profitable* is a strong thesis. It narrows the subject to a more specific and manageable topic and it also identifies the specific causes for the existence of hunger. This thesis statement is a transitional "hook" which moves the reader to the first paragraph of the body of the essay.

The main body explains and supports the thesis statement, develops and illustrates the points you wish to make. It should be the easiest part to write. Using your outline and notes, try to rank ideas in order of importance. The first paragraph of the body should include the strongest argument as well as the second one. The third paragraph, however, usually presents the weakest argument. The main body is characterized by different evidences and examples, it is necessary to discuss positive and negative aspects. The writer can display power of analysis, personal understanding of complex topics. Do not feel you have to put in everything you have learned. Relevance and independence of thought are of importance. Take all the time you can to fully develop your ideas. If you stop writing too soon, it may be because you have not explained yourself completely, or backed up your assertions with examples. Do not simply state that something is true, prove it. There may be several ideas which must be supported. Not every supporting point will have details, though, some will have several details. Those make your essay

stand out. You should include, however, only information that pertains to your topic. Qualify your answers for accuracy. If you cannot remember an exact date, approximate-“late eighteenth century” is better than 1988 if 1988 is incorrect. When you feel that you expressed everything you wanted, your thoughts are backed up by evidences and examples, you may proceed with concluding part of your essay.

The concluding paragraph must summarize the entire essay and reiterate the thesis statement presented in the introduction. It must be remembered that new facts and data cannot be presented here. A strong concluding statement at the end helps to convince the reader. You can effectively reinforce the points, made in the body but remember to reword them and keep the conclusion fresh. It's not enough just to restate your main ideas - if you only did that and then ended your essay, this part would be flat and boring. You should not use phrases such as “I wrote about” or “This essay was about. ” Drawing a conclusion often involves summarizing of the main points already made. A common mistake is to write the end that does not follow logically from what has been written before. This is sometimes called a ‘non-sequitur’. If you have the time, end with something more interesting giving a thought-provoking quotation, talking about consequences or implications, stating what action needs to be done. A speculative conclusion refers to a future possibility or prediction, such as “perhaps years from now. ” If you write about a problem, try to offer a solution. If you have a fitting quotation, use it to finish your essay. The person quoted does not have to be famous, but the quote should help you to make your point. Although be aware that you cannot overcome a weak essay with a clever conclusion. Your conclusion is the final impression left with your reader. Author need to say something that will continue to simmer in the readers’ minds long after they have put down this essay.

2. Chapter 2

2.1 Types of essays. Essay samples

The information to use and the tips for writing depend on the essay type. Essays consist mainly of assignments set by instructors for the students to test their understanding and knowledge levels on a particular topic, abilities to present the balanced comprehension of it. There are many different types of essays a professor may choose from. The teacher may ask students to write a discursive essay to check their analytical skills or may instruct them to write a descriptive essay to simply test the power of expression and logical thinking of his students. Choice of essays also to some extent depends on the subject studied. Different purposes and types of writing aim at various members of the discourse community.

It is easier to teach at first descriptive essays and then discursive ones. The former are personally relevant to the students. They may focus on people, places and buildings, objects and events. It is not so simple to describe what you observe. The best way to create a vivid experience for your readers is to make use of senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, taste. They enable readers to imagine or experience something by themselves. Sensory details appeal to their emotional, physical or intellectual sensibilities. Description uses tools such as denotative and connotative language, metaphors and similes to arrive at a dominant impression.

People	Places/Buildings	Events
Introduction		
Paragraph 1 Brief information about who the person is, where/how you met	Paragraph 1 Name/location/population/state the reason for choosing this or that	Paragraph 1 Set the scene, name/type, time/date, place, reasons for.
Main body		
Paragraph 2 Physical appearance: height, age, facial features, hair, clothing	Paragraphs 2-3 General features and particular details: surroundings, facilities, exterior/interior, places to go, free-time	Paragraph 2 Preparations Paragraph 3 Description of

etc. Paragraph 3 Personality/behavior with justifications and examples Paragraph 4 Life/lifestyle, hobbies, beliefs, interests, everyday activities Paragraphs 5-6 Explanations and examples	activities Paragraphs 4-5 Explanations and examples	event itself: food, atmosphere, activities Paragraphs 4-5 Explanations and reasons: its significance
Conclusion		
Final paragraph Comments, feelings and opinion about the person	Final paragraph Feelings, opinion and give a recommendation	Final paragraph Comments, feelings and opinion

Consider the topic carefully and describe things relevant to it, some points may be unnecessary. When writing on the topic “Describe a person who has done a great deal for others, and explain how he or she has managed to achieve so much”, it will be irrelevant to describe appearance. The description must be supported with examples; use a variety of adjectives to make a composition more interesting. The adjectives must be ordered in the following way: opinion, size/weight, age, shape, colour, pattern, origin, material. It is advisable not to use them one after another; it will sound unnatural. mild language should be used when the learner wants to describe some negative qualities (e. g. tend to, seem to, can occasionally etc. - Peter tends to be impolite). To avoid simple sentences and same structures, different linking words are to be introduced.

Discursive writing is a good way to learn how to logically structure an argument and how to anticipate and counter the arguments of the other side. There exist various types of discursive essays:

- For and against essay is a formal piece of writing where the writer should consider the topic from various perspectives. Arguments are to be presented in a fair and objective way with as many justifications, examples and reasons as possible.

- Opinion essay requires the author's opinion on a topic stated clearly from various viewpoints, supported by reasons and/or examples. An opposite point of view should also be presented. It comprises a combination of personal and argumentative approaches. The writer's main task is to persuade the reader of author's rightness and to make readers take the same position.

- Essay suggesting solution to problems makes a thorough analysis of the problem, states its causes clearly, giving possible ways of solving it at the same time. The consequences and the results of the suggested actions are also specified.

For and Against	Opinion	Solution to Problems
Introduction		
Paragraph 1 State topic (without giving your opinion)	Paragraph 1 State the topic and your opinion	Paragraph 1 State the problem and its causes/effects
Main body		
Paragraphs 2-3 Arguments for and justifications, examples or reasons Paragraphs 4-5 Arguments against and justifications, examples or reasons	Paragraphs 2-4 View points and reasons/examples Paragraph 5 Opposing viewpoint and reason/example	Paragraphs 2-5 Suggestions and results

Conclusion		
Final paragraph Balanced consideration or opinion	Final paragraph Summarize/restate your opinion	Final paragraph Summarize your opinion

Virginia Evans gives the following samples of these types:

Essay samples	
For and against essay	Censorship is necessary in modern society Censorship is an issue which frequently generates a great deal of heated debate, with supporters maintaining that it is vital in order to protect society, whilst opponents claim that it is an unjustifiable restriction of public access to information. Firstly, all countries have secrets which must be safeguarded for reasons of national security. For instance, if an enemy country were to acquire such highly sensitive information, the effects could be catastrophic. Consequently, governments have to have the power to restrict access to information concerning areas such as the armed forces or particular aspects of foreign policy. Secondly, it is often argued that censorship is necessary to prevent the broadcast and publication of obscene material which is considered offensive or harmful to public morals. Many people feel that, without censorship the public would be constantly subjected to material that the majority would find offensive. For this reason, the government has a duty to impose certain restrictions on the mass media by censoring films and texts which contain explicit scenes of sex, violence or foul language. In contrast, opponents of censorship point out that when it is abused by governments, censorship becomes an instrument used to

	misinform society and maintain power. In order to control the flow of information which reaches the public, repressive regimes try to put constraints on the media, thus denying citizens the right to information owing to the fact that governments believe it may lead them to seek greater freedom. Furthermore, it is generally felt that mature adults are able to make informed choices about what they watch, read and listen to and should, therefore, be permitted to make their own decisions. For example, some comedians make use of offensive language taboo subjects in their performances. Critics of censorship argue that the only people who will watch or listen to such material are adults who have made a conscious decision to do so. Thus, it is claimed, it is unjust to censor material like this since it is not forced upon people who may subsequently be offended by it. All things considered, it can be concluded that a certain degree of censorship is always necessary. The best course of action would be to attempt to achieve a balance between the requirements of the country and the public on the one hand, and individuals' rights on the other.
Opinion essay	Although the position of women in society today has improved, there is still a great deal of sexual discrimination. Throughout this century, the role of women within society has changed, and the majority of people feel that this change is for the better. More women work than ever before, and it is accepted in Western culture that many women now have careers. Nonetheless, in my opinion there is still a great deal of sexual equality has been achieved is not altogether accurate. To begin with, many women find it very difficult to return to work after having children. The main reason for this is that there are rarely any provisions made for childcare in the workplace and, in these

cases, women are forced to find someone to look after the children while they are at work. Obviously, this can prove to be a time-consuming and expensive process, yet it must be done if mothers are to be able to resume their careers.

Secondly, the traditional views of the position of women within society are so deeply ingrained that they have not really changed. For instance, not only is the view that women should stay at home and look after their family still widely held, but it is reinforced through images seen on television programmes and advertisements. An example of this is that few men are ever seen doing housework on television, since this is traditionally thought of as “a woman’s job”.

Thirdly, since families often need two incomes in order to enjoy a good standard of living, a woman finds herself doing two jobs: one at home and one at the office. So, it could be said that a woman’s position has, in fact, deteriorated rather than improved, with the result that women carry the burdens of equality but get none of the benefits.

In contrast, there are some people who claim that the problem of sexual discrimination no longer exists. They point out that women do, after all, have legal rights intended to protect them from discrimination. In addition, a few women are now beginning to reach top positions as judges, business leaders and politicians, while a number of other previously all-male professions are opening their ranks to women. Nonetheless, these examples are not the norm and discrimination is still very much with us.

Taking these points into consideration, I would say that the position of women has improved only slightly. While, rules and laws have changed, it is the deep-rooted opinions of people within society which are taking a longer time to evolve. Needless to say, until these attitudes have changed, sexual discrimination will remain a problem

	which we all need to face and fight against.
Solutions to problems essay	What could be done to improve the lives of the elderly? For many elderly people the latter part of their life is not a time to relax and enjoy retirement, but rather a difficult and unhappy period, owing to financial worries, failing health and loneliness. As life expectancy increases, the average person lives well beyond the age of retirement. As a result, the elderly make up an ever-increasing percentage of society, which makes it more important than ever for a real effort to be made in improving the lives of senior citizens. One way to deal with the situation would be to ensure that the elderly have enough money on which to live. Obviously, when a person stops working, they still require a source of income to cover their basic needs such as food, accommodation and heating. A clear solution to the problem is for the government to make sure that the state pension is adequate for these needs. Furthermore, free financial advice should be made available to retired people so that the stress of worrying about money could be reduced as far as possible. Steps should also be taken to overcome problems the elderly face as a result of deteriorating health due to old age, and inadequate health-care provisions. Again, the responsibility should fall to the government to provide access to the best health care available, which may necessitate paying for residential homes where the elderly can have round-the-clock nursing, or, at the very least, providing medication free of charge to all people over a certain age. As a result, old people would enjoy not only better health, but also peace of mind from the knowledge that they need not fear falling ill and being unable to pay for treatment. The lives of old people could also be improved if attempts were made to address the problem of social isolation which so many of

them face. If we organised trips for the elderly to community centers, visits from social workers or free bus passes to allow pensioners greater mobility, the effect would be alleviate the problem of loneliness which marks the lives of so many old people living alone far from their families.

One final suggestion, which would help enormously, is to change the attitude of the community towards its older members, who are all too often seen as a burden on society and dismissed as having little to do with modern life. We need to be taught from an early age to respect the views of old people, and appreciate their broader experience of life. This would help society as a whole, and encourage appreciation of the role that old people can still play today.

To sum up, there are several measures which could be taken to improve the lives of old people. If the government and individuals alike were to help, it would make retirement and old age a time to look forward to, rather than dread.

A discursive essay presupposes following some rules. It should be written in a formal style. Topic sentence for introducing the subject of each paragraph, passive voice and impersonal constructions, use of quotations and references to other sources, linking words and phrases are of great importance. The learners should avoid contracted forms and colloquial expressions (e. g. lots of), over-generalizations (e. g. I absolutely detest...) and too emotional expressions, a series of simple sentences. It is better to combine simple sentences with complex and compound ones.

2.2 Punctuation. Word choice

The learners must be successful in their compositions, knowing some basic requirements for essay writing and considering essay types carefully. The paragraphs must be structured in a cohesive way. A logical presentation of facts is essential for the reader to understand the topic well and approach the words in the

right way. Language must be simple and smooth flowing and care must be taken to avoid all kinds of grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors.

Punctuation is vital to disambiguate the meaning of sentences. There are some general rules concerning this.

The first word in a sentence, names of organizations, people/places, days and months, nationalities and languages should be capitalized. A capital letter is used for the most important words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) of titles of books, programs, films etc. (e. g. Indiana Jones and the Lost Temple);

Comma is used:

- to separate words in a list, phrases or clauses as well as to separate long sentences link by as, or, and, but etc. For example, Tim brought the sandwiches, and Diana brought a bunch of grapes for the picnic;

- to mark a clause giving extra information which is not essential for the meaning of the main clause (non-defining relative clause): The Tate Modern, which is the newest museum in London, has excellent facilities for children.

- after certain linking words (e. g. however, therefore, for example, to sum up etc.)

- when if-clause begins the sentence, no comma is used when the if-clause follow the main one.

Apostrophes (') are used with possessives, e. g. The professor's secretary, and to show contractions, e. g. It's generally believed ...However, they are not common in academic English. Semi-colons (;) show the link between two connected phrases when a comma would be too weak and a full stop too strong. They are quite rare in most types of writing. Colons (:) introduce explanations, e. g. The meeting was postponed: the Dean was ill, and start a list, e. g. Two factors were discussed: cultural and social.

Question mark is used to end a direct question; however, we use a full stop to end an indirect question (e. g. He asked me what I was doing.) Exclamation mark is used in exclamatory sentence. Italics are used to show the titles of books, plays, films: Romeo and Juliet as well as for names of hotels, restaurants. Hyphens (-) are

used with certain compound words: well-educated/co-operative/four-year-old. Dots (...) are used to show omissions. Brackets () are used to contain information of lesser importance: There were only 40 marriages (out of 14.900) in which 'baker' was listed. Single quotation marks are used to emphasize a word, to give quotations from other writers and to show direct speech: The word 'quiz' was first used in the nineteenth century. 'Can anyone find the answer?' asked the lecturer. Double quotation marks are used to show quotations inside quotations (nested quotations): As Murphy has observed: 'Concepts of "typical" need careful examination'. They are also used for the names of articles and chapters, but for book and journal titles use italics. Full stops and commas are placed inside quotation marks. You should also focus on the grammar concepts for the essay to have sense.

Another issue to consider is the language you use. Inappropriate language leads to misunderstanding or communication breakdown. The common error is the use of translation from the mother tongue. By translating word for word the student uses the wrong sentence patterns and the wrong vocabulary. Another cause of writing errors is the choice of long and complicated sentences with far too many supplementary clauses. The longer the sentence the bigger is the chance of making mistakes and failing to communicate the meaning. Therefore, in the early stages of your writing choose short and simple sentences to build up a basic essay-writing style. You can play with more complex words and grammatical structures later, when you have acquired some basic techniques. Do not use words specifically to show off your vocabulary. In most cases when an essay is given to write, there is a word limit stated, i. e. an indication how many words you should not exceed in your composition. Having a limit is a way to ensure that you select the most relevant words to express your thoughts. Moreover, keeping to the word limits is a part of good practice and a sign that you possess certain skills. The best way to stay within the limits is to plan your essay. William Strunk states that "Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no

unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts." [p.29] Similarly in an essay, all sentences and paragraphs must have an essential function and purpose. Knowing that all synonyms have a subtle nuance of meaning making it distinct from the other words will help you avoid random substitutions of words that merely seem to look better. It is important to choose the right word to convey meaning. For instance, *Devlin's essay predicates that a society consists of a group of people brought together by a common set of morals and assurances* is not the best choice of words. Whereas the sentence *Devlin's essay asserts that a society consists of a group of people brought together by a common set of morals and beliefs* displays your proper knowledge of vocabulary.

On the other hand, according to Truman Capote, "The greatest pleasure of writing is not what it is about, but the music the words make." [p.14] Nevertheless, your lexis must be rich and relevant to the topic to express everything you mean from different perspectives. Editing the language can be tedious, but it is essential to polish it to the point that it is pleasing to read and has literary style. The style must display a variety of sentence types, well-chosen connectors and appropriate vocabulary. To establish emphasis learners can employ subordination and coordination. This allows you to emphasize different parts of the sentence, so that the more important phrase is clear. Coordination involves combining clauses where neither clause is more emphasized than the other. On the other hand, subordination involves designating one clause to be more important than the other. It is up to you to decide what type to choose. It is essential to mention the role of linking words in this case.

2.3 Linking words and phrases

Put down your thoughts in clear sentences that flow logically from one to another. To be coherent a paragraph must satisfy two criteria: relevance (every idea must relate to the topic) and effective order (ideas must be arranged in a way that clarifies their logic or their importance and help the reader to follow and understand the writer's thoughts). An appropriate use of paragraphs is an essential part of writing well-structured essays: *In addition to problems of obesity,*

America's youth also suffer from increasing amounts of psychological stress. The transition is made from obesity to psychological stress providing a bridge between paragraphs. Transitions are useful when moving from paragraph to paragraph, from one point to another to form logical flow. Every essay you write should have this feeling of continuity. Connectors will occur throughout your essay. The most common ones are those that are used for listing, addition, consequences and emphasis.

Cause and effect: *because, as* and *since* introduce a cause; *so, therefore, consequently* and *as a result* introduce an effect. *Because, as* and *since* are usually used in the middle or at the beginning: I stayed at home, because it was raining. Because it was raining, I stayed at home. *Therefore, consequently* and *as a result* are used at the beginning; it is not possible with *so*. It was raining; therefore, I stayed at home. It was raining. Consequently, I stayed at home. *Due to/owing to* and *because of* introduce a cause in the form of a noun phrase: Due to the rise in oil prices, the inflation rate rose by 1.25%.

The most common way of giving examples is by using *for example* or *for instance*. *Namely* refers to something by name, i. e. There are two problems: namely, the expense and the time. *Such as* cannot begin a clause. It is followed by a noun or gerund.

Ideas are often linked by *and*. In a list, you put a comma between each item, but not before *and*: We discussed training, education and the budget. *Also* is used to add an extra idea or emphasis: We also spoke about marketing. Do not usually start a sentence with *also*. If you want to start a sentence with a phrase that means *also*, you can use *In addition* or *In addition to this*. You can use *also* with *not only* to give emphasis: We are concerned not only by the costs, but also by the competition. *As well as* can be used at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence. *Too* goes either at the end of the sentence or after the subject and means *as well*: They were concerned too/They, too, were concerned. *Moreover* and *furthermore* add extra information to the point you are making.

Sequencing ideas: the former and the latter are useful when you want to refer to one of two points: Marketing and finance are both covered in the course. The former is studied in the first term and the latter is studied in the final term. Firstly, secondly, ... finally (or lastly) are useful ways to list ideas.

Contrasting ideas: *but* is more informal than *however*. It is not normally used at the beginning of a sentence He works hard, but he doesn't earn much. He works hard. However, he doesn't earn much. The use of the linking words 'However' at the beginning of the second paragraph and 'Nevertheless' at the start of the third paragraph provides essential signposts for the reader to follow the argument that is being made. *Despite and in spite of* must be followed by a noun. If you want to follow them with a noun and a verb, you must use the fact that: Despite the fact that the company was doing badly, they took on extra employees. In theory... in practice... show an unexpected result: In theory, teachers should prepare for lessons, but in practice, they often don't have enough time.

Do not overuse these connectors. It is very boring to read one of these at the beginning of each sentence. Make yourself familiar with the most useful ones and be careful to use them accurately or your logic will appear faulty. With the help of linking words a continuity or flow is established for the essay that reassures the reader that you know where you are going without guessing how one paragraph relates to the other.

2.4 Plagiarism

The difficulties in understanding and following the writer's thoughts which are not connected in a cohesive piece of writing may be caused by plagiarizing. While it is always good to use quotes to show that you have read widely, you should make sure that the essay is written in your own words, otherwise you may be accused of cheating. Students are aware of the many Internet sites offering essays. What they may not realize is that teachers are aware of them. Tutors are usually very familiar with the difference between the way students write and the way experienced authors write, and soon notice when a student lurches between an 'expert' and a 'beginner' style. The advice is simple: write your own essay. Do not

even waste your time reading other people's essays looking for ideas. It is one thing to read to understand the process, and another to take these ideas and words as your own. This approach will not get you good marks. Indeed, when tutors reveal this they will tend to assume you understand very little and you will get lower mark. Worse, you do not develop your own writing style. If you persist in parroting other people's words rather than expressing your own thoughts, then you are likely to remain a beginner for a long time. And you will not learn much about the ideas in the course either. It is difficult to elaborate various ideas, to present the topic from different perspectives. That is the reason why some students are tempted to 'lift' sections of words from textbooks and articles and put them in their essays without using quotation marks or acknowledging the source. When you are quoting draw upon a wide variety of sources to ensure that you have examined the issue from multiple perspectives. There are three main ways to integrate quotations into your essay: (1) direct quotation, (2) paraphrase, and (3) mixed quotation. Direct quotation involves quoting word for word one or more sentences from an author or source. When you quote, be sure to introduce your quotation with a signal phrase. It is another issue to consider. Signal phrase is a clause before the quotation that identifies the author (e. g., "Jones says," or "According to Jones. "). It is essential to create a bridge between your own voice and that of another you are incorporating into your essay. Avoid putting the article title in the signal phrase. It is better to include paper itself or the author. Suppose you are using a quotation that appears inside an article written by someone other than the one saying the quotation. In other words, if you are using, say, Judge Davidson's quotation that appears within Oliver Gardner's article, you cite it by writing "qtd. in" following the quote: According to Judge Davidson, "just law is the foundation of a just society" (qtd. in Gardner). Paraphrase, instead of quoting the author word for word, involves putting the original phrasing into your own words. Be careful to substantially reword the original, however. If you leave just several words in a row unchanged, it will be considered plagiarism. Mixed quotations are a mix between direct quotation and paraphrase. Mixed quotations involve paraphrasing half of the

original but mixing in a few direct selections from the author. When you insert them, be sure to blend in the quotation with the grammar of your own sentence. The sentence as a whole must flow smoothly. To achieve this you may need to omit or add words from or to the original. To omit words, insert an ellipsis in place of the words you take out. Ellipses always indicate omission. To add words, put them inside brackets [] to indicate the insertion. Notice that there are spaces between the ellipses' dots and that the brackets are square, not rounded like parentheses. For instance, Cummings asserted that the poet's imagination and his "preoccupation with the Verb" results in an ability to surpass normal standards of logic and create "an irresistible truth [in which] $2 \times 2 = 5$ ". Notice that the words "in which" inside brackets are insertions. You needed to add them so that the sentence would flow grammatically. Nevertheless, support your quotations with commentary, interpretation, or analysis. Avoid just dropping in the quotation and then immediately moving on, assuming the reader fully understands the meaning, purpose, and application of the quotation just presented.

You are a vital part of the subject. No matter what the topic is, you are really writing about how you understand it and feel about it. Good writing has personality. This doesn't mean you have to flatter your readers or avoid saying something they may disagree with. It is your job to guide them, to make their task as easy as the subject allows. Armed with the belief in ability to express their thoughts and knowledge of some basic writing rules, learners will feel confident and their writing will begin to mature. The final task when writing an essay is to reflect upon the feedback received from the tutor or other students. This may be invaluable in helping to improve learner's essay writing skills for future work.

On the whole, writing is a challenging activity that "demands conscious intellectual effort, which usually has to be sustained over a considerable period of time because cognitive skills are involved" [20, p.38]. Everything should be taken into consideration: writing techniques and stages, organization and structure, linking phrases and punctuation, word choice and its implementation. It will help

the reader to decode the message and the essay will be written in a persuasive, powerful and cohesive way.

Conclusion

Writing is a crucial and fundamental skill that must not be left out of the language learning process. It tends to be both the most demanding and rewarding part of any course of study. Critical thinking is crucial for effective writing. It is essential to understand texts and to produce an essay that addresses complex topics.

A logical presentation of facts and data is essential for the reader to understand the topic well. The essay should include introduction, main body and conclusion. Each paragraph must be focused on separate issue. Linking words are used to connect ideas and sentences, so that people can follow writer's ideas easily. They act as bridges between paragraphs. All presented arguments must be backed by evidences. Through the construction of detailed, reasoned and balanced arguments students consolidate what you have learned and apply key principles and theories in such a way that is both interesting to them and informative to the reader. Learners must acknowledge the quotations clearly. Language must be simple and smooth flowing and care must be taken to avoid all kinds of grammatical, spelling, stylistic errors.

The learners must get used to implementing effective strategies for writing: prewriting, gathering information, planning, structuring, drafting, revising, editing and presentation. They should have a purpose when writing, recognize that different audiences have different needs, use a level of formality that is appropriate to the task, and use writing conventions that are appropriate to a given situation, taking into consideration different types of essays.

Writing essays is a very important part of studying:

- it deepens students' learning of the subject studied, consolidates their understanding;
- it provides a unique form of feedback because the process immediately becomes the product in writing;

- it stimulates the mind to use ideas to argue a case, support it with examples;
- it enables students to enter into a dialogue with a teacher through which they can extend and refine learners' thinking and writing skills. An essay opens up a teaching-learning dialogue;
- it enables the tutors to assess the progress, and learners to express their thoughts clearly and logically.

Teaching writing essays is essential to help write better essays, to delve into a topic more deeply. Focusing on writing becomes a way of focusing on the methods, practices, social and psychological processes of learning.

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