

The 5 Paragraph Essay



Introduction

§1 introduces the topic and provides a road map of the rest of the essay. It defines the main idea.

This paragraph usually ends with the **thesis statement**. It encapsulates the essay's argument; it is your essay boiled down to one sentence.

§2: Argument A:

The second paragraph provides information and supporting points. Use your second strongest argument here.

§3: Argument B:

More info and thoughts that your thesis statement. Use your weakest argument here in the middle.

§4: Argument C:

Use your strongest argument, the “kicker” that the reader will remember.

§5: Conclusion

Summarize the arguments that were discussed in the body paragraphs and reassert the thesis statement in other words.

What is the heart of your essay?

An essay is a form of writing that defends a **thesis statement**. This statement typically appears at the end of the first paragraph. Poor thesis statements suffer from vagueness; the more precise you can be, the stronger the essay.

A strong thesis statement is not only a guide for the reader, it is also a guide for the writer. If you become stuck or find yourself writing in circles, a good thesis can remind you exactly what you are after.

Ask yourself some basic questions when planning your essay:



What is the purpose of your thesis? What do you want to convince the reader of?

What are the main arguments of defense that you can develop into coherent argument paragraphs?

Remember: Each paragraph is a mini-essay in itself and needs

- a topic sentence
- a body (your argument, examples, details)
- a concluding sentence, often leading on to the next paragraph

Make sure each paragraph deals with only ONE argument or aspect of the problem.

How can you wrap up your essay and sum up all your arguments most convincingly? Rephrase your thesis statement and show to your reader that your arguments really lead to a very clear conclusion and evaluation of the problem.

Before you finish go through your essay one more time and check:

- Has your intent remained clear and consistent throughout the arguments and conclusion of the essay?
- Does your essay contain ONE MAIN IDEA that is supported by examples, explanations, comparisons, and/or definitions?
- Has each paragraph been constructed around one idea or argument?
- Have you linked your ideas and paragraphs logically? Have you used appropriate linking words and phrases to guide your reader through your essay.

STYLE and LANGUAGE:

An essay is a formal, academic type of text written in a formal register.

Do not use slang, abbreviations or contractions. Use “one” and “we” rather than “I think”.

Check the page on “the language of essay-writing” and the pages about “transitional devices” for more language tips.

AN ESSAY WRITER'S MANTRA

I will not be aimless, confused or self-contradictory. I will be coherent and logical. I will use lots of effective transition sentences. In the end, no one will oppose my thesis statement.

Essays and Articles – What's the difference?

Persuasive Essay	Article
Purpose	
Always the same: to convince the reader of one's opinion by arguing coherently, logically and compellingly.	Varies according to the publication and target reader: to describe, inform, entertain, advise, recommend, compare and contrast, give an opinion etc.
Target Reader	
General (intellectual) readers hip / academic / scholarly Essays are aimed at any adult reader who is interested in the topic and in agreeing or disagreeing with the writer's arguments. The editorial in a quality newspaper often takes the form of an essay; otherwise essays appear in an academic context.	Varies according to the publication Articles are aimed at the readers of the particular magazine, journal or newspaper they are written for. The writer must consider such aspects as the age, gender and interests of the target reader.
Topic	
Any topic is possible, but essays tend rather to be about serious, controversial issues that affect people's lives in important ways e.g. moral issues or issues of current global interest.	Any topic is possible - it depends on what is suitable for the publication and what will appeal to the target reader. Topics can range from the light and entertaining to the serious.
Style	
Always formal register: no colloquialisms or slang, no abbreviations or contractions. Use "one" and "we". Avoid expressions like "I think" and "in my opinion". Use rhetorical questions for effect occasionally, but do not address the reader directly.	Neutral/informal or formal register — it depends on what is appropriate for the publication and the target reader. The article must be attractive enough to hold the reader's interest. Strike up a rapport with the reader by asking questions and using "you".
Structure	
<p>Title</p> <p>Introduction (ending with thesis statement)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thesis statement (1-2 sentences clearly expressing opinion) <p>Body: 2-3 paragraphs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each paragraph deals with a different argument supporting TS • each argument (topic sentence) supported by exemplification/elaboration/ clarification <p>Conclusion</p> <p>All parts should be related and linked to each other (ideas and language).</p>	<p>Title</p> <p>Introduction (ending with main controlling idea)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • main idea (1-2 sentences clearly defining main idea of text) <p>Body: 2-3 paragraphs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each paragraph deals with a different aspect of main idea • each aspect (topic sentence) supported by exemplification/elaboration/ clarification <p>Conclusion</p> <p>All parts should be related and linked to each other (ideas and language).</p>

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Before writing an essay always make an outline like this:

In My Opinion . . . (Main Topics and Supporting Points)

 **Five-Paragraph Essay** 

Main Idea, Introductory and Thesis Paragraph



Support/Proof Details

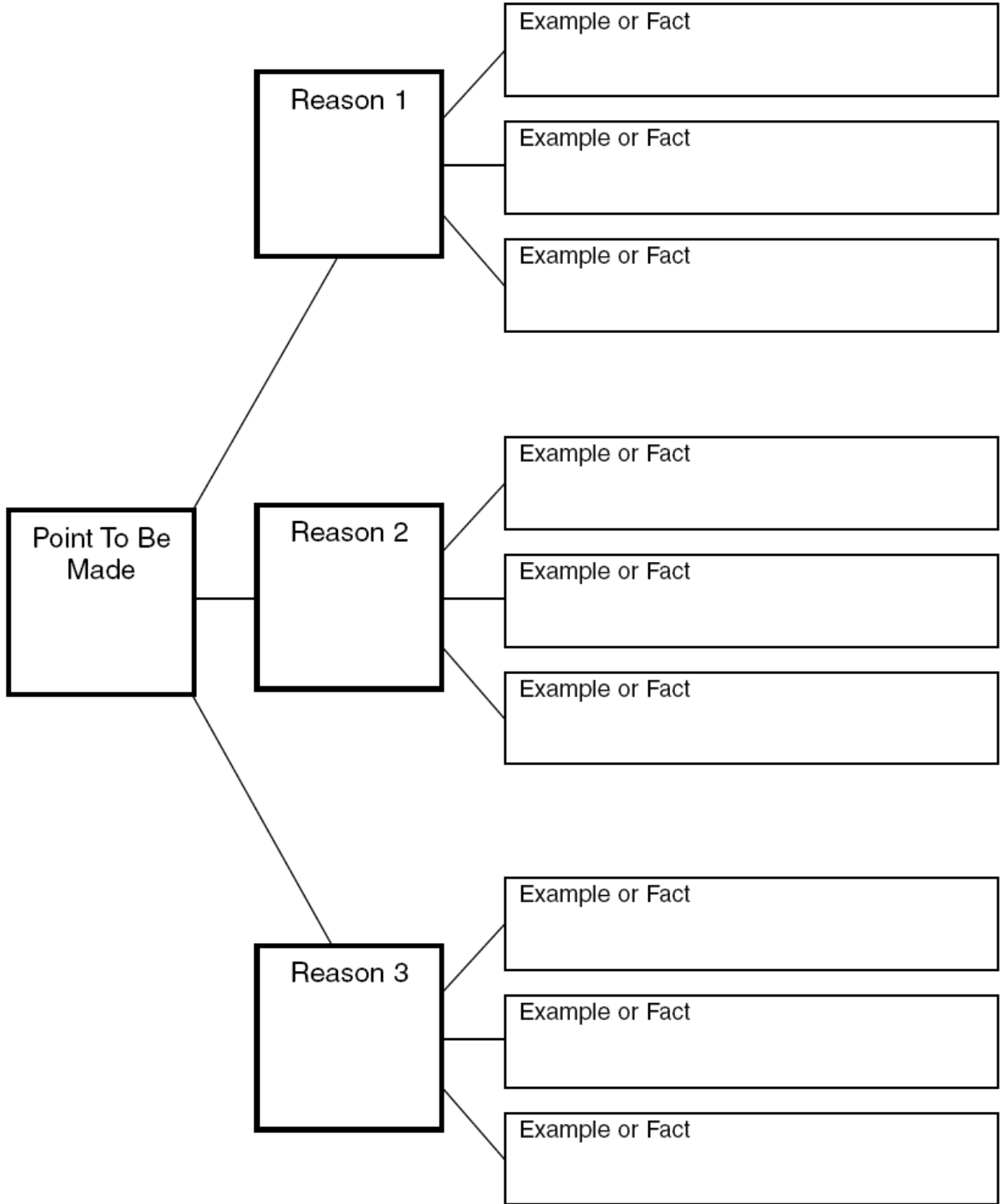
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Summary/Conclusion

Persuasion Plan



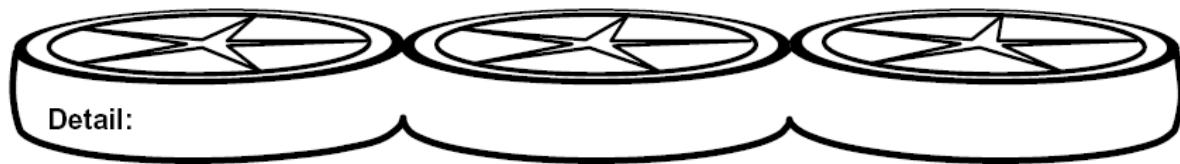
Name _____ Date _____

Sandwich Chart

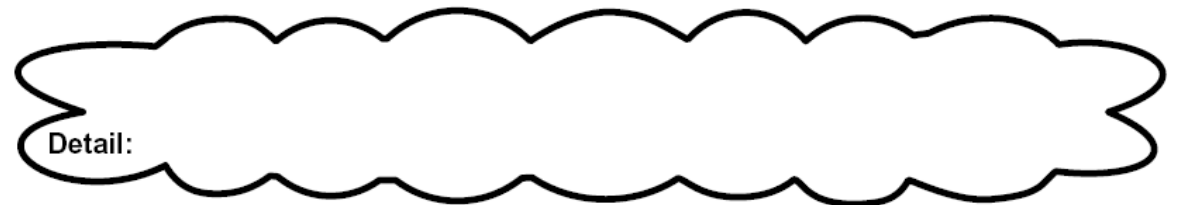
Write your topic at the top. Add details to the middle layers. Add a concluding sentence at the bottom.



Topic:



Detail:



Detail:



Detail:



Concluding Sentence:

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Choose one of the essays/articles that you have read in this project and reread it very carefully and critically. Which of the details are facts that can actually be verified, where has the writer stated his/her opinion?

Name _____ Date _____

Fact and Opinion

Write your topic at the top. Add details to each column.

--

Fact	Opinion

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Before you actually write your first essay, let's revise the writing of good paragraphs.

Writing Good Paragraphs

As we have seen in the outlines an essay is developed step by step and each step is identified by having a paragraph to itself.

- Although part of a larger essay, each paragraph stands alone.
- Each paragraph focuses on a single idea which is related to the thesis.
- A good paragraph is a unit that offers enough support in itself to satisfy the reader.
- A good paragraph starts with a topic sentence that states the idea.
- Within a paragraph the writer needs to signal the movement from one thought to the next. The same is true for a larger essay. This is best done by using transitional words and phrases

A brief list of transitional words and phrases:

<p>To introduce an illustration thus for example for instance to illustrate namely in particular</p>		<p>To make a contrast on the other hand nevertheless on the contrary by contrast however at the same time</p>
<p>To indicate time afterward meanwhile later in the past first, second, third</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>To add a thought secondly in the second place next likewise moreover again in addition finally further similarly furthermore in fact and</p>	<p>To indicate a conclusion therefore as a result consequently accordingly in other words to sum up thus then hence in brief in fact</p>

What is a Paragraph?

Here are six groups of sentences. Four of the groups are paragraphs. All of the sentences work together to explain one main idea. Two of the groups do not stick to one idea. Pick out the four good paragraphs. Be ready to explain why you think they are good paragraphs.

Why?

	<p>Early in 1978 the United States released the names of its first women astronauts. All trips to other planets have so far been made without humans on board. The Space Center at Cape Canaveral has the world's longest runway. A Russian woman took part in one of her country's space missions.</p>
	<p>The young boy- turned over on the thin mattress as the summer sun edged its way over the East River. The sun moved slowly. It spread a soft, gray light down into the canyons between the buildings. It touched the boy's face, and he was awakened. His eyes opened quickly, hurrying sleep away. He lay still a moment, smelling and hearing the morning all around him.</p>
	<p>When Manolo was nine he became aware of three important facts in his life. First, the older he became, the more he looked like his father. Second, he, Manolo Olivar, was a coward. Third, everyone in the town of Arcangel expected him to grow up to be a famous bullfighter, like his father.</p>
	<p>Salmon are powerful fish. At spawning time they leave the ocean and swim upstream. Sometimes they swim for 2,000 miles. They battle swift currents and swirling rapids. They leap over waterfalls that are often ten feet high. When they reach their spawning grounds, they have no time to rest. They must dig holes for their eggs.</p>
	<p>Wearing braces on your teeth has some good points. Three students in Mr. Chen's math class got braces the same week. New metals and ways of putting on braces mean that they work better in a shorter time. People with braces often feel shy about them at first. My Mom says it's better to have braces for a few years than to have crooked teeth your whole life.</p>
	<p>No other dog had a voice like Sounder's. It came out of the great chest cavity and broad jaws as though it had bounced off the walls of a cave. It mellowed into half-echo before it touched the air. It was louder and clearer than any purebred's voice. Each bark bounced from slope to slope in the foothills like a rubber ball. It was not an ordinary bark. It filled up the night and made music.</p>

Writing Good Topic Sentences

A good topic sentence tells what the entire paragraph is about. Look at these five sentences. Try to pick out the topic sentence.

1. She applied it to everything from making soup to planting her garden.
2. Sometimes she'd say it barely loud enough to hear, and I'd stop and think about what I was doing.
3. Other times she'd write it on a piece of paper and put the paper where I'd be sure to find it.
4. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" was my great-grandmother's favorite saying.
5. I used to tease her about her "all-purpose" advice, but I never questioned the wisdom of that advice.

Here is another group of sentences. This time the topic sentence is missing. Read the sentences and decide what all of them are about.

1. (topic sentence).....
2. Three popular ways are in a dish, on a cone, or frozen on a stick.
3. Another is on a piece of cake or on a brownie.
4. A scoop of ice cream might be placed on a piece of pie.

Here are three groups of sentences. Make them into paragraphs by writing a topic sentence for each group. Be sure that each topic sentence tells what all the rest of the sentences in the group are about.

.....
The food of Mexico has become popular in all parts of our country. Many Mexican words have become part of the English language. Mexican music has influenced American music. Mexican designs have been used in American houses, especially in the Southwest.

.....
His coat and mane were soft gold. He stood, straight and proud, looking over the grasslands. He gave good topic sentence roar. He was the master of his kingdom.

.....
Long ago the people of East Africa used jewelry as weapons. The Aztecs of Mexico used it to show a person's place in society. Certain jewelry has been worn for its magical powers. Other jewelry has been worn to remember people. For example, in the 1800's the British wore bracelets made of the braided hair of dead relatives.

Five Paragraph Essay Sample

The Hazards of Moviegoing

By John Langan

From College Writing Skills with Readings

Introductory paragraph (Thesis)	I am a movie fanatic. When friends want to know what picture won the Oscar in 1980 or who played the police chief in Jaws, they ask me. My friends, though, have stopped asking me if I want to go out to the movies. The problems in getting to the theater, the theater itself, and the behavior of some patrons are all reasons why I often wait for a movie to show up on TV.
First supporting paragraph	First of all, just getting to the theater presents difficulties. Leaving a home equipped with a TV and a video recorder isn't an attractive idea on a humid, cold, or rainy night. Even if the weather cooperates, there is still a thirty-minute drive to the theater down a congested highway, followed by the hassle of looking for a parking space. And then there are the lines. After hooking yourself to the end of a human chain, you worry about whether there will be enough tickets, whether you will get seats together, and whether many people will sneak into the line ahead of you.
Second supporting paragraph	Once you have made it to the box office and gotten your tickets, you are confronted with the problems of the theater itself. If you are in one of the run-down older theaters, you must adjust to the musty smell of seldom-cleaned carpets. Escaped springs lurk in the faded plush or cracked leather seats, and half the seats you sit in seem loose or tilted so that you sit at a strange angle. The newer twin and quad theaters offer their own problems. Sitting in an area only one-quarter the size of a regular theater, moviegoers often have to put up with the sound of the movie next door. This is especially jarring when the other movie involves racing cars or a karate war and you are trying to enjoy a quiet love story. And whether the theater is old or new, it will have floors that seem to be coated with rubber cement. By the end of a movie, shoes almost have to be pried off the floor because they have become sealed to a deadly compound of spilled soda, hardening bubble gum, and crushed Ju-Jubes.
Third supporting paragraph	Some of the patrons are even more of a problem than the theater itself. Little kids race up and down the aisles, usually in giggling packs. Teenagers try to impress their friends by talking back to the screen, whistling, and making what they consider to be hilarious noises. Adults act as if they were at home in their own living rooms and comment loudly on the ages of the stars or why movies aren't as good anymore. And people of all ages crinkle candy wrappers, stick gum on their seats, and drop popcorn tubs or cups of crushed ice and soda on the floor. They also cough and burp, squirm endlessly in their seats, file out for repeated trips to the rest rooms or concession stand, and elbow you out of the armrest on either side of your seat.
Concluding paragraph	After arriving home from the movies one night, I decided that I was not going to be a moviegoer anymore. I was tired of the problems involved in getting to the movies and dealing with the theater itself and some of the patrons. The next day I arranged to have cable TV service installed in my home. I may now see movies a bit later than other people, but I'll be more relaxed watching box office hits in the comfort of my own living room.

Working backwards: Reread the above essay and fill in the outline on the next page.

Outline for a Five-Paragraph Essay

Title: _____

I. Introduction

A. **Introductory statement**

B. **Thesis statement:** _____

II. Body

A. **First Supporting Idea (Topic Sentence):**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

B. **Second Supporting Idea (Topic Sentence):**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

C. **Third Supporting Idea (Topic Sentence):**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

III. Conclusion

A. **Closing statement**

B. **Restate thesis:** _____

Before passing your essay on to your peers or teacher, check if your arguments are clearly and logically linked. Use some of the following linkwords to make your reasoning crystal clear.



Adding more to a point already made

moreover; furthermore; again; further; what is more; in addition
besides; above all; as well (as)
either; neither...nor; not only...but also; similarly; correspondingly; in the same way; indeed
in fact; really; in reality, it is found that...
as for; as to; with respect to; regarding

Writing in lists

first(ly); second(ly); third(ly)
another; yet another; in addition; finally
to begin with; in the second place
moreover; additionally; also
next; then; and to conclude; lastly; finally

Putting the same idea in a different way

in other words; rather; or; better; in that case
to put it (more) simply
in view of this; with this in mind
to look at this another way

Introducing examples

that is to say; in other words
for example; for instance; namely; an example of this is
and; as follows; as in the following examples; such as; including
especially; particularly; in particular; notably; chiefly; mainly; mostly

Introducing an alternative viewpoint

by contrast; another way of viewing this is; alternatively; again; rather; one alternative is; another possibility is
on the one hand...on the other hand
conversely; in comparison; on the contrary; in fact; though; although

Returning to emphasise your earlier viewpoint

however; nonetheless; in the final analysis; despite x; notwithstanding x; in spite of x

while x may be true, nonetheless

although; though; after all; at the same time; on the other hand; all the same; even if x is true; although x may have a good point

Showing the results of something

therefore; accordingly; as a result

so, (then,) it can be seen that

the result is; the consequence is

resulting from this; consequently; now

we can see, then, that; it is evident that

because of this; thus; hence; for this reason; owing to x; this suggests that; it follows that

in other words; otherwise; in that case; that implies

Summing up or concluding

therefore; so, my conclusion is

in short; in conclusion; to conclude; in all; on the whole

to summarise; to sum up briefly; in brief; altogether; overall; thus; thus we can see that

Useful phrases to introduce quotations

- as X points out,...
- According to X,...
- To quote from X, '...'
- X states/suggests that...
- X tells/shows us that...
- In an article entitled 'Name of Text', X makes the point that...
- Referring to ..., X argues that
- As X stated/wrote/argued/discussed/expressed the concern, ...
- In Name of Text, X primarily suggests ...
- Whilst acknowledging ... X makes the significant claim that ...
- Writing in 1926, X argued that ...

Useful phrases to follow quotations

- However, Y suggests that
- Yet this does not go far enough
- This seems untenable because
- This theory best fits the known facts, since...

References: adapted from Stella Cottrell *The Study Skills Handbook* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003)

Transition word exercises

Always ask yourself what the exact relationship is between the sentences or parts of sentences. Are you leading to the result of something? Are you making a deduction? Are you introducing some contradictory evidence or ideas? Your choice of word or phrase obviously depends on this. And always check in a good dictionary if you're not quite sure about a word's use or its position in a sentence. Remember that punctuation will affect what you use.

Exercise 1: Insert the best alternative

1 Polls show that Tony Blair is the most popular Prime Minister this century.

_____, there are even members of his own party who are uneasy with his approach.

In particular *However* *For instance*

2 There are some slight variations in temperature, but _____ 26 to 27°C should be expected.

consequently *otherwise* *as a rule*

3 The two main Channel Islands, _____ Jersey and Guernsey, are much closer to France than to England.

for example *namely* *in particular*

4 It was announced that nurses' working hours would be increased by 25%. _____, even fewer trainee nurses are expected to join the profession.

As a result *So that* *Likewise*

5 Sales of CDs have experienced a small but steady fall over the past 12 months. _____, vinyl records have seen an increase in their share of the market, up to 1.7%.

Above all *Correspondingly* *In contrast*

6 The Vice Chancellor explained that in light of the current financial climate and because of unexpected bad debts, it would be necessary to peg salary levels at their current level for all grades of staff. _____, no-one was getting a pay rise.

Nevertheless *In other words* *Similarly*

7 It is clear, therefore, that the situation in Brazil will improve only slowly. _____ the economic problems being experienced in Japan, the outlook is slightly more optimistic.

Furthermore *In comparison* *With reference to*

8 In order to try to reduce car use in the inner cities, the government has announced new restrictions on company parking spaces and _____, a new tax on individual car use.

as well as *in addition* *in the same way*

9 Essays must be handed in by the deadline, _____ they will not be marked.

obviously *otherwise* *as a result*

10 _____ it has been shown that fractures can occur at even relatively low pressures, the use of the material should not be completely discounted.

Nevertheless *Because* *Even though*

Complete the essay with the linking words below. You can use one word a few times.

therefore however although in general also furthermore secondly even though but in the first place not only

Studying

a

language in a country where it is widely spoken has many advantages. It is

_____ a good idea to study English in a country such as Britain.

_____, I believe it is not the only way to learn the language.

_____, most students in non- English-speaking countries learn English at secondary school and sometimes at university nowadays, _____ their spoken

English is not usually of very high standard, their knowledge of grammar is often quite advanced. This is certainly useful when students come to an English-speaking country to perfect the language.

_____, studying the basics of English at secondary school is less stressful than learning the language while overseas. This is because students living at home do not have to worry about problems such as finding accommodation, paying for their study and living costs, and trying to survive in a foreign country where day to day living causes much stress.

_____, there are obvious advantages of learning English in Britain. Every day there are opportunities to practise listening to and speaking with British people.

_____, students can experience the culture first-hand, which is a great help when trying to understand the language. This is especially true if they choose to live with

a British family, as exchange students for example, _____, if students attend a language school full-time, the teachers will be native speakers. In this case, _____ will students speaking and listening skills improve, _____ attention can be given to developing reading and writing skills as well. _____, _____ it is preferable to study English in an Englishspeaking country, a reasonable level of English can be achieved in one's own country, if a student is gifted and dedicated to study.

Cohesion exercise

Check your knowledge of cohesion by identifying the words which link sentences and ideas in the following paragraph. it is taken from a physics textbook.

We often associate the concept of temperature with how hot or cold an object feels when we touch it. Thus, our senses provide us with qualitative indications of temperature. However, our senses are unreliable and often misleading. For example, if we remove a metal ice tray and a package of frozen vegetables from the freezer, the ice tray feels colder to the hand than the vegetables even though the two are at the same temperature. This is because metal is a better heat conductor than cardboard, and so the ice tray conducts heat from our hand more efficiently than does the cardboard package. What is needed is a reliable and reproducible method of making quantitative measurements to establish the relative “hotness” or “coldness” of objects. Scientists have developed a variety of thermometers to fulfill this purpose.

Assignments:

Read 3 of the essays provided by your teacher and do the following tasks:

1. Underline the thesis statement and the topic sentences of each paragraph.
2. Fill in an outline form for at least one of your chosen essays.
3. **Highlight all the linking words** and phrases that you can find in the essays.
4. **Vocab Work 1:** Look up all the **unknown words** and phrases and transfer them into your vocab-book. **Add a second sample sentence** that you have found in your monolingual dictionary.
5. **Vocab Work 2:** Collect at least **20 useful phrases for essay writing** in your vocab book.
6. **How are the tenses used** in these essays? Underline all the verbs that are not in the present simple and list all the tenses that are used. Why are these tenses used? Give examples and **label the tense notions**. Check your Newby Grammar for details and ask your teacher for help if necessary.

past events	general experience	results and achievements
past states	recent events	changes
duration of a state	general facts	new developments other...

7. Write a short letter to each of the authors, telling them what you think of their views. Your letters should be between 50 and 100 words long, well structured and written in formal language, similar to *letters to the editor* in a newspaper or magazine. Upload each of your letters to our Moodle platform.
8. Then choose a topic and write your own essay for our book “Teen Think Tank” In this book we will publish all your views on different topics of your interest. In the course of this quarter write 2 essays on topics of your choice. Each essay will go through the typical stages of the writing process:
 - planning and outlining (use one of that planning sheets)
 - first draft (Upload your text to Moodle and bring a print-out to class. Only hand in work that you have proofread carefully yourself. 50% of the points will be given to your first draft, 50% to your final copy.)
 - peer feedback, teacher feedback and feedback from the Uni students
 - revising, editing and publishing

Assessment of quarter II: Make your point

Test: Essay writing	100
Essay 1 (outline, 1 st draft, peer-comment, 2 nd draft	20
Essay 2 (outline, 1 st draft, peer-comment, 2 nd draft	20
3 short letters in response to the sample essays	20
Vocab collection	10
Work-package: “Essay-writing” + Hot Discussions: Oral work	20
Reading one novel + reading diary	10

Sample Outline for a Five-Paragraph Essay

Title: The Hazards of Moviegoing

I. Introduction

- A. **Introductory statement**
- B. **Thesis statement: I like watching movies but I prefer watching them at home.**

II. Body

- A. **First Supporting Idea (Topic Sentence): just getting to the theater presents difficulties**
 - 1. bad weather
 - 2. long drive and limited parking space
 - 3. long waiting to buy ticket
- B. **Second Supporting Idea (Topic Sentence): facing the problems of the theater itself**
 - 1. old theater's problems such as smelly carpet, worn-out seat, etc
 - 2. new theater's problems such as smaller size, noise from next movie theater, etc
 - 3. both floors will be rubber-like dirty at the end of the movie
- C. **Third Supporting Idea (Topic Sentence): Some of the patrons are annoying**
 - 1. bad behavior such as running, talking loud, etc
 - 2. human noise and disturbance

III. Conclusion

- A. **Closing statement**
- B. **Restate thesis: I prefer to watch movies at home where it is comfortable, clean and safe.**

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