

# Academic Writing

*from paragraph to essay*



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# 4 Descriptive and Process Paragraphs

In this unit, you will learn about ...

- descriptive paragraphs and reasons for writing them.
- organising and writing descriptive paragraphs using adjectives and prepositions.
- process paragraphs and reasons for writing them.
- using transition words to write a process paragraph.

## ▷ Describing people, places, and processes

A descriptive paragraph explains how someone or something looks or feels. A process paragraph explains how something is done.

## Descriptive paragraphs

### ▷ Using adjectives

Adjectives are words that tell us how things look, feel, taste, sound, or smell. Adjectives also describe how you feel about something. Here are a few common adjectives.

shape and size	atmosphere	how you feel	appearance
large / small	cosy	amazed	colourful
wide / narrow	comfortable	surprised	unforgettable
round	warm / cool	happy	beautiful
rectangular	cold / hot	nostalgic	unattractive

A description of a place may answer some of these questions:

- Where is the place?
- How big is it?
- How warm or cold is the place?
- How does the place make you feel? Why?
- What things can you see in this place?
- What colours do you see?

### I List some words to describe these places.



2 Read this description from a travel brochure. Circle the adjectives.

**N**iagara Falls, a popular destination for thousands of visitors each year, is a beautiful place. When you stand at the edge and look down at the 188 feet of white waterfalls, you feel amazed at the power of nature. The tree-lined river that leads into the falls is fast-moving, pouring over the edge of

the falls and crashing to the bottom in a loud roar. If you want to experience the falls close up, go for a boat ride. You'll come near enough to look up at the roaring streams of water flowing over the edge and feel the cool mist that rises as the water hits the rocks below. Seeing Niagara Falls is an unforgettable experience!

**Describing the place around you**

☞ **Using prepositions**

Prepositions tell us how a space is organised. These are some common and useful prepositions:

in front of / behind

on top of / on the bottom of

next to

above / below, underneath

to the right of / to the left of

in the middle of

around

between

3 Read this paragraph that describes someone's favourite place. Underline the prepositions.

*My favourite place to relax is a small café down the street from where I live. This café is on a small side street and as soon as you see it, you feel like going in. There are three windows on either side of the door, and each window has a small window box with brightly coloured flowers. There is a small wooden door that opens into the café, and as you go in, you can see a dozen small tables all around the room. Even though it isn't a big place, its size makes it very cosy and comfortable. I always like to sit at a small table in the corner near the front windows. From here, I can look at the artwork on the walls and at the pretty green plants hanging from the ceiling. With a strong cup of coffee and a good book, I feel very happy and relaxed in my favourite café.*





4 Write six sentences to describe the place where you are right now. Try to answer some of the questions under 'Using adjectives' on page 25. Use adjectives and prepositions.

**Describing a character**

➤ **Describing people**

Here are some common adjectives for describing people:

*Personality*

- happy, satisfied
- relaxed
- exciting
- nervous
- angry
- serious
- sad, depressed
- outgoing

*Physical characteristics*

- big, large, tall
- small, tiny, short
- thin
- heavy
- strong
- weak
- brown-, black-, blond-, red-haired
- light-, dark-skinned

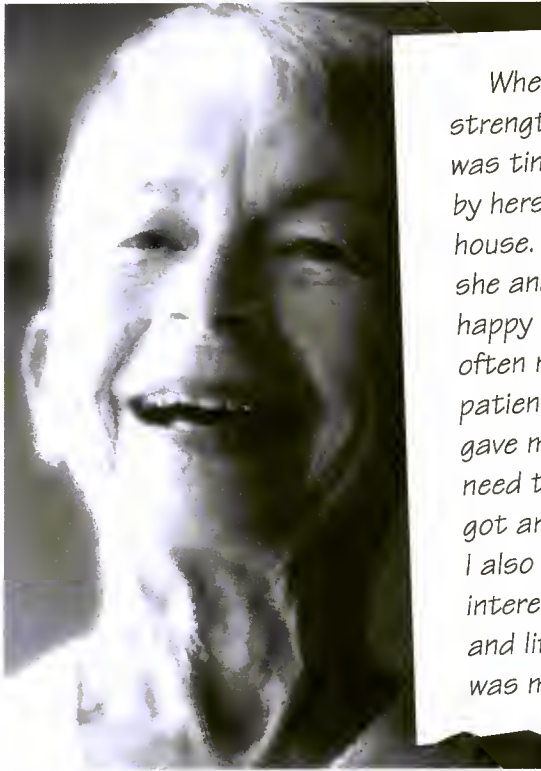
.....  
 .....

A description of a person may answer some of the following questions:

- Who is the person?
- What does the person do?
- What does he or she look like?
- How does the person act—what is his or her personality like?
- How does he or she make others feel?

5 With a partner, add at least two other adjectives to the two lists above.

- 6 Read this description written by a young woman about her grandmother. Circle the adjectives that describe the grandmother.



When I was young, I admired my grandmother for her strength and kindness. She was not very big. In fact, she was tiny and very thin. She was strong, though. She lived by herself and still did a lot of the chores around her house. When I was a child, I saw her almost every day, and she and I would talk about everything. She was a very happy person and was always smiling and joking, and she often made me laugh. My grandmother was also very patient, and she would listen to all of my problems. She gave me very good advice whenever I needed it. I didn't need to be afraid to tell her anything, because she never got annoyed with me. She just listened and tried to help. I also liked to spend time with her because she had interesting stories to tell me about her own childhood and life experiences. When I was young, my grandmother was my best friend.

- 7 Describe one of these people. Write eight sentences. Try to answer three or more of the questions at the bottom of page 27. Use your imagination!



- 8 Think of a person or place you know well. Then brainstorm your ideas, narrow down your topic, and write a descriptive paragraph.



## Process paragraphs

- 9 A process paragraph is a description of how to do something. It explains the steps you need to follow to complete an activity. Read this recipe and do the exercises below.

### Ingredients

two cups of brown rice  
 one tablespoon of cooking  
 oil  
 three tablespoons of chilli  
 sauce  
 three cloves of garlic  
 one green pepper  
 one red pepper  
 one onion  
 two tomatoes  
 two spring onions  
 salt  
 pepper

### Mike's Brown Rice and Vegetables

Brown rice and vegetables is a simple and delicious meal to make. First, cook the rice, following the directions on the packet. Then, cut the vegetables into one-inch pieces. Next, heat the oil, chilli sauce, and garlic in a frying pan. After that, add the vegetables and fry them until they are soft, but still a little bit crunchy. Now it's time to stir in the cooked rice. After stirring the rice and vegetables together, add salt and pepper to your own taste. Finally, put the rice and vegetables into a large bowl and serve it with freshly chopped tomatoes and spring onions on top. Now you are ready to enjoy your delicious brown rice and vegetables!

- Underline the topic sentence and the concluding sentence of the paragraph.
- List the steps for making brown rice and vegetables in the order you find them.
  - Cook the rice......
  - .....
  - .....
  - .....
  - .....
  - .....
  - .....
- How are the steps in the paragraph connected together? What words do you see that help show the sequence to follow? Underline them.

## Transitions

### ☞ What are transitions?

Transitions are words that connect the steps in a paragraph. Transition words and phrases show the relationships between the ideas in a paragraph. They are not used between every sentence, but are used often enough to make the order clear. Here are some common transition words and phrases that show time order or the order of steps:

first, second, third, etc.	finally	.....
next	the last step	.....
then	before	.....
after, after that	while	.....

**10** Add other transition words you know to the list above.

**11** Choose appropriate transition words to connect the steps in this paragraph about preparing for a trip.

Planning a holiday abroad? Here are some suggestions to make your trip successful.

<sup>a</sup> ....., find out if you need a visa for the country that you want to visit. Make sure you have enough time to apply for it <sup>b</sup> ..... you buy your ticket.

<sup>c</sup> ..... you've found out about visas, you should research airfares and timetables.

<sup>d</sup> ....., look for the best flight for you. Remember, the cheapest flight may stop over in several cities and reduce the amount of time you have to spend at your destination. You might want to fly direct. <sup>e</sup> ..... you're researching flights, you can also ask your travel agent about getting a good deal on a hotel. It's a good idea to book your flight and hotel early if you're sure of your destination. If you haven't already done it, the <sup>f</sup> ..... step is to learn about places to visit, the weather, the food, and other details about the country. The Internet can be a very useful source of information. <sup>g</sup> ....., on the day of your flight, make sure you go to the airport at least two hours before your flight. Now you are ready to start enjoying your holiday!



## Ordering sentences

**12** Order the steps to form a process paragraph. Write 1 next to the first step, 2 for the second step, and so on.

### Introduction to linguistics: language-learning research project

Conduct an experiment to find out whether learners of English use English more correctly in a written test or in informal conversation.

- a. .... Next, make a written test that checks the grammar point you are researching. This could be a fill-in-the-blanks test, a correct-the-errors test, or another style. It should have at least ten questions, but it should not be too long.
- b. .... After giving the written test, interview each learner individually for about ten minutes. Try to make the interviews informal and friendly. Be sure to ask questions that will encourage learners to use the grammar point you are researching. Record the interviews. (Ask for learners' permission first!)
- c. .... After you have counted the errors, calculate the score as a percentage. Do this for the written test and the spoken interview.
- d. .... Next, read the tests and listen to the recordings. Make a note of how many times your chosen grammar point was used, and how many times it was used incorrectly. Do this for both the written test and the recorded conversation.
- e. .... Third, find about ten intermediate-level English learners who will agree to take your test. Arrange a time to give the test to each learner.
- f. .... Finally, prepare two graphs to compare your results. Did learners make more mistakes on the written test or while they were speaking?
- g. .... First, choose a common English grammar point you would like to use in your research. Ask your teacher for a suggestion if you need help choosing one.

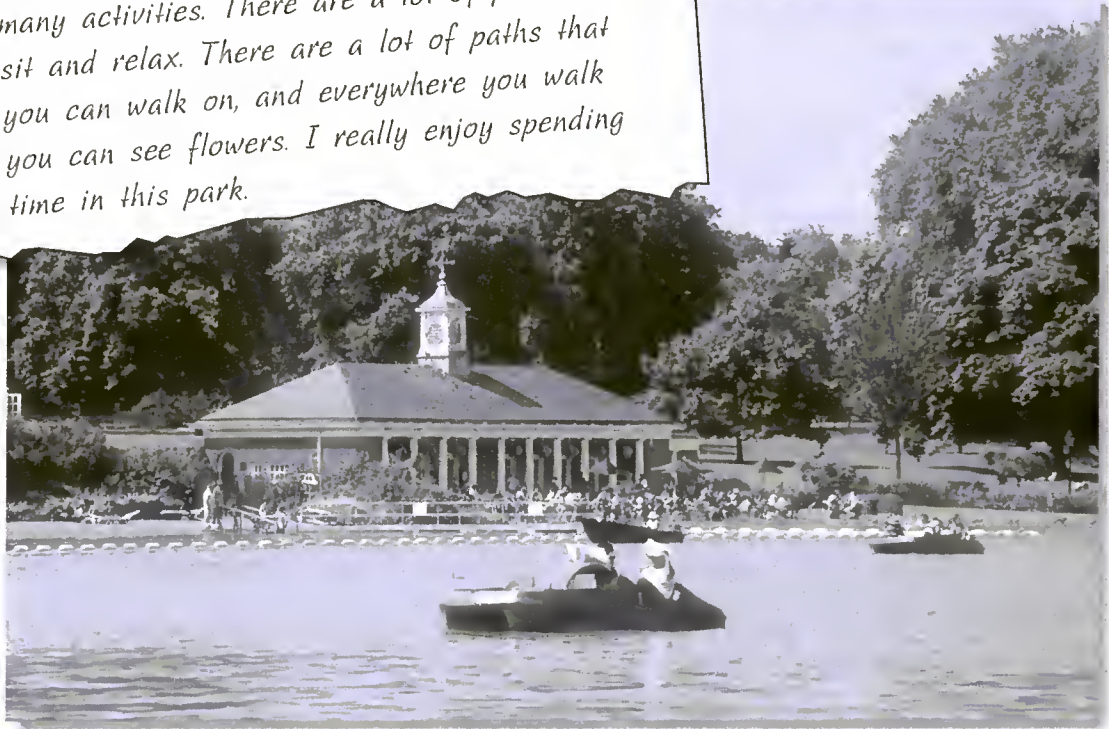


**13** Write a process paragraph about a topic that you know well. First, brainstorm all the steps that need to be followed. Then write the paragraph. Remember to use transitions.

**Review**

- 14** This paragraph describes a city park, but it doesn't have enough descriptive details. Imagine that you live next to a park. Rewrite the paragraph, adding description, to make it more interesting.

*I live next to a park. The park is large and has trees and grass. There is a lake in the park where you can see people enjoying many activities. There are a lot of places to sit and relax. There are a lot of paths that you can walk on, and everywhere you walk you can see flowers. I really enjoy spending time in this park.*



# 5 Opinion Paragraphs

In this unit, you will learn how to ...

- distinguish between fact and opinion.
- organise and write paragraphs expressing opinions and arguments.
- use transition words to express causality.
- use modal expressions to make recommendations.

## ➤ Facts and opinions

A *fact* is a piece of information that is true: *That film was three hours long.*

An *opinion* is an idea or belief about a particular subject: *That film was boring.*

Writers use facts to support their opinions and to show why they hold their beliefs.

## An opinion paragraph

- 1 Read this letter to the editor of a newspaper. Answer the questions.

Dear Editor,

More people should ride bicycles into town. Last year, seventy-three percent of all workers drove their own car to work. Car traffic in town is terrible, parking places are hard to find, and pollution from cars is a real problem. Citizens who want a cleaner, nicer place to live ought to try this non-polluting form of transport. Cycling is good exercise, too! The city must not allow this problem to get worse. Instead, people should ride bicycles to work and school—and enjoy the health benefits of daily exercise.

Bill Adams  
Bellingham



- a. What is the main idea of this paragraph? Circle the sentence.
- b. What is the writer's purpose? Why did he write this letter?
- c. Underline the sentences or parts of sentences that show an opinion.
- d. Why do you think the writer included a fact in this paragraph?

- 2** Do these types of writing use mostly facts, mostly opinions, or an even mixture of both? Write F for fact, O for opinion, or B for both. Explain your choices to a partner.
- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| a. .... film review              | e. .... news report                                   |
| b. .... advice column            | f. .... book report for a university literature class |
| c. .... police report of a crime | g. .... magazine advertisement                        |
| d. .... travel brochure          | h. .... personal e-mail to a friend                   |

- 3** Can you think of other types of writing that use opinions? Make a list. Then make a list of types of writing that use facts.

Use opinions: .....

Use facts: .....

- 4** Read these sentences. Write F if the sentence is a fact, and O if the sentence is an opinion.

- a. .... Airfares have become too expensive.
- b. .... English is an easier language to learn than Arabic.
- c. .... Owls are birds that hunt at night.
- d. .... I was born in New York City.
- e. .... Exercise is the best way to stay healthy.
- f. .... Internet use has increased every year since its beginning.
- g. .... Engineering is the best career choice.
- h. .... Big cities are dangerous at night.



- 5** Write three fact sentences and three opinion sentences.

- a. ....
- b. ....
- c. ....
- d. ....
- e. ....
- f. ....

- 6** Share your sentences with a partner. Decide which of your partner's sentences are fact and which are opinion.

## Modal auxiliaries

### ➤ Using modal auxiliaries

When you speak, you introduce opinions with phrases like *I think*, *In my opinion*, and *I believe*. In general, these introductory phrases are not needed in writing. They can even make you sound less sure of your ideas. Instead, writers use grammatical methods such as modal auxiliary verbs and transition words to express their opinions. Modal auxiliary verbs show the strength of a writer's opinion or argument.

#### AFFIRMATIVE:

The city	could	add more cycle paths.	weakest
	should		▼
	ought to		strongest
	has to / must		

#### NEGATIVE:

The city	doesn't have to	allow more cars.	weakest
	shouldn't		▼
	can't / must not		strongest

- 7 Look again at the paragraph in exercise 1 on page 33. Circle the modal auxiliaries. How strong do you think the writer's opinions were? Discuss with a partner.
- 8 Read the paragraph below. Circle the most appropriate modal auxiliary in each sentence.

Dear Editor.

I agree with Bill Adams's opinion in his recent letter saying that people <sup>a</sup> *should / don't have to* ride their bicycles into town. However, there is one problem with this idea. The roads in town are so narrow and full of cars that you <sup>b</sup> *can't / ought to* ride safely on them. If people are going to ride bicycles into town, the city <sup>c</sup> *could / must* make some cycle paths for people to use. Maybe the city <sup>d</sup> *could / mustn't* charge a small additional tax on fuel to pay for the cycle paths. Motorists have created the problem, so motorists <sup>e</sup> *could / should* pay for the solution. The city <sup>f</sup> *ought to / doesn't have to* support cyclists like Bill Adams by making more cycle paths.

Melissa Green  
Greatford



## Expressing opinions: class survey

9 Read these statements that express opinions. Add three of your own.

Name:	.....	.....	.....
1. Smoking must be banned in all restaurants and bars.	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree
2. University students should not have part-time jobs.	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree
3.	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree
4.	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree
5.	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> agree <input type="checkbox"/> disagree

10 Share your statements with three classmates. Say how you feel about your partners' statements by saying, 'I agree' or 'I disagree', and then adding one sentence. Tick (✓) your partners' opinions about your statements.



11 Read the opinion paragraphs in exercise 1 on page 33 and exercise 8 on page 35 again. Then write a paragraph about one of the opinions you expressed in exercise 10 above. Brainstorm ideas, narrow down your topic, and then write. Remember to use modal auxiliaries.



## Connectors of cause and effect

### How to use connectors of cause and effect for expressing opinions

*Because, since, and so* are connectors of cause and effect. They join two ideas when one idea causes or explains the other. *Because* and *since* introduce the cause or reason, and *so* and *therefore* introduce the effect or result:

#### cause / reason

*petrol is becoming scarce and expensive*

#### effect / result

*we should develop electric cars*

For example:

**Because** *petrol is becoming scarce and expensive, we should develop electric cars.*

*We should develop electric cars, since petrol is becoming scarce and expensive.*

*Petrol is becoming scarce and expensive, so we should develop electric cars.*

*Therefore* is slightly different. It joins the ideas in two sentences:

*Petrol is becoming scarce and expensive. Therefore, we should develop electric cars.*

### 12 In the examples above, underline the causes. Circle the results. Do the connectors of cause and effect come before the cause or before the result? Share your answers with a partner.

### Punctuation note

- When *because* or *since* begin a sentence, use a comma after the first part of the sentence (the cause).
- When the effect or result comes first, don't use a comma before *because* and *since*.
- A result or effect beginning with *so* is usually the second part of a sentence. Use a comma before *so*.
- Use *Therefore* after a full stop.
- Use a comma after *Therefore*.



### 13 Complete this opinion paragraph using *because* or *since*, *so*, or *Therefore*. Add punctuation where necessary.

Bruce Lee (1940–1973), the greatest action movie star of all time, should be given a lifetime achievement award for his work in films. Bruce died tragically in 1973 <sup>a</sup> ..... he wouldn't be able to receive the award himself, but his fans all over the world would love to see him honoured. Why was Bruce Lee so great? The fight scenes in his films were amazing <sup>b</sup> ..... Bruce was always in top physical condition. His body was almost perfect. He was also a great actor. <sup>c</sup> ..... he started acting when he was just six years old, he was very comfortable and natural in front of the camera. His face was very expressive <sup>d</sup> ..... he was able to communicate a lot of feeling with a simple look. Bruce always looked good on film <sup>e</sup> ..... he was so charming. Bruce Lee was a talented actor, a brilliant fighter, and an almost perfect example of physical fitness. <sup>f</sup> ..... he should receive an award that recognises his great contribution to the art of film making.

**14** Use the connectors of cause and effect in brackets to join these ideas. You may change the order of ideas. You may make one sentence or two. Use appropriate punctuation.

- a. the city doesn't have enough money / we ought to increase council tax (so)

.....

- b. I'm going to leave my part-time job / I don't have enough time for my homework (because)

.....

- c. some plants and trees are dying / this summer has been very dry (since)

.....

- d. many students are graduating with nursing degrees / it might be hard for nurses to find jobs in the future (Therefore)

.....

- e. my friends all recommend that restaurant / I will try it this weekend (so)

.....

**15** Look again at the opinions that were expressed in exercise 9 on page 36. Complete these sentences in your notebook with your own ideas about these opinions. Use appropriate punctuation.

- a. Because .....
- b. .... since .....
- c. .... so .....
- d. Since .....
- e. .... because .....
- f. .... Therefore .....

### Writing an opinion paragraph

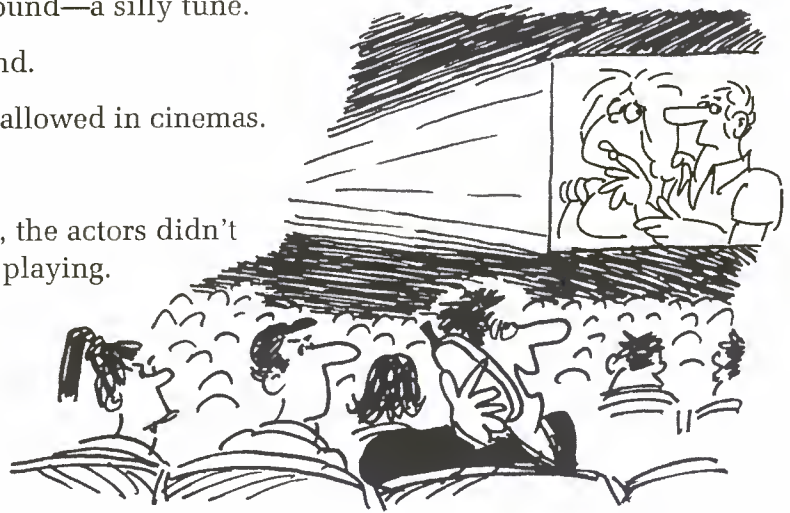
**16** Write an opinion paragraph. First, answer this question: *What do I want my reader to think or do?* Then brainstorm ideas and narrow your topic. Use modal auxiliaries and connectors of cause and effect.



## Review

**17** Put these sentences in order to make a paragraph. Write 1 in front of the first sentence, 2 in front of the second sentence, and so on.

- a. .... He was receiving a call.
- b. .... My friend and I leaned forward, listening carefully to the film.
- c. .... It was very distracting.
- d. .... Last night, I went to see a film with my friend. It was a thriller.
- e. .... He decided to answer the call.
- f. .... We think that people should turn off their mobile phones when they watch a film, or not bring them at all!
- g. .... It was very exciting.
- h. .... The man next to us had a mobile phone.
- i. .... Suddenly, we heard a loud sound—a silly tune.
- j. .... He spoke out loud to his friend.
- k. .... Mobile phones should not be allowed in cinemas.
- l. .... My friend and I felt annoyed.
- m. .... At the most exciting moment, the actors didn't speak. Only quiet music was playing.



**18** With a partner, write a paragraph using the sentences in exercise 17 above. Remember to join some of the sentences with connectors of cause and effect and with transitions from the top of page 30. Read your paragraph to another pair. How were your paragraphs the same? How were they different?

# 6 Comparison / Contrast Paragraphs

In this unit, you will learn about ...

- comparison / contrast paragraphs and reasons for writing them.
- how to organise comparison / contrast paragraphs.
- connecting words used for comparing and contrasting topics.
- how to write about the advantages and disadvantages of a topic.

## ➤ Paragraphs that compare and contrast

To *compare* means to discuss how two people, places, or things are *similar*: *Both teachers and students need to spend a lot of time preparing for classes.* To *contrast* means to discuss how two people, places, or things are *different*: *One main advantage of a bicycle over a car is that a bicycle doesn't create any pollution.*



## Choosing a topic

- 1 Brainstorm ideas to compare and contrast. Think of people, places, and things. Then compare your lists with a partner.

People: ..... and .....

Places: ..... and .....

Things: ..... and .....

## Comparing and contrasting

### 2 Read Yuko's e-mail message to her friend and answer the questions.

- What two things does the second paragraph talk about?
- Is the second paragraph mostly comparing or mostly contrasting? How do you know?

**From:** yuko@toko.com

**To:** sharifa@abz.net

**Subject:** Stratford University

Hello Sharifa

How are you? I hope everything is OK with you. The English course has almost finished now – can you believe it? I was just talking to Yu Peng yesterday and she told me that you're planning to go to Stratford University. That's great. As I'm planning to go to St John's University, we'll be living in the same city!

Have you decided where you're going to live? My parents want me to live with a host family in the city, but I want to live in a shared flat in a hall of residence on the campus. I think they're both good places to live, but a flat in a hall would be better. When you live with a family, you usually have to fit in with their timetable. On the other hand, when you live in a flat in hall you can do what you want when you want. Another difference is that, with a family, you don't have to cook. In a flat in hall, of course, you have to cook for yourself! That would be good for me because I like cooking. My parents have pointed out that all the food is included in the price when you live with a family, but you have to pay extra for this in hall. Plus there could be complications about sharing the kitchen if everyone wants to cook at the same time. However, when you live in a flat in hall, you get to choose what you eat and when you eat it.

I hope I can convince my parents that living in hall would be better for me than living with a host family!

Talk to you soon.

Love

Yuko

## Comparative and contrastive structures

### ➤ Using comparative structures

These words and phrases are used for writing comparisons:

and	<i>The man <b>and</b> the woman are tall.</i>
both	<i><b>Both</b> of the tables have broken legs.</i>
both ... and	<i><b>Both</b> my neighbour <b>and</b> I are selling our cars.</i>
also	<i>The shops are closing for the bank holiday. The post office is <b>also</b> closing.</i>
too	<i>Kathy is planning to go to the party, and I am, <b>too</b>.</i>
neither ... nor	<i><b>Neither</b> Joe <b>nor</b> Steve went to the meeting last night.</i>
similar to	<i>Their new computer is <b>similar to</b> the one my brother bought.</i>
the same as	<i>Is the restaurant where you had dinner <b>the same as</b> the place where I ate last month?</i>
(just) as + adjective + as	<i>His coat is <b>just as warm as</b> the more expensive one.</i>
likewise	<i>My parents were born in a small village. <b>Likewise</b>, my brothers and I also grew up in a small town.</i>
similarly	<i>There are many parks to visit in that city. <b>Similarly</b>, there are several parks in my hometown, too.</i>

### 3 Complete these sentences with phrases from above.

- The architecture of some modern government buildings is ..... the type of construction used hundreds of years ago.
- In recent years, new technology such as mobile telephones has made life more convenient. ...., the Internet has made a wide variety of information available to everyone.
- ..... the rivers ..... the lakes are clear and beautiful.
- The capital city is just ..... modern ..... the cities in many other countries.



### ➤ Using contrastive structures

These words and phrases are used for writing contrasts:

more / less + adjective / adverb + than *Eating out is usually **more expensive than** cooking at home.*

adjective + er + than *My bedroom is **bigger than** my sister's room.*

but, while, though *I enjoy eating fruit for dessert, **but / while / though** my friend likes chocolate.*

not the same as *This book **isn't the same as** the one you bought.*

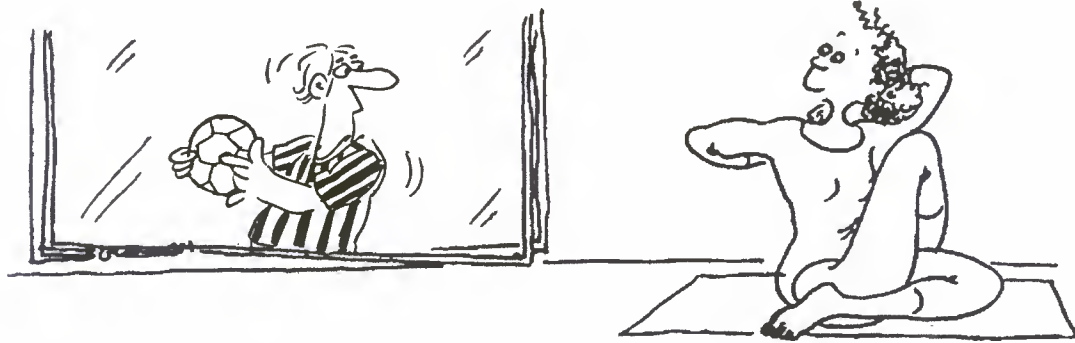
not as ... as *Some people feel that doing exercise **isn't as fun as** watching TV.*

different from *That style of shirt is **different from** the styles most people wear.*

in contrast *The lakes we swam in were very clean and beautiful. **In contrast**, the lakes in my country are polluted.*

however *The new shop sells its clothing at low prices. **However**, other shops have better quality clothing.*

on the other hand *My boyfriend likes doing sport. **On the other hand**, I prefer doing yoga.*

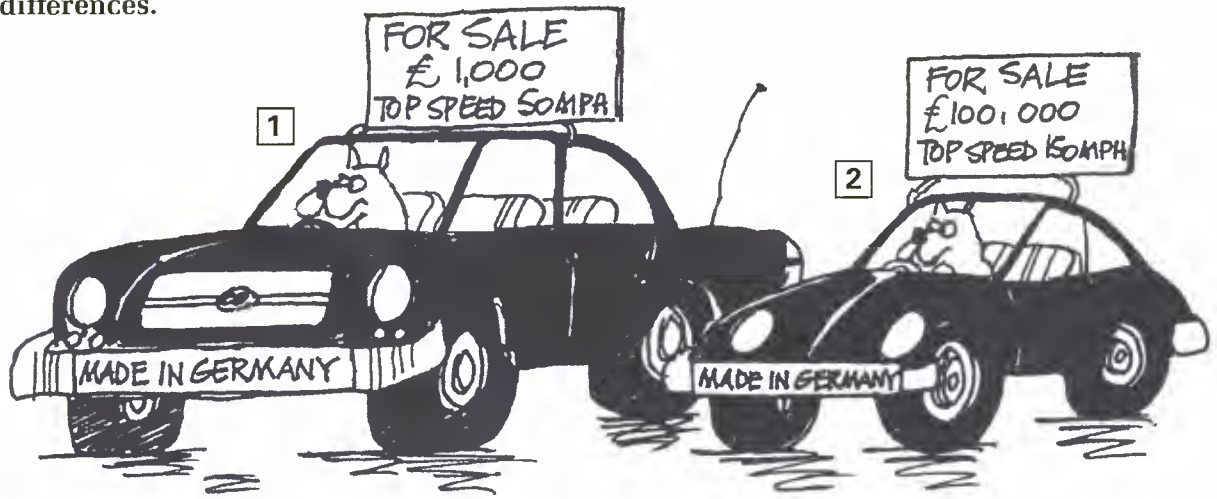


### 4 Complete these sentences with phrases from above.

- Some tourists enjoy going on organised tours, ..... many other tourists prefer travelling on their own.
- The two books are very ..... each other.
- The cost of studying in a college or university in Britain is very high. ...., in many other countries, the cost is much lower.
- Changes in technology are occurring ..... quickly ..... in the past.

## Similarities and differences

- 5 Write eight sentences about these two cars. Write about four similarities and four differences.



## Comparison / contrast organisation

- Two methods for organising a comparison / contrast paragraph

### Method 1: Block organisation

First, write about supporting points for the first topic. Then compare or contrast those same points to the second topic. This type of organisation could be outlined like this:

Topic sentence comparing / contrasting two topics (A and B)

Points of comparison / contrast about Topic A

Points of comparison / contrast about Topic B

Concluding sentence

*Reading a story in a book is often very different from seeing it as a film. When you read a story, you need to use your imagination. A book usually gives a lot of description about the people, places, and things in the story, so you can create pictures in your mind. In addition, the conversations between people are always written with details that describe how the people look or feel while they are talking. When you read, you use a lot of imagination to help 'see' the characters in the story. However, when you see a film, it is a different experience. When you watch a film, you don't need to use your imagination. The pictures on the screen give all the details about the people, places, and things in the story. The conversations are spoken out loud, so you just listen and watch. The feelings of the people come through their faces, body movements, and voices. Although a book and a film might tell the same story, reading a book and watching a film are very different experiences.*



**Method 2: Point-by-point organisation**

Compare or contrast one point about the two topics, then a second point, then a third point, and so on. This type of organisation could be outlined like this:

Topic sentence comparing or contrasting two topics (A and B)

First point of comparison / contrast (A1, B1)

Second point of comparison / contrast (A2, B2)

Third point of comparison / contrast (A3, B3)

Fourth point of comparison / contrast (A4, B4)

Fifth point of comparison / contrast (A5, B5)

Concluding sentence

Marilyn Monroe and Princess Diana lived at different times in different countries, but their lives had some surprising similarities. First of all, both women had a difficult childhood. Monroe spent many years without parents in an orphanage, and Diana's mother left the family when she was only six. Later in their lives, both women married famous men. Princess Diana married Prince Charles, and Marilyn Monroe married a famous baseball player and later a famous writer. They also had difficult marriages and eventually separated from their husbands. Another similarity between Marilyn Monroe and Princess Diana was that they were both very popular. Diana was called 'The people's princess' because she was so friendly. Although Monroe was famously sexy, she was well-liked because she seemed very innocent. However, although they both seemed to have very happy lives, both women actually had emotional problems and often felt sad and depressed. Monroe went through serious depression and had to go to a hospital for treatment. Likewise, Diana suffered from an eating problem and was depressed during parts of her marriage. A last similarity between Marilyn Monroe and Princess Diana was their deaths at an early age. In fact, they were both thirty-six years old when they died, Monroe in 1962 and Diana in 1997. Maybe their similar life circumstances and lifestyles explain why Princess Diana and Marilyn Monroe also had similar personalities.

**6 Read the two paragraphs above then answer the questions.**

- Which paragraph mostly compares and which mostly contrasts?
- Finish filling in the outlines on page 46 for each paragraph.



**Block organisation: Paragraph 1**

Topic sentence: Reading a story in a book is often very different from seeing it as a film.

Topic A—reading a book

Supporting points:

1. ....

2. ....

Topic B— .....

Supporting points:

1. ....

2. ....

**Point-by-point organisation: Paragraph 2**

Topic sentence: Marilyn Monroe and Princess Diana lived at different times in different countries, but their lives had some surprising similarities.

First point of comparison—difficult childhood

A1: .....

B1: Princess Diana—mother left family

Second point of comparison— .....

A2: Princess Diana—married Prince Charles, later separated from him

B2: .....

Third point of comparison— .....

A3: .....

B3: .....

Fourth point of comparison—had emotional problems

A4: Marilyn Monroe— .....

B4: .....

Fifth point of comparison— .....

A5: .....

B5: .....

- 7** Look again at the second paragraph in exercise 2 on page 41. Does it use point-by-point or block organisation? How do you know?

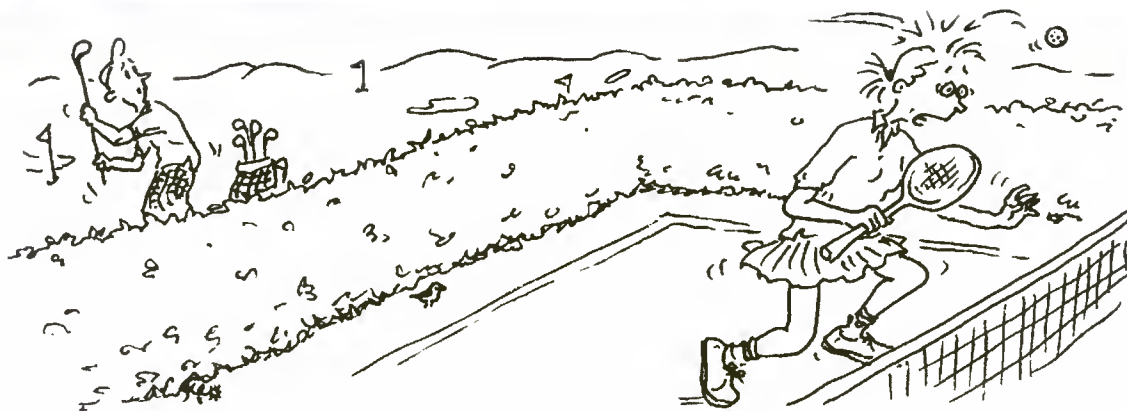
- 8 Read this list of details about two popular sports. Then make a list of similarities and a list of differences below. Discuss your answers with a partner.

### Golf

played outdoors on a large, open area  
 played with at least two people  
 clubs are used to hit a ball  
 both men and women play  
 very expensive to play in some countries  
 accuracy is an important skill  
 few spectators

### Tennis

a racket is used to hit a ball  
 played by pairs of people  
 played on a court with a net  
 played outside or inside  
 both men and women play  
 fairly cheap to play  
 speed is an important skill



#### Similarities between the sports

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

#### Differences between the sports

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 9 Write a comparison or contrast paragraph. Use either point-by-point organisation or block organisation.

## Advantages and disadvantages

### ☞ Writing about advantages and disadvantages

Another way to compare or contrast is to talk about *advantages* (positive points) or *disadvantages* (negative points) of a topic. If you are writing about one topic, it is usually best to discuss advantages and disadvantages in two separate paragraphs. If you are comparing or contrasting two topics, you could organise the paragraph in either point-by-point or block style.

### 10 Read this paragraph from a school newspaper. List the supporting points. Does the paragraph discuss advantages or disadvantages?

Studying abroad and studying in your own country both have definite benefits for a student. Living in another country can be an exciting experience because everything seems new and different. The challenge of living in a new environment can give you courage and self-confidence, too. If you want to learn another language, living abroad is a great way to do that because you can read magazines or newspapers, watch television programmes, or make friends with people who are native speakers. Another good reason to live abroad is to learn more about another culture. On the other hand, there are also advantages to staying in your own country to study. It is cheaper than living abroad, so you can save more money. Also, in your home country, everything is familiar. You don't need to worry about being taught in a foreign language, and you can understand the culture and the expectations of teachers. Finally, if you stay in your own country, you can be close to your family and friends. So, if you are thinking about where to study, consider all of these benefits and make a decision that is right for you.

### 11 Write one or two paragraphs comparing or contrasting topics of your choice or one of these.

- action films / romantic films
- the advantages and disadvantages of living abroad
- living in a small town / living in a big city
- doing sport / watching sport on TV
- the advantages and disadvantages of having a job while at university

**Review**

- 12** List five words or phrases of comparison and five of contrast. Use them to compare and contrast two things at your university. Share your sentences with the rest of the class.

Comparison

Contrast

.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

- 13** Work with a partner. Separate these ideas into advantages (A) and disadvantages (D).

Studying English

- a. .... takes a lot of time
- b. .... classes are fun
- c. .... grammar is difficult
- d. .... useful for talking to people from other countries
- e. .... good for using the Internet
- f. .... lots of vocabulary to learn
- g. .... too many tests to do
- h. .... helps to understand English-language films
- i. .... my friends like English
- j. .... pronunciation is difficult

- 14** Now, in pairs, one person should write a paragraph about the advantages and the other person should write about the disadvantages of studying English. Add one new idea of your own to your paragraph.

- 15** Share your paragraphs with another pair of students.

# 7 Problem / Solution Paragraphs

In this unit, you will ...

- write about problems and solutions.
- use real conditionals.
- write a two-paragraph text with linking phrases.

## ⇒ Problems and solutions

Problem / solution writing first explains a problem and then proposes one or more solutions to that problem. Often this type of writing requires more than one paragraph. In this unit, you will write a two-paragraph discussion of a problem and solution.

### **Problems and solutions**

1 Read the article from a website on page 51. What is the main idea of the first paragraph? What is the topic sentence?

2 Answer these questions.

- How is the first paragraph developed? What are the supporting ideas?
- What do the supporting ideas show?
- What is the main idea of the second paragraph? What is the topic sentence?
- What solution does the writer offer? What details support or explain the solution?
- Is there a concluding sentence in the first paragraph? In the second paragraph?

### **Writing about problems**

#### ⇒ How to write a *problem paragraph*

A *problem paragraph* describes and discusses a problem issue. The topic sentence names the issue you will discuss. The supporting sentences show why this issue is a problem.

3 Work with a partner or small group. Discuss why these issues are problems. Then add two more issues and discuss them.

- air pollution
- traffic
- overcrowded classrooms
- .....
- .....

Page Title - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help


Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites History Mail Print Edit Discuss Translate

Address  Go

Links [Customize Links](#) [Free Hotmail](#) [My Presario](#) [My AltaVista](#) [My City](#) [Search](#) [Service and Support](#) [Shopping](#)

Deforestation is a serious problem because forests and trees aren't just pretty to look at, they do an important job making the earth's environment suitable for life. They clean the air, store water, preserve soil, and provide homes for animals. They also supply food, fuel, wood products, and paper products for humans. In the past fifty years, more than half of the world's rainforests have been destroyed. Today, the forests of the world are being cut down at a rate of fifty acres every minute! Scientists say that if deforestation continues, the world's climate may change, floods may become more common, and animals will die.

One solution to the problem of deforestation is to use less paper. If you use less paper, fewer trees will be cut for paper making. How can you use less paper? One answer is to reduce your paper use by using both sides of the paper when you photocopy, write a letter, or write an essay. A second answer is to reuse old paper when you can, rather than using a new sheet of paper. The backs of old envelopes are perfect for shopping lists or phone messages, and when you write a rough draft of an essay, write it on the back of something else. A final answer is to recycle used paper products instead of throwing them away. Most schools, offices, and districts have some kind of recycling center. If you follow the three Rs—reduce, reuse, and recycle—you can help save the world's forests.



Done My Computer

➤ **Using conditional structures**

The *first conditional* is a useful way to talk about both problems and solutions:

*Fish will get ill if factories **dump** their waste into streams.*

**modal + main verb**                      **present**  
(will, can, could, should, etc)

*If you **eat** fish from polluted waters, you **could** get sick too.*

**present**    **modal + main verb**  
(will, can, could, should, etc)

**Punctuation note:** No comma is needed when the *if*-clause comes second:

*People can become ill if they eat the ill fish.*

The event in the *if*-clause is possible, or is likely to happen. The event in the result clause would logically follow. There are other types of conditional sentences, but first conditionals are the most common in writing about problems and solutions.

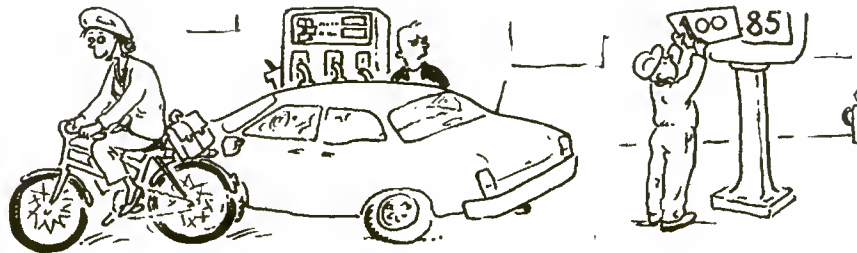
**4** Read the paragraphs on page 51 again. Underline the conditional sentences.

**5** Complete these sentences by circling the correct form of the verb.

- a. If you *use / don't use* a map when you drive, you *get / could get* lost.
- b. Students *do / will do* badly in their exams if they *don't get / won't get* enough sleep.
- c. If you *want / could want* to lose weight, *exercise / don't exercise* three times a week and *eat / don't eat* junk food.
- d. If you *fly / could fly* there, it *will be / can* faster than taking the train.
- e. Many arguments *are / can be* avoided if you *think / will think* before you speak.
- f. I *will go / won't go* to that film if I *find / will find* someone to go with me.

**6** Complete these sentences with your own ideas. Then compare with a partner.

- a. If it rains this weekend, .....
- b. If the library isn't open tomorrow, .....
- c. If petrol prices increase even more, .....



- d. ...., I'll call you tonight.
- e. ...., you can make a lot of money.
- f. ...., I won't go on holiday.



- 7** For each topic in exercise 3 on page 50, write one or two conditional sentences that explain the problem. Compare your sentences with a partner. Did you have similar or different ideas?
- 8** Choose one topic from exercise 3 on page 50. Brainstorm more ideas if necessary, then write a paragraph about it. Use conditional sentences.

### Linking problems with solutions

#### ☞ How to link a solution paragraph to a problem paragraph

The first paragraph—the problem paragraph—explains the problem. The topic sentence of the second paragraph—the *solution paragraph*—introduces your solution or solutions. The supporting sentences show how your solution(s) will solve the problem. Use these phrases:

<i>In order to solve these problems, ...</i>	<i>In order to overcome these problems, ...</i>
<i>To meet this need, ...</i>	<i>One solution is ...</i>
<i>One answer is ...</i>	<i>One thing we can do is ...</i>
<i>A second / third / final answer is ...</i>	

- 9** Read the solution paragraph on page 51 again. Circle the linking phrases.
- 10** Work with a group. For each of these topic sentences, brainstorm solutions. Introduce each solution with one of the phrases above. Then think of one more problem together, and give it to another group to discuss.
- We must reduce exam stress for secondary school students.
  - Teenagers spend so much time using their mobile phones that they are no longer skilled at face-to-face interaction.



- In the next five to ten years, experts predict that there won't be enough doctors and nurses to meet hospitals' needs.
- We need to find ways to protect young children from violence on television.
- .....

## Writing solutions

### ➤ Finding the best solution

After you have brainstormed solutions to your problem, you need to select the best one or ones to write about in your solution paragraph. A strong solution clearly and reasonably solves the problem. A weak solution doesn't really solve the problem or is not practical or not logical.

- 11** With a partner, talk about the solutions that this student brainstormed for her topic. Mark each one *strong*, *OK*, or *weak*.



Topic sentence: *I need more money while I am at university.*

....., *borrow money from my friends*

..... *sell some of my things*

..... *ask my parents for money*

..... *go busking with my guitar*

..... *get a part-time job*

..... *drop out of university and get a full-time job*

..... *buy lottery tickets*

..... *ride my bike to university instead of using public transport*

..... *ask my lecturers for money*

..... *buy fewer CDs and new clothes*

- 12** Use at least three solutions from the list in exercise 11 above to write a solution paragraph. Use linking phrases and conditional sentences to explain how the solutions will solve the problem. Share your paragraph with your partner.
- 13** For the problem paragraph you wrote in exercise 8 on page 53, brainstorm solutions. Edit your brainstorming, then write a solution paragraph. Use linking phrases and conditional sentences.

## Review

- 14** Look at this list of ideas that a student brainstormed about his topic. Work with a partner to divide the ideas into problems and solutions. Try to add one more problem and solution to the list.



*Topic: getting along with a flatmate*

*noisy flatmate*

*make cleaning rota*

*flatmate is messy*

*argue about how to decorate flat*

*fighting causes stress*

*set aside quiet time for studying*

*each person decorates half of the flat*

*talk each week about concerns*

problems

- a. ....  
 b. ....  
 c. ....  
 d. ....  
 e. ....

solutions

- f. ....  
 g. ....  
 h. ....  
 i. ....  
 j. ....

- 15** Work alone. Use the ideas above to write a problem paragraph and a solution paragraph. Remember to write a topic sentence for each paragraph, and a concluding sentence for the solution paragraph. Use conditional sentences and linking phrases where you can. Then compare your paragraphs with your partner. What parts were similar? What parts were different?