

**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research Algeria**

**University of Relizane**



**Faculty of Letters and Arts**

**Department of English**

**Course Designed by Dr. Sarah KHETTIB**

**Module: Written Expression**

**Level: Third year Licence**

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### Introduction

Writing is considered as a key element in EFL learning process. University students face many problems when it comes to essay writing, in fact they may face a number of hindrances at the level of paragraph, sentence or even word choice. As they lack basic principles and initial rules of essay writing. So why do students become unable to write in English? struggling when they are asked to construct a simple paragraph, why do students regard writing essay in English as so demanding skill? or why does the process of writing is overlooked so often ? This course may facilitate the task for EFL learners to find it as a reference or a summary of all what they need in essay writing. In fact our learners must be well oriented to find their path in writing and break down some obstacles that may hinder the process of writing.

### Course Description

Essay Writing lessons are an annual course designed for third year license students of English wanting to realize more of their potential; moreover, other learners can use it to learn about essay writing skills on any subject in any discipline. Most importantly, it is intended to novice teachers of Written Expression as well to assist them having a review of the basics for producing an academic essay. This course is to be delivered approximately over a period of fourteen weeks for each semester with an average of two sessions per week; that is, a total of forty sessions, each lasts ninety minutes. This course is presented in a consecutive manner, from how to write an introduction to how to compose a full essay with different expository types. The organization of the lectures is as follows:

Lecture One provides an important overview about the writing process theories stating mainly one of the most important theories : the flower and hayes model and the bereiter model of the writing process Lecture Two tackles both the writing strategies, and some points to be considered before writing that includes three elements: selecting and analysing a topic, purpose of writing and readers' knowledge of the topic. Lecture Three is devoted to the techniques for generating ideas for wrting including: clustering, brainstorming, interviewing, reading and note taking, writing journal and the internet. Lecture Four: is concerned mainly with writing : revising, editing. Lecture Five: is the fruit of this course explaining essay writing with its definition, framework for essays starting by the main features of a good introductory paragraph.and making the difference between the general statement and the thesis statement. This lecture covers also the

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second component of the introduction: the body as well as the last element in essays: the conclusion, at the end of this lecture there is practice I to check understanding. Lecture Six: is composed of the essay outline along with the second practice to reinforce understanding. Lecture Seven: is mainly concerned with a number of elements coherence, formal Vs informal writing, creativity. Lecture Eight: deals with the different kinds of essays: Description, Narration, Definition, Process, Classification and Comparison and Contrast. Lecture Nine: explains the difficulties in writing English essays with the third practice at the end.

This work provides a detailed presentation of essay writing, starting first with the different writing process mainly the Flower and Hayes Model and The Bereiter and Scardamalia Model. Then stating writing strategies as well as points to regard while planning an essay. This chapter involves also techniques for generation essays such as freewriting, clustering or brainstorming. Moreover, it explains the process of drafting, revising and editing. This part gives a relevant definition of essay writing and how it should be outlined. The last part of this chapter gives more details about the several types of essays and the difficulties that students may face while writing English essays.

### Course Objectives

Throughout this course, the students will be able to:

- ☐ develop a good understanding of what is academic writing.
- ☐ recognize the requirements for writing a good essay.
- ☐ analyze successfully the different parts of an essay.
- ☐ develop different types of expository essay.

## Lecture One

### 1. The Writing Process Theories

Writing, especially in a foreign language, is one of the most difficult skills in learning and practicing the language. Sokolik (2003) presents writing as a mixture of physical and mental acts. This is through conveying ideas and thoughts into words and the mental act of thinking, producing and constructing those ideas into paragraphs. Writing is also viewed as a process as Hyland (2003:23) states writing as “a sociocognitive activity which involves skills in planning and drafting as well as knowledge of language, contexts and audiences.”

The writing is a complicated process through which writers convey their thoughts. It includes a number of phases starting with planning, writing, revising and then editing. This mechanism is recursive. Writers can go back and forth from the first step to the last when it is required to organise, include more details or remove unnecessary ones.

In order to study writing process more scientifically, Emig (1971) provides a method based on cognitive psychology by using the think-aloud methodology and the case study approach. Emig's study creates a revolutionary approach of writing which transformed writing instruction and the method students learned to write. Instructors show a great interest to study the cognitive approach to the writing process. Two well-known models explaining the cognitive approach are the Flower and Hays Model and the Bereiter and Scardamalia Model. (Grabe and Kaplan 1996: 114-124)

#### 1.1 The Flower and Hayes Model

In 1977, Flower and Hayes explains a writing process model which determines the writer's thinking process. They express three hypotheses of the composing process as follows:

- “composing processes are interactive, intermingling and potentially simultaneous;
- composing is a goal-directed activity;
- expert writers compose differently than novice writers.” (Grabe & Kaplan 1996:91)

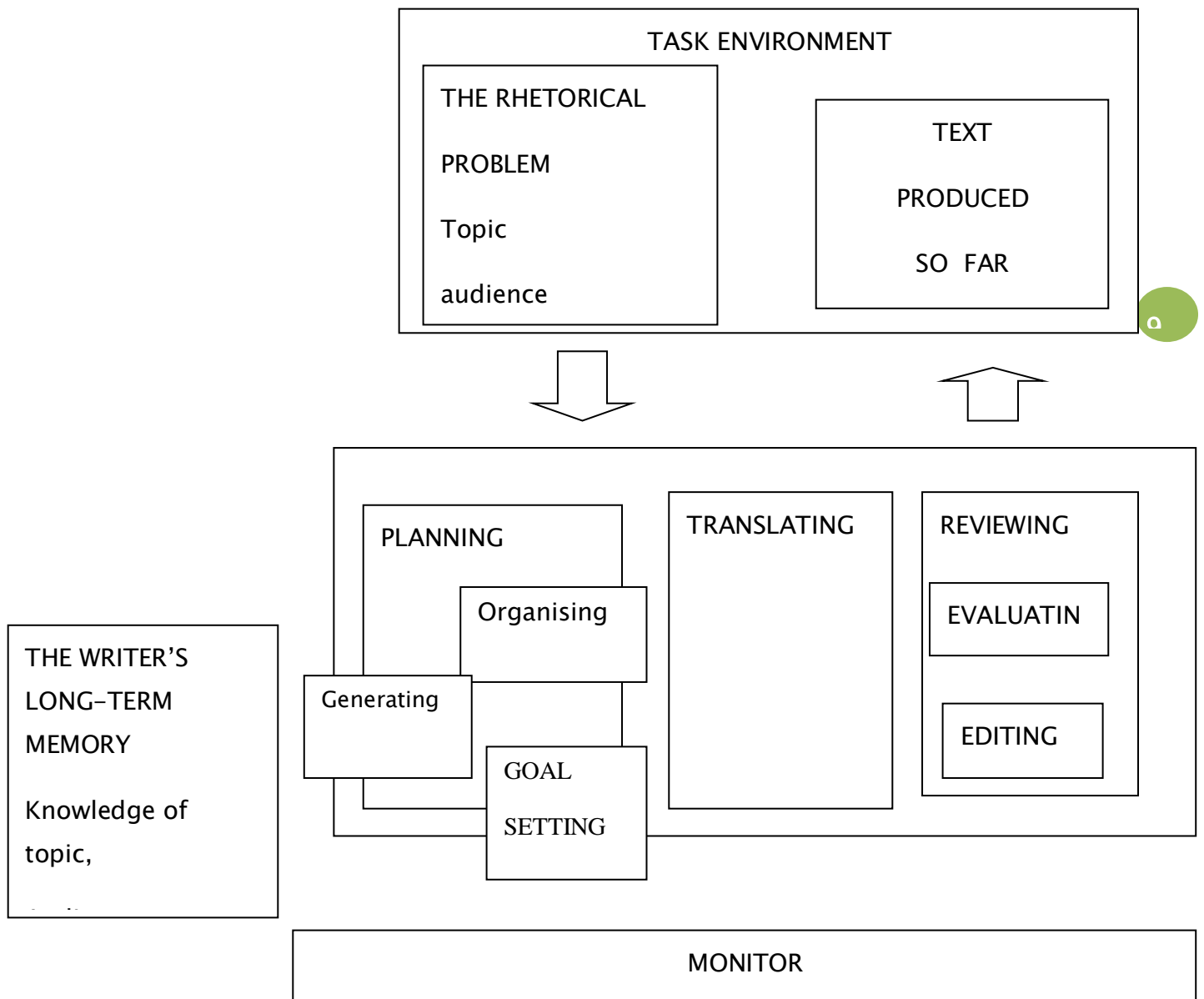
Later the transcripts and videotapes of students' speaking aloud while they conduct writing were analysed by Flower and Hayes, they presented data supporting their perspectives on

composing and later developed a model of composing process. According to their model, the writing process consists of three components:

- the task environment such as the topic, the readers, and the necessity to write;
- the writer's long term memory such as the writer's knowledge about the topic, about the readers;
- the composing processor consisting of planning, translating and reviewing. Planning includes three subcomponents: generating ideas, organising information and setting goals. Translating is converting ideas into the language by using the writer's knowledge such as vocabulary, structure and grammar. To translate for second language the writer can transform ideas in the first language into the written piece in the second language. Reviewing is evaluating of what have been written. When the writer does not accomplish what he was intended to do and feels that the work is still insufficient, he start revising the whole work.

These three components of the writing process are controlled by a monitor or metacognitive. It decides when the writer should shift from planning to translating or to reviewing. A monitor differs from one person to another and depends on each kind of writing. Flower and Hayes Model (Grabe and Kaplan 1996: 92) can be shown in diagram as follows:





Their theory has created research debate and was criticised for its ambiguity as the model does not contain how the text might be composed and what linguistic constraints might be dealt with. After stating their writing model, Flower and Hayes promote the notion of the rhetorical problem in the task-based component of their model to show the range of potential writing problems during the composing process. They also proposed the writing process features planning, drafting, revising and editing which are interactive, recursive and simultaneous.

### 1.2 The Bereiter and Scardamalia Model of the Writing Process

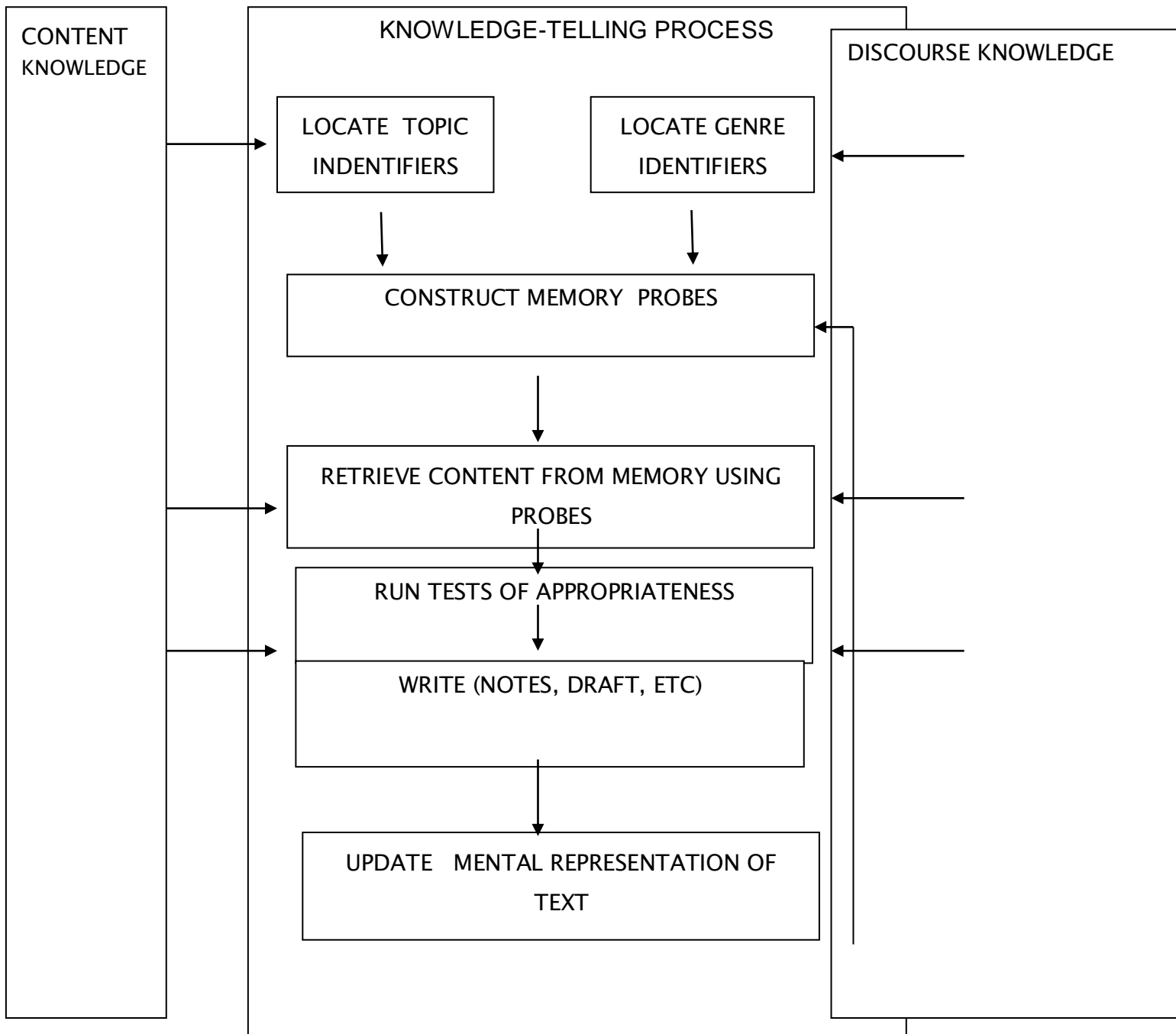
This model focuses on the various processing stages of writing between the skilled and unskilled writers. Their two process models are knowledge-telling model and knowledge-transforming model.

The Knowledge-telling Model expresses the fact that complex problem-solving activities should be avoided by writers so that they keep the task easy, explore their knowledge about the topic, consider the genre of the topic to be written and investigate significant information from their memory. Each relevant information generated leads to the production of more details. What writers have recalled from their memories is the main purpose.

In order to write journals, diaries, personal experiences and stories this writing model can be very useful. It is also presented that unskilled writers plan less than skilled writers. They also revise less often and less regularly, they have limited goals and are concerned with generating content.

## Course: Essay Writing

### MENTAL REPRESENTATION OF ASSIGNMENT

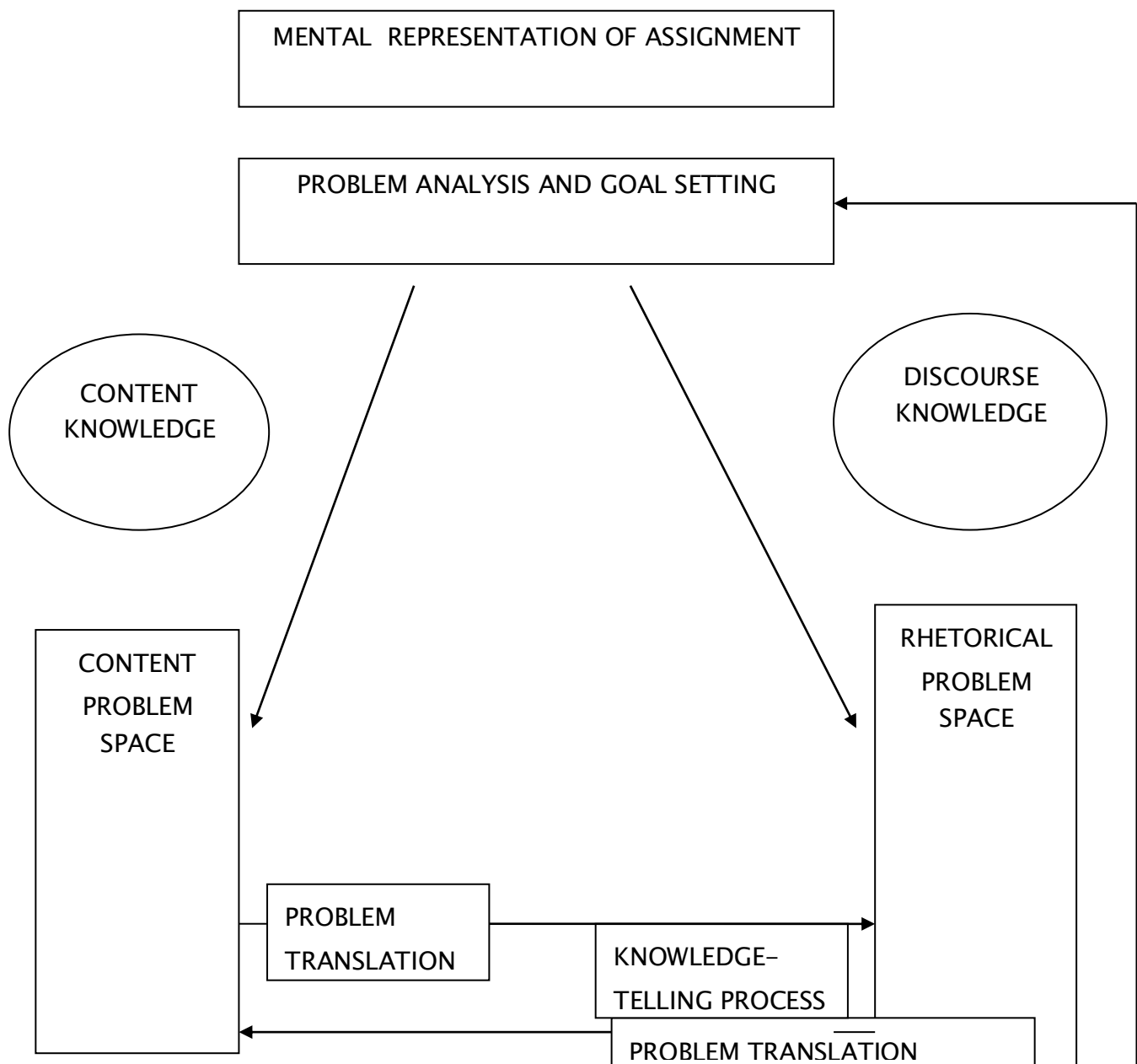


**Figure 2.1. The Knowledge-telling Model (Grabe & Kaplan 1996: 121)**

Writers can use the Knowledge-transforming Model to facilitate the writing process and overcome the difficulty of the task. This model gives proficient writers the opportunity to

examine obstacles and establish goals for the writing task. The problem analysis and goal setting lead to plans to resolve the problems of content generation, content integration, audience expectation, writer intention, genre form, linguistic style and organisational logic.

This model helps writers to begin with interpreting the task, analysing the problem and setting the goal for writing. During the writing process, writers also prepare to solve problems relating to content and language use. Nevertheless, writers who have practiced one type or writing task will not necessary transmit their skills to other types or tasks.



**Figure 2.2. The Knowledge – transforming Model (Grabe & Kaplan 1996:122)**

### Lecture Two

#### 2. Writing Strategies

Writing is a productive skill that required a set of competences such as linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse knowledge as well as knowledge about language use such as grammar, structure and vocabulary.

Writing needs another major element including strategies and an organised way of thinking; therefore, writing is not only one task but a series of interrelated tasks. It uses a number of complex processes that merge to create ideas. Weigle (2002) mentions that writing is a set of skills gained from much practice and experience. Furthermore, writing and critical thinking are firmly linked together, so students should realise that employing reasoning skill is also necessary for producing a quality piece of writing. Reasoning skills play a vital role in determining relevant ideas for essays and classifying them in an organised way. Ur (1999) explains that writing aims mainly at expressing ideas, communicating meanings and sending a message to the reader; thus, the ideas become the important aspect of the writing.

Writing skill cannot be grasped easily either you write in the first language or the foreign one, writers face troubles. Teachers should be creative enough to provoke students' thinking and inspire their ideas while they practice writing. Due to restricted English language knowledge, students studying English as a foreign language are more concerned with language rather than content when composing essays. The reason why content in some students' essays is less interesting and not well organised.

Incompetent writers should learn and follow different writing process steps which play a crucial role in facilitating the whole work as well as enhancing the quality their written output. As Zamel (1982) explains that competence in composing process was more important than linguistic competence in the ability to write proficiently in English. In addition, Zamel also completes that students' writing would progress when they understood and experienced composing as a process.

The writing process has a great relevance on influence on students' production, so they should understand it very well in order to promote their writing abilities. The importance of understanding the writing process. Myles (2002) shed light on the writing process importance as he explains that students writing in second language have to acquire proficiency in the use

of language and writing strategies, techniques as well as skills. She also adds that it is the act of composing and constructing that can create problems for students.

Raimes (2005) proposes that the writing process is a number of phases starting with planning, drafting and revising while Purdue University (2005) suggests that the writing process includes invention, collection, organisation, drafting, revising and proofreading.

In addition, Brandon (2005:30) states that “The writing process consists of a set of strategies that will help you proceed from idea or purpose to the final statement of a paragraph or an essay.” He presents the writing process of only three main steps namely prewriting; organising and developing support; and writing, revising and editing. However, Trimmer (2004) affirms that the writing process involves four stages: planning, drafting, revising and designing.

Though there are a number of concepts and patterns used for the writing process suggested by different academics, the core elements are similar. They are as follows: prewriting, writing, revising and editing.

### Prewriting

The first stage that paves the way for students to generate ideas and prepare them to the writing task is called the prewriting. It is the opportunity to organise the essay because a well thought-out plan will save time when students want to revise their written piece. Planning serves students to produce logical ideas that are easy to follow as well as produce a comprehensive piece of writing. Plotnick (2005) mentions that it is obvious that getting started is the most difficult part in writing for all students. Brandon (2005:253) defines prewriting as “strategies that can help you get started and develop your ideas”. At this stage, all ideas are preliminary and subject to change.

The prewriting stage can include two main parts:

- points to be considered when planning essays;
- techniques for generating ideas for essays.

### 3. Points to Be Considered When Planning Essays

#### 3.1 Selecting and analysing a topic

The topic is crucial element for writers either it is given as assignment or selected by writers, they should have a strong interest. At times, a single essay is not enough to cover topics which are too broad to be handled, writers here find it difficult to produce and generate a thesis with ideas or examples. Then it needs to be narrowed down to a specific idea.

### **3.2 Purpose of writing**

After narrowing the topic to a specific subject, the writer should decide a definite purpose of the essay and consider whether he/she wants the reader to be informed, persuaded or entertained. The writer can ask himself/herself what he/she wants the writing to achieve.

### **3.3 Readers' knowledge of the topic**

The readers' knowledge is the determinant of the essay's language and the ideas used in the essay. The readers' knowledge will decide how deep the content should be. Nevertheless, by analysing the readers' knowledge a clearer perception of the subject will be certainly developed.

### **Lecture Three**

#### **4. Techniques for Generating Ideas for Essays**

When the topic is already selected, the purpose of writing is previously setted and the reader's knowledge is also analysed, the writer can start gathering information for the essay. Wyrick (2002:7-17) Trimmer (2004:30-47) Brandon (2005 :31-45) The Writing Center of the University of Kansas (2005) suggest techniques for generating ideas for essays as follows:

##### **4.1 Freewriting**

Freewriting or looping is a means to produce ideas by writing whatever sentences come to mind about the topic without being concerned about grammar, spelling, punctuation or the order of ideas. The aim of freewriting is to generate ideas that are relevant and useful for the essay and the details that are not significant enough will be deleted.

##### **4.2 Clustering**

In clustering or mindmapping, the topic will be written in a circle in the middle of the page. Then related ideas, normally in words, will be written in smaller circles around the topic. More related ideas under each of the ideas previously noted can be put in even smaller circles.

##### **4.3 Brainstorming**

Brainstorming or listing is a prewriting step in which students provide a list of ideas about the topic. Brainstorming can be improved when it is done collaboratively in a group. After selecting a topic and writing down any idea that comes to students' mind, they can review, scrutinise, organise, add or remove whatever details.

##### **4.4 Interviewing**

Obtaining first-hand data can be done through interviewing. This strategy is considered to be one of the most direct methods that help writers in collecting data. The interviewer should prepare a number of questions that will organise what he/she wants to know. However, most interviews are dynamic; new questions can be inspired from the previous answers. At the end the collected data should be organised and drafted in writing after the interview.

##### **4.5 Reading and note taking**



Reading is the most frequent way to collect information. It can be done either from printed materials or from the Internet. While reading, readers who already take notes or answer questions will gather information needed for the essay more effectively.

### **4.6 Writing journal**

What students think about a certain topic can be recorded through journal entries. This strategy reflect what they have read, observed or think about. Journal can serve as sources of information for writing. Nevertheless, writing journal will build students' confidence, enhance their writing skills and facilitate the whole writing process.

### **4.7 Internet**

Surfing the 'World Wide Web' is one of the easy ways to get information since the Internet is a global network. Both subject archives and search engines are research tools but they work differently and give different results. A subject archive such as Yahoo provides links by topic area and generates important results while a search engine like Google allows searching by keyword and provides more comprehensive results.

**Lecture Four**

**5. Writing**

Writing or drafting means writing a preliminary written version from the outline. It is the act of transferring ideas into words. The outline is a guide to write an essay as setting an outline at first helps writers to draft more easily. However, a number of writers write directly through the first draft without stopping for correction. A piece of writing is being produced by writers when they use their knowledge and ideas collected together with thinking strategies. At this stage, writers also reinvest their linguistic competence and discourse knowledge to enrich their writings.

Raimes (2005) explains that at this step, the writer can change, add, delete, and reorganise the paper. At this stage writers aim to produce a piece of writing that can be adjusted later during the revision stage. Nevertheless, the writer should also be aware that they can change an outline to balance the development of ideas.

An outline is a framework that shows the plan and organisation of a piece of writing. An outline divides ideas into sections and sequences these sections in an organised order. An outline can be made either in sentence format which is called sentence or formal outline or in key word or phrase format which is called topic or scratch outline.

**6. Revising**

Revising is the stage of making changes to better the piece of writing. According to Trimmer (2004) revision aims at examining and reevaluating all pieces that have been written. Changes can be made to content and organisation by adding, deleting some ideas or enhancing clarity, style or flow of idea. In addition, changes can also be made to promote a set of elements such as sentence variety, clarity unity, coherent tone or word choice.

Writers may revise their pieces of writing more than one time according to their focuses and objectives. Faigley et al (quoted in Baguley 1994:124) write that proficient writers often make changes in content and form while less proficient writers revise at minor things. Sommers (1980) compares revision of native less experienced and more experienced writers and explains that less experienced writers revised in lexicon and teacher-generated rules but they give less concern with modifying ideas which had been written down. More experienced

writers made changes at the discourse level. Raimes (2005) proposes giving more time by putting the draft away for a few days then reading it again critically.

In order to collect more comments and details, writers may ask their peers for revision. This peer revision can be done either in pair or in group by commenting each other's work. Moreover, student-teacher conference can be helpful for revising particularly content and organisation.

### Before Revising

Get some distance from your paper. It's almost impossible to effectively evaluate ideas that you have just written. Taking some time away from your paper will help you better recognize your strengths and weaknesses. At the very least, get a good night's sleep before returning to your first draft.

REVISIONS CHECKLIST: Ensure that the paper fully addresses the prompt.

- ☐ Address any instructor comments about content, ideas, or organization (usually the end comments).
- ☐ Locate your thesis and revise it if necessary (for more on this, see the "Thesis" handout).
- ☐ Check that the content of your paragraphs supports your thesis.
- ☐ Balance your paper – cut parts that are irrelevant to the thesis; expand sections that are important to it.
- ☐ Organize your paper so that it is logical and easy to follow.

### STRATEGIES FOR REVISION

If you've read your paper so many times that you have a headache, you might need some fresh revision strategies. You can choose from the following techniques, depending on your problem areas.

1. Make a reverse outline. To make a reverse outline, write down your thesis, then number your paragraphs and make a note of the information/ideas contained in each. Once you've finished, you can evaluate the placement and order of your paragraphs and the way you

transition between ideas. Reverse outlines are particularly helpful if your concerns involve organization, transitions, balance, or flow.

2. Check your topic sentences. Write down or highlight each of your topic sentences, then compare them one-by-one to your thesis. If any topic sentences do not seem relevant to the thesis, re-think those paragraphs. This is particularly helpful if your concerns involve your thesis, flow, or clarity.

3. Ask a friend to read (but not comment on) your paper. Then, ask them to summarize your argument back to you. Does their summary match what you were trying to argue? Does it address the assignment prompt? This exercise is particularly helpful if you are concerned about your thesis, clarity, or balance.

4. Read the paper out loud. Orally reading a paper can help you catch issues (like lengthy, confusing sentences, or a too-long introduction) that you might skim over in a written work. You can also combine this exercise with #3; read to a friend and have them summarize your main points back to you. This is particularly helpful if you are concerned about balance, flow, or clarity.

5. Read your introduction and conclusion alongside each other. If there's no relationship between your introduction and conclusion, it's likely that your paper has wandered off-topic. If they are exactly the same, there may not be enough depth to your argument. This is particularly helpful if you have concerns about your introduction or conclusion (obviously), but it can also help with balance and organization.

### **7. Editing**

The last stage in the writing process is the editing. Editing includes analysing different elements on the surface level including spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, grammar or page formatting to confirm the appropriate convention and format. Proofreading and reading a piece of writing out loud is a useful strategy to detect errors. Brandon (2005) mentions that reading aloud is good to observe awkward expressions, misplaced words, omission and other errors.

### **BEFORE EDITING**

Revise. (See the other side of this handout)

- Be familiar with disciplinary formatting and style conventions.
- Know your instructor's stylistic requirements (for example: is "I" allowed?).
- Use a grammar handbook to refresh any hazy memories of grammar rules (like semi-colon usage).

### EDITING CHECKLIST Fix spelling errors and typos

- ☐ Address any issues with grammar and punctuation.
- ☐ Make your sentences as clear and concise as possible.
- ☐ Ensure that your citations are accurate and correctly formatted.

### STRATEGIES FOR EDITING

1. Know your weaknesses. Knowing that you often overuse commas or tend to mix up "affect" and "effect" will help you focus your editing. If the latter is a problem for you, for example, you might use the "Find" function on word to locate each of those words and make sure it is used correctly.
2. Read your paper out loud. Our ear can often pick up problems that our eyes do not. Issues like subject/verb agreement, run-on sentences, and awkward phrasing stand out when read aloud.
3. Print a copy of your paper. Besides giving your eyes a break from staring at your computer screen, looking at your paper in a different format will help you more easily catch typos and mistakes.
4. Look for verb problems. Verb choice and agreement is a common issue that affects meaning and clarity. Make sure each verb in a sentence corresponds clearly with one subject, and check your verb tense. Stylistically, try to eliminate as many forms of "to be" from your writing as possible; they tend to indicate passive constructions that are wordy and often unclear. (The "Find" function can also be useful here).
5. Check your citations. In this semi-final draft, every outside source you use should be cited in both intext and on your References page. Now is your chance to make sure that those

citations make sense and that you are not missing any information. Remember: every in-text citation must clearly correspond to just one entry on your References page.

6. Get feedback. Have a friend, relative, or writing consultant read over your paper before you turn it in. They can help you catch typos, grammatical errors, or clarity issues. If you do have someone proofread your paper, make it the absolute last step in your writing process; you don't want that person wasting time on things you could have easily fixed on your own.

### **Lecture Five**

#### **8. Essay Writing**

The core of this course is the concept of essay, this part is purely devoted to its definition, characteristics and framework.

##### **8.1 Definition**

Essay is generally defined as an organized piece of writing composed of many paragraphs treating one single topic. It commonly constructed of the introduction including a thesis statement, the body and the conclusion. A good essay must contain a set of characteristics such as good content, correct form or structure, clarity in the different listed ideas and coherence. Good essays must also stick to a creative style in writing as well as a correct mechanism which covers grammar, punctuation and spelling.

##### **8.2 Framework for Essays**

An essay involve a number of elements. The introduction, body and conclusion are the basic components of any essay. Each one of these parts has its own purposes explain that an essay is composed of 3 parts as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Body paragraphs
3. Conclusion

##### **8.2.1 Introduction**

The introduction is the first paragraph that initiates the essay and provides insight about the whole topic. It is a general overview of the whole essay that tends to attract the reader's attention and also cites the main idea of the essay or the writer's purpose. The quality of the introduction determines whether the essay gets read in the first place. A proper introduction gives the reader a first impression and motivates the reader to read the whole essay.

An introduction generally begins with a general, interest-grabbing remark that will identify the topic, form the tone and lead the reader from the broad view of the topic to the purpose of the writing. It generally ends with a thesis statement which contains the main idea of the

essay. It helps the reader to recognise what the whole essay is all about. It should begin with a hook that attract the reader's attention and stimulate their curiosity. It could be a quote, an analogy, a question etc. After attracting the reader's interest, the introduction should present some background information on the topic. The introductory paragraph is composed of two parts: the general statements and the thesis statement.

### Features of a Good Introductory Paragraph

Because of the importance of this paragraph, it should have the following features.

1. It should introduce the topic by informing the reader of the topic being discussed.
2. It should indicate how the topic is going to be developed, whether the essay is going to discuss causes, effects, reasons, examples etc...
3. It should contain the thesis statement.
4. It should be inviting; that is, it should be interesting enough to catch the readers attention.

#### Introduction

##### Opening Sentence

Start your paper with a general statement about your topic that catches the reader's attention, a relevant quotation, question, anecdote, fascinating fact, definition, analogy, the position opposing one you will take, or a dilemma that needs a solution.

##### Context

Provide the information the reader will need to understand the topic.

##### Thesis Statement

State your arguable position on the topic that you will support with evidence in your body paragraphs.



### The Hook

Writers use a “hook” to capture the their audience’s attention and introduce their thesis. There are a number of ways of doing this; seven standard methods are described below. You are not required to use one of these styles; these are just ideas to move you beyond your writer’s block. There is no single best way to begin a persuasive essay. You will need to figure out what works for you and your topic.

1. Question: You might choose to open your essay with a question for the reader. Usually, you also answer your question in your hook paragraph.
2. Quote: Another standard opening involves using a quotation from one of your resources or a simply a quote that you are able to connect well to your topic.
3. Anecdote: You might try beginning your paper with a small story that relates to your topic. This can be amusing, surprising, shocking, and/or entertaining—provided you keep it short and to the point.
4. Unusual Detail or Startling Fact. Shock or surprise your reader with a startling detail or interesting fact about your topic.
5. Exaggeration or Outrageous Statement. For example, you could begin with: “The whole nation watched as...” or “Criminals across American rejoiced upon hearing the outcome of...”
6. Strong Statement. For example, “If you value freedom of speech, you will be sorely disappointed by the outcome of”
7. Statistic or Fact. Give your reader a number fact to add emphasis and get your reader interested in the topic. For example, “Americans and Europeans spend \$17 billion on pet food, \$4 billion more than the estimated amount needed to provide basic health and nutrition for everyone in the world.”
8. Blunt Beginning. Sometimes it works best to be direct and state your opinion in a few words as your hook. For example, “All guns should be outlawed in America.”

#### 8.2.1.1 The General Statement

General statements are the first few sentences that provide background information on the topic and grab the reader’s attention. It also drives into the thesis statement which is mainly the last sentence in the paragraph.

Clouse (1998), Brandon (2005) suggest several ways to attract readers' attention as follows:

- Give background information : Giving fact or background information helps in providing connection between the reader to the topic. The writer determines a certain length of background information that the reader will need to understand the topic. It will help the reader to grasp the topic and the writer's intention.
- Present a brief description : The purpose of the description is to design a picture in the reader's mind. Using vivid words will lead to setting a scene as a beginning of the essay.
- Tell a brief story or an incident : The story can attract the reader's attention and lead him/her to the essay. The writer should be sure that the story is short, to the point and linked to the topic in order to be interesting. It can also start with a part of a conversation.
- Ask a question : Asking a question builds a common interest with the readers and stimulate their curiosity. A question should be one of which the answer is unpredictable.
- State a quotation : A quotation can be used as a springboard for an essay. A quotation should not be long, boring or irrelevant. It is not required to analyse the quotation as it is used only to start the essay.
- Open with an example : Examples attract the reader's interest and at the same time confirm the truth of the thesis. Examples make writing more informative and illustrative.

### 8.2.1.2 The Thesis Statement

The thesis statement is the sentence that presents the main idea of the essay. It covers all the points in the essay that is why it should be general. It also guides or introduces the rest of the essay. It is generally stated at the end of the introduction paragraph. The thesis statement is explained and reviewed with supporting ideas in the body of the essay.

Reid (1988) proposes that when writing introduction, the writer should avoid apologies, complaints, personal problems and too broad statements. In addition, Raimes (2005) explains that the writer should state context and background information without

assuming that the reader have knowledge about the topic. The length of the introduction part may differ but the common length is between three to five sentences.

The thesis statement has two main parts: *the topic* and the *controlling idea*. The topic is the general idea of the essay, and the controlling idea is the specific idea discussed in the essay.

Libraries are essential resources for communities.

A third component of the thesis statement is called *predictors* or *sub-topics*. These predictors tell the reader how many body paragraphs there will be in the essay, and what their content will be about.

**Directions:** Carefully read the writing prompt and the Bad Thesis Statement. Then, rewrite a Good Thesis Statement. State the subject and tell the author's purpose for writing or the point to be proved. A good thesis statement will directly respond to each part of the writing prompt. Writing Prompt: Describe how television commercials influence children.

Bad: Television commercials have an influence on children.

Good: \_\_\_\_\_

**Writing Prompt: Discuss the benefits of playing team sports.**

Bad: Playing team sports has many benefits.

Good: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Carefully read the writing prompt and the Bad Thesis Statement. Then, rewrite a Good Thesis Statement. State the subject and tell the author's purpose for writing or the point to be proved. A good thesis statement will directly respond to each part of the writing prompt. Writing Prompt: Persuade the school board to lengthen summer vacation.

Bad: Many people think that summer vacation should be extended.

Good: \_\_\_\_\_

**Writing Prompt:** Evaluate this statement—"Everyone should learn to play a musical instrument."

Bad: Learning to play a musical instrument has both good and bad points.

Good: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dos and Don'ts of Thesis Statements** What a Thesis Statement Isn't

- A title ○ Title: Divorce over Nothing ○ Thesis: Too many people divorce for no good reason.
- An announcement of the subject ○ Announcement: In this paper I will write about why people get divorced. ○ Thesis: Of all the reasons why people get divorced, substance abuse is the most preventable.
- A fact ○ Fact: Fifty percent of people get divorced. ○ Thesis: Our divorce rates are so high because people get married when they aren't ready for commitment. What a Thesis Statement Is
- Expresses a clear opinion about the limited topic ○ Poor: Divorce can be dangerous. ○ Stronger: Divorce is dangerous for children because they will not understand healthy romantic relationships.
- Discusses one major idea ○ Poor: Divorce is popular because people like to quit when things are difficult and people don't take the time to understand each other. ○ Stronger: Divorce is popular because it is too easy to obtain a divorce in many states.
- Discusses the major idea specifically (your thesis must be defensible in a multi-paragraph essay) ○ Poor: Divorce is negative. ○ Stronger: Divorce is harmful to us all because the family is the building block of society

**Write a T next to each thesis statement below.** Write NT if there is no thesis statement.

1. \_\_\_ Knowing how to write well will help students obtain jobs.
2. \_\_\_ My husband cooks all the meals for our family, his hunting club, and the patrons at Al's Shrimp Restaurant, where he works.
3. \_\_\_ Christmas shopping shows that the law of the jungle is still a part of our lives.
4. \_\_\_ Is affirmative action is a new form of racism?

5. \_\_ It is not only poor people who receive money from the government; big business also gets money from the government and this should end. Write G next to a good thesis statement. Write NI if it needs improvement and indicate why.

1. \_\_ The history of the United States is dominated by a lust for money.

2. \_\_ Exercise is a worthwhile activity.

3. \_\_ This paper will examine recent efforts to ease the parking problem in the city by pointing out new regulations clearly to motorists.

4. \_\_ The most important moment in my life was meeting my husband.

### 8.2.2 Body

The body of the essay supports the main point of the thesis statement. These paragraphs explain the thesis statement by presenting facts, statistics, examples, illustrations or descriptions. A topic sentence and supporting details are included in each paragraph.

The supporting details in an essay should be well organised for the sake that the reader will not get lost and confused. Generally, there are three used patterns, chronological order, spatial order and order of importance. The writer can use one or combination of these patterns to organise supporting details.

1. Chronological order : Chronological order is order by time. Supporting details are organised with order of their occurrence in time, from the first to the last event. Chronological order is often used in process and narrative essays. It presents events over a period of time. Words indicating time order are usually stated in the thesis statement.

Chronological essays often involve time phrases or clauses to present sequence of events. It is possible for the writer to start from the beginning and organise a series of events in a straightforward way. Moreover, the writer can use a flashback technique to state the events that took place earlier while giving an insight on a present event.

2. Spatial Order : Spatial order is order relating to space or position of things. The best way to arrange a description essay is spatially. It is helpful for organising ideas to describe a place or a scene: left to right, top to bottom, inside out, the most important part to the least.

3. Order of Importance : Order of importance presents details according to their importance. It is proposed that this kind should start with the least important and move to the most important idea. By writing this way, the writer can make a strong closing which is relevant when the purpose is to convince the reader.

### Body Paragraphs

#### Supporting Evidence

- The parts of a paragraph that prove the main idea.
- Include specific textual evidence: cited quotes, paraphrases or summary; or evidence that supports your thesis from other sources: anecdotes, first-person interviews or writer's own experience.

#### Analysis

- The parts of a paragraph that explain the evidence.
- The evidence should be discussed.
- Explain to the reader the significance of the evidence you have

provided. Think about why you chose to include it. How does the

#### Transition

- The part of a paragraph that helps you move fluidly from the last paragraph .
- Connect each paragraph with a sentence or two that demonstrates how each idea leads into the next, and how they work together to support your position.
- Paragraphs can be started by transitions, but they cannot end with them.
- The "Transition" and the "Main Idea" often combine to form the first sentence (the topic sentence) and then paragraphs contain multiple sentences of evidence and

### 8.2.3 Conclusion

Conclusion is the final paragraph that briefly summarises the main points in the essay or gives a prediction, solution or recommendation. It concludes the topic and should give the final impression, influence the reader's reaction to the essay and also leave the sense of closure.

Reid (1994) and Brandon (2005) propose that the writer should avoid too long summary if the essay is short and should avoid new idea since the reader will expect explanation and also avoid apology about the quality of the essay.

Conclusion can be done in one of the following ways:

1. Summarising main points : Writers should always find a way to recall and remind their readers with the most important ideas in the essay. Readers will appreciate a summary especially in long essays when this technique plays an effective role. Summarising the sentences in the introduction as they may lack the strength to refocus the readers is not enough. Writers need to be original and powerful in restating the same ideas.
2. Making a solution : One of the available conclusions writers can use is offering a solution to a problem raised in the essay. However, writers should get rid of making absolute claims such as "This proves that..." since extreme claims are hard to prove.
3. Making a restatement : The thesis can be restated in different words in the concluding paragraph. Marking its importance is a basic objective. Restatement is effective as it reinforces all the major points at the end. It is useful in essays of which the purpose is to prove a certain point.
4. Making a recommendation : Making a recommendation is psychologically significant for a persuasive piece of writing. After convincing the reader, the writer can make a certain recommendation.
5. Making a prediction : Making a prediction is a strategy to conclude an essay a step further than a summary. It does not summarise the main points in the essay but it leads the writer to make predictions regarding the points presented.
6. Using a quotation : Quotations by famous people that are appropriate for the essay can sum up and add interest to the conclusion.

## Course: Essay Writing

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In order to relate all ideas produced and make them flow smoothly, coherence, in various forms, should be used in an essay.

### Conclusion

- Provide the reader an overview of the main ideas you discussed, but also be sure to highlight the progression of your thought process, offer solutions, next steps or present new questions that your paper generated. Don't only restate your thesis but show the significance of your synthesis of the information.
- The conclusion summarises the argument, by restating the main points in a different way,.
- The conclusion explains the significance of the argument, by clarifying why your argument matters.



## Practice I

### Activity One : Are these thesis statements good or not, why ? add what is necessary

1 - Smoking can be harmful to a person's health, and it is also very bad to see someone smoking.

.....

2 Applications are very useful.

.....

3 Social media has both advantages and disadvantages for learners.

.....

### Activity Two: Writing Thesis Statement

Choose five of these topics and write a good thesis statement for each. At least three of your five statements should have a predictor.

**Success, Motivattion, Inspirational people, Interculturality, Social anxiety, Personal experiences**

1. Develop an interesting introduction for your selected topic
2. Write three interesting topic sentences of the selected topic
3. Develop one of those ttopic sentences into a developmental paragraph
4. Write an interesting conclusion for your selected topic

## Lecture Six

### 9. Essay Outline

Outlining the essay is an effective step to organise the writer's ideas, to structure the topic elements and sub-elements. Through outlining the writer will be able to notice any mistakes or gaps, illogical steps as well as managing his time as you progress in writing his essay. The language alone is not enough to structure a good essay.

#### I. Introduction:

General info about topic, reason for reader to be interested, context, etc.

Thesis statement:

## II. Topic Sentence 1:

### A. Support

1. Detail/example/data/explanation
2. Detail/example/etc.
3. Detail/example/etc.

### B. Support

1. Detail/example/etc.
2. Detail/example/etc.
3. Detail/example/etc.

### C. Support

1. Detail/example/etc.
2. Detail/example/etc.
3. Detail/example/etc.

### D. Transition

## III. Topic Sentence 2:

### A. Support

1. Detail/example/data/explanation
2. Detail/example/etc.
3. Detail/example/etc.

### B. Support

1. Detail/example/etc.

**2. Detail/example/etc.**

**3. Detail/example/etc.**

**C. Support**

**1. Detail/example/etc.**

**2. Detail/example/etc.**

**3. Detail/example/etc.**

**D. Transition**

**IV. Topic Sentence 3:**

**A. Support**

**1. Detail/example/data/explanation**

**2. Detail/example/etc.**

**3. Detail/example/etc.**

**B. Support**

**1. Detail/example/etc.**

**2. Detail/example/etc.**

**3. Detail/example/etc.**

**C. Support**

**1. Detail/example/etc.**

**2. Detail/example/etc.**

**3. Detail/example/etc.**

**D. Transition**

**V. Concluding Paragraph**

**Re-state thesis:**

### Summary of main points, return to general context, wrap-up of essay, etc

#### Sample Outline Template

##### I. Introduction

A. Hook/ Attention Grabber 1. Provide a sentence that will catch the reader's interest. 2. Try not to make a broad/generalized statement. 3. Offer something concise and catchy.

B. Background Information 1. Provide general background information. 2. Offer some more specific background information (as needed). 3. Provide the title of the piece and the author's name if the essay is about a specific book/poem/article/passage.

C. Thesis Statement 1. State your topic and position. Remember that a thesis = claim + reasons. 2. Outline your main points and ideas.

##### II. Body

A. Paragraph 1 (first main point) 1. Topic sentence: what is this paragraph about? 2. Supporting evidence and ideas a) Give reasons, facts, proof, statistics, quotes (with citations). b) Analyze your supporting evidence. (1) Why does your evidence matter? What does it mean? (2) Transition to the next point. 3. Summarize and transition to your next main idea.

B. Paragraph 2 (second main point) 1. Topic sentence: what is this paragraph about? 2. Supporting evidence and ideas

a) Give reasons, facts, proof, statistics, quotes (with citations).

b) Analyze your supporting evidence. (1) Why does your evidence matter? What does it mean? (2) Transition to the next point. 3. Summarize and transition to your next main idea.

C. Possible Paragraph 3 (third main point) 1. Topic sentence: what is this paragraph about? 2. Supporting evidence and ideas a) Give reasons, facts, proof, statistics, quotes (with citations). b) Analyze your supporting evidence. (1) Why does your evidence matter? What does it mean? (2) Transition to the next point. 3. Summarize and transition to your next main idea or conclusion.

D. Possible Paragraph 4 (fourth main point) 1. Topic sentence: what is this paragraph about? 2. Supporting evidence and ideas a) Give reasons, facts, proof, statistics, quotes (with citations). b) Analyze your supporting evidence. (1) Why does your evidence matter? What

does it mean? (2) Transition to the next point. c) Provide more reasons/facts/evidence/etc. (with citations). d) Analyze your supporting evidence. (1) Why does your evidence matter? What does it mean? (2) Transition to the concluding sentence. 3. Summarize and transition to your conclusion.

[NOTE: Continue with as many body paragraphs as necessary to develop your topic fully. Remember to include only one main point per paragraph. If you're moving to a new main point, create a new paragraph.]

III. Conclusion A. Summarize key points and pull it all together. 1. Don't introduce new information/ evidence. 2. Don't repeat your writing verbatim from previous parts of the paper. B. Offer closing thoughts and give the reader something to think about. 1. Suggest a call-to-action. 2. Provide a look into the future related to your topic.

IV. References

### Practice II

**Activity One :** underline the thesis (and **topic sentences**) in red, the **supporting details** in green and the transitions in black.

### Annotated Expository Essay Key

#### "Wolves"

Wolves are found all over the world and are popular in many cultures. Wolves are often pictured in fairy tales as ferocious animals, but they are very social and unique animals who do not deserve their scary reputation.

One interesting thing about **wolves is that they are very social animals** . **They live together in packs as small as only two or as large as twenty wolves. Additionally, each wolf pack has a male leader and a female leader and the members of the pack cooperate and get along well with one another.**

Another interesting thing about **wolves is that they are often pictured howling at the moon**. **Scientists have discovered that the wolf howl is an important form of communication between members of the pack. The howl is a way for a lone wolf to locate the rest of his or her pack, or a way to sound an alarm if there is danger nearby.**

The howl is also a way to announce to the rest of the pack when one member has killed an animal for food and wants to share.

A third interesting thing about **wolves is that they are great hunters**. They actually feed on large animals such as deer. To do this the pack must work together because the deer is so much larger than the individual wolves. Wolves, it should also be noted, will only kill what they need to eat.

**Who are the worst enemies of wolves? Humans!** Wolves may be portrayed as ferocious man eaters, but they are actually more likely to run from people than attack them. In fact, wolf attacks on humans are rare, but wolves were almost hunted to extinction by man.

**Wolves are much more complex animals than people think and more interesting than picture books show them to be.**

Review of Terms: **Thesis**, **Topic Sentence**, **Supporting Detail**, Transitions

Thesis statement and/or topic sentence: A thesis statement is a sentence that states the subject of an essay. A topic sentence states the subject of a paragraph. For example, the first sentence in the “Wolves” essay is the topic sentence. It tells the reader that the essay is about wolves: “Wolves are ...” A concise topic sentence is imperative for creating a strongly written paragraph.

Supporting Details: Supporting details are sentences which add information to your topic sentence by explaining, describing, or defining it. For example, we learn in the second body paragraph of the “Wolves” essay three reasons why wolves howl at the moon: “to locate their pack, to sound an alarm or announce a kill.”

Transitions Transition in writing are like road signs in traffic: they tell the reader what is coming next. They also tell the reader how the information contained in two sentences relates to each other. For example, the transition “in addition” or “similarly” tells the reader that they are going to learn “more of the same” information. “On the other hand” is a transition that tells the reader that he or she will hear an opposing point of view. Transitions are imperative for unity and coherence in writing.

### Expository essay example:

#### Introduction

In many ways, the invention of the printing press marked the end of the Middle Ages. The medieval period in Europe is often remembered as a time of intellectual and political stagnation. Prior to the Renaissance, the average person had very limited access to books and was unlikely to be literate. The invention of the printing press in the 15th century allowed for much less restricted circulation of information in Europe, paving the way for the Reformation.

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#### Body paragraph

The invention of the printing press in 1440 changed this situation dramatically. Johannes Gutenberg, who had worked as a goldsmith, used his knowledge of metals in the design of the press. He made his type from an alloy of lead, tin, and antimony, whose durability allowed for the reliable production of high-quality books. This new technology allowed texts to be reproduced and disseminated on a much larger scale than was previously possible. The Gutenberg Bible appeared in the 1450s, and a large number of printing presses sprang up across the continent in the following decades. Gutenberg's invention rapidly transformed cultural production in Europe; among other things, it would lead to the Protestant Reformation.

#### Conclusion

The invention of the printing press was important not only in terms of its immediate cultural and economic effects, but also in terms of its major impact on politics and religion across Europe. In the century following the invention of the printing press, the relatively stationary intellectual atmosphere of the Middle Ages gave way to the social upheavals of the Reformation and the Renaissance. A single technological innovation had contributed to the total reshaping of the continent.

## Lecture Seven

### 10. Coherence

Coherence is the relationship between paragraphs by connecting ideas presented in the essay together. A good essay must be coherent. This feature makes the ideas flow continuously. Wyrick (2002:66), Brandon (2005:54-55) present several ways to realise coherence :

- Repetition of key ideas : the reader will recall the main idea of the essay through repetition of words or phrases. Repeated words throughout the essay will relate one paragraph to another and this will make it easy for the reader to follow the main points.
- Pronoun reference: Pronouns provide connecting link in the essay. They drive the reader back to the former thought before leading to the new one.
- Transitional expressions : Transitional expressions or cohesive devices are words or phrases that tie sentences and paragraphs together. The writer can use these transitional expressions to change and enrich sentence structure. Common transitions used can be categorised according to the purpose.

To add: again, also, and, besides, furthermore, in addition, moreover, too

To show sequence: first, in the first place, further, next, second, then, last, finally

To compare: in the same way, likewise, similarly

To contrast: although, but, conversely, despite, even though, however, in contrast, nevertheless, on the contrary, though, yet, whereas

To give examples: for example, for instance, that is, such as

To indicate place: above, below, elsewhere, further on, here, near, next to, on the other side, opposite to, there, to the left, to the right

To indicate time: after, afterward, as long as, as soon as, before, immediately, since, soon, until, now, shortly  
To show cause and effect: accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, hence, otherwise, since, therefore, thus

To summarise: in brief, in conclusion, in short, in summary, therefore, to summarise





### 11. Formal Vs Informal Writing

There are two major styles of writing in English : formal and informal. Both types serve different purposes. The choice of words vary between the two styles. As in formal writing it tends to be precise or technical, while in second type colloquial phrases can be used. the way we use words to say what we want to say differs creating formal and informal writing styles.

Formal : adj. done in accordance with rules; suitable for an official or important situation or occasion. Formal writing respects a list of rules that is used in formal situations. It generally involves : avoiding first and second person pronoun, using professional in tone, avoiding contractions, as well as avoiding slang and swear words. It differs in structure and vocabulary from the language used in daily social interactions. These conventions are not necessary when writing informally. Research papers, academic essays, resumes and letters of recommendations are some examples of formal writing, and the linguistic features of academic language are lexical, grammatical, and discourse. Whereas personal writing can be included in an informal style of writing. Short and simple sentences are acceptable in any informal context ; while in formal contexts longer and more complex sentences are more acceptable. The convention in much academic writing is to write with minimal reference to yourself as a writer, aiming to establish a sense of objectivity and rationality.

Informal : adj. having a relaxed, friendly, or unofficial style. Informal writing may include slang, figures of speech, broken syntax. Short sentences, contractions, and even abbreviations are all acceptable, the writer here may also use incomplete sentences or ellipsis. In this type of writing they may use first, second, or third person and address readers using second person pronouns, another aspect is showing empathy to the reader. Informal writing is more casual and spontaneous, it is used when communicating with friends or family.

### 12. Creativity

One definition of creativity is “the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc. Creativity is one of the most powerful tools a writer can use. It has its place in all types of writing. By avoiding repetition and using different forms of syntax writers can craft strong writing. The concept of creativity is difficult to be defined : it is self-expression, originality and uniqueness. Sometimes writers’ personal details and their life experiences may add a fresh and a unique perspective to their writing. Creativity is the spark that ignites any piece of

## Course: Essay Writing

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writing. Writers formulate their innermost thoughts and then record their experiences, they pour their hearts out on pages, maybe their stories are the same, but their approach to stating them embraces a different dynamic visions.

**Lecture Eight**

**14. Kinds of Essays**

**14.1 Description**

A descriptive essay help to describe things, places, events, people or settings. It depends mainly on giving specific and accurate information by using words linked to five senses. The reader should see, hear, smell, taste and feel through words used in the essay. The writer can use descriptive words to design the picture in the reader's mind as well as to affect the reader's emotion.

In order to present the verbal picture of the things described, the writer should give particular and vivid facts as well as organise them in suitable sequence to frame the image on the reader's mind.

**Guidelines for writing a descriptive essay:**

- \* Use sensory details. Appeal to sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.
- \* Use active verbs (in which the subject is doing the acting instead of being acted upon by something or someone else, such as "Cindy hit the ball." instead of "The ball was hit by Cindy."). Also, use a variety of sentence types, such as a simple sentence ("Tom went to the store."), compound sentence ("Tom went to the store, and he bought a loaf of bread."), complex sentence ("While Tom was at the store, he bought a loaf of bread."), or compoundcomplex sentence ("While Tom was at the store, he bought a loaf of bread, but he forgot to buy a gallon of milk.").
- \* Avoid vague language, such as "pretty," "really," "a lot," and "very."
- \* Create a dominant impression (overall attitude, mood, or feeling about the subject), such as causing the readers to sympathize with you about a sad event that happened or to agree with you strongly on a certain controversial topic. Choose the details and descriptions that will help accomplish this impression.
- \* Use comparisons. In order to help make the descriptions even more vivid to the reader, use similes (such as "His emotional state was like a roller coaster."), metaphors (such as "Her smile was a ray of sunlight in the dark sea of unfamiliar faces."), personification (giving

human characteristics to an object, such as “The wind howled in my ears and beckoned me to walk further into the forest.”), and analogies (brief stories that relate to the topic). Determine the method of organization that works best for your essay: spatial (top to bottom, inside to outside, near to far), chronological (the order in which events happened), least-to-most, or most-to-least.

### 14.2 Narration

A narration essay tells a story. It should be about an event the reader would find interesting. The elements of storytelling should be included such as plot, character setting, climax and ending. It depends on concrete, sensory details that present and support the story. It is more interesting to actually recreate the incident for the reader to be engaged than to simply tell about it. Consequently, it should be detailed and evident with events stated in an organised manner.

#### **Guidelines for writing a narrative essay:**

- \* Make a specific point. Determine what the purpose of your essay is. State that point in your thesis statement, or controlling idea, and build upon it throughout the essay by using examples, stories, and other details that all relate back to the main idea.
- \* Involve readers in the story and create a visual picture by using dialogue and physical description, which is achieved through telling events that happened and presenting problems that arose. Also include specific descriptive details so that the reader can easily picture the scene in each of the events.
- \* Sequence events. Often this is done chronologically (the order in which events happened), but using flashbacks (writing the story from one point in time but then talking briefly about something that happened in the past) and foreshadowing (briefly talking about something that will happen in the future) can make the story more interesting.
- \* Decide which point of view, first-person (from the author’s point of view, using “I”) or thirdperson (using “he,” “she,” “them,” etc. instead of “I”), works best for your essay, and tell the story from that viewpoint

### 14.3 Definition

A definition essay explains what a concept means. A term can be defined by mentioning function, structure or analysis. Defining by function is to explain what something does or how something works. Defining by structure means to explain how something is organised. Defining by analysis is comparing the similarities and marking the differences from the words in the same group. In defining these terms, it is proposed that clear and basic information should be used together with facts or examples that are easy to understand.

### 14.4 Process

A process essay provides the instructions on how something functions or how to do something. The writer presents steps that lead to an outcome. In some processes, the order of steps is determinant; therefore, transitions used need to be very clear in order to make the steps simple and to facilitate the understanding of each step by readers. It is important to take into consideration what the reader already knows and what he/she needs to know. All the necessary details should be involved for the reader to learn or to realise the process.

### 14.5 Classification

A classification essay classifies things into categories in a logical order. The first step in writing a classification essay is to organise things into clear categories that do not overlap. The thesis statement includes the topic and how it is classified. Writers should regard that the ideas are grouped with the same organising manner.

Mayers (2005) presents two guidelines to ensure the categories are clear and consistent: use only one norm for organising, and create sections that allow room for everyone or everything to be classified.

#### **Guidelines for writing a classification or division essay:**

\* Decide either how to classify the topics or into what parts to divide the topics, according to whatever works best for your audience and is both exclusive (meaning that it strictly allows only certain information into each category) and comprehensive (meaning that all information is included somewhere, in one category or another) so that no topics overlap or are left out.

\* Make each category clear and understandable to the reader by using descriptions of the categories and topics and by including details.

\* Make sure the thesis statement, or controlling idea, tells what the main subject of the paper is; it may also mention the method you will use to classify or divide.

### 14.6 Comparison and Contrast

A comparison and contrast essay provides similarities and differences. A comparison shows similarities of different matters and a contrast shows differences of similar matters. A comparison and contrast essay is always stated together since there is no need to compare two similar things without contrasting them.

The thesis statement should name the topic to be compared and contrasted clearly. There are two methods for organising a comparison and contrast essay:

- **Item-by-item or block organisation :** In this type, one idea or one thing is totally and completely described and then, the other is similarly described. The writer presents supporting points of the first topic, then compare and contrast the same points of the second topic. Summarising the similarities and differences at the conclusion the reader will be provided by a clear picture of the two things.
- **Point-by-point organisation** The point-by-point pattern is used to compare and contrast one point about the two topics, then move to a second point, after that consider a third point. Which organisation is appropriate for an essay depends on the nature of the topic. The point-by-point organisation makes the topic with a lot of details easy to follow because it provides more detailed expansion of the topic. The item-by-item organisation is appropriate for topics with restricted details.

#### **Guidelines for writing a comparison and/or contrast essay:**

\* Have a clear purpose and a main point (to express ideas, to inform, to persuade, etc.). Make sure your subjects have something specific on which you can base your comparison and/or contrast.

\* Decide the order that best suits your essay. The two main ways you can choose to organize a comparison and/or contrast essay are point-by-point organization and subject-by-subject organization. point-by-point: switching back and forth between the subjects, comparing/contrasting them according to several main points subject-by-subject: writing about all the main points of one subject and then writing about all the

main points of another subject, and so on, referring back to the other subject(s) in a comparing/contrasting way.

\* In your thesis statement, or controlling idea, include the subjects; identify whether you will be talking about similarities, differences, or both; and state your main point.

\* Have a sufficient number of significant characteristics and details (which are the various points you use to compare and/or contrast the subjects), and give an equal amount to all sides

### Lecture Nine

#### 16. Difficulties in Writing English Essays

Students studying English as a second or a foreign language find it difficult to write. Even students who are competent orally may also face obstacles while they are asked to write. A person's objective, abilities and attitudes toward writing also influence their performance in writing. The capacity to write effectively in English can only be achieved through practices and experience since writing skills enhance overtime through learning from mistakes. Students' face problems in both producing contents relating to topics of the writing and using appropriate as well as accurate English language

This is confirmed by Kim and Kim (2005) who state that students learning English as a foreign language, when composing essays, struggle with structural issues, such as developing ideas about the topics. They also face problems in developing appropriate language use in different social contexts and language use in productive ways.

There are different aspects of difficulties that the writers especially second or foreign language students experience. These difficulties differ from one student to another depending on their background, English proficiency, and also the instruction received of each student. It would be useful for these students if teachers know their shortcomings.

Mistakes or errors in writing can be caused by native language interference, overgeneralisation of rules, insecurity about what to be expressed, and lack of familiarity with new rhetorical structures and organisation of ideas. (Carson 2001, Connor & Kaplan 1987, Kutz, Gordon & Zamel 1993, Raimes 1987 quoted in Myles 2002)

First language interference has great impact on students' writing strategies. Friedlander (1993) also confirms that, according to a number of researches, writers try to transmit writing abilities and strategies from their first language to their second language no matter whether they are effective or ineffective.

For the sake of developing an essay, Grabe and Kaplan (1996:354) presents that "a major problem for many writers including advanced writers, centres on appropriate ways to begin and end writing."



Lee (2004:1) states that “Low English proficiency students have difficulty making their writing coherent... Many university students write incomprehensibly.” Nevertheless, she also completes common essay writing problems as follows: 1. writing a paragraph without a topic sentence; 2. too specific controlling ideas; 3. difficulty in writing the thesis statement; 4. tendency in deviating from the controlling idea.

Students studying English as a foreign language encounter various difficulties. Some students lack basic grammar rules and sentence patterns. Their frequent errors were subject-verb agreement, wrong choice of word and wrong usage of words. Concerning writing paragraph, they had trouble with both content and language in conducting a writing task.

Students deal with the difficulties they face differently. Some students give much concern to fluency regardless losing accuracy while some students spend quite a long time checking and correcting their work. British Council (2006:1) explains that “Some students take an eternity to produce a piece of writing as they are constantly rubbing out what they have written while at the opposite extreme the writing is done as fast as possible without any planning or editing.”

### Practice III

#### Activity One: Answer the following questions

1) Can a thesis statement stand without predictors? Give one example:.....

.....

2) Give three examples of cohesive devices and explain one of those examples with a complete sentence .....,.....,.....

.....

3) Name the different orders of any body in the expository essay: .....

.....

4) The main difference between the general statement and the thesis statement is:

.....

5) The components of the body are :

.....

6) In brief, what must the writer find in a valid conclusion?

.....

.....

7) Name two things that make the thesis statement incorrect:.

.....

8) Name things that can make the conclusion invalid:

.....

.....

9) Where can we find predictors? why? .....

.....

10) Name the different assessment tools that can help assess students' essays.

.....

11) What are the different types of introductions?.....

.....

12) What are the characteristics of a good essay?.....

.....



Activity Two: Select one topic to develop an introduction about (5pts):

Misunderstanding, Generation gap, Healthy life, Interculturality, Lessons from life

(model your introduction)

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

### Conclusion

Producing a piece of writing is more than prerapring a list of information that will be included in the essay and going through different steps. The writing process is generating ideas, developing and organising them, revising and editing those ideas. Effective writers at the end must be satisfied that the writing achieves its purpose. At the end Writing is considered to be a thinking process of engaging with content, reviewing and reflecting.

## Tests and Exams

Level: 3<sup>rd</sup> year

Teacher: Dr. KHETTIB

### Fifth Semester Test of Written Expression

**Activity One : Are these thesis statements good or not, why ? add what is necessary**

1 - Smoking can be harmful to a person's health, and it is also very bad to see someone smoking.

.....

2 Internet is very useful.

.....

3 Social media has both advantages and disadvantages for people.

.....

**Activity Two: 1. Make an outline of a thesis statement and three topic sentences for the following topics.**

**2. Choose one of them to write:**

- An introduction regarding the same thesis statement.
- One Developmental paragraph

- Ways to escape stress

- The advantages of social media

- Personal bad habits

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



**Level: 3<sup>rd</sup> year**

**Teacher: Dr. KHETTIB**

**Sixth Semester Replacement Exam of Written Expression**

**Activity One : choose one of those quotes as a hook to start your introduction**

- Quote1: "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall". -Nelson Mandela
- Quote 2: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world". -Mahatma Gandhi
- Quote3: "You will face many defeats in life, but never let yourself be defeated." -Maya Angelou

Quote 4: " They tried to bury us. They did not know we were seeds" Dinos Christianponlos

**Your essay's topic based on the chosen quote :**

**The Essay's Introduction**

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(Do not forget to underline or circle your thesis statement)

**The First developmental paragraph:**



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**The Essay's Conclusion**

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**Fifth Semester Make up Exam of Written Expression**

**Answer the following questions:**

1) What are the main components of the introduction?

.....

2) What are the main components of the thesis statement?

.....

3) Can a thesis statement stand without predictors? Give one example

.....

4) Name four different types of expository essay

.....

5) What is the difference between the hook and the thesis statement?

.....

6) What are the things that lead to have incorrect thesis statement

.....

7) A good conclusion should contain:

.....

8) A good conclusion should not contain:

.....

9) Are predictors components of the conclusion? Why?

.....

10) Explain the “turn about” type of introduction

.....

**Fifth Semester Make up Exam of Written Expression**

**Answer the following questions:**

1) What are the main components of the introduction?

.....

2) What are the main components of the thesis statement?

.....

3) Can a thesis statement stand without predictors? Give one example

.....

4) Name four different types of expository essay

.....

5) What is the difference between the hook and the thesis statement?

.....

6) What are the things that lead to have incorrect thesis statement

.....

7) A good conclusion should contain:

.....

8) A good conclusion should not contain:

.....

9) Are predictors components of the conclusion? Why?

.....

10) Explain the “turn about” type of introduction

.....

.....





.....

.....

**2 What are the main components of your introduction?**

.....

.....

.....

**3 Write one topic sentence to your introduction and develop it into a paragraph**

Topic sentence :.....

Paragraph:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**4. What are the main characteristics of a good conclusion? Based on them write a conclusion to your essay**

Characteristics:.....

.....

.....

Conclusion:

.....

.....

.....

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