



# BEYOND THE WORD

academic writing principles  
and practices for EFL students

Aneta Naumoska & Biljana Naumoska - Sarakinska

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# Authors' preface

*Beyond the Word: Academic Writing Principles and Practices for EFL Students* is designed as both a guide and a companion, primarily for first-year English majors in Academic Writing classes at the “Blaže Koneski” Faculty of Philology in Skopje, though it will benefit anyone seeking to develop their academic writing skills. It supports students as they take their first steps into university-level writing, presenting it not merely as a requirement, but as a thoughtful, creative, and disciplined process through which ideas are shaped, knowledge is built, and voices find their place within academic communities.

This coursebook addresses the complex demands of academic literacy development by presenting writing as a socially and cognitively situated process. Drawing on established scholarship in English for Academic Purposes, applied linguistics, and genre-based pedagogy, it invites students to engage with academic writing not as a static set of conventions, but as a dynamic and recursive practice involving planning, drafting, feedback, revision, and reflection.

The structure of the coursebook reflects a pedagogically sequenced progression. Part I, *Introduction to Academic Writing*, provides a theoretical and conceptual foundation by exploring the role of academic writing in higher education, characteristics of effective academic discourse, and the recursive nature of the writing process. It also addresses peer and teacher feedback, the development of academic voice, and the critical engagement necessary for scholarly argumentation. Special emphasis is placed on genre awareness in determining the rhetorical choices writers make. Part II, *Building Blocks of Academic Writing*, focuses on key linguistic and structural elements of academic writing. These include the use of discipline-specific vocabulary, cohesion and coherence strategies, and paragraph-level organisation. The section provides scaffolding for students to internalise the grammatical and lexical resources necessary for constructing clear and persuasive academic texts. Part III, *Essay Types*, introduces students to common academic essays, such as compare and contrast essays, cause and effect essays, argumentative essays, and analytical and synthesis writing, thus guiding them in applying structural and rhetorical principles to various modes of exposition and argument. Rather than promoting templates, this coursebook emphasises flexibility, encouraging students to adapt genre conventions to diverse writing purposes.

Throughout the coursebook, tasks are designed to develop both linguistic competence and critical thinking. Each part incorporates model texts, guided analysis, and reflective writing tasks to promote metacognitive aware-

ness and encourage student autonomy. Furthermore, the materials are informed by a process-genre approach, allowing students to both analyse academic texts and produce them in meaningful contexts.

The coursebook is written at a B2+/C1 level (CEFR), assuming foundational upper-intermediate proficiency in English. It has been designed to accommodate a range of learning contexts, and is suitable primarily for classroom instruction, supplemented with independent writing tasks.

It is the authors' intention that this resource will serve not only as a practical writing guide, but also as an invitation for students to engage with academic discourse as a space of inquiry, critical reflection, and intellectual identity formation. We acknowledge with appreciation the scholarly contributions and pedagogical insights of the reviewers and students, whose feedback informed the development of this work. Any remaining oversights remain the responsibility of the authors.

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## **Part 1**

# **Introduction to Academic Writing**



## 1.1. The Role of Academic Writing in Higher Education

Academic writing is a central skill for university students, especially those majoring in English. For first-year undergraduates, the development of this skill is not only essential for academic success, but also forms a foundation for critical thinking, engaging in research, and communicating effectively in both academic and professional contexts. Academic writing allows students to participate in scholarly conversations, convey ideas clearly, and support arguments with credible evidence. As Ganobcsik-Williams (2010) notes, academic writing is not merely a way to demonstrate knowledge; it is a means of constructing knowledge and making meaningful contributions to disciplinary fields.

Moreover, academic writing functions as a gateway to scholarly identity. For English majors, who often pursue careers in teaching, research, writing, or publishing, this skill represents both a means of knowledge transfer and a discipline-defining tool. Engaging with academic writing involves adopting specific linguistic patterns, stylistic choices, and rhetorical structures. These features enable students to communicate not only what they know, but how they think, and this is essential in a community that values reasoning, evidence, and intellectual honesty.

## 1.2. Differences Between Speaking and Writing in an Academic Context

While both speaking and writing are essential forms of communication, in an academic context they differ substantially in purpose, audience expectations, and the degree of formality required. Recognising these differences helps students adapt effectively when moving from informal, oral exchanges to formal, written academic work.

In academic settings, the *permanence of writing* carries significant implications. Unlike speech, which is fleeting, written academic work is preserved, scrutinised, and cited. This means writers are accountable for accuracy, clarity, and substantiation of claims. A casual comment in conversation might be forgotten, but a statement in an academic essay can be revisited and critically evaluated long after submission.

Academic speaking (such as in seminars or presentations) still allows for spontaneity and interaction, but it often relies on outlines or slides rather than full scripts. Academic writing, however, demands *careful planning, structured argumentation, and multiple revisions*. University assignments must meet explicit criteria, including thesis development, evidence integration, and adherence to style guidelines. In addition, the absence of non-verbal cues in

writing necessitates precise word choice, unambiguous grammar, and complete sentences to ensure meaning is clear.

In academic speech, lecturers or peers may ask questions or signal misunderstanding, prompting immediate clarification. In writing, this feedback loop does not exist. Writers must *anticipate the reader's knowledge base*, *provide sufficient context*, and *logically structure their arguments to minimise misinterpretation*.

In academic contexts, the transition from speaking to writing is not merely a change of medium but a shift in expectations, responsibilities, and communicative strategies (Weigle, 2002). Therefore, understanding and adapting to these differences is essential for producing formal, well-structured, and persuasive academic texts.

### 1.3. Understanding Purpose and Audience

At its core, academic writing is *purposeful*. Writers produce texts to inform, persuade, analyse, or critique, and each purpose influences the language, structure, and style of the writing. One of the most critical aspects of successful academic writing is *an awareness of audience*. Students must consider who will read their work. This awareness affects the formality of tone, the level of detail, the use of discipline-specific vocabulary, and the expectations for evidence and reasoning.

Hyland (2006) and Camps (2017) emphasise that academic writing is *a social act*, situated within specific disciplinary cultures and genres. As such, students must not only master grammar and vocabulary, but also the conventions and expectations of their chosen field and audience. Understanding audience also requires sensitivity to what readers already know and what they need explained. Novice writers often assume too much or too little, but academic writing thrives on balance. To write effectively, students must distinguish between general and specialised audiences, adjusting their language accordingly. Writing for a general reader may require explanations of terminology and broader context, while writing for an expert may involve more concise and dense argumentation. Knowing the intended audience guides decisions about content, style, citations, and even formatting.

### 1.4. Characteristics of Academic Writing

Academic writing is defined by several key features:

- *Formality and objectivity*: Academic texts avoid colloquial language and are written in a formal, neutral tone. Contractions, slang,

and first-person references are generally avoided unless stylistically or contextually justified.

- *Clarity and precision*: Ideas must be expressed clearly and logically, avoiding ambiguity. Sentences should be well-structured, and word choice should convey exact meaning.
- *Evidence-based argumentation*: Claims should be supported by data, research findings, or citations from reputable sources. This practice not only adds credibility but also reflects intellectual integrity.
- *Cohesion and coherence*: Sentences and paragraphs must be logically connected to enhance the reader's understanding (Halliday and Hasan, 2013). This includes the use of cohesive devices, such as transitions, conjunctions, and reference terms.
- *Critical thinking*: Academic writing involves not just reporting on existing knowledge, but analysing, evaluating, and synthesising information to develop original insights (Cottrell, 2005). Writers must interrogate sources, identify gaps or inconsistencies, and construct arguments based on thoughtful reflection.

Other features include an *impersonal tone*, *structured organisation*, *balanced argument*, and *comprehensive referencing*. While these characteristics may vary across disciplines, they remain integral to producing academically acceptable work.

## 1.5. The Writing Process: A Recursive Model

Many students mistakenly believe that writing is a linear process. In reality, it is recursive and dynamic. Most academic writers engage in the following stages, often revisiting earlier steps as their ideas develop:

- *Planning*: This involves analysing the assignment, understanding the purpose, brainstorming ideas, conducting preliminary research, and outlining the structure. Tools like mind maps, bullet points, and concept maps are useful in this stage.
- *Drafting*: Writing the first version without worrying too much about perfection. The focus here is on getting ideas down on paper. Drafts allow for exploration, experimentation, and early articulation of arguments.
- *Revising*: Reviewing the draft for content, clarity, organisation, and argumentation. Writers may add, delete, or rearrange parts of the text to strengthen the message. Revision is not only about fixing problems but improving quality.

- *Editing and proofreading*: This final stage addresses grammar, punctuation, formatting, and spelling. It also ensures consistency in style, accuracy in citation, and correctness in sentence construction.

Hedge (2005) stresses that students should not view writing as a one-time task but as a process of discovery. Through writing, students refine their understanding of the topic and learn how to express complex ideas effectively. Importantly, these stages are not fixed in order. Writers often loop back; revisiting the outline after drafting, conducting additional research during revision, or rewriting entire sections. “Remember, it is no sign of weakness or defeat that your work ends up in need of major surgery. This is a common occurrence in all writing” (Strunk and White, 1999: 72). The recursive nature of writing requires time and patience. Writers must learn to tolerate imperfection in early drafts and see feedback and reflection as parts of growth. The most successful students develop habits of drafting early, seeking feedback, and revising with intention.

## 1.6. Peer and Teacher Feedback in Academic Writing

One of the most influential factors in the development of academic writing is feedback. Through feedback, students gain insight into their strengths and areas for improvement. It provides an external perspective that can uncover issues the writer may not have noticed, such as unclear reasoning, weak transitions, or inappropriate tone. Both peer and teacher feedback serve distinct but complementary functions.

*Teacher feedback* is typically more authoritative and grounded in academic expectations. Teachers can offer detailed commentary on content, structure, language use, and overall effectiveness. According to Ferris and Hedgcock (2011), effective teacher feedback should be specific, balanced, and oriented towards revision. Comments should not merely point out errors but guide students towards strategies for improvement. Ideally, this feedback becomes formative, thus helping students develop transferable skills rather than simply fixing a single assignment.

*Peer feedback*, on the other hand, encourages students to become active readers and critical thinkers. When students review each other's work, they gain practice in analysing academic writing and recognizing both successful techniques and common pitfalls. Peer review also fosters a sense of audience; writers become more attuned to how their texts are received. As Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (2006) and Rollinson (2005) note, students benefit from learning to articulate constructive criticism and from defending or reconsidering their choices in response to peers' suggestions.

Feedback, however, is only effective when it is thoughtfully integrated. Students must learn to evaluate the feedback they receive, determine which suggestions to incorporate, and reflect on how revisions enhance their writing. Feedback becomes a dialogue: between teacher and student, peer and peer, writer and text.

### **1.7. Academic Vocabulary and Its Role in Clear, Disciplined Expression**

A distinguishing feature of academic writing is its use of precise, formal vocabulary. Mastery of academic vocabulary supports clarity, reduces ambiguity, and enables writers to express complex ideas with precision. In academic contexts, word choice is not just about correctness, but about appropriateness, discipline-specific convention, and rhetorical effect (Porter, 2007). Academic vocabulary, discussed in Part II, can be broadly categorised into three groups: general academic words, discipline-specific terms, and technical terminology. The Academic Vocabulary List (AVL) compiled by Gardner and Davies (2014) provides examples of high-frequency academic words across disciplines, such as “analyse,” “evaluate,” “approach,” and “significant.” These words appear consistently in scholarly writing and form the backbone of academic discourse.

#### *Collocations and word families*

Beyond individual words, academic writers must also be aware of collocations, i.e. words that commonly occur together. For instance, “pose a question,” “reach a conclusion,” or “conduct research” are typical academic collocations. Using these combinations correctly enhances fluency and conforms to disciplinary expectations. Closely related to collocations are word families. A word family consists of related forms of a base word, such as “analyse” (verb), “analysis” (noun), “analytical” (adjective), and “analytically” (adverb). Understanding and applying word families allows writers to maintain consistency and vary sentence structure without losing coherence.

#### *Discipline-specific terminology*

Each field of study has its own specialised vocabulary. English majors, for instance, might work with terms such as “narrative voice,” “intertextuality,” “discourse,” or “metaphor.” Using such terms appropriately shows engagement with the discipline and lends credibility to the writing. However, students must also ensure that these terms are clearly defined or contextualised when necessary, particularly for non-specialist audiences. Vocabulary deve-

lopment requires more than memorisation; it calls for context-rich exposure, strategic use, and reflective practice. Reading widely within one's field, maintaining a vocabulary journal, and revising drafts for word choice are effective strategies to internalise and apply academic vocabulary.

## **1.8. The Role of Language Awareness in Academic Writing Development**

An essential but sometimes overlooked component of academic writing is the development of *language awareness*. This refers to the writer's conscious understanding of how language functions to achieve specific rhetorical goals. Academic texts are not just grammatically correct; they are deliberately structured to argue, explain, compare, define, or critique.

Halliday and Hasan (2013) emphasise the cohesive elements of language that create texture and meaning in texts. Writers must become aware of how reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion operate to link ideas smoothly. Likewise, grammatical choices, such as verb tense, voice, clause structure, and modality, affect how meaning is constructed and interpreted.

Language awareness also involves stylistic choices. Academic writing often features nominalisation, passive voice, and complex noun phrases to create a dense, information-rich style. However, overuse of these features can obscure meaning. Writers must balance sophistication with clarity, recognising when to simplify language or vary sentence structures for better reader comprehension. Students can develop language awareness through focused analysis of academic texts, guided practice in writing and revising, and reflective activities that encourage attention to form and function. As Lynch and Anderson (2013) suggest, grammar instruction for academic writing should be integrated with content and purpose rather than treated as isolated rules.

## **1.9. Achieving Coherence and Cohesion: The Role of Cohesive Devices**

Two essential qualities of academic writing are coherence and cohesion. *Coherence* refers to the overall unity and logical flow of ideas in a text, while *cohesion* is the grammatical and lexical linking within and between sentences and paragraphs. Without cohesion and coherence, even well-researched content can appear disjointed or difficult to follow.

### *Cohesive devices*

Cohesion is achieved through strategic use of cohesive devices such as:

- Linking words and transitions (e.g. “however,” “therefore,” “moreover,” “in contrast”) help signal relationships between ideas and guide the reader through the argument.
- Pronoun reference (e.g. “this,” “these,” “it,” “they”) avoids repetition and maintains continuity.
- Synonyms and lexical chains ensure variation while reinforcing key themes.
- Parallel structures and repetition of key terms add rhythm and clarity.

Halliday and Hasan (2013) identify several types of cohesion: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. Skilled academic writers use these mechanisms deliberately to strengthen the reader’s understanding and create a seamless reading experience.

*Unity, clarity, and conciseness*

- Unity means that all parts of a paragraph or essay contribute to the main idea. Irrelevant information or digressions should be eliminated.
- Clarity involves clear expression, logical organisation, and unambiguous vocabulary. Ambiguous pronouns, unclear references, or overly complex sentences can undermine clarity.
- Conciseness requires eliminating redundancy and avoiding wordy constructions. Academic writing favors economy of expression, or saying as much as possible in as few words as necessary.

Developing cohesion and coherence is an ongoing process that improves with feedback and revision (Briesmaster and Etchegaray, 2017). Writers should read their drafts critically, checking whether transitions are clear, paragraphs are logically ordered, and references are unambiguous. Cohesion and coherence will be discussed in Part II.

## **1.10. Paragraph Structure: Topic Sentences and Opinion Paragraphs**

Paragraphs are the building blocks of academic writing. Each paragraph should focus on a single idea, clearly expressed through a topic sentence and developed through supporting details. The focus of Part II is on paragraph structure.

A *topic sentence* is usually the first sentence of a paragraph and states the main idea. It serves as a guidepost for the reader and sets the direction for the rest of the paragraph. Effective topic sentences are specific, arguable, and

aligned with the overall thesis of the essay. Following the topic sentence, the paragraph should include explanations, examples, and evidence. The concluding sentence may summarise the point or transition to the next idea.

*Opinion paragraphs* are a common feature in argumentative and analytical writing. These paragraphs present the writer's viewpoint, supported by reasoning and evidence. The writer must balance assertiveness with justification, as opinion alone is not enough in academic contexts. As Strunk and White (1999: 80) note: "Opinions scattered indiscriminately about leave the mark of egotism on a work. Similarly, to air one's views at an improper time may be in bad taste. If you have received a letter inviting you to speak at the dedication of a new cat hospital, and you hate cats, your reply, declining the invitation, does not necessarily have to cover the full range of your emotions. You must make it clear that you will not attend, but you do not have to let fly at cats. The writer of the letter asked a civil question; attack cats, then, only if you can do so with good humor, good taste, and in such a way that your answer will be courteous as well as responsive. Since you are out of sympathy with cats, you may quite properly give this as a reason for not appearing at the dedicatory ceremonies of a cat hospital. But bear in mind that your opinion of cats was not sought, only your services as a speaker. Try to keep things straight." This exemplifies that the manner and context in which opinions are expressed matter as much as the opinions themselves. In academic writing, this translates to offering a stance that is relevant to the topic, framed with respect for the reader, and supported by appropriate evidence. An opinion paragraph, then, should not be a platform for unrelated grievances or personal asides, but a carefully constructed contribution to an ongoing scholarly conversation. When used thoughtfully, such paragraphs allow writers to articulate a position while maintaining the intellectual rigor and civility expected in academic discourse.

## 1.11. Common Essay Types in Academic Writing

Academic essays come in various forms, each with its own structure, purpose, and language features. Understanding the distinctions between essay types helps students choose appropriate strategies and organise their arguments effectively. The following essay types will be discussed in Part III.

### *Compare and contrast essay*

This essay examines the similarities and differences between two or more items, concepts, or perspectives.

Structure:

- Introduction with thesis statement indicating the basis of comparison
- Body paragraphs organised by point or by subject
- Clear use of comparative transitions (e.g. “similarly,” “on the other hand”)
- Conclusion summarising the comparison and presenting a final insight

Purpose: To evaluate items critically, identify underlying patterns, or highlight meaningful differences.

### *Cause and effect essay*

This type explores the reasons why something happens (causes) and the outcomes of those events (effects).

Structure:

- Introduction with context and thesis
- Body organised by causes first, then effects, or interwoven
- Use of causal language (e.g. “due to,” “as a result,” “leads to”)
- Conclusion that reinforces the significance of the causal relationship

Purpose: To analyse processes, understand consequences, or recommend solutions.

### *Argumentative essay*

An argumentative essay presents a position on a debatable issue and supports it with evidence. It is the most common type of academic essay and it is essential for building persuasive and critical writing skills.

Structure:

- Introduction with a clear thesis or claim
- Body paragraphs presenting reasons and evidence
- Counterarguments with rebuttals
- Conclusion reinforcing the thesis and its implications

Purpose: To persuade the reader of a specific viewpoint through logical reasoning and evidence.

### *Analytical and synthesis writing*

Analytical writing involves breaking down a subject into its component parts to understand its structure and meaning. Synthesis writing requires combining information from multiple sources to construct a new understanding or argument.

Both forms require:

- Interpretation of evidence
- Integration of ideas
- Clear organisation and transitions

Analytical and synthesis writing foster higher-order thinking and are foundational to advanced academic work.

## **1.12. Digital Literacies and Writing in the Contemporary University Context**

Academic writing today does not occur in isolation from technology. Digital literacies, i.e. skills associated with using digital tools to communicate, research, and create, are becoming essential in higher education. Students are expected to navigate online databases, use word processing tools proficiently, format documents according to academic standards, and even publish or share their work in online forums. Hockly (2012) describes digital literacy as encompassing more than technical ability. It includes critical engagement with digital content, ethical use of information, and participation in online scholarly communities. For example, students may use collaborative platforms for peer review, manage references using citation software, or build portfolios that include multimedia components.

Moreover, the accessibility of information online raises questions about credibility, bias, and plagiarism. Students must develop skills to evaluate digital sources critically, distinguish between scholarly and non-scholarly content, and synthesise diverse perspectives responsibly. Digital writing environments also allow for multimodal expression, combining text, image, audio, and video, though these forms are more prevalent in some disciplines than others. Academic writing in the digital age is, therefore, not only about composing words on a page; it is about participating in a larger digital discourse community with competence, integrity, and critical awareness.

## **1.13. Developing a Personal Academic Voice**

Contrary to the belief that academic writing must be entirely impersonal, students are encouraged to develop a clear, individual academic voice. While maintaining a formal tone and adhering to disciplinary conventions, academic writers should still make interpretive choices, demonstrate evaluative judgment, and structure arguments in ways that reflect their unique perspectives. This balance between convention and individuality is central to effective scholarly communication.

Academic voice involves more than stylistic flair; it reflects the writer's stance, authority, and engagement with the material. Students learn to

position themselves in relation to the arguments they reference, signaling agreement, critique, or neutrality as appropriate. According to Hyland (2004), the use of hedging (e.g. “might suggest”), boosters (e.g. “clearly demonstrates”), and self-mentions (e.g. “I argue”) helps students to establish a presence in their writing and align with their discipline’s epistemological norms. Developing this voice takes time and confidence. Students must move beyond merely summarising sources to engaging with them critically. They must learn to frame questions, propose interpretations, and signal the significance of their claims. Instructors can support this development by offering models of strong academic voice and by encouraging reflection on how voice is constructed in students’ own writing.

### **1.14. The Role of Critical Thinking in Academic Argument**

Academic writing is inextricably linked to critical thinking. Writers are expected not just to recount facts or ideas but to question assumptions, evaluate sources, draw connections, and construct reasoned arguments. This intellectual activity distinguishes academic work from other types of writing and contributes to the development of independent thought. Halpern (2014) describes critical thinking as the use of cognitive skills or strategies to increase the probability of a desirable outcome. In academic writing, this means applying logic, identifying fallacies, and supporting claims with valid evidence. Students are taught to avoid confirmation bias, to seek out alternative explanations, and to justify their positions with clarity (Facione, 2020; Fisher, 2001).

Writing critically involves more than criticising. It requires recognising complexity, appreciating nuance, and integrating multiple perspectives. Students must go beyond description to assess the strength of arguments, the relevance of evidence, and the implications of conclusions. Critical thinking also involves metacognition, or reflecting on one’s own thought process (Allen, 2004; Chason et al., 2017). Through writing, students externalise their reasoning, making their thinking visible for scrutiny and improvement. Writing, therefore, becomes a medium for practicing and refining critical thinking skills.

### **1.15. The Influence of Genre and Discourse Community**

Academic writing does not occur in a vacuum. It is shaped by genre, i.e. the conventional forms and structures associated with particular types of texts, and by discourse communities, i.e. groups of people who share norms, values, and language practices. Understanding both is essential for effective academic communication. Swales (1990; 2004) defines a discourse community

as a group that has common goals, communicates using specific genres, and possesses specialised terminology. For example, the expectations for a linguistics essay differ from those for a philosophy paper, even though both may be written in English by university students. These differences reflect each community's ways of constructing knowledge and presenting arguments.

Genres provide a blueprint for writing. They inform the organisation of content, the use of evidence, and the tone of the writing. Students must learn to recognise these patterns and to produce texts that conform to them. This does not mean writing rigidly but adapting flexibly within constraints. As Flowerdew (2000) and Flowerdew and Costley (2017) note, genre awareness helps students understand the “why” behind writing conventions and empowers them to make informed choices. Instructors play a key role in demystifying genre by providing exemplars, facilitating genre analysis, and encouraging students to compare texts across contexts. The goal is not simply to teach templates, but to help students become adaptable writers capable of responding to varied rhetorical situations (Badger and White, 2000; Dawit, 2013; Nesi and Gardner, 2012; Thornbury, 2005).

### **1.16. The Interrelationship of Reading and Writing in Academic Contexts**

Academic writing is inseparable from academic reading. Reading scholarly texts not only provides content for writing but also models academic language, argumentation techniques, and organisational patterns. In many cases, students must interpret, evaluate, and synthesise multiple sources to construct their own written responses. Thus, writing should not be taught in isolation from reading but as a complementary and integrated skill. Coffin et al. (2003) argue that students often struggle with academic writing because they have not yet learned to read academic texts critically. Active reading strategies, such as annotating, questioning, summarising, and mapping arguments, help students identify key ideas, recognise rhetorical moves, and understand how evidence is deployed. These strategies, in turn, support stronger writing.

Critical reading goes beyond understanding content. It involves questioning assumptions, comparing perspectives, and identifying gaps in existing research. These analytical skills translate directly into stronger writing, enabling students to position their work within broader scholarly conversations (Mermelstein, 2015).

Reading also develops genre awareness. By examining how different academic texts are structured and how language is used within them, students begin to internalise the conventions of their discipline. For university students,

especially English majors, engaging with a wide range of scholarly sources is essential for developing informed, credible, and original writing. Exposure to multiple perspectives through reading helps writers construct balanced and informed arguments. Moreover, reading expands academic vocabulary, informs content knowledge, and strengthens analytical thinking; each of which contributes to more sophisticated writing. By analysing how authors introduce topics, connect ideas, and use evidence, students acquire models they can adapt in their own work (Grabe and Zhang, 2013; Park, 2016).

Academic reading is both a foundation and a catalyst for effective writing. Students who read critically and widely are better prepared to craft arguments, synthesise information, and meet the expectations of academic discourse.

### **1.17. Motivation, Identity, and Writer Development**

The process of becoming an academic writer is not merely cognitive or technical, but it is also deeply personal. Motivation, confidence, and identity shape how students approach academic writing. Those who see themselves as capable contributors to academic discourse are more likely to persist through challenges, seek feedback, and engage critically with their work. According to Hinkel (2004), motivation influences both the effort students invest in writing and the strategies they use. Intrinsically motivated students, or those who find satisfaction in exploring ideas and expressing themselves, tend to produce more thoughtful and engaged writing. Conversely, students who write only to fulfill assignments may struggle to develop a distinctive academic voice or see value in revision.

Writer identity also plays a crucial role. As students encounter unfamiliar conventions or complex genres, they may experience uncertainty or resistance. Some may feel that academic writing suppresses personal expression, while others may fear being judged or misunderstood. Instructors can support writer identity by creating inclusive learning environments, validating diverse perspectives, and encouraging experimentation. Reflective writing tasks, personal goal-setting, and discussions about the emotional dimensions of writing can help students become more aware of their development as academic writers. Over time, students build not only skills but a sense of agency and belonging within the academic community.

### **1.18. Academic Writing in the CEFR Companion Volume**

The CEFR Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2020) does not isolate academic writing as a separate macro-skill, but it strengthens and expands the descriptors and frameworks that can be applied directly to academic contexts. Its approach to writing, particularly at higher proficiency levels

(B2, C1), clearly aligns with the demands of academic communication in universities and research environments.

One of the key shifts in the 2020 edition is the broader conceptualisation of writing as *purposeful communication within social and professional domains*. Academic writing is seen not simply as the ability to produce grammatically correct texts, but as the ability to organise ideas logically, support them with evidence, adapt style and register to the audience, and work with complex source material; all of which are integral to higher education contexts.

The *mediation scales* are especially relevant to academic writing. They address skills such as summarising long and demanding texts, synthesising information from multiple sources, and explaining abstract or complex ideas in a clear way for specific audiences. This includes transforming material into a different genre or register, which is exactly what happens in tasks like paraphrasing academic articles, writing literature reviews, or adapting research findings for non-specialist audiences.

Another significant aspect is the *action-oriented approach*. The CEFR frames the learner as a social agent, i.e. in academic terms this could be a student engaging with research communities, collaborating on projects, or contributing to knowledge creation. This reflects real-world academic writing as a socially embedded activity, not just an isolated skill.

While the Companion Volume does not create a separate academic writing band, it embeds the competencies required for it within written production, written interaction, and mediation, offering detailed descriptors that can be used to assess writing tasks at university level.

## **1.19. Concluding Remarks: Academic Writing as a Lifelong Practice**

Academic writing is not confined to merely university coursework. It is a lifelong practice that extends into professional, civic, and personal domains. The ability to think critically, communicate clearly, and engage with others' ideas remains vital.

This course in academic writing equips students with the foundational concepts and strategies needed to begin this journey. It fosters an understanding of writing as a social, rhetorical, and intellectual activity. It encourages students to see writing not only as a product to be assessed, but as a process of learning, discovery, and self-expression. In embracing academic writing, students join an ongoing conversation; one that invites curiosity, challenges assumptions, and rewards clarity of thought. With support, reflection, and practice, students will come to see writing not as a hurdle to overcome, but as a powerful tool for inquiry, connection, and transformation.

## **Part 2**

# **Building Blocks of Academic Writing: Grammar for Clarity and Paragraph Writing**



## 2.1. Academic Vocabulary: Collocations, Word Families, Discipline-Specific Terms, Academic Tone

### 2.1.1. Academic collocation builder

**Objective:** To develop fluency in using academic collocations.

**Instructions:**

- Match one word from each column to create verb+noun and adjective+noun collocations from the table below (e.g. address challenges, large-scale implications).
- Write at least 7 original academic sentences; each sentence using two collocations from the table.
- Try to connect collocations thematically (e.g. a research context).

Verbs	Adjectives	Nouns
address	adverse	approach
assess	complex	assumptions
challenge	considerable	challenges
conduct	empirical	concern
establish	key	effects
exert	large-scale	evidence
explore	major	framework
facilitate	meaningful	hypothesis
formulate	methodological	implications
generate	potential	income
highlight	prevailing	influence
pose	significant	interaction
provide	substantial	phenomenon
undergo	theoretical	results
undertake	widespread	study

### 2.1.2. Academic phrase completion

**Objective:** To use academic phrases in longer, coherent sentences.

**Instructions:**

Complete the academic phrases (in *italic*) by expanding them into a full sentence.

This study aims to \_\_\_\_\_.

The data suggests a strong correlation between \_\_\_\_\_.

Scholars have argued that \_\_\_\_\_.

There is a growing body of \_\_\_\_\_.

The implications of these findings \_\_\_\_\_.

In order to determine whether \_\_\_\_\_.

A key limitation of the current study is \_\_\_\_\_.

The results are consistent with \_\_\_\_\_.

It is widely acknowledged that \_\_\_\_\_.

Future research should focus on \_\_\_\_\_.

### 2.1.3. Academic vocabulary in context (gap-fill)

Objective: To use academic vocabulary naturally in context.

Instructions:

Fill in the blanks in this gapped text by using the words below. There are two extra words.

*acknowledged / analysis / arguing / collected / derived / emerged / expressed / extensive / findings / indicate / inform / interpretation / justified / limited / notified / reduced / reported*

Some noteworthy patterns have (1)\_\_\_\_\_ from recent research on student motivation during online learning. The data was (2)\_\_\_\_\_ through surveys and interviews involving over 500 first-year university students across three institutions. Key insights were (3)\_\_\_\_\_ from both quantitative and qualitative (4)\_\_\_\_\_.

One of the most significant (5)\_\_\_\_\_ relates to students' perception of autonomy. Responses strongly (6)\_\_\_\_\_ that learners who felt they had more control over their study schedules (7)\_\_\_\_\_ higher satisfaction levels and stronger academic performance. This is consistent with existing theories of self-regulated learning.

Additionally, students (8)\_\_\_\_\_ mixed views about asynchronous learning formats. While some appreciated the flexibility, others struggled with time management and (9)\_\_\_\_\_ peer interaction. The researchers provided a detailed (10)\_\_\_\_\_ of these contrasting experiences, (11)\_\_\_\_\_ that student outcomes were influenced more by personal learning styles than by delivery format alone.

As the study employed a robust mixed-methods design, its conclusions are largely (12)\_\_\_\_\_, however the authors (13)\_\_\_\_\_ limitations, such as the narrow demographic focus and potential response bias.

Overall, the study offers (14)\_\_\_\_\_ evidence of the complex relationship between motivation, autonomy, and learning environment. These findings may (15)\_\_\_\_\_ course design in future blended and online education programmes.

#### 2.1.4. Academic vocabulary in context (word substitution)

**Objective:** To use academic vocabulary naturally in context.

**Instructions:**

From the list below, choose one word which could be used in place of the word / phrase shown in bold without changing the meaning of the sentence. You may need to change the form or in some cases the grammatical class of the word.

*accuracy (n) / assist (v) / clarify (v) / converse (v) / extract (v) / incline (v) / propensity (n) / sustain (v)*

1. The lecturer tried to **explain** her point **more clearly** by using another example more familiar to her students.
2. By the age of three, most children are able to **talk** with an adult in a limited fashion.
3. Because of unhappy childhood experiences, he is **disposed** to believe that most people are basically very selfish.
4. During examinations, students are not allowed to talk to or **help** other students in any way.
5. Students should not read every page of a book but instead identify and then **take out** only those ideas which are relevant.
6. Some students will stay up all night to finish their work, but it is impossible to **maintain** this for very long and so it is not recommended.
7. Heavy smokers have a **tendency** to develop lung cancer and other serious illnesses.
8. The measurements taken by researchers must be **correct**, otherwise the conclusions they come to will be useless.

### 2.1.5. Nominalisation transformation

**Objective:** To transform verb-based sentences into more formal academic structures using nominalisation. To understand why nominalisation is used in academic English.

**Instructions:**

Each of the following sentences uses a verb-focused structure. Rewrite them using nominalisation, and compare the tone and clarity.

**Discuss:**

Which version sounds more academic? (Why?)

Are there cases where nominalisation makes the sentence less clear?

1. Researchers analysed the survey results carefully.
2. The author argues that social media harms mental health.
3. Students improved their writing after receiving feedback.
4. The professor explained the theory in detail.
5. The team evaluated the effectiveness of the intervention.
6. We need to decide whether this method is reliable.
7. The university introduced new policies to ensure academic integrity.

## 2.2. Cohesive Devices: Linking Words, Transitions, Pronoun Reference

The Table below (Table 1) categorises a range of useful academic discourse markers based on their function in writing. These phrases help improve cohesion and clarity by signalling relationships between ideas, such as adding information, comparing, clarifying, or emphasising a point. Using them appropriately allows students' writing to flow more logically and read more fluently. However, care should be taken when choosing an accurate marker, and they should not be overused or combined with too many others within a single sentence. The markers chosen should suit the intended meaning, academic tone, and sentence structure. It should be noted that this Table is not comprehensive and definitive, however for the purposes of this coursebook, it provides a broad view of such markers / phrases.

Function / Use	Markers / Phrases
Adding Information	furthermore, moreover, in addition, also, besides, what's more, similarly, as well as that, additionally, not only that, likewise
Sequencing / Listing	firstly, secondly, thirdly, finally, to begin with, next, then, subsequently, in conclusion, overall, eventually, to start with, lastly

Function / Use	Markers / Phrases
Giving Examples	for example, for instance, such as, namely, to illustrate, as evidenced by, as an illustration, specifically, particularly, including
Comparing	similarly, likewise, in the same way, just as, equally, in comparison, correspondingly, analogously
Contrasting / Conceding	however, on the other hand, in contrast, nevertheless, although, whereas, even though, yet, despite this, alternatively, conversely
Showing Cause / Reason	because, since, as, due to, owing to, in view of, considering, given that, on account of, as a result of
Showing Effect / Result	therefore, thus, consequently, as a result, hence, so, this leads to, accordingly, for this reason, which explains why
Emphasising	indeed, in fact, clearly, undoubtedly, it is important to note that, significantly, particularly, notably, above all, most importantly
Conceding / Qualifying	although, even though, while it is true that, admittedly, nonetheless, though, albeit, still, yet, despite that
Clarifying / Reformulating	in other words, that is to say, namely, to put it differently, specifically, to clarify, to rephrase, to put it another way
Giving Condition	if, unless, provided that, on the condition that, as long as, in case, only if, even if, assuming that
Concluding / Summarising	in conclusion, to summarise, overall, to sum up, in brief, all things considered, in short, in essence, to conclude, in summary
Expressing Purpose	in order to, so that, for the purpose of, with the aim of, to, with a view to, so as to, for the sake of
Indicating Time / Chronology	meanwhile, at the same time, later, earlier, eventually, subsequently, afterwards, at first, formerly, prior to this, thereafter
Transitioning Between Ideas	with regard to, as for, in terms of, concerning, regarding, when it comes to, as far as X is concerned, turning to
Repeating / Restating	again, in other words, as mentioned earlier, to reiterate, it bears repeating, to restate, as stated above, to put it again
Anticipating / Predicting	it is likely that, may result in, can be expected to, will probably, there is a high chance that, it is anticipated that
Expressing Opinion (Formal)	it can be argued that, one might contend that, according to some scholars, arguably, it is often believed, it is generally accepted that, some assert that

*Table 1: Discourse markers / transition phrases*

### 2.2.1. Logical connections (identification)

**Objective:** To identify and extend logical relationships between ideas using appropriate discourse markers / transition phrases.

**Instructions:**

- Circle the sentence which follows logically from the first sentence.
- Continue each train of thought by writing 1-2 more sentences to follow.

1. Studying when you are older should not be a problem.
  - a. In fact, some say that the additional experience that group of people have is a plus.
  - b. Despite this, there are many benefits to being a mature student.
  
2. Going back to studying after a long gap can be challenging.
  - a. As a result, people can greatly improve their job prospects.
  - b. This is so because mature students often have family commitments as well as academic difficulties.
  
3. Many students struggle with time management at university.
  - a. Consequently, Universities are increasing tuition fees.
  - b. Hence, workshops on planning and prioritising have become more common.
  
4. Not all subjects require the same type of assessment.
  - a. For example, engineering courses often involve practical evaluations.
  - b. However, most students find assessment stressful.
  
5. The number of international students has increased dramatically in recent years.
  - a. This trend is partly due to globalisation and scholarship opportunities.
  - b. Nevertheless, the costs of studying abroad continue to rise.
  
6. Some professors argue that exams are not the best way to measure ability.
  - a. In fact, they believe that coursework gives a more accurate picture.
  - b. In contrast, exams can be scheduled more easily by institutions.
  
7. Online learning allows students greater flexibility.
  - a. For instance, it can improve digital literacy among older students.
  - b. On the other hand, many students prefer face-to-face discussions.

8. University dropout rates remain a concern in many countries.
- a. Therefore, lecturers have become more interested in research funding.
  - b. Consequently, institutions are investing more in student support services.
9. A good academic writer presents their ideas clearly and logically.
- a. Moreover, poor referencing is often penalised.
  - b. For this reason, outlining and structuring ideas is an important early step in the writing process.
10. Group work is commonly used in university courses to develop collaboration skills.
- a. However, many students find it difficult to concentrate in lectures.
  - b. In addition, it helps students learn how to negotiate and share responsibilities.
11. Critical thinking is considered a core component of academic success.
- a. As a result, universities are revising their grading policies.
  - b. For this reason, students are encouraged to question assumptions and evaluate evidence.
12. Instructors often provide reading lists at the start of a module.
- a. For instance, these lists include key texts and recent publications.
  - b. Nevertheless, attendance at lectures is not always monitored.

### 2.2.2. Logical connections (extension)

**Objective:** To extend logical relationships between ideas using appropriate discourse markers.

**Instructions:**

Complete each sentence with ideas of your own.

- a) Technology use among teenagers has increased significantly. As a result, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- b) Public transportation is often cheaper and more environmentally friendly. In contrast, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

c) The rise in processed food consumption has led to health problems. Therefore, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

d) Online learning allows students to study at their own pace. Nevertheless, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

e) Many cities are investing in green infrastructure. Consequently,

\_\_\_\_\_.

f) A strong CV is important in today's job market. Similarly,

\_\_\_\_\_.

g) Recycling has become more common in households. Despite this,

\_\_\_\_\_.

h) Sleep plays a critical role in memory retention. For this reason,

\_\_\_\_\_.

i) Group projects help develop collaboration skills. However,

\_\_\_\_\_.

j) Regular exercise has been linked to improved concentration. In the same way, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

### 2.2.3. Multiple-choice: Technology and society

**Objective:** To develop an understanding of how transition markers affect the logical flow in a connected text.

**Instructions:**

- Choose the most appropriate transition / discourse marker from the options below (A, B, C, or D) to complete each gap.
- Discuss whether other options are possible.

Technology has become an integral part of modern life. (1)\_\_\_\_\_, it affects how we communicate, learn, and even form relationships. (2)\_\_\_\_\_

this widespread influence, there are both positive and negative consequences. Some researchers argue that digital tools enhance productivity and accessibility; (3) \_\_\_\_\_, others believe they contribute to social isolation.

(4) \_\_\_\_\_, smartphones enable users to access information instantly. (5) \_\_\_\_\_, they often distract individuals from meaningful in-person interactions. (6) \_\_\_\_\_, it is essential to evaluate how these tools are integrated into everyday life.

(7) \_\_\_\_\_ the benefits of online education, many students face challenges related to motivation and time management. (8) \_\_\_\_\_, not all students thrive in remote learning environments. (9) \_\_\_\_\_, the educational system must provide both flexibility and support. (10) \_\_\_\_\_, educators should prioritise a balanced approach to technology use.

- |                 |                 |                      |                   |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| A. Clearly      | B. In contrast  | C. In fact           | D. For instance   |
| A. Due to       | B. Because      | C. Even though       | D. Despite        |
| A. however      | B. for example  | C. in addition       | D. hence          |
| A. Nevertheless | B. For example  | C. On the other hand | D. Thus           |
| A. Likewise     | B. Furthermore  | C. On the contrary   | D. Consequently   |
| A. As a result  | B. For example  | C. In particular     | D. In other words |
| A. Although     | B. Because of   | C. In addition to    | D. Unless         |
| A. Therefore    | B. Nevertheless | C. Similarly         | D. Otherwise      |
| A. Consequently | B. As a result  | C. For instance      | D. In other words |
| A. In contrast  | B. Overall      | C. For example       | D. Nevertheless   |

#### 2.2.4. Multiple-choice: Climate change policy

**Objective:** To develop an understanding of how transition markers affect the logical flow in a connected text.

**Instructions:**

- Choose the most appropriate transition / discourse marker from the options below (A, B, C, or D) to complete each gap.
- Discuss whether other options are possible.

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of the 21st century. (1) \_\_\_\_\_, governments across the globe have committed to reducing carbon emissions. (2) \_\_\_\_\_, critics argue that current efforts remain insufficient. (3) \_\_\_\_\_, a significant gap persists between policy and practice.

(4) \_\_\_\_\_, international agreements like the Paris Accord set ambitious targets. (5) \_\_\_\_\_, few countries have fully met their pledges.

(6)\_\_\_\_\_ climate commitments are in place, enforcement mechanisms remain weak.

(7)\_\_\_\_\_, industrialised nations have a moral obligation to lead by example. (8)\_\_\_\_\_, they are historically responsible for the majority of emissions. (9)\_\_\_\_\_, climate justice advocates call for financial and technological support for developing countries. (10)\_\_\_\_\_, collaboration remains essential to address global climate threats.

- |                    |                   |                      |                |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| A. Consequently    | B. For instance   | C. As a result       | D. In response |
| A. On the contrary | B. Nevertheless   | C. Moreover          | D. Similarly   |
| A. That is to say  | B. In comparison  | C. In other words    | D. In fact     |
| A. For example     | B. Furthermore    | C. However           | D. Yet         |
| A. In contrast     | B. In addition    | C. Although          | D. Therefore   |
| A. While           | B. Since          | C. Due to            | D. As if       |
| A. Namely          | B. In other words | C. In particular     | D. Indeed      |
| A. That is         | B. Because        | C. Since             | D. After       |
| A. Thus            | B. However        | C. Likewise          | D. In contrast |
| A. Despite this    | B. To sum up      | C. On the other hand | D. Overall     |

### 2.2.5. Multiple-choice: Media literacy

**Objective:** To develop an understanding of how transition markers affect the logical flow in a connected text.

**Instructions:**

Choose the most appropriate transition / discourse marker from the options below (A, B, C, or D) to complete each gap.

Discuss whether other options are possible.

The rise of digital media has transformed the way people consume information. (1)\_\_\_\_\_, it has increased the spread of misinformation. (2)\_\_\_\_\_, users may struggle to distinguish credible sources from false ones. (3)\_\_\_\_\_, media literacy education has become a priority in many schools.

(4)\_\_\_\_\_, teaching students how to evaluate sources can reduce the impact of disinformation. (5)\_\_\_\_\_, such training encourages critical thinking and responsible sharing. (6)\_\_\_\_\_, misinformation continues to thrive on many platforms.

(7)\_\_\_\_\_, algorithms that promote engaging content often prioritise sensational headlines. (8)\_\_\_\_\_, users tend to share emotionally charged content without verifying accuracy. (9)\_\_\_\_\_, educators and

policymakers must collaborate to address this issue. (10)\_\_\_\_\_, media literacy alone may not be enough, but it is an essential first step.

- |                    |                      |                 |                    |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| A. In addition     | B. However           | C. Consequently | D. Specifically    |
| A. For example     | B. As a result       | C. Meanwhile    | D. In contrast     |
| A. Therefore       | B. On the other hand | C. Furthermore  | D. Although        |
| A. On the contrary | B. In fact           | C. For instance | D. In the same way |
| A. Moreover        | B. However           | C. Instead      | D. In contrast     |
| A. Thus            | B. Nonetheless       | C. Hence        | D. In other words  |
| A. For example     | B. While             | C. Since        | D. In addition     |
| A. In other words  | B. Similarly         | C. Yet          | D. Even though     |
| A. That is         | B. Nevertheless      | C. Because      | D. Accordingly     |
| A. To conclude     | B. On the contrary   | C. All in all   | D. Still           |

### 2.2.6. Open cloze: Academic writing skills

**Objective:** To develop an understanding of how transition markers affect the logical flow in a connected text.

**Instructions:**

Complete the text with one appropriate transition / discourse marker per blank.

Academic writing requires clarity, logic, and structure. (1)\_\_\_\_\_, students must learn how to organise their ideas effectively. (2)\_\_\_\_\_, using appropriate transition markers is essential to guide the reader. These markers show relationships between ideas; (3)\_\_\_\_\_, they help express contrast, cause, or sequence.

(4)\_\_\_\_\_ students rely too heavily on basic connectors like “and” or “but,” their writing may seem repetitive. (5)\_\_\_\_\_, more advanced expressions such as “moreover” or “nevertheless” can enhance academic tone.

(6)\_\_\_\_\_, academic texts often begin with background information, followed by specific analysis. (7)\_\_\_\_\_, students should include clear topic sentences in each paragraph. (8)\_\_\_\_\_, coherence suffers when transitions are missing or misused.

(9)\_\_\_\_\_ improving sentence-level grammar is important, developing discourse-level awareness is equally crucial. (10)\_\_\_\_\_, mastering transition markers is key to academic writing success.

### 2.2.7. Open cloze: Research and ethics

**Objective:** To develop an understanding of how transition markers affect the logical flow in a connected text.

**Instructions:**

Complete the text with one appropriate transition / discourse marker per blank.

Ethical concerns are central to modern research. (1)\_\_\_\_\_, researchers must ensure informed consent is obtained from all participants. (2)\_\_\_\_\_, data privacy must be protected, especially in sensitive studies. (3)\_\_\_\_\_ ethical guidelines are followed, the credibility of the research may be compromised.

(4)\_\_\_\_\_, unethical practices such as data fabrication or plagiarism can lead to academic sanctions. (5)\_\_\_\_\_, they damage the reputation of the institution. (6)\_\_\_\_\_, journals are increasingly requiring declarations of ethical compliance.

(7)\_\_\_\_\_ researchers face pressure to publish, they must resist the temptation to cut corners. (8)\_\_\_\_\_ integrity should remain a core academic value. (9)\_\_\_\_\_, ethics is not a barrier to progress but a foundation for trustworthy knowledge. (10)\_\_\_\_\_, responsible research practices should be taught early in academic programmes.

### 2.2.8. Open cloze: Globalisation and culture

**Objective:** To develop an understanding of how transition markers affect the logical flow in a connected text.

**Instructions:**

Complete the text with one appropriate transition / discourse marker per blank.

Globalisation has connected the world in unprecedented ways. (1)\_\_\_\_\_, cultures now interact more frequently than ever before. (2)\_\_\_\_\_, this increased interaction leads to greater mutual understanding. (3)\_\_\_\_\_, some fear it results in cultural homogenisation.

(4)\_\_\_\_\_, multinational companies influence local markets and customs. (5)\_\_\_\_\_ fast food chains have altered diets in many countries. (6)\_\_\_\_\_, local traditions sometimes adapt rather than disappear.

(7)\_\_\_\_\_, globalisation presents both opportunities and challenges. (8)\_\_\_\_\_ economic benefits, there are concerns about environ-

mental and cultural costs. (9) \_\_\_\_\_, a balanced approach is necessary to protect cultural diversity. (10) \_\_\_\_\_, education can help students critically engage with global issues.

## 2.3. Cohesion and Coherence: Unity, Clarity, Conciseness

### 2.3.1. Cohesion identification

**Objective:** To identify cohesion through pronouns, and determiners.

**Instructions:**

Decide what each word in bold refers to from options A, B, or C.

1. The college offers distance learning courses leading to diplomas in a wide range of subjects. However, students should be aware that **these** are not recognised qualifications.

a. the courses / b. the diplomas / c. the students

2. Among the readers of **his** book *Martin Eden*, there is more than one who has had similar experiences to those Jack London describes.

a. Jack London / b. Martin Eden / c. one reader

3. From the whole course, Finn singled out the meeting with Gerard as the turning point in his career. **That** was what made him decide to be a doctor.

a. the whole course / b. the meeting with Gerard / c. the decision to be a doctor

4. When **she** describes her mother as 'old, desperate and saddened', Rose wants to provoke any kind of response from the female reader.

a. Rose / b. Rose's mother / c. the female reader

5. Students encouraged to enrol in courses by doubtful individuals posing as academics are often bitterly disappointed. **They** soon find that the course of study is not well coordinated.

a. students / b. doubtful individuals / c. academics

6. The subject studied by a student who fails to get qualifications is irrelevant. The outcome is not a matter of what you choose, but of how suitable **it** is for you.

a. the failure to get qualifications / b. the suitability of a subject / c. the subject

### 2.3.2. Pronoun precision challenge

**Objective:** To identify lack of clarity and improve reference clarity.

**Instructions:**

- Read the following two paragraphs. Some pronouns and determiners are vague or ambiguous. Identify them and rewrite the paragraphs to make the references clearer and more cohesive.
- Where would you use cohesive devices?
- Read the sample and rewritten sample paragraph as an example.

**Sample paragraph:**

Shakespeare's plays often reflect themes of power and corruption. They are recurring themes in many of them. They are studied in most literature courses, and he and they remain a popular topic for discussion.

**Rewritten sample paragraph:**

Shakespeare's plays often reflect themes of power and corruption. These themes are recurrent in many of his works. His plays are studied in most literature courses, and both Shakespeare and the themes of power and corruption remain a popular topic for discussion.

**Paragraph 1:**

The novel explores themes of identity and belonging. It is important in the way it shows how people struggle to find a place in society. They are often confused about where they fit, and it creates conflict. The characters deal with these issues in different ways, but they usually have a hard time overcoming them. In schools, it is often assigned because of how relevant it still is. Students connect with it, even though it was written years ago. It continues to be read in classrooms because it speaks to so many people's experiences.

**Paragraph 2:**

Time management is a skill that many people find difficult to master. It can affect how productive someone is during the day, and when it is not handled well, it leads to stress. Students often struggle with it, especially when they have multiple deadlines. They try to plan ahead, but it doesn't always work. It's something that takes practice and discipline. Some use tools to help with it, like calendars or apps, but even those don't always solve the problem. That is why improving it is often recommended for anyone who wants to be more efficient and less overwhelmed.

### 2.3.3. Substitution showdown

**Objective:** To practice substitution for cohesive variation.

**Instructions:**

- Read the following two paragraphs. Rewrite the paragraphs using substitution where possible to avoid repetition and improve flow.

- When rewriting, note what other means of substitution there are.

Where would you use cohesive devices?

- Read the sample and rewritten sample paragraph as an example.

**Sample paragraph:**

The students submitted their essays on Monday. The essays were evaluated by Friday. The essays showed improvement in argumentation and structure. The essays also included fewer grammar mistakes than last time.

**Rewritten sample paragraph:**

The students submitted their essays on Monday. These were evaluated by Friday and showed improvement in argumentation and structure. They also included fewer grammar mistakes than last time.

**Paragraph 1:**

The course helps students develop scientific research skills. Scientific research skills are essential for academic writing and critical analysis. Scientific research skills include identifying credible sources, evaluating data, and citing evidence. Scientific research skills are emphasised in every major assignment. Students are taught to apply scientific research skills through hands-on projects and lab work. Students who master scientific research skills are more likely to succeed in upper-level courses. Scientific research skills also prepare students for careers in science, healthcare, and education. By focusing on scientific research skills, the course ensures that students are ready for future academic challenges.

**Paragraph 2:**

The study examined the effects of online learning on university students. The study focused on how online learning influences motivation and academic performance. The study was conducted over two semesters. The study included surveys, interviews, and test results from participating students. The study revealed that some students preferred online learning because of its flexibility. The study also showed that others struggled with time management and staying engaged. The study concluded that while online learning offers benefits, the effectiveness of online learning depends on individual learning styles and support systems.

### 2.3.4. Ellipsis in action

**Objective:** To use ellipsis to reduce repetition and maintain cohesion.

**Instructions:**

- Compare Version A and Version B. One uses ellipsis effectively. Identify where ellipsis occurs.
- Rewrite the two paragraphs below using ellipsis where appropriate.

**Version A:**

Some students preferred online classes. Other students preferred face-to-face classes. The students who preferred online classes liked the flexibility. The students who preferred face-to-face classes liked the interaction.

**Version B:**

Some students preferred online classes, while others preferred face-to-face. Those who preferred the former liked the flexibility; those who preferred the latter liked the interaction.

**Paragraph 1:**

Many scholars believe that technology improves access to education. Other scholars believe that technology has a minimal impact on access to education. The scholars who support the idea that technology improves access to education often refer to the rise of online platforms, open educational resources, and remote learning tools. The scholars who argue that technology has a minimal impact on access to education suggest that economic inequality and lack of digital literacy remain significant barriers. These scholars emphasise that technology alone cannot solve structural issues in education systems around the world.

**Paragraph 2:**

Students in the science programme attended a research workshop designed to enhance their practical lab skills. Students in the humanities programme also attended a research workshop, but theirs focused on theoretical knowledge and critical analysis. The students in the science programme worked on experiments and collected data. The students in the humanities programme reviewed academic articles and discussed research methodology. Despite the different emphases, all students in the science and humanities programmes gained valuable research experience during the workshop.

### 2.3.5. Fix the broken chain

**Objective:** To repair broken referencing chains across sentences.

**Instructions:**

- The two paragraphs below lack cohesion due to poor referencing. Fix the chain of references to make the text more fluid and connected. Identify vague references and replace them with clearer expressions for cohesion.
- Building reference chains: specific noun → pronoun → restated or summarised noun phrase
- Read the sample and rewritten sample paragraph as an example.

**Sample paragraph:**

The article discusses the rise of eco-tourism in Southeast Asia. There is an increase in local community engagement. The people are benefiting from tourism. This is a positive change. It can encourage further development.

**Rewritten sample paragraph:**

The article discusses the rise of eco-tourism in Southeast Asia, highlighting an increase in local community engagement. These communities are benefiting from tourism, which represents a positive change. Such developments can encourage further sustainable growth.

Good reference chains follow this pattern:

- Specific noun: local community engagement
- Pronoun: these communities / which / this trend
- Restated or summarised noun phrase: such developments / this shift / this growth

**Paragraph 1:**

Technology has changed how students access information. It has had a big impact on how they study. This is becoming more common in classrooms around the world. It is also affecting teachers. These are often not trained to use it properly. That is a problem in many schools. Some are investing in tools, but others are not sure about that. This creates gaps. It might make things worse for students in different regions.

**Paragraph 2:**

The report highlights rising sea levels in coastal cities. It says this could affect millions of people. This is already happening in some areas. These are seeing more floods. They are not always prepared for them. This can damage homes and infrastructure. That puts pressure on governments. It could lead to migration. Some are trying to plan for it, but others don't think that's a good idea.

### 2.3.6. Lexical chain detective

**Objective:** To identify and analyse lexical cohesion through repetition, synonyms, and related words.

**Instructions:**

- Read the three paragraphs below and highlight all the instances of lexical cohesion (repetition, synonyms, word families, collocations).
- Draw a lexical chain for each paragraph's key concept. Is the chain effective or overused? Is the cohesion smooth or repetitive?

**Paragraph 1:**

Urbanisation is rapidly transforming landscapes across the globe. As cities expand, urban development reshapes rural areas, turning farmland into residential zones. This growth creates challenges for infrastructure, transportation, and housing. Planners must adapt to this urban sprawl to ensure sustainable growth and livable cities.

**Paragraph 2:**

Climate change continues to pose a significant threat to the environment. Rising temperatures contribute to more frequent heatwaves, while shifting weather patterns disrupt agriculture. Governments are implementing climate policies to address these issues, but experts argue that global warming requires faster action. Reducing emissions is seen as critical to slowing the pace of environmental degradation and preserving the planet for future generations.

**Paragraph 3:**

Higher education equips individuals with the skills needed in today's workforce. Through academic programmes, students gain knowledge, improve their critical thinking, and build professional competencies. Many Universities also emphasise research and independent study to foster intellectual growth. However, rising tuition fees make access to tertiary education more difficult for some, raising concerns about educational inequality.

### 2.3.7. Balancing the lanes: Cohesion and lexical patterns

**Objective:** To identify and examine lexical cohesion (repetition, synonyms, word families, collocations), referential cohesion (pronouns, demonstratives, ellipsis) and use of discourse markers.

**Instructions:**

- Read the article below – “*What to do with the oddball Jarvis Street?*” by Amy Smith (Cityscape Magazine, 2015) – and discuss what connection(s) you can make between the content in this text and your life.
- Exemplify each lexical chain in the table.
- Provide three examples of reference chains, where pronouns or determiners clearly link back to previous nouns.
- Provide three discourse markers that guide the reader through the text.
- Rewrite one paragraph from the article (choose one with cohesion issues or repetition), improving clarity of referencing (replace vague terms like “it,” “this”), lexical variety without losing cohesion, or the flow between sentences using appropriate linking expressions.
- Do your changes make the text clearer or more formal? Why?

	Examples
<b>Lexical Chain</b>	
- <i>Transportation and traffic</i>	
- <i>Urban planning and development</i>	
- <i>Civic policy and government</i>	
- <i>Stakeholders and roles</i>	
- <i>Temporal change</i>	
<b>Reference chains</b>	
<b>Discourse markers</b>	

**ARTICLE:**

**What to do with the oddball Jarvis Street?**

Jarvis Street is an atypical thoroughfare among the downtown Toronto roads. With its dimensional peculiarities and demographic dynamics, no one – least of all the City – knows quite what to do with its traffic situation. This has resulted in both wasted money and public protests. Its unclear *modus operandi* pits motorist versus cyclist versus pedestrian with no clear winner, except for fleeting moments where one appears to have the green light and the others are stopped at a red.

Running just two blocks east of the city’s main commercial artery, Yonge Street, Jarvis provides a north/southbound route into or out of the downtown core. It ends at Bloor Street, Yonge’s east/west counterpart. Traditionally

home to mansions, city gardens, old churches, hotels, and a few big business headquarters, Jarvis has lacked pedestrian volume by design. Additionally, without shops lining the street, drivers often opt for the relatively little congestion of this 50 kph zone (though its straight lines often encourage speeding), if a quick commute into downtown neighbourhoods remains the goal.

Unlike most streets that accommodate even lane numbers, Jarvis Street's current width is awkward. Four may create luxuriously wide lanes, while six would make even Smart cars blush. One option: engineer a centre commuter lane that changes direction at different times of the day. Drivers must pay attention to the lighted green check or red X dangling over this lane indicating the current flow (although having a head-on collision also makes this violently clear). For most of Jarvis's life, decisions involving traffic flow have given motorists the keys to the road.

Between 2010 and 2012, however, cyclists had their day, which proved quite costly. Attempting to improve Jarvis Street "as a cultural corridor with an emphasis on its historical significance," the City approved new sidewalks, trees, and curb side bicycle lanes. To make way, the reversible lane was removed, and the existing four lanes were redrawn. City cyclists declared victory even though the lanes themselves included mere painted borders and chevrons. Legally sharing the road between motorists and cyclists was in fact short-lived. Despite protests, just 18 months later, a new City Council led by Mayor Rob "war on the car" Ford, approved the removal of bike lanes by a 24:19 vote to the sum of \$272,000 (a \$186,000 difference above the cost of installation).

Most recently, pedestrians may prepare to parade their influence on the streets. Over the last 10 years, Toronto's skyline has irrevocably changed, with the condominium boom encroaching on every corner of the downtown core, now including Jarvis. In various stages of construction, Pace, X1, X2, Radio City, and Dundas Square Gardens populate the boulevards. Furthermore, as Ryerson University continues to expand into the neighbourhood, a new 30-storey building will increase the student population in the area by 593. With resident numbers predicted to rise sharply, pedestrian concerns return to City Council's docket. Additionally, after a series of fatal collisions, City Hall proposed a speed limit reduction to 40 kph, but even with World Health Organisation supportive data, public opinion sides against it.

In the end, Jarvis Street continues to evolve, shifting influence over its right-of-way. Pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists all have stakes in how the street continues to develop, with a balance between safety and convenience an elusive goal. If history repeats, however, the rules of this quirky stretch of road will undoubtedly change again.

### 2.3.8. Paragraph cohesion / coherence comparison

**Objective:** To make a distinction between cohesion and coherence in a paragraph and their interconnectedness.

**Instructions:**

Read each paragraph and explain whether it is coherent, cohesive, or both, or even lacking in one and / or another. Are there any breakdowns in cohesion or coherence noticeable?

**Paragraph 1:**

School uniforms are necessary due to the divisions and cliques that are often created when uniforms are not present. In many urban areas, clothing is often used to signify membership in or allegiance to a specific street gang. Gang activity and violence distracts from a safe and effective school environment, and through the discipline process, students are excluded from the classroom. In addition, outside of street gang activity, clothing often creates cliques in schools. In a recent interview, students in one middle school discussed a specific clique of girls based on their attire, including “scrunchies” and “large sweatshirts that cover their shorts.” Solely based on attire, students recognised members of this clique in their schools, and saw themselves as excluded from the group. School uniforms would create an environment where all students dress similarly and no student is singled out as a member of a specific clique.

**Paragraph 2:**

Your social networks and your location within them shape the kind and amount of information that you have access to. Information is distinct from data in that it makes some kind of generalization about a person, thing, or population. Defensible generalizations about society can be either probabilities (i.e. statistics) or patterns (often from qualitative analysis). Such probabilities and patterns can be temporal, spatial, or simultaneous.

**Paragraph 3:**

Depletion of ground water is going to have disastrous consequences for the future if management plans are not implemented soon. The world’s water capital is being steadily depleted. Worldwide, people are using significantly more water than can be replaced. Reserves of water are very large and people are using them without any thought for the future. One-third of the world’s population depends on ground water. Ground water has taken thousands of years to develop. Poor management of ground water resources is a major issue all over the world.

### 2.3.9. Paragraph sequencing

**Objectives:** To practice logical ordering / transition of ideas and topic continuity.

**Instructions:**

– Arrange these nine jumbled sentences (mini-paragraphs) on *the ethics of AI decision-making* in the most coherent order.

– Justify your answer.

a) Ultimately, this raises questions about accountability: who is responsible when something goes wrong?

b) Autonomous vehicles must make decisions that balance passenger safety and pedestrian rights.

c) Legal scholars have suggested that shared liability between manufacturers and users may be a necessary solution.

d) These dilemmas highlight the difficulty of encoding human values into machine logic.

e) Ethicists warn that AI might favour the statistically less risky choice, rather than the morally preferable one.

f) Public opinion on these decisions is divided, with some arguing for strict ethical rules and others favouring pragmatic outcomes.

g) One real-world example is when a vehicle must decide whether to swerve into an empty lane or risk hitting a pedestrian.

h) Researchers are now working on AI models that can weigh legal, social, and moral factors in real time.

i) To mitigate bias, some suggest programming vehicles to randomise morally difficult decisions.

### 2.3.10. Cohesion diagnostics

**Objectives:** To diagnose and correct cohesion issues. To develop editing skills for clarity and style.

**Instructions:**

– Read the paragraph below, containing several issues with cohesion and referencing (unclear pronouns, repetitive words, inconsistent transitions).

– Rewrite the paragraph to improve clarity, remove redundancy, and strengthen linking.

**Paragraph:**

Solar energy is becoming more important. It has many benefits. This is why some people are choosing it. It helps the planet because it's cleaner. But it is expensive. That's something people don't like. Although it is popular, some think it's not reliable. This causes issues. For example, when it's cloudy, it doesn't work well. And that makes people worried. Another thing is storage. It doesn't always get stored properly. Even though they are trying to fix this. Also, in some places, they don't get enough of it. It's hard to know what to do about that. The government tries to support it, but it is not easy. They give help sometimes. However, some believe it is not enough. In conclusion, this is something that will keep being talked about. Because it's very relevant now.

**2.3.11. Comparative coherence**

**Objective:** To analyse two versions of the same paragraph (cohesive vs disjointed).

**Instructions:**

- Read and compare Version A (well-connected) and Version B (disjointed) below.
- Underline differences in connectors, referencing, and sentence flow.
- Identify where Version B lacks cohesion and transitions.

**Version A:**

Globalisation fosters cultural exchange; consequently, societies benefit from diverse perspectives in areas such as language, art, and education. Furthermore, international collaboration has increased innovation, particularly in science and technology, where cross-border research has led to major breakthroughs. As a result, many argue that globalisation promotes economic growth by opening new markets and creating global supply chains. In addition, businesses are able to access a wider talent pool, which enhances competitiveness and productivity. However, while globalisation brings numerous benefits, it also poses challenges. For instance, developing nations may become dependent on foreign investment, and local industries can suffer under intense global competition. Despite these concerns, advocates claim that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Therefore, many economists and policymakers continue to support globalisation as a driving force behind modern development. Ultimately, understanding both the opportunities and limitations of globalisation is essential for building inclusive and sustainable global systems.

**Version B:**

Globalisation fosters cultural exchange. Societies benefit from diverse perspectives. People share language, art, and education. International collaboration has increased innovation. Research in science and technology has improved. Economic growth is promoted by globalisation. It opens markets and creates global supply chains. Companies hire people from different places. This helps businesses. Globalisation also causes problems. Some countries rely on foreign money. Local businesses close. Some people support globalisation. Others do not. Economists talk about it. Policymakers support it. Globalisation is a big part of development. Understanding globalisation is important. It has good sides and bad sides. There are a lot of opinions about it. People should learn more about it.

**2.3.12. In-depth analysis of cohesive devices in context**

**Objective:** To encourage deeper linguistic analysis and understanding of textual cohesion and how it is achieved.

**Instructions:**

– Read the following paragraph on *hybrid cars and sustainable transport*. Identify and categorise different cohesive devices, including reference (e.g. pronouns, demonstratives), substitution or ellipsis, conjunctions (additive, adversative, causal, temporal), and lexical cohesion (repetition, synonyms, collocations).

– Explain how each contributes to the overall cohesion of the text.

**Paragraph:**

Hybrid cars are increasingly viewed as a practical solution in the shift towards more sustainable transportation. These vehicles combine an internal combustion engine with an electric motor, allowing for reduced fuel consumption and lower greenhouse gas emissions. This dual-power system improves energy efficiency and extends driving range, making hybrids appealing to both environmentally conscious consumers and cost-conscious drivers. They also benefit from regenerative braking, a process in which energy lost during braking is converted into usable power. However, hybrid vehicles are typically more expensive than traditional models. Some argue that the long-term fuel savings offset the initial cost, while others question whether the price difference is justified. In addition, limited battery capacity can restrict performance, especially on longer trips. Nevertheless, advancements in battery technology are expected to reduce these limitations. Ultimately, hybrid cars represent a transitional technology, bridging the gap between conventional

vehicles and fully electric alternatives. Their growing popularity suggests that this category of vehicles will play a key role in the future of clean mobility.

### 2.3.13. Linking across paragraphs (global coherence)

**Objective:** To improve logical flow between paragraphs, referencing, lexical cohesion.

**Instructions:**

- Read the two body paragraphs below on *climate policy*.
- Improve global coherence by adding a transitional sentence between the two paragraphs, and appropriate cohesive devices (pronouns, references, synonyms, transitions).
- Revise the paragraph to reduce repetition and improve flow.

**Paragraph A:**

Governments around the world are implementing climate policies to reduce carbon emissions. These strategies typically involve setting national emissions targets and investing in renewable energy. Such initiatives are crucial in slowing the pace of global warming. In addition to domestic efforts, many countries are participating in international climate agreements, which promote collaboration and policy alignment. Despite facing obstacles in implementation, many governments continue to rely on these coordinated policies as a primary means of addressing environmental challenges.

**Paragraph B:**

Climate change also affects developing countries. Climate change threatens food security, water supplies, and public health. Climate change makes these regions more vulnerable to natural disasters such as floods and droughts. Many of these countries lack the resources to adapt to climate change. Climate change puts additional pressure on fragile economies and weak infrastructures. In rural areas, climate change can disrupt agricultural productivity, which is often the backbone of local livelihoods. Urban populations also suffer from rising temperatures and air pollution caused by climate change. Despite growing awareness, the global response to the specific needs of developing nations has been limited. Climate change must be addressed through global cooperation that supports those most at risk

### 2.3.14. Peer feedback

**Objective:** To build editing, collaborative, and metacognitive skills; critical reflection.

**Instructions:**

- In pairs, exchange one of your recent academic paragraphs.
- Use the following checklist to evaluate your partner’s writing:
  - Are cohesive devices used appropriately and effectively?
  - Are there any unclear references (e.g. ambiguous pronouns)?
  - Is the progression of ideas logical and clear?
  - Are synonyms and lexical variety used to avoid repetition?
  - Are transitions used between and within paragraphs?
- Provide constructive written feedback (balance between praise and suggestions for improvement) and suggest at least three edits to improve cohesion and coherence.

**2.4. Topic Sentences****2.4.1. Topic sentence and supporting sentences matchmaker**

**Objective:** To understand how topic sentences determine the logical scope and unity of a paragraph.

**Instructions:**

Match each topic sentence in Column A with the correct group of supporting sentences in Column B. One supporting set in Column B does not match any of the topic sentences. Identify it and explain why it does not belong.

**Column A: Topic sentences**

1. Artificial intelligence is transforming the modern workplace.
2. Urban green spaces offer numerous benefits to city dwellers.
3. Fast fashion contributes significantly to environmental degradation.
4. Volunteering abroad can develop key interpersonal and professional skills.
5. Critical thinking is essential in academic writing and research.
6. The rise of telemedicine is reshaping how patients access healthcare.

**Column B: Supporting sentence sets**

a)

- Rooftop gardens and community parks reduce urban heat and improve air quality.
- Access to green areas has been linked to lower stress and better mental health.
- Green spaces also promote physical activity among city residents.

b)

- Virtual consultations save time and reduce hospital overcrowding.
- Remote monitoring devices allow doctors to track patients at home.
- Some patients, however, find online appointments less personal.

c)

- Retailers produce clothes at record speeds using cheap materials.
- Unsold garments often end up in landfills, contributing to waste.
- Dyeing processes release toxic chemicals into rivers and ecosystems.

d)

- Students must question sources rather than accept information at face value.
- Academic arguments rely on logical reasoning and evidence.
- Evaluating different viewpoints is part of developing a strong thesis.

e)

- AI-powered tools now handle data analysis, scheduling, and customer support.
- Automation reduces the need for some administrative roles.
- However, it also creates demand for workers with advanced digital skills.

f)

- Many people believe dogs are more loyal than cats.
- Some studies suggest dog owners are more physically active.
- Others argue that cats are less demanding and more independent.

g)

- Participants often build confidence and adaptability in new environments.
- Collaborating with diverse groups enhances communication and problem-solving.
- Volunteers may also gain insight into global issues and social responsibility.

#### 2.4.2. Topic sentence creator

**Objective:** To develop the ability to write clear and focused topic sentences. To infer the main idea. To synthesise and come to a deduction.

**Instructions:**

- Below are seven sets of supporting sentences. Write a strong topic sentence for each that clearly summarises the main idea and includes a controlling idea.
- Discuss how topic sentences act like an ‘umbrella’.

**Set 1:**

- Studies show excessive social media use correlates with anxiety and depression.
- Online comparison often lowers users' self-esteem.
- Experts suggest setting screen time limits to reduce negative effects.

**Set 2:**

- The printing press allowed ideas to spread across Europe rapidly.
- Literacy rates increased as more people gained access to books.
- This contributed to major cultural changes like the Reformation and the Enlightenment.

**Set 3:**

- Employees who lack work-life balance often experience burnout.
- Chronic stress from overwork can lead to health issues.
- Companies with flexible hours or remote options report higher staff satisfaction.

**Set 4:**

- Plastic pollution in oceans harms marine life and ecosystems.
- Some countries have banned single-use plastics to address the issue.
- Environmental groups advocate for stronger global regulations on plastic waste.

**Set 5:**

- Automated machines now perform tasks once done by humans.
- This shift has led to job displacement in some industries.
- At the same time, demand for tech-related jobs has increased.

**Set 6:**

- Rote memorization does not equip students to analyse or question ideas.
- Critical thinking enables students to assess arguments and solve problems creatively.
- Many educators now incorporate debate and inquiry-based learning into their teaching.

**Set 7:**

- Studies show that plant-based diets reduce the risk of chronic disease.
- Vegetarian and vegan diets are often lower in saturated fats.
- These diets have also been linked to environmental benefits.

### 2.4.3. Improving weak topic sentences

**Objective:** To strengthen the ability to critically identify vague or overly general topic sentences and revise them to express a clear, specific main idea with a controlling idea appropriate for academic writing. To formulate strong and focused topic sentences expressing clear opinions.

**Instructions:**

- Read the following six topic sentences. For each, explain what makes it ineffective or vague.
- Rewrite it to clearly state the main idea and provide a controlling idea.
- Provide peer feedback to another student’s rewritten version.
- Discuss:
  - What makes a good topic sentence?
  - How would you expand each topic sentence into an opinion paragraph?
  - What ideas would you write about?

- a) Technology is changing everything.
- b) There are many problems in the world.
- c) Sports are fun for a lot of people.
- d) I don’t understand what influencers actually do for a living.
- e) There are lots of ways to stay healthy.
- f) The economy affects everyone.

### 2.4.4. Identifying relevance

**Objective:** To develop the ability to recognise and evaluate paragraph unity and coherence by identifying topic sentences, linking devices, and irrelevant content.

**Instructions:**

- Read the following three paragraphs carefully.
- For each paragraph, underline the topic sentence, circle any linking devices used to organise ideas, and cross out one sentence that does not relate clearly to the paragraph’s main idea.

**Paragraph 1:**

Bilingualism offers numerous cognitive and social advantages. To begin with, individuals who speak more than one language often show greater mental flexibility and problem-solving skills. In addition, research suggests bi-

lingual people are better at switching between tasks and filtering out distractions. These skills are particularly useful in both academic and professional contexts. Moreover, bilingual individuals can communicate with a wider range of people, which can lead to deeper intercultural understanding and more inclusive communities. For instance, job applicants who speak multiple languages are often preferred in international workplaces. Many language learners enjoy cooking food from different countries. Furthermore, studies indicate that bilingualism may delay the onset of dementia in older adults. Taken together, these benefits show that learning and maintaining more than one language can be highly advantageous throughout life.

**Paragraph 2:**

Urban air pollution results from several interconnected causes. One of the primary contributors is vehicle emissions, which release carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and other harmful gases into the air. Additionally, industrial activity near city centers can exacerbate the problem by emitting pollutants through factory chimneys. The construction industry also plays a role, especially in growing cities where dust and particles are released daily. For example, large-scale roadworks often produce fine particles that affect air quality. Moreover, the widespread use of air conditioning units adds to energy consumption, increasing power plant emissions. Some people prefer cycling to work instead of taking the bus. Governments attempt to mitigate pollution by introducing stricter emission regulations and promoting cleaner energy alternatives. Without coordinated policies, however, these efforts often fall short. Overall, urban air pollution is a complex problem requiring both local and global solutions.

**Paragraph 3:**

Social media has a significant impact on the lives of teenagers today. First of all, platforms like Instagram and TikTok shape how young people view themselves and others. Because of this, teens may experience lower self-esteem or increased anxiety due to constant comparison. Moreover, excessive screen time can negatively affect sleep patterns, making it harder for students to focus during the school day. Some teenagers like playing basketball in their free time. In contrast, social media also provides opportunities for connection, allowing teens to communicate across distances and form online communities. Many use it to engage with social issues and express themselves creatively. Therefore, while social media can be empowering, its influence is not always positive. Parents and educators need to help students build healthy habits and critical thinking skills when navigating online spaces.

### 2.4.5. Composing a paragraph outline

**Objective:** To develop the ability to compose focused and logically structured topic sentences that clearly support a thesis, while planning relevant supporting points for a well-organised academic paragraph / essay.

**Instructions:**

- For each thesis statement write three strong topic sentences that would be used in the body paragraphs of an essay supporting the thesis. Then, briefly note what evidence or ideas would go under each. This would represent a draft version that can be further expanded.

**Thesis statement 1:**

Technology has had a profound impact on modern education by changing how students access information, communicate with instructors, and engage in independent learning.

Topic sentence 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Topic sentence 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Topic sentence 3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

**Thesis statement 2:**

Improving working conditions is essential for employee well-being, increased productivity, and long-term business success.

Topic sentence 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Topic sentence 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Topic sentence 3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

## 2.5. Opinion Paragraphs

Paragraph Component	Purpose	What to Include / Writing Tips	Example (Topic: Social Media in Education)
Topic Sentence	Introduce the topic and clearly express your opinion (stance).	- Be specific, not vague. - Use opinion language (“I believe”, “In my view”, “It is clear that”, etc.).	In my view, social media can be a powerful tool for enhancing student engagement in the classroom.
First Supporting Reason	Provide the first main reason for your opinion.	- Use logical reasoning. - Make sure the reason directly supports your opinion.	This is because it allows teachers to connect learning with platforms students already use daily.
Example or Evidence	Give evidence: a fact, statistic, example, or real-world reference.	- Use academic or real-world examples. - Avoid generalities like “Everyone knows...”	For example, some educators use Instagram or YouTube to share visual explanations of difficult concepts.
Commentary / Explanation	Analyse how the evidence supports your opinion.	- Interpret the example. - Show the logical connection to your argument.	By using familiar tools, students may feel more motivated and engaged with the material.
Second Supporting Reason (Optional)	Strengthen your opinion with an additional point or perspective.	- Use connectors like “Additionally,” “Moreover,” “Another reason is...”	Moreover, social media allows for peer collaboration through comment threads and group discussions.
Concluding Sentence	Restate your opinion and summarise your key point.	- Do not introduce new ideas. - Use summarising language (“Therefore”, “As a result”, “In conclusion”, etc.)	Therefore, integrating social media into education can enrich student participation and modernise learning.

*Table 2: Structure of an opinion paragraph*

### 2.5.1. Opinion paragraph building blocks

**Objective:** To understand and analyse the structure of an academic opinion paragraph.

**Instructions:**

– Read the following three paragraphs on different topics. Identify the topic, topic sentence, supporting arguments, examples, and the concluding sentence. Label each part in the margins.

– Discuss:

- How would you expand each paragraph?
- If you could omit one sentence from each paragraph, which one would it be? Why?

**Paragraph 1:**

University students should be required to take public speaking courses as part of their degree programmes. Effective communication is a vital skill in nearly every profession, and public speaking offers structured training to develop this ability. These courses help students articulate their ideas clearly, organise their thoughts logically, and speak confidently in front of an audience. Moreover, public speaking courses can enhance performance in other academic areas such as presentations, seminars, and group discussions. For instance, students who receive formal training in public speaking often perform better in oral exams and report greater self-confidence when participating in classroom activities. Additionally, developing presentation skills in university better prepares students for real-world tasks like interviews, networking, and workplace meetings. Communication anxiety is a common issue, especially among young professionals, and exposing students to speaking situations in a supportive environment helps reduce fear and build competence. Critics might argue that not all degree paths require public speaking, but in today's globalised and highly interactive job market, this skill is broadly applicable. Therefore, making public speaking a required course would not only benefit students academically but also equip them with essential tools for personal and professional growth.

**Paragraph 2:**

In my opinion, adopting sustainable living practices is no longer a choice but a necessity in today's world. First of all, our current rate of resource consumption is unsustainable and contributes significantly to environmental degradation. For instance, the overuse of single-use plastics, excessive energy consumption, and food waste all put a strain on natural ecosystems. Additionally, individuals who embrace sustainable habits, such as recycling, reducing meat consumption, and using public transport, can significantly reduce their carbon footprint. These small, consistent actions have a cumulative effect that benefits the planet. Moreover, sustainable living often leads to healthier lifestyles and financial savings. People who consume less tend to make more conscious choices, which can improve well-being and reduce impulsive spen-

ding. Critics argue that one person's efforts cannot solve global issues, but collective action begins with individual responsibility. By choosing sustainable options in our everyday routines, we not only protect the environment but also influence larger systems such as markets and policy through our consumption patterns. Therefore, promoting sustainable living is crucial if we want to ensure a livable planet for future generations.

**Paragraph 3:**

Fast fashion is a deeply problematic industry, and I believe consumers should take greater responsibility for its harmful effects. To begin with, fast fashion contributes heavily to environmental pollution through overproduction and the use of toxic chemicals. Factories that mass-produce cheap clothing often dump waste into rivers, contributing to water contamination and damaging ecosystems. Additionally, the industry is notorious for exploiting low-paid labor in developing countries. Workers frequently endure unsafe conditions and earn wages far below the living standard. Despite these issues, many consumers continue to prioritise low prices and frequent wardrobe changes over ethical concerns. For example, large clothing chains release new styles weekly, encouraging impulsive buying and waste. Although some argue that affordable clothing makes fashion accessible to all, this accessibility comes at a high ethical and environmental cost. Consumers need to rethink their shopping habits by supporting ethical brands or buying second-hand. Making informed choices can reduce the demand for harmful practices. In conclusion, fast fashion's popularity has serious consequences, and it is our responsibility as consumers to push the industry towards more sustainable and ethical alternatives.

**2.5.2. Rebuilding meaning: Paragraph reconstruction**

**Objective:** To develop awareness of paragraph structure, logical flow and cohesion-building strategies through sentence ordering, reference and linking.

**Instructions:**

- Read the following ten scrambled sentences, which are from a paragraph discussing *remote work*.
- Arrange the sentences into a coherent and cohesive paragraph.
- Write a topic sentence that logically introduces the paragraph.

a) As a result, many professionals report higher satisfaction and improved mental well-being.

b) Nevertheless, not all employees thrive in this environment, especially those who miss face-to-face communication.

c) Remote work has become increasingly common across a wide range of industries.

d) One major advantage is the flexibility it offers in terms of working hours and location.

e) In some cases, this lack of social interaction can lead to feelings of isolation or disconnection.

f) Furthermore, companies benefit from reduced overhead costs, including rent and utilities.

g) In response, some organisations have introduced regular virtual check-ins and informal video meetings.

h) Employees who previously spent hours commuting now have more time for family or personal activities.

i) Effective use of digital tools, such as video conferencing and shared cloud platforms, helps maintain productivity.

j) Still, the shift to remote work requires new strategies to support collaboration and team cohesion.

### 2.5.3. Linker lab: Transition control

**Objective:** To practice using discourse markers / transition phrases for coherence, flow and logical sequencing in opinion paragraphs.

**Instructions:**

- Read the following paragraph on *whether e-cars are truly eco-friendly*.
- Insert discourse markers / transition phrases wherever appropriate.

**Paragraph:**

Electric cars are widely considered a sustainable alternative to traditional gas vehicles, but their environmental impact is more complicated than many people assume. The electricity used to charge these cars is still generated by burning fossil fuels in many parts of the world. The production of electric vehicle batteries relies heavily on mining raw materials like lithium, cobalt, and nickel. These mining activities often cause water shortages, soil degradation, and pollution in vulnerable regions. The manufacturing process of e-cars also consumes significant energy, sometimes more than producing a standard internal combustion vehicle. Battery disposal is another major concern, as most lithium-ion batteries are not easily recyclable and can be hazardous to the environment if not handled properly. Electric cars do emit less carbon dioxide while driving, which helps reduce air pollution in cities. Focusing only

on the absence of tailpipe emissions overlooks the environmental costs hidden in the supply chain. The long-term benefits of e-cars depend heavily on advances in green energy and battery technology. Without changes to how batteries are produced, powered, and discarded, electric cars may offer only a partial solution to environmental problems rather than a complete one.

#### 2.5.4. From evidence to opinion

**Objective:** To practice building logically argued opinions from supporting evidence.

**Instructions:**

- Read the list of three facts and statistics about urbanisation, followed by a model paragraph (around 100 words) that expresses a clear opinion based on this evidence.
- Write a paragraph (around 100 words) that expresses a clear opinion based on the evidence below on coffee and health.

**Evidence (urbanization):**

- According to the UN, 68% of the world’s population is expected to live in urban areas by 2060.
- A World Bank report states that urban areas generate over 80% of global GDP.
- Urbanisation has been linked to rising housing inequality, pollution, and pressure on infrastructure in developing cities.

**Model paragraph:**

Urbanisation, while inevitable, brings more advantages than drawbacks for modern society. With 68% of the global population expected to live in cities by 2060, efficient urban planning is essential. Urban centers drive economic growth, generating over 80% of global GDP, as noted by the World Bank. This concentration of resources fosters innovation, access to education, and job opportunities. Although challenges like pollution and housing inequality exist, they can be addressed through smart policies and investment. Overall, urbanisation, if managed responsibly, can enhance quality of life and serve as a catalyst for sustainable development.

**Evidence (coffee and health):**

- A 2021 study found that drinking 3-5 cups of coffee per day is associated with a 15% lower risk of heart disease.

- Coffee contains antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds that may protect brain function and lower the risk of Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s.
- According to the World Health Organisation, moderate coffee consumption is not linked to increased cancer risk and may even reduce the risk of liver and uterine cancer.

### 2.5.5. Opinion shifts

**Objective:** To develop balance in opinion writing by rewriting from the opposite viewpoint (rebuttal and counterargument structures).

**Instructions:**

Read the two opinion paragraphs below on different topics, and choose one paragraph to rewrite from the opposing perspective.

**Paragraph 1:**

Traditional classroom instruction is more effective than online learning for most university students. Although online courses offer flexibility, they often lack the structure and interactive elements that enhance student engagement and comprehension. In face-to-face classrooms, students benefit from immediate feedback, opportunities for spontaneous discussion, and real-time clarification of difficult concepts. Moreover, physical classroom environments foster accountability and motivation, reducing procrastination and disengagement. For example, students who attend lectures in person are more likely to participate in group work and ask questions, which contributes to deeper learning. In contrast, many online learners struggle with time management, isolation, and distraction, especially when left to work independently. Additionally, not all students have access to stable internet or quiet workspaces at home, leading to unequal learning experiences. While some argue that online education allows access for more people, access alone does not guarantee effectiveness. Furthermore, research suggests that completion rates for online courses are significantly lower than for traditional ones. In-person learning creates a more immersive and supportive environment that fosters community, collaboration, and academic growth. Therefore, while online learning has its place, traditional classrooms remain the most effective setting for university-level education.

**Paragraph 2:**

Banning smartphones in classrooms is unnecessary and potentially counterproductive. Rather than eliminating them, educators should teach students how to use smartphones responsibly as learning tools. Modern phones

offer a range of educational functions, including language apps, note-taking tools, calculators, and instant research capabilities. Students can use their phones to participate in interactive quizzes, access digital textbooks, or collaborate with classmates. Removing this access limits flexibility, particularly for students who may not own a laptop or tablet. Moreover, enforcing a ban can create tension between teachers and students, fostering resistance rather than responsible use. The focus should be on digital literacy and engagement, not restriction. In real-world work and academic settings, individuals are expected to manage their own distractions. Classrooms should prepare students for that reality rather than shielding them from it. While inappropriate use of smartphones should be addressed, a total ban assumes that students cannot be trusted to regulate their behavior; an assumption that undermines their autonomy and growth as learners.

### 2.5.6. One idea, two directions

**Objective:** To deepen the understanding of balanced argumentation and perspective-taking, exploring a single issue from multiple angles.

**Instructions:**

- Read the following two opposing paragraphs on the same idea (*university students and part-time jobs*). Paragraph A supports the idea, while Paragraph B opposes it.
- Finish each sentence with appropriate ideas that fit in the context.

**Paragraph A:**

University students can benefit greatly from part-time jobs, as these experiences help develop important life and career skills. Working while studying teaches \_\_\_\_\_. For instance, students who work part-time often learn to balance competing priorities and meet deadlines – skills that are essential in most careers. Additionally, a part-time job can reduce dependence on loans or family support, thus \_\_\_\_\_. Even jobs unrelated to a student’s major can build communication, teamwork, and customer service skills. Critics may argue that \_\_\_\_\_. However, studies show that students who work fewer than 15 hours per week do not suffer significant academic decline. Furthermore, students who work gain confidence and often build professional networks before graduation. In an increasingly competitive job market, work experience during university can give students \_\_\_\_\_. Therefore, part-time employment, when managed wisely, complements academic development and prepares students for post-university life.

**Paragraph B:**

University students should avoid working part-time during their studies as it can negatively affect their academic performance and overall well-being. Balancing work and study often leads to \_\_\_\_\_. For example, students who work 20 or more hours a week often report skipping classes or submitting rushed assignments due to time constraints. Moreover, long work hours may reduce \_\_\_\_\_, or even basic self-care like healthy eating and rest. While some argue that working teaches responsibility, the pressure to earn income can push students to prioritise \_\_\_\_\_. Additionally, working students may be unable to take advantage of \_\_\_\_\_ that directly enhance academic development. In the long term, this could reduce their career readiness. Therefore, students should be supported through scholarships, grants, or flexible academic structures rather than expected to fund their education through part-time jobs, especially during the academic term.

**2.5.7. Tone shift rewrite**

**Objective:** To develop the ability to recognise and apply a formal academic tone.

**Instructions:**

- Read the following opinion paragraph on concerts, written in an informal register, with a conversational tone.
- Rewrite it using a formal tone suitable for university-level academic discourse. This includes, among other things, improving lexical range, avoiding contractions and slang, and adopting an objective, precise, and coherent style.
- Read the sample and rewritten sample paragraph as an example.

**Sample paragraph:**

I think students shouldn't take online classes because it's boring. Also, some people cheat and that's not fair. It's better to be in a classroom with people. That's my opinion.

**Rewritten sample paragraph:**

In-person classes are more effective than online alternatives. Face-to-face learning provides interaction with instructors, which helps students stay engaged. Moreover, academic integrity is easier to maintain in a physical setting. For example, students are less likely to cheat when monitored in person. Therefore, traditional classes should remain the primary mode of instruction.

**Paragraph to be rewritten:**

Honestly, I think concerts are kind of a waste of time and money. Sure, some people love the energy, but I just don't get the hype. They're super loud, overcrowded, and uncomfortable. You usually have to stand for hours, sometimes in bad weather, just to see the band from way in the back. Half the time you can't even hear the music properly; it sounds way better in your headphones anyway. Plus, people around you are constantly screaming, singing off-key, or holding up their phones to record everything. That totally ruins the vibe. Then there's the price. Tickets are crazy expensive these days, and don't even get me started on parking, merch, and overpriced snacks. And after all that, you still have to deal with traffic jams getting there and back, and sometimes even public transport delays. I get that some folks are into the "live experience," and maybe it's fun if you're with a big group of friends, but for me, it's just not worth the stress, the money, or the hassle. I'd rather chill at home, put on a good playlist, light a candle, and actually enjoy the music without all the chaos and nonsense that usually comes with concerts.

**2.5.8. Where does it belong? (Activity 1)**

**Objective:** To develop an awareness of logical paragraph structure, including effective topic sentence support, idea development, and cohesive sentence placement.

**Instructions:**

- Read the opinion paragraph below, which has four sentences extracted.
- Decide where each extracted sentence fits best in the paragraph to improve coherence and cohesion.
  - Pay attention to transition words, referencing, and idea development to guide your choices.
  - After placing all the sentences, reread the complete paragraph to check for clarity and flow, and revise if necessary.
  - Justify your choices and discuss alternatives.

**Opinion paragraph:**

Some people put forth the argument that movies are less valuable art forms than literature and paintings. I completely disagree with this argument. In my opinion, films have the same artistic value as writings and drawings. It is true that literature, paintings and sculptures have a much longer history than movies. For example, literature of each century gives us an accurate description of life in those times. Paintings and sculptures have the same value. Needless to say, they are a goldmine of information for historians and anthro-

pologists. It is true that films are a newer form of art and entertainment. However, just like literature and paintings, films also reflect the era in which they are made. They also showcase the growth of technology. What's more, films are intrinsically linked to literature and there are many filmy adaptations of classic literature. Another advantage that films have over other art forms is that they enjoy mass appeal. Actually, films reach a greater audience than books or other art forms. Better still, unlike a novel or a drawing, a film is a labour of love of hundreds of artists and technicians and going to cinema is rated as the highest form of entertainment today. To conclude, I believe that films have the same artistic value as literature and painting.

**Extracted sentences:**

- a) This popularity itself makes them a valuable form of art and a good medium for conveying socio-cultural messages.
- b) They are also deeply rooted in the culture and that makes them priceless representation of various eras.
- c) One cannot gauge the value of films merely from the number of years of history they have; nor can one consider them less valuable just because aesthetic preferences differ.
- d) However, it is wrong to measure the historic and aesthetic value of an art form by the number of years it has been in existence.

**2.5.9. Where does it belong? (Activity 2)**

**Objective:** To develop an awareness of logical paragraph structure, including effective topic sentence support, idea development, and cohesive sentence placement.

**Instructions:**

- Read the opinion paragraph below, which has five sentences extracted.
- Decide where each extracted sentence fits best in the paragraph to improve coherence and cohesion.
- Pay attention to transition words, referencing, and idea development to guide your choices.
- After placing all the sentences, reread the complete paragraph to check for clarity and flow, and revise if necessary.
- Justify your choices and discuss alternatives.

**Opinion paragraph:**

It is often debated whether people should plan for the future or simply live in the moment. In my opinion, both ways of living have their merits.

Living in the present is a great way to beat stress, while the past is gone and we can no longer change it, and the future is uncertain and there is no way we can predict it. The present is what we have. By making the best use of the present we can enjoy each and every moment of life. Thinking about the uncertain future could be too agonizing and devastating for them. Hence, therapists often suggest that they should experience and focus on the present to reduce their pain. Being thankful to the family and friends and feeling blessed for the days that they have lived help the patients forget about the fears of death. People running the rat race also benefit from living in the now. It gives them a moment to take stock of what they have achieved so far. While tomorrow is uncertain, the truth is that the vast majority of us will live to seventy or eighty. Without some amount of planning, it is impossible to live a stress-free life. For example, every one of us needs to save some money for our retirement. Likewise, planning is essential to have a clear goal in life. Planning is particularly helpful for young people. It enables them to set up goals and pursue them. What's more, if we have already planned what we want to do with our lives, we will be able to make better use of our time and resources. In my opinion, excessive planning should be avoided especially when it hampers our ability to enjoy the present. Even so, it is important for us to have a clear vision in life and it is impossible to achieve it without planning.

**Extracted sentences:**

- a) For instance, mindfulness is a form of therapy which guides patients to concentrate on the here and now.
- b) To conclude, there are certainly some merits to living in the present; this, however, does not mean that planning is totally unnecessary.
- c) This advice is particularly helpful for people who are suffering from terminal illness.
- d) Without planning we are like a kite with a broken string.
- e) On the other hand, a little bit of planning is essential to secure our future.

**2.5.10. Where does it belong? (Activity 3)**

**Objective:** To develop an awareness of logical paragraph structure, including effective topic sentence support, idea development, and cohesive sentence placement.

**Instructions:**

- Read the opinion paragraph below, which has four sentences extracted.

- Decide where each extracted sentence fits best in the paragraph to improve coherence and cohesion.
- Pay attention to transition words, referencing, and idea development to guide your choices.
- After placing all the sentences, reread the complete paragraph to check for clarity and flow, and revise if necessary.
- Justify your choices and discuss alternatives.

### **Opinion paragraph:**

Public libraries continue to serve a vital role in society, even in the age of smartphones, e-books, and instant information access. They provide free access to educational materials, which is especially valuable for low-income families and students. Libraries also offer a quiet, distraction-free space that supports focused learning and research. In addition to books, many libraries now provide free Wi-Fi, computer access, digital literacy workshops, and even job-search assistance. Beyond their educational function, libraries serve as inclusive community hubs where people of all ages gather for events, language classes, and cultural programmes. While some argue that online resources have replaced physical libraries, the internet does not guarantee equal access to all, particularly in underserved communities. Libraries bridge this digital divide and promote information equity. Their trained staff also guide users in navigating complex information sources, something search engines cannot always do effectively. Public libraries evolve with the times, integrating technology and responding to the changing needs of their communities. Therefore, far from being outdated, libraries remain essential institutions that foster lifelong learning, civic engagement, and equal opportunity.

### **Extracted sentences:**

- a) This range of services helps individuals gain skills they need to succeed in today's digital economy.
- b) This makes them ideal for students, job seekers, and anyone needing a productive environment.
- c) Libraries provide not only access but also guidance, which is increasingly important in a world of misinformation.
- d) These physical spaces offer more than just books; they support social connection and inclusion.

### **2.5.11. Paragraph ladder: Building a complete opinion paragraph**

**Objective:** To practice paragraph development by expanding a basic opinion structure into a complete, well-organised academic paragraph. To

strengthen skills in supporting and elaborating on key ideas, using transitions and cohesive devices, and maintaining unity and logical flow.

**Instructions:**

- Read the topic, topic sentence and two supporting reasons provided below.
- Expand this outline into a full opinion paragraph.
- End your paragraph with a concluding sentence that reinforces your opinion.
- Reread and revise to make sure the paragraph is unified, well-organised, and logically developed.

**Topic:**

Are smart cities a worthwhile investment?

**Topic sentence:**

Smart cities are a valuable investment because they improve urban efficiency and enhance sustainability.

**Supporting reason 1:**

They use technology to streamline public services like transportation and energy.

**Supporting reason 2:**

Smart cities can reduce environmental impact through better resource management.

### 2.5.12. In-depth analysis

**Objective:** To develop critical thinking skills and revision skills by evaluating opinion paragraphs.

**Instructions:**

- Read the following three opinion paragraphs written by students.
- Use Table 4 to give constructive feedback and evaluate each paragraph.
- Write brief comments or suggestions in the margins.
- Discuss if there are sentences that can be omitted from each paragraph.

**Paragraph 1:**

Since the introduction of social media applications in the early 2000's the world has become a much smaller place. Social media applications such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have become information sources for a ma-

majority of the global market. As such, I would agree that marketing, which happens to be a source of information accessible on these platforms can influence the consumers who use them. This notion is further aided by the rise in online retail stores who conduct the bulk of their transactions online. This makes it easier for the consumer to purchase from anywhere in the world. As a consumer on social media, you are constantly bombarded with advertisements of various products that are specifically designed to catch your attention. This means that most of the adverts on your news feeds aren't random and will almost always feature something you have previously searched online or something currently popular or trending. Given the fact that most social media users are young consumers who are influenced by current trends and happenings these adverts will almost always catch their eye. The habit of sharing, retweeting and liking also ensures that these adverts get around, quite fast. As such, when an advert does reach your news feed you have already probably seen it on your friend's news feed. The truth is, adverts are a form of information and with the age of the internet, information spreads faster than a wildfire. Therefore, it only makes sense that in the era and age of technology, globalization and the need to be trendy, social media marketing can influence what consumers buy.

**Paragraph 2:**

When a person reaches 18, which is roughly around the time finishing his or her high school years, what comes up to the person next is an important major decision-going to university or take a break. If he or she decides to take a break at the moment, that person will probably need to choose between work or travel. We live in a colorful world; it is good to have a change to explore it. To open our eyes when we are still young can help us to know more about what is going on right now, and to be more aware of the relationship between ourselves and the world. What happened during one's trip to a different place would help he or she apply the experience to a different situation when feeling needed. If somebody decides to go to work instead of travel, she or he could learn from the work experience, which may be helpful when becoming a full-time worker. While both going to work and traveling can give a person some information regarding one's future plan, it's not always a good idea to do so. Sometimes when people didn't choose to finish school very soon, they will find it's harder for them to return to school after doing other things outside the campus. They may have a feeling that they can not adjust to a formal academic life because they are free for too long. It can cause a problem when nowadays academic achievement is so important for a more brighter future. Whatever people choose to do after their high school years, it's so

important to know what you really want and like. It's the best way to have a happy life and love what you choose.

**Paragraph 3:**

Owing to the problems which a growing population of overweight people cause for the health care system, some people think that the key to solving these issues is to have more sport and exercise in schools. In my opinion, I completely agree that this is the best way to tackle the issue of deteriorating public health in relation to weight. Firstly, dealing with the issues surrounding obesity and weight problems is best solved by taking a long term approach and introducing more sport and exercise in schools. This method will ensure that the next generation will be healthier and will not have such health problems. At the moment, the average child in the West does sport possibly twice a week, which is not enough to counteract their otherwise sedentary lifestyle. However, by incorporating more sports classes into the curriculum as well as encouraging extracurricular sports activities, they will undoubtedly become fitter and more active. Another point to consider is that having more sports lessons for children in schools will probably result in children developing an interest in exercise which might filter through to other members of their family and have a longer lasting effect. In other words, parents with sporty children are more likely to get involved in sport as a way of encouraging their children. By both parents and children being involved, it will ensure that children grow up to incorporate sport into their daily lives. This is certainly a natural and lasting way to improve public health. In conclusion, to deal with an increasing population of unfit, overweight people, changing the lifestyle of the coming generation by introducing sport in schools is the easiest and most effective method to use.

**OPINION PARAGRAPH TOPIC BANK:**

Before writing an opinion paragraph, brainstorm ideas and use this table below (modified Table 2) to put your ideas down in order to have a structure to your writing. After writing an opinion paragraph, self-check your writing (Table 3). Provide peer feedback (Table 4).

Paragraph Component	Ideas
Topic Sentence	
First Supporting Reason	
Example	

Paragraph Component	Ideas
Commentary / Explanation	
Second Supporting Reason	
Example	
Commentary / Explanation	
Concluding Sentence	

1. Do reality TV shows promote unrealistic expectations of life?
2. Should students have the right to evaluate their teachers?
3. Is the gig economy empowering or exploitative for workers?
4. Should museums offer free admission to the public?
5. Should books with controversial content be banned from school libraries?
6. Is online dating changing how people form relationships?
7. Should school days start later to improve student performance?
8. Should space exploration be prioritised over solving problems on Earth?
9. Is competitive sports culture too intense for children?
10. Is success more influenced by talent or hard work?
11. Is it ethical to use animals for scientific research?
12. Do celebrities have a responsibility to be role models?
13. Should public transport be made free in all major cities?
14. Is traditional news media still relevant in the digital age?
15. Should school curricula include financial literacy education?
16. Should universities offer courses in mindfulness or mental health?
17. Is a four-day workweek the future of employment?
18. Are plant-based diets healthier and more sustainable?
19. Is work-life balance more important than salary?
20. Should internships always be paid?
21. Is remote work better for employees in the long term?
22. Should beauty standards in the media be regulated?
23. Is cancel culture helping or harming public discourse?
24. Should governments regulate influencers and sponsored content?
25. Are grades an accurate measure of student ability?
26. Does technology make people more socially isolated?
27. Should governments invest more in public art and culture?
28. Is school the best place to learn social skills?
29. Should professional athletes earn more than doctors and teachers?
30. Should companies be punished for data breaches?

31. Should people have the legal right to disconnect from work emails after hours?
32. Should multilingualism be a prerequisite for employment?
33. Can tourism ever be truly sustainable?
34. Should zoos be abolished in the modern world?
35. Is cryptocurrency a reliable form of future finance?
36. Should social media “likes” be hidden to improve mental health?
37. Are university entrance exams fair to all students?
38. Should the death penalty be abolished?
39. Can the world ever become a cashless society?
40. Is it the government’s responsibility to enforce individual environmental behavior?
41. Is remote work the future of employment in most industries?
42. Are influencers more influential than traditional celebrities in shaping public opinion?
43. Is universal basic income a realistic way to reduce inequality in the 21st century?
44. Should schools teach media literacy as a core subject?
45. Do virtual reality and the metaverse pose risks to human interaction and mental health?
46. Is it ethical for employers to monitor remote workers digitally?
47. Are mental health apps a reliable substitute for in-person therapy?
48. Has streaming culture harmed attention spans and learning habits?
49. Should students be allowed to vote in university-level decision-making?
50. Is digital detoxing necessary for a healthy lifestyle today?

√	Category	Checklist Item	Improvement Tip
	Content and Focus	My opinion is clearly stated in the topic sentence.	Avoid vague phrases; be specific and assertive.
		My opinion directly answers the prompt or question.	Stay fully on-topic and relevant.
	Support and Examples	I give clear, strong reasons for my opinion.	Ask “Why do I believe this?” Use logic.
		I support the reasons with a specific example or explanation.	Avoid generalizations; use real-life or academic examples.
	Structure and Flow	My paragraph follows this order: topic – reason – example – conclusion.	Treat it like a mini-essay.

√	Category	Checklist Item	Improvement Tip
		My sentences connect smoothly.	Use linking words.
		I included a concluding sentence.	Reinforce or restate your opinion clearly.
	Language and Style	I used formal academic tone.	Avoid slang, contractions, and casual phrasing.
		I used appropriate academic vocabulary.	Use precise words.
		I used a variety of sentence types (simple, compound, complex).	Combine ideas logically.
	Accuracy	I checked grammar.	Read aloud or peer check.
		I corrected spelling and punctuation errors.	Use tools or proofreading help.
	Length and Clarity	My paragraph is between 180-200 words.	Expand or reduce as needed.
		I removed off-topic, repetitive, or unclear content.	Stay focused on the main opinion.
	Final Review	I read it aloud to check for clarity and flow.	Helps spot awkward phrasing.
		I revised my writing at least once.	Improves structure, vocabulary, or coherence.
		I asked a peer or teacher for feedback (optional but encouraged).	A second opinion helps improve clarity.

Table 3: Student self-check checklist: Opinion paragraph

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Clear Opinion	Opinion is clearly and confidently stated in the topic sentence. It is specific, relevant to the prompt, and reflects a strong personal or academic stance.	Opinion is mostly clear, though it may lack precision or be too cautiously worded.	Opinion is present but vague, overly general, or slightly off-topic.	Opinion is unclear, absent, or irrelevant to the topic.
Relevance to Topic	The paragraph directly and consistently addresses the given prompt. Every sentence supports the main idea.	Mostly stays on topic with only minor digressions.	Occasionally veers off-topic or includes unrelated ideas.	Frequently off-topic or unfocused.

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Strong Supporting Reason	A logical, relevant, and persuasive reason supports the opinion. It is clearly stated and well integrated.	Reason is generally clear and relevant, but could be more fully developed or refined.	Reason is present but lacks clarity, logic, or strong connection to the opinion.	Reason is unclear, weak, or missing.
Example or Explanation	Example or explanation is specific, detailed, and clearly supports the reason. Enhances persuasiveness.	Example or explanation is relevant but may lack depth or specificity.	Example or explanation is included but too general or unrelated.	No example or one that is off-topic or confusing.
Paragraph Structure	Paragraph follows clear, academic structure: topic sentence – reason – support – conclusion. Transitions are smooth and logical.	Paragraph is organised with clear beginning, middle, and end. Some transitions may be basic or repetitive.	Organisation is somewhat unclear or inconsistent. Transitions may be weak or missing.	Paragraph is poorly structured, hard to follow, or lacks logical flow.
Coherence and Unity	All sentences are clearly connected to the main idea and to each other. Paragraph feels unified and focused.	Most ideas are connected and support the topic, though there may be slight jumps or weak connections.	Some unrelated or loosely connected ideas weaken coherence.	Ideas are disjointed or unrelated. Paragraph lacks unity.
Academic Style and Tone	Uses a consistent, formal academic tone. Vocabulary is appropriate, precise, and varied.	Generally maintains academic tone with few informal phrases or awkward wording.	Tone may shift between formal and informal; vocabulary is basic or repetitive.	Informal, casual, or inappropriate language used throughout.
Sentence Structure	Demonstrates variety and control of sentence structures (simple, compound, complex). All sentences are grammatically correct or near-perfect.	Good range of sentence types; some minor errors that do not affect understanding.	Sentences are mostly correct but may be repetitive or contain noticeable grammar errors.	Many sentences are incomplete, confusing, or error-prone.
Grammar, Spelling, and Mechanics	Virtually no grammar, punctuation, or spelling mistakes. Demonstrates excellent command of written English.	A few minor errors that do not interfere with readability.	Several noticeable grammar / spelling errors; some impact clarity.	Frequent errors that interfere with meaning or distract the reader.

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Word Count and Sentence Range	Paragraph is within the recommended length (180-200 words).	Paragraph is slightly too short or long, but close. Contains mostly complete sentences.	Paragraph is significantly under or over length, or too few well-developed sentences.	Paragraph is too short, too long, or lacks sentence development.

Table 4: Rubric for assessing opinion paragraphs (peer feedback or teacher feedback)

## 2.6. Paraphrasing and Summarising

In academic writing, both paraphrasing and summarising are essential skills for integrating source material into your own work (without plagiarising). However, while they both involve rewriting someone else's ideas in your own words, they serve different purposes and involve different processes and approaches to the original text.

*Paraphrasing* is the act of rewriting a specific passage or idea from a source in your own words, usually maintaining approximately the same length and level of detail as the original. It is often used to demonstrate understanding of a particular point or to integrate expert support into your argument more fluently. A good paraphrase changes vocabulary and sentence structure while keeping the original meaning intact. It is useful when you want to focus on a specific idea or claim without quoting directly.

*Summarising*, on the other hand, involves condensing a larger section of text (such as a paragraph, article, or chapter) into a much shorter version that expresses only the main ideas. A summary strips away examples, elaborations, and minor points in order to give the reader a quick overview of the original source. Summarising is useful when you want to provide background, introduce a topic, or refer to the overall argument of a text rather than its specific details.

Aspect	Paraphrasing	Summarising
<b>Definition</b>	Rewriting a specific portion of a text in your own words.	Condensing a larger section or whole text to its main points in fewer words.

Aspect	Paraphrasing	Summarising
<b>Purpose</b>	To explain or restate a specific idea clearly without quoting.	To give an overview of a larger text or argument quickly.
<b>Length</b>	Roughly the same length as the original (or slightly shorter).	Much shorter than the original text.
<b>Level of Detail</b>	Retains all or most key details and examples.	Focuses only on the central argument or most important points.
<b>Typical Use</b>	When referencing a key point that supports your argument or needs clarification.	When introducing a source, background, or showing understanding of the whole text.
<b>Changes Made</b>	Vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammar are changed.	Vocabulary and structure are changed, and details are omitted.
<b>Example Application</b>	Rewriting a claim from a journal article while keeping its meaning intact.	Condensing a chapter or article in 1-2 sentences.
<b>Citation Required</b>	Yes, even though you use your own words.	Yes, even though it is condensed.
<b>Skills Demonstrated</b>	Deep understanding of ideas, accurate rewording, grammatical transformation.	Ability to extract main ideas, synthesise information, and write concisely.
<b>Common Mistakes</b>	Too close to the source; changing only a few words.	Omitting important points or oversimplifying.
<b>Academic Benefit</b>	Shows precise engagement with specific content.	Shows critical understanding of broader arguments or sections.
<b>When to Use</b>	When referring to a key idea or quote you do not wish to quote directly.	When giving background or showing you understand the overall message.
<b>Reader's Expectation</b>	Expecting the idea to be the same in meaning but in new language.	Expecting a brief version of the original's central meaning.

*Table 5: Paraphrasing vs summarising in academic writing*

Paraphrasing and summarising are illustrated below, where a sample original text has been paraphrased and summarised, respectively.

**Sample original text (202 words):**

Climate change is now considered one of the primary drivers of biodiversity loss worldwide. As global temperatures continue to rise, extreme weather events such as wildfires, floods, and prolonged droughts are increasing in

both frequency and intensity. These events can severely damage ecosystems, leading to habitat loss and fragmentation, which in turn force species to migrate or face extinction. Coral reefs, wetlands, and polar regions are among the ecosystems most at risk due to their high sensitivity to temperature fluctuations.

In addition to destroying physical habitats, climate change disrupts ecological relationships. Changes in temperature and precipitation affect food availability, breeding cycles, and migration patterns. Species that rely on specific environmental conditions, like alpine plants or cold-water fish, may struggle to survive as their habitats shrink or disappear. According to a 2019 report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), up to one million species are at risk of extinction in the coming decades if immediate action is not taken.

Urgent measures are needed, including emission reductions, habitat restoration, and international conservation strategies. Without coordinated global efforts, critical ecosystem services like pollination, clean water, and disease regulation could be permanently disrupted, posing serious risks to both nature and humanity.

**Paraphrase (165 words):**

Climate change is widely recognised as a major cause of biodiversity decline across the globe. As average temperatures increase, extreme events, such as droughts, floods, and wildfires, are occurring more often and with greater severity. These disruptions damage habitats, cause fragmentation, and displace wildlife, often leading to extinction. Particularly vulnerable ecosystems include coral reefs, wetlands, and polar zones due to their climate sensitivity.

Moreover, climate change alters key ecological processes. Shifts in temperature and rainfall disturb food sources, reproductive timing, and migration patterns. Species that depend on narrow environmental ranges, such as cold-water fish or alpine vegetation, face higher extinction risks. A 2019 IPBES study warns that as many as one million species could disappear unless urgent action is taken.

To address this crisis, the international community must implement rapid interventions like reducing carbon emissions, restoring natural habitats, and enhancing conservation cooperation. If not, the loss of ecosystem services, such as pollination, clean drinking water, and disease control, could endanger both ecological and human health.

**Summary (53 words):**

Climate change is a major driver of global biodiversity loss, causing extreme weather, habitat destruction, and ecological disruption. Vulnerable

species and ecosystems face rising extinction risks, with up to one million species threatened. Urgent global actions, including emission cuts and conservation efforts, are needed to prevent permanent damage to ecosystems and human well-being.

### 2.6.1. Spot the bad paraphrase

**Objective:** To develop the ability to evaluate the quality of paraphrasing by identifying unacceptable paraphrases that are too close to the original in wording, alter the original meaning, or use inappropriate academic tone.

**Instructions:**

- For each pair of sentences, read the original sentence and its paraphrase.
- Decide whether the paraphrase is acceptable or not. If not acceptable, explain what is wrong and suggest how it could be improved.

a) Original: Regular physical activity is associated with a lower risk of chronic diseases.

Paraphrase: Doing exercise all the time means you probably won't get sick as much.

b) Original: The industrial revolution marked a major turning point in human history.

Paraphrase: The industrial revolution was an important time in history.

c) Original: Artificial intelligence is being integrated into various sectors, including healthcare and finance.

Paraphrase: AI is now used in many fields like medicine and banking.

d) Original: Excessive screen time in children has been linked to sleep disturbances and reduced attention spans.

Paraphrase: Too much time on screens can make kids sleep badly and pay less attention.

e) Original: Social media platforms can influence public opinion during political campaigns.

Paraphrase: Political campaigns can be changed by social media websites that affect what people think.

f) Original: Economic inequality continues to widen the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest segments of society.

Paraphrase: The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

**g)** Original: Exposure to air pollution is associated with an increased risk of respiratory problems.

Paraphrase: Breathing polluted air can heighten the chances of developing lung-related health issues.

**h)** Original: Social isolation can negatively impact mental health, especially among older adults.

Paraphrase: Lack of social interaction may harm psychological well-being, particularly in elderly populations.

**i)** Original: Globalisation has significantly changed how businesses operate around the world.

Paraphrase: The way companies function internationally has been greatly influenced by globalisation.

**j)** Original: Some researchers believe that early exposure to technology can improve children's problem-solving skills.

Paraphrase: According to some scholars, introducing children to technology at a young age enhances their ability to solve problems.

### 2.6.2. Note-summarising

**Objective:** To develop the ability to transform and synthesise fragmented and disjointed notes into a cohesive and grammatically accurate summary paragraph.

**Instructions:**

– Below are three sets of bullet points taken from lectures. Write a coherent paragraph (70-80 words) for each set of bullet points, summarising the main ideas, using only the information provided.

– Do not copy the wording of the notes directly, but rather use your own words and sentence structure.

– Focus on clarity, logical flow, and concise academic style.

– Group related points, infer structure, and eliminate redundancy.

**Set 1 (Green cities):**

– Urban life → pollution, dense traffic

– Trees on rooftops, vertical gardens = popular

– Eco-buildings reduce waste and heating bills

– Less car use → cleaner air

– City health = parks + access to nature

- Efficient buses, cycling options
- Building design affects carbon footprint

### Set 2 (AI in healthcare):

- Algorithms can predict patient risks early
- Ethical concerns → privacy of medical data
- Some hospitals already use AI to diagnose diseases
- Decision support systems help doctors, not replace them
- Machine learning = improving treatment accuracy
- Concerns: bias in datasets, patient consent
- Useful in radiology, pathology (image analysis)

### Set 3 (Space exploration):

- Satellites used in communication, GPS
- Mars exploration – focus on potential for life
- Concerns: high costs, space debris
- International agencies (NASA, ESA, etc.) collaborate
- Advancements in rocket tech
- Space tourism emerging industry
- Scientific benefits: Earth climate monitoring
- Private companies increasing role (e.g. SpaceX)

## 2.6.3. Summary comparison: Activity 1

**Objective:** To develop critical reading and analytical skills by evaluating the clarity, accuracy, and conciseness of different summaries. To recognise the characteristics of effective academic summarising and learn to avoid common pitfalls.

### Instructions:

- Read the text on *public libraries*, then read the three summaries that follow.
- Discuss and justify:
  - Which summary best captures the main idea and key supporting points?
  - Which is most concise and accurate?
  - Does any summary include irrelevant or unnecessary details?
  - Which summary uses the best and most appropriate academic tone?

**Text:**

Public libraries have long served as essential community hubs that provide free access to books, information, and learning resources. However, their role has evolved significantly in the 21st century. In addition to lending books, modern libraries offer digital literacy programmes, internet access, career workshops, and community events. Many also provide access to e-books, online databases, and multimedia tools. These changes have made libraries increasingly relevant in an age of rapid technological advancement.

Despite budget cuts in some regions, usage remains high, especially among students, job seekers, and elderly citizens. Public libraries help bridge the digital divide, offering access to people who may not have reliable internet or technology at home. They also serve as quiet study areas and safe, inclusive spaces for vulnerable populations. Today, libraries represent not only repositories of books, but active learning environments that adapt to changing community needs. Their continued relevance depends on public funding and awareness of their expanding services.

**Summary 1:**

Public libraries are more than just book-lending institutions. Today, they offer internet access, career help, and digital programmes. Even with budget cuts, people still use them, especially those needing internet access. Libraries help communities adapt to modern needs and continue to play an important role in society.

**Summary 2:**

Libraries provide e-books, host community events, have digital workshops, and help old people and students. Libraries are still used even though they get less money. Some people don't have internet at home. Libraries used to be about books, but now they do lots of things.

**Summary 3:**

Public libraries have transformed into dynamic community centers that offer more than just books. Today, they provide digital literacy programmes, internet access, career workshops, and support for diverse populations. Despite funding challenges, libraries continue to serve essential roles by bridging the digital divide and fostering inclusive environments. Their adaptability ensures they remain valuable resources in an increasingly digital world.

### 2.6.4. Summary comparison: Activity 2

**Objective:** To develop critical reading and analytical skills by evaluating the clarity, accuracy, and conciseness of different summaries. To recognise the characteristics of effective academic summarising and learn to avoid common pitfalls.

**Instructions:**

- Read the text on *luxury brands* reshaping the strategy for China’s e-commerce market, then read the three summaries that follow.
- Discuss and justify:
  - Which summary captures the key points of the original text most accurately? Consider whether the main ideas (e.g. Richemont's strategy, the role of Alibaba, market trends, concerns about the economy) are clearly and correctly represented.
  - Which summary is too vague or general, and what important details does it leave out? Reflect on whether the summary omits key names, partnerships, or market dynamics.
  - Does any summary include too much detail or read more like a list than a cohesive summary? How could that summary be improved to maintain focus and coherence?
  - Which summary is the most concise while still maintaining accuracy and clarity? What specific strategies (e.g. topic sentences, paraphrasing, grouping of ideas) helped achieve this?
  - If you were writing your own summary, what three points would you prioritise and why? Think about the purpose of the summary and what the intended audience most needs to understand.

**Text:**

Swiss luxury conglomerate Richemont has partnered with Chinese tech giant Alibaba in a move that signals a major shift in how the luxury sector approaches China’s digital marketplace. Historically, many Western luxury brands have been reluctant to embrace Chinese e-commerce platforms, fearing that such partnerships might dilute the exclusivity and prestige of their products. For example, LVMH, the world’s top luxury group by revenue, has emphasised the importance of its global retail strategy. According to Toni Beloni, LVMH’s Group Managing Director, “The store is the first point of contact for all our brands; it is where storytelling becomes story-living.” This physical presence remains a cornerstone of their approach in China.

Richemont, however, is taking a different route. It plans to launch its online luxury fashion retailers, Net-a-Porter and Mr Porter, on Alibaba’s Tmall Luxury Pavilion – an e-commerce platform designed specifically to cater to

high-end branding requirements. This mirrors similar moves by JD.com, which established a partnership with Farfetch, showing how Chinese tech companies are actively courting luxury labels to capture a larger share of the world's fastest-growing luxury market.

The Chinese luxury market is booming, driven by young, mobile-savvy consumers and supported by government efforts to encourage domestic spending. Chinese buyers already account for a third of all luxury purchases globally, and much of this growth now happens within China rather than through overseas shopping trips. Smaller e-commerce firms like Taobao and Secoo are also entering the space, offering platforms for boutique European labels to tap into China's massive mobile consumer base.

Some luxury houses, like Hermès, are experimenting with hybrid strategies: launching official Chinese e-commerce websites, engaging users on WeChat, and testing short-term pop-up stores. Still, e-commerce giants like Alibaba believe their deep consumer insights can complement, not replace, traditional retail.

Even amid concerns over China's slowing economy and currency fluctuations, luxury sales remain resilient. Brands like Gucci, Louis Vuitton, and Zegna continue to perform well, suggesting that the market's long-term prospects remain strong despite short-term uncertainties.

#### **Summary 1:**

Luxury companies are changing how they sell things in China. Some of them are trying out new methods, while others are being more cautious and sticking with what they know. A few brands are working with online platforms, and others still prefer having their own stores. There is a big focus on online shopping, especially because many people in China like to use their phones. Mobile shopping is becoming more important, and companies are starting to notice. There are also concerns about how the economy is doing in China. The currency is not doing great, and some brands are worried about sales. But at the same time, there are still strong sales for some products. Overall, the situation is a mix of challenges and opportunities, and luxury companies are doing different things to figure it all out.

#### **Summary 2:**

Luxury brands are increasingly embracing China's e-commerce platforms as online luxury consumption rises among young, tech-savvy consumers. Richemont's partnership with Alibaba's Tmall Luxury Pavilion marks a shift from traditional caution in the sector, while others like LVMH still favor brick-and-mortar stores. Smaller platforms such as Secoo and Taobao are also enabling lesser-known brands to enter the market. Meanwhile, some compani-

es adopt hybrid strategies combining pop-up stores, WeChat marketing, and dedicated Chinese e-commerce sites. Although economic slowdown and currency concerns persist, high-end brands like Gucci and Louis Vuitton report strong growth, suggesting long-term optimism for luxury in China.

### Summary 3:

Richemont formed a joint venture with Alibaba and plans to launch Net-a-Porter and Mr Porter on Tmall Luxury Pavilion. JD.com launched Farfetch. Gucci's CEO, Marco Bizzarri, talked about how everyone wants access to Chinese platforms, but luxury perception still matters. LVMH, on the other hand, prefers stores and focuses on storytelling in physical spaces. Taobao and Secoo are also trying to attract luxury brands. Hermès used WeChat for a pop-up store and launched a Chinese e-commerce site. Moncler and Valentino joined Tmall Luxury Pavilion. Ermenegildo Zegna is worried about the economic slowdown and exchange rate. LVMH said it will be vigilant due to uncertainty. Analysts say fears are exaggerated, and Gucci and Louis Vuitton have had strong sales. Alibaba says it can help with store placement through consumer insights.

### 2.6.5. Summary vs paraphrase vs blurb vs review

**Objective:** To develop an understanding of the distinct purposes, functions, structures, and styles of a summary, paraphrase, blurb, and review, as they are similar in some respects.

#### Instructions:

- Fill in the gapped Table below (Table 6).
- Which text below (Text 1 or Text 2) is a blurb and which is a review?

Justify your reasons.

Aspect	Summary	Paraphrase	Blurb	Review
<b>Purpose</b>			To promote or describe a book to attract readers.	To evaluate, critique, and respond to a book's (movie's) content, style, and significance. It is not limited to books (movies).
<b>Length</b>			Very short; 2-4 sentences or one short paragraph.	Varies (typically 300-1000 words in academic or journalistic contexts).

Aspect	Summary	Paraphrase	Blurb	Review
Content Focus			Key themes or plot points, genre, and appeal.	Plot, themes, strengths / weaknesses, writing style, personal / critical opinion.
Language	Condensed and objective; uses own words.	Uses own words and grammar; meaning must remain accurate.		Analytical, evaluative, subjective with evidence from the text.
Tone	Neutral, formal, informative.	Neutral or academic, depending on context.	Promotional and enthusiastic.	
Audience	Academic readers, teachers, researchers.	Academic or general readers.		Readers interested in literature, academics, or critics.
Use in English for Academic Purposes (EAP)			Not commonly used in EAP writing.	Used for analysis, argumentation, or reflection in academic writing.
Example Use	In a literature review or abstract.	In essay paragraphs when integrating research.		

Table 6: Summary vs paraphrase vs blurb vs review

### Text 1:

A forgotten diary. A small town's buried secret. One woman's journey to uncover the past and heal the present.

In *Whispers of the River*, bestselling author Lila Hart weaves a haunting tale of memory, grief, and redemption. When historian Claire Duvall discovers her grandmother's journal hidden in the attic, she is drawn into a decades-old mystery that reshapes her understanding of family and belonging. Poetic and emotionally rich, this novel will stay with readers long after the final page.

**Text 2:**

Lila Hart's *Whispers of the River* offers a compelling and introspective examination of intergenerational memory and the enduring effects of familial silence. The novel centers on Claire Duvall, a historian who uncovers her grandmother's long-hidden journal, prompting a re-evaluation of family history and personal identity. Through dual timelines, Hart skillfully juxtaposes past and present, allowing readers to explore how historical narratives shape individual lives.

The author's prose is notable for its precision and lyrical quality, effectively capturing both the geographical and emotional landscapes of the American South. Overall, it succeeds as both a literary and emotional work. Its thematic complexity, narrative craftsmanship, and stylistic elegance position it as a valuable text for readers interested in historical fiction, memory studies, and the literary portrayal of personal transformation.

### 2.6.6. Paraphrase vs summary: Skill in precision and reduction (Activity 1)

**Objective:** To develop the ability to apply the skills of paraphrasing and summarising to academic texts.

**Instructions:**

– Read the text on *green cities* below. Then paraphrase it and summarise it.

**Green Cities: Urban Sustainability in Action**

As urban populations continue to grow, the concept of “green cities” has emerged as a key strategy for making urban living more sustainable. Green cities aim to reduce environmental impact while enhancing the quality of life for residents through eco-friendly infrastructure, efficient transportation, and increased access to green spaces. By integrating sustainable planning into urban design, cities can significantly cut carbon emissions, conserve resources, and improve public health.

One of the hallmarks of a green city is its investment in renewable energy and energy-efficient buildings. Solar panels, green roofs, and passive heating systems are increasingly common in new developments. Public transportation is another priority, with successful green cities offering clean, reliable options like electric buses, bike lanes, and pedestrian zones to reduce dependence on private vehicles. These changes not only lower emissions but also reduce traffic congestion and noise pollution.

Moreover, green cities prioritise the inclusion of nature within the urban landscape. Parks, community gardens, and tree-lined streets help combat the urban heat island effect, filter air pollutants, and offer mental health benefits. Cities like Copenhagen and Singapore are often cited as models for incorporating nature and sustainability into their long-term planning.

In conclusion, green cities represent a proactive response to the environmental and social challenges of modern urbanisation. By investing in sustainable technologies and planning practices, these cities demonstrate that economic growth and ecological responsibility can coexist in the 21st century.

### 2.6.7. Paraphrase vs summary: Skill in precision and reduction (Activity 2)

**Objective:** To develop the ability to apply the skills of paraphrasing and summarising to academic texts.

**Instructions:**

– Read the text on *fast fashion* below. Then paraphrase it and summarise it.

#### **The Impact of Fast Fashion on the Environment**

Fast fashion, characterised by the rapid production of inexpensive clothing to meet changing trends, has become a dominant force in the global apparel industry. However, this business model comes with substantial environmental costs. The production of textiles (especially cotton and synthetic fibers) consumes enormous quantities of water, chemicals, and energy. Dyeing processes alone are among the largest contributors to industrial water pollution globally.

In addition, the fast fashion cycle encourages overconsumption and waste. Many garments are designed for short-term use and are discarded within months. This leads to overflowing landfills and growing textile waste that takes years to decompose, particularly items made from polyester and other synthetic materials. Furthermore, transportation emissions increase as clothes are shipped rapidly from factories, often located in low-wage countries, to markets worldwide.

Consumers and manufacturers are becoming increasingly aware of these environmental consequences. Sustainable fashion initiatives are gaining traction, with some brands committing to recycled materials, ethical labour practices, and circular economy principles. Nonetheless, significant challenges remain in changing both consumer habits and industry norms. Unless demand for constant novelty is reduced, the environmental impact of fashion will likely continue to grow.

### 2.6.8. Paraphrase vs summary: Skill in precision and reduction (Activity 3)

**Objective:** To develop the ability to apply the skills of paraphrasing and summarising to academic texts.

**Instructions:**

– Read the text on *women being decision-makers* below. Then paraphrase it and summarise it.

#### **Are Women Better Decision-Makers Than Men?**

Research suggests that the average person makes approximately 35,000 decisions per day; ranging from trivial matters, such as choosing between tea or coffee, to life-altering choices, like selecting a university or changing careers. In her book *How Women Decide*, cognitive psychologist Therese Huston examines whether women’s decision-making is unfairly judged and how such perceptions may hinder their advancement, particularly in the workplace.

According to Huston, a significant gender bias persists. “Men are consistently perceived as more capable decision-makers, especially in professional settings,” she notes. “This stems from entrenched cultural beliefs that women lack the ability to make sound judgements.” She points out that while studies often ridicule the time women spend selecting clothing, little scrutiny is placed on the time men spend choosing cars, thus revealing a double standard.

Huston’s research challenges these stereotypes. While decisiveness is ranked as a top leadership trait and frequently associated with men, empirical data indicates that both men and women struggle equally with decision-making. The only notable variation appears during adolescence, where teenage girls show slightly more indecision than boys – a gap that disappears in adulthood.

Nonetheless, there are some gendered differences in style. Women tend to adopt a more collaborative approach, actively seeking input before reaching a decision. While this tendency often results in better outcomes, it is paradoxically perceived as a weakness in many professional environments.

Stress appears to amplify gender-based differences. Studies conducted by cognitive neuroscientists Mara Mather and Nicole R. Lighthall revealed that women under stress are more likely to make careful, calculated choices, whereas men are prone to riskier behaviour. Supporting this, neurobiologist Ruud van den Bos found that women’s decision-making under pressure becomes both faster and more accurate, even though they tend to be more self-critical.

Huston argues that women are frequently brought into leadership roles during times of crisis, when outcomes are uncertain. She cites examples, such as Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer, whose decisions faced disproportionate scrutiny compared to her male counterparts.

Ultimately, despite mounting evidence that women excel in high-pressure decision-making, societal biases continue to undermine their credibility as leaders.



**Part 3**  
**Essay Types**



## 3.1. Compare and Contrast Essay

### 3.1.1. Comparative topic brainstorming

**Objective:** To develop the ability to generate balanced and relevant ideas for compare and contrast essays.

**Instructions:**

– The topic is *taking a gap year vs entering university immediately*. Consider the two options carefully. Think about what each option involves in real life. Brainstorm and reflect on factors like lifestyle, education, cost, goals, and outcomes.

– Fill in the gapped table below by identifying how the two options are similar or different in various aspects.

Aspect	Taking a Gap Year	Entering University Immediately
Purpose	Often used for travel, work, volunteering, or personal growth.	Focused on continuing formal education directly after high school.
Cost		
Maturity / Experience	Can increase maturity, independence, and real-world experience.	
Academic Readiness		Maintains momentum and study habits from high school.
Career Impact	Could enrich a résumé with unique experiences.	
Social Life		Begins university with same-age cohort (peers), builds connections earlier.
Mental Health		
Flexibility	Highly flexible; activities can be self-designed.	

### 3.1.2. Sentence reordering: Compare and contrast cohesion (Activity 1)

**Objective:** To reinforce understanding of cohesion and logical structure in compare and contrast writing. To identify transitional phrases, group similar ideas, and construct well-organised comparisons.

**Instructions:**

– Below are eight jumbled sentences comparing *bicycles and cars*. Reorder them to create a clear, logically structured paragraph, in the following progression:

- Introduction
- Shared use
- Pros of bicycles
- Pros of cars
- Bicycle limitations
- Car limitations
- Conclusion
- Write the full paragraph.
- Discuss if the sentences can be ordered differently.
- Discuss the cohesion features, as well as the structure of a strong compare and contrast paragraph.

A. Cars, on the other hand, offer greater comfort, travel speed, and weather protection, making them more suitable for long-distance journeys or daily commutes in unpredictable climates.

B. In conclusion, the decision to use a bicycle or a car ultimately depends on multiple factors, including environmental values, budget constraints, commuting distance, and individual lifestyle needs.

C. Bicycles and cars are two of the most commonly used modes of transportation globally, each with its own distinct advantages and limitations.

D. In contrast to the low environmental impact of bicycles, cars require fossil fuels, generate carbon emissions, and contribute to traffic congestion in urban areas.

E. Bicycles are widely praised for being environmentally friendly, cost-effective, and beneficial to personal health, as they encourage regular physical activity and produce no emissions.

F. Although riding a bike is healthier and more sustainable, it is often considered impractical for individuals who need to travel long distances or carry heavy loads.

G. Similarly, both bicycles and cars are used for a range of purposes such as commuting to work, running errands, or engaging in recreational activities, depending on accessibility and user preferences.

H. While cars are significantly more expensive to purchase, fuel, and maintain, they are often chosen for their convenience, safety features, and ability to operate efficiently in various road and weather conditions.

### 3.1.3. Sentence reordering: Compare and contrast cohesion (Activity 2)

**Objective:** To reinforce understanding of cohesion and logical structure in compare and contrast writing. To identify transitional phrases, group similar ideas, and construct well-organised comparisons.

**Instructions:**

- Below are eight jumbled sentences comparing *keeping a pet bunny vs a pet cat*. Reorder them to create a clear, logically structured paragraph.
- Write the full paragraph.
- Discuss if the sentences can be ordered differently.
- Discuss the cohesion features, as well as the structure of a strong compare and contrast paragraph.

A. While cats are independent and require minimal supervision, bunnies are often more delicate and demand more consistent human care.

B. In contrast, bunnies have more specific dietary needs, such as fresh hay, greens, and regular access to water, which must be closely monitored.

C. Both cats and bunnies can be affectionate companions, but their personalities and care requirements differ significantly.

D. However, cats may be more suitable for people with busier schedules or smaller living spaces, as they are generally litter-trained and self-sufficient.

E. When it comes to diet, cats typically eat prepared food and don't require much variation or hands-on feeding.

F. For example, bunnies often prefer quiet environments and may not enjoy being handled frequently, whereas many cats are more adaptable to noisy households.

G. Despite these differences, both animals can form strong bonds with their owners and thrive in domestic environments when given proper attention.

H. In terms of temperament, cats are generally more social and exploratory, while bunnies tend to be more cautious and sensitive.

### 3.1.4. Comparative revision: Professional development

**Objective:** To develop the ability to identify and express comparative relationships by revising a neutral, fact-based paragraph into a cohesive compare and contrast composition using appropriate structures and transitions.

**Instructions:**

- Read the neutral paragraph below, which presents information about *online and onsite professional development courses* without making any comparisons.
- Revise and rewrite the neutral paragraph (200-220 words) to clearly highlight similarities and differences between the two formats of professional development courses.
- Use appropriate comparative transition words. Combine or restructure sentences to improve flow, cohesion, and clarity.

**Neutral paragraph:**

Online professional development courses are typically delivered through digital platforms. These courses often include video lectures, reading materials, discussion boards, and quizzes. Participants may complete assignments at their own pace, and communication usually occurs through email or online forums. Many of these courses are asynchronous and accessible to learners from different locations. They are frequently used by professionals who need flexible scheduling or remote access. Onsite professional development courses are usually held in physical training centers, classrooms, or workplace settings. These courses are often scheduled at specific times and require participants to attend in person. Sessions may include live presentations, group discussions, practical exercises, and face-to-face interaction with instructors. Participants often receive printed materials or use on-site equipment. These courses are commonly used by organisations for in-house training or team development. Both formats are designed to support skill-building, certification, or continuing education. Employers and institutions may offer either format depending on the nature of the training, budget, and participant availability. Each format includes structured content, instructional support, and defined learning objectives.

**3.1.5. Compare and contrast essay structure analysis 1 (Point-by-point)**

**Objective:** To understand the structure and cohesion of one type of compare and contrast essay (point-by-point structure) and to apply this understanding to academic writing.

**Instructions:**

- Read the sample essay below on the topic *staying at a hotel vs staying at an airbnb*.
- Pay close attention to the structure: introduction, thesis statement, body paragraphs, and conclusion.

– Once you have read it, review the introduction, thesis statement, and conclusion separately. Then answer the reflection questions provided in the Reflection Section below to discuss how the essay is organised and how comparisons are effectively made in this way.

### **Sample compare and contrast essay (Point-by-point)**

#### **Introduction:**

When planning a trip, one of the most important decisions travelers face is where to stay. With the growth of the sharing economy, traditional hotel accommodations now compete with platforms like Airbnb. While both offer a place to sleep, their experiences can be quite different. Each option appeals to different types of travelers based on priorities such as convenience, cost, and atmosphere.

#### **Thesis statement:**

Although both hotels and Airbnbs provide accommodation, they differ significantly in terms of cost, level of service, and the overall travel experience they offer.

#### **Body paragraph 1: Cost:**

One major difference between hotels and Airbnbs is the cost. Hotels often charge higher nightly rates, especially in major cities or during peak travel seasons. They may also include extra fees for parking, room service, or resort access. In contrast, Airbnbs usually offer more competitive pricing, especially for longer stays or group travel. Guests can often find entire apartments or homes for the same price as a single hotel room, with access to kitchens and laundry facilities that help reduce additional expenses.

#### **Body paragraph 2: Service and amenities:**

The level of service and amenities also varies greatly between the two. Hotels typically offer professional services such as daily housekeeping, front desk support, room service, and on-site restaurants or gyms. These conveniences appeal to travelers who value a hassle-free experience. On the other hand, Airbnbs are usually managed by individual hosts and provide a more self-service style of accommodation. While some may include thoughtful touches, such as local guides or welcome snacks, guests are expected to manage their stay more independently.

#### **Body paragraph 3: Travel experience:**

The atmosphere and overall experience also differ. Hotels often feel standardised and consistent, which some travelers appreciate for the predictability and brand reliability. In contrast, Airbnbs offer a more personalised and

immersive experience, especially in residential neighborhoods. This appeals to travelers seeking a more local or “authentic” stay. However, the lack of regulation can sometimes lead to inconsistent quality or unexpected issues with hosts.

**Conclusion:**

In the end, the choice between staying at a hotel or booking an Airbnb depends on the traveler's goals and preferences. Those who prioritise full service and convenience may find hotels more suitable, while those seeking affordability and a unique local experience might prefer Airbnbs. Understanding the differences can help travelers select the accommodation that best aligns with their expectations and needs.

**Reflection Section:**

**Introduction reflection:**

- a) What background information does the introduction provide?
- b) Is the topic clearly introduced for comparison?

**Thesis statement reflection:**

- a) What three areas of comparison are clearly listed?
- b) How does this thesis help structure the essay?

**Conclusion reflection:**

- a) How does the conclusion reframe the thesis without repeating it exactly?
- b) Does it provide closure or next steps?

### 3.1.6. Compare and contrast essay structure analysis 2 (Block)

**Objective:** To understand the structure and cohesion of another type of compare and contrast essay (block structure) and to apply this understanding to academic writing.

**Instructions:**

- Read the sample essay below on the topic *working a gig job vs not working a gig job as a student*.
- Pay close attention to the structure: introduction, thesis statement, body paragraphs, and conclusion.
- Once you have read it, review the introduction, thesis statement, and conclusion separately. Then answer the reflection questions provided in the Reflection Section below to discuss how the essay is organised and how comparisons are effectively made in this way.

## Sample compare and contrast essay (Block)

### Introduction:

Many college students look for ways to support themselves financially while pursuing their degrees. One common option is taking on a gig job, such as delivering food or driving for a rideshare service. Others choose not to work during their studies to focus entirely on academic and personal development. Both choices can affect a student's experience in different ways, particularly in terms of time management, financial independence, and academic performance.

### Thesis statement:

While some students benefit from the flexibility and income of gig work, others may find that not working allows them to focus more effectively on their studies and well-being.

### Body paragraph 1: Students who work gig jobs:

Students who work gig jobs often gain practical experience, income, and a sense of financial independence. These jobs typically offer flexible schedules, which can be adjusted around classes and exams. Gig work can also help students develop time management skills, as they must balance their academic responsibilities with work commitments. Additionally, earning an income may reduce their reliance on loans or parental support. However, gig jobs can also be physically and mentally draining, especially during busy academic periods, and they may leave students with limited time for rest, social life, or extracurricular activities.

### Body paragraph 2: Students who do not work gig jobs:

On the other hand, students who do not take on gig work have more time to focus on their studies, join campus and extracurricular activities, and maintain a healthier school-life balance. Without the added responsibility of a job, these students can dedicate themselves fully to coursework and often experience less stress related to time pressure. They may also have more opportunities to engage in unpaid internships, research, or volunteer roles that build their résumé in other ways. Still, not working can lead to greater financial dependence and might limit their budgeting or professional development until after graduation.

### Conclusion:

Ultimately, whether or not a student chooses to work a gig job depends on individual needs, goals, and resources. Both paths offer distinct benefits and challenges. By understanding how each choice affects areas like time, mo-

ney, and academic focus, students can make informed decisions that align with their personal priorities.

### Reflection Section:

#### Introduction reflection:

- a) How does the introduction set up the two options neutrally?
- b) Are the comparison points introduced clearly?

#### Thesis statement reflection:

- a) Does the thesis preview the contrast without bias?
- b) What does it suggest about how the essay will be organised?

#### Conclusion reflection:

- a) How does the conclusion summarise the main idea?
- b) Does it avoid restating details while still offering closure?

### 3.1.7. Analyzing essay structures: Point-by-point vs block

**Objective:** To understand, identify, and evaluate two organisational methods for compare and contrast essays (point-by-point structure and block structure) through reading and analysis of sample texts on the same topic.

#### Instructions:

- Read both essays on the topic of *whether prisons should continue to exist or be abolished*. Identify which essay uses point-by-point structure and which one uses block structure.

#### – Questions for reflection:

- What clues helped you identify the structure?
- What are the points of comparison?
- How clearly are the comparisons and contrasts organised?
- Do both essays provide a balanced view of the topic?
- Is one structure more effective or easier to follow (clarity and flow)? Why or why not?
- Which dimensions of the topic are considered?
- How is coherence achieved?
- How does the introduction, thesis statement, and conclusion in each essay contribute to the overall structure?

#### Essay A:

Prisons have long been central to justice systems around the world. They are designed to punish offenders, protect society, and offer opportunities for rehabilitation. Supporters believe prisons are necessary to keep communiti-

es safe and ensure consequences for criminal behavior. However, growing numbers of critics argue that prisons often fail to meet their goals and may cause more harm than good. This debate shows how different societies view justice, punishment, and the future of criminal law.

People who support prisons argue that they are necessary for maintaining public safety and legal order. One of the main purposes of prison is to remove dangerous individuals from the community. In this way, prisons protect others from harm. Supporters also believe that the fear of going to prison discourages people from committing crimes. In addition, many believe that punishment is a fair response to serious offenses and that prison provides that punishment. Some modern prisons offer services such as education, job training, or counseling. These programmes are meant to help inmates return to society and live productive lives. Supporters say that if prisons are improved through better funding, staff training, and access to support services, they can become more effective.

On the other hand, opponents of prisons argue that they often fail to rehabilitate people and can even make things worse. Many studies show that people who are released from prison often commit crimes again, which suggests that prison does not change long-term behavior. Critics also say that prisons are often violent, overcrowded, and emotionally damaging. Rather than helping individuals, they may increase anger, trauma, or disconnection from society. Furthermore, critics highlight that prisons do not affect everyone equally. People from poorer communities or minority backgrounds are often more likely to be imprisoned. They argue that this creates injustice in the system. Financially, prisons are also very expensive for governments to maintain. Opponents believe that this money could be better spent on programmes that prevent crime, such as education, job training, mental health support, and community-based justice.

In conclusion, the question of whether prisons should continue to exist is a difficult one. Supporters believe prisons can work if they are reformed to focus more on rehabilitation and fairness. Opponents argue that the system is broken and should be replaced by more humane and effective solutions. Both views raise important concerns about safety, justice, and human dignity. As societies continue to change, this debate is likely to remain an important part of discussions on criminal justice reform

### **Essay B:**

The future of prisons is a topic that divides opinion. Some people believe prisons are essential for keeping society safe and ensuring that crimes are punished. Others argue that prisons are harmful, unfair, and do not achieve

their goals. A useful way to explore both sides of this issue is by comparing their views on three major areas: public safety, rehabilitation, and cost.

In terms of public safety, supporters of prisons say that incarceration removes dangerous individuals from society, helping to reduce harm and protect the public. They also believe that knowing there are serious consequences for crime helps prevent others from breaking the law. However, critics say that prison is only a short-term solution. They argue that it does not address the causes of crime, such as poverty, lack of education, or mental illness. They believe that long-term safety requires investment in social support, not just punishment.

When it comes to rehabilitation, prison supporters say that many facilities offer programmes to help inmates return to society successfully. These programmes may include education, job training, or therapy. They believe that with proper funding, prisons can help people improve their lives. On the other hand, critics argue that these services are often limited or poorly run. In many cases, people leave prison without the support they need. Critics also claim that alternative approaches, such as community service, counseling, or restorative justice, are more effective and less damaging.

Cost is another area where opinions differ. Running prisons requires large amounts of public money, including costs for staff, buildings, healthcare, and food. Supporters say this spending is necessary to keep society safe and maintain justice. However, opponents argue that the results do not match the investment. In their view, the money could be better spent on education, housing, and social programmes that reduce crime before it starts. They believe these approaches offer better value and better outcomes for communities.

In conclusion, the debate over prisons involves complex arguments on both sides. Supporters see prisons as necessary for safety, order, and justice. They believe that prisons can be improved and made more effective. Critics, however, view the system as deeply flawed and believe it should be replaced with more humane and cost-efficient alternatives. By comparing these perspectives point by point, it becomes clear that this debate is not just about crime and punishment, but about the kind of society people want to build.

### 3.1.8. Deconstruction: Block structure vs point-by-point structure

**Objective:** To develop a full understanding of the two main organisational patterns in compare and contrast essays (block vs point-by-point structure) so informed choices can be made when planning and writing essays.

**Instructions:**

Fill in the gapped Table below (Table 7).

Feature	Block Structure	Point-by-Point Structure
<b>Organisation</b>	Discusses all aspects of one subject first, then all aspects of the second.	
<b>Paragraph Focus</b>		
<b>Typical Body Paragraph Layout</b>	- Paragraph 1: Subject A (e.g. arguments for prisons) - Paragraph 2: Subject B (e.g. arguments against prisons)	- Paragraph 1: Public safety (pro and con) - Paragraph 2: Rehabilitation (pro and con)
<b>Tone of Thesis Statement</b>	Often broader or more general in structure, setting up full discussion of each subject.	More analytical or segmented, suggesting direct comparisons across specific points.
<b>Clarity of Comparison</b>		Comparison is more explicit and direct, easier to follow side-by-side.
<b>Reader Engagement</b>	Can be simpler to write, but there is risk of imbalance or repetitive tone.	
<b>Best Used When...</b>		- You want to highlight contrasts or similarities clearly. - Reader needs help tracking direct comparisons.
<b>Transitions and Linking</b>	Important to use clear transitional phrases between blocks (e.g. "In contrast," "On the other hand").	
<b>Planning / Outlining</b>		Plan by points: choose key areas of comparison, then compare both sides in each.
<b>Risk of Bias or Imbalance</b>	Higher – since one side is discussed fully before the other.	

Table 7: Block structure vs point-by-point structure: Compare and contrast essay

### Instructions:

- Fill in the two gapped tables below with content you would include in a compare and contrast essay on *e-books vs printed books*. Brainstorm ideas.
- Write a compare and contrast essay (500-550 words) following either the block structure or the point-by-point structure.

### Block structure outline

Essay title: *Reading in the Digital Age: E-books and Printed Books*

Section	Content
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce changing reading habits</li> <li>- Rise of e-books alongside print</li> <li>- <b>Thesis statement:</b> E-books and printed books offer different experiences in usability, comfort, and emotional connection.</li> </ul>
<b>Body Paragraph 1</b> <i>E-books</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a)</li> <li>b)</li> <li>c)</li> </ul>
<b>Body Paragraph 2</b> <i>Printed Books</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a)</li> <li>b)</li> <li>c)</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Restate main differences</li> <li>- Acknowledge personal preference</li> <li>- Suggest both formats serve different contexts and can coexist</li> </ul>

### Point-by-point structure outline

Essay title: *E-books vs Printed Books: A Comparative Reading Experience*

Section	Content
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce digital vs traditional reading</li> <li>- Debate over screen vs paper</li> <li>- <b>Thesis statement:</b> E-books and printed books differ in usability, comfort, and emotional experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Body Paragraph 1</b> <i>Usability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a)</li> <li>b)</li> </ul>
<b>Body Paragraph 2</b> <i>Reading Comfort</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a)</li> <li>b)</li> </ul>
<b>Body Paragraph 3</b> <i>Emotional Connection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a)</li> <li>b)</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recap key differences</li> <li>- Emphasise format depends on context</li> <li>- Argue both formats enhance reader choice and access</li> </ul>

### 3.1.9. Thesis statement precision practice

**Objective:** To develop the ability to recognise and write clear, balanced, and focused thesis statements that accurately present the comparison and structure of a compare and contrast essay.

**Instructions:**

– Read the two thesis statements below on the topic of activity III.1.7. (*whether prisons should continue to exist or be abolished*). Which is a block structure thesis statement, and which is a point-by-point structure thesis statement? Justify your answers.

– Then read the following ten thesis statements on a variety of topics. These examples are vague, biased, or unclear in structure. Rewrite each thesis statement to:

- Name both subjects being compared
- Use precise, formal language
- Show balance (no obvious bias)
- Include 2-3 points of comparison (optional but encouraged)

**Thesis statement 1:**

Although prisons aim to provide safety, punishment, and rehabilitation, they differ greatly from proposed alternatives in terms of long-term effectiveness, cost, and impact on communities.

**Thesis statement 2:**

While many believe prisons are necessary for justice and public safety, others argue that they are harmful and should be replaced with more humane alternatives.

**Thesis statements to be rewritten:**

- a) Working while studying at any age in life is hard.
- b) Some people like working from home, but others don't.
- c) Owning a home is smarter than renting because renting is a waste of money.
- d) Living in the city is more exciting than living in the country.
- e) Reading is more educational than watching movies.
- f) Group work is annoying and doesn't help students learn.
- g) There are a lot of differences between paying with cash and using digital payments.
- h) E-books are ruining real reading.
- i) Some people recycle while others try not to use things, but both help.
- j) Green cities are better than regular cities because they care about the environment.

### 3.1.10. Comparing and contrasting opposing views

**Objective:** To develop critical reading by examining how two authors with opposing viewpoints use rhetorical strategies, such as tone, appeals (ethos, pathos, logos), evidence, and audience awareness, to communicate their arguments on the same topic.

**Instructions:**

- Read the two articles below on *AI regulation*.
- Discuss by comparing and contrasting both articles:
  - How do the authors of each article establish credibility (ethos)?
  - What emotional appeals (pathos) are used in each article, and how do they affect the reader’s perception of AI regulation?
  - Which article uses logical reasoning (logos) more effectively?
  - Who is the intended audience for each article? What assumptions are made about the audience?
  - What tone does each author use (formal, urgent, skeptical, sarcastic, etc.)?
  - Which article do you find more persuasive? Why?
  - Do both texts acknowledge the other side? How effectively?
- Write a compare and contrast essay (350-400 words) discussing how the two authors approach the topic of AI regulation.

**Author A: Why AI Should Be Regulated Now**

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more integrated into everyday life, its potential to disrupt industries, economies, and personal liberties grows at an alarming pace. From autonomous weapons to data-driven hiring algorithms, AI systems are increasingly influencing decisions that were once reserved for human judgment. The absence of clear, enforceable international standards on AI development poses a serious threat to global stability.

Logical reasoning demands that such powerful technology not be left unchecked. Just as we regulate pharmaceuticals or nuclear energy, governments must step in to create frameworks that ensure AI serves humanity rather than endangers it. Leading technology experts, including those from OpenAI and Google DeepMind, have already warned of long-term existential risks. We cannot afford to wait for harm to occur before acting.

Moreover, the current trajectory of private-sector AI research prioritises profitability over public interest. Without regulatory oversight, AI may reinforce social inequalities, facilitate mass surveillance, or even displace millions of workers without safety nets. Legislation will not be easy, but proactive regulation is a moral imperative for preserving human rights and economic justice in the digital age.

### **Author B: Let AI Evolve Without Government Interference**

The rapid rise of artificial intelligence is one of the most exciting developments in human history. While critics call for government regulation, such interference would stifle innovation, burden startups, and delay the benefits AI could bring to education, medicine, and transportation.

History teaches us that progress thrives in freedom, not bureaucracy. Imagine if government panels had reviewed every invention in the industrial revolution – would we have lightbulbs, airplanes, or the internet as quickly? The same logic applies to AI. Of course, risks exist, but the best solutions emerge from open markets and responsible innovation, not pre-emptive red tape.

Calls for regulation often stem from fear and control, not genuine concern. The truth is that AI has already begun solving problems: from detecting cancer earlier to improving accessibility for people with disabilities. Rather than hampering these breakthroughs, we should encourage experimentation. After all, technological evolution should not be dictated by those who least understand it.

### **3.1.11. Comparing and contrasting cultural perspectives**

**Objective:** To develop comparative writing skills by examining how underlying cultural values and observable practices shape perspectives on a shared issue.

**Instructions:**

- Read the sample essay below comparing *primary education in England and Finland*. Then divide the essay into six paragraphs.
- Discuss:
  - What aspects are examined?
  - Does this compare and contrast essay follow the block structure or the point-by-point structure?
  - What challenges might arise if a student from one country studies in the other?
  - How does teacher autonomy differ between the two countries, and how might this affect classroom practices?
  - Which aspects of the Finnish model could be adapted to improve England's system, or vice versa?
- Write a compare and contrast essay (500-550 words) on the higher education system in your home country vs the UK or the USA.

**Essay:****Primary Education in England and Finland: A Cultural Comparison**

Education is often considered a reflection of national values, and this is clearly seen in how countries approach primary schooling. England and Finland, both developed European nations, take very different paths in educating their youngest citizens. By examining three key areas – school structure, teaching philosophy, and student assessment – we can understand how each system reflects its cultural priorities and educational goals.

In terms of school structure, primary education in both countries is compulsory and publicly funded, but the age of entry and school organisation differ. In England, children typically begin school at the age of four or five, one of the earliest starting ages in Europe. The school day is structured with a strong focus on formal learning, including literacy and numeracy, from the beginning. In contrast, Finnish children start school at age seven. Prior to that, they attend pre-primary education that focuses more on play-based learning and social development rather than academic content. This later start reflects Finland's belief in child readiness and emotional maturity before introducing formal schooling. Teaching philosophy is another area of contrast. English primary education tends to follow a structured national curriculum with clear targets, regular testing, and teacher accountability. Lessons are often timed and focused, with measurable objectives. Finland, by contrast, emphasises student autonomy, curiosity, and a holistic approach. Teachers are trusted professionals with high autonomy in the classroom and no pressure to "teach to the test." Finnish classrooms often include flexible schedules, integrated subjects, and a strong focus on student well-being. Assessment practices further highlight the contrast. In England, primary students are regularly assessed through standardised national tests. These assessments are used to track school and teacher performance, as well as student progress. In Finland, formal testing is minimal. Students are assessed through teacher observations, classroom participation, and project-based work. National testing is not introduced until much later in the educational journey. The Finnish approach reflects a deep trust in teachers and a belief that learning cannot be fully measured by test scores. Despite these differences, both systems aim to provide equitable education for all children. Both countries value literacy, numeracy, and personal development, and both continue to refine their systems in response to research and societal needs. England has recently introduced more mental health and well-being support in primary schools, while Finland continues to explore digital learning tools in inclusive settings. In conclusion, England and Finland offer two distinct models of primary education – one that emphasises structure and accountability, and another that values flexibility and student-centered learning. Understanding these differences not only

sheds light on broader cultural attitudes but also offers educators and policy-makers new perspectives on how children learn best.

### COMPARE AND CONTRAST ESSAY TOPIC BANK:

After writing a compare and contrast essay, self-check your writing (Table 8). Provide peer feedback (Table 9).

1. Using public libraries vs paying for subscription services
2. Personal finance habits: millennials vs baby boomers
3. Traditional dating vs online dating
4. Studying the humanities vs studying STEM
5. Raising children in the city vs the countryside
6. Environmental activism: youth vs older generations
7. Government surveillance vs personal privacy
8. Traditional medicine vs modern medicine
9. Yoga vs high-intensity workouts
10. Fast food vs home-cooked meals
11. Owning a pet vs not owning a pet
12. Early birds vs night owls
13. Mental health approaches: East vs West
14. Public transportation vs driving a car
15. Digital detox vs constant connectivity
16. Living alone vs living with others
17. News consumption: digital vs print
18. Online friendships vs in-person relationships
19. Blogging vs vlogging
20. Technology use: teenagers vs adults
21. Traditional vs modern lifestyles
22. Attitudes towards aging in different societies
23. Retirement in different societies
24. Family structures: nuclear vs extended families
25. Fully remote work vs office work
26. Working for a corporation vs working freelance
27. Government jobs vs private sector jobs
28. Entrepreneurship vs employment
29. Studying abroad vs studying in your home country
30. Group projects vs independent assignments
31. Grading systems vs pass/fail systems
32. Homeschooling vs traditional schooling
33. Vocational education vs academic education
34. Electric cars vs gasoline cars

35. Rural environmental issues vs urban environmental issues
36. Animal conservation in zoos vs in natural habitats
37. Green building design vs traditional architecture
38. Public transportation vs private vehicles
39. Traveling solo vs traveling with a group
40. Staying at a hotel vs staying at an airbnb
41. Domestic travel vs international travel
42. Backpacking vs luxury travel
43. Cultural tourism vs adventure tourism
44. Travel in the pre-internet era vs the digital age
45. Visiting historical sites vs visiting natural landmarks
46. Peak season travel vs off-season travel
47. Traveling for leisure vs traveling for work
48. Cultural experiences in rural areas vs urban centers
49. Digital nomad lifestyle vs traditional expat living
50. Eco-tourism vs mass tourism

√	Category	Checklist Item	Improvement Tip
	<b>Thesis and Focus</b>	My thesis identifies both subjects and has a clear purpose.	Include both topics and state what you are comparing.
		I follow a consistent structure (block or point-by-point).	Stick to one structure throughout the essay.
	<b>Ideas and Development</b>	I include at least two similarities with explanation.	Use evidence or examples to show how they are similar.
		I include at least two differences with explanation.	Focus on meaningful, relevant differences.
		I explain why similarities / differences matter (analysis).	Ask yourself: "So what?" after each point to show significance.
	<b>Structure and Coherence</b>	Each paragraph starts with a clear topic sentence.	Signal if you are comparing or contrasting.
		My essay has an introduction, thesis statement, body, and conclusion.	- The thesis statement should be clear and appropriate. - The introduction and conclusion should not be worded exactly the same.
		I use appropriate transitions / markers.	Vary connectors; don't repeat the same ones.
	<b>Language and Style</b>	I use formal academic vocabulary.	Avoid slang and contractions.

√	Category	Checklist Item	Improvement Tip
		The grammar and sentence structure are accurate.	Check articles, agreement, and punctuation.
		I use varied sentence types.	Combine or divide sentences to improve flow.
	<b>Final Review and Editing</b>	My essay meets the required word count (500-550 words).	Expand or shorten as needed.
		I proofread or got peer feedback before submitting.	Read aloud or ask someone to check clarity and grammar.

Table 8: Student self-check checklist: Compare and contrast essay

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
<b>Thesis Statement</b>	Clear, specific, and effectively presents the purpose of comparison / contrast and identifies the two subjects being compared.	Thesis is mostly clear and includes the subjects and general purpose.	Thesis is present but vague or lacks clear direction.	Thesis is missing, too general, or off-topic.
<b>Structure and Organisation</b>	Logical structure (point-by-point or block); smooth transitions guide reader clearly through similarities and differences.	Organisation is generally clear, with only minor lapses in coherence or sequencing.	Structure is present but uneven or not consistently followed; some confusion in transitions.	Weak or confusing structure; transitions missing or unclear.
<b>Similarities Development</b>	Similarities are clearly identified and well-explained with relevant examples, demonstrating thoughtful comparison.	Most similarities are explained, with adequate support and clarity.	Some similarities are present but not well-developed or supported.	Similarities are poorly explained, irrelevant, or missing.
<b>Differences Development</b>	Differences are clearly identified and explained	Most differences are clear and explained, though	Some differences included but insufficient	Differences are vague, unsupported,

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
	with strong supporting evidence and analysis.	may lack depth or variety.	explanation or development.	or missing.
<b>Analysis and Insight</b>	Essay demonstrates insightful analysis of why the similarities / differences matter or what conclusions can be drawn.	Some analysis is provided; attempts to go beyond surface-level comparison.	Minimal analysis; tends to list comparisons without exploring deeper meaning.	No real analysis; mostly description or listing.
<b>Use of Transitions</b>	Variety of accurate comparison and contrast transitions.	Some variety of correct transitions used.	Repetitive or limited use of transitions.	Incorrect or missing transitions; relationships unclear.
<b>Paragraph Development</b>	Paragraphs are unified, coherent, and fully developed with clear topic sentences and supporting examples.	Most paragraphs are logically structured with minor lapses in coherence.	Some paragraphs underdeveloped or poorly focused.	Paragraphs lack structure or development; off-topic or fragmented.
<b>Grammar and Sentence Structure</b>	Excellent grammar and varied sentence structures; very few errors.	Minor grammar errors that do not impede meaning; good sentence variety.	Noticeable grammar issues; sentence structure may be repetitive or awkward.	Frequent grammar errors that affect clarity or readability.
<b>Vocabulary and Style</b>	Academic, precise vocabulary used appropriately; consistent formal tone.	Mostly appropriate word choice and tone; minor inconsistencies.	Some informal expressions or limited vocabulary.	Inappropriate tone or vocabulary for academic writing.

*Table 9: Rubric for assessing compare and contrast essays (peer feedback or teacher feedback)*

## 3.2. Cause and Effect Essay

### 3.2.1. Cause and effect brainstorming

**Objective:** To generate and organise ideas for a cause and effect essay, thus distinguishing its approach from other types of essays.

**Instructions:**

- The topic is *having a service dog*. Think about why someone might have a service dog and how that decision affects their daily life.
- Discuss causes – Brainstorm several reasons why a person might require a service dog. Consider: Types of disabilities (physical, sensory, psychiatric), need for independence or safety, and medical or emotional conditions.
- Discuss effects – Brainstorm the short-term and long-term effects of having a service dog. Consider: Increased independence and mobility, emotional or psychological benefits, public accessibility and social interaction, and challenges (costs, responsibility, public awareness).
- Discuss which cause and effect relationships are most significant. These will form the body paragraphs of your essay.
- Fill in the gapped table below to visually organise your ideas.

Causes – Why Someone Might Need a Service Dog	Effects – What Happens as a Result of Having a Service Dog
Has a physical disability (e.g. limited mobility, paralysis, arthritis).	Gains greater physical independence in performing daily tasks like opening doors, picking up dropped items, or navigating stairs safely.
	Service dog can detect oncoming seizures or medical episodes, enabling faster responses and potentially saving the person's life.
Experiences anxiety, PTSD, or other psychiatric conditions.	
	Gains better navigation, avoids hazards, and receives alerts for sounds (e.g. alarms or approaching vehicles), improving safety and confidence.
Needs more autonomy and wants to reduce reliance on caregivers or family members.	

Causes – Why Someone Might Need a Service Dog	Effects – What Happens as a Result of Having a Service Dog
	Service dog becomes a social bridge, encouraging conversations, reducing loneliness, and improving mood through companionship.
	With legal protection under accessibility laws, the person gains increased freedom to enter public spaces and may feel more socially accepted.
Accepts long-term responsibility of caring for a dog (e.g. feeding, grooming, vet care).	
Has experienced trauma or a major life adjustment due to disability.	Builds emotional resilience and reestablishes daily structure through the relationship and trust built with the service dog.
	May reduce reliance on medication or therapy alone by integrating animal-assisted intervention into a holistic care plan.

### 3.2.2. Identifying cause and effect in texts

**Objective:** To enhance the ability to identify and interpret cause and effect relationships in academic writing by analysing signal words, structural cues, and logical reasoning within a model essay.

**Instructions:**

- Read the model essay. Pay attention to how the author links reasons and results.
- Highlight the sentences that describe causes (why something happened).
- Underline the sentences that present effects (what happened as a result).
- Identify signal words or phrases used to express causality.
- Discuss:
  - What is the main idea of each paragraph?
  - Do some sentences express both a cause and an effect? Justify your answers using examples from the text.
  - Which sentence in the text most clearly shows a direct causal chain from one event to another?

- How does the author use signal words or phrases to guide the reader through cause and effect relationships?
- Were any causes implied rather than stated explicitly? How can you tell?
- What are some examples of complex effects that had multiple causes in the text?
- How does understanding the cause and effect structure improve your comprehension of the text’s main argument?

**Model essay:**

**The Rise of Remote Work and Its Implications for Urban Life**

In recent years, remote work has emerged as a transformative trend reshaping the global workforce. This shift is primarily due to the advancement of communication technologies, such as high-speed internet and video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams. As a result, employees can now perform their duties without being physically present in the office.

One major cause of the remote work revolution was the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced organisations worldwide to adopt work-from-home models to ensure business continuity. Even after lockdowns ended, many companies maintained flexible work policies due to employee demand and cost-saving opportunities. Therefore, what began as a temporary adaptation quickly evolved into a long-term cultural shift.

The widespread adoption of remote work has produced several significant effects, particularly on urban environments. For instance, city centres that once bustled with office workers now experience decreased foot traffic. This reduction has led to lower revenues for local businesses such as cafés, restaurants, and dry cleaners, which heavily depend on daily commuters. Consequently, some of these businesses have been forced to close or shift their operations online.

Another consequence is the changing demand for real estate. As employees are no longer tied to a specific office location, many have relocated from expensive urban centers to more affordable suburban or rural areas. This migration has, in turn, influenced housing prices, with urban rents declining while property values in outer regions have surged. Moreover, city planners now face the challenge of repurposing vacant office buildings and redesigning infrastructure to accommodate hybrid lifestyles.

There are also social and environmental outcomes to consider. On the positive side, remote work has contributed to a decline in daily commutes, which has reduced traffic congestion and air pollution in major cities. Additionally, flexible work schedules have improved work-life balance for many individuals, leading to greater overall job satisfaction. However, some experts

warn that extended remote work may lead to feelings of isolation and a weakening of organisational culture.

In conclusion, the rise of remote work can be attributed to both technological progress and the global health crisis. Its effects are far-reaching, touching upon economic, geographic, and social domains. As this trend continues, businesses and governments alike must adapt to the evolving needs of a more distributed workforce.

### 3.2.3. Thesis statement development

**Objective:** To practice crafting effective thesis statements for cause and effect essays.

**Instructions:**

– From the three thesis statements below, choose the best one for the topic in Activity III.2.1. Justify your answer.

– Then read the following ten thesis statements. These examples are ineffective, vague, unfocused, informal, or unclear in structure. Rewrite each into a clear thesis statement.

**Thesis statement 1:**

People have service dogs for many different reasons, and these animals can do all kinds of things to help them. This includes giving comfort, helping them move around, or being there just in case something goes wrong. All in all, service dogs are helpful and people like having them.

**Thesis statement 2:**

Everyone who struggles with anything should have a service dog because they are the best solution to emotional, physical, and social problems. People would be way better off if service dogs were made available to everyone, and there would probably be fewer mental health problems too.

**Thesis statement 3:**

Having a service dog can significantly improve a person's daily life by increasing their independence, enhancing emotional well-being, and improving access to public spaces, often as a response to physical, sensory, or psychiatric disabilities.

**Thesis statements to be rewritten:**

a) Social media is bad for teens because they get sad and stuff from using it too much.

b) People are moving all over the place because the climate is changing, which is like a huge issue.

c) Cities are getting bigger, and traffic is getting worse, and that's just how it is now.

d) Ads make people buy things they don't need, which happens all the time.

e) AI is taking over and will probably replace humans in all jobs sooner or later.

f) Tourism changes places a lot and has some effects on the places people visit.

g) Technology has changed how families talk, and some things are different now.

h) Influencers have an effect on what people buy, and this can be good or bad in some ways.

i) Plastic in the ocean is a big deal and causes problems for sea life and everything like that.

j) People drop out of university for many reasons and it affects their lives in different ways, so it's really a big deal.

### 3.2.4. Mastering cause and effect signal words / phrases

**Objective:** To enhance academic writing by identifying and applying appropriate cause and effect signal words / phrases to improve coherence and logical flow in essay development.

**Instructions:**

- Read the essay below on *procrastination*.
- Fill in the gaps with appropriate cause and effect transitions. Explain why each transition fits logically.

**Essay: Procrastination: Causes and Consequences**

Procrastination, or the act of delaying tasks despite knowing there will be negative consequences, is a behavior experienced by students, professionals, and individuals across all walks of life. While it is often dismissed as a matter of poor time management, procrastination is, in fact, a complex issue influenced by psychological, environmental, and emotional factors. Its effects can be far-reaching, impacting academic performance, mental health, and long-term productivity.

One of the primary causes of procrastination is fear of failure. Many individuals delay tasks not because they are lazy, but (1) \_\_\_\_\_ they worry their performance will not meet expectations. This fear can become paralyzing, particularly in perfectionists who set unrealistically high standards for themselves. (2) \_\_\_\_\_, they postpone starting assignments, hoping to

avoid the discomfort of potentially falling short. Over time, this avoidance pattern reinforces the fear and increases anxiety.

Another common cause is poor self-regulation and impulse control. In an age of constant digital distractions, the temptation to scroll through social media or binge-watch shows can easily override the intention to study or complete work. People often prioritise short-term pleasure over long-term goals, even when they are aware of the consequences. (3) \_\_\_\_\_, procrastination becomes a habitual response to stress or boredom rather than a conscious decision.

(4) \_\_\_\_\_ environmental factors, some individuals lack the structure and support that promote self-discipline. Students or workers in chaotic or unstructured environments may find it harder to focus. (5) \_\_\_\_\_ they are not held immediately accountable for their delays, the urgency to complete tasks is diminished. This is particularly true in remote learning or flexible work settings, where individuals must be more autonomous in managing their time.

The effects of procrastination are both short-term and long-term. In the short term, individuals often experience a buildup of stress and guilt as deadlines approach. The pressure to complete large tasks at the last minute may result in subpar performance and reduced learning. (6) \_\_\_\_\_, procrastinators frequently miss out on the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills or produce quality work.

Long-term effects can be even more serious. Chronic procrastination has been linked to lower academic and professional achievement, strained relationships, and poor mental health outcomes such as anxiety and depression. (7) \_\_\_\_\_, what may begin as an occasional bad habit can evolve into a persistent barrier to success and well-being if left unaddressed.

(8) \_\_\_\_\_ its negative effects, procrastination can be reduced through intentional strategies. Time management techniques, such as breaking tasks into smaller parts and using structured schedules, can help individuals regain a sense of control. (9) \_\_\_\_\_ cultivating self-awareness and addressing the underlying emotional causes, such as fear or perfectionism, can lead to lasting behavioral change.

In conclusion, procrastination is a widespread problem with multiple causes, including fear of failure, impulse control challenges, and environmental influences. Its effects can significantly impair performance, mental health, and personal growth. (10) \_\_\_\_\_, with proper understanding and consistent effort, individuals can overcome procrastination and build more effective habits. (11) \_\_\_\_\_, change is possible with the right strategies and mindset.

### 3.2.5. Evaluating competing causes – Unpacking complex explanations

**Objective:** To develop critical thinking, reading analysis, and argumentation skills by evaluating two contrasting cause and effect explanations of the same issue as to which cause and effect logic is more compelling. To learn to assess evidence quality, causal logic, and underlying assumptions.

**Instructions:**

– Read both essays below. Each presents a different explanation for the same phenomenon: *the rise in unemployment*.

– Underline the cause(s) in both essays.

– Circle the effect(s) in both essays.

– Discuss:

- Which of the two essays presented a clearer cause and effect relationship? What made it easier to follow: structure, signal words, evidence, or tone?
- Did either essay oversimplify a complex issue? If so, how might that affect the credibility of its argument?
- Which essay made better use of data, examples, or expert references to support its claims? Why is this important in a cause-and-effect essay?
- Did either author acknowledge alternative causes or counterarguments? How does including or ignoring complexity affect persuasiveness?
- How did each essay signal the causal connections between ideas? Identify specific transition words or sentence structures that helped clarify these links.
- In your opinion, can both causes (automation and policy failure) be valid at the same time? How might a strong cause and effect essay integrate multiple factors?
- How did the tone or language of each text influence your judgment of its argument? Did one seem more neutral, biased, emotional, or analytical?
- What strategies from these essays could you apply when writing your own cause and effect essay?

**Essay A: Automation Is the Main Driver of Unemployment**

The rapid rise of AI, machine learning, and robotics is reshaping global employment patterns. In many industries, machines have replaced human workers in tasks that are routine, predictable, or physically intensive. As this trend accelerates, experts increasingly view automation as the leading cause of rising unemployment, especially among lower-skilled labor sectors.

Jobs that once relied heavily on repetitive labor, such as warehouse sorting, data entry, and even customer service, are now handled by smart technologies. Self-checkout kiosks in grocery stores, robotic arms in car manufacturing, and automated chatbots replacing helpdesk agents illustrate how machines are taking over work once done by people. According to an Oxford University study, up to 47% of U.S. jobs are at risk of automation over the next two decades.

The situation is not limited to manual labor. Even white-collar tasks, like legal research, financial auditing, and basic medical diagnostics, are increasingly being automated. For displaced workers, the path to reemployment is narrow. Retraining requires access, funding, and time, which are often in short supply. As a result, many former workers struggle to transition into tech-oriented roles, creating a growing divide between low-skilled and high-skilled populations.

This digital divide has social and economic consequences. As demand for highly technical workers rises, those left behind face reduced job security, stagnant wages, and limited mobility. Economists warn that the structural nature of this shift, rather than temporary job losses, will lead to chronic unemployment for certain demographics. Without intervention, automation may not only displace jobs but reshape entire economic classes, exacerbating inequality.

### **Essay B: Policy Failure, Not Technology, Is Behind Unemployment**

While automation often receives the blame for rising unemployment, a closer look suggests that poor policy decisions and economic governance play a more significant role. It is not the machines themselves, but how governments and corporations respond to technological change that determines whether workers are left behind.

One major policy failure lies in the lack of proactive retraining programmes. As the economy evolves, there has been minimal investment in adult education, apprenticeships, and vocational learning. Without accessible reskilling options, workers displaced by change, whether due to automation, globalization, or recession, remain unemployable not by necessity, but by design.

Furthermore, the expansion of precarious labor models, such as zero-hour contracts, gig work, and unpaid internships, has destabilised employment. These models are enabled by deregulated labor markets, not automation. Even industries untouched by AI, like hospitality or retail, now rely on part-time or freelance workers with limited benefits. Wages have stagnated, worker protections have eroded, and labor unions have declined, largely because of policy choices and corporate lobbying.

Cross-country comparisons also undermine the automation-blame argument. Germany and South Korea, for example, have embraced automation while maintaining relatively low unemployment rates. What differentiates them is policy infrastructure: robust training programmes, strong labor protections, and collaborative relationships between employers and educational institutions.

Moreover, blaming automation risks distracting from deeper systemic issues, such as underfunded public services, outdated education systems, and corporate tax avoidance. These all affect labor market dynamics more directly than the presence of robots in warehouses.

In short, unemployment is not a technological inevitability; it is a political outcome. When governments fail to cushion transitions, people fall through the cracks. Rather than fear automation, we should demand smarter policies that ensure innovation benefits the whole population.

### 3.2.6. Structural divisions and conclusion (Activity 1)

**Objective:** To strengthen understanding of cause and effect essay structure by identifying logical paragraph divisions and composing an effective and coherent conclusion that summarises key causes and effects while reinforcing the central idea.

**Instructions:**

- Read the sample essay below on *how smart cities influence urban living*. Then divide the essay into 5 paragraphs.
- Write a conclusion that summarises the main causes and effects discussed, restates the topic in a new way, and offers a final insight, implication, or recommendation.

**Sample Essay: How Smart Cities Influence Urban Living**

Smart cities are transforming the way urban environments function by integrating digital technology into infrastructure and governance. This evolution is largely driven by the need to address problems associated with rapid urbanisation, including traffic congestion, resource waste, and pollution. City planners and policymakers are increasingly turning to smart technologies as a solution to these interconnected challenges. One major cause behind the development of smart cities is the global population shift towards urban areas. As cities become more densely populated, traditional systems for managing traffic, waste, and energy become strained. In response, governments are investing in data-driven tools like traffic flow sensors, smart lighting, and real-time public transport updates. These innovations aim to optimise effici-

ency while reducing environmental impact. Another contributing factor is the growing availability of Internet of Things technologies. Sensors embedded in roads, buildings, and public spaces collect massive amounts of data, which can then be analysed to improve services. For example, smart water systems detect leaks early, reducing waste and costs. Similarly, air quality monitors can help inform public health responses during pollution spikes. These advancements are only possible because of rapid technological progress and expanded internet infrastructure. The effects of implementing smart city technologies are far-reaching. Residents benefit from more responsive services and improved quality of life. Commuters may spend less time stuck in traffic due to intelligent transportation systems. Energy consumption can drop as buildings self-regulate heating and cooling based on occupancy. Moreover, cities that adopt smart systems tend to attract more business investment and innovation, creating positive economic ripple effects. However, smart cities also raise new concerns. Increased reliance on data collection invites questions about privacy and digital security. Without strong policies in place, sensitive information may be exposed or misused. Additionally, not all residents may benefit equally; people without digital access may be excluded from services or decision-making. As cities become more dependent on technology, the digital divide could widen, exacerbating social inequality.

### 3.2.7. Structural divisions and conclusion (Activity 2)

**Objective:** To strengthen understanding of cause and effect essay structure by identifying logical paragraph divisions and composing an effective and coherent conclusion that summarises key causes and effects while reinforcing the central idea.

**Instructions:**

- Read the sample essay below on *how social media use affects adolescent sleep patterns*. Then divide the essay into 6 paragraphs.
- Write a conclusion that summarises the main causes and effects discussed, restates the topic in a new way, and offers a final insight, implication, or recommendation.

**Sample Essay:**

#### How Social Media Use Affects Adolescent Sleep Patterns

Over the past decade, social media has become deeply embedded in the daily lives of adolescents. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat are not only tools for entertainment and communication, but also shape

identity, peer connection, and self-esteem. While these platforms offer many benefits, their excessive use, particularly in the evening hours, has been increasingly associated with sleep disturbances in adolescents. This phenomenon can be attributed to a combination of psychological, behavioral, and physiological factors, all of which contribute to diminished sleep quality and duration among young users. One major cause of adolescent sleep disruption is screen exposure before bedtime. The blue light emitted from smartphones and tablets suppresses melatonin production, the hormone responsible for regulating sleep-wake cycles. When melatonin levels drop, it becomes biologically harder for teens to fall asleep at a consistent time. Since adolescents are already biologically predisposed to fall asleep later than adults, this artificial delay only amplifies their natural sleep phase shift. As a result, many students find themselves unable to fall asleep until late at night, leading to chronic sleep deprivation during the school week. Another contributing factor is the psychological stimulation caused by social media engagement. Social platforms are designed to be attention-grabbing and emotionally engaging. Notifications, direct messages, and scrolling through emotionally charged content, such as arguments, viral news, or curated images of peers, stimulate cognitive activity and emotional arousal. This stimulation keeps the brain in a heightened state of alertness, making it difficult to mentally disengage and prepare for restful sleep. Adolescents may experience the so-called revenge bedtime procrastination, or deliberately delaying sleep to reclaim personal time at night after busy days, with social media often becoming the activity of choice during those hours. Additionally, fear of missing out (FOMO) plays a significant role in poor sleep habits. Adolescents frequently worry that by going offline, they might miss important social interactions, group chats, or trending content. This anxiety can lead to compulsive checking of apps during the night, even after going to bed. Some teens keep their phones under their pillows or next to them on silent mode, responding to notifications or browsing intermittently throughout the night. This fractured sleep pattern not only reduces the total hours of sleep but also undermines its quality, leaving adolescents tired even after a full night in bed. The social comparison effects amplified by social media also contribute indirectly to sleep disruption. When adolescents view idealised images of others' lifestyles, bodies, or achievements, especially at night when reflection is more likely, they may experience anxiety, low self-esteem, or overthinking. These negative emotional states can lead to rumination, making it harder to mentally shut down for the night. Over time, this habit can form a loop in which social media both triggers emotional distress and becomes the coping mechanism, thereby reinforcing late-night use. Increased social media use is also associated with displacement of healthy sleep routines. Rather than winding down with a book, journaling, or mindful breathing,

adolescents are more likely to spend their last waking hour on a screen. This shift in bedtime behavior shortens sleep opportunity and normalises unhealthy sleep hygiene habits during a critical developmental period.

### 3.2.8. Reverse engineering – From effect to cause

**Objective:** To build deductive reasoning by presenting a visible effect (outcome) and tracing back to hypothesise credible causes using structured academic writing.

**Instructions:**

- Read the example effect and causes, as well as the sample paragraph.
- For each of the following fifteen effects, brainstorm multiple possible causes, group them (e.g. social, economic, technological), and evaluate their plausibility.
- Choose an effect and focus your attention on only one cause. Write a paragraph explaining that cause (up to 100 words).

**Example effect and causes:**

Effect: Decline in book reading.

Causes: Rise of digital entertainment, multitasking, burnout and cognitive overload, publishing industry shift.

**Sample paragraph:**

One major contributing factor is the rise of digital entertainment. With the proliferation of streaming platforms, podcasts, video games, and social media, young adults are constantly surrounded by high-stimulation content that requires little effort. Scrolling through TikTok or watching Netflix episodes in quick succession offers instant gratification, which is a sharp contrast to the slower, more reflective experience of reading a novel. In this environment, reading a book can feel like a chore rather than a leisure activity.

**Effects:**

1. Decline in in-person social interaction among teenagers
2. Rising levels of urban air pollution
3. Increased anxiety levels in university students
4. Drop in reading comprehension scores among high schoolers
5. Higher food prices in urban grocery stores
6. Growth in remote work opportunities worldwide
7. Increased number of young adults living with parents
8. Decline in public trust in traditional news media
9. Fewer people using public transportation post-pandemic

10. Sharp decrease in biodiversity in coastal regions
11. Wider wealth gap between urban and rural populations
12. Improved access to healthcare in remote communities
13. Rising dropout rates in online education platforms
14. Higher rates of smartphone addiction among children
15. Expansion of surveillance technologies in public spaces

### CAUSE AND EFFECT ESSAY TOPIC BANK:

After writing a cause and effect essay, self-check your writing (Table 10). Provide peer feedback (Table 11).

1. How owning a pet affects mental health and emotional well-being.
2. Causes and consequences of pet abandonment in urban areas.
3. How gender roles shape career choices.
4. Effects of beauty standards on self-esteem.
5. How globalization affects cultural identity.
6. How immigration affects community cohesion.
7. Effects of gentrification on local populations.
8. How parenting styles influence child behavior.
9. How remote work changes organisational culture.
10. Causes and effects of job dissatisfaction.
11. How burnout affects workplace productivity.
12. The rise of the gig economy: causes and outcomes.
13. Causes and consequences of workplace discrimination.
14. Causes and consequences of peer pressure.
15. How extracurricular involvement affects social skills.
16. Effects of part-time jobs on high school students.
17. How bullying in schools affects long-term self-worth.
18. Causes and effects of academic pressure on teens.
19. The impact of online influencers on teen identity.
20. How cliques and group dynamics shape behaviour.
21. Causes of short attention spans in the digital age.
22. Effects of algorithm-driven news feeds.
23. The rise of podcasting: causes and cultural impact.
24. The effects of cancel culture on public discourse.
25. How over-tourism affects local cultures and economies.
26. Causes and effects of digital nomadism.
27. The impact of climate change on the tourism industry.
28. Effects of globalization on local businesses.
29. How international volunteering shapes student perspectives.
30. How low-cost airlines changed global mobility.

31. Causes and outcomes of travel restrictions during pandemics.
32. Causes and effects of dropping out of university.
33. The impact of online learning on student motivation.
34. How standardised testing affects classroom instruction.
35. How smartphone overuse impacts sleep patterns.
36. The effect of AI on traditional job markets.
37. Why digital privacy is declining and its consequences.
38. The rise of telemedicine: causes and outcomes.
39. How wearable technology affects personal health habits.
40. Causes and effects of childhood obesity.
41. How fast food consumption impacts long-term health.
42. The psychological effects of long-term stress.
43. How lack of exercise contributes to mental health issues.
44. Impact of sleep deprivation on immune function.
45. Causes and effects of rising health misinformation online.
46. Causes and consequences of declining biodiversity in urban areas.
47. Causes of loneliness in the digital age and its psychological effects.
48. The effects of remote schooling on student-teacher relationships.
49. How climate-induced migration affects urban housing markets.
50. How rising tuition fees affect University enrollment trends.

√	Category	Checklist Item	Improvement Tip
	<b>Thesis and Focus</b>	My thesis clearly states the main cause(s), effect(s), or both.	Clarify whether you're focusing on causes, effects, or both.
		I address all parts of the prompt.	Re-read the task to ensure full coverage.
	<b>Ideas and Development</b>	I explain at least two clear causes or effects.	Use examples or data to support your claims.
		I show logical cause and effect relationships.	Link ideas clearly with cause and effect reasoning.
		I include examples and explanations.	Avoid vague points; add detail.
	<b>Structure and Coherence</b>	My essay has an introduction, body, and conclusion.	Make sure each part has a clear function.
		Each paragraph is focused and well organised.	Stick to one idea per paragraph.
		I use transitions.	Vary transitions and use them to guide logic.

√	Category	Checklist Item	Improvement Tip
	<b>Language and Style</b>	I use formal academic vocabulary.	Avoid informal or vague language.
		Grammar and sentence structure are mostly accurate.	Watch for verb agreement, punctuation, and articles.
		I use a mix of simple and complex sentences.	Combine ideas for better fluency.
	<b>Final Review</b>	My essay meets the word count (500-550 words).	Expand or shorten as needed.
		I proofread or got feedback before submitting.	Read aloud or ask a peer for suggestions.

Table 10: Student self-check checklist: Cause and effect essay

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
<b>Thesis Statement</b>	Clear, concise, and clearly states the cause and effect focus of the essay.	Generally clear but may be slightly too broad or narrow.	States a thesis, but lacks clarity or direct focus on cause and / or effect.	Vague or missing thesis; unclear connection to causes and effects.
<b>Organisation</b>	Logical and coherent essay structure; clear introduction, body, and conclusion; smooth transitions between paragraphs.	Mostly logical structure with minor lapses; transitions generally used.	Organisation present but paragraphs may be uneven; transitions are weak or formulaic.	Poorly organised; lacks coherence or logical progression.
<b>Development of Causes</b>	Causes are explained in depth with relevant examples and analysis; well-supported and clearly linked to the topic.	Causes are explained with some supporting examples; analysis could be deeper.	Some causes are mentioned, but limited explanation or support.	Causes are vague, unsupported, or unrelated to the topic.

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
<b>Development of Effects</b>	Effects are clearly presented, relevant, and well-developed with detailed explanation and examples.	Effects are mostly clear with moderate explanation and support.	Some effects are unclear or underdeveloped; examples may be weak.	Effects are missing, vague, or unsupported.
<b>Use of Cause and Effect Language</b>	Excellent use of cause and effect signal words; varied and accurate.	Good range of signal words used, but may be slightly repetitive or misused once.	Limited use of signal words or some awkward usage.	Very few or inaccurate use of cause and effect transitions.
<b>Paragraph Development</b>	Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence, supporting details, and is fully developed.	Most paragraphs are developed, with clear main ideas and some support.	Some paragraphs lack topic sentences or sufficient development.	Paragraphs are undeveloped or lack unity and coherence.
<b>Grammar and Sentence Structure</b>	Grammar and sentence structure are strong, with only minimal errors; wide variety of complex structures.	Some minor errors, but they don't interfere with meaning; sentence variety present.	Frequent grammar errors; some issues with sentence complexity.	Numerous grammar errors that interfere with clarity and coherence.
<b>Academic Style and Vocabulary</b>	Consistently appropriate academic tone and vocabulary; precise, formal, and subject-appropriate.	Mostly academic in tone, with some minor informal or repetitive phrasing.	Vocabulary is simple or inconsistent with academic tone.	Informal or inappropriate tone and vocabulary throughout.
<b>Overall Impact and Insight</b>	Essay shows originality, critical thinking, and strong engagement with the topic.	Essay demonstrates some insight or personal engagement.	Essay is clear but lacks depth or originality.	Essay lacks insight, originality, or engagement.

*Table 11: Rubric for assessing cause and effect essays (peer feedback or teacher feedback)*

### 3.3. Argumentative Essay

#### 3.3.1. Evaluating opposing arguments: Analyzing counterarguments and rebuttals

**Objective:** To develop the ability to critically evaluate how opposing arguments are presented and refuted in argumentative essays, improving understanding of balanced reasoning and persuasive writing techniques.

**Instructions:**

- Read the model essay titled: *Should University Education Be Free for All?*
- Highlight and label the following structural components:
  - Thesis statement (the writer’s main claim)
  - Main supporting arguments
  - Counterarguments (opposing views)
  - Rebuttals (responses to those opposing views)
- Discuss:
  - What is the central thesis of the essay, and is it clearly stated in the introduction?
  - What are the author’s strongest arguments in favor of free university education? Why do they stand out?
  - How does the author use evidence (e.g. examples, data, country comparisons) to support their points?
  - What tone does the writer maintain throughout the essay? Is it formal, persuasive, neutral, or biased?
  - How effectively does the author acknowledge opposing views, and are these counterarguments treated respectfully?
  - Which counterargument do you think was strongest? Why?
  - Were the rebuttals convincing? What made them effective or weak?
  - Does the essay maintain clear organisation and logical flow between paragraphs? Explain with examples.
  - How did the essay structure help the writer present both views clearly?
  - What rhetorical strategies (e.g. reasoning, analogy, contrast) does the author use to persuade the reader?
  - Which paragraph do you think is the most persuasive, and why?
  - What are the possible weaknesses or limitations in the author’s argument? Are any assumptions made?
  - After reading the essay, do you agree or disagree with the author’s position? Has your opinion changed? Why or why not?

### Model Essay: Should University Education Be Free for All?

The question of whether University education should be free continues to divide governments, educators, and students. Supporters argue that free access to higher education promotes equality and long-term economic growth. Opponents claim that such a system is unsustainable and unfair to taxpayers. While both sides present compelling points, the argument for free university education remains stronger due to its broader social and economic benefits.

First, free university education can significantly reduce inequality. Many capable students from low-income families are forced to forgo higher education due to high tuition fees. This perpetuates a cycle of poverty and limits social mobility. By removing financial barriers, more students can access the same opportunities, creating a more equitable society. Countries like Germany and Norway, where higher education is free, have seen increases in enrollment among disadvantaged groups, demonstrating the policy's positive effect.

Opponents argue that providing free education would place an enormous financial burden on governments and taxpayers. They contend that students should contribute to the cost of their own education since they personally benefit from it through better employment and higher salaries. While this is partially true, it ignores the broader impact of an educated workforce. Societies as a whole benefit when more people are trained as doctors, engineers, and teachers. These individuals contribute to public well-being, pay more taxes over their lifetimes, and require fewer government support services.

Moreover, critics claim that making education free could reduce student motivation and increase dropout rates. The logic is that if students don't pay, they may not take their studies seriously. However, this is not supported by evidence. In countries with free education, graduation rates are comparable to or higher than those in tuition-based systems. Academic success depends more on student support systems, mental health services, and quality teaching than on financial investment alone.

Another concern is that free education might lead to overcrowded universities and declining quality. But again, this depends on how the policy is implemented. With proper investment in infrastructure, hiring more faculty, and setting enrollment standards, quality can be maintained. The issue is not with the idea of free education itself, but with how governments manage the transition and ensure sustainable funding.

In conclusion, while there are logistical and financial challenges, the benefits of free university education, in terms of equity, social mobility, and long-term national development, far outweigh the drawbacks. Instead of asking whether education should be free, we should be asking how we can make it accessible and sustainable for future generations.

### 3.3.2. Thesis calibration challenge

**Objective:** To develop the ability to craft clear, precise, and defensible thesis statements that reflect both the author's stance and the scope of their argumentative essay.

**Instructions:**

– The following six qualities are characteristics of a strong argumentative thesis statement. Each is followed by two weak and flawed thesis statements.

– Provide strong thesis statements for each quality. The first one is given as an example.

**Qualities:**

**1. Clearly states a position** (It presents a definite opinion on a debatable issue.)

- *Weak example 1:* This paper will talk about school uniforms.
- *Strong example 1:* School uniforms should be mandatory in public schools because they promote discipline and reduce peer pressure.
- *Weak example 2:* College education is important in today's world.
- *Strong example 2:*

**2. Debatable and arguable** (It is not a fact or general truth, but a claim that reasonable people might disagree with.)

- *Weak example 1:* Global warming is caused by human activity.
- *Strong example 1:*
- *Weak example 2:* Smoking causes cancer.
- *Strong example 2:*

**3. Specific and focused** (Avoids vague language or overly broad topics.)

- *Weak example 1:* Technology affects our lives in many ways.
- *Strong example 1:*
- *Weak example 2:* The economy affects people.
- *Strong example 2:*

**4. Indicates structure or main points** (Previews the key arguments that will be developed in the body paragraphs. Optional, but helpful.)

- *Weak example 1:* There are good and bad things about fast food.
- *Strong example 1:*
- *Weak example 2:* There are many reasons why people exercise.
- *Strong example 2:*

**5. Formal and academic in tone** (Uses precise language and avoids informal phrasing, emotional language, or questions.)

- *Weak example 1:* Honestly, I feel like taxes are way too high for most of us.
- *Strong example 1:*
- *Weak example 2:* I think free college is awesome and should totally happen.
- *Strong example 2:*

**6. Balanced** (Acknowledges complexity in topics with multiple perspectives, especially for nuanced arguments.)

- *Weak example 1:* Prisons are completely useless and should be shut down immediately.
- *Strong example 1:*
- *Weak example 2:* Anyone who supports animal testing is clearly wrong.
- *Strong example 2:*

### 3.3.3. Argument in structure: Comparing persuasive strategies

**Objective:** To enhance analytical reading by examining how different argument structures (linear vs dialectical) influence clarity, balance, and persuasiveness in essay writing.

**Instructions:**

- Read the two essays below on the topic of *sustainable living*.
- Identify the structure each essay uses:
  - Which essay follows linear argument structure, focusing on and building one side of the issue?
  - Which essay follows a dialectical structure (thesis-antithesis-synthesis), presenting multiple perspectives before synthesizing them?
- Discuss:
  - Which structure feels more persuasive or convincing? Why?
  - How does each essay present evidence?
  - How does the linear essay build its case compared to the dialectical one?
  - What information is presented in each paragraph?
  - Are counterarguments acknowledged or ignored?
  - In the dialectical essay, how effectively are the opposing views addressed? Is the rebuttal fair, balanced, and well-supported?

- Which essay better integrates real-world examples or data?  
How does the use of examples support the overall argument?

### **Essay A: Why Sustainable Living Is an Urgent Necessity**

Sustainable living is not just a lifestyle choice; it is a global necessity. As the planet faces escalating environmental crises such as climate change, deforestation, and resource depletion, adopting sustainable practices has become critical. Human consumption habits, particularly in industrialised nations, have placed immense pressure on Earth's ecosystems. Without significant change, future generations will inherit a planet severely diminished in biodiversity, clean air, and freshwater availability.

One of the most immediate threats addressed by sustainable living is climate change. Fossil fuel consumption, excessive waste production, and unsustainable agriculture are major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. By switching to renewable energy sources, reducing meat consumption, and minimising single-use plastics, individuals can substantially reduce their carbon footprint. Such lifestyle shifts, when adopted widely, have the potential to slow the rate of global warming and mitigate its worst effects.

Furthermore, sustainable living addresses the issue of waste. Landfills around the world are reaching capacity, and plastic pollution is contaminating oceans and threatening marine life. A zero-waste lifestyle that includes composting, reusing materials, and choosing products with minimal packaging can help to reverse this trend. These actions not only reduce environmental harm but also foster a more conscious, responsible relationship with consumption.

Another benefit of sustainable living is its impact on personal and community health. Locally sourced, organic foods reduce exposure to harmful chemicals and support local economies. Sustainable transportation options, like cycling and walking, contribute to improved physical fitness and reduced air pollution. When communities prioritise sustainability, they often experience increased social cohesion and resilience.

In summary, sustainable living is not optional; it is essential. The cumulative impact of individual actions can drive systemic change. By making environmentally conscious decisions in our daily lives, we can preserve natural resources, protect biodiversity, and ensure a livable planet for generations to come.

### **Essay B:**

#### **Is Sustainable Living a Practical Solution or an Idealistic Vision?**

Sustainable living has gained prominence as a response to the environmental challenges of our time. Advocates argue that by adopting eco-fri-

endly habits such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and supporting ethical consumption, individuals can significantly reduce their environmental impact. Yet critics question whether sustainable living is practical for the average person, especially given economic constraints and systemic barriers.

Proponents highlight numerous benefits. Sustainable living practices, like using public transportation, eating plant-based diets, and conserving energy at home, reduce carbon emissions and resource use. On a broader level, these actions contribute to environmental protection, improved health, and community well-being. Examples from cities that incentivise sustainability, such as Copenhagen or Vancouver, show that when individuals and governments work together, large-scale change is achievable.

However, critics argue that sustainable living can be costly and inconvenient. Organic food, renewable energy installations, and eco-friendly products often come with a higher price tag. Additionally, many people live in areas without access to robust recycling programmes, safe biking infrastructure, or reliable public transportation. For them, living sustainably is not merely a matter of willpower but of structural limitations.

Another concern is that focusing on individual lifestyle changes may distract from the need for systemic reforms. While personal actions matter, large-scale environmental progress depends on corporate responsibility and government regulation. Critics warn that the emphasis on individual responsibility can absolve major polluters of accountability.

Nonetheless, a balanced view suggests that sustainable living and policy reform are not mutually exclusive. Personal choices, when supported by equitable policies and infrastructure, can contribute to significant environmental gains. Moreover, growing public demand for sustainability often drives legislative change.

In conclusion, while sustainable living presents real challenges, it also offers meaningful opportunities. With the right support and societal shifts, it can be both a practical and powerful tool in the fight against environmental degradation.

### 3.3.4. Linear or dialectical: Writing

**Objective:** To enhance academic literacy by constructing a linear (single-sided) or dialectical (multi-sided with synthesis) argumentative essay, demonstrating clarity, balance, and persuasiveness of the writing. To apply rhetorical strategies to influence the effectiveness of the essay.

**Instructions:**

Write an argumentative essay from these topics/questions below. Choose whether to write in a linear or a dialectical structure. After writing the essay, self-check your writing (Table 12). Provide peer feedback (Table 13).

### Topics bank:

1. Do standardised tests accurately measure student ability?
2. Is the rise of AI a threat to human creativity?
3. Is cancel culture a necessary form of accountability or a threat to free speech?
4. Should zoos be phased out in favor of wildlife sanctuaries?
5. Is tourism more beneficial or harmful to local communities?
6. Is competitive sports culture in schools too intense for young students?
7. Should governments regulate influencers and online content creators?
8. Is cryptocurrency a sustainable alternative to traditional finance?
9. Should countries prioritise economic growth over environmental protection?
10. Can virtual reality be an effective tool in education and training?
11. Is consumer activism an effective way to drive corporate change?
12. Is fame inherently harmful to mental health?
13. Should certain art and literature be censored in public schools?
14. Should public figures be held to higher moral standards than private citizens?
15. Should countries implement a four-day workweek?

### 3.3.5. Moral dilemma: Reasoning through ethics

**Objective:** To develop the ability to analyse a thesis-driven argumentative essay in response to a complex ethical dilemma, using logic, moral reasoning, and evidence-based support.

#### Instructions:

- Discuss the “trolley dilemma”. What is your stance on this dilemma? Choose a side and justify.
- Then read the argumentative essay below on the *trolley dilemma*.
- Discuss:
  - Do you agree with the essay’s main argument that pulling the lever is morally justifiable? Why or why not?
  - Which ethical theory did the writer primarily rely on to support their position? Was it applied convincingly?

- What role does emotion play in the essay’s argument, and how is it balanced with logic?
- How does the essay acknowledge and respond to opposing viewpoints (e.g. deontological ethics)? Is the rebuttal fair?
- In your opinion, is doing nothing morally different from taking action that leads to someone’s death? Why?
- Can the logic used in the trolley dilemma be applied to real-life policy decisions? Give an real-life example.
- Was the writer’s tone effective for this type of ethical argument? Why or why not?
- How would the argument change if the person on the other track was a close relative or friend? Should that matter?
- Did the essay convince you to reconsider your own view of the trolley dilemma? What part was most persuasive?
- If you were to argue the opposite position (not pulling the lever), what would your thesis be, and what evidence would you use?

### Essay:

#### The Trolley Dilemma and the Ethics of Sacrificing One for Many

The trolley dilemma presents a powerful moral paradox: should one actively intervene to save five lives at the cost of one? In its most familiar form, a runaway trolley is heading towards five people tied to the tracks. You are standing by a lever that can switch the trolley to another track, where only one person is tied. Should you pull the lever? While emotionally unsettling, the morally justifiable action is to pull the lever and save the greater number of lives. This utilitarian approach, which prioritises the greatest good for the greatest number, provides a more consistent and socially responsible framework for moral decision-making in life-and-death situations.

The primary justification for pulling the lever lies in the principle of consequentialism. This ethical theory argues that the rightness of an action depends on its outcomes. In the trolley scenario, allowing five people to die when one death could prevent it results in a worse overall outcome. Even though pulling the lever causes the death of one person, that decision ultimately minimises harm. While the choice may feel morally distressing, from a rational standpoint, sacrificing one to save five preserves more lives and reduces the overall loss to society.

Furthermore, most modern legal and policy decisions rely on some version of cost-benefit analysis. Triage in emergency rooms, disaster relief planning, and public health policies often require prioritizing some lives over others due to limited resources. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic,

hospitals sometimes had to allocate ventilators based on survival likelihood. Though tragic, such decisions are grounded in a moral calculus that values maximising survival. The trolley dilemma, though hypothetical, mirrors the difficult real-world choices made every day by professionals in healthcare, law, and public safety.

Opponents of this view often argue from a deontological perspective, which holds that certain actions are inherently wrong regardless of their outcomes. From this view, pulling the lever makes the agent morally responsible for killing the one person, whereas doing nothing means merely allowing harm to happen. While this distinction is philosophically interesting, it loses moral weight in situations where passivity leads to even greater harm. If we have the power to prevent five deaths at the cost of one, choosing inaction seems morally negligent rather than virtuous.

That said, pulling the lever does not mean disregarding the value of the individual life sacrificed. In fact, the ethical weight of the decision is precisely what makes the dilemma so powerful. The person on the alternative track deserves to be mourned, and their loss acknowledged. Yet moral responsibility in this scenario lies in choosing the least harmful outcome, not in preserving perfect innocence.

In conclusion, while the trolley dilemma poses a deeply unsettling choice, the morally responsible action is to pull the lever and save five lives at the cost of one. Through the lens of consequentialist ethics, this decision aligns with widely accepted practices that aim to minimise harm. Ethical choices often involve trade-offs, and in this case, acting to save more lives demonstrates a reasoned commitment to collective well-being over personal moral comfort.

### 3.3.6. Moral dilemma: Writing

**Objective:** To develop the ability to construct a balanced, thesis-driven argumentative essay in response to a complex ethical dilemma, using logic, moral reasoning, and evidence-based support.

**Instructions:**

Write an argumentative essay on a moral dilemma from these topics / questions below. After writing the essay, self-check your writing (Table 12). Provide peer feedback (Table 13).

**Topics bank:**

1. Should parents have access to their teenage children's online activity?
2. Should autonomous vehicles be programmed to sacrifice their passengers if it means saving more lives in an accident?

3. Is it morally acceptable to use animal testing for medical research that could save human lives?
4. Should doctors be allowed to assist terminally ill patients in ending their lives (euthanasia)?
5. Is it ever justifiable to break the law for a moral cause?
6. Should parents be permitted to use genetic engineering to select or enhance traits in their unborn children?
7. If a life-saving drug is discovered, should pharmaceutical companies be allowed to charge high prices for profit?
8. Should governments use surveillance technology to prevent crime, even at the cost of individual privacy?
9. Is it ethical to lie to protect someone's feelings or to avoid serious conflict?
10. Should employers be allowed to monitor employees' digital activity during work hours, even when working from home?
11. Is it ethical to use deception (e.g. undercover journalism or secret recordings) to expose wrongdoing?
12. Is it morally acceptable to deny someone a job or promotion based on their controversial views expressed online?
13. Is it ethical for social media companies to ban users or remove content based on their values and policies?
14. Is it morally justifiable to use punishment, such as solitary confinement, in prison systems?
15. Should parents be allowed to post photos and personal information about their children (under 18) online without consent?

### 3.3.7. Assessing the assessors: An argumentative exploration of psychometric testing

**Objective:** To strengthen the ability to critically analyse an argumentative essay by examining its structure, use of evidence, balance of perspectives, and persuasiveness. To develop reflective thinking through guided analysis and discussion.

**Instructions:**

- Read the essay below on the topic of *psychometric testing*.
- Discuss what makes this an argumentative essay. Why is it not a compare and contrast essay nor a cause and effect essay?
- Identify key components of the essay, such as:
  - Thesis statement
  - Supporting arguments

- Counterarguments and rebuttals
- Conclusion
- Discuss:
  - What is the main argument of the essay? How is it supported throughout the text?
  - How does the author balance the advantages and disadvantages of psychometric testing? Is the tone neutral, persuasive, or biased?
  - What evidence does the writer use to support the reliability of psychometric testing? Is it convincing? Why or why not?
  - How is expert opinion (e.g. Jason Sindall's perspective) used to challenge the main argument?
  - What are the potential risks of over-relying on psychometric tests in recruitment, according to the essay?
  - How effectively does the essay handle counterarguments? Are they addressed thoroughly and fairly?
  - How does the final paragraph bring together the writer's viewpoint? Do you agree with the conclusion? Why or why not?
  - In your opinion, what additional perspectives (ethical, cultural, or psychological) could have been considered in this discussion?
  - How would this argument differ if written from the perspective of a job applicant rather than an employer?
  - Do you think psychometric testing should be used in educational or government recruitment as well? Why or why not?
- Write a short response (150-200 words) expressing your own opinion on the topic, using at least one argument and one counterargument.

### Essay:

#### Psychometric Testing – A Reliable Tool or a Recruitment Risk?

Recruiting the right candidate is arguably one of the most consequential decisions any organisation can make. Employees do not merely perform tasks; they shape the culture, productivity, and long-term success of a company. A poor hiring decision can disrupt team dynamics and diminish operational efficiency, which is why many companies are increasingly turning to psychometric testing to support the recruitment process. However, while these tools offer distinct advantages, they also raise significant concerns regarding over-reliance, validity, and fairness.

Psychometric tests are structured tools used to assess a candidate's cognitive abilities, personality traits, or behavioural tendencies. Typically administered in a multiple-choice format, these tests aim to provide employers with

a more objective means of evaluating an applicant's suitability. Advocates argue that psychometric testing streamlines recruitment by offering insights that traditional interviews may not reveal. Standardised scoring methods also eliminate some of the unconscious bias that can influence hiring decisions. Moreover, these tests are cost-effective over time, especially when compared to the potential financial losses associated with repeated hiring errors.

Additionally, psychometric assessments can encourage candidates to reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement, contributing to greater self-awareness. They are particularly useful in large-scale recruitment, where employers must assess numerous applicants efficiently. The growing popularity of these tests is also linked to the increasing demand for data-driven decision-making in human resources.

Despite these advantages, several experts caution against placing excessive trust in psychometric testing. HR consultant Jason Sindall warns that these assessments should be viewed as one of many tools, not the definitive measure of a candidate's potential. He notes that test scores can lead to premature judgments, possibly sidelining highly capable individuals who may not perform well in test environments. Furthermore, test-takers can sometimes manipulate results by choosing answers they believe employers want to see, thereby undermining the authenticity of the responses.

The issue of test reliability also raises concerns. Not all psychometric tests are created equal. For meaningful results, the chosen tests must be scientifically validated, job-specific, and administered by trained professionals. According to Sindall, the most effective approach is to combine multiple assessments to cross-check for consistency and gain a more nuanced understanding of the candidate.

Another criticism of psychometric testing is that it may prioritise potential over experience. For instance, a high score on leadership potential does not automatically translate into effective real-world leadership. In some cases, relying too heavily on theoretical profiles may overlook valuable practical experience or interpersonal skills better assessed during in-person interviews or role-based evaluations.

Nevertheless, some recent studies have affirmed the general accuracy of psychometric tools. In an experiment conducted by *Personnel Today*, three experienced HR managers were given separate psychometric tests. All three reported that the results aligned closely with their own self-perceptions, suggesting that, when well-designed, such assessments can offer meaningful insights.

Ultimately, psychometric testing can be a valuable component of a comprehensive hiring strategy, but it should never replace human judgment. Companies that choose to incorporate these tests must do so thoughtfully,

ensuring that results are interpreted in context and supplemented by interviews, reference checks, and other traditional methods. Used wisely, psychometric tests can contribute to better hiring decisions. Used in isolation, however, they risk simplifying the complex process of human evaluation.

√	Checklist Item	Improvement Tip
	Clear, arguable, and specific thesis statement.	Avoid vague / factual claims; take a clear position.
	Introduction logically leads to the thesis and engages the reader.	Start with a hook and background context.
	Body paragraphs organised around distinct, developed ideas.	Use clear topic sentences; one main idea per paragraph.
	Strong evidence supports claims (facts, examples, logic).	Use specific, credible evidence and explain its relevance.
	At least one counterargument included and addressed logically.	Refute or concede using reasoning or evidence.
	Conclusion offers more than a summary (insight or reflection).	Reframe thesis or explain its broader implications.
	Tone is academic, objective, and precise.	Avoid slang / emotion; use hedging like “may suggest.”
	Sentences are clear, grammatically correct, and varied in structure.	Use compound / complex sentences; read aloud to check flow.
	Logical connectors and transition words are used effectively.	Use linking words.

Table 12: Student self-check checklist: Argumentative essay

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
<b>Thesis Statement</b>	Clear, arguable, specific, and insightful; establishes a strong position that guides the essay.	Clear and arguable, but could be more specific or nuanced.	Present and relevant, but somewhat vague or general.	Thesis is unclear, unfocused, or too broad.
<b>Introduction</b>	Effectively engages	Engaging and	Basic context	Weak context

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
	the reader; provides strong context and leads smoothly to thesis.	relevant; provides some context.	given; leads to thesis with minor issues.	or abrupt lead-in to thesis.
<b>Organisation and Coherence</b>	Each paragraph supports the thesis; transitions are seamless; ideas flow logically.	Generally clear and logical; some transitions may be weak.	Paragraph structure mostly clear; some repetition or disjointed ideas.	Organisation is confusing; poor paragraphing or logical gaps.
<b>Argument Development and Reasoning</b>	Argument is sophisticated, well-reasoned, and fully developed with layered reasoning.	Strong reasoning; most points well-developed with clear logic.	Reasoning is sometimes underdeveloped or overly simplistic.	Arguments are weak, unsupported, or poorly reasoned.
<b>Use of Evidence</b>	Integrates high-quality, relevant, and diverse evidence; excellent source handling.	Relevant and sufficient evidence used appropriately.	Evidence is somewhat relevant; limited variety or unclear integration.	Minimal or weak evidence; poor integration or overreliance on one source.
<b>Counter-arguments and Refutation</b>	Addresses opposing views thoughtfully; refutations are balanced and logical.	Acknowledges at least one counterargument with an attempt to refute.	Mentions counterarguments briefly, but weak or underdeveloped.	Counterarguments unclear, one-sided, or off-topic.
<b>Conclusion</b>	Insightful, reinforces argument, and offers a thoughtful final perspective.	Effectively summarises argument and restates thesis.	Basic conclusion; restates main ideas with limited insight.	Weak or abrupt; may introduce new ideas.
<b>Academic Style and Tone</b>	Consistently formal and objective; appropriate for academic context.	Generally academic and appropriate with minor lapses.	Inconsistent tone; sometimes informal or too personal.	Often too casual or vague for academic writing.
<b>Grammar, Mechanics and Sentence Structure</b>	Virtually error-free; variety in sentence structure and excellent control of language.	Few minor errors; good sentence variety and clarity.	Some grammatical issues that do not significantly impede understanding.	Frequent errors; some confusion or awkward phrasing.

*Table 13: Rubric for assessing argumentative essays (peer feedback or teacher feedback)*

## 3.4. Analytical and Synthesis Writing

### 3.4.1. Comparative lens analysis

**Objective:** To develop the ability to conduct **analytical comparison** between two texts discussing a shared issue, with a focus on identifying contrasting perspectives, underlying assumptions, rhetorical strategies, and implications. To develop the ability to synthesise ideas from multiple sources and recognise viewpoints, tone, and argument strategies.

**Instructions:**

- Read these two articles (informational texts) on the topic of *leadership in a hybrid work setting*, which can be found online.
  - “Leading in a Hybrid World” (Lauren Doherty). *Harvard Business Impact*. January 20, 2023.
  - “Keeping People at the Centre: Strengthening Connection, Collaboration and Culture in the New Era of Flexible Work”. *Economist Impact*. 2023.
- Review key comparative analysis techniques: identifying points of agreement, disagreement, tone, and values.
- Model a side-by-side analysis of tone, rhetorical purpose, and evidence use (data or examples).
- Discuss:
  - What is the central claim or argument made by each author regarding leadership in hybrid or flexible work environments? How are these arguments similar or different in scope and focus?
  - How does each text define or emphasise the concept of “connection” in a hybrid work setting? Which strategies are proposed to maintain or strengthen it?
  - What rhetorical strategies does each author use to persuade the reader (e.g. appeals to logic, emotion, or authority)? Which do you find more effective, and why?
  - What types of evidence (e.g. statistics, case studies, expert opinions) are used in each text? How credible or convincing is the evidence presented?
  - How would you describe the tone of each text (e.g. optimistic, urgent, analytical, skeptical)? How does tone influence your perception of the author’s argument?
  - Do either of the texts reveal any implicit assumptions or biases about the workplace, leadership, or employee needs? How do these shape the overall argument?

- In what ways do the two articles reflect different values or priorities (e.g. productivity vs employee well-being)? Which perspective aligns more closely with your own experience or beliefs?
- If you were to synthesise both texts into one cohesive viewpoint, what key insights would you highlight? Are there any tensions or contradictions that cannot be reconciled?
- Read the following essay, which clearly compares and contrasts the authors' ideas and reasoning; and uses synthesis (not summary) to focus on how the ideas relate, oppose, or complement each other. This essay moves beyond summary towards **analytical synthesis**.

### Essay: Synthesizing Leadership Perspectives in the Hybrid Work Era

Both *“Leading in a Hybrid World”* and *“Keeping People at the Centre”* underscore the critical challenges of leadership within hybrid and flexible workplaces. Although they converge on the importance of organisational culture, they diverge in emphasis: Lauren Doherty’s article stresses managing ambiguity and conflict in hybrid settings, whereas Economist Impact’s report highlights employee connection and trust as pillars of flexible work success.

Doherty contends that hybrid work introduces unprecedented communication challenges. The flexibility it grants – where and when people work – offers inclusivity and broader talent access, notably improving retention among underrepresented groups. However, this autonomy often results in role ambiguity and differential expectations, particularly when senior managers favor in-office presence over remote work. As a result, transparency around who gets to work flexibly is frequently lacking, causing friction. This perspective is analytical and cautious: it recognises hybrid as “here to stay,” but urges leaders to clarify policies and manage conflicts proactively.

In contrast, *“Keeping People at the Centre”* adopts a more holistic cultural lens. Based on a global executive survey, Economist Impact argues that organisations thriving in flexible work environments place human-centric values at the core, thus strengthening trust, collaboration, and connection across teams. Their findings suggest that even when the structure of work is flexible, culture must be deliberately cultivated rather than assumed. They point to four strategic pillars – management, trust, connection, and collaboration – and advocate for continuous evaluation and improvement to make flexibility sustainable.

Although both texts affirm hybrid work’s permanence, Doherty’s tone remains pragmatic and problem-focused: leaders must mitigate transparency issues and interpersonal conflict. Economist Impact, however, projects an op-

timistic tone, viewing flexibility as an opportunity to reimagine workplace culture and elevate employee well-being.

Crucially, the two authors complement each other. Doherty highlights the structural ambiguity leaders must navigate: uncertainty around who benefits from flexibility and how expectations align. Economist Impact counters that such structural shifts require cultural anchoring: trust and connection become the glue that ensures collaboration and morale in a spatially dispersed workforce.

Regarding evidence, Doherty relies on analytical observations and case-based examples about senior management behaviours and hybrid policy tensions. Economist Impact, conversely, draws on survey data and the barometer framework to substantiate its four pillars. The latter's use of quantitative metrics, such as trust indices and culture-related scores, enhances its policy-oriented credibility.

Together, the articles suggest that successful leadership in hybrid contexts blends clarity and culture. Doherty reminds us that without transparent policy and conflict management, flexibility may breed resentment or disengagement. Economist Impact shows that organisations that intentionally foster connection and trust, instead of treating culture as incidental, are more likely to thrive.

In summary, while Doherty emphasises the operational and communicative complexity of hybrid work, Economist Impact stresses the need for deliberate culture-building around trust and collaboration. A synthesis of both viewpoints indicates that hybrid leadership must combine transparent policy-making with human-centred strategies to foster resilient, inclusive, and productive teams.

### 3.4.2. Reflection questions

The following reflection questions can be posed after reading two texts and before beginning a synthesis essay. They are designed to guide deep comprehension, critical comparison, and analytical thinking.

- **Text comprehension and understanding**
  1. What is the main argument or thesis of Text A?
  2. What is the main argument or thesis of Text B?
  3. What are the key supporting points in each text?
  4. What kind of evidence does each author use (e.g. data, examples, expert opinions)?
  5. What is the tone of each text (e.g. neutral, persuasive, critical, enthusiastic)?
  6. Who is the intended audience for each text?

- **Comparison of content and perspective**
  7. In what ways do the two texts agree on the topic?
  8. Where do the authors disagree or contrast in opinion?
  9. Do the texts rely on similar values or assumptions?
  10. How does each author define or frame the issue?
  11. Which aspects of the topic does each text emphasise more?
- **Analysis of structure and rhetoric**
  12. What rhetorical devices or persuasive strategies are used in each text?
  13. Does either text address counterarguments? If so, how effectively?
  14. Are the texts biased in any way? What language signals this?
  15. Is one argument more balanced or nuanced than the other? Why?
- **Critical thinking and evaluation**
  16. Which text do you find more convincing or credible? Why?
  17. What are the strengths of each text’s reasoning or evidence?
  18. Are there any weaknesses, gaps, or limitations in either argument?
  19. What questions remain unanswered after reading both texts?
  20. How might these two perspectives be integrated or reconciled?
- **Extended critical thinking and synthesis preparation**
  21. How does each text reflect its cultural, social, or professional context?
  22. What implications does each argument have for real-world decision-making?
  23. If you had to combine the strongest points from both texts, what would they be?
  24. What is a potential middle ground or synthesis between the two positions?
  25. How could you use ideas from both texts to support your own position?

### 3.4.3. Evaluating evidence across sources: Writing

**Objective:** To develop critical literacy and analytical writing skills by evaluating how different types of evidence, such as statistical data, expert testimony, and personal anecdote, are used to support arguments across multiple texts. To assess the credibility, relevance, and rhetorical impact of each source’s evidence strategy, especially when sources conflict or achieve similar conclusions through different reasoning, so as to be able to write a synthesis essay.

**Instructions:**

- Choose a topic focus: a controversial or evolving issue (e.g. *nutrition science, public health recommendations, immigration, salary gender gap, economic inequality, vaccine policy*).
- Read about the issue from two or more texts (articles) that use different types of evidence: one emphasising quantitative data or statistics; one using expert testimony or anecdotal reasoning.
- Analyse the strengths, weaknesses, and rhetorical impact of each source’s evidence strategy. Evaluating evidence involves questioning: Is it current? Is it from a reputable and credible source or from a biased source? Is it directly relevant to the claim? Is it interpreted logically?
  - Think about the persuasive power vs logical strength of the texts.
  - To gain an in-depth understanding of the texts, answer reflection questions in Activity III.4.2.
  - Write a synthesis essay, providing a title as well.
  - After writing the essay, self-check your writing (Table 14). Provide peer feedback (Table 15).

√	Checklist Item	Improvement Tip
	I present a clear argument / insight connecting multiple sources or ideas.	Go beyond summary; show deeper meaning or a linking pattern.
	I represent each source / perspective accurately in my own words.	Summarise fairly; don’t just quote.
	I draw meaningful comparisons or contrasts between sources.	Use markers: “Both authors... but differ on...”
	I analyse the ideas / evidence – not just describe.	Ask: Why is this significant? What does it imply?
	Each paragraph links clearly to my thesis / synthesis argument.	Use topic sentences focused on your analysis, not just summaries.
	I use relevant, well-chosen evidence from sources.	Integrate quotes or examples smoothly and explain them.
	I avoid just summarising source after source.	Weave sources together instead of listing them.
	My conclusion adds insight, not just a restatement.	Reframe the thesis or suggest broader implications.

√	Checklist Item	Improvement Tip
	My tone is formal, objective, and precise.	Use hedging and academic transitions (“in contrast to,” “this implies...”).
	I proofread for grammar and sentence clarity.	Vary structure and read aloud to catch issues.

Table 14: Student self-check checklist: Analytical and synthesis writing

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
<b>Central Insight or Thesis</b>	Offers a nuanced, arguable, and original insight that clearly synthesises multiple sources or ideas.	Presents a clear and arguable thesis that reflects synthesis.	Thesis is present but lacks depth, specificity, or synthesis.	Thesis is unclear, generic, or oversimplified.
<b>Understanding of Sources / Texts</b>	Demonstrates deep understanding of all texts or data; accurately represents and contextualises key points.	Shows strong understanding; represents sources clearly and fairly.	Adequate understanding with occasional misinterpretation or surface-level treatment.	Misrepresents or oversimplifies key ideas; limited grasp of content.
<b>Synthesis of Ideas</b>	Insightfully integrates multiple perspectives, drawing meaningful connections and contrasts across sources.	Integrates ideas well, showing logical connections across sources.	Attempts synthesis, but may rely on comparison only or shift between sources without integration.	Limited synthesis; sources presented side by side with little connection.
<b>Analytical Depth</b>	Offers complex, critical analysis; goes beyond surface meaning to explore implications, assumptions, or contradictions.	Strong analysis; shows depth and thoughtful interpretation.	Adequate analysis; mostly descriptive with limited interpretation.	Analysis is shallow, unclear, or unsupported.

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
<b>Organisation and Logical Flow</b>	Essay is cohesively structured; each paragraph logically supports the thesis and transitions smoothly.	Generally well-organised with clear transitions and logical progression.	Organisation is present but may have weak transitions or repetitive ideas.	Poor paragraph structure or disorganised argument.
<b>Use of Evidence</b>	Selects and integrates relevant, credible, and diverse evidence; excellent source attribution and explanation.	Good evidence selection and integration; mostly relevant and explained.	Some evidence is weak, vague, or insufficiently connected to analysis.	Minimal or unclear use of evidence; sources poorly integrated.
<b>Academic Tone and Style</b>	Consistently formal, precise, and objective; suitable for academic context.	Generally academic; few lapses in tone or formality.	Inconsistent tone; some informal or vague language.	Tone frequently inappropriate for academic writing.
<b>Grammar, Mechanics and Sentence Structure</b>	Error-free or nearly error-free; writing is fluid and varied in sentence structure.	Minor grammatical issues; mostly clear and correct.	Several grammatical errors; clarity occasionally affected.	Frequent grammar issues; meaning may be unclear.

*Table 15: Rubric for assessing analytical and synthesis writing (peer feedback or teacher feedback)*



# Glossary

Term	Definition
<b>Abstract</b>	A concise summary of a scholarly paper's content: purpose, methods, results, and conclusions.
<b>Academic discourse</b>	Formal written and spoken communication in educational and research contexts.
<b>Academic integrity</b>	Upholding honesty, fairness, crediting sources, and avoiding plagiarism; a foundation of credible scholarship.
<b>Argument</b>	A reasoned claim supported by evidence and logical progression.
<b>Audience</b>	The readers or listeners targeted by a text, whose needs shape tone and structure.
<b>Authorial voice</b>	The distinctive style and tone that reflect a writer's personality or scholarly identity.
<b>Bias</b>	Unbalanced presentation favoring one group or perspective over others; lack of neutrality.
<b>Bibliography</b>	A list of sources consulted, whether cited or not, usually at the end of a text.
<b>Body paragraph</b>	A paragraph that supports the thesis with evidence.
<b>Brainstorming</b>	Generating ideas before writing.
<b>Citation</b>	A formal reference to a source in-text, supporting ethical scholarship.
<b>Coherence</b>	Logical flow, connection of ideas and clarity within and between paragraphs.
<b>Cohesion</b>	Grammatical and lexical linking between sentences and paragraphs; cohesive devices (transition devices).
<b>Collaborative writing</b>	Writing jointly by multiple authors.
<b>Concession</b>	Acknowledging opposing arguments to balance and strengthen one's position.
<b>Conclusion</b>	The final section of a paper that summarises the main points, arguments and implications, restating the thesis.
<b>Connotation</b>	Emotional associations of words beyond their literal meaning.
<b>Consensus</b>	Agreement among scholars or sources on a given topic.
<b>Contradiction</b>	Statements or evidence that directly oppose one another.
<b>Co-reference</b>	Expressions (e.g. pronouns) that refer to the same entity in text.

Term	Definition
<b>Counterargument</b>	An opposing viewpoint to the main argument.
<b>Credibility</b>	The trustworthiness of a source or argument, enhanced by proper citation and evidence.
<b>Critical analysis</b>	Interpreting and evaluating evidence, not just summarising.
<b>Data</b>	Factual information used as a basis for reasoning or argument, e.g. statistics.
<b>Deductive reasoning</b>	Starting from general principles to reach a specific conclusion.
<b>Discourse markers (transitions)</b>	Words / phrases that guide readers through logic.
<b>Discussion</b>	A section that interprets results and connects them to existing research.
<b>Draft</b>	A preliminary version of a text, subject to revision.
<b>Editing</b>	Refining language, sentence structure, and consistency; correcting grammar, mechanics and formatting.
<b>Empirical evidence</b>	Information based on observation or experiment.
<b>Ethics</b>	Principles guiding moral scholarly practices (e.g. honesty, fairness).
<b>Evidence</b>	Data, citations, quotes, examples supporting a claim.
<b>Footnote / Endnote</b>	Notes providing additional information or citations, placed at page end (footnote) or chapter / book end (endnote).
<b>Formatting style</b>	A set of guidelines (APA, MLA) for consistent presentation.
<b>Hedging</b>	Using cautious language (e.g. “may,” “suggests”) to indicate uncertainty and avoid overgeneralization.
<b>IMRaD</b>	Standard structure: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion.
<b>In-text citation</b>	Brief acknowledgment within the text.
<b>Inference</b>	Drawing conclusions based on evidence.
<b>Introduction</b>	Opening section that sets context and states a thesis or research question.
<b>Jargon</b>	Specialised language; may obscure meaning if overused.
<b>Justification</b>	The reasoning that explains why a claim is valid.
<b>Limitations</b>	Boundaries influencing interpretation of results.
<b>Literature review</b>	Survey of existing research to situate the new study.
<b>Methodology</b>	Description of procedures and rationale behind them; process used to gather and analyse information.
<b>Modality</b>	Degree of certainty or obligation expressed by a verb (e.g. “must,” “might”).

Term	Definition
<b>Objective (adj)</b>	Writing that remains unbiased and fact-based.
<b>Outline</b>	A structured plan (rough version) showing major parts of a text before drafting.
<b>Paragraph</b>	A group of sentences developing one idea.
<b>Paraphrase</b>	Restating someone else's ideas in your own words with proper citation.
<b>Peer feedback</b>	Feedback from fellow students before finalizing a draft.
<b>Plagiarism</b>	Presenting others' work as your own without proper acknowledgement.
<b>Point</b>	An idea or argument made in support of a thesis.
<b>Post-editing</b>	Final revision focusing on polishing and accuracy.
<b>Preface</b>	Introductory note, often written by the author, providing context and background.
<b>Proofreading</b>	Final check for minor errors in spelling, punctuation, and format.
<b>Qualitative data</b>	Non-numerical data, like interviews or observations.
<b>Quantitative data</b>	Numerical data, like statistics, measurements, surveys.
<b>Quotation</b>	Using someone's exact words with proper format and citation.
<b>Rationale</b>	Reasoning behind chosen methods and arguments.
<b>Rebuttal</b>	A response to and refutation of a counterargument.
<b>Reference list</b>	A list of all sources cited; complete bibliographic information for cited sources, at the end of the text.
<b>Register</b>	Style appropriate to academic writing; the level of formality used in writing.
<b>Research question</b>	The central question guiding an academic study or research project.
<b>Revision</b>	Process of refining content, structure, and style.
<b>Section heading</b>	Title indicating the topic of a section.
<b>Signposting</b>	Indicating the structure and flow to guide readers.
<b>Source evaluation</b>	Checking credibility, bias, currency of sources.
<b>Style guide</b>	A manual specifying writing norms for academic disciplines.
<b>Summary</b>	Brief statement of the main ideas, notably shorter than the original.
<b>Support</b>	Evidence or reasoning backing up a point.
<b>Synthesis</b>	Integrating multiple sources to form a coherent argument.
<b>Table / Figure</b>	Visual representation of data for clarity.

Term	Definition
<b>Thesis statement</b>	Central claim or argument guiding the essay or study. A concise statement summarising the main point or argument of the entire essay, providing a roadmap for the reader, indicating the essay's purpose and scope. Usually found at the end of the introductory paragraph. Provides the overall direction, and the topic sentences guide the reader through the specific points within the essay.
<b>Title</b>	The name of the essay or paper, often reflecting the thesis.
<b>Tone</b>	The writer's attitude adopted in writing (formal, neutral, etc.).
<b>Topic sentence</b>	A concise statement summarising the main point of a single paragraph, acting as a mini-thesis for that specific paragraph. Usually found at the beginning of a body paragraph. Often supports or relates back to the overarching thesis statement of the essay. Guides the reader through the specific points within the essay, and the thesis statement provides the overall direction.
<b>Transition</b>	Words or phrases that guide readers across ideas, connect ideas or paragraphs.
<b>Validity</b>	Accuracy, credibility and soundness of methods and conclusions.
<b>Voice</b>	The personality or presence expressed through the writing style.
<b>Word count</b>	Length requirement for a paper or section.

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*Editor* Aneta NAUMOSKA

*Reviewers* Prof. Emilija SARŽOSKA-GEORGIEVSKA, PhD  
“Blaže Koneski” Faculty of Philology, UKIM  
Prof. Nejša KALAJDŽISALIHVIĆ, PhD  
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo

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**Beyond the Word: Academic Writing Principles and Practices for EFL Students** is both a guide and a companion for first-year English majors at the “Blaže Koneski” Faculty of Philology in Skopje, as well as for anyone seeking to strengthen academic writing skills. It introduces writing as a creative, reflective, and disciplined process through which ideas are shaped, knowledge is built, and students develop their academic voice.

Grounded in scholarship in English for Academic Purposes, applied linguistics, and genre-based pedagogy, the book presents writing as a dynamic, recursive practice of planning, drafting, feedback, revision, and reflection. Its structure follows a clear progression: Part I explores the nature and role of academic writing, its conventions, and the importance of feedback and critical engagement; Part II develops the linguistic and structural foundations of effective writing, focusing on vocabulary, coherence, and paragraph organisation; Part III guides students through common essay types, encouraging adaptability rather than rigid templates.

Designed at the B2+/C1 CEFR level, the coursebook combines model texts, guided analysis, and reflective tasks to foster both linguistic competence and critical thinking. More than a manual, it invites students to enter academic discourse as a space for inquiry, reflection, and intellectual growth.