

Paragraphs

Task 1:

Divide the following text into paragraphs. Use // to indicate where a paragraph begins.

What is the difference between an expert and a novice writer?

Researchers Bereiter and Scardamalia have spent the last thirty years exploring what makes an expert writer. They have examined how school children and academic writers go about the process. One of the interesting findings is that expert writers undertake the writing process differently from the novice writers (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987). Novice writers adopt a linear approach to their writing and tend to take each of the writing process elements in turn. The reason they do this is because they are not at the stage of managing and controlling more than one element at a time. Consequently, they gather information for an essay without giving thought to how they are going to use the information at a later stage in the writing process. On the other hand, expert writers keep a mental map of the finished product or essay in mind while they are gathering information and during the drafting process. Consequently, they keep moving backwards and forwards through the various elements of the process which they accomplish with ease and skill. Thus, if anyone wishes to become an expert writer, it is vital to take firm control of the different elements. To improve results, it is essential to begin considering whether they are good time managers. Most students have to write assignments within tight deadlines – either self-imposed or externally imposed by tutors. Therefore, they need to be effective and efficient in their control of the whole process.

Task 2:

Decide what the function of each sentence is in the paragraph below.

A balanced diet makes a major contribution to good health. This is because it provides essential nutrients for the human body. For example, the micronutrients, vitamins and minerals, are needed for the body's cells to function well. Different types of food contain different amounts of these nutrients and so it is vital for people to eat a wide variety of foods, such as rice and bread, fish and eggs, and vegetables and fruit, every day. The human body extracts nutrients from these foods and uses them to grow and repair itself. Therefore, consumption of this diverse range of foods will result in the nutrient-rich, balanced diet which is essential for the maintenance of human health.

Task 3:

Choose the best topic sentence for the paragraph below.

1. Although originality and significance provide some basis for distinguishing a thesis from a dissertation, other qualities need to be considered.
2. Despite having different names, a thesis and a dissertation are, in fact, very similar in most respects.
3. It is reasonable to expect that various types of texts, namely essays, theses, and dissertations, share a wide range of common features.

..... First, both are expected to follow principles of sound research design and implementation. Both also follow the same principles of good academic writing style and are written up in much the same way, sharing as they do similar structure, organisation and formatting conventions. Finally, both require you, as a researcher, to produce a piece of work that is original and adds to the body of knowledge in the field with which your research is associated.

Task 4:

Read the topic sentences below and predict the content of the paragraph.

- a) There is an essential difference between a fact in science and a fact in humanities.
- b) The paper is organized as follows.

Task 5:

Choose the best concluding sentence for the paragraph below.

Anxiety in sport is most commonly measured by means of the self-report questionnaire (Dilthey, 2003). This method has the advantages of being inexpensive and convenient to administer (Malloy, 1999). However, its reliability can easily be undermined for two reasons. If the athlete answers the questionnaire before or during the competition, this risks impeding the athlete's performance, as the questionnaire requires the athlete to concentrate deliberately on his/her anxiety about the competition, and concentrating in this way can tend to increase anxiety about the competition (Smith, 2003). On the other hand, when athletes complete the questionnaire after the competition, there is a tendency for them to remember their behaviour inaccurately (Malloy, 1999).

1. Anderson (1999) argues that measuring athlete's heart-rates and breathing is probably the most reliable way to gauge levels of anxiety.
2. Furthermore, self-report questionnaires are often designed in unhelpful, confusing ways, which may undermine the validity of results (Malloy 1999).
3. The consensus of opinion among sports psychologists today is that self-report questionnaires cannot be relied upon as genuine measurements of anxiety in sports performance.

Task 6:

Look at the following two paragraphs and decide which of them has a better overall plan. Support your opinion with evidence.

A

The ancient Egyptians were masters of preserving dead people's bodies by making mummies of them. Mummies several thousand years old have been discovered nearly intact. The skin, hair, teeth, finger- and toenails, and facial features of the mummies were evident. It is possible to diagnose the diseases they suffered in life such as smallpox, arthritis, and nutritional deficiencies. The process was remarkably effective. Sometimes apparent were the fatal afflictions of the dead people: a middle-aged king died from a blow on the head, and polio killed a child king. Mummification consisted of removing the internal organs, applying natural preservatives inside and out, and then wrapping the body in layers of bandages.

B

The ancient Egyptians were masters of preserving dead people's bodies by making mummies of them. The process of mummification consisted of removing the internal organs, applying natural preservatives inside and out, and then wrapping the body in layers of bandages. It was a remarkably effective practice. Indeed, mummies several thousand years old have been discovered nearly intact. Their skin, hair, teeth, fingers and toenails, and facial features of the mummies are still evident. Their diseases in life, such as smallpox, arthritis, and nutritional deficiencies, are still diagnosable. Even their fatal afflictions are still apparent: a middle-aged king died from a blow on the head: a child king died from polio.

Task 7:

Read these paragraphs and decide which are appropriate for academic writing and why.

a) To make the argument that unconstrained freedom leads to paralysis and becomes a kind of self-defeating tyranny while self-determination within significant constraints – within rules of some sort – leads to well-being and optimal functioning, I will begin by considering a few aspects of rational-choice theory in some detail, more concretely by considering problems of rational-choice theory related to an empirical description of how people choose, and problems that are a reflection of important constraints on freedom of choice that the theory of rational choice leaves out and that a positive theory of self-determination must include.

b) Academic writers need to be sure that what they create is written in the appropriate style. They face increasing challenges when describing an academic writing style. One difficulty in using the appropriate style is knowing what is considered academic and what is not. Deciding what is academic and what is not is complicated by the fact that academic style differs in terms of what is acceptable from one area of study to another. Academic style is not used in all academic settings.

c) The goals and objectives of a dissertation are quite different from the goals and objectives of a journal article. Dissertations, similar to memoirs, contain a great deal of “process” information in addition to the research “content”. The process information allows the dissertation committee to see all the roads we investigated when selecting and defining the research problem, including all the plans considered before selecting the final methodology, and many other details that would be considered extraneous in a journal article. Dissertations are lengthy for the same reason that legal trials often are lengthy, in that both the writer and lawyer are providing reams of evidence, i.e., meticulously building a case to back up the ultimate conclusions that are offered. Such laborious justification regarding what was or was not done, or considered, in a research project – leaving no conceptual stone unturned – is not expected nor appropriate to journal manuscripts.

d) Females in African-Caribbean families are the breadwinners and they set good examples for their female children (Brown, 2006). However, not all female African-Caribbean children do well at school (Moore et al, 2005). African-Caribbean women don't find it hard to find a job, but the males do (Brown, 2006). This is because of their education (ibid). Some teachers treat African-Caribbean children differently because they speak English with an accent which is sometimes difficult for a middle-class English teacher to understand (Brown, 2006). This can lead to under-achievement in the classroom (Moore et al, 2005).