By the same author:
English for Academic Purposes: A guide and resource book for teachers-
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997

For BALEAP members

Contents

Guide to Using the Book

The Aim of the Course

1 To enable non-native speakers of English who wish to follow a course in the medium of English at tertiary level to express themselves coherently in writing.

2 To provide samples of academic writing and appropriate practice material for such students and also for those students who need to write essays or reports in English at an intermediate to advanced level.

3 To act as a revision course for students who have previously learned English as a foreign language at school and who probably learned English with the sentence as the grammatical unit. These students may now need to write in English for academic purposes.

4 To provide some practice in answering examination-type questions for public or internal exams.

The Organisation of the Course

Units
The book is divided into units that are self-contained but are linked in their progression through the overall needs of students who have to write in English for an academic purpose.

Many of the units focus on language functions that are used to express a particular notion or idea, e.g. description and definitions. The procedures of academic writing are also practised, e.g. paraphrasing and summarising. The most common genre (type of writing) that is practised is the essay. However, some practice is also provided in writing for exams, and information is given about writing research reports.

Written practice is given at different levels within each unit, mostly in three stages. All the units except the first conclude with a Structure and Vocabulary Aid to provide assistance with the words and grammatical constructions needed in that unit.

Key
The Key at the end of the book provides additional comments on some of the exercises and gives answers to many of the exercises.

Appendices
The Appendices act as a bank of reference material for both the student and the teacher. Appendix 1 provides an overview of some of the common types of language error and their causes. It also lists some useful books that give further practice in these areas.

Product and Process

Overall, the course provides practice in writing for a particular purpose: often models or examples are given from academic writing. In addition, the process of achieving the final product is considered. Students are encouraged to discuss and compare some of their writing, and to draft and check their writing carefully through proofreading. The teacher's use of a correcting code (Appendix 4) will help in this respect.

Using the Book

It is best if the units are worked through in order. However, this depends on the requirements of the students, who may need to practise the content of certain units before others (for example, Unit 14: Academic Style). The Structure and Vocabulary Aids should be referred to when necessary. Normally, the answers to each exercise should be checked in the Key before proceeding to the next exercise.

Suggestions for the Teacher

General

1 In a number of units there are blank-filling exercises to be done after reading a text. These can be used with some flexibility: students who have difficulty can look at the text again or at the same time as they are writing. Other students can do the exercises without referring back to the text. Advanced students can try to do the exercises before looking at the text. In other words, they will be trying to anticipate or predict the language needed from the context of the sentence.

2 Students may need to practise different kinds of academic writing (genres) in preparation for their studies of a particular subject. Units 14 and 16 will be particularly useful for this. In addition, it would be helpful if they could see examples of essays, reports, etc. of the type they will need to write in the future. Information about the requirements and expectations of subject departments would be particularly useful.

3 Some groups of students may be studying the same academic subject, e.g. one of the sciences or social sciences. If this is the case, then it would be helpful if you could devise some questions related to their specific subject at the end of Stage 3 for each unit. Similarly, some students may be at undergraduate level while others may be postgraduates. Consequently, practice at the appropriate level would be beneficial.

4 The questionnaires in Unit 17 and Appendix 5 may be photocopied for students to complete.

5 As a learning resource for students, any word processing package can help them to edit their own texts. There are also a range of websites which give access to learning and practice material (guidance, models, examples).

Examination Practice

Some students may need to practise writing answers for examination questions, either for internal or public exams. For such practice they need to be able to analyse the questions and decide what is needed. In addition, they need to write concisely, fluently and accurately. Unit 19 will be especially useful for this: its Glossary of Examination and Essay Questions will be generally useful for writing essays. Other units that are useful for exam practice are numbers 11–15.

One feature of writing for exams is the need to be able to write quickly – 'against the clock': for example, one essay-type question in one hour. Practice for this can be devised by giving a certain time limit in which to write some of the Stage 3 exercises, particularly those that apply to the students' own subject.

If a class is formed of students from the same subject area, it would be useful to obtain copies of past exam papers in their subject. The questions can be analysed with the students, noting the question-types that appear frequently. A question can be selected, discussed, the structure agreed upon and notes put on the board to help the students. They could then be given a time limit to write the answer. Later in the course, the notes on the board can be removed after discussion so that gradually help is reduced.

If the students are of mixed disciplines, they can be asked to provide questions about their own subjects. After suitable preparatory work they can attempt to write the answers under simulated exam conditions.

It is also possible to obtain information about public exams with examples of question papers. For example, *The IELTS handbook* is available from UCLES, Cambridge. Information about these exams, as well as other aspects of academic writing, is given in *English for Academic Purposes* (A guide and resource book for teachers) by R. R. Jordan, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Correcting Code

Sometimes when checking students' writing, it is necessary to write in the correct answers. However, some research has shown that if students are actively involved in trying to correct their own mistakes, with guidance, they are more likely to learn from them and not repeat them. One way to help in this respect is to use a code for correcting (see Appendix 4). With this approach, mistakes are not corrected but are indicated – both the type of mistake and its location.

Where a student's writing is 'good' or 'very good', it is very helpful to the student if you can indicate which parts are good and briefly explain why they are good. Without such comments, students may not repeat the good features in their next writing.

In addition to the Correcting Code, an appropriate Checklist for the type of writing (e.g. essay) can be constructed. If this is also circulated to students it will raise their awareness of what is needed and also remind them of what to check for. It can be used in conjunction with Unit 18. Examples of its content might be:

- Relevance of the answer to the question or topic
- Structure and organisation of the essay, and completeness of the writing

- Clear expression
- Coherence of argument
- Critical evaluation of points of view
- References to literature/research and use of quotations and bibliography
- Other details: grammar, spelling, punctuation

Discussion and Writing

Several discussion activities have been included, and students are encouraged to compare and discuss their answers with other students. The purpose is to raise the level of awareness of students of certain aspects of written English. In addition, the discussion is a useful prelude to writing discussion-type essays in which points of view need to be argued. It helps in the evaluation of differences between arguments. Such discussion also helps to develop critical thinking and self-confidence in expressing one's own views.
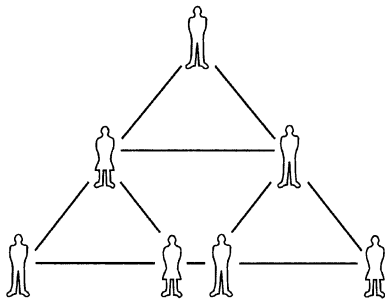
Pyramid Discussions

A Pyramid Discussion is an activity in which students are encouraged to take part in discussion by gradually increasing the size of the discussion group, starting with the individual, then building up to two students, then four, and then the whole group. The procedure is as follows:

1 First, students should individually select three items, as instructed, from the list given in the activity. The order of their choices is not important.

2 Then each student, in turn, should call out the numbers of his/her choices. Write these on the board for all to see.

e.g. student:	A	B	C	D etc.
choices:	12	3	4	1
	14	7	7	7
	15	10	12	10

3 After this, put the students in pairs so that they have, as far as possible, at least one choice in common (e.g. A and C, B and D above).

4 In pairs the students should then try to persuade each other to make changes in their choices so that at the end of a certain time limit (perhaps five minutes) they both agree on three choices. If necessary, they can compromise on new choices or 'trade-off' choices. The pairs' three choices are then noted on the board again.

5 Pairs should then be placed together who have at least one choice the same . . . and so the procedure continues until all of the class are involved.

6 If a pair or group finish their discussion before other groups, they can prepare arguments to defend their choices so that they are ready to meet another group.

7 While they are discussing, students will be practising the language of persuasion: agreement, disagreement, suggestion, qualification and compromise.

7

Stage 2
Connectives

A piece of writing or text will often have the following structure:


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BASIC
CONNECTIVES: type
A – and
B – or
C – but
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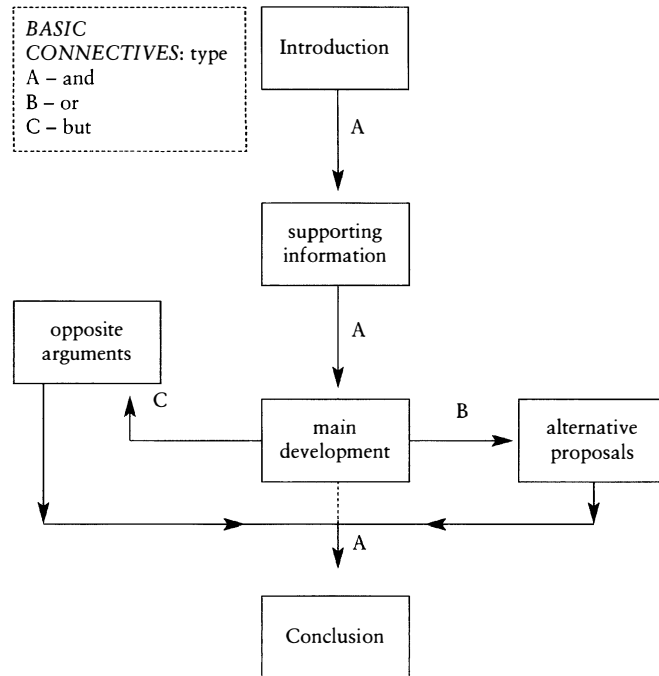
A The discussion, argument, or comment in the development of the topic may be very straightforward, in which case ideas will be added together one after the other. The basic connective *and* is used here. (A number of connectives have a similar or related meaning to *and*.)

B Sometimes the comments may be expressed in another way, or an alternative proposal may be made. This is represented by the basic connective *or*. (A number of other connectives have a similar meaning.) After the alternative has been considered, the main argument will continue.

C There are also occasions in arguments etc. when the opposite is considered or referred to. This is represented by the basic connective *but*. (There are also a number of other connectives with a similar meaning.) After the opposite or opposing view has been considered, the main argument is continued.

A list of the connectives divided into the main groups of *and*, *or*, *but* is contained in Appendix 2: Connectives.

Summary of the Stages of Writing an Essay

1
> Topic — think
> Reading list

↓

2

↓

3

↓

4

↓

5

↓

6

↓

7
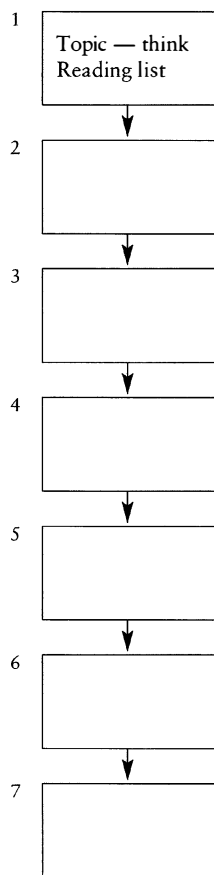
n _____ an outline of the essay, making use of headings or sub-headings, if they are appropriate.

o _____ the first draft, in a suitably formal or academic style.

p _____ the use of colloquial expressions or personal references.

q _____ the draft critically, in particular checking the organisation, cohesion and language.

r _____ yourself several questions about it, for example: Is it clear? Is it concise? Is it comprehensive?

s _____ the draft.

t _____ the final draft.

u _____ sure it is legible!

v _____ first impressions are important.

w _____ your bibliography, using the conventional format.

x _____ that your references are in strict alphabetical order.

y _____ the bibliography to the end of your essay.

3 Read through 'The Stages of Writing an Essay' again. Decide what you consider to be the most important stages or advice. In very brief note form summarise the stages by filling in the boxes in the diagram. The first one has been done for you (you may change it if you do not agree with it).

Either: Before beginning, discuss with the student next to you what you both consider to be the most important stages. Do you agree with each other?

Or: After you have finished, compare your summary diagram with the student next to you and discuss any differences.

Pyramid Discussion
Writing an Essay or Report
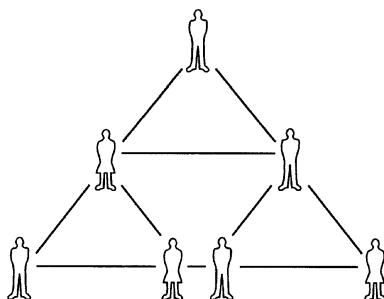
Individually select the three most important pieces of advice, from the list below, that you think will help to improve a student's academic writing. The order of the three choices is not important.

1 Write precisely: clearly, accurately and explicitly.
2 Use correct language: grammar, vocabulary, spelling etc.
3 Organise the writing carefully: introduction, main body, and conclusion.
4 Write legibly: handwriting should be easy to read.
5 Write in an academic style: impersonally, without using colloquial language.
6 Write concisely, and avoid very long sentences.
7 Adopt appropriate attitudes: be rational, critical, honest and objective.
8 Carefully paragraph the writing.
9 Include variety in the writing: avoid too much repetition.
10 Check details carefully, both of content and of language.
11 Ensure that the opening paragraph is not too long and that it creates a good impression.

B Compass points (and adjectives)

North
(northern)

North-West   North-East
(north-western)   (north-eastern)

West   East
(western)   (eastern)

South-West   South-East
(south-western)   (south-eastern)

South
(southern)

C Location
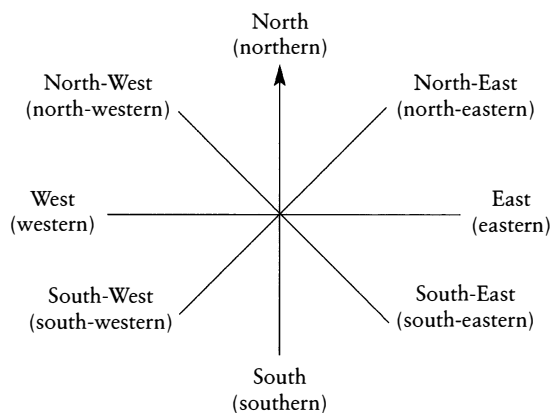
X is situated/located	in . . . to . . . on . . .
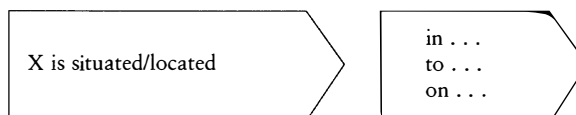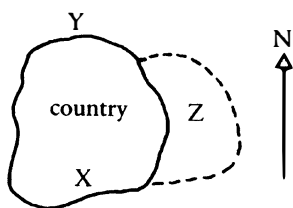
e.g.   X is *in the south* of the country.
       Y is *to the north* of the country.
       The north of the country is | cold.
                                       | *on/near* the equator.
                                       | *on/near* the coast/sea.
                                       | *inland.*
       Z is a neighbouring (or adjacent) country.

Note: *lies* (to *lie*) is used for islands. For mainland (joined to a continent) we would use *is situated* in referring to location.

Y

country   Z

X   N

D Verbs to describe the composition of a country

X   comprise(s) . . .
    consist(s) of . . .
    constitute(s) . . .   (notice the use and differences)
    is composed of . . .

E Approximation

X has   just
        a little   over . . .
                        under . . .   (+ figure,
        about   measurement, etc.)
        approximately
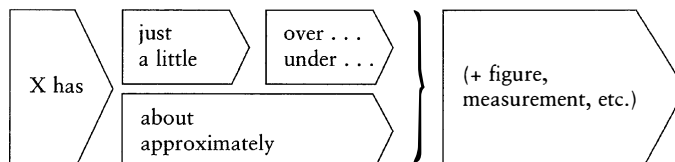
Independent: private, fee-paying

nursery school

pre-preparatory

PREPARATORY

pupils: ages 7–11/12/13

Common Entrance Examination ⟶

pupils: ages 11/12/13–18/19

SECONDARY

day school   'public schools'   boarding school
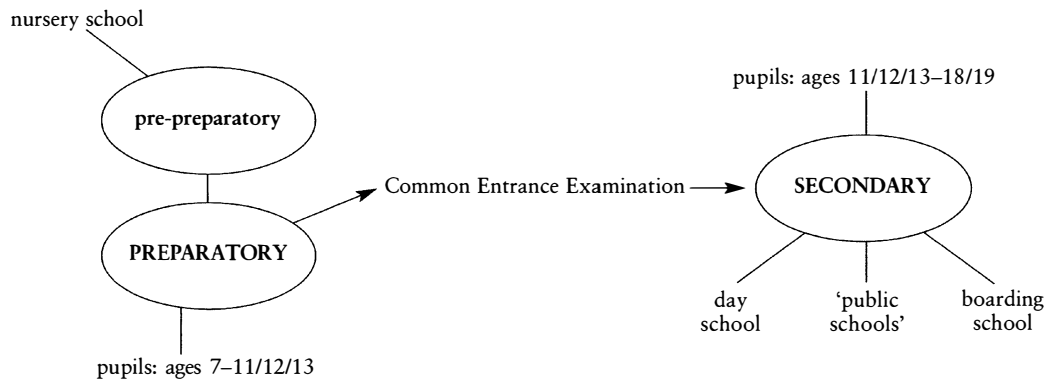
1 Are there any other words that you would find it useful to add to the above lists?

2 Make a similar list for the school system in your country.

Most of the unemployed had been without jobs for more than two months. A number had been unemployed for more than a year. Undoubtedly the longer a person is out of work, the more likely it is that he will not find another job. In addition, job prospects are definitely worse for older workers.

Quantity	Frequency	Probability
all	usually	possible

Stage 2
Qualification

1 Look at the following information which relates to a British university. It shows some of the forms that overseas students completed during their first few weeks in Britain last year. Write a paragraph describing the information in the table. Use quantity qualifications instead of percentage figures. Begin 'Last year all overseas students completed University Registration forms . . .'

%	Form
100	University Registration
95	University Library Membership Application
80	National Health Service Registration
56	International Student Identity Card Application
35	Accommodation Office Application
3	Magazine Subscription

2 Use the information in the table to make generalised predictive statements about students coming to the university next year and form-filling. Make use of probability expressions in order to do this, as in the example:

It is certain that (all) students will need to complete a University Registration form.

3 Recently science students were asked if they had difficulty in obtaining their course books from libraries. The diagram indicates their responses.

Changing the percentage figures to quantity qualifications, describe the information, e.g.

A few students were never able to obtain their course books from libraries.

55%
sometimes

25%
often

10%
rarely

5%
never

5%
always

(students) %

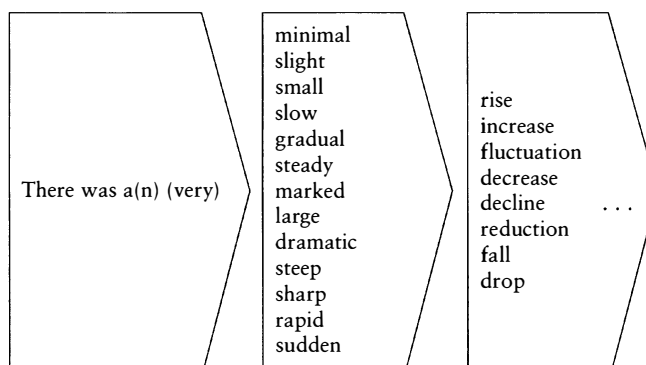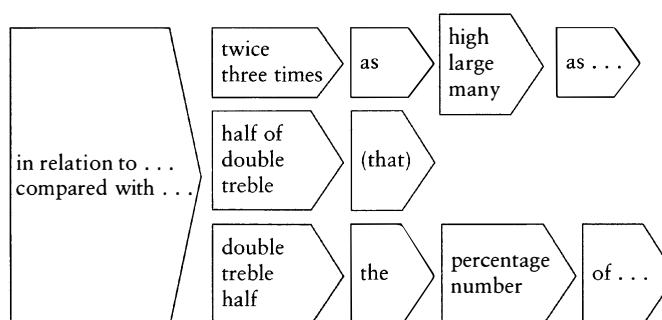## B Describing change

There was a(n) (very)	minimal slight small slow gradual steady marked large dramatic steep sharp rapid sudden	rise increase fluctuation decrease decline . . . reduction fall drop
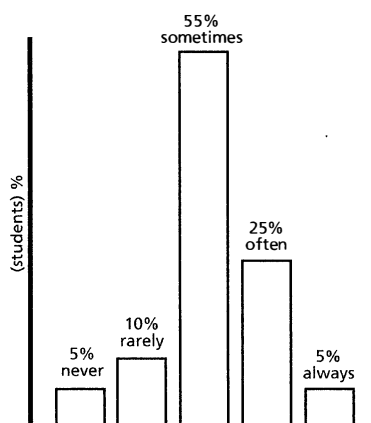
Note: Not all the words above can go with each other e.g. use *steady rise*, **NOT** *steady fluctuation*.

C Comparing

in relation to . . . compared with . . .	twice three times	as	high large many	as . . .
	half of double treble	(that)		
	double treble half	the	percentage number	of . . .

D Useful vocabulary for describing the information in a graph

a *trend* involves a direction
a *curve* involves a shape or position

upward trend
downward trend

peak
plateau
sharp drop
steady increase
gradual rise
trough
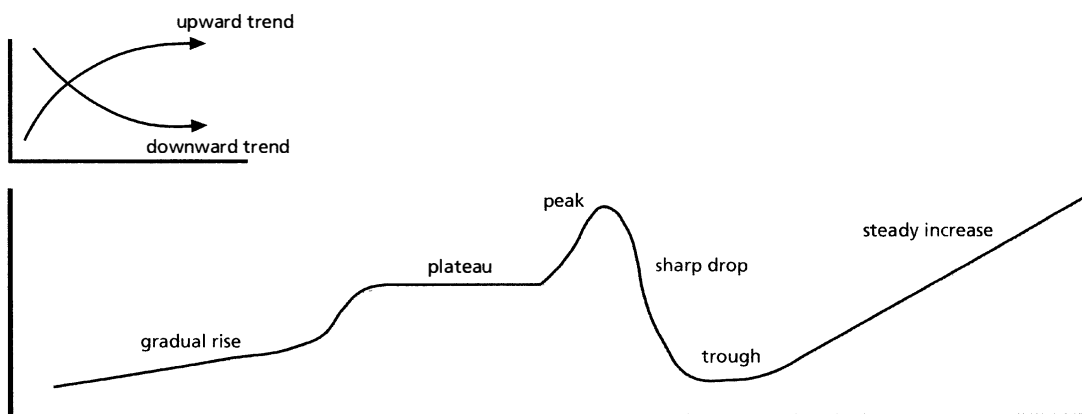
Structure and Vocabulary Aid

A Marking stages in a discussion

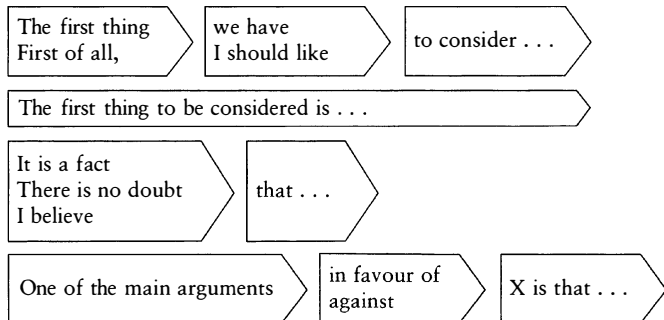In summarising the stages in a discussion or in presenting your arguments, you can mark the order of the items or degrees of importance by certain words or phrases. Some examples are:
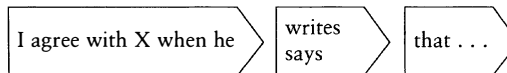
First, Firstly, First of all, In the first place, The most important . . .
Second, Secondly, In the second place, The next most important . . .
Next, Then, After this/that, Following this/that . . .
Finally, Lastly, In conclusion . . .

Note: Points of view may be expressed cautiously or tentatively (see Unit 10), or strongly or emphatically (it depends upon your feelings and the purpose of the writing). Agreement or disagreement may be total or partial. Below are some ways of expressing your views.

B Introducing your own point of view

| The first thing / First of all, | we have / I should like | to consider . . . |

| The first thing to be considered is . . . |

| It is a fact / There is no doubt / I believe | that . . . |

| One of the main arguments | in favour of / against | X is that . . . |

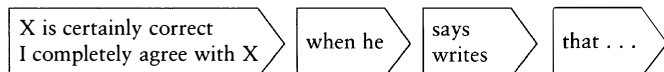## C Agreement

| I agree with X when he | writes / says | that . . . |

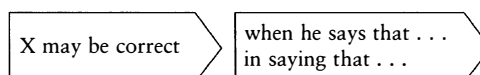## D Partial disagreement

. . . but . . .
. . . however, . . .
. . . on the other hand, . . .

E Emphatic agreement

| X is certainly correct / I completely agree with X | when he | says / writes | that . . . |

F Cautious agreement

| X may be correct | when he says that . . . / in saying that . . . |

Unit 19   Examinations

Exams or tests can be divided into two basic types: objective and subjective. Objective tests usually involve either multiple-choice questions (where only one answer is correct out of several given answers) or true/false questions. In this unit we are concerned with subjective tests only: these require essay-type answers.

The practice in this unit is suitable for both internal exams (in colleges/ universities) and external exams, e.g. IELTS (the International English Language Testing System from the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, Cambridge), UETESOL (the University Entrance Test in English for Speakers of Other Languages from the Northern Examinations and Assessment Board, Manchester), and TOEFL (the Test of English as a Foreign Language from the Educational Testing Service, USA).

All subjective exams and tests that need essay-type answers require students to be able to:
- understand and carry out instructions;
- understand the different question types and answer appropriately and relevantly;
- divide the time equally between the questions;
- write fairly quickly.

Stage 1
Instructions
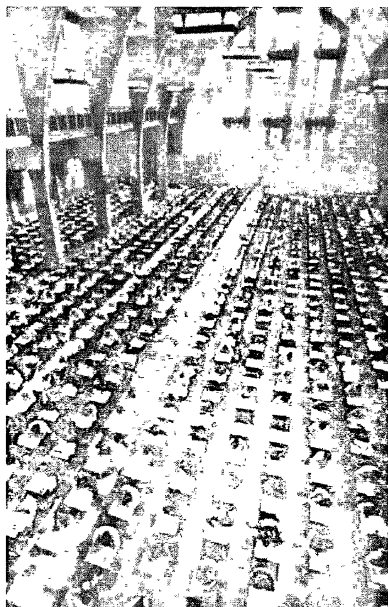
1   It is important to read the instructions and questions very carefully before you start to write anything in an examination. For the practice exercise below, use your notebook or a sheet of paper. Give yourself only five minutes to finish. **Read all the instructions carefully before you begin**.

a   Write your full name in BLOCK CAPITALS at the top of the page, in the centre, and underline it.
b   Under that, on the left, write the words **Date of birth:** and underline them.
c   Next to that, write your date of birth.
d   Under that, in the centre, write the letters **CV** (short for the Latin 'curriculum vitae' – a record of your education and employment). Underline CV.
e   Under that, at the top left, write the heading **Education and Qualifications**.
f   Now list, in date order, the schools, colleges and/or universities that you have attended.
g   Next to each college/university write the qualification that you have received, together with the year.
h   If you have worked at all, add the heading **Career** or **Employment** to the left.
i   Under that, in date order, list any jobs that you have had, together with places and dates.
j   At the bottom, to the left, sign your name and add today's date next to it.
k   Now that you have finished reading the instructions, do a, b and c only.

Appendix 4   Correcting Code

The following is a list of suggested abbreviations and symbols to use when checking students' writing. They can be written in the margin next to the line containing the error. If you need/wish to give more help, the mistake can also be underlined.

Abbreviations

A	Article error (wrong choice or usage)
Adj.	Adjective error (wrong choice, formation or position, or omission)
Adv.	Adverb error (wrong choice, formation or position, or omission)
Cap.	Capital letter(s) needed
Gram.	Grammatical error(s) – miscellaneous e.g. countable/uncountable nouns, pronouns, negatives, connectives
P	Punctuation error
Prep.	Preposition error (wrong choice or usage)
Ref.	Reference omitted
Sp.	Spelling mistake
Str.	Structure of the sentence is wrong e.g. subject or verb omitted
SV	Subject-verb agreement/concord needed
Vb.	Wrong verb tense or verb form
Vocab.	Wrong choice of words
WO	Wrong word order

Symbols

✓	right
✗	wrong
⌃	something omitted
( )	the word(s) in brackets should be omitted
⌐	a paragraph is needed
? |	meaning unclear: it needs to be rewritten

Note: The above abbreviations and symbols are suggestions. They can be changed or added to depending on your needs. It is important that they are used consistently otherwise they may cause confusion.

For students
If you need to request help with your writing, you could use a **help code** (you would need to discuss this with your teacher). For example, you could underline the parts of your writing that you are dissatisfied with or had difficulty with. If you are uncertain about, for example, the vocabulary or expressions or sentence construction, you could put a question mark (?) in the margin opposite the item.