TEACHING ADULTS HOW TO *KISS* WHEN WRITING

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DEDICATION

At the end of this educational process I have to thank many people for their unconditional support and advice when I most needed it, but the culmination of this dream would not have been possible without the constant motivation of my Mother, she has waited for this moment more than any one else and my happiness for this milestone in my life can not be compared with hers.

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ABSTRACT

By doing a general review from the first methods for foreign language teaching up to date it can be seen that writing has not played a vital role in most of them. Moreover, according to many authors that will be cited in this paper work, writing is a complex skill both to be taught and learnt. However, it is not a difficult task to be undertaken by teachers. The purpose of this study was to give a group of students of intermediate level of Academia de Adultos, a set of techniques focused on keeping things Simple and Straightforward when writing compositions or formal and informal letters. To carry out this project, a pre-experimental research style was used where the same group of students were administered the pre-test and post-test since randomization was not possible. Results indicated that when students have the right kind of materials, techniques, exercises, and are taught with an efficient approach, writing can become an easy task to be developed. Finally, it can be concluded that Keeping Things Simple and Straight forward when writing is a matter or practice, correct guidance, an adequate mix between theory and practice along with an encouraging teaching approach.

RESUMEN

Al hacer una revisión desde los primeros métodos para la enseñanza de idiomas extranjeros hasta la fecha se puede ver que la escritura no ha tenido un papel importante en muchos de ellos. Además, de acuerdo con muchos autores que serán citados en este trabajo de grado, la escritura es una compleja habilidad tanto para ser enseñada como aprendida. Sin embargo, no es una tarea difícil para ser llevada a cabo por los profesores. El propósito de este estudio fue el de darle a un grupo de estudiantes de nivel intermedio de la Academia de Adultos, un conjunto de técnicas basadas en mantener las cosas simples y directas al hacer composiciones o escribir cartas formales e informales. Para llevar a cabo este proyecto, se utilizo un estilo de investigación pre-experimental, donde al mismo grupo de estudiantes se les administro el pre-test y el post-test puesto que no fue posible realizar un proceso de división aleatoria. Los resultados indicaron que la escritura puede convertirse en una tarea fácil de ser llevada a cabo cuando los estudiantes tienen la clase correcta de materiales, técnicas, ejercicios, y son instruidos con un enfoque eficiente. Finalmente, se puede concluir que el mantener las cosas simples y directas al escribir es un asunto de práctica, enseñanza apropiada, y una mezcla adecuada entre teoría y práctica junto con un enfoque de enseñanza motivante

1. THE PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

The reason why I am doing this research about how to KISS (Keep It Simple and Straightforward) when writing has arisen from many different aspects such as teaching experiences, ASOCOPI conferences, but above all, from the need of my students to express themselves in a simple way when it comes to written compositions, or writing business, formal and informal letters or simply when writing a paragraph.

I feel particularly attracted to work with this skill (writing) of the English Language because it is a challenging task both for teachers and students. Sometimes as teachers we are very concerned about our student's speaking skills and we devote a lot of time to it and it seems that the written part of the language is not a top priority in any language syllabus. Well, from my own experience I think it is one of the most complex skills to teach for it requires a lot of time, patience and practice to both learners and instructors.

It also takes a great deal of time for students to come up with ideas and put them into words. However it is not only ideas but also thinking about syntax, grammar, semantics, spelling, coherence, etc. On the other hand, teachers are not exempt of spending long hours trying to figure out what the students wish to transmit in their compositions. Then, I think it would be worthwhile doing something for students to KISS when writing.

1.2   TENTATIVE PROBLEM STATEMENT

An implementation of a writing program for students of intermediate level of English at Academia de Adultos will enhance their competence in writing.

1.3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Will the implementation of a workshop called how to " KISS when writing" improve the composition skills of the students of intermediate level at Academia de Adultos?

1.3.1 Graphic Explanation

To better understand the problem statement I have decided to elaborate a graphic which shows the reasons to implement a writing program at ¨Academia de Adultos¨ and the difficulties that students face in the writing process. Then, this graphic will help the reader to comprehend the problem which will be investigated in this paper work.

The graphic shows that there is a lack of effective techniques for writing at ¨Academia de Adultos¨. There are many reasons for it, but among the main ones we can find the methodology because the syllabus emphasizes on the oral competence too much. On the other hand, time is also a very vital factor for an hour-class gives the teacher just enough time to cover the lesson assigned and

The syllabus emphasises on the oral competence too much

Students do not have enough vocabulary to compose

Students do not read at home to learn more vocabulary

Students need to master more grammar structures , rules, tenses, exceptions, etc
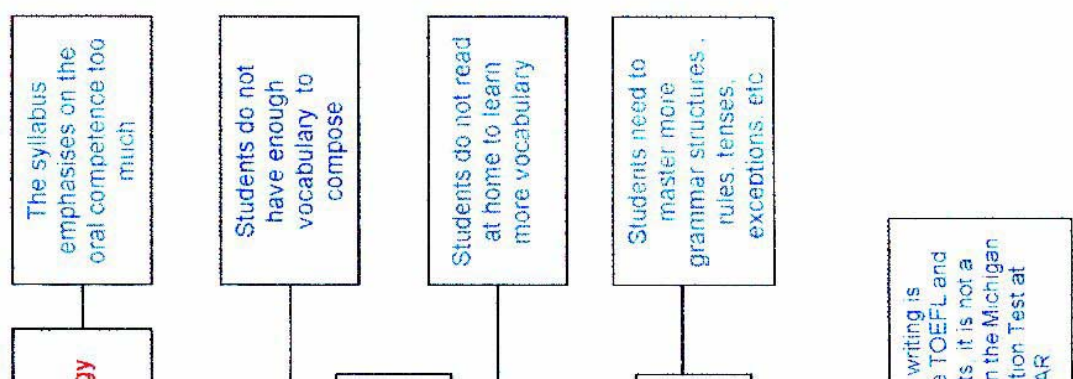
usually there is no time for writing. Now, students argue that they do not have enough time to compose at home because some of them are full time students and others are full time workers. Finally, the graphic shows that the student performance in the L2 affects their ability to write because: firstly ,they do not have enough vocabulary to compose and secondly, students do not read at home to learn more vocabulary.

1.4 PROBLEM EVALUATION

a) This study has a great importance for it not only helps students but also teachers to better understand the writing process, specially to keep things simple and straightforward.

b) It is possible to research this problem because I can get information about it by means of writing exercises, compositions, field notes, etc. Of course, all the information can be processed in a systematic way to be interpreted afterwards.

c) I have the support of the Director and Administrative personnel of the institute where this research is going to take place.

d) I have enough time to plan, elaborate and carry out this research.

e) All the money issues were budgeted and there is enough monetary resources to make it possible.

1.5   GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The general objective of this study is to determine the effect of a writing program called ¨Keep it Simple and Straightforward¨ in the writing skills of the students of intermediate level of ¨Academia de Adultos¨.

1.5.1 Specific Objectives

■ To design a well structured writing program so that students can improve their composition skills.

■ To make students realize about the importance of writing as a means of communication in our daily lives.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE

As far as I am concerned, there is not a study to date about teaching students to KISS when writing both at the Universidad de Nariño and Academia de Adultos. This study is also important because even though there is previous research on writing in our program, this study pretends to give students some techniques to go beyond the formation of simple sentences. Nowadays students of languages are exposed to writing on a daily bases and the reasons vary from class assignments to presentations of exams like the TOEFL, Michigan Test, Cambridge, etc. Then, it is imperative for students to know some rules to succeed at writing and of course to Keep things Simple and Straightforward.

1.7 DELIMITATIONS

1.7.1 Conceptual

1.7.1.1 Definition of terms

KISS: Keep it Simple and Straightforward. Basically what it means is to teach students some techniques to make better compositions avoiding repetitions, unnecessary words or sentences, to go to the point, and be specific when writing.

Skill: The ability that someone has to do something, in this case skill refers to the ability of writing in the English language.

Intermediate: It is the level in which students have a good command of English but are still trying to get a better level of fluency both written and spoken.

Writing: It is a language activity whereby people express their ideas, opinion, feeling, thoughts, etc, by means of written signs which can go from a simple word to a well-structured composition.

1.7.2 Population

I will work with 16 students of intermediate level whose ages range from 16 to 36 years old. The group is composed of 10 males and 6 females who belong to the middle class. The majority of them study English because they want to get better opportunities in the future. Some of them want to travel to the USA for

vacation purposes, others want to apply to ICETEX in order to get a graduate study scholarship in England.

1.7.3 Geographic

The place where my study will be carried out is called " Academia de Adultos, Extension Universidad Mariana" , which has been working in San Juan de Pasto since 1990. It is located in the Cr 24 No 14-50. This is a non profit institute sponsored by The ¨Universidad Mariana¨ along with the LED foundation from Leichtensteinscher.   This Academy not only offers English as an educational option but also French, German, dance, tourism, art, public relations, accounting, computers science, among others.

1.7.4   Time

The duration of this study will be one month, working one hour a day from Monday through Friday .

1.8   LIMITATIONS

1.8.1   Methodological Limitations

Since this is a pre-experimental study the following considerations must be taken into account:

a)   I will only have one group of students to work with.

b) Both the pre-test and post-test will be administered to this group of students.

c) Randomization will not be possible.

d) The success of the study might not be attributed to the treatment itself since the same topics of the pre-test will be presented twice. That is, the pre-test and the posttest are based on paragraph writing and letters. Then students might know what to expect as a means of evaluation at the end of the study.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1   BEGINNINGS OF WRITING

Flood and Salus (1984) affirm that the ancient cave painting of Southern Spain date from about 35,000 to 40,000 years ago. Since many of these living and beautiful drawings appear to have served religious or cult purposes and to have "communicated" messages. " We might consider them to be the very beginnings of iconographic writing", they say. However, it took many millennia to make the "leap" to analytic writing.

2.2   WHAT IS WRITING ?

Pincas, (1982) says that writing is the action of setting pen to paper and make a choice of what we want to do about a specific predetermined task and adjust our language accordingly.

2.3   THE IMPORTANCE OF WRITING

According to White (1987), there are some reasons why writing deserves a place in the language syllabus. To begin with, there is no question that writing remains the commonest way of examining student's performance in English. Consequently, the ability to write still remains a key of examination success. In addition, in the eyes of students, the ability to write may be associated with the

evidence of having learnt the language. Writing is tangible. Students can see what has been done and achieved.

According to White, everyone has a particular purpose to write, whether it be to entertain, to provoke thought and reflection, to provide a record of events or experiences, to inform, to influence opinion or to request information, and so on. Writing can provide useful evidence of success or failure in learning, of confusions, and errors, and the teacher can diagnose individual as well as general problems on the basis of such written work.

2.4   WRITING VS SPEAKING

As White (1987) pointed out, in spoken interaction we can normally judge how our messages are received and comprehended by looking at how our audience is responding. In writing, this is more complicated because the feedback from the author of the written text or the reader will always be retarded, and it will be too late to change or improve the message we wanted to convey.

On the other hand, it is also good to know that the writers have an advantage of which the speakers do not normally do. They (writers) are able to guide their own actions and to make corrections and improvement without the reader being aware of this process of self-correction.

When we speak, corrections and hesitations are obvious to the hearer, whereas in writing such things never need to be revealed to the reader. So the writer can spend a lot of time and effort producing a "good" message and it is possible to be more fluent and accurate in writing than in speaking.

According to Flood (1984), the writer who fails to communicate has failed to move from syntax of inner speech to that of written speech. Eming (1971) as quoted by Flood in his book *"Language and the language arts"* maintains that it is erroneous to assume that writing and speaking are the same process because she found that a

> "number of transdisciplinary sources suggest that talking and writing may emanate from different sources and represent quite different possibly distinct language functions." (p. 273)

Raimes (1983) says that even though writing and speaking are not the same, they make up a good complement. She also stands out that most people learn to speak an L1 at home without a systematic instruction, whereas most of us had to be taught at school how to write our native language. She also presents some differences between Writing and Speaking as follows:

While speech is often informal and repetitive, for instance, when we say " I mean…" or " let me start again…", writing is more formal and compact. It progresses logically with fewer digressions and explanations.

2. Speakers use pauses and intonation. Writers use punctuation.

3. Speaking is usually spontaneous and unplanned. Writing takes time, it is planned. We can go back and change what we want in our written production.

4. Speech is universal. Everyone gets a native language in the first years of life, but not everyone learns to read and write.

5. A speaker speaks to a listener who is present. A writer has only one chance to transmit information and be interesting to hold the reader's attention and interest.

2.5   THE COMPLEXITY OF WRITING

White and Arndt (1991) say that the teaching and learning process are joint enterprises involving both teachers and students; so writing is one of the first things to be delegated to homework. Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into writing symbols. "It is a thinking process in its own right", they affirm. They also point out that it demands conscious intellectual effort, which usually has to be sustained over a considerable period of time. Furthermore, precisely because cognitive skills are involved, proficiency in language does not, of itself, make writing easier. Finally, the authors say that people who write in their native language, though they may have a more extensive stock of language sources to call upon, can frequently confront exactly the same kinds of writing problems as people writing in a foreign or second language.

Then, writing is a form of problem solving which involves such processes of generating ideas, discovering a "voice" to write, planning, and searching for language to express exact meanings, so they finish saying that often the teacher has given all the instructions, examples, and he or she has motivated the students in the way of writing, the student is responsible for the text which eventually he or she wants to express the message of communication.

Rivers and Temperly (1978) tell us that the operation of writing must be formed as in respond to personal internal stimulus. Consequently, the writer must compensate for the absence of external contextual elements by the deliberate inclusion and elaboration of explanatory details, which the speaker would omit. To write, so that one is really communicating a message, isolated in place and time, it is an art that requires consciously directed effort and deliberate choice in language. Rivers and Temperly say that it is difficult to obtain a high level of written expression in a foreign language when they affirm that:

> "It   cannot   be   achieved by chance, as a kind of by product of other language activities, although it draws on what has been learnt in these areas. Good   writing   implies   a   knowledge of   the conventions   of   the   written   code (the "good manners" of   the   medium) … so   good   writing will not develop from practice exercises in grammar and vocabulary choice. Experience in speaking freely seems to facilitate early writing." (1978: 263-264)

Writing is a cognitive process. Vygotsky (1962) (as cited in Flood. 1984) viewed written speech as:

> ¨a separate linguistic function differing from oral speech in   both structure and mode of functioning. ¨ (p. 98)

He also noted that writing is difficult for the child because of its abstraction.

> ¨Our studies show that it is the abstract quality of written language that is in the main stumbling block,

not the underdevelopment of small muscles or any
other mechanical obstacles.¨ (p. 99)

2.6   STUDENTS´ PROBLEMS IN WRITING

According to Withrow (1987), Here are some of the reasons why students find it
difficult to write:

a) The ideas may not be presented in an order that makes sense to a reader.

b) The relation between the ideas may not be clear because of the absence, or
inappropriate use, of linking words and phrases, such as because, *for example,
first, on the other hand*.

c) The writer's attitude to what he or she is writing may not be clear; Is the
writer describing, suggesting, or criticizing something?

d) The ideas may not be grouped together into distinct paragraphs, or the
student may begin practically every sentence on a new line. Again, the beginning
of a paragraph — or the beginning of a long text — might not start the reader in
the right direction; similarly, a paragraph — or a longer text — may not end
appropriately.

e) A text may contain ideas that are not relevant to what the writer wants to
express, or the writer may find it difficult to think of enough ideas.

f) The sentences may not have clear punctuation: There may be commas and

periods without any good reason, or there may be no punctuation where there should be.

2.7   MURRAY´S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHING WRITING

The following recommendations for teachers are in keeping with Murray's (1974), (as cited in Flood. 1984) lists of seven skills necessary for the successful teaching of writing. He suggests that teachers of writing must do the following:

1*. **Listen,** because the content of writing belongs to the student. Some teachers are stern disciplinarians and some are lenient, but if they are effective, they establish communication with their students as speakers and themselves as listeners.

2. **Coach** by designing programs that work with the potential of each student.

3. **Diagnose**, because the teacher is a physician (not a judge) who can stop the critical problem in the student's writing. The teacher realizes that confused and complex syntax is usually an attempt to fit information where it does not belong. It may not be a grammar problem, but a thinking problem.

4. **Remain flexible.** One rule that the teacher must repeat in many different ways is,   " Be Specific." Students need examples.   Teachers should have extensive libraries of materials because not all devices will be useful with every child. The teacher should use news papers, classical literature, records (lyrics), or whatever materials are needed to help students develop their skills.

5. **_Write_** with their students to demonstrate that writing is a process. By writing with them, the teacher brings them into the process by exposing his or her own struggle.

6. **_Keep their distance._** The writing teacher cannot be a psychiatrist, parent, aunt or uncle. The teacher has to be aware of the amount of emotional outputting that he or she can accept. The writing teacher must have a sense of humor about the task.

2.8 FIVE APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF WRITING

Murray (1974), (cited in Flood. 1984) proposes the following five approaches of writing as follows:

2.8.1   The Models Approach

This style assumes that children can learn to imitate a writing style before they have the power of sustained thought. This teaching uses a direct dictation approach or variations, including asking students to paraphrase messages. These ideas have been used by teachers in many different ways. For example, young children may be taught to write their names by tracing letters or may learn what a story is by retelling the story to the teacher. The "Mix-up Monster" has been used in the Circle Preschool in Oakland, California. The Mix-up Monster confuses things such as "hello" and "good-bye," and he tells children the story by telling the monster where and how he is mixed up. About the cons, teachers who object to the Models Approach maintain that the emphasis of this approach is on the product of the task.

2.8.2   The Steps approach

This approach, founded on the works of several researchers and educators, informs students about the three assumed processes in writing: prewriting, composing and editing. In prewriting, Rothman (1965), (cited in Flood. 1984), found that preparation time for writing was essential for exploring and discovering. In her research, Janet Eming (1971), (cited in Flood. 1984), found that most assignments in schools allow no time for prewriting. In composing, "it may be useful to turn your class into an art workshop in which students write on brown paper draped over easels", says Eming. The author also recombines to help students during the writing process, she finally says that in the editing process the teacher can create groups of students where one of the them can be the composer and two as editors. Objections to this approach center on a number of questions that remain unanswered: How are the students selected for instructional groups? How are the skills sharpened?

2.8.3   The Sentence Combining Approach

This approach shares some features with the Models Approach, which assumes that children can learn skills through imitation of structures, and with the Steps Approach, which assumes that students can edit each other's work. For this approach, the sentence is the entity to focus on because it has discrete boundaries and is manageable due to its brevity. Proponents of this approach suggest that it is tantamount to asking children to deal with all the complex problems of writing at once. Early attempts at teaching the Sentence Combining Approach to writing focused on requesting children to combine simple sentences into a single sentence, for example:

Frank ate tomatoes.

Scott ate tomatoes.

Into

Frank and Scott ate tomatoes

and changing sentence forms, for example:

The dog chased the cat. To *Did the dog chase the cat (Question)*

The dog chased the cat. To *The cat was chased by the dog. (Passive)*

The critics of the Sentence Combining Approach maintain that focusing on the single sentence does not allow children opportunities for writing whole texts.

2.8.4   The Relationship Approach

This approach emphasizes on the relationship that exists between the writers and their audiences and writers and their subjects. Young children often write for a very close audience on a very personal subject; this reflects their natural egocentrism. Then, " extending the audience to include a community and the topic to encompass a more generalized notion requires maturity and a decrease in egocentrism", says Flood.

Meyers (1978), (cited in Flood. 1984) points out that a sequence in classroom looks something like this:

1. Improvisations, panels, trials, all organized by students: developing a scene of audience (the other students in the improvisation or trial)

2. Journals, diaries, letters, and autobiographical incidents: moving the audience from oneself to others and learning to act as spectator of one's own experience.

3. Interviews, reports, Socratic dialogues and arguments: moving to an anonymous audience in the world at large and acting as spectator to the experiences of others.

4. The author says that objections to this approach stem from the fact that educators find difficulty providing different audiences for children and helping children move from personal experience writing to idea writing. They argue that in schools, children are always writing for the teacher, school secretary, or principal. To do otherwise is "pretend writing."

2.8.5   The Theory-of-the-World approach

This approach assumes that each child should have a theory of the world in order to write effectively.   Instruction in this approach is based upon teaching predication and visual models. Josephine Miles says (cited in Flood. 1984) that "My Home Town" is not an appropriate topic for an essay, but "My Home Town Stinks" is appropriate because the child's noun has a predicate.   She finally maintains that it is the predicate that sharpens the essay or composition.   Critics of this approach point to the fact that young children need instruction to cultivate a theory of the world.   It is developed, rather than intrinsic to the child.

2.9   DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WRITING AND COMPOSITION

A distinction needs to be made between writing and composition.   Paulston (1972), (cited in Flood .1984) states succinctly that :

" Writing is the activity and composition is the objective"

Finochiaro and Bonomo (1973), (cited in Flood.1984) affirm that writing are those carefully guided marks on paper that we assist our students in making unless we are teaching a course in creative writing or advanced composition. In writing, it is necessary the adequate control of syntax and vocabulary for ordering the ideas. In addition, students must learn to follow the general rhetorical principles typical of English composition, which include the logical organization of sentences, the linking of sentences within paragraphs, and the organization of the whole composition

The authors also describe clearly the kind of writing that is usually done at the various levels of proficiency. He says that at the elementary level in second-language learning, students usually begin writing sentences based on constructions and vocabulary items they have previously heard, spoken and read. After that comes, the writing of paragraphs and simple compositions, still primarily based on material learnt through oral practice. At the advanced level, students have generally acquired sufficient control of structure,   vocabulary and the mechanics of writing to write freely on a wide range of topics with a minimum of error. He ends up saying that it is important to give major attention   to organization and presentation of material and stylistic matters."

2.10   INTERACTION OF WRITING WITH OTHER SKILLS

Finochiaro and Bonomo (1973) affirm that:

> "Students should be helped to recognize and
> use different "modes" of discourse. The mode
> may be narrative, expository, critical, or a
> combination of them which may be found in
> letters, dialogues, poetry, essays or plays"
> (1973 : 132)

Writing should reinforce the structural and lexical items which have been taught, as well as the listening, speaking and reading skills. The teacher should begin by teaching his students activities which include transcription, dictation, guided and free composition. It is necessary to train students in sound spelling correspondences, the mechanics of writing, letter writing, both formal and informal; the organization and expression of an idea which will convey its desired meaning and permit the reader to understand the message, the difference between reading and writing, between formal and more informal styles of writing, and between "modes of discourse"

The teacher could lead their students to develop the writing skills with some writing activities, many of them combined with listening, speaking and reading activities which will also be found effective in preparing students for the "freer" expressional writing.

Since the emphasis of this research will be about paragraph compositions, letter compositions, here is some related literature about these topics. Here is an example for each of the topics mentioned above.

2.11   THE PARAGRAPH

According to Oshiama and Hogue (1983), a paragraph is a basic unit of organization in writing in which a group of related sentences develop a main idea. A paragraph can be as short as one sentence or as long as ten sentences. They also say that the number of sentences is unimportant; however, the paragraph should be long enough to develop the main idea clearly. The authors give an example of what a good paragraph looks like:

Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion . Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins and ornamental purposes. Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was minted twenty-three centuries ago. Another characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science. For many years, it has been used in hundred of industrial applications. The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits. Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection outside the spaceship. In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty, but also for its utility.

2.11.1 The Three Parts of a Paragraph

A paragraph has three major structural parts: a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence.

2.11.1.1 The Topic Sentence

The topic sentence states the main idea of the paragraph. It not only names the topic of the paragraph, but it also limits the topic to one or two areas that can be discussed completely in the space of a single paragraph. The specific area is called the controlling idea. The authors mentioned above give another example to notice how the topic sentence of the model states both the topic and the controlling idea:

(Topic)   (Controlling idea)

Gold , a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics.

2.11.1.2   The Supporting Sentences

Supporting sentences develop the topic sentence. That is, they explain the topic sentence by giving reasons, examples, facts, statistics, and quotations. In the former example, some of the sentences that explain the topic sentence about gold are:

- *First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion.*
- *For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was minted twenty-three centuries ago.*
- *Another important characteristic of gold is its utility in industry and science.*
- *The most recent application of gold is in astronauts' suits*

2.11.1.3   The Concluding Sentence

This sentence signals the end of the paragraph and leaves the readers with

important points to remember:

In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty, but also for its utility.

Oshima and Houge (1983) also mention two additional elements to be taken into account. They say that a good paragraph has the elements of Unity and Coherence as well.

2.11.2 Unity

Unity means that you discuss only *one* main idea in a paragraph. The main idea is stated in the topic sentence, and then each and every supporting sentence develops that idea. If, for example, you announce in your topic sentence that you are going to discuss two important characteristics of gold, Oshima and Houge recommend to discuss only those. They say that it would be irrelevant to discuss about the price of gold, the history of gold, or gold mining.

2.11.3 Coherence

Coherence means that your paragraph is easy to read and understand because (1) your supporting sentences are in some kind of logical order, and (2) your ideas are connected by the use of appropriate transition signals. For example, in the paragraph about gold, there are two main supporting ideas: gold is beautiful and gold is useful. Each of these supporting ideas are discussed, one after the other, and an example is giving for each one. This is the kind of logical order. Furthermore, the relationship between the ideas is clearly shown by using appropriate transition of words and phrases such as "first of all," "the second

important characteristic," "for example," and "in conclusion."

Then, in summary a well-written paragraph contains five elements: a topic sentence, supporting sentences, a concluding sentence, unity and coherence.

2.12   FORMAL LETTERS

Love and Tinervia (1985) in their book "Commercial Correspondence" affirm that commercial correspondence is a vital factor in making the world of business run smoothly and efficiently. "This kind of correspondence may take many forms", they say.   The business letter is the most common form.   It includes such different types of communication as interoffice memorandums, reports, telegrams, cables, resumes, and printed forms that are used for particular purposes.

2.12.1   Parts of the formal letters and their placement

Love and Tinervia state that to make commercial correspondence as efficient and productive as possible, one must follow the conventional, established forms for each type of correspondence.   Since the business letter is the most frequently used business communication, one should be familiar with the main parts of such a letter:

1.   The Heading, which includes the name of the firm, its address, and date. Most companies use stationary with printed letterheads.   However, the date line, an important part of the heading, must be added to the letterhead to make the heading complete.

2. The Inside Address, which includes the name, title, and complete address of the person to whom the letter is sent.

3. The Salutation, which is a greeting to the addressee.

4. The Body of the Letter, Which may vary in length from a few sentences to several pages.

5. The Closing, which is a short sentence showing respect for the person you are writing to.

6. The signature, which usually includes the job title of the writer.

7. Special Notations, Which include references to any relevant information: the names of any person who are to receive copies of the letter, an enclosure notation if additional material is sent with the letter, the initials of the secretary who typed the letter, and so on.

2.13   INFORMAL LETTERS

2.13.1 Tips for Writing to Family Members

2.13.1.1 Begin your letter with news of family interest. Because diving right into requests for information may make you seem pushy, begin your letter with some family news. Consider sharing some recently discovered information about a common ancestor or some news about a relative.

2.13.1.2 Offer to share information. Offering to share your information with the family members you are writing to is always a good idea. They are probably just as interested in the information that you have collected as you are in the information that they have collected.

2.13.1.3 Be reasonable. Unless the person you are writing has already agreed to help you extensively, make sure that you aren't asking anyone to go out of their way to find information for you.

2.14 THE ROLE OF WRITING IN SOME OF THE DIFFERENT METHODOLOGIES FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Bastidas. (1983) makes a great contribution in compiling some of the most important methodologies for Foreign Language Teaching in his book *" Opciones Metodológicas para la Enseñanza de Idiomas".*

Here are some of the roles of Writing in the different methodologies for Foreign language Teaching:

2.14.1 Grammar and Translation Method

- Writing is practiced since the very first lessons and is practiced when students copy down words and sentences.

- Since translation is done on the daily bases, it is believed that by means of translation exercises the students will get a good practice in writing both in the L1 and L2.

2.14.2 The Series Method

- The practicing of writing sentence series comes after an oral practice.

- This method includes written exercises after an act-practice orally.

2.14.3 The Direct Method

- In order to reinforce memory, perception and expression, writing is taught since the very first class. This method in particular allows the student to write what he can speak.

- Writing is taught through a step-by-step practice which starts with copying exercises, answer writing, dictations, and short story compositions.

- There is a 3-step technique for dictations: 1) The teacher reads the dictation at a normal speed while students listen to it carefully. 2) the teacher reads sentence by sentence, doing pauses when necessary for the students to copy what is being read. 3) Finally, the teacher reads at a normal speed while students review their writing.

2.14.4 The Reading Method

◼ Writing was limited and was meant to help students remember vocabulary and structures which are essential for the comprehension of the story.

2.14.5 The Audio-Lingual Method

◼ At the beginning, students practice word and sentence writing, and short dictation exercises

◼ Short compositions are done once they know some vocabulary, grammar structures, and some expressions. The compositions only include structures studied before in order to avoid confusion.

◼ At an advanced level, students do longer compositions following a reading model which shows a good composition style and included cultural aspects.

2.14.6 The Audio-Visual Method

◼ Due to the complexity of writing in some languages, for instance, in English where writing differs from the way it is pronounced in some cases, writing is postponed in the first lessons and is started after 60-70 hours of oral work.

◼ The authors of this method affirms that the exposition to writing since the very first lesson can confuse students because they could start analyzing spelling, grammar and the literal comprehension of words.

■ The first exercises in writing start with sentence and paragraph writing, which are organized according to certain sounds, syllable groups and common expressions.

2.14.7 The Cognitive Approach

■ This approach does not mention any particular way for teaching writing, that is why Bastidas (1983) affirms that:

> " La literatura del EC no demuestra una concepcion particular en este aspecto. Sin embargo, la forma como se presentan algunos modelos de unidades revelan que el contenido se basa en estructuras gramaticales, las cuales se desarrollan progresivamente de acuerdo al grado de dificultad y en relacion con las estructuras de la lengua nativa." (1993 : 98)

2.14.8 The Silent Way

■This method suggests the use of simple sentence copying exercises, dictation and some short descriptions of recordings. All of these exercises are done at elementary levels and unfortunately there is no further description for the rest of the levels.

2.14.9 The Community Language Learning

Since the emphasis of this method is the oral expression and listening comprehension, and there is not a well-defined program to be followed, writing is considered as a secondary activity.

2.14.10 Total Physical Response

Since the emphasis of the TPR is the spoken skills, the practicing of writing is done after the tenth unit because writing along with reading are considered as secondary activities.

2.14.11 Suggestopedia

Writing is a secondary activity and is used only as a reinforcement of the oral practice.   Writing is practiced after the 20th hour of class to create imaginary stories.

2.14.12 Communicative Method

This method establishes that writing skills must have as objective the transition of information. The emphasis should concentrate on the content and not in the grammatical correction. This method seeks that the student work at the paragraph level and not at the sentence level by doing good use of the cohesion and coherence. The communicative method uses authentic texts which are combined with other skills.

2.14.13 The Natural Approach

■The inclusion of this skill depends on the course's needs and objective. Krashen and Terrell (as cited in Bastidas. 1983) mention four good reasons to include this skill in the NA:

1. To make a vocabulary review in the early stages before the conversation

2. As an integral part of an oral activity

3. As a practice for the group leader

4. As practical and specific objective. The NA also includes activities such as:
Word copying, complementation for cards, charts, interviews; problem solving situations; descriptions, narrations and games.

2.15   RELATED LITERATURE

Unfortunately there is not enough research in the field of writing in our faculty. It could explain, in a way, what I stated in the first chapter of this paper work when I affirmed that writing is a very complex task both to teach and learn. Besides, in most of the teaching methods (please refer to 2.14 in the Literature review), writing has always been considered as a secondary skill.

Villota and Chamorro (1996) did a study about the importance of writing in the English learning process. Some of the objectives of this paper work were:
■To increase the written practice by using some techniques to improve the level in the written English.

■To give students the opportunity to keep in touch with writing, expressing their own ideas.

I could say that 95% of their study was based at the sentence level , that is, most of the treatment was based on sentence compositions, filling in gaps and at some point, a creation of an informal letter was done.

On the other hand, Naced and Portilla (1999) did a study on papers related to the second language methodology in the oral and written composition. Their main objective was:

■¨To determine the improvement or the effect of using pictures picture sequences on the level of writing in simple texts.¨

They also worked with short-story compositions. They affirmed that ¨pictures were an interesting way to help students in the writing process.¨

According to the post-tests results both studies seemed to have achieved their goals. Based on this, I can state that none of these studies worked at the paragraph level to help students make better compositions. Finally, it is almost impossible to pretend that high school students can create well-structured compositions out of a picture. There were some external factors that both of the studies did not keep in mind such as those exposed in this study in the graphic that explains the problem statement in chapter one.

2.16 HYPOTHESIS

After the completion of the treatment on "How to KISS When Writing" students of

the intermediate level of "Academia de Adultos" will be able to:

1. Easily identify the parts of a well-structured paragraph and compose one themselves.

2. Compose an informal/a business letter using the techniques learnt during the treatment to keep things simple and straightforward.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 DESIGN

In order to carry out this research, I used a pre-experimental design (pre-test –
post-test). This kind of design was chosen because there was only one upper
intermediate level at "Academia de Adultos" by the time I carried out the
treatment and of course, I would have needed another group of students should I
wanted to carry out a quasi-experimental or a true experimental research. Then,
since I could work with one group only, the pre-experimental design was the
chosen one.   Under these circumstances they were both the control and the
experimental group.   They developed two tests, one test before the treatment
and the other one after it.

3.2 SUBJECTS, SETTING AND SAMPLE

3.2.1 Subjects

I developed this research with a group of intermediate students of "Academia de
Adultos, Extension Universidad Mariana".   They all studied in the evening from
6:15 to 8:30 P.M, from Monday through Friday.   There were 16 students in this
group whose ages ranged from 15 to 36 years old.   The group consisted of 10
males and 6 females who belonged to the middle class. It is important to mention
that all of them were highly motivated towards English learning for different

purposes. For instance, some of them wanted to apply to local institutions such as ICETEX in order to get a scholarship to study abroad and others were planning to go to Europe and the USA for business and vacation purposes.

3.2.2 The Setting

As mentioned before, this research was done at "Academia de Adultos, Extension Universidad Mariana". This institution has begun to work as an English Institute since 1992. Its success and acceptance among Pasto's population has been so great that nowadays it not only offers a well-structured program in English but also in French, German and more that 30 different programs about arts, music, dance, business, computers, tourism, among others. The key for its high quality programs has been the on-going reinvesting process due to its nonprofit status. Finally, this is a non-formal Education Institute.

3.2.3 The Sample

Within the intermediate level of English at "Academia de Adultos" there are 3 sublevels (B1,B2,B3). I only worked, as I pointed out before, with the (B3) upper intermediate level. Since I decided to work with one group only, randomization was not necessary. I could have worked with any other level of English students at " Academia de Adultos", however, I felt particularly attracted to work with this group due to their great interest in this project, their responsibility and boundless willingness to learn about writing and because of the need they had for writing.

3.3   MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS

3.3.1   Instruments

The pre-test and post-test were the instruments to carry out this research. The pre-test was administered before the treatment to analyze the student's writing state. It helped me to determine the student's writing skills, their strengths and weaknesses in writing. During the treatment a weekly evaluation was done to check the students performance. And of course, the post-test was administered after the treatment to see if the students attained the goals of this project. Both the pre-test and post-test were scored quantitatively, that is, with scores from cero (0) to five (5).

3.4   PROCEDURE

The most important factor in writing exercises is that students need to be personally involved in order to make the learning experience of lasting value. Then, keeping this in mind I encouraged students to participate in the exercises, while at the same time they were able to refine and expand their writing skills. There is no doubt that to accomplish this, it required a certain pragmatic approach.

I had to be clear on what skills they were trying to develop. Next, I needed to decide on which means (or type of exercise) students were going to feel most comfortable with. Once the targeted skill areas and means of implementation were defined, I could then proceed to focus on what the treatment was going to be about to ensure student participation.

Finally, by pragmatically combing these objectives, I only could expect both enthusiasm and effective learning.

To accomplish the goals of this research, it was developed in five stages as follows:

INTRODUCTION

During this stage I told students about the purposes of my research, the way it was going to be carried out, what I planned to attain with it and what they were going to learn. I also discussed with them about the importance of writing for foreign language students, I heard their concerns about writing, their difficulties, their strategies to compose, etc. I briefly explained that this project did not pretend to make them excellent writers at the end of the treatment. However, I told them that this study would give them some techniques to improve their writing skills, to compose coherent paragraphs and letters. For this introductory part I spent one session.

FIRST STAGE

This stage was devoted to the pre-test administration. Of course, an explanation was given to the students so that they could understand what they were supposed to do. The results of this pretest helped me to determine the actual state of the students' writing skills.

SECOND STAGE

According to the results of the post- test I could determine that students had no idea of what a paragraph was. Furthermore, none of their paragraphs had unity, a great variety of linking expressions, a topic sentence, supporting ideas, etc. For that reason, I decided to start the treatment with a theoretical explanation about the most important topics about paragraphs. (For further information about the material given to the students, please see the appendix). Three sessions were spent in this stage.

THIRD STAGE

For this stage, a great variety of techniques were administered to the students. They cover topics such as identifying topic sentences, organizing paragraphs, writing topic sentences, identifying the parts of a topic sentence, exercises about unity and of course the composition of paragraphs based on given topics. Based on my field notes, I could see that students reacted in a positive fashion to the activities taught during the theoretical explanation because they had the opportunity to interact with the rest of the class, express their ideas, learn from their own mistakes, etc

LEARNING THERMOMETER No 1

The "Learning Thermometer" was something I came up with when I thought that it was necessary to have a mechanism to evaluate students before the post-test. Basically, what I wanted with this was to make a general review of the topics

that had been covered during the first sessions. Obviously, there were a lot of concepts that I wanted them to keep in mind and this was definitely a great summarizing activity just before we began with the topic about Formal and Informal letters. (For further information about the Learning Thermometer No 1, please refer to the appendix)

FOURTH STAGE

This stage was not as long as the one about paragraphs because students had some previous knowledge about writing letters. However, a short theoretical introduction to the topic was done so that they could learn about the rules and latest trends about letter writing. Subsequently, they were administered the techniques about formal and informal letters. In this stage they not only filled in spaces but also had to write a series of letters to put in practice the things they had learnt. This stage was vital to tell them how important it was to keep things simple and straightforward when writing, to avoid wordy letters, to challenge them to write real-situation letters.

LEARNING THERMOMETER No 2

This Learning Thermometer had basically the same purpose as the former one. That is, to evaluate students about the topics they had learnt during the letter writing part. This way, students were able to keep in mind the more important aspects about the parts of a letter, the format of both formal and informal letters, suggestions to keep things simple and straightforward.

FIFTH STAGE

This stage was devoted to the post-test administration. Since informal letters were not a problem at all for the students, I decided to emphasize on the paragraph composition and formal letters writing. Of course, the post-test aimed to test students on how to keep things simple and straightforward.

3.5   PILOT STUDY

In order to detect any problems on the test designs, complexity and efficacy, a pilot study was carried out with the students of intermediate level (afternoon schedule) of "Academia de Adultos, Extension Universidad Mariana". Needless to say that the group chosen for the pilot study had the same conditions of the evening group of intermediate students. This activity, helped me a lot because I had the opportunity to sharpen up my ideas about the real purpose of my study, I also had the opportunity to make some final corrections in order to succeed at the real treatment.

During the development of the pilot study I could realize that some questions in the pre-test and some techniques were not clear to students, I decided to include more theoretical material for the final group and this idea definitely paid off because students had a written support to study at home.

Finally, the pilot group had the all the stages of the final group except the two learning thermometers because that was something I decided to implement for the night group of intermediate students.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

For this study, the analysis was based on the results of the group's pre-test and post-test to determine any significant differences between them. I also used the mean, the mode, the median and the standard deviation as statistic measures in order to get results in a quantitative way. Furthermore, the T-test was also used to show any significant variations between the pre-test and the post-test. Finally, graphics to show these data were also used.

3.7 ETHICAL ISSUES
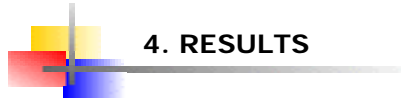
In order to follow all the principles and procedures of a research, the following ethical issues were taken into account:

a) Before I started the project, a letter - asking for permission – was sent to the director of " Academia de Adultos". In this letter I explained the Director about the purposes of my study, the dates of the sessions, a compromise of reporting the results of it at the en of the treatment.

b) The participants were more than welcomed to provide their insights, comments, suggestions and concerns before, during, and after the treatment.

c) Students were not pressed to join this research study at any time.

d) A report was done after every session so that the Administrative personnel and staff could see the progress of the treatment to give any kind of suggestions if necessary.

e) Whenever I needed to present a written report to the students, Academic Director, or the Institute's Director, the language used in it was carefully chosen as a sign of respect to them.

f) Before the research study students received an agenda of activities to be accomplished during the treatment. That is, objectives, dates, timetable, location for the treatment sessions and the duration of it.

g) Needless to say that the treatment did not have any cost for students and that all the materials were provided by the author.

4. RESULTS

4.1 DATA DESCRIPTION

4.1.1 Quantitative Results

4.1.1.1 Results for the Pilot Study

The pilot study was carried out with a group of Intermediate students of Academia de Adultos. The pre-test had 3 points, which basically evaluated their ability to compose a paragraph based in topics such as:

a) Arranged marriages

b) Uncontrolled growth pollution

c) Computers, calculators, or machines in general

d) Left-handed people

e) Owning a car

The second part of the test was based on letter writing both informal and formal ones. The purpose of this activity was to determine how well students were at Keeping Things Simple and Straightforward. They were only given the basic information they needed to compose the letters so they had to place the addresses, names, dates, etc in the correct place as well. On the whole, it was quite a challenging task for them to write about a chosen topic in the space of a

paragraph and to write a couple of letters with to different formats (Informal, and Formal). Here are the results of the pre-test and the pos-test:

No	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST
1	2,4	3,1
2	2,5	3,4
3	3	4
4	3,6	4,3
5	2,8	4
6	3,5	4,2
7	1	3,2
8	3,6	4
9	2	3,8
10	3,4	4
11	2	3,5
12	2	3,8
13	3,4	4
14	3	4,2
15	3,5	4,2
16	3,2	3,6

Table 1. Raw scores Pre-test. Post-Test
for the Pilot Group

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS								
VARIABLE	VALID N	MEAN	MEDIAN	MODE	MIN	MAX	STD. DEV	T-TEST
PRE-TEST	16	2.8	3.0	2.0	1.0	3.6	0.75	1.8E06
POST-TEST	1.6	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.1	4.3	0.37	

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the Pilot Study

Taking into account the results for the pilot study´s pre-test and post-test, we can see a great increment in the group´s performance after the treatment when we compare the mean of the pre-test (2.8) and the mean of the post test (3.8). Furthermore, the highest score in the pre-test was 3.1 which is a low score if we compare it with its counterpart in the post-test, 4.3.

On the other hand, the lowest score in the post-test was 3.6 while the lowest score in the pre-test was 2,4. The mean of both tests show us that the group is homogeneous for the results of the means are not so spread from the results of the standard deviation.

4.1.1.2   Results for the Study Group

No	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST
1	3,2	4,5
2	2	3,6
3	1,5	4,2
4	3	4,5
5	3,4	4,6
6	3,2	4,2
7	1,5	4
8	2,2	4,3
9	1,8	3,8
10	2	4,5
11	2,6	3,8
12	2,5	4
13	3	4,6
14	2,8	4,2
15	3	4,5
16	1,8	4

Table 3. Raw scores Pre-test. Post-Test
for the Study Group

| DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS								
VARIABLE	VALID N	MEAN	MEDIAN	MODE	MIN	MAX	STD. DEV	T-TEST
PRE-TEST	16	2.4	2.6	3.0	1.5	3.4	0.6	1.12E09
POST-TEST	1.6	4.2	4.2	4.5	3.6	4.6	0.3	

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for the Study Group

After analyzing the Descriptive Statistical Results of the Study Group´s post-test in comparison with the pre-test it can be concluded that there was a substantial increment in the group´s performance. That is, the treatment was effective because the mean of the post-test (4.2) is way higher than the one obtained in the pre-test (2.4).

While the most obtained score in the pre-test was 3.0, 4.5 was the score that the majority of students got in the post-test, which clearly shows the benefits they got from the treatment.

The highest score of the pre-test was 3.6, which is a low score in comparison to the highest score of the post-test, 4.6. On the other hand, the lowest score in the Post-test was 3.4, while the minimum score of the Pre-test was 1.5 . This group is a very homogeneous one because its standard deviation is not so spread from the mean of both pre-test and post-test. Finally, I can conclude that this treatment was highly significant because the chances of failure are extremely low.

4.2   GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION FOR THE PILOT AND STUDY GROUPS
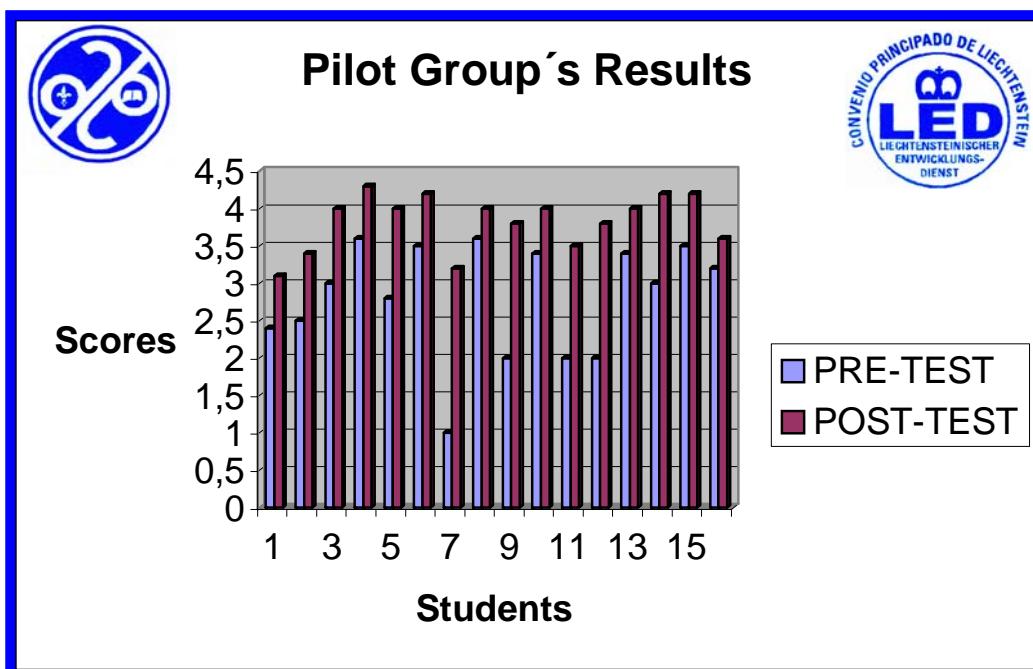
Graphic 1. Pilot Group´s Results
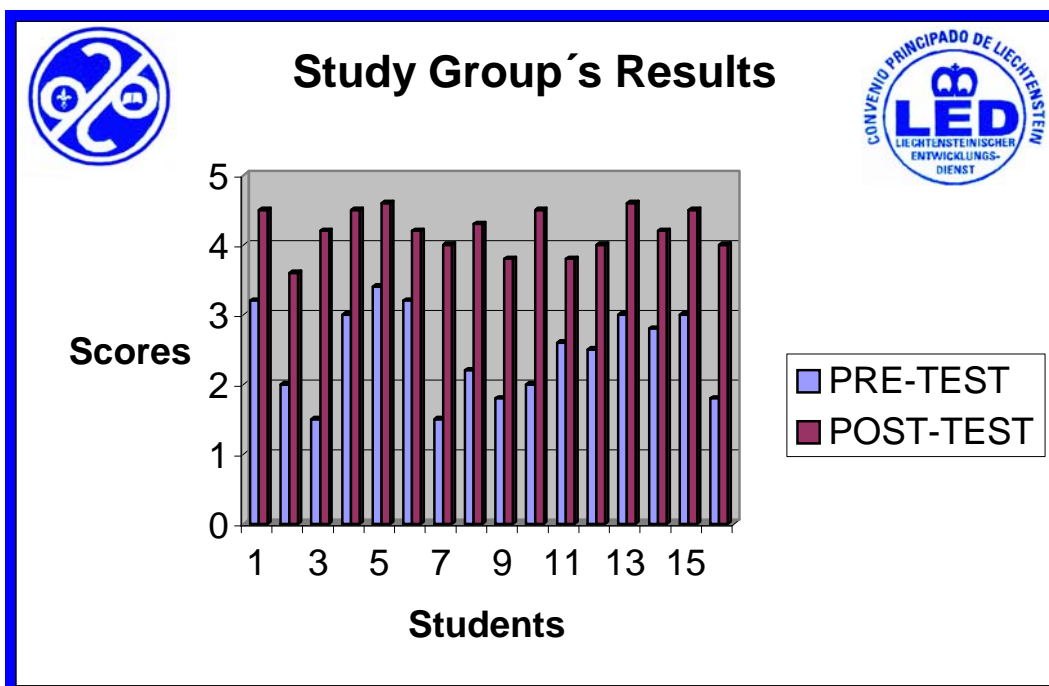
Graphic 2. Study Group´s Results

4.3 STUDY REPLICATION

In order to experience new reactions in favor or against the treatment I had designed, I decided to accept the invitation done by Mr. Luis Gerardo Galeano.,M.A, who presently owns and runs the Conversational English Center 2001 to carry out this treatment at his institute. This was a great ending for my project because I could get his insights and concerns about the writing process. He agreed with me when he claimed that writing was one of the most difficult skills to be taught and learnt.

By the time I applied the treatment, his institute was offering a PET (Preliminary English Test) training to a group of students (6) who wanted to take this exam administered by the University of Cambridge. The results were simply outstanding due to the English level of students and their cooperation. The group was initially conformed by 2 males and 4 females but unfortunately – for University-related activities- one of the males did not attend part of the treatment and the post-test. Here are the results for Conversational English Center 2001

Name	Pre-test	Post-Test
Byron	2,5	5
Claudia	2,7	4,2
Karen	2,7	4
María	3	4,6
Nury	2,4	4,6

Table 5. Raw Scores . Pre-test. Post-Test
for the 2001 PET Group

| DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS								
VARIABLE	VALID N	MEAN	MEDIAN	MODE	MIN	MAX	STD. DEV	T-TEST
PRE-TEST	6	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.4	3.0	0.23	0.001301
POST-TEST	6	4.4	4.0	4.6	4.0	5.0	0.38	

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for the 2001 PET Group

According the statistical results I can conclude that the treatment carried out at "Conversational English Center 2001" to teach Adults how to Keep Things Simple and Straightforward was very successful.

The results show us a mean of 2,66 for the Pre-test and after the treatment there was and improvement and as a result of it the general performance of the group was increased up to a level of 4,48. The most obtained score in the pre-test was 2,7, whereas 4.6 was the most obtained on in the post-test

The highest score of the pre-test was 3, which is a low score in comparison to the highest score of the post-test, 5. On the other hand, the lowest score in the Post-test was 4, while the minimum score of the Pre-test was 2,4.

The mean of both the pre-test and the post-test shows us that the group is very homogeneous for the results of the mean are not so spread from the results of the Standard Deviation. Finally, according to the T-test, the study is highly significant because the chances of failure are 1 out of a 1000.

4.3.1 Graphic Results for the PET group at Conversational English Center 2001.
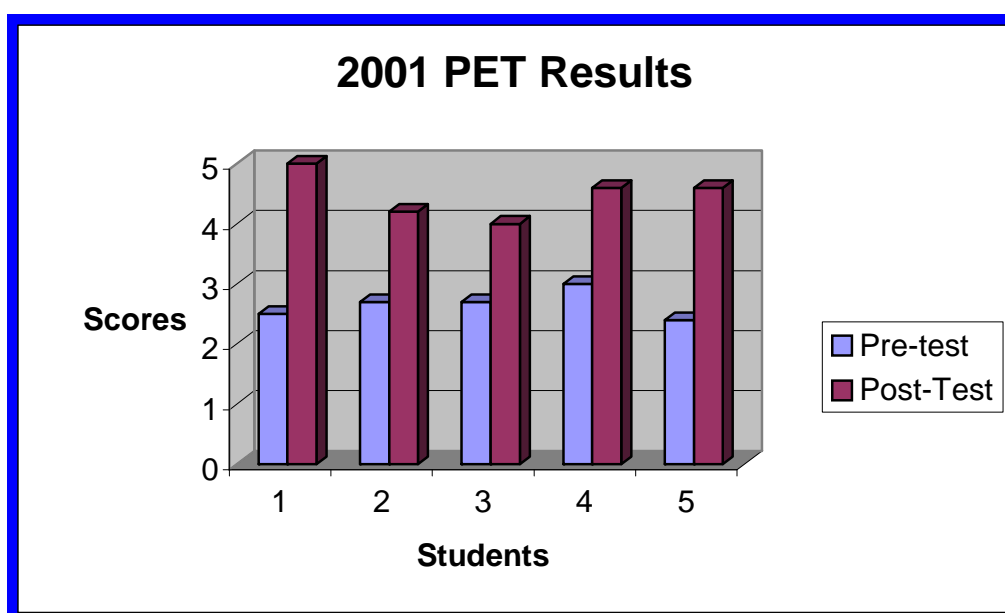
Graphic 3. 2001 PET Results

4.4 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Based on the field notes taken during the treatments at Academia de Adultos, I could see that writing was a difficult task for students at the beginning especially because they had not enough practice in writing paragraphs and letter writing was not assigned very often as an extra class activity.

They had some problems when they wanted to express some common greetings and endings in Spanish. The parts of the letter placement was something difficult

for them too. They often confused an informal greeting with a formal one and it was very common to see all kinds of contractions in their formal writing.

In terms of paragraphs, the great majority did not have any idea about it or had never been taught before. However, this was one of the topics where they improved the most at the end of the treatment. At the beginning most of their paragraph compositions had no sense at all, or did not have unity and coherence but with the time they sharpened their style and ended up writing interesting compositions.

Finally, but not least important, there was a huge advance in terms of Keeping Things Simple and Straightforward because students were used to make long compositions, repeating things over and over, using wordy expressions that are not very common in written English. It was somehow hard for them to try to understand that in English we have to cut the lines as much as we can and go straight to the point when it comes to letter writing or paragraph compositions. Fortunately, they accepted the challenge and got the most out of this treatment that for sure will contribute to their writing necessities in the near future.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

When I was about to start the treatment, I was wondering about what approach or method to use to teach writing to adults. Since I wanted to avoid the use of structural approaches or techniques, I thought that the learning by doing approach was going to be a good option and it really was indeed. There were various s reasons for this. First, students generally found that doing something (being active) was more interesting than being told about it (being passive). Second, when students came to understand something through learning to use their own resources to solve problems, their understanding was more thorough, and they were more likely to retain what they had learnt. Finally, it was only when students put something into practice that any incorrect or imperfect learning was revealed, and it was revealed both to the students themselves and to me. Experience shows that learning by doing is interesting, efficient, and, most important, successful.

After the development of the treatment I can conclude that writing is indeed a hard skill to be taught but not impossible though. It is also obvious that it requires a lot of cooperation from students because the more they practice the better they will do at writing. Students need the necessary techniques to

approach a composition, they know the grammar rules, they have in mind some structures, however, they need patterns, models, practice, real-task activities to put into word what they have learnt.

A learning by doing approach was very helpful to develop this treatment because students were involved and encouraged to try harder to work at home, to read the support material to have clear concepts in mind. I think, this workshop was a perfect combination between theory and practice. Why theory? Because students need somehow to have some written material as a support when they are at home, because what has been written stays there handy whenever you need it, if they only listen to instructions, these can be easily forgotten with the time.

All the sessions were very active in terms of written productions, sometimes they worked individually, other sessions involved group work. In general, students were very motivated towards learning how to Keep Things Simple and Straightforward because they were aware of the importance of it in their future performance as students, workers, etc.

Finally, I showed students that writing was not as difficult as they thought and they proved this to me throughout the development of the treatment and with their post-test results. Besides, I feel very satisfied because this study was also replicated at a different institute with excellent results too and because the statistical analysis indicates that the techniques developed during the treatment were highly significant.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

As the author of this project, I would like to recommend future students who might be interested in the field of writing to avoid studies based on the sentence-writing level, they should go beyond the limits of writing isolated sentences as a means of communicating with others mainly because it is not going to prepare students to face real-life activities such as written compositions in international examinations.

I wish I could have developed this project with a bigger group of students , so my second suggestion would be to try these techniques with a group of at least 30 students. I carried out this project at two institutes where students were really motivated to learn English and this project was well accepted among them and perhaps that was one of the reasons for its success, then I would suggest to apply this treatment to university students of the different programs to see how effective it is and to see how well they react to it.

Finally, I would definitely not suggest using this techniques for high school students because the participants need to have an upper intermediate level of English, otherwise, they will not be able to cope with it because of the language used in the theoretical material, the techniques, etc.

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APENDIX

IMPROVEMENT OF WRITING TO KEEP IT SIMPLE AND STRAIGHT FORWARD

THE LACK OF EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES FOR WRITING

Students give a high priority to speaking

The need for writing

Methodology

The syllabus emphasises on the oral competence too much

Teachers do not have time for extra activities such as writing

Time

Students do not have enough vocabulary to compose

Students claim that they do not have time to compose at home

Students L2 Performance

Students do not read at home to learn more vocabulary

Writing takes time and is usually the last skill students try to master

Writing as a process

Grammar

Students need to master more grammar structures , rules, tenses, exceptions. etc.

The importance of writing

When you join an English institute, people often ask you how well you speak the language and not how well you write it

Even though writing is mandatory in the TOEFL and Cambridge Tests, it is not a compolsory task in the Michigan Test and Selection Test at UDENAR.

Academia de Adultos

OBJECTIVE: Students will identify the topic sentence from the paragraph writing TS in front of it. This will help them to better understand the function of a topic sentence and how it will develop the general idea of the whole paragraph.

This activity has been programmed to be done in 1 hour

STEPS

1. Team up in groups of four or five students.

2. Read the instructions carefully to fully understand what you are asked to do.

3. Now read each paragraph and decide what the topic sentence is for each one.

4. Use the dictionary to find the meaning of unknown words or ask your teacher for help if you can not understand the meaning of something.

5. Once you have chosen your ideal topic sentence, number the rest of the sentence so that they have a logical order.

6. After you finish, discuss with your group to see if you all did the same election.

7. If you did not agree with the rest of your peers, try to justify your answers so that all the group can present to the rest of the class a final result of the exercise.

8. Choose one person from your group to go to the board and write down the answers of each paragraph.

9. If the are any differences among the rest of the groups, the person you have chosen will be in charged of giving the reason to justify what you have done.

10. Finally, your teacher will provide the answers for each paragraph and will explain in detail the function of the topic sentence in each paragraph.

WRITING AND DISCOVERING

WELL-STRUCTURED TOPIC SENTENCES

TECHNIQUE No 2

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OBJECTIVE: After the theoretical explanation of what a topic sentence is, its elements and the previous practice of TECHNIQUE No 1, students will write some possible examples of topic sentences. They will also learn to identify well-structured topic sentences.

STEPS

This activity has been programmed to be done in 1 hour

ABC

1. Work in groups of four or five students.

2. Read the instructions carefully and ask your teacher if you don´t understand anything.

3. Identify the well-structured topic sentences from exercise A, circling the topic and underlining the controlling idea(s)

4. Once you have finished identifying your topic sentences, share those with another friend of your group so that he/she can revise your work and you can check his/hers.

5. Get your paper back. Take into account the suggestions of your friend, if any.

6. Proceed to exercise B and read the instructions for selection exercise.

7. Part B should be done in group. Look at sentences 1 to 5, brainstorm about possible topic sentences and controlling ideas for each sentence.

8. Tell your teacher and the rest of the class which one or ones were the easiest and which the most difficult ones.

9. Give your sentences to your teacher and compare how similar or different your answers were from the rest of the class.

WRITING CONCLUDING SENTENCES

TECHNIQUE No 3

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OBJECTIVE : Students will learn to paraphrase and summarize the main topics of a paragraph in order to write a concluding sentence. Furthermore, they will interact with others to give constructive feed back about their answers

STEPS

This activity has been programmed to be done in 1 hour

1. Work individually to discover the topic sentence of each paragraph. Once you find it, underline it.

2. Try to determine what the main topic of each paragraph is. Give reasons, examples, statistics, quotations, to support your answers.

3. Add a concluding sentence for each paragraph. For paragraphs 1 and 2 you will paraphrase the topic sentences of each paragraph. That is, you will tell with your own words what has been said in each topic sentence. For paragraphs 3 and 4 you will summarize the main points of those paragraphs.

4. Once you finish share your answers with the members of your group, compare your answers with theirs.

5. Answer this question:

What is easier for you? To summarize the main topics or to paraphrase the topic sentence in order to write a concluding sentence.

TECHNIQUE No 4

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OBJECTIVE : Students will learn what Unity is, what breaks the Unity of a paragraph, to focus only on one or two controlling ideas when writing paragraphs in order to keep its Unity.

STEPS

This activity has been programmed
to be done in 1 hour

1. In each of the paragraphs there is one sentence that breaks the unity of them. Try to identify which the sentence is.

2. Working individually, read through the text quickly to get a general idea about each paragraph.

3. Read again carefully, use a dictionary if you do not understand difficult expressions or words.

4. As you were taught at the beginning of the workshop, a paragraph develops only one or two controlling ideas. Then try to find out what that or those ideas are and determine which sentence does not develop that idea.

5. You can read the photocopies about paragraphs if you want to check and remember what unity means.

6. Once you have chosen your sentences, give your reasons to the rest of the class and your teacher by explaining why the sentences you have chosen break the unity of each paragraph.

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Teaching Adults How to Kiss Project
By: Hector Reina Casanova

This activity has been programmed to done in 1 hour

FAMILIARIZATION

PURPOSE: ▮ Introduce students to informal letter writing by letting them decide what aspects are necessary to keep in mind when writing informal letters, giving them useful hints to start and finish a letter.

STEPS

▮ To present the parts of an informal letter

1. Ask students about their experience in writing letters. How often they do it, to whom they write, when the last time they wrote was, etc.

2. Explain the importance of writing as a means of communication. Tell them that written communication plays a vital role in today´s world. Ex: The news papers, the internet, etc.

3. Their turn. Determine when you write informal letters, give reasons. (Task 1)

4. Based on the common expressions to invite people, give examples orally, invite friends to come to your house for dinner, etc.

5. Complete the letter in task 2 and determine if Jane knows Clarie very well or not. Do this task individually and then compare your answers with the rest of the class

Teaching Adults How to Kiss Project
By: Hector Reina Casanova

Academia de Adultos

This activity has
been programmed
to done in 1hour

REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS

PURPOSE:

▪ To provide students real-life situations so that they can compose an informal letter.

▪ Encourage students to use some of the aspects they have learnt in previous techniques so that hey can keep things simple and go to the point.

STEPS

1. Team up in groups of 2 or 3

2. Look at exercise No 1 and read carefully what you are asked to do.

3. Underline the difficult vocabulary, expressions, if any. Then ask them to your teacher.

4. Discuss what the underlined word <u>must</u> means in the letter. Is it a suggestion?, an obligation? Give your opinion.

5. Look at Alison´s schedule and think about the best time to visit your friend. Discuss with your group the best option.

6. Once you have written your letter, share it with the rest of the class and compare how similar or different it was from the rest of the groups.

7. For the second part, remember what you have learnt during technique No 5 and the written material for informal letters.

8. Be creative and try to imagine what problems happened at this party. For instance: drunk people, a misunderstanding of the game, etc.

Teaching Adults How to Kiss Project
By: Hector Reina Casanova

Academia de Adultos

This activity has
been programmed
to done in 1 hour

MAKING FRIENDS VIA EMAIL!!!

PURPOSE ▌ To offer students MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES to practice what they have learnt about writing letters.

▌ To give students the opportunity to make friends around the world by writing about themselves, their families, country, culture, etc

STEPS

ABC

1. Ask students how often they use the internet and if they have ever sent an email abroad.

2. Tell students that a couple of friends want to meet them to exchange information about language, culture, way of life, customs, country, etc.

3. Their turn. Read the emails provided in technique No 7. Decide which one you like the most and give an answer to that person.

4. Since it is the first time you write to this person, introduce yourself and follow (if you wish) some of the suggestions at the end of email 2.

5. Try to apply everything you have learnt so far about informal letters, that is, introductions, endings, parts of the letter, style, etc.

6. Do your first draft in class and show it to your teacher. You have many options to reply to the email:

a) Reply to the email on your own if you have access to internet

b) Type your email on a computer, save it in a diskette and give it to your teacher, he will send it for you.

c) If none of the former options are possible, just write down your letter on a piece of paper and your teacher will send it for you.

Teaching Adults How to Kiss Project
By: Hector Reina Casanova

Academia de Adultos

This activity has
been programmed
to done in 1 hour

LINKING WORDS AND PHRASES

PURPOSE ▌ To teach students about the importance of connectors in English as a means to make our compositions more interesting and attractive.

▌ To motive students towards the composition of a friendly letter using as many linking words and phrases as they can.

STEPS

1. Ask students to tell you what they know about linking words and linking phrases,

2. If they know the answer, tell them to name some of them.

3. Explain students the importance of linking words and phrases in written compositions, write on the board some of the commonest connectors in English with its meaning.

4. Once they have been introduced to the topic. Hand out technique No 8.

5. Their turn. Read the letter quickly to get a general idea of what it is about. Then look at the linking words and sentences listed below, find their meanings if you don´t know them.

6. Try to fill in the blanks with the best option. Share your answers with the rest of your group (3 or 4).

7. Check if you think you have any mistakes and give just one set of answers from your group to your teacher.

8. Your teacher will provide the answers for the technique.

9. Finally, compose a letter to a friend using as many connectors as you can.

FORMAL LETTERS
TECHNIQUE No 9

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This activity has
been programmed
to done in 1 hour

Teaching Adults How to Kiss Project
By: Hector Reina Casanova

ORGANIZING IDEAS

PURPOSE ▌ To have students correlate the concepts they have learnt about coherence for paragraphs applied to letters.

STEPS
ABC

▌ To familiarize students with the paragraphing of a formal letter, its parts, styles of formal letters,etc.

1. Ask students what they know about formal letters, who writes formal letters, its rules, placing, paragraphing, etc.

2. Ask them if they have ever written a formal letter. If so, when, to whom, for what.

3. Have students read the little ad about a TRAVEL AGENT position. Explain them what "a plus" , resume, and CV mean.

4. Their turn. Determine the importance of the underlined words. Do they give any specific details as to discover where each sentence go.

5. Organize the letter and share your answers with the rest of your group. Check how much you agree or disagree in.

6. Now identify the parts of a formal letters. What style is it? Block, semi block, etc.

Finally, determine how the underlined words help you and if the letter should be divided into paragraph. If so, how many?

Teaching Adults How to Kiss Project
By: Hector Reina Casanova

Academia de Adultos

This activity has been programmed to done in 1 hour

KISS WHEN WRITING

PURPOSE

▌ To give students some guidelines to keep things simple and straightforward

▌ To make students realize about the big difference in composing letters in English and Spanish.

STEPS

1. Start by posing the following question. Why commercial correspondence has to go the point? How can you KISS when writing?.

2. Have students read the instructions. Then tell them to read both letters and ask them if they notice anything strange in them. Hear their appreciations and comments.

3. Ask students what the problem of both letters are and how we can correct them.

4. Their turn. Once you have identified the problems of each letter start by taking out unnecessary information to make it simpler. To accomplish this task you are to apply everything you have learnt during this workshop as well as your own experience as a writer.

5. In the second letter, you are required to translate your friend´s letter into English. Remember the techniques you have learnt, avoid long greetings, ask the necessary information only, do not use any kind of contractions, informal vocabulary whatsoever.

ACADEMIA DE ADULTOS.
EXTENSION UNIVERSIDAD MARIANA
TEACHING ADULTS HOW TO "KISS" PROJECT
By: Héctor Reina Casanova

P R E   T E S T

Name : _____ Level : _____ Date : _____

1. Paragraphs. Write a short paragraph (6- 10 lines) using one of the topics listed below:

- Arranged marriages
- Uncontrolled growth pollution
- Computers, calculators, or machines in general
- Left-handed people
- Owning a car

_____
Write here the title of the paragraph you chose

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Writing letters. Here is the information you need to write two letters, an informal one and a formal one.

INFORMAL LETTER

1. Use your name as sender, your address and today´s date

2. You are sending this letter to a friend of yours, his name is Thomas Hamilton and his address is: 140 Kinston St

Bridge City, NY 20347

3. Greet you friend, apologize for not writing earlier, tell him about your holly week activities (The place you went to, the things you did, etc), Invite him to come to Pasto and finally say bye to him.

FORMAL LETTER

1. Use your name as sender, and a <u>made up</u> address for " PASTO ENGLISH INSTITUTE ". Use today´s date.

2. You are sending this letter to Jessica O´hare, she is the UCLES Director of the British Council and her address is : Cra 71 N No 120 – 40

Santa fe de Bogota

3. You are the Director of PASTO ENGLISH INSTITUTE, you want to bring the PET and FCE exams for the first time to your institute, ask Mrs. O´hare about the forthcoming dates for the PET and FCE examinations, the cost of the exams. Finally say bye to Mrs O´hare.

TECHNIQUE No 1

Recognizing Topic Sentences

Name: _____ Level_____ Date: _____

1. Remember that the topic sentence indicates the main idea of a paragraph and is the most general statement in the paragraph.

Step 1 : Decide which of the following sentences is the topic sentence of the paragraph
Step 2 : Write TS on the line next to that sentence
Step 3 : Decide what order the supporting ideas should be in and number them 1,2,3, or 4.

PARAGRAPH No 1

_____ a. Next, add antifreeze to your windshield washer fluid; otherwise, the fluid will freeze and possibly break the container.

_____ b. First, put on snow tires if you plan to drive on snowy, icy roads very often.

_____ c. Driving in winter, especially on snowy, icy roads, can be less troublesome if you take a few simple precautions.

_____ d. Finally, it is also a good idea to carry tire chains, a can of spray to unfreeze door locks and a windshield scraper in your car when driving in winter weather.

_____ e. Second, check the amount of antifreeze in your radiator and add more if necessary.

PARAGRAPH No 2

_____ a. Next, add antifreeze to your windshield washer fluid; otherwise, the fluid will freeze and possibly break the container.

_____ b. First, put snow tires if you plan to drive on snowy, icy roads very often.

_____ c. Driving in winter, especially in snow, icy roads, can be less troublesome if you take a few simple precautions.

_____ d. Finally, it is also a good idea to carry tire chains, a can of spray to unfreeze door locks and a windshield scraper in your car when driving in winter weather.

_____ e Second, check the amount of antifreeze in your radiator and add more if necessary.

PARAGRAPH No 3

_____ a. Later on, people began to write on pieces of leather, which were rolled into scrolls.

_____ b. In the earliest times, people carved or painted messages on rocks.

_____ c. In the Middle Ages, heavy paper called parchment was used for writing; books were laboriously copied by hand.

_____ d. With the invention of the printing press in the middle of the fifteenth century, the modern printing industry was born.

_____ e. Some form of written communication has been used throughout the centuries.

PARAGRAPH No 4

_____ a. If there had been a big storm on the day of a baby's birth, the baby might have been named Thunder Cloud.

_____ b. American Indian names are very descriptive, for Indians were usually named for a physical attribute, for an occurrence in nature, or for an animal.

_____ c. Grey Eagle, Red Dog, Big Bear, and Spotted Wolf are examples of Indians named after animals.

_____ d. Indians with distinctive physical characteristics might be given such names as Big Foot or Crooked Leg.

PARAGRAPH No 5

_____ a. For one thing, individual I.Q. scores vary considerably.

_____ b. Many experts also question whether I.Q. scores are related to intelligence.

_____ c. Furthermore, most psychologists agree that intelligence tests are biased in favor of middle-class children.

_____ d. The validity of standardized intelligence tests is being seriously questioned by educators and psychologists.

_____ e. In fact, motivation seems to be just as important as intelligence in determining a person's ability to learn.

TECHNIQUE No 2

**Writing and discovering well structured
Topic sentences**

Name: _____ Level_____ Date: _____

A. Circle the topic and underline the controlling idea in each of the following sentences.

Example:

(Driving on freeways) requires skill and alertness

1. Driving in Tokyo requires nerves of steel

2. Driving in Tokyo requires an aggressive attitude.

3. Living in a dormitory helps foreign students to improve their English faster.

4. Living in a dormitory helps foreign students to learn about American culture more quickly.

5. Living in a dormitory may cause severe culture shock for some foreign students.

6. San Francisco is famous for its temperate climate.

7. San Francisco is well known for its many tourist attractions.

8. San Francisco has a great variety of ethnic neighborhoods

9. Meeting and making friends with Americans is a major problem for many foreign students

10. Communicating in English is a major problem for foreign students

11. In my opinion, many television commercials are misleading

12. In the opinion of the nation's economic experts, the primary cause of inflation is our dependence on imported oil

13. A good topic sentence has two essential parts

14. Owning a large automobile is quickly becoming an expensive luxury

B. Write a topic sentence for each of the following topics. Remember to include both a topic (main idea) and a controlling idea.

Example

Topic: The effect(s) of television on children.

Topic Sentence: Television is harmful to children because it teaches them violence

                            as a way of life

or

                            Television retards a child's reading ability.

1. The effect(s) of smoking on a person's health.

2. The benefits of foreign travel.

3. The importance of a college education for your field of study (engineering, medical technology, art, business, etc.).

4. The cause(s) of a current problem in your country (or in the United States).

5. A cultural difference between your country and the United States.

TECHNIQUE No3

Writing Concluding Sentences

Name: _____ Level_____ Date: _____

Step 1 : Underline the topic sentence in each paragraph

Step 2 : Determine the main idea of the paragraph.

Step 3 : Add a good concluding sentence to the paragraph. You may either paraphrase the topic sentence or summarize the main points.

Step 4: Begin your concluding sentence with an end-of-a-paragraph signal.

PARAGRAPH No 1

You can reduce gas consumption in your car by careful driving and good maintenance. Don´t speed. Gas consumption is about 10 percent higher at 60 miles per hour than at 50 miles per hour and even greater at higher speeds. Avoid fast stops and starts because they wear your tires out in addition to using a lot of gas. Check your tire pressure often because underinflated tires reduce gas mileage considerably. Get your car tuned up regularly because an inefficient operating engine results in inefficient fuel consumption. _____
_____
_____

PARAGRAPH No 2

There are numerous everyday words in English that have come from other languages. Americans relaxing at home, for example, may put on *kimonos,* which is a Japanese word. Americans who live on a temperate climate may take and afternoon *siesta* on an outdoor *patio*, without even realizing that these are Spanish words. In their garden they may enjoy the fragrance of *jasmine* flowers, a word that came into English from Persian. They may even relax on a *chaise longue* while sipping a drink made with *vodka,* words of French and Russian origin, respectively. _____
_____
_____
_____

PARAGRAPH No 3

There are two major differences between European and American university systems. In European universities, students are not required to attend classes. In fact, professors in Germany do not know the name of the students enrolled in their courses. In the United States, however, students are required to attend all the classes and may be penalized if they don´t. Furthermore, In the European System, there is usually just one comprehension examination at the end of the student´s entire four or five years of study. In the American system, on the other hand, there are usually numerous quizzes, tests and homework assignments and there is almost always a final examination in each course at the end of the semester. _____

_____

_____

PARAGRAPH No 4

House construction in various parts of the world depends mainly on the availability of building materials. For example, the Eskimos, living in a treeless region of snow and ice, sometimes build temporary homes out of thick blocks of ice. People who live in deserts, on the other hand, use the most available material, mud or clay, which provides good insulation from the heat. In Northern Europe, Russia and other areas where forests are plentiful, people usually construct their homes out of wood. In the islands of the South Pacific, where there is a plentiful supply of bamboo and palm, people use these tough, fibrous plants to build their homes_____

_____

_____

_____

TECHNIQUE No4

Recognizing Unity

Name:_____ Level_____ Date: _____

EXERCISE . Examine each of the following paragraphs to test its unity. There is one sentence in each that is not closely related to the topic. Find this sentence, copy it onto your paper, and be ready to explain how it breaks the unity of the paragraph.

1

When backpacking ¡n Glacier National Park in Northwestern Montana, hikers are advised not to disturb the grizzly bears that live in the park. Because grizzlies have been known to react violently *when* suddenly surprised by visitors, hikers wear bells which jingle as they march, warning any bears in the vicinity that intruders are coming. The black bears found in Yellowstone Park do not have the same frightening reputation as the grizzlies. Although there are only about two hundred grizzlies in Glacier National Park (the park is larger than the state of Rhode Island) and although chances of being attacked are about one million to one, visitors are uneasy because the grizzly has traditionally been considered America's fiercest and most dangerous animal. Even today a grizzly will occasionally attack a human being — with painful results.

2

While some parents may be skeptical about the education their children receive at Breston College and some students may share the attitude of these parents, all have only praised for the college's beautiful campus situated on a wooded hill overlooking Spring Lake. Stand at the edge of the campus and look down at the shimmering surface of the Lake. Your eye can follow the graceful curves of a road, obscured here and there by foliage, as it winds to the water's edge. In winter, the dark ribbon of toad is visible all the way. Snowmobiles, which are a noisy winter distraction in this part of the country, are forbidden on campus. Now turn about for a view of the campus. All the buildings- dormitories, classroom buildings, the gymnasium, and the student center have old--fashioned charm. The red and white of the buildings blend easily with the green of lawns and playing fields. Students who are sensitive to beauty say the campus itself is enough to make them glad to return at the beginning of each school year.

3

There are many things to learn about paddling a canoe. Since a canoe can be pushed from its course by a slight breeze, the paddlers must sit in such a way that the bow will not be forced too high out of the water where it will catch too much wind. In calm weather, the canoeists should sit in the stern, but in windy weather, they should kneel just aft of the middle, for in this position they can control their craft with less effort. They should paddle on the side opposite the direction of the wind because the wind then actually helps them to hold to a straight course. A canoe should never be loaded with stones for ballast because the stones will sink the canoe, should it be swamped. Steering is done by a twist of the paddle at the end of each stroke, the extent of the twist depending upon the force of the stroke and the strength of the wind against the bow.

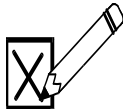| TECHNIQUE No5	FAMILIARIZATION

1

Informal letters can be written for a variety of reasons, using a variety of words, but they will always have some purpose behind them, and follow some 'rules'.

Task I

When *do you* write informal letters?

- ❑ to apply for a job
- ❑ to apologize
- ❑ to send an invitation
- ❑ to thank someone for something
- ❑ to complain
- ❑ to accept or refuse an invitation
- ❑ to order goods by post
- ❑ to send your news to a friend

Compare your answers with a partner's.

2 Some common expressions to invite people

We were wondering if you and Simon could join us,

Could you come for… on…..?

What about coming…

We'd like you to …

We'd like to invite you to … / for.

If you are very keen for the person to accept, you may try to persuade him or her like this:

We do hope that you'll both be able to come.

(We) do hope you'll join us.

Do try to be there, I'm really looking forward to seeing you.

Informal letters usually have an opening or *introduction*, which may not be the central theme of the letter. For example, you may thank the person for his/her letter, or apologize for not having written sooner.

The *body* of the letter is the invitation. You mention:

- the nature of the invitation (e. g. lunch, dinner, a party)
- the date and the time
- the reason, if any (e. g. a birthday, a visit of a mutual friend)
- the people who will be there (this is not essential).

The *ending* of the letter may be only one sentence long. It is usually some kind of persuasive formula.

The *close* of all informal letters depends on how well you know the person, and how close you are to them.

Task2
Now complete the following informal invitation:

Dear Claire,

Thank you so much for your nice long letter. I meant to ………….

…………………………………..………… but somehow I …………….…………………………

………………………………………………………………..

The thing is we are having…………………………….next …………………………

………………………………………………………… our tenth wedding anniversary

with ………………………….…..……………It will be quite informal as Paul hates

dressing up. We …………………………………. If ………………………………….

………………………………………………………… at 8 pm.

We ……………………………………………………….

Love,

Jane

I N F O R M A L   L E T T E R S

TECHNIQUE No6

1. You have just received the letter below. Consult your diary for the same weekend and reply to your friend´s invitation. None of your engagements can be changed, except your Sunday morning tennis, and it takes about one hour to get to your friend´s house (and an hour to return, of course)

> Monday Nov. 18th
>
> Dear Alison,
>
> Just a few lines to tell you that Mark will be here next weekend. He called last night to tell us the good news. You **must** come and see him. He mentioned you and said how very much he hoped he wasn't going to miss you this time.
>
> Come and have a meal with us — any time.
> Looking forward to seeing you.
> Love
> Frances
>
> P.S. I tried to ring you this morning but my phone's out of order.

> — SATURDAY —
>
> John's birthday.
> → take him to the seaside. (boat?)
>
> — SUNDAY —
>
> 9am Tennis with Mary.
> 1pm Lunch with the O'Connors.
> (Bring holiday slides for projection in the evening)

2. You were invited to the party below and, in spite of the way the evening ended, you feel you ought to write the hostess and thank her.

   To write this letter, remember you should:
   a) Thank the person
   b) Say a few words about the party (why it was pleasant, interesting, friendly, etc)
   c) Add one or two sentences as conclusion.

'It was one of those games supposed to start the party off with a swing.'

I N F O R M A L   L E T T E R S

TECHNIQUE No7   **MAKING FRIENDS VIA EMAIL!!!**

1. Your teacher has just received a couple of emails from England and Australia. Look at the emails below and chose one of them to introduce yourself to the sender using what you have learnt about informal letters by far.

Date: Thu, 08 Mar 01 02:37AM MST

From: "caroline hart" <cazza59@hotmail.com>   Add To Address Book

To: hector-reina@usa.net

Subject: 'email friends project'

More Details   Print Preview

Hello,

This is Caroline Hart, I'm a friend of Jen and Carlos, Jen has just emailed me about the great idea to help your students english lessons. I'd love to email them back if they would like to email me to practice their english. I live in Durham, England, I study at the university here. I met Jen and Carlos two summers ago when i went to work at camp before I began University. Feel free to email me about the email project,

best wishes,
Caroline Hart

Get your FREE download of MSN Explorer at http://explorer.msn.com

< | > | Delete | Forward | Reply | Reply All | Move To: | Junk Mail

Date: Wed, 07 Mar 01 19:07PM MST

From: Jennifer Kalberg <limey_jk@yahoo.com>

To: hector-reina@usa.net

Subject: I'd be willing...

More Details   Print Preview

...to set up a pen-pal with one of your students!!! I
just got Jen's email and the idea is wonderful for
applying language. Let me know if I can be useful or
if you need any more info about me! (Jen and I were at
Camp Duncan together)

=====
"J"ennifer Kalberg
ISU, Elementary Ed
'97 Golden Apple Scholar
There are many things in life that will catch your eye,
But only a few will catch your heart....pursue these.

Do You Yahoo!?
Get email at your own domain with Yahoo! Mail.
http://personal.mail.yahoo.com/

<   >   Delete   Forward   Reply   Reply All   Move To: Junk Mail ▼

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS TASK.

1. Start by telling her/them who you are, what you do, where you live, etc.

2. Tell them a little bit about your town, any tourist places you know well.

3. Ask them about their profession, family, country, etc.

4. They also would like to know about some of the customs of Colombia. Share with them the ones you think are the are the most remarkable about our country.

5. Add any extra information you might consider necessary.

I N F O R M A L   L E T T E R S

TECHNIQUE №8   **LINKING WORDS AND PHRASES**

1 In groups discuss the linking words and phrases underlined in the paragraph below. Answer these questions:

A) What do they mean? B) How do they link the ideas? C) How are they punctuated?

2 Now work in groups and choose the best word or phrase for each blank in paragraph 2 and 3 from the letter below.

Dear Reynaldo,

Do you remember I told you I was trying to get a part-time job as a waiter at a Japanese restaurant? (1) _Well_, I finally managed to get one! Of course, I haven't been working there long, (2) _but_ I can already tell it's a wonderful place to work. All the staff, even the maître d', are very friendly. (3) _Besides_, the pay is pretty good, (4) _and_ they let us eat whatever we want after work. (5) _For instance_, last night I had a big platter of sushi at 11:00!

I work only as a dinner waiter (6).......................... I go to classes during the day. My main job is to take orders from customers, give the orders to the cooks, (7).......................... take the food to the customers. I often have to describe the different Japanese dishes, (8).......................... sashimi, sukiyaki, or teriyaki. Sometimes Japanese customers speak to me in Japanese, expecting me to know the language. (9).........................., I know only a few words of Japanese, (10).......................... I get a little embarrassed. You know, my grandparents immigrated from Japan, (11).......................... my parents never taught me Japanese. I'm pretty well over my embarrassment now, (12).........................., and am taking advantage of learning more of the language on the job. I find the job very interesting (13).......................... I get to meet so many different people.

(14).........................., that's my news. What about you? Drop me a line when you have time. Regards to your family.

as always,

Ken

6. a) because   b) by the way   c) however
7. a) and   b) so   c) for instance
8. a) besides   b) however   c) such as
9. a) then   b) however   c) although
10. a) then   b) so   c) because
11. a) because   b) besides   c) but
12. a) well   b) though   c) and
13. a) why   b) because   c) then
14. a) well   b) for example   c) but

F O R M A L   L E T T E R S

TECHNIQUE No9   **ORGANIZING IDEAS**

TRAVEL AGENT

Bright individual with good phone manner, varied duties, must type 60 wpm, bilingual a plus. Experience preferred. Send resume :

F3457 Times

The following sentences form a letter that answers this ad, but the sentences are in the wrong order.

a) Discuss how the underlined words help you

b) Should the letter be divided into paragraphs. If so, where?

4831 East 6th Street
Los Angeles, California 90037
June 3, 1988

Ms. Maria Cuellar
Travel Agents International
P.O. Box 3974
Los Angeles, California 90031

Dear Ms. Cuellar:

a) My primary responsibility at Vacations Plus was helping plan international trips for individuals and groups.

b) I therefore feel confident that I can make a contribution to your company.

c) I enclose a resume as requested, and I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

d) In reference to your advertisement in the Times June 1, I would like to apply for the position of travel agent.

e) Additional duties included typing correspondence, doing ticketing, and telephoning airlines, bus companies, and clients.

f) In dealing with clients, I was often required to use Spanish and French, both of which I speak fluently.

g) I have an Associate of Arts degree in Travel and Tourism and have worked as an intern at Vacations Plus Travel Company.

Sincerely yours,

Gerard Gernand

Gerard Gernand

F O R M A L   L E T T E R S

TECHNIQUE No10   **KISS WHEN WRITING**

1. Here are two letters of people who have some problems on how to keep things simple and straightforward.

   a) Work in pairs and determine what the problems of letter A are, correct the mistakes and rewrite it

   b) Translate letter B into English keeping in mind what you have learn about Keeping Things Simple and Straightforward.

The Fashion Show
23 North Elm Street
Bell Air, NC 236767

April 14, 2001

Mr. James Harrison
Sales Manager
The Clothes Company
2345 Black Lake Dr
Tampa, FL 45678

Dear James:

Hello! Please receive a very cordial and fraternal greeting from Colombia and I also want to wish you lots of prosperity and luck in your daily activities.

I wanted to write you to tell you that I need to buy you "2001 Summer Collection" for men, women and kids. Yesterday, I went to my brother ´s house because I wanted to access your web site to find some information about you new summer collection. By the way, the site looks great Anyway, I want you confirm the price of the collection because I would like you to send it to me as soon as possible because the weather is very hot here and people want to by casual and summer clothes.

As I mentioned before, I need this collection soon please. Do you think there is here any kind of discount for me? . I want to pay in cash so I think I deserve a discount. Don't you think so? Please send me this collection by June 1. I want to buy sizes M, L, and XL. Oh I almost forgot! I read that the price for the whole collection is US 10.000. The question is, does it include shipping costs. Because if that is so, it would be a great deal because I could save a lot of money.

Please write or fax me soon

Yours,

Patricia Benavides
Director

Calle 25 30-56
Pasto Nariño

Mayo 24, 2001

Señora.
Beth Barlette
Directora.
Centro Americano
Cll 8 No 13-87
Armenia. Quindio

Cordial saludo:

Primero que todo quiero empezar deseándole mucha suerte y éxito en su vida personal y espero que se encuentre bien en unión de su familia y demás seres queridos.
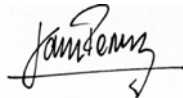
Quiero tomar esta oportunidad para solicitarle muy comedidamente me mande información acerca del Examen de Oxford, pues hoy en dia es muy solicitado aquí en nuestra ciudad y en especial si uno quiere ingresar a trabajar a una universidad como profesor de Inglés.

Resulta que las convocatorias son en ocho días y me urge saber cuando son las fechas de presentación para asi reservar mi tiquete aéreo con tiempo y también me gustaría saber cual es el precio de dicho examen.

Por favor le agradecería si Usted me envía esta información por fax (0927 745896), lo que pasa es que mi computador se daño la semana pasada pues de lo contrario me la podría mandar a mi email.

Finalmente, fue un gusto haber tratado con usted aunque solo haya sido por carta, que ojalá le vaya bien en su trabajo y que se cuide mucho.

Cordialmente,

Javier Pérez

LEARNING THERMOMETER No 1

Name: _____ Level: _____ Date: _____

1. **Give your own definition of paragraph**

_____

_____

_____

2. **What are the 5 parts of a paragraph?**

_____

_____

_____

3. **Read the following statements and answer true (T) or false (F)**

a) A good topic sentence should include two or more controlling ideas (T) (F)

b) It is necessary to give a title to your paragraph (T) (F)

c) Unity means that your paragraph has some kind of logical order (T) (F)

d) The supporting sentences speak about the controlling idea(s) in detail, giving examples, statistics, quotations, etc (T) (F)

e) The concluding sentence summarizes the main points of the paragraph (T) (F)

f) A concluding sentence at the end of the paragraph is absolutely

necessary (T) (F)

g) A paragraph can be as short as one sentence or as long as ten

sentences (T) (F)

4. Read the topic sentences below. Tell which sentences are good topic sentences and which are not. Then rewrite the dull sentences to make them correct and more interesting.

a) Frightened and injured, the only survivor made his way through the thick jungle

b) I´m going to tell you about my best friend

c) Coral, which comes in unusual shapes and delicate colors, is actually a type of skeleton.

d) This paragraph is about camping.

**5. Use these two paragraphs to answer the question below.**

1

Pueblo boys learned many things from their fathers. They learned to grow corn, squash, and beans. The Pueblos lived on the desert lands of the West and Southwest. The boys learned to weave beautiful designs into cloth. Also, the craft of painting designs on pottery was handed down from one generation to another. Boys learned to weave baskets for harvesting corn. They also learned to make silver jewelry and carve wooden dolls.

2

One howl shows that a wolf wants to "talk." Another type of howl signals a warning that danger is near. When the members of a pack gather to begin a hunt, they greet each other with howls. Then, a much wilder, more primitive howl signals the beginning of the hunt. A wolf howls sadly when a loved one dies or is injured.

1. What is the main idea of paragraph 1? of paragraph 2?

2. Which paragraph does not have a topic sentence?

3. What is the topic sentence of the other paragraph?

4. Write a topic sentence for the paragraph that does not have one.

5. Which paragraph has a sentence that does not tell about the main idea? Write the sentence.
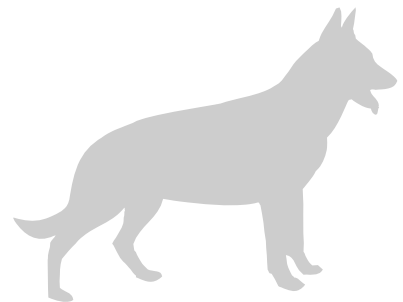
LEARNING THERMOMETER No 2

Name: _____ Level: _____ Date: _____

1.   Look at the report opposite. Read what happened to Melissa and applying what you have learnt about letters and KISS, answer one of the letters below.

Million Dollar Winner

Melissa Donahue couldn't believe it when our reporter knocked on her door yesterday morning with a check for a million dollars. She is the first winner in our super million-dollar contest. Melissa is a school bus driver from Detroit, Michigan. We photographed her outside her home in Detroit. If you want to win a million dollars, turn to page 13 for today's fantastic contest.

April o

My Dear Ms. Donahue:

Congratulations on your good luck. May I introduce myself? My name is Fredrick T. Boone, M.S. (Linguistics). I have invented a new language, Simplicado. I have been working on it for thirty years. The world needs one language, and English is too difficult. The grammar of Simplicado has only four rules, and the spelling is logical. If people learn Simplicado, everyone will be able to communicate with each other more easily.

I have sent my book, "Simplicado: A World Language" to 139 publishers, and none of them want to publish it. I need $20,000. If I get this money, I will be able to print and market the book myself. If people see the book, they will buy it and I will become rich. I do not want you to give me the money. I want you to lend it to me.

Does this idea interest you? I can come to Detroit and explain my work at any time.

Yours very truly,

F.T.B.

Kyu! (In Simplicado this means "Thank you very much.")

1276 Gateway Road
Kansas City, MO 64108

Dear Ms. Donahue,   April 9

You don't know us. We are sure that you have gotten a lot of letters. We saw your picture in the paper. You look like a kind person, and we need help. We have never written this kind of letter before, but we have tried everything else.

Our baby is very sick, and she needs an operation. There is only one hospital in the world that can do the operation, and it is in Switzerland. We are not rich people. We have been saving for a year, and we have saved $700. But we still don't have enough money. You will help us if you can, won't you? Please.

Yours very truly,
Harriet and Jethro Thomson

2. Go to technique No 8. You can find there many examples of linking words and sentences. You have also the model of a letter. Based on that model, write an informal letter to a friend (free topic), using as many connectors as you can

3. Write a formal letter based on this information.

Sender: Laura Benz
Address: 2345 Kingston Rd
             Sunshine Ville, MN 89752
Date: Today, s date

Addressee: Mark Woodcock
                INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMS
                2334 Lake Dr.
   Green Garden, NY 24589

Position: Sales Director

SITUATION.

You have bought 10 personal computers to start a family business in your house. You contacted many companies asking for prices, discounts, guarantees, technical support etc, and finally you decided that INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMS was the best option for you.

The company shipped the computers to your house within 3 days, most of the computers work properly, however, three of them do not work at all and seem to be defective and one of them is broken.

TASK

Write a letter of complaint to INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMS. It will be up to you to ask for a refund, ask them to replace the defective computers and the broken one, etc.
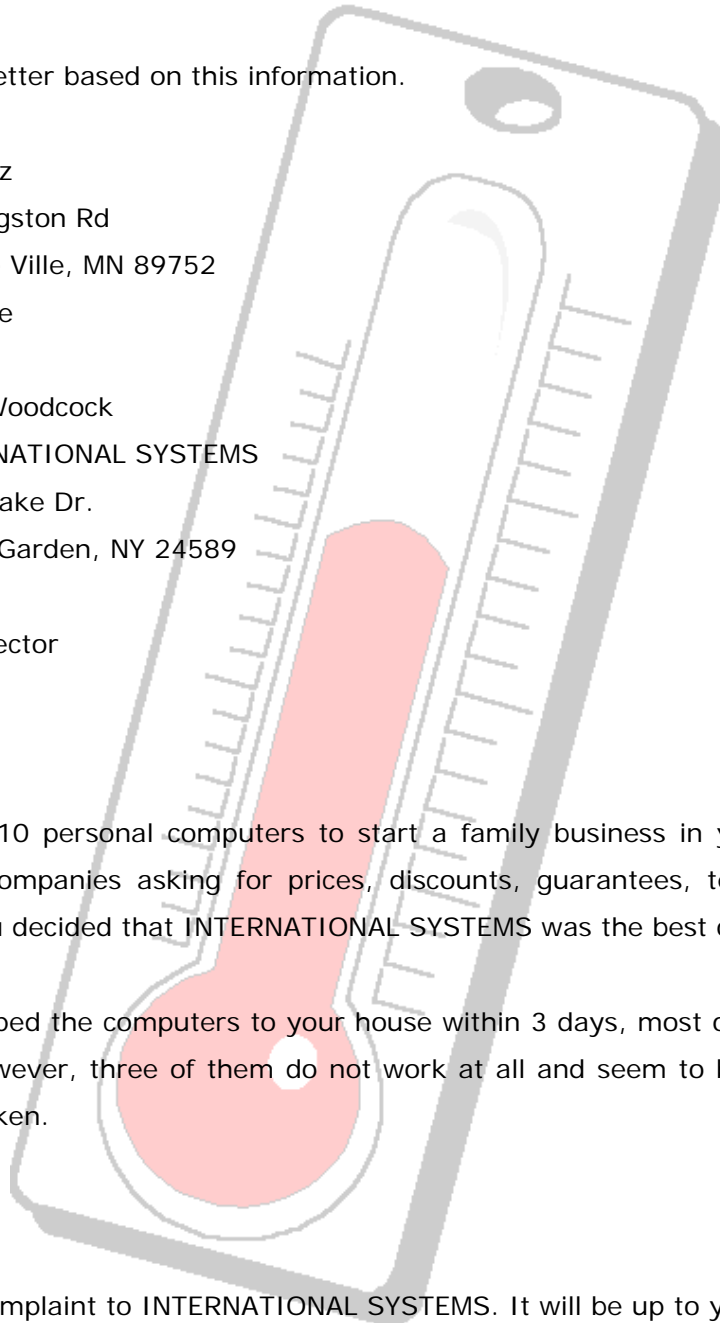
P O S T   T E S T

Name: _____   Level:

_____ Date: _____

1. Choose one of the following topics to write a well-structured paragraph.
   a) Studying abroad
   b) The importance of English
   c) Advantages of having a computer
   d) Today´s teenagers.

....
WRITE HERE THE TITLE OF YOUR PARAGRAPH

....•...
....•...
....
....
....
....•

2. Here are two letters where you are going to apply everything you have learnt about Keeping Things Simple and Straightforward.

In the first letter, a customer writes to complain about a defective calculator that he bought at Peers Lowbruck Co. in San Diego. The letter seems to be too wordy because it has unnecessary information. Then you will decide what information to keep and what information to take out.

In the second letter, a friend of yours wants to send a letter to England in order to ask for some information about summer courses. This letter has way too many expressions that are not common in English. Besides, there is unnecessary information that the addressee does not need to know. To help your friend, you will rewrite his letter (In English).

---

174 Logan Drive
San Diego, CA 92013
May 22, 2001

Customer Service Dept.
Peers Lowbruck Co.
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Sir or Madam:

I want to write this letter to tell you that last week I bought a pocket calculator at your store in Anaheim, California. I wanted to buy this calculator because my daughter just broke the one that I had bought at your store last year. It seemed to work in the store. When I got home, I went to my room and I discovered it was defective. It performs arithmetic functions fine, and the color is nice too, but the memory function does not work at all.

Since I was on holyday in Anaheim when I bought this calculator, I decided to take it to your store in San Diego. Anyway, I took it back to your store in San Diego, but they refused to exchange it. They said that I would have to return it to the store where I bought it. This is impossible because I do not live in Anaheim and going there would be very expensive for me. Besides, I am a very busy person.

I have enclosed the calculator along with the receipt, showing the price and date of purchase, and your guarantee because maybe you are going to need it as a proof of what I´m saying is true. I would appreciate a full refund.

Finally, I´m sorry about it, maybe you are a busy person too and spent your time with this letter but trust me I need this money back soon. Thank you. If you have any questions, I would be more than happy if you could call me at: (619) 235 8736.

Sincerely,

Gail Yamamura.

Cra 28 No 41 –20
Pasto, Nariño.
Colombia.
June 11, 2001

Mrs. Mary Sprinfield.
Director, Euro Centres
145 Dover Street
Putney,
London SW5 5AE

Estimada Señora Springfield:

Reciba un saludo muy cordial de este servidor y a la vez me dirijo con mucho respeto ante usted a fin de solicitarle una información que necesito acerca de sus cursos de verano de Inglés.

Como usted vera el Inglés es muy necesario hoy en dia y más aun para los que estudiamos medicina y soñamos con viajar a Europa o Estados Unidos para hacer una especialización. Estoy particularmente interesado en el curso de 10 semanas en Londres y me interesaría saber cuanto vale el curso, porque si vale mas de 5.000 dólares, entonces me tocaría hacer un préstamo al banco, también desearía que me mande información acerca de requisitos para solicitar la visa, el costo del alojamiento en el campus y el plazo para cancelar dicho dinero.

Finalmente agradezco toda la ayuda que Usted me pueda brindar y a la vez le agradecería si mi pudiera mandar toda esta información al email: rodrigoa@coldmail.co.

Mil gracias por su atención,

Rodrigo Andrade