

4.3 writing

essay writing about problems and solutions

1 activating background knowledge

Discuss these questions with a partner or in small groups.

- What do you think are the good things and the bad things about the town where you are studying English?
- Could any of these things be improved? How?

2 understanding text structure

a Read the essay that a student wrote about her home town. Number the paragraphs in the correct order.

This situation could be improved and I feel the town council should take some action. They could clean the lake and put some fish and birds there, so people will see it as a protected natural area, not a place to throw rubbish. They could also make a small area in the park where bicycles and skaters are not allowed. In this way, people could walk and sit in the park in safety.

I believe these actions would improve the town. The park would become a more attractive place for people to enjoy some natural scenery in the town centre. It would also be much safer for people of all ages to walk and children to play.

One of the worst aspects of my home town is the park in the centre. It is not a very pleasant place for people to spend their free time. The paths can be dangerous, as children ride their bicycles and rollerskate along them at high speed. In addition to this, the small lake in the park is full of plastic bottles and other rubbish so it is not very attractive.

b Match each paragraph to its function.

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| Paragraph 1 | a suggests some solutions |
| Paragraph 2 | b explains the result |
| Paragraph 3 | c describes the problems |

3 identifying text type

Which do you think was the title / task for this piece of writing?

- 1 My home town
- 2 The problems in my home town and how to solve them
- 3 Describe something that is not satisfactory in your home town, and say how it could be improved.
- 4 Fun for all the family in the park!

4 using formal language

tip An essay is a serious piece of writing and so you need to use quite a formal style. This includes full forms, not contractions, and more formal vocabulary, e.g. *large* rather than *big*.

a Find more formal equivalents for these words and expressions from the essay.

Paragraph 1 1 things _____

2 also _____

Paragraph 2 3 I think _____

4 do something _____

5 so _____

Paragraph 3 6 I think _____

7 a lot _____

4.3 writing

- b Choose the more formal option in each pair of words in *italics*.

There are (1) *several* / *quite a lot of* problems in my town. There are (2) *very few* / *only a couple of* parks and (3) *not enough* / *a lack of* sports centres. It does not have many (4) *things* / *facilities* for children and (5) *old* / *elderly* people have (6) *trouble* / *difficulty* getting around because of the (7) *poor* / *bad* bus service. Finally, the (8) *issue* / *problem* of dirt and litter in the streets has still not been resolved.

5 using topic sentences

- a Look at the essay again and underline the first sentence in each paragraph. What is the connection between this sentence (called the *topic sentence*) and the other sentences in each paragraph?
- b Use the following topic sentences and paragraph plan for the writing task below.

Paragraph 1

Topic sentence: *One of the worst aspects of my home town is ...*

Other sentences: explain the problem

Paragraph 2

Topic sentence: *This situation could be improved.*

Other sentences: suggest some steps the council / local people could take

Paragraph 3

Topic sentence: *I believe these actions would improve the town.*

Other sentences: say what the result would be

6 generating ideas for writing

- a Which of these problems does your home town have?
- traffic congestion
 - limited facilities for young people / older people / children
 - not enough green spaces
 - dirty streets
 - pollution
 - problems with public transport
 - problems with shopping facilities
 - other: _____
- b Tell your partner(s) what you think. How could the situation be improved?



Writing task

Your English teacher has asked you to write this essay for homework:
Describe a problem in your home town and say what you think could be done to improve the situation. Write between 120 and 150 words.