Text structure /organisation exercises

Uno de los errores más comunes que se suele detectar en los *writing* es el estructural. A menudo nos encontramos con textos que carecen de una estructura clara y lógica y que demuestran una planificación casi inexistente. Un texto no es una enumeración caótica de ideas sino un todo que gira en torno a una idea central, que primero se presenta, luego se desarrolla y finalmente se consolida en la conclusión. Es necesario trabajar bien este aspecto ya que la estructura y planificación son el chasis de los escritos, lo que les da sentido, equilibrio y, a efectos prácticos de examen, representan la cuarta parte de la nota.



La mejor manera de entender esto es leer escritos de forma analítica, como si nuestros ojos fueran rayos X que quisieran ver el esqueleto de tales textos. Prueba a hacer estos ejercicios y después consulta las soluciones al final de esta página:

ANALYSING PLAN AND IDEAS

Exercise 1:

TASK ONE: Read the following text:

Should animals be used in testing new drugs and procedures? Animal testing may be necessary, but we need to be merciful

Argument essay

Should animals be used in testing new drugs and procedures? Animal testing may be necessary, but we need to be merciful.

Every year, millions of animals undergo painful suffering or death as a result of scientific research into the effects of drugs, food additives, cosmetics and other chemical products. While most people think animal testing is necessary, others are upset by what they see as needless suffering. This essay looks at some of the positive and negative aspects of animal testing.

Many medical treatments and procedures have been developed from experiments on animals. Since animals share many features with humans, scientists use animals to test the safety and effectiveness of newly developed drugs before pilot testing on small groups of patients. Medical teams practice new operating techniques such as transplants on animals. Without animal testing, many procedures or new drugs would be extremely unsafe.

However, many people are concerned that animals are suffering unnecessarily and cruelly. They do not believe that every new drug needs to be tested on animals, especially with the huge database of knowledge and modern computer models. They also are worried that many animal tests are ineffective, pointing out that any drugs have had to be withdrawn from the market despite extensive testing. They particularly feel that animal testing should not be used for non-essential products such as cosmetics, shampoos, soaps, and cleaning products. Furthermore, some campaigners would like to see certain tests replaced and more humane methods used.

We need to make sure that the millions of animals who are used for testing new products are treated with the minimum of suffering. Although some animal testing may be unavoidable at present, treating our fellow creatures as mercifully as possible will demonstrate our humanity.

267 words Source: www.writefix.com

TASK THREE: Check your answer to task two once you have completed the following chart by inserting the ideas expressed in each part and putting them in the correct order:

- 1) It is cruel and not necessary.
- 2) Aim of this essay.
- 3) Treatments and procedures developed thanks to animal testing.
- 4) Assure minimum suffering.
- 5) Many tests useless because some drugs withdrawn anyway.
- 6) Unnecessary as there are huge database and modern computer models.
- 7) Animal testing causes their suffering or death.
- 8) Useful to test safety and effectiveness of new drugs before pilot testing—reason for using animals.
- 9) Campaign to use more humane methods and to stop certain tests.
- 10) Unnecessary for non-essential products: cosmetics, shampoo, soaps, cleaning products.
- 11) Useful for techniques practice: transplants
- 12) If it cannot be avoided, at least, show mercy.
- 13) What people feel about it: two sides.
- 14) If not animal testing, procedures and new drugs not safe.

INTRODUCTION First paragraph: (three ideas)	DEVELOPMENT Second and third paragraphs:	CONCLUSION Fourth paragraph (two ideas)
	(nine ideas) Positive aspects:	Personal opinion:
	Negative aspects:	

Exercise 2:

TASK ONE: Read the following text:

Argument essay

Does everyone have the right to the best healthcare, regardless of cost?

Some of us are lucky to live in parts of the world with excellent medical care. However, even in rich countries, health authorities have to make tough decisions because of the staggering costs of new procedures and medicines: who gets which treatment? Which patient is more deserving? In this essay I will discuss if universal healthcare is really possible.

There are several reasons why it is ridiculous to expect free or subsidized medical care indefinitely. First of all, every country has a limited health care budget. Money must be spent where it can do the most good for the most people. Second, many expensive treatments are experimental or a last resort. The patient may have already cost the government a small fortune. A third and harsh point is that we need sometimes to let nature take its course. For example, prolonging the life of someone in suffering, just because we can, is sometimes not the answer.

However, it's also natural to fight for life. We rejoice when we hear stories of babies saved by incredible medical intervention or of difficult surgeries that successfully repair faces, hands and bodies. A related point is that we hope that these costly procedures will become routine and more widely available. Heart surgery was revolutionary in the 1960s but is now commonplace. Finally, most people understand the need for healthcare premiums, within reason, even if they never get sick. They are happy to share the burden of insurance if they know that they and their families are protected.

In conclusion, deciding who deserves which treatments is immensely difficult. We need to accept that there are limits to what medicine can do, as well as to how much we can spend on it..

267 words

Source: www.writefix.com

TASK THREE: Check your answer to task two once you have completed the following chart by inserting the ideas expressed in each part and putting them in the correct order:

- 1 Need for health insurance.
- 2 Reason 1: Countries have limited health budgets.
- 3 Medical treatments become cheap and more available over time.

Example: heart surgery in the 60s and now.

- 4 Healthcare is limited and we need to accept that.
- 5 Many people have cheap but excellent health care.
- 6 We cannot expect free unlimited health care.
- 7 Reason 3: We must accept that we are mortal after all.
- 8 Innate tendency to stick to life. Example: awesome medical achievements.
- 9 Thesis sentence.
- 10 Reason 2: Some expensive treatments are not effective or worthwhile.
- 11 However, spending on medicine or treatment is limited.

INTRODUCTION First paragraph: (three ideas)	DEVELOPMENT Second and third paragraphs: (seven ideas)	CONCLUSION Fourth paragraph (one idea)
	One side:	
	Other side:	

Exercise 3:

TASK ONE: Read the following text:

Argument essay

Some people say cheap air travel is good because it enables ordinary people to travel, while others argue that it is bad for the environment. Discuss both views, and include your opinion.

In the past air travel was only for the elite – the rich, the powerful, the privileged. Today, hundreds of millions of people are able to travel around the world for work or pleasure. As Air Asia's slogan puts it: "Now everyone can fly." However, the price to be paid for this easier travel may be damage to the environment. In this essay, I will examine some of the arguments for and against cheap air travel.

There are plenty of accusations against cheap flights. Critics of budget air travel claim that the emissions from jet fuel are damaging the atmosphere. This is particularly serious at the higher levels of the atmosphere where modern jets fly. A single short flight from Dubai to Mumbai can produce as much carbon dioxide as one month's driving for a family. The environmental cost continues when the tourists land, as hotels, leisure and other facilities are very significant polluters and consume a lot of resources. A third point of course is that this travel is mostly 'unnecessary' and people would simply stay at home if the flights were not so cheap.

However, the proponents of cheap air travel, such as Ireland's Michael O'Leary, have their own powerful counterclaims. First, they reject the allegation that jets contribute significantly to global warming. They point out that modern jets are much quieter and much more fuel-efficient than in the past. Secondly, many countries already have carbon taxes or levies included in the price of the airline ticket or aviation fuel. This can offset the carbon produced during the flight. In addition, most of the arguments against cheap flights are based on the belief that it is acceptable for certain people to fly, but not for ordinary people. In other words, the wealthy or powerful would like to deprive ordinary people of the right to travel, to see new places and meet new people.

In conclusion, cheap air travel is not a clear-cut issue, but a political, economic and environmental minefield. In my opinion, everyone should have the opportunity to travel, but we do need some monitoring of the effect on the environment, both in the air and on the ground.

Words: 398 Source:

www.writefix.com

TASK THREE: Check your answer to task two by inserting the ideas expressed in each part and putting them in the correct order:

- 1) Tourism causes pollution.
- 2) Situation today.
- 3) All this travel is unnecessary. Better to stay at home.
- 4) Negative side of situation.
- 5) Modern planes don't pollute so much.
- 6) Summary.
- 7) Situation in the past.
- 8) Carbon taxes can offset carbon dioxide produced.
- 9) Flying causes pollution.
- 10) Thesis: what the essay will do.
- 11) The bottom line of arguments against is that only rich people should have the right to fly.

12) Personal opinion.

INTRODUCTION First paragraph: (four ideas)	DEVELOPMENT Second and third paragraphs: (six ideas)	CONCLUSION Fourth paragraph (two ideas)
	Against cheap flights:	
	In favour of cheap flights:	

Exercise 4:

Lee con atención los siguientes ejemplos, observa cómo se estructura la información y fíjate qué recursos se utilizan para captar la atención del lector:

Q: You work for the student newspaper. You have been asked to write an article about the theatre group that is going to make a performance in your town.

All in one - come and watch

Have you ever been asked to make a decision and choose only one thing out of many that you really like? I am sure you have. And then you always wonder what would have happened if you had chosen the alternative. Maybe you just missed something really special... You do not particularly like that feeling, do you? There is a group of young people who decided once that it is ridiculous to choose if you can have all in one - do you want to meet them? Actually, you will have a chance soon.

The Red Dragon Theatre Group is coming to our town next week. They will bring a lot of good sense of humour, music, dance, and anything you can think of that should appear on stage. Their main concern is to make you think, laugh, maybe cry a bit, but above all to give you a great time. I bet you will love them at first sight.

To make the long story short - you cannot miss this event! The group is going to perform in The Globe theatre and they have promised to meet your expectations. The choice is obvious this time... Simply, come and watch.

Financial Collapse: A 10-Step Recovery PlanBy ALAN S. BLINDER

(artículo adaptado)

HEGEL once wrote, "What experience and history teaches us is that people and governments have never learned anything from history." Actually, I think people do learn. The problem is that they forget — sometimes

amazingly quickly. That seems to be happening today, even though recovery from the economic debacle of 2008-9 is far from complete.

Evidence of this forgetting is everywhere. The public has lost interest in the causes of the crisis; many, of course, are just struggling to get by. Unrepentant financiers whine about "excessive" regulation and pay lobbyists to battle every step toward reform. Conservatives bemoan "big government" and yearn to return to laissez-faire deregulation. Higher international standards for bank capital and liquidity have been delayed. I could go on.

Instead, let me try to encapsulate what we must remember about the financial crisis into 10 financial commandments, all of which were brazenly violated in the years leading up to the crisis.

1. Remember That People Forget

When the good times roll, investors expect them to roll indefinitely. When bubbles burst, they are always surprised.

2. Do Not Rely on Self-Regulation

Self-regulation of financial markets is a cruel oxymoron. We need zookeepers to watch over the animals.

3. Honor your Shareholders

Boards of public corporations are supposed to protect the interests of shareholders. In the years before the crisis, too many directors forgot those responsibilities. Will they now remember? Some will — for a while. But sanctions on directors for poor performance are minimal.

4. Elevate Risk Management

One bitter lesson of the crisis is that, when it comes to risk taking, what you don't know can hurt you. The primary responsibility for keeping risk-management systems up to snuff rests with top executives and boards of directors.

5. Use Less Leverage

Excessive leverage — otherwise known as over-borrowing — was one of the chief foundations of the house of cards that collapsed so violently in 2008. Bankers and investors (not to mention home buyers) deluded themselves into thinking they could earn high returns without assuming big risks. But leverage is like alcohol: a little bit has health benefits, but too much can kill you.

6. Keep It Simple, Stupid

Modern finance profits from complexity, because befuddled customers are more profitable ones. But do all those fancy financial instruments actually do the economy any good?

7. Standardize Derivatives and Trade Them on Exchanges

It is the customized, opaque, "over the counter" derivatives that are the most dangerous.

8. Keep Things on the Balance Sheet

Before the crisis, some banks took important financial activities off their balance sheets to hide how much leverage they had. But the joke was on them. The crisis revealed that some chief executives were only dimly aware of the off-balance-sheet entities their banks held. These "masters of the universe" hadn't mastered their own books.

9. Fix Perverse Compensation

Offering traders monumental rewards for success, but a mere slap on the wrist for failure, encourages them to take excessive risks. We may need the heavy hand of government to do it.

10. Watch Out for Consumers

What we learned in the crisis is that failure to protect unsophisticated consumers from financial predators can undermine the whole economy. That surprising lesson mustn't be forgotten.

Mark Twain is said to have quipped that while history doesn't repeat itself, it does rhyme. There will be financial crises in the future, and the next one won't be a carbon copy of the last. Neither, however, will it be so different that these commandments won't apply. Financial history does rhyme, but we're already forgetting the meter.

Exercise 5:

TASK ONE: Read this description of Sydney:

Sydney's biggest advantage is its superb setting on one of the most beautiful harbours in the world. The views of the harbour bridge and the Opera House are magnificient and you find that you are never very far from water wherever you go. It's very relaxed and cosmopolitan city and there's plenty to see and do. I've visited many interesting cities in my life but I think my favourite must be Sidney in Australia. I've been lucky enough to go there several times and it's certainly a place I would be happy to live in. Then, a short drive away you have beaches like the famous Bondi beach and national parks where you can walk for miles without meeting anyone except, perhaps, the odd kangaroo! So, with its wonderful setting and all its other attactions, Sydney takes a lot of beating, in my view. And when you're hungry, there are hundreds of restaurants, at all prices, serving every possible type of cuisine from Australian to my favourite, Mongolian! But in the end, it's people who make a city and Sydney-siders, as they are called, are some of the friendliest and most welcoming I know. Even if you can't afford the price of an opera ticket, you can visit some of the museums and art galleries or wander round Darling Harbour or Paddington Market completely free.

TASK TWO: As you can see, the ideas are not in order and the text is not clearly structured. Rewrite the description and put the ideas in a logical order following this structure:

First paragraph: Introduction: Sets the scene (2 sentences)

Second paragraph: Location and special attractions (3 sentences)

Third paragraph: Atmosphere and amenities (3 sentences)

Fourth paragraph: Conclusion (2 sentences)

Exercise 6:

TASK ONE: Read the following text:

Subject "Write an account of a day you will never forget"

That day in May three years ago could have put me off flying completely, but it didn't. I had always wanted to take up flying, but it wasn't until I had seen an advertisement for a cheap trial lesson that I decided to try it. I had very little money and no knowledge at all about flying, but I had a lot of courage, or at least I thought I did! So I rang up the flying club and booked a lesson.

I woke up very excited on the morning of the 'historic day' and cycled to the airport which was about ten miles away. When I turned up at the club, I paid and then met my instructor, who turned out to be a woman. Although she knew I had no experience at all, she took me straight out to the plane which was being tanked up with fuel. I should have listened to her from the moment we had shaken hands, because she was in fact giving me my own private lecture on the basis of flying. The trouble was that everything was so new and strange to me that I hardly heard anything she said.

We put on parachutes, got into the plane, which was about as big as a Mini inside, strapped ourselves in side by side, and took off. The instructor was still talking, giving me information and advice, but I couldn't take anything in. I wasn't frightened: I was just too interested in leaving earth and in the view beneath us.

The instructor was flying the plane of course and I was just holding my dual controls. But we had only been up in the air for about ten minutes-and remember that this was the first time I had ever been in an aeroplane-when she said: 'Right. You can take over now. Good luck. Just keep her steady with the horizon.' And she took her hands off the controls.

I know that I froze for a moment or two, but I don't know exactly what I did after that. I obviously did something wrong because the next moment the ground seemed to be racing up to meet us. I thought we were going to crash, but with a calm 'I'll take over again now, my instructor took over the controls and we were soon flying straight again.

I honestly admit that the experience was more embarrassing than anything else. I have been flying regularly for three years now and can put a plane in and out of a dive, but friends won't let you forget things like that very easily, will they?

Source: Longman First Certificate Coursebook

TASK THREE: Check your answer once you have completed the following chart by inserting the ideas expressed in each part and putting them in the correct order:

- 1 Got in plane took off.
- 2 3 years ago had always wanted to fly.
- 3 Dual controls. After 10 mins 'You can take over' froze.
- 4 Booked trial lesson.
- **5** Ground raced up to meet us. Embarrassing.
- **6** 'Historic day' excited airport woman instructor.
- 7 Nevertheless went on flying. 3 years now.
- **8** She talked I hardly took anything in.

BEFORE THE EVENT	THE EVENT	AFTER THE EVENT
(two ideas)	(four ideas)	(two ideas)

Exercise 7: Descriptive/narrative

TASK ONE: Read the following text:

Subject 'Choose a skill or special ability that you possess. Give an account of when you first noticed you had this skill or ability, and how it developed.'

I believe I have always been able to 'take people off'. It certainly started at a very early age, because I always seemed to be able to imitate the voice and mannerisms of almost anyone I met.

It made me quite popular with my family and my schoolfriends, but sometimes not quite so popular with others. The more important 'others' were teachers at the last school I attended. Without consciously thinking about it, I found it quite easy to 'take off' most of them; all teachers have exaggerated mannerisms, and our teachers were no exceptions. My friends were delighted and I had to do my impersonations for them in the playground. It must have gone to my head somewhat, because I allowed them to persuade me to do impersonations in class when the particular teacher taking us did not appear to be watching.

As you know, all teachers also seem to have eyes in the back of their head, and I was often caught. This led to unpleasant things like extra homework and other punishments, but this still did not put me off, because I could not resist the urge to mimic what I saw. However, I was quite sure that, when I was not impersonating them, a lot of the teachers were quite pleased with my ability to impersonate their colleagues.

My belief was borne out when the time came for me to leave the school, at the age of 14. There was a little farewell party for school-leavers. Suddenly, the restraint of the past two or three years was broken down. The teachers actually encouraged, indeed insisted, that I did my impersonations of the staff. It was an amazing afternoon. I took off all the teachers one by one. Each 'take-off' set everybody off laughing and clapping, but I noticed that the 'victim' in each case stayed strangely silent. And I have noticed ever since then that, although most people enjoy impersonations of others, they do not like being impersonated themselves.

Adapted from an account written by Mike Yarwood, a famous English impersonator

Source: Longman First Certificate Coursebook

TASK THREE: Check your answer to task two once you have completed the following chart by inserting the ideas expressed in each part and putting them in the correct order:

- **1** Sometimes felt teachers were pleased with my ability to take off other pupils and teachers.
- 2 Impersonated teachers in playground and in class.
- 3 I can take people off-started when young.
- 4 Example-farewell party.
- **5** Easy to imitate people.
- **6** Teacher's reactions and people's reactions since.
- 7 Popular with family and friends; not with teachers.
- **8** Teachers caught me extra homework. Didn't put me off.

INTRODUCTION	DEVELOPMENT	CONCLUSION
(two ideas)	(four ideas)	(two ideas)

Answer key Exercise 1: Layout:

INTRODUCTION	DEVELOPMENT	CONCLUSION
First	Second and third	Fourth
paragraph:	paragraph:	paragraph
(three ideas)	(nine ideas)	(two ideas)
(three racas)	(mile reeds)	(two lucus)
	Positive aspects:	Personal
		opinion:
- Animal testing	- Treatments and	opinon
causes their	procedures developed	- Assure
suffering or death.	thanks to animal testing.	minimum
- What people feel	- Useful to test safety and	suffering.
about it: two sides.	effectiveness of new	- If it cannot be
- Aim of this essay.	drugs before pilot	avoided, at
Time of this essay.	testing- reason for using	least, show
	animals.	mercy.
	- Useful for techniques	mercy.
	practice: transplants.	
	- If not animal testing,	
	procedures and new	
	drugs not safe.	
	urugs not sale.	
	Negative aspects:	
	- It is cruel and not	
	necessary.	
	- Unnecessary as there	
	are huge database and	
	modern computer	
	models.	
	- Many tests useless	
	because some drugs	
	withdrawn anyway.	
	- Unnecessary for non-	
	essential products:	
	cosmetics, shampoo,	
	soaps, cleaning products.	
	- Campaign to use more	
	humane methods and to	
	stop certain tests.	

Exercise 2:

<u>Layout:</u>

INTEROPLICATION	DEVEL ODIVENE	CONCLUCION
INTRODUCTION	DEVELOPMENT	CONCLUSION
<u>First</u>	Second and third	Fourth
paragraph:	paragraphs:	paragraph:
(three ideas)	(seven ideas)	(one idea)
	One side:	
		- Healthcare is
- Many people	- We cannot expect free	limited and we
have cheap but	unlimited health care.	need to accept
excellent health		that.
care.	- Reason 1: Countries	
	have limited health	
- However,	budgets.	
spending on	8	
medicine or	- Reason 2: Some	
treatment is	expensive treatments	
limited.	are not effective or	
	worthwhile.	
- Thesis sentence.	Working.	
	- Reason 3: We must	
	accept that we are	
	mortal after all.	
	mortar arter an.	
	Other side:	
	- Innate tendency to	
	stick to life. Example:	
	awesome medical	
	achievements.	
	- Medical treatments	
	become cheap and more	
	available over time.	
	Example: heart surgery	
	in the 60s and now.	
	- Need for health	
	insurance.	

Exercise 3:

and third agraphs: ideas) inst cheap flights: ring causes ation.	Fourth paragraph (two ideas) - Summary Personal
ideas) inst cheap flights: ring causes ation.	(two ideas) - Summary.
inst cheap flights: ring causes	- Summary.
ring causes	•
urism causes ution. this travel is ecessary. Better to at home.	opinion.
t pollute so much. rbon taxes can et carbon dioxide luced.	
	odern planes It pollute so much. It pollute so much. It pollute so much. It carbon dioxide It carbon dioxide It carbon line of It iments against is It only rich people

Exercise 5:

SYDNEY

I've visited many interesting cities in my life but I think my favourite must be Sidney in Australia. I've been lucky enough to go there several times and it's certainly a place I would be happy to live in.

Sydney's biggest advantage is its superb setting on one of the most beautiful harbours in the world. The views of the harbour bridge and the Opera House are magnificient and you find that you are never very far from water wherever you go. Then, a short drive away you have beaches like the famous Bondi beach and national parks where you can walk for miles without meeting anyone except, perhaps, the odd kangaroo!

It's very relaxed and cosmopolitan city and there's plenty to see and do. Even if you can't afford the price of an opera ticket, you can visit some of the museums and art galleries or wander round Darling Harbour or Paddington Market completely free. And when you're humgry, there are hundreds of restaurants, at all prices, serving every possible type of cuisine from Australian to my favourite, Mongolian!

So, with its wonderful setting and all its other attactions, Sydney takes a lot of beating, in my view. But in the end, it's people who make a city and Sydney-siders, as they are called, are some of the friendliest and most welcoming I know.

Exercise 6:

Before the event

- 1 3 years ago had always wanted to fly.
- **2** Booked trial lesson.

The event

- **3** 'Historic day excited airport woman instructor.
- **4** She talked I hardly took anything in.
- **5** Got in plane took off.
- 6 Dual controls. After 10 mins 'You can take over'- froze.

After the event

- 7 Ground raced up to meet us. Embarrassing.
- **8** Nevertheless went on flying. 3 years now.

Exercise 7:

Introduction

- 1 I can take people off started when young
- 2 Easy to imitate people.

Development

- **3** Popular with family and friends; not with teachers.
- **4** Impersonated teachers in playground and in class.
- **5** Teachers caught me extra homework. Didn't put me off.
- **6** Sometimes felt teachers were pleased with my ability to take off other pupils and teachers.

Conclusion

- **7** Example farewell party.
- **8** Teacher' reactions and people's reactions since.