Success Center
Directed Learning Activity

EMLS 100
Writing Assignment 1A

EMLS100.1

Description: Welcome to the Language Success Center! This first writing assignment is designed to guide you through the process of writing a well-developed paragraph. You will start by reading a short passage on a topic and answering some questions. You will then choose a topic to write on. After that, you will be guided through some prewriting steps that will help you get ideas and organize them. The last thing you will do is write a rough draft of your paragraph. If you have any questions at all, ask one of the tutors to help you.

STEP ONE: Pre-Reading Activity

Answer the following questions:

1. What kind of pollution exists in the city you live now? What kind exists in your native country?

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2. You are going to read an article entitled "Hawaii Hit by Great Plastic Garbage Patch." What do you think the article will be about?

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3. Look on the Internet and google "ocean garbage patches." Write down a couple of things that you learn about them.

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STEP TWO:

Read the following article. Circle any new words that you don't know. Don't use a dictionary to look them up, but try to guess the meanings based on the context.

Hawaii Hit by Great Plastic Garbage Patch

A recent discovery shows the world now has two ocean garbage patches. These are huge areas of the ocean that have a huge floating island of trash and litter. The first garbage patch was discovered in the Pacific by ocean researcher Charles Moore in 1997. The new one was found in the Atlantic by a husband and wife team Anna Cummins and Marcus Eriksen. "We found the Great Atlantic Garbage Patch," said Ms Cummins. "Our job now is to let people know that plastic ocean pollution is a global problem. Unfortunately, it is not confined to a single patch," she added. Ms. Cummins described her sadness at what humans are doing to the ocean: "It's shocking to see it firsthand ….We've managed to leave our footprint really everywhere."

The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) has just reported on the damage the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is doing. Tons of plastic is washing up on the beaches of Hawaii. This island chain is world famous for having some of the world's most beautiful beaches. The very name "Hawaii" conjures up images of paradise islands. No longer. The BBC's presenter Simon Reeve says Kamilo Beach on the island of Hawaii has been described as "the world's dirtiest beach." He went on a tour of the remote beach with a local conservationist. They analyzed what was on the beach and found more plastic particles than grains of sand. A Wikipedia search confirms the beach's new status. The website says, "It is known for its accumulation of plastic marine debris from the Great Pacific Garbage Patch."

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1004/100426-plastic_garbage_patch.html

STEP THREE: Post-Reading Activity

Answer the following comprehension questions. The answers are from the article that you just read. Use complete sentences.

a. Where are the two garbage patches located?

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_____

b. What damage is the garbage patch doing to Hawaii?

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STEP FOUR: Vocabulary

Choose three new words from the article and write them down below. Write the definition of each word. You may use a dictionary.

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STEP FIVE: Preparing to Write a Paragraph

Below are two topics. Choose ONE and follow the instructions.

TOPICS:

1. What kinds of pollution do you see where you live? Talk about each type and give examples.

2. What do you think should be done to fix the problem of pollution?

I. PREWRITING: Before you even begin to write your paragraph, you must first think about what you want to write about in your paragraph. The best way to do this is to BRAINSTORM. Brainstorming is where you gather as many good and bad ideas, suggestions, examples, and details as you can. Write down everything that comes to mind. There are different ways to brainstorm. Below are four techniques:

a. Clustering

Clustering is probably the most effective of all the writing techniques because it helps you to group and organize ideas while you are brainstorming. Begin by drawing a circle in the middle of a paper. Write your topic in the middle. Then draw lines out from the circle. At the end of each line, write ideas that are connected to the topic. See the example below.



My dog Charlie is my best friend.

Clustering (continued)
Notice that the four outer circles have ideas that could be used as major supporting points to the topic. The ideas connected to the four circles can then be used as details or examples. Remember that with brainstorming, you don't have to use everything you write down. Write down everything that comes to your mind. You can eliminate ideas later.

b. Wh- Questions
Another prewriting technique that is effective is questioning. Journalists have six questions they use when they write a story: *who, what, when, where, why, and how*. Journalists will answer these questions to be certain that they have included the most important information about an event, issue, or problem. These questions are especially useful when you are describing an event or writing an informative paragraph. See the example below.

Suppose that your teacher asks you to write about a particular problem in the world. Using the Wh- questions, you could get ideas by asking yourself the following questions:

Who is involved in the problem?
What exactly is the problem?
When did the problem begin, and how has it developed over time?
Where do you see the problem in the world?
Why is it a problem, and why is it so hard to solve?
How can we solve this problem?

Freewriting
Another prewriting strategy you can use is freewriting. This method is similar to writing in a journal. Take a topic and spend 5-10 minutes writing about it. Don't worry about spelling, grammar or complete sentences. Write whatever comes to your mind. You will be surprised at how many ideas will come to your mind as you write. You can then go back and highlight ideas that you want to put in your paragraph.

Listing
The last method is called listing. This method is good for a topic that has a specific order. Maybe your teacher wants you to write a paragraph where you have to list the steps in a process. Start at the top of a paper and write the steps in order. See the example below.

Topic: steps for getting a job

1. prepare a resume
2. look in newspaper/on Internet
3. ask friends and relatives
4. send in applications and resumes
5. call or email to follow up
6. interview
7. wait
8. start working

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: Use the space below to brainstorm ideas on your topic of pollution. Use any of the four methods above; however, I would recommend clustering for this type of assignment.

II. OUTLINE: After you have finished brainstorming, it is now time to organize your ideas. Every paragraph must have a topic sentence, two to five supporting points and several details or examples. Look over your ideas and choose 3 or 4 main ideas about your topic. Those will be your supporting points. Then choose details/examples to describe those supporting points. See an example outline below. Notice that the outline does NOT include every point or detail from the clustering exercise. As you are preparing an outline, cross off ideas from the brainstorming that you don't want to use.

OUTLINE

Topic Sentence: Dogs make great pets.

Supporting Point 1: They are easy to take care of

Details/Examples:
a. feed and give water once a day
b. bathe every other week
c. easy to pick up poop in the backyard

Supporting Point 2: Dogs are good for protection

Details/Examples:
a. bark at intruders
b. guard your house

Supporting Point 3: Dogs are great for kids

Details/Examples:
a. playful and fun
b. teach kids responsibility

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: Use the form on the next page and write an outline for your paragraph on pollution. You don't have to have four supporting points. You can have just three. And you don't have to use all the lines for details and examples. However, the more information you include on your outline, the easier your paragraph will be to write.

OUTLINE

TOPIC Sentence: _____

Supporting Point 1: _____

Details/Examples: _____

_____

_____

Supporting Point 2: _____

Details/Examples: _____

_____

_____

Supporting Point 3: _____

Details/Examples: _____

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Supporting Point 4: _____

Details/Examples: _____

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Conclusion: (You can write this when you do your rough draft)

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PRINT STUDENT NAME **STUDENT #**

Tutor Feedback:

_____In Step One, the student completed the pre-reading activity.

_____In Steps Two and Three, the student read the article and circled new words. The student then answered the comprehension questions.

_____In Step Four, the student wrote down 3 new words and defined them.

_____In Step Five, the student did a thorough job of brainstorming the topic. If you think the student didn't write down enough ideas, send him/her back to complete this part. Or you can help the student come up with some ideas.

_____In Step Five, student filled out the outline form completely. Look over the outline with the student and make sure the supporting points focus on the topic and all the details connect logically to their corresponding supporting points. <u>The student DOES NOT have to fill in all the lines</u>.

Additional Comments:

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PRINT INSTRUCTOR/TUTOR NAME **DATE**

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INSTRUCTOR/TUTOR SIGNATURE