Introduction_____

How to Become A Better Reader

Why is reading important when you are learning a new language?
Here are some important reasons:

- Reading helps you learn to think in the new language.
- Reading helps you build a better vocabulary
- Reading makes you more comfortable with written English. You can write better English if you feel comfortable with the language
- Reading may be the only way for you to use English if you live in a non-English-speaking country.

This handout is taken from various sources of Reading Comprehension material that meets its competence in mastering English texts.

1. Reading for pleasure. Read as much as you can. Read books, magazines, newspaper stories. Read anything you like. The more you read, the better you understand the English text. Choose a book from the list or find another book that is interesting for you. Your teacher can help you to find one at the bookshop or the library. Read your book everyday. Time your reading. Keep a record of your reading. Be sure to talk about your book with your teacher, your classmates and your friends.
2. Working on your reading skills. When you read, you use many different skills. You need to work on them one at a time. Here are some important skills you need to work on:

- Previewing. Before you start reading, find out something about what you will read. Then you can start thinking about the subject. You will be able to read faster and with more understanding.
- Asking questions as you read. This keeps your mind on what you read. Asking question helps you pay attention. It also helps you to remember what you read.
- Guessing what new words mean. It takes too much time to kook up every new word. And if you stop, you may forget what you read. Use the sentence or paragraph to guess words.
- Finding the topic and the main idea. The topic and the main idea let you know what is important. To find the topic and the main idea, ask two questions: what is this about? What does the writer want to say about this?
- Understanding patterns in English. A pattern is a way of putting ideas together. If you find the pattern, you can understand more. You will also remember more.
- Using signal words. Some words are like signposts on a highway. They tell you what direction is going. And they help you to follow the writer's ideas. Signal words also help you guess what you will read about.

3. Learning to Read faster. Reading faster is very important because of the way your brain works. When you read slowly, your brain does not get enough information. You understand better when you read faster.
4. Learning to Think in English. You also need to work on understanding English sentences. Learn how to get the meaning of the sentences. Find out ideas follow each other in English.

How to Read Faster

Read Passage A   Starting time:_____

Rosebud is a small town in New Jersey. It looks like many other towns in the United States. On Main Street, there is a post office and a police station. The drugstore and the library are down the street. There is also a shopping center. It has a supermarket and department store. Rosebud is a quiet place, not very rich or poor. But the town is growing. There are new houses every year. It is a popular place to live because it is near New York City. Many people live in Rosebud and work in New York.

Stop! Write the time you finished reading: _____
Now look at the questions. Try not to look at the passage.
Circle the best answer!

1. This passage is about: a. New York City   b. towns   c. Rosebud of New Jersey   d. a quiet place
2. Rosebud is: a. like many other American towns   b. not like many other American towns   c. a noisy place   d. a large city
3. Every year Rosebud: a. has fewer houses.   b. is like other Americans towns   c. has noisy streets   d. has more houses
4. Many people want to live in Rosebud because: a. it is growing   b. it is a quiet place   c. it is near New York City   d. it is not rich or poor.

Now go back and answer the questions a second time. You may look back the passage.

Now read passage B.   Starting time: _____

      In the middle of Rosebud, N.J., near the post office, is the office of Dr. Sam Diamond. Everybody in town knows Dr. Diamond. He is a very good dentist. He is also a popular person. He likes to tell funny stories to his patients. They forget about teeth when they listen to him. On the weekends Dr. Diamond likes to go to basketball games. Sometimes he also watches sports on TV. But his favorite activity is fishing. Every Saturday in the summer, he gets up early in the morning. He and his friends spend the day fishing at Lake Massapog.

Stop! Write the time you finished reading: _____
Now answer the questions. Do not look at the passage above, if it's possible cover or close it with your hand or any piece of paper.
Circle the best answer.
1. This passage is about: a. a dentist   b. what Dr. Diamond likes to do   c. Dr. Sam Diamond   d. fishing
2. Dr. Diamond is popular because: a. everyone in town knows him   b. he listens to his patients   c. he tells funny stories   d. he likes to go fishing
3. Fishing is Dr. Diamond's : a. job   b. dream   c. favorite activity   d. patient
4. Dr. Diamond likes to be: a. with people b. alone c. quite d. a patient

  Now go back and answer the questions a second time. You may look back the passage.

Read Passage C   Starting time: _____
      Dr. Diamond is married to Susan Diamond. She is a scientist with a PhD in chemistry. She works in a laboratory in New York City. She and some other scientists are studying the air over the city. They want find a way to make the air cleaner. Every morning, Susan takes the train to New York. She sees the dirty air. She also sees the dirt and garbage on the streets. She is glad she lives in New Jersey, and not in New York. The Diamonds' house has a back yard with trees and beautiful flowers. Susan's favorite activity is working in her garden.

Stop! Write the time you finished reading: _____
Now answer the questions. Do not look at the passage above, if it's possible cover or close it with your hand or any piece of paper.
Circle the best answer.
1. This passage is about: a. Dr. Diamond   b. scientists   c. the city and the country   d. Susan Diamond
2. Susan Diamond thinks New York: a. is a nice city   b. is a clean city   c. is a busy city   d. has dirty air and streets
3. Rosebud is: a. dirtier than New York   b. cleaner than New York   c. crowded   d. not a good place to live.
4. Susan's favorite activity is : a. taking the train to New York City   b. working in the laboratory   c. working in the garden   d. New York City
Now go back and answer the questions a second time. You may look back the passage.
Check your overall answers. Numbers correct_____

How to Think in English
If you want to read English well, you must think in English. These exercises will help you. In each exercise, the last sentence is not finished. Below the exercise, there are four endings. Circle the best ending. As you work.
1. Guess the meanings of new words
2. Try to understand the way ideas work together in English
Here is an example:

  In the morning the language laboratory was <u>full of people</u>. Many students were waiting. Joe could not find a seat. He decided to come back later when the laboratory was
    a. Closed
    b. Busy
    c. More crowded
    d. Less crowded

Here are six more examples for practice. The underlined words may help you find the best ending.
1. Fruit is <u>sweet</u>, but candy is <u>even</u>: a. nicer b. worse c. sweeter d. less sweet

2. Vitamins are very important for the health for young children. If children <u>don't get enough</u> vitamins in their food, they will: a. get sick   b. be happy   c. get well   d. stay home
3. Some people are vegetarians. They do not eat any kind of meat. One special kind of vegetarian will not <u>even</u> eat: a. vegetables b. carrots   c. fruits   d. eggs
4. There are many kinds of coffee around the world. The Italians like their coffee strong and dark. Americans <u>do not like very strong coffee</u>. They prefer it: a. stronger   b. weaker   c. for breakfast d. black.
5. You can make tea from many kinds of <u>plants</u> and <u>fruits</u>. Some people drink tea from roses and other flowers. People also make tea from: a. medicine   b. coffee   c. milk   d. apples
6. Chocolate is popular around the world. In some countries, people use it in main dishes such as chicken. In other countries, it is used in <u>desserts such as</u> ice cream, pudding, or : a. breakfast b. soup c. salad d. cake

Check your answer. If you made mistakes, lock at the examples again. Try to find out why you did not understand.

Previewing and Predicting_____

Previewing
Before you start on a trip, you usually look at a map. It helps you plan your way. Then you know what to expect as you travel. This is a good idea in reading, too. Look before you read. Then it is much easier to understand. That is what you do when you **PREVIEW**

Read this passage

The first time you try it, you ask someone to help you. You may fall if no one holds you up. It is a good idea to start on the sidewalk. The street may be dangerous. After you start, do not stop. Try to go faster. That will help you to stay up. Remember, even little children can do this. And once you learn how, you will never forget!

What is this passage about? _____ (pictures below are the clue)

How to preview a short passage:
1. Read the title
2. Look at the pictures (if any)
3. Read the first sentence in the first paragraph
4. Read the first line of the other paragraphs
5. Read the last sentence of the last paragraph
6. Watch for names, dates, and numbers

A Busy Student
Tomiko is happy to be a student in New York. She is studying English at Columbia University. She plans to finish her English course in June. Then She will work on his master's degree at New York University.

Tomiko likes the many beautiful buildings in New York. Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

She also likes the people in New York. Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Best of all, Tomiko loves the theaters in New York. Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Tomiko is far from her home in japan. But she is not sad. Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. She is very busy and happy in New York.

Now turn the page and answer the questions!

Circle the best answer. Don't look back at the passage.
1. This passage is about: a. an American student in New York   b. a Japanese student in New York   c. a Japanese student in Japan   d. a Japanese man studying in New York.
2. Tomiko is: a. unhappy   b. happy   c. lonely   d. not busy
3. She goes to plays in: a. large theaters   b. small theaters   c. New York   d. all the above
4. Tomiko has: a .few interests b. few friends c. many interests   d. nothing to do

Now read the whole passage

A Busy Student

Tomiko is happy to be a student in New York. She is studying English at Columbia University. She plans to finish her English course in June. Then she will work on her master's degree at New York University.

Tomiko likes the many beautiful buildings in New York. In fact, she plans to become an architect. Then she can build great buildings, too.

Tomiko also likes the people in New York City. There are many different kinds of people. They speak many languages. Tomiko has made new friends from other countries.

Best of all, Tomiko loves the theaters in New York. She goes to plays almost very week. Sometimes the plays are in theaters on Broadway. Sometimes the plays are in small theaters in other parts of the city.

Tomiko is far from her home in Japan. But she is not sad. She goes to classes every day. She visits her friends. She goes to see new places. And she attends many plays. She is very busy and happy in New York.

Check your answers. How many did you answer correctly?_____
You can learn a lot about a passage if you read just a few important sentences. This is the reason for **Previewing**.

Passage B   LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE UNITED STATES

Most people in the United States speak only one language: English. They do not learn to speak a second language. High schools teach languages. But very few students learn to speak well. Why don't Americans speak other languages?

First, most Americans never travel to other countries. The United States is a very large country. Americans can travel a long distance and not leave the United States. They do not need to learn a second language.

Second, one of the countries next to the United States is Canada. Most people in Canada speak English. Some Americans live near Canada. They travel there often. But they do not have to learn a new language.

Third, many people in other parts of the world speak English. If Americans travel to other countries, they can speak English there, too.

Some Americans think that it is a mistake to speak only English. They believe it is very important to learn a second language. Maybe someday other Americans will agree. Then more people will speak a second language in the United States.

Circle the best answer. Do not look at the passage above!
1. Most Americans never learn to speak: a. English   b. a second language   c. to people in other counties   d. fluently
2. Most Americans speak only English because: a. they can't learn another language   b. they never travel to other countries   c. other languages are not important   d. they don't have language classes in school
3. In other parts of the world: a. everyone speaks English b. no one speaks English c. many people speak English   d. everyone speaks a second language
4. Some Americans think it is a mistake to: a. learn other languages   b. speak only English   c. travel to other countries   d. go to school.

Scanning_____
Look at the following shopping list to find out if you remembered to order bread:
Shopping list
Milk
Butter
Ice cream

Bread
Bananas
Broccoli
Rice
Potatoes
Oranges

How many words did you read? Bread was the only word you needed to read. The other words were not important. This kind of reading is called scanning

You usually scan: a telephone book, an index in a textbook, a list of movies in the newspaper, the pages of a dictionary.

You usually do not scan: a mystery story, a textbook for an important course, important papers from a lawyer, a map for getting to a party, a question on a test.

Example. Scan below page for the answers to these questions. Work as quickly as you can.
1. How many chapters are there in the book?
2. Which is the chapter on Networks and Repertoires?
3. On what page can you read about the Linguistic Variable?
4. Which part of chapter 6 is about data collection?
5. Does this book have an index?

Contents

Scanning an Index

Look for answers to these questions in the index on the page. Try to find the page number very quickly. Ask your teacher or another student to time you. Write down exactly how many seconds it takes to complete the page.
1. Contract language   page_____
2. Arabic   page_____
3. Communicative competence   page_____
4. Chomsky   page_____
5. Culture   page_____
6. Austin   page_____
7. Basilect   page_____
8. Cooperation   page_____
9. Closing in conversation   page_____

Index

Going to the Movies

1. How many movies are showing at Tunjungan XXI?
2. What movies are playing or showing at Tunjungan XXI?
3. What time is "The Resident" showing at the CIPUTRA WORLD XXI?
4. How many movies are showing at SUTOS XXI?
5. What movie is shown not later than 9 pm at Tunjungan XXI?
6. What movie is now showing at DELTA?
7. Where I can go to see "My Sassy Girl"?
8. What movie I can see at MATOS XXI?
9. What time is the latest movie shown at CIPUTRA WORLD XXI?

Grand City XXI 13:00, 15:00, 19:00, 21:00
LARRY CROWNE, DYLAN DOG, IRONCLAD & ARTHUR 3
Matos XXI 12:00, 15:00, 19:00, 21:00
LIMITLESS
Ciputra World XXI 14:00, 16:15, 18:30, 20:45
THE RESIDENT, SCREAM 4
Sutos XXI 14:00, 16:00, 18:00, 20:00
CATATAN SI BOY, KEPERGOK POCONG, IRONCLAD, SURAT KECIL UNTUK TUHAN
Delta 12:30, 15:00, 18:30, 20:45
TRANSFORMER, MY SASSY GIRL, LIMITLESS, THE A TEAM
Tunjungan XXI 13:30, 16:00, 19:00, 21:00
THE DEATHS OF IAN STONE, TRANSFORMER, SCREAM 4, THE RESIDENTS, IRONCLAD (not showing up to 21:00)

Looking for Properties (housing)

1. Are there any apartments rent in central Surabaya?
2. Whom do I call about an apartment in west Surabaya?
3. What is the phone number if I want to call for an apartment in eastern part of Surabaya?
4. How much does it cost if I want to rent a house at Pondok Benowo Indah in west Surabaya?

West Surabaya	East Surabaya
For sale/ rent Pondok Benowo Indah ER-10	property for sale on wonorejo timur
200jt sold/10 per year phone: 3559007, Mrs. Yap	350jt (negotiable) phone: 085234730162
Central Surabaya	a house for rent on kalijudan taruna V/1 SHM LT5x21
For rent apartment for business kalibutuh street 39	15 jt (negotiable) phone :031-9700136
Phone: 5347899	a flat for sale at Summerset phone: 031-9700766

Scanning a Newspaper story

Scan the news story below to find the answers to these questions. Work fast. Ask your friend to time you

Starting time_____

1. How many stores were damaged in the fire?
2. In which store did the fire (blaze) start?
3. What time did the fire start?
4. Where is the shopping center?

The New York Times
14 Yonkers Stores Damaged by Fire
Special to The New York Times
Yonkers, Nov. 12—a four alarm fire damaged 14 store today in the Cross County Shopping Center, the largest shopping center in Westchester County. Fire investigators said the blaze apparently started in a pile of cardboard cartons at the rear of a shoe store and spread through a utilities duct above the 13 other stores. The fire started at 4:40 pm and was declared under control at 6:14 pm. The center is on the Cross County Parkway at the Gov. Thomas E. Dewey Thruway. Two firefighters were treated at the scene for minor cuts. Lieut. John Carey of the Yonkers Arson Squad said the cause of the fire was under investigation.

High February rainfall a Jakarta flood hazard

The Jakarta Post , Jakarta | Tue, 02/02/2010 5:57 PM | Jakarta

The Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) warned Tuesday that Jakarta's February rainfall could reach 400 mm, well above the normal average of 273 mm. The Head of Climate Analysis and Information Nuryadi said that the high level of rainfall could cause inundations in Jakarta's low-lying areas."People have to remain vigilant when the predicted rainfall numbers are this high," he told The Jakarta Post.

BMKG predicted chances of light to heavy rain in Jakarta both noon and night for the first week of February. The current rainy season is expected to end in June 2010 for Jakarta and West Java. (gzl)

1. What is the news about?
2. In what paragraph(s) the newsworthy event can really be captured?
3. What is the closest meaning of the word "vigilant"?
4. Who is the possible actor involved in the news?

Govt should fix roads: PMI chairman

Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) chairman Jusuf Kalla said that high number of road accidents during the Idul Fitri holiday this year was caused mostly by driver error and poor road conditions.

"The drivers might be sleepy or careless, while the road conditions are poor," Kalla said on Thursday as quoted by tribunnews.com.
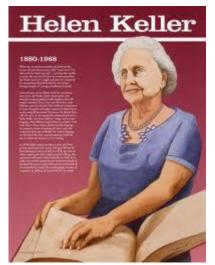
Therefore, he said, the government should renovate the roads in order to decrease the number of accidents.
The National Police recorded 2,773 accidents cases have occurred since a week before Idul Fitri to two days after it. The number of accidents has increased by 34.61 percent from last year's cases which were 2,060.

Now, try to find out or capture some information provided from the news story above.

1._____

2._____

3._____

Guessing Word Meanings

The story of Helen Keller.

Helen Keller was a famous American. She was a writer and a speaker. She wrote_____ and articles about education and politics. She_____ to every part of the world. But the surprising fact about Helen Keller _____ this: she could not see and she could not hear. This blind and deaf _____ was a very special person. Helen Keller _____ not always blind and deaf. She was all right when _____ was born on June 1880. but she _____ very sick the next year. After that, she was not the same. Her parents _____ her and _____ tried to take care of her. But it was not easy. Her _____ could not show her what to do.

By the time Helen was six _____ old, her parents were very unhappy. _____ knew that Helen was very smart. _____ they could not teach her. They did _____ know what to do. But they knew they had to do something. They wrote to Michael Anagnos, a _____ in Boston. They asked him to _____ a teacher for Helen. He _____ to them and said " I know ___ good teacher for Helen, Her name ___ Annie Sullivan. I will send her to you."

The Kellers were very pleased. They _____ a good teacher for Helen. Then _____ could learn and they could all ___ happy. The teacher could show Helen _____ to do. She could teach Helen ___ read and to talk. The Keller _____ lived in the South. They had a _____ beautiful house in a small town in Alabama. _____ were not rich, but they were _____ poor. They could pay Annie Sullivan to _____ Helen.

Helen was not always a nice child to be near. She did not know how to e___ at the table. She made strange n_____ like bird. She sometimes hit h___ mother or her father. She often r___ around the room and hurt herself. I_ was hard to know what Helen t_____. She could not see and she c_____ not hear. She could not k_____ the world. No one knew how t__ tell her things. And she could n___ tell things to anyone else.

Annie Sullivan finally came __o the Keller home. She came by train from Boston. Helen's m_____ and father tried to tell Helen t_____ Annie was her friend. They could n___ make her understand. Annie began to t_____ care of Helen. She tried to t_____ her. She showed Helen the name o___ things. She wrote the words on _____'s hands. But Helen did not understand. _____ began to feel hopeless.

One day. Annie was trying to teach Helen. They went for a walk, and _____ came to a well. Helen was _____ warm and thirsty. Annie put Helen's hand _____ the water. She took a _____ and gave Helen a drink.

Helen _____ glad to have a cool drink. _____ Annie took Helen's hand. She used her _____ to write "WATER" on Helen's _____. Suddenly, Helen understood! She knew that _____ was telling her _____ something. The feeling _____ her hand was the name for something. Then Helen was very happy. She _____ excited. Now She could know the _____ of everything, She took Annie's hand.

The next year, Annie Sullivan took Helen to Boston. They stayed with Michael Anagnos. _____ went to a special school. She _____ how to speak and how to listen with her hand. She learned _____ read book with her fingers. _____ she was ready to go _____ another school in New York. Annie went _____ Helen to New York, and they _____ to the Gilman school. Soon Helen _____ nineteen years old. It was _____ for her to go to college. _____ took an examination to ____ to Radcliffe, a famous college _____ Massachusetts. Helen was very _____ student. She passed the examination. Helen went to Radcliffe, and she _____ in 1904.

Annie and Helen stayed together. Helen wrote a book _____her life. It _____ called *The Story of My Life*. She also wrote _____ other books. Some of _____ books became movie. Annie ____ Helen traveled to England, Scotland, Greece and other _____. Helen visited almost every ____ of the world. She _____ to help other blind _____. She also tried to _____ poor people and she _____ to stop wars. Helen_____ that her life was _____ because of Annie Sullivan. She _____ Annie, and she wrote ____ story book about her called *Teacher*. _____ is the name that _____ used for Annie all _____ her life. Helen Keller died _____ June, 1968.

Now, try to make Topics of each Paragraph. What it tells you about.

CHOOSING THE BEST TOPIC

A. Try to read each paragraph. Ask yourself, "What is this about?" Make a check after the best topic. Write "too specific" or "too general".

Mexico City

Mexico City is growing very fast. In 1970 the city had about nine million people. Now it has over 17 million. All these people are causing problems for the city. There are not enough jobs. Also, there is not enough housing. Large families have to live together in very small houses. Many houses do not have water supply. They also do not have bathroom and electricity. The Mexican government is worried about all these problems; it is working hard to make life better in the city.

a. Mexican government   Too specific because it is only mentioned at the of the paragraph
b. large cities   Too general as this paragraph does not really tell the point of its topic
c. Mexico City's problems   Is the right answer as it is described mainly about towards the problems

Why is Mexico City growing so fast? Where are all these people coming from? They are coming to the city from the country. Life is hard on the farms in Mexico. Most people on farms have to live a very simple life. They have no extra money for modern things. People think life in the city must be better. So they leave their farms and move to Mexico City.

a. Why people are moving to Mexico City _____
b. How Mexican live in the country   _____
c. Life in Mexico today   _____

All around the world large cities have the same problem. That problem is air pollution. Mexico City has very bad air. The air there is dirty and very unhealthy. Cars are one reason for the dirty air. Many Mexican now own their own cars and drive in the city. The factories in the area also cause air pollution. These factories put a lot of smoke into the air. It is not easy to clean up the air in a large city. The government has to make new laws and everyone has to help.

a. air pollution   _____
b. Mexico City's air pollution   _____
c. How factories cause air pollution _____

Exercise .

Some of the largest trees in the world are in California. These are called redwood trees. Redwood National Park is a large forest of redwood trees. Visitors in the park can walk and drive through the forest to look at the trees. Some redwoods are hundreds of years old. These old trees are very tall. They are also very wide at the bottom. One tree has a large hole in the bottom. The hole is so big you can drive a car through it.

a. parks in California   _____
b. redwood trees in California_____

c. the age of redwoods _____

     In many hilly areas of Scotland there once were large forests. Over the years the forests became smaller. People cut down the trees to use the wood for heating or building. They used the land for farming. But after a while the land was not good for farming. It became rocky because the earth was washed away by the rain. There were no trees to hold the earth in place. Now the Scottish government is planting new trees. These new forest look nice and green. They also will help improve the earth for the future.

a. the land in Scotland _____
b. how trees hold earth in place _____
c. forests in Scotland _____

     Large forests are important to us in many ways. They give us wood for building and heating. They are a home for many kinds of plants and animals. And for many city people, forests are a place to go for vacation. People can learn about nature there. They can breathe fresh air and sleep in a quiet place. But there is one more reason why forests are important for everyone. The leaves on the trees in a forest can help clean the air. Dirty air is a problem in many parts of the world. Without our forests, this problem might be much worse.

a. the important of forests _____
b. taking vacation in forest _____
c. large forest _____

B. Now try to write the topic of all three paragraphs. _____

THINKING OF THE TOPIC

Example:

>   The first real bicycle was made in Scotland. It was built in 1839 by a man named Macmillan. His bicycle had two wheels like modern bicycle. But it was much more difficult to ride. It was heavier because it was made of wood and iron. It did not have rubber tires like a modern bicycle. Instead, it had wooden wheels. This made it very uncomfortable on bumpy roads. But Macmillan was lucky about one thing: he could not get a flat tire!
>
> What is the topic of this paragraph? Think carefully about your topic. It should not be too specific or too general
> Topic: _____

The topic of this paragraph is "the first bicycle." If your answer is similar, that is okay. For example, "the Macmillan bicycle" is also a good answer. "Bicycle" could be too general; "Bicycle wheels" is too specific.

Exercise 1:
A. Write the topics. Be sure they are not too specific or too general. You can work with another student.

     Fog is really a low cloud near the ground. Fog and clouds are made of many little drops of water. These drops stay in the air because they are so small. You cannot see each drop. But fog can make it hard to see other things. It can be dangerous if you are driving, for example. Sometimes where there is a lot of fog you cannot see the road. Sailors also have trouble when there is fog. Boats may get lost and hit rocks or beaches in the fog.
Topic: _____

     When there is a heavy rain storm, you sometimes see lightning. It is a very bright light in the sky. In the past, people thought the reason was religious. They thought it came from an angry god. In the 1700s, Benjamin Franklin found out lightning was electricity. Storms with lightning really are electrical storms. But scientists today still do not know everything about lightning. They do not know exactly what it comes from. And they never know where and how it will hit the earth.
Topic: _____

     All clouds are made of many little drops of water. But not all clouds are alike. There are three kinds of clouds. Cirrus clouds are one kind. These are made of ice drops. They look very soft and light. Another kind of cloud is called a cumulus cloud. They are very large and deep and flat on the bottom. We usually see cumulus clouds on warm summer days. And finally there are stratus clouds, which cover the whole sky. These clouds make the sky gray and sun does not shine at all.
Topic: _____

B. Write the topic of all three paragraphs: _____

Exercise 2:

In the United States drinking water comes from a few different places. Many cities get their drinking water from special lakes called reservoirs. Other cities get their drinking water from rivers. For example, the drinking water for New Orleans comes from the Mississippi River. In some areas, people get their water from mountains. The water from mountain snow is delicious and clean. In other areas people dig deep holes in the ground for water. These holes are called wells. Outside of cities, most people get their water this way.
Topic: _____

Many American scientists are worried about the drinking water in the United States. They think that soon there may be no more clean drinking water. Dirt, salt and chemical from factories can get into the water. Then it is not safe to drink. This is already true in some places. One example is a small town in Massachusetts. Many children in this town became sick because of the dirty water. Another place with water problems is Sacramento, California. The water near an airport in Sacramento is not safe to drink. Many other cities and towns have water problems, too.
Topic: _____

It is very important to use water carefully. Here are some ways you can use less water. First, you should be sure you turn off the faucets tightly. They should not drip in the bathroom or kitchen sink. Second, you should not keep the water on for a long else. It should be off while you are washing the dishes. Finally, in the summer you should water your garden in the evening. That way you will not loose a lot of water. During the day the sun dries up the earth too quickly.
Topic: _____

B. Write the topic for all three paragraphs. _____

MAIN IDEAS
Main idea tells you more about the topic. It tells you the writer's idea about the topic. For example: The topic is about *Supermarkets*
Try to write three different ideas about supermarkets.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Example: Bicycles are very popular today in many countries. Many people use bicycles for exercise. Exercise is only one of the reasons why bicycles are popular. Another reason is money. Bicycles are expensive to buy. They do not need gas to make them go. They are easy and cheap to fix. In cities, many people like bicycles than cars. With a bicycle, they never have to wait in traffic. They also do not have to find a place to park. And finally, bicycles do not cause any pollutions!

What do you think is the topic? _____
Write three topics about bicycle: 1. Bicycles do not cause pollution
                                  2. Bicycles are better than cars
                                  3. Bicycles are popular today for many reasons

Reasons for each main idea: _____

_____

_____

Exercise 1: Read each paragraph. Ask yourself, "What is the topic? What is the main idea?" Write the topic beside the best main idea.

Clothes can tell a lot about a person. Some people like very colorful clothes. They want everyone to look at them. They want to be the center of things. Others like to wear nice clothes. But their clothes are not colorful or

fancy. They do not like people to look at them. There are also some people who wear the same thing all the time. They do not care if everyone looks at them. They do not care what anyone thinks about them.

  a. Clothes _____

  b. Clothes _____

  c. Clothes_____

   It is important to bring the clothes when you travel. If you are going to a cold country, you should bring warm clothes. Be sure you have a hat and gloves, too. If you are going to a hot country, you need different clothes. You do not want heavy or dark clothes. In hot weather, light clothes are best. If you are going to a city, you may need some nice clothes. You may want to go to a special restaurant or a concert. It is different if you are travelling by bicycle in the country. Then you will want comfortable clothes. But one rule is the same for all travelers. Do not bring too many clothes.

  a. Clothes _____

  b. Clothes _____

  c. Clothes _____

   Clothes today are very different from the clothes of the 1800s. One different is the way they look. For example, in the 1800s all women wore dresses. The dresses all had long skirts. But today women do not always wear dresses with long skirts. Sometimes they wear short skirts. Sometimes they wear pants. Another difference between 1800s and today is the cloth. In the 1800s, clothes were made only from natural kinds of cloth. They were made cotton, wool, silk or linen. But today, there are many new kinds of man-made cloth. A lot of clothes are now made from nylon, rayon, or polyester.

  a. Clothes _____

  b. Clothes _____

  c. Clothes _____

Read each paragraph. Try to ask yourself, "What is the topic? What is the writer's idea about the topic?" Then write the main idea sentence

Practice 1:

   Not all newspaper ads are for selling things. Some ads are about people. The "Help Wanted" ads give information about jobs. All kinds of jobs are found in this part of the newspaper. There are ads for secretaries and electricians, doctors and professors. Another kind of as about people is the "Personal" ad. These ads are not about work. They are written by people who are looking for friends. Sometimes these people are even looking for husbands and wives. Newspaper ads are a very good way to get people together.

Main idea: _____

   We can learn a lot a country from the "Personal" ads. These ads tell us about people and their problems. One example of this is from Spain. In a small town in Spain there were forty-two men. But there were not many women there. The men wanted to find wives. So they put a personal ad in a city newspaper. Some women in the city were not happy living alone. So they answered the ad by telephone. They wanted to find out more about the town and the men. But the women did not go to live in the town. They did not really want to work on farms. They did not really want to marry small-town men. So the men did not find wives. And the women are still alone. Not all men and women in Spain are like these people. But this ad may tell us something about larger problems in Spain.

Main idea: _____

Personal ads are usually written for good reasons. Most of the people who write them really do want a friend. But sometimes people write personal ads for other reasons. They may write the ads as a joke. This is not a nice thing to do. The people who answer the ads may be unhappy. They may need a friend very much. Some of the people who write the ads can cause worse problems. They may want to hurt someone. So, if you answer a personal ad, you should be careful. The ad may not mean what it says.

Main idea: _____

Practice 2:

   The earth is always changing. One way it changes is by erosion. Some reason is caused by the weather. For example, the wind causes erosion. In a desert, the wind blows the sand around. Rain also causes erosion. It washes

away earth and even changes the shape of some rocks. Another kind of erosion is caused by rivers. When a river goes through a mountain, it cuts into the mountain. After a long time, the mountain is lower and the land is flatter.

Main idea: _____

Mt. Vesuvius in Italy and Mt. St, Helens in the United States are both famous mountains. They are both volcanoes. A volcano is a mountain that is open at the top. Smoke and hot air come out of the hole. Sometimes very hot rock also comes out of the mountain. That can mean trouble for people nearby. This is what happened with Mt.Vesuvius and Mt. St, Helens. Hot rock poured out of Mt. Vesuvius and covered the town of Pompeli in 19 A.D. Everyone in the town was killed. The Mt. St, Helens volcano did not kill many people. There were no cities close to the mountain. But the hot rock killed a large part of the forest. And a lot of dirt fell on cities many miles away.

Main idea: _____

Scientists know a lot about the earth. For example, they understand how mountains are made and what a volcano is. But they do not know when a volcano will send hot rock into the air. They may know about the outside of the earth. But they are still not sure about the inside. And scientists are not sure about how earth was mad. They have many different ideas about this. There are still many difficult questions for scientists who study the earth.

Main idea: _____

FINDING THE PATTERN OF ORGANIZATION

For example:
1. Listing – ways to travel : Plane, train, bus , and ship
2. Time order: -- wars in American History:
                    1776 – American Revolution
                    1812 – War of 1812
                    1860 – Civil war
                    1914 – world war I
                    1940 – world war 2
3. Cause- effect – Cause: heavy rain
                    - Effect : my clothes get wet
4. Comparison – comparing Paris and New York : How are they alike?
                                        Expensive, beautiful buildings
                                        Many art museums
                                     How are they different?
                                        Paris is a capital city; New York is not a capital city
                                        Paris is safer; New York is larger
    1. Listings
Example: Diamonds are very expensive for <u>several</u> reasons. <u>First</u> they are difficult to find. They are not only found in a few places in the world. <u>Second,</u> they are useful. People use diamond to cut other stones. <u>Third,</u> diamonds do not change. They stay the same for millions of years. And <u>finally,</u> they are very beautiful.
What is the topic of this paragraph? _____
What is the main idea? _____
The underlined words are signal words. They tell us about the author's pattern of organization. The signal word for this pattern is several. It tells us to look for a list. This list tells us several reasons why diamonds are expensive. Try to write them below:

_____
_____
_____

    2. Time order. Example: Albert Einstein was born in <u>1879</u> in Ulm, Germany. He graduated from the University of Zurich in Switzerland in <u>1905</u>. In <u>1905,</u> he also did some of his most famous work in physics. In <u>1919</u> he won the Nobel Prize of Physics. Between <u>1919 and 1933</u> he lived in Germany and traveled a lot to talk to other scientists. Then in <u>1933,</u> he had to leave Germany because of Hitler and The Nazi party. He moved to the United States. From <u>1933 until his death,</u> he lived I Princeton, New Jersey. He died on <u>April 18, 1955.</u>
    What is the topic of this paragraph? _____
    How can you tell this is a time order pattern? _____
        Signals   Event

13

1. _____   _____
2. _____   _____
3. _____   _____
4. _____   _____
5. _____   _____

3. Cause and effect. Example1:
1. Exercise can make you hungry and thirsty
   Cause_____ Effect _____
2. Many car accidents happen because of ice and snow on the road.
   Cause _____ Effect _____
3. Bad food and not enough sleep are two reasons for bad health.
   Cause _____ Effect _____
4. Many doctors today believe that smoking cigarettes may lead to cancer
   Cause _____ Effect _____
5. Some people become nervous because of drinking coffee.
   Cause _____ Effect _____

Example 2: There are many different causes of car accidents in the United States. Sometimes accidents are caused by bad weather. Ice or snow can make roads very dangerous. Accidents also can result from problems with the car. Even a small problem like a flat tire can be serious. Bad roads are another cause of accidents. Some accidents happen because the driver falls asleep. And finally, some accidents are caused by drinking too much alcohol. In fact, this is one of the most important causes of accidents.
Topic : the cause of car accidents in the United States

Causes :	Signals:	effect
Bad weather	are caused by	car accidents
Car problems	result from	
Bad roads	cause of	
Driver falls	because	
Drinking too much alcohol	are caused by	

Exercise 1:
   The first computers were very large machines. Now computers come in all shapes and sizes. There are still big computers for companies or universities. There are other special computers for factories. These large computers tell the factory machines what to do. But there are also small personal computers to use at home or in an office. There are even computers in telephones, television sets, and cars. These computers have to be very small. They are so small you cannot even see all their parts.
   a. Topic : _____
   b. Main idea : _____
   c. Pattern signal :_____
   Signal: details
_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____

   Computers are very useful, but they also can cause problems. One kind of problem is with the computer's memory. It is not perfect, so sometimes computers lose important information. Another problem is with the machinery. Computers are machines, and machines can break down. When computers break down, they may erase information, like chalk on a blackboard. Or they may stop doing anything at all. And there is another, different kind of problem with computers. Some doctors say they may be bad for your health. They say you should not work with computers all day.
   a. Topic: _____
   b. Main idea: _____
   c. Pattern signal: _____
   Signals: details
_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____

_____   _____
_____   _____

Exercise 2.

      The Vietnam War began soon after World War II. At first, in 1946, the war was between the Vietnamese and the French. The government was French, but many Vietnamese people did not want a French government. They wanted the French to leave so they could have their own government. The Vietnamese fought hard, and slowly they won more and more land. By 1953, the French army was in trouble. They were not winning the war. French soldiers were dying and the war was costing a lot of money. So, in 1954, the French army stopped fighting and left Vietnam. That was the end of the first part of the Vietnam War.

Topic: _____

Signal: Events

_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____

      The second part of the Vietnam War began in 1954. After the French army left, there were two Vietnams: North Vietnam and South Vietnam. There were also two governments. But both governments wanted to be the only government for all of Vietnam. So from 1954 until 1960, the North and the South were fighting all the time. The North Vietnamese grew slowly stronger. By the beginning of 1965, The North Vietnamese were winning the war. But the United States government did not want the North Vietnamese to win. So in March 1965, the United States began to help South Vietnam. They sent guns and airplanes to help the South. At first, the United States sent only few soldiers. But by July 1965, there were about 75.000 American soldiers in Vietnam.

Topic: _____

Signal: Event

_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____

Exercise 3:

Try to write the topic for each paragraph. Underline the signal words. Write the causes and the effects o the lines.

      Most people do not think of coffee as a drug. But, in fact, it is a drug and it has important effects on your body. Some of the effects are good and some are not. Coffee can help you stay awake when you are driving or working. But it can also keep you awake at night when you want to sleep. Coffee makes some people feel more alive so they can work better. Others feel too nervous when they drink coffee. After a large meal, coffee can help your stomach. But much coffee can cause a stomachache.

Topic: _____

Causes:	signals	Effects
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

      Aspirin is a simple drug. It has many useful effects. It can stop a headache or an earache. It helps take away pain in the fingers or knees. Aspirin can stop a fever if you have the flu. Or it can make you feel better if you have a cold. Some doctors believe that aspirin can also result in a healthy heart. They say that some people should take an aspirin everyday. For those people, aspirin may stop heart disease.

Topic: _____

Causes:	Signals	Effects
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Exercise 4:

Scientists and doctors say that about 34 million Americans are too fat. Why is this? One cause is the kind of food Americans eat. Many Americans like "fast food." These foods (such as hamburgers and ice cream) often have fattening things in them. Another cause is the way Americans eat. They often eat little snacks between regular meals. These extra foods add extra fat on the body. A third cause is not enough exercise. Americans like driving everywhere, instead of walking. They often have machines to do a lot of the work. Some Americans are also too heavy because of health problems. But for most of those 34 million Americans, the problem is the Americans lifestyle.

Topic: _____

Causes:	Signals	Effects
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

If you are too fat, you may have serious problems with your health. A group of doctors wrote about a report about some of the effects of too much fat. One important effect is on the heart. If you are fat, your heart has to work harder. This may lead to a heart attack. Or it may lead to other heart problems. Extra fat can also change the amount of sugar in your blood. This can cause serious disease such as diabetes. High blood pressure is another possible result of being fat. Even cancer can sometimes be a result. More studies are needed about all these problems. But one thing is clear: extra fat may make your life shorter.

Topic: _____

Causes:	Signals	Effects
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____