

# **English for Study Purposes**

## **Unit 2B: Improving Writing**

## **Aims**

- To build on students' awareness of good writing, style, structure and grammatical correctness.
- To give students the opportunity to be guided through a series of writing problems and to overcome them.
- To ask students to use this awareness by correcting/amending poor/weak pieces of writing.
- To alert students to elements of style, structure, syntax and organisation.

## **Materials**

- EFSP 2.1. Student's File Paragraph One - Read More Week - Rewrite
- EFSP 2.2. Student's File Paragraph Two - Surface Errors and Topic Sentences
- EFSP 2.3. Student's File Paragraph Three - More Problems
- EFSP 2.4. Student's File Paragraph Four and Five - Where's the content?
- EFSP 2.5. Student's File Paragraph Six - Developing a Topic
- EFSP 2.6. Student's File Paragraph Seven - Conclusions
- EFSP 2.7. Student's File Student Essay 1 - Proofread, Discuss, Improve
- EFSP 2.8. Student's File Student Essay 2 - Proofread, Discuss, Improve

## **Procedure**

1. Refer students to EFSP 2.1 and explain that they are being guided through a rewrite procedure. The piece of writing is analysed for them and errors pointed out.
2. Students can work through the materials at their own pace with the teacher monitoring.
3. The two final activities, EFSP 2.7 and EFSP 2.8 are two short essays for students to proof read, discuss and improve. Set this up as a group activity if so wanted. The Teacher's File provides notes on improving the essays.

Some brief notes on Student Essay 1

## Paragraph 1:

Normally one would be introduced by someone else, and anyway, the President of the SA would be known to the school. The opportunity to attract attention and advertise the special week is lost.

## Paragraph 2:

A reasonably coherent paragraph. We come to school to learn, and one of the best ways of learning is to read. The point is rather lost in the poor grammar and syntax.

## Paragraph 3:

Another reasonably coherent paragraph. This is where the main event, Read More Week, is introduced. However, the inadequacy of textbook knowledge is repeated here. The presentation is very much weakened again by the poor grammar, syntax and diction.

## Paragraph 4:

Rather a jumble of ideas, only loosely connected. Some of the suggestions seem rather unrealistic. Convention may have been confused with exhibition. The comment about having to stand in public libraries is very odd. A lot of reorganisation is necessary.

## Paragraph 5:

Most school libraries organise newspaper subscriptions anyway. The writer's ideas are not very appropriate.

## Paragraph 6:

It sums up, but so little has gone before that it comes over as repetition.

The writer has rather more sense of structure and paragraphing than the first had, but is not good on ideas, and is very weak when it comes to grammar. The content is, in general, very thin.

Brief notes on Student Essay 2

## Paragraph 1:

Plenty to say about unclear reference and vagueness. There is some idea of a stimulating start with a rhetorical question, but it may not really lead us to the heart of the essay. The student was not asked to write about who is responsible, but whether it would work to make parents legally responsible.

## Paragraph 2:

There seem to be more important points, but the student could develop an argument that parents should be held legally responsible until their children are 16. The problem is that this never happens. The next paragraph seems to start the argument again.

## Paragraph 3:

It's not a bad paragraph, but it's a little irrelevant. Is it true that parents don't realise that their children will grow up? Is this why they should be made legally responsible? The exact argument is not very clear or central to the topic. It seems a rather general comment on youth problems. This is a common problem in student examination essays.

## Paragraph 4:

How well does the metaphor work?

Is it really helpful?

Legal responsibility and the need for parental love seem to be getting mixed up. Despite paragraph 2, it is unclear what age group is being discussed.

## Paragraph 5:

We have moved without explanation from moral responsibility to practical consequences of the proposal.

## Paragraph 6:

Are these practical objections to the policy, or definite arguments against it? It might have been the writer's intention to argue that the policy is correct in theory, but impractical. If it was, this argument could have been made far more clearly. This essay keeps on going off in different directions.

## Paragraph 7:

Towards the end, we again start talking about a different point, related, but not part of a chain of argument.

## Paragraph 8:

A reader might feel cheated now. The plan of the essay suggested in paragraph 2 has not been realised. The final sentence seems to miss the point, and this may be the real weakness at the heart of this essay: the writer never fully realised that the should be discussing in moral and practical terms a proposal to punish parents when their offspring commit crimes. The essay wanders around the point, but never reaches it.