Şehir Test of English Proficiency (STEP) Students’ Handbook
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I. STEP: GENERAL OVERVIEW

STEP is the exit test of English Preparatory Program of İstanbul Şehir University. STEP is given in September, January and May. It consists of ‘Reading’, ‘Listening’, ‘Writing’ and ‘Speaking’ sections and given in two sessions: Written and Speaking Exam. Below you can find detailed information for all the sections. The written exam, the first session, takes two and a half hours and assesses students’ reading, listening and writing skills. The speaking exam, the second session, is given on the day after the written exam. It takes 15 minutes for each pair of students. You can refer to the table below for the general outline of each component of STEP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING COMPONENT</th>
<th>READING TEXT 1: 15%, about 1100 words, 10 questions, 60 minutes with the second reading task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>READING TEXT 2: 15%, about 1500 words, 10 questions, 60 minutes with the first reading task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LISTENING COMPONENT</td>
<td>Listening 1 (While Listening): 10%, 10 questions, 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening 2 (Note-taking): 15%, 10 questions, 25 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 35 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRITING COMPONENT</td>
<td>Argumentative Essay Writing: 25%, 60 minutes, 300+ words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEAKING COMPONENT</td>
<td>Part 1: Interview with the examiner, personal questions, about 2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 2: Monologue, answering an academic question for about 1 minute, about 4 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part 3: Discussion with the other examinee, a discussion prompt, about 8 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 15 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. STEP: STRATEGIES FOR READING

You will be given 2 different academic reading texts and asked to answer 20 reading questions, which are 1.5 points each, in 60 minutes in total. You need to transfer your answers to the optical form in the given time. Extra transfer time is not given under any circumstances. Reading section comprises 30% of the exam. All the reading questions are multiple-choice questions, but each of them assesses a specific reading skill. The reading skills assessed in the STEP are as follows:

A. MAIN IDEA QUESTIONS

Before we answer a “main idea” question, we should first recognize “Main Idea-type” questions. The most common main idea-type questions are as follows:
- What is the main idea of the text?
- What is the text mainly about?
- What would be the best title for this text?
- The main idea of the text is ___________________.
- The passage/text mainly discusses _______________.
- The passage/text is mainly about _______________.

Remember that main idea questions are not always about the whole text. Sometimes, the main idea of a specific paragraph can be asked. You might be asked, for example, to find the main idea of paragraph C.

Answering main idea questions:

In main idea-type questions, the reader is expected to have understood the overall point of a specific paragraph or the whole passage.

Rephrasing: A good approach to answer main idea questions is to “Rephrase” the answer in your own words before looking at the options. The answers usually do not contain the exact specific language from the text, that’s why, it is important that you rephrase the point of the text or paragraph in your own words and choose the option that is closest to your version in terms of meaning.

Remember that when you try to rephrase the main idea you should consider the main flow or structure of a passage without worrying too much about the details and specific examples.

Learning to spot wrong answers: Use the process of elimination to rule out wrong answers. Wrong answers for main idea questions are often:

a) too broad – the answer covers too much, is too “big” in some way. Such answers cover the ideas in the passage, but also include many others that are not in the passage.
b) too narrow – the answer is too restricted. For “whole-text main idea” questions, main ideas of specific paragraphs are usually used as distractors. For “specific-paragraph main idea” questions, certain facts or supporting details can be used as distractors. Although such options may provide true facts or information, they are usually not the main idea of the paragraph but just details supporting it.
c) unsupported/new – the answer is not directly related to the question. It can also be something related but unsupported by the text or related but not a part of the text. Such an answer might fit the general discussion, but is ultimately outside the scope of the passage.
d) incorrect/illogical – the answer distorts or contradicts the facts in the passage. Such answers usually involve the reversed version of an idea from the text, making it imply the opposite of what the text actually is saying.

Example 1.
In the first half of the nineteenth century, a New York newspaper, the New York Sun, successfully carried out a hoax on the American public. As a result of this trick, the readership of the paper rose substantially. On August 25, 1835, the Sun published reports that some wonderful new discoveries had been made on the moon. The article described strange, never-before-seen animals and temples covered in shining jewels. Many members of the American public, including some prominent members of the scientific community, were fooled by the story. The effect of this false story was dramatic. The sales of the newspaper increased as people eagerly searched out details of the new discoveries. Later, the newspaper company announced that it had not been trying to panic the public; instead, the company explained the moon stories as a type of literary satire.

(Taken from www.toeflskills.com)

**Question:** The paragraph mainly discusses ____________________________________________.

- a) the discoveries made on the moon in the nineteenth century
- b) the effects of a fake story on the sales of the New York Sun
- c) the power and the influence of media on public opinions
- d) the popularity of one of the earliest American newspapers

**Explanation:** The correct answer is choice B because the paragraph basically discusses how the New York Sun’s sales increased after they published a false story. We can eliminate choice A as it gives incorrect information. It has been stated in the text that there were not any discoveries made on the moon at the time. Choice C can be eliminated as it is too broad. The text is about the New York Sun but the option is concerned with media in general. Choice D is unsupported. This is a tricky option because the information it presents seems related. However, the problem with the option is that it is not supported in the paragraph. Although the increase in the sales of the New York Sun is mentioned in the paragraph, the paragraph overall is not about how popular the paper was. It is actually about how one false story increased the sales of the New York Sun.

Example 2.
English was a colonial language spoken as the official language in the African countries that were under British rule. Even after these countries declared their independence, English still continues to be the official language in almost all of these countries. The reason why it has been retained is to avoid ethnic tensions between tribes who speak different languages. It has also been retained because of its prestige and association with power. Thus, English is the preferred language in classrooms as it is seen as the key to economic empowerment and progress, whereas the local and tribal languages are viewed as backward and inferior. Until a few years ago, students were made ashamed of their mother tongue, and they were punished for speaking it. In Kenya, for instance, it was quite common to embarrass students speaking a local language by making them carry around the skull of some dead animal all day.
Question: The paragraph is mainly about ____________________________________________.

a) the dramatic effects of British colonization on African countries and cultures
b) benefits that speaking the same language in the classes can provide students with
c) a general comparison of and contrast between English and local African languages
d) the reasons for the dominance of English as the official language in African countries

Explanation: The correct answer is choice D because the paragraph mainly explains why English still continues to be the official language in postcolonial African countries.
Choice A is too broad (It has no information regarding English being the official language in African countries).
Choice B can be eliminated as it is too narrow and not supported in the text. It may be somewhat related to the text (one benefit of speaking English for students may be avoiding embarrassment), but there is no mention of different benefits of speaking the same language in the classroom. The passage in general discusses something else.
Choice C is too narrow. Although a comparison of how people view English and local languages has been made in one part of the text, the paragraph in general is not about it.

B. SPECIFIC INFORMATION QUESTIONS

Authors make use of key facts and examples to support their main ideas, thereby clarifying the overall meaning of the texts. The ability to make sense of the fact or example, which is frequently given in two or three sentences, is vital to answering these types of questions correctly. In order to identify the correct answer, you should first recognize the question type and focus on the most important words used in the question, then find the relevant place in the passage by skimming and scanning and finally do careful reading for the specific information that you need.

The familiarity with the question type can ease your job. The most common specific information questions are as follows:

- Which of the following is NOT mentioned in Paragraph A?
- The passage states that XXXXX happens because ________________
- According to Paragraphs A and B, which of the following CANNOT be said about XXXXX?
- According to the passage, which of the following is TRUE/FALSE?
- The passage mentions each of the following EXCEPT ________________.
- ________________ leads to XXXXX.
- What is the MAIN reason for/advantage of XXXXX?
- The author suggests that XXXXX ________________.
- According to the passage, if XXXXX happens, ________________.
- The author points out that ________________.

In order to answer these questions correctly, acquiring the reading skills below can help you.

1) Understanding Reason & Result / Cause & Effect Relationship

Cause/effect and reason/result models can be used in many different types of texts to organize information in a text so that readers can get a better understanding of the relationship between causes and effects. Comprehending this relationship allows learners to understand when actions and their reactions happen.

There are a number of keywords employed by authors in texts to state a cause and effect or reason and result relationship. Examples are given in the chart below*:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>since as because</th>
<th>+ Reason (SVO)</th>
<th><strong>Because</strong> some educators may lack the professional training, they simply do what they experienced as students. As students mostly see medical staff and focus on their condition, they may lose sight of the broader world. Since my students spoke very little English, it made me become more creative as a teacher to engage them in producing more!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>as a result therefore thus as a consequence consequently so that’s why for this reason</td>
<td>+ Result (SVO)</td>
<td>As Crimea fell, the West took only limited steps and let Putin set the agenda. <strong>As a result</strong>, Putin decided to take full advantage of his success in Crimea by moving into eastern parts of Ukraine. This study also explored gains in reading over a relatively short period; <strong>therefore</strong>, it is possible that these gains may not be maintained over time. The federal government of the United States expanded greatly. <strong>For this reason</strong> the wartime period is a particularly interesting one for the assessment of the relative power of governmental officials. Even when children are sitting by themselves behind closed doors, peers are in the room with them, on the laptop or smartphone, and <strong>thus</strong> peer influence can be highly pervasive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because of due to thanks to owing to on account of</td>
<td>+ Reason (Noun)</td>
<td>I hypothesized that differences in achievement must have been <strong>due to</strong> differences in the peer tutoring sessions. Emissions of nitrogen oxides and ammonia were not included <strong>owing to</strong> the lack of reliable data and limited funds. The Cleveland Conference was almost cancelled in November <strong>on account of</strong> the difficulties of travel at that time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as a result of as a consequence of</td>
<td>+ Reason (Noun)</td>
<td>The reading specialist candidates demonstrated professional growth <strong>as a result of</strong> using technology-based instructional techniques and materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>result in lead to contribute to bring about</td>
<td>+ Result (Noun)</td>
<td>Participants stated that teaching using MI helped students develop more meaningful memory pathways that <strong>led to</strong> more effective learning. The years that followed <strong>brought about</strong> such economic hardship that an education in the arts was not always a priority for financially impoverished school systems. The digital literacies that many engage in can <strong>contribute to</strong> learning about writing by providing students with contexts for situated writing practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>result from stem from</td>
<td>+ Reason (Noun)</td>
<td>Psychological disorders were considered to <strong>stem from</strong> physiological deformities, neural or biochemical, not from life experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reason(s) why</td>
<td>+ Result</td>
<td>There are many different <strong>reasons why</strong> students struggle in reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to so as to in order to so that so adjective/adverb that in order that</td>
<td>+ Purpose</td>
<td>With these actions, the idea was to generate extreme situations of aggression <strong>so as to</strong> force participants to react. Managers have the power to be flexible around work scheduling, <strong>so as to</strong> give employees more control over their working time. This other student also wore earphones and listened to classical music <strong>so that</strong> they could not hear the interaction between the researcher and their peer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Examples were extracted and adapted from Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*
As can be seen in the chart above, there are multiple ways of mentioning the cause and effect or reason and result relationship. This makes it possible to say similar things differently in questions and texts. Therefore, being aware of the synonyms or antonyms can help learners to answer the questions correctly or identify the relevant place in the texts to find the correct answer among the other options.

**Note:** Some other content words such as ‘consequence’, ‘culprit’, ‘affect’, ‘effect’, ‘outcome’, ‘impact’, ‘influence’, ‘repercussion’, and ‘arise’ are also employed in texts to show the cause & effect / reason & result relationship.

**Example 1.**
As technological developments have altered production techniques, types of mechanical equipment and varieties of outputs, society has begun to recognize that economic progress involves not only changes in machinery but also in man. Investment in people makes it possible to take advantage of technical progress as well as to contribute to that progress. Improvements in health make investment in education more rewarding by extending life expectancy. Investment in education expands and extends knowledge, leading to advances which raise productivity and improve health.

**Question:** According to the author, investment in education ____________.

a) has a direct impact on production techniques  
b) will contribute positively to human progress  
c) has little significance for economic progress  
d) will lead to more advanced production techniques

**Explanation:** The correct answer is B. The information given in the passage is “Investment in education expands and extends knowledge, leading to advances which raise productivity and improve health”. Here the focus is on human progress. The phrase, ‘contribute to’, in choice B shows the relationship and “positively” shows the direction of this relationship.

**Example 2.**
The great expansion in energy demand over recent years has been met to a large extent by petroleum oil. The total world reserves of petroleum oil, are still uncertain since large parts of the world are still not fully prospected. The cutback in oil production and the rise in the price of Middle Eastern oil following the 1973 Arab-Israeli war unleashed a worldwide energy crisis which affected the economies of both producing and consuming countries. One example is that Britain has increased its North Sea oil production and entered into the league of the five largest oil producing countries in the world.

**Question:** According to the passage, one result of the oil crisis caused by the Arab-Israeli war has been that _____.

a) the world has learned to reduce its energy consumption  
b) many new oil fields in the world have been prospected.  
c) Britain has become one of the leading oil producers  
d) consumer countries have had to redefine their economic priorities

**Explanation:** The correct answer is C. The information given in the passage is first “(crisis)...affected the economies...” and then “one example is that Britain has increased...”. The example is given to illustrate one of the consequences of the crisis (remember the word ‘affected’). “five largest oil producing countries” and “leading oil producers” are similar in meaning.
Example 3.

In 1945, following the Second World War, the allies, that is, the United States, the Soviet Union, and Britain drew up and signed the Potsdam Agreement. The main points of this agreement were that Militarism and Hitlerism should be destroyed; that industrial power should be so reduced that Germany would never again be in a position to wage aggressive war; that surplus equipment should be destroyed or transferred to replace wrecked plants in allied territories; that Germany should be treated as an economic whole, and that local self-government should be restored on democratic lines as rapidly as was consistent with military security.

**Question:** According to the passage, one of the major provisions made in the Potsdam Agreement was that

a) necessary measures should be taken to prevent Germany from any future renewal of aggression  
b) the rearmament of Germany should be under allied supervision  
c) the military, but not the domestic, policies of Hitler should be discontinued  
d) Germany’s industrial production should be reduced to a pre-Hitler level

**Explanation:** The correct answer is A. The information given in the passage is “industrial power should be so reduced that Germany would never again be in a position to wage aggressive war”. The proposition stated after “that” is the purpose of the action mentioned before “that”. That proposition is in line with “to prevent ....” in choice A.

(Taken and adapted from The Ultimate Guide to KPDS by Hüseyin Öz and Ö. Faruk Cantekin)

2) **Understanding Compare & Contrast Relationship**

Comparing and contrasting is a frequently used skill that people need in many different parts of life. Similarities and/or differences of two or more things, people, topics or concepts are mentioned to convey a message effectively in reading texts. Therefore, identifying the compare/contrast clues in these texts and sorting out similarities and/or differences can enhance reading comprehension. For this reason, the knowledge of the keywords commonly used to express comparison and contrast is crucial for every reader. You can find them in the charts below:

**Comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison (Equal or same Qualities)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the same</td>
<td>the same as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the same as</td>
<td>as ... (adjective/adverb) as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the same way</td>
<td>by the same token</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both</td>
<td>too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So (auxiliary verb) I/they.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading for information through sources such as the Internet did not offer **the same** positive benefit as storybook and novel reading.

The results of the current study indicated that free practice was **as effective as** any of the strategies tested.

Feature films serve as historical evidence **in the same way** that other representational art forms do.

Sam thinks Jamie is a good reader. Jamie thinks so **too**.

Creating a presentation requires organization and a logical flow. **So do** articles.
## Comparison (Similar Qualities)

- like
- alike
- similar to
- similarly
- have in common

## Comparison (Different Qualities)

- differ
- different from
- more than .../ more .. (adjective/adverb) than
- less .. (adjective/adverb) than
- the most ... (+adjective)
- the least ... (+adjective)

Both groups also performed **similarly** on their post-instruction assessments.

Students and instructors **alike** may feel uncomfortable opening up elements of their private lives to observation by others.

My generation took religion seriously and we discovered that we had a lot **in common** with all Christians.

Male and female student-athletes also did not **differ** significantly in their responses.

Chinese authorities were expected to share information **more quickly** and **accurately than** they had done in the past.

Democracy and human rights once again proved to be the **least important** issue for the Russians.

Diamond (2008) concluded active involvement was **more effective than** passively listening to lectures.

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*Examples were extracted and adapted from Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*

## Contrast*

- although
- even though
- adjective + though
- yet
- however
- on the other hand

*Although* reading is positively associated with higher literacy scores and reading achievement (Anderson, 1988), adolescent engagement in recreational book reading is in decline (Maynard, 2008).

Administrators played a limited role in the placement process, **though** they did regularly attend all the placement meetings.

FMRI can map brain activity and we can now explore the hidden regions of the mind, **yet** much of the brain’s inner workings remain a mystery.

Weckwerth and Flynn (2006) found that females experience greater levels of academic stressors, specifically burnout. **On the other hand**, Lin and Huang (2012) found the opposite—males showed a higher level of learning burnout and loneliness.

*Unlike* the entertaining nature of narrative text, informational text’s primary purpose is to convey information thus making it less engaging for a reader (Jitendra et al., 2011).

**While** all cultures have used traditional storytelling, digital storytelling is a new method teachers can use to motivate students, promote learning, and encourage them to develop 21st century skills.

This finding runs **contrary to** the research hypothesis, which suggested that students in individualized treatment would outperform students in the standardized intervention.

Organised crime can exist without drug trafficking but **the reverse** is not true.

The public’s display of self-discipline reduced loss of life, but, **nevertheless**, there were seventy-two fatalities (including more than sixty soldiers) and hundreds of wounded.

*Examples were extracted and adapted from Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*
Example 1. & Example 2.

Until recently, many archaeologists took the view that civilized communities first arose in Egypt, though only a very short time before a similar development in Mesopotamia. On the other hand, a more recent opinion is now that the earliest advances may have taken place in Mesopotamia. Whichever view is followed, it is necessary to bear in mind that geographical conditions in both regions were not identical, and it can in fact be stated that in Mesopotamia environmental factors were not as wholly favorable as in the valley of the Nile.

Question 1: According to a more recent view, the beginnings of the development of civilization

a) have only recently been a major preoccupation among archaeologists
b) were apparently not affected by geographical conditions
c) seem to have occurred in Mesopotamia rather than, as once thought, in Egypt
d) in Egypt were greatly hampered by unfavorable environmental factors

Question 2: It is pointed out in the passage that the Nile valley and Mesopotamia

a) have never attracted the attention of historians
b) were equally suitable for the rise of civilization
c) could not have been the home of our earliest civilizations
d) do not share the same geographical conditions

Explanation for Question 1: The correct answer is C. The information given in the passage is “... that the earliest advances may have taken place in Mesopotamia.” In the first two sentences of the paragraph, there is a comparison between the traditional and recent views (remember ‘on the other hand’). While the traditional view focuses on Egypt, the recent view deals with the possibility about Mesopotamia. “as once thought” used in choice C represents the traditional view.

Explanation for Question 2: The correct answer is D. The information given in the passage is “geographical conditions in both regions were not identical” and “... were not as wholly favorable as ...”. These two pieces of information shows that these regions do not share the same geographical conditions.

Example 3.

Work is central in British culture. When someone asks one “What do you do?”, they really mean “What work do you do?” When a woman is asked “Do you work?”, what is meant is “Are you doing a paid job?” Yet many people without a paid job work at other kinds of productive activities. Women, notably, perform an unpaid “double shift” in the home as housekeepers and mother. To confine the term “work” to paid employment, therefore, restricts it far too narrowly. There are many other kinds of work, some of which can take more time and energy than we put into our paid employment from voluntary working in the garden to repairs to the house or the car. In other cultures, work is not as highly valued. Some people value leisure more, and work only as much as they need in order to provide basic necessities.

Question: The writer points out that, unlike the case in Britain, in some cultures

a) work in any form is highly respected
b) voluntary work is held in high respect
c) it is leisure, not work, that is of primary importance
d) people are unwilling to work to meet even their basic necessities
**Explanation:** The correct answer is C. In the question, ‘unlike the case in Britain’ requires readers to find something different from the case in Britain. The information given in the passage is “In other cultures, work is not as highly valued. Some people value leisure more, and work only as much as they need....” As can be seen, leisure is more important, which is not the case in Britain.

**Example 4.**

Tigers grow to lengths of ten feet or more and can be bigger than the largest lion. They have immense strength. They clutch their prey to them. Holding on with their claws, they depend on the crushing bite of their powerful jaws to end the struggle. They swim very well and can often be seen splashing about in water on very hot days since they apparently suffer from the heat. When the weather is chilly, however, they avoid wet or damp vegetation. They can climb, but do not approach the leopard’s ability in this. They can negotiate treacherous rocky areas but generally prefer to stay on level ground. They are not as well equipped with senses as one might expect. They apparently depend on hearing while hunting. Their eyesight is not particularly good, and they seem unable to spot prey until it moves.

**Question:** It is clear from the passage that tigers ________________.

- a) rely on their huge claws alone to catch and kill their prey
- b) are sensitive to significant variations in temperature
- c) are similar to lions as regards size, speed and strength
- d) rely heavily upon their eyesight in locating and catching prey

**Explanation:** The correct answer is B. The information given in the passage is “... seen splashing about in water on very hot days ...” and “... chilly, however, they avoid wet ...”. In the passage, two different weather conditions are compared (hot versus chilly) and different actions of tigers in each condition are emphasized. This shows how sensitive tigers are to the changes (variations) in weather.

3) **Understanding Conditional Relationship**

It is highly important to understand conditional relationships in order to comprehend reading texts effectively. Conditional relationship is employed to talk about possible or impossible actions and their possible or impossible results with regard to past, present or future. Below is a chart illustrating the conditional sentences with various usages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Usages</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero</td>
<td>To make statements about general truths (e.g. scientific facts).</td>
<td>If you heat ice, it melts. When you heat ice, it melts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(time is present, situation is real)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type-I</td>
<td>To express a possible condition and its probable result</td>
<td>If he doesn’t come tomorrow, I will be mad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(time is present or future, situation is real)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type-II (unreal present)</td>
<td>To express an unlikely or hypothetical condition and its probable consequence</td>
<td>If I were taller, I would be playing for the school team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(time is present or future, situation is hypothetical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type-III</td>
<td>To talk about an unreal past condition and its probable consequence in the past</td>
<td>If you had studied harder, you would have passed (time is past, situation is hypothetical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Type</td>
<td>To talk about an unreal past condition and its probable result in the present</td>
<td>If I had learnt a foreign language at university, I would have a better job now.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are some other important structures that authors employ to express conditions and their probable consequences, which can increase the difficulty of reading texts.

→ **unless**

It means the same as “if ... not” and can be used in all types of conditional sentences.

Unless you study diligently, you cannot get what you want from the exam.

unless you study = if you don’t study

→ **only if**

‘Only if’ means ‘only one condition happens”. This form basically means the same as ‘if’. The main emphasis is on the result.

You can go out only if you do your homework.

Here, there is just a condition of doing homework. Then, he can go out. If he doesn’t do his homework, he cannot go out.

**Inversion:** When ‘only if’ begins the sentence you need to invert the main clause.

Only if you study hard can you be successful. (You can be successful only if you study hard)

→ **Provided that/as long as/so long as/providing**

These mean almost the same as only if. Providing and so long as are less formal.

We should publish private information about celebrities if readers are interested in knowing that information, provided that the information does no harm to the celebrity as a person.

(Taken from http://goo.gl/x3nFya)

Example 1.

Aid to underdeveloped countries takes many forms and it is given for many reasons. Underdeveloped countries need aid to provide finance for development projects; to provide foreign exchange with which imports for development purpose can be bought; and to provide the trained manpower and technical knowledge they lack. The motives of the donor are not always humanitarian. Aid can take a military form; it can be used to support an incompetent or unjust government. Nor is aid always beneficial to the recipient country. It may be wasted on ill-conceived or prestige projects, or cause the government simply to relax its own efforts.
Question: According to the passage, unless they receive aid, underdeveloped countries ____________.

a) cannot overcome the consequences of military coups  
b) will be at the mercy of the donor countries with various motives  
c) will have to rely on foreign technical advice for many years to come  
d) cannot provide money and human resources for development

Explanation: The correct answer is D. In the question, unless is used, so readers should focus on the information about what happens if these countries don’t receive aid. Understanding the reasons why these countries need aid can help them to get the correct answer. In the second sentence of the paragraph, the reasons are explained or listed (to provide finance..., to provide foreign ...). As can be seen, these reasons are in relation to money and human resources and the target is development, which is mentioned in choice D.

Example 2.

Many substances, whether man-made or natural, can cause harm to man or the environment. Some of these reach the environment in waste streams; however, emission limits and environmental quality standards can, in some instances, reduce the amounts released. But some other substances cannot be controlled in this way because they are released, not in industrial waste streams, but through the use or disposal of products which contain them. In many cases these substances pose little or no threat if the product containing them is used and disposed of properly. The right way to deal with them is usually through controls over their supply, use and disposal.

Question: The author points out that the danger posed to man by many substances ____________.

a) arises from their misuse and wrong disposal  
b) is unrelated to environmental pollution  
c) is even greater than generally admitted  
d) continues to grow despite constant control of disposal systems

Explanation: The correct answer is A. In the question, ‘danger posed to man by many substances’ is given, so readers should find the relevant part first. The information given in the passage is “In many cases these substances pose little or no threat if the product containing them is used and disposed of properly.” Here, it is clear that the possibility of danger (possible result) depends on how people use and dispose the substances (condition/possible action). This relationship is given in choice A saying “arises from their misuse and wrong disposal”.

4) Understanding Additional Information

Another important reading skill is to understand additional information given in a text. Authors usually use this kind of information as supporting details (e.g., reinforce ideas, express agreement with the preceding materials, etc.) and therefore employ a couple of transitional words or linking words to move from one idea to another smoothly and coherently. For this reason, one way to identify additional information is to recognize these words (see the chart below).
**Transitional Words**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additionally</th>
<th>Guthrie et al. (2007) found that motivation predicted growth in reading comprehension. <strong>Additionally</strong>, students must possess the confidence and self-efficacy to believe they can use the strategies successfully (Hollenbeck &amp; Saternus, 2013).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternatively</td>
<td>People in charge of China have capacious minds, analytical and quick on the uptake. <strong>Equally important</strong>, the Chinese Communist Party is growing and recruiting dynamic new members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally important</td>
<td>First, we showed the participants their three SoC scores and their three LoU scores. All 10 participants stated they were comfortable with the results they were shown. <strong>Second</strong>, the participants talked about their successes, their concerns, and their future goals for RTI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First/second/finally</td>
<td>If someone posts a message insulting the monarchy of Thailand, it will be blocked and unavailable to Twitter users in that country. <strong>What is more</strong>, Twitter users in Thailand will be put on notice that something was removed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furthermore</td>
<td>Lin and Huang (2012) found that males showed a higher level of learning burnout and loneliness; <strong>likewise</strong>, Wiseman et al. (1995) found that males showed a higher level of loneliness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreover</td>
<td><strong>Apart from</strong> its health benefits, in view of its functional properties, dietary fiber is incorporated into food products for many purposes such as enhancement of water and oil retention (Elleuch et al., 2011).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besides</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Also</td>
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<td>Likewise</td>
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<td>Apart from</td>
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<td>Together with</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Examples were extracted and adapted from Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)*

**Example 1.**

Real depression cannot be as easily overcome as some people often suppose. It usually passes with time, but the time can seem endless. Activities giving companionship and a new interest can help, but for the sufferer to talk, again and again, about the causes of the depression helps most. People with depression need to be listened to and encouraged to find their own solutions, not made to feel yet more inadequate by good advice. They may need professional counseling as well as the support of family and friends.

**Question:** In overcoming depression the support of friends and family ________________.

a) can be best be directed into giving good advice  
b) may cause more harm than good  
c) never contributes to any improvement in the patient  
d) is not always sufficient

**Explanation:** The correct answer is D. The information given in the passage is “They may need professional counseling as well as the support of family and friends.” In this sentence, it is clear that in addition to the support of family and friends, the professional counseling may be needed as well. Therefore, “..is not always sufficient” explains the situation very well.
C. INFECTION QUESTIONS

Questions in this category may ask about the meaning of a word, line, paragraph or even an entire passage. As the word “inference” suggests, the reader is expected to make inferences using the given information. In other words, the ideas that are asked about are not directly stated in the passage. Inference questions usually involve information or ideas that could be “interpreted from” or “suggested by” the words, phrases or sentences in the text.

Inference questions also involve the ability to get meaning from entire paragraphs to make comparisons between or choose from different ideas or chunks of information.

In STEP, there are four common types of inference questions: deduction, paragraph completion, examination/speculation, and application.

1) Deduction

The questions that fall into this subcategory often ask the reader to guess or deduce the meaning of an unfamiliar word using the contextual clues surrounding that word.

The most common “deducing the meaning of unknown vocabulary” questions are as follows:

- The word “XXXXX” in line ... is closest in meaning to ____________.
- The word “XXXXX” in line ... can best be replaced by ____________.
- What is the word “XXXXX” in line ... closest in meaning to?

Answering deduction questions:

To answer such questions you may make use of the other words around the unfamiliar vocabulary. Sometimes, you can figure out the meaning of the unfamiliar word using the other words/information within the same sentence.

Example 1.

...Computers are becoming so prevalent in American schools and homes that perhaps in another twenty years every school aged child the U.S will be able to operate a computer. ...

Question: The word “prevalent” in line X is closest in meaning to ____________.

   a. large  b. common  c. expensive  d. difficult

Explanation: The correct answer is choice B. We can deduce the meaning of the word “prevalent” by studying the information in the same sentence. We can see a reason-result connection in the sentence. Every school aged child’s being able to operate a computer in twenty years seems to be the result of computers’ being prevalent. We can infer that prevalence of computers is something that will have an effect on every student. Using this information, we can say that “common” is the word that is closest in meaning to “prevalent.”
Example 2.

... When it rains hard for a long period of time, the ground gets saturated, and as a result of this, the availability of oxygen in the soil might decrease. ...

**Question:** The word “saturated” in line X is closest in meaning to ___________.

a. very wet  
   b. quite different  
   c. slightly dangerous  
   d. partly nutritious

**Explanation:** The correct answer is choice A. Using the information in the sentence, we can infer that “saturated” means very wet. Remember that when you try to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary, the information in the same sentence may not be enough. You might often need to make use of the information in other sentences surrounding the unfamiliar word.

Example 3.

... The early industrial revolution started the decline of the feudal lords and the rise of the bourgeoisie. Likewise, the new technological revolution may herald major social and economical changes in the societies of the future....

**Question:** The word “herald” in line X is closest in meaning to ___________.

a. seek for  
   b. prevent  
   c. respond to  
   d. introduce

**Explanation:** The correct answer is choice D. The transition word “Likewise” at the beginning of the sentence shows that the action mentioned in the second sentence is similar to the one in the first sentence. Since the text points to the similarity between two revolutions, the main verb of the first sentence helps us deduce the meaning of the main verb in the second sentence. Therefore, we can infer that the meaning of the verb “herald” must somewhat be similar to the verb “start”.

(Taken and adapted from: http://goo.gl/sKVLMC)

2) Paragraph Completion

The questions that fall into this category ask the reader to find the missing line in a paragraph using the contextual clues surrounding the missing line. It is actually quite similar to the “deduction” type questions but this time the reader is required to have a fuller understanding of a paragraph because to find the missing line the reader may need to take into account a bigger part of the passage.

The most common paragraph completion questions are as follows:

- Which of the following best completes the missing line in paragraph X?
- Choose the option that best fits into the blank in paragraph X?
Answering paragraph completion questions:

In such questions the reader is usually expected to infer the logical extension of given information. In answering paragraph completion questions, readers should pay attention to the scope of the paragraph, flow of ideas, transition signals and coreferences.

- **Scope of the paragraph**: Every paragraph has a scope and, for the sake of unity, all the sentences are supposed to be within the same scope. For instance, if the paragraph is about the benefits of nuclear power, the missing line cannot be a sentence about wind turbines as it would be outside the scope of the paragraph.

- **Flow of ideas**: The reader is also expected to figure out in what direction the ideas are flowing in a paragraph. For instance, if a paragraph starts with one benefit of using nuclear power, it can continue with another benefit, or it can elaborate on this certain benefit.

- **Transition signals**: Transition signals in a text show the relationships between sentences. For instance, let’s say the paragraph starts with one benefit of using nuclear power, the next sentence can start with a connector signaling additional information, such as “in addition”. Then you might expect to see information on the second benefit. If the second sentence starts with a connector signaling contrast, such as “however”, then we might expect to see one disadvantage of nuclear power.

- **Coreferences**: Coreferences occur in a text when two or more expressions in a text refer to the same person or thing. If you do not understand what a word refers to, it would be very difficult to understand the flow of ideas in a text.

**Example 1.**

An average person needs about a total of 60 minutes of physical activity a day, but many people complain about the difficulty of creating a 60-minute break among all the other things that they are supposed to do every day. Five or ten sessions of physical activities during the day are just as good for you. These may include walking, running or jogging. You can take a longer route and walk for an extra 10 minutes to your workplace and go jogging for 15 minutes when you get back home from work.

**Question**: Which of the following best completes the missing line in the paragraph?

- a. Scientists suggest people should also be careful about the kinds of food they eat.
- b. However, the good news is this does not have to be done all at one time.
- c. Also, you feel quite energetic and get rid of everyday stress when you do sports.
- d. These children regularly take physical education classes at school.

**Explanation**: The correct answer is choice B as it naturally connects the information below and above it. The first sentence presents a necessity and a perceived problem that comes with it. Choice B presents a solution to this problem and the rest of the paragraph elaborates on this solution. Thus, it can be said that choice B is functioning as a bridge between the problem and how it is solved. Choice A is incorrect because it is not within the scope of this paragraph. There is no mention of food in this paragraph. C is incorrect because it breaks the flow of ideas. This sentence starts with the transition signal “also” and mentions one benefit of doing sports, but the previous sentence is not about any benefit of sports. Rather, it is about the necessity of physical exercise and people’s concern about creating time for it. Choice D is also incorrect as it starts with the words “these children”, a coreference marker, but we cannot see any mention of children in the previous part of the paragraph.
Example 2.

Atlantis is an island whose existence and location have never been confirmed. The first references to Atlantis are from the classical Greek philosopher Plato, who said it was engulfed by the ocean as the result of an earthquake 9,000 years before his own time. They also added that Plato made up the story using elements that may have been drawn from real events. (Taken from http://goo.gl/3TVkuC)

Question: Choose the option that best fits into the blank in the paragraph

- a. Plato's accounts of Atlantis are in his works Timaeus and Critias and these philosophical dialogues are the earliest known references to Atlantis.
- b. According to the legend, an island called Atlantis in the Atlantic Ocean was swallowed by a very strong earthquake.
- c. While there are many hypotheses about Atlantis, the vast majority of scientists concluded that Atlantis never existed.
- d. Many film producers and writers have based their scenarios on this place whose existence has always been a matter of controversy.

Explanation: The correct answer is choice C.

3) Examination/Speculation

The questions that fall into this subcategory often ask the reader to speculate about the meaning (or the suggested meaning) of a given statement (or statements) through examining the text. It can also involve inferring the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of the author or someone else mentioned in the text. As in other types of inference questions, the answer is not directly stated in the text, but one can make a guess through examining the contextual clues within a certain statement or the other statements surrounding it.

The most common examination/speculation questions are as follows:

- It can be inferred from the passage/paragraph X that ________.
- It is implied in the passage/paragraph X that ________.
- What does the writer/author mean by saying “...........” ?
- How does the writer/author feel about XXXXX?
- It can be inferred from the passage that according to XXXXX, ________.

Answering examination/speculation questions:
The most common mistake test takers make when they try to answer such questions is that they rely on their own assumptions alone. It should be kept in mind that even though the answers for inference questions are not directly stated in the text, they are supposed to be found by drawing conclusions from the stated information in the text. Answers that seem reasonable but not supported by the text might be tricky. Therefore, the reader should try to stick to the text.

Another important point is trying to understand the point of the passage and its exact reasoning. Otherwise, you might draw wrong conclusions.

Finally, trying to understand the disposition or the attitude of the author can be really helpful since everything that the author mentions in the text serves to support his/her opinions.
Example 1.

Although Locke has been regarded as a giant figure in European intellectual history, his ideas were largely borrowed from his predecessors, who are now unfairly neglected by historians. Furthermore, Locke never wrote a truly great book; his most widely known works are muddy in style, awkwardly constructed, and often self-contradictory.

**Question:** It can be inferred from the paragraph that according to the author _________________.

a. Locke made use of ideas without acknowledging his predecessors as the sources of those ideas.
b. Current historians are re-evaluating the work of Locke in the light of present-day knowledge.
c. Locke's contributions to the development of European thought have been greatly exaggerated.
d. Although Locke's ideas were important, his works are not appreciated enough today.

**Explanation:** The author makes two assertions about Locke: that his ideas were not original and that his books were not very good. On the basis of these assertions, the author concludes that Locke's reputation as an intellectual giant is undeserved. Choice C accurately summarizes this conclusion. Choice A focuses on a subsidiary point, not the main idea; moreover, it makes an assumption unsupported by the passage namely, that Locke did not acknowledge the sources of his ideas. Choice B is wrong because although the passage clearly indicates that the author is "re-evaluating" Locke's work, it does not suggest that "current historians" in general are doing so. Choice D is wrong because it states that Locke’s works are not appreciated today, which actually is the opposite of what the text states at the beginning of the text.

Example 2.

After the jokes and the appetizers, we got down to more substantive talk of goals and tactics. Conversations with politicians, of course, tend to be heavily autobiographical and in this respect Ronald Reagan proved to be no exception. From both his comments and his questions it was clear to me that he wanted to be President and that he was prepared to take risks to achieve that objective.

**Question:** What does the author mean by “in this respect Ronald Reagan proved to be no exception”?

a. His talk with Ronald Reagan about goals and tactics was quite substantive.
b. His conversation with Ronald Reagan was mostly autobiographical.
c. Ronald Reagan always wanted to be a president, and he achieved this goal.
d. Like every other president, Ronald Reagan was a risk taker.

**Explanation:** The correct answer is choice B.

**4) Application**

Application questions ask the reader to take information and conclusions in the passage and apply them to similar situations outside the text. The key to this question type is the ability to identify the most important point of an argument or an idea and see how it relates to a similar situation.

The most common examination/speculation questions are as follows:
Answering application questions:

As mentioned above, to answer application questions it is important to understand the main argument of a theory/strategy/scientist etc. The next step is to analyze the situation(s) or options to look for similarities between the argument(s) in the text and the given situation(s) or options. In other words, the reader has to decide whether the information given in the text applies to the external situation that is given in the question.

Example 1.

A stereotype can be defined as a generalization, usually exaggerated or oversimplified and often offensive, that is used to describe or distinguish a group. These generalizations may or may not reflect the reality, but they are used to separate a group of people from the others. Stereotypes may involve racial, cultural or gender related generalizations. For instance, gender stereotypes usually involve oversimplifications regarding the roles of each gender. Gender roles are generally neither positive nor negative; they are simply inaccurate generalizations of the male and female attributes. A good example of a gender stereotype is the idea that “Men are better drivers than women.”

Question: Which one of the following statements CANNOT be an example of a stereotype?

a. All German people eat sausages and drink beer for breakfast.
b. I expect that guy to be good at basketball because he is black.
c. Some people dislike math classes in high school.
d. Only anorexic women can become models.

Explanation: The main point to remember about stereotypes is that they are generalizations that are used to distinguish certain groups of people from others. Choice A involves a cultural generalization which attributes the same eating habit to all Germans, so it is a cultural stereotype. Choice B is a racial stereotype about black people. It makes the generalization that all black people are good at basketball. Choice D regards all models as anorexic women, so it is also a stereotype concerning a certain group of people. But choice C is not an example of a stereotype. Unlike the other options which attribute certain qualities to specific groups, and all the models, choice C is a vague sentence as it mentions some people. Since we do not know who those people are, we cannot distinguish them from others.

D. UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF THE TEXT QUESTIONS

Each text has a purpose and the reason why a text is written is also known as “the writer’s purpose”. The purpose of a text has an influence on the writing style chosen. For this reason, understanding the purpose of a text helps readers to decode the text and enhances comprehension. There are three main categories used to classify a reading text. These categories are shaped on the basis of three writing
purposes: to persuade, explain and entertain. Each category has its characteristics defined with regard to the type of writing, main idea, purpose, point of view, organizational structure, tone, language, and literacy devices.

→ Writing to Persuade (Persuasive)

With a persuasive text, the writers’ primary goal is to convince readers of a specific point of view through argumentation, strengthen readers’ existing beliefs or persuade them to take an action at the end of reading. Advertisements, campaign speeches, and persuasive letters can fall into this category. The main idea can be the argument itself or advantages or disadvantages of a specific topic. The writer’s point of view is subjective. As an organizational structure, compare and contrast, cause and effect, facts and statistics, and emotional appeal can be employed. Types of tone includes authoritative, compassionate or judgmental, defensive, sarcastic, ironic, and even humorous. The language used in the writing can be subjective, argumentative, opinionated, factual, and emotional.

→ Writing to Explain (Expository)

The main goal of an expository text is to inform, to instruct or to educate readers about a topic. Expository essays or articles, instructions or directions, and encyclopedias or other reference texts fall into this category. The type is informational, descriptive or researched writing; therefore, the writer has an objective and non-biased point of view. As for the organizational structure, “general information”, “comparison and contrast”, “cause and effect”, “definition and example”, “chronologic order of events”, or “step by step instructions” can be listed in this category. The tone of the writer is usually informal or formal, unemotional, or academic. Thus, unemotional, informational, factual, descriptive or formal language is used in this type of texts. As literary devices, factual information, statistics or chronological ordering of events can be employed.

→ Writing to Entertain (Literary)

A text written to entertain has a primary goal of amusing people. However, it does not have to be happy. It can also be a tragedy. Stories, poems, dramas and songs can be examples in this category. These texts can also inform or persuade people but they are mainly based on entertainment. The type of writing is usually narrative, which appeals to the reader’s imagination. The main idea of the text is generally inferred. The purpose of writing these texts is to entertain, enlighten, or elicit emotion. The organizational structure of texts varies depending on the type of writing. Sometimes, it might tell a story, contain dialogue, or describe a person or place. The tone depends on the type of writing. It can be emotional, humorous, ironic, moral, or sarcastic. As for the language, descriptions including wide use of adjectives and adverbs are employed.

Below are the possible questions types used in the tests:

→ What is the purpose of the author/writer?

→ The author most likely wrote this passage to _________.

→ What is the tone of the text?

→ Why does the writer/author talk about X?

(Taken and adapted from http://goo.gl/6SM40t, http://goo.gl/rJNYCG.)
Example 1.

**Oppositional Defiant Disorder**

On a bad day, have you ever been irritable? Have you ever used a harsh tone or even been verbally disrespectful to your parents or teachers? Everyone has a short temper from time to time, but current statistics indicate that between 16 and 20 percent of a school’s population suffer from a psychological condition known as oppositional defiant disorder, or ODD.

ODD symptoms include difficulty complying with adult requests, excessive arguments with adults, temper tantrums, difficulty accepting responsibility for actions, low frustration tolerance, and behaviors intended to annoy or upset adults. Parents of children with ODD often feel as though their whole relationship is based on conflict after conflict.

Unfortunately, ODD can be caused by a number of factors. Some students affected by ODD suffer abuse, neglect, and severe or unpredictable discipline at home. Others have parents with mood disorders or have experienced family violence. Various types of therapy are helpful in treating ODD, and some drugs can treat particular symptoms. However, no single cure exists.

Question: The author’s purpose in writing this passage is to _________________.

a) express frustration about ODD.
b) prove that parents are the cause of ODD.
c) inform the reader about this complex condition.
d) persuade the reader to keep students with ODD out of public school.

Explanation: The correct option is choice C. This passage explores numerous facets of ODD and is meant to inform the reader about this psychological condition. Although parental frustration is noted, it is not the primary focus, making choice A incorrect. Likewise, despite the fact that parental behavior as a contributor is mentioned, parents are not overtly blamed for ODD. Choice B is, therefore, not the correct choice. Choice D does note that a relatively high percentage of students have ODD, but this passage nowhere implies that they should be kept out of school because of it, so choice D should also be eliminated.

III. STEP: STRATEGIES FOR WHILE LISTENING

The Sehir Test of English Proficiency assesses both students’ lecture and while listening skills. The while listening text is a dialogue which lasts almost 8 minutes. You are expected to answer 10 multiple-choice questions, which are 1 point each. The dialogue is usually set in a school campus between two students, or a student and an instructor, or a student and an officer within the campus context. You are expected to follow the conversation between the two speakers as they take turns discussing the subject matter. You should listen selectively, keeping in mind what the questions are asking. You should follow signposts and key words, and ignore anything that does not sound relevant. In this way, you will be able to narrow down your search and get the details you need. The question types are the same, but the skills that these questions test change. You can find detailed information about the while listening skills and strategies below.

1. Predict the topic – Look through each section in the time you are given and make sure you have an idea of who is speaking to who and what the context is.
2. **Predict the questions** – You should also try and have an idea of what kind of information you are listening out for. Sometimes you will listen for names, numbers or addresses. Have a look at the questions in the time you are given and work out what kind of information is required.

3. **Read the instructions** – It is an important tip for any part of the test. Always read the instructions carefully.

4. **Only look at one section at a time** – In the time you are given, you should only read the questions from the sections you are told to read instead of looking at previous or following sections. You will be given one and a half minutes at the end to check all your answers and to transfer them to the optical form.

5. **Be careful with question order** – The questions follow the order of the recording. However, when you have a table to complete, and sometimes a diagram or chart, the questions will not necessarily go from left to right, so check the progression carefully. Otherwise, you will get lost and confused.

6. **Keep in mind contents of the following question** – There are two reasons for doing this. There may be times in the listening when an answer is given immediately after the answer to another question. Therefore, if you are focusing on only one question at a time, you may miss the answer and you may not realize the next answer may come soon. However, if you are also aware of what the next question is about, at least you will still have the chance to catch the next answer.

7. **Move on if you miss an answer** – If you do realise you have missed an answer, concentrate on the next ones. Getting stuck in one question may cost you more. The same applies if you realise you missed two or three answers. Don’t panic and just move on. A few questions missed may not necessarily affect your overall score.

8. **Look out for paraphrasing** – Remember that what you hear will probably not be exactly the same as is written on the exam paper. Questions often use synonyms instead of using the same word, so you must listen carefully for these synonyms.

9. **Ignore words you don’t know** – Don’t worry or panic if you hear a word that you do not know. It may not be necessary to know it anyway. You can always try to guess from the context.

10. **Underline key words** – when you look through the questions first, underline key words (such as names, places and dates) in the questions to help you hear the answer. Remember though, as explained above, synonyms are often used in the questions.

11. **Don’t worry about what you write on the exam sheet** – Remember that nobody sees or marks what you write here. Don’t waste time getting the spelling correct or anything else. If you do this you may get lost – you need to be listening. So just write down what you hear, then move on. When you transfer the answers at the end to the optical form, you can make sure you have the correct answers on the optical form.

12. **Practice listening and study vocabulary** – You should also expose yourself to as much English as you can. You should search for materials appropriate to your level. There is no point in listening to BBC World if you don’t understand any of it. Find resources on the internet that suit your level and gradually increase difficulty. When you study a new vocabulary item, do not forget to check its correct pronunciation in different accents. Otherwise, you cannot recognize the word even though you hear it. In addition, to know its synonym will help, as mentioned before. The synonyms of the target words might be used in questions to check your understanding of spoken English.

(Taken and adapted from http://www.ieltsbuddy.com/ielts-listening-tips.html)
A. MAIN IDEA QUESTIONS

Such questions ask about the overall ideas of a whole conversation or a certain part of the conversation. They may ask what the topic, the purpose or the main idea of the conversation is. It is important to remember that the main idea of a conversation may be directly stated in the conversation, or you may have to synthesize (bring together) bits of information given during the conversation or during a certain part of the conversation.

An extract from a campus talk:

Student:

Advisor:

Student: I see that a comprehensive exam is required for my major, and I’m not exactly sure what a comprehensive exam is.
Advisor: A comprehensive exam is an exam that you take in the final quarter of your studies. Its purpose is to determine your overall competency.
Student: How is this comprehensive exam different from a final exam?
Advisor: A final exam covers all the materials taught in a specific course; a comprehensive exam, on the other hand, covers all the materials taught in the entire program.
Student: And it’s true that taking the comprehensive exam is not optional for my major, is it?
Advisor: No, it’s required for you. However, it’s not required for all the majors at this university, though.
Student:

Advisor:

Example 1.

Question:

1. Why does the student go to see the advisor?
   a. to take an exam that he missed
   b. to discuss what his major should be
   c. to learn about a requirement for his major

Explanation: In the conversation, the student says “I see that a comprehensive exam is required for my major, and I’m not exactly sure what a comprehensive exam is.” From this, it can be understood that the student goes to see his advisor to learn about a requirement for his major. Choice C is, therefore, the best answer.

B. SPECIFIC INFORMATION QUESTIONS

Information needed to answer detail questions is directly stated in the conversation. The key words in the questions help you follow the discussion and understand when the needed specific information is coming. The answers to detail questions are generally in order in the conversation. It is recommended to keep an eye on two questions at once so that you can move on to the next question if you realize you have missed the answer and the speakers have already started talking about the next subject.
Example 1.

Question:
2. Which of the following is TRUE about a comprehensive exam?
   a. It is given on the last day of the last course.
   b. It covers content of one specific course.
   c. It is mandatory only for some majors.

Explanation: You need to understand all the details about a comprehensive exam so that you can eliminate the wrong answers. In the conversation, the advisor says “A comprehensive exam is an exam that you take in the final quarter of your studies” so you need to understand students take this test towards the end of the program. The advisor says “a comprehensive exam, on the other hand, covers all the materials taught in the entire program” so it is clear that this test does include content of all the courses, not only one. Then, the advisor gives more information about the course: “It’s not required for all majors at this university” so you need to choose choice C as the correct answer.

C. INFERECE QUESTIONS

These questions require more subtle understanding of spoken English than the main idea or specific information questions. They may test the speaker’s function, purpose, stance, or attitude, toward a particular subject.

Example 1.

Question:
3. Why does the student say “And it’s true that taking the comprehensive exam is not optional for my major, is it?”
   a. To show that he thinks his advisor is mistaken.
   b. To make sure what he understands is correct.
   c. To request further explanation from the advisor.

Explanation: In the conversation, after the advisor’s explanation about the requirement of a comprehensive exam, the student responds by saying “And it’s true that taking the comprehensive exam is not optional for my major, is it?” From this, it can be concluded that the student only wants to check his understanding. The advisor’s following response also verifies the correct answer B.

(Taken and adapted from Longman IBT)

D. LABELING or COMPLETING a TABLE/MAP/CHART QUESTIONS

These tasks expect listeners to follow a description or directions, understand a map or a diagram, and write short notes, all at the same time. It is often one of the speakers giving information to the other about an event, a website or showing around a building, such as a university or hotel. Not being aware of the vocabulary and functional language used to describe locations may cause difficulty in understanding the directions given. See the useful language and strategy sections below.

You will be given 4 possible options for each question, like the sample question below, and in this case you will have to select the correct answer from these options. The information you need to answer the questions is in the same order as on the recording.

Useful Language for Labeling Maps
- at the top/at the bottom
- on the left/on the right/on the far side
- North/South/East/West
- to the north/to the west
- slightly west of
- in the southwest/in the northeast
- in the middle of/in the center of
- above/below
- inside/outside
- opposite/in front of
- left hand side/right hand side
- clockwise/anticlockwise or counterclockwise
- a little beyond
- just past
- before you get to
- runs alongside

**Strategies for Labeling Maps**
1. Read the questions carefully. Understand the map or plan and its features.
2. Ask yourself where things are in relation to the questions. This should help you predict the answers and follow the talk.
3. Think about where the person might begin their talk from. What is to their right and left? What is in front of and behind them?
4. Look at the major parts of the map or plan to help you understand and navigate your way around.
5. Predict what type of words might be the answer i.e. will it be a place, room, street, building etc.
6. Listen to the beginning of the talk carefully because this will help you understand the context and help you follow the talk more easily.
7. Visualize the place they are describing whilst the person is talking. Note down any possible answers, but be careful with distractors e.g. ‘this **was** the library but we decided to **move** it down to the end of the corridor’.
8. Use signposting language like ‘The next room we are about to see is...’, or ‘If you now follow me to...’, to help you understand each stage of the talk.

**Example 1.** Study the map of the Town Library below and circle the best answer a-d.

---

**Question:**
4. Which of the following is Room Number 14?
   a. Arts Collection
   b. Local History Collection
   c. Tourist Information
   d. Children’s Books

(Adapted from: http://ieltsadvantage.com/2015/06/09/ielts-listening-labeling-map-plan/)
IV. STEP: STRATEGIES FOR NOTE-TAKING

In the second listening section of the STEP, you will be asked to listen to an academic lecture of almost 13 minutes and take notes. Afterwards, you will be given 10 multiple-choice questions, which are 1.5 points each, to answer by referring to your own notes of the lecture. The second listening task is 25 minutes long and 15 points in total. You can find more information about the assessed listening skills and suggested strategies below.

1) The Big Picture (Topics & Subtopics)

At the beginning of a lecture, professors usually tell you the topic, or what the lecture is going to be about. They also give you the big picture - the general plan of the lecture. The big picture is an overview of how the professor will present the material, like a map of the lecture.

Below are the signal phrases frequently used in introducing topics or subtopics, as well as the lecture plan.

**The ones that signal the topic**
- Today’s lecture will focus on …
- This afternoon we’ll look at …
- Our topic today is …
- We’ll be talking about …
- What I want to talk about today is …
- What I want to discuss today is …
- I’ll give you an overview of …
- Last time we discussed … and this week we’re going to …

**The ones that signal the lecture plan**
- I’d like to begin with the first category …
- Today’s lecture will be divided into two parts …
- In the first half, you’ll hear about …
- In the second half, we’ll discuss …
- There are a few things we’ll be covering today …
- I’ll be covering two areas in today’s lecture …
- First, we’ll look at … then … and finally we’ll move on to …

**Lecture Language Signalling a Transition Between Ideas**

Professors use a variety of expressions throughout a lecture to signal a new idea, or end of one idea and begin a new idea. Think of these transitions as road signs that help you find your way.

**Expressions signalling a new idea or topic**
- Let me start with …
- Next, let’s talk about …
- I want to focus on …

**Expressions signalling the end of one idea and the beginning of a new idea**
- Now that we have talked about ____________, let’s talk about …
- Let’s move on to …
- That’s enough about ____________. Let’s go to the next point.

(Taken from Lecture Ready 2)
2) Numbers and Statistics

Whether you are studying humanities, social sciences, or physical sciences, you will often work with numbers and statistics. Listen carefully for stressed syllables (A), since many numbers sound similar but have different stress patterns. Also, listen for number group markers such as hundred, thousand, and million (B). Finally, note that the word “and” can come before the tens units (C), although many speakers don’t use it.

(A) 13 - thirteen; 30 - thirty
(B) 53,721 - fifty-three thousand, seven hundred twenty-one
    368,586 - three hundred sixty-eight thousand, five hundred eighty-six
    19,046,899 - nineteen million, forty-six thousand, eight hundred ninety-nine.
(C) 374 - three hundred seventy-four / three hundred and seventy-four

Many history lectures include dates, numbers, and chronologies - or series of events. In a lecture like this, it is important to keep track of the key idea or information associated with each date or number you hear. (Taken from Contemporary Topics 3)

CE stands for “Common Era.” It is a relatively new term that is being used more and more, and it is expected to eventually replace AD. AD is an abbreviation for the Latin phrase “Anno Domini,” which means “the year of the Lord” in English. CE and AD have the same meaning. 2008 CE = 2008 AD. BCE stands for “Before the Common Era.” It is expected to eventually replace BC, which means “Before Christ.” BC and BCE also have the same meaning. (Taken Contemporary Topics 2)

316 BCE = Three-one-six b-c-e
1468 CE = Fourteen-sixty-eight c-e

Numbers are also expressed as percentages, fractions, or ratios. Here are some ways to write them as numerals when you are taking notes. (Taken from NGL 2)

Fractions: three-fourths, three-quarters ¾
two-thirds ⅔
one and a half 1 ½

Percentages: thirteen point four percent 13.4%
zero point nine percent 0.9%
point 10 percent 0.10%

Ratios: two out of ten 2:10
### 3) Definition

Professors often use new words as they explain new information or ideas. They also use a variety of expressions to present definitions for those words. Here are the expressions that signal a definition.

(Taken from Lecture Ready 2)

- that is, ...
- in other words, ...
- X, or _______
- by X, I mean _______
- X is the term for _______
- X means _______
- What I mean by X is _______
- What I mean when I say X is _______

Sometimes, a key term is followed by its definition with a verb or phrase connecting the two. Other times, the definition precedes the key term, with a verb or phrase in between. For example:

(Taken from Contemporary Topics 3)

- ABC is _______
- ABC means _______
- ABC, which is _______,
- ABC, called _______, is _______, referred to as ABC, is _______. This is what’s know as ABC

### 4) Examples

Professors use examples throughout their lectures. These examples of specific things help students understand general ideas. These examples are important because they make abstract ideas more concrete and understandable. They may also help you remember the abstract idea. Here are some phrases signaling examples:

(Taken from Lecture Ready 2)

#### For Actual Examples

- For example, ...
- Take X, for example.
- Here is a perfect example of what I mean.
- Here are some examples of ...
- Let’s look at a couple of examples of ...
- To illustrate, let’s look at ....
- For instance, ...
- Such as ... Like ...

#### For Hypothetical (Unreal) Examples

- Let’s say ...
- Take something like ...
- Let’s imagine..........
5) **Key terms and Content Words**

Use keywords to write down the essential information in a lecture. It is neither possible nor necessary to write every word you hear. Here are some tips for choosing keywords. (NGL 2)

- Concentrate on content words: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs
- Choose the most important words to convey the meaning in the fewest words possible. For example, you hear

  *Lecture says: “Culturally, three characteristics stand out in this period: conformity to social norms, greater male domination of the family than in the later periods, and very clear gender roles, that is, clear and separate roles for men and women at home and at work.”*

  You write: “3 characteristics: social conformity, male domination, clear gender roles at home and work”

- You may also choose to put some information in your own words. For example instead of writing *conformity to social norms*, you might write *social conformity*. (NGL 2)

Speakers use a variety of cues to let you know when they are about to focus on a keyword in the lecture. They may give any of the following cues: (Contemporary Topics 2)

- Pause
- Slow down
- Speak more loudly
- Repeat the keyword
- Spell the keyword
- Define the keyword using an introductory phrase (see *Definition* part above)

One way to note keywords is to write the keyword on the left and the definition on the right. Say you hear *A phobia—that’s p-h-o-b-i-a—is an extreme fear*. Your notes might look like this: (Contemporary Topics 2)

  phobia → an extreme fear

6) **Symbols & Abbreviations**

When you take notes on a lecture, you will not have time to write down all the important information. That is why good notetakers use symbols and abbreviations. See the tips below: (NGL 2)

→ **Using Conventional Symbols**

  & or +  and
  =  equals; is the same as
  ≠  not; not the same as
  >;<  more than; less than
  @  at
  ↑  go up; increase
Using Conventional Abbreviations

- cent. = century
- ex = example
- info = information
- intro = introduction
- max = maximum
- min = minimum
- psych = psychology; psychological
- stats = statistics
- appx = approximately
- fb = feedback
- intl = international
- av = average

Using the first syllable or the first syllable + the first letter of the second syllable

- educ = education
- lect = lecture
- pres = president
- subj = subject
- transp = transportation

Making up your own abbreviations

Lectures will usually include words for which you cannot use conventional symbols and abbreviations. Most lectures will also have words that are unique to the topic of the lecture. In such cases, make up your own abbreviations. Just be sure to create abbreviations that will help you remember the complete words when you go back and read your notes. (NGL 2)

Here are some additional tips to save writing time when you take notes:
→ Use as few vowels as possible
bewildering bewldrng
ceremony cermny
cremated cremtd
reassured reassrd

→ Omit the final letters of the word
elaborate elab
reception recep
significance signif

→ Use these abbreviations
someone s/o
something s/t
with w/
without w/o
dollars $

→ Use other conventional symbols
→ causes, leads to
← is the result of

7) Cause and Effect Relationships
Academic lectures often include information about cause-and-effect relationships. These relationships are very important because they clarify how different aspects of a topic are related to one another. Understanding cause-and-effect relationships will help you remember the information in the lecture. Here are some ways lecturers might express a cause-and-effect relationship.

(Taken from Contemporary Topics 3)

If you hear something, then your auditory memory will be activated.
You remember this theory because we talked about it for almost an hour.
Because of his research, our understanding of memory is clearer.
Using more senses causes us to remember more.
Emotion affects how well we remember events.
The effect of repeating information is better recall.
Better memory results in more learning.
8) Comparison and Contrast Relationships

In a lecture that includes comparison and contrasts, it is important to note how items are similar or different. The words on the top are used to indicate similarities, or comparisons. Those on the bottom indicate differences, or contrasts. (Contemporary Topics 3)

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>like</td>
<td>likewise</td>
<td>in a similar manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the same</td>
<td>as with ... so</td>
<td>both ... and ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as .... as</td>
<td>not only ...</td>
<td>parallels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>also</td>
<td>similar to</td>
<td>in like fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>similarly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but</td>
<td>more (than)</td>
<td>on the other hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>however</td>
<td>whereas</td>
<td>in contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conversely</td>
<td>different from</td>
<td>unlike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>while</td>
<td>less (than)</td>
<td>although</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9) Problem and Solution Relations

In some academic lectures, the speaker’s goal is to describe problems and possible solutions to those problems. In this type of lecture, it is important to first clearly distinguish the problems, then determine which solutions apply to which problems. (Contemporary Topics 3)

Expressing problems:

The first problem is ...

The bad news is ...

This causes problems such as ...

One theory of (the problem) says ...

Think about the problems of this...

Expression reasons for problems:

The first reason is ...

A second major reason is ...

This is caused by ...

This, in turn, causes ...

This happens because ...

One interpretation is ...
Expressing solutions:

What can be done about this?
How can we solve this problem?
There is some good news here...
Is there any good news here?
One possible solution is ...

10) Lists

Lecturers will sometimes give information in the form of a list. For instance, this could be lists of causes, effects, characteristics, or types of something. These lists are important because they often concern key information in the lecture; thus, this information needs to be a part of your notes if you are to understand the lecture completely and accurately. When adding a list to your notes, be sure to number each item on the list (e.g., 1, 2, 3, etc.) The following are some ways lecturers might indicate that they are going to list something:

Scientists have identified three causes for ...
There are four important effects of ...
I would like to discuss the three major characteristics of ...
We currently believe that there are four types of ...

(Taken from Contemporary Topics 3)

11) Degrees of Certainty

Speakers often express how certain they are about something. They may describe information that they are certain is true, such as facts. They may also discuss theories that they think are probably true or possibilities that may or may not be true. It is important to listen for the differences among these three types of ideas.

Fact (certain):

Mars is the fourth planet from the Sun
In 1965, the spaceship Mariner 4 took the first pictures of Mars.

Theory (probably, but not proven)

It’s very probable that ... It makes sense that ...
It’s likely that ... We assume that ...

Possibility (less certain):

Maybe ... It’s possible that ...
There may/could be ... We think that ...

(Taken from Contemporary Topics 1)
A. MAIN IDEA QUESTIONS

Main idea questions ask about the overall ideas of a passage as a whole. They may ask what the subject, topic, or main idea of a passage is. They may also ask what overall purpose the passage serves. It is important to understand that the main idea of a passage may be directly stated in the passage, or you may have to synthesize (bring together) information from different parts of the passage to understand the overall.

How to identify the question

- What is the subject of the passage?
- What is the topic of the passage?
- What is the main idea of the passage?
- What is the purpose of the passage?
- The lecture is mainly about....
- The lecturer mainly discusses ...
- Why .... in the passage?

Where to find the answer

Information to help you understand the main idea may be directly stated at the beginning of the passage or restated at the end of the lecture. It may also be necessary for you to draw a conclusion about the main idea based upon information provided throughout the passage.

(Taken from Longman IBT)

B. SPECIFIC INFORMATION QUESTIONS

Detail questions ask you about specific pieces of information that are stated in a passage.

How to identify the question

- What is stated in the lecture ...?
- What is indicated in the lecture ...?
- According to the speaker, ...?
- Which of the following is (not) mentioned in the lecture?
- Which of the following is true/false about ....?

Where to find the answer

Information needed to answer detail questions is directly stated in the passage. The answers to detail questions are generally found in order in the passage.

(Taken from Longman IBT)
C. INFERENCE QUESTIONS

1) Inferences and Drawing Conclusions
Sometimes you need to make inferences to answer the questions correctly.

How to identify the question
- What is most likely ...?
- What is implied ...?
- What can be inferred ...?

Where to find the answer
Information to answer these questions is not directly stated in the passage. It is necessary to understand the points given in the passage and draw a conclusion based on the main points to answer them.

2) Understanding the stance
In the exam, you may be asked questions about the speaker’s stance, or attitude. This type of question asks you how the speaker seems to feel about a particular topic. Often the speaker does not say directly how he or she feels; instead, you must understand the speaker’s attitude from a combination of the words the speaker says, the context in which the words are said, and the way the words are said. You may, for example, be asked to determine if the speaker feels positive or negative, happy or sad, impressed or unimpressed, or enthusiastic or bored about a particular topic. You may also be asked about whether a speaker is doubtful or certain about what he or she is saying. To answer this type of question, you must listen to what is said in a particular context and how it is said, and then you must draw a conclusion about the speaker’s stance, or attitude.

How to identify the question
- What is the attitude, opinion, point of view of the speaker?
- Which statement best expresses how the speaker feels?

Where to find the answer
Information to answer organization questions is not directly stated in the passage. It is necessary to understand the main points and draw a conclusion based on the main points to answer the question.

3) Application
Sometimes you may be asked to use the information you have taken from the lecture and apply it to similar situations. The key to this question type is the ability to identify the most important point of an argument or an idea and see how it relates to a similar situation.

How to identify the question
- Which of the following would the author agree/disagree with?
- Which of the following would the XXXXX approach/scientist(s) criticize/support etc.?
- Which of the following would (not) be an example of XXXXX?
- Study the situation(s) below and decide which approach/strategy etc. is operating/used?
Study the claims and decide which scientist/researcher etc. would make such a claim.

Where to find the answer

The answer to such questions are not directly stated in the lecture, so the listener cannot directly find them in their notes. As mentioned above, to answer application questions it is important to understand the main argument of a theory/strategy/scientist etc. The next step is to analyze the situation(s) or options to look for similarities between the argument(s) in the text and the given situation(s) or options. In other words, one has to decide whether the information given in the lecture is applicable to the external situation that is given in the question.

(Taken from Longman IBT)

Sample Lecture & Questions

Phrenology

I want to talk about what was once a very popular way of studying character based on the shape of the skull. This theory, what was known as “phrenology,” was started by a German doctor named Franz Gall around the year 1800. What Gall proposed was that it was possible to determine character by feeling or “reading” the bumps on a person’s head. I want to discuss here the basic principles of this theory, what it claimed to be able to do – and then why it became unfashionable and disappeared. Finally, I want to ask whether it contributed anything to our knowledge about the brain.

So, what were some of the important features of phrenology? Gall said that the brain is the organ of the mind, which our talents and mental abilities stem from the brain. Furthermore, he said that the brain is composed of several distinct organs – and that each of the brain’s faculties has a separate organ in a separate part of the brain. What’s more, the size of any organ is a reflection of its power – and hence importance in the makeup of an individual’s character. He also claimed that the overall shape of the brain is determined by the development of the organs which it contains. He argued that the outside skull takes on the shape of the brain which it encloses – and therefore the surface of the skull can be taken as an accurate reflection of the shape of the brain and thus of a person’s psychological tendencies and aptitudes.

So how did it work? Well, a phrenologist would run his fingers over a person’s head, examining every bump or indentation. So, for example, a protuberance – a bump, in say, the forehead – would indicate that the person had a pronounced tendency to be benevolent, since the organ of benevolence was supposedly in that location. An indentation somewhere else would mean a weakly developed attribute, say a poor memory.

Now, these things were the basic ideas of phrenology as practiced throughout the early nineteenth century. So widespread was this theory that many people would consult phrenologists before, oh, for example, hiring an employee, or even, say, finding a marriage partner. Proponents also tried to determine a person’s predisposition to crime or dishonesty, and unfortunately, at one stage some scientists tried to justify notions such as criminal tendency or racial superiority through skull readings. At the peak of its popularity, phrenology was widely practiced in both North America and Europe. So, you’re probably thinking all this really bizarre, right? Well, so did some people back then! In truth there had always been dissenting voices. The theory was made fun of by various individuals from its earliest appearance.

So what happened to phrenology? Well, educated people lost interest as more academic approaches to psychology became common. It was noticed by some that phrenologists tended to seek
confirmation for their hypotheses – while ignoring counterexamples. Suppose a person was said after a reading to have a marked tendency towards, let’s say, honesty, but then exhibited strongly dishonest personality traits; it would be clear that the analysis was not accurate. Phrenologists tended to dogmatically reject or explain away falsifying evidence, such as this example shows.

Have we learned anything from this theory? Well, I would like to argue that there was some value in it. First of all, it was an important step historically to have emphasized that the brain was the organ of the mind, that thinking and feeling were done through the brain. Furthermore, phrenologists were important in arguing that brain functions were localized – that some parts of the brain were specialized for certain abilities. Nowadays, of course, we know that this is only partly true. Some parts of the brain appear to be very much involved with certain functions, whereas many abilities seem to be distributed throughout the brain rather than in one location. So, to sum up, we can say that phrenology was of some scientific value although many, if not most, of its ideas have been superseded.

1. What is the lecture mainly about? (Understanding the Main Idea)
   a. A theory about criminal personality development
   b. A system for evaluating personality theory
   c. A method of psychological analysis
   d. A comparison of early psychological theories

2. Which of the following points was made by professor Gall? (Understanding Details)
   a. Different kinds of abilities were evenly distributed in the brain.
   b. The ability to remember was controlled by the frontal part of the brain.
   c. The shape of the skull corresponded to brain shape.
   d. The shape of the brain was less important than the size.

3. According to the professor, how did phrenologists approach evidence? (Understanding Details)
   a. They carefully examined evidence that did not fit with their theory.
   b. They were not interested in seeking confirmation of their claims.
   c. They only accepted the evidence that seemed to fit their claims.
   d. They looked for evidence that they knew was false.

4. What does the professor imply about phrenology? (Making inferences)
   a. It was once more highly thought of than today.
   b. It was mainly a waste of research time.
   c. It was never more than a minority interest.
   d. It was usually on the receiving end of satirical humor.

5. According to the professor, which of the following modern beliefs did phrenology contributed to? (Understanding Details)
   a. Certain organs within the brain are responsible for certain kinds of behavior.
   b. The power of the brain is related to the size and shape of the organ.
   c. The shape of the skull is determined by the shape of the brain.
   d. Certain abilities are related to specific areas of the brain.

V. STEP: STRATEGIES FOR WRITING AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

When you are writing an essay that asks you to discuss a topic or give your opinion on a question, it is important to organize your thoughts and present your arguments clearly. It’s also important to work out the structure of your essay before you start to write.

1. Plan four or five paragraphs:
   - **an introduction paragraph** a. introduces the topic with its background information and b. states your response to the writing question, the **thesis statement**
   - **two or three body paragraphs** a. supports your argument and b. gives a counter-argument with refutation of this opposing view
   - **a conclusion paragraph** gives a. a summary of your opinion and b. interpretation of the facts.

2. List your reasons “for” or “against” before you start writing

3. Back up your reasons with clear examples and justification. Plan how you can refute the opposing ideas.

4. Do not forget:
   * The kind of argument that can be argued logically is one based on an opinion that can be supported by **evidence such as facts**. An argumentative essay is also one that attempts/tries to **change the reader’s mind**, to convince the reader to agree with the point of view of the writer. For that reason, the argumentative essay should attempt to be **persuasive and logical**.
   * When you write an argumentative essay, assume that the **reader disagrees** with you. Try to understand your opponent’s point of view. If you do not, you are not likely to convince the reader.

1.CONTENT

When you are **planning the argumentative essay**, be aware that the essay should contain the following characteristics:

1. The argumentative essay should **introduce and explain the issue or case in the introduction**. The reader needs to understand what issue is being argued.
2. The essay should **offer reasons and support** for those reasons. In other words, the essay should prove its point.
3. The essay may include a counter-argument and, if so, you should **refute this opposing view**. (refute: to prove wrong by argument or to show that something is invalid/untrue/illogical)
4. The essay should be based on a planned outline, to avoid irrelevant ideas and repetition.
Introduction Paragraph:

_Thesis Statement:_ Cigarette advertising should certainly be banned as smokers will risk both their own and non-smokers’ health and spend great amount of money on smoking and healing their health problems.

**Body Paragraph 1:** An argument in favor of bans on cigarette advertising

- promotes such an unhealthy habit of smoking
  - respiratory illness: breathing problems
  - pregnant women and children- more vulnerable

**Body Paragraph 2:** Another argument in favor of bans on cigarette advertising

- high cost of smoking
  - it is expensive, to be deterrent for smokers
  - pay to cure health problems caused by smoking

**Conclusion Paragraph:**

_Summary:_ Taking health and cost related consequences into consideration, I am definitely for the idea of restrictions on cigarette ads.

---

2. ORGANIZATION

2.1. THESIS STATEMENT in ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS

The argumentative thesis takes a side of an issue; frequently it proposes an approach of action which is often expressed with the modal _should._

E.g. 1: In the argument concerning the _nuclear power plant_, the thesis for a paper on this topic might be:

“Governments _should ban further construction_ of nuclear power plants due to safety issues in spite of some undeniable benefits for the economy.”

E.g. 2: In the argument concerning the _high school graduates_, the thesis for a paper on this topic might be:

“High school graduates _should be required_ to take a year off to pursue community service projects before entering college in order to increase their maturity and _global awareness._”
2.2. GENERAL OVERVIEW

1st suggested organization template for the essay “Cigarette advertising should be banned.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction Paragraph:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a lot of talk these days about....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette advertising should be banned....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Paragraph 1: An argument in favor of bans on cigarette advertising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is hard to ignore the huge impact of .....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is obvious that...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette advertising should be monitored .....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Paragraph 2: Another argument in favor of bans on cigarette advertising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Another reason why there must be restrictions on.....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is apparent that...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisers should not be allowed ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusion Paragraph:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taking everything into consideration, I must say...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think it’s ethical to...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2nd suggested organization template with a counter-argument and its refutation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction Paragraph:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a lot of talk these days about....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette advertising should be banned....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Paragraph 1: Arguments in favor of bans on cigarette advertising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First of all, ...........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is apparent that...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another reason why there must be restrictions on.....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisers should not be allowed ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Paragraph 2: Refutation of the arguments against bans on cigarette advertising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the other hand, some people take other issues into consideration...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They claim we should not overlook the fact that...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although it may seem...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No matter what these people assert, it would be better to......</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusion Paragraph:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having considered both sides of the argument I must say...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think it’s ethical to...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3. TRANSITION WORDS / CONNECTORS

*the following exercises and samples show the correct and natural use of transition words in essays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To list points</th>
<th>To add more points to the same topic</th>
<th>To make contrasting point</th>
<th>To show cause and effect</th>
<th>To conclude the topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one major advantage of advantage</td>
<td>furthermore</td>
<td>however</td>
<td>therefore</td>
<td>to sum up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one major disadvantage of</td>
<td>what is more</td>
<td>on the other hand</td>
<td>as a result</td>
<td>all in all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the first place</td>
<td>in addition to</td>
<td>in spite of</td>
<td>consequently</td>
<td>all things considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first of all</td>
<td>besides</td>
<td>while</td>
<td>accordingly</td>
<td>in conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to start with</td>
<td>apart from this/that</td>
<td>nevertheless</td>
<td>thus</td>
<td>above all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one point of view in favor of</td>
<td>moreover</td>
<td>despite</td>
<td>as/since</td>
<td>on the whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondly</td>
<td></td>
<td>even though</td>
<td>/because</td>
<td>as previously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finally</td>
<td></td>
<td>nonetheless</td>
<td>due to/owing to</td>
<td>stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last but not least</td>
<td></td>
<td>on the contrary</td>
<td></td>
<td>taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>instead</td>
<td>everything into</td>
<td>account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>/consideration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In other words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXERCISE 1

a) Read the following composition and fill in the blanks with a word or expression from the list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>furthermore</th>
<th>recently</th>
<th>as a result</th>
<th>in conclusion</th>
<th>on the other hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

“Genetic engineering brings with it more dangers than benefits and should be banned worldwide”

___________(1), advances in science have demonstrated to us that things that once seemed possible only in science fiction could become a reality. The cloning of a sheep brought the possibility of using genetic engineering to create new organs, or even whole human beings, one step closer. I would say that genetic engineering has the potential to be a terrible curse for humankind because of its being very unfamiliar and against laws of nature, so there must be international laws to ban its practice.

It is quite obvious that genetic engineering is a dangerous development with full of ambiguity for human-beings and no way to alter the outcomes. It would not be an exaggeration to request that all that research be banned. Interfering with nature in this way could bring dangers that none of us can imagine. We have no idea how an artificially-created person might behave, or indeed how he or she might suffer. ____________ (2), we may find ourselves in a position which we do not like, but
which we are unable to reverse. After this knowledge is applied and a human-being is copied, it will be too late to take a proper action if the outcome is not as we dreamed or aimed.

_________________ (3), the other reason for the necessity to ban genetic engineering is that it is not for human beings to decide what other human beings should be like; it is unnatural and unethical. It is not only people with deep religious beliefs who feel that it is wrong, for example, for parents to choose whether their baby will be a boy or a girl, or have blue eyes or musical talent. It does not naturally happen so. We must also argue how cloned children would relate themselves with their nuclear donor since they would not have a genetic mother or father. If a man cloned himself, that child would be a new type of relationship to him as his clone, not his son or his twin brother. This weird and unfamiliar relationship would definitely cause a lot of ethical concerns.

_________________ (4), the latest research in genetics has also opened the possibility of new treatment for many diseases which up to now have been incurable. People have reasons to believe in this new advance. It might be possible to prevent a baby from developing a hereditary disease by modifying its genes. Doctors could replace a diseased organ with a new one grown from cells. All these benefits attracts people and make them believe it is worth trying it. However, it would be wise to keep in mind that its drawbacks greatly outweigh its advantages.

_________________ (5), genetic engineering is more likely to give irremediable harm to humankind as illustrated above. Despite all these meaningful reasons to be against genetic engineering, if most people still continue to believe its medical benefits, it will be necessary to control it very strictly, then. The real challenge will be to find ways of monitoring the research that is conducted in laboratories all over the world and to make sure that it is used only for the good of everyone.

(Taken and adapted from http://www.writefix.com/argument)

b) In the box below you will find more linking words and expressions you can use to substitute for the ones used in the essay above, Exercise 1.a. Can you match the words with the blanks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>moreover</th>
<th>consequently</th>
<th>therefore</th>
<th>nevertheless</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>however</td>
<td>to sum up</td>
<td>in addition</td>
<td>finally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answer Key for Exercise 1:

a) 1. recently
2. as a result
3. furthermore
4. on the other hand
5. in conclusion

b) 1. nowadays
2 consequently, therefore
3. moreover, in addition
4. however, nevertheless
5. to sum up, finally
EXERCISE 2

Read the essay below and, for each blank, decide which two of the three given choices are right and which one is wrong.

1) while, whereas, since
2) despite, although, even though
3) despite, nevertheless, however
4) as regards, in summary, to sum up
5) on the contrary, opposite, on the other hand
6) however, although, nevertheless
7) in spite of, even though, despite
8) unfortunately, unluckily, unlikely
9) furthermore, since, due to the fact that
10) in summary, to cut a long story short, in conclusion

“Who learns faster - children or adults?”

Small children seem to learn very quickly, ____________ (1) adults sometimes appear to lose the ability to pick up new subjects such as languages, music, games, or computer programs. Whether children or adults make the best learners has been a burning issue among academics in education. ____________ (2) some theorists claim that adults are more engaged and skilled learners, I agree with the common belief that children are fast learners due to their physiological and social advantages.

It is quite apparent that children seem to learn very quickly compared to adults. In just a few years, they can learn how to play a musical instrument, speak one or even two new languages, and deal with many subjects at school. They have time for sports and hobbies, and become experts in their favorite pastimes. ____________ (3), how much of this is social pressure and how much is genetic? I am convinced that children's brains have a natural ability to absorb new information as part of their developmental growth. Their achievement is also because of social pressure and their surroundings to some extent, though. Schools force them to take many subjects. Parents force them to practice new sports or to learn music. Even their playmates force them to become better at computer games or to read Harry Potter novels faster. ____________ (4), children may enjoy learning since their environment and their cognitive readiness are big motivating factors.

Adults ____________ (5) are supposed to be poor learners. ____________ (6), some people state that adults also have many skills that compensate for the decline in the ability of the brain to grasp and remember new material. They can organize their learning by setting times for reading or practice. They can build on skills and experiences they know already. Adults usually cannot learn to do ballet or to play the violin, but ____________ (7) these physical challenges, their motivation can often be higher than children’s motivation. ____________ (8), society does not encourage many adults to learn. They are busy with families and work all the time. Also, most of them may feel that further learning is pointless, ____________ (9) they have already achieved many goals at work or in their personal life. All these responsibilities and lack of encouragement by society break adults’ motivation.

__________ (10), I feel that we cannot generalize about children or adults being better learners. It depends on the situation and the motivation of the person, and the level of enthusiasm he or she has for learning.

(Taken and adapted from http://www.writefix.com/argument)
Answer Key for Exercise 2:

1. while, whereas
2. although, even though
3. nevertheless, however
4. in summary, to sum up
5. on the contrary, on the other hand
6. however, nevertheless
7. in spite of, despite
8. unfortunately, unluckily
9. since, due to the fact that
10. in summary, in conclusion

3. VOICE

ACADEMIC STYLE

The writer is expected to use the following structures appropriately and effectively:

1. passive voice, impersonal constructions
   E.g. It is argued that ....................

2. a range of advanced and academic vocabulary
   E.g. There has been a heated debate concerning this controversial issue ....................

3. complex sentences with a variety of formal linking words, dependent clauses
   E.g. Although compulsory military service, which provides army with abundant manpower, is beneficial to a country’s ability to defend itself, closer analysis of military efficiency suggests that advanced weaponry plays a more crucial role in the success of a country’s military force.

4. hedging language to sound as accurate as possible, instead of making unreal, too strong claims which would definitely sound wrong to the reader
   E.g. Water shortage may trigger conflicts between nations. / Most of the experts seem to ignore the adverse side-effects of this new approach. / All these are probably caused by people’s ignorance about the subject matter.
   A wide range of words and phrases that could be used in hedging:
   - Modal auxiliary verbs: can, could, may, might, should, would
   - Other modal verbs: appear, seem, look, tend
   - Probability adjectives: possibly, probably, presumably
   - Frequency adverbs: generally, usually, often, occasionally, seldom

5. Generalizations
   E.g. In most developed countries, people .................... / A great majority of people struggle ........
The writer needs to avoid using the following structures, not to sound informal:

1. short forms
   e.g. I’m, it’s

2. informal/colloquial language
   e.g. lots of people

3. simplistic vocabulary
   e.g. Experts say that... / It is a bad idea that....

4. short sentences
   e.g. Many people think so. They are wrong.

5. very emotinal language or very strong personal opinions
   e.g. I absolutely hate people who .......... / I certainly know that ............

6. over-generalization (unreasonable assumption!)
   e.g. All politicians are ................. / Everybody believes that ............

7. use personal examples
   e.g. In my school, .................

4. SAMPLE ESSAYS

4.1. Sample 1

“Television news shows many scenes of disasters and violence. This can have negative effects on individuals and society.”

Write an essay in which you either AGREE or DISAGREE with the statement above.

Give reasons and justifications for your ideas.

Write at least 300 words.

Satellite television and 24-hour news channels mean that viewers are flooded with images of natural disasters, wars and conflict from around the world. While it’s important to know what is going on in our world, it can be depressing or counter-productive to watch repeated images of famine, fighting or fear. We have to admit that being exposed to all these images and news have very influential negative effects on individuals’ mental well-being on the contrary to the positive assumptions that some people may have.

The constant bombardment of images can be counter-productive and may impact our mental health negatively. Instead of learning more about the starving baby and what led to the situation, we struggle with pushing the shocking images from our mind. To protect ourselves, we group the images: another typhoon in the Philippines, another earthquake in China, another bomb in Gaza. As more and more images appear we feel more and more powerless and unable to contribute to solving the problem. A second point is that news organizations compete to make their images more graphic: greater
massacre, more crying mothers, and angrier protestors. We also have to question the reliability of some of the images. Many television stations and journalists have their own bias and agenda. They just want to have more viewers and get more support from the ones who have the power. The result of this is that trusting the news gets harder and we respond less and less to the situation and to the human suffering.

If we look at the other side of the coin, some people may agree with the need for news organizations to provide us with up-to-date and accurate information, and live pictures convey information in a way that words cannot. Pictures may allow us to grasp what is happening much more quickly than by reading long articles, or to form our own idea of the situation, without input from the reporter or journalist. However, technological advances enable news organizations to manipulate images by using some applications and software programs. Considering today’s biased news companies, it is hard to believe not only their reports but also images they share with society. There have been many incidents that the photos or videos shared by some news organizations were mistaken. They were actually shots taken at other dates and showing some other instances, not that of the broadcasted news. The only aim of such organizations’ is to create people whose opinion conforms with the majority.

In conclusion, we need to stay informed but we also need to limit our exposure to the constant tide of news and shocking images to stay mentally healthy, and to hold our own stance no matter what news we are exposed to. Otherwise, we may start to feel helpless and less sensitive to important issues.

(Taken and adapted from http://www.writefix.com/argument)

4.2. Sample 2

“Some people fear some languages are in danger of extinction. However, having fewer languages could really ease people’s lives.”

Write an essay in which you either AGREE or DISAGREE with the statement above.

Give reasons and justifications for your ideas.

Write at least 300 words.

The world appears to be moving towards a smaller number of languages such as English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese or Hindi, each with millions or billions of speakers. Unfortunately, this means that smaller languages are in danger of disappearing. Some people may fear this may lead to the loss of culture and identity; however, I believe a world with easier communication would be a better place to live in for people in this global world.

It would be wise to consider that there might be a lot to be gained from having fewer languages and greater communication. First of all, today there is a common problem of translation: business is more difficult, travel is more complicated, and misunderstandings arise. To really derive pleasure from the existence of these many languages in the world, we need to truly use them like reading their original books or speaking to the natives. However, it would be impossible to learn more than a few languages at all. We have to depend on others’ translation, which would not give the same enjoyment as reading the original text. Another current problem is marginalization: communities who do not speak a major world language fall behind in science and technology and their economies suffer. English is now the lingua franca and the countries who want to flourish in science, technology and business have to use
English; otherwise, they will have difficulty keeping up-to-date and sharing ideas with other countries or corporations. Global collaboration could happen instantly rather than taking years.

On the other hand, a language in danger of extinction might mean more than losing only one language for some people as they fear this may lead to the loss of national identities, religious beliefs, lifestyles, traditions, and such other values. Some other people are also afraid of the loss of diversity: different languages can contribute to different ways of looking at and solving human problems. Although these people are worried about the loss of culture or identity, it seems that good ideas and values can still survive. We don’t speak Latin or classical Greek anymore, but the ideas and values of the people who spoke those languages are still with us because we keep listening to their music or like their cuisines. Unless the aim is assimilating people into some other religious beliefs or cultural values, people do not have to speak their native language to retain their culture and religion.

In conclusion, it seems inevitable that some languages will disappear as it is a natural outcome of the needs of this modern world. The answer is not to hide and isolate ourselves but to be confident about our identity in whatever language we speak and enjoy easy communication.

(Taken and adapted from http://www.writefix.com/argument)

4.3. Sample 3

“It’s better for parents to teach their children at home instead of sending them to traditional schools.”

Write an essay in which you either AGREE or DISAGREE with the statement above.

Give reasons and justifications for your ideas.

Write at least 300 words.

In most countries in the world, governments require children to attend schools in which trained teachers are responsible for educating the children using an approved curriculum. However, a significant number of parents believe that it is much better for their children to be educated at home by the people who know them and their needs best. Despite the unquestionable benefits of home schooling, I certainly believe the best option for the child is to be educated at traditional schools for a healthy socialization process.

There are many arguments in favor of sending children to conventional schools. The first is that children will interact with other children and learn a lot from their peers. These children may represent either a cross-section of society or a narrow group, but in either case the children will interact with each other and develop social skills. A second point is that the children will learn to function outside the family. They will not be dependent on their parents for their educational, emotional and social needs. Children will find it easier to integrate into real life when they finish school, as they eventually will, when they start work or college. The school will be their first, and safe place where they can socialize healthily with others and come across a small, representative sample of real world outside under their teachers’ and parents’ guidance. Taking this chance from students and leaving them alone with the real cruel world, when they have to face it up, would be unfair to them since it may be too late for them to develop their social skills then.
On the contrary, an increasing number of parents have started to claim that home schooling is a good option for their children. Some parents fear that their children will suffer from bullying or will be forced into antisocial behavior by peer pressure. Their main concern might also be the low quality of schooling available. They are unhappy with the quality or depth of education offered in schools. Schools frequently have large classes. They are often staffed by teachers without sufficient knowledge of subjects that they teach. Nonetheless, a majority of parents are aware that the school curriculum is structured by experts and their children need a well-planned education for academic, social and cultural reasons. Even though the quality of schooling gets worse, parents could hardly provide high quality education without getting any professional help. If they prefer home-schooling for their kids, they must keep in mind that this would not be a great help to their kids’ learning.

Overall, while many parents work hard to teach their children at home, conventional schools are still the right choice for most children. Schools are not perfect, but they seem to be a proven way of preparing our children for the real world. Children need their peers and experts’ guidance more than their parents’ guidance. (Taken and adapted from http://www.writefix.com/argument)

4.4. Comments on Sample Essays

Content:
All three samples have a sufficient number of body paragraphs which clarify the argument stated in the thesis statements. The first body paragraphs mention why the writers defend these certain points of view with well-explained justifications and examples. All the justifications are relevant and well-linked with the main idea. The second body paragraphs refer to the opponents’ ideas, but then the writers clarify why they don’t agree with them. This refutation helps their own arguments sound stronger and more persuasive.

Organization:
All the three essays start with introduction paragraphs which introduce the topics, give background information, and then present the writers’ stances with thesis statements at the end of the introduction paragraphs. All the body paragraphs have central ideas and supporting ideas which expand on these main ideas. Eventually the essays end with conclusion paragraphs which state summaries of the essays and personal reflections on the subjects. Each paragraph has its own unity, and there is natural flow of ideas throughout the essays with successful use of a wide range of connectors.

E.g. “English is now the lingua franca and the countries who want to flourish in science, technology and business have to use English; otherwise, they will have difficulty keeping up-to-date and sharing ideas with other countries or corporations.”

Lexis:
These essays set good examples which clarify vocabulary related expectations from a B2 level learner. They have a lot of high level and academic words, rather than only repeating basic level words. These words are used appropriately with correct spellings and forms.

E.g. 1. “Children will find it easier to integrate into real life when they finish school, as they eventually will, when they start work or college.”

E.g. 2. “However, technological advances help news organizations manipulate even images using some applications and software programs.”
Grammar:

The writers of all these three essays use varied sentence structures; have a lot of complex sentences with subordinate clauses rather than having only simple sentences. They apply sentence structure, punctuation, and capitalization rules accurately. Correct use of all these three systems makes the message clear to the reader.

E.g. 1. “On the other hand, a language in danger of extinction (reduced relative clause) might mean more than losing only one language for some people as it presumably leads to the loss of national identities, religious beliefs, lifestyles, traditions, and such other values. (reason - subordinate clause)”

Voice:

All the three writers keep an academic tone of voice through their papers. They prefer to use academic vocabulary, hold a confident and persuasive stance and avoid using some certain structures and personal examples which may make their writing less formal. You can refer to page 7 and 8 to get more detailed information on how to improve your academic voice.

5. STEP WRITING CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>Do your main ideas in each body paragraph support the thesis statement?</th>
<th>YES / NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you have enough relevant supporting ideas to expand on the main ideas of each body paragraph?</td>
<td>YES / NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you refute the opposing idea with strong justifications?</td>
<td>YES / NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>Do you have an introduction paragraph which clarifies the topic and the organization of your essay, the thesis statement?</th>
<th>YES / NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does each of your body paragraphs have a central/main idea, preferably stated with a topic sentence?</td>
<td>YES / NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you have a conclusion paragraph which summarizes your argument and include your reflection on the topic?</td>
<td>YES / NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRAMMAR &amp; LEXIS</th>
<th>Do you have a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary?</th>
<th>YES / NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you have an appropriate number of transition words and are they used correctly? (see page 41)</td>
<td>YES / NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you have some complex, long and high level sentences?</td>
<td>YES / NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you have an academic tone of voice? (see page 44 and 45)</td>
<td>YES / NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REFERENCES:

http://www.eslflow.com/Acargumentativesessay.html

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wdc/learning/language/hedging.htm

VI. STEP: STRATEGIES FOR SPEAKING

The STEP Speaking Exam is given on a different day from the written exam and you take the exam at a predetermined time on that day. It consists of three sections and is worth 20% of the whole STEP exam.

Before the test starts, you will be asked some warm-up questions: Where are you from? and What are you going to study at this university? This part is not graded; however, it may help you overcome your nervousness. No elaboration is expected in answers, which means you can give basic answers.

PART-1 (2 minutes)

In the first part, you will have a conversation with the examiner. In this part, you will be asked one general or personal question on familiar topics. For this section, examiners have a list of questions and randomly choose one question to ask for each student. You have maximum 30 seconds to answer the question. If you cannot answer the question or gives a yes/no answer, you will be asked one more question. Students’ request for definitions of unfamiliar words are kindly turned down with a statement like “Sorry, I cannot help you with that.”

Here is a list of possible questions prepared for one pair:

- Do you know anyone who is really happy?
- What activities make you happy?
- Do different people experience happiness differently?
- Do people sometimes need to feel unhappy?
- Are older or younger people happier?
- What have you done recently to make a friend or family member happy?

Sample-1: (Bad Sample)

**Examiner:** Do you know anyone who is really happy?
**Student A:** I know. My father is always happy.

**Explanation:** The answer is relatively short. The student should have elaborated on the answer. S/he could have mentioned what factors make his father happy so that s/he could have used the allotted time effectively and produced more in terms of grammar and lexis, and content.

Sample-2: (Good Sample)

**Examiner:** What have you done recently to make a friend or family member happy?
**Student B:** Well, I usually try to find a way to make people around me happy and I have done countless things so far, but the most recent one is that I bought my brother a toy car that he had been dreaming of. He got really surprised. It was like a dream coming true for him.

**Explanation:** It is a fully extended answer and completely relevant. As for the language use, it is highly accurate and appropriate. The range of vocabulary and grammar is quite wide (grammar: to infinitive, present perfect, superlative, noun clause, past perfect continuous, reduction of relative clause; vocabulary: countless, dream of, really surprised, come true).
Some tips:

1) It is strongly advised you do your best to answer the question. You can use some filler phrases that can give you some thinking time. The use of filler phrases will also indicate that you can keep speaking upon encountering a difficult question. Some filler phrases are as follows:
   - To give opinion
     - In my opinion, ...; I believe (that)...; To me, ....;
     - If you didn’t hear/understand something
     - Could you say that again? / Could you repeat the question, please?
     - If you face a difficult / strange question
     - Hmm, that is a tricky question. Let me think about that ...
     - Yeah, I guess I would say that ....

   (Taken from http://www.fluentu.com/ielts/blog/ielts-speaking/)

2) You should not give too short answers. You should extend your answer by explaining the reason behind what you mention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bad Sample</th>
<th>Good Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examiner: What is your favourite color?</td>
<td>Examiner: What is your favourite color?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student A: Blue, I think.</td>
<td>Student B: Blue, I think. Yeah, blue, because it reminds me of the ocean and the sky. I feel calm when I see the color blue. I also like to wear blue – it looks good on me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) You can also use such strategies as division, from general to specific, or concession. See the samples below:

   (Taken from http://www.ieltsanswers.com/speaking-strategies.html)

Examiner: What kind of food do you like?

1. Divide into three parts:
   - Well, there are three kinds of food that I’m really keen on.
   - The one I like best is Italian food because....
   - I also really like to eat Korean food as it’s very....
   - I’m also kind of partial to Mexican food for the reason that it is....

2. General to specific (Give an example)
   - Well, I’d have to say that I’m a big fan of seafood. In particular, I really like to eat Japanese seafood because it’s always so fresh. For instance, sashimi is delicious because the raw fish is so flavoursome.

3. Depends
   - I think it depends really.
   - If I’m working, I prefer to get something like fast food such as McDonalds because......
   - But, if I’m out with friends, I would rather have something more exotic such as Thai food or Indian food.

4. Concession
   - Well, recently I’d have to say that I’ve been enjoying eating steak and each time I feel like a steak I go to Outback Steak House, because the steaks there are huge. However, I think that it may not be all that healthy to eat so much red meat, as I’ve heard it can lead to high levels of cholesterol.

4) You should not try to have conversation with the examiner before or after the exam.

Additional Sources for General Questions on Familiar Topics

http://www.ielts-exam.net/ielts-speaking/ielts-speaking-part-one.html
http://www.englishpractice.com/ielts/ielts-speaking-strategies/
PART 2 (4 minutes)

For Part-2, you will be asked an academic question on which you should speak in a monologue. First, Student A is asked a question; and expected to prepare for his/her talk within 30 seconds and to speak for another 1 minute after the preparation. Then, Student B goes through the same procedure. During the preparation time, each can take notes if they wish. The goal of Part 2 is to measure students’ ability to talk about a topic, develop their ideas about that topic, and use relevant grammar and vocabulary.

The questions are based on personal experience but do not require any specific knowledge.

Sample Question & Answer

Student – A – Bad Sample

**Examiner:** Do you think money can buy happiness?

(Student A has 30 seconds to prepare for the talk. S/he can prepare notes that will help her/him during the talk. S/he will be given a pencil and paper to take notes)

**Student A:** Yes money is too important for people. Peoples need money for buy food, house and clothes etc.. Peoples need money for them children also. If they have money, peoples can be happy. Poor people are not happy. They have to work too much. It is bad. They do not have food enough. They do not have food good house or clothes. Good clothes. So they are become unhappy. I am believe people need money for to be happy.

**Explanation:** The problems with the production are as follows: lack of organization, repetition of ideas, simple ideas, inaccurate use of plurality, inaccurate use of infinitives, inaccurate use of quantifiers, incomplete sentences, problems with the use of ‘be’, and a poor range of vocabulary.

Student – B – Good Sample

**Examiner:** Do you think certain food and drinks can make people happy?

(Student B has 30 seconds to prepare for the talk. S/he can prepare notes that will help her/him during the talk. S/he will be given a pencil and paper to take notes)

**Student B:** There are some positive effects of certain food and drinks on people’s mental health. First of all, healthy food can make people happy because there are lots of vitamins in it. We know that lack of certain vitamins can make people feel depressed. Moreover, organic food can make people feel much better as they do not contain harmful chemicals. People should avoid dangerous chemicals because they can harm the body and the mind. Finally, some food can make the brain produce certain hormones and make people happy. The best example is chocolate. Chocolate makes the body produce happiness hormones so that people feel happy. I think the choice of food is important to be healthy and happy.

**Explanation:** What makes this production a good one is as follows: fully extended answer, completely relevant and logical progression of ideas, a good range of high level vocabulary (lack, contain, harmful chemicals, feel depressed, avoid, certain, choice) and grammar (infinitives, comparative/superlative, modals, noun clauses, causatives), and the accurately used linkers.

Some tips are as follows:

1) You are expected to produce fully extended answers in this part. There should be a completely relevant and logical progression of ideas.
2) To meet the expectation mentioned above, you use preparation time wisely. You can make a general outline on the basis of some general structures such as introduction, body, and conclusion.

3) For introduction, you can use some introductory structures such as “I’d like to talk about X”.

4) For body, you should elaborate on your introduction by focusing on the details one by one. You can use linkers such as Firstly, Secondly, and Finally. This will help you to state your ideas in a logical order.

5) For body, to extend your ideas you can give examples. This way, you can show your ability to use a wide range of grammar structures and vocabulary as well. You can touch upon past, present, or future issues, thereby employing relevant structures. Phrases that can be used with examples are as follows:
   - For example,
   - To illustrate,
   - For instance,
   - Let me give you an example,
   - To demonstrate,
   - Specifically,

6) For conclusion, you can briefly summarize what you have said.

7) You can express your opinions by using a wide range of phrases given below.
   - I strongly believe that ....
   - As far as I am concerned, ...
   - I am strongly against ...
   - I am strongly in favor of ..... 
   - I am skeptical of the idea that ...
   - I must admit, I think ...

(Taken from http://ieltsadvantage.com/2015/03/03/ielts-speaking-task-2-strategy/)

Links for sources for Part-2 (Questions & Samples)
http://www.ielts-exam.net/ielts_speaking_samples/386/
http://www.ieltsbuddy.com/ielts-speaking-topics.html
http://www.goodluckielts.com/IELTS-speaking-topics-2.html

PART 3 (8 minutes)

In the third part of the speaking exam, you will discuss an agree/disagree prompt with your partner. One student agrees while the other disagrees, and students attempt to persuade each other while refuting the opposing viewpoint. This discussion may last for 6 minutes.

Example:

   Examiner: In the third part, I will give you a statement to discuss and you’ll think about it for 2 minutes. Then, you will discuss it with your partner for 6 minutes. You may use the ideas given on the task sheet or use your own ideas. You don’t have to come to an agreement.

   Examiner: Here is the statement.

   The happiest time in someone’s life is when they are in primary school.

   Examiner: <Student A> You agree with the statement and < Student B> You disagree with the statement.
You will be given a task sheet (see below) on which you can take notes. On the paper, you will be also provided with some prompts to help you not only in preparation for talk but also in interaction with your partner. You don’t have to stick to the prompts. In other words, you can talk about something different from the prompts given.

The task sheet for Student A as a sample is given below:

PART 3: TASK SHEET FOR STUDENT A

The happiest time in someone’s life is when they are in primary school.

You are going to discuss this topic with another student.

You will AGREE with the statement.

You can take notes below. You have 2 minutes to prepare.

In this part, together with students’ ability to use a wide range of grammar and vocabulary, and extend their ideas in logical progression, their use of functions and strategies is measured. You should listen to your partner attentively and respond to them in a logical way. You should not dominate the discussion or list all your ideas at once. You need to use turn taking skills. You are expected to keep the conversation going by providing opinions or asking questions. You should evaluate your partner’s ideas and try to refute them in a respectful manner.

The ability to employ functions and strategies effectively is of primary importance. Since the exam is high-stakes and measures whether students have an adequate level of English proficiency for their studies in faculty, they are expected to use a wide range of these functions and strategies accurately.

Below are some of these functions and strategies. You can also find links given below for the webpages listing many others.

- To express lack of understanding
  - I beg your pardon?
  - I am sorry, but I don’t quite understand.
• To ask for clarification
  What do you mean by...?
  Do you mean...?
  Could you explain it again, please?

• To clarify one's point or idea
  Let me clarify that...
  Let me explain that in more detail...
  Let me put it in other words..

• To give reasons
  because,
  since,
  owing to ..., 
  due to...

• Expressing probability or improbability:
  o Probability:
    It is probable that we solve this serious problem
    Maybe / perhaps the problem won't be serious.
    It will probably work better
  o Improbability:
    No, probably not.
    I don't suppose some people will be willing to participate
  o Expressing opinion
    I think...
    As far as I'm concerned,...
    To my mind,...

• Agreement and disagreement
  o Agreement:
    There is no doubt about it that...
    I completely / absolutely agree with you.
  o Disagreement
    I don't agree with you.
    I'm sorry, but I disagree.

• Refutation
  It is only partly true that...
  That’s true, but...
  That seems obvious, but ...
  That is not necessarily so.
  It is not as simple as it seems.
  I agree with you up to a point, but...
  Well, you could be right, but
  Perhaps this is true, but it cannot be denied that..

• Conversation fillers
  While listening    While speaking
  Really?           Well
  Right             OK
  Sure              So
  How awful!       I mean

IMPORTANT NOTE: Students are notified in advance of the time and place for the speaking section; they must arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the given exam time and must not arrive late. Each student enters the speaking exam room together with another student.

Links for Functions and Strategies