

Units 11 & 12 Writing worksheet

Writing a problem-solution essay

GOAL: write a problem-solution essay for a student career magazine.

Include: a block or chain structure; a conclusion; examples; expressions for describing problems and solutions.

1 Have you ever studied online? If not, would you consider it? What was (or would be) enjoyable? What was (or would be) difficult?

2 Read the problem-solution essay from a student magazine about studying online. Complete the chart.

Problem	Solution

Why are online degrees sometimes less than perfect?

Online degree programmes allow students to study anywhere and at any time. However, these courses present some problems.

A major issue is there is not enough support for students. For example, there is little regular contact with teachers and students have difficulty getting the help they require. This means that students can struggle with completing assignments. Another problem is that students can get bored. For instance, watching lectures online is not as engaging as attending a live lecture. Consequently, students do not watch the lectures and get behind with their work, or even drop out.

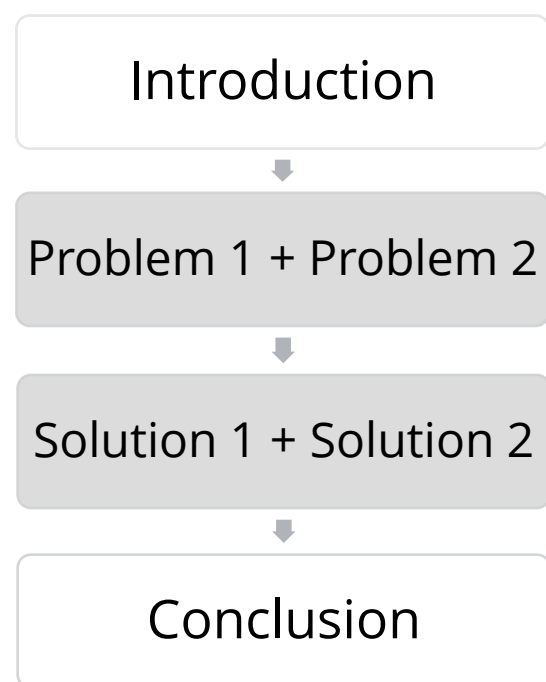
Universities and students need to find solutions to these issues. Universities should offer different ways to contact teachers, such as real-time chats, email support and face-to-face meetings. Students also need to give feedback to the university about the course material, so that the content and its delivery is more motivating and supportive.

In conclusion, online courses have made education accessible for so many people, but the quality needs improvement. If academic institutions and students work together to transform these courses, online learning will not only be convenient, it will also be an incredibly positive experience.

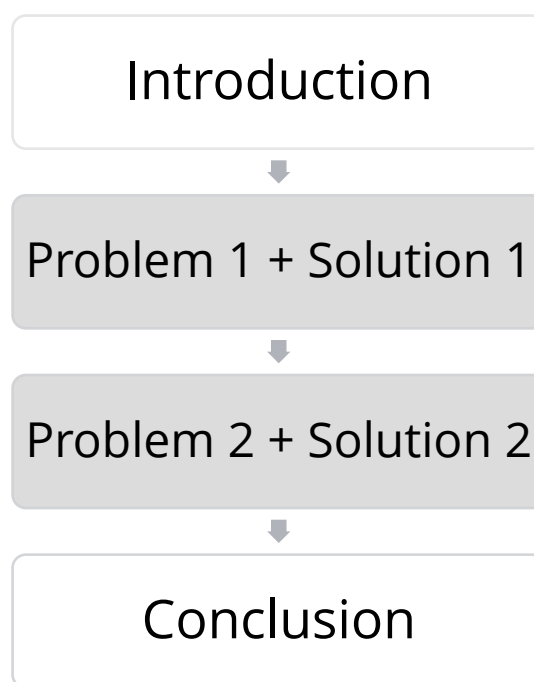
Writing skill using block and chain structures

Use a block or chain structure to make it easy to identify the problems and solutions in your essay. Choose one structure only. Do not mix them.

BLOCK STRUCTURE



CHAIN STRUCTURE



3 Read the text from Exercise 2 again. Does it use a block or chain structure? Explain your answer to your partner.

Writing mechanics writing conclusions

Problem-solution essays identify problems and suggest ways to overcome these. A strong conclusion will make your argument more convincing.

Use conditional sentences in your conclusion to present possible outcomes if a certain action is or isn't taken.

*If students aren't prepared at high school, they won't do well at university.
Change can only happen if we all work together.*

4 Underline the conditional sentence in the text from Exercise 2.

5 Use the prompts to write conditional sentences for a conclusion.

1 companies not offer internships – young people not able to get work experience

2 teenagers not have a hobby / specific interest– not have much to write on their personal statement

3 schools get more information about college courses – give this to students

4 universities attract international students – offer language courses

Writing mechanics giving examples

Adding examples to your essay supports your ideas and makes your argument stronger. Use linking words in different positions to give examples in a variety of ways.

*More universities are offering blended courses. **For example**, some students watch lectures at home and discuss them with a tutor the next day at college.*

*Students expect more flexibility nowadays, **for instance**, being able to attend a lecture online.*

***To illustrate his point**, Professor Phillips poured the chemical onto the sample.*

***A clear example of this is** the lecturer asking us to watch the video.*

*This issue usually occurs at specific times, **such as** during the last part of the project.*

*Non-academic skills are important, **namely** teamwork and communication.*

6 Circle the two phrases giving examples in the text in Exercise 2.

7 Complete each gap with the correct word or phrase.

More and more companies are sponsoring students on popular degree programmes, ¹ _____ (namely / to illustrate) engineering, law and finance. ² _____ (Such as / For example), 20% of students on one university's law programme is being funded by leading law firms. This is because companies are looking for talented individuals with skills that directly relate to their industry. Students get benefits from this arrangement, ³ _____ (to illustrate / such as) as free education and a guaranteed job. ⁴ _____ (A clear example of this is / Namely) the case of Josh Peterson. A large supermarket company paid for his Business Management degree. After graduating, he joined the head office and is now a senior manager.

WRITE

8 You are going to write an essay about studying at university abroad. Work in pairs. Identify problems that students might face abroad and complete the chart.

Problem	Solution

9 Read the essay title below and decide which structure to use for your essay (block or chain). Then complete the diagram with notes on the problems and solutions you will include in your essay.

More and more students are looking for study programmes in different countries. What problems might international students have and what solutions can you suggest?

Introduction



Conclusion

10 Look at the *Key language* box. Which expressions does the writer use in the text in Exercise 2?

Key language expressions for describing problems and solutions

Problems

A major problem ...

A common problem ...

It can be difficult to ...

Another problem is that ...

... struggle ...

... challenge ...

Solutions

One answer is ...

In order to solve this,

... should ...

... need to ...

... can make sure ...

... work together ...

... transform ...

11 Write a problem-solution essay for a student career magazine. Use your notes, a block or chain structure, a conclusion, examples and expressions for describing problems and solutions. Write 150–180 words.

12 Read your partner's work and tick (✓) the checklist below.

Has your partner ...

- ☐ ... used a block or chain structure?
- ☐ ... included a conclusion?
- ☐ ... included examples?
- ☐ ... described problems and solutions?

13 Read your classmates' essays. How many different problems and solutions can you identify?