



Practical Guide – How to do a composition writing

Before writing

◆ Understanding the question

◆ Obeying the instructions

◆ Preparing and planning.

a) Spend some minutes thinking about what you are going to write about. Write your ideas in topic form.

b) Plan your writing carefully. Your ideas must follow each other logically. Decide on

the subject of each paragraph before you begin writing.

While writing

◆ Simple ideas

Your knowledge of English is growing but is still not wide and you have to put your ideas in this language. Possibly you can use your own language to express interesting ideas but you still have not enough English to deal with these ideas as you would like to. As a result you have to use simple vocabulary, simple sentence constructions and simple expressions. Keep sentences short, use word groups you have already learned and forms you know are natural everyday English expressions.

◆ Never translate from your own language

When writing in English it is very important to think in English. Translation from your own language only encourages mistakes and also unnatural English.

After writing

◆ Reading through

Read very carefully through what you have written, sentence by sentence. Look for mistakes of all kinds, especially the following:

a) Agreement of subject and verb

b) Verb tenses

)The articles 'the' and 'a'

d) Grammatical and sentence constructions

e) Word order

f) Complete sentences: subject, verb and objects:(direct, indirect, manner, place, time)

g) Punctuation

◆ Learning from Corrections

Studying the corrections written on a piece of paper by your teacher is one of the most useful parts of language learning. After all, the things corrected are those you still have to learn. Copy out each word or expression where there is a mistake and

◆ Try not to make the same mistake twice.

Here is an example of the very simple English you should start with.

In about 80 words describe your journey to school or work each day.

My office is in the suburbs of Lisbon, about five kilometres from the centre. I leave home just before half-past seven in the morning. I walk to the nearest bus stop. Usually I wait there for two or three minutes. When I get off the bus, I have to walk for about five minutes. I go into the building and go by lift to the fourth floor where my office is. I arrive just before eight o'clock.

(77 words)