WRITING

Student’s Book

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UNIT 4

GLOBAL WARMING

This unit will give you practice in:

1. Interpreting data from tables, graphs and diagrams.
2. Recognising and analysing a **Situation—Problem—Solution—Evaluation** pattern in writing.
3. Reorganising a text to follow this pattern.
4. Writing an article on global warming which is organised according to this pattern.
5. Asking pre-writing and post-writing questions about your own and your partner’s draft.
6. Evaluating your own draft and another person’s draft with the aid of a checklist.
7. Rewriting and improving your draft.

**Task 1**

**Step 1**

1.1 Discuss the problem of global warming:
   - What are the causes of global warming?
   - What problems will global warming lead to?
   - What are possible solutions to these problems?

1.2 Figures 1 to 3 give information about the ‘greenhouse’ gases which contribute to global warming. Use them to answer the questions which follow and specify which figure your information comes from.
**Figure 1:** Contribution of greenhouse gases to climate change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gas and sources</th>
<th>1990 emissions, millions of tonnes</th>
<th>Present concentration in atmosphere</th>
<th>Cut in emissions needed to stabilise concentration</th>
<th>Annual increase in concentration</th>
<th>Global warming potential*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CARBON DIOXIDE: burning fossil fuels and forests, cement making</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>354 parts per million in atmosphere</td>
<td>60%–80%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHANE: rubbish dumps, paddy fields, cattle, tarmac, coal mining, gas leaks</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1.72 ppm</td>
<td>15%–20%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFCs, HCFCs: coolants for fridges, air conditioners, foam-blowing agents, electronics, solvents, aerosols</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.001 ppm</td>
<td>70%–85%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NITROUS OXIDE: burning fossil fuels and forest, fertilisers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.31 ppm</td>
<td>70%–80%</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A measure of how much warming one tonne of the gas causes over a century, relative to one tonne of carbon dioxide.

**Figure 2:** Greenhouse gases and sea levels

**Figure 3:** Sources of gases

1. Which gas has the highest emission figure?
2. Which gas contributes most to climate change?
3. Which gases have the highest global warming potential?
4. Which gases have the highest rate of annual increase in concentration?
5. What are the main sources of CFCs?
6. What are the main sources of carbon dioxide?
7. By how much is the sea level expected to rise by the year 2050?
8. Which sources of greenhouse gases are easiest to reduce and control?

1.3 Discuss in your group the possible economic and social effects of trying to reduce the emission rates of these greenhouse gases.

Step 2

1.4 The following pattern of organisation is often found in texts which present problems and explore what can be done about them:

- Situation
- Problem
- Solution(s)
- Evaluation/comment.

This is a very common way of organising ideas in academic writing. It can be used for:

- a paragraph
- a section of a longer document
- a complete article
- a complete book.

Here is an example of this pattern in a short paragraph.

*I am a foreign student living in Britain. I find it very difficult to meet British students. I will join some university clubs so as to meet some students. This should help to put me in contact with British students.*

This pattern of organisation is presented in Reading Unit 4.

1.5 Read Text 4.1, which is an article about protecting the ozone layer and how developing countries can participate in solutions to global warming. It uses the *Situation→Problem→Solution→Evaluation* pattern of organisation.

**Text 4.1**

*Protecting the ozone layer*

Over the past year, scientific evidence has continued to mount showing that stratospheric ozone layer depletion is even more serious than thought only a few years back. This poses a major problem, because the ozone layer shields life from a harmful solar ultraviolet radiation known as UV-B.

Although ozone depletion has been most pronounced at the
poles, its effects will be serious at other latitudes, since UV-B, like all solar radiation, increases in intensity toward the equator. At higher latitudes, people will face a greater risk of skin cancer; at lower latitudes, more crop damage and health effects such as cataracts and immune system impairment are likely to occur; and vital links in food chains on land and sea might be broken.

While the ozone problem has been caused principally by industrialized countries, developing countries will have to join them in reaching a solution. Their participation is currently facilitated by the 1987 Montreal Protocol (MP), but if the phaseout needs to be accelerated, additional financial incentives and a more flexible way of carrying out the accord would be required.

Adapted from 'Protecting the ozone layer' by Mohan Mantasinghe and Kenneth Sing, Finance and Development, June 1992

1.6 Complete the flow diagram below on the basis of Text 4.1:

```
  Situation

  Problem

  Solution(s)

  Evaluation
```

1.7 Compare your answers with those of a partner.

1.8 Is there a further problem created by the proposed solution in the text?

**Step 3**

Text 4.2 is about the harmful substances emitted by paints. The sentences have been arranged in the wrong order.
1.9 Decide how to arrange the sentences in a more logical order, as they would probably have been arranged in the original article. Keep in mind the **Situation→Problem→Solution→Evaluation** pattern. Make notes on the reasons for your choices.

Text 4.2

(1) To combat this, five states are limiting the VOC contents of paints, and the regulations take effect within the next year.

(2) Tough new regulations in five states in the US suggest that paint is bad for your health.

(3) This means that paints will be safer to use, more environmentally friendly, and painters will be getting more paint per tin.

(4) Some of the new paints will also be easier to apply, and there will be obvious improvements in air quality.

(5) The problem is that all paints – apart from those which are water-based – contain volatile organic compounds (VOC).

(6) The bad news is that paints with less VOC in them will be more expensive.

(7) These are solvents which evaporate as the paint dries and can react with sunlight to produce low-level ozone: this can be harmful to human health.

(8) Users and manufacturers will also be burdened with complying with the new regulations.

Adapted from a report in *The Guardian* (6 August 1989) based on an article in the *Journal of the Air Pollution Control Association* (vol 39:517)

1.10 Decide how your new order of sentences can be grouped into paragraphs.

1.11 Compare your answers with those of a partner. Be prepared to give specific reasons for your choices.

**Task 2**

In this task you will write an article on the following topic:

**Reducing global warming: what each individual can do**
Writing

The article is to appear in a student magazine and will be read by people like yourself. It should be about 500 words in length. The purpose is to:

- inform readers of the problem
- suggest some possible solutions
- suggest how each individual can help in his or her daily life
- show how these solutions also give rise to other problems.

If you are using the Reading book in this series, you may want to review the texts in Unit 4 on global warming.

Step 1

2.1 Ask yourself the following pre-writing questions:

- What do I already know about global warming?
- Who are my readers? Is the student magazine local or national?
- What do my readers already know about the subject?
- What will my readers want to learn from me about the subject?
- What will probably be my readers' attitude towards global warming?
- How can I make my article interesting, especially to readers who have little interest in the subject?

2.2 Discuss these questions with a partner.

Step 2

2.3 Using the brainstorming method, write down your ideas in note form as quickly as you can, in any order. As before, try to achieve a rapid and spontaneous 'flow' of ideas.

2.4 Now plan your article by thinking about the order and grouping of your ideas.

- Try to arrange your ideas in a logical order.
- Decide how your points can be grouped together, so that each group has one main or unifying idea.
- Decide how your groups of points can be arranged effectively in a Situation→Problem→Solution→Evaluation pattern.
- Add notes about further information or ideas, if necessary, to support your main ideas.

2.5 Find a partner and exchange plans. When you read your partner's plan, ask yourself:

- Is the order of points effective?
- Will each group of points form a well-organised paragraph?
Global warming

• Is the order of groups of points – i.e. paragraphs – effective?
• Do the paragraphs form an effective **Situation→Problem→Solution→Evaluation** pattern of organisation?

Try to identify both strengths and weaknesses in the plan. Discuss your ideas with your partner. Use the evaluation checklists (in Units 2 and 3) and Appendices 1 and 2 to guide you.

2.6 Think critically about your partner’s comments. Which comments do you agree with? Why? Which comments do you disagree with? Why? Try to improve your plan.

**:Step 3**

2.7 Write your first draft.

2.8 When you have finished writing your first draft, re-read it. Then ask yourself the following post-writing questions:

• Is there a clear definition of global warming?
• What specific evidence have I given?
• Is this evidence relevant?
• What solutions have I given? Are they practical?
• Do these solutions concentrate on what **each individual** can do in his or her daily life?
• Is there too much emphasis on what organisations and governments – rather than individuals – can do?
• Does the essay begin and end in an interesting way?
• Is the **Situation→Problem→Solution→Evaluation** sequence effectively carried through in the essay as a whole?

**:Step 4**

2.9 Exchange drafts with a partner.

2.10 Apply the post-writing questions in 2.8 to your partner’s draft.

2.11 Refer to Evaluation Checklist A or B for further questions to consider when reading your partner’s draft. If you use Evaluation Checklist A, concentrate on Sections 2 and 4. If you use Evaluation Checklist B, concentrate on Sections 2 and 3.

2.12 Make written comments and suggestions for improvement on your partner’s draft or on another piece of paper. Refer specifically to many of the post-writing
Writing

questions and to the points in the relevant sections of Evaluation Checklist A or B. Add your name or initials to these comments when you make them.

2.13 Discuss your comments and suggestions with your partner. Think critically about your partner’s comments. Which comments do you agree with? Why? Which comments do you disagree with? Why? Try to be specific in answering these questions.

Step 5

2.14 Refer either to Sections 5 and 6 of Evaluation Checklist A or to Sections 4 and 6 of Evaluation Checklist B, and to Appendices 1 and 2, to help you make further improvements to your own draft.

2.15 Rewrite your draft, with corrections and improvements, and give it to your teacher.

Task 3 (optional)

Writing Conference

The writing conference is an opportunity for you to assess the progress in your academic writing in English by taking an overall view of a number of essays.

You can begin by evaluating some of the essays you have written in English with the aid of Evaluation Checklist B. Choose between three and five essays you have written recently.

Step 1

3.1 Read the essays once.

3.2 Read Evaluation Checklist B again and make sure that all the terms are clear to you. Keep in mind the six main aspects of writing evaluation:

   1. Content
   2. Organisation
   3. Cohesion
   4. Vocabulary
   5. Grammar
   6. Mechanical accuracy.

Step 2

3.3 Take a sheet of paper and divide it into two columns. Write ‘Strengths’ as the heading on the left and ‘Weaknesses’ as the heading on the right.
3.4 Re-read your essays and make notes in each of the columns as you read. With the aid of Evaluation Checklist B, look for strengths and weaknesses that occur in more than one essay – often enough to form a pattern. Ask yourself, for example:

- Is the content in my essays consistently relevant and well-developed?
- Do I have consistent problems with organisation?
- Do I make repeated mistakes with the use of the present perfect tense?

These are only a few examples of the kinds of questions you can ask yourself in the process of trying to evaluate your writing. Try not to rely wholly on the teacher’s comments about your essay – leave some room for your own independent analysis.

3.5 Be *specific* in what you write; for example, if you feel that you have frequent problems with grammar, identify which problems they are. For instance, are they associated with:

- the present perfect tense?
- definite or indefinite articles?
- agreement of subject and verb?

The more specific you are in your assessment, the more you will learn from it. To help you, use a good learner’s grammar such as *Using English Grammar: Meaning and Form* (Woods and MacLeod, Prentice Hall International, 1990) or *Collins Cobuild English Grammar* (Collins Cobuild, 1991).

**Step 3**

3.6 Once you have completed this process and made notes in both columns, make some further notes about your conclusions. Try to comment on questions like these:

- Do I feel my writing is improving? Why/why not?
- Which weaknesses or mistakes occur most often in my writing? Which ones are the most serious?
- In what areas do I need to concentrate most for improvement? Why?
- What are the most obvious strengths in my writing?
- How can I build on these strengths in future essays?
- What can I say about my writing as a whole?

You can probably think of other questions to ask yourself about your writing. Remember that the aim is to achieve a *balanced* view. It is often easier to identify weaknesses than strengths in your writing and to be too negative in your assessment. Both strengths and weaknesses should be clear in your mind, and you can discuss these with your teacher. Take your essays and written evaluation with you when you meet your teacher.