

Intermediate Reading Course. Section 1: The Basics

Practice 2. Topics and Details in a Paragraph

Instructions. In this exercise, use what you have learned in [the lesson about the anatomy of a paragraph](#). For each item, you will see several statements about a related topic. One of them states the main topic; the others elaborate on that statement providing more specific details. Select the sentence that states the main topic and what the writer wants you to know about it.

See the example below:

Statements

1. The demand of a certain type of food The cost of gasoline fluctuates due to several factors.
2. The price of food can change from time to time due to several factors.
3. Weather patterns such as droughts, floods, and extreme temperatures can affect production of crops, which affects the price you pay at the store.
4. The cost of transporting and distributing food (e.g., the price of fuel, labor, and transportation infrastructure) affects the price of food.

Answer: **Sentence 2**

Explanation: Sentence 2 states the topic (why food prices fluctuate) without getting into any details. The other statements support the statement by providing the reasons in more detail.



1. Statements:

1. Regular exercise can improve your overall health and reduce the risk of chronic disease such as type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.
2. Regular exercise improves your mood and reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression.
3. You should exercise regularly for many reasons.
4. People who exercise regularly have been shown to live longer than those who live sedentary lifestyles.

Answer:

2. Statements:

1. One stage in the educational process involves introducing a new concept, topic, or skill to the learner.
2. Reviewing what the material is an important stage in the education process because it helps learners assess what they have learned and identify weaknesses.
3. The educational process can be categorized into 3 stages: introduction, practice, and review.
4. Practice is an important stage in the educational process as it allows students to engage with the content and reinforce their understanding of the material.

Answer:

3. Statements:

1. Women and men and women use language differently.
2. When communicating, women have been found to use more descriptive vocabulary whereas men choose more direct vocabulary.
3. Women are generally more expressive than men when using nonverbal communication such as gestures or facial expressions.
4. It appears that women use language to establish connections; men seem to be more focused on conveying information and asserting themselves.

Answer:

4. Statements:

1. Choose a topic sentence for your paragraph and provide sufficient supporting details to explain your main point.
2. Use transition words and phrases to show the relationship between important ideas in the paragraph.
3. Revise and edit your paragraph to make sure the ideas are clear and written using proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
4. Follow a few steps when writing a paragraph to communicate your ideas clearly to your readers.

Answer:

5. Statements:

1. English and Dutch share a lot of similar vocabulary such as “huis,” “broeder,” and “werk,” which mean “house,” “brother,” and “work.”
2. English and Dutch share many similarities in vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.
3. Many of the verb tenses are similar in English and Dutch; for example, both languages use auxiliary verbs to create verb tenses and have verb tenses in common such as the simple past and present perfect tense tenses.
4. Despite some differences, the grammar is similar in many ways such as how articles, prepositions, and comparatives and superlatives are used.

Answer:

6. Statements:

1. Plants are typically characterized by their ability to produce their own food through photosynthesis.
2. Animals have the ability to move and consume other organisms for food.
3. Plants have unique cell structures that allow them to transport water and nutrients to other tissues.
4. Animals have a circulatory system which pumps blood and fluids throughout their bodies so that they can get oxygen and energy.
5. Broadly speaking, living organisms can be classified into two categories based on their characteristics.

Answer:

7. Statements

1. Pets offer emotional support, which can be beneficial to people who live alone or have limited social interactions.
2. It has been found that people who have pets have lower blood pressure and lower levels of stress compared to non-pet owners.
3. Having a pet is beneficial because they provide companionship and health benefits.
4. Pets encourage their owners to be more physically active, which has positive health outcomes.

Answer:

8. Statements:

1. Social interactions are very common in classroom-based courses. In online courses students must interact with other students indirectly in chat rooms or discussion boards.
2. Online and classroom-based courses differ in flexibility, interactivity, and learning outcomes.
3. In a classroom-based course, you must attend classes at the scheduled time, but online courses are self-paced and allow students to log on anytime they can.
4. Online courses are best suited for students with good reading and organization skills while students who need more one-on-one attention may do better in classroom-based courses.

Answer:

9. Statements:

1. Taking regular breaks to engage in physical activity while studying is a good way for busy students to reduce stress.
2. Effective time management is crucial for students to reduce stress as they avoid last-minute studying and feeling overwhelmed.
3. Having a supportive social network can help students reduce stress due to academic challenges.
4. To reduce stress, students should develop good habits including physical activity, time management, and social support.

Answer:



10. Statements:

1. Identifying the problem involves defining and understanding the problem, identifying its causes, and gathering information to solve it.
2. Brainstorming involves generating possible solutions, evaluating pros and cons, and selecting the best possible solution.
3. The problem-solving process involves identification, brainstorming, and implementation steps.
4. Implementing a solution to the problem consists of taking action, monitoring progress, and making necessary adjustments as needed.

Answer:



Answer Key

1. Statement 3: You should exercise regularly for many reasons. *(This proposes that you should exercise regularly without getting into the reasons. The other statements explain in specific details why you should do it.)*

2. Statement 3: The educational process can be categorized into 3 stages: introduction, practice, and review. *(While this statement introduces the topic that the educational process has three stages, the other statements elaborate on each specific stage.)*

3. Statement 1: Women and men use language differently. *(The other statements provide details on such differences in how women and men use language.)*

4. Statement 4: Follow a few steps when writing a paragraph to communicate your ideas clearly to your readers. *(The other statements provide the specific steps.)*

5. Statement 2: English and Dutch share many similarities in vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure. *(Each of the other statements explain the similarities in vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure.)*

6. Statement 5: Broadly speaking, living organisms can be classified into two categories based on their characteristics. *(The other statements describe the specific categories of living organisms, that is, plants and animals.)*

7. Statement 3: Having a pet is beneficial because they provide companionship and health benefits. *(The other statements elaborate on specific details about companionship and health benefits of owning a pet.)*

8. Statement 2: Online and classroom-based courses differ in flexibility, interactivity, and learning outcomes. *(The other statements elaborate on the differences in flexibility, interactivity, and learning outcomes between online and classroom-based learning.)*

9. Statement 4: To reduce stress, students should develop good habits including physical activity, time management, and social support. *(The other statements explain specifically how physical activity, time management, and social support help students reduce stress.)*

10. Statement 3: The problem-solving process involves identification, brainstorming, and implementation steps. *(The other statements explain the specific steps of identification, brainstorming, and implementation in the problem solving process.)*

