

SAMPLE COMPOSITIONS

American Download C1/C2 Student's Book

1 All Change (Task 6, page 15)

It is a fact that many countries are faced with the task of hosting newly-arrived immigrants who have been forced from their own homes as a result of war, famine, or poverty. It is difficult to say how best to help these immigrants adjust and integrate, but organizing community events and providing information and advice are two possible ways.

With regard to the integration of immigrants into the local community, organizing an event such as a sports tournament or a barbecue would allow locals and immigrants to meet and socialize. A friendly face can make a world of difference to someone who is far away from home. However, it could be argued that some local people might be unfriendly toward newcomers and, if that happened, such an event would be stressful for all concerned.

With that in mind, a more effective way of helping new arrivals might be the establishment of an advice center where immigrants could receive information and guidance about topics such as housing, education, health care, and financial aid. The advice center could be run either by professionals or volunteers, some of whom would be able to speak the immigrants' language. This solution would offer new immigrants much more support over a longer period of time than a single community event ever could.

On balance, it would seem that setting up advice centers would be a better alternative as the long-term effects would be far more beneficial than the short-term benefit derived from a single community event.

2 Technological Times (Task 7, page 31)

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have just read your article about whether or not using the Internet can be addictive. I would like to relate a surprising experience that involved my younger brother. I think this story will show that the Internet isn't always a negative influence.

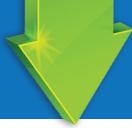
On his fifteenth birthday, my brother was given a state-of-the-art smartphone. From that day on, he began spending more and more time alone in his room, using the phone to download music, watch movies, and communicate with friends via social media. We became increasingly concerned that he was living in a virtual world of his own. We believed that his Internet use was out of control, and my parents were concerned that his schoolwork would suffer.

As a result, they decided to take away his phone. However, when they discovered what he had actually been doing, they soon changed their attitude. It turned out that he had been spending all that time creating a series of short videos about our life as a family – a kind of digital diary. Each video included music, words, images, and live action, and we were amazed at how professional his work was. We were also totally surprised when he explained that he wanted to pursue a career in digital media when he was older.

After this experience, I am no longer so fast to judge young people and their use of the Internet. When used in a creative way, this essential part of modern life can help people learn and grow and also help them achieve their professional ambitions.

Sincerely yours,

(Student's name)



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3 Influential People (Task 8, page 49)

There is no doubt that good teachers need to have excellent knowledge of their subject and a passion for educating the young. However, the most successful teachers are those who are able to encourage and inspire their students to develop both their academic skills and the tools they need to achieve their personal goals.

In my opinion, the most important quality that a teacher needs to possess is the ability to see people as individuals and to understand the needs of every student. Whatever the subject, a teacher needs to engage students on different levels. A student who is not able to memorize a lot of facts, for instance, may benefit from learning through diagrams, drawings, or videos. A good teacher needs to be flexible in his or her teaching methods in order to get the best results from all students.

Furthermore, in order for students to reach their full potential, they need to trust their teacher. However knowledgeable or hard-working, a teacher will never earn trust or respect if he or she treats students unfairly or with sarcasm. Most adults will tell you that the teachers they remember with most affection are those who were compassionate and caring and who showed that they understood their students' viewpoints and feelings.

In short, a successful teacher needs to use a range of abilities and skills to make students feel special and inspire them to fulfill their potential as learners and as individuals.

4 Ways of Working (Task 8, page 65)

HEALTHY EATING

Introduction

The aim of this report is to assess the success of the company's Health at Work program and to recommend any further changes that will continue to benefit the health and fitness of the staff.

Company Canteen

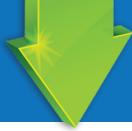
In the past the company canteen offered a range of meals that were high in fat and salt. A team of experts was brought in to evaluate the selection of food available and, as a result of their findings, employees can now choose from menus that include fish and vegetarian options, as well as a salad bar, where they can select different salad ingredients. Employees have reported significant weight loss as well as an improvement in their energy levels. However, there have been some complaints that their freedom of choice has been limited due to the changes.

Vending Machines

Employees used to obtain snacks such as cookies and candy bars from office vending machines. A new food-cart service now visits all offices twice a day, offering salads, sandwiches, and fruit. Employees have praised the service, saying they have changed their eating habits as a result. However, some staff have suggested that the service should also offer drinks such as mineral water and herbal teas.

Conclusion

To sum up, the new menus and food-cart service now offer healthier meals and snacks. However, the fact that some people feel their freedom of choice is limited indicates that they are still not fully aware of the benefits of healthy eating. I recommend that we distribute leaflets explaining why diet is important to our general level of health and fitness.



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5 Memories (Task 8, page 85)

Fire at Sea

What would you do if your home and your country were destroyed by war or famine? Would you try to escape and make a better future for yourself? I think the answer would be “Yes.”

This is the subject of the award-winning documentary “Fuocoammare” (or “Fire at Sea”) by Italian director Gianfranco Rosi. The film is set on and around the Italian island of Lampedusa, which is at the frontline of the European migrant crisis. It contrasts the quiet everyday existence of the local community with the tragedy of thousands of refugees who risk their lives trying to cross the Mediterranean to get into Europe.

Its cast of characters includes the kind-hearted local doctor, a 12-year-old boy named Samuele, and members of the Italian coast guard who work tirelessly to rescue as many survivors as they can. And you could say that the sea itself is a character in this beautiful and mysterious film that is far more than “just” a documentary. No special effects or clever make-up are needed to highlight the everyday dramas that take place on the island. The stunning camera work, the soundtrack, and the beautiful scenery slowly build an unforgettable picture of two different worlds.

This film is highly recommended, not only to people who want to learn more about one of today’s most important issues, but also to anyone who enjoys fine filmmaking and excellent photography. It was nominated for, and won, a Golden Bear award at the Berlin International Film Festival and if you watch it, you will understand why.

6 Is that for real? (Task 8, page 99)

Magazine Photos: Truth or Lies?

Most people today know that air-brushing is used in magazines to make women look “perfect.” However, some people may not realize just how much these photos are altered. Are your readers aware of how photographic technology can manipulate reality and how serious this issue is?

One of the most well-known air-brushing stories involved British actress Kate Winslet. The movie star is famous for her full figure, but on the cover of a popular magazine she suddenly appeared to be extremely thin. Kate Winslet’s photo had been doctored so much that it no longer reflected reality. The star herself complained about the picture, saying that she didn’t approve of the digitally-enhanced image.

The trouble with that image – the extremely thin body, those long legs, that perfect skin without any wrinkles – was that it didn’t reflect reality. Does anybody really look like that in real life? Of course not. These idealized images have a huge effect on girls’ body image and how they feel about themselves. “I wish I looked like that. If only I were as thin as the model in this photo,” they say. They often feel depressed, have no confidence, and may suffer from eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia.

To sum up, photographic technology is often used in the media to present an unrealistic image of women. Pictures such as the air-brushed photo of Kate Winslet are fake and distort our idea of beauty. We need pictures of young women that reflect the truth and show that real people are beautiful even if they are not “perfect.”



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7 Lifestyle (Task 7, page 117)

Can the generation gap ever be successfully bridged? While older people have a lot to offer the young in terms of experience and advice, technological progress means that older people are no longer able to communicate effectively with the younger generation.

Older people can bring a different perspective to young people's problems because they speak from experience, having been through similar situations in their own lives. However, the challenges today's youngsters face are so different that their elders don't often have any relevant advice. Nevertheless, even if their knowledge is a little out of date, the guidance of an older person is likely to be more trustworthy than that of their friends. They can offer an objective view precisely because they see life differently.

Although differences between the generations have always existed, it seems that today's "gap" is becoming unbridgeable. Technology moves so fast that by the time an older person has begun to grasp a concept, that concept is already out of date! When older people don't even use the same vocabulary as their children or grandchildren, how useful can their advice really be?

Part of the problem may be older people's refusal to accept and use technology. If they asked the younger generation for advice about social media or common phone apps, they might be able to relate to it better. If they broaden their own horizons, maybe they will learn more about the world in which their children and grandchildren live and be in a better position to use their experience to offer really useful advice.

8 Making a Difference (Task 7, page 133)

Dear Ms. Brown,

Thank you for your letter. On behalf of the Friends of the Children's Hospital Committee, I would like to express my thanks for all your hard work during the fundraising day at the theater. The day was a great success, and we raised a substantial sum of money.

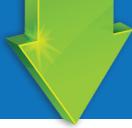
As far as the backstage tours are concerned, the visitors loved seeing what really goes on behind the scenes. They were very interested in the technical side of things and had great fun trying out the lighting and sound equipment. Your costume director was also very informative and had a wonderful way with children. But the true highlight of the day was the make-up session for children. They were thrilled to be transformed into witches, fairies, and superheroes! On the down side, though, it was unfortunate that we weren't able to raise more money through the theater ticket lottery. While the gift of tickets for your new show was very generous, maybe the price per lottery ticket was a little high as not many people bought them. Would it be possible to sell them for a lower price next year? I think we might raise even more money that way.

And thinking about next year, would you consider the idea of holding an exhibition of children's paintings in the theater foyer? I think this would generate great publicity and attract even more people to the event next year.

Thank you once again for making this wonderful event possible and for helping us raise so much money. I look forward to seeing you next week when we hand over the check to the hospital's management team.

Yours truly,

Emma Wilkins



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9 You are what you eat! (Task 8, page 151)

Bio-food is produced using methods that aim to keep a balance with nature; organic farmers do not use chemicals and fertilizers when growing crops or antibiotics when raising livestock. Products that reach the supermarket shelves do not contain artificial ingredients or preservatives.

The main reason for the increasing popularity of bio-foods is that people are worried about the effects that factory farming has on their health. For example, many people say that factory-farmed foods contain fewer vitamins and minerals than bio-food, and are therefore not as nutritious. In addition, chemicals used in conventional farming are washed into the soil and into the water system, disturbing the balance of the ecosystem. What's more, many customers are worried about the terrible conditions in which many animals on conventional farms are kept.

As well as using only natural fertilizers, bio-food farmers avoid using dangerous pesticides that kill wild flowers and plants. This means that organic farming is friendlier to the environment because it encourages a greater diversity of plants, insects, and animals. Although conventional farmers say that their products are safe, many people worry that the chemicals we ingest when we eat beef products or drink milk are responsible for cancer and other diseases. They also insist that bio-food products simply have more flavor; for example, as a result of eating a more natural diet, free-range hens produce tastier eggs.

Consequently, it would seem that worries about human health as well as a desire to protect the environment are leading more and more people to choose organic products over conventional ones.

10 Going Green (Task 8, page 167)

Proposal for Improvements to the Town Center

Introduction

The aim of this proposal is to outline ways of improving the town center to make it a safer and healthier place for both residents and visitors.

Current Situation

The town center is currently an unattractive place with high pollution levels caused by exhaust fumes. More importantly, the speed of vehicles means that pedestrians are in danger of being knocked down and a high number of traffic accidents are recorded every year.

Make the Center Pedestrian-Friendly

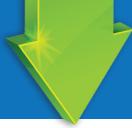
To reduce pollution, it is essential that the town center becomes a car-free zone. A bypass should be built so that cars go around (and not through) the town center. The main shopping streets could be converted into a pedestrianized area. Planting trees and flowers would further help transform the center into a quiet, green space where residents can enjoy shopping and walking around in a safe and healthy environment.

Make the Center Car-Free and Bike-Friendly

We should also do all we can to encourage people to leave their cars at home. A park-and-ride scheme could be implemented where drivers park their cars in out-of-town parking lots and then bike into town. The old factory on the edge of town could be demolished to create one such parking lot, and bicycles could be provided for residents to use. This scheme would benefit both public health and the environment.

Recommendations

If these proposals are implemented, the town center will become a safer and healthier place. Moreover, the benefits to the environment will be enormous. I strongly recommend that these plans are put into action as soon as possible for the benefit of the town, its residents, and its visitors.



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11 The Arts (Task 8, page 185)

There is no doubt that theater is an important part of any young person's development. It opens our minds to new experiences and encourages us to think about other people's feelings. In my opinion, schools should inspire an interest in drama and in addition, theaters should make their performances more accessible to all by reducing their prices.

One of the main reasons that young people don't take an interest in the theater is that they have very little contact with the performing arts. A program of theater education in schools including drama workshops and talks by theater professionals, would encourage young people to take more of an interest in it. Nonetheless, the reality is that many schools focus only on academic subjects and believe that theater education is a waste of time and resources. Perhaps if more schools had drama programs, educators would have living proof that theater education (like other forms of art education) develops creative thinking and collaborative skills that students need throughout life.

Another reason that many young people do not go to the theater is cost. Performances are expensive, and some families cannot afford to go. On one hand, theater owners say that they will be forced to close down if they lower their prices and lose a lot of money from ticket sales. On the other hand, however, I believe that with the help of local councils, theaters could offer subsidized tickets, which would make up for the potential loss of ticket sales.

In my opinion, both suggestions are important, but an appreciation of the theater must begin in our schools. If students are introduced to the theater from an early age through a program of educational events and activities, they will develop a love of the theater that will stay with them all their lives.

12 The “In” Thing (Task 8, page 201)

Dear Joe,

I'm sorry to hear you're feeling fed up with your clothes. I agree with you that wearing the same old things day after day can be really boring, but we do it because it's easier and we don't have to think about what we're going to wear.

First of all, take everything out of your closet and have a good look at it. Are there some items you've forgotten about or that you don't usually wear? If you still like them, then start wearing them! Secondly, do you always wear the same things together? You'll be amazed at how easy it is to create a different look just by mixing and matching items that you already own. For example, don't always wear the same T-shirt with the same pair of jeans.

As for buying new clothes on a tight budget, the best place to start is in places that sell second-hand clothes. Today there are lots of stores that sell quality used clothing at really cheap prices. You can find unique and affordable items that none of your college friends will have because they're no longer available at the mall or online. Dare to be different, and your friends will be amazed by your unusual style choices!

I hope my advice has helped. Let me know how your new look works out! I might be able to come and visit you next month, so we could go to some used-clothing stores together. Whatever you do, never forget that personality is far more important than fashion. You have a great personality, so just be yourself!

Take care!

Craig