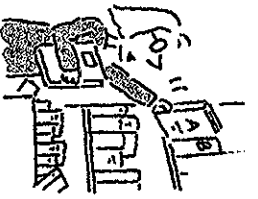


# ORGANIZATION (1)



## Writing Tutorial

In this part we are talking about: shape, direction, relevance, or form. It is a quality of writing which is highly prized in some parts of the world and not so valued in others. So what we want you to learn is to some extent a cultural thing. When you have learnt to do it, you can decide for yourself whether you want to go on doing it.

### Do you need practice?

From your discussion with your teacher/tutor, you should know whether organization is one of your weak points. Most students (including most native speakers) need some improvement in this area.

About one student in ten has a real deep-seated problem with organization. Usually they know it. Such students are often very imaginative and have interesting thoughts and strong feelings: they just can't arrange them in order. Their writing is chaotic. If you are one of these, do not despair. You will have to work harder on this aspect of your writing, but you really can improve. And you have the great advantage that you always have something interesting to say.

### What goes wrong

There are several main faults of form.

- Weak beginnings The composition starts in the middle.
- Weak endings The composition has no real ending.
- Rambling writing The thought is linear and lacks direction.
- Confused writing The points are not dealt with one by one but are all mixed up together.

We will look at the first three in this unit and at confused writing in the next unit.

### Beginnings

Usually the beginning is the easy part. But sometimes writers rush into their compositions as if they were just continuing a conversation. This is fine if you know what they are talking about. If you don't, you are in the dark.

As an example, here's the beginning of a composition (it had no title). As you read, try to answer these questions: Who is Vitelli? What are they doing with him? Why is it good?

*I think that what they are doing with Vitelli is quite good although it needs more control. Indeed, jail has to be a place for developing better citizens and not better criminals.*

(Sherman, Jane: *Feedback. Essential writing skills for intermediate students*. OUP: 1994, pp. 125-129)



Do we know what this writer is talking about? No. The writer has not taken time to explain. We have to work it out for ourselves.

### Filling in the reader

When you write a composition you have to assume:

- a that you have a lot of readers, and
  - b that most of them do not know what you are talking about.
- You have to give them all the information they need to understand what you are saying. We call this 'filling the readers in' or 'filling in the background', or 'putting the readers in the picture'. It is an important part of reader-awareness, which is an important part of being a good writer.

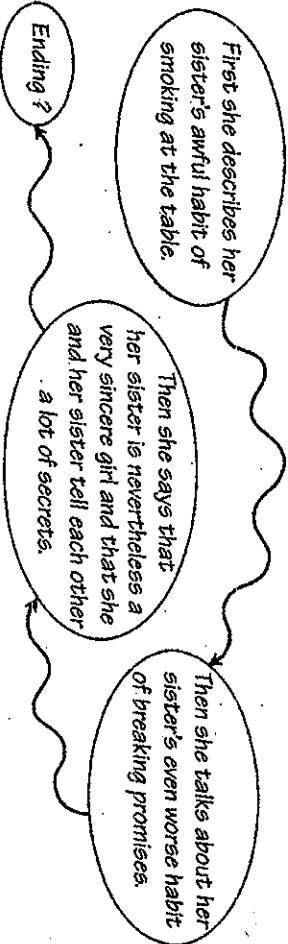
Here is the same composition, with the beginning rewritten. This time it fills the readers in very well.

*In the 1950s and 1970s there was a horrible period of political terrorism in Italy. You may remember some of the most shocking actions. For example, the kidnapping and killing of Aldo Moro and the bombing of Bologna railway station. Some of the terrorists died, some disappeared and some were caught and put in prison. One of these was Roberto Vitelli...*

Now we know where we are. The writer has put us in the picture.

### Endings

More frequently, the composition doesn't have a proper ending. You can't think of anything more to say, so you just stop. A good ending relates to the whole of the composition. A weak ending usually relates only to the last part. Here is an example. The writer is talking about virtues and vices, mostly those of her sister.



Ending 2

Here are three endings for this composition. Which do you think would fit best? You are looking for one which relates to the whole of the composition.

- Ending 1 Sincerity is important in family life because it strengthens family relationships.
- Ending 2 Sincerity is important in family life because it strengthens family relationships. But I think sincerity is only a beginning. There must be consideration and trust as well.
- Ending 3 Sincerity is important in family life because it strengthens family relationships. But even more important is love.

You should see that one of the endings simply continues the subject, one introduces a new subject, and one deals with the whole subject of the composition and brings it to a conclusion.

A good ending should 'wrap up' the subject, as you wrap up a parcel: it should make the reader feel that this is 'The End', not the middle or a new beginning.

### How to end

We can't tell you how to end your composition. It depends on what you have to say. As we have said before, one way to get a good ending is to think how to end before you start writing: always keep the best to the last. Alternatively, we can give you a very boring way of ending which you can use if you can't think of anything else.

- 1 Start a new paragraph.
- 2 Write *In conclusion* or *To conclude* or *To sum up* or *In short*.
- 3 Then repeat everything you have said before, but in summary form.
- 4 Stop.

This is a last resort. But it is better than no ending at all.

### TASK 3

Below and on the next page is a composition about being a model. We have removed the ending - it took up three lines.

- 1 Read the composition through and try to think of a good ending, one which wraps up the subject.
- 2 If you can't think of a good ending, write a 'last resort' ending instead.
- 3 Then compare your ending with the original one.

Check in the Key for the original ending.

Possible ending (last paragraph)

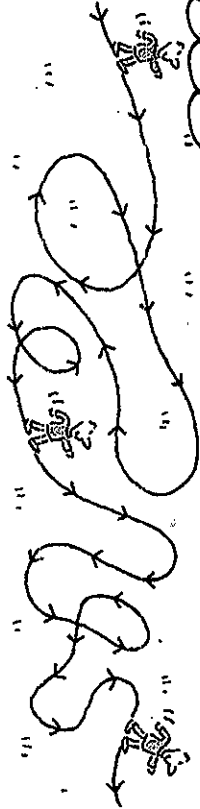
A modelling career is a wonderful dream for most people. It can make you rich and famous, your face becomes familiar to the whole world. A model is always well-dressed and made up and always has beautifully done hair. She knows a lot of countries because she travels everywhere by private plane. She meets other interesting and famous people.

Becoming a model is difficult because you have to have particular qualities; for example, you must be quite tall, thin and pretty. Models usually live in comfortable flats and they do not have to do boring things like cooking or cleaning their houses; they usually have a personal maid to do these things for them.

Things change when we look at a model's life more closely. In reality, working as a model means a lot of sacrifices, like being always on a diet, having very little time for private life and also working when you are sick.

But the worst thing is that a model has a very short-term career. When she gets old she is replaced by younger women and is forgotten and neglected. She continues her life as a normal person, but (I imagine) with lots of regrets.

### Ramblings



This is rambling. Rambling is perfectly natural. Your mind rambles when it is not focusing on one thing in particular. It is like a car when it is not in gear. Rambling can be quite interesting. It is sometimes used in novels to show how someone's mind works when it is running freely, without control, moving from subject to subject at random.

But rambling is something we do not want in a composition. It means that the writer doesn't know where he's going, has no direction, has no reason for writing. Rambling results in 'linear' writing, where one sentence suggests the next sentence, which suggests the next sentence, and so on.

Here is an example:

I was born in a little village called Stowton. In fact Stowton is not a very exciting place to live, as my friend Mac often points out. He used to work there as a carpenter, but he left when he got married to Julia and went to live near to Julia's family. They are quite rich (lucky Mac!). They have a factory which makes biscuits. The biscuits are famous and they export a lot. In fact I bought some when I was in France.

### TASK 4

Look at how the subject changes. The first sentence is about 'I'. What about the others?

Example	Sentence	Subject
1		Stowton.
2		
3		
4		
5		