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R. R. Jordan

New
Edition

*Academic
Writing
Course*

COLLINS STUDY SKILLS IN ENGLISH

Academic Writing Course

R. R. Jordan

REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION

This popular and effective course has been specially designed for students embarking on further studies through the medium of English. It is suitable for students at Cambridge First Certificate level and above.

The book is divided into two parts:

- Functions of Written English
- Appendices

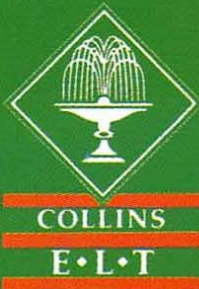
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The main part – Functions of Written English – consists of fifteen units of material. These cover all aspects of academic writing, including structure, description, narrative, exemplification, contrast, discussion, data interpretation and presenting conclusions.

The ten Appendices act as a bank of useful material that is cross-referenced from the main units and can be consulted as necessary. The Appendices focus on such areas as accuracy, sounds and spelling, punctuation, irregular verbs, connectives and referencing, and also provide a glossary of examination and essay terms.

There is an extensive Key to Exercises, and Notes, at the back of the book. The course can be used in a class or for private study.



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COLLINS E•L•T
London and Glasgow

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Guide to using the book

The aim of the Course

- 1 To enable non-native speakers of English who wish to follow a course in the medium of English at tertiary level to express themselves coherently in writing.
- 2 To provide samples of academic writing and appropriate practice material for such students and also for those students who need to write essays or reports in English at an intermediate to advanced level.
- 3 To act as a revision course for students who have previously learned English as a foreign language at school and who probably learned English with the sentence as the grammatical unit. These students may now need to write in English for academic purposes.

The organisation of the Course

The book is divided into two parts: a Functions of Written English and b Appendices.

Functions of Written English

The grammatical features of English have been organised into language functions that are used to express a particular notion or idea. Written practice is given at different levels within each unit. A Key to the exercises is included at the end of the book (page 127).

Appendices

These act as a bank of reference material which contains information and examples generally useful to the student when he/she is writing. Students should familiarise themselves with the contents of the Appendices before commencing the units. In particular, they should look at *Appendix 1: Accuracy: Awareness and Correction* (page 93). This contains an overview of a number of areas of writing difficulty together with exercises for practice in these areas. Some students would benefit from doing these exercises before beginning the units.

The book is concerned with aspects of writing at all the different levels: the details of spelling and punctuation, the use of grammatical constructions, and the appropriate style for academic writing.

Using the book

The *units* should be worked through in sequence. The *Appendices* should be referred to when necessary. The *Key* should be checked after each exercise.

The units are organised as follows: each of the units has either two or three stages which are graded in the amount of help and guidance they give. All the units except the last one conclude with a *Structure and Vocabulary Aid* to provide assistance with the words and grammatical constructions needed in that unit. The *Key* at the end of the book (page 127) provides additional comments on the exercises and answers to most of the exercises. Normally, the answers to each exercise should be checked before proceeding to the next exercise.

To the teacher: suggestions

- 1 In a number of the units there are blank-filling exercises to be done after reading a text. These can be used with some flexibility: students who have difficulty could look at the text again or at the same time as they are writing. Other students could do the exercises without referring back to the text. Advanced students could try to do the exercises *before* looking at the text. In other words, they would be trying to anticipate or predict the language needed from the context of the sentence.
- 2 Some groups of students may be studying the same academic subject e.g. one of the sciences, social sciences, and so on. If this is the case, then it would be helpful if you could devise some questions related to their specific subject at the end of Stage 3 for each unit.
- 3 Some students may need practice in writing quickly, especially if they are preparing for an examination in which a limited time is given to answer questions or write an essay. Such students could be given a certain time limit in which to write some of the exercises, particularly those in Stage 3 in the later units. Suitable questions could be composed, making use of the *Glossary* in *Appendix 10* (page 125).
- 4 The questionnaires on pages 90 to 92 may be photocopied for students to complete with a number of participants.
- 5 Several discussion activities have been included, and students are encouraged to compare and discuss their answers with other students. The purpose is to raise the level of awareness of students of certain aspects of written English.

Pyramid Discussion

At the end of Unit 2, Stage 3, (page 18) there is an activity called 'Pyramid Discussion'.

The purpose of this discussion activity is to raise the students' awareness of the important features of continuous academic writing. It is an activity in which students are encouraged to take

part in discussion by gradually increasing the size of the discussion group, starting with the individual, then building up to two students, then four, and then the whole group. The procedure is as follows:

- a First, students should individually select three items, as instructed, from the list given in the activity. The order of their three choices is not important.
- b Then each student, in turn, should call out the numbers of his/her choices. Write these on the blackboard for all to see.

e.g. student:	A	B	C	D etc.
choices:	12	3	4	1
	14	7	7	7
	15	10	12	10
- c After this, put the students in pairs so that they have, as far as possible, at least one choice in common (e.g. A and C, B and D above).
- d In pairs the students should then try to persuade each other to make changes in their choices so that at the end of a certain time limit (perhaps five minutes) they both agree on three choices. If necessary, they can compromise on new choices or 'trade-off' choices. The pairs' three choices are then noted on the blackboard.
- e Pairs should then be placed together who have at least one choice the same . . . and so the procedure continues until all of the class are involved.
- f If a pair or group finish their discussion before other groups, they can prepare arguments to defend their choices so that they are ready to meet another group.
- g While they are discussing, students will be practising the language of persuasion: agreement, disagreement, suggestion, qualification and compromise.
- h At the end of the activity is a suggestion that students can add some advice of their own to the list. This may be done in pairs instead of, or in addition to, individually.
- i 13 in the list refers to: clichés, jargon, propaganda, exaggeration, and emotive language. Ask the students if they can give examples of these types of language. If necessary, give examples yourself.
- 5 Some practice in spelling commonly misspelt words is given in *Appendix 1 Spelling* (page 95).
Dictation (see page 00).

One way to give more practice in the spelling of words that cause difficulty is to include them in appropriate sentences and to read them out as a dictation. Some examples are given below of words taken from the list of 40 in the Spelling Recognition exercise (page 95).

- a Many students have difficulty finding *accommodation* in the city.
- b He *achieved* only half of his aims.
- c This regulation is not *applicable* to me!
- d She arrived at the *beginning* of October.

- e Usually some *choice* is given in examination questions.
- f In seminars there may be some *criticism* of one's views.
- g Economic *Development* is a popular subject with students.
- h By the end of term his language problems had *disappeared*.
- i The class was *divided* into three groups.
- j In language learning, some *emphasis* should be put on accuracy.

- 1 Note the following words: they are also commonly misspelt.
- | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| acquire | category | interrupt | preferring |
| aggression | consistent | liaison | procedure |
| ancillary | definite | maintenance | relevant |
| argument | environment | occasion | repetition |
| assimilation | inferred | omission | respectively |
| auxiliary | integration | permissible | |

- 2 A general spelling rule that is useful:
 'i' before 'e' except after 'c' e.g. belief; ceiling
Some exceptions: ancient, feint, foreign, neighbour, reign

- 3 Spelling of the sound – *seed*
- (a) only 1 word – *sede* = supersede
 - (b) only 3 words – *ceed* = exceed, proceed, succeed
 - (c) the rest = – *cede* = precede, etc.

References

The following will be found useful for further explanation and practice:

- Longman Dictionary of Common Errors* – J. B. Heaton and N. D. Turton – Longman
- A Communicative Grammar of English* – G. Leech and J. Svartvik – Longman
- An Intermediate English Practice Book* – S. Pit Corder – Longman
- A Grammar of Contemporary English* – Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik – Longman
- Practical English Usage* – M. Swan – O.U.P.
- A Practical English Grammar* – A. J. Thomson and A. V. Martinet – O.U.P.
- Grammar in Context* – Hugh Gethin – Collins ELT

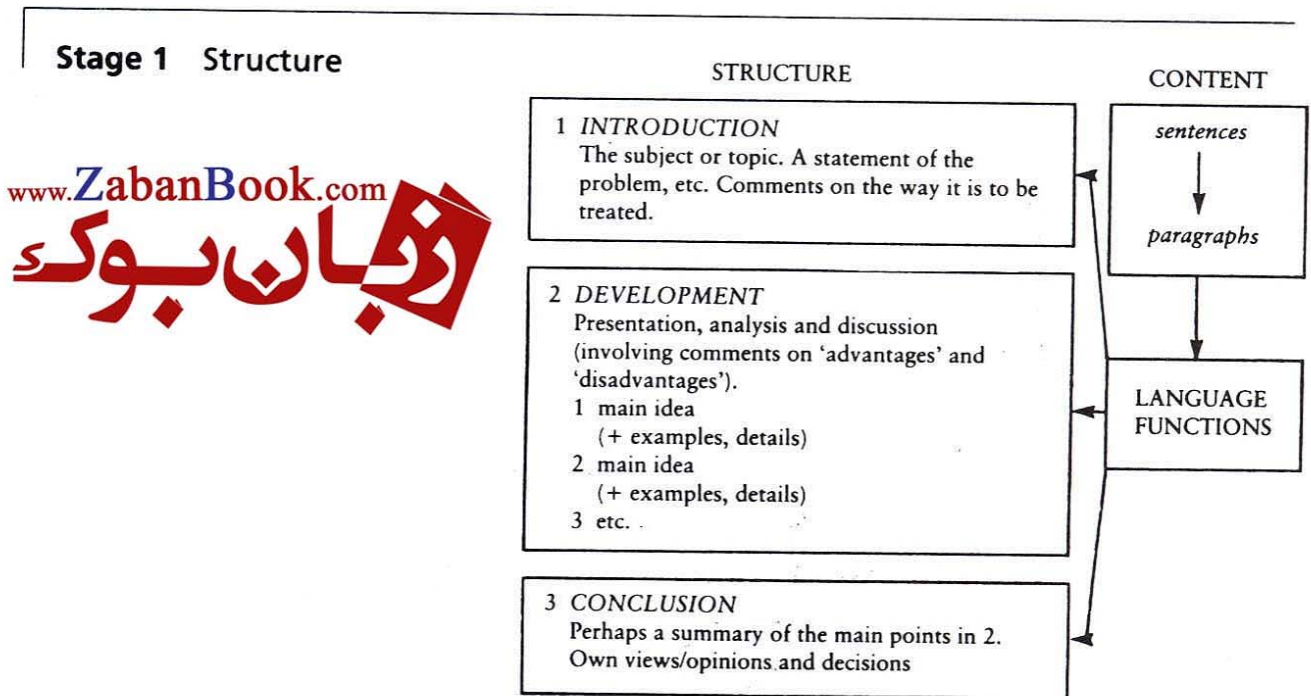
Functions of Written English

The notes on the exercises and the answers are in the Key at the end of the book (page 127).

Unit 1 Structure and Cohesion

This unit is concerned with the general organisation of a piece of academic writing (e.g. a report, an essay, an assignment, a project), its structure and

particularly the way in which the different parts are linked together. The plan below of a piece of writing, in this case an essay, will help to explain the overall structure.

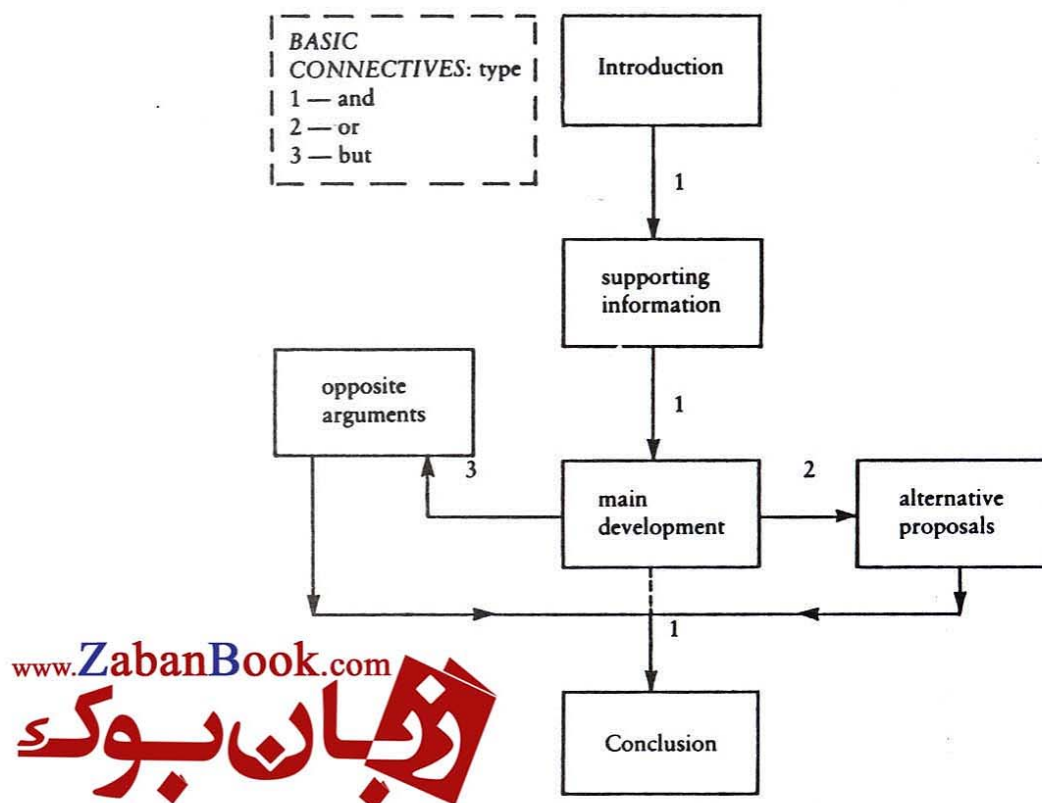


Most pieces of formal writing are organised in a similar way — introduction; development of main ideas or arguments; conclusions. Each part of the writing will consist of language functions: particular uses and structures of the language organised according to the specific purpose that the writer has in mind in wishing to communicate his ideas etc. to other people — describing, defining, exemplifying, classifying etc.

Each language function consists of sentences and/or paragraphs that are joined together or linked by connectives (words or phrases that indicate a logical relationship). These language functions will be examined in detail in the following units. In the rest of this unit we shall look at the linking of sentences by means of *connectives*.

Stage 2 Connectives

A piece of writing or text will often have the following structure:



- 1 The discussion, argument, or comment in the development of the topic may be very straightforward, in which case ideas will be added together one after the other. The basic connective 1 *and* is used here. (A number of connectives have a similar or related meaning to *and*.)
- 2 Sometimes the comments may be expressed in another way, or an alternative proposal may be made. This is represented by the basic connective 2 *or*. (A number of other connectives have a similar meaning.) After the alternative has been considered, the main argument will continue.
- 3 There are also occasions in arguments etc. when the opposite is considered or referred to. This is represented by the basic connective 3 *but*. (There are also a number of other connectives with a similar meaning.) After the opposite or opposing view has been considered, the main argument is continued.

A list of the connectives divided into the main groups of *and*, *or*, *but* is contained in *Appendix 8: Connectives* (page 118).

Exercises

In the following exercises practice is given in some examples of the three main groups of connectives.

1 'And' type: Connectives of Result

Look at the following example:

He passed his examinations;	<i>therefore,</i> <i>as a result,</i> <i>accordingly,</i> <i>consequently,</i> <i>thus,</i> <i>hence,</i>	he had some good news to tell his parents.
<i>Because</i> he passed his examinations,		

Note:

The connectives (in *italics*) join a cause ('he passed his examinations') with a result, effect or consequence ('he had some good news to tell his parents').

Exercise 1a

To the following sentences add (a) a suitable connective from the list above, and (b) an appropriate result, effect or consequence from the list below.

- 1 Many students find it difficult to read newspapers in English . . .

- 2 Most students living abroad are interested in news of their own country . . . _____
- 3 When a student goes abroad to study he/she may have to complete about twelve different forms . . . _____

Result, Effect or Consequence:

- a British news is found to be of most interest.
- b they usually read the international news first in the newspapers.
- c an average of five books per month are read.
- d not many read one regularly.
- e it is useful to be able to answer questions briefly.

Exercise 1b

Complete the following by adding a suitable ending of your own.

- 4 The lecture was very difficult to understand. Consequently, _____
- 5 Carlos was only able to read very slowly in English. Therefore, _____

2 'Or' type: Connectives of Reformulation

Look at the following example:

He said that he had kept the library book for several years. *In other words*
To put it more simply, he had stolen it.
It would be better to say

Note: The connectives (in *italics*) introduce a reformulation of what has come before. The reformulation appears in different words and is used to make the idea clearer or to explain or modify it.

Exercise 2a

To the following sentences add (a) a suitable connective from the list above, and (b) an appropriate reformulation from the list below.

- 1 Maria is rather slow at learning . . . _____
- 2 Helen finds languages quite easy . . . _____
- 3 Anna speaks English like a native-speaker . . . _____

Reformulation:

- a she speaks it excellently.
- b she speaks slowly.
- c she is taking a long time to improve her English.
- d she has little difficulty in learning English.
- e she speaks it with great difficulty.

Exercise 2b

Complete the following by adding a suitable ending of your own.

- 4 Margaret is bilingual. In other words, _____
- 5 Some people say that if you are good at music you will also be good at learning languages. In other words, _____

3 'But' type: Connectives of Concession

Look at the following example:

The time available for discussion was very limited.	<i>However,</i> <i>Nevertheless,</i> <i>Nonetheless,</i> <i>Yet,</i> <i>In spite of that,</i> <i>All the same,</i>	it was still possible to produce some interesting arguments.
---	---	--

Note: The connectives (in *italics*) indicate the surprising nature of what follows in view of what was said before; a kind of contrast is indicated.

Exercise 3a

To the following sentences add (a) a suitable connective from the list above, and (b) an appropriate concession (or contrast) from the list over the page.

- 1 Some of the examination questions were very difficult . . . _____
- 2 There was only limited money available for research . . . _____

3 The project was very complicated . . . _____

Concession:

- a Dimitrios was not able to do it.
- b Juan succeeded in completing it in time.
- c Abdul was able to obtain a grant.
- d Oscar did not manage to complete them.
- e Ali managed to answer them satisfactorily.

Exercise 3b

Complete the following by adding a suitable ending of your own.

4 It seemed likely that he would fail the test. However, _____

5 There were a number of good reasons why he should not finish
the experiment. Nevertheless, _____

Now turn to page 127 and check your answers.

For a list of the connectives and more information turn to
Appendix 8: Connectives (page 118).

Unit 2 Description: Process and Procedure

When we describe a process or procedure, we often use the present passive tense (is/are + verb stem + ed e.g. *it is manufactured*) to give a general description.

When we report a *particular procedure* we are concerned with only one particular occasion in the past; then we often use the past passive tense (was/were + verb stem

+ ed e.g. *it was heated*).

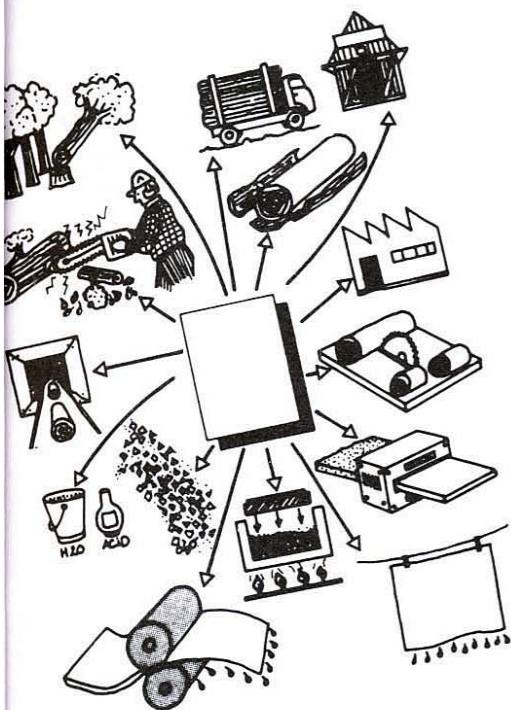
A description that does not involve a process or procedure is often written in the present simple active tense (verb stem + s e.g. *it comprises*).

Sequence, or order, is important in both describing a process or reporting a procedure.

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Stage 1

General Description



- 1a Read the following carefully. Note particularly the verb forms that are used: some of the present passive verb forms have been underlined.

How paper is made

Paper is made from wood, and many of the world's paper mills are found in those countries which have great forests — Canada, Sweden and Finland.

The trees are felled or cut down.

The branches and leaves are removed.

The trees are transported to the sawmill.

The bark is stripped from the trunks.

The trunks are sawn into logs.

They are conveyed to the paper mill.

They are placed in the shredder.

They are cut into small chips.

They are mixed with water and acid.

They are heated and crushed to a heavy pulp.

This wood pulp is cleaned.

It is also chemically bleached to whiten it.

It is passed through rollers to flatten it.

Sheets of wet paper are produced.

The water is removed from the sheets.

These sheets are pressed, dried and refined until the finished paper is produced.

- b Read carefully through the text again and underline any further verbs in the present passive tense.
- 2a When describing a process, sequence markers, e.g. *first, then, next, finally . . .* are often used (see *Appendix 8: Connectives, Section 1, page 118*). They help to link the sentences.
- b Sometimes, in order to avoid repeating a subject, a relative pronoun and relative clause are used.

e.g. The bark is stripped from *the trunks*. *The trunks* are sawn into logs.

becomes:

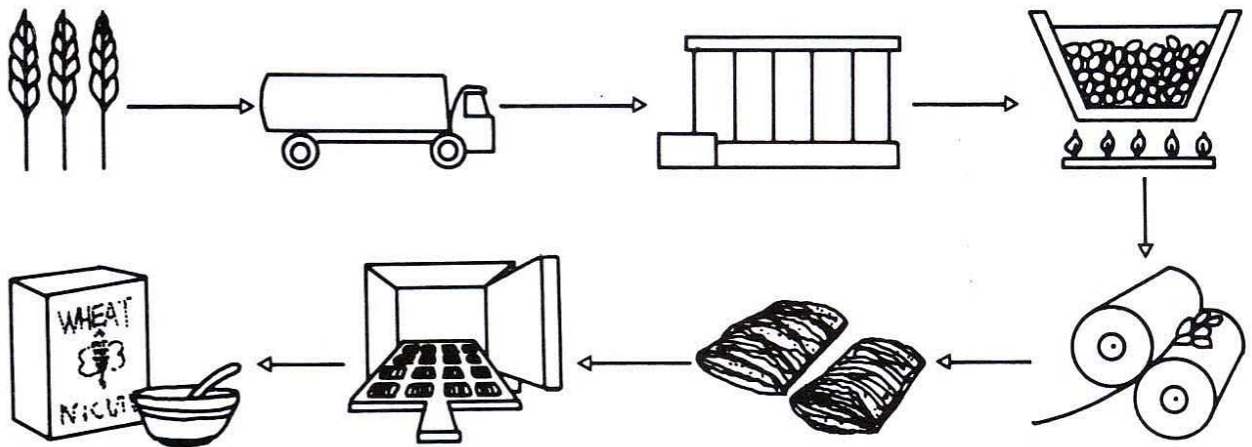
The bark is stripped from *the trunks which* are sawn into logs.

- c Some of the sentences from the text have been joined together below to form a paragraph. Spaces have been left in the sentences. In the spaces write an appropriate verb (and sometimes preposition), and, if suitable, a relative pronoun.

First, the logs _____ in the shredder. Then they _____ into small chips _____ water and acid. Next they _____ to a heavy pulp _____. It _____ also chemically _____ to whiten it. After this, it _____ rollers to flatten it. Then, sheets of wet paper _____. Finally, the water _____ from the sheets _____ until the finished paper _____.

- 3 Look at the sequence of pictures below. Underneath there are a number of sentences describing how a breakfast cereal is made. The sentences are in the *wrong* order. Write them out in the correct order using the sequence of pictures to help you.

How a breakfast cereal is made



It is stored in the silos.

These are woven into biscuits.

The wheat is harvested from the field.

Each biscuit is baked until brown.

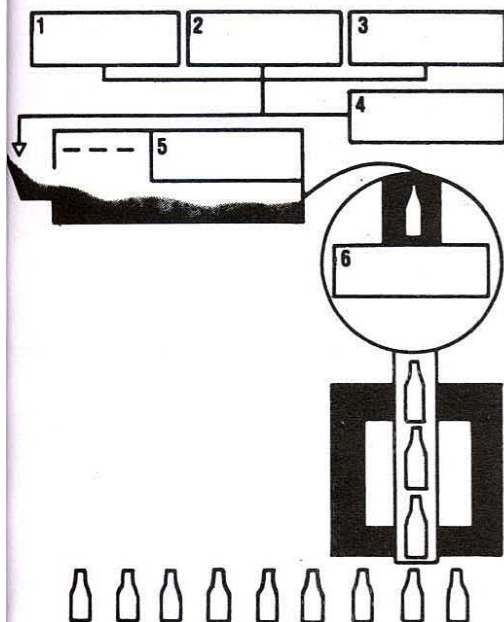
It is cut into thin strips.

The grain is cooked to soften it.

It is packed ready to be eaten.

The wheat grain is transported to the silos.

- 4 Look carefully at the diagram on page 15 of the stages of manufacture of glass bottles. Six boxes have been numbered and left empty. Now read carefully the sentences next to the diagram. They are in the *wrong* order and are not complete.



- Write the sentences in the *correct* order.
- Join them together by means of sequence markers (e.g. *then, next*).
- Complete the sentences by putting the verb (given at the end of each sentence) in the appropriate passive form.
- Finally, from the information in the sentences, write the correct names in the six boxes in the diagram.

How glass bottles are made

It _____ into bottles in the mould. (shape)
 Sometimes broken glass _____. (add)
 The bottles _____ to strengthen the glass. (reheat and cool)
 Glass _____ from sand, limestone, and soda ash. (make)
 They are ready _____. (use)
 Glass _____. (produce)
 This mixture _____ strongly in a furnace. (heat)
 These three materials _____ together in the right proportions. (mix)

Stage 2 Specific Procedure

- Look at the following table carefully.
Writing in English: Manchester University (50 students)

% students	type of writing	(average) frequency	(average) length
52	essay	5 per term	2000 words
34	report	2 per term	4000 words
14	dissertation	1 per year	8000 words
12	thesis	1 after	300-1000 pages
		2-3 years	

The information in the table can be described (as an alternative to using the table). Notice the construction of the following sentence:

52% of the students wrote essays, of an average frequency of 5 per term, of an average length of 2000 words.

Now read the following paragraph, which describes some of the information contained in the table. Complete the spaces with information from the table.

A survey was conducted among _____ overseas postgraduate students at _____. The purpose of the survey was to discover the type, _____ and _____ of academic writing that was expected of the students by their supervisors or tutors. _____ of the students _____ reports, of an _____ 2 per term, _____ average length _____.

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