

# Writing a balanced article

# Writing task

- Your school is producing a magazine for teenagers, which is going to be distributed in your neighbourhood. The aim of the magazine is to increase young people's awareness of protecting the environment.
- You have been asked to write an article to be published in the magazine, which deals specifically with zoos, the problems commonly associated with them and their potential conservation role.

# Before writing

- Decide who the audience is (*teenagers in your school and neighbourhood who may read this article*)
- Decide what the topic is (*the problems associated with zoos, i.e. disadvantages, and their potential conservation role, i.e. potential advantages*)
- *Decide what the purpose of the text is* (to raise readers' awareness concerning both the benefits and drawbacks associated with zoos)
- Remember to produce a balanced text and avoid using "I" or stating your personal opinion.

# Introduction

- Introduce the twofold issue of zoos, by rephrasing the topic given
- Include a balanced intention statement (informing the reader you will be covering for both the pros and cons objectively)
- Recently there has been a great deal of controversy about the role that zoos play in protecting the environment. In some ways it is difficult to generalize on the topic of zoos, since there are many of them in the world which care for the animals in them and in no way seek to exploit them. Regrettably, though, there are many that do not.

# Main body

- Organise your ideas in a single extensive paragraph (when there is only one topic question to address) or two shorter ones (when there are two separate questions).
- In our case, the drawbacks associated with zoos could be addressed in one paragraph and their potential role in preserving endangered species in another.

# Main body – paragraph 1

- Make your main point in relation to **disadvantages** and give a couple of examples.
- Brainstorm at least 2 disadvantages.
  - Small cages
  - Different from their natural habitat
  - Inadequate care
- Do not forget to start your paragraph with an appropriate topic sentence.
- It is possible to identify certain problems that are often associated with zoos. Firstly, many animals are kept in small cages where they have no opportunity to move about. There is no attempt to provide them with an environment comparable to their natural one. Furthermore, there are many instances where the animals are not cared for adequately in relation to warmth, shelter, food and hygiene.

# Paragraph 1 – analysis

- It is possible to identify certain problems that are often associated with zoos. Firstly, many animals are kept in small cages where they have no opportunity to move about. There is no attempt to provide them with an environment comparable to their natural one. Furthermore, there are many instances where the animals are not cared for adequately in relation to warmth, shelter, food and hygiene.
- Take a closer look at the first main paragraph to find
  - the topic sentence
  - three disadvantages
  - Explanations
  - Examples
  - Linking expressions
  - Impersonal structures, instead of a direct opinion

## Main body – paragraph 2

- Make your main point in relation to **advantages** and give a couple of examples.
- Brainstorm at least 2 advantages.
  - Large enclosures instead of cages
  - Recreation of the natural habitat
  - Protection of certain species from extinction
- Do not forget to start your paragraph with an appropriate topic sentence.
- On the other hand, there are some zoos that are completely different. Animals are not kept in cages but enclosures which are much larger and allow the occupants to room about more freely. Attempts are made to recreate the natural habitat of the animals with regard to vegetation, temperature and the like. In instances such as this, zoos are actually playing a role in conservation. They offer refugee to certain animals that face extinction in their natural habitat, as a result of being hunted by man or because of the cutting down of rainforests.



## Paragraph 2 - analysis

- On the other hand, **there are some zoos that are completely different.** Animals are not kept in cages but **enclosures** which are much larger and allow the occupants to room about more freely. Attempts are made to **recreate the natural habitat** of the animals with regard to vegetation, temperature and the like. In instances such as this, zoos are actually playing a role in conservation. They **offer refugee to certain animals that face extinction** in their natural habitat, as a result of being hunted by man or because of the cutting down of rainforests.
- Take a closer look at the first main paragraph to find
  - **the topic sentence**
  - **three advantages**
  - **Explanations**
  - **Examples**
  - **Linking expressions**

# Conclusion

- Summarise your arguments and give a balanced judgment.
- End with a comment / warning / condition / hope / rhetorical question.
- In conclusion, it can be said that whilst some zoos are not overly concerned about the total well – being of their animals, others are playing a vital role in conservation. Let us hope that more and more zoos will allocate more funds to proper programs that will help promote the welfare of endangered species.

# After writing

- Check the letter generally for grammar, spelling, punctuation mistakes.
- Make sure you have adopted a formal style of writing which includes
  - Sophisticated vocabulary
  - Long, complex sentences
  - Impersonal constructions (*it can be said that...*)
  - Linking words / phrases (*On the other hand, Furthermore, In conclusion*)
  - Passive voice (*many animals are kept... they are not cared for adequately...*)
  - Inversion
  - Non – contracted forms
  - No colloquial words



## It's your turn

- Some people feel admissions should be free to national museums, galleries and major historical sites, while others disagree, arguing that admission fees are necessary.
- You have been asked to write an article to be published in the school magazine, which discusses the arguments for and against establishing free admission to national treasures.