



## Chapter 18: Writing essays: general-specific texts

### Task 1

Texts 1–3 are introductions from student essays. Identify the function of each sentence. (Sentences are numbered to help you.)

### Text 1

<sup>1</sup>In recent years, many educational authorities have seen the internet as a way of reducing the cost of education while continuing to enrol greater numbers of students. <sup>2</sup>It is undeniable that the internet presents many new educational opportunities, but whether these are more cost-effective than traditional methods is less clear. <sup>3</sup>This paper will argue that the cost of designing and implementing quality programs using the internet is greater than the cost of similar programs delivered by traditional means.

### Text 2

<sup>1</sup>While the use of tobacco is declining in many Western countries, it is increasingly common in developing countries. <sup>2</sup>Governments in many of these countries defend the increase because they claim that tobacco production and consumption has economic benefits for the country. <sup>3</sup>However, this claim is questioned by health authorities, which point out the long-term damage to health that is associated with smoking. <sup>4</sup>In fact, the income generated by the production, sale and taxation of tobacco products is far outweighed by the costs of caring for people with tobacco-related diseases.



## Text 3

<sup>1</sup>In assessing a country's standard of living, it is common practice to use the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measure. <sup>2</sup>The GDP measures incomes that are earned and the goods and services that are produced in the official 'formal' economy. <sup>3</sup>However, this tends not to account for productive activity outside the formal economy. <sup>4</sup>Many activities, such as cleaning, handyman services, babysitting and so on occur in the 'informal' economy. <sup>5</sup>Therefore, they may not be reflected in the GDP. <sup>6</sup>This means that GDP may be an inadequate basis for assessing the standard of living of a country.

<sup>7</sup>Much research on poverty and inequality is based on people's incomes from work in the formal economy. <sup>8</sup>Because activity in the informal economy is not included, some economists argue that the amount of poverty and inequality in a country is overestimated. <sup>9</sup>This essay will demonstrate that the inclusion of data from the informal economy does not change estimates of the level of poverty and inequality in a country.

## Task 2

In each of the pairs of sentences below, identify the generalization (G) and the specific information (S).

- 1 a. Scientists predict that the average temperature may rise by as much as 6°C by the year 2100.  
b. Global warming is one of the most serious problems facing the world today.
- 2 a. In 2003, 70 per cent of internet users were under 30 years of age, compared to less than 30 per cent in the US.  
b. The growth of the internet is changing the way that business is done on a global scale.
- 3 a. The management style of managers within multinational corporations is more likely to be influenced by their nationality than by corporate culture.  
b. American managers use colleagues' first names almost immediately, while for German managers it takes a long time to get on a first-name basis.
- 4 a. Among developed countries the digital divide between those who adopted internet technology rapidly and those who were reluctant to get involved is narrowing.  
b. In 2001, 169 million Americans were online, accounting for about 60 per cent of the country's total population and 29 per cent of the world's internet population.



### Task 3

Text 4 is part of an essay on the following topic:

*Discuss the major effects of water shortage in developing countries.*

Identify the generalisations (G) and the sentences that present specific information (S). (Note: Some sentences, such as the thesis statement in sentence 3, cannot be classified as either G or S.)

### Text 4

<sup>1</sup>The water crisis is likely to be one of the great crises facing humanity during the 21st century. <sup>2</sup>Lack of access to adequate sources of easily available water has a major impact on the life prospects of large numbers of rural dwellers in developing countries. <sup>3</sup>This paper will first establish minimum daily water requirements and then discuss the effects that lack of water has on women and girls, on the maintenance of hygiene and on health.

<sup>4</sup>A huge discrepancy in water consumption exists between those who have easy access to water and those who have to fetch it from a distance. <sup>5</sup>A joint report by UNICEF and the World Health Organisation (2003) points out that in the developing world, households with multiple taps have an average water consumption of between 100 and 200 litres per person per day. <sup>6</sup>In rural areas where water has to be collected from up to a kilometre away, this falls to 20 litres per person per day. <sup>7</sup>If the water source is further than one kilometre away, consumption drops to around five litres per day. <sup>8</sup>This contrasts with the World Health Organisation (2002) recommendation of 2 to 4.5 litres a day for drinking, and another 4 litres for cooking and food preparation are the absolute minimum limits for survival. <sup>9</sup>The water needed to raise food is not taken into account in this figure.

<sup>10</sup>It is usually women and young girls who are responsible for collecting water from distant sources.

<sup>11</sup>Not only may this expose them to the possibility of attack in some regions (Dwyer, 2004), but it also reduces time available for other things, such as cooking and agriculture. <sup>12</sup>Most seriously, it may make it difficult for girls to attend school, thus condemning them to a life of poverty and illiteracy.

<sup>13</sup>In urban areas, the poor are frequently not connected to mains water supply. <sup>14</sup>This means that they are forced to buy water from private suppliers. <sup>15</sup>The World Watch Institute (2001) estimates that they pay an average of 12 times more per litre than those who have access to mains water. <sup>16</sup>In Jakarta, the Institute points out, this rises to 60 times more, in Karachi, Pakistan, to 83 times more and in Haiti, 100 times more.

<sup>17</sup>When water is scarce, basic hygiene is difficult to maintain. <sup>18</sup>The UN's World Water Development Report (2003) estimates that households with taps use as much as 30 times more water for child hygiene compared with those who have to collect water from a distance.

<sup>19</sup>Lack of water greatly increases the chance of infectious disease, especially diseases such as diarrhoea, typhoid and cholera, which are responsible for 80 per cent of illnesses and deaths in the developing world. <sup>20</sup>Bowden (2002) points out that the simple ability to wash one's hands with soap and water can reduce diarrhoea by 35 per cent.

