Student homework 1
An argument in a paragraph

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Evaluation criteria

Your written work is evaluated for:

- *language* (accuracy, appropriateness and fluency of grammar, lexis)
- *content and structure* (layout, organisation, coherence, cohesion).

Some of the paragraphs were not structured as paragraphs at all. We will deal with paragraphing elsewhere.

In texts A and B in this presentation, there are problems with rhetorical structure and coherence, and with language.

Text A: rhetorical structure

The main issue in the paragraph on the next slide is that it does not do what was required.

The writing task, remember, was to support the thesis statement that we should cut off the power supply to western households once a week.

What's wrong, here?

Nowadays there are only few places in the western world where people are able to gaze at the stars without coming across the light pollution phenomenon. In order to solve this problem and many others the evolutionary biologist Chris Ponting came out with a new proposal: why don't we cut off the power supply at random once a week in the western household? This will not only permit to gaze at the stars but it will also be a weekly reminder of how different and sometime difficult it can be to live in countries with intermittent electricity. Accordingly, this proposal could also increase public awareness regarding electricity waste.

The initial sentence of the paragraph is:

Nowadays there are only few places in the western world where people are able to gaze at the stars without coming across the light pollution phenomenon.

In this new rhetorical structure, the roles of the proposal and supporting reasons have been changed. The new ordering of the parts puts the focus on one of the supporting reasons Ponting gave for the proposal to cut off the power supply. The reason becomes a problem that needs to be solved, and the proposal becomes a solution to that problem, as stated further on:

In order to solve this problem *and many others the evolutionary biologist Chris Ponting came out with a new proposal: why don't we cut off the power supply at random once a week in the western household?*

Ponting formulated his argument in terms of a PROPOSAL ^ REASONS structure.

He did not present it with a PROBLEM ^ SOLUTION structure.

On the next slide the new, PROBLEM ^ SOLUTION structure is highlighted.

Nowadays there are only few places in the western world where people are able to gaze at the stars without coming across the light pollution phenomenon. In order to solve this problem and many others the evolutionary biologist Chris Ponting came out with a new proposal: why don't we cut off the power supply at random once a week in the western household? This will not only permit to gaze at the stars but it will also be a weekly reminder of how different and sometime difficult it can be to live in countries with intermittent electricity. Accordingly, this proposal could also increase public awareness regarding electricity waste.

PROBLEM

∧

SOLUTION TO PROBLEM (the proposal)

∧

REASON FOR PROPOSED SOLUTION AND OTHER BENEFITS

The rhetorical structure of Ponting's argument

The power supply to western households should be cut off once a week. This would have benefits a) b) c) d) e) f)

PROPOSAL

^

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

Text A: language

There are also some issues with language:

- Word order. WO
- Grammar. Gr
- Register.   Reg
- Spelling   Sp

Can you spot them?

Nowadays there are only few places in the western world where people are able to gaze at the stars without coming across the light pollution phenomenon. In order to solve this problem and many others the evolutionary biologist Chris Ponting came out with a new proposal: why don't we cut off the power supply at random once a week in the western household? This will not only permit to gaze at the stars but it will also be a weekly reminder of how different and sometime difficult it can be to live in countries with intermittent electricity. Accordingly, this proposal could also increase public awareness regarding electricity waste.

Nowadays there are only few places in the western world where people are able to gaze at the stars without coming across the light pollution phenomenon. In order to solve this problem and many others the evolutionary biologist Chris Ponting ==came out with== a new proposal: ~~why don't we~~ cut off the power supply at random once a week in the western household? This ==will== not only ==permit ^ to== gaze at the stars but it ==will== also be a weekly reminder of how different and ==sometime== difficult it can be to live in countries with intermittent electricity. ~~==Accordingly==~~, this proposal could also increase public awareness regarding ==electricity waste==.

WW too
colloquial *made*
/ put forward
to cut off
T *would*
Gr. *permit /*
enable / allow us
Sp *sometimes*
WW *increase is*
NOT a
consequence
WW *wastage*
or *wasted*
electricity

Nowadays there are only few places in the western world where people are able to gaze at the stars without coming across the light pollution phenomenon. In order to solve this problem and many others the evolutionary biologist Chris Ponting ~~came out with~~ *put forward / made* a new proposal~~: why don't we~~ *to* cut off the power supply at random once a week in the western household.~~?~~ This ~~will~~ *would* not only permit / *enable / allow us / people* to gaze at the stars but it ~~will~~ *would* also be a weekly reminder of how different and ~~sometime~~ sometimes difficult it can be to live in countries with intermittent electricity. ~~Accordingly,~~ This proposal could also increase public awareness regarding electricity ~~waste~~ *wastage.*

Punctuating places: West, Western or west, western?

Use initial capitals if the adjective is an integral part of a place name, e.g.

Northern Ireland; South America; East Timor; South-east Asia; Western Sahara

If the reference is to an area of physical geography, or to direction, no initial capital is required:

You've heard of the north-south divide [in the UK]. *How about the west-east one?*

The northern parts of India are subject to heavy flooding.

The Union Pacific Railroad (UP) and Central Pacific Railroad, built the railway line westward and eastward respectively.

In the case of cultural, social or historical entities, whether or not initial capitals are used is a case of personal preference . Often they are:

What caused the obesity crisis in the West?

We will consider how East and West think in profoundly different ways.

But equally initial capitals may NOT be used in such cases:

The division between East and West Germany by the Berlin Wall was a significant part of the Cold War, a 40-year conflict between the east and the west, which came to an end in 1991, just after the fall of the Wall in 1989.

Are any corrections needed, here?

The middle east, including the arabian peninsula, eastern mediterranean, turkey and iran, and north africa, are no exception to the worldwide increase in obesity.

The middle east, including the arabian peninsula, eastern mediterranean, turkey and iran, and north africa, are no exception to the worldwide increase in obesity.

With correct punctuation:

The Middle East, including the Arabian peninsula, Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey and Iran, and North Africa, are no exception to the worldwide increase in obesity.

What's the difference between *waste* and *wastage*?

- **Waste** can be a verb, noun and adjective:

Verb: *The UK **wastes** more food than any other country*

Noun: *Commuting is such **a waste** of time.*

Noun & verb*: Food **waste** has reached alarming proportions: one third of the world's food **is wasted**.*

Adjective: *A **waste** product is material discarded in the process of making something.*

- **Wastage** is a noun only, and it is an UNCOUNTABLE noun:

*The company is committed to reducing its paper **wastage** by 40%*

Some think space research is ~~a wastage~~ a waste of money

What's the difference in meaning between *waste* and *wastage*?

The nouns **waste** and **wastage** are sometimes interchangeable:

*Food **waste** has reached alarming proportions*

*Food **wastage** has reached alarming proportions.*

Wastage is both the act of wasting and the amount that is wasted, so we talk about the ***wastage rate*** or about ***paper / natural / water wastage***.

Waste as a noun has many meanings:

- the act of wasting or state of being wasted: *food **waste** is high in the UK*
- a failure to take advantage of something: *the **waste** of an opportunity*
- anything unused or not used to full advantage: *a **waste** of time, money, water*
- anything or anyone rejected as useless, worthless, or in excess of what is required: *a **waste** of resources*
- garbage, rubbish or trash: *household **waste**   nuclear **waste***
- *(usually plural)*a land or region that is wild or <u>uncultivated</u>:

    *the polar **wastes**   the barren **wastes** of the Sahara*
- Physiology the useless products of metabolism: *the kidneys flush **waste** from our bodies*

Wastage seems to have a narrower meaning than **waste. Wastage** does not

1) imply human carelesslessness, extravagance

2) refer to unwanted or unusable material, substances or by-products.

Text B: Language

In the paragraph on the next slide there are mistakes in

- use or non-use of the definite and indefinite article ^ /
- grammar.   GR
- wrong word choice.   WW
- punctuation.   P
- missing preposition.   ^
- In the sense or logic.   ?

Can you spot them?

The power supply to Western households should be randomly switched off for one day, once a week. There are many arguments in support of this position. First of all, carbon emissions would go down for the day, and the CO2 saved would remind us of the electricity we waste. An another reason is that it produces personally empowering, and it makes us free from personal enslavement to electronic devices such as internet and smartphones. Last but not least, with the lights off, we would be able to do something usually denied us: lift our heads, and gaze the stars.

The power supply to Western households should be randomly switched off for one day, once a week. There are many arguments in support of this position. First of all, carbon emissions would go down for the day, and the CO_2 saved would remind us of the electricity we waste. An another reason is that it produces personally empowering, and it makes us free from personal enslavement to electronic devices such as ^ internet and smartphones. Last but not least, with the lights off, we would be able to do something usually denied us: lift our heads, and gaze ^ the stars.

Gr

Gr & ww

Ww

Sense?

An another reason is that it produces personally empowering, and it makes us free from personal enslavement to electronic devices such as ^ internet* and smartphones. Last but not least, with the lights off, we would be able to do something usually denied us: lift our heads, and gaze ^ the stars.

Another reason is that it *would be personally empowering*, and *liberate / free / emancipate us* from enslavement to electronic devices such as smartphones, which connect us to *the Internet *

[..] lift our heads, and *gaze at / contemplate* the stars.

*Sense: the Internet is not an example of an electronic device ...

The power supply to Western households should be randomly switched off for one day, once a week. There are many arguments in support of this position. First of all, carbon emissions would go down for the day, and the CO_2 saved would remind us of the electricity we waste. Another reason is that it would be personally empowering, and liberate / free / emancipate us from enslavement to electronic devices connecting us to the Internet, such as tablets and smartphones. Last but not least, with the lights off, we would be able to do something usually denied us: lift our heads, and gaze at the stars.

Another aspect of language use is *appropriateness.* You should use an appropriate *register* for your text. Essays use formal or semi-formal English, not colloquial forms characteristic of spoken English.

The expression in bold is informal. Can you write it more formally?

*This would also be **a great way** to reduce our CO_2 emissions.*

Write it more formally

Informal, spoken

Formal, written

This would also be a great way to reduce our CO2 emissions.

This would be an efficient / effective way / means to reduce our CO2 emissions