PROBLEM AND SOLUTION PARAGRAPHS AND ESSAYS

1. What's a problem/solution paragraph?

Problem / Solution writing first explains a problem and then proposes solutions to that problem. This type of writing requires more than one paragraph.

EXAMPLE

Deforestation is a serious problem because forests and trees aren't just pretty to look at, they do an important job making the earth's environment suitable for life. They clean the air, store water, preserve soil, and provide homes for animals. They also supply food, fuel, wood products, and paper products for humans. In the past fifty years, more than half of the world's rainforests have been destroyed. Today, the forests of the world are being cut down at a rate of fifty acres every minute! Scientists say that if deforestation continues, the world's climate may change, floods may become more common, and animals will die.

One solution to the problem of deforestation is to use less paper. If you use less paper, fewer trees will be cut for paper making. How can you use less paper? One answer is to reduce your paper use by using both sides of the paper when you photocopy, write a letter, or write an essay. A second answer is to reuse old paper when you can, rather than using a new sheet of paper. The backs of old envelopes are perfect for shopping lists or phone messages, and when you write a rough draft of an essay, write it on the back of something else. A final answer is to recycle used paper products instead of throwing them away. Most schools, offices, and districts have some kind of recycling center. If you follow the three Rs—reduce, reuse, and recycle—you can help save the world's forests.

Let's analyze these paragraphs:
a) How is the first paragraph developed?
b) Which is the main idea?
c) What are the supporting ideas?
d) What solutions does the writter offer?
e) Is there a concluding sentence in the second paragraph?

2. How to write a problem paragraph.

A problem paragraph describes and discusses a problem issue. The topic sentence names the issue you will discuss. The supporting sentences show why this issue is a problem.

3. Language

Conditional Sentences are very useful when talking about problems.There are different types, for example:

Fish will get ill if factories dump their waste into streams.

Remember that there are several types of conditional sentences. Choose the best one depending on your intention.

4. How to write a solution paragraph

The topic sentence introduces the first solution (remember that you only include one idea per paragraph) The supporting sentences show how your solution will solve the problem. For this, you can use details, definitions and examples.

5. How to link a solution paragraph to a problem paragraph

a) In order to solve this problem, …
b) To meet this need, …
c) One answer is...
d) A second/third, final answer is…
e) In order to overcome these problems, …

6. In short, the structure if these paragraphs is:

Problem: Topic sentence (it presents the problematic issue) + supporting sentences (explain why that is problematic + a sentence to close the paragraph (e.g: a conditional sentence: "*If we do nothing to change this situation, more women will die in the hand of their own husbands*")

Solution: Topic sentence (it introduces the idea of a solution – you can use a "linking phrase") + supporting sentences (explain the solution) + final concluding sentence.

7. From paragraph to essay
Example:

1st paragraph: State and define the problem. Suggest that there are (one,two,three…) solutions. If you can summarize them, you can mention them.

2nd paragraph: Suggest the first possible solution. The solutions should be acceptable, realistic, reliable and mutually exclusive.)

3rd paragraph: Suggest the second possible solution

4th paragraph: Evaluate the solutions**:** Discuss the advantages (strengths) and the disadvantages (weaknesses) of the solutions.

5th paragraph: Make a recommendation**:** If you think that one of the solutions is better than the other(s), state directly which of the solutions in your opinion is better (the best) and why. You may also suggest that solutions can be combined. **IMPORTANT NOTE: DO NOT INTRODUCE NEW INFORMATION HERE!**