

## Understanding Text Structure – Practice Exercises

In a bid to understanding text structure and being a position to analyse a text successfully, we have looked at the following elements:

- lexical cohesion
- grammatical cohesion
- topic sentences

The final text feature we need to address is **development and support**. As we now know, good writers will ensure that they help guide the reader through the structure of the text taking him/her from point to point, thereby facilitating the understanding of the text's content. This is achieved by setting out a clear topic sentence at the introduction of each new point and then following on with information that **clarifies, develops and supports** the content of topic sentence. Consider the brief texts below and describe the purpose of each sentence.

### Text 1(1)

Authors writing in English from all corners of the globe will be eligible for the Man Booker Prize from 2014, organisers have confirmed. (2) "We are abandoning the constraints of geography and national boundaries," said Jonathan Taylor, chair of the Booker Prize Foundation. (3) At present, the £50,000 (\$79,850) prize only considers works by writers from the Commonwealth, Ireland or Zimbabwe.

(bbc.co.uk, 18 Sept., 2013)

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### Text 2

(1) Bilingualism is commonly defined as the use of at least two languages by an individual (ASHA, 2004). (2) It is a fluctuating system in children and adults whereby use of and proficiency in two languages may change depending on the opportunities to use the languages and exposure to other users of the languages. (3) It is a dynamic and fluid process across a number of domains, including experience, tasks, topics, and time.

(American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 18 Oct., 2016)

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Below are two openings of two very different articles from the 'A Life in the Day' series.

- Work with a partner. Look at one of the texts and answer the following questions:
  1. How does the opening to the article create the personality of the person being interviewed?
  2. What specific lexis is used in the text to help create this identity?
  3. How is text cohesion achieved?
- Now exchange information regarding your text with your partner and discuss the differences between the text's style and content and also the impression created by the text.

Student A: A Life in the Day of Tracey Emin

Ria Higgins, The Sunday Times, June 8, 2008

*The 44-year-old artist lives on her own with her cat, Docket, in east London. Now a Royal Academician, she has curated a room in this year's summer show at the Royal Academy of Arts, which opens tomorrow.*

I wake up at about 6.30, and the first thing I do is turn on the BBC World Service. Docket, who's my little soul mate, often sleeps with me. He's grey and white with pink paws and big yellow eyes, and with him at my heel I'll then head downstairs to make some tea. I live in an 18th-century weaver's house with five floors; my bedroom's at the top and my kitchen's at the bottom. Docket will open his little cupboard and nudge at his food, while I reach for my china teapot. Mum gave it to me. It's got a pink rose on it and has a matching cup and saucer and milk jug. I put it all on a wicker tray and head back upstairs to my satin sheets.

This, to me, is a perfect start to the day. On my own, catching up on my thoughts, my ideas — me time. If I don't have that, I end up in a bad mood. About 9, I'll make some porridge and two slices of toast with strawberry jam, and then get ready. My bathroom and dressing room are on the floor below, and it's either a shirt and jeans or a shirt and skirt. If the outfit doesn't work, I go to pieces — it's potentially the first massive problem of the day. Jewellery is something I always wear — I have done since I was a kid. It's not a bling thing, it's tradition — I'm half Turkish Cypriot. This gold chain, for instance, was a present from my twin brother, Paul, and I keep my nan's wedding rings on it.

Student B: A Life in the Day of Yann Martel

Robina Dam, The Sunday Times, September 28, 2003

*The author Yann Martel, 40, won the 2002 Man Booker prize for Life of Pi, a novel about an Indian boy shipwrecked with a Bengal tiger. He lives in Montreal, Canada*

I start work by playing computer games and answering my e-mails. How I work depends on the stage I'm at with a book. If I've done the research, it's a matter of sitting down and getting on with it. Once I've written a few sentences, I'll make a herbal tea and probably decide I don't like what I've typed and change it. I can spend a whole day doing that! I may end up writing half a page during one day. I don't think I've written a whole page in my life. Why rush?

I took four years to write Life of Pi because I really enjoyed telling the story. I work in my study, which is very minimal. There's a small Ikea typing table, a notepad computer, Webster's dictionaries and a small crucifix left to me by my grandmother. I have few possessions, partly because they weigh you down in life and partly because I'm used to a nomadic lifestyle. My parents were diplomats, so we always lived in different places. I was born in Spain, then at three days old moved to Portugal, then Alaska, Ottawa, Victoria, Costa Rica and Paris.