

Part 4: A technique for writing good answers on tests

Introduce your answers.

This is a technique that is useful when you are writing answers to quiz questions. When your instructors are reading your answers, it helps them know which question you are answering. Also, it helps you to focus on a question and to start writing your answer.

Exercise 1: Read this situation.

Situation

Wen is a Chinese student who had just started studying at an American college. After the first week of classes, he wanted to talk to his History teacher, so he went to her office. The door was closed, so he knocked twice and without waiting for a response, slowly opened it and walked in. The teacher looked surprised and a little upset (Cushner & Brislin, 1996).

Exercise 2: Analyze the style of students' answers about the *Test Questions*.

- 1) Read the *Test Question* in each box below.
- 2) Write the answers to the *Analysis Questions*.

Test Question 1: Why was the teacher upset at Wen?

Student A's answer:

Because Wen followed a different norm about opening a door to an office.

Student B's answer:

The reason why the teacher was upset was because Wen followed a different norm about opening a door to an office.

Analysis Question 1

Which student's answer is better because he introduced his answer by repeating part of the question? _____

Test Question 2: What do you think is the norm for opening doors in the instructor's culture?

Student C's answer:

The norm in the instructor's culture is probably to knock and then wait for an invitation to come in.

Student D's answer:

To knock and wait for an invitation to come in.

Analysis Question 2

Which student's answer is better because he introduced his answer by repeating part of the question? _____

Test Question 3: What does "upset" mean?

Student E's answer: Angry or irritated.

Student F's answer: Upset means angry or irritated.

Analysis Question 3

Which student's answer is better because he introduced his answer by repeating part of the question: _____

Exercise 3: In this exercise, you will practice introducing answers.

1) Read the exam questions below.

2) Choose a phrase from the box and fill in the blanks.

- ◆ In the story about the teacher and Wen
- ◆ This situation is interesting to researchers
- ✓ ◆ From the story about Wen
- ◆ The teacher felt
- ◆ The reason why Wen walked into the office

Exam question 1: What can we learn from the story about Wen?

Answer: _____ we learned ...

Exam question 2: Why is this interesting to researchers?

Answer: _____ because ...

Exam question 3: Explain what happened in the story about the teacher and Wen.

Answer: _____, a Chinese student
...

Exam question 4: How did the teacher feel when Wen entered her office?

Answer: _____ irritated.

Exam question 5: Why did Wen walk into his teacher's office?

Answer: _____ was
because ...

Exercise 4: Read this situation.

Situation

Betty was an American student who was studying at a university in Germany. Because of her high scores in German, she was able to get a scholarship. After the first week of classes, she joined several of her German classmates at a local restaurant. Some of them asked her about the U.S. policy on nuclear arms as well as about the American president's position on trade and immigration. Betty, who didn't read newspapers very much and was not interested in current events, was not prepared to discuss these topics and didn't say much. As a result, after that, she was not invited to join her classmates when they got together after class.

For German students, the norm is to discuss politics and foreign policy, and they expect their friends to be able to do the same. For the Germans, if someone doesn't participate in these discussions, they feel that that person is not very interested in the Germans (Cushner & Brislin, 1996).

Exercise 5: Write answers to the questions about the information in the box above.

Include introductions to your answers (which you practiced in Exercises 1, 2, and 3 above). *Write on other paper.*

1. What topics did the German students want to discuss?
2. Why didn't Betty participate very much during the discussion?
3. What does "current events" mean?
4. How do Germans feel if someone does not participate in a discussion about politics?
5. Do you think that Germans and Americans have different norms concerning discussion topics?