

# Essay Writing

Unit 2A – How to Structure an Essay: Developing an Essay Structure

**INDEPENDENT LEARNING RESOURCES**

Learning Centre



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

*This unit's place in the whole module:*

Unit 1A How to be analytical:  
What is analysis?

Unit 1B How to be analytical:  
Setting up a taxonomy

**Unit 2A How to structure an essay:  
Developing an essay structure**

Unit 2B How to structure an essay:  
Writing introductions and conclusions

Unit 3A How to use evidence:  
Developing an argument out of the evidence

Unit 3B How to use evidence:  
Supporting your argument with the evidence

Unit 3C How to use evidence:  
Avoiding plagiarism

Unit 4A How to develop an argument:  
Being persuasive

Unit 4B How to develop an argument:  
Being critical

## UNIT 2A.      **How to structure an essay: Developing an essay structure**

### OBJECTIVES OF THIS UNIT

After you have finished this unit, we hope you will be able to:

- analyse the essay question to identify exactly what is required
- identify appropriate structural units in which to analyse and present the material for your essay
- identify appropriate patterns for sequencing these structural units in the presentation of your essay

### IDENTIFYING YOUR PROBLEMS WITH STRUCTURING AN ESSAY

If you have been having difficulty in structuring your essay, your marker may have made a comment on your writing similar to these:

- *"Your essay does not really answer the question."*
- *"The parts of your essay do not seem to fit together very logically."*
- *"Some of the material in this essay is not relevant to the topic."*
- *"You have spent too much time on X and not enough on Y."*
- *"It's difficult to understand the overall structure of your essay."*

### INTRODUCTION TO THIS UNIT

At the beginning of this module, you studied some general principles about thinking in an analytical way. In this unit, you will see how important this analytical kind of thinking is for being able to set up the structure of your essay.

Following this unit on structuring the essay, the next unit will be about the way that evidence from various sources is used in your essays. In this unit, you will see how essential the evidence is to give you something to say, and to help give support to the points you want to make. The final unit in the module will be about how to develop your argument. However, even in this unit, you will start to see how important it is to be clear about the point of view you want to adopt in your writing.

## 1. PREDICTING THE STAGES OF AN ESSAY

The fundamental structure of all essays is composed of an introduction, followed by a body, followed by a conclusion. In this unit, we'll be looking in more detail at what can constitute the **BODY** of an analytical essay, and how its parts can be sequenced. In the second part of unit 2, we will look at the structure of the introduction and conclusion stages.

### 1a.      **Analysing the essay question**

The following essay question was set in a second-year course in Educational Psychology:

*It has been cited with alarm that modern children spend more hours in front of television than they spend at school. Is this necessarily cause for alarm? By examining the relevant research literature, critically discuss the effects of television on children with respect to at least one of the following:-*

- (a) *the development of aggression (effect of television violence)*
- (b) *educational television (Sesame Street, Playschool)*
- (c) *the development of fantasy and imagination*
- (d) *the development of sex-role stereotypes*

The essay question has been divided up into four parts in the following table to show what is the function of each section. Many essay questions are not as explicit or obvious as this one in stating what the requirements are. This question could have easily been asked as "*Modern children spend more hours in front of television than they spend at school.*" *Discuss.* If the question had been asked in this more simple form, however, the requirements would have been just the same.

***Functional stages of the essay question***

SECTIONS OF THE ESSAY QUESTION	FUNCTION OF EACH SECTION OF QUESTION
It has been cited with alarm that modern children spend more hours in front of television than they spend at school.	STATEMENT OF FACT TO ORIENTATE TO TOPIC
Is this necessarily cause for alarm?	QUESTION
By examining the relevant research literature, critically discuss the effects of television on children	INSTRUCTIONS
with respect to at least one of the following:	SCOPE

**Exercise 1**

For each stage of the essay question, you have to make some decisions. For example, because the question begins with a statement of a fact, you have to decide how you will deal with that fact: will you simply accept it as a fact, and not waste any time discussing whether it is true or not; will you find some evidence to try to support the truth of it as a fact; or will you find some evidence so that you can deny it as a fact? In this exercise, you should imagine that you have to write the essay, so try to guess what your decisions might be for each choice.

**Choices you must make as the writer**

SECTIONS OF THE ESSAY QUESTION	FUNCTION OF EACH SECTION OF QUESTION	CHOICES THE WRITER MUST MAKE
It has been cited with alarm that modern children spend more hours in front of television than they spend at school.	STATEMENT OF FACT TO ORIENTATE TO TOPIC	Acknowledge fact ----- - accept - confirm - deny
Is this necessarily cause for alarm?	QUESTION	Establish thesis ----- - yes - partly - no
By examining the relevant research literature, critically discuss the effects of television on children	INSTRUCTIONS	Select relevant evidence to confirm thesis and criticise selected evidence Evidence 1 - -confirm thesis -contradict thesis Evidence 2 - -confirm thesis -contradict thesis Evidence 3 - -confirm thesis -contradict thesis etc.
with respect to at least one of the following:	SCOPE	Choose areas of scope - (a) - (b) - (c) - (d)

 **KEY**

Turn to the key for an explanation of the choices that you would be required to make if you were writing this essay. Then continue to the next page.

**1b. Predicting the stages in the essay from the essay question**

Having decided what choices you would be likely to make as the writer, your final essay must make those choices clear to the reader. Thus, we can make a prediction that certain stages **must** exist in your final essay, as in this final table. However, it is important to note that these are not the only stages that must be in your final essay. Nor would these stages appear in this same sequence. For example, you would have to make it clear early in the essay (probably in the introduction) what the scope of the essay was: were you going to discuss only one aspect such as "the development of aggression", or were you going to discuss more than one.

SECTIONS OF THE ESSAY QUESTION	FUNCTION OF EACH SECTION OF QUESTION	CHOICES THE WRITER MUST MAKE	FUNCTIONAL STAGES WITHIN ESSAY
It has been cited with alarm that modern children spend more hours in front of television than they spend at school.	STATEMENT OF FACT TO ORIENTATE TO TOPIC	Acknowledge fact - - accept - confirm - deny	ORIENTATE TO TOPIC
Is this necessarily cause for alarm?	QUESTION	Establish thesis - yes - partly - no	STATE THESIS/STATE PROPOSITION
By examining the relevant research literature, critically discuss the effects of television on children	INSTRUCTIONS	Select relevant evidence to confirm thesis and criticise selected evidence Evidence 1 - -confirm thesis -contradict thesis Evidence 2 - -confirm thesis -contradict thesis Evidence 3 - -confirm thesis -contradict thesis etc.	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS  CRITICISE EVIDENCE THAT CONFIRMS THESIS  PRESENT EVIDENCE THAT CONTRADICTS THESIS  CRITICISE EVIDENCE THAT CONTRADICTS THESIS
with respect to at least one of the following:	SCOPE	Choose areas of scope - (a) - (b) - (c) - (d)	STATE SCOPE OF ESSAY

## 2. IDENTIFYING THE STAGES IN AN ESSAY

### Exercise 2

As we have just seen, a certain number of stages can be predicted to appear in an essay that answers this question. In this exercise, we will look at the outlines of two essays written by students in response to this essay question. The exercise is divided up into a number of parts to help you make your assessments of the two essay outlines, and to decide which one is better structured.

#### (TONY'S ESSAY OUTLINE)

Before you begin to answer each question below, turn over the page to see an outline of Tony's essay. Tony received a poor mark for his essay. The marker commented that Tony's essay was mainly a description of the research, rather than a critical analysis.

- a) Look at the second column in the table "Tony's essay outline". This column shows the number of words in each of these paragraphs. Are his paragraphs well balanced in

terms of their length?

- b) Now look at the third column. Does Tony use all of the functional stages that we predicted in Section 1b? If not, which stages are missing?
- c) Are there other stages in Tony's outline that we had not predicted? If so, are these stages appropriate for this essay question?
- d) Now look at the fourth column. This shows a very brief summary of the ideas that Tony was presenting in each stage of the essay. Examine in detail his STATE THESIS stage in paragraph 1, and the CONFIRM THESIS stages in paragraphs 7 and 13. Does Tony's thesis stay the same?

**TONY'S ESSAY OUTLINE**

<b>para-graph</b>	<b>no. of words</b>	<b>FUNCTIONAL STAGE</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>	<b>MACRO-TOPIC</b>
1	80	ORIENTATE TO TOPIC BY ACCEPTING FACT  STATE THESIS	repetition of fact  effect of tv is "potentially damaging"	INTRODUCE
2	130	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS	example to show bad effect of tv (bomb threats)	
3	100	CONFIRM FACT	number of viewing hours and factors influencing	CONFIRM TOPIC FACT
4	85	CONFIRM FACT	factors influencing number of viewing hours	
5	110	CONFIRM FACT  ESTABLISH CONDITIONS FOR THESIS	children watch a lot of tv  effect depends on tv content	
6	110	PRESENT EVIDENCE	examples of violent tv content	MOST CONTROVERS IAL TELEVISION CONTENT - VIOLENT TV
7	65	CONFIRM THESIS	tv violence makes children insensitive to violence	
8	100	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS	research experiment - tv violence makes children insensitive to violence	
9	190	CONFIRM THESIS  PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS	effect of tv violence is long- term  research results - tv violence makes children continue to be aggressive	
10	190	CONFIRM THESIS  PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS	tv violence causes aggression  research experiment	
11	120	CRITICISE EVIDENCE	in experiments, violence is not contextualised	
12	95	RECOMMEND	to reduce violent tv content	

### TONY'S ESSAY OUTLINE (Continued)

para-graph	no. of words	FUNCTIONAL STAGE	CONTENT	MACRO-TOPIC
13	23	CONFIRM THESIS	tv is educational	EDUCATIONAL TV
14	65	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS	examples of educational tv	
15	130	CONFIRM THESIS PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS	educational tv is good research experiment on effect of Sesame Street	
16	250	CONFIRM THESIS RECOMMEND	benefits and problems of educational tv to improve educational tv	SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING
17	160	CONFIRM THESIS	sex-role stereotyping on tv evil	
18	55	RECOMMEND	to reduce sex-role stereotyping	
19	160	CONFIRM THESIS	tv is both good and bad, its effect depending on tv content	CONCLUDE
20	75	RECOMMEND WARN	to educate children and parents about tv otherwise tv will have bad effect	

#### **Exercise 3** (PRUE'S ESSAY OUTLINE)

Before you begin to answer each question below, turn over the page to see an outline of Prue's essay. Prue received a high mark for her essay. The marker commented that Prue's essay gave an excellent critical analysis of the research on the topic.

- a) Look at the second column in the table "Prue's essay outline". This column shows the number of words in each of these paragraphs. Are her paragraphs well balanced in terms of their length?
- b) Now look at the third column. Does Prue use all of the functional stages that we predicted for answering this essay question? If not, which stages are missing?
- c) Are there other stages in Prue's outline that we had not predicted? If so, are these stages appropriate for this essay question?
- d) Now look at the fourth column. This shows a very brief summary of the ideas that Prue was presenting in each stage of the essay. Examine in detail all the stages in which she states and confirms the thesis. Is the thesis consistent throughout the essay?

## PRUE'S ESSAY OUTLINE

paragraph	no. of words	FUNCTIONAL STAGE	CONTENT	MACRO-TOPIC
1	100	ORIENTATE TO TOPIC BY ACCEPTING FACT  CONFIRM FACT  STATE PURPOSE	fact is important  number of viewing hours  to investigate effects of tv exposure	INTRODUCE
2	100	STATE SCOPE  STATE THESIS	tv violence  research shows relationship between tv violence and aggressive behaviour	
3	90	CONFIRM FACT RELATED TO SCOPE OF ESSAY	amount of violence on tv	CONFIRM FACT
4	55	OUTLINE RANGE OF CONTROVERSY : CONFIRM THESIS	simple cause-effect analysis - sharp rise in societal violence coincided with increased tv	GENERAL THEORETICAL POSITIONS
5	70	OUTLINE RANGE OF CONTROVERSY: CONTRADICT THESIS	analysis to extend causes of societal violence beyond tv	
6	155	CONFIRM THESIS	how children learn aggression from tv - by imitation	
7	190	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS	research experiments to show imitation	CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH EVIDENCE
8	120	CRITICISE EVIDENCE	experiments not conducted in authentic situations	

## PRUE'S ESSAY OUTLINE (Continued)

paragraph	no. of words	FUNCTIONAL STAGE	COMMENT	MACRO-TOPIC
9	140	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS	more realistic research experiments - children see consequences of violence	CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH EVIDENCE (continued)
10	200	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS	more realistic research experiments - in nursery	
11	135	CRITICISE EVIDENCE	experiments not long term, and still artificial	
12	190	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONTRADICT THESIS	more realistic research experiments - in home, tv violence caused less aggression and tv non-violence caused more aggression	
13	130	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONTRADICT PART OF THESIS  AND TO CONFIRM PART OF THESIS	replication of previous experiment - non violent tv caused more verbal aggression  violent tv caused more physical aggression	
14	110	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS	subsequent experiment shows violent tv caused more aggression	
15	140	EXPLAIN UNDERLYING CAUSE OF THESIS	viewing tv changes perception of reality	CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF UNDERLYING THEORY
16	155	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO EXPLAIN CAUSE	research experiment - tv violence dulls sensitivity to real violence	
17	95	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO EXPLAIN CAUSE	research experiment - same result	
18	150	FOCUS ON PARTICULAR GROUP	disturbed children most at risk	
19	80	SUMMARISE EVIDENCE  CONFIRM THESIS  QUALIFY THESIS	research data not consistent  tv violence causes aggression  particularly in aggressive children and in particular environments	CONCLUDE

### 3. SEQUENCING THE STAGES OF THE ESSAY

So far in this unit, we have looked at the types of stages that would be appropriate in the body of the essay for answering the question. In this section, we will go on to think about how these stages need to be sequenced logically, that is, what order to put them in.

There are many different ways of sequencing information and ideas that are to be included in an essay. The structure that you set up might be a reflection of the way these things are structured in the real world, for example the way one thing happens after another in a time sequence. Or the structure might be based on your own interpretation of the real world, for example, the way you think one thing is more important than another. These two structures are shown in the table below.

LOGICAL SEQUENCING - STRUCTURES	"REAL -WORLD" SCHEMES	- time - location - process - cause
	-INTERPRETED SCHEMES	- generality - importance - comparison - problem - solution

(After Peters, P.[1985] Strategies for Student Writers,  
John Wiley & Sons. pp 25-34)

#### Exercise 4

By referring to the table above, decide what basis has been used to structure the following groups of information or ideas.

- Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland
- machine, home appliance, cooking appliance, micro-wave
- birth, death, marriage

#### Exercise 5

Analyse Tony's essay outline to determine why he has sequenced the stages of his essay as he has. Turn back to the table showing how Tony's essay is structured, and look particularly at the contents showing "macro-topics", and the "content" column. Why has he put "most controversial television content" first, and then followed that with "educational tv" and then "sex-role stereotyping"? Are there any obvious logical connections between each of these macro-topics? Or are they simply placed in that sequence randomly? Now compare with Prue's essay in the same way.

#### 4. MAKING YOUR ESSAY STRUCTURE CLEAR TO THE READER

Even if you have set up an excellent structure for your essay, it may not work very well unless you can show the reader very clearly how your essay is structured. To make your essay structure clear, there are two things you have to do:

- a) set up the structure of your essay in paragraphs with each new paragraph making some new or distinctive point
- b) write each paragraph with a beginning which clearly shows how the paragraph fits into the overall structure, and which clearly states what this paragraph is going to be about.

Here is a section from Prue's essay, showing only the beginning sentence of each paragraph. As you read each paragraph beginning, you can predict the purpose of the paragraph (for example, if it going to present more research evidence, or criticise evidence), and sometimes what its new and distinctive points are.

##### Some paragraph beginnings from Prue's essay

para-graph	FUNCTIONAL STAGE	PARAGRAPH BEGINNINGS	PARAGRAPH CONTENT
7	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS	Typically, two films similar in length, use of colour, identity of the acts and the character of the situation are shown. ....	research experiments to show imitation
8	CRITICISE EVIDENCE	In these studies, no real harm comes to person or property and so they do not show whether imitation of an aggressor who does do damage or is reprimanded by someone in authority would occur. ....	experiments not conducted in authentic situations
9	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS	In a study by Drabman and Thomas (1974), one group of elementary school children were shown a violence-filled film while another group saw no film. ....	more realistic research experiments - children see consequences of violence
10	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THESIS	Friedrich and Stein (1973) tried to approximate the child's home experience. ....	more realistic research experiments - in nursery
11	CRITICISE EVIDENCE	The findings are impressive but there are problems. ....	experiments not long term, and still artificial
12	PRESENT EVIDENCE TO CONTRADICT THESIS	Feshbach and Singer (1971) attempted to answer this question, and in doing so produced evidence totally contrary to earlier predictions. ....	more realistic research experiments - in home, tv violence caused less aggression and tv non-violence caused more aggression

If we look in more detail at Paragraph 11, we can see the way that this paragraph fits into the whole structure. The paragraph begins by summarising what has gone before, it makes its own new points, and then it finishes by pointing forwards to what is coming next.

### Paragraph 11 from Prue's essay

The findings are impressive but there are problems. Only two weeks of measurement of the follow-up effects were done, and thus it is not known if long term effects exist. It is difficult to assess the overall effect on a child's behaviour, and a tendency for children to acquire a new behaviour than reduce an old one makes it even more difficult to say decisively whether televised violence affects the preschooler's aggressive behaviour. The nursery may still be too artificial, the children may not understand their actions and be blindly imitating, or their parents may already have set a model. Perhaps if a more natural setting were used for the experiments, and the subjects were aware of the significance of the modelled behaviour, more conclusive results would be obtained.

*The findings* refers back to paragraphs 7-10.

The words *impressive* and *problems* signal that this paragraph is going to criticise the evidence from those findings.

The words *more natural* are in contrast with the word *artificial* used as a criticism.

The words *perhaps* and *would be obtained* help us predict that the next paragraph is going to be about more experiments in more natural settings.

### Exercise 6

Here is another paragraph from Prue's essay. Analyse it in terms of its structure, showing how it points backwards and forwards.

### Paragraph 8 from Prue's essay

In these studies, no real harm comes to person or property and so they do not show whether imitation of an aggressor who does do damage or is reprimanded by someone in authority would occur. While the studies of Bandura and his colleagues (Huoton, Ross and Ross, 1976) show that in some circumstances children will imitate televised violence, they fail to show the conditions under which children *will* carry out aggressive behaviour already in their repertoire, nor the factors making it more or less likely, for example, parental explanations, the favourable or unfavourable outcome of the violence, whether it is seen as fantasy or reality. These shortcomings motivated scientists to study the effects of televised aggression in more natural settings.

### Exercise 7

In this paragraph from Tony's essay, the beginning of the paragraph does not make it clear how the paragraph relates to the whole essay structure. Instead, it just looks like an interesting little bit of information describing Sesame Street. The paragraph needs to be rewritten to focus on the point that educational television has benefits for children's learning behaviour. When you read this paragraph, you will see that this message gradually comes through as you go on reading. How would you rewrite this paragraph so that this point comes out at the beginning?

**Paragraph 15 from Tony's essay**

Sesame St began in 1969, with a carefully planned curriculum designed to foster skills such as learning the alphabet and numbers, as well as increasing vocabulary. What is the value of Sesame Street in relation to what it is supposed to achieve? Studies by Ball and Bogatz have show that the more a child watches Sesame Street, the more proficient they become. The way they formulated this was using four groups, ranging from a control group who didn't watch the program at all, to those who watched it every day. The results when tabulated showed that the longer the program was seen, the better the individual on tests like reciting the alphabet.

**Exercise 8**

Look back at some essays you have written, and try to work out their structure. Is there a clear structure? Can you see what the main structural sections are? What is the logic of the sequence of the essay? Are the paragraphs introduced clearly so that you can see how parts of the whole essay fit together?

Now try to do the same exercise with an essay that you are planning to write.

**For your next appointment**

Bring along an outline of one essay showing what is the function of each paragraph in the essay, and showing how each paragraph connects backwards and forwards.

**ANSWER KEY**  
**ESSAY MODULE**  
**Unit 2A**  
**How to structure an essay:**  
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**Exercise 1**

***Acknowledge fact***

For this choice, the best thing to do is just ACCEPT the fact that you have been given, and then get on with the essay. There would be no point in finding evidence to confirm that it is true - after all, the point of the essay is to discuss why this is significant in educational terms, rather than to argue whether it is true or not. If, instead of the essay being for a course in education, but a course in communications technology, then maybe it would be appropriate to find evidence to support the fact given. The other choice, of denying the fact, would also be a waste of time.

***Establish thesis***

For this choice, it might be very difficult to answer definitely yes, or definitely no. Perhaps the majority of writers would argue somewhere in the middle - that it is partly cause for alarm, and partly not. This more indefinite approach is safer because it appears to be more reasonable and balanced. However, if you have a very strong case to make, based on strong evidence, there is no reason why you should not put this case.

You can present your thesis (or argument) in the essay in two different ways:

- a. either by beginning with your thesis statement immediately, for example:  
"This essay will argue that children's television viewing habits are definitely cause for alarm."
- b. or by beginning with a proposition for discussion, for example:  
"This essay will examine whether children's television viewing habits are cause for alarm."

However, even if you begin with a proposition, you must end with a definite answer, for example:

- "Thus, it can be seen from the evidence that children's television viewing habits are indeed cause for alarm."  
or "Thus, it can be seen from the evidence that children's television viewing habits are not cause for alarm."  
or "Thus, it can be seen from the evidence that children's television viewing habits are cause for alarm in the case of young boys from lower socio-economic backgrounds, but of little significance for other children."

***Select relevant evidence***

The choices that you need to make about which evidence to select can only be made from

your reading on the topic. Usually you can only decide what you want to argue after you have done quite a lot of reading. As you are reading, you will probably find evidence that would support many different points of view. You will need to consider all this evidence, and be prepared to include evidence which contradicts your own point of view, rather than just leaving it out. But when you include evidence which goes against the point of view you are presenting, you will have to show why that evidence is not stronger than the evidence that supports your point of view. This is usually done by presenting the contradictory evidence in a critical way, showing its weaknesses and faults.

### ***Choose area of scope***

Often, when you are given a choice of particular areas to focus on, it is difficult to cover all the choices in your essay. For this essay question, it would be very difficult to include all the four areas of focus, because it would be hard to find the relationships amongst them all. The danger would be that the final essay might look like four short essays put together, rather than being one coherent essay.

### **Exercise 2**

- a. Tony's essay outline has paragraphs of very different lengths, ranging between 23 words in one paragraph, and 250 words in another paragraph. This makes it rather difficult to read, and appears to be unbalanced and poorly structured.
- b. Tony's essay lacks a State Scope stage, which makes it very difficult for the reader to know what to expect the essay will cover. The essay also lacks any stages which Present Evidence to Contradict the Thesis, which shows that the essay is not balanced in drawing on all the evidence to develop the argument. The essay has only one Criticise Evidence stage, which shows that he is simply presenting the evidence as if it is the truth, rather than questioning the evidence.
- c. Tony's essay has several Recommend stages. These are very inappropriate for this essay because the question did not ask for changes or recommendations to improve or solve things; it merely asked for an objective presentation of the available evidence. His essay also has a Warn stage at the end, which is also inappropriate.
- d. In the first paragraph, Tony argues that the effect of television is "potentially damaging" to children. In paragraph 7, he supports this view by arguing how it damages children, namely by making children insensitive to violence. However, in paragraph 13, he argues that television is educational, which seems to be the opposite of his argument until now. This problem highlights the difficulty of trying to cover too many different areas in the scope of the essay. It also shows the problem of only writing the essay once, rather than going back and rewriting the essay after the first draft. If Tony had been aware of this problem, he could have rewritten the essay to adopt a more balanced point of view throughout the essay.

### Exercise 3

- a. Prue's essay is much more well balanced than Tony's in terms of the size of the paragraphs.
- b. Her essay has every stage that we predicted for answering this question.
- c. There are no inappropriate stages.
- d. Prue's statement of thesis in paragraph 2 is consistently made at the introduction of each new piece of evidence. In paragraph 13, however, Prue has to make a slight qualification of the thesis statement because of the evidence she presents in paragraph 12. So the thesis statement remains generally the same, but it now has a specific qualification.

### Exercise 4

- a. The states of Australia have been sequenced according to their geographical **location**, from south (Tasmania) to north (Queensland). This is not open to interpretation, but a fact in the real world.
- b. The machines have been sequenced according to their **generality**, from most general (machine) to most specific (a micro-wave machine).
- c. These words may have been sequenced according to their **importance**, with birth being seen as the most important or significant event, death as the next, and marriage as the least important event. However, the reasoning for the sequence of this group is most unclear, because the content is most open to interpretation. If, instead, the sequence had been birth, marriage, death, the sequence would be based on **time**.

### Exercise 5

Tony's essay is sequenced in the order of television violence, educational tv, and sex-role stereotyping. When he introduces the first area, he refers to it as "the most controversial television content", which could suggest that he planned to sequence the essay according to the importance or significance of the area, from most controversial to least controversial. However, the following two areas are not introduced in this way, so this does not seem to be the reason for putting the areas in this order. The obvious reason for the sequence is that he has just followed the sequence given in the essay question. This suggests that Tony did not try to find the relationships between the areas, but simply treated them as three separate and distinct issues. The parts of his essay therefore appear to be unconnected, and his essay is not an analysis, but a mere description of what he found from his reading.

By contrast, Prue's essay is sequenced according to a **problem-solution** structure. The problems are outlined in the "criticise evidence" stages, which serve to highlight the weaknesses or inadequacies of each piece of research evidence. These are followed by the subsequent research which tried to solve those problems. The sequence is therefore also one of **time**, in that this was the same time sequence that the research followed, with each researcher trying to solve the previous research problems. This sequence can be seen several times throughout the essay:

Paragraph 7	Present evidence to confirm thesis	
Paragraph 8	Criticise evidence (finding problems with the evidence in paragraph 7)	<b>problem</b> ↓
Paragraph 9	Present evidence to confirm thesis	<b>solution</b>
Paragraph 10	Present evidence to confirm thesis	
Paragraph 11	Criticise evidence (finding problems with the evidence in paragraph 9 and 10)	<b>problem</b> ↓
Paragraph 12	Present evidence to contradict thesis	<b>solution</b>

### Exercise 6

#### Paragraph 8 from Prue's essay

In these studies, no real harm comes to person or property and so they do not show whether imitation of an aggressor who does do damage or is reprimanded by someone in authority would occur. While the studies of Bandura and his colleagues (Huoton, Ross and Ross, 1976) show that in some circumstances children will imitate televised violence, they fail to show the conditions under which children *will* carry out aggressive behaviour already in their repertoire, nor the factors making it more or less likely, for example, parental explanations, the favourable or unfavourable outcome of the violence, whether it is seen as fantasy or reality. These shortcomings motivated scientists to study the effects of televised aggression in more natural settings.

*"In these studies"* refers back to paragraph 7.

The negatives *"no real harm"*, *"do not show"*, and *"they fail to show"* indicate that these are criticisms of the evidence.

Some examples are given of the ways of solving the problems with the previous research, and this helps the reader to expect what will come next.

The word *"shortcomings"* summarises what this paragraph is about. *"More natural settings"* points forward to how the problems were to be resolved in the later research.

### Exercise 7

A possible rewriting of Paragraph 15 from Tony's essay:

Although television violence can have damaging effects on children's social development, educational television by contrast can have benefits for children. These benefits are particularly apparent in children's learning behaviour, which is the explicit aim of programs such as Sesame Street which aims to foster skills such as learning the alphabet and numbers, and increasing vocabulary. Studies by Ball and Bogatz have shown that ....