

C. N. Grivas

NEW
FORMAT

WRITING SKILLS

for the

ECPE



WRITING SKILLS

for the
ECPE



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READ ALL ABOUT IT



Camping, as we all know, has long been the favorite pursuit of nature-lovers worldwide. And who can blame them? After all, what better way to enjoy your vacation than to pitch a tent beside a beautiful lake? Sleeping under the stars to the sound of the waves lapping on the shore really is the experience of a lifetime. During the day you will have the opportunity to teach your children the art of fishing. Having no telephones, TV or computers means that you and your family can relax, far from the stresses and strains of everyday life.

Camping vacations used to be associated with images of primitive living conditions: muddy boots, insect bites and the awful backache one gets from carrying heavy equipment and sleeping on the ground. These days, however, all the discomforts have miraculously vanished. You can now purchase a comfortable, insulated tent, an inflatable mattress, and even portable furniture. If cooking over a campfire is not for you, modern gas burners are readily available.

All campgrounds are equipped with the right amenities: both hot and cold running water, flushing toilets, shower facilities and cooking grills. Basic home comforts combined with idyllic surroundings make camping the ideal choice for family vacations.

A serious traffic accident which occurred yesterday afternoon at the corner of 53rd and West resulted in two people being rushed to the hospital.

A head-on collision between a blue Ford and a black Chevrolet brought traffic to a standstill for more than an hour while firefighters worked to free the trapped victims.

The driver of the blue Ford said that the accident happened when he swerved to avoid a young cyclist who had suddenly moved out of the designated bicycle lane. As the driver slammed on his brakes, he lost control of the steering, skidded into the opposite lane and hit the black Chevrolet, injuring the driver. According to one eyewitness account, however, the blue Ford had actually been speeding at the time of the accident. Police are still investigating the cause of the accident.





Welcome To Plaza Travel



Here at Plaza Travel, making your vacation enjoyable is our top priority. That's why before you've even started thinking about your vacation arrangements, we've been working hard to get them right. At Plaza Travel, everything - from your travel itinerary to your stay in the resort - is taken care of.

Although family vacations can be fun, we do appreciate the fact that parents also relish the prospect of a few hours of peace and quiet without the kids. The good news is that Plaza Travel features a special children's club which is aimed at keeping youngsters occupied through a variety of creative activities. Just enroll your child upon your arrival.

There's another reason why families show a preference for Plaza Travel: our reductions for children are simply unbeatable, with up to 50% discounts for a second child.

All you need to do is pick up one of our brochures and choose your destination at your leisure. Whether you prefer the independence of a bungalow or the rest and freedom that a hotel can provide, we at Plaza Travel have something for you.

Plaza Travel stands for quality accommodations at affordable prices. In every one of our hotels, you will find tempting cuisine, exciting nightlife and a range of sports facilities - all adding up to a very special vacation.



IN OTHER WORDS

FAR AWAY

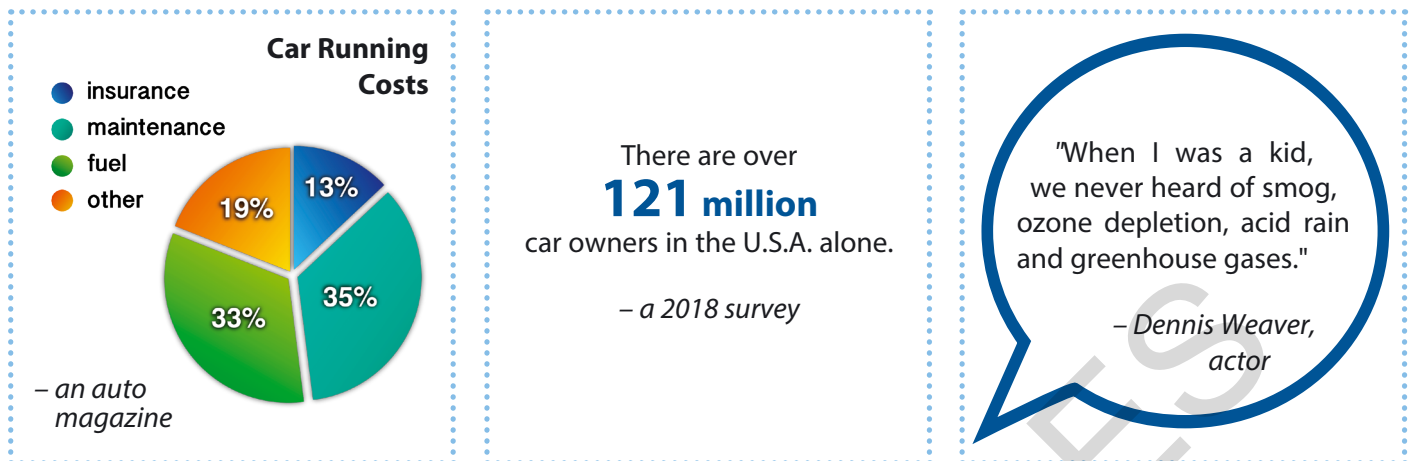
The beach is actually **a good way / a good distance** from the main road.

We stayed in a small hotel **in the middle of nowhere**.

The museum is a little **out of the way**, but it's certainly worth a visit.

The car broke down **miles from anywhere**.

1 MODEL ESSAY



Nowadays, vast public transportation networks exist in most cities. As a result, it has been argued that car ownership in crowded urban centers has become unnecessary. What are the advantages and disadvantages of public and private transportation in modern cities? Write an **essay** addressing this topic and explain your opinion about it. Include at least one piece of information given above to support your response.

Choose the correct words to complete the model essay.

Nowadays, residents of large towns and cities are fortunate in that they can utilize various means of public transportation. This, of course, makes getting about relatively easy. However, a 2018 survey showing that over 121 million Americans own a car, suggests that private vehicles are still the [1] **preferred / preferring** option for city dwellers. Before we can decide whether car ownership is no longer necessary, we must first consider the advantages and disadvantages of both public and private transportation.

One of the benefits of traveling by car is its convenience. In other words, owning your own car means you can step out of your house, hop into your car and drive straight to the destination of your choice. This independence is particularly useful in an emergency. Moreover, a private car is comfortable, whereas buses and trains can get so crowded during peak hours that it is often impossible to find a seat. [2] **Despite / Nevertheless**, its advantages, however, the car also has several drawbacks. Its biggest disadvantage is its effect on the [3] **environment / surroundings**. Automobiles emit carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas which has disastrous consequences for our health. Another drawback to the car is its expense. Apart from paying for the vehicle itself, there are operating costs to consider. As we can see from the statistics shown in a recent auto magazine, insurance as well as gas and maintenance make up a significant part of a car's running costs.

The main [4] **profit / benefit** of public transportation is its [5] **efficiency / deficiency**. In short, buses and trains transport large numbers of passengers at a time, which eases inner-city traffic and greatly reduces pollution levels. Furthermore, since subway systems are [6] **powered / moved** by electricity, they do not actually produce any exhaust fumes. In addition, many people find using public transportation far less stressful than driving. On the other hand, a major disadvantage of public transportation is its unreliability. Irregular services mean that commuters often waste a lot of their valuable time waiting at bus stops and subway stations.

In conclusion, having considered all the pros and [7] **against / cons** of both public and private transportation, I feel that it would definitely be more beneficial for the environment if people used public transportation instead of their cars on certain journeys. However, it seems that the overall convenience of the car in other situations means it will continue to be necessary.

Read the essay again and say whether you agree with the writer's opinion. Then discuss any further advantages or disadvantages that apply to public and private transportation.

2 UNDERSTANDING THE MODEL ESSAY

a Look again at the model essay and match each paragraph with its content.

Paragraph 1

☐

Paragraph 2

☐

Paragraph 3

☐

Paragraph 4

☐

- a presents positive and negative aspects of public transportation
- b introduces the topic and states reasons for comparison
- c sums up by briefly stating a preference / opinion
- d presents positive and negative aspects of private transportation

b Find words and phrases in the model essay that are used to present **advantages** and **disadvantages**.

Paragraph 2

One of the benefits

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____

Paragraph 3

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____

3 WRITING SKILLS

Essays should be written in a **formal style**.

a Tick (✓) which features appear in formal writing.

- 1 **contractions** [I haven't been]
- 2 **indirect questions** [Would you like to know if ... ?]
- 3 **appropriate linking words** [To begin with, In addition to, etc.]
- 4 **colloquial language** [They could hang out by the hotel pool ...]



b Rewrite the underlined words / phrases in a more **formal style**.

- 1 To their surprise, cooking over an open fire turned out to be **a piece of cake**.
To their surprise, cooking over an open fire turned out to be _____.
- 2 **As well as** visiting the sites, they also sample the local cuisine.
_____ visiting the sites, they also sample the local cuisine.
- 3 Those in the younger age group **see this as a cool** idea.
Those in the younger age group _____ idea.

4 REFERENCING THE SOURCES

a Look back at the model essay and say which sources the writer has referred to and where.

b Now fill in the correct verb to show other ways of introducing information you have been given to support your response.

see • say • indicate

- 1 A survey conducted in 2017, _____ how many people enjoy going on vacation in spring.
- 2 As we can _____ from the statistics, over 80% of young people favor camping over a package vacation.
- 3 As a famous poet once _____, "Travel brings power and love back into your life".

5 PLANNING YOUR ESSAY

Before starting your essay, it is a good idea to make a brief outline of the main points you wish to include. Remember that these points should be supported with reasons and / or examples.

a Read the following Writing Task and complete the notes for *traveling by air*, as in the example.

- When going on vacation to a faraway island, people generally have to choose between traveling on a ship or going by plane. **Discuss** the **advantages** and **disadvantages** of both means of traveling to such a destination.

Traveling by sea

Main points

- + enjoy fresh air and scenery
- + can take own car
- busy during summer
- takes too long

Reasons and / or examples

- feel that your vacation has already started*
- do not have to rent a car on arrival at destination*
- difficult to find a seat / cabin in summer*
- Rhodes is a twelve-hour trip from the country's main port*

Traveling by air

Main points

- + shorter journey time
- + comfortable
- overpriced tickets
- waiting time

Reasons and / or examples

- spend more time at destination*

b Now using your notes, continue the sentences below, as in the example.

Traveling by sea

Traveling by ship gives you the opportunity to enjoy the fresh air and the scenery. **In this way**, _____.

- 1 One of the benefits of traveling by sea is that you can take your own car. **This means that** _____.
- 2 Ferry boats tend to be busy during the summer, **which is why** _____.
- 3 Many islands take too long to get to. **For example**, _____.

Traveling by air

- 4 Traveling by air means a shorter journey time. **Therefore**, you have _____.
- 5 The plane is, without doubt, a far more comfortable means of transportation. **For instance**, not only are you _____.
- 6 To my mind, plane tickets are overpriced. **For this reason**, _____.
- 7 Plane journeys involve a lot of waiting time **since** _____.

6 ENRICHING YOUR VOCABULARY

a Choose the correct preposition.

MAN: I've had enough of packed resorts [1] **in / to the height of** summer.

WOMAN: Yeah, I know what you mean. Still, it's nice to be [2] **within / with easy reach of** the sea.

MAN: Not if your hotel's [3] **at / to the end of** a busy street!

WOMAN: How about camping, then? I saw an advertisement for a camping vacation [4] **on / in the vicinity of** Taylor Beach.

MAN: Hm! I can't say I like the idea of a camping vacation. I mean, have you thought of **the lack** [5] **of / in** facilities?

WOMAN: Well, according to the advertisement, it's a modern campground with bathroom facilities and a restaurant. Vacations can be booked [6] **in / on a weekly basis**.

b Fill in the correct adjective.

secluded • low • serious • basic • local

- Package deals are cheap, but they tend to offer _____ standard vacations.
- A youngster on a Jet Ski caused a(n) _____ accident yesterday, in which a swimmer was badly injured.
- Despite the large number of fast-food restaurants on the island, visitors still have the opportunity to sample the _____ cuisine.
- While the campground had only _____ facilities, we were able to explore the local area extensively.
- One morning, we discovered a(n) _____ beach with nobody else on it.

d Match the words to form collocations related to travel.

- | | |
|--------------------|-------|
| 1 guided | _____ |
| 2 exotic | _____ |
| 3 unlimited | _____ |
| 4 peak | _____ |
| 5 motion | _____ |

- | | |
|---|----------|
| a | island |
| b | season |
| c | tour |
| d | mileage |
| e | sickness |



7 COMMON ERRORS

Choose the correct answer.

- Most / The most** people have never tried an alternative kind of vacation.
- Staying at a **camping / campground** is a great experience.
- I like going to the beach for **swimming / a swim**.
- I much prefer traveling by air **to travel / to traveling** by ship.
- I booked my vacation **on / with** the travel agent's advice.

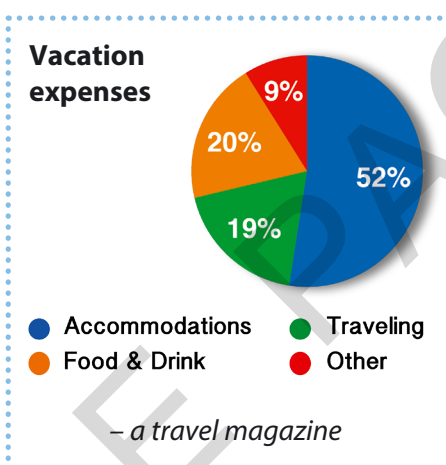
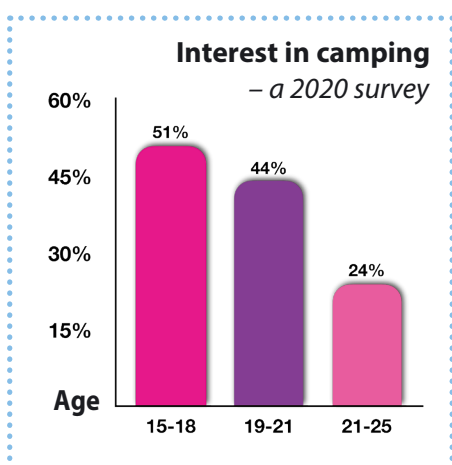
PREPARATION FOR THE WRITING TASK

Discuss the following points.

- Why do so many tourists choose to go on package vacations?
- What limitations do package vacations have?
- What is the appeal of camping?

WRITING TASK

You will have 45 minutes to write this task. You should write about two pages.



"Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better."

– Albert Einstein

TASK

While package vacations are very popular with tourists seeking affordable breaks, many travelers claim that camping provides a far superior experience on vacation. What are the advantages and disadvantages of both package and camping vacations? Write an **essay** addressing this topic and explain your opinion about it. Include at least one piece of information given above to support your response.

OUTLINE

- INTRODUCTION:** Introduce the topic, mentioning that there are advantages and disadvantages to both package and camping vacations (*without giving your opinion*).
- PARAGRAPH 2:** Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of package vacations, giving relevant examples.
- PARAGRAPH 3:** Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of camping, giving relevant examples.
- CONCLUSION:** Conclude by summarizing the main points. Then express your own opinion.

HELPLINE

KEY POINTS: *cost • types of resorts • accommodations • freedom*

Introduction

- *Both options have considerable benefits ...*

Paragraph 2 **ADVANTAGES +**

- *all-inclusive package deals*
- *book in advance*
- *range of bars / restaurants / stores nearby*
- *extensive entertainment facilities on hand*
- *childcare facilities*

DISADVANTAGES -

- *overdeveloped resorts / mass tourism*
- *multi-storey hotels*
- *touristy and overcrowded*
- *minimal exposure to local culture*
- *restricted by set mealtimes*

Paragraph 3 **ADVANTAGES +**

- *personal freedom to discover unspoiled places*
- *offers great mobility / flexibility*
- *explore the area / experience local culture*
- *allows vacations for those on a tight budget*
- *modern campgrounds equipped with amenities*

DISADVANTAGES -

- *campgrounds provide only basic amenities*
- *communal showers and toilets*
- *carry heavy camping gear*
- *dependent on weather*

Conclusion

- *On balance, I would say that ...*
- *After having considered the pros and cons ...*

WRITING TIP »

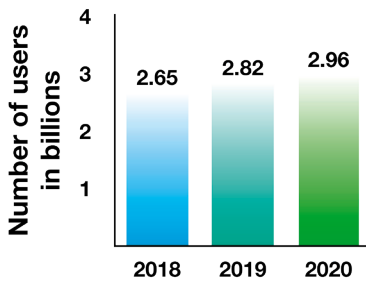
- » *Remember to support your response by referring to at least one piece of information given.*

USEFUL WORDS / PHRASES

- » *It can be seen in a 2020 survey ...*
- » *... saw a decrease in ...*
- » *... of people between the ages of ... and ...*
- » *In the words of Albert Einstein, ...*
- » *More than ... of those questioned by a travel magazine said that ...*

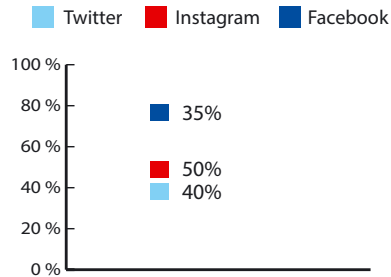
1 MODEL PROPOSAL

Social media users worldwide



– 2020 research

U.S. 15-21 year olds who use social media



– a 2020 study

"The best education I have ever received was through travel."

– Lisa Ling, author

You are employed by a travel company that specializes in vacations for young people, particularly school groups. Your manager has asked you to write a **proposal** on how to attract more customers. Within your proposal you should include ideas on how to improve the service the company offers and widen the range of vacations. Include at least one piece of information given above to support your response.

Fill in the correct phrases to complete the model proposal.

add to • specialize in • expressed an interest in • designed for • dealt with • appeal to

The purpose of this proposal is to outline ways in which *Youth Travel* could attract more customers.

Currently, our company advertises in a number of newspapers whose readers are more likely to be adults than teenagers. Rather than trying to sell our vacations to the parents of the children they are (1) _____, we should be targeting the young people themselves. The best way to do this would be to advertise on the social media sites that are most popular among teenagers which, according to a recent study, are Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Aside from this, we should email a copy of our brochure to schools throughout the country, emphasizing the fact that we (2) _____ organizing vacations for parties of schoolchildren. By increasing awareness of what we have to offer, I am convinced we will be able to increase interest in our vacations too.

It is standard practice at *Youth Travel* for any inquiries about our vacations to be (3) _____ over the phone or via email. We could vastly improve our service if we opened offices around the country so that at least some potential customers would be able to visit us in person. We could also send representatives to schools which (4) _____ booking one of our vacations. Additionally, if we had videos made showing what some of our vacations involve, including the resort, the accommodations and the excursions we arrange, these could be posted online to give potential customers a better idea of what our company offers.

At the moment, we offer adventure vacations in Scotland and Wales and skiing holidays in the French Alps. While these (5) _____ young people, it would certainly pay off to include new locations as well as new activities, as, for instance I feel that vacations with an educational focus, such as coach tours of the archeological sites of Greece, would be popular with schools. Within Britain, we could (6) _____ our list of destinations, thus widening the appeal of our holidays.

I feel certain that by adopting some of the suggestions outlined above, the company can increase the number of customers it attracts.

Now read the proposal again and say whether you could make any other suggestions.

2 UNDERSTANDING PROPOSALS

What is a Proposal?

A proposal is a formal piece of writing in which the focus is on the future. In it, we usually make recommendations.

The Format of a Proposal

A proposal should be well structured and contain clear sections. It can be a good idea to use appropriate headings for those sections, though they are not necessary.

THE MODEL PROPOSAL

Look at the model proposal and answer the following questions:

- 1 In which paragraph did the writer state the aim of the proposal?
- 2 What was the purpose of the opening sentences of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4?
- 3 What did the writer then go on to do?
- 4 In which two paragraphs did the writer state that the outlined recommendations would be effective?

PLANNING YOUR PROPOSAL

What kind of services does a travel agency usually offer? Tick (✓) those you think are appropriate.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|---|-------|
| 1 arranges excursions and tours | _____ | 4 sets prices of hotel accommodations in the area | _____ |
| 2 recommends accommodations | _____ | 5 operates local bus services | _____ |
| 3 gives out maps and leaflets | _____ | 6 provides information about the local bus schedule | _____ |

When you write your proposal, bear in mind that the tourist office can make only some of the changes you suggest. For ideas which are not the responsibility of the tourist office, such as the local bus service, make suggestions like *The local council should be encouraged to ...*

3 WRITING SKILLS

a Tick (✓) the phrases that introduce or expand on a suggestion.

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1 One possibility would be to ... | _____ |
| 2 The best way to achieve this is by ... | _____ |
| 3 Additionally / What is more / Aside from | _____ |
| 4 It is standard practice to ... | _____ |
| 5 At the present time ... | _____ |
| 6 ... as, for instance ... | _____ |
| 7 As things stand ... | _____ |
| 8 By doing this, we would ... | _____ |
| 9 Rather than only ... , we could ... | _____ |
| 10 You might want to consider ... | _____ |

b Now say what the function of the remaining phrases is.



4 ENRICHING YOUR VOCABULARY

a Fill in the correct form of the word in capitals to complete part of a proposal about improving a ski resort.

Most of the people who visit this area during the winter are (1) _____. They come here for the many (2) _____ ski runs that are available on the slopes. However, as the resort can get a little (3) _____ during the peak season, certain (4) _____ need to be made. One priority should be to reduce waiting lines at the ski lifts. This could be achieved by (5) _____ new runs in the area surrounding the village. The local authorities need to be made aware of the importance of (6) _____ money in such facilities. Should these not be within (7) _____ distance of the resort, a shuttle service could be provided between the village and the new lifts throughout the day. (8) _____, a similar service could be run by the local hotels, most of which already have their own shuttle van. Hotel (9) _____ would be willing to get involved if they felt more visitors would be attracted to the resort in this way.

SKI
CHALLENGE
CROWD
IMPROVE
OPEN
INVEST
WALK
ALTERNATE
OWN

b The following sentences have been taken from a proposal on how to interest more young people in adventure vacations. Fill in the correct verb.

appeal • take • widen • target • go • have

- 1 We need to _____ the range of vacation destinations on offer.
- 2 We must _____ into consideration the interests of the young people we hope to attract.
- 3 Our publicity campaign was designed to _____ young adults.
- 4 Most young people like to _____ on excursions, so a variety of day trips must be included in the vacation.
- 5 If our brochures included more photographs and less writing, I believe they would _____ more appeal.
- 6 We should be asking ourselves what kind of activities really _____ to young people today.

c Choose the word(s) which is similar in meaning to the word in bold.

- 1 Our village is situated in an area of **outstanding** natural beauty and attracts many visitors. [exceptional, average]
- 2 All our attempts to improve the bus service have been **futile** up to now. [effective, in vain]
- 3 The local council **undertook** to improve the town's facilities. [promised, asked]
- 4 Families with young children favor restaurants which serve cheap yet **nourishing** food. [healthy, tasty]
- 5 Most of the souvenir shops along the beachfront do a **brisk** trade. [weak, lively]
- 6 Some people are **prejudiced** against this part of the country because it was once an industrial area. [old-fashioned, biased]
- 7 Our **objective** this summer is to go on a sightseeing vacation in Greece. [aim, dream]
- 8 A **combined** effort needs to be made by the tourist office and the local council to improve the amenities here. [joint, special]

d Think of the word that best fits each space to complete this paragraph about attracting more customers to a chain of hotels.

One of the best (1) _____ to publicize our family hotels, would be to invest (2) _____ advertising campaigns which target the kind of people we (3) _____ to attract, namely families with young children. In (4) _____ words, we should advertise in women's magazines. These advertisements could sometimes take the (5) _____ of a competition, which would make them more appealing. (6) _____ way to raise awareness of our hotels (7) _____ to produce our own brochure. Although this might be costly, I feel that it would be (8) _____ the expense. Arrangements could be (9) _____ for them to be displayed in travel agencies all over the country. They could also be posted online on travel websites and on social (10) _____.

e Fill in the correct adjective to complete the sentence.

restful • self-catering • overrun • recreational • cultural • dull

- 1 The guided tours currently available are not interesting enough. In fact, they are positively _____.
- 2 We should offer more _____ facilities. People go on vacation to enjoy themselves, after all.
- 3 People don't realize how many places of _____ interest there are in the area.
- 4 Many vacationers prefer resorts which are not completely _____ with tourists.
- 5 Most visitors to our resort are looking for little more than a(n) _____ week in the sun.
- 6 Families often prefer _____ accommodations because of the flexibility they offer.

f Fill in the correct form of the infinitive or the gerund.

Despite all it has _____ (**offer**), fewer and fewer people are visiting our resort every year. If we aim (1) _____ (**turn**) the situation around, certain steps will have to be taken. Firstly, I would propose (2) _____ (**clean**) up the beach. What used to be a beautiful stretch of sand is today covered in litter. If we can remedy this situation and make an effort (3) _____ (**keep**) the beach free of litter, more vacationers will return to the resort. Furthermore, the beachfront needs (4) _____ (**develop**). We must encourage new businesses such as souvenir shops, cafés and restaurants (5) _____ (**open**) up in that area, thereby (6) _____ (**bring**) it back to life. I believe this could be the key to (7) _____ (**attract**) young people back to the area. However, unless we are all committed to (8) _____ (**increase**) the number of people who spend their vacation here, we will not achieve our aim.



PREPARATION FOR THE WRITING TASK

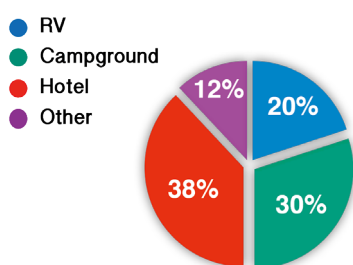
Discuss the following points.

- What kind of amenities should a good vacation resort have?
- Do you think that entertainment amenities (bowling alley, movie theater, etc.) are more important than practical ones (good public transportation system)?
- What do people with children take into consideration when planning a vacation?
- How could a resort be improved to make it more appealing to families?

WRITING TASK

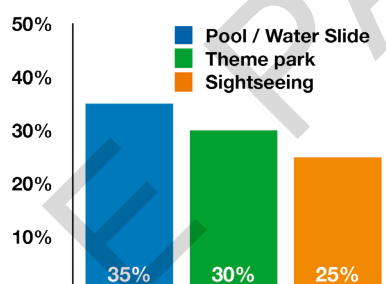
You will have 45 minutes to write this task. You should write about two pages.

Preferred Vacation Accommodations for Families



– a recent study

Popular Vacation Activities among Children



– a national survey

"To walk in nature
is to witness a
thousand miracles."

– Mary Davis,
poet

TASK

You are employed by the tourist office of a quiet seaside resort. Your manager has asked you to write a **proposal** on how to attract more people to the resort. Within your proposal you should include ideas on how to improve the amenities in the resort and make it more appealing, particularly to families with young children. Include at least one piece of information given above to support your response.

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION: State the purpose of the proposal.

PARAGRAPH 2: State the current situation regarding your first idea. Outline and justify your suggestions.

PARAGRAPH 3: State the current situation regarding your second idea. Outline and justify your suggestions.

PARAGRAPH 4: State the current situation regarding your third idea. Outline and justify your suggestions.

CONCLUSION: Sum up and explain briefly why your suggestions would be effective.

HELPLINE

KEY POINTS: *facilities • accommodations • activities • transport*

Introduction

- *The purpose of this proposal is to ...*

Main Body

- *As the resort stands at the moment,*
- *It would be fair to say ...*
- *The best way to do this ...*
- *offer more child-friendly activities ...*
- *organize excursions to ...*
- *could introduce ...*
- *Another good idea would be to ...*
- *At present, our resort ...*
- *It would certainly pay off to ...*
- *... need to make an agreement with ...*
- *improve local transportation system*
- *a range of cafés and restaurants*
- *a retreat away from the crowds*
- *... has a secluded beach*
- *A good way to publicize ...*
- *... invest in an advertising campaign*
- *Another way to raise awareness of ...*
- *... would be worth the expense*

Conclusion

- *All things considered, I feel strongly that ...*
- *... by adopting the suggestions ...*

WRITING TIP »

- » *Remember to support your response by referring to at least one piece of information given.*

USEFUL WORDS / PHRASES

- » *It can be seen in the national survey ...*
- » *... of those questioned, ... showed a preference for ...*
- » *... of vacationers prefer to stay ...*
- » *... ranked as the most popular form of ...*
- » *The results of a national survey indicate ...*
- » *According to a recent study, ...*
- » *While on vacation, children are most interested in ...*
- » *Very few vacationers ...*
- » *... percent of ...*
- » *As the poet (Mary Davis) put it, ...*

Writing Skills for the ECPE is a new book for students preparing for the Michigan proficiency examination. It aims to equip students with the techniques and skills they need to write coherently and correctly, thus enabling them to produce interesting, well-structured writing tasks.

Writing Skills for the ECPE:

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- ✓ highlights the most common mistakes made by students at this level.
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