

EXERCISE A

Serious depression, as opposed to the fleeting kind we all feel at times, has definite warning signs. One symptom of depression is a change in sleep patterns—either sleeplessness or sleeping too much. In addition, abnormal eating patterns may develop, either eating too much or loss of appetite. A third sign is trouble in thinking or concentrating—even to the point of finding it difficult to read a magazine or newspaper. And last of all, a general feeling of hopelessness may signal depression. People feel indifferent to their families and jobs and may begin to think that life is not worth living.

1. What is the main idea for the paragraph?

2. What are TWO supporting details for the above paragraph?

a. _____

b. _____

EXERCISE B

People lie for different reasons. One common reason is to avoid hurting someone's feelings. For example, a friend might ask, "Do you like my new haircut?" If you think it's ugly, you might still answer, "Yes." Another common reason for lying is to avoid a fight. Say a friend angers you and then asks, "Are you upset with me?" You might answer, "No," to avoid an argument. People also lie so that they'll fit in, as when you listen to a boring person and politely say, "That's interesting." In addition, people lie to avoid spending more time with someone. For instance, you might lie, "I have to go now."

1. What is the main idea for the paragraph?

2. What are TWO supporting details for the above paragraph?

a. _____

b. _____

EXERCISE C

Several factors can interfere with having a good memory. For one thing, there can be a lack of motivation. Without a real desire to learn or remember something, you probably won't. Also a factor is a lack of practice. To stay sharp, memory skills, like any other skill, must be used on a regular basis. Yet another factor that can hurt memory is self-doubt. If you're convinced you won't remember something, you probably won't. In addition, distraction can interfere with memory. If you're distracted by a television or by conversation nearby, try to find a quiet environment before trying to commit something to memory.

1. What is the main idea for the paragraph?

2. What are TWO supporting details for the above paragraph?

a. _____

b. _____

EXERCISE D

Being a celebrity is often difficult. First of all, celebrities have to look almost perfect all the time. There's always a photographer ready to take an unflattering picture of a famous person looking dumpy in old clothes. Celebrities also sacrifice their private lives. Their personal struggles, divorces, or family tragedies all end up as front-page news. Last, and most frightening of all, celebrities are in constant danger of the wrong kind of attention. Threatening letters and even physical attacks from crazy fans are things a celebrity must contend with.

1. What is the main idea for the paragraph?

2. What are TWO supporting details for the above paragraph?

a. _____

b. _____

EXERCISE E

Write down the main idea of each paragraph.

1. I have only three close friends. One of them is from the same school while the other two are studying in college. They are special and we can talk comfortably about almost anything. I think this friendship will last a long time. We have been friends for four years and we understand each other very well.

Main idea : _____

2. The British Council recently launched its 'Learn English Website'—www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish. This website is designed to enable learners of all levels and ages to practice their English online in any one of the three levels – kids, teens and adults. This site includes features such as stories, pop songs and even poems which you can download.

Main idea : _____

3. Rita is a retired school teacher. In her spare time, she helps out at the local orphanage. She also babysits her neighbors' children. Her house is full of unwanted cats which she feeds and looks after. Friends drop by every day to chat and pass the time. She always has friendly words for everybody.

Main idea : _____

4. The business community is now starting to pay attention to women, or more specifically, to their purchasing power. More and more advertisements nowadays are focusing on the fairer sex. This is the clear indication that retailers and service providers are becoming aware of women's increasing financial independence and are trying to take advantage of it. For example, certain international hotels have designed special rooms and reserved whole floors for their female guests while some investment companies have come up with special packages for women investors.

Main idea : _____