# AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF EXTENDED READING EXERCISES FOCUSING ON TEXT STRUCTURE ON LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE*

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## Abstract

The main objective of this research was to develop the reading exercises focusing on text structure and to investigate the impact of these exercises on learners' reading and writing skills. As foreign language learners, students in Myanmar learn mainly two English language skills: reading and writing. Reading is the major activity for them to obtain an unlimited amount of knowledge. Thus, teachers should find out and teach exercises that can enhance both students' reading and writing skills. The text structure exercise is one of the ways to improve these skills. To investigate the effects of text structure exercises, a sample of (314) Grade Nine students from four Basic Education High Schools was used. A quasi-experimental research design was applied. Five text structure exercises: Description, Collection, Compare and Contrast, Cause and Effect and Problem and Solution were taught in the pilot group, first. After necessary changes had been made, they were used in the experimental groups. To see whether the groups which received the extended reading exercises and those which did not were the same at the beginning of the study, a pretest was administered. After 5 months' treatment, the sample students were administered a series of posttests to see whether the exercises were really effective in their reading and writing skills. According to the findings, it was found that the performance of students who received the extended reading exercises was better than that of students who did not, in all the selected sample schools. Thus, it was concluded that the text structure exercises contributed to the improvement of students' reading and writing skills.

**Key words**: impact, extended reading exercises, text structure, description, collection, compare and contrast, cause and effect

## Introduction

In Myanmar, English language is regarded as a foreign language. For foreign language students, English, a world language, can be learned mainly at school."The Grade Nine English Text aims to develop students' reading and writing skills and at the same time provide opportunities their speaking and

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listening skills" (Ministry of Education, 2016). Although the aim of language learning is to develop four language skills, "the thrust of the revised ELT curriculum in basic education schools is the development of reading and writing skills" (Myo Myint & Poe Poe, 2003, as cited in Kam & Wrong, 2003). So, learners are studying English with little opportunity to speak it or hear it, then, reading is the only activity that gives them access to unlimited amount of the language. Jordan (2000) states that reading is a skill that is normally linked with writing. Thus, the teacher should find out extra-curriculum activity to improve their reading skill as well as writing skill.

Three approaches were chosen to relate reading and writing skills; explicit teaching of knowledge of text structure and its associated signal words, drawing graphic organizer and writing summary about the given paragraph. Generally, there are two major types of text structure: narrative and expository. Although basically there are two types of text structure, only expository text structure will be involved in this research. Based on Meyer (1999) five expository text structures exercises: description, collection, compare and contrast, cause and effect and problem and solution are developed in this research. Knowledge of text structure, signal words, and graphic organizer will enhance students' ability to construct meaning during reading and will give them insight about what should be organized during writing. Moreover, by summarizing, the students will have opportunities to apply basic knowledge of text structure in their writing. It helps students learn the construction of written text in general. By providing students with the exercises focusing on text structure, they can better understand how to make a piece of writing more effectively and increase their reading skill. Therefore, the extended reading exercises focusing on text structure will enhance students' reading skill as well as their writing skill.

**Objectives of the Research**

The major objectives of this study can be briefly described as follows:

1. To develop extended reading exercises focusing on text structures.

2. To investigate the impact of extended reading exercises on learners' reading skill.

3. To investigate the impact of extended reading exercises on learners' writing skill.

4. To give suggestions for improving learners' reading and writing skills.

**Hypotheses**

Hypotheses of this study are as follows.

**H1**:    There is a significant difference in the reading skill between students who receive extended reading exercises focusing on text structure and those who do not.

**H2**:     There is a significant difference in the writing skill between students who receive extended reading exercises focusing on text structure and those who do not.

**Definitions of Key Terms**
**Extended Reading Exercises**

Extended reading exercises is defined as the reading exercises focusing on text structure which is not included in the English Text in order to improve the reading and writing skills of students.

**Impact**

Impact refers to the effectiveness of the text structure exercises on students' reading and writing skills. There may be two kinds of effect: positive and negative. If the students' reading or writing skill is improved after teaching the text structure exercises, there will be a positive effect and vice versa.

**Text Structure**

Text structure refers to the internal organization of a text. As authors write a text to communicate an idea, they will use a structure that goes along with the idea (Meyer, 1985).

Meyer (1999) describes five organizations or patterns of text: description, collection, compare and contrast, cause and effect and problem and solution.

**The Significance of the Study**

The contribution of this study is that extended reading exercises or text structure exercises will help to improve students' reading and writing skills. Students will have better idea for their writing by learning the reading exercises. In addition, this study will provide with learning materials for teachers to improve students' reading skill as well as writing skill. For learners, these exercises would be a better way to learn the reading and writing skills and would provide ways to have success in their language learning. Therefore, this study would be a contribution to both language teachers and learners as it would provide necessary information about the way to teach the reading and writing skills effectively.

## Review of Related Literature

In the literature review, types of expository text structure and its associated signal words that highlight the aspects of structural organization in text and graphic organizer, and Gradual Release Responsibility Model are described.

**Text Structure**

Text is written much in the same way a house is built. The writer begins with a basic blueprint that guides the overall design of the house, which is like the overall organization of a piece of text. Generally, there are two major types of text: narrative and expository. The blueprint for narrative text tends to be organized around literary elements such as setting, characters, plot, and theme. The blueprint for expository or information text tends to be based on a hierarchy of main ideas and subordinate main ideas, often reflected through the use of headings and sub-headings.

Text structures are authors' arrangements or organizations of ideas in texts. Meyer (1999) has described five organizations or patterns of expository text. These types of text structure can be represented by graphic organizers. They help students structure their learning, visualize the way information is organized in texts to improve comprehension. A graphic organizer can be defined as "a visual and graphic display that depicts

relationships between facts, terms and ideas within a learning task" (Hall & Strangman, 2002). First, the following example represents the structure of **description**.

*Example:* *There are many kinds of birds in the world. All of them have wings and many of them can fly, but some cannot. Birds which cannot fly are called flightless birds. For example, penguins, ostriches, and emus are all flightless birds. They have wings but they cannot fly. Penguins are found along the shore of South Atlantic Ocean. They can neither fly nor run but they are very good swimmers. Ostriches are found in South Africa and Western Asia. They can run as fast as sixty miles per hour. Emus which are found only in Australia cannot fly either but they can run (Ministry of Education, 2016).*
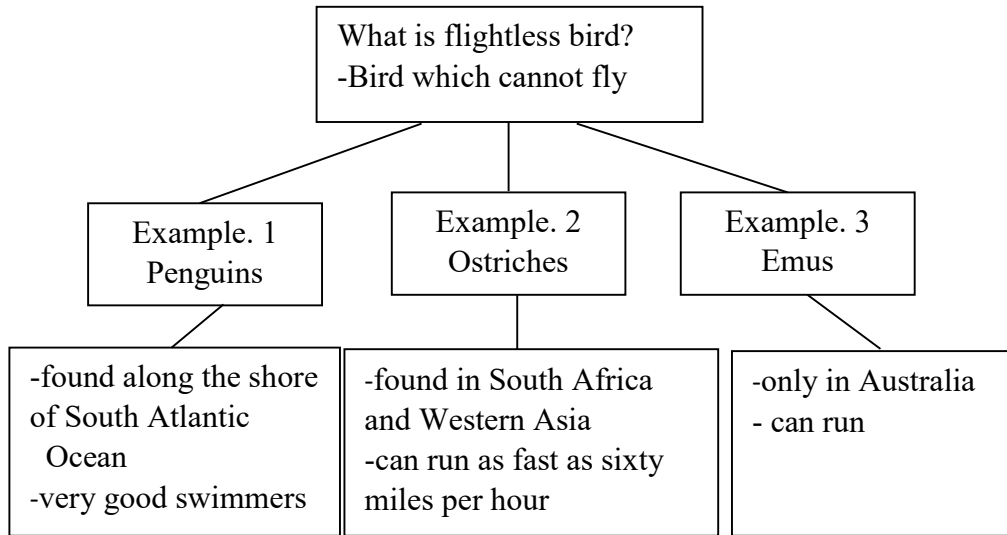
What is flightless bird?
-Bird which cannot fly

Example. 1
Penguins

Example. 2
Ostriches

Example. 3
Emus

-found along the shore of South Atlantic Ocean
-very good swimmers

-found in South Africa and Western Asia
-can run as fast as sixty miles per hour

-only in Australia
- can run

**Figure 1**:  Descriptive Text Structure

In addition, **collection** text structure can be organized by the following graphic representation.

*Example:* *When you plan your week, you should make a list of things that you have to do. Otherwise, you may forget to leave enough time to complete an important task. After making the list, you should make a schedule of your time. First, fill in committed time eating,*

*sleeping, dressing, school, meetings, and so forth. Then, decide on a good regular time for studying. Be sure to set aside enough time to complete the work that you are normally assigned each week (Ministry of Education, 2016).*
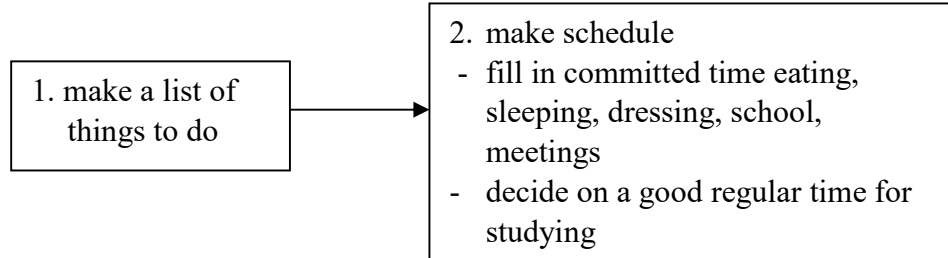


| 1. make a list of things to do | → | 2. make schedule<br> - fill in committed time eating, sleeping, dressing, school, meetings<br> - decide on a good regular time for studying |

**Figure 2**: Sequence Text Structure

Furthermore, **compare and contrast** text structure can be represented by the following graphic organizer.

***Example:*** *Both reptiles and mammals are included in the group of vertebrates. And also both of them are land animals although a few are aquatic. But, they have different characteristics. Reptiles are those animals with a dry skin covered with scales or bony plates. But, mammals' bodies are covered with hair. Reptiles are cold-blooded animals while mammals are warm-blooded animals. The distinct characteristic of mammals is that they feed their young with milk from milk glands (adapted from Ministry of Education, 2016).*

| **Reptiles** | **Similarities** | **Mammals** |
|---|---|---|
| - dry skin covered with scales or bony plates<br>- cold-blooded animals | - Vertebrates<br>- Land animals (a few aquatic) | - covered with hair<br>- warm-blooded animals<br>- feeding their young with milk |

**Figure 3:** Compare and Contrast Text Structure

And also, the following graphic organizer represents the structure of **cause and effect**.

***Example:*** *After an earthquake happens, people can die from lack of food, water and medical supplies. The amount of destruction caused by an earthquake depends on where it happens, what time it happens, and how strong it is. It also depends on types of buildings, soil conditions, and populations. Of the 6000 earthquakes in the world each year, only about fifteen cause great damage and many deaths (Ministry of Education, 2016).*
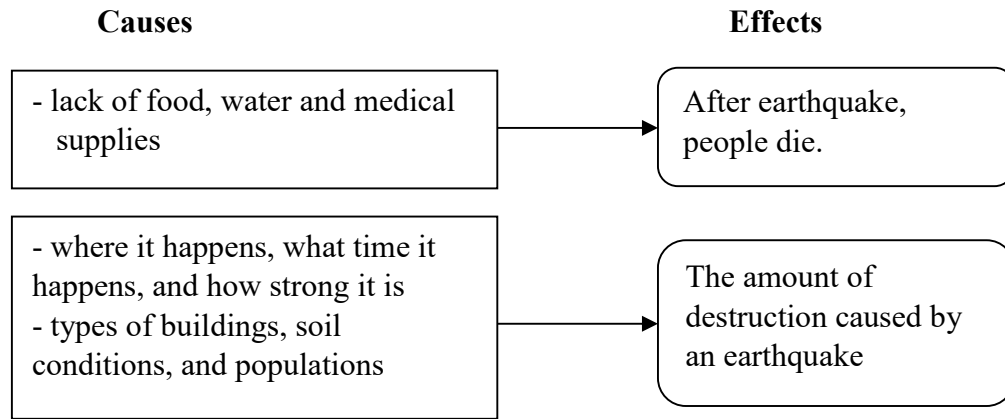
**Causes**                                    **Effects**

| - lack of food, water and medical supplies | → | After earthquake, people die. |

| - where it happens, what time it happens, and how strong it is<br>- types of buildings, soil conditions, and populations | → | The amount of destruction caused by an earthquake |

**Figure 4:** Cause and Effect Text Structure

Moreover, the graphic representation of **problem and solution** can be found in the following structure.

***Example:*** *Recognizing the importance of traditional medicines, in 2003, WHO (World Health Organization) introduced a Traditional Medicine Strategy. According to this strategy, there were several areas of concern. The first area of concern is safety. WHO recommends more scientific testing on traditional medicine - not all the traditional medicines are helpful and some can actually be harmful (Ministry of Education, 2016).*
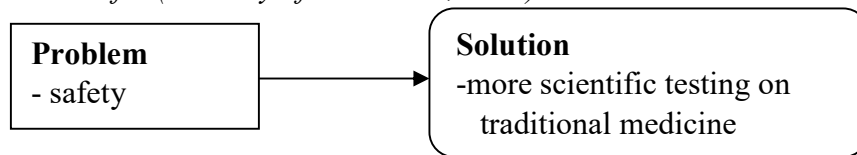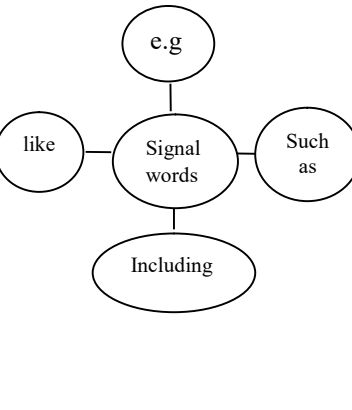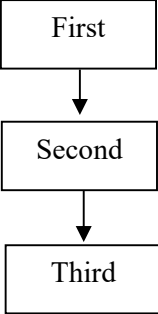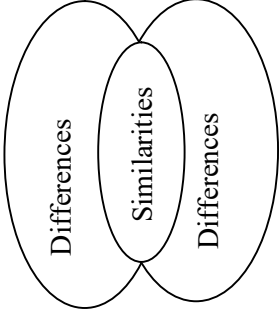
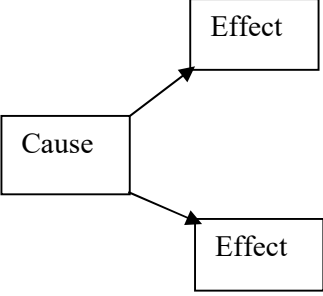| **Problem**<br>- safety | → | **Solution**<br>-more scientific testing on traditional medicine |

**Figure 5**: Problem Solution Text Structure

In each type of the expository text, there are words which serve as signals for the particular type of text. Meyer (1985) defines "the signals as stylistic writing devices that highlight aspects of semantic content or structural organization. Signaling is information in text that does not add new content in a topic but gives emphasis to certain aspect of the semantic content and points out the aspect of the structure of the content". Based on their signaling function, Meyer (1985) has also introduced four types of signaling: words that state the relational structure among main propositions of the text, preview statements, summary, and pointer words. The signal words in this study refer to the words that state the relational structure among main propositions of the text as signals.

In the text structure exercises, the students have to learn about the text structure, signal words and graphic organizer, but they have to write a summary of a paragraph by using the information in the graphic organizer. Summarizing does not follow the actual rules of summary writing. It is only a way of practicing to write a text by using the text structure and the information presented in the given text. It is assumed that these factors: identifying text structure and signal words, drawing graphic organizer and summarizing will help to improve the students' reading and writing skills. Five expository text structures, their associated signal word and graphic organizers are described in the following table.

**Table 1:** Five Expository Text Structures and their Associated Signal Words

| Text Structure | Description | Signal words | Graphic organizer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Description | The author describes a topic by listing characteristics, features, attributes and examples | • For example<br>• Characteristics<br>• For instance<br>• Such as<br>• Is like<br>• Including<br>• To illustrate | |

| Text Structure | Description | Signal words | Graphic organizer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Collection (listing, sequence) | The author lists items or events in numerical or chronological sequence. | • First<br>• Second<br>• Third<br>• Later<br>• Next<br>• Before<br>• Then<br>• Finally<br>• After<br>• Later<br>• Since<br>• Now<br>• Previously | 1._____<br>2. _____<br>3. _____<br>4. _____<br><br>First → Second → Third |
| Compare and Contrast (Comparison) | Information is presented by detailing how two or more events, concepts, and things are alike or different | • However<br>• Nevertheless<br>• But<br>• Similarly<br>• In contrast<br>• Different<br>• Alike<br>• In the same way<br>• Either or<br>• Likewise<br>• In comparison | Differences — Similarities — Differences |
| Cause and Effect (causation) | The author presents ideas, events as causes and the resulting effects that happens as a result of the events. | • If / then<br>• Reasons why<br>• As a result<br>• Therefore<br>• Because<br>• So that<br>• For<br>• Hence<br>• Due to<br>• Thus<br>• This lead to | Cause → Effect / Effect |

| Text Structure | Description | Signal words | Graphic organizer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Problem and solution | The author presents a problem and one or more solutions to the problems | • Problem is<br>• Dilemmas is<br>• Difficulty<br>• Need to prevent<br>• Danger<br>• Threat<br>• Solution<br>• In response<br>• Recommended<br>• Suggest<br>• Reply | Problem → Solution |

**Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (GRR Model)**

The gradual release of responsibility is a research-based instructional model developed by Pearson and Gallagher (1983). In this optimal learning model, the responsibility for task completion shifts gradually over time from the teacher to the student. This model emphasizes that the teacher shifts from assuming all the responsibility for performing a task to a situation in which the students assume all of the responsibility.

Based on the ideas of the Russian educational theorist Lev Vygotsky, Pearson and Galagher (1983) envisioned instruction that moved from explicit modeling and instruction to guided practice and then to activities that positioned students into becoming independent learners. Based on Pearson and Gallagher's (1983) model, Fisher and Frey (2008) take the model a step further by defining the specific stages in greater detail. According to them, four interactive (or interrelated) components of a gradual release of responsibility model are: Focus lessons   (I do it), Guided instruction (We do it), Collaborative (You do it together) and Independent (You do it alone). These four instructional arrangements are shown in the following figure.

A Structure for Successful Instruction

Teacher Responsibility
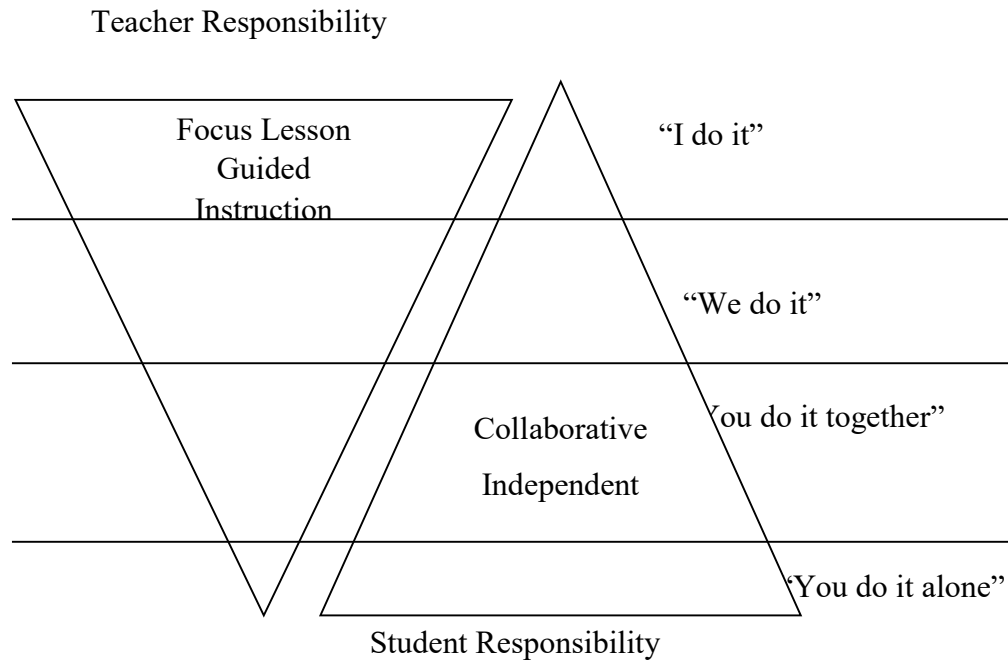


**Figure 6:** Gradual Release Responsibility Model (GRR Model)
**Source:** Fisher and Frey (2008)

## Methodology

### I. Sample of the Study

Participants for this study were chosen by using the stratified random sampling method. The sample of this study were (314)Grade Nine students from four Basic Education High Schools: B.E.H.S (1) Mingalardon, B.E.H.S (3) Mingalartaungnyunt, B.E.H.S (5) Mayangone and B.E.H.S (6) North Okkalapa (see Table 2).

**Table 2:** Sample Size in the Research

| BEHS | Pretest | | | Posttest | | |
|------|---------|--|--|----------|--|--|
| | Control Group | Experimental Group | Total | Control Group | Experimental Group | Total |
| BEHS (5) Mayangone | 43 | 51 | 94 | 42 | 45 | 87 |
| BEHS (3) Mingalartaung-nyunt | 39 | 40 | 79 | 37 | 35 | 72 |
| BEHS (1) Mingalardon | 43 | 35 | 78 | 37 | 34 | 71 |
| BEHS (6) North Okkalapa | 41 | 44 | 85 | 41 | 43 | 84 |
| **Total** | **166** | **170** | **336** | **157** | **157** | **314** |

## II. Research Instruments

### 1. Pre-test

In order to determine whether the control and experimental groups were the same or not at the beginning of the study, the students were pretested. It includes two parts, one for reading and the other for writing. In achievement test for reading, the students are given two reading comprehension passages. After reading the passage, they have to answer some reading comprehensions.  Achievement test for writing includes three items. Question No. I and II are to assess how much the students are familiar with signal words. In Question No. III, students have to write a paragraph by using the given prompts.

### 2. Post-test

The purpose of the post-test is to determine the impact of the extended reading exercises on students' reading and writing. There are five reading comprehension tests and five paragraph writing tests in posttest. In achievement test for reading, there are five items. The students are given five reading passages. Question No. I includes a descriptive reading paragraph,

No. II is a paragraph with collection structure, No. III is a compare and contrast text, No. IV is a cause and effect paragraph and finally, No. V is a problem and solution paragraph. After reading the passage, they have to answer some reading comprehension questions. In achievement text for writing, there are also five items. The students have to write five paragraphs by using the given information in Question No. I, III, and IV.But, in Question No. II and V, students have to find out their own ideas in order to write a paragraph.

The pre-test and post-test were constructed under the guidance of supervisor and co-supervisor. As the tests were self-developed tests, the researcher asked five experts for the content validity. According to the suggestions of these experts, the tests were revised. Students had to sit for two hours in reading and two hours in writing.

## 3. Questionnaire

When the post-test had been done, in order to get the necessary information about the teachers' and students' attitude to the text structure exercises, a questionnaire was constructed. This questionnaire includes ten items concerning the effect of the extended reading exercises on the students' reading, writing and their opinion on teaching of these exercises and one open-ended question. It is constructed based on the five points Likert scale. The initial draft of the questionnaire was checked by the supervisor and co-supervisor.

## 4. Interview

After that, teachers and five students who were randomly selected from each school were interviewed in order to obtain the in-depth information of the way they apply text structure knowledge in their reading and writing and their attitude to text structure knowledge. The semi-structured interview was constructed in a way that the students must use their text structure knowledge in their reading and writing, the effectiveness of the text structure knowledge in their understanding and their attitude on teaching text structure exercises. The interviews with the teachers and students were recorded.

**III. Experimental Design**

There are two groups in this research. Both of the groups were not randomly formed. As the researcher had to use two intact groups, the design is a quasi-experimental design. Two existing groups were pretested at the start of the research. After that, the experimental group received a treatment. Both groups had to take the posttest to be compared by the scores and to determine the effectiveness of the suggested text structure exercises. As this producer does not involve the random assignments of subjects to groups, the design applied in this research is the Nonequivalent Control Group quasi-experimental design.

**IV. Procedure**

Before the extended reading exercises were used in teaching, the lesson plans for these exercises were developed. These exercises were used in the pilot study group, first. Then, they were used in the selected Basic Education High Schools.

**1. Lesson Plan**

Lesson plans for extended reading exercises are based on the Gradual Release Responsibility model developed by Pearson and Gallagher (1983). Based on Pearson and Gallagher's (1983) model, Fisher and Frey (2008) take the model a step further by defining the specific stages in greater detail. According to them, there are four interactive (or interrelated) components: Focus lessons (I do it), Guided instruction (We do it), Collaborative learning (You do it together) and Independent learning (You do it alone). According to these phrases, the lesson plan contains four stages. At the first stage, the teacher states the purpose of the task, explains when the task is used and demonstrates how the task is completed. In the guided instruction, the students are divided into small groups and work together under the guidance of the teacher. In stage three of the collaborative learning, the students are also divided into groups and different tasks are allocated to the group members. And then, they have to answer the way they think to decide the structure of text. In the final stage, the students have to work the task on their own.

**2. Pilot Teaching**

As an initial phrase of this study, a pilot study was carried out in June 2015. In order to know if the extended reading exercises were suitable or not to Grade Nine students, the students in School A were selected for the pilot study. There were (65) test takers: (36) test takers in the experimental group and (29) test takers in the control group. Both the pilot teaching groups were pretested, and the experimental group receives treatment. After teaching the text structure exercises, both groups were posttested. Based on the result of the pilot study, the researcher improved the weakness of wording in tests and modified the text structure exercises which were inappropriate.

**3. Analysis of Pilot Teaching**

According to the pre-test, there is no significant difference between the experimental group and control group. After the treatment, both the experimental and control groups were post tested in order to determine the effectiveness of the treatment. The scores of the post-test were analyzed by using the *t*-test for independent samples. After the post-test, the means of the two groups indicate that there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups.

**4. Teaching in the Selected Schools**

When the pilot study was finished, a pre-test was administered in selected Basic Education High Schools. After the pre-test, it was found that the experimental and control groups were essentially the same at the beginning of the study. The experimental groups in four schools were taught the suggested extended reading exercises from August, 2015 to December, 2015. The experimental group in School A was taught by the researcher and the experimental groups in the other three schools were taught by the other three Senior Teachers who had learned about extended reading exercises. In January, 2016, both control and experimental groups had to take the posttest. The post-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups.

After the post-test, a questionnaire for the teachers' and students' attitude on the text structure exercises was used. After that, in order to obtain the in-depth information of the way they apply text structure knowledge in

their reading and writing, teachers and five students from each school were interviewed. Both the questionnaire and interview were conducted only in experimental groups. Teachers and every student in the experimental groups had to respond to the questionnaire and five students who were selected randomly in each experimental group were requested to participate in the interview study.

## Findings

### I. Findings from Quantitative Study

To be able to compare the differences between the experimental group which received extended reading exercises and the control group which did not, the scores for post-test were analysed by using the independent samples *t*-test.

### 1. *t* Values for Post-test Scores on Reading Questions

In all the reading questions, there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the groups which received the extended reading exercises did better than the groups which did not receive these exercises in reading comprehension skill (see Table 3).

**Table 3**: *t* Values for Total Post-test Scores on Reading Questions

| School | Group | N | Mean | SD | *t* | *df* | *Sig. (2-tailed)* |
|--------|-------|---|------|-----|-----|------|-------------------|
| A | Experimental | 45 | 37.64 | 4.9 | 6.707 | 85 | .000*** |
| | Control | 42 | 29.62 | 6.223 | | | |
| B | Experimental | 35 | 35.69 | 4.44 | 7.980 | 70 | .000*** |
| | Control | 37 | 25.65 | 6.138 | | | |
| C | Experimental | 34 | 34.74 | 5.059 | 7.484 | 69 | .000*** |
| | Control | 37 | 25.59 | 5.183 | | | |
| D | Experimental | 43 | 32.16 | 3.207 | 8.813 | 82 | .000*** |
| | Control | 41 | 26.02 | 3.174 | | | |

**Note:** ***$p < .001$

**2. *t* Values for Post-test Scores on Writing Questions**

In all writing questions, the probability value of test score was less than .001 for all schools. Therefore, it can be concluded that the groups which received extended reading exercises performed better in writing skill than the groups which did not (see Table 4).

**Table 4:** *t* Values for Total Post-test Scores on Writing Questions

| School | Group | N | Mean | SD | *t* | df | *Sig. (2-tailed)* |
|--------|-------|---|------|-----|-----|----|----|
| A | Experimental | 45 | 33.38 | 3.749 | 13.316 | 85 | .000*** |
| | Control | 42 | 22.26 | 4.037 | | | |
| B | Experimental | 35 | 30.06 | 3.233 | 7.196 | 70 | .000*** |
| | Control | 37 | 22.78 | 5.083 | | | |
| C | Experimental | 34 | 30.12 | 3.444 | 7.676 | 69 | .000*** |
| | Control | 37 | 23.32 | 3.966 | | | |
| D | Experimental | 43 | 27.12 | 2.970 | 12.273 | 82 | .000*** |
| | Control | 41 | 18.27 | 3.627 | | | |

**Note**: ***$p < .001$

## II. Findings from Qualitative Study

In order to obtain the students' opinion on and attitude towards whether text structure exercises are beneficial for them or not, the questionnaire and interview study was conducted.

## 1. Findings from Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire can be divided into two main parts: reading and writing. According to their answers, it was found that most of the students agreed that text structure knowledge can enhance to see the main idea of a text. For the second item, most of the students strongly agreed that text structure knowledge can enhance to select the important points of a text. And also, most of them strongly agreed on the fact that signal words enhance to understand a text. Most of the students strongly agreed on the fourth item that graphic organizer enhance to understand the structure and the content of a text. Moreover, they had confidence in understanding the content of a text by using text structure knowledge. They strongly agreed that text structure

knowledge enhance to remember the content of a text. For writing, most of the students strongly agreed that text structure knowledge provides them basic pattern of writing. They also strongly agreed on eighth item; signal words enhance to present their writing effectively and ninth item; drawing graphic organizer enhance to organize their idea. Finally, they did strongly agree on the fact that they feel confident to organize their writing well by text structure knowledge.

## 2. Findings from Interview Study

In order to obtain the in-depth information of the students' opinion on teaching text structure exercises and the way they apply text structure knowledge in their reading and writing, five students who were randomly selected from each school were interviewed. Interview includes three main points: the way the students apply text structure knowledge in their reading, writing and their attitude towards teaching these exercises.

Interviews describe that students apply text structure knowledge in their reading and writing. Students have a better idea of the reading passages and how the information can be organized in their own writing. In reading, signals are the cues to decide the structure of the text. In addition, graphic organizer helps students to comprehend the structure of the text and main points presented in it. In writing, students can use signal words to highlight the main ideas of their writing. And also, graphic organizer shows ways to organize information in their own writing. To conclude that text structure, signal words and graphic organizer operate significant support for the students' clear reading and effectual writing.

## Discussion and Suggestions and Conclusion

### Discussion

According to the results of t-test, it is found that the extended reading exercises have a positive impact on students' reading and writing skills. In other words, these exercises can improve the reading and writing skills of students. Signal words are considered as cue words to decide the structure of the text in reading and also they can highlight ideas presented in the text if they are used in writing. With signal questions, students can focus on the important points in the text. By the use of graphic organizer, students not only

recognize the structure of the text but also understand the main ideas presented in the text. In addition, writing summary provides students an opportunity to use the structure of the text that they had read in organizing their own writing.

This result is consistent with the following findings. Kara (2013) examined that the effect of explicit teaching of signal words on reading comprehension with EFL learners. The result indicated that teaching of signal words contributes to the reading comprehension. And also, Gaddy, Bkken, and Fulk (2008) conducted a study to determine the relative efficacy of text structure strategy instruction. The result indicated that the students in text structure strategy condition outperformed students in the traditional instruction. Carrell (1985) conducted a study to determine whether explicit teaching of text structure can facilitate reading for learners of English as a second language. The result showed that the overt teaching about the text structure can facilitate ESL students' reading comprehension. Furthermore, Newman (2007) examined the effects of explicit instruction of expository text structure incorporating graphic organizer on the comprehension of students. Findings from this study revealed that students receiving the intervention showed a statistically significant difference in their ability to comprehend expository texts. For writing, Hammann and Stevens (2003) conducted a study for instructional approaches to improving students' writing compare and contrast essay. The result indicated that the students receiving text structure instruction had significantly higher score on compare and contrast structure.

All these findings are in line with the quantitative result of this study which is also supported by the following qualitative result. From the questionnaire and interview, students express that text structure knowledge enhance them to see the main idea of a text. In addition, text structure knowledge also help them to see how to select the content of a text (e.g. description, sequence, comparison, etc.). This finding is supported by Sanders and Noordman (2000). They found that linguistic markers (signal words) guided the reader in selecting the right coherence relation. After teaching text structure, signal words and graphic organizers, students have confidence in understanding the content of a text and remember the content of a text longer. This is consistent with the finding of Gaddy, Bakken, and Fulk (2008). Their

finding indicated that text structure strategy instruction improves long-term comprehension rather than sort-term rote memorization. In addition, Armbruster, Anderson, and Ostertag (1987) also found that text structure training group recalled more information of the essay test on the main idea of a problem and solution passage. For writing skill, text structure knowledge enhances students to see the basic patterns of writing. Moreover, they have confidence in organizing their writing well by using text structure knowledge. This finding is in line with Hammann and Stevens (2003) who found that text structure instruction helped students meet the demands of organizing the content to be presented in a compare and contrast structure. This finding expresses that students have positive attitude towards the extended reading exercises and they apply text structure knowledge in their reading and writing.

## Suggestions

By the findings discussed above, the following suggestions are to be made.

❖ As it is found that students' reading and writing skills are related, teachers and curriculum developers need to develop plans to support the students' reading ability as well as writing skill. So, it is suggested that to be able to improve the students' reading and writing skills, teachers should use text structure exercises.

❖ Teachers should explain students both the purpose and function of the signal words and graphic organizers and the way to use them in both reading and writing.

❖ Teachers should explicitly explain students the various functions of the signal words in order to enhance their comprehension as well as writing skill.

❖ Teachers should give emphasis to the use of the graphic organizers to guide both reading and writing. Then, students will have a better idea of the organization of a text and how the information can be organized in their own work. Moreover, at advanced level, the students will be able to carry out more complex assignments successfully because the graphic organization provides way to maintain more complex sets of information

and makes accurate comparisons and syntheses across related sources of information on a theme.

❖ The next suggestion is that when the students see the organization of a text that they read, they should use that knowledge in their own writing. Summary writing is an effective way to organize information presented in text. To be an effective summarization instruction, students should be explained that summarizing passage supports the students understanding of the material in the text, their identification of the main ideas and their memory of this information. In addition, the students should be told that being able to summarize would help them with a primary challenge in writing: what to say and text structure knowledge would provide them how to write.

❖ Moreover, it should also be suggested that before the students are able to write a summary, the guidelines for writing a summary of a particular text structure should be given first and then they should write a summary of a passage on their own. They should practise to compose a paragraph or an essay that reflects a single text structure so that they have chance to use the text structure knowledge in their own writing.

❖ Moreover, the passages used in the texts should be structured and signaled texts. When students recognize the way the structured texts are arranged and organized, they will understand the basic patterns of writing and will apply this knowledge in their writing.

❖ So, it is suggested that the extended reading exercises should be used in texts at different grade levels by varying length and difficulty. In addition, it is also suggested that students will quickly see the power of the ideas of the text structure knowledge if the instruction is done well and done regularly.

❖ The final suggestion is the use of instructional procedures included in the gradual release responsibility model. As the purpose of the model is to help students become independent learners, the teacher gradually shifts the responsibility for task completion to the students. This model can be applied in all subject areas and at all grade levels.

## Conclusion

The main objective of this research is to develop the extended reading exercises focusing on text structure and to investigate the impact of these exercises on learners' reading and writing skills. Based on the idea of Meyer (1999), five text structures exercises: Description, Collection, Compare and Contrast, Cause and Effect and Problem and Solution are constructed in this research. After the text structure exercises were developed, based on the gradual release responsibility model developed by Pearson and Gallagher (1983), lesson plans for these exercises were developed. They were taught in the pilot group, first. After necessary changes had been made, exercises were used in the experimental groups in four Basic Education High Schools. The schools were selected from Yangon Region by using the stratified random sampling method. As two classrooms from each school were randomly selected, the quasi-experimental design was used in this study. The exercises were taught to the experimental groups in all the selected schools. The post-test only control group design was used in this study and pre-test scores were used only to see whether there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups or not at the beginning of the study. According to the quantitative results of the research, it was found that both in the reading and writing skills, there was a statistically difference between groups which received the extended reading exercises and those which did not. Similarly, the qualitative result of the research proved that the students have positive attitude towards the extended reading exercises and apply these knowledge in their reading and writing. Extended reading exercises can provide an effective way to improve the reading and writing skills of students. Therefore, the suggested extended reading exercises should be used as a reference for teachers and will be one of the significant contributions to the improvement of students' reading and writing skills.

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**Appendix**

**Five Text Structure Exercises**

**I. The Example of Descriptive Text Structure**

**Dogs**

All of us have seen dogs, but only a few of us know all the things about dogs. There are **different kinds** of dogs. Some dogs are very much like wolves. Such dogs are called wolf-like dogs. The Husky and Alsatian are **good examples** of wolf-like dogs.

There is another group of dogs called the Mastiffs. The Great Dane, the Dalmatian, the Saint Bernard are all Mastiffs.

Some kinds of dogs are used in hunting, that is, catching animals. Hunters usually keep hunting dogs and take them along when they go out hunting. **For example,** the Greyhound, the Scottish Deerhound and the Irish Wolfhound are all hunting dogs. They can run very fast and they use their eyes as well as their ears and nose to chase animals which their masters, the hunters want to catch (Ministry of Education, 2016).

**1. Describe three kinds of dogs with examples, using the following graphic organizer.**

```
                          ┌──────────────────┐
                          │   Kinds of dogs   │
                          └──────────────────┘
            ┌───────────────────┬───────────────────┐
   ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐
   │ 1. Wolf-like dogs │ │  2. Mastiffs     │ │ 3.Hunting dogs   │
   └──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘
```

**Examples**
- Husky
- Alsatian

**Examples**
- Great Dane
- Dalmatian
- Saint Bernard

**Examples**
- Greyhound
- Scottish Deerhound
- Wolfhound
**Ability**
- run very fast and they use their eyes as well as their ears and nose to chase animals
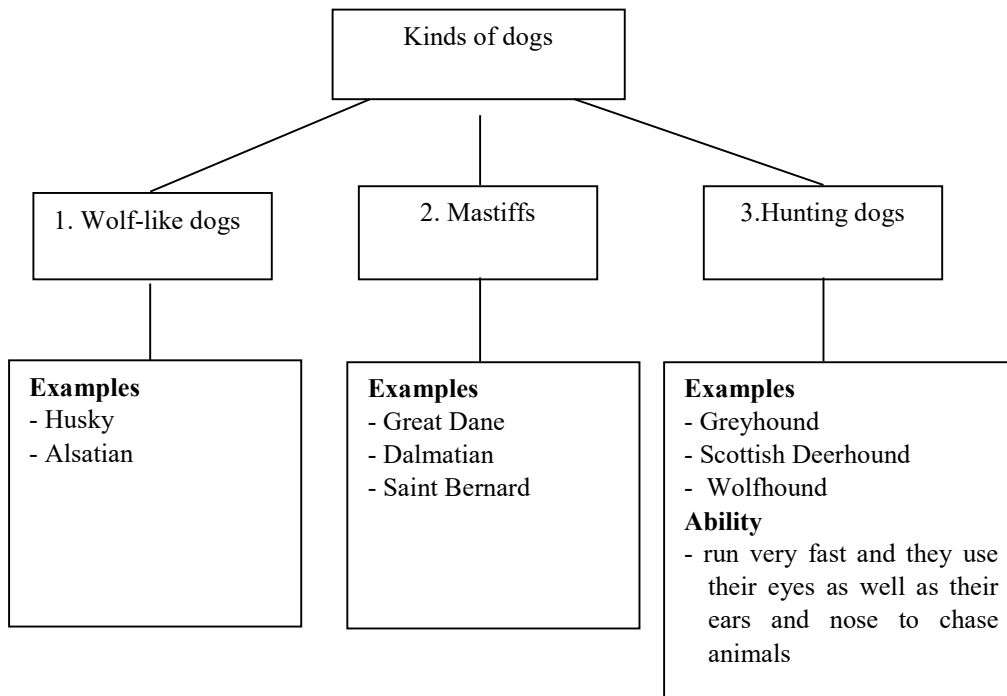
**2. Write a summary of the paragraph mentioned above by using signal words.**

There are different types of dogs such as wolf-like dogs, Mastiffs and hunting dogs. Husky and Alsatian are good examples of wolf-like dogs. Examples of Mastiffs are Great Dane, the Dalmatian, and the Saint Bernard. The Greyhound, the Scottish Deerhound and the Irish Wolfhound are examples of hunting-dogs. They can run very fast and use their eyes as well as their ears and nose to chase animals.

**II. The Example of Collection Text Structure**
**Methods for shampooing dogs**

There are two methods that can be used to shampoo your dog. **The first method** is the 'outside tub' method. To wash your dog outside the house, you will need a tub, some warm water, a large towel and of course, your dog, if you can find him.

**In the second method**, the 'inside house' method, you will need to use your bathtub. The bathtub should not be filled too full and the amount of shampoo used should not be large because an active dog can spray water and shampoo all over your bathroom.

In each of two methods, there are several steps to follow. **First**, fill the tub with 10 cm of warm water. **Then,** take the dog's color off and put him in. **Third,** shampoo the dog's back, legs, feet and head. **Fourth,** rinse off the shampoo. **Next,** take the dog out of the tub and let him shake. **Finally,** dry him off with a towel (Gordon, 1990).

**1. List the methods that can be used to shampoo a dog.**
    1. Inside house method
    2. Outside tub method

**2. Draw a graphic organizer for the steps of shampooing a dog.**

| Fill the tub with 10 cm of warm water |
|:---:|

↓

| Take the dog's color off and put him in |
|:---:|

↓

| Shampoo the dog's back, legs, feet and head |
|:---:|

↓

| Rinse off the shampoo |
|:---:|

↓

| Take the dog out of the tub and let him shake. |
|:---:|

↓

| Dry him off with a towel |
|:---:|
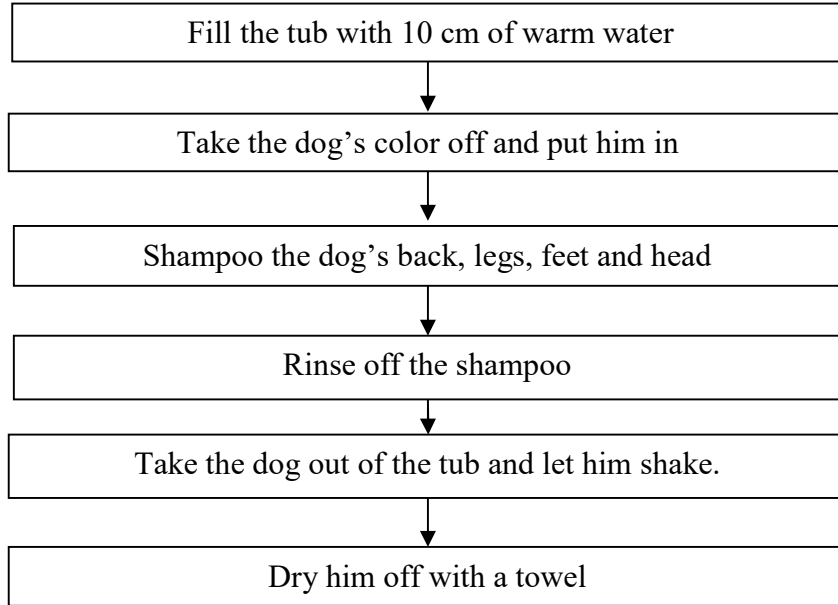
**3. Write a summary of the paragraph mentioned above by using signal words.**

      To shampoo a dog, there are two methods: inside tub and outside tub methods. Both of these methods have to follow several steps. First, fill the tub with 10 cm of warm water. Then, take the dog's color off and put him in. Third, shampoo the dog's back, legs, feet and head. Fourth, rinse off the shampoo. Next, take the dog out of the tub and let him shake. Finally, dry him off with a towel.

**III. The Example of Compare and Contrast Text Structure**

**Twins**

      Mya Mya and Hla Hla are identical twins. Although they look exactly alike, everything else about them is **<u>different</u>**. MyaMya likes to play sports and enjoys listening to rock and hip-hop music. **<u>Unlike</u>** Mya Mya, Hla Hla would much rather read and play classical music on the piano with her free

time. They dress **differently**, too. Mya Mya likes to wear casual clothes, **but** Hla Hla prefers to dress up every day. Even though they lead very **different** lives, **both** My aMya and Hla Hla love each other very much and enjoy discussing their day every night.

**1. With the help of the following graphic organizer, describe the similarities and differences between Mya**

**Mya and HlaHla.**

Mya Mya
(Differences)
-likes to play sports
and enjoys listening
to rock and hip-hop music
- likes to wear casual clothes

Similarities
- love each other very much
- enjoy discussing their day every night.

Hla Hla
(Differences)
- likes reading and play classical music on the piano
- likes to dress up every day
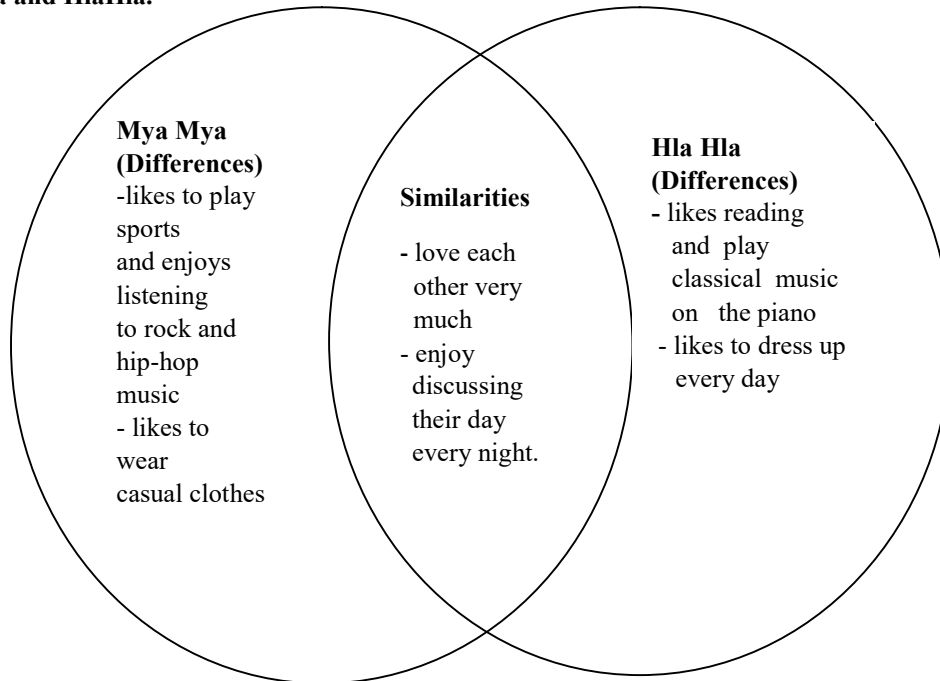
**2. Write a summary of the paragraph mentioned above by using signal words.**

Mya Mya and Hla Hla are identical twins. Both of them love each other very much. And also both of them enjoy discussing their day every night. But, there are differences. Mya Mya likes to play sports and enjoy listening to rock and hip-hop music. Unlike Mya Mya, Hla Hla likes reading and play classical music on the piano. In addition, while Mya Mya likes to wear casual clothes, Hla Hla likes to dress up every day.

**IV. The Example of Cause and Effect Text Structure**

**Outstanding Student**

Not all the students in a class are outstanding. <u>**Why?**</u> There are many <u>**causes**</u> to be an outstanding student. First <u>**reason**</u> is the right time to study. A student should study when he is fresh and his head is clear in order to absorb well what he or she is trying to learn. Second, an outstanding student keeps regular hours for studying. Third, he studies for as long as his brain can absorb. This means that one should not study when his brain becomes exhausted. Relaxing is very important. Finally, he studies regularly from the beginning of the school year. All these are <u>**reasons**</u> for being an outstanding student.

**1. Describe the causes of being an outstanding student, with the use of following graphic organizer.**

```
                                      ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                                      │ Cause.1                     │
                                   ┌──│    The right time to study  │
                                      └─────────────────────────────┘
                                      ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                                      │ Cause.2                     │
  ┌──────────────────┐             ┌──│ Regular hours for studying  │
  │ Effect: Being an │◄────────────   └─────────────────────────────┘
  │ outstanding      │◄────────────   ┌─────────────────────────────┐
  │ student          │◄────────────   │ Cause.3                     │
  └──────────────────┘             └──│ Studying for as long as his │
                                      │ brain can absorb            │
                                      └─────────────────────────────┘
                                      ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                                      │ Cause.4                     │
                                      │ studying regularly from the │
                                      │ beginning of the school year│
                                      └─────────────────────────────┘
```
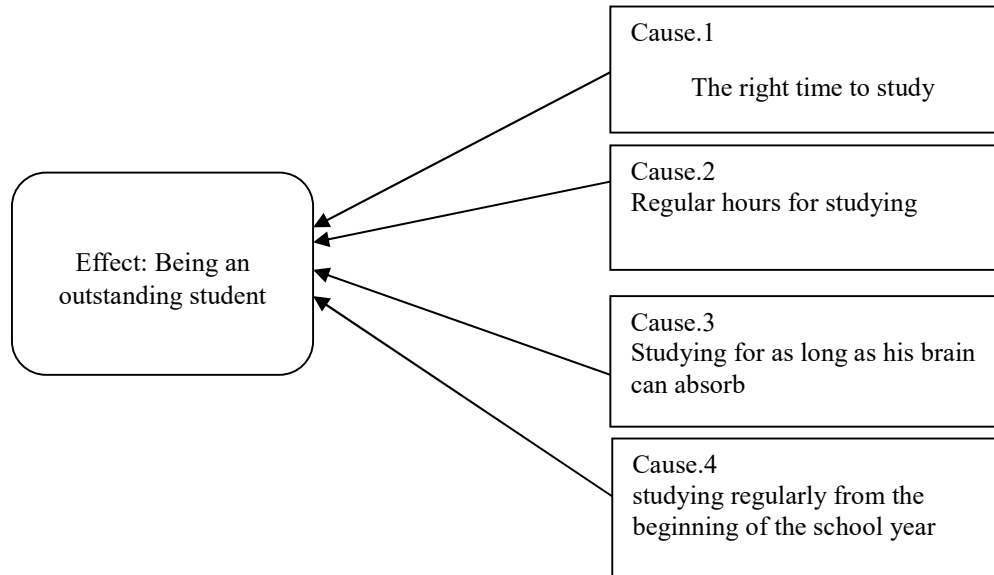
**2. Write a summary of the paragraph mentioned above by using signal words.**

There are many reasons to be an outstanding student. The first reason is that an outstanding student has the right time to study. Second, he keeps
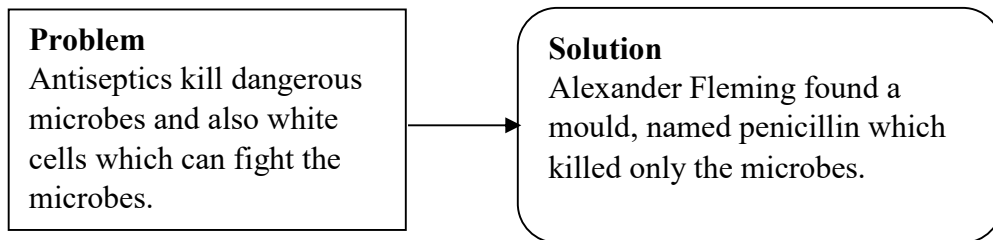
regular hours for studying. Third, he studies for as long as his brain can absorb. Finally, he studies regularly from the beginning of the school year.

**V. The Example of Problem and Solution Text Structure**

**Penicillin**

Bacteria are microbes which attack our body and cause illness. In our body, there are very small red and white cells. The white cells fight the microbes which cause diseases. If the white cells lose the fight, the person becomes seriously ill and may even die. Doctors use antiseptics to kill dangerous microbes. The **problem** is that the antiseptics also killed the white cells. In order to **solve this problem**, Alexander Fleming worked hard to find out something which would kill only the microbes, not the white cells. He found a mould which killed only the microbes. He named this mould penicillin. For his work, he was given the title of "Sir". Penicillin is the **best solution** to kill microbes and to save the countless number of lives all over the world (adapted from, Ministry of Education, 2016).

**1. Describe the problem and solution of the paragraph in the following graphic organizer.**

| **Problem** Antiseptics kill dangerous microbes and also white cells which can fight the microbes. | → | **Solution** Alexander Fleming found a mould, named penicillin which killed only the microbes. |
|---|---|---|

**2. Write a summary of the paragraph mentioned above by using signal words.**

In our body, there are two types of cells: red and white cells. The white cells are very important because they fight the microbes which cause diseases. Doctors use antiseptics to kill microbes. The problem is that the antiseptics also killed the white cells. In order to solve this problem, Alexander Fleming worked hard and found a mould, named penicillin which killed only the microbes. Penicillin is the best solution to kill microbes and to save the countless number of lives all over the world.