First of all, big cities are more dangerous than small towns. Many big cities have a lot of crime so people don’t feel safe, especially at night. On the other hand, small towns have a stronger sense of community because people know each other, so there is less crime. I live in a small town and I know my neighbors. Many of them are my friends so I feel safe when I go out, in the daytime and at night.

Second, life in small towns is less expensive because things such as house rent and car parking are a lot cheaper. In big cities, a one-bedroom apartment costs almost 100,000 (one hundred thousand) yen. And if you have a car, parking can cost 30,000 yen or more. This is not true in small towns because apartments are usually cheaper and parking costs much less. I live in a two-bedroom apartment. The rent is 50,000 yen and the car parking is 3,000 yen a month.

Finally, small towns are usually less stressful. In big cities, people can spend one hour or more going to work on a crowded train. If you drive to work, traffic is often very bad, both in the morning and in the evening. Moreover, there’s a lot of noise and pollution. In other words, big cities can be very stressful. In my town, most people live close to their work and traffic isn’t bad. There is a lot of nature such as parks, forests, and rivers. There is also less pollution and less noise so people have less stress.

In conclusion, small towns are safer, the cost of living is lower, and there is less stress, and that’s why I think life there is better.
2. The Introduction

*I like (living in a small town) more than (in a big city).* There are three reasons: small towns are safer, the cost of living is lower, and there is usually less stress.

The introduction shows the main idea of the entire writing (what the writing is about). This is usually done in the first sentence (the green part). In the example above, the writing is about life in small towns and in big cities. The writer prefers living in small towns more than in big cities and gives three reasons why he thinks so (safety, cost of living, and stress).

Now, imagine that you want to write an essay comparing summer and winter. You prefer summer. First, write your main idea like the one above.

**summer / winter**

I like __________________________. There are three reasons:

3. Next, we need three reasons why summer is better than winter. Unscramble the three sentences below. *I like summer more than winter because...*

1. is bad / the weather / in the winter
   ___________________________________________________________

2. is alive / nature / in the summer
   ___________________________________________________________

3. is / there / daylight / more / (in the summer)
   ___________________________________________________________

Now write the full introduction below:

I like ____________________________________________ ___

______________________, ___________________________ __

________________________ and _______________________________ __
The Body

4. **The body is where the writer explains his ideas.** If I think that summer is better than winter, I have to tell the reader the reasons *why I think so* and this is done in the body of the essay. Often, the body has three paragraphs but this is not always so. The body of an essay can have two, three, four, and even five paragraphs.

The paragraphs usually begin with the words below:

- **First of all,** the first reason
- **Second,** the second reason
- **Finally,** the final reason

**Paragraph 1:** In the small towns vs. big cities essay, the first reason says that big cities are more dangerous than small towns. This is the writer’s opinion. The rest of the paragraph supports this opinion. *At the end of the paragraph, the writer also uses personal experience to support his ideas.*

- **First of all,** big cities are more dangerous than small towns. Many big cities have a lot of crime so people don’t feel safe, especially at night. On the other hand, small towns have a stronger sense of community because people know each other, so there is less crime. I live in a small town and I know my neighbors. Many of them are my friends so I feel safe when I go out, in the daytime and at night.

Notice that this personal experience is expressed by words such as “I” and “my ~”. In contrast, the first part of the paragraph uses more general language such as “big cities”, “people”, “you”, etc.
Look at paragraphs 2 and 3 below. Mark the support sentences with numbers (#1, #2, #3, etc. above the beginning of each support) and underline the writer’s personal experience. Also, circle all the general language.

**Second**, life in small towns is less expensive because things such as house rent and car parking are a lot cheaper. In big cities, a one-bedroom apartment costs almost 100,000 (one hundred thousand) yen. And if you have a car, parking can cost 30,000 yen or more. This is not true in small towns because apartments are usually cheaper and parking costs much less. I live in a two-bedroom apartment. The rent is 50,000 yen and the car parking is 3,000 yen a month.

**Finally**, small towns are usually less stressful. In big cities, people can spend one hour or more going to work on a crowded train. If you drive to work, traffic is usually terrible both in the morning and in the evening. Moreover, there’s a lot of noise and pollution. In other words, big cities can be very stressful. In my town, most people live close to their work and traffic isn’t bad. There is a lot of nature such as parks, forests, and rivers. There is also less pollution and less noise so people have less stress.
5. Do you remember the sentences you unscrambled in ex. 8c? Rewrite them in the blanks below. In the blue boxes, write the phrases from ex. 8d.

1. ________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________

These are going to be the reasons for the three-paragraph essay you are going to write. However, these three sentences are not enough the way they are. They need support as well as your personal experience.

6. Before we start to write our support sentences, we have to look at two very useful words: so / because. They will help you to support your ideas.

Finish the sentences in the charts below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the reason</th>
<th>So what?</th>
<th>the result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ex. A In big cities, there’s a lot of crime</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>people don’t feel safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The weather is bad (in the winter)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Trees are green, beaches are warm, and flowers are very colorful (in the summer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. There is more daylight (in the summer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the result</th>
<th>Why?</th>
<th>the reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ex. B People don’t feel safe in big cities</td>
<td>because</td>
<td>there is a lot of crime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It’s not easy to go to school or work (in the winter)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. People can enjoy nature (in the summer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. People can go out after school or work (in the summer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that “so” comes before the reason while “because” comes after.
A very useful phrase is “such as”. Take a look at the two examples:

1. In small towns, things such as rent and car parking are cheaper than in big cities.

2. I like summer sports such as baseball, soccer, and swimming.

Thus, such as is used to give examples, and can come between the subject and verb like in ex.1 above or after the object of the sentence like in ex.2.

Finish the following sentences. If you need help, see the three boxes at the bottom of this page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traffic problems such as ____________________________ and ____________________________ often occur in the winter.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In the winter, more traffic problems such as ____________________________ occur.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nature such as ____________________________, ____________________________, and ____________________________ is beautiful.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I like nature ____________________________, ____________________________, and ____________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Outdoor activities such as ____________________________, ____________________________, and ____________________________ are fun.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In the summer, people can enjoy outdoor activities ____________________________, ____________________________, and ____________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traffic Problems</th>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Outdoor Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accidents</td>
<td>green trees</td>
<td>taking a walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traffic jams</td>
<td>interesting plants</td>
<td>going on a picnic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>icy roads</td>
<td>colorful flowers</td>
<td>having a barbecue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>closed streets</td>
<td>beautiful lakes</td>
<td>going to the beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>warm beaches</td>
<td>playing baseball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>forests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

526 | Lesson 105
8. Before you start writing your three-paragraph essay in which you think summer is better than winter, answer the following questions. They will help you with writing ideas. When done, pair up and alternate asking and answering with eye contact.

1. Is it difficult for people to ride their bicycles (in the winter)?
2. Is there a lot of snow and ice on the roads?
3. Is it difficult for people to walk in heavy snow?
4. Do our shoes, socks, and clothes get wet (from the snow)?
5. Are there more traffic problems in the winter?
6. Does it take you longer sometimes to go to school (or work)?

7. Do people like nature?
8. Do we feel comfortable when we are close to nature?
9. Can we relax and enjoy life (when we are close to nature)?
10. In the summer, what kind of beautiful nature can we enjoy?
11. In the winter, do a lot of trees, plants, and flowers die?
12. Is it cold outside (in the winter)?
13. Can you enjoy going to the forest, to the beach, or to a lake (in the cold winter)?

14. Do people usually like having more daylight?
15. What outdoor activities can we enjoy?
16. In the winter, what time does it get dark?
17. Do you like doing outdoor activities when it’s dark and cold outside?
18. Do you usually just go home after school or work (in the winter)?
Finally, let’s look at the conclusion. **The conclusion is almost the same as the introduction.** Look at the introduction and conclusion of the small towns vs. big cities essay.

I like living in a small town more than in a big city. There are three reasons: **small towns are safer, the cost of living is lower, and there is usually less stress.**

**In conclusion, small towns are safer, the cost of living is lower, and there is usually less stress and that’s why I (think) life there is better.**

The blue part “...and that’s why I (think)…” is how the writer can summarize his opinions.

Rewrite the introduction about summer and winter that you wrote in ex. 8c.

I like ____________________________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

and ____________________________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

Next, write the conclusion below. Give your three main points which you unscrambled in ex. 8c and then summarize your opinions (like in the blue part above). When done, pair up with a partner. One of you will read the introduction, the other the conclusion. Listen to each other. Did you write the same thing?

The last thing to do now is for you to write the entire three-paragraph essay about summer and winter on a separate piece of paper. Make sure to use words and phrases like “**First of all,**” / “**so**” / “**because**” / “**such as**”. Ganbatte!
10a. Using one of the topics below (or using your own original topic), write a three paragraph essay like the ‘big cities vs. small towns’ or ‘summer vs. winter’ essay.

1. baseball vs. soccer
2. wearing school uniforms vs. not wearing school uniforms
3. playing the piano vs. playing the guitar
4. having a cat vs. having a dog
5. e-mailing vs. calling
6. getting married vs. staying single
7. going to university after high school vs. getting a job after high school
8. living in Hokkaido vs. living in Kyushu
9. AKB48 vs. EXILE
10. ______________________

10b. Once you’ve decided the topic, you have to think about main and supporting ideas. In the advice lesson in ATLANTIS Higher Learning 1, you were introduced to a word map. This is a very good way to think of ideas and how to connect them. The topic is in the center, and there are three or four main ideas, each with its own supporting ideas. These ideas can be introduced, supported, and connected with words such as ‘first of all’, ‘second’, ‘finally’, ‘in conclusion’, ‘however’, ‘moreover’, ‘therefore’ and ‘such as’. Also remember that when you write a word map, you shouldn’t write full sentences, just key words. Look at the word map below about summer vs. winter.

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e: エッセーの記述 / writing an essay