Feedback Tutorial Letter

English in Practice
EPR511S

Assignment number 1
Dear Student  

This course aims to enhance the learning of advanced grammar aspects to improve the language usage skills necessary to communicate effectively and accurately in writing. Dear student, *engage* with emerging technologies to improve online reading and discussion. If you do not have access to a computer and reliable internet connection, make use of the facilities at the Regional Centres. Furthermore, we need to encourage you to also develop the required critical thinking skills to enhance life-long learning. Use the supplementary material to answer the critical reading questions. 

Upon completion of this assignment, you were expected to be able to:  

- apply reading techniques such as skimming, scanning, close reading, and inferences. To respond to detailed questions in section A.  
- *demonstrate* the correct use of advanced grammar aspects such as verb tenses, gerunds and infinitives, and active and passive voice as required in section B.  
- integrate new vocabulary found in the course resources, specifically in academic texts as required in section A.  
- *apply* critical reading and thinking skills through academic texts and infer meaning from and analyse texts to answer questions in section C.  
- apply essay writing skills and strategies to write focused, lucid, and cohesive opinion essay in section D.  

*We hope the completion of assignment one was an enjoyable learning curve for you.*

**Course Name:** ENGLISH IN PRACTICE  

**Course Code:** EPR511S  

**Department:** EDUCATION AND LANGUAGES  

**Course Duration:** ONE SEMESTER  

**NQF Level and Credit:** 5, 12  

**Pre-requisite:** Principles of Language.  

**Prescribed Textbook(s):** COLL EPR study guide and the supplementary material.  

**Recommended Material:** A good dictionary  

**Moodle Enrollment Key:** Enter the Moodle Enrollment Key here  

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SECTION A: READING COMPREHENSION
Read the passage below and then answer all the questions that follow.

Does cannabis cure cancer? We asked an expert  

[30 marks]

David Robert Grimes, Queen’s University Belfast

1. For thousands of years people have used cannabis for recreational, ritualistic, and medicinal purposes. In the modern era, the latter property excites a lot of people, and there is no shortage of wild claims about the supposed medical benefits of the plant. Of all the claims, perhaps the boldest is the assertion that cannabis can cure cancer.

2. Astounding testimonials about cannabis and its derived products shrinking tumours or curing terminal cases are easy to find on the internet. But alluring as these stories are, they tend to be based on misunderstanding, wishful thinking or outright falsehood.

3. Let’s start by asking what the medical efficacy might be. Contrary to what most people believe, medical uses of cannabis have been widely studied. A 2017 review by the National Academy of Science looked at over 10,000 studies. They found evidence for some applications of cannabis, including managing chronic pain and spasms associated with multiple sclerosis. There was also good evidence that tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main psychoactive ingredient in cannabis, can reduce the nausea caused by chemotherapy. Indeed, a synthetic form of THC, called dronabinol, has been prescribed for just this uses for decades.

4. Nonetheless crucially, there is zero evidence that cannabis has any curative or even helpful impact on cancer, despite enthusiastic claims to the contrary.

5. Why then is there such a gulf between public perception and scientific evidence? Part of this is misunderstanding. For example, an often-aired claim is that high-dose THC kills cancer cells in a petri dish. This is true, but not very meaningful.

6. Killing cells in a dish is extremely easy; you can do so with anything from heat to bleach. But effective anti-cancer agents must be able to selectively kill cancer cells in the human body while sparing healthy ones. The reality is that cannabis simply cannot do this.

7. Other cannabis advocates are driven by ideological fixation, most often expressed in a sentiment that cannabis is “natural” and implicitly better than pharmacological drugs. But this is a classic example of an “appeal to nature” argument, and thus rather dubious.

8. The term “natural” is somewhat vague. If we define natural to mean that which occurs without human intervention, the argument still doesn’t hold. Arsenic, plutonium, and cyanide are also natural, yet it would be a poor strategy to binge on these substances. The active compounds of many drugs are themselves discovered in plants, synthesised to control the dose, and maximise efficacy. We already have THC-derived medicines, but these do not cure cancer, and neither does cannabis. Sadly, some cannabis advocates go further, claiming that cannabis’s cancer-curing abilities are covered up by drug companies. This is abject nonsense. Such a conspiracy would be massive and would rapidly collapse.

9. Given that around half of us will be affected by cancer in our lifetime, a cure would be not only be hugely profitable, even though the patent laws for “natural” products are complicated, it would also garner its discoverer infinite gratitude, financial rewards, and scientific honours. The idea that researchers would be callous enough to suppress a cancer cure, and the rewards that would go with it, is ludicrous.
The reality is that cancer is a complex family of disease, and it is unlikely that there will ever be a single cure. Cannabis may be useful for treating some people’s nausea when undergoing chemotherapy, but we can say with confidence that the idea that it cures cancer is a myth.

Read the text again and answer the following questions: [30 marks]

1. Who is the author of the text? (2)
   David Robert Grimes

2. According to the text, define cancer? (2)
   cancer is a complex family of disease

3. Provide reasons for the use of cannabis? (3)
   people have used cannabis for recreational, ritualistic, and medicinal purposes

4. What are the alluring issues around testimonials about cannabis? (3)
   Testimonials tend to be based on misunderstanding, wishful thinking and outright false.

5. Explain what author suggests in the third paragraph? (2)
   using cannabis can be helpful for some medical conditions.

6. Present authors view about cannabis killing cells in a petri dish. (3)
   Killing cells in a dish is extremely easy; you can do so with anything from heat to bleach. But effective anti-cancer agents must be able to selectively kill cancer cells in the human body while sparing healthy ones.

7. According to the author what evidence is there on cannabis curing cancer? (1)
   There is zero evidence

8. According to paragraph 8, what do some cannabis advocates about cannabis and companies? (2)
   They (cannabis advocates) think that pharmaceutical companies want to hide the cancer-curing properties of cannabis.

9. Complete the statement with one option below: On contrary to cannabis advocates, the author strongly believes that researchers...
   (2)
   a. would never hide a cure for cancer.
   b. would only hide a cure for cancer if that could give them lots of money and fame.
   c. it's impossible to patent "natural" remedies.
   d. we will never be able to find how to cure for cancer.

10. Which word (noun) in paragraph 1 means 'lack of something'? (2)
    shortage

11. Question 9 Vocabulary
    Choose the synonyms for the following words as used in the passage: (8)
    a) Callous (paragraph 9): heartless, cruel, uncaring, insensitive, unfeeling, cold-hearted
    b) Alluring (paragraph 2): fascinating, interesting, appealing, attractive, tempting
    c) Ludicrous (paragraph 9): absurd, nonsensical, ridiculous, comical, silly
    d) Astounding (paragraph 2): amazing, shocking, surprising, astonishing

Tutors’ comments

Section A: Most students did very well in this section. Only a few who failed to respond to this section. This was because students attempt to answer questions without reading the text thoroughly and understand it. In addition, they answer the comprehension questions before understanding which reading skill the question requires. The application of these skills is still a problem with many students. Vocabulary was poorly attended too. Students, please make reading a habit. Through reading a lot, vocabulary improves and so does the writing of essays.
SECTION B: GRAMMAR [20]

Question 1: Verb Tenses [2x4=8 marks]
Write the following sentence in the following tenses:

1.1. Sentence: If we define natural to mean that which occurs without human intervention, the argument still doesn’t hold.

1.2. Simple Past tense: If we defined natural to mean that which occurred without human intervention, the argument did not hold.

1.3. Future Continuous tense: If we will define natural to mean that which will occur without human intervention, the argument will not hold.

1.4. Present Perfect tense: If we have defined natural to mean that which have occurred without human intervention, the argument has not held.

1.5. Past Perfect tense: If we had defined natural to mean that which had occurred without human intervention, the argument had not held.

Question 2: Gerunds and infinitives
Write the following statement using a gerund or infinitive to complete it: [4]

a) For thousands of years people have been using cannabis for recreational, ritualistic, and medicinal purposes.

b) The active compounds of many drugs are themselves discovered in plants, synthesised to control the dose, and maximise efficacy.

c) Cannabis may be useful for treating some people’s nausea when undergoing chemotherapy, but we can say with confidence that the idea that it cures cancer is a myth.

d) But alluring as these stories are, they tend to be based on misunderstanding, wishful thinking or outright falsehood.

Question 3: Identify the voice of the sentence below and thereafter, write it into the opposite form. Where there are no subjects, create one. [8]

A. Pharmaceutical companies want to hide the cancer-curing properties of cannabis. Active voice: The cancer-curing properties of cannabis are to be hidden by pharmaceutical companies

B. Using cannabis can be helpful for some medical conditions. Active voice: For some medical conditions, using cannabis can be helpful.

C. Cannabis property excites a lot of people in the modern era. Active voice: A lot of people are excited by cannabis property in the modern era/ A lot of people in the modern era are excited by cannabis property.

D. When undergoing chemotherapy cannabis may be useful for treating some people’s nausea. Active voice: For treating some people’s nausea when undergoing chemotherapy, cannabis may be useful.
Tutors’ comments

Section B: Grammar needs a lot of attention. Most students have no clear understanding of the use of verb tenses. This is a serious concern as it is evident in their writing of the essay. The incorrect use of verb tenses impedes meaning of a sentence. The use of active and passive voice is another serious challenge for students. Most students were not able to identify the voice of a sentence. To change the sentence to the other voice. More reading on the two voices is needed. Students need to understand that the active voice focus on the subject while the passive voice is on the object of the sentence. In addition, they should know that the tense does not change. The difference between gerunds and infinitives still needs attention. We recommend a lot of reading in preparation for the comprehensive assessment. As well as the application of these skills in their daily interactions.

Section C: Critical reading

Read the text about food and the environment and for questions 1 to 10, choose the correct answer. [2x10=20]

Food miles: Is buying local food always better?

Recently, campaigners have encouraged us to buy local food. This reduces ‘food miles’, that is, the distance food travels to get from the producer to the retailer. They reason that the higher the food miles, the more carbon emissions. Buying local food, therefore, has a lower carbon footprint and is more environmentally friendly.

However, the real story is not as simple as that. If our aim is to reduce carbon emissions, we must look at the whole farming process, not just transportation. According to a 2008 study, only 11% of carbon emissions in the food production process result from transportation, and only 4% originated from the final delivery of the product from the producer to the retailer. Other processes, including fertilisation, storage, heating and irrigation, contribute much more.

In fact, imported food often has a lower carbon footprint than locally grown food. Take apples, for example. In autumn, when apples are harvested, the best option for a British resident is to buy British apples. However, the apples we buy in winter or spring have been kept refrigerated for months, and this uses up a lot of energy. In spring, therefore, it is more energy-efficient to import them from New Zealand, where they are in season. Heating also uses a lot of energy, which is why growing tomatoes in heated greenhouses in the UK is less environmentally friendly than importing them from Spain, where the crop grows well in the local climate.

We must also take into account the type of transport. Transporting food by air creates about 50 times more emissions than shipping it. However, only a small proportion of goods are flown to the consumer country, and these are usually high value, perishable items which we cannot produce locally, such as seafood and out-of-season berries. Even then, these foods may not have a higher carbon footprint than locally grown food. For example, beans flown in from Kenya are grown in sunny fields using manual labour and natural fertilisers, unlike in Britain, where we use oil-based fertilisers and diesel machinery. Therefore, the total carbon footprint is still lower.

It’s also worth remembering that a product’s journey does not end at the supermarket. The distance consumers travel to buy their food, and the kind of transport they use will also add to its carbon footprint. So, driving a long way to shop for food will negate any environmental benefits of buying locally grown produce. Furthermore, choosing local over imported food can also badly affect people in developing
countries. Many of them work in agriculture because they have no other choice. If they are unable to sell produce overseas, they will have less income to buy food, clothes, medicine and to educate their children.

Recently, some supermarkets have been trying to raise awareness of food miles by labelling foods with stickers that show it has been imported by air. But ultimately, the message this gives is too simple. Lots of different factors contribute to a food's carbon footprint besides the distance it has travelled. And even if we only buy local food which is currently in season, there are ethical implications. What’s more, our diets would be more limited.

1. What is the main idea of the text?
   a. The importance of buying locally produced food.
   b. The reasons why food miles campaigns are too simple.
   c. The advantages of importing food from overseas.
   d. The problems caused by transporting food.

2. According to a study in the USA, 11% is ...
   a. the percentage of food that is produced and sold locally.
   b. the percentage of energy in food production used to transport food from producer to retailer.
   c. the percentage of energy in food production used for any kind of transport.
   d. the percentage of food which is imported from overseas.

3. Seafood is given as an example of food which...
   a. is transported by air unnecessarily.
   b. is expensive and goes bad quickly.
   c. people in poor countries rely on for income.
   d. is usually transported by ship.

4. According to the text, how are Spanish tomatoes and Kenyan beans similar?
   a. They are both transported by air.
   b. They are both grown using natural fertilizer.
   c. They are both grown outdoors.
   d. They both have high carbon footprints.

5. Which of these does the writer NOT support?
   a. Supporting farmers in poor countries.
   b. Importing apples to Britain from New Zealand in spring.
   c. Buying beans imported by air from Kenya.
   d. Making a long journey to buy food produced locally.

6. The writer thinks that labelling food which has been transported by air...
   a. will raise environmental awareness.
b. helps people to shop more ethically.

c. does not tell a full, accurate story.

d. gives false information about the product.

7. What is the implication of buying local food which is currently in season?

a. our diets would be more limited

b. There are ethical implications

c. There are health implications

d. a balanced diet

8. According to the author, choosing local over imported food can also badly affect people in developing countries.

a. Many of them work in agriculture because they have no other choice. If they are unable to sell produce overseas, they will have less income to buy food, clothes, medicine and to educate their children.

b. If they are unable to sell produce overseas, they will have less income to buy food, clothes, medicine and to educate their children.

c. Many of them work in agriculture because they have no other choice

d. they will have less income

9. According to a 2008 study in the USA, 4% is ...

a. the percentage of food that is produced and sold locally.

b. The percentage from the final delivery of the product from the producer to the retailer.

c. the percentage of energy in food production used for any kind of transport.

d. the percentage of other processes, including fertilisation, storage, heating and irrigation, contribute much more.

10. A product’s journey does not end at the supermarket and thus add to its footprint because...

a. They both have high carbon footprints

b. they percentage of energy in food.

c. they will have less income

d. the distance consumers travel to buy their food, and the kind of transport they use will also add to its carbon footprint

Tutors’ comments.

**Section C:** This was one of the most well responded sections. The only challenge was with those students who failed to use letters instead of writing out the answer. NB! Students should pay attention to instructions by sticking to the selection of a letter not writing out the answer. More reading on critical reading strategies is highly recommended. A reader is provided with practical activities that will assist in the enhancement of your understanding of these skills. Reading is highly recommended.
Section D: In not more than 350 words, write opinion essay on one of the topics below: [30 marks]

**Tutors’ comments**

Section D: This is the worst responded section of the whole assignment. First, students should note that plagiarism is a serious offense. Second, students should know that writing is a process not a product. Thus, they should go through the writing stages before submitting the essay. Third, grammar needs extra effort from most students. There was a lot of wrong use of subject-verb agreement, tense and spelling of words. Other technicality was on the use of run-on sentences, poor spacing of words within sentences and lack of thesis statement in the introduction. In the body paragraphs students failed to present clear topic sentence, support sentences and a concluding sentence. Last, students should avoid long sentences, poor use of punctuation marks and making sure that each paragraph has three elements. Remember to stick to the word limit.

- All in all, it was a well attempted assignment. We hope students will reflect on all comments and act upon them in the second assignment. Students should make time to read the units in the e-guide and complete activities to acquire the necessary skills in the successful completion of EPR511S.

**Good luck with assignment 2!**