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Using Examples to Support a General Statement

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Many essays begin with a **THESIS**, the writer's main idea or argument. The rest of the essay consists of **supporting points** - i.e. examples or evidence that prove the thesis is true. For example:

THESIS

Japan is a fascinating country.

Supporting Point 1

Its natural beauty is outstanding.

Supporting Point 2

There are many opportunities for adventure sports and other outdoor activities.

Supporting Point 3

Japanese culture is rich and varied.

• TASK ONE

Look at the following thesis:

Communications have improved enormously in the past century.

Only four of the points below can be used to support this thesis. Tick them.

- A network of telephone cables on land and under the sea makes it possible for people almost anywhere on earth to communicate with each other.
- Inter-continental air travel is fast and relatively cheap.
- Telephone answering machines are very useful if people call you when you are out.
- The Internet allows us to obtain information, send documents or hold "real time" conversations with people thousands of kilometres away.
- In 1903, Henry Ford started production of the Model A car.
- Communications satellites transmit television news "live" to all corners of

the earth.

- Whales communicate with each other by means of ultrasound.

• TASK TWO

When we have more than one supporting point, it is normal to use a linking word/phrase to introduce each new point. The following are often used:

- For example, ...
- For instance, ...
- In particular, ...
- Also, ...
- ... also ...
- In addition, ...
- Furthermore, ...
- Similarly, ...

Select a suitable thesis from the list of notes below. Use the notes to write a full sentence. Do the same for the other notes (the supporting points) and arrange these into a suitable order. Finally, copy them all out as a paragraph and use appropriate linking words/phrases.

- a. do research ... on the Internet ... in CD-ROM encyclopedias
- b. students ... word-process their assignments ...
- c. computers ... important ... modern education ...
- d. teachers ... create worksheets ... copy articles from the Internet ...
- e. administrators, teachers & students ... present information ... as spreadsheets/graphs

• TASK THREE

With a partner, choose one of the following thesis statements and write a list of three or four supporting points. (If there is enough time, do the same for another statement.)

- Handphones are extremely useful.
- Handphones are irritating.
- MSN Messenger and Internet "chat" rooms can be dangerous.
- Computers are time-wasting, not time-saving.
- Technology has improved our lives.
- Reading a printed book is more enjoyable and convenient than reading

an "e-book".

- Many computer games glamorize violence.

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