**Writing Tasks.**

**Task1.**

Read the following professional essay. Then answer the questions and read the comments that

follow.

**Born to Be Different?**

**by Camille Lewis**

**1** Some years ago, when my children were very young, I cut a cartoon out of a magazine and taped it to my refrigerator. It showed a young couple welcoming friends over for Christmas. The hosts rather proudly announce that instead of dolls, they have given their little daughter her own set of tools. And sure enough, the second panel shows their little girl playing in her room, a wrench in one hand and a hammer in the other. But she's making the wrench say, “Would you like to go to the prom, Barbie?” and the hammer answer, “Oh, Ken! I'd love to!”

**2** Oh my, did that cartoon strike a chord. I grew up with *Ms.* magazine and the National

Organization of Women and a firm belief that gender differences were *learned,* not inborn.

Other parents may have believed that pink and baby dolls and kindergarten teaching were for girls, and blue and trucks and engineering were for boys, but by golly, *my* kids were going to be different. They were going to be raised free of all that harmful gender indoctrination. They were just going to be *people.*

**3** I don't remember exactly when I began to suspect I was wrong. Maybe it was when my three-year-old son, raised in a “no weapons” household, bit his toast into a gun shape and tried to shoot the cat. Maybe it was when his younger brother nearly levitated out of his car seat, joyously crowing “backhoe!” upon spotting his first piece of earth-moving equipment. Maybe it was when my little daughter first lined up her stuffed animals and began teaching them their ABC's and bandaging their boo-boos.

**4** It wasn't that my sons couldn't be sweet and sensitive, or that my daughter wasn't sometimes rowdy and boisterous. But I had to rethink my earlier assumptions. Despite my best efforts not to impose gender-specific expectations on them, my boys and my girl were, well, different. *Really* different.

**5** Slowly and hesitantly, medical and psychological researchers have begun confirming my observations. The notion that the differences between the sexes (beyond the obvious anatomical ones) are biologically based is fraught1 with controversy. Such beliefs can easily be misinterpreted and used as the basis for harmful, oppressive stereotypes. They can be overstated and exaggerated into blanket statements about what men and women “can” and “can't” do; about what the genders are “good” and “bad” at. And yet, the unavoidable fact is that studies are making it ever clearer that, as groups, men and women differ in almost every measurable aspect. Learning about those differences helps us understand why men and women are simultaneously so attracted and fascinated, and yet so frequently stymied and frustrated, by the opposite sex. To dig into what it really means to be masculine and feminine helps to depersonalize our responses to one another's behavior—to avoid the “*My* perceptions and behaviors are normal; *yours* don't make sense” trap. Our differences are deep-rooted, hard-wired, and present from the moment of conception.

**6** To begin with, let's look at something as basic as the anatomy of the brain. Typically, men have larger skulls and brains than women. But the sexes score equally well on intelligence tests. This apparent contradiction is explained by the fact that our brains are apportioned differently. Women have about 15 percent more “gray matter” than men. Gray matter, made up of nerve cells and the branches that connect them, allows the quick transference of thought from one part of the brain to another. This high concentration of gray matter helps explain women's ability to look at many sides of an argument at once, and to do several tasks (or hold several conversations) simultaneously.

**7** Men's brains, on the other hand, have a more generous portion of “white matter.” White matter, which is made up of neurons, actually inhibits the spread of information. It allows men to concentrate very narrowly on a specific task, without being distracted by thoughts that might conflict with the job at hand. In addition, men's larger skulls contain more cerebrospinal fluid, which cushions the brain. Scientists theorize that this reflects men's history of engaging in warfare and rough sports, activities which bring with them a high likelihood of having one's head banged about.

**8** Our brains’ very different makeup leads to our very different methods of interacting with the world around us. Simon Baron-Cohen, author of *The Essential Difference: Men, Women and* *the Extreme Male Brain,* has labeled the classic female mental process as “empathizing.” He defines empathizing as “the drive to identify another person's emotions and thoughts, and to respond to these with an appropriate emotion.” Empathizers are constantly measuring and responding to the surrounding emotional temperature. They are concerned about showing sensitivity to the people around them. This empathetic quality can be observed in virtually all aspects of women's lives: from the choice of typically female-dominated careers (nursing, elementary school teaching, social work) to reading matter popular mainly with women (romantic fiction, articles about relationships, advice columns about how people can get along better) to women's interaction with one another (which typically involves intimate discussion of relationships with friends and family, and sympathy for each other’s concerns). So powerful is the empathizing mindset that it even affects how the typical female memory works. Ask a woman when a particular event happened, and she often pinpoints it in terms of an occurrence that had emotional content: “That was the summer my sister broke her leg,” or “That was around the time Gene and Mary got into such an awful argument.” Likewise, she is likely to bring her empathetic mind to bear on geography. She'll remember a particular address not as 11th and Market Streets but being “near the restaurant where we went on our anniversary,” or “around the corner from Liz's old apartment.”

**9** In contrast, Baron-Cohen calls the typical male mindset “systemizing,” which he defines as “the drive to analyze and explore a system, to extract underlying rules that govern the behavior of a system.” A systemizer is less interested in how people feel than in how things work. Again, the systematic brain influences virtually all aspects of the typical man's life. Male-dominated professions (such as engineering, computer programming, auto repair, and mathematics) rely heavily on systems, formulas, and patterns, and very little on the ability to intuit another person's thoughts or emotions. Reading material most popular with men includes science fiction and history, as well as factual “how-to” magazines on such topics as computers, photography, home repair, and woodworking. When they get together with male friends, men are far less likely to engage in intimate conversation than they are to share an activity: watching or playing sports, working on a car, bowling, golfing, or fishing. Men's conversation is peppered with dates and addresses, illustrating their comfort with systems:

“Back in 1996 when I was living in Boston . . .” or “The best way to the new stadium is to go all the way out Walnut Street to 33rd and then get on the by pass. . . .”

**10** One final way that men and women differ is in their typical responses to problem-solving. Ironically, it may be this very activity—intended on both sides to eliminate problems—that creates the most conflict between partners of the opposite sex. To a woman, the *process* of solving a problem is all-important. Talking about a problem is a means of deepening the intimacy between her and her partner. The very anatomy of her brain, as well as her accompanying empathetic mindset, makes her want to consider all sides of a question and to explore various possible solutions. To have a partner who is willing to explore a problem with her is deeply satisfying. She interprets that willingness as an expression of the other's love and concern.

**11** But men have an almost completely opposite approach when it comes to dealing with a problem. Everything in their mental makeup tells them to focus narrowly on the issue, solve it, and get it out of the way. The ability to fix a problem quickly and efficiently is, to them, a demonstration of their power and competence. When a man hears his female partner begin to describe a problem, his strongest impulse is to listen briefly and then tell her what to do about it. From his perspective, he has made a helpful and loving gesture; from hers, he's short-circuited a conversation that could have deepened and strengthened their relationship.

**12** The challenge that confronts men and women is to put aside ideas of “better” and “worse” when it comes to their many differences. Our diverse brain development, our ways of interacting with the world, and our modes of dealing with problems all have their strong points. In some circumstances, a typically feminine approach may be more effective; in others, a classically masculine mode may have the advantage. Our differences aren't going to disappear: my daughter, now a middle-schooler, regularly tells me she loves me, while her teenage brothers express their affection by grabbing me in a headlock. Learning to understand and appreciate one another's gender-specific qualities is the key to more rich and rewarding lives together.

**Questions.**

About Unity

1. Which of the following statements best represents the implied thesis of “Born to Be

Different”?

1. Although the author believed that gender differences were learned rather than inborn, experience with her own children convinced her otherwise.
2. Researchers have classified the typical female mental process as “empathizing” and the typical male process as “systemizing.”
3. Many of the differences in the ways men and women think and behave may be due to their biological makeup.
4. In order to live together happily, men and women need to appreciate and understand their gender-based differences.
5. Which statement would best serve as a topic sentence for paragraphs 6 and 7?
6. Because of their different construction, men's and women's brains function differently.
7. Women are skilled at doing several tasks or holding several conversations simultaneously.
8. Although men's brains are larger than women's, men and women score equally on tests of intelligence.
9. Men's brains have a larger allocation of white matter, which contributes to the ability to focus narrowly on a particular task.
10. What statement below would best serve as the topic sentence of paragraph 11?
11. Men solve problems quickly to demonstrate power and competence.
12. Men's approach to solving problems usually involves giving instructions.
13. Men's gestures of love are often unhelpful to women.
14. Men's approach to problem solving is the opposite of women's.

About Support

1. Paragraph 8 states that the “empathizing” mindset “can be observed in virtually all aspects of women's lives.” What evidence does Lewis provide to support that claim?
2. According to the author, what are the three major differences between men and women?

About Coherence

1. Has the author presented her evidence one side at a time or point by point? Explain your answer.
2. As shown by the outline below, the organization of “Born to Be Different?” resembles the traditional one-three-one essay model. Fill in the missing paragraph numbers.

* Introduction : Paragraphs (……)
* Supporting Point1 : Paragraph(s) (……)
* Supporting Point 2 : Paragraph(s) (……)
* Supporting Point 3 : Paragraph(s) (……)
* Conclusion : Paragraph (……)

1. What are the three contrast signals used to introduce the main supporting paragraphs in the essay? Where do they occur? *(Write the paragraph number after the signal.)*

About the Introduction and Conclusion

1. What method best describes the introductory paragraph to the essay?
2. Broad, general statement narrowing to a thesis
3. Questions
4. Idea that is the opposite of the one to be developed
5. Anecdote
6. With which common method of conclusion does the essay end?
7. A summary and final thought
8. Questions that prompt the reader to think further about what's been written
9. A prediction

**Note:**

Wording of answers may vary.

**Writing Assignment.**

Write an essay of comparison or contrast on one of these topics:

* Two teachers you've had
* Two jobs you'd held
* Two bosses you've worked for
* Two restaurants you've eaten in
* Two parenting styles you've observed
* Two friends you've had
* Two pets you've had or seen
* Two sports you're acquainted with
* Two singers or bands you've heard
* Two dates you've been on
* Two places you've lived

**Task2.**

Read these essays (student essays) then underline the thesis statement, specific examples, and transitions in each essay before answering the questions.

**The Joys of an Old Car**

**1** Some of my friends can't believe that my car still runs. Others laugh when they see it parked outside the house and ask if it's an antique. But they aren't being fair to my twenty-year- old Toyota Corolla. In fact, my “antique” has opened my eyes to the rewards of owning an old car.

**2** One obvious reward of owning my old Toyota is economy. Twenty years ago, when my husband and I were newly married and nearly broke, we bought the car—a shiny red year-old leftover—for a mere $4,200. Today it would cost four times as much. We save money on insurance, since it's no longer worthwhile for us to have collision coverage. Old age has even been kind to the Toyota's engine, which has required only three major repairs in the last several years. And it still delivers twenty-eight miles per gallon in the city and forty-one on the highway—not bad for a senior citizen.

**3** I've heard that when a Toyota passes the twenty-thousand-mile mark with no problems, it will probably go on forever. I wouldn't disagree. Our Toyota breezed past that mark many years ago. Since then, I've been able to count on it to sputter to life and make its way down the driveway on the coldest, snowiest mornings. When my boss got stuck with his brand-new BMW in the worst snowstorm of the year, I sauntered into work on time. The single time my Toyota didn't start, unfortunately, was the day I had a final exam. The Toyota may have the body of an old car, but beneath its elderly hood hums the engine of a teenager.

**4** Last of all, having the same car for many years offers the advantage of familiarity.

When I open the door and slide into the driver's seat, the soft vinyl surrounds me like a well-worn glove. I know to the millimeter exactly how much room I have when I turn a corner or back into a curbside parking space. When my gas gauge points to “empty,” I know that 1.3 gallons are still in reserve, and I can plan accordingly. The front wheels invariably begin to shake when I go more than fifty-five miles an hour, reminding me that I am exceeding the speed limit. With the Toyota, the only surprises I face come from other drivers.

**5** I prize my twenty-year-old Toyota's economy and dependability, and most of all, its familiarity. It is faded, predictable, and comfortable, like a well-worn pair of jeans. And, like a well-worn pair of jeans, it will be difficult to throw away.

**Stresses of Being a Celebrity**

**1** A woman signing herself “Wants the Truth in Westport” wrote to Ann Landers with a question she just had to have answered. “Please find out for sure,” she begged the columnist, “whether or not Oprah Winfrey has had a face-lift.” Fortunately for Ms. Winfrey's privacy, Ann Landers refused to answer the question. But the incident was disturbing. How awful it would be to be a celebrity, always in the public eye. Celebrities lead very stressful lives, for no matter how glamorous or powerful they are, they have too little privacy, too much pressure, and no safety.

**2** For one thing, celebrities don't have the privacy an ordinary person has. The most personal details of their lives are splashed all over the front pages of US Weekly and the

Globe so that bored supermarket shoppers can read about “Leonardo DiCaprio's Awful Secret” or “The Heartbreak behind Jessica Simpson's Smile.” Even a celebrity's family is hauled into the spotlight. A teenage son's arrest for pot possession or a wife's drinking problem becomes the subject of glaring headlines. Photographers hound celebrities at their homes, in restaurants, and on the street, hoping to get a picture of Halle Berry in curlers or Vince Vaughn guzzling a beer. When celebrities try to do the things that normal people do, like eat out or attend a football game, they run the risk of being interrupted by thoughtless autograph hounds or mobbed by aggressive fans.

**3** In addition to the loss of privacy, celebrities must cope with the constant pressure of having to look great and act right. Their physical appearance is always under observation. Famous women, especially, suffer from the spotlight, drawing remarks like “She really looks old” or “Boy, has she put on weight.” Unflattering pictures of celebrities are photographers’ prizes to be sold to the highest bidder; this increases the pressure on celebrities to look good at all times. Famous people are also under pressure to act calm and collected under any circumstances. Because they are constantly observed, they have no freedom to blow off steam or to do something just a little crazy.

**4** Most important, celebrities must deal with the stress of being in constant danger. The friendly grabs, hugs, and kisses of enthusiastic fans can quickly turn into uncontrolled assaults on a celebrity's hair, clothes, and car. Most people agree that photographers bear some responsibility for the death of one of the leading celebrities of the 1990s—Princess Diana. Whether or not their pursuit caused the crash that took her life, it's clear she was chased as aggressively as any escaped convict by bloodhounds. And celebrity can even lead to deliberately lethal attacks. The attempt to kill Ronald Reagan and the murder of John Lennon came about because two unbalanced people became obsessed with these world famous figures. Famous people must live with the fact that they are always fair game—and never out of season.

**5** Some people dream of starring roles, their name in lights, and their picture on the cover of People magazine. But the cost is far too high. A famous person gives up private life, feels pressured to look and act certain ways all the time, and is never completely safe. An ordinary, calm life is far safer and saner than a life of fame.

**Questions.**

**About Unity**

1. Which supporting paragraph in “The Joys of an Old Car” lacks a topic sentence?
2. 2
3. 3
4. 4
5. Which sentence in paragraph 3 of “The Joys of an Old Car” should be omitted in the interest of paragraph unity? *(Write the opening words.)*
6. Rewrite the thesis statement of “The Joys of an Old Car” to include a plan of development.

**About Support**

1. In paragraph 4 of “Stresses of Being a Celebrity,” the author supports the idea that “celebrities must deal with the stress of being in constant danger” with *(circle the letters of the two answers that apply)*
2. statistics.
3. an explanation.
4. a quotation by an expert.
5. examples.
6. After which sentence in paragraph 3 of “Stresses of Being a Celebrity” are more specific details needed? *(Write the opening words.)*
7. In “The Joys of an Old Car,” how many examples are given to support the topic sentence “One obvious reward … is economy”?
8. Two
9. Three
10. Four
11. five

**About Coherence**

1. Which topic sentence in “Stresses of Being a Celebrity” functions as a linking sentence between paragraphs? *(Write the opening words.)*
2. Paragraph 3 of “Stresses of Being a Celebrity” includes two main transition words or phrases. List those words or phrases.
3. What are the two transition words or phrases in “The Joys of an Old Car” that signal two major points of support for the thesis?

**About the Introduction and Conclusion**

1. Which method is used in the conclusion of “The Joys of an Old Car”?
2. Summary and final thought
3. Thought-provoking question
4. Recommendation

**Writing Assignment.**

On a piece of paper, provide brief causes *or* effects for at least four of the ten statements below. The first is done for you as an example. Make sure that you have three *separate* and *distinct* items for each statement—don't provide two rewordings that say essentially the same thing. Also, indicate whether the items you have listed are causes or effects.

When you have finished your four scratch outlines, decide which of them would provide the best basis for a cause-and-effect essay that you will write.

1. Many youngsters are terrified of school.

Causes: **Note:** Answers will vary.

* 1. **Afraid of not being liked by other students**
  2. **Afraid of failing tests**
  3. **Intimidated by teachers**

1. Having more mothers in the workforce has changed the way many kids grow up.
2. Society would benefit if nonviolent criminals were punished in ways other than jail time.
3. My relationship with (*name a relative or friend*)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has changed over time.
4. Growing up in my family has influenced my life in significant ways.
5. A bad (or good) teacher can have long-lasting impact on a student.4
6. The average workweek should be no more than thirty hours.
7. It is easy to fall into an unhealthy diet in our society.

**Note:** Wording of answers may vary.

**Answer Key.**

**Task1.**

**1-**c

**2-** a

**3-** d

**4-***She lists a series of examples where the “empathizing” mindset is evident: female-dominated careers, female reading matter, and female relationships.*

**5-***Brain anatomy*

*Ways of interacting with the world*

*Ways of problem solving*

**6-***Lewis presents her essay point by point. The first point is about brain anatomy, the second is about interacting with the world, and the third is about problem solving.*

*For each point, she discusses women and then men.*

**7-**

******

**8-** *On the other hand (7)*

*In contrast (9)*

*But (11)*

**9-***d*

**10-***a*

**Task2.**

**1-** *b*

**2-** *The single time…*

**3-***In fact, my “antique” has opened my eyes to the advantages of owning an old car: economy, reliability, and familiarity.*

**4-** *b, d*

**5-***Because they are constantly observed …*

**6-***c*

**7-***In addition to the loss of privacy …*

**8-***In addition also*

**9-***One Last of all*

**10-***a*