

**Expository Writing Program: Self-assessment.** After each statement, answer "yes" or "no."

**Reading:**

- Did it take more than 15 minutes for you to read the passage comfortably before beginning to write?
- Did you feel the need to work with an English-language translator as you read?
- Were you unable to read the passage without stopping because you wanted to look up words and concepts?
- Whether you did or did not decide to look up words and meanings, do you think that definitions alone would help you to make better sense of the passage?

**Writing:**

- After reading did you want some time to think before beginning to write?
- Did you feel uncomfortable about the pressure of having to write in a short time?
- Did your response summarize the passage using more of Berger's works than your own? That is, did your response contain your own thoughts or reflections about what Berger is saying and not mostly Berger's quotes and phrases? For example, someone with a fluent understanding of the passage and a comfortable fluency with English would take under 20 minutes to read the passage, consider what to say, and write a thoughtful response about the passage. The response does not always have to be long, but it has to arrive at the essence of the passage's main idea.

Compare your response to the response below, written by a native speaker. The response below, although only two sentences, demonstrates not only an understanding of the passage, but the ability to get to the core of the passage's meaning without quoting. Certainly there is more that can be said, but this writer has composed a very substantial preliminary beginning:

*"John Berger is concerned about the fact that we no longer live in close relationship with the world around us; we have lost ourselves, with the help of technology, in virtual worlds made up of disembodied images. Lost in this world of images--isolated from one another--we are losing our ability to work together for our own survival."*

**Grammar and Speaking:**

- Are you uncomfortable sharing your writing out loud, before native speakers, because you think it does not represent the passage, or because you are unsure about what you wrote, or because you are uncertain that a native speaker would understand what you wrote?
- Do you think your passage lacks Standard English structure (subjects followed by verbs, complete sentences, clauses, transitional phrases, correct punctuation)?

If you are not certain whether you have written in Standard English, try this. Copy your response onto a word processing program in your laptop. In the drop down menu under "TOOLS", select "GRAMMAR". Errors will appear in red. Can you recognize the errors or make the corrections on your own?

*If your answers are "yes" more often than "no" to the above situations, you should take the International Course. In the International course, you would have more time in class and at home to work with difficult passages. Class discussion would include a close reading of the passage, with students sharing thoughts and questions in an environment where understanding is a common goal. If you would have preferred to complete this exercise in a less stressful setting, or if you would have preferred to work at your own pace, you should take the International Course.*

For more information or advice about which course to take, contact:

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