Exercise 1: Skim each passage looking for the main idea and the organization of details. (1) Highlight the topic sentence(s). (2) Then underline any words that show you how the details are organized. The first one is the example.

Passage One

The United States does not have a national university, but the idea has been around for quite some time. George Washington first recommended the idea to Congress; he even selected an actual site in Washington, D.C., and then left an endowment for the proposed national university in his will. During the century following the Revolution the idea of a national university continued to receive the support of various U.S. presidents, and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie pursued the cause at the beginning of the present century. Although the original idea has not yet been acted upon, it continues to be proposed in bills before Congress.

Passage Two

Within organizations, management may see conflict from one of two contrasting points of view. According to the traditional view of conflict, all conflict is harmful to an organization. Managers with this traditional view of conflict see it as their role in an organization to rid the organization of any possible sources of conflict. The interactionist view of conflict, on the other hand, holds that conflict can serve an important function in an organization by reducing complacency among workers and causing positive changes to occur. Managers who hold an interactionist view of conflict may actually take steps to stimulate conflict within the organization.

Passage Three

Chamber music received its name because it was originally intended to be performed in small towns in private homes rather than huge concert halls or theaters. Today it has evolved into small ensemble music in which each performer in the ensemble plays an individual part. The compositions written for this type of performance can easily be classified into three distinct periods, each with its style of music and instrumentation. In the earlier period (1450-1650), the viol and other instrumental families developed considerably, and instrumental music took its first steps toward equal footing with vocal music. In the second period (1650-1750), trio sonatas dominated. These ensemble compositions were often written for two violins and a cello; the harpsichord was also featured in various compositions of this period. In the modern period (after 1750), the preponderance of chamber music was written for the string quartet, an ensemble composed of two violins, a viola, and a bass.

Passage Four

Vaccines are prepared from harmful viruses or bacteria and administered to patients to provide immunity to specific diseases. The various types of vaccines are classified according to the method by which they are derived.

The most basic class of vaccines actually contains disease-causing microorganisms that have been killed with a solution containing formaldehyde. In this type of vaccine, the microorganisms are dead and therefore cannot cause disease; however, the antigens found in an on the microorganisms can still stimulate the formation of antibodies. Examples of this type of vaccine are those that fight influenza, typhoid fever, and cholera.

A second type of vaccine contains the toxins produced by the microorganisms rather than the microorganisms themselves. This type of vaccine is prepared when the microorganism is extremely harmful. For example, the bacteria that cause diphtheria can thrive in the throat without much harm, but when toxins are released from the bacteria, muscles can become paralyzed and death can ensue.

A final type of vaccine contains living microorganisms that have been rendered harmless. With this type of vaccine, a large number of antigen molecules are produced and the immunity that results is generally longer lasting than the immunity from other types of vaccines. The Sabin oral antipolio vaccine and the BGG vaccine against tuberculosis are examples of this type of vaccine.