

Susan Fawcett

EVERGREEN

A Guide to Writings with Readings

COMPACT EDITION

9TH EDITION



Checklist For Revising Paragraphs

- Can a reader understand and follow my ideas?
- Is the topic sentence clear?
- Have I fully supported the topic sentence with details and facts?
- Does the paragraph have unity? Does every sentence relate to the main idea?
- Does the paragraph have coherence? Does it follow a logical order and guide the reader from point to point?
- Have I varied the length and type of my sentences?
- Is my language exact, concise, and fresh?
- Have I proofread carefully for grammatical and spelling errors?



Checklist For Revising Essays

- Is the thesis statement clear?
- Does the body of the essay fully support the thesis statement?
- Does the essay have unity? Does every paragraph relate to the thesis statement?
- Does the essay have coherence? Do the paragraphs follow a logical order?
- Are the topic sentences clear?
- Does each paragraph provide good details and well-chosen examples?
- Does the essay conclude, not just leave off?



A Guide to Writing with Readings
Compact 9th Edition



Evergreen

A Guide to Writing with Readings

COMPACT NINTH EDITION

Susan Fawcett



Australia • Brazil • Japan • Korea • Mexico • Singapore • Spain • United Kingdom • United States

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Preface

“Evergreen works.” Again and again, I hear this comment from instructors and students alike, and I consider it the greatest possible compliment. Based on my years of classroom experience at Bronx Community College, City University of New York, *Evergreen* is designed for students who need to improve the writing skills necessary for success in college and in most careers. The text’s clear, paced lessons, inspiring student and professional models, many high-interest practices and writing assignments, and provocative reading selections have guided over two million students through the process of writing effectively, from prewriting to final draft. The book was written for diverse student populations, whatever their ethnicity, age, language background, or dominant learning style. I am proud that *Evergreen with Readings* has won juried awards for excellence and has remained, from the first edition, the most widely used developmental writing text in the United States. My goal in revising *Evergreen* is always to ensure that it serves the changing needs of instructors and their students.

This special Compact Edition has been created to offer additional flexibility and convenience for those who have requested it for their students. It has the same content as the “regular” *Evergreen* Ninth Edition, with the exception that the practice exercises, with their accompanying write-on lines, have been moved to a separate Workbook. This enables us to provide *Evergreen* in a more convenient and portable size, and allows students to complete and turn in practice exercises without damaging the main text. An Annotated Instructor’s Edition of the Workbook provides answers to all of the practice exercises as well as margin annotations including Teaching Tips, ESL Tips, and Learning Styles Tips.

In planning the Ninth Edition, my editors and I called upon more faculty reviewers and consultants than ever before to tell us what they and their students most need for success in this course and beyond. We also solicited detailed feedback from college students. The thoughtful suggestions of these reviewers helped shape this edition, which is enriched with increased coverage of essay-writing, more student writing, a contemporary design with many more images for critical viewing and thinking, fresh writing assignments and topics chosen for their relevance to students’ lives and concerns, and seven new reading selections. As always, I have replaced large numbers of the written models and practice exercises with thought-provoking, contemporary subject matter.

The most important change in the Ninth Edition is its greatly expanded essay coverage. Students need to get up to speed quickly, and instructors need to pack more writing instruction into fewer class hours. Consequently, many courses are addressing essay writing sooner. In response, I have completely reorganized and

amplified the essay-writing coverage in Unit 4. The former Chapter 15, Types of Essays, has been expanded to two chapters, with two sample student essays for each of the nine rhetorical patterns (illustration, contrast, and so on), more detailed explanations, and a graphic essay organizer to help students think through the process of planning and writing their own essays.

Several other key changes enrich this edition. Because students are inspired by the excellent writing of their peers, I've added more student-authored paragraphs and essays throughout the text. I hope that this injection of fine student work will show our students as no lecture can what they too can achieve with engaged effort. The visual program in the last edition was extremely well received, so we have increased the number of images. My aim here, informed by a study of brain-based learning, is to select photographs, ads, paintings, diagrams of core concepts, and cartoons that relate to the written task at hand, promote critical thinking, and are worth looking at. Many of these images accompany the practice exercises, and are found in the four-color Workbook. A fresh design, adapted to the Compact Edition and Workbook, invites student engagement and punctuates *Evergreen's* clear, friendly pedagogy. *Evergreen's* reading selections have been freshened with seven eloquent new essays, combined with eleven faculty and student favorites from the last edition. In response to reviewers' suggestions, the writing assignments and topic lists have been largely updated with material vital to students' education, careers, and concerns. As always, I also have replaced many models and content-based practices with current subject matter intended to spark and hold students' interest as they learn.



Special Features of *Evergreen with Readings*, Compact Ninth Edition

New Compact Format

This edition is in a new compact format, with the practices in a companion Workbook in the same smaller format. This new format will allow students to more easily carry and use the Workbook for exercises and for writing practice, as well as give them the full text content in this volume.

New Expanded Coverage of the Essay

The former Chapter 15, Types of Essays, has been expanded to two chapters, 16 and 17, with fuller explanations, two student model essays for each pattern, and a graphic-organizer diagram that leads students through the process of writing each pattern essay.

New More Student Writing

More student paragraphs and essays now enrich the writing chapters, inspiring students and prompting them to compare their writing with successful student work.

New More Appeal to Visual Learners

New diagrams and graphic depictions of the writing process plus many more images, found in both this main text and in the Workbook, help visual and other learners grasp key concepts and think critically about visual images.

New Contemporary Design

A fresh, colorful design appeals to students, supports *Evergreen's* clear flow of instruction, and highlights the expanded image program.

More Relevant Writing Topics

Topic lists and contextualized writing assignments in the text have been largely updated with topics of interest to today's students, such as financial issues, family subjects, relationships, life in the military, learning and life skills, and career exploration.

40 Percent New Diverse Reading Selections

Based on feedback from faculty and students, Unit 8 has been freshened with seven stimulating and diverse readings. New to this edition are Jessica Bennett on viral videos, Leonard Pitts on genetic tinkering, Nilsa Mariano on an eye-opening school visit, Wang Ping's moving account of censorship, Andrew Sullivan's case for gay marriage, and two humorous essays—Dave Barry on stupid drivers and student Elissa Englund on good grammar as a dating strategy (or as a babe magnet). Readers' favorites from the last edition—those rated most thought-provoking and appealing—have been kept, for a new total of 18.

45 New High-Interest Models and Practices

Engaging models and content-based practice sets (now found in the companion Workbook) are vital to *Evergreen's* effectiveness—motivating students to read on and perhaps promoting thinking and writing. Fresh subjects include green jobs, the controversy over Bratz dolls, job-search techniques in a recession, the changing meaning of “race,” turning dreams into goals, Michelle Obama, the odd similarities between Gregory House and Sherlock Holmes, new college courses on happiness, how to read a visual advertisement, finding your learning style, the Cherokee story of two wolves, the Cornell note-taking method, and the rise of comedy-news shows.

Integrated ESL/ELL Coverage

Evergreen integrates thorough coverage of ESL issues within the flow of chapters. In addition, an intensive ESL appendix with instruction on some ESL-specific issues concludes the text; ESL practices are found in the Workbook. Faculty who want even more expert support will appreciate the ESL tips and the pedagogical riches in a 40-page *Evergreen Instructor's Guide to Teaching ESL Students*, free with the text.

Chapter 19, Strengthening an Essay with Research

This chapter has been updated with inclusion of the new 2009 *MLA Handbook* citation formats, including a sample paper using the new MLA citation style.

Other Improvements

The chapter on introductions, conclusions, and titles has been refreshed with many more samples from student writing and with added material to help students see how each introduction hints at the content and shape of the essay to come. Now all lists of transitional expressions consist of conjunctive adverbs only; my inclusion of other selected conjunctions bothered some instructors, and I agree that clarifying these lists is a good idea.



Extensive New Online Teaching Program

Evergreen's strong new technology package offers an array of tools and resources:

For Students



- *Evergreen*, Compact Ninth Edition, includes **Basic Writing CourseMate**, a complement to your textbook. Basic Writing CourseMate includes
 - An interactive eBook
 - Interactive teaching and learning tools, such as
 - Quizzes
 - Flashcards
 - Videos
 - Test Your Visual IQ
 - ESL Resources
 - and more
 - Engagement Tracker, a first-of-its-kind tool that monitors student engagement in the course

To access Basic Writing CourseMate, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**. At the CengageBrain.com home page, search for the ISBN of your title (from the back

cover of your book) using the search box at the top of the page. This will take you to the product page where these resources can be found.

For Instructors



- *Aplia for Evergreen* is an optional student supplement that instructors can order for their classes. *Aplia* provides developmental writing students with clear, succinct, and engaging writing instruction and practice to help students master basic writing and grammar skills. *Aplia for Evergreen* features ongoing individualized practice, immediate feedback, and grades that can be automatically uploaded, so instructors can see where students are having difficulty (allowing for personalized assistance.) To learn more, visit <http://www.aplia.com/developmentalenglish>.
- **Completely revised Test Bank**, authored by Professor Judy Pearce of Montgomery Community College and Ann Marie Radaskiewicz of Western Piedmont Community College, provides diagnostic, mastery, unit, and chapter tests for every chapter in the book; the Test Bank is available either online or in ExamView® format.
- The *Evergreen PowerLecture*™ is an easy-to-use tool that helps the instructor assemble, edit, and present tailored multimedia lectures. The PowerLecture™ is organized around the topics in the text and allows you to create a lecture from scratch, customize the provided templates, or use the readymade Microsoft PowerPoint slides as they are. The CD-ROM also includes the following resources:
 - Instructor's Manual and Test Bank
 - ExamView® Test Bank, which allows instructors to create, deliver, and customize tests (both print and online)
 - ESL Guide and ESL Resources
 - Videos corresponding to the Reading Selections in the text
 - Web Links to all websites referenced in the text
 - and more!
- **Revised Instructor's Manual**, with the author's teaching suggestions for every chapter and reading, sample syllabi, and more. Included in the Instructor's Manual is the *Evergreen Instructor's Guide to Teaching ESL Students* written by Dr. Donald L. Weasenforth and updated by Catherine Mazur-Jefferies, which provides extensive assistance in teaching classes that include ELL or Generation 1.5 students, including a Language Transfer Chart that shows common errors for each main language group.

- **Instructor Companion Site**, a password-protected website, provides a downloadable version of the Test Bank and Instructor's Manual, **Creative Classroom Links** to teaching strategies and tested classroom activities; resources for preventing plagiarism; customizable rubrics for every paragraph and essay type; and chapter-specific **PowerPoint** slides for classroom use.

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Nationally-recognized ESL expert Don Weasonforth of the Collin County Community College District provided our practical and nuanced guide to more effectively teaching ESL students in *Evergreen* classes. The guide has been updated with additional help and websites by ESL whiz Catherine Mazur-Jeffries.

Thank you to my English colleagues around the country who helped me find inspiring student essays for the new edition. The process was great fun. My inspiration always has been our students, whose aspirations, hard work, and fortitude in the face of sometimes unthinkable obstacles drive my life's goal of helping them learn and thrive. This year, I had the privilege of speaking with students all over the country as I sought permission to reprint many new examples of good student writing. These conversations with community college students and recent graduates filled me with pride; I spoke with entrepreneurs, nurses, military veterans, engineers, even a former rodeo rider whose essays and paragraphs will surely motivate the students who read this book.

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A Guide to Writing with Readings
Compact 9th Edition



Unit 1

Getting Started

CHAPTER 1

Exploring the Writing Process

CHAPTER 2

Prewriting to Generate Ideas



CHAPTER 1

Exploring the Writing Process

A: The Writing Process

B: Subject, Audience, and Purpose



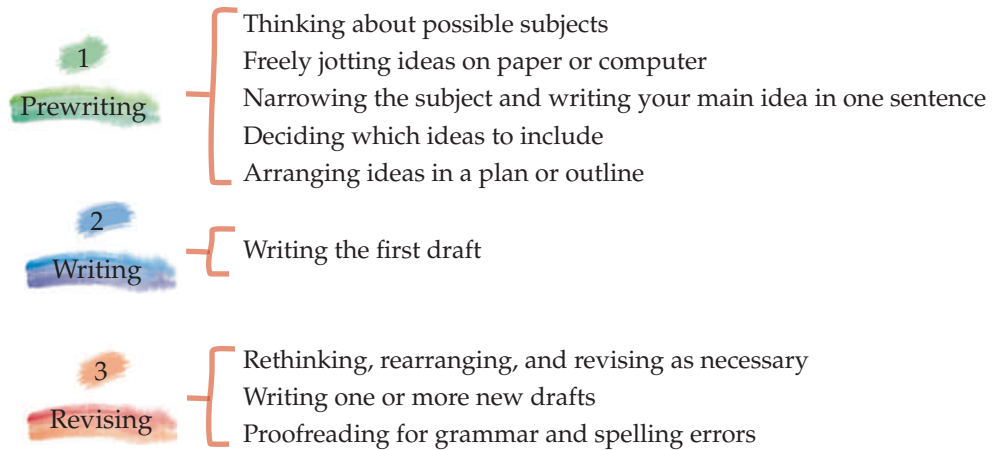
Did you know that the ability to write well characterizes the most successful college students and employees—in fields from education to medicine to computer science? Skim the job postings in career fields that interest you and notice how many stress “excellent writing and communication skills.” Furthermore, reading and writing enrich our daily lives; in surveys, adults always rate reading, writing, and speaking well as the most important life skills a person can possess.

The goal of this book is to help you become a more skilled, powerful, and confident writer. You will see that writing is not a magic ability only a few are born with, but a life skill that can be learned. The first chapter presents a brief overview of the writing process, explored in greater depth throughout the book. Now I invite you to decide to excel in this course. Let *Evergreen* be your guide, and enjoy the journey.

A. The Writing Process

Many people have the mistaken idea that good writers simply sit down and write out a perfect letter, paragraph, or essay from start to finish. In fact, writing is a **process** consisting of a number of steps:

The Writing Process



Not all writers perform all the steps in this order, but most **prewrite**, **write**, and **revise**. Actually, writing can be a messy process of thinking, writing, reading what has been written, and rewriting. Sometimes steps overlap or need to be repeated. The important thing is that writing the first draft is just one stage in the process. “I love being a writer,” jokes Peter De Vries. “What I can’t stand is the paperwork.”

Good writers take time at the beginning to **prewrite**—to think, jot ideas, and plan the paper—because they know it will save time and prevent frustration later. Once they write the first draft, they let it “cool off.” Then they read it again with a fresh, critical eye and **revise**—crossing out, adding, and rewriting for more clarity and punch. Good writers are like sculptors, shaping and reworking their material into something more meaningful. Finally, they **proofread** for grammar and spelling errors so that their writing seems to say, “I am proud to put my name on this work.” As you practice writing, you will discover your own most effective writing process.

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://www.google.com>

Search “Writing: A Ticket to Work... or a Ticket Out” and read the summary. This survey of business leaders finds that good writing is the key to career success. What two facts or comments do you find most striking?

B. Subject, Audience, and Purpose

Early in the prewriting phase, writers should give some thought to their **subject**, **audience**, and **purpose**.

In college courses, you may be assigned a broad **subject** by your instructor. First, make sure you understand the assignment. Then focus on one aspect of the subject that intrigues you. Whenever possible, choose something that you know and care about: life in Cleveland, working with learning-disabled children, repairing motorcycles, overcoming shyness, watching a friend struggle with drug addiction, playing soccer. You may not realize how many subjects you do know about.

To find or focus your subject, ask yourself:

- What special experience or expertise do I have?
- What inspires, angers, or motivates me? What do I love to do?
- What story in the news affected me recently?
- What campus, job, or community problem do I have ideas about solving?

Your answers will suggest good subjects to write about. Keep a list of all your best ideas.

How you approach your subject will depend on your **audience**—your readers. Are you writing for your professor, classmates, boss, closest friend, youngsters in the community, or the editor of a newspaper?

To focus on your audience, ask yourself:

- For whom am I writing? Who will read this?
- How much do they know about the subject? Are they beginners or experts?
- Will they likely agree or disagree with my ideas?

Keeping your audience in mind helps you know what information to include and what to leave out. For example, if you are writing about women's college basketball for readers who think that hoops are big earrings, you will approach your subject in a basic way, perhaps discussing the explosion of interest in women's teams. But an audience of sports lovers will already know about this; for them,

you would write in more depth, perhaps comparing the technique of two point guards.

Finally, keeping your **purpose** in mind will help you write more effectively. Do you want to explain something to your readers, persuade them that a certain view is correct, entertain them, tell a good story, or some combination of these?



EXPLORING ONLINE

Throughout this book, Exploring Online features will suggest ways to use the Internet to improve your writing and grammar. A number of online writing labs—called OWLs—based at colleges around the country offer excellent additional practice or review in areas where you might need extra help. Here are two good sites to explore:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Purdue University's OWL

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Capital Community College's OWL

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.



CHAPTER 2

Prewriting to Generate Ideas

- A: Freewriting
- B: Brainstorming
- C: Clustering
- D: Asking Questions
- E: Keeping a Journal



This chapter presents five effective prewriting techniques that will help you get your ideas onto paper (or onto the computer). These techniques can help you overcome the “blank-page jitters” that many people face when they first sit down to write. You can also use them to generate new ideas at any point in the writing process. Try all five to see which ones work best for you.

In addition, if you write on a computer, try prewriting in different ways: on paper and on computer. Some writers feel they produce better work if they prewrite by hand and only later transfer their best ideas onto the computer. Every writer has personal preferences, so don’t be afraid to experiment.

A. Freewriting

Freewriting is an excellent method that many writers use to warm up and to generate ideas. These are the guidelines: for five, ten, or fifteen minutes, write rapidly, without stopping, about anything that comes into your head. If you feel stuck, just repeat or rhyme the last word you wrote, but *don’t stop writing*. And don’t worry about grammar, logic, complete sentences, or grades.

The point of freewriting is to write so quickly that ideas can flow without comments from your inner critic. The *inner critic* is the voice inside that says, every time you have an idea, “That’s dumb; that’s no good; cross that out.” Freewriting helps you tell this voice, “Thank you for your opinion. Once I have lots of ideas and words on paper, I’ll invite you back for comment.”

After you freewrite, read what you have written, underlining or marking any parts you like.

Freewriting is a powerful tool for helping you turn thoughts and feelings into words, especially when you are unsure about what you want to say. Sometimes freewriting produces only nonsense; often, however, it can help you zoom in on possible topics, interests, and worthwhile writing you can use later. Focused freewriting can help you find subjects to write about.

Focused Freewriting

In **focused freewriting**, you simply try to focus your thoughts on one subject as you freewrite. The subject might be one assigned by your instructor, one you choose, or one you have discovered in unfocused freewriting. The goal of most writing is a polished, organized piece of writing; focused freewriting can help you generate ideas or narrow a topic to one aspect that interests you.

Here is one student’s focused freewriting on the topic of *someone who strongly influenced you*:

Mr. Martin, the reason I’m interested in science. Wiry, five-foot-four-inch, hyperactive guy. A darting bird in the classroom, a circling teacher-bird, now jabbing at the knee bone of a skeleton, now banging on the jar with the brain in it. Like my brain used to feel, pickled, before I took his class. I always liked science but everything else was too hard. I almost dropped out of school, discouraged, but Martin was fun, crazy, made me think. Encouragement was his thing. Whacking his pencil against the plastic model of an eyeball in his office, he would bellow at me, “Taking too many courses! Working too many hours in that restaurant! Living everyone else’s life but your own!” Gradually, I slowed down, got myself focused. Saw him last at graduation, where he thwacked my diploma with his pencil, shouting, “Keep up the good work! Live your own life! Follow your dreams!”

- This student later used this focused freewriting—its vivid details about Mr. Martin and his influence—as the basis for an effective paper. Underline any words or lines that you find especially striking or appealing. Be prepared to explain why you like what you underline.

B. Brainstorming

Another prewriting technique that may work for you is **brainstorming** or freely jotting down ideas about a topic. As in freewriting, the purpose is to generate lots of ideas so you have something to work with and choose from. Write everything that comes to you about a topic—words and phrases, ideas, details, examples.

After you have brainstormed, read over your list, underlining interesting or exciting ideas you might develop further. As with freewriting, many writers brainstorm on a general subject, underline, and then brainstorm again as they focus on one aspect of that subject.

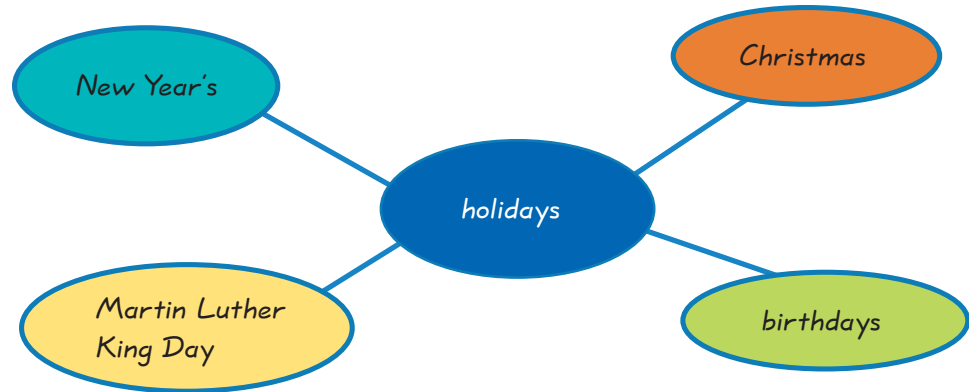
Here is one student's brainstorm list on the topic of *managing your time*:

time, who has it?
classes, getting to campus
work 20 hours a week, plus time for Marina
always tired
hey Alicia, I don't feel like a Superwoman
help? I don't ask
studying falls to last place
why be in college if I don't study?
if only I had 10 hrs a week outside class to read, write
get help where?
library has study places, ask my counselor
trade child care time with Flo?
take 5 minutes every morning to read my spiritual books
start the day fresh
maybe I can plan my time to find time

With brainstorming, this writer generated many ideas and started to move toward a more focused topic: *By planning ahead, I am learning to find time for what matters*. With a narrowed topic, brainstorming once more can help the writer generate details and reasons to support the idea.

C. Clustering

Some writers use still another method—called **clustering** or **mapping**—to get their ideas on paper. To begin clustering, simply write an idea or a topic, usually one word, in the center of a piece of paper. Then let your mind make associations, and write these associations branching out from the center.



When one idea suggests other ideas, details, and examples, write these around it in a “cluster.” After you finish, pick the cluster that most interests you. You may wish to freewrite for more ideas.



Brandon Blinkenberg/Shutterstock.com



D. Asking Questions

Many writers get ideas about a subject by asking questions and trying to answer them. This section describes two ways of doing this.

The Reporter's Six Questions

Newspaper reporters often answer six basic questions at the beginning of an article: **Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?** Here is the way one student used these questions to explore the general subject of *sports* assigned by his instructor:

Who?	Players, basketball and football players, coaches, fans. Violence—I'm tired of that subject. Loyal crazy screaming fans—Giants fans.
What?	Excitement. Stadium on the day of a game. Tailgate parties. Cookouts. Incredible spreads—Italian families with peppers, stuff to spread on sandwiches. All-day partying. Radios, TVs, grills, Giants caps.
Where?	Giants Stadium parking lot. People gather in certain areas—meet me in 10-B. Stadiums all over the country, same thing. People party on tailgates, in cars, on cars, plastic chairs, blankets.
When?	People arrive early morning—cook breakfast, lunch. After the game, many stay on in parking lot, talking, drinking beer. Year after year they come back.
Why?	Big social occasion, emotional outlet.
How?	They come early to get space. Some stadiums now rent parking spaces. Some families pass on season tickets in their wills!

Notice the way this writer uses the questions to focus his ideas about tailgate parties at Giants Stadium. He has already come up with many interesting details for a good paper.

Ask Your Own Questions

If the reporter's six questions seem too confining, just ask the questions *you* want answered about a subject. Let each answer suggest the next question.

Here is how one student responded to the subject *a career that interests you* (she chose nursing):

What do I know about nursing? I know that hospitals never seem to have enough nurses, so many jobs must be available. Nurses work hard, but their work seems interesting, exciting. The pay is good. Nurses also help people, which is important to me.

What would I like to know? What kind of education and training do nurses need? Is it better to work in a hospital, clinic, doctor's office, school, nursing home? I think nurses specialize in certain areas, like ER medicine or pediatrics. I'd like to know how they pick and how they get specialized training.

Where can I get more information? A friend of my mom's is a nurse in the intensive care unit at Mt. Sinai. I could interview her. I could speak with the career counselor on campus. Kendra told me to check out a great U.S. government website on careers, <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/>.

What would I like to focus on? Well, I'd like to know more about the real-life experience of being a nurse and the specific knowledge and skills nurses need. What are the rewards and drawbacks of a nursing career?

What is my angle or point? I want to give readers (and myself!) a sense of what it means to be a good nurse and how to prepare for a successful career. I think readers would be interested in practical tips about the education, choices, and what to do to become a nurse.

Who is my audience? I would like to write for people who might be considering nursing as a career.

E. Keeping a Journal

Keeping a journal is an excellent way to practice your writing skills and discover ideas for further writing. Your journal is mostly for you—a private place where you record your experiences and your inner life; it is the place where, as one writer says, “I discover what I really think by writing it down.”

You can keep a journal in a notebook or on a computer. If you prefer handwriting, get yourself an attractive notebook with 8½-by-11-inch paper. If you prefer to work on a computer, just open a “Journal” and keep your journal there. Then every morning or night, or several times a week, write for at least fifteen minutes in this journal. Don't just record the day's events. (“I went to the store. It rained. I came home.”) Instead, write in detail about what most angered, moved, or amused you that day.

Write about what you really care about—motorcycles, loneliness, building websites, working in a doughnut shop, family relationships, grades, ending or starting a relationship. You may be surprised by how much you know. Write, think, and write some more. Your journal is private, so don't worry about grammar or correctness. Instead, aim to capture your truth so exactly that someone reading your words might experience it too.

You might also carry a little 3-by-5-inch pad with you during the day for “fast sketches,” jotting down things that catch your attention: a man playing drums in the street; a baby wearing a bib that reads *Spit Happens*; a compliment you receive at work; something your child just learned to do.

Every journal is unique—and usually private—but here is a sample journal entry to suggest possibilities. The student links a quotation he has just learned to a disturbing “lesson of love”:

Many people have a favorite writing spot, a place they go, either physically or mentally, to write. What is yours?

Woman Writing on the Porch, Valerie Hardy



© Valerie Hardy

Apr. 11. Two weeks ago, our professor mentioned a famous quote: "It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." The words had no particular meaning for me. How wrong I was. Last Sunday I received some very distressing news that will change my life from now on.

My wife has asked me why I never notified any family members except my mother of the birth of our children. My reply has been an argument or an angry

stare. Our daughter Angelica is now two months shy of her second birthday, and we were also blessed with the birth of a son, who is five months old. I don't know whether it was maturity or my conscience, but last Sunday I decided it was time to let past grievances be forgotten. Nothing on this green earth would shelter me from what I was to hear that day.

I went to my father's address, knocked on his door, but got no response. Nervous but excited, I knocked again. Silence. On leaving the building, I bumped into his neighbor and asked for the possible whereabouts of my father. I couldn't brace myself for the cold shock of hearing from him that my father had died. I was angry as well as saddened, for my father was a quiet and gentle man whose love of women, liquor, and good times exceeded the love of his son.

Yes, it would have been better to have loved my father as he was than never to have gotten the opportunity to love such a man. A lesson of love truly woke me up to the need to hold dearly the ones you care for and overcome unnecessary grudges. "I love you, Pop, and may you rest in peace. *Qué Dios te guíe.*"

—Anthony Falu, Student

The uses of a journal are limited only by your imagination. Here are some ideas:

- Write down your goals and dreams; then brainstorm steps you can take to make them reality. (Notice negative thoughts—"I can't do that. That will never work." Focus on positive thoughts—"Of course I can! If X can do it, so can I.")
- Write about a problem you are having and creative ways in which you might solve it.
- Analyze yourself as a student. What are your strengths and weaknesses? What can you do to build on the strengths and overcome the weaknesses?
- What college course do you most enjoy? Why?
- Who believes in you? Who seems not to believe in you?
- If you could spend time with one famous person, living or dead, who would it be? Why?
- List five things you would love to do if they didn't seem so crazy.
- If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be? What might you do to change it?

- Use your journal as a place to think about material that you have read in a textbook, newspaper, magazine, or online.
- What news story most upset you or made you laugh out loud in the past month? Why?
- Write down facts that impress you—the average American child watches 200,000 acts of violence before graduating from high school! Analyzing that one fact could produce a good paper.
- Read through the Quotation Bank at the end of this book, and copy your five favorite quotations into your journal.



EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://www.powa.org/>

Under “discovering,” click “choosing your subject” for practical advice about finding a subject *you* want to write about.

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/brainstorm_freewrite.htm

Tips and timed practice on using freewriting to get started

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.



Unit 2

Discovering the Paragraph

CHAPTER 3

The Process of Writing Paragraphs

CHAPTER 4

Achieving Coherence



CHAPTER 3

The Process of Writing Paragraphs

- A:** Defining and Looking at the Paragraph
- B:** Narrowing the Topic and Writing the Topic Sentence
- C:** Generating Ideas For the Body
- D:** Selecting and Dropping Ideas
- E:** Arranging Ideas in a Plan or an Outline
- F:** Writing and Revising the Paragraph



This chapter will guide you step by step from examining basic paragraphs to writing them. The paragraph makes a good learning model because it is short yet contains many of the elements found in longer compositions. Therefore, you easily can transfer the skills you gain by writing paragraphs to longer essays, reports, and letters.

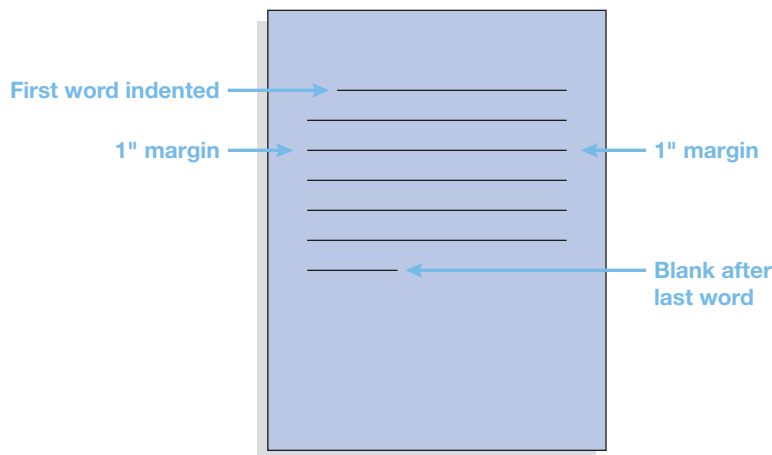
In this chapter, you will first look at finished paragraphs and then move through the process of writing paragraphs of your own.

A. Defining and Looking at the Paragraph

A **paragraph** is a group of related sentences that develops one main idea. Although there is no definite length for a paragraph, it is often from five to twelve sentences

long. A paragraph usually occurs with other paragraphs in a longer piece of writing—an essay, an article, or a letter, for example. Before studying longer compositions, however, we will look at single paragraphs.

A paragraph looks like this on the page:



- Clearly **indent** the first word of every paragraph about 1 inch (five spaces on the computer).
- Extend every line of a paragraph as close to the right-hand margin as possible.
- However, if the last word of the paragraph comes before the end of the line, leave the rest of the line blank.

Topic Sentence and Body

Most paragraphs contain one main idea to which all the sentences relate.

The **topic sentence** states this main idea.

The **body** of the paragraph develops and supports this main idea with particular facts, details, and examples:

I allow the spiders the run of the house. I figure that any predator that hopes to make a living on whatever smaller creatures might blunder into a four-inch-square bit of space in the corner of the bathroom where the tub meets the floor needs every bit of my support. They catch flies and even field crickets in those webs. Large spiders in barns have been known to trap, wrap, and suck hummingbirds, but there's no danger of that here. I tolerate the webs, only occasionally sweeping away the very dirtiest of them after the spider itself has

scrambled to safety. I'm always leaving a bath towel draped over the tub so that the big, haired spiders, who are constantly getting trapped by the tub's smooth sides, can use its rough surface as an exit ramp. Inside the house the spiders have only given me one mild surprise. I washed some dishes and set them to dry over a plastic drainer. Then I wanted a cup of coffee, so I picked from the drainer my mug, which was still warm from the hot rinse water, and across the rim of the mug, strand after strand, was a spider web.

—Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

- The first sentence of Dillard's paragraph is the **topic sentence**. It states the main idea of the paragraph: that *the spiders are allowed the run of the house*.
- The rest of the paragraph, the **body**, fully explains and supports this statement. The writer first gives a reason for her attitude toward spiders and then gives particular examples of her tolerance of spiders.

The topic sentence is more *general* than the other sentences in the paragraph. The other sentences in the paragraph provide specific information relating to the topic sentence. Because the topic sentence tells what the entire paragraph is about, *it is usually the first sentence*, as in the example. Sometimes the topic sentence occurs elsewhere in the paragraph, for instance, as the sentence after an introduction or as the last sentence. Some paragraphs contain only an implied topic sentence but no stated topic sentence at all.

As you develop your writing skills, however, it is a good idea to write paragraphs that *begin* with the topic sentence. Once you have mastered this pattern, you can try variations.

B. Narrowing the Topic and Writing the Topic Sentence

A writer can arrive at the goal—a finished paragraph—in several ways. However, before writing a paragraph, most writers go through a process that includes these important steps:

1. Narrowing the topic
2. Writing the topic sentence
3. Generating ideas for the body
4. Selecting and dropping ideas
5. Arranging ideas in a plan or an outline

The rest of this chapter will explain these steps and guide you through the process of writing basic paragraphs.

Narrowing the Topic

As a student, you may be assigned broad writing topics by your instructor—success, cheating in schools, a description of a person. Your instructor is giving you the chance to cut the topic down to size and choose one aspect of the topic *that interests you*.

Suppose, for example, that your instructor gives this assignment: “Write a paragraph describing a person you know.” The challenge is to pick someone you would *like* to write about, someone who interests you and also would probably interest your readers.

Thinking about your *audience* and *purpose* may help you narrow the topic. In this case, your audience probably will be your instructor and classmates; your purpose is to inform or perhaps to entertain them by describing a person you want to write about.

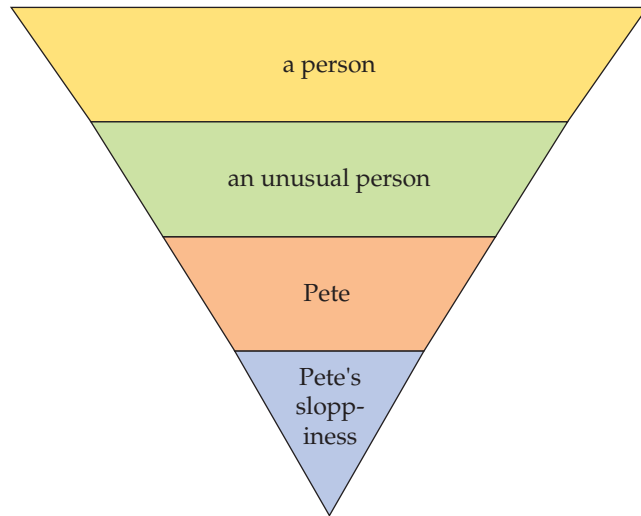
Many writers find it useful at this point—on paper or on the computer—to brainstorm, freewrite, or ask themselves questions: “What person do I love or hate or admire? Is there a family member I would enjoy writing about? Who is the funniest, most unusual, or most talented person I know?”

Let’s suppose you choose Pete, an unusual person and one about whom you have something to say. But Pete is still too broad a subject for one paragraph; you could probably write pages and pages about him. To narrow the topic further, you might ask yourself, “What is unusual about him? What might interest others?” Pete’s room is the messiest place you have ever seen; in fact, Pete’s whole life is sloppy, and you decide that you could write a good paragraph about that. You have now narrowed the topic to just one of Pete’s qualities: *his sloppiness*.



aceshot1/Shutterstock.com

You might visualize the process like this:



Writing the Topic Sentence

The next important step is to state your topic clearly *in sentence form*. Writing the topic sentence helps you further narrow your topic by forcing you to make a statement about it. The simplest possible topic sentence about Pete might read *Pete is sloppy*, but you might wish to strengthen it by saying, for instance, *Pete's sloppiness is a terrible habit*.

Writing a good topic sentence is an important step toward an effective paragraph because the topic sentence controls the direction and scope of the body. A topic sentence should have a clear *controlling idea* and should be a *complete sentence*.

You can think of the topic sentence as having two parts, a **topic** and a **controlling idea**. The controlling idea states the writer's point of view or attitude about the topic.

topic	controlling idea
TOPIC SENTENCE: Pete's sloppiness is a terrible habit.	

The controlling idea helps you focus on just one aspect or point.

As a rule, the more specific and limited your topic and controlling idea, the better the paragraph; in other words, your topic sentence should not be so broad that it cannot be developed in one paragraph.

The topic sentence also must be a **complete sentence**. It must contain a subject and a verb, and express a complete thought.* Do not confuse a topic with a topic sentence. For instance, *a celebrity I would like to meet* cannot be a topic sentence because it is not a sentence; however, it could be a title† because topics and titles need not be complete sentences. One possible topic sentence might read, *A celebrity I would like to meet is writer Julia Alvarez.*

Do not write *This paragraph will be about . . .* or *In this paper I will write about. . .* Instead, craft your topic sentence carefully to focus the topic and let your reader know what the paragraph will contain. Make every word count.

C. Generating Ideas For the Body

One good way to generate ideas for the body of a paragraph is **brainstorming**—freely jotting on paper or the computer anything that relates to your topic sentence: facts, details, examples, little stories. This step might take just a few minutes, but it is one of the most important elements of the writing process. Brainstorming can provide you with specific ideas to support your topic sentence. Later you can choose from these ideas as you compose your paragraph.

Here, for example, is a possible brainstorm list for the topic sentence *Pete's sloppiness is a terrible habit*:

1. His apartment is full of dirty clothes, books, candy wrappers
2. His favorite candy—M&Ms
3. He is often a latecomer or a no-show
4. He jots time-and-place information for dates and appointments on scraps of paper that are soon forgotten
5. Stacks of old newspapers sit on chair seats
6. Socks are on the lampshades
7. Papers for classes are wrinkled and carelessly scrawled
8. I met Pete for the first time in math class
9. His sister is just the opposite, very neat
10. Always late for classes, out of breath

* For more on correcting fragments, see Chapter 27, “Avoiding Sentence Errors,” Part B.

† For more on writing titles, see Chapter 15, “The Introduction, the Conclusion, and the Title,” Part C.

11. He is one messy person
12. Papers are stained with coffee or M&Ms

Instead of brainstorming, some writers freewrite or ask themselves questions to generate ideas for their paragraphs. Some like to perform this step on paper, whereas others use a computer. Do what works best for you. The key is to write down lots of ideas during prewriting. If you need more information on any of these methods, reread Chapter 2, “Prewriting to Generate Ideas.”

D. Selecting and Dropping Ideas

Next, simply read over what you have written, **selecting** those ideas that relate to and support the topic sentence and **dropping** those that do not. That is, keep the facts, examples, or little stories that provide specific information about your topic sentence. Drop ideas that just **repeat** the topic sentence but that add nothing new to the paragraph.

If you are not sure which ideas to select or drop, underline the **key word(s)** of the topic sentence, the ones that indicate the real point of your paragraph. Then make sure that the ideas that you select are related to those key words.

Here again is the brainstorm list for the topic sentence *Pete's sloppiness is a terrible habit*. The key word in the topic sentence is *sloppiness*. Which ideas would you keep? Why? Which would you drop? Why?

1. His apartment is full of dirty clothes, books, candy wrappers
2. His favorite candy—M&Ms
3. He is often a latecomer or a no-show
4. He jots time-and-place information for dates and appointments on scraps of paper that are soon forgotten
5. Stacks of old newspapers sit on chair seats
6. Socks are on the lampshades
7. Papers for classes are wrinkled and carelessly scrawled
8. I met Pete for the first time in math class
9. His sister is just the opposite, very neat
10. Always late for classes, out of breath
11. He is one messy person
12. Papers are stained with coffee or M&Ms

You probably dropped ideas 2, 8, and 9 because they do not relate to the topic—Pete's sloppiness. You should also have dropped idea 11 because it merely repeats the topic sentence.

E. Arranging Ideas in a Plan or an Outline

After you have selected the ideas you wish to include in your paragraph, you can begin to make a **plan** or an **outline**. A plan briefly lists and arranges the ideas you wish to present in your paragraph. An outline does the same thing a bit more formally, but in an outline, letters or numbers indicate the main groupings of ideas.

First, group together ideas that have something in common, that are related or alike in some way. Then order your ideas by choosing which one you want to present first, which one second, and so on.

Below is a plan for a paragraph about Pete's sloppiness:

TOPIC SENTENCE: Pete's sloppiness is a terrible habit.

- Group 1** — His apartment is full of dirty clothes, books, candy wrappers
Stacks of old newspapers sit on chair seats
Socks are on the lampshades
- Group 2** — He jots time-and-place information for dates and appointments on scraps of paper that are soon forgotten
He is often a latecomer or a no-show
Always late for classes, out of breath
- Group 3** — Papers for classes wrinkled and carelessly scrawled
Papers stained with coffee or M&Ms
-

- Once you have finished arranging ideas, you should have a clear **plan** from which to write your paragraph.*

* For more on order, see Chapter 4, "Achieving Coherence," Part A.

F. Writing and Revising the Paragraph

Writing the First Draft

The first draft should contain all the ideas you have decided to use in the order you have chosen in your plan. Be sure to start with your topic sentence. Try to write the best, most interesting, or most amusing paragraph you can, but avoid getting stuck on any one word, sentence, or idea. If you are unsure about something, put a check in the margin and come back to it later. Writing on every other line or double-spacing if you write on the computer will leave room for later corrections.

Once you have included all the ideas from your plan, think about adding a concluding sentence that summarizes your main point or adds a final idea. Not all paragraphs need concluding sentences. For example, if you are telling a story, the paragraph can end when the story does. Write a concluding sentence only if it will help to bring your thoughts to an end for your reader.

If possible, once you have finished the first draft, set the paper aside for several hours or several days.

Revising

Revising means rethinking and rewriting your first draft and then making whatever changes, additions, or corrections are necessary to improve the paragraph. You may cross out and rewrite words or entire sentences. You may add, drop, or rearrange details.

As you revise, keep the *reader* in mind. Ask yourself these questions:

- Is my topic sentence clear?
- Can a reader understand and follow my ideas?
- Does the paragraph follow a logical order and guide the reader from point to point?
- Will the paragraph keep the reader interested?

In addition, check your paragraph for adequate support and unity, characteristics that we'll consider in the following pages.

Revising for Support

As you revise, make sure your paragraph contains excellent **support**—that is, specific facts, details, and examples that fully explain your topic sentence.

Be careful, too, that you have not simply repeated ideas—especially the topic sentence. Even if they are in different words, repeated ideas only make the reader suspect that your paragraph is padded and that you do not have enough facts and details to support your main idea properly.

Revising for Unity

It is sometimes easy, in the process of writing, to drift away from the topic under discussion. Guard against doing so by checking your paragraph for **unity**; that is, make sure the topic sentence, every sentence in the body, and the concluding sentence all relate to one main idea.*

This paragraph lacks unity:

(1) Quitting smoking was very difficult for me. (2) When I was thirteen, my friend Janice and I took up smoking because we thought it would make us look cool. (3) We practiced smoking in front of a mirror, striking poses with our cigarettes. (4) Even though we often were seized with violent fits of coughing, we thought we seemed grown up and sophisticated. (5) Gradually, I began to smoke not just to appear worldly but also to calm myself when I felt stressed. (6) I smoked to give myself confidence on dates and to feel less anxious before taking tests at school. (7) Reading, talking on the phone, and driving all became reasons to light up. (8) Soon, I was smoking all the time.

- Here the topic sentence itself, sentence 1, does not relate to the rest of the paragraph. The main idea in sentence 1, that quitting smoking was difficult, is not developed by the other sentences. Since the rest of the paragraph is unified, a more appropriate topic sentence might read, *As a teenager, I developed the bad habit of smoking.*

Revising with Peer Feedback

Sometimes you may wish to show or read your first draft to a respected friend, asking questions like those on the next page:

* For more on revising, see Chapter 24, “Putting Your Revision Skills to Work.”

Peer Feedback Sheet

To _____ From _____ Date _____

1. What I like about this piece of writing is _____

2. Your main point seems to be _____

3. These particular words or lines struck me as powerful:

Words or lines

I like them because

4. Some things aren't clear to me. These lines or parts could be improved (meaning not clear, supporting points missing, order seems mixed up, writing not lively):

Lines or parts

Need improving because

5. The one change you could make that would make the biggest improvement in this piece of writing is _____

- Ask this person to give you an honest response, *not* to rewrite your work. You might want to ask your own specific questions or to modify the Peer Feedback sheet.

Writing the Final Draft

When you are satisfied with your revisions, recopy your paper or print a fresh copy. If you are writing in class, the second draft will usually be the last one. Be sure to include all your corrections, writing neatly and legibly.

The first draft of the paragraph about Pete, showing the writer's changes, and the revised, final draft follow. Compare them.

First Draft with Revisions

Add details to show his sloppiness!

Pete's sloppiness is a terrible habit. He lives by himself in a small apartment ^{carpeted} with dirty clothes, books, and candy wrappers. Stacks of papers cover the chair seats. Socks ^{bake} ~~are~~ on the lampshades. When Pete makes a date or an appointment, he may jot down the time and place on a scrap of paper that is soon ^{tucked into a pocket and} forgotten, or—more likely—he doesn't jot down the information at all. ^{As a result,} Pete often arrives late, or he completely forgets to appear. His grades have suffered, too, ^{because} few instructors will put up with a student who arrives out of breath and whose messy papers arrive ^{punctuated with coffee stains and melted M&Ms.} (late of course) ^{with stains} on them. Pete's sloppiness really is a terrible habit.

how small?—better word needed

Show consequences

Add more details—better support

*This repeats t.s.
Better conclusion needed.*

Final Draft

Pete's sloppiness is a terrible habit. He lives by himself in a one-room apartment carpeted with dirty clothes, books, and crumpled candy wrappers. Stacks of papers cover the chair seats. Socks bake on the lampshades. When Pete

makes a date or an appointment, he may jot down the time and place on a scrap of paper that is soon tucked into a pocket and forgotten, or—more likely—he doesn’t jot down the information at all. As a result, Pete often arrives late, or he completely forgets to appear. His grades have suffered, too, because few instructors will put up with a student who arrives out of breath ten minutes after the class has begun and whose wrinkled, carelessly scrawled papers arrive (late, of course) punctuated with coffee stains and melted M&Ms. The less Pete controls his sloppiness, the more it seems to control him.

- Note that the paragraph contains good support—specific facts, details, and examples that explain the topic sentence.
- Note that the paragraph has unity—every idea relates to the topic sentence.
- Note that the final sentence provides a brief conclusion, so that the paragraph *feels finished*.

Proofreading

Whether you write by hand or on the computer, be sure to **proofread** your final draft carefully for grammar and spelling errors. Pointing to each word as you read it will help you catch errors or words you might have left out, especially small words like *to*, *the*, or *a*. If you are unsure of the spelling of a word, consult a dictionary and run spell checker if you work on a computer.* Make neat corrections in pen or print a corrected copy of your paper. Chapter 38, “Putting Your Proofreading Skills to Work,” and all of Units 6 and 7 in this book are devoted to improving your proofreading skills.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

The assignments that follow will give you practice in writing basic paragraphs. In each, aim for (1) a topic sentence with a clear controlling idea and (2) a body that fully supports and develops the topic sentence.

Remember to **narrow the topic**, **write the topic sentence**, **freewrite** or **brainstorm**, and **select** and **arrange ideas** in a plan or an outline before you write. Rethink and **revise** as necessary before composing the final version of the paragraph. As you work, refer to the checklist at the end of this chapter.

* For tips and cautions on using a computer spell checker, see Chapter 39, Part B.

Paragraph 1

Discuss an important day in your life

Think back to a day when you learned something important. In the topic sentence, tell what you learned. Freewrite or brainstorm to gather ideas. Then describe the lesson in detail, including only the most important steps or events in the learning process. Conclude with an insight.

Paragraph 2

Describe your ideal job

Decide on the job for which you are best suited and, in your topic sentence, tell what this job is. Then describe the qualities of this job that make it ideal. Include information about the pay, benefits, intangible rewards, working conditions, and duties this perfect job would offer you. Explain how each quality you describe matches your needs and desires. Revise your work, checking for support and unity.

Paragraph 3

Interview a classmate about an achievement

Write about a time when your classmate achieved something important, like winning an award for a musical performance, getting an A in a difficult course, or helping a friend through a hard time. To gather interesting facts and details, ask your classmate questions like these and take notes: *Is there one accomplishment of which you are very proud? Why was this achievement so important?* Keep asking questions until you feel you can give the reader a vivid sense of your classmate's triumph. In your first sentence, state the person's achievement—for instance, *Being accepted in the honors program improved Gabe's self-esteem*. Then explain specifically why the achievement was so meaningful.

Paragraph 4

Tell a story of justice or injustice

Think about someone you know or heard about in news reports who did or did *not* get what he or she deserved. For example, you may have an athletic family member whose years of practice and hard work were rewarded with a college scholarship. On the other hand, you might have read about a person who spent time in prison for a crime he or she did not commit, thus losing precious years before being released. Make sure that you state your main idea and point of view clearly in a topic sentence. Then, use vivid supporting details to tell this person's story.

Paragraph 5

Discuss a quotation

Look through the quotations in the Quotation Bank before the indexes in this book. Pick a quotation you strongly agree or disagree with. In your topic sentence, state how you feel about the quotation. Then explain why you feel the way you do, giving examples from your own experience to support or contradict the quotation. Make sure your reader knows exactly how you feel.

Paragraph 6

Give advice to busy working parents

Help busy working parents by giving them some advice that will make their lives easier. You might explain how to prepare quick and easy meals, how to know a good day care when you see one, how to reduce morning chaos, or how to control your anger when a child misbehaves. Use humor if you wish. State your controlling idea in the topic sentence and support this idea fully with details, explanations, and examples.

Checklist

The Process of Writing Basic Paragraphs

Refer to this checklist of steps as you write a basic paragraph.

- ☐ 1. Narrow the topic in light of your audience and purpose.
- ☐ 2. Write a topic sentence that has a clear controlling idea and is a complete sentence. If you have trouble, freewrite or brainstorm first; then narrow the topic and write the topic sentence.
- ☐ 3. Freewrite or brainstorm, generating facts, details, and examples to develop your topic sentence.
- ☐ 4. Select and drop ideas for the body of the paragraph.
- ☐ 5. Arrange ideas in a plan or an outline, deciding which ideas will come first, which will come second, and so forth.
- ☐ 6. Write the best first draft you can.
- ☐ 7. Conclude. Don't just leave the paragraph hanging.
- ☐ 8. Revise as necessary, checking your paragraph for support and unity.
- ☐ 9. Proofread for grammar and spelling errors.

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/606/01/>

Quick review of paragraph writing

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/561/01/>

Good proofreading strategies to improve your writing and your grade

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.

CHAPTER 4

Achieving Coherence

A: Coherence Through Order

B: Coherence Through Related Sentences

 Every composition should have **coherence**. A paragraph *coheres*—holds together—when the sentences are arranged in a clear, logical *order* and when the sentences are *related* like links in a chain.

A. Coherence Through Order

An orderly presentation of ideas within the paragraph is easier to follow and more pleasant to read than a jumble. *After* jotting down ideas but *before* writing the paragraph, the writer should decide which ideas to discuss first, which second, which third, and so on, according to a logical order.

There are many possible orders, depending on the subject and the writer's purpose. This section will explain three basic ways of ordering ideas: **time order**, **space order**, and **order of importance**.

Time Order

One of the most common methods of ordering sentences in a paragraph is through **time**, or **chronological order**, which moves from present to past or from past to present. Most stories, histories, and instructions follow the logical order of time.* The following paragraph employs time order:

* For more on narrative paragraphs, see Chapter 6, "Narration," and for more on process paragraphs, see Chapter 8, "Process."

(1) I love to talk, but I never thought twice about listening. (2) So when my College Skills instructor said that becoming an active listener improves academic performance, I thought, “Whatever.” (3) Now I believe that working on my listening skills has raised my GPA. (4) *First*, I arrive in the classroom early and pick a seat near the front of the room; that way, windows, latecomers, and jokers won’t distract me. (5) *Then* I take out my paper, pen, and textbook. (6) I like to converse with my classmates during these moments, but I have learned to politely end these conversations as soon as the instructor comes in. (7) *Next*, I stop slouching, sit up in my chair, and look straight at the instructor. (8) Doing this signals my brain that it’s time to learn. (9) *As class proceeds*, I participate and keep my mind focused on the lesson. (10) If the instructor lectures, I take notes. (11) If the instructor leads a discussion, I think about what is being said, answer questions, and contribute my comments. (12) *Finally*, I resist the urge to have side conversations, text, make calls, or do homework during class. (13) Becoming an active listener takes some effort, especially if, like me, you have to break bad habits, but you’ll be amazed at how much more you’ll remember.

—Tony Aguera, Student

- The steps or actions in this paragraph are clearly arranged in the order of time. They are presented as they happen, *chronologically*.
- Throughout the paragraph, key words like *first*, *then*, *next*, *as class proceeds*, and *finally* emphasize time order and guide the reader from action to action.

Careful use of time order helps prevent confusing writing like this: *Oops, I forgot to mention that before the instructor comes in, I arrange my paper, pen and book.*

Occasionally, when the sentences in a paragraph follow a very clear time order, the topic sentence is only implied, not stated directly.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1

Use **time order** to give coherence to a paragraph. Choose one of the following two topics. Compose a topic sentence, freewrite or brainstorm to generate ideas, and then arrange your ideas *chronologically*. You may wish to use transitional words and phrases like these to guide the reader from point to point.*

first, second	before	soon	suddenly
then	during	when	moments later
next	after	while	finally

* For a more complete list of transitional expressions, see pages 47–48.

Paragraph 1

Narrate the first hour of your average day

Start with getting up in the morning and continue to describe what you do for that first hour. Record your activities, your conversations, if any, and possibly your moods as you go through this hour of the morning. As you revise, make sure that events clearly follow time order.

Paragraph 2

Record an unforgettable event

Choose a moment in sports or in some other activity that you vividly remember, either as a participant or as a spectator. In the topic sentence, tell in a general way what happened. (*It was the most exciting touchdown I have ever seen, or Ninety embarrassing seconds marked the end of my brief surfing career.*) Then record the experience, arranging details in time order.

Space Order

Another useful way to arrange ideas in writing is through **space order**—describing a person, a thing, or a place from top to bottom, from left to right, from foreground to background, and so on. Space order is often used in descriptive writing because it moves from detail to detail like a movie camera's eye:*

(1) A rainforest actually consists of five different layers, each one teeming with life. (2) On the *forest's dark floor* live a wide variety of creatures, from the smallest insects and spiders to anteaters, wild boars, and even gorillas. (3) Rising a few feet above the ground is a layer of *shrubs and seedlings* struggling to grow in the deep shadows. (4) Still higher is the forest's *understory*, a cool, shady zone beneath the leaves of the taller trees where beetles, snakes, lizards, and frogs crawl over ferns and vines, and jaguars might lounge in tree branches, watching for prey. (5) The *canopy*—the leafy roof of the forest that is home to many mosses, orchids, birds, reptiles, and monkeys—chirps, squawks, hisses, and howls with life. (6) Bursting through the canopy into the sunlight are a few towering trees of the uppermost *emergent layer*, the habitat of birds like the brilliant red, blue, and yellow scarlet macaw.

* For more work on space order, see Chapter 7, "Description."

- This paragraph uses space order.
- Sentence 1 clearly places the scene: the rainforest.
- Sentence 2 begins at the bottom, *on the forest's dark floor*.
- Sentences 3 and 4 move upward from the forest floor to describe the next two layers: *shrubs and seedlings* and the *understory*.
- Sentences 5 and 6 move further upward, describing the two highest areas of the rainforest: the *canopy* and the *emergent layer*.

Note how phrases like *rising a few feet above the ground*, *still higher*, *beneath the leaves of the taller trees*, *leafy roof*, and *bursting through the canopy into the sunlight* help the reader form a mental image of the rainforest as the paragraph moves from bottom to top.

Some paragraphs that are clearly arranged according to space order have only an implied topic sentence:

(1) Just inside the door of Filene's Basement, the famous bargain clothing store, giant hanging signs explain that the longer an item remains in the store, the cheaper it becomes. (2) All around the walls, floor-to-ceiling racks are crammed with a random mix of shoes, sneakers, neckties, and handbags. (3) Counters are cluttered with rhinestone rings, plastic sunglasses, and silk scarves. (4) In the center of the floor, huge square bins contain disorganized piles of shoes and clothes. (5) Customers dig into these jumbled bins, pulling out yellow rain hats, pink suede pumps, even cheese graters and other items that belong in a kitchen department. (6) Friends lose each other in the crowded aisles. (7) Frantic shoppers often collide as items fly into the air. (8) Some customers question whether any bargain makes this chaos worthwhile, but they always seem to return.

—Emma Lou Haynes, Student

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2

Use **space order** to give coherence to one of the following paragraphs. Compose a topic sentence, freewrite or brainstorm for more details, and then arrange them in space order. Use transitional words and phrases like these if you wish:*

on the left	above	next to
on the right	below	behind
in the middle	beside	farther out

* For a more complete list of transitional expressions, see pages 47–48.

Paragraph 1

Describe a firefighter's uniform, security around the Declaration of Independence, or a city scene

Choose one group of details from Practice 2, formulate a topic sentence that sets the scene for them all, and use them as the basis of a paragraph. Convert the details into complete sentences, adding words if you wish.

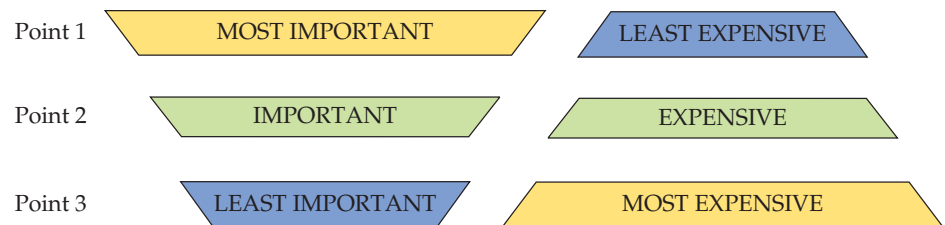
Paragraph 2

Describe a memorable face

Describe the face of someone you know well, perhaps a friend, family member, or person you admire. Study the actual face of the person or visualize it vividly as you jot down the five or six most important or striking details. Then, before writing your paragraph, arrange these details according to space order—moving from left to right or from top to bottom.

Order of Importance

Ideas in a paragraph can also be arranged in the **order of importance**. You may start with the most important idea and end with the least, or you may begin with the least important idea and build to a climax with the most important one.



If you wish to persuade your reader with arguments or examples, beginning with the most important points impresses the reader with the force of your ideas and persuades him or her to continue reading.* On essay examinations and in business correspondence, be especially careful to begin with the most important idea. In those situations, the reader definitely wants your important points first.

* See Chapter 5, "Illustration," and Chapter 13, "Persuasion."

Read the following paragraph and note the order of ideas.

(1) Louis Pasteur is revered as a great scientist for his three major discoveries. (2) Most important, this Frenchman created vaccines that have saved millions of human and animal lives. (3) The vaccines grew out of his discovery that weakened forms of a disease could help the person or animal build up antibodies that would prevent the disease. (4) The vaccines used today to protect children from serious illnesses owe their existence to Pasteur's work. (5) Almost as important was Pasteur's brilliant idea that tiny living beings, not chemical reactions, spoiled beverages. (6) He developed a process, pasteurization, that keeps milk, wine, vinegar, and beer from spoiling. (7) Finally, Pasteur found ways to stop a silkworm disease that threatened to ruin France's profitable silk industry. (8) Many medical researchers regard him as "the father of modern medicine."

Sometimes, if you wish to add drama and surprise to your paragraphs, you may want to begin with the least important idea and build toward a climax by saving the most important idea for last. This kind of order can help counter the tendency of some writers to state the most important idea first and then let the rest of the paragraph dwindle away.

Read the following paragraph and note the order of ideas:

(1) Called a genius by some and a publicity seeker by others, Salvador Dali was one of the best-known painters of the twentieth century. (2) Dali was a *surrealist*—that is, he painted scenes in bizarre or *surreal* ways, trying to express inner realities and shake up the viewer. (3) Recently, shows of his work at major museums have created new Dali admirers, who give at least three reasons for his lasting importance. (4) First, Dali was a larger-than-life creative force—an artist, sculptor, writer, filmmaker, adviser to fashion designers, and international party animal. (5) Even more important, his work strongly influenced younger painters like Andy Warhol, whose brightly colored portraits of Marilyn Monroe and Campbell's Soup cans are known worldwide. (6) But the premiere reason for Dali's importance is that his dreamlike paintings and surreal combinations of images changed people's idea of art. (7) His canvases, like *The Persistence of Memory*, capture unconscious states. Dali continues to inspire, anger, and amuse viewers from the grave, which no doubt would please him.

- The reasons for Dali's importance that develop this paragraph are discussed in the **order of importance**: *from the least to the most important*.

The Persistence of Memory
by Salvador Dali



Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/
Art Resource, NY. © 2009 Salvador Dali, Gala-Salvador Dali
Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

- The fact that Dali influenced younger painters is more important than his range of talents. However, the fact that his work changed the world's idea of art is the most important of all.
- Transitional words like *first*, *even more important*, and *premiere reason* help the reader follow clearly from one reason to the next.

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://www.virtualdali.com/>

On this enjoyable site, you can learn more about Dali and view many of his works. Choose one painting; write three things about it that command your attention, arrange them in order of importance, and write a paragraph.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3

Use **order of importance** to give coherence to one of the paragraphs that follow. Use transitional words and phrases like these to guide the reader along:*

first	even more	another
next	last	least of all
above all	especially	most of all

* For a more complete list of transitional expressions, see pages 47–48.

Paragraph 1

Describe a day in which everything went right (or wrong)

Freewrite or brainstorm to generate ideas. Choose three or four of the day's best (or worst) events and write a paragraph in which you present them in order of importance—either from the most to the least important, or from the least to the most important.

Paragraph 2

Persuade someone to attend your college

Choose a person you know—a friend, relative, or co-worker—and write a paragraph to convince that person to enroll in classes at your college. Write your topic sentence and generate ideas; choose three to five reasons to use to convince your reader. Arrange these reasons according to their order of importance—either from the most to the least important or from the least to the most important.

B. Coherence Through Related Sentences

In addition to arranging ideas in a logical order, the writer can ensure paragraph coherence by linking one sentence to the next. This section will present four basic ways to link sentences: **repetition of important words**, **substitution of pronouns**, **substitution of synonyms**, and **transitional expressions**.

Repetition of Important Words and Pronouns

Link sentences within a paragraph by *repeating important words and ideas*:

(1) An Amber Alert is a notice to the general public that a child has been kidnapped. (2) This notification system was named after Amber Hagerman, a nine-year-old girl abducted from her neighborhood and found murdered a few days later. (3) The term *Amber Alert* is also an acronym for “America’s Missing Broadcast Emergency Response.” (4) The goal of an Amber Alert is to collect and spread information about the abduction with utmost speed, thus increasing the chances of finding the child alive. (5) First, police confirm that a child is missing and race to collect descriptive details about the child, the suspected abductor, and the suspect’s vehicle. (6) Then broadcasts on television, radio, the Internet, and electronic highway signs spread these details and urge people to report any sightings or clues immediately. (7) To date, the program has saved 180 young lives.

- What important words are repeated in this paragraph?
- The words *Amber Alert* appear three times, in sentences 1, 3, and 4. The word *child* appears four times, in sentences 1, 4, and 5. The word *abducted* appears in sentence 2, *abduction* in sentence 4, and *abductor* in sentence 5.
- Repetition of these key words helps the reader follow from sentence to sentence as these terms are defined or the relationships between them are explained.

Although repetition of important words can be effective, it can also become boring if overused.* To avoid *unnecessary* repetition, substitute *pronouns* for words already mentioned in the paragraph, as this author does:

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 4

Paragraph 1

Explain success

How do you measure *success*? By the money you make, the number or quality of friends you have? Freewrite or brainstorm for ideas. Then answer this question in a thoughtful paragraph. Give the paragraph coherence by repeating important words and using pronouns.

Paragraph 2

Discuss a public figure

Choose a public figure whom you admire—from the arts, politics, media, or sports—and write a paragraph discussing *one quality* that makes that person special. Name the person in your topic sentence. Vary repetition of the person's name with pronouns to give the paragraph coherence.

Synonyms and Substitutions

When you do not wish to repeat a word or use a pronoun, give coherence to your paragraph with a **synonym** or **substitution**. **Synonyms** are two or more words that mean nearly the same thing. For instance, if you do not wish to repeat the word *car*, you might use the synonym *automobile* or *vehicle*. If you are describing a *sky* and have already used the word *bright*, try the synonym *radiant*.

Or instead of a synonym, **substitute** other words that describe the subject. If you are writing about Manny Ramirez, for example, refer to him as *this powerful slugger* or *this versatile athlete*. Such substitutions provide a change from constant repetition of a person's name or a single pronoun.[†]

* For suggestions for eliminating wordiness (repetition of unimportant words), see Chapter 23, "Revising for Language Awareness," Part B.

[†] For more on exact language, see Chapter 23, "Revising for Language Awareness," Part A.

Use synonyms and substitutions together with repetition and pronouns to give coherence to your writing:

(1) *The main building of Ellis Island* in New York Harbor reopened as a museum in 1990. (2) Millions of people visit *the huge brick and limestone structure* every year. (3) From 1892 to 1954, *this famous immigrant station* was the first stop for millions of newcomers to American shores. (4) In fact, the ancestors of nearly 40 percent of American citizens passed through *this building*. (5) Abandoned in 1954, *it* deteriorated so badly that snow and rain fell on its floor. (6) Today visitors can follow the path of immigrants from a ferryboat, through the great arched doorway, into the room where the weary travelers left their baggage, up the stairway where doctors kept watch, and into the registry room. (7) Here questions were asked that determined if each immigrant could stay in the United States. (8) *This magnificent monument to the American people* contains exhibits that help individuals search for their own relatives' names and that tell the whole immigration history of the United States.

- This paragraph effectively mixes repetition, pronouns, and substitutions. The important word *building* is stated in sentence 1 and repeated in sentence 4.
- Sentence 5 substitutes the pronoun *it*.
- In sentence 2, *the huge brick and limestone structure* is substituted for *building*, and a second substitution, *this famous immigrant station*, occurs in sentence 3. Sentence 8 refers to the building as *this magnificent monument to the American people* and concludes the paragraph.

EXPLORING ONLINE

http://www.ellisland.org/genealogy/ellis_island.asp

This site has links to Ellis Island immigration stories and records; however, your name or a family story might be fine writing topics, wherever you are from.

To find synonyms, check a **dictionary**. For instance, the entry for *smart* might list *clever, witty, intelligent*. An even better source of synonyms is the **thesaurus**, a book of synonyms. For example, if you are describing a city street and cannot think of other words meaning “noisy,” look in the thesaurus. The number of choices will amaze you.



WRITING ASSIGNMENT 5

As you do the following assignments, try to achieve paragraph coherence by using repetition, pronouns, synonyms, and substitutions.

Paragraph 1

Discuss your favorite form of relaxation

Tell what you like to do when you have free time. Do you like to get together with friends? Do you like to go to a movie or to some sporting event? Or do you prefer to spend your time alone, perhaps listening to music, reading, or going fishing? Whatever your favorite free-time activity, name it in your topic sentence. Be sure to tell what makes your activity *relaxing*. Then give your paragraph coherence by using pronouns and synonyms such as *take it easy*, *unwind* and *feel free*.

Paragraph 2

Describe your ideal mate

Decide on three or four crucial qualities that your ideal husband, wife, or friend would possess, and write a paragraph describing this extraordinary person. Use repetition, pronouns, and word substitutions to give coherence to the paragraph. For example, *My ideal husband ... he ... my companion*.

Transitional Expressions

Skill in using transitional expressions is vital to coherent writing. **Transitional expressions** are words and phrases that point out the exact relation between one idea and another, one sentence and another. Words like *therefore*, *however*, *for example*, and *finally* are signals that guide the reader from sentence to sentence. Without them, even orderly and well-written paragraphs can be confusing and hard to follow.

The transitional expressions in this paragraph are italicized:

(1) Zoos in the past often contributed to the disappearance of animal populations. (2) Animals were cheap, and getting a new gorilla, tiger, or elephant was easier than providing the special diet and shelter needed to keep captive animals alive. (3) *Recently, however*, zoo directors have realized that if zoos themselves are to continue, they must help save many species now facing extinction. (4) *As a result*, some zoos have redefined themselves as places where endangered animals can be protected and even revived. (5) The San Diego Zoo and the National Zoo, in Washington, D.C., *for example*, have both successfully bred giant pandas, a rapidly disappearing species. (6) The births of such

endangered-species babies make international news, and the public can follow the babies' progress on zoo websites and "animal cams." (7) If zoos continue such work, perhaps they can, like Noah's ark, save some of Earth's wonderful creatures from extinction.

- Each transitional expression in the previous paragraph links, in a precise way, the sentence in which it appears to the sentence before. The paragraph begins by explaining the destructive policies of zoos in the past.
- In sentence 3, two transitional expressions of contrast—*recently* (as opposed to the past) and *however*—introduce the idea that zoo policies have *changed*.

Zoos in China and the United States are breeding pandas like this healthy six-month-old, thus helping to save this endangered species.



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- The phrase *as a result* makes clear that sentence 4 is a *consequence* of events described in the previous sentence(s).
- In sentence 5, *for example* tells us that the National Zoo is *one particular illustration* of the previous general statement, and the San Diego Zoo is another.

EXPLORING ONLINE

On Google or another search engine, type the words, “endangered species, zoos.” Take notes on writing ideas, and bookmark websites that intrigue you.

As you write, use various transitional expressions, together with the other linking devices, to connect one sentence to the next. Well-chosen transitional words also help stress the purpose and order of the paragraph.

Particular groups of transitional expressions are further explained and demonstrated in each chapter of Unit 3. However, here is a combined partial list for handy reference as you write.*

Transitional Expressions at a Glance

Purpose	Transitional Expressions
to add	also, as well, besides, beyond that, first (second, third, last, and so on), for one thing, furthermore, in addition, moreover, next, then, what is more
to compare	also, as well, equally, in the same way, likewise, similarly
to contrast	be that as it may, however, in contrast, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand
to concede (a point)	certainly, granted that, of course, no doubt, to be sure
to emphasize	above all, especially, indeed, in fact, in particular, most important, surely
to illustrate	as a case in point, as an illustration, for example, for instance, in particular, one such, yet another
to place	above, below, beside, beyond, farther, here, inside, nearby, next to, on the far side, opposite, outside, to the east (south, and so on)

Continued

* For more on using conjunctions to join ideas, see Chapter 26, “Coordination and Subordination.”

Transitional Expressions at a Glance (continued)

Purpose	Transitional Expressions
to qualify	perhaps, maybe
to give a reason or cause	as, because, for, since
to show a result or effect	and so, as a consequence, as a result, because of this, consequently, for this reason, hence, so, therefore, thus
to summarize	all in all, finally, in brief, in other words, lastly, on the whole, to conclude, to sum up
to place in time	after a while, afterward, at last, at present, briefly, currently, eventually, finally, first (second, and so on), gradually, immediately, in the future, later, meanwhile, next, now, recently, soon, suddenly, then

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://www.powa.org/>

For advice on ordering your ideas in the most powerful way, go to “organizing” and click “arranging and ordering.”

<http://www.powa.org/>

For work on transitional expressions, go to “organizing” and click “showing the links.”

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.

Unit 3

Developing the Paragraph

CHAPTER 5

Illustration

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Process

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CHAPTER 5

Illustration

To illustrate is to explain a general statement by means of one or more specific examples.

Illustration makes what we say more vivid and more exact. Someone might say, “My math professor is always finding crazy ways to get our attention. Just yesterday, for example, he wore a high silk hat to class.” The first sentence is a general statement about this professor’s unusual ways of getting attention. The second sentence, however, gives a specific example of something he did that *clearly shows* what the writer means.

Writers often use illustration to develop a paragraph. They explain a general topic sentence with one, two, three, or more specific examples. Detailed and well-chosen examples add interest, liveliness, and power to your writing.

Topic Sentence

Here is the topic sentence of a paragraph that is later developed by examples:

Great athletes do not reach the top by talent alone but by pushing themselves to the limit and beyond.

- The writer begins an illustration paragraph with a topic sentence that makes a general statement.
- This generalization may be obvious to the writer, but if he or she wishes to convince the reader, some specific examples would be helpful.

Paragraph and Plan

Here is the entire paragraph:

Great athletes do not reach the top by talent alone but by pushing themselves to the limit and beyond. For instance, basketball sensation LeBron James keeps striving to improve. Branded the next Michael Jordan when he was in high school and drafted by the Cleveland Cavaliers, James kept his cool and kept working hard. He emerged an All-Star and leader who propelled the Cavaliers to the NBA playoffs three years in a row and his 2008 Olympic teammates to a gold medal. This professional perfects his agility, strength, and health routines, even off-season. Another example is record-breaking swimmer Dara Torres. After winning nine medals at four Olympic Games and becoming a mother at age 39, this racer continued to build power and speed with brutal daily workouts: 90 minutes each of hard swimming and strength training, plus two hours of stretching. At 41, the oldest female swimmer ever to compete in the Olympics, Dara scored three more silver medals. Few players in any sport, however,

41-year-old Dara Torres wins a silver medal at the Olympic Games



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can match the work ethic of Lance Armstrong. In 1996, this bicycle racer was diagnosed with testicular cancer that had spread to his brain and lungs. After surgery and chemotherapy left him weak and exhausted, Armstrong began a strict diet and training regimen, cycling up to six hours a day. His commitment paid off when he won the Tour de France, cycling's toughest race, seven years in a row. Armstrong retired in 2005, but in 2008, at 37, he announced that Dara Torres had inspired him to compete again. Like many top athletes, he turned his talent into greatness through sheer hard work.

Before completing this illustration paragraph, the writer probably made an **outline** like this:

TOPIC SENTENCE: Great athletes do not reach the top by talent alone but by pushing themselves to the limit and beyond.

Example 1: LeBron James

- worked hard after being drafted by Cavaliers
- All-Star, brought Cavaliers to the NBA playoffs three times, gold medal in 2008 Olympic Games
- perfects agility, strength, and health routines, even off-season

Example 2: Dara Torres

- won 9 medals at four Olympic Games
- brutal daily workouts: 90 minutes swimming, 90 minutes strength, 2 hours stretching
- at age 41, won 3 more silver Olympic medals

Example 3: Lance Armstrong

- 1996 cancer diagnosis
- after surgery and chemo, strict training (diet, cycling)
- won Tour de France, 1999–2005
- retired in 2005 but began training again in 2008, age 37

CONCLUSION: Like many top athletes, he turned talent into greatness through sheer hard work.

- Note that each example clearly relates to and supports the topic sentence.

Instead of using three or four examples to support the topic sentence, the writer may prefer instead to discuss one single example:

Dreams alone are not enough when it comes to creating the future. As professional life coach Diana Robinson says, “A dream is a goal without legs.” And without legs, that goal is going nowhere. Making dreams come true requires planning and hard work. Gloria Gonzalez is an example. She chose the fashion design curriculum because she liked clothes, and people always admired her style. As she continues through college, however, she will need to master the nuts and bolts of the fashion business. Her abilities will be tested. Can she create under pressure, spot trends, meet tight deadlines, and work her way up? Perhaps she will learn that even brilliant fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent got his first big break, designing for Christian Dior, only after winning a major international design competition. Breaking into the fashion industry is challenging, but that doesn’t mean Gloria should abandon her dream. Instead, she must find a reality-based path to help her turn that dream into goals.

—Adapted from Constance Staley, *Focus on College Success*

The single example may also be a **narrative**,* a *story* that illustrates the topic sentence:

Aggressive drivers not only are stressed out and dangerous, but often they save no time getting where they want to go. Recently I was driving south from Oakland to San Jose. Traffic was heavy but moving. I noticed an extremely aggressive driver jumping lanes, speeding up, and slowing down. Clearly, he was in a hurry. For the most part, I remained in one lane for the entire forty-mile journey. I was listening to a new audiobook and daydreaming. I enjoyed the trip because driving gives me a chance to be alone. As I was exiting off the freeway, the aggressive driver crowded up behind me and raced on by. Without realizing it, I had arrived in San Jose ahead of him. All his weaving, rapid acceleration, and putting families at risk had earned him nothing except perhaps some high blood pressure and a great deal of wear and tear on his vehicle.

—Adapted from Richard Carlson, *Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff*

Transitional Expressions

The simplest way to tell your reader that an example is going to follow is to say so: “*For instance, LeBron James ...*” or “*Gloria Gonzalez is an example.*” This partial list should help you vary your use of **transitional expressions** that introduce an illustration:

* For more on narrative, see Chapter 6, “Narration,” and Chapter 16, “Types of Essays,” Part B.

Transitional Expressions for Illustration

for instance	another instance of
for example	another example of
an illustration of this	another illustration of
a case in point is	here are a few examples
to illustrate	(illustrations, instances)

- Be careful not to use more than two or three of these transitional expressions in a single paragraph.*

Checklist

The Process of Writing an Illustration Paragraph

Refer to this checklist of steps as you write an illustration paragraph of your own.

- ☐ 1. Narrow the topic in light of your audience and purpose.
- ☐ 2. Compose a topic sentence that can honestly and easily be supported by examples.
- ☐ 3. Freewrite or brainstorm to find six to eight examples that support the topic sentence. If you wish to use only one example or a narrative, sketch out your idea. (You may want to freewrite or brainstorm before you narrow the topic.)
- ☐ 4. Select only the best two to four examples and drop any examples that do not relate to or support the topic sentence.
- ☐ 5. Make a plan or an outline for your paragraph, numbering the examples in the order in which you will present them.
- ☐ 6. Write a draft of your illustration paragraph, using transitional expressions to show that an example or examples will follow.
- ☐ 7. Revise as necessary, checking for support, unity, logic, and coherence.
- ☐ 8. Proofread for errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, and mechanics.

* For complete essays developed by illustration, see Chapter 16, Part A.

Suggested Topic Sentences for Illustration Paragraphs

1. Even the busiest people can incorporate more exercise into their daily routines.
2. Most people have special places where they go to relax or find inspiration.
3. In my family, certain traditions (beliefs or activities) are very important.
4. In my chosen profession, I will have to write several kinds of different documents.
5. Misfortunes can sometimes teach valuable lessons.
6. College students face a number of pressures.
7. Unfortunately, cheating at college (or stealing at work) is more common than most people realize.
8. A true friend is someone who sees and encourages the best in us.
9. Sexual harassment is a fact of life for some employees.
10. Some lucky people love their jobs.
11. Certain fellow students (or co-workers) inspire me to do my best.
12. Eating disorders harm people in many ways.
13. A sense of humor can make difficult times easier to bear.
14. Choose a quotation from the Quotation Bank at the end of this book. First, state whether you think this saying is true; then use an example from your own or others' experience to support your view.
15. Writer's choice: _____



EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://www.google.com>

Search the words “une.edu, paragraph types illustration” for a visual review of illustration writing and sample illustration paragraphs from the University of New England.

<http://writesite.cuny.edu/projects/keywords/example/hand2.html>

Online practice: brainstorming examples for your paragraph

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CHAPTER 6

Narration

To narrate is to tell a story that explains what happened, when it happened, and who was involved.

A news report may be a narrative telling how a man was rescued from icy flood waters or how a brave whistle blower risked her career and perhaps her life to expose an employer's harmful practices. When you read a bedtime story to a child, you are reading a narrative. In a college paper on campus drug use, telling the story of a friend who takes Ecstasy would help bring that subject to life. In an e-mail or letter, you might entertain a friend by narrating your failed attempts to windsurf during a seaside vacation.

We tell stories to teach a lesson, illustrate an idea, or make someone laugh, cry, or get involved. No matter what your narrative is about, every narrative should have a clear **point**: It should reveal what you want your reader to learn or take away from the story.

Topic Sentence

Here is the topic sentence of a **narrative** paragraph:

The crash of a Brinks truck on a Miami overpass still raises disturbing questions.

- The writer begins a narrative paragraph with a topic sentence that tells or sets up the point of the narrative.

Paragraph and Plan

Here is the entire paragraph:

The crash of a Brinks truck on a Miami overpass still raises disturbing questions. January 8, 1997 was just another crowded, rude, and crazy day in Miami traffic until an armored Brinks truck flipped and broke open, sending nearly a million dollars in cash swirling over the highway. Hundreds of motorists screeched to a stop, grabbing whatever money they could. People in nearby houses raced outside, shouting and scooping up bills. When it was over, a tiny handful of people returned some money. Firefighter Manny Rodriguez turned in a huge bale of bills worth \$330,000, and one teenager returned some quarters. However, nearly half a million dollars was missing—stolen by everyday people like you and me. In the following days, some rationalized the mass theft as a kind of Robin Hood action because the truck had crashed in a poor area of town. Most people claimed to be shocked. Now we are all left with hard questions: *Why did a few people “do the right thing”? Why did the majority do the “wrong thing”? What causes people to act virtuously, even if no one is watching? What would you or I have done?*

- The body of a narrative paragraph is developed according to time, or chronological, order.* That is, the writer explains the narrative—the entire incident—as a series of small events or actions in the order in which they occurred. By keeping to strict chronological order, the writer helps the reader follow the story more easily and avoids interrupting the narrative with, *But I forgot to mention that before this happened...*

Before writing this narrative paragraph, the writer may have brainstormed or freewritten to gather ideas, and then he may have made an **outline** like this:

TOPIC SENTENCE: The crash of a Brinks truck on a Miami overpass still raises disturbing questions.

- Event 1:** Brinks truck flips, spilling cash on the highway.
- Event 2:** Hundreds of motorists stop, grab money.
- Event 3:** People race out of houses, grabbing money.
- Event 4:** Later, firefighter Rodriguez returns \$330,000.
- Event 5:** Just a few others give anything back; half million is gone.
- Event 6:** Days after, some call it “Robin Hood” action.
- Event 7:** Some say they are shocked.

CONCLUSION: Now we are all left with hard questions. (Some questions are listed.)

*For more on time, see Chapter 4, “Achieving Coherence,” Part A.

- Note that all of the events occur in chronological order.
- The conclusion provides a strong and thought-provoking ending.
- Finally, the specific details of certain events (like events 2 and 4) make the narrative more vivid.

Transitional Expressions

Because narrative paragraphs tell a story in **chronological** or **time order**, transitional expressions that indicate time can be useful.*

Transitional Expressions for Narratives

afterward	finally	next
after that	first	now
currently	later	soon
eventually	meanwhile	then

Checklist

The Process of Writing a Narrative Paragraph

Refer to this checklist of steps as you write a narrative paragraph of your own.

- ☐ 1. Narrow the topic in light of your audience and purpose.
- ☐ 2. Compose a topic sentence that tells the point of the story.
- ☐ 3. Freewrite or brainstorm for all of the events and details that might be part of the story. (You may want to freewrite or brainstorm before you narrow the topic.)
- ☐ 4. Select the important events and details; drop any that do not clearly relate to the point in your topic sentence.
- ☐ 5. Make a plan or an outline for the paragraph, numbering the events in the correct time (chronological) sequence.

*For complete essays developed by narration, see Chapter 16, "Types of Essays," Part B.

- ☐ 6. Write a draft of your narrative paragraph, using transitional expressions to indicate time sequence.
- ☐ 7. Revise as necessary, checking for support, unity, logic, and coherence.
- ☐ 8. Proofread for errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, and mechanics.

Suggested Topics for Narrative Paragraphs

1. Your best (or worst) job interview
2. A risk that paid off
3. An important family story or story someone told you
4. A turning point (personal, academic, or professional)
5. An episode in a courtroom, ER, or other interesting place
6. How you developed a career skill (in customer service, computers, attitude, and so on)
7. A breakthrough (emotional, physical, or spiritual)
8. An experience in a new country (city, school, or job)
9. An incident that provoked an intense emotion (such as rage, grief, pride, or joy)
10. A triumphant (or embarrassing) moment
11. The first time you encountered a role model or important friend
12. A serious choice or decision
13. An encounter with prejudice
14. Interview a person you admire and tell, in short form, his or her story
15. Writer's choice: _____

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/narrative.htm>

Review the elements of a good narrative, and read some fine examples.

<http://www.healingstory.org/>

Do you think that stories can heal? Explore this Website and decide for yourself. Click the door and then “Treasure Chest.”

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CHAPTER 7

Description



To **describe** something—a person, a place, or an object—is to capture it in words so others can imagine it or see it in their mind’s eye.

The best way for a writer to help the reader get a clear impression is to use language that appeals to the senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. For it is through the senses that human beings experience the physical world around them, and it is through the senses that the world is most vividly described.

Imagine, for instance, that you have just gone boating on a lake at sunset. You may not have taken a photograph, yet your friends and family can receive an accurate picture of what you have experienced if you *describe* the pink sky reflected in smooth water, the creak of the wooden boat, the soothing drip of water from the oars, the occasional splash of a large bass jumping, the faint fish smells, the cool and darkening air. Writing down what your senses experience will teach you to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch more acutely than ever before.

Description is useful in English class, the sciences, psychology—anywhere that keen observation is important.

Topic Sentence

Here is the topic sentence of a descriptive paragraph:

On November 27, 1922, when archaeologist Howard Carter unsealed the door to the ancient Egyptian tomb of King Tut, he stared in amazement at the fantastic objects heaped all around him.

Paragraph and Plan

Here is the entire paragraph:

On November 27, 1922, when archaeologist Howard Carter unsealed the door to the ancient Egyptian tomb of King Tut, he stared in amazement at the fantastic objects heaped all around him. On his left lay the wrecks of at least four golden chariots. Against the wall on his right sat a gorgeous chest brightly painted with hunting and battle scenes. Across from him was a gilded throne with cat-shaped legs, arms like winged serpents, and a back showing King Tut and his queen. Behind the throne rose a tall couch decorated with animal faces that were half hippopotamus and half crocodile. The couch was loaded with more treasures. To the right of the couch, two life-sized statues faced each other like guards. They were black, wore gold skirts and sandals, and had cobras carved on their foreheads. Between them was a second sealed doorway. Carter's heart beat loudly. Would the mummy of King Tut lie beyond it?

- The overall impression given by the topic sentence is that the tomb's many objects were amazing.

Egyptian officials in King Tut's tomb prepare the boy king's mummy for placement in a climate-controlled glass box.



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- Note the importance of words that indicate richness and unusual decoration in helping the reader visualize the scene.*
- This paragraph, like many descriptive paragraphs, is organized according to space order.† The author uses transitional expressions that show where things are.

Before composing this descriptive paragraph, the writer probably brainstormed and freewrote to gather ideas and then made an **outline** like this:

TOPIC SENTENCE: On November 27, 1922, when archaeologist Howard Carter unsealed the door to the ancient Egyptian tomb of King Tut, he stared in amazement at the fantastic objects heaped all around him.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. To the left: | chariots
—wrecked
—golden |
| 2. To the right: | a gorgeous chest
—brightly painted with hunting and battle scenes |
| 3. Across the room: | a throne
—gilded
—cat-shaped legs
—arms like winged serpents |
| 4. Behind the throne: | a couch
—decorated with faces that were half hippopotamus and half crocodile |
| 5. To the right of the couch: | two life-sized statues
—black
—gold skirts and sandals
—cobras carved on foreheads |
| 6. Between the two statues: | a second sealed doorway |

CONCLUSION: expectation that King Tut's mummy was beyond the second door

- Note how each detail supports the topic sentence.

* For more on vivid language, see Chapter 23, "Revising for Language Awareness."

† For more on space order and other kinds of order, see Chapter 4, "Achieving Coherence," Part A.

Transitional Expressions

Since space order is often used in description, **transitional expressions** indicating place or position can be useful:

Transitional Expressions Indicating Place

next to, near	on top, beneath
close, far	toward, away
up, down, between	left, right, center
above, below	front, back, middle

Of course, other kinds of order are possible. For example, a description of a person might have two parts: details of physical appearance and details of behavior.*

Checklist

The Process of Writing a Descriptive Paragraph

Refer to this checklist of steps as you write a descriptive paragraph of your own.

- ☐ 1. Narrow the topic in light of your audience and purpose.
- ☐ 2. Compose a topic sentence that clearly points to what you will describe or gives an overall impression of the person, object, or scene.
- ☐ 3. Freewrite or brainstorm to find as many specific details as you can to capture your subject in words. Remember to appeal to your readers' senses. (You may want to freewrite or brainstorm before you narrow the topic.)
- ☐ 4. Select the best details and drop any irrelevant ones.
- ☐ 5. Make a plan or an outline for the paragraph, numbering the details in the order in which you will present them.

* For complete essays developed by description, see Chapter 16, Part C.

- ☐ 6. Write a draft of your descriptive paragraph, using transitional expressions wherever they might be helpful.
- ☐ 7. Revise as necessary, checking for support, unity, logic, and coherence.
- ☐ 8. Proofread for errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, and mechanics.

Suggested Topics for Descriptive Paragraphs

1. An unusual man or woman: for example, an athlete, an entertainer, someone with amazing hair or clothing, or a teacher you won't forget
2. A food, object, or scene from another country
3. A workspace or place on campus that needs improvement (to be safer, more useful, more attractive)
4. A painting, sculpture, or other work of art
5. A scene of poverty or despair
6. Someone or something you found yourself staring at
7. A workspace or environment that would motivate employees to work
8. A scene of peace (or of conflict)
9. A room that reveals something about its owner
10. A tool or machine you use at work
11. A shop that sells only one type of item: cell phones, Western boots, flowers, car parts, cooking items
12. An interesting person you have met on campus
13. A crowded place: dance club, library, fast-food restaurant, town square, or theater lobby
14. A fascinating or frightening outdoor scene
15. Writer's choice: _____

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/descriptive.html>

Good tips for improving your description writing, with sample paragraphs

<http://grammar.about.com/od/developingparagraphs/a/descparhub.htm>

In-depth tutorial for writing a descriptive paragraph, with professional samples

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.

CHAPTER 8

Process

Two kinds of **process paragraphs** will be explained in this chapter: the how-to paragraph and the explanation paragraph.

The **how-to paragraph** gives the reader directions on how he or she can do something: how to install a software program, how to get to the airport, or how to make tasty barbecued ribs. The goals of such directions are the installed software, the arrival at the airport, or the great barbecued ribs. In other words, the reader should be able to do something after reading the paragraph.

The **explanation paragraph**, on the other hand, tells the reader how a particular event occurred or how something works. For example, an explanation paragraph might explain how an internal combustion engine works or how palm trees reproduce. After reading an explanation paragraph, the reader is not expected to be able to do anything, just to understand how it happened or how it works.

Process writing is useful in history, business, the sciences, psychology, and many other areas.

Topic Sentence

Here is the topic sentence of a **how-to paragraph**:

Careful preparation before an interview is the key to getting the job you want.

- The writer begins a how-to paragraph with a topic sentence that clearly states the goal of the process—what the reader should be able to do.

Paragraph and Plan

Here is the entire paragraph:

“Luck is preparation meeting opportunity,” it has been said, and this is true for a job interview. Careful preparation before an interview is the key to getting the job you want. The first step is to learn all you can about the employer. Read about the company in its brochures or in newspaper and magazine articles. A reference librarian can point you to the best sources of company information. You can also find company websites and other useful material on the Internet. Second, as you read, think about the ways your talents match the company’s goals. Third, put yourself in the interviewer’s place, and make a list of questions that he or she will probably ask. Employers want to know about your experience, training, and special skills, like foreign languages. Remember, every employer looks for a capable and enthusiastic team player who will help the firm succeed. Fourth, rehearse your answers to the questions out loud. Practice with a friend or a tape recorder until your responses sound well prepared and confident. Finally, select and prepare a professional-looking interview outfit well in advance to avoid the last-minute panic of a torn hem or stained shirt. When a job candidate has made the effort to prepare, the interviewer is much more likely to be impressed.

- The topic sentence is the second sentence. In the first sentence, the writer has used a quotation to open the paragraph and spark the reader’s interest.
- The body of the how-to paragraph is developed according to time, or chronological, order.* That is, the writer gives directions in the order in which the reader is to complete them. Keeping to a strict chronological order avoids the necessity of saying, *By the way, I forgot to tell you . . .*, or *Whoops, a previous step should have been to. . .*

Before writing this how-to paragraph, the writer probably brainstormed or freewrote to gather ideas and then made an **outline** like this:

TOPIC SENTENCE: Careful preparation before an interview is the key to getting the job you want.

- Step 1:** Learn about the employer
- read company brochures, papers, magazines
 - reference librarian can help
 - check company website

* For more on order, see Chapter 4, “Achieving Coherence,” Part A.

- Step 2:** Think how your talents match company goals
- Step 3:** List interviewer questions
—think about experience, training, special skills
—employers want capable team players
- Step 4:** Rehearse your answers out loud
—practice with friend or tape recorder
- Step 5:** Select your interview outfit
—avoid last-minute panic
—avoid torn hem, stained shirt

CONCLUSION: Interviewer more likely to be impressed

- Note that each step clearly relates to the goal stated in the topic sentence.

The second kind of process paragraph, the **explanation paragraph**, tells how something works, how it happens, or how it came to be:

Many experts believe that recovery from addiction, whether to alcohol or other drugs, has four main stages. The first stage begins when the user finally admits that he or she has a substance abuse problem and wants to quit. At this point, most people seek help from groups like Alcoholics Anonymous or treatment programs because few addicts can “get clean” by themselves. The next stage is withdrawal, when the addict stops using the substance. Withdrawal can be a painful physical and emotional experience, but luckily, it does not last long. After withdrawal comes the most challenging stage—making positive changes in one’s life. Recovering addicts have to learn new ways of spending their time, finding pleasure and relaxation, caring for their bodies, and relating to spouses, lovers, family, and friends. The fourth and final stage is staying off drugs. This open-ended part of the process often calls for ongoing support or therapy. For people once defeated by addiction, the rewards of self-esteem and a new life are well worth the effort.



© John W. Bova/Photo Researchers, Inc.

Just as these photos show each stage of a solar eclipse—as the moon passes between the sun and the earth—so your process paragraphs should clearly describe each step or stage for the reader. Before you write, try to visualize the process as if it were a series of photographs.

Transitional Expressions

Since process paragraphs rely on **chronological order**, or **time sequence**, words and expressions that locate the steps of the process in time are extremely helpful.

Transitional Expressions for Process

Beginning a Process

first
initially
the first stage
the first step

Continuing a Process

afterward then
after that second
later third
meanwhile the second stage
next the next step

Ending a Process

finally
last
the final step

Checklist

The Process of Writing a Process Paragraph

Refer to this checklist of steps as you write a process paragraph of your own.

- ☐ 1. Narrow the topic in light of your audience and purpose.
- ☐ 2. Compose a topic sentence that clearly states the goal or end result of the process you wish to describe.
- ☐ 3. Freewrite or brainstorm to generate steps that might be part of the process. (You may want to freewrite or brainstorm before you narrow the topic.)
- ☐ 4. Drop any irrelevant information or steps that are not really necessary for your explanation of the process.
- ☐ 5. Make an outline or a plan for your paragraph, numbering the steps in the correct time (chronological) sequence.
- ☐ 6. Write a draft of your process paragraph, using transitional expressions to indicate time (chronological) sequence.
- ☐ 7. Revise as necessary, checking for support, unity, logic, and coherence.
- ☐ 8. Proofread for errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, and mechanics.

Suggested Topics for Process Paragraphs

- 1. How to get information about a company you want to work for
- 2. How to prepare your favorite dish
- 3. How to relax or meditate
- 4. How to establish credit (or improve your credit score)
- 5. How to land an interesting job
- 6. How an important discovery was made
- 7. How to find information in the library's electronic card catalog (or reference book section)
- 8. How to be a true friend
- 9. How to get the most out of a doctor visit
- 10. How to get fired, ruin a love affair, or alienate your in-laws (humorous)

11. How to break an unhealthy habit
12. A process you learned at work or school (how to handcuff a suspect, how to take blood pressure, how to make a customer feel welcome, how a lithograph is made, and so forth)
13. How to motivate someone to_____
14. How to shop on a budget for a computer, phone, or television
15. Writer's choice:_____



EXPLORING ONLINE

http://www.ehow.com/how_1323_make-peanut-butter.html

Do you think you can make a scrumptious peanut butter and jelly sandwich? Follow the clear instructions in this video.

<http://www.ehow.com/>

Learn how to do all sorts of things; categories include careers, health, cars, legal, games, and more.

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CHAPTER 9

Definition

A: Single-Sentence Definitions

B: The Definition Paragraph

To define is to explain clearly what a word or term means.

As you write, you will sometimes find it necessary to explain words or terms that you suspect your reader may not know. For example, *net profit* is the profit remaining after all deductions have been taken; a *bonsai* is a dwarfed, ornamentally shaped tree. Such terms can often be defined in just a few carefully chosen words. However, other terms—like *courage*, *racism*, or *a good marriage*—are more difficult to define. They will test your ability to explain them clearly so that your reader knows exactly what you mean when you use them in your writing. They may require an entire paragraph for a complete and thorough definition.

In this chapter, you will learn to write one-sentence definitions and then whole paragraphs of definition. The skill of defining clearly will be useful in such courses as psychology, business, the sciences, history, and English.

A. Single-Sentence Definitions

There are many ways to define a word or term. Three basic ways are **definition by synonym**, **definition by class**, and **definition by negation**.

Definition by Synonym

The simplest way to define a term is to supply a **synonym**, a word that means the same thing. A good synonym definition always uses an easier and more familiar word than the one being defined.

1. *Gregarious* means *sociable*.
2. *To procrastinate* means *to postpone needlessly*.
3. A *wraith* is a *ghost* or *phantom*.
4. *Adroitly* means *skillfully*.

Although you may not have known the words *gregarious*, *procrastination*, *wraith*, and *adroitly* before, the synonym definitions make it very clear what they mean.

A synonym should usually be the same part of speech as the word being defined, so it could be used as a substitute. *Gregarious* and *sociable* are both adjectives; *to procrastinate* and *to postpone* are verb forms; *wraith*, *ghost*, and *phantom* are nouns; *adroitly* and *skillfully* are adverbs.

5. Quarterback Peyton Manning *adroitly* moved his team up the field.
6. Quarterback Peyton Manning *skillfully* moved his team up the field.

- In this sentence *skillfully* can be substituted for *adroitly*.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to come up with a good synonym definition.

Definition by Class

The **class** definition is the one most often required in college and formal writing—in examinations, papers, and reports.

The class definition has two parts. First, the writer places the word to be defined into the larger **category**, or **class**, to which it belongs.

7. *Lemonade* is a *drink* ...
8. An *orphan* is a *child* ...
9. A *dictatorship* is a *form of government* ...

Second, the writer provides the **distinguishing characteristics** or **details** that make this person, object, or idea *different* from all others in that category. What the reader wants to know is what *kind* of drink is lemonade? What

Here is a class definition of the device pictured:
The Play Pump is a water pump that operates when children play on a merry-go-round, thus cheaply bringing water to poor communities in Africa.



© Play Pumps International

specific type of child is an orphan? What *particular* form of government is a dictatorship?

10. *Lemonade* is a drink *made of lemons, sugar, and water*.
11. An orphan is a child *without living parents*.
12. A dictatorship is a form of government *in which one person has absolute control over his or her subjects*.

Think of class definitions as if they were in chart form:

Word	Category or Class	Distinguishing Facts or Details
lemonade	drink	made of lemons, sugar, and water
orphan	child	without living parents
dictatorship	form of government	one person has absolute control over his or her subjects

When you write a class definition, be careful not to place the word or term in too broad or vague a category. For instance, saying that lemonade is a *food* or that an orphan is a *person* will make your job of zeroing in on a distinguishing detail more difficult.

Besides making the category or class as limited as possible, be sure to make your distinguishing facts as specific and exact as you can. Saying that lemonade is a drink *made with water* or that an orphan is a child *who has lost family members* is not specific enough to give your reader an accurate definition.

Definition by Negation

A definition by **negation** means that the writer first says what something is not, and then says what it is.

13. A *good parent* does not just feed and clothe a child but loves, accepts, and supports that child for who he or she is.
14. *College* is not just a place to have a good time but a place to grow intellectually and emotionally.
15. *Liberty* does not mean having the right to do whatever you please but carries the obligation to respect the rights of others.

Definitions by negation are extremely helpful when you think that the reader has a preconceived idea about the word you wish to define. You say that *it is not* what the reader thought, but that *it is* something else entirely.

B. The Definition Paragraph

Sometimes a single-sentence definition may not be enough to define a word or term adequately. In such cases, the writer may need an entire paragraph in which he or she develops the definition by means of examples, descriptions, comparisons, contrasts, and so forth.

Topic Sentence

The topic sentence of a definition paragraph is often one of the single-sentence definitions discussed in Part A: definition by synonym, definition by class, definition by negation.

Here is the topic sentence of a definition paragraph:

A flashback memory can be defined as a vivid, long-lasting memory that is formed at the moment a person learns of a highly emotional event.

Paragraph and Plan

Here is the entire paragraph:

A flashback memory can be defined as a vivid and long-lasting memory formed at the moment a person experiences a highly emotional event. It is as though a mental flashback pops, preserving the moment in great detail. Although flashback memories can be personal, they often are triggered by public events. For example, many older Americans recall exactly what they were doing when they learned that Pearl Harbor was bombed in 1941. Time froze as people crowded around their radios to find out what would happen next. Many more people recall in detail the shocking moment on November 11, 1963, when they heard that President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated. Considered the most widely shared flashback memory of our time, the image of Kennedy's death is burned into the minds of people the world over. More recently, the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center became a flashback memory for millions. Whether they heard the terrible news on their morning commute or were awakened by a panicked voice on the phone telling them to turn on the television, research into memory suggests that they will never forget that day. As these examples show, flashback memories mark some of our most permanent and haunting experiences, moments that were scored into our hearts.

- By repeating the word being defined—or a form of it—in the context of the definition paragraph, the writer helps the reader understand the definition better: “Although *flashback memories* can be personal ...,” “Considered the most widely shared *flashback memory* of our time ...,” “... on the World Trade Center became a *flashback memory* for millions.”
- Before writing the paragraph, the writer probably brainstormed or freewrote to gather ideas and then made an **outline** like this:

TOPIC SENTENCE: A flashbulb memory is a vivid and long-lasting memory formed at the moment a person experiences a highly emotional event.

Example 1: Pearl Harbor

- older Americans recall what they were doing in 1941
- people crowded around radios

Example 2: J. F. Kennedy's assassination

- most widely shared flashbulb memory of our time
- image of Kennedy's death burned into minds all over the world

Example 3: World Trade Center attack

- more recent flashbulb memory for millions
- whether on morning commute or phone, will never forget

CONCLUSION: Flashbulb memories mark our most permanent and haunting experiences.

- Note that each example in the body of the paragraph clearly relates to the definition in the topic sentence.

Although examples are an excellent way to develop a definition paragraph, other methods of development are also possible. For instance, you might compare and contrast* *love* and *lust*, *assertiveness* and *aggressiveness*, or *the leader* and *the follower*. You could also combine definition and persuasion.† Such a paragraph might begin, *College is a dating service* or *Alcoholism is not a moral weakness but a disease*. The rest of the paragraph would have to persuade readers that this definition is valid.

There are no transitional expressions used specifically for definition paragraphs. Sometimes phrases like *can be defined as* or *can be considered* or *means that* can help alert the reader that a definition paragraph will follow.‡

* For more on contrast, see Chapter 10, "Comparison and Contrast."

† For more on persuasion, see Chapter 13, "Persuasion."

‡ For entire essays developed by definition, see Chapter 16, Part E.

Checklist

The Process of Writing a Definition Paragraph

Refer to this checklist of steps as you write a definition paragraph of your own.

- ☐ 1. Narrow the topic in light of your audience and purpose.
- ☐ 2. Compose a topic sentence that uses one of the three basic methods of definition discussed in this chapter: synonym, class, or negation.
- ☐ 3. Decide on the method of paragraph development that is best suited to what you want to say.
- ☐ 4. Freewrite or brainstorm to generate ideas that may be useful in your definition paragraph. (You may want to freewrite or brainstorm before you narrow the topic.)
- ☐ 5. Select the best ideas and drop any ideas that do not clearly relate to the definition in your topic sentence.
- ☐ 6. Make a plan or an outline for your paragraph, numbering the ideas in the order in which you will present them.
- ☐ 7. Write a draft of your definition paragraph, using transitional expressions wherever they might be helpful.
- ☐ 8. Revise as necessary, checking for support, unity, logic, and coherence.
- ☐ 9. Proofread for errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, and mechanics.

Suggested Topics for Definition Paragraphs

- 1. The gossip (or life of the party, Internet addict, co-worker from hell)
- 2. Professionalism
- 3. Self-esteem
- 4. A term from your field of study (like *sustainability*, *broken heart syndrome*, *Oedipus complex*, *placebo*, *Baroque*)
- 5. A term from popular culture (*Spanglish*, *sampling* in music, *whistle blower*, *Twitter*, *avatar*)
- 6. Unemployed (or uninsured)
- 7. Family

8. A disability, such as dyslexia, autism, or ADHD
9. A military term or symbol, such as the Purple Heart medal
10. A slang term you or your friends use
11. Urban legend (see <http://www.snopes.com>)
12. Plagiarism
13. A racist (terrorist, artist, sexist, activist, or other *-ist*)
14. The video-game (or fashion, football, racing car or other) fanatic
15. Writer's choice: _____



EXPLORING ONLINE

http://www.quintcareers.com/jobseeker_glossary.html

Check out this job seeker's glossary of career terms and words.

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/definition.htm>

Read advice about writing longer definitions and one student's essay defining "Yankee."

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CHAPTER 10

Comparison and Contrast

- A:** The Contrast Paragraph and the Comparison Paragraph
- B:** The Comparison and Contrast Paragraph



To **contrast** two persons, places, or things is to examine the ways in which they are different. To **compare** them is to examine the ways in which they are similar.

Contrast and comparison are useful skills in daily life, work, and college. When you shop, you often compare and contrast. For instance, you might compare and contrast two dishwashers to get the better value. In fact, the magazine *Consumer Reports* was created to help consumers compare and contrast different product brands.

Your employer might ask you to compare and contrast two computers, two telephone services, or two shipping crates. Your job is to gather information about the similarities and differences to help your employer choose one over the other. In nearly every college course, you will be expected to compare and contrast—two generals, two types of storm systems, two minerals, or two painters of the same school.

A. The Contrast Paragraph and the Comparison Paragraph

Topic Sentence

Here is the topic sentence of a **contrast** paragraph:

Although soul and hip hop both spring from African American roots, they are very different musical expressions.

- The writer begins a contrast paragraph with a topic sentence that clearly states what two persons, things, or ideas will be contrasted.

Paragraph and Plan

Here is the entire paragraph:

Although soul and hip hop both spring from African American roots, they are very different musical expressions. Soul music borrows from gospel and rhythm and blues. The singer's voice, backed up by live instruments, soars with emotion, with soul. This music captures the optimism of its time—the civil rights movement of the 1960s and hope for social change. There are two types of soul—the smooth Detroit style of the Supremes, Stevie Wonder, and The Temptations and the more gritty, gospel-driven Memphis style of Otis Redding and Booker T and the MGs. Soul music is upbeat and often joyful; its subjects are love and affirmation of the human condition. On the other hand, hip hop (or rap) draws on hard rock, funk, and techno. The rapper chants rhymes against a driving instrumental background that may be prerecorded. Rap grew out of the New York ghettos in the late 1970s and the 1980s, when crack and guns flooded “the hood” and many dreams seemed broken. Of the rival East and West Coast rappers, New Yorkers include Grandmaster Flash, LL Cool J, and the murdered Biggie Smalls, while Los Angeles rappers include Ice Cube and the murdered Tupac Shakur. The subjects of hip hop are racism, crime, and poverty. Both soul and hip hop claim to “tell it like it is.” Hip hop's answer to the soulful Four Tops is the Furious Four. What's in a name? Perhaps the way the listener experiences reality.

—Maurice Bosco, Student

- The writer first provides information about (A) soul music and then gives contrasting parallel information about (B) hip hop.

Before composing the paragraph, the writer probably brainstormed or freewrote to gather ideas and then made an **outline** like this:

TOPIC SENTENCE: Although soul and hip hop both spring from African American roots, they are very different musical expressions.

Points of Contrast	A. Soul	B. Hip Hop
1. influences	gospel, R&B	hard rock, funk, techno
2. sound	soaring voice, live instruments	chanted rhymes; instrumentals may be prerecorded
3. time period	1960s, civil rights, hope for change	1970s–1980s, crack, guns
4. types	Detroit, Memphis	New York, Los Angeles
5. subjects	love, affirmation	racism, crime, poverty

Organized in this manner, the plan for this contrast paragraph helps the writer make sure that the paragraph will be complete. That is, if the historical period of soul is discussed, that of hip hop must also be discussed, and so on, for every point of contrast.

Here is another way to write the same paragraph:

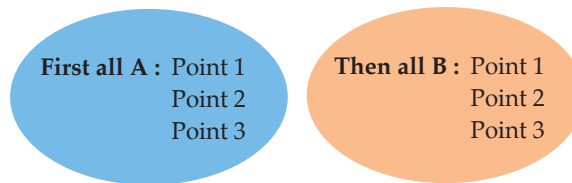
Although soul and hip hop both spring from African American roots, they are very different musical expressions. Soul music borrows from gospel and rhythm and blues, whereas hip hop (or rap) draws on hard rock, funk, and techno. The soul singer's voice, backed up by live instruments, soars with emotion, with soul; however, the rapper chants rhymes against a driving instrumental background that may be prerecorded. Soul music captures the optimism of its time—the civil rights movement of the 1960s and hope for social change. On the other hand, hip hop grew out of the New York ghettos in the late 1970s and the 1980s, when crack and guns flooded “the hood” and many dreams seemed broken. There are two types of soul—the smooth Detroit style of the Supremes, Stevie Wonder, and The Temptations and the more gritty, gospel-driven Memphis style of Otis Redding and Booker T and the MGs. Of the rival East and West Coast rappers, New Yorkers include Grandmaster Flash, LL Cool J, and the murdered Biggie Smalls, while Los Angeles rappers include Ice Cube and the murdered Tupac Shakur. Whereas soul music's subjects are love and affirmation of the human condition,

the subjects of hip hop are racism, crime, and poverty. Both soul and hip hop claim to “tell it like it is.” Hip hop’s answer to the soulful Four Tops is the Furious Four. What’s in a name? Perhaps the way the listener experiences reality.

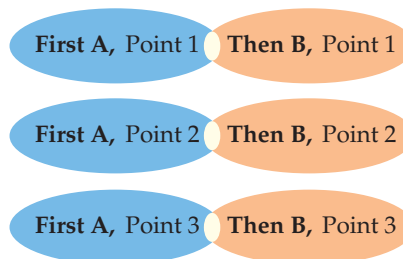
- Instead of giving all the information about soul music and then going on to hip hop, this paragraph moves back and forth between soul and hip hop, dealing with *each point of contrast separately*.

Use either one of these **two patterns** when writing a contrast or a comparison paragraph:

1. Present all the information about **A** and then provide parallel information about **B**:



- This pattern is good for paragraphs and for short compositions. The reader can easily remember what was said about A by the time he or she gets to B.
2. Move back and forth between **A** and **B**. Present one point about **A** and then go to the parallel point about **B**. Then move to the next point and do the same:



- The second pattern is better for longer papers, where it might be hard for the reader to remember what the writer said about A by the time he or she gets to B a few paragraphs later. By going back and forth, the writer makes it easier for the reader to keep the contrasts or comparisons in mind.

What you have learned so far about planning a contrast paragraph holds true for a comparison paragraph as well. Just remember that *contrast stresses differences* whereas *comparison stresses similarities*.

Here is a **comparison** paragraph:

In my family, personality traits are said to skip generations, so that might explain why my grandfather and I have so much in common. My grandfather arrived in the United States at sixteen, a penniless young man from Italy looking for a new life and ready to earn it. He quickly apprenticed himself to a shoe cobbler and never stopped working until he retired fifty-three years later. Similarly, when I was fourteen, I asked permission to apply for my first job as a bank teller. My parents smiled and said, “She’s just like Grandpa.” Though everyone else in my family spends money the minute it reaches their hands, my habit of saving every penny does not seem strange to them. My grandfather also was careful with money, building his own shoe repair business out of nothing. He loved to work in his large vegetable garden and brought bags of carrots and tomatoes to our house on Saturday mornings. Like him, I enjoy the feeling of dirt on my fingers and the surprise of seedlings sprouting overnight. Though I raise zinnias instead of zucchinis, I know where I inherited a passion to make things grow. Only in opportunities, we differed. Although my grandfather’s education ended with third grade, I am fortunate to attend college—and hope that education will be my legacy to the generations that come after me.

—Angela De Renzi, Student

Transitional Expressions

Transitional expressions in contrast paragraphs stress *opposition* and *difference*:

Transitional Expressions for Contrast

conversely	nevertheless
however	on the contrary
in contrast	on the one hand
in opposition	on the other hand
although, even though, whereas, while*	but, yet†

* For more on subordinating conjunctions like *although* and *while*, see Chapter 26, Part B.

† For more on coordinating conjunctions like *but* and *yet*, see Chapter 26, Part A.

Transitional expressions in comparison paragraphs stress *similarities*:

Transitional Expressions for Comparison

also	in a similar way
as well	in the same way
equally	likewise
in addition	similarly

As you write, avoid using just one or two of these transitional expressions. Learn new ones from the list and practice them in your paragraphs.*

Checklist

The Process of Writing a Comparison or Contrast Paragraph

Refer to this checklist of steps as you write a comparison or contrast paragraph of your own.

- ☐ 1. Narrow the topic in light of your audience and purpose.
- ☐ 2. Compose a topic sentence that clearly states that a comparison or a contrast will follow.
- ☐ 3. Freewrite or brainstorm to generate as many points of comparison or contrast as you can think of. (You may want to freewrite or brainstorm before you narrow the topic.)
- ☐ 4. Choose the points you will use, and drop any details that are not really part of the comparison or the contrast.
- ☐ 5. List parallel points of comparison or of contrast for both A and B.
- ☐ 6. Make a plan or an outline, numbering all the points of comparison or contrast in the order in which you will present them in the paragraph.
- ☐ 7. Write a draft of your comparison or contrast paragraph, using transitional expressions that stress either differences or similarities.
- ☐ 8. Revise as necessary, checking for support, unity, logic, and coherence.
- ☐ 9. Proofread for errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, and mechanics.

* For entire essays developed by comparison or contrast, see Chapter 17, Part A.

Suggested Topics for Comparison or Contrast Paragraphs

1. Compare or contrast two attitudes toward money (the spendthrift and the miser) or partnership (the confirmed single and the committed partner).
2. Compare or contrast two ways of dealing with anger, loss, grief, or disappointment.
3. Compare or contrast a job you hated and a job you loved.
4. Compare or contrast two consumer items of the same type (cars, computers, phones).
5. Compare or contrast the way something is done in the United States and the way it is done in another country (or the ways something is done in two different states).
6. Compare or contrast two high schools or colleges you have attended (perhaps one in the United States and one in another country).
7. Compare or contrast two athletes in the same sport (or two entertainers, politicians, professors).
8. Compare or contrast your expectations of a person, place, or situation and the reality.
9. Compare or contrast two career fields you are considering.
10. Writer's choice: _____

B. The Comparison and Contrast Paragraph

Sometimes an assignment will ask you to write a paragraph that both compares and contrasts, one that stresses both similarities and differences.

Here is a comparison and contrast paragraph:

Although contemporary fans would find the game played by the Knickerbockers—the first organized baseball club—similar to modern baseball, they would also note some startling differences. In 1845, as now, the four bases of the playing field were set in a diamond shape, ninety feet from one another. Nine players took the field. The object of the game was to score points by hitting a pitched ball and running around the bases. The teams changed sides after three outs. However, the earlier game was also different. The umpire sat at a

table along the third base line instead of standing behind home plate. Unlike the modern game, the players wore no gloves. Rather than firing the ball over the plate at ninety miles an hour, the pitcher gently tossed it underhand to the batter. Since there were no balls and strikes, the batter could wait for the pitch he wanted. The game ended not when nine innings were completed but when one team scored twenty-one runs, which were called “aces.”

Before composing this comparison and contrast paragraph, the writer probably brainstormed or freewrote to gather ideas and then made an **outline** like this:

TOPIC SENTENCE: Although contemporary fans would find the game played by the Knickerbockers—the first organized baseball club—similar to modern baseball, they would also note some startling differences.

Comparisons	Knickerbockers	Modern Game
Point 1	four bases, ninety feet apart, in diamond shape	
Point 2	nine players	
Point 3	scoring points	
Point 4	three outs	
Contrasts		
Point 1	umpire sat at third base line	umpire at home plate
Point 2	no gloves	gloves
Point 3	pitcher gently tossed ball	pitcher fires ball at plate
Point 4	no balls and strikes	balls and strikes
Point 5	twenty-one “aces” to win, no innings	most runs to win, nine innings

- A plan or outline such as this makes it easier for the writer to organize a great deal of material.
- The writer begins by listing all the points of comparison—how the Knickerbockers’ game and modern baseball are similar. Then the writer lists all the points of contrast—how they are different.

Working Through the Comparison and Contrast Paragraph

You can work through the comparison and contrast paragraph in the same way that you do a comparison paragraph or a contrast paragraph. Follow the steps in the earlier checklist, but make certain that your paragraph shows both similarities and differences.

Suggested Topics for Comparison and Contrast Paragraphs

1. Compare and contrast two different places you've lived.
2. Compare and contrast the requirements of two jobs or careers.
3. Compare and contrast weddings, parties, or funerals in two different cultures.
4. Compare and contrast two albums, videos, or websites on similar subjects.
5. Compare and contrast your life now and your life five years ago.
6. Compare and contrast two singers, bands, or artists.
7. Compare and contrast shopping at two different discount stores (or another type).
8. Compare and contrast two popular television programs of the same type (newscasts, talk shows, situation comedies, and so on).
9. Compare and contrast two attitudes toward one subject (firearms, immigration, and so on).
10. Writer's choice: _____

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/ParDevCC.html>

Review of the comparison/contrast paragraph, with examples

<http://muskingum.edu/~cal/database/general/organization.html#Comparison>

Print these graphic outlines to help plan your paragraph.

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CHAPTER 11

Classification

To **classify** is to gather into types, kinds, or categories according to a single basis of division.

Mailroom personnel, for example, might separate incoming mail into four piles: orders, bills, payments, and inquiries. Once the mail has been divided in this manner—according to which department should receive each pile—it can be efficiently delivered.

The same information can be classified in more than one way. The Census Bureau collects a variety of data about the people living in the United States. One way to classify the data is by age group—the number of people under eighteen, between eighteen and fifty-five, over fifty-five, and over seventy. Such information might be useful in developing programs for college-bound youth or for the elderly. Other ways of dividing the population are by geographic location, occupation, family size, level of education, and so on.

Whether you classify rocks by their origin for a geology course or children by their stages of growth for a psychology course, you will be organizing large groups into smaller, more manageable units that can be explained to your reader.

Topic Sentence

Here is the topic sentence for a classification paragraph:

Gym-goers can be classified according to their priorities at the gym as sweaty fanatics, fashionistas, busybodies, or fit normals.

- The writer begins a classification paragraph with a topic sentence that clearly states what group of people or things will be classified.

Paragraph and Plan

Here is the entire paragraph:

Gym-goers can be classified according to their priorities at the gym as sweaty fanatics, fashionistas, busybodies, and fit normals. Sweaty fanatics take gym-going to the extreme. They hog the machines, drip sweat everywhere, and barely look up if someone falls off the treadmill beside them. Occasionally, they will stare at the mirror, admiring the muscle group they are working on. The fashionistas also admire their own reflections, but they barely break a sweat. For them, the gym is just another excuse to buy clothes. They wear perfectly matched workout clothes with color-coordinated sport watches and gym shoes. The third group, the busybodies, can't stop talking. Whether it's making idle chitchat or correcting another exerciser's form on a machine, they seem unable to shut up. Not even headphones and one-word answers can stop the busybodies from babbling. Luckily, the fit normals keep things from getting too far out of control. They come to the gym to work out, stay healthy, and go home, but they remember that basic good manners apply in every setting.

—Laurie Zamot, Student

Before composing the paragraph, the writer probably brainstormed or freewrote to gather ideas and then made an **outline** like this:

TOPIC SENTENCE: Gym-goers can be classified according to their priorities at the gym as sweaty fanatics, fashionistas, busybodies, or fit normals.

Type 1: Sweaty fanatics

- hog machines; drip sweat
- barely look up if someone falls
- stare in mirror, admiring muscles

Type 2: Fashionistas

- admire themselves but don't sweat
- excuse to buy clothes
- matched workout clothes
- coordinating sport watches and gym shoes

- Type 3:** Busybodies
 —can't stop talking, advising
 —headphones, short answers don't work
- Type 4:** Fit normals
 —keep things from going out of control
 —work out, go home
 —remember good manners even in gym

- Note that the body of the paragraph discusses all four types of gym-goers mentioned in the topic sentence and does not add any new ones.

This classification paragraph sticks to a single method of classification: *the priorities of gym-goers at the gym*. If the paragraph had also discussed a fourth category—*left-handed gym-goers*—the initial basis of classification would fall apart because *left-handedness* has nothing to do with *the priorities of different gym-goers*.

The topic sentence of a classification paragraph usually has two parts: the *topic* and the *basis of classification*. The basis of classification is the controlling idea: it *controls* how the writer will approach the topic. Stating it in writing will help keep the paragraph on track.

There is no set rule about which category to present first, second, or last in a classification paragraph. However, the paragraph should follow some kind of **logical sequence** from the most to least outrageous, least to most expensive, from the largest to the smallest category, and so on.*†

Transitional Expressions

Transitional expressions in classification paragraphs stress divisions and categories:

Transitional Expressions for Classification	
can be divided	the first type
can be classified	the second kind
can be categorized	the last category

* For more on order, see Chapter 4, “Achieving Coherence,” Part A.

† For complete essays developed by classification, see Chapter 17, Part B.

Checklist

The Process of Writing a Classification Paragraph

Refer to this checklist of steps as you write a classification paragraph.

- ☐ 1. Narrow the topic in light of your audience and purpose. Think in terms of a group of people or things that can be classified easily into types or categories.
- ☐ 2. Decide on a single basis of classification. This basis will depend on what information you wish to give your audience.
- ☐ 3. Compose a topic sentence that clearly shows what you are dividing into categories or types. If you wish, your topic sentence can state the basis on which you are making the classification and the types that will be discussed in the paragraph.
- ☐ 4. List the categories into which the group is being classified. Be sure that your categories cover all the possibilities. Do not add any new categories that are not logically part of your original basis of classification.
- ☐ 5. Freewrite, cluster, or brainstorm to generate information, details, and examples for each of the categories. (You may want to prewrite before you narrow the topic.)
- ☐ 6. Select the best details and examples, and drop those that are not relevant to your classification.
- ☐ 7. Make a plan or an outline for your paragraph, numbering the categories in the order in which you will present them.
- ☐ 8. Write a draft of your classification paragraph, using transitional expressions wherever they may be helpful.
- ☐ 9. Revise as necessary, checking for support, unity, logic, and coherence.
- ☐ 10. Proofread for errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, and mechanics.

Suggested Topics for Classification Paragraphs

1. Ways that people manage their finances (organize or make decisions)
2. Co-workers at your job
3. Problems facing college freshmen or someone new to a job

4. Clothing in your closet
5. Types of resources in the college library
6. College instructors
7. Dancers at a party or club
8. Ways that students prepare for exams
9. Shoppers
10. Performers of one kind of music
11. Marriages or partnerships
12. Financial aid sources for college
13. Styles of jeans
14. Colleges in your city or area
15. Writer's choice: _____



EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://www.filmratings.com>

Click “ratings guide” for movie classifications.

<http://sln.fi.edu/tfi/units/life/classify/classify.html>

Amazing introduction to the classification of plants and animals

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.

CHAPTER 12

Cause and Effect

The ability to think through **causes and effects** is a key to success in many college courses, jobs, and everyday situations. Daily we puzzle over the **causes** of, or reasons for, events: What caused one brother to drop out of school and another to succeed brilliantly? What causes Jenine's asthma attacks? Why did the stock market plunge 300 points?

Effects are the *results* of a cause or causes. Does playing violent computer games affect a child's behavior? What are the effects of being a twin, keeping a secret, or winning the lottery?

Most events worth examining have complex, not simple, causes and effects. That is, they may have several causes and several effects. Certainly, in many fields, questions of cause and effect challenge even the experts: *What will be the long-term effects of the breakup of the former Soviet Union? What causes the HIV virus to disappear from the blood of some infected babies?* (This one answer could help save millions of lives.)

Topic Sentence

Here is the topic statement of a cause and effect paragraph; the writer has chosen to break the information into two sentences.

What killed off the dinosaurs—and 70 percent of life on earth—65 million years ago? According to recent research, this massive destruction had three causes.

Paragraph and Plan

Here is the entire paragraph:

What killed off the dinosaurs—and 70 percent of life on earth—65 million years ago? According to recent research, this massive destruction had three causes. Dr. Peter Ward of the University of Washington reports that the first cause was simple “background extinction.” This is the normal disappearance of some animals and plants that goes on all the time. Second, a drop in sea level during this period slowly destroyed about 25 percent more of the world’s species. Last and most dramatic, a comet as big as Manhattan smashed into the earth near Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula, literally shaking the world. The huge buried crater left by this comet was found in 1991. Now Dr. Ward has proved that ash and a rare metal from that fiery crash fell around the globe. This means that the impact, fires, smoke, and ash quickly wiped out the dinosaurs and much of life on earth. This great “die-off” cleared the way for mammals to dominate the earth.

Before writing the paragraph, the writer probably jotted an outline or plan like this:

TOPIC SENTENCE: According to recent research, this massive destruction had three causes.

—write a catchy introductory sentence?

—mention time, 65 million years ago

Cause 1: “background extinction”

—normal disappearance of animals and plants

—give credit to Dr. Ward

Cause 2: drop in sea level

—25 percent more species destroyed

Cause 3: giant comet hit earth

—big as Manhattan

—crater found in 1991 near Yucatan Peninsula

—now Ward proves ash and rare metal circled globe

—this comet destroyed dinosaurs and others

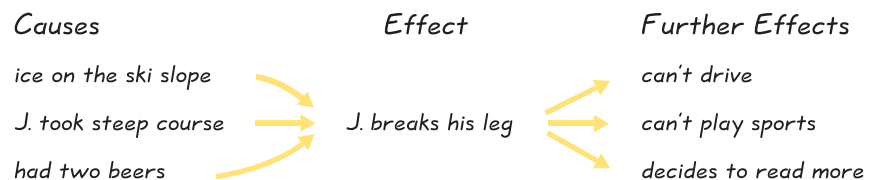
CONCLUSION: “die-off” cleared way for mammals—OR tie to current news and films about comet danger

Other paragraphs examine *effects*, not causes. Either they try to predict future effects of something happening now, or they analyze past effects of something that happened earlier, as does this paragraph:

For Christy Haubegger, the lack of Latina role models had life-changing consequences. As a Mexican American girl adopted by Anglo parents, Christy found no reflection of herself in teen magazines or books. One result of seeing mostly blonde, blue-eyed models was an increase in her adolescent insecurities. A more damaging effect was Christy’s confusion as she wondered what career to pursue; there were no Hispanic role models in schoolbooks to suggest possible futures for this excellent student. Even at Stanford Law School, Christy and her friends missed the inspiration and encouragement of professional Latina role models. At Stanford, Christy began to see this problem as an opportunity. She decided to start a national magazine that would showcase talented and successful Latinas. The 27-year-old made a detailed business plan and, incredibly, won the financial backing of the CEO of *Essence* magazine. In 1996, the first issue of *Latina* hit the newstands—the very positive consequence of an old loneliness.

- Notice that the paragraph first discusses negative effects and then a positive one.

Before you write about causes or effects, do some mental detective work. First, search out the three most important causes or effects. For example, if you are trying to understand the causes of a friend’s skiing accident, you might consider the snow conditions that day, whether he took unnecessary risks, and whether he had been drinking.



In exploring the effects of something, consider both short-term and long-term effects and both negative and positive effects. (Although Jay could *not* do many things, perhaps he took advantage of his recovery time to read more or to learn a new computer program.)

Artist Joe Mariscal calls this large ceramic work “Cause and Effect.” Why do you think he chose this title? What is the cause, and what is the effect? What statement is the artist making?



© Joe Mariscal

Problems to Avoid in Cause and Effect Writing

1. **Do not oversimplify.** Avoid the trap of naming one cause for a complex problem: *Why did they divorce? Because she is a hothead.* Or, *The reason that reading scores have fallen in the school is television.* Searching for the three most important causes or effects is a good way to avoid oversimplifying.
2. **Do not confuse time order with causation.** If your eye starts watering seconds after the doorbell rings, you cannot assume that the doorbell made your eye water. Were you peeling onions? Is it allergy season? Do you need to wet your contact lenses?
3. **Do not confuse causes and effects.** This sounds obvious, but separating causes and effects can be tricky. (Is Rita’s positive attitude the cause of her success in sales or the result of it?)

Transitional Expressions

These transitional expressions are helpful in cause and effect paragraphs, which often imply order of importance or time order:*

* To read essays of cause and effect, see Chapter 17, Part C.

Transitional Expressions

To show causes

the first cause (second, third)
the first reason (second, third)
yet another factor
because of
is caused by
results from

To show effects

one important effect
another result
a third outcome
as a result
consequently
then, next, therefore, thus

Checklist

The Process of Writing a Cause and Effect Paragraph

Refer to this checklist of steps as you write a paragraph.

- ☐ 1. Narrow the topic in light of your audience and purpose. Think of a subject that can be analyzed for clear causes or effects.
- ☐ 2. Decide whether you will emphasize causes or effects. What information would be most interesting to your audience?
- ☐ 3. Compose a topic sentence that states the subject and indicates whether causes or effects will be discussed.
- ☐ 4. Now freewrite, brainstorm, or cluster to find at least three possible causes or effects. Do your mental detective work. At this stage, think of all possible causes; think of short- and long-term effects, as well as positive and negative effects.
- ☐ 5. Select the best causes or effects with which to develop your paragraph. Drop those that are not relevant.
- ☐ 6. Make a plan or an outline for your paragraph, numbering the causes or effects in the order in which you will present them.
- ☐ 7. Write a first draft of your cause and effect paragraph, explaining each point fully so that your reader understands just how X caused Y. Use transitional expressions to emphasize these relationships.
- ☐ 8. Revise as necessary, checking for good support, unity, logic, and coherence. Does your paragraph have an interesting opening sentence?
- ☐ 9. Proofread for errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, and mechanics. Especially watch for your personal error patterns.

Suggested Topics for Cause and Effect Paragraphs

1. Reasons why someone made an important decision
2. Causes of dropping out of school (or attending college)
3. Reasons for doing volunteer work
4. Causes of a marriage or divorce (friendship or end of friendship)
5. Reasons why a child dislikes school
6. Causes of an act of courage or cowardice
7. Causes or effects of membership in a group (choir, band, sports team, church, or gang)
8. Effects of high blood pressure, alcoholism, diabetes, or some other illness
9. Effects of a certain event (like the death of a loved one, a medical diagnosis, or a move to a new place)
10. Effects of losing one's job
11. Effects of living in a particular place (such as a repressive country or home or a place that is rural, urban, poor, rich, ethnically diverse)
12. Effects (positive or negative) of a habit or practice, such as meditation or overeating
13. Effects of a superstition or prejudice
14. Effects of e-mail, a computer, cell phone, or other technology on a person's life
15. Writer's choice: _____



EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/cill/exercises/cause&effect.htm>

Review of vocabulary and grammar needed to describe causes and effects

<http://www.shsu.edu/~txcae/Powerpoints/prepostest/causeeffect2.html>

Test yourself! Quiz on the words showing cause and effect

http://www.delmar.edu/engl/wrtctr/handouts/Composition_Website/Cause.htm

Helpful advice and review for writing cause and effect papers

Basic Writing CourseMate

Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.

CHAPTER 13

Persuasion

 To persuade is to convince someone that a particular opinion or point of view is the correct one.

Any time you argue with a friend, you are each trying to persuade or convince the other that your opinion is the right one. Commercials and advertisements are another form of persuasion. Advertisers attempt to convince the audience that the product they sell—whether jeans, a soft drink, or an automobile—is the best one to purchase.

You will often have to persuade in writing. For instance, if you want a raise, you will have to write a persuasive memo to convince your employer that you deserve one. You will have to back up, or support, your request with proof, listing important projects you have completed, noting new responsibilities you have taken upon yourself, or showing how you have increased sales.

Once you learn how to persuade logically and rationally, you will be less likely to accept the false, misleading, and emotional arguments that you hear and read every day. Persuasion is vital in daily life, in nearly all college courses, and in most careers.

Topic Sentence

Here is the topic sentence of a **persuasive** paragraph:

Passengers should refuse to ride in any vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking.

Paragraph and Plan

Here is the entire paragraph:

Passengers should refuse to ride in any vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking. First and most important, such a refusal could save lives. The National Council on Alcoholism reports that drunk driving causes 25,000 deaths and 50 percent of all traffic accidents each year. Not only the drivers but the passengers who agree to travel with them are responsible. Second, riders might tell themselves that some people drive well even after a few drinks, but this is just not true. Dr. Burton Belloc of the local Alcoholism Treatment Center explains that even one drink can lengthen the reflex time and weaken the judgment needed for safe driving. Other riders might feel foolish to ruin a social occasion or inconvenience themselves or others by speaking up, but risking their lives is even more foolish. Finally, by refusing to ride with a drinker, one passenger could influence other passengers or the driver. Marie Furillo, a student at Central High School, is an example. When three friends who had obviously been drinking offered her a ride home from school, she refused, despite the driver's teasing. Hearing Marie's refusal, two of her friends got out of the car. Until the laws are changed and a vast re-education takes place, the bloodshed on American highways will probably continue. But there is one thing people can do: They can refuse to risk their lives for the sake of a party.

Before composing this persuasive paragraph, the writer probably brainstormed or freewrote to gather ideas and then made an **outline** like this:

TOPIC SENTENCE: Passengers should refuse to ride in any vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking.

Reason 1: Refusal could save lives (**predicting a consequence**).

—statistics on deaths and accidents (**facts**)

—passengers are equally responsible

Reason 2: Riders might say some drinkers drive well—not true (**answering the opposition**).

—Dr. Belloc's explanation (**referring to authority**)

Reason 3: Others might feel foolish speaking up, but risking lives is more foolish (**answering the opposition**).

Reason 4: One rider might influence other passengers.

—Marie Furillo (**example**)

CONCLUSION: Bloodshed will probably continue, but people can refuse to risk their lives.

- Note how each reason clearly supports the topic sentence.

Transitional Expressions

The following transitional expressions are helpful in persuasive paragraphs:

Transitional Expressions for Persuasion

Give Reasons

another, next
first (second, third)
importantly
last, finally

Answer the Opposition

granted that
of course
on the other hand
some may say

Draw Conclusions

consequently
hence
therefore
thus

Methods of Persuasion

The drinking-and-driving example showed the basic kinds of support used in persuasive paragraphs: **facts**, **referring to an authority**, **examples**, **predicting the consequences**, and **answering the opposition**. Although you will rarely use all of them in one paragraph, you should be familiar with them all. Here are some more details:

1. **Facts:** **Facts** are simply statements of *what is*. They should appeal to the reader's mind, not just to the emotions. The source of your facts should be clear to the reader. If you wish to prove that children's eyesight should be checked every year by a doctor, you might look for supporting facts in appropriate books and magazines, or you might ask your eye doctor for information. Your paper might say, "Many people suffer serious visual impairment later in life because they received insufficient or inadequate eye care when they were children, according to an article in *Better Vision*."^{*}
Avoid the vague "everyone knows that" or "it is common knowledge that" or "they all say." Such statements will make your reader justifiably suspicious of your "facts."
2. **Referring to an authority:** An **authority** is an expert, someone who can be relied on to give unbiased facts and information. If you wish to convince your readers that asthma is a far more serious illness than most people realize, you

^{*} For more on summarizing and quoting outside sources, see Chapter 19, "Strengthening an Essay with Research."

might speak with an emergency-room physician about the numbers of patients treated for asthma attacks, or you might quote experts from the literature of national organizations like the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America or the American Lung Association. These are all excellent and knowledgeable authorities whose opinions on medical matters would be considered valid and unbiased.

Avoid appealing to “authorities” who are interesting or glamorous but who are not experts. A basketball player certainly knows about sports, but probably knows little about cameras or cookware.

3. **Examples:** An **example** should clearly relate to the argument and should be typical enough to support it.* If you wish to convince your reader that high schools should provide more funds than they do for women’s sports, you might say, “Jefferson High School, for instance, has received inquiries from sixty female students who would be willing to join a women’s basketball or baseball team if the school could provide the uniforms, the space, and a coach.”

Avoid examples that are not typical enough to support your general statement. That your friend was once bitten by a dog does not adequately prove that all dogs are dangerous pets.

4. **Predicting the consequence:** **Predicting the consequence** helps the reader visualize what will occur if *something does or does not happen*. To convince your readers that a college education should be free to all qualified students, you might say, “If bright but economically deprived students cannot attend college because they cannot afford it, our society will be robbed of their talents.”

Avoid exaggerating the consequence. For instance, telling the reader, “If you don’t eat fresh fruit every day, you will never be truly healthy,” exaggerates the consequences of not eating fresh fruit and makes the reader understandably suspicious.

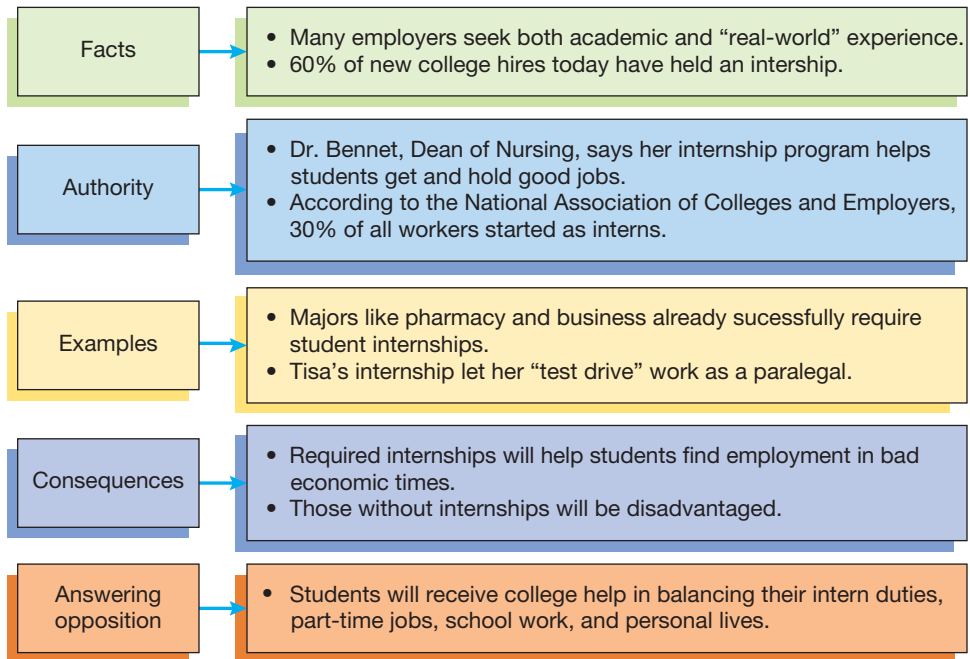
5. **Answering the opposition:** **Answering possible critics** shows that you are aware of the opposition’s argument and are able to respond to it. If you wish to convince your readers that your candidate is the best on the ballot, you might say, “Some have criticized him for running a low-key campaign, but he feels that the issues and his stand on them should speak for themselves.”

Avoid calling the opposition “fools” or “crooks.” Attack their ideas, not their character.

* For more work on examples, see Chapter 5, “Illustration.”

Building Blocks of Effective Persuasive Writing

Topic: Every college student should complete an internship in his or her field of study.



Considering the Audience

In addition to providing adequate proof for your argument, pay special attention to the **audience** as you write persuasively. In general, we assume that our audience is much like us—reasonable people who wish to learn the truth. But because argument can evoke strong feelings, directing your persuasive paper toward a particular audience can be helpful. Consider just *what kind of evidence* this audience would respond to. For instance, if you were attempting to persuade parents to volunteer their time to establish a local Scout troop, you might explain to them the various ways in which their children would benefit from the troop. In other words, show these parents how the troop is important to *them*. You might also say that you realize how much time they already spend on family matters and how little spare time they have. By doing so, you let them know that you understand their resistance to the argument and that you are sympathetic to their doubts. When you take your audience into consideration, you will make your persuasive paragraph more convincing.*†

* For more work on audience, see Chapter 1, “Exploring the Writing Process,” Part B.

† For complete essays developed by persuasion, see Chapter 17, Part D.



WRITING ASSIGNMENT

To help you take a stand for a persuasive paragraph of your own, try the following exercises on notebook paper:

1. List five things you would like to see changed at your college.
2. List five things you would like to see changed in your home *or* at your job.
3. List five things that annoy you or make you angry. What can be done about them?
4. Imagine yourself giving a speech on national television. What message would you like to convey?

From your lists, pick one topic you would like to write a persuasive paragraph about. Now make a plan or an outline for a paragraph on a separate sheet of paper. Use at least two of the five methods of persuasion. Arrange your reasons in a logical order, and write the most persuasive paragraph you can.

Checklist

The Process of Writing a Persuasive Paragraph

Refer to this checklist of steps as you write a persuasive paragraph of your own.

- ☐ 1. Narrow the topic in light of your audience and purpose. What do you wish to persuade your reader to believe or do?
- ☐ 2. Compose a topic sentence that clearly states your position for or against. Use *should*, *ought*, *must*, or their negatives.
- ☐ 3. Freewrite or brainstorm to generate all the reasons you can think of. (You may want to freewrite or brainstorm before you narrow the topic.)
- ☐ 4. Select the best three or four reasons and drop those that do not relate to your topic sentence.
- ☐ 5. If you use *facts*, be sure that they are accurate and that the source of your facts is clear. If you use an *example*, be sure that it is a valid one and adequately supports your argument. If you *refer to an authority*, be sure that he or she is really an authority and *not biased*. If one of your reasons *predicts the consequence*, be sure that the consequence flows logically from your statement. If one of your reasons *answers the opposition*, be sure to state the opposition's point of view fairly and refute it adequately.

- ☐ 6. Make a plan or an outline for the paragraph, numbering the reasons in the order in which you will present them.
- ☐ 7. Write a draft of your persuasive paragraph, using transitional expressions wherever they may be helpful.
- ☐ 8. Revise as necessary, checking for support, unity, logic, and coherence.
- ☐ 9. Proofread for errors in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, and mechanics.

Suggested Topic Sentences for Persuasive Paragraphs

A list of possible topic sentences for persuasive paragraphs follows. Pick one statement and decide whether you agree or disagree with it. Modify the topic sentence accordingly. Then write a persuasive paragraph that supports your view, explaining and illustrating from your own experience, your observations of others, or your reading.

1. Companies should not be allowed to read their employees' e-mail.
2. Occasional arguments are good for friendship.
3. A required course at this college should be _____ (Great American Success Stories, Survey of World Art, How to Manage Money, or another).
4. The families of AIDS patients are the hidden victims of AIDS.
5. Condom machines should be permitted on campus.
6. The death penalty should (or should not) be used to punish certain crimes.
7. Expensive weddings are an obscene waste of money.
8. Gay people should be allowed to marry.
9. Smoking marijuana should be legal for adults over the age of 21.
10. Drunk drivers who cause accidents with fatalities should be charged with murder.
11. _____ is the most _____ (hilarious, educational, mindless, racist) show on television.
12. To improve academic achievement, this town should create same-sex high schools (all boys, all girls).
13. No one under the age of 21 should be allowed to have body piercing (tattoos, cosmetic surgery, or other).

14. _____ (writer, singer, or actor) has a message that more people need to hear.
15. Writer's choice: _____



EXPLORING ONLINE

http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/persuasion_map/

This online persuasion map helps you create your argument.

<http://www.tesoltasks.com/ArgVocab.htm>

Practice using the vocabulary of argument.

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.

Unit 4

Writing the Essay

CHAPTER 14

The Process of Writing an Essay

CHAPTER 15

The Introduction, the Conclusion, and the Title

CHAPTER 16

Types of Essays, Part 1

CHAPTER 17

Types of Essays, Part 2

CHAPTER 18

Summarizing, Quoting, and Avoiding Plagiarism

CHAPTER 19

Strengthening an Essay with Research

CHAPTER 20

Writing Under Pressure: The Essay Examination



CHAPTER 14

The Process of Writing an Essay

- A:** Looking at the Essay
- B:** Writing the Thesis Statement
- C:** Generating Ideas For the Body
- D:** Organizing Ideas into an Outline
- E:** Ordering and Linking Paragraphs in the Essay
- F:** Writing and Revising Essays



Although writing effective paragraphs will help you complete short-answer exams and do brief writing assignments, much of the time—in college and in the business world—you will be required to write essays and reports several paragraphs long. Essays are longer and contain more ideas than the single paragraphs you have practiced so far, but they require many of the same skills that paragraphs do.

This chapter will help you apply the skills of paragraph writing to the writing of short essays. It will guide you from a look at the essay and its parts through planning and writing essays of your own.

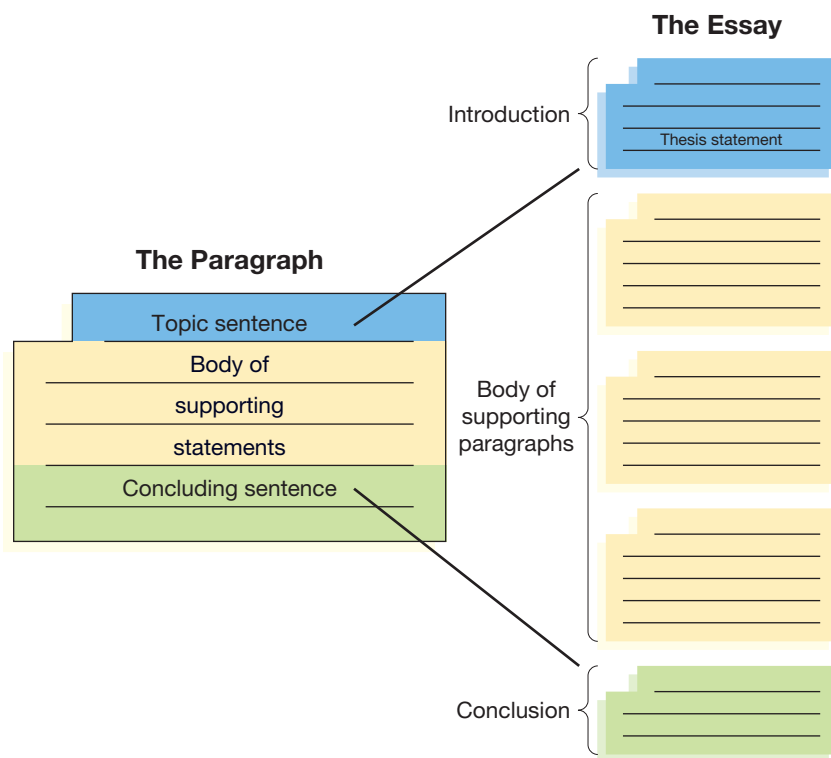
A. Looking at the Essay

An **essay** is a group of paragraphs about one subject. In many ways, an essay is like a paragraph in longer, fuller form. Both have an introduction, a body, and

a conclusion. Both explain one main, or controlling, idea with details, facts, and examples. An essay is not just a padded paragraph, however. An essay is longer because it contains more ideas.

The paragraphs in an essay are part of a larger whole, so each one has a special purpose.

- The **introductory paragraph*** opens the essay and tries to catch the reader's interest. It usually contains a **thesis statement**, one sentence that states the main idea of the entire essay.
- The **body** of an essay consists of one, two, three, or more paragraphs, each one making a different point about the main idea.
- The **conclusion**[†] brings the essay to a close. It might be a sentence or a paragraph long.



* For more work on introductions, see Chapter 15, "The Introduction, the Conclusion, and the Title."

[†] For more work on conclusions, see Chapter 15, "The Introduction, the Conclusion, and the Title."

Here is a student essay:

SUNLIGHT

Introduction

Thesis statement

*Topic sentence
introducing point 1*

*Details, facts, examples
supporting point 1*

(1) An old proverb says, “He who brings sunlight into the lives of others cannot keep it from himself.” Students who volunteer through the Center for Community Service often experience this wisdom firsthand. By giving their time and talents to the local community, these students not only enrich the lives of others, but they receive many surprising benefits for themselves.

(2) Most important, volunteering can bring a sense of empowerment, a knowledge that we can make a difference. This is significant because many students feel passive and hopeless about “the way things are.” My first volunteer assignment was working with a group of troubled teenagers. Together we transformed a dismal vacant lot into a thriving business. The three-acre lot in the South Bronx, surrounded by abandoned buildings, was full of junk and heaps of wood. One teenager kicked a piece of wood and said, “Why don’t we chop this up and sell it?” We surprised him by taking his idea seriously. We helped these young men, some of whom already had rap sheets, to chop up the wood, bundle it, contact restaurants with wood-burning ovens, and make deliveries. The restaurants, most of them very elegant, were happy to get cheap firewood, and the

Volunteers with Habitat for Humanity build houses in Texas.



© Eric Gay / AP Images

Topic sentence
introducing point 2

Details, facts, examples
supporting point 2

Topic sentence
introducing point 3

Details, facts, examples
supporting point 3

Conclusion

teenagers were thrilled to be treated like businesspeople. Most rewarding for me was seeing the changes in Raymond, “Mr. Apathy,” as he took on a leading role in our project.

(3) Second, the volunteer often gains a deeper understanding of others. Another student, Shirley Miranda, worked with SHARE, a food cooperative that distributes bulk food once a month to its members. SHARE does not give food as charity; rather, each person does a job like unloading trucks at 5 A.M. on delivery day or packing boxes in exchange for healthy, inexpensive food. For Shirley, SHARE was a lesson in human relationships. Reflecting on her service, she wrote: “I learned that people may sometimes need guidance with dignity rather than total dependency on others. I saw that true teamwork is based on people’s similarities, not their differences.” SHARE so impressed Shirley that she worked in the program through her graduation.

(4) Finally, volunteering can be a way to “try on” a work environment. Sam Mukarji, an engineering student, volunteers on Saturdays as a docent, or guide, at the Museum of Science and Industry, which he describes as “my favorite place on the planet.” Sam admires the creative uses of science in this museum, such as the virtual-reality experience of piloting an airplane. When many visitors asked Sam how the exhibit was put together, he suggested that the museum include signs explaining the technology. His idea was accepted, and he was asked to help implement it. Struggling to explain the exhibit in a clear way taught Sam how important writing skills are, even for an engineering major. Now he is paying closer attention to his English assignments and has discovered that working in a science museum would be his “dream job.”

(5) Stories like these are not unusual at the Center for Community Service. Whenever the volunteers meet there, we always seem to end up talking about the positive ways in which volunteering has changed our lives. The Center is in a cinder-block basement without a single window, but it is filled with sunlight.

- The last sentence in the introduction is the **thesis statement**. Just as a topic sentence sets forth the main idea of a paragraph, so the thesis statement sets forth the main idea of the whole essay. It must be *general enough to include the topic sentence of every paragraph in the body*.
- Each topic sentence introduces one *benefit* that volunteers receive.
- Note that the thesis and topic sentences of paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 make a rough **outline** of the entire essay:

1. **INTRODUCTION** and **thesis statement:**

By giving their time and talents to the local community, these students not only enrich the lives of others, but they receive many surprising benefits for themselves.

- 2. **Topic sentence:** Most important, volunteering can bring a sense of empowerment, a knowledge that we can make a difference.
- 3. **Topic sentence:** Second, the volunteer often gains a deeper understanding of others.
- 4. **Topic sentence:** Finally, volunteering can be a way to “try on” a work environment.

5. CONCLUSION

- Note that every topic sentence supports the thesis statement. Every paragraph in the body discusses in detail one *benefit* that students receive from volunteering. Each paragraph also provides an *example* to explain that benefit.
- The last paragraph **concludes** the essay by mentioning sunlight, a reference to the proverb in paragraph 1.

B. Writing the Thesis Statement

The steps in the essay-writing process are the same as those in the paragraph-writing process: **narrow the topic, write the thesis statement, generate ideas for the body, organize ideas in an outline, draft, and revise.** However, in essay writing, planning on paper, prewriting, and outlining are especially important because an essay is longer than a paragraph and more difficult to organize.

Narrowing the Topic

The essay writer usually starts with a broad subject and then narrows it to a manageable size. An essay is longer than a paragraph and gives the writer more room to develop ideas; nevertheless, the best essays, like the best paragraphs, are often quite specific. For example, if you are assigned a 400-word essay titled “A Trip I Won’t Forget,” a description of your recent trip to Florida would be too broad a subject. You would need to *narrow* the topic to just one aspect of the trip. Many writers list possible narrowed subjects on paper or on computer:

- 1. huge job of packing, more tiring than the trip
- 2. how to pack for a trip with the children without exhausting yourself
- 3. Disney World, more fun for adults than for children

4. our afternoon of deep-sea fishing: highlight of the trip
5. terrible weather upsetting many of my sightseeing plans

Any one of these topics is narrow enough and specific enough to be the subject of a short essay. If you had written this list, you would now consider each narrowed topic and perhaps freewrite or brainstorm possible ways to support it. Keeping your audience and purpose in mind may also help you narrow your topic. Your audience here might be your instructor and classmates; your purpose might be to inform (by giving tips about packing) or to entertain (by narrating a funny or a dramatic incident). Having considered your topic, audience, and purpose, you would then choose the topic that you could best develop into a good essay.

If you have difficulty with this step, reread Chapter 2, “Prewriting to Generate Ideas.”

Writing the Thesis Statement

The **thesis statement**—like the topic sentence in a paragraph—further focuses the narrowed subject because it must clearly state, in sentence form, the writer’s **controlling idea**—the main point, opinion, or angle that the rest of the essay will support and discuss.

Narrowed subject:	My job at the brewery
Controlling idea:	So bad it changed my life
Thesis statement:	That was the most boring and painful job I’ve ever had, but it motivated me to change my life.

- This thesis statement has a clear controlling idea. From it, we expect the essay to discuss specific ways in which this job was boring and painful and how it motivated a change.

The thesis statement and its controlling idea should be as **specific** as possible. By writing a specific thesis statement, you focus the subject and give yourself and your readers a clear idea of what will follow. Here are three ways to make a vague thesis statement more specific.

1. As a general rule, replace vague words with more exact words* and replace vague ideas with more exact information:

* For more practice in choosing exact language, see Chapter 23, “Revising for Language Awareness,” Part A.

Vague thesis statement:	My recent trip to Florida was really bad.
Revised thesis statement:	My recent trip to Florida was disappointing because the weather upset my sightseeing plans.

- The first thesis statement above lacks a clear controlling idea. The inexact words *really bad* do not say specifically enough *why* the trip was bad or *what* the rest of the essay might discuss.
- The second thesis statement is more specific. The words *really bad* are replaced by the more exact word *disappointing*. In addition, the writer has added more complete information about why the trip was disappointing. From this thesis statement, it is clear that the essay will discuss how the weather upset the writer's plans.

2. Sometimes you can make the thesis statement more specific by stating the natural divisions of the subject. If a subject naturally has two, three, or four divisions, stating these in the thesis can set up an outline for your entire essay:

Vague thesis statement:	The movie <i>Southern Smoke</i> seemed phony.
Revised thesis statement:	The costumes, the dialogue, and the plot of the movie <i>Southern Smoke</i> all seemed phony.

- The first thesis statement above gives little specific direction to the writer or the reader.
- The second thesis statement, however, actually sets up a plan for the whole essay. The writer has divided the subject into three parts—the costumes, the dialogue, and the plot—and he or she will probably devote one paragraph to discussing the phoniness of each one, following the order in the thesis statement.

3. Avoid a heavy-handed thesis statement that announces, “Now I will write about...” or “This essay will discuss....” Don't state the obvious. Instead, craft a specific thesis statement that will capture the reader's interest and control what the rest of your essay will be about. Make every word count.

C. Generating Ideas For the Body

The thesis statement sets forth the main idea of the entire essay, but it is the **body** of the essay that must fully support and discuss that thesis statement. In composing the thesis statement, the writer should already have given some thought to what the body will contain. Now he or she uses one or more prewriting methods—*brainstorming, freewriting, clustering, or asking questions*—to generate ideas for the body.

To get enough material to flesh out an essay, many writers brainstorm or freewrite on paper or on the computer screen—jotting down any ideas that develop the thesis statement, including main ideas, specific details, and examples, all jumbled together. Only after creating a long list do they go back over it, drop any ideas that do not support the thesis statement, and then group ideas that might go together in body paragraphs.

Suppose, for instance, that you have written this thesis statement: *Although people often react to stress in harmful ways, there are many positive ways to handle stress.* By brainstorming and then dropping ideas that do not relate, you might eventually produce a list like this:

- work out
- dig weeds or rake leaves
- call a friend
- talking out problems relieves stress
- jogging
- many sports ease tension
- go to the beach
- take a walk
- taking breaks, long or short, relieves stress
- talk to a shrink if the problem is really bad
- escape into a hobby—photography, bird watching
- go to a movie
- talk to a counselor at the college
- talk to a minister, priest, rabbi, etc.
- many people harm themselves trying to relieve stress
- they overeat or smoke
- drinking too much, other addictions
- do vigorous household chores—scrub a floor, beat the rugs, pound pillows
- doing something physical relieves stress

some diseases are caused by stress

take a nap

some people blow up to help tension, but this hurts their relationships

Now read over the list, looking for groups of ideas that could become paragraphs. You might want to use colored highlighters to mark related ideas. Some ideas might become topic sentences; others might be used to support a topic sentence. How many possible paragraphs can you find in this list?

D. Organizing Ideas into an Outline

Many writers make an **outline** before they write an essay. Because an essay is longer, more complex, and harder to control than a paragraph, an outline, even a rough one, helps the writer stay on track and saves time later. The outline should include the following:

1. Two to four main ideas to support the thesis statement
2. Two to four topic sentences stating these ideas
3. A plan for each paragraph in the body (developed in any of the ways explained earlier in this book)
4. A logical order in which to present paragraphs

Different writers create such outlines in different ways. Some writers examine their brainstorming or other prewriting, looking for paragraph groups. Others write their topic sentences first and then generate ideas to support these topic sentences.

Reread prewriting and find paragraph groups. In Part C, you read one student's brainstorm list developing the thesis statement, *Although people often react to stress in harmful ways, there are many positive ways to handle stress*. Here is one possible way to group those ideas:

1. many people harm themselves trying to relieve stress
 - they overeat or smoke
 - drinking too much, other addictions
 - some diseases are caused by stress
 - some people blow up to help tension, but this hurts their relationships
2. work out
 - dig weeds or rake leaves
 - jogging

many sports ease tension
 take a walk
 do vigorous household chores—scrub a floor, beat the rugs, pound pillows
 doing something physical relieves stress

3. call a friend

talking out problems relieves stress
 talk to a shrink if the problem is really bad
 talk to a counselor at the college
 talk to a minister, priest, rabbi, etc.

4. go to the beach

taking breaks, long or short, relieves stress
 escape into a hobby—photography, bird watching
 go to a movie
 take a nap

- What is the main idea of each group? Each group contains a possible topic sentence that expresses its main idea.

Here is the completed outline from which the student wrote her essay:

-
- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. INTRODUCTION and thesis statement: | Although people often react to stress in harmful ways, there are many positive ways to handle stress. |
| 2. Topic sentence: | Many people actually harm themselves trying to relieve stress.
—overeat, smoke, or drink too much
—get stress-induced diseases
—blow up at others |
| 3. Topic sentence: | For some people, doing something physical is a positive way to relieve stress.
—walk or jog
—work out
—vigorous household chores
—dig weeds or rake leaves |

- 4. Topic sentence:** Taking breaks, long or short, is another positive way to relieve stress.
- take a nap
 - escape into a hobby
 - go to a movie, to the beach
- 5. Topic sentence:** Discussing one's problems can relieve stress and sometimes resolve the cause of it.
- call a friend
 - talk to a minister, etc.
 - talk to a counselor at the college
 - talk to a therapist if necessary
- CONCLUSION:** Stress is a fact of life, but we can learn positive responses to be happier and more productive.

- Note that this writer now has a well-organized outline from which to write her paper.
- She has chosen a new order for the four supporting paragraphs. Does this order make sense?

Write topic sentences and then plan paragraphs. Sometimes a writer can compose topic sentences directly from the thesis statement without extensive jotting first. This is especially true if the thesis statement itself shows how the body will be divided or organized. Such a thesis statement makes the work of planning paragraphs easy because the writer has already broken down the subject into supporting ideas or parts:

Thesis statement: Because the student cafeteria has many problems, the college should hire a new administrator to see that it is properly managed in the future.

- This thesis statement contains two main ideas: (1) that the cafeteria has many problems and (2) that a new administrator should be hired. The first idea states the problem and the second offers a solution.

From this thesis statement, a writer could logically plan a two-paragraph body, with one paragraph explaining each idea in detail. He or she might compose two topic sentences as follows:

Thesis statement: Because the student cafeteria has many problems, the college should hire a new administrator to see that it is properly managed in the future.

Topic sentence: Foremost among the cafeteria's problems are unappetizing food, slow service, and high prices.

Topic sentence: A new administrator could do much to improve these terrible conditions.

These topic sentences might need to be revised later, but they will serve as guides while the writer further develops each paragraph.

The writer might develop the first paragraph in the body by giving **examples*** of the unappetizing foods, slow service, and high prices.

He or she could develop the second paragraph through **process**,[†] by describing the **steps** that the new administrator could take to solve the cafeteria's problems. This planning will create a clear **outline** from which to write the essay.

E. Ordering and Linking Paragraphs in the Essay

An essay, like a paragraph, should have **coherence**. That is, the paragraphs in an essay should be arranged in a clear, logical order and should follow one another like links in a chain.

Ordering Paragraphs

It is important that the paragraphs in your outline, and later in your essay, follow a **logical order**. The rule for writers is this: Use your common sense and plan ahead. Do *not* leave the order of your paragraphs to chance.

The types of order often used in single paragraphs—**time order**, **space order**, and **order of importance**[‡]—can sometimes be used to arrange paragraphs within an essay. Essays about subjects that can be broken into stages or steps, with each step discussed in one paragraph, should be arranged according to *time*. *Space order* is used occasionally in descriptive essays. A writer who wishes to save the most

* For more work on developing paragraphs by process, see Chapter 8, "Process."

† For more work on developing paragraphs with examples, see Chapter 5, "Illustration."

‡ For more work on time order, space order, and order of importance, see Chapter 4, "Achieving Coherence," Part A.

important or convincing paragraph for last would use *order of importance*. Or he or she might wish to reverse this order and put the most important paragraph first.

Very often, however, the writer simply arranges paragraphs in whatever order makes sense in the particular essay. Suppose, for example, that you have written the thesis statement *Electric cars, which are now being developed by many vehicle manufacturers, have strong advantages and disadvantages*, and you plan four paragraphs with these topic sentences:

The high price tag and cost of parts for electric cars make them unaffordable for many Americans.

Electric cars will generate less pollution-per-mile than cars with gasoline engines even though they get their power from fossil fuel-burning electric plants.

Because electric cars must be plugged in and charged about 6 hours for every 50–100 miles driven, they will be impractical for those who drive long distances.

Electric cars will help to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil sources and thus improve our national security.

The writer lists four points about electric cars. Points two and four both state advantages of electric cars; therefore, it makes sense to order the paragraphs so that those two advantages are grouped together. Points one and three state two disadvantages—high cost and limits of operation—so these two points should be grouped together. The thesis statement refers to *advantages and disadvantages*, so it would make sense to discuss the advantages first. A logical order of paragraphs, then, might be the following:

-
- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. INTRODUCTION and thesis statement: | Electric cars, which are now being developed by many vehicle manufacturers, have strong advantages and disadvantages. |
| 2. Topic sentence: | Electric cars will generate less pollution-per-mile than cars with gasoline engines even though they get their power from fossil fuel-burning electric plants. |
| 3. Topic sentence: | Electric cars will help to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil sources and thus improve our national security. |
| 4. Topic sentence: | The high price tag and cost of parts for electric cars make them unaffordable for many Americans. |

5. Topic sentence:

Because electric cars must be plugged in and charged about 6 hours for every 50–100 miles driven, they will be impractical for those who drive long distances.

6. CONCLUSION

Finally, if your thesis statement is divided into two, three, or four parts, the paragraphs in the body should follow the order in the thesis; otherwise, the reader will be confused.

Linking Paragraphs

Just as the sentences within a paragraph should flow smoothly, so the paragraphs within an essay should be clearly **linked** one to the next. As you write your essay, do not make illogical jumps from one paragraph to another. Instead, guide your reader. Link the first sentence of each new paragraph to the thesis statement or to the paragraph before. Here are four ways to link paragraphs:

1. Repeat key words or ideas from the thesis statement.
2. Refer to words or ideas from the preceding paragraph.
3. Use transitional expressions.
4. Use transitional sentences.

1. Repeat key words or ideas from the thesis statement.* The topic sentences in the following essay plan repeat key words and ideas from the thesis statement.

Thesis statement: Spending time in nature can promote inner peace and a new point of view.

Topic sentence: A stroll in the woods or a picnic by the sea often brings feelings of inner peace and well-being.

Topic sentence: Natural places can even give us a new point of view by putting our problems in perspective.

* For more work on repetition of key words, see Chapter 4, “Achieving Coherence,” Part B. See also “Synonyms and Substitutions” in the same section.

- In the first topic sentence, the words *feelings of inner peace* repeat, in slightly altered form, words from the thesis statement. The words *a stroll in the woods or a picnic by the sea* refer to the idea of *spending time in nature*.

2. Refer to words or ideas from the preceding paragraph. Link the first sentence of a new paragraph to the paragraph before, especially by referring to words or ideas near the end of the paragraph. Note how the two paragraphs are linked in the following passage:

(1) Would you rather take the risk of starting your own business than work for someone else? Would you prefer an insecure job with a large income over a secure job with an average income? Do you have a high energy level? If you answered yes to these questions, you might have some of the traits of what Dr. Frank Farley calls the “Type T” personality.

(2) According to Farley, Type T people (“T” stands for “Thrill”) are creative risk takers. He believes that as much as 30 percent of the American public falls into this category. “They are the great experimenters of life,” declares Farley. “They break the rules.”

—Ira Peck and Larry F. Krieger,
Sociology: The Search for Social Patterns

3. Use transitional expressions.* Transitional expressions—words like *for example*, *therefore*, and *later on*—are used within a paragraph to show the relationship between sentences. Transitional expressions can also be used within an essay to show the relationships between paragraphs:

(1) The house where I grew up was worn out and run-down. The yard was mostly mud, rock hard for nine months of the year but wet and swampy for the other three. Our nearest neighbors were forty miles away, so it got pretty lonely. Inside, the house was shabby. The living room furniture was covered in stiff, nubby material that had lost its color over the years and become a dirty brown. Upstairs in my bedroom, the wooden floor sagged a little farther west every year.

* For a complete list of transitional expressions, see Chapter 4, “Achieving Coherence,” Part B. See also the chapters in Unit 3 for ways to use transitional expressions in each paragraph and essay pattern.

(2) *Nevertheless*, I love the place for what it taught me. There I learned to thrive in solitude. During the hours I spent alone, when school was over and the chores were done, I learned to play the guitar and sing. Wandering in the fields around the house or poking under stones in the creek bed, I grew to love the natural world. Most of all, I learned to see and to appreciate small wonders.

- The first paragraph describes some of the negative details about the writer's early home. The second paragraph *contrasts* the writer's attitude, which is positive. The transitional expression *nevertheless* eases the reader from one paragraph to the next by pointing out the exact relationship between the paragraphs.
- Transitional expressions can also highlight the *order* in which paragraphs are arranged.* Three paragraphs arranged in time order might begin: *First...*, *Next...*, *Finally...*. Three paragraphs arranged in order of importance might begin: *First...*, *More important...*, *Most important...*. Use transitional expressions alone or together with other linking devices.

4. Use transitional sentences. From time to time, you may need to write an entire sentence of transition to link one paragraph to the next, as shown in this passage:

(1) Zainab Salbi lived through the ravages of war in her native Iraq. She experienced the violence committed against women under Saddam Hussein. After escaping to the United States, she worried about other women. In the 1990s, upset by stories of women in concentration camps in the former Yugoslavia, she and her husband Atallah decided to make a difference by volunteering. Unfortunately, they could find no organization dedicated to helping women affected by war.

(2) *This setback did not stop the couple, however.* Salbi and Atallah resolved to start their own group dedicated to helping women hurt physically and psychologically by war. The young couple spent their honeymoon connecting American female sponsors with female victims of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They returned from the trip and started Women to Women International, which has since helped over 150,000 women in countries like Nigeria, Colombia, and Afghanistan, distributing over forty million dollars in aid. Salbi has become a champion of women's rights and published books

* For more work on transitional expressions of time, space, and importance, see Chapter 4, "Achieving Coherence," Part A.

about women's war experiences. "Women who survive war are strong and courageous," she says. "They just need some support to deal with the aftermath of conflict."

- In paragraph 1, Salbi and Atallah focus on a goal but lack the tools to achieve it. In paragraph 2, they achieve their goal. The topic sentence of paragraph 2 is the second sentence: *Salbi and Atallah resolved to start their own group dedicated to helping women hurt physically and psychologically by war.*
- The first sentence of paragraph 2 is actually a **sentence of transition** that eases the reader from a challenge to success. (Note that it includes a transitional expression of contrast, *however*.)

Use all four methods of linking paragraphs as you write your essays.

F. Writing and Revising Essays

Writing the First Draft

Now you should have a clear plan or outline from which to write your first draft. This plan should include your thesis statement, two to four topic sentences that support it, details and facts to develop each paragraph, and a logical order. Write on every other line to leave room for later corrections, including all your ideas and paragraphs in the order you have chosen to present them. Explain your ideas fully, but avoid getting stuck on a particular word or sentence. When you have finished the draft, set it aside, if possible, for several hours or several days.

Revising and Proofreading

Revising is perhaps the most important step in the essay-writing process. Revising an essay involves the same principles as revising a paragraph.* Read your first draft slowly and carefully to yourself—aloud if possible. Imagine you are a reader who has never seen the paper before. As you read, underline trouble spots, draw arrows, and write in the margins, if necessary, to straighten out problems.

* For more work on revising, see Chapter 3, "The Process of Writing Paragraphs," Part F, and Chapter 24, "Putting Your Revision Skills to Work."

Here are some questions to keep in mind as you revise:

1. Is my thesis statement clear?
2. Does the body of the essay fully support my thesis statement?
3. Does the essay have unity; does every paragraph relate to the thesis statement?
4. Does the essay have coherence; do the paragraphs follow a logical order?
5. Are my topic sentences clear?
6. Does each paragraph provide good details, well-chosen examples, and so on?
7. Is the language exact, concise, and fresh?
8. Are my sentences varied in length and type?
9. Does the essay conclude, not just leave off?

If possible, ask a **peer reviewer**—a trusted classmate or friend—to read your paper and give you feedback. Of course, this person should not rewrite or correct the essay but should simply tell you which parts are clear and which parts are confusing.

To guide your peer reviewer, you might ask him or her to use the Peer Feedback Sheet on page 29 or to answer these questions in writing:

1. What do you like about this piece of writing?
2. What seems to be the main point?
3. Which parts could be improved (meaning unclear sentences, supporting points missing, order mixed up, writing not lively, and so forth)? Please be specific.
4. What one change would most improve this essay?

Proofreading and Writing the Final Draft

Next, carefully **proofread** the draft for grammar and spelling. Check especially for those errors you often make: verb errors, comma splices, and so forth.* If you are unsure about the spelling of a word, check a dictionary or use the spell checker on your computer.

Finally, neatly recopy your essay or print out a final copy on 8 ½-by-11-inch paper. Write on one side only. When you finish, proofread the final copy.

The following sample essay by a student shows his first draft, the revisions he made, and the revised draft. Each revision has been numbered and explained to give you a clear idea of the thinking process involved.

* For practice proofreading for individual errors, see chapters in Unit 6; for mixed-error proofreading, see Chapter 38, “Putting Your Proofreading Skills to Work.”

First Draft

PORTRAIT OF A BIKE FANATIC

(1) I first realized how serious Diane was when I joined her on a long trip one Sunday afternoon. Her bike looked new, so I asked her if it was. When she told me she had bought it three years ago, I asked her how she kept it looking so good. She showed me how she took good care of it.

(2) Diane had just about every kind of equipment I've ever seen. She put on her white crash helmet and attached a tiny rearview mirror on it—the kind the dentist uses to check out the backs of your teeth. She put a warning light on her left leg. She carried a whole bag full of tools. When I looked into it, I couldn't believe how much stuff was in there (wrenches, inner tubes, etc.)—tools to meet every emergency. I was tempted to see if it had a false bottom.

(3) I had no idea she was such a bike nut. We rode thirty miles and I was exhausted. Her equipment was something else, but useful because she had a flat and was able to fix it, saving our trip.

(4) She doesn't look like a bike fanatic, just a normal person. You'd never guess that her bike has more than 10,000 miles on it.

(5) As we rode, Diane told me about her travels throughout the Northeast (Cape Cod, Vermont, Penn., New York). Riding to work saved her money, kept her in shape. Her goal for the next summer was a cross-country tour over the Rockies!

(6) Our trip was no big deal to her but to me it was something. I might consider biking to work because it keeps you in shape. But basically I'm lazy. I drive a car or take the bus. I do like to walk though.

Revisions

PORTRAIT OF A BIKE FANATIC

① *Add intro and thesis*

I first realized how serious Diane was ^{② *about bicycling*} when I joined her on a ^{③ *thirty-mile*} long trip one Sunday afternoon. Her bike looked new, so I asked her if it was.

When she told me she had bought it three years ago, I asked her how she kept it looking so good. ~~She showed me how she took good care of it.~~

④ *Describe in detail*

Diane had just about every kind of equipment I've ever seen. ^{⑤ *For example,*} She put on her white crash helmet and attached a tiny rearview mirror on it—the

⑧ *Mention trip location*

kind the dentist uses to ^{⑥ examine} check out the backs of your teeth. She ^{⑦ strapped} put a warning light ^{to just below the knee} on her leg.

She carried a whole bag full of tools. When I looked into it, I couldn't believe how much stuff was in there (wrenches, inner tubes, etc.)—tools to meet every emergency. I was tempted to see if it had a false bottom.

⑨ *New ¶ on tools, flat tire*

~~⑩ I had no idea she was such a bike nut. We rode thirty miles and I was exhausted.~~ Her equipment was something else, but useful because she had a flat and was able to fix it, saving our trip.

⑪ *Combine into one ¶ on tools*

⑫ *Move to intro?*

She doesn't look like a bike fanatic, just a normal person. You'd never guess that her bike has more than 10,000 miles on it.

⑬ *Describe in detail. Make interesting!*

As we rode, Diane told me about her travels throughout the Northeast (Cape Cod, Vermont, Penn., New York). Riding to work saved her money, kept her in shape. ^{⑭ Help Mother Earth!} Her goal for the next summer was a cross-country tour over the Rockies!

⑮ *Better conclusion needed*

Our trip was no big deal to her, but to me it was something. I might ~~consider biking to work because it keeps you in shape. But basically I'm lazy. I drive a car or take the bus. I do like to walk though.~~

⑯ *Drop. Irrelevant*

Reasons for Revisions

1. No thesis statement. Add catchy introduction. (introduction and thesis statement)
2. Add *bicycling*. What she is serious *about* is not clear. (exact language)
3. Tell *how* long! (exact language)
4. Expand this; more details needed. (support, exact language)
5. Add transition. (transitional expression)

6. Wrong tone for college essay. (exact language)
7. Find more active verb; be more specific. (exact language)
8. Conclude paragraph; stress time order. (order)
9. This section is weak. Add one paragraph on tools. Tell story of flat tire? (paragraphs, support)
10. Drop! Repeats thesis. Not really a paragraph. (unity, paragraphs)
11. Put this in tools paragraph. Order is mixed up. (order)
12. Put this in introduction? (order)
13. Add details; make this interesting! (support, exact language)
14. Add the point that biking helps the environment.
15. Write a better conclusion. (conclusion)
16. Drop! Essay is about Diane and biking, not my bad exercise habits. (unity)

Final Draft

PORTRAIT OF A BIKE FANATIC

(1) You'd never guess that the powder-blue ten-speed Raleigh had more than 10,000 miles on it. And you'd never guess that the tiny woman with the swept-back hair and the suntanned forearms had ridden those miles over the last two years, making trips through eleven states. But Diane is a bicycle fanatic.

(2) I first realized how serious Diane was about bicycling when I joined her on a thirty-mile trip one Sunday afternoon. Her bike looked new, so I asked her if it was. When she told me she had bought it three years ago, I asked her how she kept it looking so good. From her saddlebag she took the soft cloth that she wiped the bike down with after every long ride and the plastic drop cloth that she put over it every time she parked it outdoors overnight.

(3) Diane had just about every kind of bike equipment I've ever seen. For example, she put on her white crash helmet and attached a tiny rearview mirror to it—the kind the dentist uses to examine the backs of your teeth. She strapped a warning light to her left leg, just below the knee. Then we set off on our trip, starting at Walden Pond in Concord and planning to go to the Wayside Inn in Sudbury and back again before the sun set.

(4) We were still in Concord when Diane signaled me to stop. "I think I have a flat," she said. I cursed under my breath. I was sure that would mean the end of our trip; we'd have to walk her bike back to the car and she'd have to take it to the shop the next day. But she reached into her saddlebag again, and out came a wrench and a new tube. Before I knew it, she took the rear wheel off the bike, installed the new tube, and put the wheel back

on. I began to wonder what else was in that saddlebag. When I asked, she showed me two sets of wrenches, another spare inner tube, two brake pads, a can of lubricating oil, two screwdrivers, a roll of reflective tape, extra bulbs for her headlight and taillight, and an extra chain. She had so much in the bag, I was tempted to see if it had a false bottom. Diane is one of those bicyclists who has tools to meet any emergency and knows how to use them.

(5) As we rode along, Diane told me about her travels throughout the Northeast. She had taken her bike on summer vacations on Cape Cod and fall foliage tours in Vermont. She had ridden all over Pennsylvania and upstate New York, covering as much as seventy miles in a single day. She also rode to and from work every day, which she said saved money, kept her in shape, and made a small contribution to the environment. Her goal for the next summer, she said, was a cross-country tour. “All the way?” I asked. “What about the Rockies?” “I know,” she said. “What a challenge!”

(6) Our trip took a little less than three hours, but I’m sure Diane was slowing down to let me keep up with her. When we got back to the parked car, I was breathing hard and had worked up quite a sweat. Diane was already there waiting for me, looking as if she did this every day—which she does. For Diane, riding a bike is as easy and natural as walking is for most people. Look out, Rockies.



WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

The assignments that follow will give you practice in writing essays. In each, concentrate on writing a clear thesis statement and a full, well-organized body. Because introductions and conclusions are not discussed until Chapter 15, you may wish to begin your essay with the thesis statement and conclude as simply as possible.

Before you write, make an outline that includes

- a clear thesis statement
 - two to four topic sentences that support the thesis statement
 - details, facts, and examples to develop each paragraph
 - a logical order of paragraphs
1. Some college students cheat on their papers and exams; some people cheat on the job. Why do people cheat? What are the advantages and disadvantages of cheating? Does cheating pay off? Does it achieve the end that the cheater desires? Focus on cheating at college or at work, and choose one main idea to write about. You might wish to use

examples to support your thesis. Plan your essay carefully on paper before you write it.

2. Interview a classmate (or, if you do this assignment at home, someone with an unusual skill). As you talk to the person, look for a thesis: ask questions, take notes. What stands out about the person? Is there an overall impression or idea that can structure your essay? Do you notice an overall quality, skill, or goal that seems to characterize this person? Formulate a thesis statement that points out this quality or trait, organize your ideas, and write.
3. Do you socialize mostly with members of your own ethnic or racial group? Why? Should you broaden your circle of friends to include more diverse people? Write an essay that either explores in detail the advantages or disadvantages of a diverse social life or the ways that you could go about making this change happen. Begin by writing a clear thesis statement and making a plan for a well-organized essay.
4. Give advice to the weary job hunter. Describe the most creative job-hunting strategies you have ever tried or heard about. Support your thesis statement with examples, or consider using time order to show a successful job-hunting day in the life of the expert, you.
5. Narrate your work history. First, list all the jobs you have held, from your first job to your last or current job. Now decide on a point that you could make about your employment history; for example, has your experience been broad, encompassing a variety of different kinds of jobs, or have you developed deep expertise by working for one type of company, such as restaurants or retail? Write a thesis statement that includes this point, and develop your discussion of each job with details such as your job title, the company name, number of years employed, and your major responsibilities.
6. Write a letter to an elected official, newspaper editor, school principal, college president, or other authority figure about an issue or incident that concerns you. Begin by crafting a thesis statement that mentions both the problem and at least one possible solution. Support your thesis first by clearly describing the problem, using specific details from your observations or experience. Then, carefully explain each of your proposed solutions, anticipating and answering all of the reader's potential questions.

Checklist

The Process of Writing an Essay

- ☐ 1. Narrow the topic in light of your audience and purpose. Be sure you can discuss this topic fully in a short essay.
- ☐ 2. Write a clear thesis statement. If you have trouble, freewrite or brainstorm first; then narrow the topic and write the thesis statement.
- ☐ 3. Freewrite or brainstorm, generating facts, details, and examples to support your thesis statement.
- ☐ 4. Plan or outline your essay, choosing from two to four main ideas to support the thesis statement.
- ☐ 5. Write a topic sentence that expresses each main idea.
- ☐ 6. Decide on a logical order in which to present the paragraphs.
- ☐ 7. Plan the body of each paragraph, using all you learned about paragraph development in Unit 2 of this book.
- ☐ 8. Write the first draft of your essay.
- ☐ 9. Revise as necessary, checking your essay for support, unity, and coherence. Refer to the list of revision questions on page 195.
- ☐ 10. Proofread carefully for grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, and mechanics.

Suggested Topics for Essays

- 1. The career for which I am best suited
- 2. Tips for balancing work, school, and home
- 3. How to do something that will improve your life (get better organized, learn a new language)
- 4. Why many Americans don't _____ (save money for the future, give their all at work, value education, read poetry)
- 5. A valuable discipline or practice (lifting weights, rock climbing, bicycling, or other)
- 6. The best (or worst) teacher I ever had
- 7. A story of courage

8. A lesson in diversity, race, or difference
9. The joys of homework (or housework or some other supposedly unpleasant task)
10. How to resolve a disagreement peacefully
11. A film, book, or magazine
12. The best gift I ever gave (or received)
13. Three ways that a certain type of ads (for cigarettes, cereal, or toys, for example) “hook” children
14. Should courts require a one-year “cooling-off” period before a divorce?
15. Writer’s choice



EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://www.powa.org>

Click “thesis/support essays” for a good review of the college essay-writing process.

<http://aaweb.gallaudet.edu/x15824.xml>

Click “Writing,” then “Essays,” and then “Structure” and “Structure of an Essay: Outline” for tips and examples to help you structure an essay.

<http://www.google.com>

Search “Purdue OWL, proofreading your writing” for good revising and proofreading techniques to sharpen your awareness and raise your grade.

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.

CHAPTER 15

The Introduction, the Conclusion, and the Title

A: The Introduction

B: The Conclusion

C: The Title



A catchy title and introduction are important parts of an essay. Both attract the reader's attention and make him or her want to read on. The conclusion of an essay performs a different job, leaving the reader with something to think about or with a sense of why the topic matters. Most writers polish these three elements *after* they have planned and written the essay though, sometimes, a great title or the idea for a good introduction might occur to them earlier. This chapter will teach you how to write memorable introductions, conclusions and titles.

A. The Introduction

An **introduction** has two functions in an essay. First, it contains the **thesis statement** and, therefore, tells the reader what central idea will be developed in the rest of the paper. Since the reader should be able to spot the thesis statement easily, it should be given a prominent place—for example, the first or the last sentence in the introduction. Second, the introduction has to interest the reader enough that he or she will want to continue reading the paper.

Sometimes the process of writing the essay will help clarify your ideas about how best to introduce it. So once you have completed your essay, you may wish to revise and rewrite the introduction, making sure that it clearly introduces the essay's main idea.

There is no best way to introduce an essay, but you should certainly avoid beginning your work with "I'm going to discuss" or "This paper is about." You needn't tell the reader you are about to begin; just begin!

Here are six basic methods for beginning your composition effectively. In each example, the thesis statement is italicized.

1. Begin with a single-sentence thesis statement. A single-sentence thesis statement can be effective because it quickly and forcefully states the main idea of the essay:

Time management should be a required course at this college.

- Note how quickly and clearly a one-sentence thesis statement can inform the reader about what will follow in the rest of the essay.

2. Begin with a general idea and then narrow to a specific thesis statement. The general idea gives the reader background information or sets the scene. Then the topic narrows to one specific idea—the thesis statement. The effect is like a funnel, from broad to narrow.

Few Americans stay put for a lifetime. We move from town to city to suburb, from high school to college in a different state, from a job in one region to a better job elsewhere, from the home where we raise our children to the home where we plan to live in retirement. *With each move we are forever making new friends, who become part of our new life at that time.*

—Margaret Mead and Rhoda Metraux, "On Friendship," in *A Way of Seeing*

- What general idea precedes the thesis statement and then leads the reader to focus on the specific main point of the essay?
- The rest of the essay will discuss how friendships change as people move.

3. Begin with an illustration or anecdote (a brief narrative). A brief illustration or anecdote in the introduction of an essay makes the thesis statement more concrete and vivid, a good technique for catching the reader's interest.

The other day I was watching a Reebok commercial. It was about a young male who, after purchasing a pair of sneakers, was walking down the street to a smooth jazz tune. As this “pretty boy” walked in his new pair of sneakers, he drew the attention of all in his path, especially the females. For a second I was envious of this “dude.” I’ve been purchasing sneakers for over eighteen years, and I haven’t had one girl look at me the way they did him during his thirty-second stroll down some dark and filthy sidewalk. As I watched this ad and others like it, I started to analyze the ads’ underlying message. *I wondered why the majority of sneaker ads are geared to inner-city youth, especially ads for brand-name sneakers.*

—Saladin Brown, Student, “The Illusion of Ads”

- Mr. Brown’s thesis poses a question that his essay will try to answer.
- What example does the writer provide to make the thesis statement more concrete?
- The rest of the essay will discuss the reasons why athletic shoe advertisers seem to target inner-city males.

4. Begin with a surprising fact or idea. A surprising fact or idea arouses the reader’s curiosity about how you will support this initial startling statement.



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Millions of law-abiding Americans are physically addicted to caffeine—and most of them don’t even know it. Caffeine is a powerful central nervous system stimulant with substantial addiction potential. When deprived of their caffeine, addicts experience often severe withdrawal symptoms, which may include a throbbing headache, disorientation, constipation, nausea, sluggishness, depression, and irritability. As with other addictive drugs, heavy users develop a tolerance and require higher doses to obtain the expected effect.

—Tom Ferguson and Joe Graedon, “Caffeine,” *Medical Self-Care*

- Why are the facts in this introduction likely to startle or surprise the reader?
- The rest of the essay will discuss caffeine addiction in depth.

5. Begin with a contradiction. In this type of introduction, your thesis statement contradicts what many or most people believe. In other words, your essay will contrast your opinion with the widely held view.

When I became an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), I was excited by the opportunity to assist others and save lives. Like most people, I didn't think of an EMT job as dangerous. After all, EMTs arrive *after* the accident or crime has occurred, so the riskiest part of our work would seem to be the high-speed ambulance ride to or from the scene. I never expected to encounter a situation that put my life and my partner's life in danger when we answered someone's call for help. *But one night a year ago, responding to a 911 call to aid a gunshot victim, we found ourselves in a situation that soon turned deadly dangerous.*

—Marlena Torres Ballard, Student

- The writer first describes her excitement at becoming an EMT, and her initial belief that the job was not dangerous.
- How does she then contradict this idea?
- The rest of the essay will tell the story of her frightening experience.

6. Begin with a direct quotation. A direct quotation is likely to catch your reader's attention and to show that you have explored what others have to say about the subject. You can then proceed to agree or to disagree with the direct quotation.

"All glory comes from daring to begin," according to an old saying. The last two-and-a-half-year chapter of my life shows just how true this saying is. It started when I got laid off from my job at the furniture manufacturing plant in Morganton, North Carolina. I had worked there for ten years after high school and assumed I always would. The chapter ended with me wearing a light blue cap and gown, walking across the stage to receive my college degree in dental assisting as my family and friends cheered me on. *By daring to find a new path and stay on it through the hardships, I have changed my life for the better.*

—Sam Chaich, Student

Of course, definitions, comparisons, or any of the other kinds of devices you have already studied can also make good introductions. Just make sure that the reader knows exactly which sentence is your thesis statement.

B. The Conclusion

A conclusion signals the end of the essay and leaves the reader with a final thought. As with the introduction, you may wish to revise and rewrite the conclusion once

you have completed your essay. Be certain your conclusion flows logically from the body of the essay.

Like introductions, conclusions can take many forms, and the right one for your essay depends on how you wish to complete your paper—with what thought you wish to leave the reader. However, never conclude your paper with “As I said in the beginning,” and try to avoid the overused “In conclusion” or “In summary.” Don’t end by saying you are going to end; just end!

Here are three ways to conclude an essay.

1. End with a call to action. The call to action says that in view of the facts and ideas presented in this essay, the reader should *do something*.

Single-gender schools work. As we have seen, boys-only and girls-only middle and high schools help steer young people toward academic achievement and higher self-esteem. Showing off for the opposite sex, dating too early, and, especially in the case of girls, failing to raise their hands for fear of outshining the boys, are problems avoided altogether in single-gender environments. Parents and concerned citizens must contact their representatives and school boards to demand the option of single-gender schools. We owe it to our children to fight for the schools that truly serve them.

● What does the writer want the reader to do?

2. End with a final point. Make a point that follows from the ideas or experiences discussed in your essay. Some writers also summarize their main ideas, but if you do this, be sure to add a new point or thought; don’t just repeat what you have already said.

The next morning I had an eerie feeling of remorse and buried the birds in the back yard. The BB gun ended up lying on the ground and rusting into the earth. I think that this experience is the reason I chose not to become a hunter. I understand having to kill an animal for food, but I do not agree with killing an animal just for sport. I still like to shoot guns today but only at brightly colored targets taped to a board.

—Shannon Holman, Student, “The Daisy”

● With what final point does Holman end the essay?

3. End with a question. By ending with a question, you leave the reader with a final problem that you wish him or her to think about.

Yes, it is embarrassing to speak with our children about sex. We will feel awkward not knowing what to say, stymied as they resist the discussion. However, knowing the pressures that kids today face, the terrible examples bombarding them from popular culture, and the real threat of diseases, can we afford not to?

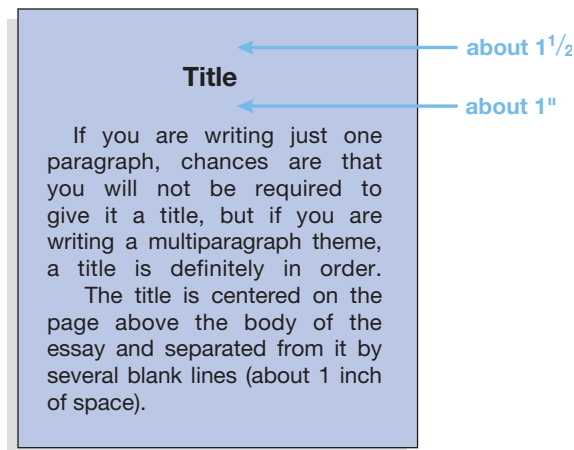
—Amelia Garcia, Student, “Talking to Kids about Sex”

- What problem does the writer’s final question point to?

C. The Title

If you are writing just one paragraph, chances are that you will not need to give it a title, but if you are writing a multiparagraph essay, a title is definitely in order.

The title is centered on the page above the body of the composition and separated from it by several blank lines (about 1 inch of space), as shown here.



- Do *not* put quotation marks around the title of your own paper.
- Do *not* underline or italicize the title of your own paper.
- Remember, unlike the topic sentence, the title is not part of the first paragraph; in fact, it is usually only four to five words long and is rarely an entire sentence.

A good title has two functions: to suggest the subject of the essay and to spark the reader's interest. Although the title is the first part of your essay the reader sees, the most effective titles are usually written *after* the essay has been completed.

To create a title, reread your essay, paying special attention to the **thesis statement** and the **conclusion**. Try to come up with a few words that express the main point of your paper.

Here are some basic kinds of titles.

1. The most common title used in college writing is the no-nonsense descriptive title. In this title, stress key words and ideas developed in the essay:

Anger in the Work of Jamaica Kincaid
Advantages and Disadvantages of Buying on Credit

2. Two-part titles are also effective. Write one or two words stating the general subject, and then add several words that narrow the topic:

Rumi: Poet and Mystic
Legal Gambling: Pro and Con

3. Write the title as a rhetorical question. Then answer the question in your essay:

What Can Be Done About the High Price of Higher Education?
Are Athletes Setting Bad Examples?

4. Relate the title to the method of development used in the essay (see Unit 3 and Chapters 16 and 17):

Illustration:	Democracy in Action Three Roles I Play
Narration:	The Development of Jazz Edwidge Danticat: The Making of a Storyteller
Description:	Portrait of a Scientist A Waterfront Scene
Process:	How to Start a Book Group How to Get in Shape Fast
Definition:	What It Means to Be Unemployed A Definition of Respect
Comparison:	Two Country Stars Who Crossed Over Unconventional Dads: Homer Simpson and Tony Soprano
Contrast:	Pleasures and Problems of Owning a Home Montreal: City of Contrasts
Classification:	Three Types of Soap Operas What Kind of E-mail User Are You?
Cause and Effect:	What Causes Whales to Beach Themselves? The Effects of Divorce on Children
Persuasion:	Internet Pornography Should Be Banned The Need for Metal Detectors in Our Schools

Use this list the next time you title a paper.*

* For more on how to capitalize in titles, see Chapter 37, "Mechanics," Part B.

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://www.powa.org>

Click “thesis/support essays” and scroll to “introductions and conclusions.”
Read more about beginning and ending your essays effectively.

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Under “essay and research paper level,” scroll to “beginnings”
for lively sample introductions, plus tips for the writer.

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.



CHAPTER 16

Types of Essays, Part 1

- A: The Illustration Essay
- B: The Narrative Essay
- C: The Descriptive Essay
- D: The Process Essay
- E: The Definition Essay



Because an essay is like an expanded paragraph, the methods for developing and organizing a paragraph that you learned in Unit 3—illustration, process, and so forth—can also be used to develop an entire essay. Chapters 16 and 17 will show you how.

A. The Illustration Essay

The **illustration** essay is one of the most frequently used in college writing and in business. For papers and exams in history, health, psychology, English, and other subjects, you often will be asked to develop a main point with examples. In careers as varied as engineering, nursing, and advertising, you will author reports that include examples of advantages of one computer system, patients' symptoms and behavior, or successful product launches. In a letter of job application, you might wish to give examples of achievements that demonstrate your special skills.

Here is an illustration essay:

GIRL HEROES IN THE HOUSE

Introduction

(1) Although a visitor might not notice, the small apartment I share with my daughters is very crowded. We live with a group of fantastic characters who fill my young daughters' imaginations and therefore our daily lives. Mostly female, they reveal a world beyond Cinderella and Barbie. These role models are teaching my girls to take pride in their heritage, their intelligence, and their unique talents.

Thesis statement

Topic sentence introducing example 1

Facts & details developing example 1

(2) A good example is *Dora the Explorer*, a spunky preschool adventurer with an international fan club. My third grader, who once knew every Dora song by heart, has since moved on, but her little sister now calls Dora her best friend. As a mother, I have good reasons to admire Dora. She is bilingual like our family, and while she is Mexican and we are Guatemalan, Dora gives my lovely brown daughters a reason to like themselves even if they don't look like Barbie. Dora plunges into the unknown day after day, armed with little more than a talking backpack and a belief that she can overcome any obstacle. The world outside can be an unsavory place for a four-year-old, so I am thankful for the pleasures Dora uncovers on her journeys and the dignity she brings to our heritage.

Topic sentence introducing example 2

Facts & details developing example 2

(3) A new role model in our home is Hermione, the brainy heroine in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books. She is my older daughter's current obsession, and I confess that I am hooked on her too. Like most parents, I was thrilled when my cartoon-addicted third-grader wanted to read a chapter book, so every night we sit together absorbing the adventures of Harry and his best friends Ron and Hermione. We take turns reading pages, getting lost in the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. I love that Hermione is neither graceful nor gorgeous and often comes across as a know-it-all. But experience reveals her as a brilliant young woman and a deeply loyal friend. Just two books into the series and Hermione has saved Harry more than once. I hope that my daughter internalizes the message that really cool girls value intelligence and loyalty more than superficial traits.

Topic sentence introducing example 3

Facts & details developing example 3

(4) With the "tween" years fast approaching, I suppose Hannah Montana will soon arrive in our home. While part of me dreads my girls' transition into rock music, boys, and fashion, there are worse role models than a perky high schooler who lives an average teenager's life by day and performs as a famous pop artist at night. The wild success of the *Hannah Montana* television show and merchandise shows the power this secret rock star has over little girls. Hannah solves everyday problems with a silly humor that girls love. She also offers a fantasy that preteens can escape into when their bodies begin to change and their social lives get complicated. Hannah's message is positive: pursue your talents, whatever they are.

Conclusion

(5) The girl heroes in our home will keep changing as fast as my daughters do. I wonder if some day they will see me—raising them, working, going to college, pursuing my dreams—as a hero too. But for now, I am happy to share my home with a Latina

adventurer, a smart witch-in-training, and a lively singer in lip gloss. They are helping me teach my daughters to embrace their lucky lives as modern girls.

—Irma Batres, Student

- The **thesis statement** in an illustration essay states the writer's central point—a general statement that the rest of the essay will develop with examples.
- How many **examples** does the writer use to develop the thesis statement? What are they?
- Notice that the thesis statement and topic sentences setting forth the three main examples create an **outline** for this essay. The writer no doubt made an outline well developed with specifics before she wrote the first draft.

Planning and Writing the Illustration Essay

Before writing an illustration essay, you may wish to reread Chapter 5, “Illustration.” As you pick a topic and plan the essay, make sure your thesis statement can be richly developed by examples. Prewrite to generate as many examples as possible, so you can choose the best two, three, or four. As you revise, make sure you have fully discussed each example, including all necessary details and facts.

A graphic essay organizer like the one below can be helpful in planning your essay. The information you write in each box will become a paragraph.

ILLUSTRATION ESSAY ORGANIZER

Title

Jot ideas for a title that clearly states the subject or refers to it in an interesting way.

Paragraph 1:
Introduction
& Thesis
statement

In box one, write a thesis statement that identifies your subject and point of view. You also might refer to the examples to come. Jot ideas for an introduction that will grab the reader's attention or show the relevance of your topic.

Paragraph 2:
Example 1
& detailed
explanation

In box two, write a topic sentence introducing the first example. Brainstorm details and specifics to explain this example in one body paragraph. Use transitional expressions of illustration.

Paragraph 3:
Example 2
& detailed
explanation

In box three, write a topic sentence introducing the second example. Brainstorm details and specifics to explain this example in one body paragraph. Use transitional expressions of illustration.

Paragraph 4:
Example 3
& detailed
explanation

In box four, write a topic sentence introducing the third example. Brainstorm details and specifics to explain this example in one body paragraph. Use transitional expressions of illustration.

Paragraph 5, 6,
and so on:
Example 4
& detailed
explanation

Write a topic sentence to introduce each remaining example in the body of the essay. For each, prewrite for rich details, specifics, and explanation. Continue this way until the illustration essay is complete.

Last
paragraph:
Conclusion

Jot ideas for your conclusion. Include a final thought about or implication of the illustration you have presented.

B. The Narrative Essay

The urge to tell stories and listen to them is as old as human beings, so it's not surprising that the **narrative** essay is used frequently in college writing. For instance, in a history course, you might be assigned a paper on the major battles in World War I or be given an essay examination question about the struggle of women to gain the right to vote. An English teacher might ask you to write a composition retelling a meaningful incident or personal experience. In police work, nursing, and social work, your ability to organize facts and details in clear chronological, or time, order—to tell a story well—will be a crucial factor in the effectiveness of your writing.

Here is a narrative essay:

MAYA LIN'S VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

(1) The Vietnam War was the longest war in United States history, lasting from 1965 until 1975. Also our most controversial war, it left a deep wound in the nation's conscience. The creation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial helped heal this wound and put an unknown architecture student into the history books.

(2) In 1980, when the call went out for designs for a Vietnam war memorial, no one could have predicted that as many as 14,000 entries would be submitted. The rules were clear. The memorial had to be contemplative, harmonize with its surroundings, list the names of those dead or missing, and—most important—make no political statement about the war. When the judges, all well-known architects and sculptors, met in April 1981, they unanimously chose entry number 1026. The winner was Maya Lin, a twenty-one-year-old Asian American architecture student who, ironically, was too young to have had any direct experience of the war.

(3) Lin envisioned shining black granite slabs embedded in a long V-shaped trench, with one end pointing toward the Lincoln Memorial and the other toward the Washington Monument. She defined the trench as a cut in the earth, “an initial violence that in time would heal.” Names would be carved into the granite in the order of the dates on which the soldiers had died or disappeared. Lin felt that finding a name on the memorial with the help of a directory would be like finding a body on a battlefield.

A visitor at the Vietnam Memorial



© Rachel Epstein/PhotoEdit

(4) Although her design satisfied all the contest criteria and was the judges' clear favorite, it aroused much controversy. Some critics called it a "black gash of shame and sorrow," labeling it unpatriotic, unheroic, and morbid. They were upset that the memorial contained no flags, no statues of soldiers, and no inscription other than the names. Privately, some complained that Lin was too young to win the contest—and that she was female besides. She fought back. She claimed that a flag would make the green area around the memorial look like a golf course and that a traditional statue on her modern structure would be like a mustache drawn on someone else's portrait. At last, a compromise was reached: A flag and a statue were added to the memorial, and the critics withdrew their complaints. On Veterans Day, November 11, 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was finally dedicated.

(5) Since then, the memorial has become the most popular site in Washington, D.C. Some visit to see the monument and pay tribute to those who died in the war. Others come to locate and touch the names of loved ones. As they stand before the wall, they also learn the names of those who served and died with their relatives and friends. When the rain falls, all the names seem to disappear. Visitors often leave memorials of their own—flowers, notes to the departed, bits of old uniforms. A place of national mourning and of love, Maya Lin's monument has helped heal the wounds of the Vietnam War.

- The thesis statement of a narrative essay usually gives the point of the essay.
- Paragraphs 2, 4, and 5 of this essay tell in chronological order the incidents of the narrative.

Planning and Writing the Narrative Essay

Before writing a narrative essay, you may wish to reread Chapter 6, "Narration." Pick a story idea that interests *you*—one with a point—and plan before you write. Your thesis statement will probably state the story's point. Supply any necessary background information. If your story consists of just a few major events, you may wish to devote one body paragraph to each one; if it has many small events, consider describing several events per paragraph. Follow chronological, or time, order. As you prewrite, search for exciting, precise details and words, just as you would if you were entertaining friends with a good story over lunch.

A graphic essay organizer like the one below can be helpful in planning your essay. The information you write in each box will become a paragraph.

NARRATIVE ESSAY ORGANIZER

Title

In the title box, jot ideas for a clear title if the subject is work-related or a "grabber" title if more personal.

Paragraph 1:
Introduction
& Thesis
statement

In box one, write your thesis statement and jot any ideas for a catchy or engaging introductory paragraph.

Paragraph 2:
Event 1
& detailed
explanation

In box two, write a topic sentence introducing the first event (or series of events) in the narrative. Brainstorm details that will explain the incident.

Paragraph 3:
Event 2
& detailed
explanation

In box three, write the topic sentence for the second event or series of events. Prewrite for details.

Paragraph 4:
Event 3
& detailed
explanation

And so on to the end of the narrative . . .

Paragraph 5:
Event 4
& detailed
explanation

If your story has just 3 to 6 main events, write a topic sentence for each body paragraph, choosing the best details and supporting points from your prewriting. If the events are short or numerous, combine two or three in each paragraph.

Paragraph 6:
Conclusion

Prewrite ideas for a conclusion: a final thought or statement of the point, so the story will feel finished.

C. The Descriptive Essay

Although paragraphs of **description** are more common than whole essays, you will sometimes need to write a descriptive essay. In science labs, you may need to describe accurately cells under a microscope or a certain kind of rock. In business, you might need to describe a product, a piece of equipment, or the behavior of consumers in a test group. In social work, medicine, and psychology, case notes require precise description. No doubt you already use your descriptive powers in personal e-mails and letters. As this chapter will show, descriptive and narrative writing often overlap.

Here is one student's descriptive essay:

THE DAY OF THE DEAD

(1) The most important holiday in Mexico is the Day of the Dead, *El Día de Los Muertos*. Surprisingly, this holiday is anything but depressing. In the weeks before, Mexicans excitedly prepare to welcome the souls of the dead, who come back each year to visit the living. From October 31 through November 2 this year, I attended this fiesta with my roommate Manuel. By sharing Day of the Dead activities in his family's home, in the marketplace, and in a cemetery, I have observed that Mexicans, unlike other North Americans, accept and celebrate death as a part of life.

(2) For this holiday, the home altar, or *ofrenda*, lovingly celebrates the dead. In the Lopez home, a trail of marigold petals and the rich smell of incense led us from the front door to the altar. The bright orange marigold blooms, the flowers of the dead, also trimmed a card table overflowing with everything the dead would need to take up their

Skeleton in finery for Mexico's Day of the Dead. Like a photograph, a good description creates a vivid picture.



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lives again. For Manuel's Uncle Angel there was a fragrant bowl of *mole*,* a glass of tequila, cigars, playing cards, and two Miles Davis jazz CDs. For Manuel's cousin Lucia, who died at eighteen months, there was a worn stuffed puppy, a coral blanket, and a bowl of the rice pudding she loved. Heavy black and yellow beeswax candles threw a soft glow on photos of Angel and Lucia. It was as if the dead had never left and would always have a place of honor.

(3) While death is given an honored place in the home, it is celebrated with humor and mockery in the marketplace. Here the skeleton, or *calavera*, rules. Shops sell sugar skulls, humorous bone figures, and even skeletons made of flowers. At the candy store, Manuel's niece picked out a white chocolate skull decorated with blue icing and magenta sequins in the eye sockets. In many bakeries, skull-and-crossbones designs decorated the delicious "bread of the dead." Most impressive were the stalls filled with *calacas*, handmade wooden skeletons, some no bigger than my thumb. The shelves showed a lively afterlife where skeleton musicians played in a band, skeleton writers tapped bony fingers on tiny typewriters, and teenage skeletons hoisted boom boxes on their matchstick-sized shoulder bones.

(4) On the evening of November first, reverence and fun combined in an all-night vigil at the cemetery. On a path outside the cemetery gate, rows of vendors sold soft drinks and cotton candy as if it were a sporting event. Men drank a strong fermented cactus beverage called *pulque* and played cards at picnic tables. The loud music of a mariachi band serenaded the dead, who would come back to eat the food laid out for them on the graves. Old grandmothers wearing hand-woven shawls mourned and wept while children chased each other around the pink- and blue-painted graves. Nobody scolded the children. Life and death did not seem so separate.

(5) While I have always felt fearful in cemeteries at home, there I felt excited and hopeful. When a soft breeze made the rows of candles flicker, I wondered if the souls of the children, the *angelitos*, had come back, laughing and giggling. Or was it the real children I heard laughing? I really didn't know. But I felt more alive than ever, waiting for the dead to arrive in a dusty cemetery in Mexico.

—Jason Eady, Student

- The **thesis statement** of a descriptive essay says what will be described and often gives an overall impression of it or tells how the writer will approach the subject.
- Each paragraph in the body of this essay describes one scene or aspect of the topic. How many scenes or aspects are described, and what are they?
- What kind of order does the writer follow in organizing paragraph 2?
- Paragraph 5 completes and **concludes** the essay. How effective is this student's conclusion?

* *mole*: sauce used in Mexican cooking

Planning and Writing the Descriptive Essay

Before writing a descriptive essay, you may wish to reread Chapter 7, “Description.” Use your senses—sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch—as you plan and prewrite ideas. Pay special attention to organizing your details and observations; space order is often the best choice, but time order might work for your subject. As you revise, aim for rich details and exact language; these are what make good descriptions come alive.

A graphic essay organizer like the one below can be helpful in planning your essay. The information you write in each box will become a paragraph.

DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY ORGANIZER

Title

In the title box, write a clear, engaging title.

Paragraph 1:
Introduction
& Thesis
statement

In box one, write a thesis statement that tells what will be described and conveys an overall impression. Jot ideas for an engaging introductory paragraph.

Paragraph 2:
Scene 1
in the
description

In box two, write a topic sentence introducing the first scene or aspect of the description. Brainstorm details and specifics that “paint” the scene clearly in words.

Paragraph 3:
Scene 2
in the
description

In box three, write the topic sentence for the second scene or aspect of your description. Prewrite for rich details and specifics.

Paragraph 4:
Scene 3
in the
description

In box four, write a topic sentence for the third scene or aspect of your description. Prewrite for rich details and specifics.

Paragraph 5, 6,
and so on:
Scene 4
in the
description

Write a topic sentence to introduce each remaining scene or aspect of the subject. For each, prewrite for rich details and specifics. Continue until the description is complete.

Last paragraph:
Conclusion

Jot ideas for your conclusion. Include a final thought or feeling that the description evokes.

D. The Process Essay

The **process** essay is frequently used in college and business. Process essays either explain *how to do something* or describe *how something works* (or *how something happened*). In psychology, you might describe the stages of a child's moral development. In history, you might explain how a battle was won or lost, while in business, you might set forth the steps of an advertising campaign. In medicine, science, and technology, you must understand and perform numerous biological and technical processes.

Here is one student's process essay:

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A FINAL EXAM

(I) At the end of my first semester at college, I postponed thinking about final examinations, desperately crammed the night before, drank enough coffee to keep the city of Cincinnati awake, and then got Cs and Ds. I have since realized that the students who got As on their finals weren't just lucky; they knew how to *prepare*. There are many different ways to prepare for a final examination, and each individual must

perfect his or her own style, but over the years, I have developed a method that works for me.

(2) First, when your professor announces the date, time, and place of the final—usually at least two weeks before—ask questions and take careful notes on the answers. What chapters will be covered? What kinds of questions will the test contain? What materials and topics are most important? The information you gather will help you study more effectively.

(3) Next, survey all the textbook chapters the test will cover, using a highlighter or colored pen to mark important ideas and sections to be studied later. Many textbooks emphasize key ideas with boldface titles or headlines; others are written so that key ideas appear in the topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph. Pay attention to these guides as you read.

(4) Third, survey your class notes in the same fashion, marking important ideas. If your notes are messy or disorganized, you might want to rewrite them for easy reference later.

(5) Fourth, decide approximately how many hours you will need to study. Get a calendar and clearly mark off the hours each week that you will devote to in-depth studying. If possible, set aside specific times: Thursday from 1 to 2 P.M., Friday from 6 to 8 P.M., and so on. If you have trouble committing yourself, schedule study time with a friend, but pick someone as serious as you are about getting good grades.

(6) Fifth, begin studying systematically, choosing a quiet place free from distractions in which to work—the library, a dorm room, whatever helps you concentrate. One of my friends can study only in his attic; another, in her car. As you review the textbook and your notes, ask yourself questions based on your reading. From class discussions, try to spot the professor's priorities and to guess what questions might appear on the exam. Be creative; one friend of mine puts important study material on cassette tapes, which he plays walking to and from school.

(7) Finally, at least three days before the exam, start reviewing. At the least opportunity, refer to your notes, even if you are not prepared to digest all the material. Use the moments when you are drinking your orange juice or riding the bus; just looking at the material can promote learning. By the night before the exam, you should know everything you want to know—and allow for a good night's sleep!

(8) By following these simple procedures, you may find, as I do, that you are the most prepared person in the exam room, confident that you studied thoroughly enough to do well on the exam.

—Mark Reyes, Student

- The **thesis statement** in a process essay tells the reader what process the rest of the essay will describe.

- What **process** does this essay discuss?
- How many **steps or stages** make up this process? What are they?
- What kind of **order** does the writer use to organize his essay?
- Before writing his first draft, Mr. Reyes made a clear **outline**. An outline is even more important in essay writing than paragraph writing because it keeps the writer organized and on track.

Planning and Writing the Process Essay

Before writing a process essay, you may wish to reread Chapter 8, “Process.” Choose a process topic that you know something about. What expertise, experience, or humorous attempt might you wish to share? If your process requires any equipment or ingredients (a recipe, for instance), list them in the first paragraph. As you plan the essay, jot down all the necessary steps or stages and arrange them logically, probably in time order. Then prewrite to gather details and examples about each step or stage.

A graphic essay organizer like the one below can be helpful in planning your essay. The information you write in each box will become a paragraph.

PROCESS ESSAY ORGANIZER

Title

Write a title that clearly states the process or refers to it in an interesting way.

Paragraph 1:
Introduction
& Thesis
statement

In box one, write a thesis statement that tells what process will be explained. Jot ideas for a catchy and engaging introduction.

Paragraph 2:
Step 1 or
Stage 1
in the process

In box two, write a topic sentence stating the first step or stage in the process. Prewrite details that will explain this stage clearly.

Paragraph 3:
Step 2 or
Stage 2
in the process

In box three, write the topic sentence stating the second step or stage in the process. Prewrite details to explain this step.

Paragraph 4:
Step 3 or
Stage 3
in the process

In box four, write the topic sentence stating the third step or stage in the process. Prewrite details to explain this step.

Paragraph 5, 6,
and so on:
Step 4 or
Stage 4
in the process

Write a topic sentence to introduce each remaining step or stage in the process. For each, prewrite for rich details and specifics. Continue until the process is complete.

Last paragraph:
Conclusion

Jot ideas for your conclusion. Include a final thought about or some implications of the process you have just analyzed.

E. The Definition Essay

Although paragraphs of **definition** are more common in college and the workplace than essays are, you may at some time have to write a definition essay. In a computer course, for example, you might be called on to define a *network* or *database*. In psychology, you might need to define the *Oedipus complex*, or in biology, the terms *DNA* or *stem cells*. Sometimes defining at length a term people think they know—like *work ethic* or *acquaintance rape*—can be illuminating.

Here is a definition essay:

WINNING

(1) The dictionary defines winning as “achieving victory over others in a competition, receiving a prize or reward for achievement.” Yet some of the most meaningful wins of my life were victories over no other person, and I can remember winning when there was no prize for performance. To me, winning means overcoming obstacles.

(2) My first experience of winning occurred in elementary school gym. Nearly every day, after the preparatory pushups and squat-thrusts, we had to run relays. Although I had asthma as a child, I won many races. My chest would burn terribly for a few minutes, but it was worth it to feel so proud—not because I’d beaten others or won a prize, but because I’d overcome a handicap. By the way, I “outgrew” my asthma by age eleven.

(3) In high school, I had another experience of winning. Although I loved reading about biology, I could not bring myself to dissect a frog in lab. I hated the smell of the dead animals, and the idea of cutting them open disgusted me. Every time I tried, my hands would shake and my stomach would turn. Worst of all, my biology teacher reacted to my futile attempts with contempt. After an upsetting couple of weeks, I decided to get hold of myself. I realized that I was overreacting. “The animals are already dead,” I told myself. With determination, I swept into my next lab period, walked up to the table, and with one swift stroke, slit open a frog. After that, I excelled in biology. I had won again.

(4) I consider the fact that I am now attending college winning. To get here, I had to surmount many obstacles, both outside and inside myself. College costs money, and I don’t have much of it. College takes time, and I don’t have much of that either with a little son to care for. But I overcame these obstacles and a bigger one still—lack of confidence in myself. I had to keep saying, “I won’t give up.” And here I am, winning!

(5) These examples should clarify what winning means to me. I don’t trust anything that comes too easily. In fact, I expect the road to be rocky, and I appreciate a win more if I have to work, sacrifice, and overcome. This is a positive drive for me, the very spirit of winning.

—Audrey Holmes, Student

- The **thesis statement** of a definition essay tells the reader what term will be defined and usually defines it briefly as well.
- How do paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 develop the thesis statement?
- What order does the writer follow in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4?
- Review the parts of this well-organized essay. You can see that the introduction and thesis statement; three body paragraphs, each explaining one example of “winning”; and the conclusion form a clear **outline** of the essay. This student made just such an outline before she sat down to write.

Planning and Writing the Definition Essay

Before writing a definition essay, you should reread Chapter 9, “Definition.” Review the three types of definitions: by *synonym*, *class*, or *negation*. Take your time choosing a word or term that truly interests you—a word from your job, a college course, or your own experience. Prewrite for ideas to explain your definition. Consider using two three or examples to develop the term, one paragraph per example, the way the first student writer does above. If you use some short examples like the second student, you might group them in one paragraph.

A graphic essay organizer like the one below can be helpful in planning your essay. The information you write in each box will become a paragraph.

DEFINITION ESSAY ORGANIZER

Title

Write a title that clearly states the term or refers to it in an interesting way.

Paragraph 1:
Introduction
& Thesis
statement

In box one, write a thesis statement that briefly defines your word or term. Review in Chapter 9 the type of definition you have selected, probably definition by class or negation. Jot ideas for a catchy and engaging introduction.

Paragraph 2:
Example 1
or Point 1
of the
definition

In box two, write a topic sentence introducing the first example or point in the definition. Brainstorm details and specifics that clearly develop this idea. Consider devoting one paragraph to each example or point.

Paragraph 3:
Example 2
or point 2
of the
definition

In box three, write the topic sentence introducing the second example or point in the definition. Brainstorm details and specifics that clearly support this idea.

Paragraph 4:
Example 3
or point 3
of the definition

In box four, write the topic sentence introducing the third example or point in the definition. Brainstorm details and specifics that clearly support this idea.

Paragraph 5, 6,
and so on:
Example 4
or point 4
of the definition

Write a topic sentence to introduce each remaining example or point in the definition. For each, prewrite for rich details and specifics. Continue until the definition is complete.

Last
paragraph:
Conclusion

Jot ideas for your conclusion. Include a final thought about or some implications of the definition you have developed.

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/narrative.htm>

Interesting tips on writing narratives and descriptions, with professional examples

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/definition.htm>

Excellent advice on crafting a valuable essay of definition, with professional examples

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.



CHAPTER 17

Types of Essays, Part 2

- A: The Comparison and the Contrast Essay
- B: The Classification Essay
- C: The Cause and Effect Essay
- D: The Persuasive Essay



This chapter will show you how to apply four more methods of paragraph development that you learned in Unit 3 to the essay. Because an essay is like an expanded paragraph, the same methods you would use to prewrite, organize, and write a paragraph of comparison and contrast, for instance, can also be used to develop an entire essay. The rest of the chapter will show you how.

A. The Comparison and the Contrast Essay

Essays of **comparison** or **contrast** are frequently called for in college courses. In an English or a drama class, you might be asked to contrast two of Shakespeare's villains—perhaps Iago and Claudius. In psychology, you might have to contrast the training of the clinical psychologist and that of the psychiatrist, or in history, to compare ancient Greek and Roman religions.

Does the following essay compare or contrast?

E-NOTES FROM AN ONLINE LEARNER*Introduction*

(1) This year I attended my first U.S. history class at midnight, clad in my dancing cow pajamas and fluffy slippers. No, I was not taking part in some bizarre campus ritual. I am enrolled in two courses in the University of Houston's Distance Education Program. Although I took classes on campus at the same college last year, my experiences in the traditional classroom and in the virtual classroom have been vastly different.

*Thesis statement**Topic sentence
introducing point 1*

(2) Attending online courses has proved more convenient for me than traveling to regular classes each day. Because I live over an hour away from campus, I was often stalled in traffic when my 8:00 A.M. psychology lecture was beginning. Then I spent the last half hour of my afternoon English class praying that the discussion—however lively and interesting—would not go past 4:00 P.M. and make me late to pick up my son at day care. In contrast, my online classes are always convenient to attend because I set my own schedule. Lectures for my history survey course are posted to the class website, so I can log on whenever I want to read new material or review. My writing seminar is “asynchronous.” This means that students and instructors communicate at their convenience on an electronic bulletin board. I can e-mail my questions, file homework, and respond to other students' work at night or on weekends without ever leaving my apartment.

*Topic sentence
introducing point 2*

(3) Though some students miss the human energy of a real classroom, the online format actually encourages me to participate more in discussions. As a shy woman who is older than many of my peers, I used to hide in the back row to avoid having to speak. I only answered questions when called upon. On the other hand, writing online, I am more confident. I have time to think about what I want to say, and I know people are not judging me by anything except my ideas. Even though bulletin board discussions can be painfully slow and disjointed compared to the back-and-forth of a great classroom discussion, I like the equality in a virtual classroom. Surprisingly, there I feel freer to be the real me.

*Topic sentence
introducing point 3*

(4) The biggest difference in moving from a regular classroom to a virtual one, in my view, is learning to be self-motivated. Attending classes on campus, I was motivated by the personal involvement of my instructors. I also caught that group adrenaline rush, seeing other students hunched over their notebooks in a lecture hall or coffeehouse. While my online courses still require papers to be written each week and tests to be completed within a certain time, now no instructor is prodding me to get busy. Instead, only the soft bubbling noise of my computer's aquarium screensaver reminds me to tap the keyboard and dive into my coursework. Fortunately, I am self-motivated and focused. As a returning student with a job and a child, I have to be. Honestly, however, I have already seen some of my online classmates post homework assignments later and later until they drop off the screen entirely.

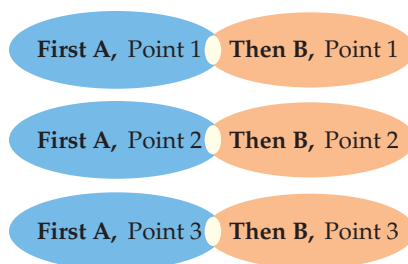
Conclusion

(5) Overall, my experience with online classes has been more positive than my experience on campus, but online learning is not for everyone. So far I find online classes

convenient, welcoming for self-expression, and well-suited to my particular personality, which is organized, shy, and prone to bouts of midnight energy. In fact, it's 12:14 A.M. now as I input the final draft of this essay assignment. My son is asleep in the next room and my cat, Miss Fleason, is nuzzling my hot pink fluffy slippers.

—Brenda Wilson, Student

- The **thesis statement** of a comparison or contrast essay tells what two persons or things will be compared or contrasted.
- Will this essay **compare** or **contrast** the two kinds of classrooms? What word or words in the thesis indicate this?
- Does the writer discuss all points about A and then all points about B, or skip back and forth between A and B?
- The pattern of supporting points in this essay might be shown like this:



- Notice how the thesis statement, topic sentences, and supporting details form a clear **outline** of the essay.

Planning and Writing the Comparison and Contrast Essay

Before writing your essay, you may wish to reread Chapter 10, “Comparison and Contrast.” Outlining is especially important in comparison and contrast. As you plan, make a chart of all your points of comparison or contrast to make sure you give balanced coverage. Decide which pattern will better present your ideas: *AB*, *AB*, *AB*, or *all A, then all B*. Be sure to use transitional expressions* to help the reader follow.

A graphic essay organizer like the one below can be helpful in planning your essay. The information you write in each box will become a paragraph.

* For a list of transitional expressions of comparison and contrast, see pages 87 and 88.

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST ESSAY ORGANIZER

Title

Write a title that states the two persons or things you will compare or contrast.

Paragraph 1:
Introduction
& Thesis statement

In box one, write a thesis statement that clearly states the two persons or things and whether your essay will compare or contrast them. Jot ideas for an engaging or informative introduction.

Paragraph 2:
Point 1 of
comparison or
contrast

In box two, write a topic sentence introducing your first point of comparison or contrast. You should have decided by now whether to arrange your points in AB, AB, AB order or all A, then all B. Brainstorm details and specifics that clearly develop the topic sentence.

Paragraph 3:
Point 2 of
comparison or
contrast

In box three, following your plan, write a topic sentence introducing the second point of comparison or contrast. Brainstorm details and specifics that clearly support this idea.

Paragraph 4:
Point 3 of
comparison or
contrast

In box four, following your plan, write a topic sentence introducing the third point of comparison or contrast. Brainstorm details and specifics that clearly support this idea.

Paragraph 5, 6,
and so on: Point 4
of comparison
or contrast

Write a topic sentence to introduce each remaining point of comparison or contrast. For each, prewrite for rich details and specifics. Continue until the essay is complete.

Last paragraph:
Conclusion



Jot ideas for your conclusion.
Include a final thought about or
some implications of the comparison
or contrast you have just developed.

B. The Classification Essay

The **classification** essay is useful in college and business. In music, for example, you might have to classify Mozart's compositions according to the musical periods of his life. A retail business might classify items in stock according to popularity—how frequently they must be restocked. All plants, animals, rocks, and stars are classified by scientists. Libraries classify and display books according to the Dewey Decimal Classification System. It seems that one way the human mind makes sense of the world is by grouping similar things and then dividing them into subcategories; a good classification does just that.

Here is a classification essay:

THREE TYPES OF PARENTS

(1) One does not have to pass a qualifying examination to enter the state of parenthood. In fact, almost anyone can become a parent. Precisely because the group called *parents* is so large, many different kinds of parenting exist. In terms of how strict parents are with their children, however, there are three basic types: autocratic, permissive, and democratic.

(2) Autocratic parents think their word is the law, and when they say jump, everyone had better do it quickly. These parents assume that they alone know what is best for their children and that the kids will learn discipline and respect for authority from regimentation. What they do not even consider is that they may not know best and that rules untempered with mercy can breed rebellion and contempt for authority. The autocratic parent whose child comes home one hour late from a date because a major accident tied up traffic for miles will allow that child no opportunity to explain his or her reasons for being late. The child is immediately grounded, his or her allowance suspended. Parents of this type probably have good intentions, wanting their children to grow up "right," but they approach the task as if the family were in boot camp.

(3) At the other extreme, permissive parents set few or no rules for their children and offer little guidance. Frequently, these parents are too busy to take time with the children and tend to leave the child rearing to TV, the computer, school, and chance.

Since parents of this type set few rules for their children, it would be nearly impossible for their child to come home late. They allow their children to come and go as they please, either because they don't care what their youngsters do or because they think children need to learn to make their own rules. Permissive parents may not understand that all young people need guidance because when they mature, they will have to abide by society's rules. Not being taught to respect order early in life causes some children of permissive parents to resent the regulations everyone must obey.

(4) Democratic parents, the third type, are not as strict as autocrats and not as lenient as permissives. They are willing to discuss rules and punishments with their children and to listen to the other side of an argument. A democratic parent whose child comes in an hour late from a date will listen to the explanation about the major wreck that tied up traffic for miles. Since this is such an easily verifiable story, the democratic parent would suspend any punishment in this case when he or she hears the news or sees the morning paper. In general, democratic parents lay down fewer rules than their autocratic counterparts because they realize that children must learn some life lessons on their own. Democratic parents prefer to work in the role of advisors, always available when their children need help.

(5) Too few people with children are democratic parents, the most effective of the three types. Both too much authority and too little can breed disrespect and resentment. A good parent should offer boundaries and advice, trying neither to rule nor disregard his or her children completely.

—Sallie Duhling

- The **thesis statement** in a classification essay tells the reader what group will be classified and on what basis.
- Into how many categories are parents divided? What are they?
- On what **basis** are these categories examined?
- Can you see the logic of this writer's **order** of paragraphs? That is, why are autocrats discussed first, permissives second, and democratic parents last?
- Note that the thesis statement, topic sentences setting forth the three categories, and the conclusion create an **outline** for this essay. The writer made such an outline before she wrote the first draft.

Planning and Writing the Classification Essay

Before writing a classification essay, you might reread Chapter 11, "Classification." Choose a topic that lends itself to this pattern, and then make sure your *basis of classification* includes every member of the group. As you plan your essay, make

sure your categories follow a logical order. As you write, use transitional phrases like “The first type . . .” and “The second category . . .” to help the reader follow.*

A graphic essay organizer like the one below can be helpful in planning your essay. The information you write in each box will become a paragraph.

CLASSIFICATION ESSAY ORGANIZER

Title

Write a title that clearly states the classification subject or refers to it in an interesting way.

Paragraph 1:
Introduction &
Thesis statement

In box one, write a thesis statement that sets forth the group you will classify and the basis of the classification; you also might name your categories (three or four is a good number). Jot ideas for an introductory paragraph that will convey to the reader the value or point of your classification.

Paragraph 2:
Category 1 of
the classification

In box two, write a topic sentence introducing the first category. Brainstorm details, specifics, and perhaps an example or two to explain the category in one body paragraph. Use transitional expressions to lead the reader along.

Paragraph 3:
Category 2 of
the classification

In box three, write a topic sentence introducing the second category. Brainstorm details, specifics, and an example or two to explain the category.

Paragraph 4:
Category 3 of
the classification

In box four, write a topic sentence introducing the third category. Brainstorm details, specifics, and an example or two to explain the category.

* For a list of transitional expressions of classification, see page 94.

Paragraph 5, 6,
and so on:
Category 4 of
the classification

Write a topic sentence to introduce each remaining category of the classification. For each, prewrite for rich details, specifics, and examples. Continue this way until the classification is complete.

Last paragraph:
Conclusion

Jot ideas for your conclusion. Include a final thought about or some implications of the classification you have presented.

C. The Cause and Effect Essay

Essays of **cause and effect** are among the most important kinds of essays to master because knowing how to analyze the causes and consequences of events will help you succeed in college, at work, and in your personal life. What *caused* a historic battle, an increase of homelessness, or a friendship breaking apart? How will a certain child be *affected* by owning a computer, spending time at Sunshine Day Care, or being teased because he loves to dance? In business, the success of every company and product relies on a grasp of cause and effect in the marketplace. Why does this brand of smart phone outsell all others? What causes employees to want to work hard? How will the Internet affect business in 2030?

Here is an essay of cause and effect. As you will see, this writer's eventual understanding of causes and effects might have saved her life.

WHY I STAYED AND STAYED

(1) It has been proven that about 1.8 million women are battered each year, making battery the single largest cause of injury to women in the United States. Domestic violence can be physical, emotional, verbal, financial, or sexual abuse from a partner you live with. I suffered from most of these abuses for almost ten years. I have had black eyes, busted lips, bruises, and scars on my face. He had affairs with other women, yet he claimed that he loved me. People ask, "Why did you wait so long to leave him?" I stayed for many reasons.

(2) First, I was born in a country that is male-dominated. Many of my people accept violence against women as a part of life. I grew up seeing hundreds of women staying in violent relationships for the sake of their children. They wanted their children to grow up

with a father at home. Relatives convinced these women to try to make their marriages work. This was all I knew.

(3) Another reason I stayed was that I was afraid to make changes in my life. I had been with him so long that I thought I had nowhere to go. I depended on him to provide me and my child with food and shelter. How could I manage on my own? Of course, the longer I believed these things, the more my self-confidence withered.

(4) Finally, I stayed because I was isolated. I felt ashamed to talk about the problem, believing it was somehow my fault. Fear was isolating, too. Living in a violent home is very frightening. Like many women, I was afraid to say anything to anyone, thinking he would get upset. If I just kept quiet, maybe he wouldn't hurt me. But nothing I did made any difference.

(5) When I finally realized that the abuse was not going to stop, I decided to do something about it. I was finally ready to end my pain. I began to talk to people and learn about ways to get help.

(6) On April 24th of this year, I fought back. When he punched me in the eye, I called 911. Thank God for changes in the way domestic violence cases are now being handled. The police responded quickly. He was arrested and taken to jail, where he waited for two days to go to court. The next day, I went to the courthouse to press charges. I spoke to the district attorney in charge, asking for an order of protection. This order forbids him from having any verbal or physical contact with me.

(7) It is very hard to see someone you love being taken away in handcuffs, but I had to put my safety and my child's well-being first. Although he is now out of jail, I feel safe with my order of protection; however, I understand that court orders sometimes do not stop abusers. These are very difficult days for me, but I pray that time will heal my wounds. I cry often, which helps my pain. But an innocent life depends on me for guidance, and I cannot let her down.

(8) Every case is different, and you know your partner better than anyone, but help is out there if you reach for it. Most cities have a twenty-four-hour hotline. There is help at this college at the PASS Center and the Department of Student Development. You can go to a shelter, to a friend, to your family. These people will not fail you. You too can break the chain.

—Student, name withheld by request

- The **thesis statement** of a cause and effect essay identifies the subject and tells whether causes or effects will be emphasized. Does it emphasize causes or effects?
- How many **causes** does the writer discuss, and what are they?
- Although some essays discuss either causes or effects, this one does both. Paragraph 5 marks a turning point, her decision to take action. What positive effects of this new decision does she discuss? Are there any negative effects?

- Before she wrote this essay, the writer probably made a **plan** or **outline** like this:
 - Introduction and thesis statement
 - Reasons for staying with abusive partner
 - upbringing
 - fear of change
 - isolation
 - Decision to leave
 - Effects of decision to leave abuser
 - reached out for help
 - fought back (911, order of protection)
 - acted for daughter
 - sadness, guilt
 - Advice for women in the same situation
- What order does this essay follow?
- Do you think paragraph 8 makes an effective **conclusion**?

Planning and Writing the Cause and Effect Essay

Before writing an essay of cause and effect, reread Chapter 12, “Cause and Effect,” especially the section called “Avoiding Problems in Cause and Effect Writing.” Choose a subject that lends itself to an analysis of causes or effects. Think on paper or computer screen, listing many possible causes and effects; then choose the best three or four. Don’t forget to consider short- and long-term effects, as well as positive and negative effects. Decide on a logical order—probably time order or order of importance—and use transitional expressions to introduce your points.*

A graphic essay organizer like the one below can be helpful in planning your essay. The information you write in each box will become a paragraph.

CAUSE AND EFFECT ESSAY ORGANIZER

Title

Write a title that clearly states the subject or refers to it in an interesting way. “Why I Stayed and Stayed,” for instance, tells us the writer will examine reasons why she stayed somewhere too long.

Paragraph 1:
Introduction
& Thesis
statement

In box one, write a thesis statement that briefly states your subject and whether causes or effects will be emphasized. Jot ideas for an engaging or informative introduction.

* For a list of transitional expressions of cause and effect, see page 101.

Paragraph 2:
Cause or
effect 1

In box two, write a topic sentence introducing the first cause or effect you will explain. Brainstorm details and specifics that clearly explain the importance of this cause or effect. Consider devoting one paragraph to each main cause or effect.

Paragraph 3:
Cause or
effect 2

In box three, write a topic sentence introducing the second cause or effect. Brainstorm details and specifics that clearly explain the importance of this cause or effect.

Paragraph 4:
Cause or
effect 3

In box four, write a topic sentence introducing the third cause or effect. Brainstorm details and specifics that clearly explain the importance of this cause or effect.

Paragraph 5, 6,
and so on:
Cause or
effect 4

Write a topic sentence to introduce each remaining cause or effect. For each, prewrite for rich details and facts to explain how it supports your thesis statement.

Last paragraph:
Conclusion

Jot ideas for your conclusion. Include a final thought about or some implications of the cause and effect essay you have written.

D. The Persuasive Essay

Persuasive essays are the essay type most frequently called for in college, business, and daily life. That is, you will often be asked to take a stand on an issue—censorship on the Internet, whether a company should invest in on-site child care, or whether a new super-store will help or hurt your community—and then try to persuade others to agree with you. Examination questions asking you to “agree or disagree” are really asking you to take a position and make a persuasive case for that position—for example, “The election of President Barack Obama signals an end to racism in the United States. Agree or disagree.”

Here is a persuasive essay:

STOPPING YOUTH VIOLENCE: AN INSIDE JOB

(1) Every year, nearly 1 million twelve- to nineteen-year-olds are murdered, robbed, or assaulted—many by their peers—and teenagers are more than twice as likely as adults to become the victims of violence, according to the Children’s Defense Fund. Although the problem is far too complex for any one solution, teaching young people conflict-resolution skills—that is, nonviolent techniques for resolving disputes—seems to help. To reduce youth violence, conflict-resolution skills should be taught to all children before they reach junior high school.

(2) First and most important, young people need to learn nonviolent ways of dealing with conflict. In a dangerous society where guns are readily available, many youngsters feel they have no choice but to respond to an insult or an argument with violence. If they have grown up seeing family members and neighbors react to stress with verbal or physical violence, they may not know that other choices exist. Robert Steinback, a former *Miami Herald* columnist who worked with at-risk youth in Miami, writes that behavior like carrying a weapon or refusing to back down gives young people “the illusion of control,” but what they desperately need is to learn real control—for example, when provoked, to walk away from a fight.

(3) Next, conflict-resolution programs have been shown to reduce violent incidents and empower young people in a healthy way. Many programs and courses around the country are teaching teens and preteens to work through disagreements without violence. Tools include calmly telling one’s own side of the story and listening to the other person without interrupting or blaming—skills that many adults don’t have! Conflict Busters, a Los Angeles public school program, starts in the third grade; it trains students to be mediators, helping peers find their own solutions to conflicts ranging from “sandbox fights to interracial gang disputes,” according to *Youthwatch: Statistics on Violence*, May 2009. Schools in Claremont, Connecticut, run a conflict-resolution course written by Dr.

Luz Rivera, who said in a phone interview that fewer violent school incidents have been reported since the course began. Although conflict resolution is useful at any age, experts agree that students should first be exposed before they are hit by the double jolts of hormones and junior high school.

(4) Finally, although opponents claim that this is a “Band-Aid” solution that does not address the root causes of teen violence—poverty, troubled families, bad schools, and drugs, to name a few—in fact, conflict-resolution training saves lives now. The larger social issues must be addressed, but they will take years to solve, whereas teaching students new attitudes and “people skills” will empower them immediately and serve them for a lifetime. For instance, fourteen-year-old Verna, who once called herself Vee Sinister, says that Ms. Rivera’s course has changed her life: “I learned to stop and think before my big mouth gets me in trouble. I use the tools with my mother, and guess what? No more screaming at home.”

(5) The violence devastating Verna’s generation threatens everyone’s future. One proven way to help youngsters protect themselves from violence is conflict-resolution training that begins early. Although it is just one solution among many, this solution taps into great power: the hearts, minds, and characters of young people.

- The **thesis statement** in a persuasive essay clearly states the issue to be discussed and the writer’s position on it.
- This introduction includes *facts*. What is the source of these facts and why does the writer include them here?
- Sometimes a writer needs to define terms he or she is using. What term does the writer define?
- How many reasons does this writer give to back up the thesis statement?
- Notice that the writer presents one reason per paragraph.
- Which reasons refer to an *authority*? Who are these authorities?
- How is the second reason supported?
- What is the source of information on Conflict Busters?
- Which reason is really an *answer to the opposition*?
- This reason also uses an *example*. What or who is the example?
- Note that the thesis statement, topic sentences, and conclusion make up an **outline** or **plan** for the whole essay.

Planning and Writing the Persuasive Essay

Before writing a persuasive essay, you should reread Chapter 13, “Persuasion.” In particular, review the five methods of persuasion, all employed well in the first essay above:

1. Use facts
2. Cite authority
3. Give examples
4. Predict consequences
5. Answer the opposition

Keeping your readers in mind is key to persuading them, so craft your thesis statement carefully. Plan to devote one paragraph to each of your reasons, developing each paragraph with facts and discussion. Ample factual support is vital to successful persuasion. A good way to find interesting factual support is to do some basic **research**—for example, to find books or articles by or about experts on your subject or even to conduct your own interviews, as does the author of “Stopping Youth Violence.”*

A graphic essay organizer like the one below can be helpful in planning your essay. The information you write in each box will become a paragraph.

PERSUASIVE ESSAY ORGANIZER

Title

Write a title that forcefully or provocatively sets forth the issue.

Paragraph 1:
Introduction
& Thesis
statement

In box one, write a thesis statement that clearly states the issue and your position about it. Jot ideas for a strong and engaging introduction. Visualize your typical reader, and write with him or her in mind.

* For information on summarizing and quoting outside sources and on using research in an essay, see Chapter 18, “Summarizing, Quoting, and Avoiding Plagiarism” and Chapter 19, “Strengthening an Essay with Research.”

Paragraph 2:
Reason 1 in the
argument

In box two, write a topic sentence introducing the first reason (refer to the five methods of persuasion and try to use at least two in your essay). Prewrite ideas that clearly explain the first reason.

Paragraph 3:
Reason 2 in
the argument

In box three, write a topic sentence introducing the second reason. Especially if your topic is controversial, try to include an answer to the opposition. Brainstorm details and specifics that clearly and convincingly explain it.

Paragraph 4:
Reason
3 in the
argument

In box four, write a topic sentence introducing the third reason. Especially if your topic is controversial, try to include an answer to the opposition. Brainstorm details and specifics that clearly and convincingly explain it.

Paragraph 5, 6,
and so on:
Reason 4 in the
argument

Write a topic sentence to introduce each remaining reason that will support and explain your thesis statement. For each, prewrite for facts and specifics to explain it fully. Continue until your last reason is presented. Double check the order in which you present the reasons; does it make logical sense?

Last paragraph:
Conclusion

Jot ideas for your conclusion that brings home to the reader why he or she should agree with your position. Include a brief review of your argument and/or a final thought about the issue and its importance.



EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/comparcontrast.html>

Helpful advice on writing a comparison contrast essay

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/argument.htm>

Excellent tips on developing and supporting an argument

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.



CHAPTER 18

Summarizing, Quoting, and Avoiding Plagiarism

- A:** Avoiding Plagiarism
- B:** Writing a Summary
- C:** Using Direct and Indirect Quotation

 Now more than ever before, it is important for you to know how to find, evaluate, and use information from **outside sources**—that is, sources outside yourself (for example, books, articles, Internet sites, or other people). In some college courses, you will write papers with no outside sources. However, many courses and jobs will require you to refer to outside sources as you write reports, essays, and research papers. Besides, information from outside sources can vastly enrich your writing with facts, statistics, experts' ideas, and more.

In this chapter, you will learn what **plagiarism** is and how to avoid it. You will also learn and practice three excellent ways to use outside sources in your writing: **summarizing, quoting directly, and quoting indirectly.**

A. Avoiding Plagiarism

Before we discuss how to summarize or quote from an outside source, it is all-important that you understand—so you can avoid—**plagiarism**. Plagiarism is failing to give proper credit to an author whose words or ideas you have used.

That is, plagiarism means passing off someone else's words or ideas as your own. Whether intentional or careless, plagiarism is stealing. A college student who plagiarizes a paper may be expelled from the course or from college. In the business world, publishing material copied from someone else is a crime.

To avoid plagiarism, you must give proper credit to the original author, as this chapter and the next will explain. Meanwhile, keep this simple rule in mind: **Always tell your reader the source of any words and ideas not your own. Give enough information so that a reader who wants to find your original source can do so.**

B. Writing a Summary

A **summary** presents the main idea and supporting points of a longer work *in much shorter form*. A summary might be one sentence, one paragraph, or several paragraphs long, depending on the length of the original and the nature of your assignment.

Summarizing is important both in college and at work. In a persuasive essay, you might summarize the ideas of an expert whose views support one of your points. A professor might ask you to summarize a book, a market survey, or even the plot of a film—that is, to condense it in your own words, presenting only the highlights. Of course, many essay exams also call for written summaries.

Compare this short newspaper article—the *source*—with the *summary* that follows:

Source

Fido may be cute, cuddly, and harmless. But in his genes, he's a wolf.

Researchers tracing the genetic family tree of man's best friend have confirmed that domestic dogs, from petite poodles to huge elkhounds, descended from wolves that were tamed 100,000 years ago.

"Our data show that the origin of dogs seems to be much more ancient than indicated in the archaeological record," said Robert K. Wayne of UCLA, the leader of a team that tested the genes from 67 dog breeds and 62 wolves on four continents.

Wayne said the study showed so many DNA changes that dogs had to have diverged genetically from wolves 60,000 to more than 100,000 years ago.

The study suggests that primitive humans living in a hunting and gathering culture tamed wolves and then bred the animals to create the many different types of dogs that now exist.

—Recer, Paul. "Dogs Tamed 100,000 Years Ago."
The Herald 13 June 1997: 9A. Print.

Summary

Dogs began evolving from wolves between 60,000 and 100,000 years ago, reports Paul Recer in *The Herald*. Apparently, humans tamed wolves far earlier than was previously thought. Researchers at UCLA, led by Robert K. Wayne, came to these conclusions after studying the genes of 67 breeds of dogs and 62 wolves on four continents (9A).

- Notice that sentence 1 states the author and source of the original article. Sentence 1 also states the main idea of the article. What is its main idea?
- What evidence supports this idea?
- The original is short, so the summary is very short—just three sentences long.
- The summary writer does not add his own opinions about dogs or evolution but simply states the main ideas of the source. Unlike many kinds of writing, a summary should not contain your personal opinions and feelings.
- Note that the page number of the original source appears in parentheses at the end of the summary.*

Preparing to Write a Summary

The secret of writing a good summary is clearly understanding the original. If you doubt this, try to summarize out loud Chapter 3 of your biology book. To summarize well, you have to know the subject matter.

Before you summarize a piece of writing, notice the title and subtitle (if there is one); these often state the main idea. Read quickly for meaning; then carefully read the work again, underlining or jotting down notes for yourself. What is the author's thesis or main point? What points does he or she offer in support? Be careful to distinguish between the most and least important points; your summary should include only the most important ones.

To help you understand *what the author thinks is important*, notice which ideas get the most coverage. Read with special care the topic sentence of each paragraph and the first and last paragraphs of the work. If you are summarizing a magazine article or a textbook chapter, the subheads (often in boldface type) point out important ideas.

* For more precise information on how to cite sources, see Chapter 19, "Strengthening an Essay with Research," Part C.

Your written summary should include the following:

1. The author, title, and source of the original
2. The main idea or thesis of the original, in your own words
3. The most important supporting ideas or points of the original, in your own words

Try to present the ideas in your summary in proportion to those in the original. For instance, if the author devotes one paragraph to each of four ideas, you might give one sentence to each idea. To avoid plagiarism, when you finish, compare your summary with the original; that is, make sure you have not just copied the phrasing and sentences of the original.

A summary differs from much other writing in that it should *not* contain your feelings or opinions—just the facts. Your job is to capture the essence of the original, with nothing added.

Following are two summaries of a student essay in Chapter 17, “Types of Essays, Part 2,” Part A, of this book. Which do you think is the better summary, A or B? Be prepared to say specifically why.

Summary A

(1) In the essay “E-Notes from an Online Learner,” printed in Fawcett, *Evergreen*, Ninth Edition, student and mother Brenda Wilson contrasts her learning experiences in traditional and online classrooms. (2) Whereas Wilson’s long commute to campus once made her late to class or anxious, she finds online classes more convenient because she can read lectures or submit coursework any time, from home. (3) Next, Ms. Wilson says that other students might prefer the energy of live class discussion, but she feels freer online, writing her thoughts with less self-consciousness. (4) Finally, she stresses that online students must be self-motivated, unlike regular students who can rely on professors to prod them or on the “group adrenaline rush [of] seeing other students hunched over their notebooks.” (5) Less focused students might procrastinate and drop out. (6) Overall, Wilson prefers distance learning (238–239).

Summary B

(1) This excellent essay is by Brenda Wilson, student. (2) I enjoyed reading about online learning because I have never taken a course online. (3) This year Ms. Wilson attended her history class dressed in dancing cow pajamas and fluffy slippers. (4) This was not a bizarre college ritual but part of the University of Houston’s

Distance Education Program. (5) Virtual courses are very different. (6) She has a job and a son, so she is very busy, like many students today. (7) Online classes are great for this type of student, more convenient. (8) Students have to motivate themselves, and Ms. Wilson has only the soft bubbling noise of her aquarium screen saver to remind her to work. (9) She ends by saying it is 12:14 A.M. and her cat is nuzzling her fluffy pink slippers. (10) I also liked her cat's name.

- The test of a good summary is how well it captures the original. Which better summarizes Ms. Wilson's essay, A or B?
- If you picked A, you are right. Sentence 1 states the author and title of the essay, as well as the name and edition of the book in which it appears. Sentence 1 also states the main idea of the original, which *contrasts* the author's experience of traditional classes and virtual classes. Does any sentence in B state the main idea of the original essay?
- Compare the original with the two summaries. How many points of contrast does A include? B?
- Does each writer summarize the essay *in his or her own words*? If not, which sentences might seem plagiarized?
- Writer A once quotes Ms. Wilson directly. How is this shown? Why do you think the summary writer chose this sentence to quote?
- Do both summaries succeed in keeping personal opinion out? If not, which sentences contain the summary writer's opinion?.
- Note that summary writer A includes the source page number in parentheses at the end of the summarized material. On the other hand, writer B refers to Brenda Wilson but does not name her essay or the source in which it appears.

Checklist

The Process of Writing a Summary

- ☐ 1. Notice the title and subtitle of the original; do these state its main idea?
- ☐ 2. Read the original quickly for meaning; then carefully read it again, underlining important ideas and jotting down notes for yourself.

- ☐ 3. Determine the author's thesis or main idea.
- ☐ 4. Now find the main supporting points. Subheads (if any), topic sentences, and the first and last paragraphs of the original may help you find key points.
- ☐ 5. Write your topic sentence or thesis statement, stating the author's thesis, title, source, and date of the original.
- ☐ 6. In your own words, give the author's most important supporting points, in the same order in which the author gives them. Keep the same proportion of coverage as the original.
- ☐ 7. Write your summary, skipping lines so you will have room to make corrections.
- ☐ 8. Now revise, asking yourself, "Will my summary convey to someone who has never read the original the author's main idea and key supporting points?"
- ☐ 9. Proofread, making neat corrections above the lines.
- ☐ 10. Compare your final draft with the original to avoid plagiarism.

C. Using Direct and Indirect Quotation

Sometimes you will want to quote an outside source directly. A quotation might be part of a summary or part of a longer paper or report. Quoting the words of others can add richness and authority to your writing; in fact, that is why I include a Quotation Bank at the end of this book—a kind of minireader of great thoughts. Use short quotations in these ways:

- Use a quotation to stress a key idea.
- Use a quotation to lend expert opinion to your argument.
- Use a quotation to provide a catchy introduction or conclusion.
- Use a quotation about your topic that is wonderfully written and "quotable" to add interest.

However, avoid using very long quotations or too many quotations. Both send the message that you are filling up space because you don't have enough to say. Of course, to avoid plagiarism, you always must credit the original author or speaker.

Here are some methods for introducing quotations:

Ways To Introduce Quotations

Mr. Taibi says, . . .

One expert had this to say:

In a recent *Times* column,
Maureen Dowd observes . . .

Ms. Luboff writes, . . .

. . . , one authority reported.

According to Dr. Haynes, . . .

Following are a passage from a well-known book and two ways that students quoted the author:

Source

On film or videotape, violence begins and ends in a moment. “Bang bang, you’re dead.” Then the death is over. This sense of action-without-consequences replicates and reinforces the dangerous “magical” way many children think. Do the twelve- and fourteen-year-olds who are shooting each other to death in Los Angeles, Chicago, or Washington, D.C., really understand that death is permanent, unalterable, final, tragic? Television certainly is not telling them so.

—Prothrow-Stith, Deborah. *Deadly Consequences*.
New York: Harper Perennial, 1991: 34. Print.

Two students who wrote about the effects of TV violence correctly quoted Dr. Prothrow-Stith as follows:

Direct Quotation

“This sense of action-without-consequences replicates and reinforces the dangerous ‘magical’ way many children think,” writes Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith in *Deadly Consequences* (34).

Indirect Quotation

In *Deadly Consequences*, Prothrow-Stith points out that TV and movie violence, which has no realistic consequences, harms children by reinforcing the magical way in which they think (34).

- The first sentence gives Dr. Prothrow-Stith’s exact words inside quotation marks. This is **direct quotation**. Note the punctuation.
- The second sentence uses the word *that* and gives the *meaning* of Prothrow-Stith’s words without quotation marks. This is **indirect quotation**, or **paraphrase**. Note the punctuation.

- Both students correctly quote the writer and credit the source. Both include the page number in parentheses after the quoted material and before the period. (See Chapter 19, Part C, for more information on this style of citing sources.)

Now read this passage from a third student's paper:

Plagiarism

On film and television, violence begins and ends in a minute, and then the death is over. Teenagers killing each other across the country don't realize that death is "unalterable, final, and tragic" because they do not see its consequences on TV.

- Can you see why this passage is plagiarized (and why the student received a failing grade)?
- Both the ideas and many of the words are clearly Prothrow-Stith's, yet the student never mentions her or her book. Four words from the original are placed in quotation marks, but the reader has no idea why. Instead, the student implies that all the ideas and words are his own. What exact words are plagiarized from the source? What ideas are plagiarized?
- Revise this passage as if it were your own, giving credit to the original author and avoiding plagiarism.

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://www.google.com>

Search "purdue OWL, is it plagiarism yet?" Helpful advice on what constitutes plagiarism

<http://www.google.com>

Search "purdue OWL, quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing." Helpful review of direct and indirect quotation and summary

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.



CHAPTER 19

Strengthening an Essay with Research

- A:** Improving an Essay with Research
- B:** Finding and Evaluating Outside Sources: Library and Internet
- C:** Adding Sources to Your Essay and Documenting Them Correctly

 You will have opportunities in college to prepare formal research papers with many outside sources. However, you should not limit your definition of “research” to just such assignments. Whenever you have a question and seek an answer from a source outside yourself, you are doing **research**. Most of us research every day, whether or not we call it that—when we gather facts and opinions about the cheapest local restaurant, the college with the best fire science program, the safest new cars, or various medical conditions. In this chapter, you will learn skills valuable both in college and at work: how to improve your writing with interesting information from outside sources.

A. Improving an Essay with Research

Almost any essay, particularly one designed to *persuade* your reader, can benefit from the addition of outside material. In fact, even one outside source—a startling statistic or a memorable quote—can enrich your essay. Supporting your main points with outside sources can be an excellent way to establish your credibility, strengthen your argument, and add power to your words. Compare two versions of this student’s paragraph:

Inexperienced hikers often get in trouble because they worry about rare dangers like snakebites, but they minimize the very serious dangers of dehydration and exposure to cold. For example, my brother-in-law once hiked into the Grand Canyon with only a granola bar and a small bottle of water. He became severely dehydrated and was too weak to climb back up without help.

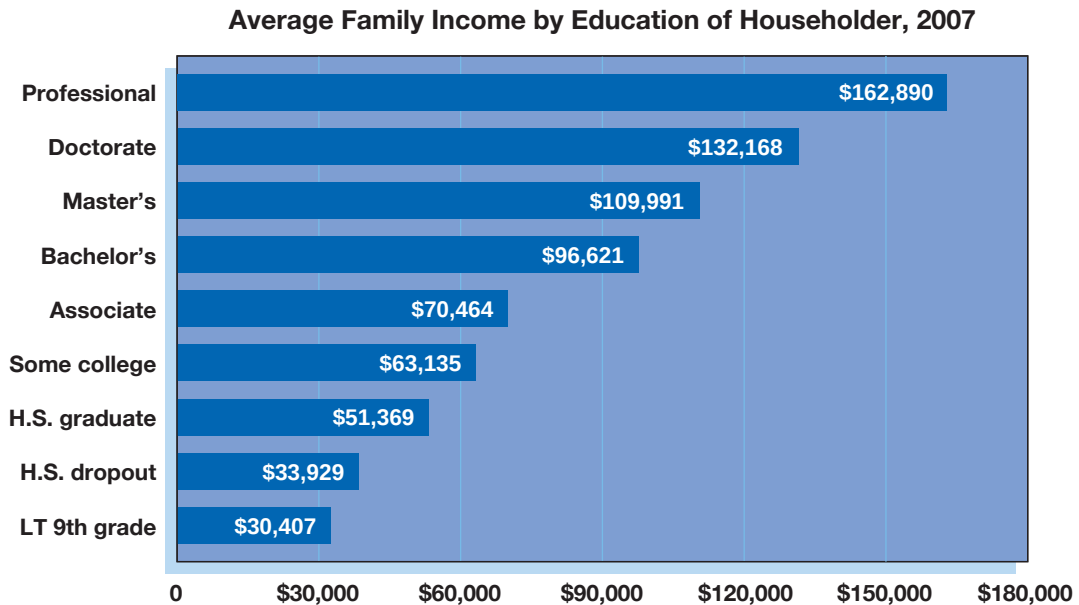
- This paragraph makes an important point about the dangers that inexperienced hikers can face. The example of the brother-in-law supports the main point, but the paragraph needs more complete support.

Now read the paragraph strengthened by some relevant facts from an outside source.

Inexperienced hikers often get in trouble because they worry about rare dangers like snakebites, but they minimize the very serious dangers of dehydration and exposure to cold. For example, my brother-in-law once hiked into the Grand Canyon with only a granola bar and a small bottle of water. He became severely dehydrated and was too weak to climb back up without help. He was lucky. According to the National Park Service website, over a hundred hikers die every year because they are not properly prepared for the environment. In addition, the NPS reports that over \$4.7 million was spent in 2007 to perform 3,593 search-and-rescue operations, almost a third of them to save poorly prepared hikers like my brother-in-law (“Search and Rescue Report”).

- What facts from the National Park Service website support the main point and add to the persuasive power of this paragraph?
- What sentence of transition does the writer use to connect his example of the brother-in-law with facts from the outside source? What transitional words connect the fact about hikers’ deaths each year?
- Remember that just one well-chosen outside source can improve and enliven a paper.

Consider the facts in this chart from the U.S. Census:



- What patterns do you see in this chart?
- How might you use this information in an essay?

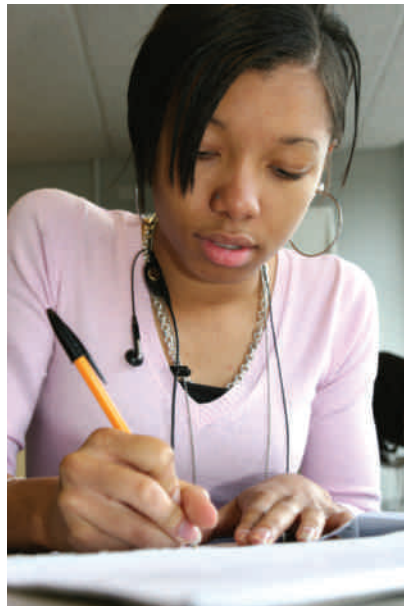
Facts and statistics can make a strong statement, but there are many other ways to enhance your writing. Consider adding a good quotation to emphasize one of your key points. You can begin by looking through the Quotation Bank at the end of this book or an online version of *Bartlett's Quotations* at <http://www.bartleby.com/100/>. Or find and quote an expert on the subject you are writing about. For example, if your subject is the lack of recycling receptacles on your campus, an opinion from a Sierra Club official would give authority to your essay. And don't forget experts closer to home; details about a student you know who has begun a recycling campaign on campus would add life and emotion to your work. If your essay is about your family history or the school's registration system, you could interview a relative or a school administrator and use that material to add authority to your paper.

A good way to begin using research is to pick an essay you have recently written. Reread it, marking any places where outside sources might make it even better. Write down any questions you want answers to or information that you would like to find:

- What would I like to know more about?
- What outside source might make my essay more interesting?
- What information—fact, statistic, detail, or quotation—would make my essay more convincing?
- What people are experts on this topic? Where can I find them or their opinions?

CARMEN'S RESEARCH PROCESS

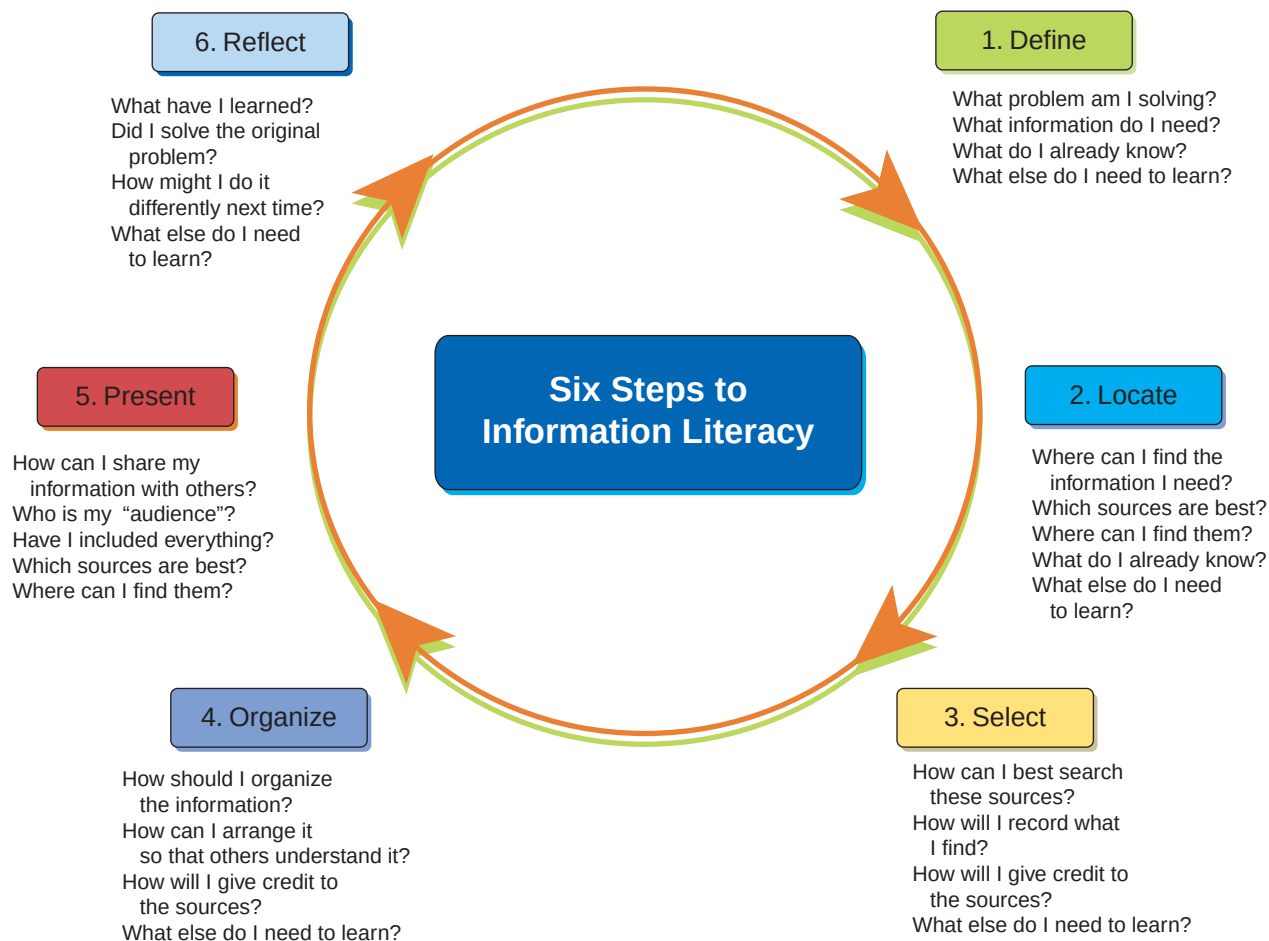
Student Carmen Gevana is learning to use outside sources. She plans to add research support to a favorite essay. She selects a cause and effect paper that examines the reasons her best friend went into credit-card debt and the devastating effects this debt had on her friend's life. In her paper, Carmen named two causes: credit-card companies using gifts to encourage students to apply for cards and students getting higher credit lines than they can realistically handle. The consequences Carmen discussed were unmanageable debt and ruined credit. Now Carmen wants to add two or three sources to support her own ideas. Her first question is whether heavy credit-card debt is a problem unique to her friend or more widespread among college students. She also wonders how much debt a typical college student carries. Finally, she hopes to find an expert opinion about the effects on college students.



Laurence Gough/Shutterstock.com

Here is one way to visualize the research process presented in this chapter:

Six Steps to Information Literacy



B. Finding and Evaluating Outside Sources: Library and Internet

The next step is finding the information you seek—or something even better. This section will show you how to find sources in the library and on the Internet.

Doing Research at the Library

Visit your college library. Ask about any print guides, workshops, or websites that show you how to use the library facilities. Introduce yourself to the reference librarian, tell him or her what subject you are exploring, and ask for help finding and using any of these resources in your search:

1. **Online Catalog or Card Catalog.** This will show you what books are available on your topic. For every book that looks like it might be interesting, jot down its title, author, and call number (the number that lets you find the book in the library).
2. **Periodical Indexes.** The more current your topic, the more likely you are to find interesting information in periodicals—magazines, journals, and newspapers—rather than books. *The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* is a print resource, listing articles by subject. The library will also have computerized indexes like *InfoTrac*, *EBSCOhost*, and *Lexis Nexis*. Ask the librarian to help you explore these exciting resources.
3. **Statistical Sources.** If you are looking for statistics and facts, the library has volumes like *The Statistical Abstract of the United States* with fascinating information on population, education, immigration, crime, economic issues, and so on.
4. **Encyclopedias and Reference Books.** General books on subjects like geology or psychology can be helpful. Special reference books and encyclopedias exist for almost every area—for example, world soccer statistics, terrorism, or the birds of South America.

As you explore, you might see why experienced researchers often love what they do. They never know what they will find, and they learn the darnedest, most interesting things. However, they must **evaluate** each source. If you are writing about the space shuttle, a current article in the *Chicago Tribune* would more likely impress readers as a truthful source than, say, a story in the *National Enquirer* called “Space Aliens Ate My Laundry.” Look at the date of a book or article; if your subject is current, your sources should be too. Is the author a respected expert on this subject? Is the information balanced and objective? The librarian can help you find strong sources.

Once you discover good information that will strengthen your essay, take clear and careful notes, using 4×6 note cards or your notebook. Use the techniques you learned in Chapter 18 to summarize and quote directly and indirectly; these will help you avoid accidental plagiarism. Write down everything you might need later. Print or buy copies of an article or book pages that are important. Don't leave the library without this information:

Book: Author name(s), title and subtitle, year of publication, publisher and location of publisher, exact pages of material quoted or summarized.

Magazine: Author name(s), title of article, title of magazine or journal, year, month, day of publication, volume and number, page numbers.

CARMEN'S RESEARCH PROCESS

Carmen visits her college library and gets help from the librarian using the computerized database *EBSCOhost*. Because Carmen's topic—student credit-card debt—is current, she assumes that newspapers and magazines will give her the most up-to-date information. Searching “credit-card debt,” she finds a recent *Chicago Tribune* article called “Big Debt on Campus: Credit Offers Flood the Quad.” She is surprised and excited to learn that credit problems like her friend's are a growing national problem. She copies the article and adds it to her source folder.

Doing Research on the Internet

The Internet is a wonderful source of information on just about everything—a great place to brainstorm, get ideas as you research, and find certain facts. However, it is harder to evaluate information on the web than in print, as this section will explain, so be careful.

If you have Internet access at the library or at home, use one of the search engines below. Type in search words that narrow your subject the same way you narrow a topic in writing—for example, *credit-card debt*, *college students*. Spell correctly, and try different words if necessary. Chances are, you will have too many “hits,” rather than too few.

Google	www.google.com
Yahoo!	www.yahoo.com
AltaVista	www.altavista.com

Evaluate each website carefully. Who sponsors the site? How balanced and unbiased is the information? Notice also the date of the site and article; many

websites come and go in the night. With practice, web researchers get better at spotting good and not-so-good sources of information. One tip is the web address, or Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of each site. The last part of a URL indicates the type of organization that owns the site:

.com	=	company (aims to sell something and make a profit)
.org	=	nonprofit organization (aims to promote a cause)
.gov	=	government (provides many public information sites)
.edu	=	college or educational institution (aims to inform the public and promote itself)

For instance, if you are researching *asthma in children, treatments*, a government-sponsored health site might give more unbiased information than a company that sells asthma medications or a personal website called *Troy's Asthma Story*. For more help evaluating websites, search “evaluating web sources” or visit <http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/evalcrit.html>.

As in the library—to avoid plagiarism later—take good notes, clearly marking words and ideas taken from your sources. Before you leave a website you wish to quote, cut and paste or print the material you want to refer to, and make sure you have full information to cite the source later in your paper:

Website: URL address, owner of site, author name(s), title of article, date written (if available), and date you accessed the website.

CARMEN'S RESEARCH PROCESS

Carmen chooses the Google search engine and types the search words, “college students, credit-card debt.” The search engine returns several thousand sources! Carmen scrolls quickly through many different “hits,” until she finds one that looks promising. It’s the website for Sallie Mae, a federal loan provider for college students. Carmen takes notes on a number of useful statistics and makes sure she has the URL address and other pertinent information before she logs off the computer.

This website, sponsored by the nation's largest company that helps people save, plan, and pay for college, is one of the sites Carmen visited.

SallieMae

For parents and students | **For schools**

Log in to your account

- Manage your loans
- Make a payment
- Loans in process

Start your application

- I'm a student
- I'm a parent

Complete your application

- Check loan status
- Complete your application
- E-sign your loan
- Cosign a loan
- Endorse a Federal PLUS loan

Cover up to 100% of school expenses

Get the Smart Option Student LoanSM

[Learn more](#)

Or exploring how to pay for college in the future

How can I build a savings plan for my child?

How much should I be saving now?

Sallie Mae's Education Investment Planner[®] [Start now](#)

Before college >

Planning and preparing for school

> **Helping students plan**

- Saving for school
- Preparing for school
- Comparing schools
- Finding free money
- Finding ways to pay

Getting a loan >

Finding loans to help you pay

> **Finding a loan**

- Loans for undergrads
- Loans for parents
- Loans for graduates
- Loans for training

After graduation >

Financial services to get you started

> **Managing your loans**

- Borrower responsibilities
- Managing your account
- Repaying student loans
- Making a payment
- Postponing payments

Courtesy of Sallie Mae, Inc.

C. Adding Sources to Your Essay and Documenting Them Correctly

Now, reread your original essay and the new material you found in your research process. Did you find other or better material than you looked for? Where in the paper will your outside sources be most effective? The next step is to use any of the three methods you learned in Chapter 18, Parts B and C—summary, direct quotation, or indirect quotation (paraphrase)—as you revise your essay and add your outside sources. This section will show you how.

The **MLA style** (named after the Modern Language Association) is a good method for documenting sources quickly and clearly. MLA style is also called *parenthetical* documentation because it puts source information in the body of the essay, in parentheses, rather than in cumbersome footnotes or endnotes.

A correct citation does two things:

- It tells your reader that the material is from an outside source.
- It gives your reader enough information to find the original source.

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A correct citation appears in *two places* in your essay:

- **inside** the essay in parentheses
- **at the end** in a Works Cited list

Inside Your Essay: Summarize or Quote and Give Credit

When you quote an outside source in an essay, indicate that the material is not yours by introducing the quote with one of the phrases suggested in Part C of Chapter 18. If you use the author's name in this phrase, you will put only the page number in parentheses. If you leave the author unnamed, be sure to include both the author's last name and the page number in parentheses. If your source is a website, no page number is needed—just the author or first word of the title.

Here is the introductory paragraph from Carmen's original essay about credit-card debt.

In her second year of college, when she was supposed to declare her major, my best friend Maya almost had to declare bankruptcy. In just two years, she had racked up \$7,000 in credit-card debt. Starting with necessities such as textbooks and car repairs, Maya soon began charging everything from midnight pizza parties to shopping sprees at the mall. It didn't take long before she had accrued a debt far greater than her part-time campus job could cover. What caused this intelligent student and perhaps others like her to get into so much debt?

- This is a catchy introduction on a good topic. You can probably see why Carmen chose to do more with this paper.

Now read the same paragraph, strengthened and expanded by facts that Carmen found on the Internet:

In her second year of college, when she was supposed to declare her major, my best friend Maya almost had to declare bankruptcy. In just two years, she had racked up \$7,000 in credit-card debt. Starting with necessities such as textbooks and car repairs, Maya soon began charging everything from midnight pizza parties to shopping sprees at the mall. It didn't take long before she had accrued a debt far greater than her part-time campus job could cover. Yet Maya's is not an isolated case of bad financial management. According to

a 2009 study conducted by Sallie Mae, the nation's largest college loan and savings company, 84 percent of undergraduates surveyed have at least one credit card. As they move through school, their debt grows, and the typical student graduates with a credit-card balance of \$3,173 (Sallie Mae). At least two causes exist for the problem of increasing student credit-card debt, but steps can be taken to help.

- Through her research online, Carmen learned that students all over the country are carrying higher credit-card balances. This information adds power to Maya's story.
- What transitional sentence moves the paragraph from Maya's personal story to the bigger picture?
- What transitional expression introduces the Sallie Mae report?
- In this instance, the "author" of the article is a corporation, Sallie Mae. The full citation is found on the Works Cited pages at the end of the paper.

Note: Electronic resources do not have set page numbers because everyone's printer is different, so no page number is shown in parentheses, as it would be with a book or article.

At the End of Your Essay: List Works Cited

The last page of your essay will be a list of all the sources you summarized, directly quoted, or indirectly quoted in your essay, in alphabetical order by the author's last name. If there is no named author, list the entry alphabetically by its title (in quotation marks). Title the page Works Cited, and center the title. Use the models below to format each source properly. (Don't worry about memorizing the forms; even experienced writers often have to check an MLA manual for the correct form.) If a citation goes beyond one line, indent any following lines five spaces to make it clear that the information belongs together.

Books

One author:

Didion, Joan. *The Year of Magical Thinking*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. Print.

More than one author:

Torre, Joe, and Tom Verducci. *The Yankee Years*. New York: Doubleday, 2009. Print.

Encyclopedia:

"Panama Canal." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 2009 ed. Print.

Periodicals

Article in a newspaper:

Revkin, Andrew. "Fossils of Largest Snake Give Hint of Hot Earth." *New York Times* 5 Feb. 2009: 7. Print.

Article in a magazine:

Ordoñez, Jennifer. "Taking the Junk Out of Junk Food." *Newsweek* 8 Oct. 2007: 46. Print.

Article in a journal:

Glezen, W. Paul. "Prevention and Treatment of Seasonal Influenza." *New England Journal of Medicine* 359 (2008): 2579–2585. Print.

Electronic Sources

The rules for citing sources found on the World Wide Web have been simplified (*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Seventh Edition, 2009). But because websites can change (or disappear), you should include the owner of the site, the date the site was created or updated, and the date on which you visited the site. Don't provide the URL address unless the reader cannot locate the source without it.

Website:

"Global Warming." *National Geographic Society*. National Geographic Society, 2009. Web. 21 Mar. 2009.

Article in an online periodical:

Thurer, Shari. "The Working Mom Myth." *Salon.com*. Salon Media Group, Inc., 6 April 1999. Web. 12 August 2008.

Work from a subscription service (give the name of the subscription service you used):

Bell, Erin. "Intelligence and How to Get It." *Psychology Today* 42.1 (Jan. 2009): 32–32. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 21 Mar. 2009.

Multimedia

Film or video:

March of the Penguins. Dir. Luc Jacquet. Narr. Morgan Freeman. Warner Independent Pictures, 2005. DVD.

Radio or television program:

“Eyewitness: How Accurate Is Visual Memory?” Narr. Leslie Stahl. *Sixty Minutes*. CBS. WCBS, New York, 8 Mar. 2009. Television.

Personal interview:

Santos, Mariela. Personal interview. 24 Apr. 2010.

These models cover the most common outside sources you will encounter in your research. If you need assistance with another source, you can find other models in one of the many websites that publish MLA guidelines. Try Purdue’s Online Writing Lab at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>. (If your instructor requires APA style instead of MLA, click APA at the site above or try <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPA.html>.)

CARMEN’S RESEARCH PROCESS

During her library and Internet research, Carmen had carefully copied the quotes and facts that she wanted to use in her essay onto index cards or photocopied relevant pages. Now, as she revises her essay to add these sources, she makes sure that she quotes her sources accurately and avoids unintentional plagiarism. As she rewrites her essay, she refers to Chapters 18 and 19. She uses transitional expressions to weave the outside sources smoothly into her essay. Then she prepares a Works Cited list, referring to the models above, as the last page of her paper.

On the next page, you can read the final draft of Carmen’s essay, which she has strengthened with research.

*Every research paper
should begin on a new page.*

Carmen Gevana
Professor Fawcett
English 100
22 May 2009

Drastic Plastic: Credit-Card Debt on Campus

Introduction

In her second year of college, when she was supposed to declare her major, my best friend Maya almost had to declare bankruptcy. In just two years, she had racked up \$7,000 in credit-card debt. Starting with necessities such as textbooks and car repairs, Maya soon began charging everything from midnight pizza parties to shopping sprees at the mall. It didn't take long before she had accrued a debt far greater than her part-time campus job could cover. Yet Maya's is not an isolated case of bad financial management. According to a 2009 study conducted by Sallie Mae, the nation's largest company that helps people save, plan, and pay for college, 84 percent of undergraduates surveyed have at least one credit card. As they move through school, their debt grows, and the typical student graduates with a credit-card balance of \$3,173 (Sallie Mae). At least two causes exist for the problem of increasing student credit-card debt, but steps can be taken to help.

*Indirectly quoted facts from
Sallie Mae expand the topic;
short title given, no page for
website.*

Thesis statement

Topic sentence: cause #1

A major cause of growing student debt is that credit-card companies bombard college students the minute they step on campus. Targeting a profitable market of young consumers, these credit companies use many tactics to lure new college students into applying for their cards. Smiling salespeople stand behind tables offering free goodies like candy bars, school sweatshirts, and even airline tickets. They flood students' mailboxes with credit-card offers and pay the college bookstore to stuff applications into every plastic book bag. For my friend Maya, the temptation was too great. Before she had been in college a week, she had already applied for two cards, each with a large credit limit.

*Developed by author's ideas,
observations*

Topic sentence: cause #2

Maya's credit-card behavior illustrates the second cause for the widespread crisis in college debt—most college students spend more than they can repay. Companies that extend credit typically offer higher limits than their customers can handle. After all, the company makes its profit through charging interest, and interest only accrues if the customer cannot pay off the full balance every month. New credit-card users, especially

*Developed by author's ideas,
observations*

college students who don't have a lot of extra cash and often lack training in how to handle money responsibly, may rapidly build a balance beyond their means. When this occurs, students may be able to cover little more than the minimum monthly payment of \$15 to \$25. With high average interest rates, the outstanding balance can grow quickly until the student ends up paying more interest than she originally charged.

*Topic sentence: effects of heavy debt
Advice to credit-card users
forms conclusion*

The drastic effects of a reliance on plastic are clear. Some students end up with debts in the thousands that trail them for years. If they have to default on their cards or declare bankruptcy, a bad credit report can follow them into adulthood, hurting their chances to rent an apartment or purchase a home or car. Some students have even fallen into depression and, in one or two extreme cases, suicide. At my cousin's college, the University of Oklahoma, a student committed suicide after being overwhelmed by a \$3,000 credit-card debt. Thankfully, Maya avoided such serious consequences; however, her dependence on credit seriously affected her education. To avoid bankruptcy, she had to leave college for a semester to work full-time and pay off her debt.

Topic sentence: consequences gaining attention and actions taken

Indirect quote from New York Times article and direct quote from Kobliner's book clearly cited

Fortunately, the consequences of students' ever-increasing credit-card debt are gaining more widespread attention. Lawmakers and colleges are taking action. An October 18, 2008, editorial in the *New York Times* reported that six states have passed laws to restrict the activities of credit-card marketers on college campuses, and Congress is considering bills that would limit students' total number of cards and maximum credit amount ("The College Credit Card Trap"). Yet students should not wait for others to save them. Financial expert Beth Kobliner, in her book *Get a Financial Life*, advises, "Limiting your access to credit is a smart move whether you're a binge shopper or a model of self-control" (49). In short, any student can practice self-discipline with credit by following three simple rules: 1) carry just one card, 2) use it only for emergencies, and 3) pay your entire balance every month.

Works Cited

Works Cited should start a new page

Kobliner, Beth. *Get a Financial Life*. New York: Fireside/Simon, 2000. Print.

Sallie Mae. "How Undergraduate Students Use Credit Cards: Sallie Mae's National Study of Usage Rates and Trends." *Salliemae.com*. Sallie Mae Corp., Apr. 2009. Web. 11 May 2010.

"The College Credit Card Trap." *New York Times* 18 Oct. 2008: 22. Print.

Suggested Topics for Research

1. Types of fat in foods
2. The effects of (or solutions for) illegal immigration
3. Zoos
4. Environmental topics, such as coral reef destruction or green burial (in ecopods)



Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock.com

5. Arguments for or against stem cell research
6. Prisons in America
7. Methods of persuasion in advertisements
8. Media violence
9. An idea to reform public schools
10. Gun control



EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/mla/index.shtml>

A thorough review of the research-paper process, including a section on how to outline your research paper

<http://www.csuohio.edu/academic/writingcenter/mla.html>

Clear, practical examples of how to insert material from outside sources in your papers

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.



CHAPTER 20

Writing Under Pressure: The Essay Examination

- A:** Budgeting Your Time
- B:** Reading and Understanding the Essay Question
- C:** Choosing the Correct Paragraph or Essay Pattern
- D:** Writing the Topic Sentence or the Thesis Statement



Being able to write under pressure is a key skill both in college and in the workplace. Throughout your college career, you will be asked to write **timed papers** in class and to take **essay examinations**. In fact, many English programs base placement and passing on timed essay exams. Clearly, the ability to write under pressure is crucial.

An **essay question** requires the same writing skills that a student uses in composing a paragraph or an essay. Even in history and biology, how well you do on an essay test depends partly on how well you write; yet many students, under the pressure of a test, forget or fail to apply what they know about good writing. This chapter will improve your ability to write under pressure. Many of the sample exam questions on the following pages were taken from real college examinations.

A. Budgeting Your Time

To do well on a timed essay or an essay test, it is not enough to know the material. You must also be able to call forth what you know, organize it, and present it in writing—all under pressure in a limited time.

Since most essay examinations are timed, it is important that you learn how to **budget** your time effectively so that you can devote adequate time to each question *and* finish the test. The following six tips will help you use your time well.

1. **Make sure you know exactly how long the examination lasts.** A one-hour examination may really be only fifty minutes; a two-hour examination may last only one hour and forty-five minutes.
2. **Note the point value of all questions and allot time accordingly to each question.** That is, allot the most time to questions that are worth the most points and less time to ones that are worth fewer.
3. **Decide on an order in which to answer the questions.** You do not have to begin with the first question on the examination and work, in order, to the last. Instead, you may start with the questions worth the most points. Some students prefer to begin with the questions they feel they can answer most easily, thereby guaranteeing points toward the final grade on the examination. Others combine the two methods. No matter which system you use, be sure to allot enough time to the questions that are worth the most points—whether you do them first or last.
4. **Make sure you understand exactly what each question asks you to do; then quickly prewrite and plan your answer.** It is all-important to take a breath, study the question, and make a quick scratch outline or plan of your answer *before you start to write*. Parts B through D of this chapter will guide you through these critical steps.
5. **Time yourself.** As you begin a particular question, calculate when you must be finished with that question in order to complete the examination, and note that time in the margin. As you write, check the clock every five minutes so that you remain on schedule.
6. **Finally, do not count on having enough time to recopy your work.** Skip lines and write carefully so that the instructor can easily read your writing as well as any neat corrections you might make.

B. Reading and Understanding the Essay Question

Before you begin writing, carefully examine each question to decide exactly what your purpose is: that is, what the instructor expects you to do.

- This question contains three sets of instructions.

Question: Using either Communist China or Nazi Germany as a model, (a) describe the characteristics of a totalitarian state, and (b) explain how such a state was created.

- First, you must use “either Communist China or Nazi Germany as a model.” That is, you must **choose** *one or the other* as a model.
- Second, you must **describe**, and third, you must **explain**.
- Your answer should consist of two written parts, a **description** and an **explanation**.

It is often helpful to underline the important words, as shown in the previous box, to make sure you understand the entire question and have noted all its parts.

The student must (1) choose to write about either Communist China or Nazi Germany, not both; (2) describe the totalitarian state; (3) explain how such a state was created.

C. Choosing the Correct Paragraph or Essay Pattern

Throughout this book, you have learned how to write various types of paragraphs and compositions. Many examinations will require you simply to **illustrate**, **define**, **compare**, and so forth. How well you answer questions may depend partly on how well you understand these terms.

1. *Illustrate* “behavior modification.”
2. *Define* “greenhouse effect.”
3. *Compare* Agee and Nin as diarists.

- The key words in these questions are *illustrate*, *define*, and *compare*—**instruction words** that tell you what you are supposed to do and what form your answer should take.

Here is a review list of some common instruction words used in college examinations.

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Classify: | Gather into categories, types, or kinds according to a single basis of division (see Chapter 11). |
| 2. Compare: | Point out similarities (see Chapter 10). Instructors often use <i>compare</i> to mean point out both <i>similarities</i> and <i>differences</i> . |
| 3. Contrast: | Point out differences (see Chapter 10). |
| 4. Describe: | Give an account of or capture pictorially (see Chapter 7). |
| 5. Define: | State clearly and exactly the meaning of a word or term (see Chapter 9). You may be required to write a single-sentence definition or a full paragraph. Instructors may use <i>identify</i> as a synonym for <i>define</i> when they want a short definition. |
| 6. Discuss:
(analyze, describe, or explain) | Often an instructor uses these terms to mean “thoughtfully examine a subject, approaching it from different angles.” These terms allow the writer more freedom of approach than many of the others. |
| 7. Discuss causes: | Analyze the reasons or causes for something; answer the question, Why? (see Chapter 12). |
| 8. Discuss effects: | Analyze the effects, consequences, or results of something (see Chapter 12). |
| 9. Evaluate: | Weigh the pros and cons, advantages and disadvantages (see Chapters 10 and 13). |

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 10. Identify: | Give a capsule who-what-when-where-why answer. Sometimes <i>identify</i> is a synonym for <i>define</i> . |
| 11. Illustrate: | Give one or more examples (see Chapter 5). |
| 12. Narrate:
(trace) | Follow the development of something through time, event by event (see Chapters 6 and 8). |
| 13. Summarize: | Write the substance of a longer work in condensed form (see Chapter 18, Part B). |
| 14. Take a stand: | Persuade; argue for a particular position (see Chapter 13). |
-

D. Writing the Topic Sentence or the Thesis Statement

A good way to ensure that your answer truly addresses itself to the question is to compose a topic sentence or a thesis statement that contains the key words of the question.

Question: How do fixed-rate and adjustable-rate mortgages differ?

- The key words in this question are *fixed-rate* and *adjustable-rate mortgages*, and *differ*.
- What kind of paragraph or essay would be appropriate for this question?

Topic sentence or thesis statement of answer: Fixed-rate and adjustable-rate mortgages differ in three basic ways.

- The answer repeats the key words of the question: *fixed-rate*, *adjustable-rate mortgages*, and *differ*.

Checklist

The Process of Answering an Essay Question

- ☐ 1. Survey the test and note the point value for each question.
- ☐ 2. Calculate how much time you need for each question. Then check the clock as you write so that you complete all the questions.
- ☐ 3. Read each question carefully, underlining important words.
- ☐ 4. Determine how many parts the answer should contain.
- ☐ 5. Considering your audience (usually the teacher) and purpose, choose the paragraph or essay pattern that would best answer the question.
- ☐ 6. Write a topic sentence or a thesis statement that repeats the key words of the question.
- ☐ 7. Quickly freewrite or brainstorm ideas on scrap paper and arrange them in a logical order, making a scratch outline or plan.
- ☐ 8. Write your paragraph or essay neatly, skipping lines so you will have enough room to make corrections.

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://www.google.com>

Don't get nervous; get an A. Search "taking essay exams" and find advice that truly helps you. You might wish to print it out.

<http://www.google.com>

Do you get so anxious when taking tests that you don't do your best? Search "test anxiety" to find tips, help, and a deeper understanding of the problem.

Basic Writing CourseMate



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Unit 5

Improving Your Writing

CHAPTER 21

Revising for Consistency and Parallelism

CHAPTER 22

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CHAPTER 21

Revising for Consistency and Parallelism

A: Consistent Tense

B: Consistent Number and Person

C: Parallelism



All good writing is **consistent**. That is, each sentence and paragraph in the final draft should move along smoothly without confusing shifts in **tense**, **number**, or **person**. In addition, good writing uses **parallel structure** to balance two or more similar words, phrases, or clauses.

Although you should be aware of consistency and parallelism as you write the first draft of your paragraph or essay, you might find it easier to **revise** for them—that is, to write your first draft and then, as you read it again later, check and rewrite for consistency and parallelism.

A. Consistent Tense

Consistency of tense means using the same verb tense whenever possible throughout a sentence or an entire paragraph. Do not shift from one verb tense to another—for example, from present to past or from past to present—unless you really mean to indicate different times.

1. Inconsistent tense: We *stroll* down Bourbon Street as the jazz bands *began* to play.
2. Consistent tense: We *strolled* down Bourbon Street as the jazz bands *began* to play.
3. Consistent tense: We *stroll* down Bourbon Street as the jazz bands *begin* to play.

- Sentence 1 begins in the present tense with the verb *stroll* but then slips into the past tense with the verb *began*. The tenses are inconsistent since both actions (strolling and beginning) occur at the same time.
- Sentence 2 is consistent. Both verbs, *strolled* and *began*, are now in the past tense.
- Sentence 3 is also consistent, using the present tense forms of both verbs, *stroll* and *begin*. The present tense here gives a feeling of immediacy, as if the action is happening now.*

Of course, you should use different verb tenses in a sentence or paragraph if they convey the meaning that you wish to convey:

4. Last fall I *took* English 02; now I *am taking* English 13.

- The verbs in this sentence accurately show the time relationship between the two classroom experiences.†

B. Consistent Number and Person

Just as important as verb tense consistency is consistency of **number** and **person**.

Consistency of Number

Consistency of number means avoiding confusing shifts from singular to plural or from plural to singular within a sentence or paragraph. Choose *either* singular or plural; then be *consistent*.

* For more work on spotting verbs, see Chapter 25, “The Simple Sentence,” Part C.

† For more work on particular verb tenses and forms, see Chapters 28, 29, and 30.

1. Inconsistent number: *The wise jogger chooses their running shoes with care.*
2. Consistent number: *The wise jogger chooses his or her running shoes with care.*
3. Consistent number: *Wise joggers choose their running shoes with care.*

- Since the subject of sentence 1, *the wise jogger*, is singular, use of the plural pronoun *their* is *inconsistent*.
- Sentence 2 is *consistent*. The singular pronoun *his* (or *her*) now clearly refers to the singular *jogger*.
- In sentence 3, the plural number is used *consistently*. *Their* clearly refers to the plural *joggers*.

If you begin a paragraph by referring to a website designer as *she*, continue to refer to *her* in the **third person singular** throughout the paragraph:

The new *website designer* created this streamlined website for our company. *She* explained that our old site was hard for customers to navigate. A slight increase in orders despite the difficult economy is probably the result of *her* work. Needless to say, we plan to use *her* again.

Do not confuse the reader by shifting unnecessarily to *they* or *you*.

Consistency of Person

Consistency of person—closely related to consistency of number—means using the same *person*, or indefinite pronoun form, throughout a sentence or paragraph whenever possible.

First person is the most personal and informal in written work: (singular) *I*, (plural) *we*

Second person speaks directly to the reader: (singular and plural) *you*

Third person is the most formal and most frequently used in college writing: (singular) *he, she, it, one, a person, an individual, a student*, and so on; (plural) *they, people, individuals, students*, and so on

Avoid confusing shifts from one person to another. Choose one, and then be *consistent*. When using a noun in a general way—*a person, the individual, the parent*—be careful not to slip into the second person, *you*, but continue to use the third person, *he or she*.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 4. Inconsistent person | <i>A player</i> collects \$200 when <i>you</i> pass “Go.” |
| 5. Consistent person: | <i>A player</i> collects \$200 when <i>he or she</i> passes “Go.” |
| 6. Consistent person: | <i>You</i> collect \$200 when <i>you</i> pass “Go.” |

- In sentence 4, the person shifts unnecessarily from the third person, *a player*, to the second person, *you*. The result is confusing.
- Sentence 5 maintains consistent third person. *He or she* now clearly refers to the third person subject, *a player*.
- Sentence 6 is also consistent, using the second person, *you*, throughout.

Of course, inconsistencies of person and number often occur together, as shown in the next box.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 7. Inconsistent person and number: | Whether <i>one</i> enjoys or resents commercials, <i>we</i> are bombarded with them every hour of the day. |
| 8. Consistent person and number: | Whether <i>we</i> enjoy or resent commercials, <i>we</i> are bombarded with them every hour of the day. |
| 9. Consistent person and number: | Whether <i>one</i> enjoys or resents commercials, <i>he or she</i> (or <i>one</i>) is bombarded with them every hour of the day. |

- Sentence 7 shifts from the third person singular, *one*, to the first person plural, *we*.
- Sentence 8 uses the first person plural consistently.
- Sentence 9 uses the third person singular consistently.

C. Parallelism

Parallelism, or **parallel structure**, is an effective way to add smoothness and power to your writing. **Parallelism** is a balance of two or more similar words, phrases, or clauses.

Compare the two versions of each of these sentences:

1. She likes dancing, swimming, and to box.
2. She likes *dancing, swimming, and boxing*.
3. The cable runs across the roof; the north wall is where it runs down.
4. The cable runs *across the roof and down the north wall*.
5. He admires people with strong convictions and who think for themselves.
6. He admires people *who have strong convictions and who think for themselves*.

- Sentences 2, 4, and 6 use **parallelism** to express parallel ideas.
- In sentence 2, *dancing, swimming, and boxing* are parallel; all three are the *-ing* forms of verbs, used here as nouns.
- In sentence 4, *across the roof and down the north wall* are parallel prepositional phrases, each consisting of a preposition and its object.
- In sentence 6, *who have strong convictions and who think for themselves* are parallel clauses beginning with the word *who*.

Sometimes two entire sentences can be parallel:

In a democracy we are all equal before the law. In a dictatorship we are all equal before the police.

—Millor Fernandes

- In what way are these two sentences parallel?

Certain special constructions require parallel structure:

7. The fruit is *both* tasty *and* fresh.
8. He *either* loves you *or* hates you.
9. Yvette *not only* plays golf *but also* swims like a pro.
10. I would *rather* sing in the chorus *than* perform a solo.

- Each of these constructions has two parts:
both . . . and
(n)either . . . (n)or
not only . . . but also
rather . . . than
- The words, phrases, or clauses following each part must be parallel:
tasty . . . fresh
loves you . . . hates you
plays golf . . . swims like a pro
sing in the chorus . . . perform a solo



EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/consistency.htm>

Review consistency with examples, “repairs,” and self tests.

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/parallelism.htm>

Write more stylishly with parallel words and phrases.

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CHAPTER 22

Revising for Sentence Variety

- A:** Mix Long and Short Sentences
- B:** Use a Question, a Command, or an Exclamation
- C:** Vary the Beginnings of Sentences
- D:** Vary Methods of Joining Ideas
- E:** Avoid Misplaced and Confusing Modifiers
- F:** Review and Practice



Good writers pay attention to **sentence variety**. They notice how sentences work together within a paragraph, and they seek a mix of different sentence lengths and types. Experienced writers have a variety of sentence patterns from which to choose. They try not to overuse one pattern.

This chapter will present several techniques for varying your sentences and paragraphs. Some of them you may already know and use, perhaps unconsciously. The purpose of this chapter is to make you more conscious of the **choices** available to you as a writer.

Remember, you achieve sentence variety by practicing, by systematically **revising** your papers, and by trying out new types of sentences or combinations of sentences.

A. Mix Long and Short Sentences

One of the basic ways to achieve sentence variety is to use both long and short sentences. Beginning writers tend to overuse short, simple sentences, which quickly become monotonous. Notice the length of the sentences in the following paragraph:

(1) There is one positive result of the rising crime rate. (2) This has been the growth of neighborhood crime prevention programs. (3) These programs really work. (4) They teach citizens to patrol their neighborhoods. (5) They teach citizens to work with the police. (6) They have dramatically reduced crime in cities and towns across the country. (7) The idea is catching on.

The sentences in the paragraph above are all nearly the same length, and the effect is choppy and almost childish. Now read this revised version, which contains a variety of sentence lengths:

(1) One cause of the falling crime rate in some cities is the growth of neighborhood crime prevention programs. (2) These programs really work. (3) By patrolling their neighborhoods and working with the police, citizens have shown that they can dramatically reduce crime. (4) The idea is catching on.

This paragraph is more effective because it mixes two short sentences, 2 and 4, and two longer sentences, 1 and 3. Although short sentences can be used effectively anywhere in a paragraph or an essay, they can be especially useful as introductions or conclusions, like sentence 4 above. Note the powerful effect of short sentences used between longer ones in the paragraph that follows. Underline the short sentences:

(1) Biting into a tabasco pepper is like aiming a flame-thrower at your parted lips. (2) There might be little reaction at first, but then the burn starts to grow. (3) A few seconds later the chili mush in your mouth reaches critical mass and your palate prepares for liftoff. (4) The message spreads. (5) The sweat glands open, your eyes stream, your nose runs, your stomach warms up, your heart accelerates, and your lungs breathe faster. (6) All this is normal. (7) But bite off

more than your body can take, and you will be left coughing, sneezing, and spitting. (8) Tears stripe your cheeks, and your mouth belches like a dragon celebrating its return to life. (9) Eater beware!

—Jeremy MacClancy, *Consuming Culture: Why You Eat What You Eat*

B. Use a Question, a Command, or an Exclamation

The most commonly used sentence is the **declarative sentence**, which is a statement. However, an occasional carefully placed **question**, **command**, or **exclamation** is an effective way to achieve sentence variety.

The Question

Why did I become a cab driver? First, I truly enjoy driving a car and exploring different parts of the city, the classy avenues and the hidden back streets. In addition, I like meeting all kinds of people, from bookmakers to governors, each with a unique story and many willing to talk to the back of my head. Of course, the pay isn't bad and the hours are flexible, but it's the places and the people that I love.

This paragraph begins with a question. The writer does not really expect the reader to answer it. Rather, it is a **rhetorical question**, one that will be answered by the writer in the course of the paragraph. A rhetorical question used as a topic sentence can provide a colorful change from the usual declarative sentences: *Is America really the best-fed nation in the world? What is courage? Why do more young people take drugs today than ever before?*

The Command and the Exclamation

(1) Try to imagine using failure as a description of an animal's behavior.
(2) Consider a dog barking for fifteen minutes, and someone saying,
"He really isn't very good at barking, I'd give him a C." (3) How absurd!

(4) It is impossible for an animal to fail because there is no provision for evaluating natural behavior. (5) Spiders construct webs, not successful or unsuccessful webs. (6) Cats hunt mice; if they aren't successful in one attempt, they simply go after another. (7) They don't lie there and whine, complaining about the one that got away, or have a nervous breakdown because they failed. (8) Natural behavior simply is! (9) So apply the same logic to your own behavior and rid yourself of the fear of failure.

—Dr. Wayne W. Dyer, *Your Erroneous Zones*

The previous paragraph begins and ends with **commands**, or **imperative sentences**. Sentences 1, 2, and 9 address the reader directly and have as their implied subject *you*. They tell the reader to do something: *(You) try to imagine ...*, *(you) consider ...*, *(you) apply ...* Commands are most frequently used in giving directions,* but they can be used occasionally, as in the previous paragraph, for sentence variety.

Sentences 3 and 8 in the Dyer paragraph are **exclamations**, sentences that express strong emotion and end with an exclamation point. These should be used very sparingly. In fact, some writers avoid them altogether, striving for words that convey strong emotion instead.

Be careful with the question, the command, and the exclamation as options in your writing. Try them out, but use them—especially the exclamation—sparingly.



WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Write a paragraph that begins with a rhetorical question. Choose one of the questions below or compose your own. Be sure that the body of the paragraph really does answer the question.

1. How has college (or anything else) changed me?
2. Should people pamper their pets?
3. Is marriage worth the risks?

* For more work on giving directions, see Chapter 8, "Process."

C. Vary the Beginnings of Sentences

Begin with an Adverb

Since the first word of many sentences is the subject, one way to achieve sentence variety is by occasionally starting a sentence with a word or words other than the subject.

For instance, you can begin with an **adverb**:*

1. He *laboriously* dragged the large crate up the stairs.
2. *Laboriously*, he dragged the large crate up the stairs.
3. The contents of the beaker *suddenly* began to foam.
4. *Suddenly*, the contents of the beaker began to foam.

- In sentences 2 and 4, the adverbs *laboriously* and *suddenly* are shifted to the first position. Notice the difference in rhythm that this creates, as well as the slight change in meaning: Sentence 2 emphasizes *how* he dragged the crate—*laboriously*; sentence 4 emphasizes the *suddenness* of what happened.
- A comma usually follows an adverb that introduces a sentence; however, adverbs of time—*often*, *now*, *always*—do not always require a comma. As a general rule, use a comma if you want the reader to pause briefly.

Begin with a Prepositional Phrase

A **prepositional phrase** is a group of words containing a **preposition** and its **object** (a noun or pronoun). *To you*, *in the evening*, and *under the old bridge* are prepositional phrases.[†]

Preposition	Object
to	you
in	the evening
under	the old bridge

* For more work on adverbs, see Chapter 34, “Adjectives and Adverbs.”

† For work on spotting prepositional phrases, see Chapter 33, “Prepositions.”

Here is a partial list of prepositions:

Common Prepositions

about	beneath	into	throughout
above	beside	near	to
across	between	of	toward
against	by	on	under
among	except	onto	up
at	for	out	upon
behind	from	over	with
below	in	through	without

For variety in your writing, begin an occasional sentence with a prepositional phrase:

5. Charles left the room *without a word*.
6. *Without a word*, Charles left the room.
7. A fat yellow cat lay sleeping *on the narrow sill*.
8. *On the narrow sill*, a fat yellow cat lay sleeping.

- In sentences 6 and 8, the prepositional phrases have been shifted to the beginning. Note the slight shift in emphasis that results. Sentence 6 stresses that Charles left the room *without a word*, and 8 stresses the location of the cat, *on the narrow sill*.
- Prepositional phrases that begin sentences are usually followed by commas. However, short prepositional phrases need not be.

Prepositional phrases are not always movable; rely on the meaning of the sentence to determine whether they are movable:

9. The dress *in the picture* is the one I want.
10. Joelle bought a bottle *of white wine* for dinner.

- *In the picture* in sentence 9 is a part of the subject and cannot be moved. *In the picture the dress is the one I want* makes no sense.
- Sentence 10 has two prepositional phrases. Which one *cannot* be moved to the beginning of the sentence? Why?

D. Vary Methods of Joining Ideas*

Join Ideas with a Compound Predicate

A sentence with a **compound predicate** contains more than one verb, but the subject is *not* repeated before the second verb. Such a sentence is really composed of two simple sentences with the same subject:

1. The nurse entered.
2. The nurse quickly closed the door.
3. The nurse *entered* and quickly *closed* the door.

- *The nurse* is the subject of sentence 1, and *entered* is the verb; *the nurse* is also the subject of sentence 2, and *closed* is the verb.
- When these sentences are combined with a compound predicate in sentence 3, *the nurse* is the subject of both *entered* and *closed* but is not repeated before the second verb.
- No comma is necessary when the conjunctions *and*, *but*, *or*, and *yet* join the verbs in a compound predicate.

A compound predicate is useful in combining short, choppy sentences:

4. He serves elaborate meals.
5. He never uses a recipe.
6. He serves elaborate meals yet never uses a recipe.
7. Aviators rarely get nosebleeds.
8. They often suffer from backaches.
9. Aviators rarely get nosebleeds but often suffer from backaches.

- Sentences 4 and 5 are joined by *yet*; no comma precedes *yet*.
- Sentences 7 and 8 are joined by *but*; no comma precedes *but*.

* For work on joining ideas with coordination and subordination, see Chapter 26, "Coordination and Subordination."

Join Ideas with an *-ing* Modifier

An excellent way to achieve sentence variety is by occasionally combining two sentences with an *-ing* modifier.

10. He peered through the microscope.
11. He discovered a squiggly creature.
12. *Peering through the microscope*, he discovered a squiggly creature.

- Sentence 10 has been converted to an *-ing* modifier by changing the verb *peered* to *peering* and dropping the subject *he*. *Peering through the microscope* now introduces the main clause, *he discovered a squiggly creature*.
- A comma sets off the *-ing* modifier from the word it refers to, *he*. To avoid confusion, the word referred to must appear in the immediately following clause.

An *-ing* modifier indicates that two actions are occurring at the same time. The main idea of the sentence should be contained in the main clause, not in the *-ing* modifier. In the preceding example, the discovery of the creature is the main idea, not the fact that someone peered through a microscope.

Be careful; misplaced *-ing* modifiers can result in confusing sentences: *He discovered a squiggly creature peering through the microscope*. (Was the creature looking through the microscope?)*

Convert sentence 13 into an *-ing* modifier and write it in the blank:

13. We drove down Tompkins Road.
14. We were surprised by the number of “for sale” signs.
15. _____, we were surprised by the number of “for sale” signs.

- The new *-ing* modifier is followed directly by the word to which it refers, *we*.

Join Ideas with a Past Participial Modifier

Some sentences can be joined with a **past participial modifier**. A sentence that contains a *to be* verb and a **past participle**† can be changed into a past participial modifier:

* For more work on avoiding confusing modifiers, see Part E of this chapter.

† For more work on past participles, see Chapter 30, “The Past Participle.”

16. Judith *is trapped* in a dead-end job.
17. Judith decided to enroll at the local community college.
18. *Trapped in a dead-end job*, Judith decided to enroll at the local community college.

- In sentence 18, sentence 16 has been made into a past participial modifier by dropping the helping verb *is* and the subject *Judith*. The past participle *trapped* now introduces the new sentence.
- A comma sets off the past participial modifier from the word it modifies, *Judith*. To avoid confusion, the word referred to must directly follow the modifier.

Be careful; misplaced past participial modifiers can result in confusing sentences: *Packed in dry ice, Steve brought us some ice cream.* (Was Steve packed in dry ice?)* Sometimes two or more past participles can be used to introduce a sentence:

19. The term paper *was revised* and *rewritten*.
20. It received an A.
21. *Revised and rewritten*, the term paper received an A.

- The past participles *revised* and *rewritten* become a modifier that introduces sentence 21. What word(s) do they refer to?

Join Ideas with an Appositive

A fine way to add variety to your writing is to combine two choppy sentences with an appositive. An **appositive** is a word or group of words that renames or describes a noun or pronoun:

22. Carlos is the new wrestling champion.
23. He is a native of Argentina.
24. Carlos, *a native of Argentina*, is the new wrestling champion.

*For more work on avoiding confusing modifiers, see Part E of this chapter.

- A *native of Argentina* in sentence 24 is an appositive. It renames the noun *Carlos*.
- An appositive must be placed either directly *after* the word it refers to, as in sentence 24, or directly *before* it, as follows:

25. *A native of Argentina*, Carlos is the new wrestling champion.

- Note that an appositive is set off by commas.

Appositives can add versatility to your writing because they can be placed at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a sentence. When you join two ideas with an appositive, place the idea you wish to stress in the main clause and make the less important idea the appositive:

26. Naomi wants to become a fashion model.
27. She is the daughter of an actress.
28. *The daughter of an actress*, Naomi wants to become a fashion model.
29. FACT made headlines for the first time only a few years ago.
30. FACT is now a powerful consumer group.
31. FACT, *now a powerful consumer group*, made headlines for the first time only a few years ago.
32. Watch out for Smithers.
33. He is a dangerous man.
34. Watch out for Smithers, *a dangerous man*.

Using an appositive to combine sentences eliminates unimportant words and creates longer, more fact-filled sentences.

Join Ideas with a Relative Clause

Relative clauses can add sophistication to your writing. A **relative clause** begins with *who*, *which*, or *that* and describes a noun or pronoun. It can join two simple sentences in a longer, more complex sentence:

- 35. Jack just won a scholarship from the Arts Council.
- 36. He makes wire sculpture.
- 37. Jack, *who makes wire sculpture*, just won a scholarship from the Arts Council.

- In sentence 37, *who makes wire sculpture* is a relative clause, created by replacing the subject *he* of sentence 36 with the relative pronoun *who*.
- *Who* now introduces the subordinate relative clause and connects it to the rest of the sentence. Note that *who* directly follows the word it refers to, *Jack*.

The idea that the writer wishes to stress is placed in the main clause, and the subordinate idea is placed in the relative clause. Study the combinations in sentences 38 through 40 and 41 through 43.

- 38. Carrots grow in cool climates.
- 39. They are high in vitamin A.
- 40. Carrots, *which* are high in vitamin A, grow in cool climates.
- 41. He finally submitted the term paper.
- 42. It was due six months ago.
- 43. He finally submitted the term paper *that* was due six months ago.

- In sentence 40, *which are high in vitamin A* is a relative clause, created by replacing *they* with *which*. Which word in sentence 40 does *which* refer to?
- What is the relative clause in sentence 43?
- Which word does *that* refer to?

Punctuating relative clauses can be tricky; therefore, you will have to be careful.*

- 44. Claude, *who grew up in Haiti*, speaks fluent French.

* For more practice in punctuating relative clauses, see Chapter 36, “The Comma,” Part D.

- *Who grew up in Haiti* is set off by commas because it adds information about Claude that is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. In other words, the sentence would make sense without it: *Claude speaks fluent French.*
- *Who grew up in Haiti* is called a **nonrestrictive clause**. It does not restrict or provide vital information about the word it modifies.

45. People *who crackle paper in theaters* annoy me.

- *Who crackle paper in theaters* is not set off by commas because it is vital to the meaning of the sentence. Without it, the sentence would read, *People annoy me*; yet the point of the sentence is that people *who crackle paper in theaters* annoy me, not all people.
- *Who crackle paper in theaters* is called a **restrictive clause** because it restricts the meaning of the word it refers to, *people*.

Note that *which* usually begins a nonrestrictive clause and *that* usually begins a restrictive clause.

E. Avoid Misplaced and Confusing Modifiers

As you practice varying your sentences, be sure that your modifiers say what you mean! Revise your work to avoid **misplaced**, **confusing**, or **dangling modifiers**.

1. Perching on a scarecrow in the cornfield, the farmer saw a large crow.

- Probably the writer did not mean that the farmer was perching on a scarecrow. Who or what, then, was *perching on a scarecrow in the cornfield*?
- *Perching* refers to the *crow*, of course, but the order of the sentence does not show this. This misplaced modifier can be corrected by turning the ideas around:

The farmer saw a large crow perching on a scarecrow in the cornfield.

Do these sentences say what they mean? Are the modifiers misplaced or correct?

2. Covered with whipped cream, Tyrone carried a chocolate cake.
3. I sold the tin soldiers to an antique dealer that I found in the basement.
4. A homeless teenager, the nun helped the girl find a place to live.

- In sentence 2, does the past participial modifier *covered with whipped cream* refer to Tyrone or the cake?
- In sentence 3, who or what does the relative clause *that I found in the basement* refer to?
- In sentence 4, the misplaced appositive totally changes the meaning of the sentence. What did this writer mean to say?

Sometimes a modifier is confusing because it does not refer to anything in the sentence. This is called a **dangling modifier** and must be corrected by rewriting.

5. Drilling for oil in Alaska, acres of wilderness were destroyed.
6. Tired and proud, the website was completed at midnight.

- In sentence 5, who or what was *drilling for oil*? The sentence doesn't tell us.
- *Drilling for oil* is a dangling modifier. It can be corrected only by rewording the sentence:

7. Drilling for oil in Alaska, the EndRun Company destroyed acres of wilderness.

- In sentence 6, *tired and proud* is a dangling modifier. Surely the website isn't tired and proud, so who is?

F. Review and Practice

Here is a brief review of some of the techniques of sentence variety discussed in this chapter:

1. Mix long and short sentences.
2. Add an occasional question, command, or exclamation.
3. Begin with an adverb: *Unfortunately*, the outfielder dropped the fly ball.
4. Begin with a prepositional phrase: *With great style*, the pitcher delivered a curve.
5. Join ideas with a compound predicate: The fans *roared and banged* their seats.
6. Join ideas with an *-ing* modifier: *Diving chin first onto the grass*, Beltran caught the ball.
7. Join ideas with a past participial modifier: *Frustrated by the call*, the batter kicked dirt onto home plate.
8. Join ideas with an appositive: Beer, *the cause of much rowdiness*, should not be sold at games.
9. Join ideas with a relative clause: Box seats, *which are hard to get for important games*, are frequently bought up by corporations.

Of course, the secret of achieving sentence variety is practice. Choose one, two, or three of these techniques to focus on and try them out in your writing. Revise your paragraphs and essays with an eye to sentence variety.

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<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/597/01>

Are your modifiers dangling? Don't blush; revise.

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CHAPTER 23

Revising for Language Awareness

- A:** Exact Language: Avoiding Vagueness
- B:** Concise Language: Avoiding Wordiness
- C:** Fresh Language: Avoiding Triteness
- D:** Figurative Language: Similes and Metaphors

Although it is important to write grammatically correct English, good writing is more than just correct writing. Good writing has life, excitement, and power. It captures the attention of the reader and compels him or her to read further.

The purpose of this chapter is to increase your awareness of the power of words and your skill at making them work for you. The secret of effective writing is **revision**. Do *not* settle for the first words that come to you, but go back over what you have written, replacing dull or confusing language with exact, concise, fresh, and sometimes figurative language.

A. Exact Language: Avoiding Vagueness

Good writers express their ideas as *exactly* as possible, choosing *specific*, *concrete*, and *vivid* words and phrases. They do not settle for vague terms and confusing generalities.

Which sentence in each of the following pairs gives the more *exact* information? That is, which uses specific and precise language? Which words in these sentences make them sharper and more vivid?

1. A car went around the corner.
2. A battered blue Mustang careened around the corner.
3. Janet quickly ate the main course.
4. Janet devoured the plate of ribs in two and a half minutes.
5. The president did things that caused problems.
6. The president's military spending increased the budget deficit.

- Sentences 2, 4, and 6 contain language that is *exact*.
- Sentence 2 is more exact than sentence 1 because *battered blue Mustang* gives more specific information than the general term *car*. The verb *careened* describes precisely how the car went around the corner, fast and recklessly.
- What specific words does sentence 4 substitute for the more general words *ate*, *main course*, and *quickly* in sentence 3? Why are these terms more exact than those in sentence 3?
- What words in sentence 6 make it clearer and more exact than sentence 5?

Concrete and detailed writing is usually exciting as well and makes us want to read on, as does this passage by N. Scott Momaday. Here this Native American writer describes his grandmother at prayer. Read it aloud if possible:

The last time I saw [my grandmother], she prayed standing by the side of her bed at night, naked to the waist, the light of a kerosene lamp moving upon her dark skin. Her long, black hair, always drawn and braided in the day, lay upon her shoulders and against her breasts like a shawl. I do not speak Kiowa, and I never understood her prayers, but there was something inherently sad in the sound, some merest hesitation upon the syllables of sorrow. She began in a high and descending pitch, exhausting her breath to silence; then again and again—and always the same intensity of effort, of something that is, and is not, like urgency in the human voice. Transported so in the dancing light among the shadows of her room, she seemed beyond the reach of time. But that was illusion; I think I knew then that I should not see her again.

—N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*

Now compare a similar account written in general and inexact language:

The last time I saw my grandmother, she was praying next to her bed. Her long hair was down, covering her. In the day, she always wore it up. I remember that her room had a kerosene lamp. I don't speak Kiowa, so I didn't understand what she was saying, but there was definitely something sad about it. I think I knew somehow that I was not going to see her again.

You do not need a large vocabulary to write exactly and well, but you do need to work at finding the right words to fit each sentence. As you revise, cross out vague or dull words and phrases and replace them with more exact terms. When you are tempted to write *I feel good*, ask yourself exactly what *good* means in that sentence: *relaxed? proud? thin? in love?* When people walk by, do they *flounce, stride, lurch, wiggle*, or *sneak*? When they speak to you, do people *stammer, announce, babble, murmur*, or *coo*? Question yourself as you revise; then choose the right words to fit that particular sentence.

B. Concise Language: Avoiding Wordiness

Concise writing comes quickly to the point. It avoids **wordiness**—unnecessary and repetitious words that add nothing to the meaning.

Which sentence in each of the following pairs is more *concise*? That is, which does *not* contain unnecessary words?

1. Because of the fact that the watch was inexpensive in price, he bought it.
2. Because the watch was inexpensive, he bought it.
3. In my opinion I think that the financial aid system at Ellensville Junior College is in need of reform.
4. The financial aid system at Ellensville Junior College needs reform.
5. On October 10, in the fall of 2003, we learned the true facts about the Peruvian mummies.
6. On October 10, 2003, we learned the facts about the Peruvian mummies.

● Sentences 2, 4, and 6 are *concise*, whereas sentences 1, 3, and 5 are *wordy*.

- In sentence 1, *because of the fact that* is really a *wordy* way of saying *because*. *In price* simply repeats information already given by the word *inexpensive*.
- The writer of sentence 3 undercuts the point with the wordy apology of *in my opinion I think*. As a general rule, leave out such qualifiers and simply state the opinion; but if you do use them, use either *in my opinion* or *I think*, not both! Sentence 4 replaces *is in need of* with one direct verb, *needs*.
- *In the fall of* in sentence 5 is *redundant*; it repeats information already given by which word?
- Why is the word *true* also eliminated in sentence 6?

Concise writing avoids wordiness, unnecessary repetition, and padding. Of course, conciseness does not mean writing short, bare sentences, but simply cutting out all deadwood and never using fifteen words when ten will do.

C. Fresh Language: Avoiding Triteness

Fresh writing uses original and lively words. It avoids **clichés**, those tired and trite expressions that have lost their power from overuse.

Which sentence in each pair that follows contains fewer expressions that you have heard or read many times before?

1. Some people can relate to the hustle and bustle of city life.
2. Some people thrive on the energy and motion of city life.
3. This book is worth its weight in gold to the car owner.
4. This book can save the car owner hundreds of dollars a year in repairs.

- You probably found that sentences 2 and 4 contained fresher language. Which words and phrases in sentences 1 and 3 have you heard or seen before, in conversation, on TV, or in magazines and newspapers?

Clichés and trite expressions like the following have become so familiar that they have almost no impact on the reader. Avoid them. Say what you mean in your own words:

Cliché: She is pretty as a picture.

Fresh: Her amber eyes and wild red hair mesmerize me.

Or occasionally, play with a cliché and turn it into fresh language:

Cliché: ... as American as apple pie.

Fresh: ... as American as a Big Mac.

Cliché: The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

Fresh: "The grass is always greener over the septic tank."—Erma Bombeck

The following is a partial list of trite expressions to avoid. Add to it any others that you overuse in your writing.

Trite Expressions and Clichés

at this point in time	in this day and age
awesome	last but not least
better late than never	living hand to mouth
break the ice	one in a million
cold cruel world	out of this world
cool, hot	sad but true
cry your eyes out	tried and true
easier said than done	under the weather
free as a bird	work like a dog
hustle and bustle	green with envy

D. Figurative Language: Similes and Metaphors

One way to add sparkle and exactness to your writing is to use an occasional simile or metaphor. A **simile** is a comparison of two things using the word *like* or *as*:

"He was *as ugly as* a wart." —Anne Sexton

"The frozen twigs of the huge tulip poplar next to the hill clack in the cold *like* tinsnips." —Annie Dillard

A **metaphor** is a similar comparison without the word *like* or *as*:

“My soul is a dark forest.” —D. H. Lawrence
Love is a virus.

- The power of similes and metaphors comes partly from the surprise of comparing two apparently unlike things. A well-chosen simile or metaphor can convey a lot of information in very few words.
- Comparing a person to a wart, as Sexton does, lets us know quickly just how ugly that person is. And to say that *twigs clack like tinsnips* describes the sound so precisely that we can almost hear it.
- What do you think D. H. Lawrence means by his metaphor? In what ways is a person’s soul like a *dark forest*?
- The statement *love is a virus* tells us something about the writer’s attitude toward love. What is it? In what ways is love like a virus?

Similes and metaphors should not be overused; however, once in a while, they can be a delightful addition to a paper that is also exact, concise, and fresh.



WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Good writing can be done on almost any subject if the writer approaches the subject with openness and with “new eyes.” Take a piece of fruit or a vegetable—a lemon, a green pepper, a cherry tomato. Examine it as if for the first time. Feel its texture and parts, smell it, weigh it in your palm.
Now capture your experience of the fruit or vegetable in words. First jot down words and ideas, or freewrite, aiming for the most exact description possible. Don’t settle for the first words you think of. Keep writing. Then go back over what you have written, underlining the most exact and powerful writing. Compose a topic sentence and draft a paragraph that conveys your unique experience of the fruit or vegetable.
2. In the paragraph that follows, Rick Bragg describes his home state in such rich, exact detail that it comes to life for the reader. Read his paragraph, underlining language that strikes you as *exact* and *fresh*. Can you spot the two similes? Can you find any especially vivid adjectives or unusual verbs?

My mother and father were born in the most beautiful place on earth, in the foothills of the Appalachians along the Alabama–Georgia line. It was a place where gray mists hid the tops of low, deep-green mountains, where redbone and bluetick hounds flashed through the pines as they chased possums into the sacks of old men in frayed overalls, where old women in bonnets dipped Bruton snuff and hummed “Faded Love and Winter Roses” as they shelled purple hulls, canned peaches and made biscuits too good for this world. It was a place where playing the church piano loud was near as important as playing it right, where fearless young men steered long, black Buicks loaded with yellow whiskey down roads the color of dried blood, where the first frost meant hog killin’ time, and the mouthwatering smell of cracklin’s would drift for acres from giant, bubbling pots. It was a place where the screams of panthers, like a woman’s anguished cry, still haunted the most remote ridges and hollows in the dead of night, where children believed they could choke off the cries of night birds by circling one wrist with a thumb and forefinger and squeezing tight, and where the cotton blew off the wagons and hung like scraps of cloud in the branches of trees.

—Rick Bragg, *All Over But the Shoutin’*

Write a paragraph or essay in which you describe a place you know well and perhaps love. As you freewrite or brainstorm, try to capture the most precise and minute details of what you experienced or remember. Now revise your writing, making the language as *exact*, *concise*, and *fresh* as you can.

EXPLORING ONLINE

http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/sensen/part3/sixteen/techniques_using.html

Practice choosing exact language.

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/concise.htm>

Practice pruning excess words.

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/vocabulary.htm>

Build a powerful, college-level vocabulary: tips, quizzes, links.

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CHAPTER 24

Putting Your Revision Skills to Work



In Units 2 and 3, you learned to **revise** basic paragraphs, and in Unit 4, you learned to revise essays. All revising requires that you rethink and rewrite with such questions as these in mind:

Can a reader understand and follow my ideas?
Is my topic sentence or thesis statement clear?
Does the body of my paragraph or essay fully support the topic or thesis statement?
Does my paragraph or essay have unity? That is, does every sentence relate to the main idea?
Does my paragraph or essay have coherence? That is, does it follow a logical order and guide the reader from point to point?
Does my writing conclude, not just leave off?

Of course, the more writing techniques you learn, the more options you have as you revise. Unit 5 has moved beyond the basics to matters of style: consistency and parallelism, sentence variety, and clear, exact language. This chapter will guide you again through the revision process, adding questions like the following to your list:

Are my verb tenses and pronouns consistent?
Have I used parallel structure?
Have I varied the length and type of my sentences?
Is my language exact, concise, and fresh?

Many writers first revise and rewrite with questions like these in mind. They do *not* worry about grammar and minor errors at this stage. Then in a separate, final process, they **proofread*** for spelling and grammatical errors.

Here are two sample paragraphs by students, showing the first draft, the revisions made by the student, and the revised draft of each. Each revision has been numbered and explained to give you a clear idea of the thinking process involved.

Writing Sample 1

First Draft

I like to give my best performance. I must relax completely before a show. I often know ahead of time what choreography I will use and what I'll sing, so I can concentrate on relaxing completely. I usually do this by reading, etc. I always know my parts perfectly. Occasionally I look through the curtain to watch the people come in. This can make you feel faint, but I reassure myself and say I know everything will be okay.

Revisions

① *In order*
I like to give my best performance. I must relax completely before a show.

② *and vocals*
I often know ahead of time what choreography I will use and what I'll sing,

③ *during that long, last hour before curtain,*
so I can concentrate on relaxing completely. I usually do this by reading,

④
⑤ *an action-packed mystery, but sometimes I joke with the other performers or just walk around backstage.*
etc. I always know my parts perfectly. Occasionally I look through the curtain to

⑥ *audience file* ⑧ *me*
watch the people come in. This can make you feel faint, but I reassure myself

⑨ *"Vickie," I say, "the minute you're out there singing to the people, everything will be okay."*
and say I know everything will be okay.

Reasons for Revisions

1. Combine two short sentences. (sentence variety)

* For practice in proofreading for particular errors, see individual chapters in Units 6 and 7. For practice in proofreading for mixed errors, see Chapter 38, "Putting Your Proofreading Skills to Work."

2. Make *choreography* and *vocals* parallel and omit unnecessary words. (parallelism)
3. Make time order clear: First discuss what I've done during the days before the performance, and then discuss the hour before performance. (time order)
4. Drop *completely*, which repeats the word used in the first sentence. (avoid wordiness)
5. This is important! Drop *etc.*, add more details, and give examples. (add examples)
6. This idea belongs earlier in the paragraph—with what I've done during the days before the performance. (order)
7. Use more specific and interesting language in this sentence. (exact language)
8. Use the first person singular pronouns *I* and *me* consistently throughout the paragraph. (consistent person)
9. Dull—use a direct quotation, the actual words I say to myself. (exact language, sentence variety)

Revised Draft

In order to give my best performance, I must relax completely before a show. I often know ahead of time what choreography and vocals I will use, and I always know my parts perfectly, so during that long, last hour before curtain, I can concentrate on relaxing. I usually do this by reading an action-packed mystery, but sometimes I joke with the other performers or just walk around backstage. Occasionally I peek through the curtain to watch the audience file in. This can make me feel faint, but I reassure myself. "Vickie," I say, "the minute you're out there singing to the people, everything will be okay."

—Victoria DeWindt, Student

Writing Sample 2

First Draft

When I was little, I stuttered. I didn't even know it. Kids at school started teasing me, and I realized. Children can be very cruel. I became withdrawn and stopped talking at school. My grades were poor. My parents decided to put me in speech therapy, which really helped. I got faster and could often speak normally, without repeating any syllables. My speech therapists taught me lessons of compassion and patience. They totally put me on the path I am on today. They not only helped me in childhood, but in my career decision as well. I hope to help other young people.

Revisions

① When I was ^{a child,} little I stuttered. I didn't even know it. ^{② until some children} Kids at school started
 teasing me, ^{③ yelling "Suh-Suh-Sarah."} and I realized. ~~Children can be very cruel.~~ I became withdrawn and
 stopped talking at school. ^{④ realized how poor} My grades were poor. ^{My grades were, they} My parents decided to put me in
 speech therapy, ^{⑤ Add new section below*} which really helped. I got faster and could often speak normally,
 without repeating any syllables. ^{at all} My speech therapists taught me
^{Early} lessons of compassion and patience. ^{from my speech therapists} They totally put me on the path I am on today.
 ⑥ My speech therapists ⑦ they inspired me to become a speech-language pathologist.
 They not only helped me in childhood, but ~~in my career decision as well.~~ I hope
 to help other young people. ⑧ ^{conquer their speaking obstacles because I know that} speaking easily will give them the confidence to succeed.

* Miss Lindsey and Mister Bob, my speech therapists, taught me to slow down and relax to pronounce words correctly. They taught me exercises and breathing techniques. Even when I struggled to get something right, they would praise and encourage me. Over time,

Reasons for Revisions

1. Add topic sentence that better fits the revised paragraph. (topic sentence)
2. Combine two short sentences. (sentence variety)
3. Add a good example of the children's cruelty. (exact language, avoid wordiness)
4. Combine two sentences and make order clear. (sentence variety, time order)
5. This is important! Tell in detail how these therapists helped me, and name them. (add examples, exact language)
6. *They* now seems to refer to *syllables*; change to *my speech therapists*. (pronoun substitution)
7. Oops. Tell what career I'm referring to. (exact language)
8. Be specific. Tell how I want to help young people, so the reader understands my passion. (add examples, exact language, sentence variety)

Revised Draft

Early lessons of compassion and patience from my speech therapists put me on the path I am on today. When I was a child, I stuttered. I didn't even know it until some children at school started teasing me, yelling, "Suh-Suh-Sarah." I became withdrawn and stopped talking at school. When my parents realized how poor my grades were, they decided to put me in speech therapy. Miss Lindsey and Mister Bob, my speech therapists, taught me to slow down and relax to pronounce words correctly. They taught me exercises and breathing techniques. Even when I struggled to get something right, they would praise and encourage me. Over time, I got faster and could often speak normally, without repeating any syllables at all. My speech therapists not only helped me in childhood, but they inspired me to become a speech-language pathologist. I hope to help other young people conquer their speaking obstacles because I know that speaking easily will give them the confidence to succeed.

—Sarah Washington, Student



EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/561/01>

Guidance for the writer who is about to revise and proofread

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Unit 6

Reviewing the Basics

CHAPTER 25

The Simple Sentence

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Coordination and Subordination

CHAPTER 27

Avoiding Sentence Errors

CHAPTER 28

Present Tense (Agreement)

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CHAPTER 25

The Simple Sentence

- A:** Defining and Spotting Subjects
- B:** Spotting Prepositional Phrases
- C:** Defining and Spotting Verbs

A. Defining and Spotting Subjects

Every sentence must contain two basic elements: a **subject** and a **verb**.

A subject is the *who* or *what* word that performs the action or the *who* or *what* word about which a statement is made:

1. Three *hunters* tramped through the woods.
2. The blue *truck* belongs to Ralph.

- In sentence 1, *hunters*, the *who* word, performs the action—“tramped through the woods.”
- In sentence 2, *truck* is the *what* word about which a statement is made—“belongs to Ralph.”

Some sentences have more than one subject, joined by *and*:

3. Her *aunt and uncle* love country music.

- In sentence 3, *aunt and uncle*, the *who* words, perform the action—they “love country music.”
- *Aunt and uncle* is called a **compound subject**.

Sometimes an *-ing* word can be the subject of a sentence:

4. *Reading* strains my eyes.

- *Reading* is the *what* word that performs the action—“strains my eyes.”

B. Spotting Prepositional Phrases

One group of words that may confuse you as you look for subjects is the prepositional phrase. A **prepositional phrase** contains a **preposition** (a word like *at*, *in*, *of*, *from*, and so forth) and its **object**.

Preposition	Object
at	the beach
on	time
of	the students

The object of a preposition *cannot* be the subject of a sentence. Therefore, spotting and crossing out the prepositional phrases will help you find the subject.

1. The sweaters in the window look handmade.
2. The sweaters ~~in the window~~ look handmade.
3. ~~On Tuesday~~, a carton ~~of oranges~~ was left ~~on the porch~~.

- In sentence 1, you might have trouble finding the subject. But once the prepositional phrase is crossed out in sentence 2, the subject, *sweaters*, is easy to spot.
- In sentence 3, once the prepositional phrases are crossed out, the subject, *carton*, is easy to spot.

Here are some common prepositions that you should know:

Common Prepositions			
about	before	in	through
above	behind	into	to
across	between	like	toward
after	by	near	under
along	during	of	until
among	for	on	up
at	from	over	with

C. Defining and Spotting Verbs

Action Verbs

In order to be complete, every sentence must contain a **verb**. One kind of verb, called an **action verb**, expresses the action that the subject is performing:

1. The star quarterback *fumbled*.

2. The carpenters *worked* all day, but the bricklayers *went* home early.

- In sentence 1, the action verb is *fumbled*.
- In sentence 2, the action verbs are *worked* and *went*.*

Linking Verbs

Another kind of verb, called a **linking verb**, links the subject to words that describe or identify it:

3. Don *is* a fine mathematician.

4. This fabric *feels* rough and scratchy.

* For work on compound predicates, see Chapter 22, “Revising for Sentence Variety,” Part D.

- In sentence 3, the verb *is* links the subject *Don* with the noun *mathematician*.
- In sentence 4, the verb *feels* links the subject *fabric* with the adjectives *rough* and *scratchy*.

Here are some common linking verbs:

Common Linking Verbs

appear	feel
be (am, is, are, was, were, has been, have been, had been . . .)	look
become	seem

Verbs of More Than One Word—Helping Verbs

So far you have dealt with verbs of only one word—*fumbled*, *worked*, *is*, *feels*, and so on. But many verbs consist of more than one word:

5. He *should have taken* the train home.
6. *Are* Tanya and Joe *practicing* the piano?
7. The lounge *was painted* last week.

- In sentence 5, *taken* is the main verb; *should* and *have* are the **helping verbs**.
- In sentence 6, *practicing* is the main verb; *are* is the helping verb.
- In sentence 7, *painted* is the main verb; *was* is the helping verb.*

* For more work on verbs in the passive voice, see Chapter 30, “The Past Participle,” Part E.

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/subjector.htm>

Interactive subject quiz

<http://www.dailygrammar.com/archive.shtml>

Click “Verbs 6–10” and “11–15” for a verb review.

<http://a4esl.org/a/g3.html>

Interactive preposition quizzes: scroll down to “prepositions”

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CHAPTER 26

Coordination and Subordination

- A: Coordination
- B: Subordination
- C: Semicolons
- D: Conjunctive Adverbs
- E: Review

A. Coordination

A **clause** is a group of words that includes a subject and a verb. If a clause can stand alone as a complete idea, it is an **independent clause** and can be written as a **simple sentence**.*

Here are two independent clauses written as simple sentences:

1. The dog barked all night.
2. The neighbors didn't complain.

* For more work on simple sentences, see Chapter 25, "The Simple Sentence."

You can join two clauses together by placing a comma and a **coordinating conjunction** between them:

3. The dog barked all night, *but* the neighbors didn't complain.
4. Let's go to the beach today, *for* it is too hot to do anything else.

- The coordinating conjunctions *but* and *for* join together two clauses.
- Note that *a comma precedes each coordinating conjunction*.

Here is a list of the most common coordinating conjunctions:

Coordinating Conjunctions			
and	for	or	yet
but	nor	so	

Be sure to choose the coordinating conjunction that best expresses the *relationship* between the two clauses in a sentence:

5. It was late, *so* I decided to take a bus home.
6. It was late, *yet* I decided to take a bus home.

- The *so* in sentence 5 means that the lateness of the hour caused me to take the bus. (The trains don't run after midnight.)
- The *yet* in sentence 6 means that despite the late hour I still decided to take a bus home. (I knew I might have to wait two hours at the bus stop.)
- Note that a comma precedes the coordinating conjunction.

B. Subordination

Two clauses can also be joined with a **subordinating conjunction**. The clause following a subordinating conjunction is called a **subordinate** or **dependent clause** because it depends on an independent clause to complete its meaning:

1. We will light the candles *when Flora arrives*.

- *When Flora arrives* is a subordinate or dependent clause introduced by the subordinating conjunction *when*.
- By itself, *when Flora arrives* is incomplete; it depends on the independent clause to complete its meaning.*

Note that sentence 1 can also be written this way:

2. *When Flora arrives*, we will light the candles.

- The meaning of sentences 1 and 2 is the same, but the punctuation is different.
- In sentence 1, because the subordinate clause *follows* the independent clause, *no comma* is needed.
- In sentence 2, however, because the subordinate clause *begins* the sentence, it is followed by a *comma*.

Here is a partial list of subordinating conjunctions:

Subordinating Conjunctions		
after	if	unless
although	if only	until
as	in order that	when
as if	once	whenever
as though	provided that	where
because	rather than	whereas
before	since	wherever
even if	so that	whether
even though	though	while

* For more work on incomplete sentences, or fragments, see Chapter 27, "Avoiding Sentence Errors," Part B.

Be sure to choose the subordinating conjunction that *best expresses the relationship* between the two clauses in a sentence:

3. This course was excellent *because* Professor Green taught it.
4. This course was excellent *although* Professor Green taught it.

- Sentence 3 says that the course was excellent *because* Professor Green, a great teacher, taught it.
- Sentence 4 says that the course was excellent *despite the fact that* Professor Green, apparently a bad teacher, taught it.

C. Semicolons

You can join two independent clauses by placing a **semicolon** between them. The semicolon takes the place of a conjunction:

1. She hopes to receive good grades this semester; her scholarship depends on her maintaining a 3.5 average.
2. Tony is a careless driver; he has had three minor accidents this year alone.

- Each of the sentences above could also be made into two *separate sentences* by replacing the semicolon with a period.
- Note that the first word after a semicolon is *not* capitalized (unless, of course, it is a word that is normally capitalized, like someone's name).

D. Conjunctive Adverbs

In earlier chapters on paragraph and essay writing, you practiced using **transitional expressions** like *however*, *for example*, and *therefore*. Most transitional expressions are **conjunctive adverbs**. A conjunctive adverb placed after a semicolon can help clarify the relationship between two clauses:

1. I like the sound of that stereo; *however*, the price is too high.
2. They have not seen that film; *moreover*, they have not been to a theater for three years.

- Note that a comma follows the conjunctive adverb.

Here is a partial list of conjunctive adverbs, or transitional expressions.*

Conjunctive Adverbs or Transitional Expressions	
Addition:	also, besides, furthermore, in addition, moreover
Comparison:	likewise, similarly
Contrast:	however, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand
Example:	for example, for instance
Emphasis:	indeed, in fact, of course
Result:	consequently, therefore, thus

* For more transitional expressions, see pages 47–48.

E. Review

In this chapter, you have combined simple sentences by means of a **coordinating conjunction**, a **subordinating conjunction**, a **semicolon**, and a **conjunctive adverb**. Here is a review chart of the sentence patterns discussed in this chapter.*

Coordination

Option 1	Independent clause	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} , \text{ and} \\ , \text{ but} \\ , \text{ for} \\ , \text{ nor} \\ , \text{ or} \\ , \text{ so} \\ , \text{ yet} \end{array} \right.$	independent clause.
Option 2	Independent clause	;	independent clause.
Option 3	Independent clause	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} ; \text{ consequently,} \\ ; \text{ furthermore,} \\ ; \text{ however,} \\ ; \text{ in addition,} \\ ; \text{ indeed,} \\ ; \text{ in fact,} \\ ; \text{ moreover,} \\ ; \text{ nevertheless,} \\ ; \text{ then,} \\ ; \text{ therefore,} \end{array} \right.$	independent clause.

* For more ways to combine sentences, see Chapter 22, "Revising for Sentence Variety," Part D.

Subordination

Option 4

Independent clause

{
after
although
as (as if)
because
before
if
since
unless
until
when(ever)
whereas
while
}

dependent clause.

Option 5

{
After
Although
As (As if)
Because
Before
If
Since
Unless
Until
When(ever)
Whereas
While
}

dependent clause, independent clause.

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/nova/nova1.htm>

Interactive coordination quiz

http://depts.dyc.edu/learningcenter/owl/exercises/conjunctions_ex2.htm

Exercises in subordination, with answers

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CHAPTER 27

Avoiding Sentence Errors

A: Avoiding Run-Ons and Comma Splices

B: Avoiding Fragments

A. Avoiding Run-Ons and Comma Splices

Be careful to avoid **run-ons** and **comma splices**.

A **run-on sentence** incorrectly runs together two independent clauses without a conjunction or punctuation. This error confuses the reader, who cannot tell where one thought stops and the next begins:

1. Run-on: My neighbor Mr. Hoffman is seventy-five years old he plays tennis every Saturday afternoon.

A **comma splice** incorrectly joins two independent clauses with a comma but no conjunction:

2. Comma splice: My neighbor Mr. Hoffman is seventy-five years old, he plays tennis every Saturday afternoon.

The run-on and the comma splice can be corrected in five ways:

Use two separate sentences.

My neighbor Mr. Hoffman is seventy-five years old. He plays tennis every Saturday afternoon.

Use a coordinating conjunction.
(See Chapter 26, Part A.)

My neighbor Mr. Hoffman is seventy-five years old, but he plays tennis every Saturday afternoon.

Use a subordinating conjunction.
(See Chapter 26, Part B.)

Although my neighbor Mr. Hoffman is seventy-five years old, he plays tennis every Saturday afternoon.

Use a semicolon.
(See Chapter 26, Part C.)

My neighbor Mr. Hoffman is seventy-five years old; he plays tennis every Saturday afternoon.

Use a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb. (See Chapter 26, Part D.)

My neighbor Mr. Hoffman is seventy-five years old; however, he plays tennis every Saturday afternoon.

B. Avoiding Fragments

Another error to avoid is the **sentence fragment**. A **sentence** must contain a subject and a verb and must be able to stand alone as a complete idea. A **sentence fragment** is incomplete. It lacks a subject, a verb, or both—or it does not stand alone as a complete idea.

Here are six common fragments and ways to correct them. The first three are among the most frequently made errors in college and business writing.

Dependent Clause Fragments

A dependent clause fragment often starts with a subordinating conjunction like *although*, *because*, *if*, *when*, and so on.*

Complete sentence: 1. Kirk decided to major in psychology.

Fragment: 2. After his sister was diagnosed with anorexia.

* For a longer list of subordinating conjunctions and more work on dependent clauses, see Chapter 26, "Coordination and Subordination," Part B.

- Example 1 is a complete sentence.
- Example 2 is a fragment because it is a dependent clause beginning with the subordinating conjunction *after*. Furthermore, it is not a complete idea.

This fragment can be corrected in two ways:

- Corrected: 3. Kirk decided to major in psychology after his sister was diagnosed with anorexia.
- Corrected: 4. Kirk decided to major in psychology. His sister was diagnosed with anorexia.

- In sentence 3, the fragment is combined with the sentence before.
- In sentence 4, the fragment is changed into a complete sentence.

Relative Clause Fragments

A dependent clause fragment can also start with *who*, *whose*, *which*, or *that*.*

- Complete sentence: 5. Mrs. Costa is a popular history professor.
- Fragment: 6. Who never runs out of creative ideas.

- Example 5 is a complete sentence.
- Example 6 is a fragment because it is a relative clause beginning with *who*.^{*} It is not a complete idea.

This fragment can be corrected in two ways:

- Corrected: 7. Mrs. Costa is a popular history professor who never runs out of creative ideas.
- Corrected: 8. Mrs. Costa is a popular history professor. She never runs out of creative ideas.

^{*} For more work on relative clauses, see Chapter 22, “Revising for Sentence Variety,” Part D, and Chapter 28, “Present Tense (Agreement),” Part G.

- In sentence 7, it is combined with the sentence before.
- In sentence 8, the fragment is changed into a complete sentence.

-ing Fragments

An *-ing* fragment starts with an *-ing* verb form.

Complete sentence: 9. Joaquin can be seen on the track every morning.
Fragment: 10. Running a mile or two before breakfast.

- Example 9 is a complete sentence.
- Example 10 is a fragment because it lacks a subject and because an *-ing* verb form cannot stand alone without a helping verb.*

This fragment can be corrected in two ways:

Corrected: 11. Joaquin can be seen on the track every morning, running a mile or two before breakfast.
Corrected: 12. Joaquin can be seen on the track every morning. He runs a mile or two before breakfast.

- In sentence 11, the fragment is combined with the sentence before.
- In sentence 12, the fragment is changed into a complete sentence.

Watch out for fragments beginning with a subordinating conjunction; *who*, *which*, or *that*; or an *-ing* verb form. These groups of words cannot stand alone, but must be combined with another sentence or changed into a complete sentence.

Prepositional Phrase Fragments

Complete sentence: 13. A huge telescope in Green Bank, West Virginia, scans for signs of life.
Fragment: 14. On stars twenty to thirty light years away.

* For more work on joining ideas with an *-ing* modifier, see Chapter 22, “Revising for Sentence Variety,” Part D.

- Sentence 13 is a complete sentence.
- Sentence 14 is a fragment because it is a prepositional phrase beginning with *on*. It lacks both a subject and a verb.

This fragment can be corrected in two ways:

- Corrected: 15. A huge telescope in Green Bank, West Virginia, scans for signs of life on stars twenty to thirty light years away.
- Corrected: 16. A huge telescope in Green Bank, West Virginia, scans for signs of life. Its target is stars twenty to thirty light years away.

- Sentence 15 shows the easiest way to correct this fragment—by connecting it to the sentence before.
- In sentence 16, the fragment is changed into a complete sentence by adding a subject, *its target*, and a verb, *is*.

Appositive Phrase Fragments

- Fragment: 17. A fine pianist.
- Complete sentence: 18. Marsha won a scholarship to Juilliard.

- Example 17 is a fragment because it is an appositive—a noun phrase. It lacks a verb, and it is not a complete idea.*
- Example 18 is a complete sentence.

This fragment can be corrected in two ways:

- Corrected: 19. A fine pianist, Marsha won a scholarship to Juilliard.
- Corrected: 20. Marsha is a fine pianist. She won a scholarship to Juilliard.

- In sentence 19, the fragment is combined with the sentence after it.
- In sentence 20, the fragment is changed into a complete sentence by adding a verb, *is*, and a subject, *she* (to avoid repeating *Marsha*).

* For more work on appositives, see Chapter 22, “Revising for Sentence Variety,” Part D.

Infinitive Phrase Fragments

Complete sentence: 21. Lauri has always wanted to become a biologist.

Fragment: 22. To protect the environment.

- Example 21 is a complete sentence.
- Example 22 is a fragment because it lacks a subject and contains only the infinitive form of the verb—*to* plus the simple form of *protect*.

This fragment can be corrected in two ways:

Corrected: 23. Lauri has always wanted to become a biologist and to protect the environment.

Corrected: 24. Lauri has always wanted to become a biologist. Her goal is to protect the environment.

- In sentence 23, the fragment is combined with the sentence before it.
- In sentence 24, the fragment is changed into a complete sentence.

Watch out for phrase fragments. A prepositional phrase, appositive phrase, or infinitive cannot stand alone, but must be combined with another sentence or changed into a complete sentence.



Laurence Gough/Shutterstock.com

Review Chart: Correcting Sentence Fragments

Type of Fragment	F <i>Fragment</i> C <i>Corrected</i>
1. Dependent clause	F After Jake moved to Colorado. C After Jake moved to Colorado, he learned to ski.
2. Relative clause	F Who loves computer games. C My niece, who loves computer games, repairs my computer.
3. -ing modifier	F Surfing the Web. C Surfing the Web, we visited European art museum sites.
4. Prepositional phrase	F Inside the cave. C They found mastodon bones inside the cave.
5. Appositive	F A slow student. C Einstein, a slow student, proved to be a genius.
6. Infinitive	F To go dancing tonight. C She wants to go dancing tonight.

EXPLORING ONLINE

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/run-ons_add1.htm

Review and quizzes to help you root out run-ons

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/fragment_fixing.htm

Great tips and quizzes to help you find and fix sentence fragments

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CHAPTER 28

Present Tense (Agreement)

- A:** Defining Subject-Verb Agreement
- B:** Three Troublesome Verbs in the Present Tense: *To Be*, *To Have*, *To Do*
- C:** Special Singular Constructions
- D:** Separation of Subject and Verb
- E:** Sentences Beginning with *There* and *Here*
- F:** Agreement in Questions
- G:** Agreement in Relative Clauses

A. Defining Subject-Verb Agreement

Subjects and verbs in the present tense must **agree** in number; that is, singular subjects take verbs with singular endings, and plural subjects take verbs with plural endings.

Verbs in the Present Tense				
Sample Verb: <i>To Leap</i>				
Singular		Plural		
	If the subject is	the verb is	If the subject is	the verb is
1st person:	I	leap	we	leap
2nd person:	you	leap	you	leap
3rd person:	he	leaps	they	leap
	she			
	it			

- Use an -s or -es ending on the verb only when the subject is *he*, *she*, or *it* or the equivalent of *he*, *she*, or *it*.

The subjects and verbs in the following sentences agree:

1. He *bicycles* to the steel mills every morning.
2. They *bicycle* to the steel mills every morning.
3. This student *hopes* to go to social work school.
4. The planets *revolve* around the sun.

- In sentence 1, the singular subject, *he*, takes the singular form of the verb, *bicycles*. *Bicycles* agrees with *he*.
- In sentence 2, the plural subject, *they*, takes the plural form of the verb, *bicycle*. *Bicycle* agrees with *they*.
- In sentence 3, the subject, *student*, is equivalent to *he* or *she* and takes the singular form of the verb, *hopes*.
- In sentence 4, the subject, *planets*, is equivalent to *they* and takes the plural form of the verb, *revolve*.

Subjects joined by the conjunction *and* usually take a plural verb:

5. Kirk and Quincy *attend* a pottery class at the Y.

- The subject, *Kirk and Quincy*, is plural, the equivalent of *they*.
- *Attend* agrees with the plural subject.*

B. Three Troublesome Verbs in the Present Tense: *To Be*, *To Have*, *To Do*

Choosing the correct verb form of *to be*, *to have*, and *to do* can be tricky. Study these charts:

Reference Chart—*To Be* Present Tense

	Singular		Plural	
	If the subject is	the verb is	If the subject is	the verb is
1st person:	I	am	we	are
2nd person:	you	are	you	are
3rd person:	he she it	is	they	are

Reference Chart—*To Have* Present Tense

	Singular		Plural	
	If the subject is	the verb is	If the subject is	the verb is
1st person:	I	have	we	have
2nd person:	you	have	you	have
3rd person:	he she it	has	they	have

* For work on consistent verb tense, see Chapter 21, “Revising for Consistency and Parallelism,” Part A.

Reference Chart—*To Do* Present Tense

Singular		Plural	
If the subject is	the verb is	If the subject is	the verb is
1st person: I	do	we	do
2nd person: you	do	you	do
3rd person: he she it	does	they	do

C. Special Singular Constructions

Each of these constructions takes a **singular** verb:

Special Singular Constructions		
either (of) . . .	each (of) . . .	every one (of) . . .
neither (of) . . .	one (of) . . .	which one (of) . . .

1. *Neither* of the birds *has* feathers yet.
2. *Each* of the solutions *presents* difficulties.

- In sentence 1, *neither* means *neither one*. *Neither* is a singular subject and requires the singular verb *has*.
- In sentence 2, *each* means *each one*. *Each* is a singular subject and requires the singular verb *presents*.

However, an exception to this general rule is the case in which two subjects are joined by *(n)either . . . (n)or . . .*. Here, the verb agrees with the subject closer to it:

3. Neither the teacher nor the *pupils want* the semester shortened.
4. Either the graphs or the *map has* to be changed.

- In sentence 3, *pupils* is the subject closer to the verb. The plural subject *pupils* takes the verb *want*.
- In sentence 4, *map* is the subject closer to the verb. The singular subject *map* takes the verb *has*.

D. Separation of Subject and Verb

Sometimes a phrase or a clause separates the subject from the verb. First, look for the subject; then make sure that the verb agrees with the subject.

1. The economist's *ideas* on this matter *seem* well thought out.
2. *Radios* that were made in the 1930s *are* now collectors' items.

- In sentence 1, the *ideas* are well thought out. The prepositional phrase *on this matter* separates the subject *ideas* from the verb *seem*.*
- In sentence 2, *radios* are now collectors' items. The relative clause *that were made in the 1930s* separates the subject *radios* from the verb *are*.

E. Sentences Beginning with *There* and *Here*

In sentences that begin with **there** or **here**, the subject usually follows the verb:

1. There *seem* to be two *flies* in my soup.
2. Here *is* my *prediction* for the coming year.

* For more work on prepositional phrases, see Chapter 25, "The Simple Sentence," Part B.

- In sentence 1, the plural subject *flies* takes the plural verb *seem*.
- In sentence 2, the singular subject *prediction* takes the singular verb *is*.

You can often determine what the verb should be by reversing the word order: *two flies seem . . .* or *my prediction is . . .*

F. Agreement in Questions

In questions, the subject usually follows the verb:

1. What *is* the *secret* of your success?
2. Where *are* the *copies* of the review?

- In sentence 1, the subject *secret* takes the singular verb *is*.
- In sentence 2, the subject *copies* takes the plural verb *are*.

You can often determine what the verb should be by reversing the word order: *the secret of your success is . . .* or *the copies are . . .*

G. Agreement in Relative Clauses

A **relative clause** is a subordinate clause that begins with *who*, *which*, or *that*. The verb in the relative clause must agree with the antecedent of the *who*, *which*, or *that*.*

1. People *who have a good sense of humor* make good neighbors.
2. Be careful of a scheme *that promises you a lot of money fast*.

- In sentence 1, the antecedent of *who* is *people*. *People* should take the plural verb *have*.
- In sentence 2, the antecedent of *that* is *scheme*. *Scheme* takes the singular verb *promises*.

* For more work on relative clauses, see Chapter 22, “Revising for Sentence Variety,” Part D.

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/svagr3.html>

Click on the subject-verb agreement error you most need to avoid for interactive practice.

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/vm/svagr.html>

Take this verb quiz and get instant feedback on your answers.

<http://itech.pjc.edu/writinglab/MakingSubjectsandVerbsAgree.htm>

Test your verb skills with this more difficult quiz.

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CHAPTER 29

Past Tense

- A:** Regular Verbs in the Past Tense
- B:** Irregular Verbs in the Past Tense
- C:** A Troublesome Verb in the Past Tense: *To Be*
- D:** Troublesome Pairs in the Past Tense: *Can/Could, Will/Would*

A. Regular Verbs in the Past Tense

Regular verbs in the past tense take an *-ed* or *-d* ending:

1. The captain *hoisted* the flag.
2. They *purchased* a flat screen TV yesterday.
3. We *deposited* a quarter in the meter.

- *Hoisted, purchased, and deposited* are regular verbs in the past tense.
- Each verb ends in *-ed* or *-d*.

B. Irregular Verbs in the Past Tense

Irregular verbs do not take an *-ed* or *-d* ending in the past but change internally:

1. I *wrote* that letter in ten minutes.
2. Although the orange cat *fell* from a high branch, she escaped unharmed.
3. The play *began* on time but ended fairly late.

● *Wrote* is the past tense of *write*.

● *Fell* is the past tense of *fall*.

● *Began* is the past tense of *begin*.

Here is a partial list of irregular verbs:

Reference Chart Irregular Verbs in the Past Tense			
Simple Form	Past Tense	Simple Form	Past Tense
be	was, were	eat	ate
become	became	fall	fell
begin	began	feed	fed
blow	blew	feel	felt
break	broke	fight	fought
bring	brought	find	found
build	built	fly	flew
buy	bought	forbid	forbade
catch	caught	forget	forgot
choose	chose	forgive	forgave
come	came	freeze	froze
cut	cut	get	got
deal	dealt	give	gave
dig	dug	go	went

dive	dove (dived)	grow	grew
do	did	have	had
draw	drew	hear	heard
drink	drank	hide	hid
drive	drove	hold	held
hurt	hurt	shake	shook
keep	kept	shine	shone (shined)
know	knew	sing	sang
lay	laid	sit	sat
lead	led	sleep	slept
leave	left	speak	spoke
let	let	spend	spent
lie	lay	split	split
lose	lost	spring	sprang
make	made	stand	stood
mean	meant	steal	stole
meet	met	stink	stank
pay	paid	swim	swam
put	put	take	took
quit	quit	teach	taught
read	read	tear	tore
ride	rode	tell	told
rise	rose	think	thought
run	ran	throw	threw
say	said	understand	understood
see	saw	wake	woke (waked)
seek	sought	wear	wore
sell	sold	win	won
send	sent	write	wrote

C. A Troublesome Verb in the Past Tense: *To Be*

To be is the only verb that in the past tense has different forms for different persons. Be careful of subject-verb agreement:

Reference Chart— <i>To Be</i> Past Tense				
	Singular		Plural	
	If the subject is	the verb is	If the subject is	the verb is
1st person:	I	was	we	were
2nd person:	you	were	you	were
3rd person:	he she it	was	they	were

- Note that the first person singular form and the third person singular form are the same—*was*.

Be especially careful of agreement when adding *not* to *was* or *were* to make a contraction:

was + not = wasn't
were + not = weren't

D. Troublesome Pairs in the Past Tense: *Can/Could, Will/Would*

Use **could** as the past tense of **can**.

1. Maria is extraordinary because she *can* remember what happened to her when she was three years old.
2. When I was in high school, I *could* do two sit-ups in an hour.

- In sentence 1, *can* shows the action is in the present.
- In sentence 2, *could* shows the action occurred in the past.

Use **would** as the past tense of **will**.

3. Roberta says that she *will* arrive with her camera in ten minutes.
4. Roberta said that she *would* arrive with her camera in ten minutes.

- In sentence 3, *will* points to the future from the present.
- In sentence 4, *would* points to the future from the past.



EXPLORING ONLINE

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/par2_quiz.pl/irregular_quiz.htm.

Type in the irregular verbs; the computer checks you.

<http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/330/grammar/pasted.htm>

Review and quizzes: regular verbs

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CHAPTER 30

The Past Participle

- A:** Past Participles of Regular Verbs
- B:** Past Participles of Irregular Verbs
- C:** Using the Present Perfect Tense
- D:** Using the Past Perfect Tense
- E:** Using the Passive Voice (*To Be* and the Past Participle)
- F:** Using the Past Participle as an Adjective

A. Past Participles of Regular Verbs

The **past participle** is the form of the verb that can be combined with helping verbs like *have* and *has* to make verbs of more than one word:

Present Tense	Past Tense	Helping Verb plus Past Participle
1. They <i>skate</i> .	1. They <i>skated</i> .	1. They <i>have skated</i> .
2. Beth <i>dances</i> .	2. Beth <i>danced</i> .	2. Beth <i>has danced</i> .
3. Frank <i>worries</i> .	3. Frank <i>worried</i> .	3. Frank <i>has worried</i> .

- *Skated, danced, and worried* are all past participles of regular verbs.
- Note that both the *past tense* and the *past participle* of regular verbs end in *-ed* or *-d*.

B. Past Participles of Irregular Verbs

Most verbs that are irregular in the past tense are also irregular in the past participle, as shown in the following chart.

Present Tense	Past Tense	Helping Verb plus Past Participle
1. We <i>sing</i> .	1. We <i>sang</i> .	1. We <i>have sung</i> .
2. Bill <i>writes</i> .	2. Bill <i>wrote</i> .	2. Bill <i>has written</i> .
3. I <i>think</i> .	3. I <i>thought</i> .	3. I <i>have thought</i> .

- Irregular verbs change from present to past to past participle in unusual ways.
- Sung*, *written*, and *thought* are all past participles of irregular verbs.
- Note that the past tense and past participle of *think* are the same—*thought*.

Reference Chart Irregular Verbs, Past and Past Participle		
Simple Form	Past Tense	Past Participle
be	was, were	been
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
cut	cut	cut
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug	dug
dive	dove (dived)	dived
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn

drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
feed	fed	fed
feel	felt	felt
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
fly	flew	flown
forbid	forbade	forbidden
forget	forgot	forgotten
forgive	forgave	forgiven
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	got (gotten)
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hide	hid	hidden
hold	held	held
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
know	knew	known
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
leave	left	left
let	let	let
lie	lay	lain
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
pay	paid	paid
put	put	put
quit	quit	quit
read	read	read
ride	rode	ridden

rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
seek	sought	sought
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
shake	shook	shaken
shine	shone (shined)	shone (shined)
sing	sang	sung
sit	sat	sat
sleep	slept	slept
speak	spoke	spoken
spend	spent	spent
split	split	split
spring	sprang	sprung
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
stink	stank	stunk
swim	swam	swum
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
understand	understood	understood
wake	woke (waked)	woken (waked)
wear	wore	worn
win	won	won
write	wrote	written

C. Using the Present Perfect Tense

The **present perfect tense** is composed of the present tense of *to have* plus the past participle. The present perfect tense shows that an action has begun in the past and is continuing into the present.

1. Past tense: Beatrice *taught* English for ten years.
2. Present perfect tense: Beatrice *has taught* English for ten years.

- In sentence 1, Beatrice *taught* English in the past, but she no longer teaches it. Note the use of the simple past tense, *taught*.
- In sentence 2, Beatrice *has taught* for ten years and is still teaching English *now*. *Has taught* implies that the action is continuing.

D. Using the Past Perfect Tense

The **past perfect tense** is composed of the past tense of *to have* plus the past participle. The past perfect tense shows that an action occurred further back in the past than other past action.

1. Past tense: Rhonda *left* for the movies.
2. Past perfect tense: Rhonda *had already left* for the movies by the time we *arrived*.

- In sentence 1, *left* is the simple past.
- In sentence 2, the past perfect *had left* shows that this action occurred even before another action in the past, *arrived*.

E. Using the Passive Voice (*To Be* and the Past Participle)

The **passive voice** is composed of the past participle with some form of *to be* (*am, is, are, was, were, has been, have been, or had been*). In the passive voice, the subject does not act but is *acted upon*.

Compare the passive voice with the active voice in the following pairs of sentences.

1. Passive voice: This newspaper *is written* by journalism students.
2. Active voice: Journalism students *write* this newspaper.
3. Passive voice: My garden *was devoured* by rabbits.
4. Active voice: Rabbits *devoured* my garden.

- In sentence 1, the subject, *this newspaper*, is passive; it is acted upon. In sentence 2, the subject, *students*, is active; it performs the action.
- Note the difference between the passive verb *is written* and the active verb *write*.
- However, both verbs (*is written* and *write*) are in the *present tense*.
- The verbs in sentences 3 and 4 are both in the *past tense*: *was devoured* (passive) and *devoured* (active).

Use the **passive voice sparingly**. Write in the passive voice when you want to emphasize the receiver of the action rather than the doer.

F. Using the Past Participle as an Adjective

The **past participle** form of the verb can be used as an **adjective** after a linking verb:

1. The window *is broken*.

- The adjective *broken* describes the subject *window*.

The **past participle** form of the verb can sometimes be used as an adjective before a noun or a pronoun.

2. This *fried* chicken tastes wonderful.

- The adjective *fried* describes the noun *chicken*.



EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://itech.pjc.edu/writinglab/vbcross.htm>

This crossword puzzle will test your past tense and past participles.

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/final-ed_option.htm

To add or not to add *-ed*? This one is tricky; test yourself.

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CHAPTER 31

Nouns

- A:** Defining Singular and Plural
- B:** Signal Words: Singular and Plural
- C:** Signal Words with *of*

A. Defining Singular and Plural

Nouns are words that refer to people, places, or things. They can be either singular or plural. **Singular** means one. **Plural** means more than one.

Singular	Plural
the glass	glasses
a lamp	lamps
a lesson	lessons

- As you can see, nouns usually add *-s* or *-es* to form the plural.

Some nouns form their plurals in other ways. Here are a few examples:

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
child	children	medium	media
crisis	crises	memorandum	memoranda (memorandums)
criterion	criteria	phenomenon	phenomena
foot	feet	syllabus	syllabi
goose	geese	tooth	teeth
man	men	woman	women

These nouns ending in *-f* or *-fe* change endings to *-ves* in the plural:

Singular	Plural
half	halves
knife	knives
life	lives
scarf	scarves
shelf	shelves
wife	wives
wolf	wolves

Hyphenated nouns form plurals by adding *-s* or *-es* to the main word:

Singular	Plural
brother-in-law	brothers-in-law
maid-of-honor	maids-of-honor
master-at-arms	masters-at-arms

Other nouns do not change at all to form the plural; here are a few examples:

Singular	Plural
deer	deer
equipment	equipment
fish	fish
merchandise	merchandise

If you are unsure about the plural of a noun, check a dictionary. For example, if you look up the noun *woman* in the dictionary, you may see an entry like this:

woman, women

The first word listed, *woman*, is the singular form of the noun; the second word, *women*, is the plural.

Some dictionaries list the plural form of a noun only if the plural is unusual. If no plural is listed, that noun probably adds *-s* or *-es*.^{*} *Remember:* Do not add an *-s* to words that form plurals by changing an internal letter. For example, the plural of *man* is *men*, not *mens*; the plural of *woman* is *women*, not *womens*; the plural of *foot* is *feet*, not *feets*.

B. Signal Words: Singular and Plural

A **signal word** tells you whether a singular or a plural noun usually follows. These signal words tell you that a singular noun usually follows:

Signal Words	
a(n) a single another each every one	} house

^{*} For more work on spelling plurals, see Chapter 39, “Spelling,” Part H.

These signal words tell you that a plural noun usually follows:

Signal Words	
all both few many most several some two (or more) various	} houses

C. Signal Words with *of*

Many signal words are followed by *of . . .* or *of the . . .* Usually, these signal words are followed by a **plural** noun (or a collective noun) because they really refer to one or more from a larger group.

one of the each of the many of the a few of the lots of the	} } } } }	pictures is . . . pictures are . . .
---	-----------------------	---

- *Be careful:* The signal words *one of the* and *each of the* are followed by a **plural** noun, but the verb is **singular** because only the signal word (*one* or *each*) is the real subject.*

One of the coats is on sale.
Each of the flowers smells sweet.

* For more work on this type of construction, see Chapter 28, "Present Tense (Agreement)," Part C.



EXPLORING ONLINE

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/cross/plurals_gap.htm

Interactive noun plurals quiz: test yourself!

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/final-s_option.htm

Do you know when to add -s to nouns and verbs? Test yourself.

http://www.grammar-quizzes.com/agr_countnounprac2.html

ESL writers, try this interactive noun exercise.

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CHAPTER 32

Pronouns

- A:** Defining Pronouns and Antecedents
- B:** Making Pronouns and Antecedents Agree
- C:** Referring to Antecedents Clearly
- D:** Special Problems of Case
- E:** Using Pronouns with *-self* and *-selves*

A. Defining Pronouns and Antecedents

Pronouns take the place of or refer to nouns, other pronouns, or phrases. The word that the pronoun refers to is called the **antecedent** of the pronoun.

1. *Eric* ordered *baked chicken* because *it* is *his* favorite dish.
2. *Simone and Lee* painted *their* room.
3. *I* like *camping in the woods* because *it* gives *me* a chance to be alone with *my* thoughts.

- In sentence 1, *it* refers to the antecedent *baked chicken*, and *his* refers to the antecedent *Eric*.
- In sentence 2, *their* refers to the plural antecedent *Simone and Lee*.
- In sentence 3, *it* refers to the antecedent *camping in the woods*. This antecedent is a whole phrase. *Me* and *my* refer to the pronoun antecedent *I*.

B. Making Pronouns and Antecedents Agree

A pronoun must *agree* with its antecedent in number and person.*

1. When *Tom* couldn't find *his* pen, *he* asked to borrow mine.
2. The three *sisters* wanted to start *their* own business.

- In sentence 1, *Tom* is the antecedent of *his* and *he*. Since *Tom* is singular and masculine, the pronouns referring to *Tom* are also singular and masculine.
- In sentence 2, *sisters* is the antecedent of *their*. Since *sisters* is plural, the pronoun referring to *sisters* must also be plural.

As you can see from these examples, making pronouns agree with their antecedents is usually easy. However, three special cases can be tricky.

1. Indefinite Pronouns

anybody
anyone
everybody
everyone
nobody
no one
one
somebody
someone

Each of these words is **singular**. Any pronoun that refers to one of them must also be singular: *he, him, his, she, or her*.

3. *Anyone* can quit smoking if *he* or *she* wants to.
4. *Everybody* should do *his* or *her* best to keep the reception area uncluttered.

- *Anyone* and *everybody* require the singular pronouns *he, she, his, and her*.

* For more work on pronoun agreement, see Chapter 21, "Revising for Consistency and Parallelism," Part B.

In the past, writers used *he* or *him* to refer to both men and women. Now, however, many writers use *he* or *she*, *his* or *her*, or *him* or *her*. Of course, if *everyone* or *someone* is a woman, use *she* or *her*; if *everyone* or *someone* is a man, use *he* or *him*. For example:

5. *Someone* left *her* new dress in a bag on the sofa.
6. *Everyone* is wearing *his* new tie.

2. Special Singular Antecedents

each (of) . . .
 either (of) . . .
 neither (of) . . .
 every one (of) . . .
 one (of) . . .



Each of these constructions is **singular**. Any pronoun that refers to one of them must also be singular.*

7. *Neither* of the two men paid for *his* ticket to the wrestling match.
8. *Each* of the houses has *its* own special charm.

- The subject of sentence 7 is the singular *neither*, not *men*; therefore, the singular masculine pronoun *his* is required.
- The subject of sentence 8 is the singular *each*, not the plural *houses*; therefore, the singular pronoun *its* is required.

3. Collective Nouns

Collective nouns represent a group of people but are usually considered **singular**. They usually take singular pronouns.

9. The *jury* reached *its* decision in three hours.
10. The debating *team* is well known for *its* fighting spirit.

* For more work on prepositional phrases, see Chapter 25, “The Simple Sentence,” Part B.

- In sentence 9, *jury* is a collective noun. Although it has several members, the jury acts as a unit—as one. Therefore, the antecedent *jury* takes the singular pronoun *its*.
- In sentence 10, why does the collective noun *team* take the singular pronoun *its*?

Here is a partial list of collective nouns:

Common Collective Nouns		
class	family	panel
college	flock	school
committee	government	society
company	group	team
faculty	jury	tribe

C. Referring to Antecedents Clearly

A pronoun must refer *clearly* to its antecedent. Avoid vague, repetitious, or ambiguous pronoun reference.

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. Vague pronoun: | At the box office, they said that tickets were no longer available. |
| 2. Revised: | { The cashier at the box office said . . .
or |
| 3. Revised: | |

- In sentence 1, who is *they*? *They* does not clearly refer to an antecedent.
- In sentence 2, *the cashier* replaces *they*.
- In sentence 3, the problem is avoided by a change of language.*

* For more work on using exact language, see Chapter 23, “Revising for Language Awareness,” Part A.

4. Repetitious pronoun In the article, *it* says that Tyrone was a boxer.
5. Revised: { The article says that . . .
6. Revised: { *or*
- { It says that . . .

- In sentence 4, *it* merely repeats *article*, the antecedent preceding it.
- Use either the pronoun or its antecedent, but not both.

7. Ambiguous pronoun: Mr. Tedesco told his son that *his* car had a flat tire.
8. Revised: Mr. Tedesco told his son that the younger man's car had a flat tire.
9. Revised: Mr. Tedesco told his son Paul that Paul's car had a flat tire.

- In sentence 7, *his* could refer either to Mr. Tedesco or to his son.

D. Special Problems of Case

Personal pronouns take different forms depending on how they are used in a sentence. Pronouns can be **subjects**, **objects**, or **possessives**.

Pronouns used as **subjects** are in the **subjective case**:

1. *He* and *I* go snowboarding together.
2. The peaches were so ripe that *they* fell from the trees.

- *He*, *I*, and *they* are in the subjective case.

Pronouns that are **objects of verbs** or **prepositions** are in the **objective case**. Pronouns that are **subjects of infinitives** are also in the **objective case**:

3. A sudden downpour soaked *her*. (object of verb)
4. Please give this card to *him*. (object of preposition)
5. We want *them* to leave right now. (subject of infinitive)*

● *Her, him, and them* are in the objective case.

Pronouns that **show ownership** are in the **possessive case**:

6. The carpenters left *their* tools on the windowsill.
7. This flower has lost *its* brilliant color.

● *Their and its* are in the possessive case.

Pronoun Case Chart			
Singular	Subjective	Objective	Possessive
1st person	I	me	my (mine)
2nd person	you	you	your (yours)
3rd person	he	him	his (his)
	she	her	her (hers)
	it	it	its (its)
	who	whom	whose
	whoever	whomever	
Plural	Subjective	Objective	Possessive
1st person	we	us	our (ours)
2nd person	you	you	your (yours)
3rd person	they	them	their (theirs)

Using the correct case is usually fairly simple, but three problems require special care.

* An infinitive is *to + the simple form of a verb* (to purchase, to study).

1. Case in Compound Constructions

A **compound construction** consists of two nouns, two pronouns, or a noun and a pronoun joined by *and*. Make sure that the pronouns in a compound construction are in the correct case.

8. *Serge and I* went to the pool together.
9. Between *you and me*, this party is a bore.

- In sentence 8, *Serge and I* are subjects.
- In sentence 9, *you and me* are objects of the preposition *between*.

Never use *myself* as a substitute for either *I* or *me* in compound constructions.

2. Case in Comparisons

Pronouns that complete **comparisons** may be in the **subjective**, **objective**, or **possessive** case:

10. His son is as stubborn as *he*. (subjective)
11. The cutbacks will affect you more than *me*. (objective)
12. This essay is better organized than *mine*. (possessive)

To decide on the correct pronoun, simply complete the comparison mentally and then choose the pronoun that naturally follows:

13. She trusts him more than I . . . (trust him).
14. She trusts him more than . . . (she trusts) . . . me.
15. Orlo's dog is as energetic as theirs . . . (is).

- Note that in sentences 13 and 14, the case of the pronoun in the comparison can change the meaning of the entire sentence.

3. Use of *Who* (or *Whoever*) and *Whom* (or *Whomever*)

Who and **whoever** are in the **subjective** case. **Whom** and **whomever** are in the **objective** case.

16. *Who* is at the door?
17. For *whom* is that gift?
18. *Whom* is that gift for?

- In sentence 16, *who* is the subject.
- The same question is written two ways in sentences 17 and 18. In both, *whom* is the object of the preposition *for*.

Sometimes, deciding on who or whom can be tricky:

19. I will give the raise to *whoever* deserves it.
20. Give it to *whomever* you like.

- In sentence 19, *whoever* is the subject in the clause *whoever deserves it*.
- In sentence 20, *whomever* is the object in the clause *whomever you like*.

If you have trouble deciding on who or whom, change the sentence to eliminate the problem.

21. I prefer working with people *whom* I don't know as friends.
or
I prefer working with people I don't know as friends.

E. Using Pronouns with *-self* and *-selves*

Pronouns with *-self* or *-selves* can be used in two ways—as reflexives or as intensives. A reflexive pronoun indicates that someone did something to himself or herself:

1. My daughter Miriam felt very grown up when she learned to dress *herself*.

- In sentence 1, Miriam did something to *herself*; she *dressed herself*.

An intensive pronoun emphasizes the noun or pronoun it refers to:

2. Anthony *himself* was surprised at how relaxed he felt during the interview.

- In sentence 2, *himself* emphasizes that Anthony—much to his surprise—was not nervous at the interview.

The following chart will help you choose the correct reflexive or intensive pronoun.

Antecedent	Reflexive or Intensive Pronoun	
Singular	I	myself
	you	yourself
	he	himself
	she	herself
	it	itself
Plural	we	ourselves
	you	yourselves
	they	themselves

Note that in the plural *-self* is changed to *-selves*.

- **Be careful:** Do not use reflexives or intensives as substitutes for the subject of a sentence.

Incorrect: Harry and *myself* will be there on time.

Correct: Harry and *I* will be there on time.



EXPLORING ONLINE

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/pronouns_add1.htm

Interactive pronoun quiz; click for pronoun review.

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/vm/pronouns.html>

Pronoun quiz: especially helpful for ESL writers

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CHAPTER 33

Prepositions

A: Working with Prepositional Phrases

B: Prepositions in Common Expressions

A. Working with Prepositional Phrases

Prepositions are words like *about*, *at*, *behind*, *into*, *of*, *on*, and *with*.^{*} They are followed by a noun or a pronoun, which is called the **object** of the preposition. The preposition and its object are called a **prepositional phrase**.

1. Ms. Fairworth hurried *to the computer lab*.
2. Students *with a 3.5 grade average* will receive a special award.
3. Traffic *at this corner* is dangerously heavy.

- In sentence 1, the prepositional phrase *to the computer lab* explains where Ms. Fairworth hurried.
- In sentence 2, the prepositional phrase *with a 3.5 grade average* describes which students will receive a special award.
- Which is the prepositional phrase in sentence 3 and what word does it describe?

^{*} For more work on prepositions, see Chapter 25, “The Simple Sentence,” Part B.

In/On for Time

Two prepositions often confused are *in* and *on*. Use *in* before months not followed by a specific date, before seasons, and before years that do not include specific dates.

1. *In March*, the skating rink will finally open for business.
2. Rona expects to pay off her car *in 2008*.

Use *on* before days of the week, before holidays, and before months if a date follows.

3. *On Sunday*, the Kingston family spent the day at the beach.
4. *On January 6*, Bernard left for a month of mountain climbing.

In/On for Place

In means *inside* a place.

1. Tonia put her DVD player *in the bedroom*.
2. Many country groups got their start *in Nashville*.

On means *on top of* or *at a particular place*.

3. That mess *on your desk* needs to be cleared off.
4. Pizza Palace will be opening a new parlor *on Highland Avenue*.

B. Prepositions in Common Expressions

Prepositions are often combined with other words to form fixed expressions. Determining the correct preposition in these expressions can sometimes be confusing. Following is a list of some troublesome expressions with prepositions. Consult a dictionary if you need help with others.

Expressions with Prepositions

Expression

according to
 acquainted with
 addicted to
 afraid of
 agree on (a plan)
 agree to (something or
 another's proposal)
 angry about or at (a thing)
 angry with (a person)
 apply for (a position)
 approve of
 argue about (an issue)
 argue with (a person)
 capable of

 complain about (a situation)

 complain to (a person)

 comply with

 consist of

 contrast with

 correspond with (write)

 deal with
 depend on

 different from
 differ from (something)

 differ with (a person)

 displeased with

Example

According to the directions, this flap fits here.
 Tom became *acquainted with* his classmates.
 He is *addicted to* soap operas.
 Tanya is *afraid of* flying.
 Can we *agree on* our next step?
 Roberta *agreed to* her secretary's request for a raise.
 Jake seemed *angry about* his meager bonus.
 Sonia couldn't stay *angry with* Felipe.
 By accident, the twins *applied for* the same job.
 Do you *approve of* bilingual education?
 I hate *arguing about* money.
 Edna *argues with* everyone about everything.
 Mario is *capable of* accomplishing anything he attempts.
 Patients *complained about* the long wait to see the dentist.
 Knee-deep in snow, Jed vowed to *complain to* a maintenance person.
 Each contestant must *comply with* contest regulations.
 This article *consists of* nothing but false accusations and half-truths.
 The light blue shirt *contrasts sharply with* the dark brown tie.
 We *corresponded with* her for two months before we met.
 Ron *deals well with* temporary setbacks.
 Miriam can be *depended on* to say the embarrassing thing.
 Children are often *different from* their parents.
 A DVD player *differs from* a VCR in many ways.
 Kathleen *differs with* you on the gun control issue.
 Ms. Withers was *displeased with* her doctor's advice to eat less fat.

fond of	Ed is <i>fond of</i> his pet tarantula.
grateful for	Be <i>grateful for</i> having so many good friends.
grateful to (someone)	The team was <i>grateful to</i> the coach for his inspiration and confidence.
identical to	Scott's ideas are often <i>identical to</i> mine.
inferior to	Saturday's performance was <i>inferior to</i> the one I saw last week.
in search of	I hate to go <i>in search of</i> change at the last moment before the toll.
interested in	Willa is <i>interested in</i> results, not excuses.
interfere with	That dripping faucet <i>interferes with</i> my concentration.
object to	Martin <i>objected to</i> the judge's comment.
protect against	This heavy wool scarf will <i>protect</i> your throat <i>against</i> the cold.
reason with	It's hard to <i>reason with</i> an angry person.
rely on	If Toni made that promise, you can <i>rely on</i> it.
reply to	He wrote twice, but the president did not <i>reply to</i> his letters.
responsible for	Kit is <i>responsible for</i> making two copies of each document.
sensitive to	Professor Godfried is <i>sensitive to</i> his students' concerns.
shocked at	We were <i>shocked at</i> the graphic violence in that PG-rated film.
similar to	Some poisonous mushrooms appear quite <i>similar to</i> the harmless kind.
speak with (someone)	Geraldine will <i>speak with</i> her supervisor about a raise.
specialize in	This disc jockey <i>specializes in</i> jazz of the 1920s and the 1930s.
succeed in	Oscar <i>succeeded in</i> painting the roof in less than five hours.
superior to	It's clear that the remake is <i>superior to</i> the original.
take advantage of	Celia <i>took advantage of</i> the snow day to visit the science museum.
worry about	Never <i>worry about</i> more than one problem at a time.



EXPLORING ONLINE

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/preposition_quiz1.htm

Graded preposition quiz

<http://a4esl.org/q/f/z/zz36mas.htm>

Interactive quiz: swim with the manatees as you practice prepositions!

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CHAPTER 34

Adjectives and Adverbs

- A:** Defining and Using Adjectives and Adverbs
- B:** The Comparative and the Superlative
- C:** A Troublesome Pair: Good/Well

A. Defining and Using Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives and **adverbs** are two kinds of descriptive words. **Adjectives** describe or modify nouns or pronouns. They explain what kind, which one, or how many.

1. A *black* cat slept on the piano.
2. We felt *cheerful*.
3. *Three* windows in the basement need to be replaced.

- The adjective *black* describes the noun *cat*. It tells what kind of cat, a *black* one.
- The adjective *cheerful* describes the pronoun *we*. It tells what kind of mood we were in, *cheerful*.
- The adjective *three* describes the noun *windows*. It tells how many windows, *three*.

Adverbs describe or modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. They tell how, in what manner, when, where, and to what extent.

4. Joe dances *gracefully*.
5. *Yesterday* Robert left for a weekend of sky diving.
6. Brigit is *extremely* tall.
7. He travels *very* rapidly on that skateboard.

- The adverb *gracefully* describes the verb *dances*. It tells how Joe dances, *gracefully*.
- The adverb *yesterday* describes the verb *left*. It tells when Robert left, *yesterday*.
- The adverb *extremely* describes the adjective *tall*. It tells how tall (to what extent), *extremely* tall.
- The adverb *very* describes the adverb *rapidly*, which describes the verb *travels*. It tells how rapidly he travels, *very* rapidly.

Many adjectives can be changed into adverbs by adding an *-ly* ending. For example, *glad* becomes *gladly*, *hopeful* becomes *hopefully*, *awkward* becomes *awkwardly*.

Note the pairs on this list; they are easily confused:

Adjectives	Adverbs
awful	awfully
bad	badly
poor	poorly
quick	quickly
quiet	quietly
real	really
sure	surely

8. The fish tastes *bad*.
9. It was *badly* prepared.

- In sentence 8, the adjective *bad* describes the noun *fish*.
- In sentence 9, the adverb *badly* describes the verb *was prepared*.

B. The Comparative and the Superlative

The **comparative** of an adjective or adverb compares two persons or things:

1. Ben is *more creative* than Robert.

2. Marcia runs *faster* than the coach.

- In sentence 1, Ben is being compared with Robert.
- In sentence 2, Marcia is being compared with the coach.

The **superlative** of an adjective or adverb compares three or more persons or things:

3. Sancho is the *tallest* of the three brothers.

4. Marion is the *most intelligent* student in the class.

- In sentence 3, Sancho is being compared with the other two brothers.
- In sentence 4, Marion is being compared with all the other students in the class.

Adjectives and adverbs of one syllable usually form the **comparative** by adding *-er*. They form the **superlative** by using *-est*.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
fast	faster	fastest
smart	smarter	smartest
tall	taller	tallest

Adjectives and adverbs of more than one syllable usually form the **comparative** by using *more*. They form the **superlative** by using *most*.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
beautiful	<i>more</i> beautiful	<i>most</i> beautiful
brittle	<i>more</i> brittle	<i>most</i> brittle
serious	<i>more</i> serious	<i>most</i> serious

Note, however, that adjectives that end in *-y* (like *happy*, *lazy*, and *sunny*) change the *-y* to *-i* and add *-er* and *-est*.

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
happy	happier	happiest
lazy	lazier	laziest
sunny	sunnier	sunniest

C. A Troublesome Pair: Good/Well

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
Adverb	Comparative	Superlative
well	better	best
badly	worse	worst

Be especially careful not to confuse the adjective **good** with the adverb **well**:

1. Jessie is a *good* writer.
2. She writes *well*.

- *Good* is an **adjective** modifying *writer*.
- *Well* is an **adverb** modifying *writes*.



EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://a4esl.org/q/f/z/zz60fck.htm>

Choose the correct adjective or adverb, and check your answers.

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/9901/gc-advadj.html>

Interactive practice: comparative and superlative forms

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/adjectives.htm>

Everything you wanted to know about adjectives

Basic Writing CourseMate



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CHAPTER 35

The Apostrophe

A: The Apostrophe For Contractions

B: The Apostrophe For Ownership

C: Special Uses of the Apostrophe

A. The Apostrophe For Contractions

Use the **apostrophe** in a **contraction** to show that letters have been omitted.

1. *I'll* buy that coat if it goes on sale.
2. At nine *o'clock* sharp, the store opens.

- *I'll*, a contraction, is a combination of *I* and *will*. *Wi* is omitted.
- The contraction *o'clock* is the shortened form of *of the clock*.

Be especially careful in writing contractions that contain pronouns:

Common Contractions

I + am = I'm	it + is or has = it's
I + have = I've	we + are = we're
I + will or shall = I'll	let + us = let's
you + have = you've	you + are = you're
you + will or shall = you'll	they + are = they're
he + will or shall = he'll	they + have = they've
she + is or has = she's	who + is or has = who's

B. The Apostrophe For Ownership

Use the apostrophe to show ownership: Add an 's if a noun or an indefinite pronoun (like *someone*, *anybody*, and so on) does not already end in -s:

1. I cannot find my *friend's* book bag.
2. *Everyone's* right to privacy should be respected.
3. *John and Julio's* apartment has striped wallpaper.
4. The *children's* clothes are covered with mud.

- The *friend* owns the book bag.
- *Everyone* owns the right to privacy.
- Both John and Julio own one apartment. The apostrophe follows the compound subject *John and Julio*.
- The *children* own the clothes.

Add only an apostrophe to show ownership if the word already ends in -s:*

5. My *aunts'* houses are filled with antiques.
6. The *knight's'* table was round.
7. Mr. *Jonas'* company manufactures sporting goods and uniforms.

- My *aunts* (at least two of them) own the houses.
- The *knight's* (at least two) own the table.
- *Aunts* and *knight's* already end in -s, so only an apostrophe is added.
- Mr. *Jonas* owns the company. Mr. *Jonas* already ends in -s, so only an apostrophe is added.

Note that *possessive pronouns never take an apostrophe*: *his, hers, theirs, ours, yours, its*:

8. *His* car gets twenty miles to the gallon, but *hers* gets only ten.
9. That computer is *theirs*; *ours* is coming soon.

C. Special Uses of the Apostrophe

Use an apostrophe in certain expressions of time:

1. I desperately need a *week's* vacation.

- Although the week does not own a vacation, it is a vacation of a week—a *week's vacation*.

* Some writers add an -'s to one-syllable proper names that end in -s: James's bike.

Use an apostrophe to pluralize lowercase letters, words, and numbers that normally do not have plurals:

2. Be careful to cross your *t*'s.
3. Your *8*'s look like *f*'s.
4. Don't use so many *but*'s in your writing.

Use an apostrophe to show omitted numbers:

5. The class of '72 held its annual reunion last week.



EXPLORING ONLINE

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/apostrophe_quiz2.htm

Graded practice: Apostrophe or no apostrophe? This is the question.

<http://www.towson.edu/ows/exerciseapos.htm>

Apostrophe practice makes perfect.

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CHAPTER 36

The Comma

- A:** Commas For Items in a Series
- B:** Commas with Introductory Phrases, Transitional Expressions, and Parentheticals
- C:** Commas For Appositives
- D:** Commas with Nonrestrictive and Restrictive Clauses
- E:** Commas For Dates and Addresses
- F:** Minor Uses of the Comma

A. Commas For Items in a Series

Use commas to separate the items in a series:*

1. You need *bolts, nuts, and screws*.
2. I will be happy to *read your poem, comment on it, and return it to you*.
3. *Mary paints pictures, Robert plays the trumpet, but Sam just sits and dreams.*

* For work on parallelism, see Chapter 21, “Revising for Consistency and Parallelism,” Part C.

Do not use commas when all three items are joined by *and* or *or*:

4. I enjoy *biking* and *skating* and *swimming*.

B. Commas with Introductory Phrases, Transitional Expressions, and Parentheticals

Use a comma after most introductory phrases of more than two words:*

1. *By four in the afternoon*, everybody wanted to go home.
2. *After the game on Saturday*, we all went dancing.

Use commas to set off transitional expressions:

3. Ferns, *for example*, need less sunlight than flowering plants.
4. Instructors, *on the other hand*, receive a lower salary than assistant professors.

Use commas to set off parenthetical elements:

5. *By the way*, where is the judge's umbrella?
6. Nobody, *it seems*, wants to eat the nut burgers.

* For more work on introductory phrases, see Chapter 22, "Revising for Sentence Variety," Part C.

- *By the way* and *it seems* are called parenthetical expressions because they appear to be asides, words not really crucial to the meaning of the sentence. They could almost appear in parentheses: (*By the way*) *where is the judge's umbrella?*

Other common parenthetical expressions are *after all*, *actually*, *as a matter of fact*, and *to tell the truth*.

C. Commas For Appositives

Use commas to set off appositives:*

1. Yoko, *our new classmate*, is our best fielder.
2. *A humorous and charming man*, he was a great hit with my parents.
3. This is her favorite food, *ketchup sandwiches*.

- Appositive phrases like *our new classmate*, *a humorous and charming man*, and *ketchup sandwiches* rename or describe nouns and pronouns—Yoko, he, food.

4. Hip hop mogul Simmons launched Def Jam Recordings.
5. His wife, Kimora, succeeded with her company Baby Phat.

- A one-word appositive is not set off by commas when it is essential to the meaning of the sentence. Without the appositive *Simmons*, we do not know who launched Def Jam Recordings.
- A one-word appositive is set off by commas when it is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. The name *Kimora* does not affect the meaning of the sentence.

* For more work on appositives, see Chapter 22, “Revising for Sentence Variety,” Part D.

D. Commas with Nonrestrictive and Restrictive Clauses

A **relative clause** is a clause that begins with *who*, *which*, or *that* and modifies a noun or pronoun. There are two kinds of relative clauses: **nonrestrictive** and **restrictive**.*

A **nonrestrictive relative clause** is not essential to the meaning of the sentence:

1. Raj, *who is a part-time aviator*, loves to tinker with machines of all kinds.

- *Who is a part-time aviator* is a relative clause describing *Raj*. It is a nonrestrictive relative clause because it is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. The point is that *Raj loves to tinker with machines of all kinds*.
- **Commas** set off the nonrestrictive relative clause.

A **restrictive relative clause** is essential to the meaning of the sentence:

2. People *who do their work efficiently* make good students.

- *Who do their work efficiently* is a relative clause describing *people*. It is a restrictive relative clause because it is *essential* to the meaning of the sentence. Without it, sentence 2 would read, *People make good students*. But the point is that certain people make good students—*those who do their work efficiently*.
- Restrictive relative clauses do *not* require commas.

E. Commas For Dates and Addresses

Use commas to separate the elements of an address. Note, however, that no punctuation is required between the state and ZIP code if the ZIP code is included.

* For more work on nonrestrictive and restrictive clauses, see Chapter 22, “Revising for Sentence Variety,” Part D.

1. Please send the books to *300 West Road, Stamford, CT 06860*.
2. We moved from *1015 Allen Circle, Morristown, New Jersey*, to *Farland Lane, Dubuque, Iowa*.

Use commas to separate the elements of a date:

3. The sociologists arrived in Tibet on *Monday, January 18, 2009*, and planned to stay for two years.
4. John DeLeon arrived *from Baltimore in January* and will be our new shortstop this season.

Do not use a comma with a single-word address or date preceded by a preposition:

5. I expect to have completed my B.A. in physical education by June 2012.

F. Minor Uses of the Comma

Use a comma after answering a question with *yes* or *no*:

1. *No*, I'm not sure about that answer.

Use a comma when addressing someone directly and specifically naming the person spoken to:

2. *Alicia*, where did you put my law books?

Use a comma after interjections like *ah*, *oh*, and so on:

3. *Ah*, these coconuts are delicious.

Use a comma to contrast:

4. Harold, *not Roy*, is my scuba-diving partner.*



EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/607/01/>

Quick rules for commas. Review.

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/commas_fillin.htm

Interactive quiz: Where have all the commas gone?

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* For help using commas with coordinating and subordinating conjunctions—and help avoiding run-ons, commas splices, and fragments—see Chapters 26 and 27.



CHAPTER 37

Mechanics

- A:** Capitalization
- B:** Titles
- C:** Direct Quotations
- D:** Minor Marks of Punctuation

A. Capitalization

Always capitalize the following: names, nationalities, religions, races, languages, countries, cities, months, days of the week, documents, organizations, and holidays.

1. The *Protestant* church on the corner will offer *Spanish* and *English* courses starting *Thursday, June 3*.

Capitalize the following *only* when they are used as part of a proper noun: *streets, buildings, historical events, titles, and family relationships*.

2. We saw *Professor Rodriguez* at *Silver Hall*, where he was delivering a talk on the *Spanish Civil War*.

Do not capitalize these same words when they are used as common nouns:

3. We saw the professor at the lecture hall, where he was delivering a talk on a civil war.

Capitalize geographic locations but not directions:

4. The tourists went to the *South* for their winter vacation.
5. Go south on this boulevard for three miles.

Capitalize academic subjects only if they refer to a specific named and numbered course:

6. Have you ever studied psychology?
7. Last semester, I took *Psychology* 101.

B. Titles

Capitalize words of a title except short prepositions, short conjunctions, and the articles *the*, *an*, and *a*. Always capitalize the first and last words of the title, no matter what they are:

1. I liked The Invisible Man but found The House on the River slow reading.

Underline the titles of long works: *books,* newspapers and magazines, television shows, plays, record albums, operas, and films.*

* The titles and parts of sacred books are not underlined and are not set off by quotation marks: Job 5:6, Koran 1:14, and so on.

Put quotation marks around shorter works or parts of longer ones: *articles, short stories, poems, songs, scenes from plays*, and *chapters from full-length books*.

2. Have you read Hemingway's "The Killers" yet?
3. We are assigned "The Money Market" in Essentials of Economics for homework in my marketing course.

- "The Killers" is a short story.
- "The Money Market" is a chapter in the full-length book Essentials of Economics.

Do not underline or use quotation marks around the titles of your own papers.

C. Direct Quotations

1. He said, "These are the best seats in the house."

- The direct quotation is preceded by a comma or a colon.
- The first letter of the direct quotation is capitalized.
- Periods always go *inside* the quotation marks.

2. He asked, "Where is my laptop?"
3. Stewart yelled, "I don't like beans!"

- Question marks and exclamation points go inside the quotation marks if they are part of the direct words of the speaker.

4. "That was meant for the company," he said, "but if you wish, you may have it."
5. "The trees look magnificent!" she exclaimed. "It would be fun to climb them all."

- In sentence 4, the quotation is one single sentence interrupted by *he said*. Therefore, a comma is used after *he said*, and *but* is not capitalized.
- In sentence 5, the quotation consists of two different sentences. Thus a period follows *exclaimed*, and the second sentence of the quotation begins with a capital letter.

D. Minor Marks of Punctuation

1. The Colon

Use a colon to show that a direct quotation will follow or to introduce a list:*

1. This is the opening line of his essay: “The airplane is humanity’s greatest invention.”
2. There are four things I can’t resist in warm weather: fresh mangoes, a sandy beach, cold drinks, and a hammock.

Use a colon to separate the chapter and verse in a reference to the Bible or to separate the hour and minute:

3. This quotation comes from Genesis 1:1.
4. It is now exactly 4:15 P.M.

2. Parentheses

Use parentheses to enclose a phrase or word that is not essential to the meaning of the sentence:

5. Herpetology (the study of snakes) is a fascinating area of zoology.
6. She left her hometown (Plunkville) to go to the big city (Fairmount) in search of success.

* Avoid using a colon after any form of the verb *to be* or after a preposition.

3. The Dash

Use a dash to emphasize a portion of a sentence or to interrupt the sentence with an added element:

7. This is the right method—the only one—so we are stuck with it.

The colon, parentheses, and the dash should be used sparingly.



EXPLORING ONLINE

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/par_numberless_quiz.pl/caps_quiz.htm

Graded capitalization practice

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/punct_fillin.htm

Mixed practice: test your skill with many marks of punctuation.

Basic Writing CourseMate



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CHAPTER 38

Putting Your Proofreading Skills to Work

 After you have written a paragraph or an essay—once you have prewritten, drafted, and revised—you are ready for the next step—**proofreading**.

Proofreading, which takes place at the sentence level, means applying what you have learned in Units 5 and 6. When you proofread, carefully check each sentence for correct grammar, punctuation, and capitalization. Is every sentence complete? Do all verbs agree with their subjects? Are there any comma errors? Do all proper nouns begin with a capital letter?

Proofreading exercises that will help you practice your proofreading skills can be found in the *Workbook* that accompanies this text, or in the *Basic Writing CourseMate*.

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/proofread.html>

Proofreading instruction and practice

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Interactive grammar and writing help. Explore, learn, review!

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/561/01>

Overview of proofreading, with useful tips.

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.



Unit 7

Strengthening Your Spelling

CHAPTER 39

Spelling

CHAPTER 40

Look-Alikes/Sound-Alikes



CHAPTER 39

Spelling

- A:** Suggestions For Improving Your Spelling
- B:** Computer Spell Checkers
- C:** Spotting Vowels and Consonants
- D:** Doubling the Final Consonant (in Words of One Syllable)
- E:** Doubling the Final Consonant (in Words of More Than One Syllable)
- F:** Dropping or Keeping the Final *E*
- G:** Changing or Keeping the Final *Y*
- H:** Adding *-S* or *-ES*
- I:** Choosing *IE* or *EI*
- J:** Spelling Lists

A. Suggestions For Improving Your Spelling

Accurate spelling is an important ingredient of good writing. No matter how interesting your ideas are, if your spelling is poor, your writing will not be effective.

Some Tips for Improving Your Spelling

- **Look closely at the words on the page.** Use any tricks you can to remember the right spelling. For example, “The *a*’s in *separate* are separated by an *r*,” or “*Dessert* has two *s*’s because you want two desserts.”
- **Use a dictionary.** Even professional writers frequently check spelling in a dictionary. As you write, underline the words you are not sure of and look them up when you write your final draft. If locating words in the dictionary is a real problem for you, consider a “poor speller’s dictionary.”
- **Use a spell checker.** If you write on a computer, make a habit of using the spell-check software. See Part B for tips and cautions about spell checkers.
- **Keep a list of the words you misspell.** Look over your list whenever you can and keep it handy as you write.
- **Look over corrected papers for misspelled words (often marked *sp.*).** Add these words to your list. Practice writing each word three or four times.
- **Test yourself.** Use flash cards or have a friend dictate words from your list or from this chapter.
- **Review the basic spelling rules explained in this chapter.** Take time to learn the material; don’t rush through the entire chapter all at once.
- **Study the spelling list on pages 331–332, and test yourself on these words.**
- **Read through Chapter 40, “Look-Alikes/Sound-Alikes,” for commonly confused words (*their, there, and they’re, for instance*).** The practices in that chapter will help you eliminate some common spelling errors from your writing.

B. Computer Spell Checkers

Almost all computer programs are equipped with a spell checker. A spell checker picks up spelling errors and gives you alternatives for correcting them. Get in the habit of using this feature as your first and last proofreading task.

What a spell checker cannot do is think. If you’ve mistyped one word for another—if for *it*, for example—the spell checker cannot bring it to your attention. If you’ve written *then* for *than*, the spell checker cannot help. Proofread your paper *after* using the spell checker. For questions about words that sound the same but are spelled differently, check Chapter 40, “Look-Alikes/Sound-Alikes.” Run spell check again after you’ve made all your corrections. If you’ve introduced a new error, the spell checker will let you know.

C. Spotting Vowels and Consonants

To learn some basic spelling rules, you must know the difference between vowels and consonants.

The **vowels** are *a, e, i, o, and u*.

The **consonants** are *b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, and z*.

The letter *y* can be either a vowel or a consonant, depending on its sound:

daisy	sky
yellow	your

- In both *daisy* and *sky*, *y* is a vowel because it has a vowel sound: an *ee* sound in *daisy* and an *i* sound in *sky*.
- In both *yellow* and *your*, *y* is a consonant because it has the consonant sound of *y*.

D. Doubling the Final Consonant (in Words of One Syllable)

When you add a suffix or an ending that begins with a vowel (like *-ed*, *-ing*, *-er*, *-est*) to a word of one syllable, double the final consonant *if* the last three letters of the word are *consonant-vowel-consonant* or *c-v-c*.

plan + ed = planned
thin + est = thinnest

swim + ing = swimming
light + er = lighter

- *Plan*, *swim*, and *thin* all end in *cvc*; therefore, the final consonants are doubled.
- *Light* does not end in *cvc*; therefore, the final consonant is not doubled.

E. Doubling the Final Consonant (in Words of More Than One Syllable)

When you add a suffix that begins with a vowel to a word of more than one syllable, double the final consonant *if*:

- (1) the last three letters of the word are *cvc*, and
- (2) the accent or stress is on the *last* syllable.

begin + ing = beginning control + ed = controlled

- *Begin* and *control* both end in *cvc*.
- In both words, the stress is on the last syllable: *be-gin'*, *con-trol'*. (Pronounce the words aloud and listen for the correct stress.)
- Therefore, *beginning* and *controlled* double the final consonant.

listen + ing = listening visit + ed = visited

- *Listen* and *visit* both end in *cvc*.
- However, the stress is *not* on the last syllable: *lis'-ten*, *vis'-it*.
- Therefore, *listening* and *visited* **do not** double the final consonant.

F. Dropping or Keeping the Final *E*

When you add a suffix that begins with a vowel (like *-able*, *-ence*, *-ing*), drop the final *e*.

move + ing = moving pure + ity = purity

- *Moving* and *purity* both drop the final *e* because the suffixes *-ing* and *-ity* begin with vowels.

When you add a suffix that begins with a consonant (like *-less*, *-ment*, *-ly*), keep the final *e*.

home + less = homeless advertise + ment = advertisement

- *Homeless* and *advertisement* keep the final *e* because the suffixes *-less* and *-ment* begin with consonants.

Here are some exceptions to memorize:

argument	courageous	knowledgeable	truly
awful	judgment	simply	manageable

G. Changing or Keeping the Final Y

When you add a suffix to a word that ends in *y*, change the *y* to *i* if the letter before the *y* is a consonant.

Keep the final *y* if the letter before the *y* is a vowel.

happy + ness = happiness portray + ed = portrayed

- The *y* in *happiness* is changed to *i* because the letter before the *y* is a consonant, *p*.
- The *y* in *portrayed* is not changed because the letter before it is a vowel, *a*.

However, when you add *-ing* to words ending in *y*, always keep the *y*:

copy + ing = copying delay + ing = delaying

Here are some exceptions to memorize:

day + ly = daily	pay + ed = paid
lay + ed = laid	say + ed = said

H. Adding -S or -ES

Nouns usually take an *-s* or an *-es* ending to form the plural. Verbs take an *-s* or *-es* in the third person singular (*he, she, or it*).

Add *-es* instead of *-s* if a word ends in *ch, sh, ss, x, or z* (the *-es* adds an extra syllable to the word):

box + es = boxes crutch + es = crutches miss + es = misses

Add *-es* instead of *-s* for most words that end in *o*:

do + es = does	hero + es = heroes
echo + es = echoes	tomato + es = tomatoes
go + es = goes	potato + es = potatoes

Here are some exceptions to memorize:

pianos	sopranos
radios	solos

When you change the final *y* to *i* in a word,* add *-es* instead of *-s*:

fry + es = fries marry + es = marries candy + es = candies

I. Choosing *IE* or *EI*

Write *i* before *e*, except after *c* or in an *ay* sound like *neighbor* or *weigh*.

achieve, niece deceive vein

- *Achieve* and *niece* are spelled *ie*.
- *Deceive* is spelled *ei* because of the preceding *c*.
- *Vein* is spelled *ei* because of its *ay* sound.

However, words with a *shen* sound are spelled with an *ie* after the *c*: *ancient*, *conscience*, *efficient*, *sufficient*.

Here are some exceptions to memorize:

either	seize
neither	society
foreign	their
height	weird

J. Spelling Lists

Commonly Misspelled Words

Following is a list of words that are often misspelled. As you can see, they are words that you might use daily in speaking and writing. The trouble spot, the part of each word that is usually spelled incorrectly, has been put in bold type.

* See Part G of this chapter for more on changing or keeping the final *y*.

To help yourself learn these words, you might copy each one twice, making sure to underline the trouble spot, or copy the words on flash cards and have someone test you.

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. across | 15. different | 29. immediately |
| 2. address | 16. disappoint | 30. important |
| 3. answer | 17. disapprove | 31. integration |
| 4. argument | 18. doesn't | 32. intelligent |
| 5. athlete | 19. eighth | 33. interest |
| 6. beginning | 20. embarrass | 34. interfere |
| 7. behavior | 21. environment | 35. jewelry |
| 8. calendar | 22. exaggerate | 36. judgment |
| 9. career | 23. familiar | 37. knowledge |
| 10. conscience | 24. finally | 38. maintain |
| 11. crowded | 25. government | 39. mathematics |
| 12. definite | 26. grammar | 40. meant |
| 13. describe | 27. height | 41. necessary |
| 14. desperate | 28. illegal | 42. nervous |

"First off, there's no 'y' in resume . . ."



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- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 43. occasion | 54. privilege | 65. strength |
| 44. opinion | 55. probably | 66. success |
| 45. optimist | 56. psychology | 67. surprise |
| 46. particular | 57. pursue | 68. taught |
| 47. perform | 58. reference | 69. temperature |
| 48. perhaps | 59. rhythm | 70. thorough |
| 49. personnel | 60. ridiculous | 71. thought |
| 50. possess | 61. separate | 72. tired |
| 51. possible | 62. similar | 73. until |
| 52. prefer | 63. since | 74. weight |
| 53. prejudice | 64. speech | 75. written |

Personal Spelling List

In your notebook, keep a list of words that *you* misspell. Add words to your list from corrected papers and from the exercises in this chapter. First, copy each word as you misspelled it, underlining the trouble spot; then write the word correctly. Study your list often.



EXPLORING ONLINE

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz20.pl/spelling_quiz3.htm

Interactive spelling test: three endings

<http://www.esldesk.com/esl-quizzes/misspelled-words/index.htm>

Challenge yourself: 500 commonly misspelled words in English. Learn new words and quiz yourself.

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CHAPTER 40

Look-Alikes/ Sound-Alikes

A/an/and

1. *A* is used before a word beginning with a consonant or a consonant sound.
a man a house a union (here *u* sounds like the consonant *y*)
2. *An* is used before a word beginning with a vowel (*a, e, i, o, u*) or silent *h*.
an igloo an apple an hour (*h* in *hour* is silent)
3. *And* joins words or ideas together.
Edward *and* Ralph are taking the same biology class.
She is very honest, *and* most people respect her.

Accept/except

1. *Accept* means to receive.
That college *accepts* only women. I *accepted* his offer of help.
2. *Except* means other than or excluding.
Everyone *except* Marcelo thinks it's a good idea.

Affect/effect

1. *Affect* (verb) means to have an influence on or to change.
Her father's career as a lawyer *affected* her decision to go to law school.

2. *Effect* (noun) means the result of a cause or an influence.

Careful proofreading had a positive *effect* on Carl's grades.

3. *Effect* is also a verb that means to cause.

The U.S. Senate is attempting to *effect* changes in foreign policy.

Been/being

1. *Been* is the past participle form of *to be*. *Been* is usually used after the helping verb *have*, *has*, or *had*.

She *has been* a poet for ten years.

2. *Being* is the *-ing* form of *to be*. *Being* is usually used after the helping verb *is*, *are*, *am*, *was*, or *were*.

They *are being* helped by the salesperson.

Buy/by

1. *Buy* means to purchase.

My aunt *buys* new furniture every five years.

2. *By* means near, by means of, or before.

He walked right *by* and didn't say hello.

***By* sunset, we had finished the harvest.**

It's/its

1. *It's* is a contraction of *it is* or *it has*. If you cannot substitute *it is* or *it has* in the sentence, you cannot use *it's*.

***It's* a ten minute walk to my house.**

***It's* been a nice party.**

2. *Its* is a possessive and shows ownership.

Industry must do *its* share to curb inflation.

Know/knew/no/new

1. *Know* means to have knowledge or understanding.

Carlos *knows* he has to finish by 6 P.M.

2. *Knew* is the past tense of the verb *know*.

I *knew* it.

3. *No* is a negative.

He is *no* longer dean of academic affairs.

4. *New* means recent, fresh, unused.

I like your *new* hat.

Lose/loose

1. *Lose* means to misplace or not to win.

Be careful not to *lose* your way on those back roads.

2. *Loose* means too large, not tightly fitting.

This shirt is not my size; it's *loose*.

Past/passed

1. *Past* is that which has already occurred; it is over with.

Never let the *past* interfere with your hopes for the future.

2. *Passed* is the past tense of the verb *to pass*.

The wild geese *passed* overhead.

Quiet/quit/quite

1. *Quiet* means silent, still.

The woods are *quiet* tonight.

2. *Quit* means to give up or to stop doing something.

Last year I *quit* drinking.

3. *Quite* means very or exactly.

He was *quite* tired after playing handball for two hours.

That's not *quite* right.

Rise/raise

1. *Rise* means to get up by one's own power.

The past tense of *rise* is *rose*.

The past participle of *rise* is *risen*.

The moon *rises* at 9 P.M.

Daniel *rose* early yesterday.

He has *risen* from the table.

2. *Raise* means to lift an object or to grow or increase.

The past tense of *raise* is *raised*.

The past participle of *raise* is *raised*.

Raise your right hand.

She raised the banner over her head.

We have raised one thousand dollars.

Sit/set

1. *Sit* means to seat oneself.

The past tense of *sit* is *sat*.

The past participle of *sit* is *sat*.

Sit up straight!

He sat down on the porch and fell asleep.

She has sat reading that book all day.

2. *Set* means to place or put something down.

The past tense of *set* is *set*.

The past participle of *set* is *set*.

Don't set your workout clothes on the dining room table.

She set the package down and walked off without it.

He had set the timer on the stove.

Suppose/supposed

1. *Suppose* means to assume or guess.

The past tense of *suppose* is *supposed*.

The past participle of *suppose* is *supposed*.

Brad supposes that geology will be interesting.

We all supposed she would win first prize.

I had supposed Dan would bring his trumpet.

2. *Supposed* means ought to or should; it is followed by *to*.

You were supposed to wash and wax the car.

Remember: When you mean ought to or should, always use the *-ed* ending—*supposed*.

Their/there/they're

1. *Their* is a possessive and shows ownership.

They couldn't find their wigs.

2. *There* indicates a direction.

I wouldn't go *there* again.

There is also a way of introducing a thought.

***There* is a fly in my soup.**

3. *They're* is a contraction: *they + are = they're*. If you cannot substitute *they are* in the sentence, you cannot use *they're*.

If *they're* coming, count me in.

Then/than

1. *Then* means afterward or at that time.

First we went to the theater, and *then* we went out for a pizza and champagne.

I was a heavyweight boxer *then*.

2. *Than* is used in a comparison.

She is a better student *than* I.

Through/though

1. *Through* means in one side and out the other, finished, or by means of.

The rain came *through* the open window.

***Through* practice, I can do anything.**

2. *Though* means although. Used with *as*, *though* means as if.

***Though* he rarely speaks, he writes terrific letters.**

It was *as though* I had never ridden a bicycle before.

To/too/two

1. *To* means toward.

We are going *to* the computer lab.

To can also be combined with a verb to form an infinitive.

Where do you want *to* go for lunch?

2. *Too* means also or very.

Roberto is going to the theater *too*.

They were *too* bored to stay awake.

3. *Two* is the number 2.

There are *two* new nursing courses this term.

Use/used

1. *Use* means to make use of.

The past tense of *use* is *used*.

The past participle of *use* is *used*.

Why do you *use* green ink?

He *used* black-and-white film for the project.

I have *used* that brand of cell phone myself.

2. *Used* means in the habit of or accustomed to; it is followed by *to*.

I am not *used* to getting up at 4 A.M.

They got *used* to the good life.

Remember: When you mean *in the habit of* or *accustomed to*, always use the *-ed* ending—*used*.

Weather/whether

1. *Weather* refers to atmospheric conditions.

In June, the *weather* in Spain is lovely.

2. *Whether* implies a question.

***Whether* or not you succeed depends on you.**

Where/were/we're

1. *Where* implies place or location.

***Where* have you been all day?**

2. *Were* is the past tense of *are*.

We *were* on our way when the hurricane hit.

3. *We're* is a contraction: *we + are = we're*. If you cannot substitute *we are* in the sentence, you cannot use *we're*.

Since *we're* in the city, let's go to the zoo.

Whose/who's

1. *Whose* implies ownership and possession.

***Whose* term paper is that?**

2. *Who's* is a contraction of *who is* or *who has*. If you cannot substitute *who is* or *who has*, you cannot use *who's*.

Who's knocking at the window?

Who's seen my new felt hat with the red feathers?

Your/you're

1. *Your* is a possessive and shows ownership.

Your knowledge astonishes me!

2. *You're* is a contraction: *you + are = you're*. If you cannot substitute *you are* in the sentence, you cannot use *you're*.

You're the nicest person I know.

Personal Look-Alikes/Sound-Alikes List

In your notebook, keep a list of look-alikes and sound-alikes that *you* have trouble with. Add words to your list from corrected papers and from the exercises in this chapter; consider such pairs as *adapt/adopt*, *addition/edition*, *device/devise*, *stationery/stationary*, and so forth.

First, write the word you used incorrectly; then write its meaning or use it correctly in a sentence, whichever best helps you remember. Now do the same with the word you meant to use.

EXPLORING ONLINE

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/notorious z.htm#quizzes>

Excellent look-alikes/sound-alikes quizzes

<http://a4esl.org/q/h/homonyms.html>

Confused by English words that sound alike? Practice and learn with these excellent quizzes.

Basic Writing CourseMate



Basic Writing CourseMate, a complement to your textbook, includes practices and quizzes, videos to accompany the readings, career and job-search resources, ESL help, and live links to every Exploring Online in the book. To access this resource, please visit **www.cengagebrain.com**, and enter the ISBN of this title (from the back cover of your book) into the search box at the top of the page.



Unit 8

Reading Selections

Reading Strategies for Writers

How Sunglasses Spanned the World

NILSA MARIANO *Hunger*

JESSICA BENNETT *The Flip Side of Internet Fame*

CHRISTOPHER N. BACORN *Dear Dads: Save Your Sons*

BRENT STAPLES *A Brother's Murder*

SANDRA CISNEROS *Only Daughter*

ELISSA ENGLUND *Good Grammar Gets the Girl*

LEONARD PITTS JR. *A Risk-Free Life*

ANA VECIANA-SUAREZ *When Greed Gives Way
to Giving*

BHARATI MUKHERJEE *Two Ways to Belong in America*

ERIC A. TAUB *Cell Yell: Thanks for (Not) Sharing*

DAVE BARRY *Driving While Stupid*

WANG PING *Book War*

KAREN CASTELLUCCI COX *Four Types of Courage*

IAN FRAZIER *On the Rez*

ANDREW SULLIVAN *Why the M Word Matters to Me*

ARTHUR LEVIN *The Case for Torture*

ALICE WALKER *Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is
the Self*



Reading Strategies For Writers



The eighteen enjoyable and thought-provoking reading selections that follow deal with many of the concerns you have as a student, as a worker, and as a member of a family. Your instructor may ask you to read and think about a selection for class discussion or for a composition either at home or in class.

The more carefully you read these selections, the better you will be able to discuss and write about them. Below are ten strategies that can help you become a more effective reader and writer:

1. **Note the title.** A title, of course, is your first clue as to what the selection is about. For example, the title “Strike Out Little League” lets you know that the selection will discuss negative aspects of organized sports for children.

A title may also tell you which method of development the author is using. For instance, a selection entitled “From Thailand to Houston: My Two Childhoods” might be a comparison/contrast essay; one entitled “Using the Library—Electronically” might be a process piece explaining how to use a computerized library catalogue.

2. **Underline main ideas.** If you read a long or difficult selection, you may forget some of the important ideas soon after you have finished the essay. However, underlining or highlighting these key ideas as you read will later help you review more easily. You may wish to number main ideas to help you follow the development of the author’s thesis.

3. **Write your reactions in the margins.** Feel free to express your agreement or disagreement with the ideas in a selection by commenting “yes,” “no,” “Important—compare with Alice Walker’s essay,” or “Is he kidding?” in the margins.

You will often be asked to write a “reaction paper,” a composition explaining your thoughts about or reaction to the author’s ideas. The comments that you have recorded in the margins will help you formulate a response.

4. **Prepare questions.** As you tackle more difficult reading selections, you may come across material that is hard to follow. Of course, reread the passage to see if a second reading helps. If it does not, put a question mark in the margin.

Ask a friend or the instructor to help answer your questions. Do not be embarrassed to ask for explanations in class. Instructors appreciate careful readers who want to be sure that they completely understand what they have read.

5. **Note possible composition topics.** As you read, you may think of topics for compositions related to the ideas in the selection. Jot these topics in the margins or write about them in your journal. They may become useful if your instructor asks you for an essay based on the selection.
6. **Note effective writing.** If you are particularly moved by a portion of the selection—a phrase, a sentence, or an entire paragraph—underline or highlight it. You may wish to quote it later in class or use it in your composition.
7. **Circle unfamiliar words.** As you read, you will occasionally come across unfamiliar words. If you can guess what the word means from its context—from how it is used in the sentence or in the passage—do not interrupt your reading to look it up. Interruptions can cause you to lose the flow of ideas in the selection. Instead, circle the word and check it in a dictionary later.
8. **Vary your pace.** Some essays can be read quickly and easily. Others may require more time if the material is difficult or if much of the subject matter is unfamiliar to you. Be careful not to become discouraged, skimming a particularly difficult section just to get through with it. Extra effort will pay off.
9. **Reread.** If possible, budget your time so you can read the selection a second or even a third time. One advantage of rereading is that you will be able to discuss or write about the essay with more understanding. Ideas that were unclear may become obvious; you may even see new ideas that you failed to note the first time around.

Another advantage is that by the second or third reading, your responses may have changed. You may agree with ideas you rejected the first time; you may disagree with ones you originally agreed with. Rereading gives you a whole new perspective!
10. **Do not overdo it.** Marking the selection as you read can help you become a better reader and writer. However, too many comments may defeat your purpose. You may not be able to decipher the mass—or mess—of underlinings, circles, and notes that you have made. Be selective.

The following essay has been marked, or annotated, by a student. Your responses might be different. Use this essay as a model to help you annotate other selections in this book—and reading material for your other courses as well.

How Sunglasses Spanned the World

Could be a process essay

© Steve Wisbauer/Getty Images



Step 1—really Stage 1

Stage 2—aviator glasses invented

I own a pair just like this!

Stage 3

Stage 4—sunglasses are chic

Stage 5—designer shades

Like many of the world's inhabitants, you probably own at least one pair of sunglasses, chosen as much for the image they project as for their ability to protect your eyes from the sun. In fact, sunglasses have become a staple in almost every country; it is no longer surprising to spot sunglasses on robed Arabian sheiks, Bolivian grandmothers, or Inuit fishermen tramping Arctic snows. The process by which sunglasses have gained worldwide popularity is a fascinating one that began, surprisingly, in the justice system of medieval China.

Dark glasses with smoke-tinted quartz lenses existed for centuries in China prior to 1430, but they were not used for sun protection. Chinese judges wore the darkened lenses in court to conceal their eye expressions and keep secret their reactions to evidence until the end of a trial. In 1430, when vision-correcting glasses were introduced into China from Italy, these lenses, too, were smoke-tinted, but almost entirely for judicial use. Some people wore the darkened lenses for sun protection, but the idea never really caught on.

Five hundred years passed before the popularity of sunglasses began to grow. In the 1930s, the U.S. Army Air Corps asked the optical firm of Bausch & Lomb to produce a highly effective spectacle that would protect pilots from the dangers of high-altitude glare. Company scientists perfected a special dark-green tint that absorbed yellow light from the spectrum. They also designed a slightly drooping metal frame to protect the aviator's eyes, which repeatedly glanced down at the plane's instrument panel.

Soon this type of sunglasses was offered to the public as Ray Ban aviators, scientifically designed to ban the sun's rays. For the first time in history, large numbers of people began to purchase sunglasses.

The next step in the process—making sunglasses chic—was the result of a clever 1960s advertising campaign by the firm of Foster Grant. Determined to increase its share of the sunglass market, the company began to feature the faces of Hollywood celebrities wearing sunglasses above a slogan that read, "Isn't that... behind those Foster Grants?" Big stars of the day like Peter Sellers, Anita Ekberg, and Elke Sommer posed for the ads, and the public love affair with sunglasses took off. Behind those Foster Grants, everyone now could feel like a movie star.

In the 1970s, the trend escalated further when well-known fashion designers and Hollywood stars introduced their own brand-name lines, charging high prices for status sunglasses in the latest styles. A giant

staple—standard item

Inuit—Eskimo

This is a great idea.

judicial—relating to court.

I wonder why...

spectrum—range or band (light breaks into a series of colors)

Ah, yes. What makes anything span the world? Advertising.

True. I know people who spend \$200 for wrap-arounds to wear dancing-at night!

industry developed where only a few decades earlier none had existed, and shades became big business.

Stage 6 Today sunglasses—like blue jeans and Coca-Cola—circle the globe. ⁷ Protection against solar radiation is just part of their appeal. As women in ancient times had hidden seductively behind an expanded fan or a tipped parasol, modern women and men all over the world have discovered the mystery, sex appeal, and cosmopolitan cool of wearing sunglasses.

parasol—umbrella for the sun

Writing ideas—

- *Research the development or origin of another popular item.*
- *Think more about the power of advertising to influence us.*
- *Observe sunglass wearers and write about them.*

NILSA MARIANO

Hunger

When Nilsa Mariano was a girl, she would sit with friends on the fire escape in Brooklyn, NY, telling stories about sprouting wings, soaring into the night sky, and visiting other planets. Today, this storyteller, teacher, and writer still is igniting imaginations. In this essay from Chicken Soup for the Latino Soul, she describes her visit to an elementary school on Latino heritage day and its remarkable effect on the children.

The greatest thing you have is your self-image, a positive opinion of yourself. You must never let anyone take it from you.

—Jaime Escalante

The gym floor gleamed. Tables were set up on each side of the room with books and projects assembled by the children and the staff. There were handmade maps of Puerto Rico and Cuba and glossy maps of Latin America. The children had proudly contributed examples of cultural items that were relevant to their backgrounds. There were colorful shawls, castanets¹, plates, pictures. And there were maracas²: maracas made of wood, maracas honed out of gourds, maraca earrings, maracas made out of paper cups and seeds and even plastic maracas.

1. castanets: pairs of hand-held hollow instruments that make clicking sounds

2. maracas: rattles

Nate is a musician, and I am a storyteller. Nate set up the instruments as I looked over my notes. I tell *cuentos folklóricos*³ with an emphasis on multicultural stories, especially stories of the Caribbean, where I was born. I am the Taína Storyteller, descendent of the Taíno Indians of Puerto Rico. To the dismay of my parents, I chose to feature this aspect of my heritage and not just the Spanish great-grandparents on both sides of my family. I wanted to honor this long-ignored part of our greater heritage, and the more I learned, the more joy I felt. 2

As we were setting up, several teachers and staff stopped by to admire the conga drums and meet the “artists.” We shook hands, smiled, and chatted with each visitor. Not one was a person of color. A blonde, tall woman of solid build and thick glasses introduced herself. She told us how pleased she was to have us here. She explained that she worked with these children every day. The school was about 30 percent Latino or from Spanish-speaking homes. Another 20 percent were black or Asian, and the rest were “white non-Hispanic.” She told us how the children had been looking forward to this day and how creative and artistic they were. She wanted to expand on this, she said, because after all, “we’re not raising rocket scientists here.” 3

Nate and I were stunned by her comment. He hit the conga drum softly at first and slowly began a drumbeat, a stiff smile on his handsome Dominican/African-American face. I, who was usually fast on my feet and even quicker with my mouth, stammered something akin to, “I am sure that the children enjoy their artistic side, as I enjoy mine in addition to my work as a teacher and scholar.” 4

The children began to arrive. The first session was for the kindergarten through third-grade classes. The gym filled up with over a hundred kids, their teachers, teacher aides, the “grandmothers” who helped out during class time, and parents. I took a deep breath and eyed the children. They were beautiful. I saw brown faces, tan faces, black faces, white faces; most with smiles and lively chatter. A few shy children barely looked up. I tried to make eye contact with them, to smile, to get the audience on my side. I especially tried to search out the more obvious Latino faces. 5

We were introduced, and the stories began. Stories of brave caciques⁴, lovelorn Taínas, and the Taíno gods. Nate drummed a beat; I scraped some musical sounds on my güiro⁵. I asked the children to raise their hands if they spoke English. They all laughed at what seemed like a ridiculous question to them. I then asked who spoke Spanish, and the excitement grew—some of the children were not content to raise their hands so they jumped to their feet to 6

3. *cuentos folklóricos*: multicultural folktales

4. *caciques*: tribal leaders

5. *güiro*: hollow gourd instrument played by scraping

make sure they got my attention. “Me, too,” I said, “me, too.” Their excitement soared. I went on with stories of animals that speak Spanish, of a talking donkey, a story about my name and what it meant to me, and of boys named Juan Bobo. They listened, some with mouths open, as if they were being fed. They laughed, clapped, and asked for more. We gathered for an interactive story, and in the front row, a red-haired girl named Yolanda and a boy named José competed with other students to be the first ones to hold my hand.

The afternoon session brought in another hundred children, who were older and seemed determined to be low-key. But I would not allow it. Soon, they were laughing and calling out the names of the countries their people were from. I was loud and barely needed the mic. I was vivacious and funny, and I even danced. They drank it up. Nate was musical, funky and electric; his bald head glistened with sweat as he smiled through it all. They loved it, and we loved them.

But it was later, wandering the halls looking for a bathroom, when my heart almost burst. I could not walk five feet without children stepping in my path, telling me proudly that they were “Spanish.” The moment I said, “I knew you were because you’re beautiful,” they raised their arms to hug me. Some almost jumped into my arms. As we were going down the hall to the cafeteria for a “Latino” luncheon prepared by the kids and their parents, more children came. They mobbed around our table as we ate. They brought us food to try, and they pointed out what they had made. A large fifth-grade girl with curly dark hair came over and asked me to taste her cookies. She firmly took my arm and led me to the table. Putting a cookie in my mouth, she watched carefully as I chewed and swallowed. I told her it was just delicious, as it truly was. She beamed and, with tears in her eyes, whispered “Thank you.” Struck by her emotion, I hugged this girl who was taller than me, and she clung to me. Nate brought out his drums, and the boys and girls stood in line to get their turn to play. The joy was intense.

We were surrounded by food of all kinds. Rice and beans, pollo fricassee⁶, guineos verdes⁷, arroz con coco⁸, tacos, burritos, frijoles negros⁹—all of which looked and smelled like heaven. Our hunger was quickly satisfied as we savored the foods of our ancestors, the foods of our living cultures.

But the children were satisfying another hunger that day:

The hunger to see themselves in us and to know we are like them.

The hunger to be recognized as real people, with gifts and talents that the world needs.

6. pollo fricassee: a seasoned chicken dish

7. guineos verdes: green bananas

8. arroz con coco: coconut rice

9. frijoles negros: black beans

The hunger to feel that they, too, could speak, dream, dance, and eat in Spanish, without fear of being seen as different or less.

The hunger to be *proud*.

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. A good narrative makes a point. What is the point of Mariano's narrative essay? Does the author's masterful use of details—such as her description of the tall fifth-grade girl who brought cookies (paragraph 8)—help you understand the author's point?
2. In paragraph 3, why does the author quote the blonde woman who says, "We're not raising rocket scientists here"? What does she mean by this? Do you think the children at her school have been affected by her attitude? Why or why not?
3. Is "Hunger" a good title for this story? What different kinds of hunger are explored in this narrative? Have you experienced any of these hungers? If so, what have you done about it?
4. Do you feel pride—or some other emotion—when you consider your ancestors and their culture? Do you, like the author, honor your heritage with certain foods, music, clothing, rituals, or other cultural traditions? Why or why not?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Have you ever felt drawn to a person because he or she validated something important inside you or recognized your gifts? Write a paper in which you show with specific examples how this person encouraged your growth or self-esteem.
2. What are the consequences of having a negative self-image? How does low self-esteem affect the individual? Does one person's low self esteem affect the society in which that individual lives?
3. If you were asked to gather three objects that represent something important about you, what three would you choose? They might be objects from your heritage (clothing, jewelry, photographs), but they can be anything you value. Describe each object and explain its significance.

JESSICA BENNETT

The Flip Side of Internet Fame

In this era of “viral videos” that race from one computer user to thousands or even millions of others with a few clicks of a mouse, almost anyone can quickly become an international celebrity—or a laughingstock. Newsweek writer Jessica Bennett explores the dark side of this Internet phenomenon and asks what privacy means when cameras and high speed are everywhere.

In 2002, Ghyslain Raza, a chubby Canadian teen, filmed himself acting out a fight scene from “Star Wars” using a makeshift light saber. His awkward performance was funny, in part because it wasn’t meant to be. And it certainly was never meant to be public: for nearly a year the video remained on a shelf in Raza’s school’s TV studio, where he’d filmed it. Sometime in 2003, though, another student discovered the video, digitized it and posted it online—and Raza’s nightmare began. Within days, “Star Wars Kid” had become a viral frenzy. It was posted on hundreds of blogs, enhanced by music and special effects, and watched by millions. Entire Web sites were dedicated to the subject; one, jedimaster.net, was even named one of *Time*’s 50 best sites of 2003. Had that teenager wanted to be famous, he couldn’t have asked for anything better. But in Raza’s case it became a source of public humiliation, precisely what every kid fears the most.

Razas of the world take note: among the generation that’s been reared online, stories like this are becoming more and more common. They serve as important reminders of a dark side of instant Internet fame: humiliation. Already dozens of Web sites exist solely to help those who would shame others. There are sites for posting hateful rants about ex-lovers (DontDateHimGirl.com) and bad tippers (the S---ty Tipper Database), and for posting cell-phone images of public bad behavior (hollabackNYC.com) and lousy drivers. As a new book makes clear in powerful terms, such sites can make or break a person, in a matter of seconds.

“Anybody can become a celebrity or a worldwide villain in an instant,” says Daniel Solove, a law professor at George Washington University and author of *The Future of Reputation: Gossip, Rumor and Privacy on the Internet* (Yale). “Some people may revel in that. But others might say that’s not the role they wanted to play in life.”

“Dog poop girl” wasn’t the public role a South Korean student had in mind when, in 2005, she refused to clean up after her dog in the subway in Seoul. A minor infraction, perhaps, but another passenger captured the act on a cell-phone camera, posted it online and created a viral frenzy. The woman was harassed into dropping out of college. More recently a student at Lewis & Clark University in Portland, Ore., was publicly accused—on Facebook, the social-networking site—of sexually assaulting another student. Normally, such allegations¹ on campus are kept confidential. But in this case a Facebook group revealed his name, with the word “rapist” for the world to see, before the incident was ever even reported to the authorities. The accused teen was never arrested or charged, but he might as well have been: bloggers picked up the story, and a local alt-weekly put it on its cover, revealing graphic details of the encounter as described by the alleged² victim, without including the supposed perpetrator’s version of events.

Public shaming, of course, is nothing new. Ancient Romans punished wrongdoers by branding them on the forehead—slaves caught stealing got *fur* (Latin for thief) and runaways got *fug* (fugitive). In Colonial America, heretics³ were clamped into stocks in the public square, thieves had their hands or fingers cut off, and adulterers were forced to wear a scarlet A. More recently a U.S. judge forced a mail thief to wear a sign announcing his crime outside a San Francisco post office; in other places sex offenders have to post warning signs on their front lawns.

Although social stigma⁴ can be a useful deterrent⁵, “the Internet is a loose cannon,” says ethicist⁶ Jim Cohen of Fordham University School of Law in New York. Online there are few checks and balances and no due process⁷—and validating the credibility of a claim is difficult, to say the least. Moreover, studies show that the anonymity of the Net encourages people to say things they normally wouldn’t. *JuicyCampus*, a gossip Web site for U.S. college students, has made headlines by tapping into this urge. The site solicits juicy rumors under the protection of anonymity for sources. But what may have begun as fun and games has turned into a venue⁸ for bigoted⁹ rants and stories about

-
1. allegations: claims or accusations as yet unproven
 2. alleged: claimed but not proven
 3. heretics: people who hold controversial opinions
 4. stigma: a mark of disgrace
 5. deterrent: that which prevents or discourages an action
 6. ethicist: one who studies ethics and morality
 7. due process: the following of rules to protect individual rights
 8. venue: location
 9. bigoted: prejudiced

drug use and sex that identify students by name. “Anyone with a grudge can maliciously¹⁰ and sometimes libelously¹¹ attack defenseless students,” Daniel Belzer, a Duke senior, told *Newsweek* in December.

Regulators find sites like JuicyCampus hard to control. Laws on free speech and defamation¹² vary widely between countries. In the United States, proving libel requires the victim to show that his or her persecutor¹³ intended malice, while the British system puts the burden on the defense to show that a statement is not libelous (making it much easier to prosecute). A 1996 U.S. law—Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act—specifically protects the operators of Web sites from liability¹⁴ for the speech of their users. As long as the host of a site doesn’t post or edit content, it has no liability. (If AOL, say, were held responsible for every poster, it would quickly go out of business.)

So, then, what’s to stop a person from posting whatever he wants about you, if he can do so anonymously and suffer no repercussions¹⁵? For people who use blogs and social-networking sites like diaries, putting their personal information out there for the world to see, this presents a serious risk. “I think young people are seduced by the citizen-media notion of the Internet: that everyone can have their minutes of fame,” says Barry Schuler, the former CEO of AOL who is now the coproducer of a new movie, “Look,” about public video surveillance. “But they’re also putting themselves out there—forever.”

Shaming victims, meanwhile, have little legal recourse¹⁶. Identifying posters often means having to subpoena¹⁷ an anonymous IP address¹⁸. But that could lead nowhere. Many people share IP addresses on college networks or Wi-Fi hotspots, and many Web sites hide individual addresses. Even if a victim identifies the defamer, bloggers aren’t usually rich enough to pay big damage awards. Legal action may only increase publicity—the last thing a shaming victim wants. “The law can only do so much,” warns Solove.

Once unsavory¹⁹ information is posted, it’s almost impossible to retrieve. The family of the “Star Wars Kid,” who spent time in therapy as a result of

10. maliciously: spitefully

11. libelously: with the intention of damaging someone’s reputation

12. defamation: damage to a person’s reputation through written material

13. persecutor: tormentor

14. liability: legal responsibility

15. repercussions: consequences

16. legal recourse: right to seek a legal remedy

17. subpoena: to order someone to appear in court

18. IP address: Internet Protocol number that identifies an individual computer in a network

19. unsavory: unpleasant or offensive

his ordeal, filed suit against the students who uploaded his video, and settled out of court. But dozens of versions of his video are still widely available, all over the Net. One of the bad boyfriends featured on DontDateHimGirl.com also sued, but his case was dismissed due to lack of jurisdiction²⁰. The accused rapist at Lewis & Clark has also hired lawyers. But Google his name today, and the first entry has the word “rapist” in its title. If the “Star Wars Kid” has anything to teach us, it’s that shame, like the force, will always be with you.

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. This author uses examples to develop her point that viral videos can humiliate people and cause real harm. What examples does she give?
2. What kind of order does the author use to present examples in the first four paragraphs? All had their privacy violated though for different reasons. Do you have more sympathy for some of these people than others? Why?
3. Have you or anyone you know ever posted videos, photographs, or personal information on the Internet? What are the potential consequences should that information fall into the hands of someone who bears a grudge?
4. In paragraph 5, the author provides examples of public shaming used as punishment throughout history. Choose one of these public punishments and give the reasons why it was (or is) a fair or unfair punishment.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. According to the author, studies show that “the anonymity of the Net encourages people to say things they normally wouldn’t” (paragraph 6). In your experience, is it true that anonymity makes it easier for people to say things that they would not say to someone’s face? Give examples that support your view.
2. Psychologists claim that gossiping has some useful benefits, such as networking with others or forming social alliances. Do you agree? What do you think motivates people to gossip, in person or online? What functions does gossip serve?

.....
20. jurisdiction: power to apply the law

3. The rapid growth of the Internet has taken violations of privacy to new levels; adequate laws to protect people do not yet exist. Does everyone deserve privacy protections, even for potentially harmful online activities? For instance, sites like JuicyCampus (paragraph 7) let individuals post information about others anonymously. Do you think this is right? Why or why not?

CHRISTOPHER N. BACORN

Dear Dads: Save Your Sons

According to the National Fatherhood Initiative, an estimated 24.7 million children (36.3 percent) do not live with their biological fathers. About 40 percent of these children have not seen their fathers during the past year. Psychologist Christopher N. Bacorn puts human faces on these statistics in this provocative Newsweek essay. These kids don't need a shrink, he argues; they need a dad.

I had seen a hundred like him. He sat back on the couch, silently staring out the window, an unmistakable air of sullen¹ anger about him. He was 15 and big for his age. His mother, a woman in her mid-30s, sat forward on the couch and, on the edge of tears, described the boy's heartbreaking descent into alcohol, gang membership, failing grades and violence. She was small, thin, worn out from frantic nights of worry and lost sleep waiting for him to come home. She had lost control of him, she admitted freely. Ever since his father had left, four years ago, she had had trouble with him. He had become more and more unmanageable and then, recently, he had hurt someone in a fight. Charges had been filed, counseling recommended.

I listened to the mother's anguished² story. "Are there any men in his life?" I asked. There was no one. She had no brothers, her father was dead and her ex-husband's father lived in another state. She looked up at me, her eyes hopeful. "Will you talk with him?" she asked. "Just speak with him about what he's doing. Maybe if it came from a professional..." she added, her voice trailing off. "It couldn't hurt."

I did speak with him. Maybe it didn't hurt, but like most counseling with 15-year-old boys, it didn't seem to help either. He denied having any problems. Everyone else had them, but he didn't. After half an hour of futility,³ I gave up.

1. sullen: resentful, sulking

2. anguished: feeling terrible physical or mental pain

3. futility: uselessness



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I have come to believe that most adolescent boys can't make use of professional counseling. What a boy can use, and all too often doesn't have, is the fellowship of men—at least one man who pays attention to him, who spends time with him, who admires him. A boy needs a man he can look up to. What he doesn't need is a shrink. 4

That episode, and others like it, set me thinking about children and their fathers. As a nation, we are racked⁴ by youth violence, overrun by gangs, guns and drugs. The great majority of youthful offenders are male, most without fathers involved in their lives in any useful way. Many have never even met their fathers. 5

.....
4. racked: tortured or suffering from

What's become of the fathers of these boys? Where are they? Well, I can tell you where they're not. They're not at PTA meetings or piano recitals. They're not teaching Sunday school. You won't find them in the pediatrician's office, holding a sick child. You won't even see them in juvenile court, standing next to Junior as he awaits sentencing for burglary or assault. You might see a few of them in the supermarket, but not many. You will see a lot of women in these places—mothers and grandmothers—but you won't see many fathers.

So, if they're not in these places, where are the fathers? They are in diners and taverns, drinking, conversing, playing pool with other men. They are on golf courses, tennis courts, in bowling alleys, fishing on lakes and rivers. They are working in their jobs, many from early morning to late at night. Some are home watching television, out mowing the lawn or tuning up the car. In short, they are everywhere, except in the company of their children.

Of course there are men who do spend time with children, men who are covering for all those absentee fathers. The Little League coaches, Boy Scout leaders, Big Brothers and schoolteachers who value contact with children, who are investing in the next generation, sharing time and teaching skills. And there are many fathers who are less visible but no less valuable, those who quietly help with homework, baths, laundry and grocery shopping. Fathers who read to their children, drive them to ballet lessons, who cheer at soccer games. Fathers who are on the job. These are the real men of America, the ones holding society together. Every one of them is worth a dozen investment bankers, a boardroom full of corporate executives and all of the lawmakers west of the Mississippi.

Poverty prevention: What would happen if the truant⁵ fathers of America began spending time with their children? It wouldn't eliminate world hunger, but it might save some families from sinking below the poverty line. It wouldn't bring peace to the Middle East, but it just might keep a few kids from trying to find a sense of belonging with their local street-corner gang. It might not defuse⁶ the population bomb, but it just might prevent a few teenage pregnancies.

If these fathers were to spend more time with their children, it just might have an effect on the future of marriage and divorce. Not only do many boys lack a sense of how a man should behave; many girls don't know either, having little exposure themselves to healthy male-female relationships. With their fathers around, many young women might come to expect more than the myth that a man's chief purpose on earth is to impregnate them and then

5. truant: absent without permission

6. defuse: to make less dangerous

disappear. If that would happen, the next generation of absentee fathers might never come to pass.

Before her session ended, I tried to give this mother some hope. Maybe she could interest her son in a sport: how about basketball or soccer? Any positive experience involving men or other boys would expose her son to teamwork, cooperation and friendly competition. But the boy was contemptuous⁷ of my suggestions. “Those things are for dorks,” he sneered. He couldn’t wait to leave. I looked at his mother. I could see the embarrassment and hopelessness in her face. “Let’s go, Ma,” he said, more as a command than a request. I walked her out through the waiting room, full of women and children, mostly boys, of all ages. Her son was already in the parking lot. I shook her hand. “Good luck,” I said, “Thank you,” she replied, without conviction. As I watched her go, my heart, too was filled with a measure of hopelessness. But anger was there too, anger at the fathers of these boys. Anger at fathers who walk away from their children, leaving them feeling confused, rejected and full of suffering. What’s to become of boys like this? What man will take an interest in them? I can think of only one kind—a judge.

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. At both the beginning and end of this persuasive essay, Bacorn describes a mother and her 15-year-old son. Why does he focus on their story? Would the argument be as effective if he had begun with paragraph 4 and ended with paragraph 10?
2. Do you agree with the author that a boy needs “the fellowship of men” and “a man he can look up to” (paragraph 4)? Does this essay underestimate—or even insult—the millions of single mothers raising healthy sons?
3. In paragraphs 9 and 10, what positive consequences for boys and girls does Bacorn predict if truant fathers spent time with their children? Do you agree with his predictions, or is he exaggerating?
4. The author does not press to see the angry 15-year-old boy again, claiming that professional counseling for adolescent boys is a waste of time. What is your opinion about his decision?

.....
7. contemptuous: feeling scorn or disdain

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Playing sports can save some young men, writes Bacorn. What else could be done? Write an essay discussing other ways to help boys stay out of trouble and succeed. Visit www.supportingoursons.org or www.fatherhood.org for ideas.
2. Write about your own father's (or mother's) involvement in your upbringing. Was he (or she) an involved parent, an absentee parent, or somewhere in between? Based on your experience, what factors help a child become a healthy man or woman?
3. In a group of four or five classmates, study the public service advertisement (PSA) on page 353, recently released by the National Fatherhood Initiative. Can you identify its subject, audience, and purpose? Could this ad persuade some men to change their behavior? Why or why not? Use your notes from the group to plan and write an essay on fathers or mothers who can live at home but still be absentee.

BRENT STAPLES

A Brother's Murder

Brent Staples grew up in a rough, industrial city. He left to become a successful journalist, but his younger brother remained. Staples's story of his brother is a reminder of the grim circumstances in which so many young men of the inner city find themselves today.

It has been more than two years since my telephone rang with the news that my younger brother Blake—just twenty-two years old—had been murdered. The young man who killed him was only twenty-four. Wearing a ski mask, he emerged from a car, fired six times at close range with a massive .44 Magnum, then fled. The two had once been inseparable friends. A senseless rivalry—beginning, I think, with an argument over a girlfriend—escalated¹ from posturing² to threats, to violence, to murder. The way the two were living, death could have come to either of them from anywhere. In fact, the assailant

1. escalated: increased

2. posturing: trying to appear tough

had already survived multiple gunshot wounds from an accident much like the one in which my brother lost his life.

As I wept for Blake I felt wrenched backward into events and circumstances that had seemed light-years gone. Though a decade apart, we both were raised in Chester, Pennsylvania, an angry, heavily black, heavily poor, industrial city southwest of Philadelphia. There, in the 1960s, I was introduced to mortality, not by the old and failing, but by beautiful young men who lay wrecked after sudden explosions of violence. The first, I remembered from my fourteenth year—Johnny, brash lover of fast cars, stabbed to death two doors from my house in a fight over a pool game. The next year, my teenage cousin, Wesley, whom I loved very much, was shot dead. The summers blur. Milton, an angry young neighbor, shot a crosstown rival, wounding him badly. William, another teenage neighbor, took a shotgun blast to the shoulder in some urban drama and displayed his bandages proudly. His brother, Leonard, severely beaten, lost an eye and donned a black patch. It went on.

I recall not long before I left for college, two local Vietnam veterans—one from the Marines, one from the Army—arguing fiercely, nearly at blows about which outfit had done the most in the war. The most killing, they meant. Not much later, I read a magazine article that set that dispute in a context. In the story, a noncommissioned officer—a sergeant, I believe—said he would pass up any number of affluent, suburban-born recruits to get hard-core soldiers from the inner city. They jumped into the rice paddies with “their manhood on their sleeves,” I believe he said. These two items—the veterans arguing and the sergeant’s words—still characterize for me the circumstances under which black men in their teens and twenties kill one another with such frequency. With a touchy paranoia born of living battered lives, they are desperate to be *real* men. Killing is only machismo taken to the extreme. Incursions³ to be punished by death were many and minor, and they remain so: they include stepping on the wrong toe, literally; cheating in a drug deal; simply saying “I dare you” to someone holding a gun; crossing territorial lines in a gang dispute. My brother grew up to wear his manhood on his sleeve. And when he died, he was in that group—black, male and in its teens and early twenties—that is far and away the most likely to murder or be murdered.

I left the East Coast after college, spent the mid- and late 1970s in Chicago as a graduate student, taught for a time, then became a journalist. Within ten years of leaving my hometown, I was overeducated and “upwardly mobile,” ensconced⁴ on a quiet, tree-lined street where voices raised in anger were scarcely ever heard. The telephone, like some grim umbilical, kept me connected to the

3. incursions: attacks, violations

4. ensconced: settled comfortably

old world with news of deaths, imprisonings and misfortune. I felt emotionally beaten up. Perhaps to protect myself, I added a psychological dimension to the physical distance I had already achieved. I rarely visited my hometown. I shut it out.

As I fled the past, so Blake embraced it. On Christmas of 1983, I traveled from Chicago to a black section of Roanoke, Virginia, where he then lived. The desolate public housing projects, the hopeless, idle young men crashing against one another—these reminded me of the embittered town we’d grown up in. It was a place where once I would have been comfortable, or at least sure of myself. Now, hearing of my brother’s forays⁵ into crime, his scrapes with police and street thugs, I was scared, unsteady on foreign terrain.⁶

I saw that Blake’s romance with the street life and the hustler image had flowered dangerously. One evening that late December, standing in some Roanoke dive among drug dealers and grim, hair-trigger losers, I told him I feared for his life. He had affected the image of the tough he wanted to be. But behind the dark glasses and the swagger, I glimpsed the baby-faced toddler I’d once watched over. I nearly wept. I wanted desperately for him to live. The young think themselves immortal, and a dangerous light shone in his eyes as he spoke laughingly of making fools of the policemen who had raided his apartment looking for drugs. He cried out as I took his right hand. A line of stitches lay between the thumb and index finger. Kickback from a shotgun, he explained, nothing serious. Gunplay had become part of his life.

I lacked the language simply to say: Thousands have lived this for you and died. I fought the urge to lift him bodily and shake him. This place and the way you are living smells of death to me, I said. Take some time away, I said. Let’s go downtown tomorrow and buy a plane ticket anywhere, take a bus trip, anything to get away and cool things off. He took my alarm casually. We arranged to meet the following night—an appointment he would not keep. We embraced as though through glass. I drove away.

As I stood in my apartment in Chicago holding the receiver that evening in February 1984, I felt as though part of my soul had been cut away. I questioned myself then, and I still do. Did I not reach back soon enough or earnestly enough for him? For weeks I awoke crying from a recurrent dream in which I chased him, urgently trying to get him to read a document I had, as though reading it would protect him from what had happened in waking life. His eyes

5. forays: undertakings, trips

6. terrain: ground

shining like black diamonds, he smiled and danced just beyond my grasp. When I reached for him, I caught only the space where he had been.

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Staples says that he was “introduced to mortality” in Chester, Pennsylvania, in the 1960s (paragraph 2). What does he mean?
2. What does the author mean when he says his brother grew up to “wear his manhood on his sleeve” (paragraph 3)? Does he imply that there are other ways of expressing masculinity?
3. Staples speaks of a dream in which he holds a document for his brother to read (paragraph 8). What do you suppose that document might say? What does this dream seem to say about communication between the two brothers?
4. Staples begins his narrative by describing the moment at which he hears of Blake’s death. Why does he *start* with this event, instead of moving toward it?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write a narrative about a shocking incident that took place in your neighborhood. Like Staples, you may want to start with the incident, and then narrate the smaller events in the story that led up to it. Or you can follow time order and end with the incident.
2. Do you think Brent Staples could have done more to change his brother? Can we really influence others to change their lives?
3. In a group with three or four classmates, discuss the most significant problem facing young people in the inner city today. Is it crime? Drugs? Lack of educational or employment opportunities? Choose one problem and decide how it can be solved. Your instructor may ask you to share your solution with the class. Then write your own paper, discussing the problem you think is most significant and proposing a solution.

SANDRA CISNEROS

Only Daughter

Sandra Cisneros is the author of The House on Mango Street and other books. She often writes about the experience of being bicultural, bilingual, and female. Here, she explores the ways in which her birth family helped define who she is—and is not.

Once, several years ago, when I was just starting out my writing career, I was asked to write my own contributor's note for an anthology I was part of. I wrote: "I am the only daughter in a family of six sons. *That* explains everything."

Well, I've thought about that ever since, and yes, it explains a lot to me, but for the reader's sake I should have written: "I am the only daughter in a *Mexican* family of six sons." Or even: "I am the only daughter of a Mexican father and a Mexican-American mother." Or: "I am the only daughter of a working-class family of nine." All of these had everything to do with who I am today.

I was/am the only daughter and *only* a daughter. Being an only daughter in a family of six sons forced me by circumstance to spend a lot of time by myself because my brothers felt it beneath them to play with a *girl* in public. But that aloneness, that loneliness, was good for a would-be writer—it allowed me time to think and think, to imagine, to read and prepare myself.

Being only a daughter for my father meant my destiny would lead me to become someone's wife. That's what he believed. But when I was in the fifth grade and shared my plans for college with him, I was sure he understood. I remember my father saying, "*Que bueno, mi'ja*, that's good." That meant a lot to me, especially since my brothers thought the idea hilarious. What I didn't realize was that my father thought college was good for girls—good for finding a husband. After four years in college and two more in graduate school, and still no husband, my father shakes his head even now and says I wasted all that education.

In retrospect, I'm lucky my father believed daughters were meant for husbands. It meant it didn't matter if I majored in something silly like English. After all, I'd find a nice professional eventually, right? This allowed me the liberty to putter about embroidering my little poems and stories without my father interrupting with so much as a "What's that you're writing?"

Sandra Cisneros chose this photo of herself to use on her website. What do the clothing, pose, and colors convey about this woman?



© John Dyer

But the truth is, I wanted him to interrupt. I wanted my father to understand what it was I was scribbling, to introduce me as “My only daughter, the writer.” Not as “This is only my daughter. She teaches.” *Es maestra*—teacher. Not even *profesora*.

In a sense, everything I have ever written has been for him, to win his approval even though I know my father can’t read English words, even though my father’s only reading includes the brown-ink *Esto* sports magazines from Mexico City and the bloody *¡Alarma!* magazines that feature yet another sighting of *La Virgen de Guadalupe* on a tortilla or a wife’s revenge on her philandering¹ husband by bashing his skull in with a *molcajete* (a kitchen mortar made of volcanic rock). Or the *fotonovelas*, the little picture paperbacks with tragedy and trauma erupting from the characters’ mouths in bubbles.

My father represents, then, the public majority. A public who is uninterested in reading, and yet one whom I am writing about and for, and privately trying to woo.

When we were growing up in Chicago, we moved a lot because of my father. He suffered bouts of nostalgia. Then we’d have to let go our flat, store the furniture with mother’s relatives, load the station wagon with baggage and bologna sandwiches and head south. To Mexico City.

1. Philandering: unfaithful

We came back, of course. To yet another Chicago flat, another Chicago neighborhood, another Catholic school. Each time, my father would seek out the parish priest in order to get a tuition break, and complain or boast: “I have seven sons.” 10

He meant *siete hijos*, seven children, but he translated it as “sons.” “I have seven sons.” To anyone who would listen. The Sears Roebuck employee who sold us the washing machine. The short-order cook where my father ate his ham-and-eggs breakfasts. “I have seven sons.” As if he deserved a medal from the state. 11

My papa. He didn’t mean anything by that mistranslation, I’m sure. But somehow I could feel myself being erased. I’d tug my father’s sleeve and whisper: “Not seven sons. Six! and *one daughter*.” 12

When my oldest brother graduated from medical school, he fulfilled my father’s dream that we study hard and use this—our heads, instead of this—our hands. Even now my father’s hands are thick and yellow, stubbed by a history of hammer and nails and twine and coils and springs. “Use this,” my father said, tapping his head, “and not this,” showing us those hands. He always looked tired when he said it. 13

Wasn’t college an investment? And hadn’t I spent all those years in college? And if I didn’t marry, what was it all for? Why would anyone go to college and then choose to be poor? Especially someone who had always been poor. 14

Last year, after ten years of writing professionally, the financial rewards started to trickle in. My second National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship. A guest professorship at the University of California, Berkeley. My book, which sold to a major New York publishing house. 15

At Christmas, I flew home to Chicago. The house was throbbing, same as always; hot *tamales* and sweet *tamales* hissing in my mother’s pressure cooker, and everybody—my mother, six brothers, wives, babies, aunts, cousins—talking too loud and at the same time, like in a Fellini² film, because that’s just how we are. 16

I went upstairs to my father’s room. One of my stories had just been translated into Spanish and published in an anthology of Chicano writing, and I wanted to show it to him. Ever since he recovered from a stroke two years ago, my father likes to spend his leisure hours horizontally. And that’s how I found him, watching a Pedro Infante movie on Galavisión and eating rice pudding. 17

There was a glass filled with milk on the bedside table. There were several vials of pills and balled Kleenex. And on the floor, one black sock and a plastic urinal that I didn’t want to look at but looked at anyway. Pedro Infante was about to burst into song, and my father was laughing. 18

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2. Fellini: an Italian movie director whose films were full of strange, unforgettable characters

I'm not sure if it was because my story was translated into Spanish, or because it was published in Mexico, or perhaps because the story dealt with Tepeyac, the *colonia* my father was raised in and the house he grew up in, but at any rate, my father punched the mute button on his remote control and read my story. 19

I sat on the bed next to my father and waited. He read it very slowly. As if he were reading each line over and over. He laughed at all the right places and read lines he liked out loud. He pointed and asked questions: "Is this So-and-so?" "Yes," I said. He kept reading. 20

When he was finally finished, after what seemed like hours, my father looked up and asked: "Where can we get more copies of this for the relatives?" 21

Of all the wonderful things that happened to me last year, that was the most wonderful. 22

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. In what two ways can the title of this essay, "Only Daughter," be interpreted?
2. What expectations did the author's father have for his daughter? Did his limited expectations create any advantages for her? Why did the father's comment "I have seven sons" bother her so much?
3. In paragraphs 16 through 18, Cisneros describes one of her trips home. She includes vivid details that help the reader "see" and "feel" life inside her parents' house. Which details do you find especially effective? Although the home is in Chicago, which details capture the family's Mexican heritage?
4. For years, the author wanted her father's attention and approval. Why do you think he finally appreciated her achievement as a writer?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. In a group with three or four classmates, share statements about your personal history like those in Cisneros's opening paragraphs. First, take five minutes working on your own, and then define yourself, using a two- or three-sentence pattern: "I am _____.
_____. That explains everything."

Revise your sentences until you feel they capture a truth about you. Now share and discuss these statements with your group. What is most and least effective or intriguing about each? Use your definition as the main idea for a paper to be written at home.

2. Have you (or has someone you know) wanted another person's approval so badly that it influenced how you conducted your life? Who was the person whose approval you sought, and why was that approval so important? What did you do to please him or her and what happened? Was it worth it?
3. What were your family's expectations for you as you grew up, and how did those expectations affect your life choices? Were the expectations high or low? Did your gender or place in the family (oldest, middle, youngest) affect them? Did you accept or reject the family's vision for you?

ELISSA ENGLUND

Good Grammar Gets the Girl

Can excellent grammar help you find romance? Elissa Englund thinks it can. A senior at Michigan State University in 2005, Englund had just joined an online dating service and was struck by the importance of grammatical first impressions. She wrote this humorous article for her college newspaper, The State News, with tips for improving one's grammatical "hotness."

In the few weeks that I've been a member of an online dating service, I've had an interesting range of people contact me. Meet Craig (not his real name). He's a 28-year-old Virgo seeking a lady who is "fun to be around." He says he finished college and is employed full-time. All in all, he seems like a pretty together guy—until you read his message.

"Hi! I love to have fun weather it at work or hang out with friends," wrote Craig in his introductory conversation, which I've left with the original grammar. "I'm an optimistic because like is to short too be a pessimistic."

In our second conversation, he informed me, "I don't like it when people play games and our dishonest. I have been burned to many times."

Sorry, Craig. You seem a little "to dumb" to date.

I'm sure Craig is actually very smart. I'm sure he's very sweet. But in the online dating world, that just won't cut it, babe. Our society has reverted to

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the written word as one of the initial means of conversation. Although these love letters generally aren't written on parchment with quill pens, many first impressions are based solely on how you express yourself through the English language.

With the explosion of the Internet, many couples have exchanged their first flirting words through instant messages, e-mail and online dating services. Grammar isn't just a subject taught in seventh grade or a thing you worry about when writing a cover letter any longer. If you can't spell, use grammar or express yourself through writing, you're going to be in trouble with the ladies.

But have no fear! There are options, one of them being a nifty thing called spell check. But spell check, as I'm sure you know, can fail you. Poor Craig, for example, had no misspellings but a slew¹ of incorrect usages. "Our" should have been "are." He mixed up "too" and "to" and "weather" and "whether." And this girl deleted him from her contact list forever.

Sure, maybe I'm shallow. But it makes as bad of an impression as a guy wearing a muscle shirt and daisy dukes to a swank² club. It makes you seem trashy, not sweet.

But I'm not totally heartless, so for all of you who are lacking in grammar hotness, I'm here. Clip out these rules. Tape them to your computer. And most importantly, reread something before sending it on. A lot of times, you'll catch the errors yourself. Be the Internet Romeo we all know you can be. Nobody ever rejected a guy because his grammar was too good. I promise.

How to use stellar³ grammar to get a hot date:

1. With plurals, never use an apostrophe.

Hotter than Zack Morris⁴: "I'm looking for girls who love to laugh."

Fewer dates than Screech Powers⁵: "All my past girlfriend's dumped me when I cheated."

2. Possessives almost always use an apostrophe.

Singular:

Zack: "I always treat my girlfriend's mother with respect."

Screech: "I still steal my sisters diary and read it."

1. slew: large number

2. swank: elegant and expensive

3. stellar: excellent

4. Zack Morris: handsome character on the 1990s high school sitcom *Saved by the Bell*

5. Screech Powers: nerdy character on *Saved by the Bell*

Plural:

Zack: "My friends' favorite thing about me is my sense of humor."

Screech: "My last three girlfriend's parents hated me."

3. Know the difference between "it's" and "its." "It's" is a contraction of "it is;" "its" is possessive.

Zack: "It's sexy when a girl is successful and intelligent."

Zack: "Here's a rose; I had the florist trim its thorns."

Screech: "I like when its raining because I can see through your shirt."

4. "They're" is a contraction of "they are." "There" refers to direction or location. "Their" is ownership. Likewise, "you're" is a contraction of "you are," and "your" is ownership.

Zack: "There is something about your personality that is so magnetic."

Screech: "You're dress looks great, but it would look better on my floor."

5. Have you ever read Tupac Shakur's⁶ poetry? Yeah, it's awful. Apparently, it's thug not to capitalize and to nix⁷ spelling whole words to abbreviate "you" to "u," "are" to "r" and "for" to "4." But it makes you look like an eighth grader passing notes.

Zack: "I have a surprise for you when we go out tomorrow."

Screech: "i can't wait 4 us 2 get 2gethr so u can c my bed."

Being a communication Casanova is really quite simple; it just requires 11 that you take the effort to memorize a few quick rules and reread your writing before hitting "send." Consider it the online dating equivalent of running a comb through your hair and flossing your teeth. The extra effort shows, and the ladies will notice. And if you think you're already a syntax Superman, look me up. I'll be waiting, red pen in hand.

6. Tupac Shakur: Widely admired American rap singer who was murdered at age 25

7. nix: to reject or eliminate

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever passed judgment on someone because of his or her writing or speaking skills? What specific conclusions do people tend to draw about a person whose writing or speech is filled with grammatical errors?
2. In your opinion, how important is a first impression in personal life? At work? Can a bad first impression always be overcome? When are first impressions the most important?
3. Englund develops her essay with grammatically correct and incorrect examples. How effective are these examples? Why does she pretend they are written by sitcom characters Zack and Screech? Working with a partner, find and edit all of the errors in the incorrect examples.
4. This essay is humorous, but it aims to persuade. How effective is the writer's argument? Would this essay inspire someone who doesn't care about his or her writing skills to improve? Does it make you want to improve?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. In a workplace or personal situation, have you ever been surprised by the importance of writing or writing skills? Describe such a time.
2. Many people have become concerned about the erosion of good writing skills caused by widespread use of texting lingo, with its abbreviations (RU for "are you" and IC for "I see, "), shortcuts (IDR for "I don't remember") and misspellings (thru for "through"), and dropped capitalization and punctuation. Is this concern a valid one? What are other positive and negative consequences of heavy use of texting lingo among young people?
3. If you were writing an article for the college newspaper with the purpose of waking students up about the importance of excellent writing skills, how would you do it? Plan a strategy, brainstorm, and write your article. Once it is revised and snappy, submit it to the newspaper for publication.

LEONARD PITTS

A Risk-Free Life

If you could tinker with the genes of your unborn children to protect them from a disease—or even to select their gender or physical traits—would you do it? How far would you go to take control of nature and of chance? Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Leonard Pitts argues that people who seek this level of control are denying one of life's most basic truths.

I don't have the heart—or, perhaps more accurately, the heartlessness—to beat up on a lady whose only sin was the desire to have a healthy baby. So don't read any of what follows as a criticism of the woman—her name has not been released—who went to a geneticist¹ to have her eggs screened for the gene that causes Alzheimer's².

That disease is a clear and present danger in the life of this woman. Her family is reportedly one of about a dozen in the world carrying a genetic flaw that virtually assures them of developing Alzheimer's—and doing so while tragically young. A sister started showing symptoms at the age of 38, a brother at 35. Experts say it's a virtual certainty that this woman, who is 30, will develop the mind-destroying affliction³ by the time she's 40.

Her problem was that she desperately wanted a child. Now, as just reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, she and her husband have one. And another is on the way. It's likely that when the woman's daughter, who was born a year ago, turns 10, her mom will no longer recognize her. Had she been conceived by normal means, the daughter would have faced a 50–50 chance of suffering a similar fate. Instead, she and her sibling have been freed from what amounts to a family curse.

If I were in this woman's place, I can't tell you that I wouldn't have done the same thing she did. At the same time, I'd be lying if I didn't admit to being troubled by some of the moral and ethical doors that are swinging open here.

It is not, it seems to me, that big a leap from screening for fatal disease to screening for hair color, height, weight or susceptibility⁴ to allergies. Given that

1. geneticist: a scientist who studies genes, which pass traits from parents to children

2. Alzheimer's: an incurable brain disorder characterized by memory loss, confusion, loss of language, and finally, death

3. affliction: a state of suffering or pain

4. susceptibility: the state of being easily affected

many cultures value females less than they do males, will we see fewer girls being born? Will self-hating blacks sign up to give their children light skin and so-called “good” hair? Will self-hating Asians want to do away with almond eyes? Will there come a day when the fertility doctor hands you a checklist and you choose characteristics—one from Column A, two from Column B—putting a human being together like you would a meal in a take-out restaurant?

I fear—and believe—the inevitable answer to all of the above is yes. It’s in our nature. We seek to remove from the equation that gremlin⁵, chance.

That’s an old impulse that you and I have raised to a whole new level. The world has never seen control freaks like us. We make bestsellers out of self-help books that purport⁶ to help us put our emotional and financial houses in order. We line up to buy the latest gadget that promises to save time and simplify chores. We put the whole world in an electronic box that sits on a desk. We seek uniformity, predictability, security.

But guess what? Stuff still happens. As they did when the cliché⁷ was fresh, the best laid plans of mice and men still manage to go astray. You wonder when or whether human beings will ever concede that their ability to guarantee their own destinies is finite⁸ at best. We do what we can, but we can never do enough. So the two children who are now freed from the threat of Alzheimer’s still face the risk that they will suffer cancer, heart disease, stroke or someday step off the curb in front of a city bus. In the words of Gilda Radner⁹, “It’s always something.”

Indeed. For her, it was ovarian cancer. And I guess it would be easy to look at a thing like that and regard it as an intrusion upon your life. But life IS ovarian cancer. It’s Alzheimer’s, it’s heart attack, it’s mental illness, it’s uncertainty, and it is suffering. Yet it is also, in the very same instant, laughter that makes your head swim, faith that makes your heart soar. It is triumph, hope, pleasure and, with apologies to Al Green¹⁰, love and happiness as well.

To live is to be surprised, I think. And shocked. You wake up in the morning to find out what happens next.

I have no condemnation¹¹ for a mother who only wanted the best for her children. But at the same time, I think there’s something foolish and self-defeating in this impulse we have to make life risk-free. That’s a contradiction in terms.

5. gremlin: a trouble-making elf

6. purport: to claim

7. cliché: overused, worn-out expression

8. finite: having a limited existence

9. Gilda Radner: American comedienne and actress who died from ovarian cancer in 1989

10. Al Green: American soul singer, one of whose hits was “Love and Happiness”

11. condemnation: strong disapproval

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree or disagree with the actions of the woman who had her eggs screened for the gene that causes Alzheimer's disease? Would you have done the same thing? Should a person even have a child when he or she knows that early disease will deprive that child of a parent?
2. Do you think that Pitts' fear about a future when we'll probably be "putting a human being together like you would a meal in a take-out restaurant" (paragraph 6) is valid? Why or why not?
3. Pitts writes, "To live is to be surprised. And shocked" (paragraph 14). Do you agree? Have you ever had an unpleasant or even tragic experience that brought surprising growth or blessings?
4. How well do you prepare for or handle life's unpredictable twists and turns? Would you say that you're able to strike a healthy balance between "uniformity, predictability, and security" (paragraph 8) on the one hand and exciting or scary new challenges on the other?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Narrate a time when you tried hard to control a situation, but hurt, shock, or the unexpected occurred anyway. What happened? Did you learn any lessons from this experience?
2. Contrast someone you know who often takes risks with someone you know who avoids risks. Think of attitudes and behaviors that reveal the differences between them, and select three points of contrast to structure your writing.
3. The Serenity Prayer asks for three things: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." If you were to apply this prayer to a problem in your life now, would acceptance, courage, or wisdom help you the most? Be specific.

ANA VECIANA-SUAREZ

When Greed Gives Way to Giving

If you suddenly made millions of dollars, what would you do with the money? Here Miami Herald columnist Ana Veciana-Suarez reports one man's surprising response to that situation. Like many newspaper writers, she employs a casual tone and style, but the questions she raises are profound.

In the flurry of life, you probably missed this story. I almost did, and that would have been too bad. Over in Belleville, Minnesota, a 67-year-old man named Bob Thompson sold his road-building company for \$422 million back in July. He did not, as we would expect, buy himself a jet or an island, not even a new home. Instead, Thompson decided to share the wealth.

He divided \$128 million among his 550 workers. Some checks exceeded annual salaries. And for more than 80 people, the bonus went beyond their wildest expectations: They became millionaires. Thompson even included some retirees and widows in his plan. What's more, he paid the taxes on those proceeds—about \$25 million.

Employees were so flabbergasted¹ that the wife of an area manager tearfully said: "I think the commas are in the wrong place." The commas were right where they belonged. Thompson had made sure of that, had made sure, too, that not one of the workers would lose his or her job in the buyout.

I sat at the breakfast table stunned. I just don't know too many people or companies that would do something like that. Sure, many employers offer profit-sharing and stock-option plans. But outright giving? Nah. Employees rarely share in the bounty when the big payoff comes. In fact, many end up losing their jobs, being demoted,² seeking transfers, or taking early retirement. Insecurity—or better yet, the concept of every man for himself—is a verity³ of work life in America.

Yet here is one man defying all of the stereotypes. I search for clues in his life, but find nothing out of the ordinary, nothing that stands out. He started the business in his basement with \$3,500, supported by his schoolteacher wife.

1. flabbergasted: astonished; shocked

2. demoted: reduced in status or rank

3. verity: truth or reality

He has owned the same modest house for 37 years. His wood-paneled office has no Persian rugs or oil paintings, only photos of three children and five grandchildren. He admits to an indulgence or two: a Lincoln and an occasional Broadway show.

Yet he possesses something as priceless as it is rare: generosity. And he seems to be sheepishly modest even about that. “It’s sharing good times, that’s really all it is,” he told a reporter. “I don’t think you can read more into it. I’m a proud person. I wanted to go out a winner, and I wanted to go out doing the right thing.” We all want to do the right thing, but blessed by a windfall,⁴ would we have done as Thompson did? Maybe. I don’t know. Honestly, I’m embarrassed to say I’m not sure I would have.

Perhaps, however, the more appropriate question is this: In our own more limited circumstances, do we share with others in the same spirit Thompson showed? Do we give beyond expectations? For most of us, generosity comes with limits. It is, by and large, a sum without sacrifice, a respectable token.

Some might say that Thompson’s munificence⁵ was token-like. After all, the \$153 million is less than a third of his \$422 million payoff. That kind of reasoning, however, misses the mark. Few of us give away even 10 percent, and if our income increases, the tendency is not to share more but to buy more, to hoard⁶ more. Not Thompson. After finishing with his employees, he plans to continue giving away much of what’s left of the \$422 million.

I suspect he is on to something. In a society where success tends to be measured in what we can acquire, this guy instead is preaching and practicing the opposite. Success, he is telling us, is in the giving back. He seems to have mastered what many of us have yet to understand: the difference between need and want, between the basic essentials and our inchoate⁷ desires. He has, by golly, defined *enough*. Maybe that’s all the wealth he needs.

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. The author first tells the factual story of Bob Thompson’s “windfall” and then discusses its meaning. What does she believe is the point, or importance, of his story?

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4. windfall: sudden, unexpected good fortune or personal gain

5. munificence: great generosity

6. hoard: accumulate in a private supply, usually more than needed

7. inchoate: only partially formed or developed

2. Do you agree with the author that generosity is a rare quality in today's society? If so, why do you think this is true? If you know a truly generous person, describe his or her generosity to the class.
3. Buddhism, one of the world's major religions, teaches that the causes of human suffering are greed and selfish desire. Would you agree, or is this overstated? What is wrong with greed and selfish desire?
4. What point does the author make in the last sentence about the concept of "enough"? What is your own personal definition of "enough"?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Do you know a person who "gives beyond expectations" or even makes personal sacrifices to help others? Write an essay illustrating that person's generosity with specific examples.
2. Veciana-Suarez discusses two definitions of success: the idea that success is acquiring as much as we can and Bob Thompson's idea that success is "giving back" (paragraph 9). Which of these is closer to the truth for you? Write an essay honestly exploring your personal definition of the word *success*.
3. What career path have you chosen to pursue or are considering now? Will that career lead you to your idea of success? Write about the top three rewards of that career for you (for example, salary, mental stimulation, security, fun, the chance to give back, to travel, and so on).

BHARATI MUKHERJEE

Two Ways to Belong in America

Bharati Mukherjee describes herself as "an American writer born in India." She often writes about immigrants struggling to make a home for themselves in America. Although her sister also moved to the United States, the two women hold different beliefs about who they are, what America owes them, and what they owe America. As the immigration debate grows louder and angrier, this article, first published in the New York Times in 1996, may shed light on some enduring issues.

This is a tale of two sisters from Calcutta, Mira and Bharati, who have lived in the United States for some thirty-five years, but who find themselves on different sides in the current debate over the status of immigrants. I am an American citizen and she is not. I am moved that thousands of long-term residents are finally taking the oath of citizenship. She is not.

Mira arrived in Detroit in 1960 to study child psychology and preschool education. I followed her a year later to study creative writing at the University of Iowa. When we left India, we were almost identical in appearance and attitude. We dressed alike, in saris;¹ we expressed identical views on politics, social issues, love and marriage in the same Calcutta convent-school² accent. We would endure our two years in America, secure our degrees, then return to India to marry the grooms of our father's choosing.

Instead, Mira married an Indian student in 1962 who was getting his business administration degree at Wayne State University. They soon acquired the labor certifications necessary for the green card of hassle-free residence and employment.

Mira still lives in Detroit, works in the Southfield, Michigan school system, and has become nationally recognized for her contributions in the fields of preschool education and parent-teacher relationships. After 36 years as a legal immigrant in this country, she clings passionately to her Indian citizenship and hopes to go home to India when she retires.

In Iowa City in 1963, I married a fellow student, an American of Canadian parentage. Because of the accident of his North Dakota birth, I bypassed labor-certification requirements and the race-related "quota"³ system that favored the applicant's country of origin over his or her merit. I was prepared for (and even welcomed) the emotional strain that came with marrying outside my ethnic community. In thirty-three years of marriage, we have lived in every part of North America. By choosing a husband who was not my father's selection, I was opting for fluidity,⁴ self-invention, blue jeans and T-shirts, and renouncing three thousand years (at least) of caste-observant,⁵ "pure culture" marriage in the Mukherjee family. My books have often been read as unapologetic (and in some quarters overenthusiastic) texts for cultural and psychological "mongrelization."⁶ It's a word I celebrate.

Mira and I have stayed sisterly close by phone. In our regular Sunday morning conversations, we are unguardedly affectionate. I am her only blood

1. saris: lightweight cloth garments worn by the women of India

2. convent school: a school run by a religious organization

3. quota: the maximum number that may be admitted

4. fluidity: ability to move easily

5. caste-observant: following the rules of rigid social class

6. mongrelization: mixing different breeds or races

relative on this continent. We expect to see each other through the looming crises of aging and ill health without being asked. Long before Vice President Gore's "Citizenship U.S.A." drive, we'd had our polite arguments over the ethics of retaining an overseas citizenship while expecting the permanent protection and economic benefits that come with living and working in America.

Like well-raised sisters, we never said what was really on our minds, but we probably pitied one another. She, for the lack of structure in my life, the erasure of Indianness, the absence of an unvarying daily core. I, for the narrowness of her perspective, her uninvolvedness with the mythic depths or the superficial pop culture of this society. But, now, with the scapegoating⁷ of "aliens" (documented or illegal) on the increase, and the targeting of long-term legal immigrants like Mira for new scrutiny and new self-consciousness, she and I find ourselves unable to maintain the same polite discretion. We were always unacknowledged adversaries, and we are now, more than ever, sisters.

"I feel used," Mira raged on the phone the other night. "I feel manipulated and discarded. This is such an unfair way to treat a person who was invited to stay and work here because of her talent. My employer went to the I.N.S. and petitioned for the labor certification. For over thirty years, I've invested my creativity and professional skills into the improvement of *this* country's preschool system. I've obeyed all the rules, I've paid my taxes, I love my work, I love my students, I love the friends I've made. How dare America now change its rules in midstream? If America wants to make new rules curtailing benefits of legal immigrants, they should apply only to immigrants who arrive after those rules are already in place."

To my ears, it sounded like the description of a long-enduring, comfortable yet loveless marriage, without risk or recklessness. Have we the right to demand, and to expect, that we be loved? (That, to me is the subtext⁸ of the arguments by immigration advocates.) My sister is an expatriate,⁹ professionally generous and creative, socially courteous and gracious, and that's as far as her Americanization can go. She is here to maintain an identity, not to transform it.

I asked her if she would follow the example of others who have decided to become citizens because of the anti-immigration bills in Congress. And here, she surprised me. "If America wants to play the manipulative game, I'll play it too," she snapped. "I'll become a U.S. citizen for now, then change back to Indian when I'm ready to go home. I feel some kind of irrational attachment to

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7. scapegoating: unfairly blaming one person or group for the wrongs of others

8. subtext: unstated but implied message

9. expatriate: one who chooses to live in a foreign country, not his or her homeland

India that I don't to America. Until all this hysteria against legal immigrants, I was totally happy. Having my green card meant I could visit any place in the world I wanted to and then come back to a job that's satisfying and that I do very well."

In one family, from two sisters alike as peas in a pod, there could not be a wider divergence¹⁰ of immigrant experience. America spoke to me—I married it—I embraced the demotion¹¹ from expatriate aristocrat to immigrant nobody, surrendering those thousands of years of "pure culture," the saris, the delightfully accented English. She retained them all. Which of us is the freak?

Mira's voice, I realize, is the voice not just of the immigrant South Asian community but of an immigrant community of the millions who have stayed rooted in one job, one city, one house, one ancestral culture, one cuisine, for the entirety of their productive years. She speaks for greater numbers than I possibly can. Only the fluency of her English and the anger, rather than fear, born of confidence from her education, differentiate her from the seamstresses, the domestics, the technicians, the shop owners, the millions of hard-working but effectively silenced documented immigrants as well as their less fortunate "illegal" brothers and sisters.

Nearly twenty years ago, when I was living in my husband's ancestral homeland of Canada, I was always well-employed but never allowed to feel part of the local Quebec or larger Canadian society. Then, through a Green Paper that invited a national referendum¹² on the unwanted side effects of "nontraditional" immigration, the Government officially turned against its immigrant communities, particularly those from South Asia.

I felt then the same sense of betrayal that Mira feels now. I will never forget the pain of that sudden turning, and the casual racist outbursts the Green Paper elicited. That sense of betrayal had its desired effect and drove me, and thousands like me, from the country.

Mira and I differ, however, in the ways in which we hope to interact with the country that we have chosen to live in. She is happier to live in America as expatriate Indian than as an immigrant American. I need to feel like a part of the community I have adopted (as I tried to feel in Canada as well). I need to put roots down, to vote and make the difference that I can. The price that the immigrant willingly pays, and that the exile avoids, is the trauma of self-transformation.

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10. divergence: difference

11. demotion: reduction in status or rank

12. referendum: a proposal submitted for a public vote

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. How do the title and first paragraph let readers know that this essay will compare and contrast? How are Mira and Bharati alike? How are they different?
2. How does Mukherjee view her decision to become an American citizen (paragraph 5)? With her oath, what did she accept and what did she give up?
3. In paragraph 7, she writes that she and her sister probably pitied each other. What did each pity about the other's life? What change made them feel more like allies and sisters?
4. Mukherjee's last paragraph states her view that immigrants who become citizens must pay a price: the "trauma of self-transformation." In your own words, explain what she means. Do you agree with her?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Have you ever experienced a shock or change so radical that you had to transform yourself? Perhaps you immigrated, had a child, divorced, experienced a death, or won the lottery. Describe your process of transformation. What did you gain and lose?
2. In a small group, discuss this topic: *Are immigrants still important to American society? Why or why not?* What positive things do they contribute? What problems can immigration pose? Jot ideas for a paper explaining your answers to these questions.
3. Compare and contrast yourself and a sibling or family member with whom you share important similarities but from whom you differ in a significant way.

ERIC A. TAUB

Cell Yell: Thanks for (Not) Sharing

Once considered a luxury, cell phones have become a common and sometimes obnoxious presence in our daily lives. In this New York Times article, Eric Taub considers the reasons why cell phones—and their users—so often intrude on the people around them.

With just five minutes to takeoff, the young man across the aisle on the Baltimore-bound flight whipped out his cellphone and began a hurried and boisterous conversation, explaining the fine points of marketing his new Christmas-gift Web site to an unseen underling. With glazed eyes staring at the seat in front of him, the executive unconsciously pounded his foot in rhythm to his conversation, oblivious¹ to the 15 surrounding passengers glaring at this human loudspeaker in seat 23B.

The harried young executive was engaged in one of the more despised forms of mobile-phone behavior. In the industry it is called cell yell—a tendency of many cellphone users to speak into their phones more loudly than necessary, unwittingly involving surrounding strangers in their personal business.

Cell yell has created a subculture of cell-yell haters. The phenomenon has given rise to a Web site (www.cellmanners.com). An artist, John Detrich, offered a cell-yell-themed illustration for sale online. And The Register, a British Web site devoted to technology, reported that a mobile phone user in Germany died two years ago after a beer-garden brawl over his lack of cellular civility.

It is too simplistic to put the blame for this antisocial behavior strictly on technology, social scientists say, because the way society uses new inventions both defines and reflects the existing culture. In the 1950s, people were used to the privacy of enclosed phone booths when making calls in public places. If cellphones had been invented then, people would probably have jumped into those same booths to use them. Today, with more mobile, informal and open societies, many in Western countries relish the idea of speaking in open spaces, oblivious to the presence of others, and often in too loud a voice.

Mobile phone design doesn't help temper that arch behavior. Unlike standard corded phones, cellphones provide little in the way of aural² feedback; it has long been known that if you can hear yourself through the earpiece, you are better able to keep your voice properly modulated. (That's why the hard of hearing often speak more loudly than others.) Because the mouthpiece of the typical cellphone barely extends to the cheek, many users act, consciously or not, as if they have to shout to be heard.

"Cellphones are so small that people don't trust the technology to work," said Timo Kopomaa, a social scientist at the University of Technology in Helsinki and author of a study on cellphone behavior. That is one reason Motorola makes phones that flip open, according to a company executive: to give people the illusion that the phone is bigger and the microphone is closer to the mouth.

1. oblivious: unaware

2. aural: heard

Add to that loud street sounds, plus the relative novelty of being able to speak to anyone anywhere, and suddenly throngs³ are shouting above the ambient⁴ noise in public squares, restaurants and post offices as they become engrossed in personal conversations, consequently “privatizing the public space,” Dr. Kopomaa said. By doing so, he said, they ignore the needs of the nonphoning public, “denying others the privacy they selfishly appropriate for their own use.”

Perversely, many onlookers find it difficult to withdraw attention from the unwanted cellular intrusion. The ringing phone has long taken precedence over a conversation between two people in the same physical space; an unanswered phone expresses urgency and creates tension for the listener.

A ringing cellphone is perceived as even more important than a ringing traditional phone. Sounding in public, it “spreads tension to all those within earshot, yet because it’s not for them, they’re powerless to answer the call,” said Dr. Sadie Plant, a researcher in Birmingham, England, who was commissioned by Motorola to study cultural differences in cellphone use.

Some cellphone owners prominently display even cellphones not in use, for their presence alone creates tension, as bystanders wonder if they are soon going to ring, Dr. Plant said. Users also often engage in “stage-phoning,” making unimportant calls in public just to impress others.

Dr. Plant found individuals who actually enjoyed listening to strangers’ cell calls; a soap opera was created, but one with only half the information available. It was up to the eavesdropper to fill in the unheard party’s responses with fantasy dialogue. Others found it obnoxious, since they are neither fully admitted to nor excluded from that cellphone user’s world.

The public cellphone user creates what Dr. Kopomaa calls a “black hole” as the user psychologically withdraws from his immediate surroundings to focus on the call. At the same time, others are forced to suspend their own activities, whether they were talking with the cellphone user or trying to concentrate on their own affairs.

“People are forced to remain present both physically and mentally,” Dr. Kopomaa wrote in “The City in Your Pocket,” a Finnish study of cellphone culture. Since a phone conversation by its nature is the opposite of public speaking, surrounding people are “disgusted by this forced eavesdropping,” he theorized.

Cellphone users tend to answer their phones quickly, but not because they are concerned about annoying their fellow citizens. Rather, a rapid response to a ring shows bystanders that the users have “telecredibility,” Dr. Kopomaa

3. throngs: crowds

4. ambient: surrounding

said. They have mastered this technology, and they do not have to fumble to figure out how to answer it.

When Dr. Kopomaa recently discussed the implications of his study in an interview on his cellphone while riding a ferry from Finland to Sweden, he did what few other cellphone users do: he retreated into the ship's bathroom for privacy. In doing so, Dr. Kopomaa, 45, betrayed his age; studies indicate that young Western people see the cellphone, and the receipt of cellphone calls, as a symbol of virility and social importance, and therefore something to be flaunted.

In Dr. Plant's view, the cellphone has become a psychosexual⁵ symbol of performance. When mixed couples dine in restaurants, for example, it is more likely that the male will place his phone on the table and the female will leave hers in her purse, according to Dr. Plant. When two women dine together, both tend to keep them out of sight. But if one woman places her phone on the table, the other will probably follow suit.

Dr. Plant found this tendency toward display to be as true in Chicago as in London. Indeed, while cell boorishness⁶ is not confined to one country, certain practices are culture-specific. In China, cellphone owners prominently carry them in crocheted or silk bags, Dr. Plant said, while Japanese users often customize their phones with stick-on designs and graphically distinctive cases. In many countries, texting—sending short, coded text messages to another cell user—has become the communication method of choice, especially for adolescents. It offers the socially shy the anonymity and immediacy of e-mail.

"Boys can ask girls out by sending a text message, without having to hear the disappointment in their voices," Dr. Plant said. "And I've observed many noncommunicative teenage boys become much more communicative thanks to texting."

But even where texting is used as a nonintrusive way to communicate, it seems it is not being used enough, judging from the anti-cellphone backlash. A bagel shop in Westlake Village, Calif., banned the use of cellphones while ordering last year because customers routinely asked for the wrong food when they were busy jabbering. To stem the jangle of ringing cellphones, Cingular Wireless is erecting kiosks⁷ at 100 Loews movie theaters as a sort of lobby-based cellphone purgatory where users will be encouraged to place and receive any calls.

"People are very upset when they're forced to hear the results of a stranger's medical tests," said Carol Page, a Boston public relations consultant and founder of CellManners.com. The site has so far recruited three "cell spies," volunteers in Boston, San Francisco and Washington who report on bad cellular

5. psychosexual: perceived as sexual

6. boorishness: rudeness

7. kiosks: small booths

behavior—like the man who insisted on phoning while using the urinal, or the wedding guest whose phone went off between the words “I” and “do.”

As a new consensus⁸ develops over the use of cellphones, perhaps the fear of stigma,⁹ rather than rules and laws, will do the most to turn the disruptive tide. In Finland, Dr. Kopomaa has noticed that people already use cellphones more often in casual restaurants than in expensive ones. And when they do, they now call not from their table but from outside the establishment, sharing the space with society’s other shunned antisocial group of addicts, cigarette smokers.

21

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. How does the author define “cell yell” (paragraph 2)? What changes in society since the 1950s does the author suggest account for the way people use cell phones today?
2. How does mobile phone design contribute to bad cell phone manners? What part does the cell phone user’s sense of self-importance play?
3. Eavesdroppers on cell phone conversations experience various reactions, both positive and negative. According to the author, what are some of these reactions and how do people listening against their will handle their strong feelings?
4. Based on the author’s examples, what are the rude cell behaviors that bother people the most? What behaviors bother *you* the most? You might wish to share with the class a humorous or outrageous illustration of bad cell manners that you have encountered.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write an essay in which you argue for or against having a “designated outcast zone” for cell talkers in restaurants, theaters, or other places—the way many establishments now isolate smokers. Develop your thesis with two or three clear supporting points.
2. Is the rudeness of cell phone users just a symptom of a society that has become less considerate and more self-centered? With a group of classmates, brainstorm other possible “symptoms” of this trend. Some

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8. consensus: general agreement
 9. stigma: a mark of disgrace

ideas might include rude clerks and customers, aggressive drivers, or the dying art of thank-you notes. Then select one of these and write an essay in which you suggest ways to reverse the trend.

3. E-mail and texting are just two other technologies that some people use inconsiderately or even abusively. For instance, some people forward jokes many times a day, and others text during meetings or dates. Write an essay in which you suggest rules of web etiquette for one technology. You may wish to look up “netiquette”—the word for rules to govern online behavior.

DAVE BARRY

Driving While Stupid

Humorist Dave Barry loves to poke fun at Miami, his hometown (“Motto: an automatic-fire weapon in every home”). Barry has written over thirty books, none of which, he claims, contains useful information; he won a Pulitzer Prize for his humor columns that until 2005 ran in over 500 newspapers. Currently, Barry aspires to “continued immaturity followed by death.” In this Miami Herald column, he takes on bad drivers.

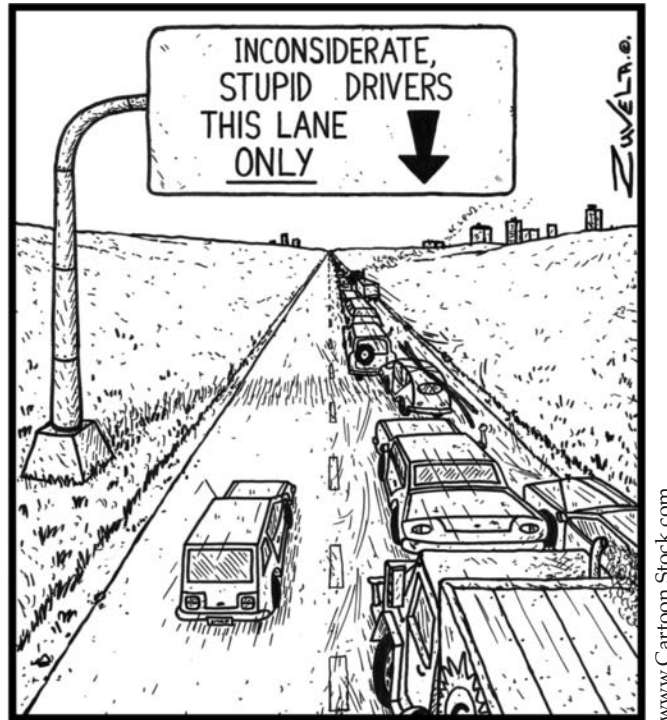
So I have to tell you what I saw on the interstate the other night. First, 1
though, you must understand that this was not just any old interstate. This
was I-95 in downtown Miami, proud home of the worst darned drivers in the
world.

I realize some of you are saying: “Oh yeah? If you want to see REALLY bad 2
drivers, you should come to MY city!” Listen, I understand that this is a point
of civic honor, and I am sure that the drivers in your city are all homicidal¹
morons. But trust me when I tell you that there is no way they can compete
with the team that Miami puts on the road.

I know what I’m talking about. I have driven in every major U.S. city, 3
including Boston, where the motorists all drive as though there is an open
drawbridge just ahead, and they need to gain speed so they can jump across it.

I have also driven in Italy, where there is only one traffic law, which is 4
that no driver may ever be behind any other driver, the result being that at all
times, all the motorists in the nation, including those in funeral processions,
are simultaneously trying to pass.

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1. homicidal: murderous; intending to kill someone



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I have ridden in a taxi in the Argentinean city of Mar del Plata (literally, “Cover your eyes”), where (a.) nobody ever drives slower than 65 miles per hour, even inside parking garages, and (b.) at night, many motorists drive with their headlights off, because—a taxi driver told me this, and he was absolutely serious—this extends the life of your bulbs. When he said this, we were in a major traffic jam caused by an accident involving a truck and a horse. 5

I have also ridden on a bus in China, plowing through humongous² traffic snarls involving trucks, cars, bicycles, ox-drawn carts and pedestrians, all aggressively vying³ for the same space, and where the bus driver would sometimes physically push pedestrians out of the way. I don’t mean with his hands. I mean with the BUS. 6

My point is that I have seen plenty of insane driving techniques, and I am telling you for a fact that no place brings so many of these techniques together as Miami, where a stop sign has no more legal significance to most motorists than a mailbox. The police down here have given up on enforcing the traffic laws. If they stop you and find a human corpse in your trunk, they’ll let you off with a warning if it’s your first one. 7

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2. humongous: slang for extremely large, enormous

3. vying: competing

So I've seen pretty much everything on the roads here. Nevertheless, I was surprised by the driver on the interstate the other night. I heard him before I saw him, because his car had one of those extremely powerful sound systems, in which the bass notes sound like nuclear devices being detonated⁴ in rhythm. So I looked in the mirror and saw a large convertible with the top down overtaking me at maybe 600 miles per hour. I would have tried to get out of his path, but there was no way to know what his path was, since he was weaving back and forth across five lanes (out of a possible three).

Fortunately, he missed me, and as he went past, I got a clear view of why he was driving so erratically⁵: He was watching a music video. He was watching it on a video screen that had been installed where the sun visor usually goes, RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIS FACE, blocking his view of the road. I don't want to sound like an old fud, but this seems to me to be just a tad hazardous. I distinctly recall learning in driver's education class that, to operate a car, you need to be able to see where the car is going, in case the need arises (you never know!) to steer.

Of course, more and more, drivers do not have time for steering, as they are busy making phone calls, eating, reading, changing CDs, putting on makeup, brushing their teeth, etc. I recently received mail from an alert reader named Kate Chadwick who reports that she drove behind a man who was SHAVING HIS HEAD, with his "visor mirror positioned just so, windows wide open for hair disposal, and for a significant portion of the ride, no hands on the wheel."

But at least these drivers are able, from time to time, to glance at the road whereas the guy I saw on I-95 basically could see only his video. I hope you agree with me that this is insane. I also hope you are not reading this in your car.

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Barry's essay is funny but focuses on a serious subject. What point does he make about some drivers?
2. How does Barry develop his persuasive thesis that Miami drivers are the worst in the world? How does he answer the opposition who might claim that other towns have the worst drivers?
3. Have you witnessed people "driving while stupid"? Give examples of roadway behaviors you have witnessed. In your view, how common is it to see people engaging in activities other than driving while they are driving?

4. detonated: exploded

5. erratically: without a fixed or regular path

4. Why in your view do some people engage in dangerous behaviors—like drug use, unprotected sex, or “sexting”—without seeming to notice the danger?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Review Chapter 16, Part A, and then write a humorous illustration essay about self-defeating ways that people behave at work, study (or don’t), or try to impress others. You might title your essay “Working (Attending College, or Dating) While Stupid.”
2. Write a serious essay of persuasion on the subject of dangerous drivers. You might wish to argue for a forceful penalty for drivers caught “multitasking” while driving, or convince readers of the need for more driver training, or try to persuade drivers that driving without full concentration is taking their own lives and others’ lives too lightly.
3. Discuss a time when you engaged in or witnessed dangerous behaviors. What happened? Did you learn anything from the experience?

WANG PING

Book War

Have you ever lived in a country whose government tried to control what you read, said, wore, or even believed? Author Wang Ping grew up in China during the violent “Cultural Revolution” of the late 1960s when Communist Chairman Mao Zedong closed schools, banned books, and imprisoned or killed thousands of citizens. In this true story, a curious child tries to learn in a place where reading the wrong book could bring a death sentence.

I discovered “The Little Mermaid,” my first fairy tale, in 1968. That morning, when I opened the door to light my stove, I found my new neighbor, a girl a few years older, sitting under the streetlight, a book in her lap. The red plastic wrap indicated it was Mao’s collected work. She must have been there all night long, for her hair and shoulders were covered with frost, and her body shivered violently from cold. Another loyal Maoist, I thought to myself. Then I heard her sobbing. I got curious. What kind of person would weep

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from reading Mao's words: I walked over and peeked over her shoulders. What I saw made me freeze in fear and excitement. The book in her hands had nothing to do with Mao; it was Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales, the story of "The Little Mermaid." Since I had heard the story in my kindergarten, I was determined to read it myself someday. Just when I was ready, the Cultural Revolution began. Schools were closed, books, condemned as "poisonous weeds," were burnt on streets, and the rest were confiscated¹.

My clever neighbor had disguised the "poisonous weed" with the scarlet cover of Mao's work. Engrossed² in the story, she didn't realize my presence behind her until I started weeping. She jumped up, fairy tales clutched to her budding chest. Her panic-stricken face said she was ready to fight me to death if I dared to report her. We stared at each other for an eternity. Suddenly she started laughing, pointing at my tear-stained face. She knew then that her secret was safe with me.

She gave me twenty-four hours to read the fairy tales, and I loaned her *The Arabian Nights*, which was missing the first fifteen pages and the last story, but no matter. The girl squealed and danced in the dawn light. When we finished each other's books, we decided to start an underground book exchange network. With strict rules and determination, we had books to read almost every day, all "poisonous" classics.

Soon I excavated³ a box of books my mother had buried beneath the chicken coop. I pried it open with a screwdriver, and pulled out one treasure after another: *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, *The Book of Songs*, *Grimms' Fairy Tales*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *American Dream*, each wrapped with waxed paper.

I devoured them all, in rice paddies⁴ and wheat fields, on my way home from school and errands. I tried to be careful. The consequences could have been catastrophic⁵, not only for myself but also for my entire family, had these books fallen into wrong hands. But my "enemy" was my own mother. Once she discovered I had unearthed her treasure box, she set out to destroy these "time bombs," combing every possible place in the house. It was a hopeless battle. My mother knew my habits, my little tricks. I couldn't outsmart her. Whenever she caught me red-handed, she'd order me to tear the pages and place them in the stove, and she'd sit nearby, tears in her eyes, muttering: "This is for your safety, everyone's safety." And my heart, our hearts, turned into ashes.

1. confiscated: seized

2. engrossed: completely absorbed

3. excavated: dug up

4. rice paddies: flooded land used for growing rice

5. catastrophic: disastrous

When the last book was gone, I went to sit in the chicken coop. Hens surrounded me, pecking at my closed fists for food. As tears flowed, the stories became alive from inside. They flapped their wings and flew out of my mouth like mourning doves. I started telling them to my siblings, friends, and neighbors; stories I'd read from those forbidden treasures, stories I made up for myself and my audience. We gathered on summer nights, during winter darkness. When I saw stars rising in their dimmed eyes, I knew I had won the war.

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. In a repressive regime, why would the government ban books or reading? How could books, including fairy tales or stories from other countries, be considered "poisonous weeds," dangerous to those in power?
2. Why does the author's mother destroy her own books once she finds out that her daughter loves them too? Would you, as a parent, have done the same thing?
3. Wang Ping uses many *metaphors* (poetic comparisons, see Chapter 13, Part D) in telling her story. For example, to the mother, the books her daughter is reading are "time bombs" (paragraph 5). Why does she say this? Find the two metaphors in the last sentence and explain what this sentence means.
4. What is the value of stories? Are stories sometimes just as important as books that contain factual information?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. What activity or right, if any, would you risk your life to fight for if the government suddenly forbade you from engaging in that activity? Explain your answer.
2. Do Americans devalue literacy? Why don't many Americans read regularly? If books were banned in this country, do you think more people might want to read? Explain.
3. Should any book ever be censored for any reason? Argue for or against censorship of books. To support your argument, use examples from websites such as <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/banned-books.html>.

KAREN CASTELLUCCI COX

Four Types of Courage

"In these times when many students wonder anxiously what the future will bring, courage may be more important than ever," claims Karen Castellucci Cox, a professor of English at City College of San Francisco. In this inspiring essay, she examines four different kinds of courage first set forth by psychologist Rollo May, applying his categories to contemporary challenges.

Most people think they know what courage is. When asked to name a courageous person, many pick a Hollywood hero like Jack Bauer, the 1
impossibly capable action star of television's 24. Others choose real-life heroes, often those who confront great physical danger like firefighters or soldiers. Indeed, our culture teaches us to view courage as a kind of Rambo-style bravado. Consider these cases, however: Chardee, a battered wife who finally leaves her husband; Luis, who goes against his family's wishes to pursue his dream of becoming an actor; Ann, who cares for a father with Alzheimer's disease, patiently having the same conversations day after day yet infusing their small apartment with good cheer and kindness. Do any of these people exhibit courage? In his classic book *The Courage to Create*, American psychologist Rollo May invites us to examine more deeply the quality he believes is essential to a meaningful life. Courage, he insists, is not just one emotion among others, but the foundation on which all other virtues and values rest. May divides courage into four distinct types—physical, social, moral, and creative.

Physical courage is familiar to most people: the ability to confront 2
bodily pain or danger with self-possession, usually for a greater goal or good. For example, when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in August 2005, causing devastating floods in New Orleans, local police raced to curb looting and rescue the stranded. These officers had no experience facing such a catastrophic emergency and little training in search-and-rescue. Yet they risked their lives to save desperate and angry citizens amid surging water, threat of disease, and even sniper fire. The pressure proved too much for some; several dozen deserted. But the truly remarkable fact was that 1,700 men and women continued to report to work each day, exhibiting the brand of physical courage that May believes capable of transforming society.

Physical courage has lost much of its usefulness in contemporary life, May 3
cautions. Whereas our society once applauded the self-reliant pioneer, now we

Firefighters in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina typified what Rollo May calls physical courage. Many had lost their homes but risked their safety to help others.



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egg on the Tony Sopranos,¹ who justify their violence with talk of disrespect or frontier justice. What masquerades as physical courage in television, films, music videos, and games is often little better than the bully's swagger on the playground. A more productive physical courage, like that of the New Orleans officers, puts the body on the line, not to overpower or harm others, but to serve and protect them.

The second category, social courage, is the type demanded of us in daily life. This is the courage to have meaningful relationships, to dare to reveal who we really are, to tell the truth in public forums despite the risks. The child who faces peer disapproval to befriend an unpopular classmate demonstrates social courage. The 55-year-old woman who goes back for her college degree though she fears she will feel out of place demonstrates social courage. The employee who volunteers to give a business presentation despite a lifelong terror of public speaking demonstrates social courage. Marriage, parenthood, any relationship that calls for an engagement of the heart and mind invites this brand of courage. May writes, "It is easier in our society to be naked physically than to be naked psychologically or spiritually." But when one chooses to open

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1. Tony Soprano: lead character in *The Sopranos*, a dramatic HBO series about a Mafia family

oneself, despite real risks of embarrassment, rejection, or worse, the reward is the chance of making a profound connection in a world of superficial ones.

Moral courage may exact an even heavier toll. The one who exhibits moral courage usually recognizes the suffering of others and decides to help despite the consequences. Aung San Suu Kyi is such a figure. The daughter of a diplomat and a general who was assassinated after negotiating Burma's independence from Great Britain in 1947, Suu Kyi was inspired by her parents to spend her life promoting democracy and human rights in Burma. When an oppressive military gained control of the government in 1988, Suu Kyi stepped into a leadership position, helping to found a democratic party and speaking publicly throughout Burma. Her inspiring vision drew huge crowds, and when her popularity became a threat, she was followed, harassed, and arrested. Suu Kyi spent a total of eleven years under house arrest, a sacrifice that meant living apart from her grown sons and not being able to visit her dying husband in England. Her moral courage was recognized when she won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. Beloved by Burmese citizens and admired worldwide as a democratic leader, she has been held under house arrest since 2002.

Moral courage is found as well in ordinary people who take a stand. Between April and July 1994, nearly one million people were killed in a mass genocide² in Rwanda; Hutu extremists murdered their Tutsi³ neighbors while the international community looked the other way. But one man, Paul Rusesabagina, did not look the other way. The son of farmers and a modest hotel manager, Rusesabagina at first wanted to protect only his wife and children. Gradually, however, he began to comprehend the scope of the brutality. He devised a way to hide Tutsi refugees in his hotel until they could be carried to safety. In all, Rusesabagina is responsible for single-handedly saving the lives of 1,268 people. His story, told in the film *Hotel Rwanda*, is reminder that moral courage can be found wherever a person chooses action over apathy.⁴

The final category is creative courage, "discovering new forms, patterns" and solutions that no one has yet imagined and that might even promote a better future. A writer, musician, or inventor shows creative courage when he or she rejects the status quo,⁵ seeing beyond what *is* to create something new. President Lincoln called Harriet Beecher Stowe, the "little woman who wrote the book that started this great war." Her 1851 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, while it didn't actually provoke the Civil

2. genocide: the systematic and planned execution of an entire national, racial, or ethnic group

3. Hutu and Tutsi: two of the three ethnic groups that occupy Rwanda and Burundi

4. apathy: lack of interest or concern

5. status quo: existing condition or state of affairs

War, created a groundswell⁶ of public outrage against slavery through its detailed and moving descriptions. Another example is *Rent*, one of the longest running shows on Broadway. *Rent* was the first musical to address the HIV health crisis through life-affirming personal stories aimed at the general public. An uplifting musical form helped the public face difficult issues.

Not just the arts, but all professions, require creative courage. Tim Berners-Lee, for instance, is credited with inventing the World Wide Web, maybe the most important innovation of our time. In 1991, he set up the first web site and began networking his computer with others around the country. Concerned that patenting his discovery would make the growing Web too expensive for general use, Berners-Lee chose to keep the technology public. In doing so, he passed up a personal fortune and risked mockery for his “foolish” insistence that the World Wide Web should belong to everyone.

Of course, the four types of courage sometimes overlap. Tobacco executive Jeffrey Wigand was motivated by moral courage when he revealed in the 1990s that Big Tobacco⁷ was hiding the truth about nicotine causing cancer. This whistle blower⁸ demonstrated physical courage as well, refusing to be silenced by veiled threats of violence. Wigand’s social courage was tested as the case hit the media, the business community shunned⁹ him, and his own family deserted him. And when his old life was shattered, this man somehow found the creative courage to build a new one.

“Courage has many faces,” writes Katherine Martin, the author of *Women of Courage*. “We lose much when we dismiss it in ourselves, thinking we don’t measure up.” The classification that May sets forth invites us to find and cultivate courage in our own lives, to ask what blocks our daring, and then to stand and try.

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. How does the author classify courage in this essay? That is, what four categories of courage does she identify? What is the source of these categories?
2. Provide one additional example of each type of courage. Draw your illustrations from your own or loved ones’ experiences, the news, history, or this textbook.

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6. groundswell: a sudden gathering of force

7. Big Tobacco: nickname for the three most powerful tobacco companies in the United States

8. whistle blower: an employee or member of an organization who exposes misconduct or corruption

9. shunned: rejected, ignored

3. What are the most common obstacles to behaving courageously? Fear? Apathy? Selfishness? What, in your opinion, most often “blocks our daring” (paragraph 10)?
4. A street campaign called “Stop Snitchin” is urging people in urban neighborhoods not to speak to police investigating local crimes—not to share tips and information that might solve those crimes. T-shirts, hip hop albums, and other marketing devices tell people to keep silent and sometimes threaten them. Does it take courage to stop snitching or to keep talking? Why? (To learn more, search online for “stop snitchin.”)

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Discuss a time when you or someone close to you displayed one or more of the four types of courage described in this essay.
2. Write a classification essay about another concept, emotion, or term—such as success, friends, mistakes, or lies—and break it into different types or “faces.”
3. Are you facing right now a situation or problem that will require courage to confront and correct? First, state the problem. Has a lack of courage in the past made it worse? If you applied true courage to the situation, what might be the outcome?

IAN FRAZIER

On the Rez

*Do you think a single act of courage or heroism can reverse decades of misunderstanding? In his book *On the Rez*, Ian Frazier tells the true story of SuAnne Marie Big Crow, who faced a taunting crowd and decided to answer its jeers with a surprising gift.*

Some people who live in the cities and towns near reservations treat their Indian neighbors decently; some don't. In Denver and Minneapolis and Rapid City police have been known to harass Indian teenagers and rough up Indian drunks and needlessly stop and search Indian cars. Local banks whose deposits include millions in tribal funds sometimes charge Indians higher

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interest rates than they charge whites. Gift shops near reservations sell junky caricature¹ Indian pictures and dolls, and until not long ago beer coolers had signs on them that said INDIAN POWER. In a big discount store in a reservation-border town a white clerk observes a lot of Indians waiting at the checkout and remarks, “Oh, they’re Indians—they’re used to standing in line.” Some people in South Dakota hate Indians, unapologetically, and will tell you why; in their voices you can hear a particular American meanness that is centuries old.

When teams from Pine Ridge play non-Indian teams, the question of race is always there. When Pine Ridge is the visiting team, usually the hosts are courteous and the players and fans have a good time. But Pine Ridge coaches know that occasionally at away games their kids will be insulted, their fans will feel unwelcome, the host gym will be dense with hostility, and the referees will call fouls on Indian players every chance they get. Sometimes in a game between Indian and non-Indian teams the difference in race becomes an important and distracting part of the event.

One place where Pine Ridge teams used to get harassed regularly was the high school gymnasium in Lead, South Dakota. Lead is a town of about 3,200 northwest of the reservation, in the Black Hills. It is laid out among the mines that are its main industry, and low, wooded mountains hedge it around. The brick high school building is set into a hillside. The school’s only gym in those days was small, with tiers of gray-painted concrete on which the spectator benches descended from just below the steel-beamed roof to the very edge of the basketball court—an arrangement that greatly magnified the interior noise.

In the fall of 1988 the Pine Ridge Lady Thorpes² went to Lead to play a basketball game. SuAnne was a full member of the team by then. She was a freshman, fourteen years old. Getting ready in the locker room, the Pine Ridge girls could hear the din from the Lead fans. They were yelling fake Indian war cries, a “*woo-woo-woo*” sound. The usual plan for the pre-game warm-up was for the visiting team to run onto the court in a line, take a lap or two around the floor, shoot some baskets, and then go to their bench at courtside. After that the home team would come out and do the same, and then the game would begin. Usually the Thorpes lined up for their entry more or less according to height, which meant that senior Doni De Cory, one of the tallest, went first. As the team waited in the hallway leading from the locker room, the heckling got louder. Some fans were waving food stamps, a reference to the reservation’s receiving federal aid. Others yelled, “Where’s the cheese?”—the joke being that if Indians were lining up, it must be to get commodity cheese. The Lead high school band had joined in, with fake Indian drumming and a fake Indian tune. Doni De Cory looked out the door and told her teammates, “I can’t handle

1. caricature: cartoon

2. Lady Thorpes: named for Native American Jim Thorpe, one of the greatest athletes of all time

this." SuAnne quickly offered to go first in her place. She was so eager that Doni became suspicious. "Don't embarrass us," Doni told her. SuAnne said, "I won't. I won't embarrass you." Doni gave her the ball, and SuAnne stood first in line.

She came running onto the court dribbling the basketball, with her teammates running behind. On the court the noise was deafening. SuAnne went right down the middle and suddenly stopped when she got to center court. Her teammates were taken by surprise, and some bumped into each other. Coach Zimiga, at the rear of the line, did not know why they had stopped. SuAnne turned to Doni De Cory and tossed her the ball. Then she stepped into the jump-ball circle at center court, facing the Lead fans. She unbuttoned her warm-up jacket, took it off, draped it over her shoulders, and began to do the Lakota shawl dance. SuAnne knew all the traditional dances (she had competed in many powwows as a little girl), and the dance she chose is a young woman's dance, graceful and modest and show-offy all at the same time. "I couldn't believe it—she was powwowin', like, 'Get down!'" Doni De Cory recalls. "And then she started to sing." SuAnne began to sing in Lakota, swaying back and forth in the jump-ball circle, doing the shawl dance, using her warm-up jacket for a shawl. The crowd went completely silent. "All that stuff the Lead fans were yelling—it was like she *reversed* it somehow," a teammate says. In the sudden quiet all they could hear was her Lakota song. SuAnne dropped her jacket, took the ball from Doni De Cory, and ran a lap around the court dribbling expertly and fast. The audience began to cheer and applaud. She sprinted to the basket, went up in the air, and laid the ball through the hoop, with the fans cheering loudly now. Of course, Pine Ridge went on to win the game.

For the Oglala, what SuAnne did that day almost immediately took on the status of myth. People from Pine Ridge who witnessed it still describe it in terms of awe and disbelief. Amazement swept through the younger kids when they heard. "I was, like, 'What did she just do?'" recalls her cousin Angie Big Crow, an eighth grader at the time. All over the reservation people told and retold the story of SuAnne at Lead. Anytime the subject of SuAnne came up when I was talking to people on Pine Ridge, I would always ask if they had heard about what she did at Lead, and always the answer was a smile and a nod—"Yeah, I was there," or "Yeah, I heard about that." To the unnumbered big and small slights of local racism that the Oglala have known all their lives SuAnne's exploit made an emphatic reply.

Back in the days when Lakota war parties still fought battles against other tribes and the Army, no deed of war was more honored than the act of counting coup. To "count coup" means to touch an armed enemy in full possession of his powers with a special stick called a coup stick, or with the hand. The touch is not a blow, and serves only to indicate how close to the enemy you came. As an act of bravery, counting coup was regarded as greater than killing an enemy

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in single combat, greater than taking a scalp or horses or any prize. Counting coup was an act of almost abstract courage, of pure playfulness taken to the most daring extreme. Very likely, to do it and survive brought an exhilaration to which nothing else could compare. In an ancient sense that her Oglala kin could recognize, SuAnne counted coup on the fans of Lead.

And yet this coup was an act not of war but of peace. SuAnne's coup strike was an offering, an invitation. It gave the hecklers the best interpretation, as if their silly, mocking chants were meant only in good will. It showed that their fake Indian songs were just that—fake—and that the real thing was better, as real things usually are. We Lakota have been dancing like this for centuries, the dance said; we've been doing the shawl dance since long before you came, before you got on the boat in Glasgow or Bremerhaven, before you stole this land, and we're still doing it today. And isn't it pretty, when you see how it's supposed to be done? Because finally, what SuAnne proposed was to invite us—us onlookers in the stands, namely, the non-Lakota rest of this country—to dance too. She was in the Lead gym to play, and she invited us all to play. The symbol she used to include us was the warm-up jacket. Everyone in America has a warm-up jacket. I've got one, probably so do you, so did (no doubt) many of the fans at Lead. By using the warm-up jacket as a shawl in her impromptu shawl dance she made Lakota relatives of us all.

"It was funny," Doni De Cory says, "but after that game the relationship between Lead and us was tremendous. When we played Lead again, the games were really good, and we got to know some of the girls on the team. Later, when we went to a tournament and Lead was there, we were hanging out with the Lead girls and eating pizza with them. We got to know some of their parents, too. What SuAnne did made a lasting impression and changed the whole situation with us and Lead. We found out there are some really good people in Lead."

America is a leap of the imagination. From its beginning people have had only a persistent idea of what a good country should be. The idea involves freedom, equality, justice, and the pursuit of happiness; nowadays most of us probably could not describe it much more clearly than that. The truth is, it always has been a bit of a guess. No one has ever known for sure whether a country based on such an idea is really possible, but again and again we have leaped toward the idea and hoped. What SuAnne Big Crow demonstrated in the Lead high school gym is that making the leap is the whole point. The idea does not truly live unless it is expressed by an act; the country does not live unless we make the leap from our tribe or focus group or gated community or demographic³ and land on the shaky platform of that idea of a good country which all kinds of different people share.

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3. demographic: group of similar people

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. How was the Pine Ridge girls' basketball team usually treated when they played games at Lead? What larger problem between Indians and non-Indians in South Dakota was reflected in this behavior?
2. SuAnne's performance of the Lakota shawl dance to a silent gymnasium full of people is described in powerful detail. What descriptive details does the author include to make that scene come alive for the reader?
3. What did the students at Lead discover during SuAnne's dance that caused them to change their opinions about Lakota Indians? What made the Pine Ridge players decide that "there are some really good people in Lead" (paragraph 9)?
4. The author calls SuAnne's dance an act of courage. What was courageous about her dance that day? Consider in your answer her age, the history between Pine Ridge and Lead, and the behavior of the audience before the game.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. SuAnne Marie Big Crow's actions that day made her a hero for the people of the Pine Ridge reservation. With a group of classmates, brainstorm the qualities that make someone a hero. Then, select two or three of these qualities and write an essay defining heroism. You may wish to illustrate with an anecdote of your own about someone who performed like a hero in a difficult situation.
2. How can we promote tolerance in the world? Think of a conflict that you have experienced or heard about—perhaps between two ethnic groups, gangs, families, or individuals. What specific actions would you recommend to help promote understanding and tolerance between the two sides?
3. Frazier says that equality and justice do not live until they are expressed in action—until "we make the leap from our tribe or group" into a larger community that "different people share" (paragraph 10). Write an essay in which you describe someone who has made such a leap, such as reaching out to an outsider, standing up against a stereotype, or moving to a new country or community.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

Why the M Word Matters to Me

In recent years, debate has flared between advocates of traditional marriage and those who support a same-sex couple's right to marry. Some states have granted gay couples this right while others remain adamantly opposed. In this Time Magazine article, blogger and author Andrew Sullivan takes a stand on the issue.

As a child, I had no idea what homosexuality was. I grew up in a traditional home—Catholic, conservative, middle class. Life was relatively simple: education, work, family. I was raised to aim high in life, even though my parents hadn't gone to college. But one thing was instilled¹ in me. What mattered was not how far you went in life, how much money you earned, how big a name you made for yourself. What really mattered was family and the love you had for one another. The most important day of your life was not graduation from college or your first day at work or a raise or even your first house. The most important day of your life was when you got married. It was on that day that all your friends and all your family got together to celebrate the most important thing in life: your happiness—your ability to make a new home, to form a new but connected family, to find love that put everything else into perspective.

But as I grew older, I found that this was somehow not available to me. I didn't feel the things for girls that my peers did. All the emotions and social rituals and bonding of teenage heterosexual life eluded² me. I didn't know why. No one explained it. My emotional bonds to other boys were one-sided; each time I felt myself falling in love, they sensed it, pushed it away. I didn't and couldn't blame them. I got along fine with my buds in a nonemotional context, but something was awry³, something not right. I came to know almost instinctively that I would never be a part of my family the way my siblings might one day be. The love I had inside me was unmentionable, anathema⁴. I remember writing in my teenage journal one day, "I'm a professional human being. But what do I do in my private life?"

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1. instilled: implanted

2. eluded: escaped or avoided

3. awry: wrong

4. anathema: someone or something that is loathed, damned, or cursed

I never discussed my real life. I couldn't date girls and so immersed myself in schoolwork, the debate team, school plays, anything to give me an excuse not to confront reality. When I looked toward the years ahead, I couldn't see a future. There was just a void. Was I going to be alone my whole life? Would I ever have a most important day in my life? It seemed impossible, a negation⁵, an undoing. To be a full part of my family, I had to somehow not be me. So, like many other gay teens, I withdrew, became neurotic, depressed, at times close to suicidal. I shut myself in my room with my books night after night while my peers developed the skills needed to form real relationships and loves. In wounded pride, I even voiced a rejection of family and marriage. It was the only way I could explain my isolation.

It took years for me to realize that I was gay, years more to tell others and more time yet to form any kind of stable emotional bond with another man. Because my sexuality had emerged in solitude—and without any link to the idea of an actual relationship—it was hard later to reconnect sex to love and self-esteem. It still is. But I persevered⁶, each relationship slowly growing longer than the last, learning in my 20s and 30s what my straight friends had found out in their teens. But even then my parents and friends never asked the question they would have asked automatically if I were straight: *So, when are you going to get married? When will we be able to celebrate it and affirm it and support it?* In fact, no one—no one—has yet asked me that question.

When people talk about gay marriage, they miss the point. This isn't about gay marriage. It's about marriage. It's about family. It's about love. It isn't about religion. It's about civil⁷ marriage licenses. Churches can and should have the right to say no to marriage for gays in their congregations, just as Catholics say no to divorce, but divorce is still a civil option. These family values are not options for a happy and stable life. They are necessities. Putting gay relationships in some other category—civil unions, domestic partnerships, whatever—may alleviate⁸ real human needs, but by their very euphemism⁹, by their very separateness, they actually build a wall between gay people and their families. They put back the barrier many of us have spent a lifetime trying to erase.

It's too late for me to undo my past. But I want above everything else to remember a young kid out there who may even be reading this now. I want to let him know that he doesn't have to choose between himself and his family

.....
5. negation: denial

6. persevered: kept going despite difficulties

7. civil: relating to the state or citizens

8. alleviate: to make more bearable

9. euphemism: an indirect and more pleasant expression substituted for a harsh, honest statement

any more. I want him to know that his love has dignity, that he does indeed have a future as a full and equal part of the human race. Only marriage will do that. Only marriage can bring him home.

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Have you, like Sullivan, ever had to choose between yourself and your family (paragraph 6)? Did you ever disappoint one or more family member because they had expectations for you that you could not fulfill for some reason?
2. Do you agree with Sullivan that there should be just one civil marriage license for all citizens, not separate categories for heterosexual and for same-sex couples? Why or why not?
3. In Chapter 13, you learned five methods of persuasion: facts, referring to an authority, examples, predicting consequences, and answering the opposition. In the first four paragraphs, the author uses his own life as an example. How many other methods does he use to develop his argument for same-sex marriage?
4. Sullivan argues that marriage is a vital institution. In your opinion, what are the benefits of getting and staying married? What are the possible problems or traps? Are you married, or do you want to marry some day? Why or why not?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write a rebuttal to Sullivan's essay, arguing against same-sex marriage. Develop your argument with two or three well-developed reasons.
2. In paragraph 5, the author says that love, marriage, and family are necessary for "a happy and stable life." Do you agree? In your opinion, what are the essential ingredients for a happy, stable life?
3. The meaning of "family" has changed in recent years. Now, many households include a single parent or grandparent, step-relations, gay parents, and so forth. Write an extended definition of the word "family" that takes into account modern realities. Use examples to support your definition.

MICHAEL LEVIN

The Case for Torture

Leaders like Martin Luther King and Mahatma Ghandi have preached nonviolence no matter what, and many people agree that deliberately injuring another person is wrong. However, philosophy professor Michael Levin argues in this startling essay that torture is sometimes necessary.

It is generally assumed that torture is impermissible,¹ a throwback to a more brutal age. Enlightened societies reject it outright, and regimes suspected of using it risk the wrath of the United States.

I believe this attitude is unwise. There are situations in which torture is not merely permissible but morally mandatory. Moreover, these situations are moving from the realm of imagination to fact.

Suppose a terrorist has hidden an atomic bomb on Manhattan Island which will detonate at noon on July 4 unless... (here follow the usual demands for money and release of his friends from jail). Suppose, further, that he is caught at 10 A.M. of the fateful day, but—preferring death to failure—won't disclose where the bomb is. What do we do? If we follow due process—wait for his lawyer, arraign him—millions of people will die. If the only way to save those lives is to subject the terrorist to the most excruciating possible pain, what grounds can there be for not doing so? I suggest there are none. In any case, I ask you to face the question with an open mind.

Torturing the terrorist is unconstitutional? Probably. But millions of lives surely outweigh constitutionality. Torture is barbaric? Mass murder is far more barbaric. Indeed, letting millions of innocents die in deference² to one who flaunts his guilt is moral cowardice, an unwillingness to dirty one's hands. If *you* caught the terrorist, could you sleep nights knowing that millions died because you couldn't bring yourself to apply the electrodes?

Once you concede that torture is justified in extreme cases, you have admitted that the decision to use torture is a matter of balancing innocent lives against the means needed to save them. You must now face more realistic cases involving more modest numbers. Someone plants a bomb on a jumbo jet. He alone can disarm it, and his demands cannot be met (or if they can, we refuse to set a precedent³ by yielding to his threats). Surely we can,

1. impermissible: not allowed

2. deference: respectful submission

3. precedent: a possible example in similar situations

we must, do anything to the extortionist⁴ to save the passengers. How can we tell 300, or 100, or 10 people who never asked to be put in danger, “I’m sorry, you’ll have to die in agony, we just couldn’t bring ourselves to...”

Here are the results of an informal poll about a third, hypothetical,⁵ case. Suppose a terrorist group kidnapped a newborn baby from a hospital. I asked four mothers if they would approve of torturing kidnappers if that were necessary to get their own newborns back. All said yes, the most “liberal” adding that she would administer it herself.

I am not advocating torture as punishment. Punishment is addressed to deeds irrevocably⁶ past. Rather, I am advocating torture as an acceptable measure for preventing future evils. So understood, it is far less objectionable than many extant⁷ punishments. Opponents of the death penalty, for example, are forever insisting that executing a murderer will not bring back his victim (as if the purpose of capital punishment were supposed to be resurrection, not deterrence⁸ or retribution).⁹ But torture, in the cases described, is intended not to bring anyone back but to keep innocents from being dispatched.¹⁰ The most powerful argument against using torture as a punishment or to secure confessions is that such practices disregard the rights of the individual. Well, if the individual is all that important—and he is—it is correspondingly important to protect the rights of individuals threatened by terrorists. If life is so valuable that it must never be taken, the lives of the innocents must be saved even at the price of hurting the one who endangers them.

Better precedents for torture are assassination and preemptive¹¹ attack. No Allied¹² leader would have flinched at assassinating Hitler¹³ had that been possible. (The Allies did assassinate Heydrich.¹⁴) Americans would be angered to learn that Roosevelt could have had Hitler killed in 1943—thereby shortening the war and saving millions of lives—but refused on moral grounds. Similarly, if nation A learns that nation B is about to launch an unprovoked attack, A has a right to save itself by destroying B’s military capability first. In the same way, if the police can by torture save those who would otherwise die at the hands of kidnappers or terrorists, they must.

4. extortionist: one who gets something by force or threat

5. hypothetical: assumed to be true for the purposes of argument

6. irrevocably: impossible to change

7. extant: existing

8. deterrence: preventing similar acts

9. retribution: punishment

10. dispatched: killed

11. preemptive attack: striking first, before the enemy does

12. Allied: in World War II, the Allied Powers included the United States, Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and China

13. Hitler: dictator of Nazi Germany who ordered the murder of millions of Jews and others

14. Heydrich: a Nazi organizer of mass executions

There is an important difference between terrorists and their victims that should mute talk of the terrorists' "rights." The terrorist's victims are at risk unintentionally, not having asked to be endangered. But the terrorist knowingly initiated his actions. Unlike his victims, he volunteered for the risks of his deed. By threatening to kill for profit or idealism, he renounces civilized standards, and he can have no complaint if civilization tries to thwart him by whatever means necessary.

Just as torture is justified only to save lives (not extort confessions or recantations),¹⁵ it is justifiably administered only to those *known* to hold innocent lives in their hands. Ah, but how can the authorities ever be sure they have the right malefactor?¹⁶ Isn't there a danger of error and abuse? Won't We turn into Them?

Questions like these are disingenuous¹⁷ in a world in which terrorists proclaim themselves and perform for television. The name of their game is public recognition. After all, you can't very well intimidate a government into releasing your freedom fighters unless you announce that it is your group that has seized its embassy. "Clear guilt" is difficult to define, but when 40 million people see a group of masked gunmen seize an airplane on the evening news, there is not much question about who the perpetrators are. There will be hard cases where the situation is murkier. Nonetheless, a line demarcating¹⁸ the legitimate use of torture can be drawn. Torture only the obviously guilty, and only for the sake of saving innocents, and the line between Us and Them will remain clear.

There is little danger that the Western democracies will lose their way if they choose to inflict pain as one way of preserving order. Paralysis in the face of evil is the greater danger. Some day soon a terrorist will threaten tens of thousands of lives, and torture will be the only way to save them. We had better start thinking about this.

DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. What is the author's main point—his thesis? According to Levin, in what specific circumstances should torture be used? Do you agree that someone who refuses to torture a terrorist is guilty of moral cowardice?
2. What arguments *against* torture does the author answer in paragraph 4? Are his answers convincing? His introduction also answers the

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15. recantations: taking back of previous statements

16. malefactor: evildoer

17. disingenuous: falsely innocent-seeming

18. demarcating: setting boundaries

opposition (paragraphs 1 and 2). Why do you think Levin spends so much time answering the opposition in this essay?

3. Levin first argues that torturing one person to save millions of lives would be acceptable; then he works down from millions to 300, 100, 10, and finally, a single infant (paragraphs 3–6). Would you, like the four mothers, approve of torturing someone who kidnapped your newborn if this would get your infant back?
4. Why does Levin argue that torture should never be used as punishment (paragraph 7)?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Conduct an informal poll of mothers based on a hypothetical kidnap case, as Levin does in paragraph 6. Ask at least five mothers whether they would support torture of the kidnapper and why. Organize your findings and write a paper presenting them.
2. Write an essay called “A Case for (or Against) Racial Profiling.” Consider whether authorities should use racial or ethnic profiling to identify possible terrorists at airports and elsewhere. What about profiling on highways (where African Americans are sometimes stopped for DWB, “driving while black”)? Carefully plan your argument before you write.
3. Write a reply to Michael Levin’s essay. Develop an argument against torture under any circumstances. For ideas search “Amnesty International, torture test” or “United Nations, torture.”

ALICE WALKER

Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self

Being physically injured can be terrifying; coming to terms with a permanent disability can be a painful, difficult process. Alice Walker, a noted fiction writer, poet, and author of The Color Purple, tells of her feelings and experiences before, during, and after an injury that changed her life.

It is a bright summer day in 1947. My father, a fat, funny man with beautiful eyes and a subversive wit,¹ is trying to decide which of his eight children he will take with him to the county fair. My mother, of course, will not go. She is knocked out from getting most of us ready: I hold my neck stiff against the pressure of her knuckles as she hastily completes the braiding and then beribboning of my hair.

My father is the driver for the rich old white lady up the road. Her name is Miss Mey. She owns all the land for miles around, as well as the house in which we live. All I remember about her is that she once offered to pay my mother thirty-five cents for cleaning her house, raking up piles of her magnolia leaves, and washing her family's clothes, and that my mother—she of no money, eight children, and a chronic earache—refused it. But I do not think of this in 1947. I am two and a half years old. I want to go everywhere my daddy goes. I am excited at the prospect of riding in a car. Someone has told me fairs are fun. That there is room in the car for only three of us doesn't faze² me at all. Whirling happily in my starched frock, showing off my biscuit-polished patent-leather shoes and lavender socks, tossing my head in a way that makes my ribbons bounce, I stand, hands on hips, before my father. "Take me, Daddy," I say with assurance; "I'm the prettiest!"

Later, it does not surprise me to find myself in Miss Mey's shiny black car, sharing the back seat with the other lucky ones. Does not surprise me that I thoroughly enjoy the fair. At home that night I tell the unlucky ones all I can remember about the merry-go-round, the man who eats live chickens, and the teddy bears, until they say: that's enough, baby Alice. Shut up now, and go to sleep.

It is Easter Sunday, 1950. I am dressed in a green, flocked, scalloped-hem dress (handmade by my adoring sister, Ruth) that has its own smooth satin petticoat and tiny hot-pink roses tucked into each scallop. My shoes, new T-strap patent leather, again highly biscuit-polished. I am six years old and have learned one of the longest Easter speeches to be heard that day, totally unlike the speech I said when was two: "Easter lilies/pure and white / blossom in / the morning light." When I rise to give my speech I do so on a great wave of love and pride and expectation. People in the church stop rustling their new crinolines. They seem to hold their breath. I can tell they admire my dress, but it is my spirit, bordering on sassiness (womanishness), they secretly applaud.

"That girl's a little *mess*," they whisper to each other, pleased.

Naturally I say my speech without stammer or pause, unlike those who stutter, stammer, or, worst of all, forget. This is before the word "beautiful"

1. subversive wit: sarcastic, sharp sense of humor

2. faze: discourage

exists in people's vocabulary, but "Oh, isn't she the cutest thing!" frequently floats my way. "And got so much sense!" they gratefully add... for which thoughtful addition I thank them to this day.

It was great fun being cute. But then, one day, it ended.

I am eight years old and a tomboy. I have a cowboy hat, cowboy boots, checkered shirt and pants, all red. My playmates are my brothers, two and four years older than I. Their colors are black and green, the only difference in the way we are dressed. On Saturday nights we all go to the picture show, even my mother; Westerns are her favorite kind of movie. Back home, "on the ranch," we pretend we are Tom Mix, Hopalong Cassidy, Lash LaRue (we've even named one of our dogs Lash LaRue); we chase each other for hours rustling cattle, being outlaws, delivering damsels from distress. Then my parents decide to buy my brothers guns. These are not "real" guns. They shoot "BBs," copper pellets my brothers say will kill birds. Because I am a girl, I do not get a gun. Instantly I am relegated to³ the position of Indian. Now there appears a great distance between us. They shoot and shoot at everything with their new guns. I try to keep up with my bow and arrows.

One day while I am standing on top of our makeshift "garage"—pieces of tin nailed across some poles—holding my bow and arrow and looking out toward the fields, I feel an incredible blow in my right eye. I look down just in time to see my brother lower his gun.

Both brothers rush to my side. My eye stings, and I cover it with my hand. "If you tell," they say, "we will get a whipping. You don't want that to happen, do you?" I do not. "Here is a piece of wire," says the older brother, picking it up from the roof; "say you stepped on one end of it and the other flew up and hit you." The pain is beginning to start. "Yes," I say. "Yes, I will say that is what happened." If I do not say this is what happened, I know my brothers will find ways to make me wish I had. But now I will say anything that gets me to my mother.

Confronted by our parents we stick to the lie agreed upon. They place me on a bench on the porch and I close my left eye while they examine the right. There is a tree growing from underneath the porch that climbs past the railing to the roof. It is the last thing my right eye sees. I watch as its trunk, its branches, and then its leaves are blotted out by the rising blood.

I am in shock. First there is intense fever, which my father tries to break using lily leaves bound around my head. Then there are chills: my mother tries to get me to eat soup. Eventually, I do not know how, my parents learn what has happened. A week after the "accident" they take me to see a doctor. "Why did you wait so long to come?" he asks, looking into my eye and shaking his

.....
3. relegated to: assigned

head. “Eyes are sympathetic,⁴” he says. “If one is blind, the other will likely become blind too.”

This comment of the doctor’s terrifies me. But it is really how I look that bothers me most. Where the BB pellet struck there is a glob of whitish scar tissue, a hideous cataract, on my eye. Now when I stare at people—a favorite pastime, up to now—they will stare back. Not at the “cute” little girl, but at her scar. For six years I do not stare at anyone, because I do not raise my head. 13

Years later, in the throes⁵ of a mid-life crisis, I ask my mother and sister whether I changed after the “accident.” “No,” they say, puzzled. “What do you mean?” 14

What do I mean? 15

I am eight, and, for the first time, doing poorly in school, where I have been something of a whiz since I was four. We have just moved to the place where the “accident” occurred. We do not know any of the people around us because this is a different county. The only time I see the friends I knew is when we go back to our old church. The new school is the former state penitentiary. It is a large stone building, cold and drafty, crammed to overflowing with boisterous,⁶ ill-disciplined children. On the third floor there is a huge circular imprint of some partition that has been torn out. 16

“What used to be there?” I ask a sullen girl next to me on our way past it to lunch. 17

“The electric chair,” says she. 18

At night I have nightmares about the electric chair, and about all the people reputedly⁷ “fried” in it. I am afraid of the school, where all the students seem to be budding criminals. 19

“What’s the matter with your eye?” they ask, critically. 20

When I don’t answer (I cannot decide whether it was an “accident” or not), they shove me, insist on a fight. 21

My brother, the one who created the story about the wire, comes to my rescue. But then brags so much about “protecting” me, I become sick. 22

After months of torture at the school, my parents decide to send me back to our old community, to my old school. I live with my grandparents and the teacher they board. But there is no room for Phoebe, my cat. By the time my grandparents decide there is room, and I ask for my cat, she cannot be found. Miss Yarborough, the boarding teacher, takes me under her wing, and begins to teach me to play the piano. But soon she marries an African—a “prince,” she says—and is whisked away to his continent. 23

4. sympathetic: closely connected

5. throes: a condition of struggle

6. boisterous: rowdy and noisy

7. reputedly: supposedly



© AP Images/Noah Berger

The writer Alice Walker

At my old school there is at least one teacher who loves me. She is the teacher who “knew me before I was born” and bought my first baby clothes. It is she who makes life bearable. It is her presence that finally helps me turn on the one child at the school who continually calls me “one-eyed bitch.” One day I simply grab him by his coat and beat him until I am satisfied. It is my teacher who tells me my mother is ill. 24

My mother is lying in bed in the middle of the day, something I have never seen. She is in too much pain to speak. She has an abscess in her ear. I stand looking down on her, knowing that if she dies, I cannot live. She is being treated with warm oils and hot bricks held against her cheek. Finally a doctor comes. But I must go back to my grandparents’ house. The weeks pass but I am hardly aware of it. All I know is that my mother might die, my father is not so jolly, my brothers still have their guns, and I am the one sent away from home. 25

“You did not change,” they say. 26

Did I imagine the anguish of never looking up? 27

I am twelve. When relatives come to visit I hide in my room. My cousin Brenda, just my age, whose father works in the post office and whose mother is a nurse, comes to find me. "Hello," she says. And then she asks, looking at my recent school picture, which I did not want taken, and on which the "glob," as I think of it, is clearly visible, "You still can't see out of that eye?" 28

"No," I say, and flop back on the bed over my book. 29

That night, as I do almost every night, I abuse my eye. I rant and rave at it, in front of the mirror. I plead with it to clear up before morning. I tell it I hate and despise it. I do not pray for sight. I pray for beauty. 30

"You did not change," they say. 31

I am fourteen and baby-sitting for my brother Bill, who lives in Boston. He is my favorite brother and there is a strong bond between us. Understanding my feelings of shame and ugliness he and his wife take me to a local hospital, where the "glob" is removed by a doctor named O. Henry. There is still a small bluish crater where the scar tissue was, but the ugly white stuff is gone. Almost immediately I become a different person from the girl who does not raise her head. Or so I think. Now that I've raised my head I win the boyfriend of my dreams. Now that I've raised my head I have plenty of friends. Now that I've raised my head classwork comes from my lips as faultlessly as Easter speeches did, and I leave high school as valedictorian, most popular student, and queen, hardly believing my luck. Ironically, the girl who was voted most beautiful in our class (and was) was later shot twice through the chest by a male companion, using a "real" gun, while she was pregnant. But that's another story in itself. Or is it? 32

"You did not change," they say. 33

It is now thirty years since the "accident." A beautiful journalist comes to visit and to interview me. She is going to write a cover story for her magazine that focuses on my latest book. "Decide how you want to look on the cover," she says. "Glamorous, or whatever." 34

Never mind "glamorous," it is the "whatever" that I hear. Suddenly all I can think of is whether I will get enough sleep the night before the photography session: if I don't, my eye will be tired and wander, as blind eyes will. 35

At night in bed with my lover I think up reasons why I should not appear on the cover of a magazine. "My meanest critics will say I've sold out," I say. "My family will now realize I write scandalous books." 36

"But what's the real reason you don't want to do this?" he asks. 37

"Because in all probability," I say in a rush, "my eye won't be straight." 38

"It will be straight enough," he says. Then, "Besides, I thought you'd made your peace with that." 39

And I suddenly remember that I have.

I remember:

I am talking to my brother Jimmy, asking if he remembers anything unusual about the day I was shot. He does not know I consider that day the last time my father, with his sweet home remedy of cool lily leaves, chose me, and that I suffered and raged inside because of this. "Well," he says, "all I remember is standing by the side of the highway with Daddy, trying to flag down a car. A white man stopped, but when Daddy said he needed somebody to take his little girl to the doctor, he drove off."

I remember:

I am in the desert for the first time. I fall totally in love with it. I am so overwhelmed by its beauty, I confront for the first time, consciously, the meaning of the doctor's words years ago: "Eyes are sympathetic. If one is blind, the other will likely become blind too." I realize I have dashed about the world madly, looking at this, looking at that, storing up images against the fading of the light. But I might have missed seeing the desert! The shock of that possibility—and gratitude for over twenty-five years of sight—sends me literally to my knees. Poem after poem comes—which is perhaps how poets pray.

On Sight

I am so thankful I have seen
The Desert
And the creatures in the desert
And the desert itself.

The desert has its own moon
Which I have seen
With my own eye.
There is no flag on it.

Trees of the desert have arms
All of which are always up
That is because the moon is up
The sun is up
Also the sky
The stars
Clouds
None with flags.
If there *were* flags, I doubt
the trees would point.
Would you?

But mostly, I remember this:

I am twenty-seven, and my baby daughter is almost three. Since her birth I have worried about her discovery that her mother's eyes are different from other people's. Will she be embarrassed? I think. What will she say? Every day she watches a television program called "Big Blue Marble." It begins with a picture of the earth as it appears from the moon. It is bluish, a little battered-looking, but full of light, with whitish clouds swirling around it. Every time I see it I weep with love, as if it is a picture of Grandma's house. One day when I am putting Rebecca down for her nap, she suddenly focuses on my eye. Something inside me cringes, gets ready to try to protect myself. All children are cruel about physical differences, I know from experience, and that they don't always mean to be is another matter. I assume Rebecca will be the same.

But no-o-o-o. She studies my face intently as we stand, her inside and me outside her crib. She even holds my face maternally between her dimpled little hands. Then, looking every bit as serious and lawyerlike as her father, she says, as if it may just possibly have slipped my attention: "Mommy, there's a world in your eye." (As in, "Don't be alarmed, or do anything crazy.") And then, gently, but with great interest: "Mommy, where did you get that world in your eye?"

For the most part, the pain left then. (So what, if my brothers grew up to buy even more powerful pellet guns for their sons and to carry real guns themselves. So what, if a young "Morehouse man" once nearly fell off the steps of Trevor Arnett Library because he thought my eyes were blue.) Crying and laughing I ran to the bathroom, while Rebecca mumbled and sang herself to sleep. Yes indeed, I realized, looking into the mirror. There was a world in my eye. And I saw that it was possible to love it: that in fact, for all it had taught me of shame and anger and inner vision, I did love it. Even to see it drifting out of orbit in boredom, or rolling up out of fatigue, not to mention floating back at attention in excitement (bearing witness, a friend has called it), deeply suitable to my personality, and even characteristic of me.

That night I dream I am dancing to Stevie Wonder's song "Always" (the name of the song is really "As," but I hear it as "Always"). As I dance, whirling and joyous, happier than I've ever been in my life, another bright-faced dancer joins me. We dance and kiss each other and hold each other through the night. The other dancer has obviously come through all right, as I have done. She is beautiful, whole and free. And she is also me.

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DISCUSSION AND WRITING QUESTIONS

1. When did the author stop being “cute”? Is she happy about this change?
2. Why do you think her family insists that she did not change after the shooting?
3. Until her operation at age fourteen, Walker speaks of hating her injured eye. By the end of the essay, she dances with another “dancer,” who is “beautiful, whole and free. And she is also me.” What makes the author change her mind about her “deformity”?
4. The author uses particular words and phrases to indicate time or chronological order in her narrative. Find the words that indicate time order. At one point in her narrative, she breaks this time order to skip back into the past. In which paragraph does this flashback occur?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write about an unpleasant event or experience that resulted in personal growth for you. Your writing need not focus on something as painful as Alice Walker’s injury. What is important is how you came to terms with the experience and what you ultimately learned from it.
2. Tell a story about being thrust into a completely unfamiliar situation. You might describe your reaction to attending a new school, starting a new job, or moving to a new city. Present concrete details of your experience. Organize the story around your most vivid memories, like meeting new classmates for the first time, or your first few days on the new job.
3. In a group with three or four classmates, discuss the accident that injured Walker’s eye and the children’s cover-up (paragraphs 8–11). Her brothers, ten and twelve, were given BB guns. How did these guns change the relationships among siblings even before the accident? Why did this happen? Are BB guns “real guns”? Have you known someone injured by “gun play”? How can such accidents be prevented? Write a paper on your own in which you present one to three ways in which Walker’s injury—or one that you know about—could have been prevented.

Quotation Bank

This collection of wise and humorous statements has been assembled for you to read, enjoy, and use in a variety of ways as you write. You might choose quotations that you particularly agree or disagree with and use them as the basis of journal entries and writing assignments. Sometimes when writing a paragraph or an essay, you may find it useful to include a quotation to support a point you are making. Alternatively, you may simply want to read through these quotations for ideas and for fun. As you come across other intriguing statements by writers, add them to the list—or write some of your own.

Education

- Knowledge is power. 1
—*Francis Bacon*
- Everyone is ignorant, only on different subjects. 2
—*Will Rogers*
- Never be afraid to sit awhile and think. 3
—*Lorraine Hansberry*
- A mind stretched by a new idea can never go back to its original dimensions. 4
—*Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.*
- The contest between education and TV . . . has been won by television. 5
—*Robert Hughes*
- This thing called “failure” is not the falling down, but the staying down. 6
—*Mary Pickford*
- Tell me what you pay attention to, and I will tell you who you are. 7
—*José Ortega y Gasset*
- We learn something by doing it. There is no other way. 8
—*John Holt*

Work and Success

- We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit. 9
—*Aristotle*

- He who does not hope to win has already lost. 10
—*José Joaquín de Olmedo*
- The harder you work, the luckier you get. 11
—*Gary Player*
- Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee. 12
—*Muhammad Ali*
- All glory comes from daring to begin. 13
—*Anonymous*
- Show me a person who has never made a mistake,
and I'll show you a person who has never achieved much. 14
—*Joan Collins*
- Nice guys finish last. 15
—*Leo Durocher*
- Do as the bull in the face of adversity: charge. 16
—*José de Diego*
- Should you not find the pearl after one or two dives, don't
blame the ocean! Blame your diving! You are not going deep enough. 17
—*P. Yogananda*
- I merely took the energy it takes to pout and wrote some blues. 18
—*Duke Ellington*
- I write when I'm inspired, and I see to it that I'm inspired
at nine o'clock every morning. 19
—*Peter De Vries*
- Love**
- If you want to be loved, be lovable. 20
—*Ovid*
- After ecstasy, the laundry. 21
—*Zen saying*
- The first duty of love is to listen. 22
—*Paul Tillich*
- A successful marriage requires falling in love many
times, always with the same person. 23
—*Mignon McLaughlin*

Love is a fire, but whether it's going to warm your hearth
or burn down your house, you can never tell. 24
—*Dorothy Parker*

The way to love anything is to realize that it might be lost. 25
—*G. K. Chesterton*

It's like magic. When you live by yourself, all your
annoying habits are gone! 26
—*Merrill Marko*

Friends and Family

Love is blind; friendship closes its eyes. 27
—*Anonymous*

Friendship with oneself is all important because without it
one cannot be friends with anyone else in the world. 28
—*Eleanor Roosevelt*

You do not know who is your friend and who is your
enemy until the ice breaks. 29
—*Eskimo proverb*

Your children need your presence more than your presents. 30
—*Jesse Jackson*

Children need love, especially when they do not deserve it. 31
—*Harold S. Hulbert*

Ourselves in Society

America is not a melting pot. It is a sizzling cauldron. 32
—*Barbara Ann Mikulski*

When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion. 33
—*Ethiopian proverb*

A smile is the shortest distance between two people. 34
—*Victor Borge*

Freedom does not always win. This is one of the
bitterest lessons of history. 35
—*A. J. P. Taylor*

If you think you're too small to have an impact, try
going to bed with a mosquito. 36
—*Anita Koddick*

Courage isn't the absence of fear; it is action in the face of fear. 37
—*S. Kennedy*

Racism is still a major issue because it is a habit. 38
—*Maya Angelou*

What women want is what men want: they want respect. 39
—*Marilyn vos Savant*

Basically people are people . . . but it is our differences 40
which charm, delight, and frighten us.
—*Agnes Newton Keith*

Wisdom for Living

Look within! The secret is inside you! 41
—*Hui Neng*

One who wants a rose must respect the thorn. 42
—*Persian proverb*

To live a creative life, we must lose our fear of being wrong. 43
—*Joseph Chilton Pearce*

People who keep stiff upper lips find that it's damn 44
hard to smile.
—*Judith Guest*

Self-pity in its early stages is as snug as a feather mattress. 45
Only when it hardens does it become uncomfortable.
—*Maya Angelou*

When three people call you a donkey, put on a saddle. 46
—*Spanish proverb*

Self-examination—if it is thorough enough—is always the 47
first step towards change.
—*Thomas Mann*

If you can't change your fate, change your attitude. 48
—*Amy Tan*

Time is a dressmaker specializing in alterations. 49
—*Faith Baldwin*

Living in the lap of luxury isn't bad, except you never know 50
when luxury is going to stand up.
—*Orson Welles*

Egoist. A person of low taste, more interested in himself than me. — <i>Ambrose Bierce</i>	51
Envy is a kind of praise. — <i>John Gay</i>	52
What doesn't destroy me strengthens me. — <i>Friedrich Nietzsche</i>	53
Life shrinks and expands in proportion to one's courage. — <i>Anaïs Nin</i>	54
I'm not afraid to die. I just don't want to be there when it happens. — <i>Woody Allen</i>	55



APPENDIX

Additional Help For ESL/ELL Students

Count and Noncount Nouns

Count nouns* refer to people, places, or things that are separate units. You can always count them and often physically point to them. Note that, in English, the following nouns are used as plural count nouns: *police, jeans, pajamas, Middle Ages, scissors, shorts*.

Count Noun	Sample Sentence
television	The marketing department purchased <u>ten</u> large-screen televisions .
drive	John had to buy <u>a</u> new flash drive to hold the graphics he completed for art class.
assignment	How <u>many</u> assignments did you complete last night?
police	The police <u>are</u> stationed around the perimeter of the house.

Noncount nouns refer to things that you cannot count separately. Some noncount nouns refer to ideas, feelings, and other things that you cannot see or touch; other noncount nouns refer to food or beverages.

* For more on nouns, see Chapters 31 and 25, Part A.

Noncount Noun**Sample Sentence**

(Note the underlined words used with noncount nouns)

integrity

A politician's integrity is frequently tested.

information

We have been waiting for some **information** about the exam.

homework

How much **homework** do you have to finish tonight?

milk

Milk is available with 2 percent fat, 1 percent fat, and no fat.

Three signs can help you identify noncount nouns: (1) nouns that have the same verb form (for example, *help*, *to help*; *cash*, *to cash*), (2) words that occur only in noun form (e.g., *equipment*, *vocabulary*), and (3) nouns with certain endings.

Following is a list of common endings on noncount nouns. This is not complete but meant as a guide.

Endings on Many Noncount Nouns

-ance/ence: insurance, patience, persistence

-ness: frankness, nervousness

-age: courage, postage, luggage, leverage

-sure or *-ture*: pressure, furniture

-fare: welfare, warfare

-th: health, warmth, wealth, strength, truth

-ice: advice, juice, practice

-tion: information, inspiration, respiration, transportation

-esty/ity: honesty, continuity, integrity

-ware/wear: software, sportswear, silverware

-ment: development, equipment

-work: homework, metalwork (exception: network)

Some nouns have both count and noncount meanings. Usually, the count meaning is concrete while the noncount meaning is abstract. Note that the count and noncount meanings of some nouns (for example, *corn*, *iron*) differ significantly.

Count Meaning

Almost all of the **lights** in the office went out. Only the exit **light** is still burning.

Some loud **sounds** are coming from the street. The last **sound** was a shout of victory from a sports fan.

I found a great store with **teas** and **cakes** from different countries. I bought a loose green **tea** and a chocolate **cake** there.

Two broken **irons** lay on the washer in the laundry room. One working **iron** sat in the cabinet.

Noncount Meaning

Technicians can now send messages as pulses of **light** through optic wires.

The speed of **sound** is slower than the speed of light.

Do you like **tea** with **cake**? Would you prefer green or black **tea**?

Iron is a strong metal used to make heavy machinery.

Articles with Count and Noncount Nouns

Indefinite Articles

The words *a* and *an* are **indefinite articles**. They refer to one *nonspecific* (indefinite) thing. For example, “a woman” refers to *any* woman, not a particular woman. **The article *a* or *an* is used before a singular count noun.***

Singular Count Noun

music video
question
umbrella

With Indefinite Article

a music video
a question
an umbrella

* For information about when to use *an* instead of *a*, see Chapter 40.

The indefinite article *a* or *an* is never used before a noncount noun:

Noncount Noun

music

Sample Sentence

Correct: I enjoy music.

Incorrect: I enjoy a music.

courage

Correct: She displayed courage.

Incorrect: She displayed a courage.

Be careful: An indefinite article *can* be used with a quantifier (a word that specifies the noun's quantity) and a noncount noun:

Noncount Noun

information

Noncount Noun with Quantifier

The hackers were looking for a piece of information that was classified.

news

Let me give you a bit of news.

Definite Article

The word *the* is the only **definite article** in English. It usually refers to one or more specific (definite) things. For example, “the doctor” refers not to *any doctor* but to a specific doctor. “The doctors” refers to two or more specific doctors. **The article *the* can be used before any singular or plural count noun:** *the moon, the soccer players, the Chinese ambassador.**

***The* can be used before a noncount noun *only* if that noun is specifically identified, usually by a prepositional phrase[†] or relative clause.[‡]**

Noncount Noun

food

Sample Sentence

Correct: The food at the party was delicious.
(specific food)

Incorrect: All living things must have *the* food to survive.
(nonspecific food)

* In fact, every singular count noun must be preceded by a “determiner”: that is, by a definite or indefinite article; by a pronoun such as *his, her, their, our, and my*; by *this, that, these, those*; or by a word such as *many, most, all, both, every, or some*, or by a number.

† For more on prepositional phrases, see Chapter 33.

‡ For more on relative clauses, see Chapter 22, Part D.

poetry

Correct: The poetry that she writes is richly detailed.
(specific poetry)
Incorrect: He enjoys reading the poetry.
(nonspecific poetry)

Review of Article Usage

Count Nouns		Noncount Nouns	
	Singular	Plural	
Indefinite	Use <i>a/an</i> . <i>A chair would be useful.</i> <i>Let's buy one.</i> (refers to a nonspecified chair)	No article <i>Chairs come in many different styles.</i> (refers to nonspecified chairs)	No article <i>Furniture comes in many different styles.</i> (refers to nonspecified furniture)
	Use <i>the</i> . <i>The chair we bought is comfortable.</i> (refers to a specific chair)	Use <i>the</i> . <i>The chairs we bought are comfortable.</i> (refers to specific chairs)	Use <i>the</i> . <i>The furniture we bought is comfortable.</i> (refers to specific furniture)

Verbs Followed by a Gerund or an Infinitive

A **gerund** is the *-ing* form of the verb used as a noun.

Watching my weight is harder during the cold months.
They enjoy *hiking* in the Rocky Mountains.

In the first sentence, *watching* is the simple subject of the sentence.* In sentence two, *hiking* is the object of the verb *enjoy*.† Some common English verbs can be followed by a gerund. Example: Joaquin quit *smoking*.

* For more on simple subjects, see Chapter 25, Part A.
† For more on objects of verbs, see Chapter 32, Part D.

Verbs That Can Be Followed by a Gerund

appreciate	consider	enjoy	mention	quit	risk
avoid	discuss	finish	mind	recommend	suggest
complete	dislike	keep	postpone	remember	understand

The verbs in the previous box are never followed by an infinitive (*to* + the simple form of the verb):

Verb

Sample Sentence

dislike

Correct: I *dislike* **cooking** on weeknights.

Incorrect: I *dislike* **to cook** on weeknights.

discuss

Correct: Let's *discuss* **taking** a trip to Asia.

Incorrect: Let's *discuss* **to take** a trip to Asia.

Other English verbs can be followed by an **infinitive** (but never by a gerund). Example: He expects *to graduate* in June.

Verbs That Can Be Followed by an Infinitive

afford	attempt	demand	hope	mean	offer
agree	choose	expect	intend	need	refuse
appear	dare	fail	learn	plan	wish
ask	decide	forget	like	promise	

Some verbs can be followed by a **noun or pronoun and an infinitive** (but never by a gerund). Example: She asked *him to dance*.

Verbs That Can Be Followed by Noun or Pronoun + Infinitive

advise	caution	expect	invite	persuade	teach
allow	convince	hire	order	remind	tell
ask	encourage	instruct	permit	require	want

The verbs in the previous box are never followed by a gerund:

Verb	Sample Sentence
afford	<i>Correct:</i> They can afford to buy the tickets. <i>Incorrect:</i> They can <i>afford buying</i> the tickets.
agree	<i>Correct:</i> I agree to lend you \$100 this week. <i>Incorrect:</i> I <i>agree lending</i> you \$100 this week.
plan	<i>Correct:</i> He plans to move to Ohio this summer. <i>Incorrect:</i> He <i>plans moving</i> to Ohio this summer.

A few verbs can be followed by *either a gerund or an infinitive* without a change in meaning. Example: They *began to write*. They *began writing*.

Verbs That Can Be Followed by a Gerund or an Infinitive		
begin	hate	prefer
continue	like	start
dislike	love	try

Some verbs can be followed by *either a gerund or an infinitive*, but the meaning of the verb differs depending on the form (gerund or infinitive) used:

He stopped <i>seeing</i> her. (Meaning: He is not seeing/dating her anymore.)
He stopped <i>to see</i> her. (Meaning: He made a stop to see/visit her.)



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Revising and Proofreading Symbols

The following chart lists common writing errors and the symbols that instructors often use to mark them. For some errors, your instructor may wish to use symbols other than the ones shown. You may wish to write these alternate symbols in the blank column.

Standard Symbol	Instructor's Alternate Symbol	Error	For help, see Chapter
adj		Incorrect adjective form	34
adv		Incorrect adverb form	34
agr		Incorrect subject-verb agreement	25; 28
		Incorrect pronoun-antecedent agreement	32, Parts A and B
apos		Missing or incorrect apostrophe	35
awk		Awkward expression	23
cap		Missing or incorrect capital letter	37, Part A
case		Incorrect pronoun case	32, Part D
⌚		Missing or incorrect comma	26, Parts A and B; 36
coh		Lack of coherence	4
⌚		Missing or incorrect colon	37, Part D
con d		Inconsistent discourse	20, Part C
con p		Inconsistent person	21, Part B
con t		Inconsistent verb tense	21, Part A
coord		Incorrect coordination	26, Part A
cs		Comma splice	27, Part A
⊖		Missing or incorrect dash	37, Part D
dev		Incomplete paragraph or essay development	3, Parts C, D, and E; 14, Parts D, E, and F
dm		Dangling or confusing modifier	22, Part E
ed		Missing <i>-ed</i> , past tense or past participle	29, Part A; 30, Part A
frag		Sentence fragment	22, Part D; 26, Part B; 27, Part B
¶		Missing indentation for new paragraph	3, Part A
⓪		Missing or incorrect parenthesis	37, Part D
		Faulty parallelism	21, Part C
pl		Missing or incorrect plural form	31
pp		Incorrect past participle form	30
⓪⓪⓪		Missing or incorrect end punctuation	22, Part B
quot		Missing or incorrect quotation marks	37, Part C
rep		Unnecessary repetition	3, Parts D and F
ro		Run-on sentence	27, Part A
⌚		Missing or incorrect semicolon	26, Part C
sub		Incorrect subordination	26, Part B
sp		Spelling error	39
		Look-alike, sound-alike error	40
sup		Inadequate support	3, Part F
title		Title needed	15, Part C
trans		Transition needed	4, Part B; 14, Part E
trite		Trite expression	23, Part C
ts		Poor or missing topic sentence or thesis statement	3, Parts A and B; 14, Part B
u		Lack of paragraph or essay unity	3, Part F; 14, Parts D, E, and F
w		Unnecessary words	23, Part B
⊖		Too much space	38
9'		Words or letters to be deleted	38
?		Unclear meaning	23, Part A
^		Omitted words	38
~		Words or letters in reverse order	38



Five Useful Ways to Join Ideas

Coordination

- Option 1
- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| <i>Independent clause</i> | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} , \text{ and} \\ , \text{ but} \\ , \text{ for} \\ , \text{ nor} \\ , \text{ or} \\ , \text{ so} \\ , \text{ yet} \end{array} \right\}$ | <i>independent clause.</i> |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|
- Option 2
- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| <i>Independent clause</i> | ; | <i>independent clause.</i> |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|
- Option 3
- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| <i>Independent clause</i> | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} ; \text{ consequently,} \\ ; \text{ furthermore,} \\ ; \text{ however,} \\ ; \text{ in addition,} \\ ; \text{ indeed,} \\ ; \text{ in fact,} \\ ; \text{ moreover,} \\ ; \text{ nevertheless,} \\ ; \text{ then,} \\ ; \text{ therefore,} \end{array} \right\}$ | <i>independent clause.</i> |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|

Subordination

- Option 4
- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <i>Independent clause</i> | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{after} \\ \text{although} \\ \text{as (as if)} \\ \text{because} \\ \text{before} \\ \text{if} \\ \text{since} \\ \text{unless} \\ \text{until} \\ \text{when(ever)} \\ \text{whereas} \\ \text{while} \end{array} \right\}$ | <i>dependent clause.</i> |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|
- Option 5
- | | |
|--|--|
| $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{After} \\ \text{Although} \\ \text{As (As if)} \\ \text{Because} \\ \text{Before} \\ \text{If} \\ \text{Since} \\ \text{Unless} \\ \text{Until} \\ \text{When(ever)} \\ \text{Whereas} \\ \text{While} \end{array} \right\}$ | <i>dependent clause, independent clause.</i> |
|--|--|