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**College Writing Skills with Readings**

**Seventh Edition**

**John Langan**

*Atlantic Cape Community College*

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**Praise for the Langan series**

*“There can be no legitimate comparison between John Langan's McGraw-Hill developmental composition text series and any other texts available. Other texts are simply not as clear, precise, interesting, or comprehensive.”*

—Candace C. Mesa, Dixie College

*“John Langan's pedagogical approach makes all kinds of sense to me. The emphasis on reading and structured writing provides students with a solid foundation in composition.”*

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**About the Author**

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**John Langan** has taught reading and writing at Atlantic Cape Community College near Atlantic City, New Jersey, for more than 25 years. The author of a popular series of college textbooks on both writing and reading, John enjoys the challenge of developing materials that teach skills in an especially clear and lively way. Before teaching, he earned advanced degrees in writing at Rutgers University and in reading at Rowan University. He also spent a year writing fiction that, he says, “is now at the back of a drawer waiting to be discovered and acclaimed posthumously.” While in school, he supported himself by working as a truck driver, a machinist, a battery assembler, a hospital attendant, and an apple packer. John now lives with his wife, Judith Nadell, near Philadelphia. In addition to his wife and Philly sports teams, his passions include reading and turning on nonreaders to the pleasure and power of books. Through Townsend Press, his educational publishing company, he has developed the nonprofit “Townsend Library”—a collection of more than 50 new and classic stories that appeal to readers of any age.

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**To the Instructor**

*College Writing Skills with Readings* is a rhetoric with readings that will help students master the traditional five-paragraph essay and variations of this essay. It is a very practical book with a number of unique features designed to aid instructors and their students.

**Key Features of the Book**

• *Four principles are presented as keys to effective writing*. These four principles—unity, support, coherence, and sentence skills—are highlighted on the inside back cover and reinforced throughout the book.

**Part One** focuses on the first three principles and to some extent on sentence skills.

**Parts Two and Three** show, respectively, how the four principles apply in the different patterns of essay development and in specialized types of writing.

**Part Four** serves as a concise handbook of sentence skills.

Finally, the professional readings in **Part Five** are followed by questions and assignments that encourage students to apply the four principles in a variety of well-developed essays.

The ongoing success of *College Writing Skills with Readings* is evidence that the four principles are easily grasped, remembered, and followed by students.

• *Writing is treated as a process*. The first chapter introduces writing as both a skill and a process of discovery. The second chapter, “The Writing Process,” explains and illustrates the sequence of steps in writing an effective essay. In particular, the chapter focuses on prewriting and revision as strategies to use with any writing assignment. Detailed suggestions for prewriting and revision then accompany many of the writing assignments in Part Two.

• *Activities and assignments are numerous and varied*. For example, Part One contains more than 90 activities to help students apply and master the

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four principles, or bases, of effective writing. The entire book has over 250 activities and tests. A variety of writing assignments follow each pattern of essay development in Part Two and each reading in Part Five. Some topics are highly structured, for students who are still learning the steps in the writing process; others are open-ended. Instructors thus have the option of selecting those assignments most suited to the individual needs of their students.

• *Clear thinking is stressed throughout*. This emphasis on logic starts with the opening pages of the book. Students are introduced to the two principles that are the bedrock of clear thinking: *making a point* and *providing support to back up that point*. The focus on these principles then continues throughout the book, helping students learn that clear writing is inseparable from clear thinking.

• *The traditional essay is emphasized*. Students are asked to write formal essays with an introduction, three supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. Anyone who has tried to write a solidly reasoned essay knows how much work is involved. A logical essay requires a great deal of mental discipline and close attention to a set of logical rules. Writing an essay in which there is an overall thesis statement and in which each of the three supporting paragraphs begins with a topic sentence is more challenging for many students than writing a free-form or expressive essay. The demands are significant, but the rewards are great.

At the same time that students learn and practice the rules of the five-paragraph essay, professional essays representing the nine patterns of development show them variations possible within the essay form. These essays provide models if instructors decide that their students will benefit from moving beyond the traditional essay form.

• *Lively teaching models are provided*. The book includes two high-interest student essays and one engaging professional essay with each chapter in Part Two. Students then read and evaluate these essays in terms of the four bases: unity, support, coherence, and sentence skills. Instructors can also refer their students to appropriate essays from the collection of professional readings in Part Five. After reading vigorous papers by other students as well as papers by professional authors and experiencing the power that good writing can have, students will be encouraged to aim for a similar honesty, realism, and detail in their own work.

• *The book is versatile*. Since no two people use an English text in exactly the same way, the material has been organized in a highly accessible manner. Each of the five parts of the book deals with a distinct area of writing. Instructors can therefore turn quickly and easily to the skills they want to present.

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• *Nineteen professional essays appear in Part Five*. These essays, like the nine professional readings in Part Two, deal with both contemporary and timeless concerns. They will stimulate lively class discussions and individual thought as well as serve as a rich source of material for a wide range of writing assignments.

Part Five has three special features. First is the emphasis placed on helping students become stronger readers. An introductory section offers tips on effective reading, and questions after each selection help students practice skills in both reading comprehension and critical thinking. A second feature of Part Five is a set of questions about structure and technique so that students can analyze and learn from a writer's craft in developing an essay. Finally, a series of writing assignments include suggestions and guidelines that will help students think about and proceed with an assignment.

**Changes in the Seventh Edition**

Here is an overview of what is new in the seventh edition of the book:

• *Among several changes in this seventh edition is its new, more contemporary design*. The enhanced four-color design adds visual appeal for students while highlighting key material for them and helping them make connections and find the information they need.

• *Over 70 images have been added throughout the text*. Because today's students respond so readily to visual images, and must learn to evaluate such images critically, this text features more than seventy new images, each chosen and used for a pedagogical purpose.

 Every part now opens with an image (or images) accompanied by a writing prompt that introduces students to the lessons that section of the text will cover.

 Every chapter in Parts One through Three opens with a compelling visual or visuals, all of which are accompanied by writing prompts related to the particular chapter. In addition, every section in Part Four features a visual opener with accompanying writing prompt.

 Part Five, Readings for Writers, now includes writing prompts for featured images, which are linked thematically to the readings.

• *Key features have been added to make the book easier to use for instructors and students.*

** Every part and chapter now opens with an outline of its contents, preparing students for the lessons to follow.

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 Tip, Hint, and Explanation Boxes throughout the text offer advice about grammar rules, hints for students on how to complete selected activities, and explanations of why the answers to sample activities are correct.

 Marginal technology icons have been simplified to include just one easily recognizable icon directing students to the book's Online Learning Center, where they can find expanded coverage of a particular topic or hone their skills through completing additional exercises.

 A new Collaborative Learning icon highlights all student activities that can be assigned as collaborative activities, either in or outside of class.

 Teaching Tips are available in the margins throughout the Annotated Instructor's Edition.

 ESL Tips, which offer specific advice for instructing multilingual writers, are also featured in the margins of the Annotated Instructor's Edition.

• *New checklists reinforce the importance of the four bases during revision.* Every chapter in Part Two: Patterns of Essay Development now features a specialized checklist of the four bases that students can use when revising essays written in the different patterns of development. Each checklist is tailored to the particular pattern of writing the students are working on in that chapter.

• *The book features two new readings*. Chosen for their appeal and relevance to today's students, these new essays address the effects of sleep deprivation and what to do about it and the increasing amount of sexuality in the media that is targeted at teens.

• *A new appendix, “A Writer's Journal,”* has been added to encourage students to keep a writing journal and to give them room to start recording ideas.

**Helpful Learning Aids Accompany the Book**

**Supplements for Instructors**

• The *Annotated Instructor's Edition* (ISBN 0-07-334393-5) consists of the student text complete with answers to all activities and tests, followed by an Instructor's Guide featuring teaching suggestions and a model syllabus. The Annotated Instructor's Edition of *College Writing Skills with Readings* also includes three diagnostic or achievement tests: two 40-

question tests

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(A and B), and, for added flexibility, a single 60-question test (C) derived from tests A and B. These tests, along with their scoring keys, are included in print form in the back of the book. The tests are also available via the *College Writing Skills with Readings* Online Learning Center **(www.mhhe.com/langan).** Instructors directing students to take the tests online can have students’ scores and assessments e-mailed to them directly. (Students taking these tests will receive their final scores and an assessment, but not the correct answers to individual responses.)

• An *Online Learning Center* **(www.mhhe.com/langan)** offers a host of instructional aids and additional resources for instructors, including a comprehensive computerized test bank, the *Instructor's Manual and Test Bank*, online resources for writing instructors, and more.

• *PageOut* helps instructors create graphically pleasing and professional Web pages for their courses, in addition to providing classroom management, collaborative learning, and content management tools. PageOut is **FREE** to adopters of McGraw-Hill textbooks and learning materials. Learn more at **www.mhhe.com/pageout.**

• *The McGraw-Hill Virtual Workbook* offers interactive activities and exercises that reinforce the skills students learn in Part Four of *College Writing Skills with Readings.* Authored by Donna T. Matsumoto, Leeward Community College, and powered by Quia, each interactive, Web-based activity corresponds to a key section or chapter in Part Four, giving students additional opportunities for practice in grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. This online workbook is supported by a powerful array of Web-based instructor's tools, including an automated online gradebook.

**Supplements for Students**

• An *Online Learning Center* **(www.mhhe.com/langan)** includes self-correcting exercises, writing activities for additional practice, a PowerPoint grammar tutorial, guides to doing research on the Internet and avoiding plagiarism, useful Web links, and more.

• *The McGraw-Hill Virtual Workbook* offers interactive activities and exercises that reinforce the skills students learn in Part Four of *College Writing Skills with Readings*. Authored by Donna T. Matsumoto, Leeward Community College, and powered by Quia, each interactive, Web-based activity corresponds to a key section or chapter in Part Four, giving students additional opportunities for practice in grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.

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**Dictionary and Vocabulary Resources**

• *Random House Webster's College Dictionary* (ISBN 0-07-240011-0) This authoritative dictionary includes over 160,000 entries and 175,000 definitions. The most commonly used definitions are always listed first, so students can find what they need quickly.

• *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (ISBN 0-07-310057-9) Based on the best-selling Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, the paperback dictionary contains over 70,000 definitions.

• *The Merriam-Webster Thesaurus* (ISBN 0-07-310067-6) This handy paperback thesaurus contains over 157,000 synonyms, antonyms, related and contrasted words, and idioms.

• *Merriam-Webster's Vocabulary Builder* (ISBN 0-07-310069-2) This handy paperback introduces 3,000 words, and includes quizzes to test progress.

• *Merriam-Webster's Notebook Dictionary* (ISBN 0-07-299091-0) An extremely concise reference to the words that form the core of English vocabulary, this popular dictionary, conveniently designed for three-ring binders, provides words and information at students’ fingertips.

• *Merriam-Webster's Notebook Thesaurus* (ISBN 0-07-310068-4) Conveniently designed for three-ring binders, this thesaurus helps students search for words they might need today. It provides concise, clear guidance for over 157,000 word choices.

• *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary and Thesaurus, Electronic Edition* (ISBN 0- 07-310070-6) Available on CD-ROM, this online dictionary contains thousands of new words and meanings from all areas of human endeavor, including electronic technology, the sciences, and popular culture.

You can contact your local McGraw-Hill representative or consult McGraw-Hill's Web site at **www.mhhe.com/english** for more information on the supplements that accompany *College Writing Skills with Readings*, Seventh Edition.

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Donna T. Matsumoto, Assistant Professor of English and the Writing Discipline Coordinator at Leeward Community College in Hawaii (Pearl City), wrote the Teaching Tips for the Annotated Instructor's Edition of *College Writing Skills with Readings.* Professor Matsumoto has taught writing, women's studies, and American studies for a number of years throughout the University of Hawaii system, at Hawaii Pacific University, and in community schools for adults. She received a 2005 WebCT Exemplary Course Project award for her online writing course and is the author of *The McGraw-Hill Virtual Workbook,* an online workbook featuring interactive activities and exercises.

John Langan

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PART 1: **Essay Writing**

1

**Preview**

1 An Introduction to Writing

2 The Writing Process

3 The First and Second Steps in Essay Writing 4 The Third Step in Essay Writing

5 The Fourth Step in Essay Writing 6 Four Bases for Revising Essays

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**Teaching Tip**

Find volunteers to read the rough draft and the final version. Then have students complete this activity in pairs.

Have yourself a merry little Christmas

It may be your last

Next year we may all be living in the past

Have yourself a merry little Christmas

Pop the champagne cork

Next year we may all be living in New York.

No good times like the olden days,

Happy golden days of yore,

Faithful friends who were dear to us

Will be near to us no more.

But at least we all will be together

If the Lord allows.

From now on we’ll have to muddle through somehow.

So have yourself a merry little Christmas now.

Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,

Let your heart be light

From now on, our troubles will be out of sight

Have yourself a merry little Christmas

Make your yuletide gay

From now on our troubles will be miles away.

Here we are as in olden days,

Happy golden days of yore.

Faithful friends who were dear to us

Gather be near to us once more.

Through the years we all will be together

If the fates allow.

Until then, we’ll have to muddle through somehow

So have yourself a merry little Christmas now.

*Even songwriters often have to write several drafts of lyrics before producing an effective song. Compare this excerpted draft of “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” by Hugh Martin with its final version; what has changed? Choose one revision and explain why and how it makes the lyrics more effective.*

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**1: An Introduction to Writing**

*This chapter will explain and illustrate*

• the importance of supporting a point in writing

• the structure of the traditional essay

• the benefits of writing the traditional essay

*This chapter also*

• presents writing as both a skill and a process of discovery

• suggests keeping a journal



*What is your ideal job? Write two or more paragraphs about what your ideal job would be and what your daily activities on the job would entail. Be sure to include your reasons for wanting such a job.*

**Teaching Tip**

Ask students to complete this writing prompt in class.

4

The experience I had writing my first college essay helped shape this book. I received a C– for the essay. Scrawled beside the grade was the comment “Not badly written, but ill-conceived.” I remember going to the instructor after class, asking about his comment as well as the word *Log* that he had added in the margin at various spots. “What are all these logs you put in my paper?” I asked, trying to make a joke of it. He looked at me a little wonderingly. “Logic, Mr. Langan,” he answered, “logic.” He went on to explain that I had not thought out my paper clearly. There were actually two ideas rather than one in my thesis, one supporting paragraph had nothing to do with either idea, another paragraph lacked a topic sentence, and so on. I’ve never forgotten his last words: “If you don’t think clearly,” he said, “you won’t write clearly.”

I was speechless, and I felt confused and angry. I didn’t like being told that I didn’t know how to think. I went back to my room and read over my paper several times. Eventually, I decided that my instructor was right. “No more logs,” I said to myself. “I’m going to get these logs out of my papers.”

My instructor's advice was invaluable. I learned that clear, disciplined thinking is the key to effective writing. *College Writing Skills* develops this idea by breaking down the writing process into a series of four logical, easily followed steps. These steps, combined with practical advice about prewriting and revision, will help you write strong papers.

Here are the four steps in a nutshell:

**Teaching Tip**

Students might enjoy hearing about your writing experiences. Recount a vivid memory. 1. Discover a clearly stated point, or thesis.

2. Provide logical, detailed support for your thesis.

3. Organize and connect your supporting material.

4. Revise and edit so that your sentences are effective and error-free.

Part One of this book explains each of these steps in detail and provides many practice materials to help you master them.

**Teaching Tip**

Have students come up with their own examples of bold statements made in school, at work, or among friends. Ask them if these assertions were challenged. You may want to offer examples of your own.

**Point and Support**

**An Important Difference between Writing and Talking**

In everyday conversation, you make all kinds of points or assertions. You say, for example, “My boss is a hard person to work for,” “It's not safe to walk in our neighborhood after dark,” or “Poor study habits keep getting me into trouble.” The points that you make concern personal matters as well as, at times, outside issues: “That trade will be a disaster for the team,” “Lots of TV commercials are degrading to women,” “Students are better off working for a year before attending college.”

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The people you are talking with do not always challenge you to give reasons for your statements. They may know why you feel as you do, or they may already agree with you, or they simply may not want to put you on the spot; and so they do not always ask why. But the people who read what you write may not know you, agree with you, or feel in any way obliged to you. If you want to communicate effectively with readers, you must provide solid evidence for any point you make. An important difference, then, between writing and talking is this: *In writing, any idea that you advance must be supported with specific reasons or details.*

Think of your readers as reasonable people. They will not take your views on faith, but they are willing to accept what you say as long as you support it. Therefore, remember to support with specific evidence any point that you make.

**ESL Tip**

Some nonnative speakers have learned English from their peers. Therefore, they may not readily distinguish between writing and talking.

**Point and Support in a Paragraph**

In conversation, you might say to a friend who has suggested a movie, “No, thanks. Going to the movies is just too much of a hassle. Parking, people, everything.” From shared past experiences, your friend may know what you are talking about so that you will not have to explain your statement. But in writing, your point would have to be backed up with specific reasons and details.

Below is a paragraph, written by a student named Diane Woods, on why moviegoing is a nuisance. A *paragraph* is a short paper of around 150 to 200 words. It usually consists of an opening point, called a *topic sentence,* followed by a series of sentences that support that point. **ESL Tip**

Nonnative students may not be accustomed to writing a topic sentence that presents a strong or direct point.

**The Hazards of Moviegoing**

Although I love movies, I've found that there are drawbacks to moviegoing. One problem is just the inconvenience of it all. To get to the theater, I have to drive for at least fifteen minutes, or more if traffic is bad. It can take forever to find a parking spot, and then I have to walk across a huge parking lot to the theater. There I encounter long lines, sold-out shows, and ever

increasing prices. And I hate sitting with my feet sticking to the floor because of other people's spilled snacks. Another problem is my lack of self-control at the theater. I often stuff myself with unhealthy calorie-laden snacks. My choices might include a bucket of popcorn, a box of Milk Duds, a giant soda, or all three. The worst problem is some of the other moviegoers. Kids run up and down the aisle. Teenagers laugh and shout at the screen. People of all ages drop soda cups and popcorn tubs, cough and burp, and talk to one another. All in all, I would rather stay home and watch a DVD in the comfort of my own living room.

**Teaching Tip**

Introduce students to the correction symbol ¶. Discuss how this symbol tells a writer to indent for a new paragraph.

**Teaching Tip**

Ask students to underline the author's topic sentence as you read this paragraph aloud.

6

Notice what the supporting evidence does here. It provides you, the reader, with a basis for understanding *why* the writer makes the point that is made. Through this specific evidence, the writer has explained and successfully communicated the idea that moviegoing can be a nuisance.

The evidence that supports the point in a paper often consists of a series of reasons followed by examples and details that support the reasons. That is true of the paragraph above: three reasons are provided, with examples and details that back up those reasons. Supporting evidence in a paper can also consist of anecdotes, personal experiences, facts, studies, statistics, and the opinions of experts.

The paragraph on moviegoing, like almost any piece of effective writing, has two essential parts: (1) a point is advanced, and (2) that point is then supported. Taking a minute to outline “The Hazards of Moviegoing” will help you understand these basic parts. Write in the following space the point that has been advanced in the paragraph. Then add the words needed to complete the paragraph's outline.

**1 Activity**

**Point Support**

***There are drawbacks to moviegoing.***

1. ***Inconvenience***

a. Fifteen-minute drive to theater

b. ***Long time to find parking spot, and long walk to theater***

c. Long lines, sold-out shows, and increasing prices

d. ***Sticky floor***

2. Lack of self-control

a. Often stuff myself with unhealthy snacks

b. Might have popcorn, candy, soda, or all three

3. ***Other moviegoers***

a. ***Running kids***

b. ***Laughing, shouting teenagers***

c. People of all ages make noise.

**Teaching Tip**

You may want to do this activity with the entire class. Copy this partial outline onto the board, and then ask students to fill in the blanks.

**Teaching Tip**

You may want to point out the similarities between an essay and a paragraph. **Point and Support in an Essay**

An excellent way to learn how to write clearly and logically is to practice the traditional college *essay*—a paper of about five hundred words that typically consists of an introductory paragraph, two to four supporting paragraphs (the norm in this book will be three), and a concluding paragraph. The central idea, or point, developed in any essay is called a *thesis statement* (rather than, as in a paragraph, a

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topic sentence). The thesis appears in the introductory paragraph, and the specific support for the thesis appears in the paragraphs that follow. The supporting paragraphs allow for a fuller treatment of the evidence that backs up the central point than would be possible in a single paragraph paper.

**Structure of the Traditional Essay**

**A Model Essay**

The following model will help you understand the form of an essay. Diane Woods, the writer of the paragraph on moviegoing, later decided to develop her subject more fully. Here is the essay that resulted.



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**Teaching Tip**

Mention that an essay may contain more than one introductory paragraph.

**The Hazards of Moviegoing**

**Introductory paragraph**

I am a movie fanatic. My friends count on me to know movie trivia (who was the pigtailed little girl in E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial? Drew Barrymore) and to remember every big Oscar awarded since I was in grade school (Best Picture, 1994? Forrest Gump). My friends, though, have stopped asking me if I want to go out to the movies. While I love movies as much as ever, the inconvenience of going out, the temptations of the concession stand, and the behavior of some patrons are reasons for me to wait and rent the DVD.

**First supporting paragraph**

To begin with, I just don't enjoy the general hassle of the evening. Since small local movie theaters are a thing of the past, I have to drive for fifteen minutes to get to the nearest multiplex. The parking lot is shared with several restaurants and a supermarket, so it's always jammed. I have to drive around at a snail's pace until I spot another driver backing out. Then it's time to stand in an endless line, with the constant threat that tickets for the show I want will sell out. If we do get tickets, the theater will be so crowded that I won't be able to sit with my friends, or we'll have to sit in a front row gaping up at a giant screen. I have to shell out a ridiculous amount of money—up to $11—for a ticket. That entitles me to sit while my shoes seal themselves to a sticky floor coated with spilled soda, bubble gum, and crushed Raisinets.

**Second supporting paragraph**

Second, the theater offers tempting snacks that I really don't need. Like most of us, I have to battle an expanding waistline. At home I do pretty well by simply not buying stuff that is bad for me. I can make do with snacks like celery and carrot sticks because there is no ice cream in the freezer. Going to the theater, however, is like spending my evening in a 7-Eleven that's been equipped with a movie screen and comfortable seats. As I try to persuade myself to just have a Diet Coke, the smell of fresh popcorn dripping with

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butter soon overcomes me. Chocolate bars the size of small automobiles seem to jump into my hands. I risk pulling out my fillings as I chew enormous mouthfuls of Milk Duds. By the time I leave the theater, I feel disgusted with myself.

**Third supporting paragraph**

Many of the other patrons are even more of a problem than the concession stand. Little kids race up and down the aisles, usually in giggling packs. Teenagers try to impress their friends by talking back to the screen, whistling, and making what they consider to be hilarious noises. Adults act as if they were at home in their own living room. They comment loudly on the ages of the stars and reveal plot twists that are supposed to be a secret until the film's end. And people of all ages create distractions. They crinkle candy wrappers, stick gum on their seats, and drop popcorn tubs or cups of crushed ice and soda on the floor. They also cough and burp, squirm endlessly in their seats, file out for repeated trips to the restrooms or concession stands, and elbow me out of the armrest on either side of my seat.

**Concluding paragraph**

After arriving home from the movies one night, I decided that I was not going to be a moviegoer anymore. I was tired of the problems involved in getting to the theater, resisting unhealthy snacks, and dealing with the patrons. The next day, I arranged to have premium movie channels added to my cable TV service, and I also got a Netflix membership. I may now see movies a bit later than other people, but I'll be more relaxed watching box office hits in the comfort of my own living room.

**ESL Tip**

The development of an essay may be different in other countries, so direct instruction about the parts of an essay will be helpful for nonnative speakers, especially the introductory and concluding paragraphs.

**Parts of an Essay**

“The Hazards of Moviegoing” is a good example of the standard short essay you will write in college English. It is a composition of over five hundred words that consists of a one-paragraph introduction, a three-paragraph body, and a one-paragraph conclusion. The roles of these paragraphs are described and illustrated below.

***Introductory Paragraph***

The introductory paragraph of an essay should start with several sentences that attract the reader's interest. It should then advance the central idea, or *thesis,* that will be developed in the essay. The thesis often includes a *plan of development*—a preview of the major points that will support the thesis. These supporting points should be listed in the order in which they will appear in the essay. In some cases, the plan of development is presented in a sentence separate from the thesis; in other cases, it is omitted.

**Teaching Tip**

The introductory paragraph serves as the “movie trailer” for the actual “film.”

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**2 Activity**

1. In “The Hazards of Moviegoing,” which sentence or sentences are used to attract the reader's interest?

a. First sentence

b. First two sentences

 First three sentences

2. In which sentence is the thesis of the essay presented?

a. Third sentence

 Fourth sentence

3. Does the thesis include a plan of development?

 Yes

b. No

4. Write the words in the thesis that announce the three major supporting points in the essay:

a. ***inconvenience of going out***

b. ***temptations of the theater***

c. ***behavior of some patrons***

**Teaching Tip**

Stress to students that not all essays have three body paragraphs.

***Body: Supporting Paragraphs***

Most essays have three supporting points, developed at length over three separate paragraphs. (Some essays have two supporting points, others four or more. For the purposes of this book, your goal will be three supporting points unless your instructor indicates otherwise.) Each of the supporting paragraphs should begin with a *topic sentence* that states the point to be detailed in that paragraph. Just as a thesis provides a focus for an entire essay, a topic sentence provides a focus for a supporting paragraph.

**Teaching Tip**

Caution students to avoid announcing their topic.

**3 Activity**

1. What is the topic sentence for the first supporting paragraph of the model essay? ***To begin with, I just don't enjoy the general hassle of the evening.***

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. The first topic sentence is then supported by the following details (fill in the missing details):

a. Have to drive fifteen minutes

b. ***Parking lot is always jammed.***

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c. Endless ticket line

d. ***Tickets may sell out, and theater is crowded.***

e. ***Tickets cost up to $11 each.***

f. Sticky floor

3. What is the topic sentence for the second supporting paragraph of the essay? ***Second, the theater offers tempting snacks that I really don't need.***

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. The second topic sentence is then supported by the following details: a. At home, only snacks are celery and carrot sticks.

b. Theater is like a 7-Eleven with seats.

(1) fresh popcorn

(2) ***chocolate bars***

(3) ***Milk Duds***

5. What is the topic sentence for the third supporting paragraph of the essay? ***Many of the other patrons are even more of a problem than the concession stand.*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. The third topic sentence is then supported by the following details:

a. ***Little kids race up and down the aisles.***

b. ***Teenagers talk back to the screen, whistle, make funny noises.***

c. Adults talk loudly and reveal plot twists.

d. People of all ages create distractions.

**Teaching Tip**

The concluding paragraph serves as the “ending” to a “movie.” Unlike a movie, though, writers should avoid cliff-hanger endings.

***Concluding Paragraph***

The concluding paragraph often summarizes the essay by briefly restating the thesis and, at times, the main supporting points. In addition, the writer often presents a concluding thought about the subject of the paper.

**4 Activity**

1. Which two sentences in the concluding paragraph restate the thesis and supporting points of the essay?

 First and second

b. Second and third

c. Third and fourth

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2. Which sentence in the concluding paragraph contains the final thought of the essay? a. Second

b. Third

 Fourth

**Diagram of an Essay**

The following diagram shows you at a glance the different parts of a standard college essay, also known as a *one-three-one essay.* This diagram will serve as a helpful guide when you are writing or evaluating essays.

**Teaching Tip**

Encourage students to refer to this diagram when working on an essay.

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You now have an overview of the traditional form of the essay. In Chapter 2, you will learn *how* to go about writing an effective essay. First, though, it will be helpful to consider the following: the benefits of writing traditional essays, the advantage of seeing writing as both a skill and a process of discovery, the value of keeping a journal, and the ways a computer can enhance the writing process.

**Benefits of Writing the Traditional Essay**

Learning to write a traditional essay offers at least three benefits. First of all, mastering the traditional essay will help make you a better writer. For other courses, you'll often compose papers that will be variations on the essay form—for example, examination essays, reports, and research papers. Becoming comfortable with the basic structure of the traditional essay, with its emphasis on a clear point and well-organized, logical support, will help with almost every kind of writing that you have to do.

Second, the discipline of writing an essay will strengthen your skills as a reader and listener. As a reader, you'll become more critically aware of other writers’ ideas and the evidence they provide (or fail to provide) to support those ideas. Essay writing will also help you become a better speaker. You'll be more prepared to develop the three basic parts of an effective speech—an appealing introduction, a solidly developed body, and a well-rounded conclusion—because of your experience writing three-part essays.

Most important, essay writing will make you a stronger thinker. Writing a solidly reasoned traditional essay requires mental discipline and close attention to a set of logical rules. Creating an essay in which there is an overall thesis statement and in which each of three supporting paragraphs begins with a topic sentence is more challenging than writing a free-form or expressive paper. Such an essay obliges you to carefully sort out, think through, and organize your ideas. You'll learn to discover and express just what your ideas are and to develop those ideas in a logical, reasoned way. Traditional essay writing, in short, will train your mind to think clearly, and that ability will prove to be of value in every phase of your life.

**Teaching Tip**

Have students discuss the benefits of writing an essay. Urge them to reflect on their own experiences as a writer.

**Writing as a Skill**

A realistic attitude about writing must build on the idea that *writing is a skill,* not a “natural gift.” It is a skill like driving, typing, or cooking; and, like any skill, it can be learned. If you have the determination to learn, this book will give you the extensive practice needed to develop your writing skills.

**Teaching Tip**

Take an opinion poll in class to see if students think that writing is a natural gift or a learned skill.

People often fear they are the only ones for whom writing is unbearably difficult. They believe that everyone else finds writing easy or at least tolerable. Such people typically say, “I'm not any good at writing,” or “English was not one of my good subjects.” They imply that they simply do not have a talent for

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writing, while others do. Often, the result of this attitude is that people try to avoid writing, and when they do write, they don't try their best. Their attitude becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: their writing fails chiefly because they have brainwashed themselves into thinking that they don't have the “natural talent” needed to write.

**Teaching Tip**

Get students to talk about other skills they have mastered. Draw parallels to writing.

Many people find it difficult to do the intense, active thinking that clear writing demands. It is frightening to sit down before a blank sheet of paper or computer screen and know that an hour later, nothing on it may be worth keeping. It is frustrating to discover how much of a challenge it is to transfer thoughts and feelings from one's head onto the page. It is upsetting to find that an apparently simple subject often turns out to be complicated. But writing is not an automatic process: we will not get something for nothing—and we should not expect to. For almost everyone, competent writing comes from plain hard work—from determination, sweat, and head-on battle. The good news is that the skill of writing can be mastered, and if you are ready to work, you will learn what you need to know.

**Teaching Tip**

Ask students to recall a time in their lives when they embarked on a journey without having a clear destination (for example, an unplanned road trip). Inquire if they made any discoveries.

**Writing as a Process of Discovery**

In addition to believing that writing is a natural gift, many people falsely believe that writing should flow in a simple, straight line from the writer's head onto the written page. But writing is seldom an easy, one-step journey in which a finished paper comes out in a first draft. The truth is that *writing is a process of discovery* involving a series of steps, and those steps are very often a zigzag journey. Look at the following illustrations of the writing process:

**Teaching Tip**

Provide visual pictures of the writing process, such as a spiral or zigzag line. Emphasize to your students that writers often repeat steps. For example, a writer may brainstorm ideas after writing a first draft.



Very often, writers do not discover just what they want to write about until they explore their thoughts in writing. For example, Diane Woods (the author of the paragraph and essay on moviegoing) had been assigned to write about an annoyance in everyday life. She did not know what annoyance she would choose; instead, she just began writing about annoyances in general, in order to discover a topic. One of those annoyances was traffic, which seemed promising, so she began putting down ideas and details that came to her about traffic. One detail was the traffic she had to deal with in going to the movies. That made her think of the traffic in the parking lot at the theater complex. At that point, she realized that moviegoing itself was an annoyance. She switched direction in midstream and began writing down ideas and details about moviegoing.

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As Diane wrote, she realized how much other moviegoers annoyed her, and she began thinking that other movie patrons might be her main idea in a paper. But when she was writing about patrons who loudly drop popcorn tubs onto the floor, she realized how much all the snacks at the concession stand tempted her. She changed direction again, thinking now that maybe she could talk about patrons and tempting snacks. She kept writing, just putting down more and more details about her movie experiences, still not having figured out exactly how she would fit both patrons and snacks into the paper. Even though her paper had not quite jelled, she was not worried, because she knew that if she kept writing, it would eventually come together.

The point is that writing is often a process of continuing discovery; as you write, you may suddenly switch direction or double back. You may be working on a topic sentence and realize suddenly that it could be your concluding thought. Or you may be developing a supporting idea and then decide that it should be the main point of your paper. Chapter 2 will treat the writing process more directly.

What is important to remember here is that writers frequently do not know their exact destination as they begin to write. Very often they discover the direction and shape of a paper during the process of writing.

**Writing as a Way to Communicate with Others**

When you talk, chances are you do not treat everyone the same. For example, you are unlikely to speak to your boss in the same way that you chat with a young child. Instead, you adjust what you say to suit the people who are listening to you—your *audience.* Similarly, you probably change your speech each day to suit whatever *purpose* you have in mind when you are speaking. For instance, if you wanted to tell someone how to get to your new apartment, you would speak differently than if you were describing your favorite movie.

To communicate effectively, people must constantly adjust their speech to suit their purpose and audience. This same idea is true for writing. When you write for others, it is crucial to know both your purpose for writing and the audience who will be reading your work. The ability to adjust your writing to suit your purpose and audience will serve you well not only in the classroom, but also in the workplace and beyond.

**TIP**

Purpose and audience, further explained on page 172, are special focuses of each of the nine patterns of essay development in Part Two.

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**Keeping a Journal**

Because writing is a skill, it makes sense that the more you practice writing, the better you will write. One excellent way to get practice in writing, even before you begin composing essays, is to keep a daily or almost daily journal. Writing in a journal will help you develop the habit of thinking on paper and will show you how ideas can be discovered in the process of writing. A journal can make writing a familiar part of your life and can serve as a continuing source of ideas for papers.

**ESL Tip**

Journals are not evaluted or marked for errors, so remind nonnative speakers they can feel free to express experiences and perceptions they would readily write about in their native language.

At some point during the day—perhaps during a study period after your last class of the day, or right before dinner, or right before going to bed—spend fifteen minutes or so writing in your journal. Keep in mind that you do not have to plan what to write about, or be in the mood to write, or worry about making mistakes as you write; just write down whatever words come out. You should write at least one page in each session.



You may want to use a notebook that you can easily carry with you for on-the-spot writing. You can also use the journal provided in Appendix A of this book. Or you may decide to write on loose leaf paper that can be transferred later to a journal folder on your desk. Many students choose to keep their journals on their home computer or laptop. No matter how you proceed, be sure to date all entries.

**Teaching Tip**

Bring a variety of “journals” to class to show students. For example, bring a spiral-bound notebook, loose-leaf paper, a marble notebook, an artist's sketchpad, and even a laptop computer. Encourage students to find a “journal” that suits their personality and style.

Your instructor may ask you to make journal entries a specific number of times a week, for a specific number of weeks. He or she may have you turn in your

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journal every so often for review and feedback. If you are keeping the journal on your own, try to make entries three to five times a week every week of the semester.

**Tips on Using a Computer**

**•** If you are using your school's computer center, allow enough time. You may have to wait for a computer or printer to be free. In addition, you may need several sessions at a computer and printer to complete your paper.

**•** Every word-processing program allows you to save your writing by pressing one or more keys. Save your work frequently as you write your draft. A saved file is stored safely on the computer or network. A file that is not saved will be lost if the computer crashes or if the power is turned off.

**•** Keep your work in two places—the hard drive or network you are working on and a backup USB drive. At the end of each session with a computer, copy your work onto the USB drive or e mail a copy to yourself. Then, if the hard drive or network fails, you'll have the backup copy.

**•** Print out your work at least at the end of every session. Then you will have not only your most recent draft to work on away from the computer but also a copy in case something should happen to your electronic file.

**•** Work in single spacing so that you can see as much of your writing on the screen at one time as possible. Just before you print out your work, change to double spacing.

**•** Before making major changes in a paper, create a copy of your file. For example, if your file is titled “Worst Job,” create a file called “Worst Job 2.” Then make all your changes in that new file. If the changes don't work out, you can always go back to the original file.



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**Teaching Tip**

Get students to discuss how blogs are public online journals. In a computer lab, you could ask students to share their blogs with the class.

**Teaching Tip**

In a computer lab, you could ask students to create a word-processed document as you review these tips.

**Using a Computer at Each Stage of the Writing Process**

Following are some ways to make word processing a part of your writing. Note that this section may be more meaningful *after* you have worked through Chapter 2 of this book.

***Prewriting***

If you're a fast typist, many kinds of prewriting will work well on a computer. With freewriting in particular, you can get ideas onto the screen almost as quickly as they occur to you. A passing thought that could be productive is not likely to get lost. You may even find it helpful, when freewriting, to dim the monitor screen so

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that you can't see what you're typing. If you temporarily can't see the screen, you won't have to worry about grammar or spelling or typing errors (all of which do not matter in prewriting); instead, you can concentrate on getting down as many ideas and details as possible about your subject.

After any initial freewriting, questioning, and list-making on a computer, it's often very helpful to print out a hard copy of what you've done. With a clean printout in front of you, you'll be able to see everything at once and revise and expand your work with handwritten comments in the margins of the paper.

If you have prepared a list of items, you may be able to turn that list into an outline right on the screen. Delete the ideas you feel should not be in your paper (saving them at the end of the file in case you change your mind), and add any new ideas that occur to you. Then use the cut and paste functions to shuffle the supporting ideas around until you find the best order for your paper.

Word processing also makes it easy for you to experiment with the wording of the point of your paper. You can try a number of versions in a short time. After you have decided on the version that works best, you can easily delete the other versions—or simply move them to a temporary “leftover” section at the end of the paper.

***Writing Your First Draft***

Like many writers, you may want to write out your first draft by hand and then type it into the computer for revision. Even as you type your handwritten draft, you may find yourself making some changes and improvements. And once you have a draft on the screen, or printed out, you will find it much easier to revise than a handwritten one.

**Teaching Tip**

Show students how to use the copy and paste functions. Some students may not know the shortcuts Ctrl+C and Ctrl+V.

If you feel comfortable composing directly on a computer, you can benefit from its special features. For example, if you have written an anecdote in your freewriting that you plan to use in your paper, simply copy the story from your freewriting file and insert it where it fits in your paper. You can refine it then or later. Or if you discover while typing that a sentence is out of place, cut it out from where it is and paste it wherever you wish. And if while writing you realize that an earlier sentence can be expanded, just move your cursor back to that point and type in the additional material.

**Teaching Tip**

For Microsoft Word, suggest that students use Track Changes to keep track of their revisions. ***Revising***

It is during revision that the virtues of word processing really shine. All substituting, adding, deleting, and rearranging can be done easily within an existing file. All changes instantly take their proper places within the paper, not scribbled above the line or squeezed into the margin. You can concentrate on each change you want to make, because you never have to type from scratch or work on a messy draft. You can carefully go through your paper to check that all your supporting evidence is relevant and to add new support as needed here and there. Anything you decide to eliminate can be deleted in a keystroke. Anything you add can be inserted precisely

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where you choose. If you change your mind, all you have to do is delete or cut and paste. Then you can sweep through the paper, focusing on other changes, such as improving word choice, increasing sentence variety, and eliminating wordiness.

**TIP**

If you are like many students, you might find it convenient to print out a hard copy of your file at various points throughout the revision. You can then revise in longhand—adding, crossing out, and indicating changes—and later quickly make those changes in the document.

***Editing and Proofreading***

Editing and proofreading also benefit richly from word processing. Instead of crossing out mistakes, using correction fluid, or rewriting an entire paper to correct numerous errors, you can make all necessary changes within the most recent draft. If you find editing or proofreading on the screen hard on your eyes, print out a copy. Mark any corrections on that copy, and then transfer them to the final draft.

If the word-processing program you're using includes spelling and grammar checks, by all means use them. The spell-checker function tells you when a word is not in the program's dictionary. Keep in mind, however, that the spell-checker cannot tell you how to spell a name correctly or when you have mistakenly used, for example, *their* instead of *there.* To a spell

checker, *Thank ewe four the complement* is as correct as *Thank you for the compliment.* Also, use the grammar-checker with caution. Any errors it doesn't uncover are still your responsibility.

A word-processed paper, with its clean appearance and handsome formatting, looks so good that you may feel it is in better shape than it really is. Do not be fooled. Take sufficient time to review your grammar, punctuation, and spelling carefully.

Even after you hand in your paper, save the computer file. Your teacher may ask you to do some revising, and then the file will save you from having to type the paper from scratch. **Teaching Tip**

Remind students to use the spelling and grammar checks with caution.

**Review Activities**

Answering the following questions will help you evaluate your attitude about writing. **Note:**

Answers will vary.

**5 Activity**

1. How much practice were you given writing compositions in high school? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Much

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Some

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Little

2. How much feedback (positive or negative comments) from teachers were you given on your compositions?

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Much

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Some

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Little

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3. How did your teachers seem to regard your writing?

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Good

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Fair

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Poor

4. Do you feel that some people simply have a gift for writing and others do not? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ No

5. When do you start writing a paper?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Several days before it is due

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ About a day before it is due

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ At the last possible minute

**Teaching Tip**

After students complete this activity, ask them to share their answers with a partner. Students are often surprised to learn that others share their attitudes about writing. **EXPLANATION:**

Many people who answer *Little* to questions 1 and 2 often answer *Poor, Yes,* and *At the last possible minute* to questions 3, 4, and 5. On the other hand, people who answer *Much* or *Some* to questions 1 and 2 also tend to have more favorable responses to the other questions. The point is that people with little practice in the skill of writing often have understandably negative feelings about their writing ability. They need not have such feelings, however, because writing is a skill that they can learn with practice.

6. Did you learn to write traditional essays (introductory paragraph, supporting paragraphs, concluding paragraph) in high school?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ No

7. If so, did your teacher explain to you the benefits of writing such essays? \_\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, very clearly

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Maybe, but not that I remember

\_\_\_\_\_\_ No

**EXPLANATION:**

If you answered *Maybe* or *No* to question 7, you may not be looking forward to taking the course in which you are using this book. It will be worth your while to read and consider again (on page 13) the enormous benefits that can come from practice in writing traditional essays.

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8. In your own words, explain what it means to say that writing is often a zigzag journey rather than a straight-line journey.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Following is an excerpt from one student's journal. As you read, look for a general point and supporting material that could be the basis for an interesting paper.

September 6

My first sociology class was tonight. The parking lot was jammed when I got there. I thought I was going to be late for class. A guard had us park on a field next to the regular lot. When I got to the room, it had the usual painted-cinder-block construction. Every school I have ever been in since first grade seems to be made of cinder block. The students all sat there without saying anything, waiting for the instructor to arrive. I think they were all a bit nervous like me. I hoped there wasn't going to be a ton of work in the course. I think I was also afraid of looking foolish somehow. This goes back to grade school, when I wasn't a very good student and teachers sometimes embarrassed me in class. I didn't like grade school, and I hated high school. Now here I am six years later—in college, of all places. Who would have thought I would end up here? The instructor appeared—a woman who I think was a bit nervous herself. I think I like her. Her name is Barbara Hanlin. She says we should call her Barbara. We got right into it, but it was interesting stuff. I like the fact that she asks questions but then she lets you volunteer. I always hated it when teachers would call on you whether you wanted to answer or not. I also like the fact that she answers the questions and doesn't just leave you hanging. She takes the time to write important ideas on the board. I also like the way she laughs. This class may be OK.

**6 Activity**

1. If the writer of the journal entry above was looking for ideas for an essay, he could probably find several in this single entry. For example, he might write a story about the apparently roundabout way he wound up in college. See if you

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can find in the entry an idea that might be the basis for an interesting essay, and write your point in the space below.

***Answers will vary.***

2. Take fifteen minutes now to write a journal entry on this day in your life. On a separate sheet of paper, just start writing about anything that you have seen, said, heard, thought, or felt today, and let your thoughts take you where they may.

**Using This Text**

Here is a suggested sequence for using this book if you are working on your own.

1. After completing this introduction, read Chapters 2 through 6 in Part One and work through as many of the activities as you need to master the ideas in these chapters. By the end of Part One, you will have covered all the basic theory needed to write effective papers.

2. Work through some of the chapters in Part Two, which describes a number of traditional patterns for organizing and developing essays. You may want to include “Exemplification,” “Process,” “Comparison or Contrast,” and “Argument.” Each chapter opens with a brief introduction to a specific pattern, followed by two student essays and one professional essay written in that pattern. Included are a series of questions so that you can evaluate the essays in terms of the basic principles of writing explained in Part One. Finally, a number of writing topics are presented, along with hints about prewriting and revising to help you plan and write an effective paper.

3. Turn to Part Three as needed for help with types of writing you will do in college: exam essays, summaries, reports, the résumé and cover letter, and the research paper. You will see that these kinds of writing are variations of the essay form you have already learned.

4. In addition, refer to Part Four as needed for review and practice in the skills needed to write effective, error-free sentences.

5. Finally, if you are using the alternate version of this book—*College Writing Skills with Readings*—then read some of the selections in Part Five and respond to the activities that follow the selections.

For your convenience, the book includes the following:

**•** On the inside back cover, there is a checklist of the four basic steps in effective writing. **•** On page 632, there is a list of commonly used correction symbols.

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Get into the habit of regularly referring to these guides; they'll help you produce clearly thought out, well-written essays.

*College Writing Skills* will help you learn, practice, and apply the thinking and writing skills you need to communicate effectively. But the starting point must be your own determination to do the work needed to become a strong writer. The ability to express yourself clearly and logically can open doors of opportunity for you, both in school and in your career. If you decide—and only you can decide—that you want such language power, this book will help you reach that goal.

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**2: The Writing Process**

*This chapter will explain and illustrate*

• the sequence of steps in writing an effective essay

• prewriting

• revising

• editing



*Think about an electronic device you use every day. It could be your cell phone, radio, computer, iPod, Palm Pilot, etc. See if you can write for ten minutes about why you couldn't live without it. Don't worry about spelling and punctuation; just get your thoughts down on paper.*

**Teaching Tip**

Ask students to complete this writing prompt in class. In addition to looking at this photo, students may want to take out their iPod or cell phone.

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Chapter 1 introduced you to the essay form and to some basics of writing. This chapter explains and illustrates the sequence of steps in writing an effective essay. In particular, the chapter focuses on prewriting and revising—strategies that can help with every essay you write.

For many people, writing is a process that involves the following steps:

1. Discovering a thesis—often through prewriting.

2. Developing solid support for the thesis—often through more prewriting.

3. Organizing the thesis and supporting material and writing it out in a first draft. 4. Revising and then editing carefully to ensure an effective, error-free essay.

Learning this sequence will help give you confidence when the time comes to write. You'll know that you can use prewriting as a way to think on paper and to gradually discover just what ideas you want to develop. You'll understand that there are four clear-cut goals—unity, support, organization, and error-free sentences—to aim for in your writing. You'll realize that you can use revision to rework an essay until it is a strong and effective piece of writing. And you'll be able to edit your writing so that your sentences are clear and error free.

**Teaching Tip**

Begin this lesson by asking students to describe the steps that they take to write a paper. Then have them compare their steps with these steps.

**Teaching Tip**

Draw a diagram on the board of the writing process.

**Prewriting**

If you are like many people, you may have trouble getting started with writing. A mental block may develop when you sit down before a blank sheet of paper. You may not be able to think of an interesting topic or thesis. Or you may have trouble coming up with relevant details to support a possible thesis. And even after starting an essay, you may hit snags—moments when you wonder, What else can I say? or Where do I go next?

**Teaching Tip**

Take a quick poll in class. Ask students if they have trouble starting an assignment.

The following pages describe five prewriting techniques that will help you think about and develop a topic and get words on paper: (1) freewriting, (2) questioning, (3) making a list, (4) clustering, and (5) preparing a scratch outline. These techniques help you think about and create material, and they are a central part of the writing process.

**Technique 1: Freewriting**

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*Freewriting* means jotting down in rough sentences or phrases everything that comes to mind about a possible topic. See if you can write nonstop for ten minutes or more. Do not worry about spelling or punctuating correctly, about erasing mistakes, about organizing material, or about finding exact words. Instead, explore

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an idea by putting down whatever pops into your head. If you get stuck for words, repeat yourself until more words come. There is no need to feel inhibited, since mistakes *do not count* and you do not have to hand in your freewriting.

**ESL Tip**

Encourage nonnative speakers to engage in all types of prewriting activities, as they provide many opportunities for communication in second language acquisition. If students can't think of a word in English, tell them to leave a blank. They can check a dictionary later on.

Freewriting will limber up your writing muscles and make you familiar with the act of writing. It is a way to break through mental blocks about writing. Since you do not have to worry about mistakes, you can focus on discovering what you want to say about a subject. Your initial ideas and impressions will often become clearer after you have gotten them down on paper, and they may lead to other impressions and ideas. Through continued practice in freewriting, you will develop the habit of thinking as you write. And you will learn a helpful technique for getting started on almost any writing you have to do.

***Freewriting: A Student Model***

Diane Woods's essay “The Hazards of Moviegoing” on page 6 was developed in response to an assignment to write about some annoyance in everyday life. Diane began by doing some general freewriting and thinking about things that annoy her. Here is her freewriting: **Teaching Tip**

Point out that writers often want to correct their mistakes or pause to during freewriting. Stress the importance of nonstop writing.

**Teaching Tip**

Suggest to students that they can use a computer to freewrite.

There are lots of things I get annoyed by. One of them that comes to mind is politishans, in fact I am so annoyed by them that I don't want to say anything about them the last thing I want is to write about them. Another thing that bothers me are people who keep complaining about everything. If you're having trouble, do something about it just don't keep complaining and just talking. I am really annoyed by traffic. There are too many cars in our block and its not surprising. Everyone has a car, the parents have cars and the parents are just too induljent and the kids have cars, and theyre all coming and going all the time and often driving too fast. Speeding up and down the street. We need a speed limit sign but here I am back with politiks again. I am really bothered when I have to drive to the movies all the congestion along the way plus there are just so many cars there at the mall. No space even though the parking lot is huge it just fills up with cars. Movies are a bother anyway because the people can be annoying who are sitting there in the theater with you, talking and dropping popcorn cups and acting like they're at home when they're not.

At this point, Diane read over her notes and, as she later commented, “I realized that I had several potential topics. I said to myself, ‘What point can I make that I can cover in an essay? What do I have the most information about?’ I decided that maybe I could narrow my topic down to the annoyances involved in

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going to the movies. I figured I would have more details for that topic.” Diane then did more focused freewriting to accumulate details for an essay on problems with moviegoing:

I really find it annoying to go see movies anymore. Even though I love films. Traffic to Cinema Six is awful. I hate looking for a parking place, the lot isn't big enough for the theaters and other stores. You just keep driving to find a parking space and hoping someone will pull out and no one else will pull in ahead of you. Then you don't want there to be a long line and to wind up in one of the first rows with this huge screen right in front of you. Then I'm in the theater with the smell of popcorn all around. Sitting there smelling it trying to ignore it and just wanting to pour a whole bucket of popcorn with melted butter down my throat. I can't stop thinking about the choclate bars either. I love the stuff but I don't need it. The people who are there sometimes drive me nuts. Talking and laughing, kids running around, packs of teens hollaring, who can listen to the movie? And I might run into my old boyfriend—the last thing I need. Also sitting thru all the previews and commercals. If I arrive late enough to miss that junk the movie may be selled out.

**Teaching Tip**

Ask a volunteer to read Diane Woods's general freewriting. Next, ask a volunteer to read her focused freewriting. As a class, discuss the changes that the author made to her paragraph.

Notice that there are errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation in Diane's freewriting. Diane is not worried about such matters, nor should she be. At this stage, she just wants to do some thinking on paper and get some material down on the page. She knows that this is a good first step, a good way of getting started, and that she will then be able to go on and shape the material.

You should take the same approach when freewriting: explore your topic without worrying at all about being correct. Figuring out what you want to say and getting raw material down on the page should have all of your attention at this early stage of the writing process. **Teaching Tip**

Get students to talk about why writers worry so much about being “correct.” Offer a few reasons (for example, being a perfectionist, feeling insecure).

**1 Activity**

To get a sense of the freewriting process, take a sheet of paper and freewrite about some of the everyday annoyances in your life. See how much material you can accumulate in ten minutes. And remember not to worry about mistakes; you're just thinking on paper.

**Technique 2: Questioning**

In *questioning,* you generate ideas and details by asking questions about your subject. Such questions include *why, when, where, who,* and *how.* Ask as many questions as you can think of.



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***Questioning: A Student Model***

Here are some questions that Diane Woods might have asked while developing her essay. **Teaching Tip**

Once students have worked on Activity 1, you may want to ask them to narrow down their topic and do focused freewriting for ten additional minutes.

**Questions Answers**

*Why don't I like to go to a movie? Just too many problems involved.*

*When is going to the movies a problem?*

*Could be any time—when a movie is popular, the theater is too crowded; when traffic is bad, the trip is a drag.*

*Where are problems with moviegoing? On the highway, in the parking lot, at the concession stand, in the theater*

*itself.*

*Who creates the problems? I do by wanting to eat too much. The patrons do by creating disturbances.*

*The theater owners do by not having*

*enough parking space and showing too*

*many commercials.*

*How can I deal with the problem? I can stay home and watch movies on DVD or cable TV.*

**Teaching Tip**

Teach your students the acronym 5WH (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How).

Asking questions can be an effective way of getting yourself to think about a topic from a number of different angles. The questions can really help you generate details about a topic. **2 Activity**

To get a sense of the questioning process, use a sheet of paper to ask yourself a series of questions about a good or bad experience that you have had recently. See how many details you can accumulate in ten minutes. And remember again not to be concerned about mistakes, because you are just thinking on paper.

**Technique 3: Making a List**

In *making a list,* also known as *brainstorming,* you collect ideas and details that relate to your subject. Pile these items up, one after another, without trying to sort out major details from minor ones or trying to put the details in any special order. Your goal is just to make a list of everything about your subject that occurs to you.



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***Making a List: A Student Model***

After Diane did her freewriting about moviegoing, she made up the following list of details. *Traffic is bad between my house and theater*

*Noisy patrons*

*Don't want to run into Jeremy*

*Hard to be on a diet*

*Kids running in aisles*

*I'm crowded into seats between strangers who push me off armrests*

*Not enough parking*

*Parking lot needs to be expanded*

*Too many previews*

*Can't pause or fast-forward as you can with a DVD*

*Long lines*

*High ticket prices*

*Too many temptatons at snack stand*

*Commercials for food on the screen*

*Can prepare healthy snacks for myself at home*

*Tubs of popcorn with butter*

*Huge choclate bars*

*Candy has always been my downfall*

*Movie may be sold out*

*People who've seen movie before talk along with actors and give away*

*plot twists*

*People coughing and sneezing*

*Icky stuff on floor*

*Teenagers yelling and showing off*

**Teaching Tip**

Explain to your students that writers often use several prewriting techniques. Each technique may provide different results.

One detail led to another as Diane expanded her list. Slowly but surely, more details emerged, some of which she could use in developing her paper. By the time

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she was done with her list, she was ready to plan an outline of her paragraph and then to write her first draft.

**3 Activity**

To get a sense of list-making, list on a sheet of paper a series of realistic goals, major or minor, that you would like to accomplish between today and one year from today. Your goals can be personal, academic, or career-related.

**Technique 4: Clustering**

**Teaching Tip**

Mention to your students that clustering helps them “see” their ideas.

*Clustering,* also known as *diagramming* or *mapping,* is another strategy that can be used to generate material for an essay. This method is helpful for people who like to do their thinking in a visual way. In clustering, you use lines, boxes, arrows, and circles to show relationships among the ideas and details that occur to you.

Begin by stating your subject in a few words in the center of a blank sheet of paper. Then, as ideas and details come to you, put them in boxes or circles around the subject and draw lines to connect them to each other and to the subject. Put minor ideas or details in smaller boxes or circles, and use connecting lines to show how they relate as well.

***Clustering: A Student Model***

Keep in mind that there is no right or wrong way of clustering or diagramming. It is a way to think on paper about how various ideas and details relate to one another. Below is an example of what Diane might have done to develop her ideas.

**Teaching Tip**

Remind students that their ideas can overlap in clustering.

**Teaching Tip**

Students who find clustering helpful may want to use other graphic organizers (for example, Venn diagram and fishbone map). Provide images of these organizers.

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**TIP**

In addition to helping generate material, clustering can give you an early sense of how ideas and details relate to one another. For example, the cluster for Diane's essay suggests that different kinds of noisy people could be the focus of one paragraph and that different kinds of temptations could be the focus of another paragraph.

**4 Activity**

Use clustering (diagramming) to organize the list of year-ahead goals that you created for the previous activity (page 30).

**Technique 5: Preparing a Scratch Outline**

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A *scratch outline* is an excellent sequel to the first four prewriting techniques. A scratch outline often follows freewriting, questioning, list-making, or diagramming; or it may gradually emerge in the midst of these strategies. In fact, trying to make a scratch outline is a good way to see if you need to do more prewriting. If you cannot come up with a solid outline, then you know you need to do more prewriting to clarify your main point or its several kinds of support.

In a scratch outline, you think carefully about the point you are making, the supporting items for that point, and the order in which you will arrange those items. The scratch outline is a plan or blueprint to help you achieve a unified, supported, well-organized essay.

When you are planning a traditional essay consisting of an introduction, three supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion, a scratch outline is especially important. It may be only a few words, but it will be the framework on which your whole essay will be built. **Teaching Tip**

You may want to do Activity 4 with the entire class. Use clustering to organize the details that students created for the previous activity.

***Scratch Outline: A Student Model***

As Diane was working on her list of details, she suddenly realized what the plan of her essay could be. She could organize many of her details into one of three supporting groups: (1) annoyances in going out, (2) too many tempting snacks, and (3) other people. She then went back to the list, crossed out items that she now saw did not fit, and numbered the items according to the group where they fit. Here is what Diane did with her list:

**Teaching Tip**

Ask students what the word “scratch” means in “scratch outline.” Point out that a scratch outline can be prepared quickly.

*1 Traffic is bad between my house and the theater*

*3 Noisy patrons*

*D~~on’t want to run into Jeremy~~*

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*2 Hard to be on a diet*

*3 Kids running in aisles*

*3 I'm crowded into seats between strangers who push me off armrests 1 Not enough parking*

*1 Parking lot needs to be expanded*

*1 Too many previews*

*~~Can’t pause or fast-forward as you can with a DVD~~*

*1 Long lines*

*1 High ticket prices*

*2 Too many temptatons at snack stand*

*~~Commercials for food on the screen~~*

*2 Can prepare healthy snacks for myself at home*

*2 Tubs of popcorn with butter*

*~~Candy has always been my downfall~~*

*2 Huge choclate bars*

*1 Movie may be sold out*

*3 People who've seen movie before talk along with actors and give away plot twists 3 People coughing and sneezing*

*1 Icky stuff on floor*

*3 Teenagers yelling and showing off*

Under the list, Diane was now able to prepare her scratch outline:

*Going to the movies offers some real problems*.

1. *Inconvenience of going out*

2. *Tempting snacks*

3. *Other moviegoers*

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After all her prewriting, Diane was pleased. She knew that she had a promising essay—one with a clear point and solid support. She saw that she could organize the material into a traditional essay consisting of an introduction, several supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. She was now ready to write the first draft of her essay, using her outline as a guide.

**TIP**

Chances are that if you do enough prewriting and thinking on paper, you will eventually discover the point and support of your essay.

**5 Activity**

Create a scratch outline that could serve as a guide if you were to write an essay about your year-ahead goals.

**Teaching Tip**

Call attention to this tip.

**Writing a First Draft**

When you write a first draft, be prepared to put in additional thoughts and details that did not emerge during prewriting. And don't worry if you hit a snag. Just leave a blank space or add a comment such as “Do later” and press on to finish the essay. Also, don't worry yet about grammar, punctuation, or spelling. You don't want to take time correcting words or sentences that you may decide to remove later. Instead, make it your goal to state your thesis clearly and develop the content of your essay with plenty of specific details.

**Teaching Tip**

Remind students to look over all their prewriting notes when creating a scratch outline for Activity 5.

**Writing a First Draft: A Student Model**

Here is Diane's first draft:

**ESL Tip**

Remind nonnative speakers that all good writers need to write multiple drafts, and it's not an indication of poor or weak writing skills.

Even though I love movies, my friends have stopped asking me to go. There are just too many problems involved in going to the movies.

There are no small theaters anymore, I have to drive fifteen minutes to a big multaplex. Because of a supermarket and restarants, the parking lot is filled. I have to keep driving around to find a space. Then I have to stand in a long line. Hoping that they do not run out of tickets. Finally, I have to pay too much money for a ticket. Putting out that much money, I should not have to deal with a floor that seems coated with rubber cement. By the end of a movie, my shoes are often sealed to a mix of spilled soda, bubble gum, and other stuff.

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The theater offers temptatons in the form of snacks I really don't need. Like most of us I have to worry about weight gain. At home I do pretty well by simply watching what I keep in the house and not buying stuff that is bad for me. I can make do with healthy snacks because there is nothing in the house. Going to the theater is like spending my evening in a 7-

Eleven that's been equiped with a movie screen and there are seats which are comfortable. I try to persuade myself to just have a diet soda. The smell of popcorn soon overcomes me. My friends are as bad as I am. Choclate bars seem to jump into your hands, I am eating enormous mouthfuls of milk duds. By the time I leave the theater I feel sick and tired of myself.

Some of the other moviegoers are the worst problem. There are teenagers who try to impress their friends in one way or another. Little kids race up and down the aisles, gigling and laughing. Adults act as if they're watching the movie at home. They talk loudly about the ages of the stars and give away the plot. Other people are droping popcorn tubs or cups of soda crushed ice and soda on the floor. Also coughing a lot and doing other stuff—bms!

I decided one night that I was not going to be a moviegoer anymore. I joined Netflix, and I'll watch movies comfortable in my own living room.

**Teaching Tip**

Writers may feel pressured to write a perfect first draft, which is unreasonable. Emphasize the importance of revision and editing.

**Teaching Tip**

Ask students to think about why writers should put their draft aside for a while. Mention that a cake needs to cool before it is frosted and a turkey needs to stand before it is carved. **TIP**

After Diane finished the first draft, she was able to put it aside until the next day. You will benefit as well if you can allow some time between finishing a draft and starting to revise.



Team up with someone in your class and see if you can fill in the missing words in the following explanation of Diane's first draft.

**6 Activity**

1. Diane has a very brief introduction—no more than an opening sentence and a second sentence that states the ***thesis*** . She knows she can develop the introduction more fully in a later draft.

2. Of Diane's three supporting paragraphs, only the ***first*** paragraph lacks a topic sentence. She realizes that this is something to work on in the next draft.

3. There are some misspellings—for example, ***(answers may vary) equiped*** . Diane doesn't worry about spelling at this point. She just wants to get down as much of the substance of her paper as possible.

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4. There are various punctuation errors, such as the run-on sentences in the ***second and third*** paragraphs. Again, Diane is focusing on content; she knows she can attend to punctuation and grammar later.

5. At several points in the essay, Diane revises on the spot to make images more ***specific*** : she changes “is sticky” to “seems coated with rubber cement,” “market” to “7-Eleven,” and “cups of soda” to “cups of crushed ice and soda.”

6. Near the end of her essay, Diane can't think of added details to insert so she simply puts the letters “ ***bms*** ” at that point to remind herself to “be more specific” in the next draft. She then goes on to finish her first draft.

7. Her ***conclusion*** is as brief as her introduction. Diane knows she can round off her essay more fully during revision.

**Revising**

Revising is as much a stage in the writing process as prewriting, outlining, and doing the first draft. *Revising* means rewriting an essay, building on what has already been done, to make it stronger. One writer has said about revision, “It's like cleaning house—getting rid of all the junk and putting things in the right order.” But it is not just “straightening up”; instead, you must be ready to roll up your sleeves and do whatever is needed to create an effective essay. Too many students think that the first draft *is* the essay. They start to become writers when they realize that revising a rough draft three or four times is often at the heart of the writing process.

Here are some quick hints that can help make revision easier. First, set your first draft aside for a while. A few hours will do, but a day or two would be better. You can then come back to the draft with a fresh, more objective point of view. Second, work from typed or printed text. You'll be able to see the essay more impartially in this way than if you were just looking at your own familiar handwriting. Next, read your draft aloud. Hearing how your writing sounds will help you pick up problems with meaning as well as with style. Finally, as you do all these things, add your thoughts and changes above the lines or in the margins of your essay. Your written comments can serve as a guide when you work on the next draft.

There are three stages to the revising process:

• revising content

• revising sentences

• editing

**Teaching Tip**

Get students to talk about how they revise. Often students simply fix superficial features, such as spelling and punctuation.

**Teaching Tip**

Use these tips to help your students revise an essay they created for a previous activity. 

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**Revising Content**

To revise the content of your essay, ask these questions:

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**Teaching Tip**

Photocopy this list for your students to use as a checklist for revising content. 1. Is my essay **unified**?

• Do I have a thesis that is clearly stated or implied in the introductory paragraph of my essay?

• Do all my supporting paragraphs truly support and back up my thesis? 2. Is my essay **supported**?

• Are there three separate supporting points for the thesis?

• Do I have specific evidence for each of the three supporting points?

• Is there plenty of specific evidence for each supporting point?

3. Is my essay **organized**?

• Do I have an interesting introduction, a solid conclusion, and an accurate title? • Do I have a clear method of organizing my essay?

• Do I use transitions and other connecting words?

**ESL Tip**

A good technique is to get students to read their essay beginning with the last sentence. Nonnative speakers will find they can concentrate on the errors with missing articles, wrong prepositions, verb tenses, etc., without being concerned about content.

Chapters 3 and 4 will give you practice in achieving **unity, support,** and **organization** in your writing.

**Revising Sentences**

To revise sentences in your essay, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do I use parallelism to balance my words and ideas?

2. Do I have a consistent point of view?

3. Do I use specific words?

4. Do I use active verbs?

5. Do I use words effectively by avoiding slang, clichés, pretentious language, and wordiness?

6. Do I vary my sentences?

**Teaching Tip**

Photocopy this list for your students to use a checklist for revising sentences. Chapter 5 will give you practice in revising sentences.

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**Editing**

After you have revised your essay for content and style, you are ready to *edit*—check for and correct—errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Students often find it hard to edit their writing carefully. They have put so much, or so little, work into their writing that it's almost painful for them to look at the essay one more time. You may simply have to *will* yourself to perform this important closing step in the writing process. Remember that eliminating sentence-skill mistakes will improve an average essay and help ensure a strong grade on a good essay. Further, as you get into the habit of checking your writing, you will also get into the habit of using the sentence skills consistently. They are an integral part of clear and effective writing.

Chapter 5 and Part Four of this book will serve as a guide while you are editing your essay for mistakes in **sentence skills.**

**Teaching Tip**

Get students to talk about how they edit. Often students submit papers without carefully editing their work. They may expect their teachers to flag and correct their errors.

**An Illustration of the Revising and Editing Processes:** *Revising with a Second Draft: A Student Model*

Since Diane Woods was using a word-processing program on a computer, she was able to print out a double-spaced version of her essay about movies, leaving her plenty of room for revisions. Here is one of her revised paragraphs:

**Teaching Tip**

You may want to ask students to provide additional changes and additions to Diane's second draft. Remind them that there is no right or wrong way to revise.

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Diane made her changes in longhand as she worked on the second draft. As you will see when you complete the activity below, her revision serves to make the paragraph more unified, better supported, and better organized.

**Teaching Tip**

Suggest to your students that they work in pairs to complete this activity. Then go over the answers in class.

**7 Activity**

Fill in the missing words.

1. To achieve better organization, Diane adds at the beginning of the paragraph the transitional phrase “ ***Second*** ,” making it very clear that her second supporting idea is tempting snacks.

2. Diane also adds the transition “ ***however*** ” to show clearly the difference between being at home and being in the theater.

3. In the interest of (*unity, support, organization*) ***unity*** , Diane crosses out the sentence “ ***My friends are as bad as I am*** .” She realizes this sentence is not a relevant detail but really another topic.

4. To add more (*unity, support, organization*) ***support*** , Diane changes “healthy snacks” to “ ***snacks like celery and carrot sticks*** ”; she changes “nothing in the freezer” to “ ***no ice cream in the freezer*** ”; she adds “ ***dripping with butter*** ” after “popcorn”; and she changes “am eating” to “ ***risk pulling out my fillings as I chew.*** ”

5. In the interest of eliminating wordiness, she removes the words “ ***watching what I keep in the house*** ” from the third sentence.

6. In the interest of parallelism, Diane changes “and there are seats which are comfortable” to “ ***comfortable seats*** .”

7. For greater sentence variety, Diane combines two short sentences, beginning the first sentence with the subordinating word “ ***As*** .”

8. To create a consistent point of view, Diane changes “jump into your hands” to “ ***jump into my hands*** .”

9. Finally, Diane replaces the vague “out of sorts” with the more precise “ ***disgusted*** .”

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***Editing: A Student Model***

After typing into her word-processing file all the changes in her second draft, Diane printed out another clean draft of the essay. The paragraph on tempting snacks required almost no more revision, so Diane turned her attention mostly to editing changes, illustrated below with her work on the second supporting paragraph:

**Teaching Tip**

Ask students to provide additional changes and additions to Diane's third draft. Remind them that there is no right or wrong way to edit.



Once again, Diane makes her changes in longhand right on the printout of her essay. To note these changes, complete the activity below.

**8 Activity**

Fill in the missing words.

1. As part of her editing, Diane checked and corrected the ***spelling*** of two words, *equipped* and *chocolate*.

2. She added ***commas*** to set off two introductory phrases (“Like most of us” in the second sentence and “By the time I leave the theater” in the final sentence) and also to set off the interrupting word *however* in the fifth sentence.

3. She realized that “milk duds” is a brand name and added ***capital letters*** to make it “Milk Duds.”

4. And since revision can occur at any stage of the writing process, including editing, she makes one of her details more vivid by adding the descriptive words “ ***the size of small automobiles*** .”

**Teaching Tip**

Explain why a comma is needed to set off an introductory phrase.

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**Review Activities**

You now have a good overview of the writing process, from prewriting to first draft to revising to editing. The remaining chapters in Part One will deepen your sense of the four goals of effective writing: unity, support, organization or coherence, and sentence skills.

To reinforce the information about the writing process that you have learned in this chapter, you can now work through the following activities:

• taking a writing inventory

• prewriting

• outlining

• revising

**Taking a Writing Inventory**

**Note:**

Answers will vary.

**Teaching Tip**

Consider having your students discuss their answers with a partner.

Answer the questions below to evaluate your approach to the writing process. This activity is not a test, so try to be as honest as possible. Becoming aware of your writing habits will help you realize changes that may be helpful.

**9 Activity**

1. When you start work on an essay, do you typically do any prewriting? \_\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ No

2. If so, which prewriting techniques do you use?

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Freewriting

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Questioning

\_\_\_\_\_\_ List-making

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Diagramming

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Scratch outline

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please describe)

3. Which prewriting technique or techniques work best for you, or which do you think will work best for you?

4. Many students say they find it helpful to handwrite a first draft and then type that draft on a computer. They then print the draft out and revise it by hand. Describe the way you proceed in drafting and revising an essay.

5. After you write the first draft of an essay, do you have time to set it aside for a while so that you can come back to it with a fresh eye?

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_\_ No

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6. How many drafts do you typically write when working on an essay?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7. When you revise, are you aware that you should be working toward an essay that is unified, solidly supported, and clearly organized? Has this chapter given you a better sense that unity, support, and organization are goals to aim for?

8. Do you revise an essay for the effectiveness of its sentences as well as for its content? \_\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_\_ No

9. Do you typically do any editing of the almost-final draft of an essay, or do you tend to “hope for the best” and hand it in without careful checking?

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Edit

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hope for the best

10. What (if any) information has this chapter given you about *prewriting* that you will try to apply in your writing?

11. What (if any) information has this chapter given you about *revising* that you will try to apply in your writing?

12. What (if any) information has this chapter given you about *editing* that you will try to apply in your writing?

**Teaching Tip**

Follow up to see what information students applied to their writing.

**Prewriting**

**Teaching Tip**

Students can do this activity alone or in pairs.

**10 Activity**

On the following pages are examples of how the five prewriting techniques could be used to develop the topic “Problems of Combining Work and College.” Identify each technique by writing F (for freewriting), Q (for questioning), L (for list-making), C (for clustering), or SO (for the scratch outline) in the answer space.

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**Outlining**

As already mentioned (see page 31), outlining is central to writing a good essay. An outline lets you see, and work on, the bare bones of an essay, without the distraction of a clutter of words and sentences. It develops your ability to think clearly and logically. Outlining provides a quick check on whether your essay will be *unified*. It also suggests right at the start whether your essay will be adequately *supported*. And it shows you how to plan an essay that is *well organized*.

The following two exercises will help you develop the outlining skills so important to planning and writing a solid essay.

One key to effective outlining is the ability to distinguish between major ideas and details that fit under those ideas. In each of the four lists below, major and supporting items are mixed together. Working in pairs, put the items into logical order by filling in the outline that follows each list. In items 3 and 4, one of the three major ideas is missing and must be added.



**11 Activity**

1. Thesis: My high school had three problem areas.

2. Thesis: Working as a dishwasher in a restaurant was my worst job.

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3. Thesis: Joining an aerobics class has many benefits.

4. Thesis: My favorite times in school were the days before holiday vacations. **12 Activity**

Read the following essay and outline it in the spaces provided. Write out the central point and topic sentences, and summarize in a few words the supporting material that fits under each topic sentence. One item is summarized for you as an example.

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**Teaching Tip**

Suggest to your students that they first annotate this essay, underlining the thesis and major ideas.

**Losing Touch**

Steve, a typical American, stays home on workdays. He logs onto his e-mail. Evenings, he listens to his iPod, watches a DVD, or surfs the Internet. On many days, Steve doesn't talk to any other human beings, and he doesn't see any people except those on television. Steve is imaginary, but his lifestyle is very common. More and more, the inventions of modern technology seem to be cutting us off from contact with our fellow human beings.

Thesis: ***More and more, the inventions of modern technology seem to be cutting us off from contact with our fellow human beings.***

The world of business is one area in which technology is isolating us. Many people now work alone at home. With access to a large central computer, employees such as secretaries, insurance agents, and accountants do their jobs at display terminals in their own homes. They no longer have to actually see the people they're dealing with. In addition, employees are often paid in an impersonal way. Workers’ salaries are automatically credited to their bank accounts, eliminating the need for paychecks. Fewer people stand in line with their coworkers to receive their pay or cash their checks. Finally, personal banking is becoming a detached process. Customers interact with machines rather than people to deposit or withdraw money from their accounts. Even some bank loans are approved or rejected, not in an interview with a loan officer, but by a computer program.

First topic sentence: ***The world of business is one area in which technology is isolating us.*** Support:

1. Many people now work alone at home.

2. ***Workers’ salaries are automatically credited to their bank accounts***.

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3. ***Personal banking is becoming a detached process.***

a. ***Customers interact with machines to make deposits and withdrawals.*** b. ***Some loans are accepted or rejected by computer programs, not loan officers.***

Another area that technology is changing is entertainment. Music, for instance, was once a group experience. People listened to music in concert halls or at small social gatherings. For many people now, however, music is a solitary experience. Walking along the street or sitting in their living rooms, they wear headphones to build a wall of music around them. Movie entertainment is changing, too. Movies used to be social events. Now, some people are not going out to see a movie. Some are choosing to wait for a film to appear on cable television or DVD. Instead of being involved with the laughter, applause, or hisses of the audience, viewers watch movies in the isolation of their own living rooms.

Second topic sentence: ***Another area that technology is changing is entertainment.*** Support:

1. ***Music is a solitary experience.***

2. ***Fewer people go out to see movies.***

Education is a third important area in which technology is separating us from others. From elementary schools to colleges, students spend more and more time sitting by themselves in front of computers. The computers give them feedback, while teachers spend more time tending the computers and less time interacting with their classes. A similar problem occurs in homes. **[Punto y seguido].**

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As more families buy computers, increasing numbers of students practice their math and reading skills with software programs instead of with their friends, brothers and sisters, and parents. Last, alienation is occurring as a result of DVDs. People are buying DVDs on subjects such as cooking, real estate investment, speaking, and speed-reading. They then practice their skills at home rather than by taking group classes in which a rich human interaction can occur.

Third topic sentence: ***Education is a third important area in which technology is separating us from others.***

Support:

1. ***Students sit alone in front of computers at school.***

2. ***Students use software at home instead of interacting with others.*** 3. ***DVDs are replacing class instruction.***

Technology, then, seems to be driving human beings apart. Soon, we may no longer need to communicate with other human beings to do our work, entertain ourselves, or pursue an education. Machines will be the coworkers and companions of the future.

**Revising**

**13 Activity**

Following is the second supporting paragraph from an essay called “Problems of Combining School and Work.” The paragraph is shown in four different stages of development: (1) first full draft, (2) revised second draft, (3) edited next-to-final draft, (4) final draft. The four stages appear in scrambled order. Write the number 1

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in the answer blank for the first full draft, and number the remaining stages in sequence. **Teaching Tip**

You may want to do this activity with the entire class.

***2***

I have also given up some personal pleasures in my life. On sundays for example I used to play softball or football, now I use the entire day to study. Good old-fashioned sleep is another lost pleasure for me now. I never get as much as I like because their just isn't time. Finally I miss having the chance to just sit in front of the TV, on weeknights. In order to watch the whole lineup of movies and sports that I used to watch regularly. These sound like small pleasures, but you realize how important they are when you have to give them up.

***1***

I've had to give up pleasures in my life. I use to spend sundays playing games, now I have to study. Im the sort of person who needs a lot of sleep, but I dont have the time for that either. Sleeping nine or ten hours a night woul'dnt be unusual for me. Psycologists say that each individual need a different amount of sleep, some people need as little as five hours, some need as much as nine or ten. So I'm not unusual in that. But Ive given up that pleasure too. And I can't watch the TV shows I use to enjoy. This is another personal pleasure Ive lost because of doing work and school. These may seem like small things, but you realize how good they are when you give them up.

***4***

Besides missing the social side of college life, I've also had to give up some of my special personal pleasures. I used to spend Sunday afternoons, for example, playing lob-pitch softball or touch football depending on the season. Now I use Sunday as a catch-up day for my studies. Another pleasure I've lost is sleeping late on days off and weekends. I once loved mornings when I could check the clock, bury my head in the pillow, and drift off for another hour. These days I'm forced to crawl out of bed the minute the alarm lets out its piercing ring. Finally, I no longer have the chance to just sit watching the movies and sports programs that I enjoy. A leisurely night of Monday Night Football or a network premiere of a Tom Hanks movie is a pleasure of the past for me now.

***3***

Besides missing the social side of college life, I've also had to give up some of my special personal pleasures. I used to spend sunday afternoons, for example playing lob-pitch softball or touch football depending on the season. Now I use the day as a catch-up day for my studies. Another pleasure I've lost is sleeping late on days off

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and weekends. I once loved mornings when I could check the clock, then burying my head in the pillow, and you drift off to sleep for another hour. These days I'm forced to get out of bed the minute the alarm lets out it's ring. Finally I no longer have the chance to just sit watching the movies and also programs with sports that I enjoy. A leisurely night of Monday Night Football or a network premiere of a Tom Hanks movie is a pleasure of the past for me now.

**Teaching Tip**

Have students underline or highlight the editing changes on the final draft.

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**3: The First and Second Steps in Essay Writing **

*Describe a favorite childhood place that made you feel secure, safe, private, or in a world of your own. Begin with a thesis statement, something like this: “\_\_\_\_\_was a place that made me feel\_\_\_\_\_when I was a child.” Remember to keep the point of your thesis statement in mind as you describe this place. Include only details that will support the idea that your place was one of security, safety, privacy, or the like.*

*This chapter will show you how to*

• start an essay with a point, or thesis

• support that point, or thesis, with specific evidence

**Teaching Tip**

Ask students to complete this writing prompt in class.

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**Teaching Tip**

You may want to remind students that a thesis statement usually appears as the first sentence but may appear later in the essay.

**ESL Tip**

Nonnative students may not be accustomed to writing a thesis statement that presents a strong or direct point. In some cultures, this is considered rude and impolite.

Chapter 2 emphasized how prewriting and revising can help you become an effective writer. This chapter focuses on the first two steps in writing an effective essay:

1. Begin with a point, or thesis.

2. Support the thesis with specific evidence.

The chapters that follow will focus on the third and fourth steps in writing:

3. Organize and connect the specific evidence (pages 80–104).

4. Write clear, error-free sentences (pages 105–138).

**Step 1: Begin with a Point, or Thesis**

Your first step in writing is to discover what point you want to make and to write that point out as a single sentence. There are two reasons for doing this. You want to know right from the start if you have a clear and workable thesis. Also, you will be able to use the thesis as a guide while writing your essay. At any stage you can ask yourself, Does this support my thesis? With the thesis as a guide, the danger of drifting away from the point of the essay is greatly reduced.

**Understanding Thesis Statements**

In Chapter 1, you learned that effective essays center around a thesis, or main point, that a writer wishes to express. This central idea is usually presented as a *thesis statement* in an essay's introductory paragraph.

A good thesis statement does two things. First, it tells readers an essay's *topic.* Second, it presents the writer's *attitude, opinion, idea,* or *point* about that topic. For example, look at the following thesis statement:

Owning a pet has several important benefits.

In this thesis statement, the topic is *owning a pet;* the writer's main point is that owning a pet *has several important benefits.*

**1 Activity**

For each thesis statement below, single-underline the topic and double-underline the main point that the writer wishes to express about the topic.

**EXAMPLES**

Our company president should be fired for three main reasons.

The Internet has led to new kinds of frustration in everyday life.

1. Our cafeteria would be greatly improved if several changes were made. 2. Celebrities are often poor role models because of the ways they dress, talk, and behave.

3. My first night as a security guard turned out to be one of the most frightening experiences of my life.

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4. SUVs are inferior to cars because they are harder to control, more expensive, and dangerous to the environment.

5. The twentieth century produced three inventions that dramatically changed the lives of all Americans.

6. Stress in the fast-food workplace has led to serious physical, psychological, and emotional problems for employees.

7. Advertisers target young people when marketing cigarettes, alcohol, and adult movies. 8. Living in the city has certain advantages over living in the suburbs.

9. Before moving away from home, every person should have mastered certain key skills.

10. Independent mom-and-pop stores are superior to larger chain stores for a number of reasons.

**Writing a Good Thesis I**

Now that you know how thesis statements work, you can begin writing your own. To start, you need a topic that is neither too broad nor too narrow. Suppose, for example, that an instructor asks you to write a paper on marriage. Such a subject is too broad to cover in a five-hundred word essay. You would have to write a book to support adequately any point you might make about the general subject of marriage. What you would need to do, then, is limit your subject. Narrow it down until you have a thesis that you can deal with specifically in about five hundred words. In the box that follows are (1) several general subjects, (2) a limited version of each general subject, and (3) a thesis statement about each limited subject.



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**Teaching Tip**

You may want to provide your students with other examples of general topics. Ask your students to limit these subjects and create thesis statements.

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**2 Activity**

Sometimes a subject must go through several stages of limiting before it is narrow enough to write about. Below are four lists reflecting several stages that writers went through in moving from a general subject to a narrow thesis statement. Number the stages in each list from 1 to 5, with 1 marking the broadest stage and 5 marking the thesis.



Later in this chapter, you will get more practice in narrowing general subjects to thesis statements.

**Writing a Good Thesis II**

**Teaching Tip**

Discuss why a thesis statement should have only one idea.

When writing thesis statements, people often make mistakes that undermine their chances of producing an effective essay. One mistake is to simply announce the subject rather than state a true thesis. A second mistake is to write a thesis that is too broad, and a third is to write a thesis that is too narrow. A fourth error is to

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write a thesis containing more than one idea. Here are tips for avoiding such mistakes and writing good thesis statements.

***1 Write Statements, Not Announcements***

The subject of this paper will be my parents.

I want to talk about the crime wave in our country.

The baby-boom generation is the concern of this essay.

In this first group, the sentences are not thesis statements but announcements of a topic. For instance, “The subject of this paper will be my parents” does not make a point about the parents but merely tells, in a rather weak and unimaginative way, the writer's general subject. Remember, a thesis statement must make a point about a limited subject. Effective thesis statements based on the above sentences could be as follows:

My parents each struggled with personal demons.

The recent crime wave in our city has several apparent causes.

The baby-boom generation has changed American society in key ways.

**Teaching Tip**

Use the analogy of Goldilocks and the Three Bears to teach students about thesis statements. Tell them that a topic sentence cannot be “too broad” or “too narrow” but must be “just right.”

***2 Avoid Statements That Are Too Broad***

Disease has shaped human history.

Insects are fascinating creatures.

Men and women are very different.

In the preceding examples, each statement is too broad to be supported adequately in a student essay. For instance, “Disease has shaped human history” would require far more than a five hundred-word essay. In fact, there are many lengthy books written on the exact same topic. Remember, your thesis statement should be focused enough that it can be effectively supported in a five-paragraph essay. Revised thesis statements based on the topics in the above sentences could be as follows:

In the mid-1980s, AIDS changed people's attitudes about dating.

Strength, organization, and communication make the ant one of nature's most successful insects.

Men and women are often treated very differently in the workplace.

***3 Avoid Statements That Are Too Narrow***

Here are three statements that are too narrow:

The speed limit near my home is sixty-five miles per hour.

A hurricane hit southern Florida last summer.

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A person must be at least thirty-five years old to be elected president of the United States.

In this third group, there is no room in any of the three statements for support to be given. For instance, “The speed limit near my home is sixty-five miles per hour” is too narrow to be expanded into a paper. It is a simple fact that does not require any support. Such a statement is sometimes called a *dead-end statement:* there is no place to go with it. Remember, a thesis statement must be broad enough to require support in an essay. Successful thesis statements based on the preceding sentences are as follows:

The speed limit near my home should be lowered to fifty-five miles per hour for several reasons.

Federal officials made a number of mistakes in their response to the recent Florida hurricane.

The requirement that a U.S. president must be at least thirty-five years old is unfair and unreasonable.

***4 Make Sure Statements Develop Only One Idea*** Here are three statements that contain more than one idea:

One of the most serious problems affecting young people today is bullying, and it is time more kids learned the value of helping others.

Studying with others has several benefits, but it also has drawbacks and can be difficult to schedule.

Teachers have played an important role in my life, but they were not as important as my parents.

In this fourth group, each statement contains more than one idea. For instance, “One of the most serious problems affecting young people today is bullying, and it is time more kids learned the value of helping others” clearly has two separate ideas (“One of the most serious problems affecting young people today is bullying” *and* “it is time more kids learned the value of helping others”). The reader is asked to focus on two separate points, each of which more logically belongs in an essay of its own. Remember, the point of an essay is to communicate a *single* main idea to readers. To be as clear as possible, then, try to limit your thesis statement to the single key idea you want your readers to know. Revised thesis statements based on each of the examples above are as follows:

One of the most serious problems affecting young people today is bullying. Studying with others has several benefits.

Teachers have played an important role in my life.

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**3 Activity**

Write TN in the space next to the two statements that are too narrow to be developed in an essay. Write TB beside the two statements that are too broad to be covered in an essay. Then, in the spaces provided, revise one of the too-narrow statements and one of the too-broad statements to make them each an effective thesis.

***TB*** 1. The way our society treats elderly people is unbelievable.

***Our society discriminates against elderly people in a number of ways.***

***TN*** 2. Up to 70 percent of teenage marriages end in divorce.

***Teenage marriages often end in divorce for several reasons.***

***TB*** 3. Action must be taken against drugs.

***Several steps should be taken to reduce the use of drugs in schools.***

***TN*** 4. I failed my biology course.

***I am doing poorly in school because of three major distractions in my life.***

**Note:**

Wording of answers may vary.



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**Step 2: Support the Thesis with Specific Evidence**

The first essential step in writing a successful essay is to formulate a clearly stated thesis. The second basic step is to support the thesis with specific reasons or details.

To ensure that your essay will have adequate support, you may find an informal outline very helpful. Write down a brief version of your thesis idea, and then work out and jot down the three points that will support the thesis.

**ESL Tip**

Remind nonnative students to avoid using circular reasoning, which simply restates the main idea and does not provide supporting details. Although this pattern may be used in some cultures, it is not acceptable in academic writing.

Here is the scratch outline that was prepared by the author of the earlier essay on moviegoing:

A scratch outline like this one looks simple, but developing it often requires a great deal of careful thinking. The time spent on developing a logical outline is invaluable, though. Once you have planned the steps that logically support your thesis, you will be in an excellent position to go on to write an effective essay.

*Moviegoing is a problem.*

*1. Inconvenience of going out*

*2. Tempting snacks*

*3. Other moviegoers*

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Activities in this section will give you practice in the crucial skill of planning an essay clearly. **Note:**

Answers will vary; examples are shown.



**4 Activity**

Following are ten informal outlines. Working with a partner, complete any five of them by adding a third logical supporing point (*c*) that will parallel the two already provided (*a* and *b*).

1. The first day on a new job can be nerve-racking.

a. Meeting new people

b. Finding your way around a new place

c. ***Learning new rules and procedures***

2. My stepmother has three qualities I admire.

a. Patience

b. Thoughtfulness

c. ***Sense of humor***

3. The neighborhood grocery store is poorly managed.

a. The checkout lines are always long.

b. The aisles are dirty and understocked.

c. ***The employees are unhelpful and even rude.***

4. College students should live at home.

a. Stay in touch with family

b. Avoid distractions of dorm or apartment life

c. ***Save money***

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_is the worst job I've ever had.

a. Difficult boss

b. Poor pay

c. ***Long hours***

6. College is stressful for many people.

a. Worry about grades

b. Worry about being accepted

c. ***Worry about finances***

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7. My landlord adds to the stress in my life.

a. Neglects repairs

b. Ignores phone calls

c. ***Raises rent frequently***

8. Our neighborhood park is an unsafe place to visit.

a. Aggressive dogs

b. Broken glass

c. ***Strangers/Gangs/Teens***

9. Buying a used car is better than buying a new one.

a. Used cars are less likely to be stolen than new cars.

b. Used cars don't lose their value as quickly as most new cars.

c. ***Used cars are cheaper/easier to repair/easier to insure.***

10. Many companies use annoying practices to increase sales.

a. Junk mail

b. Spam e-mail

c. ***Telemarketers/Rebates/Infomercials***

**The Importance of *Specific* Details**

Just as a thesis must be developed with three supporting points, each supporting point must be developed with specific details. Specific details are valuable in two key ways. First, details excite the reader's interest. They make writing a pleasure to read, for we all enjoy learning particulars about people, places, and things. Second, details serve to explain a writer's points. They give the evidence needed for us to see and understand general ideas.

All too often, the body paragraphs in essays contain only vague generalities, rather than the specific supporting details that are needed to engage and convince a reader. Here is what one of the paragraphs in “The Hazards of Moviegoing” would have looked like if the writer had not detailed her supporting evidence vividly:

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**Teaching Tip**

Have students look at a previously written paragraph to see if they used specific details.

Some of the other patrons are even more of a problem than the theater itself. Many people in the theater often show themselves to be inconsiderate. They make noises and create disturbances at their seats. Included are people in every age group, from the young to the old. Some act as if they were at home in their own living room watching TV. And people are often messy, so that you're constantly aware of all the food they're eating. People are also always moving around near you, creating a disturbance and interrupting your enjoyment of the movie.

The following box contrasts the vague support in the preceding paragraph with the specific support in the essay.

**Teaching Tip**

You may want to provide students with other examples of vague support. Ask them to provide specific support for each example.



The effective paragraph from the essay provides details that make vividly clear the statement that patrons are a problem in the theater. The writer specifies the exact age groups (little kids, teenagers, and adults) and the offenses of

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each (giggling, talking and whistling, and loud comments). She specifies the various food excesses (crinkled wrappers, gum on seats, dropped popcorn and soda containers). Finally, she provides concrete details that enable us to see and hear other disturbances (coughs and burps, squirming, constant trips to restrooms, jostling for elbow room). The ineffective paragraph asks us to guess about these details; the effective paragraph describes the details in a specific and lively way.

In the strong paragraph, then, sharp details capture our interest and enable us to share the writer's experience. They provide pictures that make us feel we are there. The particulars also enable us to understand clearly the writer's point that patrons are a problem. Aim to make your own writing equally convincing by providing detailed support.

**Teaching Tip**

Consider making a game out of this activity. See how quickly your students correctly complete the activity. You may want to ask them to create a set of game rules first.

**5 Activity**

Write S in front of the two selections below that provide specific evidence to support the opening point. Write X in front of the two selections in which the opening point is followed by vague, general, wordy sentences.

***S*** 1. The people who have moved in beside us are unpleasant neighbors.

They barely say hi when we're in our neighboring yards. When we invited them to a neighborhood barbecue, they said they were going to be busy. They sometimes turn loud music on late at night, and we have to close our window to shut out the noise. To top it off, they own a dog, which they let roam free in our street.

***X*** 2. My mother was a harsh disciplinarian.

When I did something wrong, no matter how small, she would inflict serious punishment. She had expectations that I was to live up to, and she never changed her attitude. When I did not behave as I should, I was dealt with severely. There were no exceptions as far as my mother was concerned.

***S*** 3. Some things are worse when they're “improved.”

A good cheesecake, for one thing, is perfect. It doesn't need pineapple, cherries, blueberries, or whipped cream smeared all over it. Plain old American blue jeans, the ones with five pockets and copper rivets, are perfect too. Manufacturers only made them worse when they added flared legs, took away the pockets, tightened the fit, and plastered white logos and designers’ names all over them.

***X*** 4. Pets can be more trouble than children.

My dog, unlike my children, has never been completely housebroken. When he's excited or nervous, he still has an occasional problem. My dog, unlike my children, has never learned how to take care of himself when we're away, despite the fact that we've given him plenty of time

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to do so. We don't have to worry about our grown children anymore. However, we still have to hire a dog-sitter.

**Teaching Tip**

Students often use repetition and wordy generalizations when faced with a word-count or minimum-page requirement. Remind them that brainstorming can be done after a draft is written to generate more support.

**The Importance of *Adequate* Details**

One of the most common and most serious problems in students’ writing is inadequate development. You must provide *enough* specific details to fully support the point in a body paragraph of an essay. You could not, for example, include a paragraph about a friend's unreliability and provide only a one- or two-sentence example. You would have to extend the example or add several other examples showing your friend as an unreliable person. Without such additional support, your paragraph would be underdeveloped.

Students may try to disguise unsupported paragraphs through repetition and generalities. Do not fall into this “wordiness trap.” Be prepared to do the plain hard work needed to ensure that each paragraph has solid support.

**Note:**

First paragraph is adequately developed.

**Teaching Tip**

For added practice, ask students to revise the underdeveloped paragraph by providing adequate, specific details.

**6 Activity**

Both of the following body paragraphs were written on the same topic, and each has a clear opening point. Which paragraph is adequately developed? Which one has only several particulars and uses mostly vague, general, wordy sentences to conceal that it is starved for specific details?

**Eternal Youth?—No, Thanks**

I wouldn't want to be a teenager again, first of all, because I wouldn't want to worry about talking to girls. I still remember how scary it was to call up a girl and ask her out. My heart would race, my pulse would pound, and perspiration would trickle down my face, adding to my acne by the second. I never knew whether my voice would come out deep and masculine, like a television anchorman's, or squeaky, like a little boy's. Then there were the questions: Would she be at home? If she was, would she want to talk to me? And if she did, what would I say? The one time I did get up the nerve to take a girl in my homeroom to a movie, I was so tongue-tied that I stared silently at the box of popcorn in my lap until the feature finally started. Needless to say, I wasn't very interesting company.

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