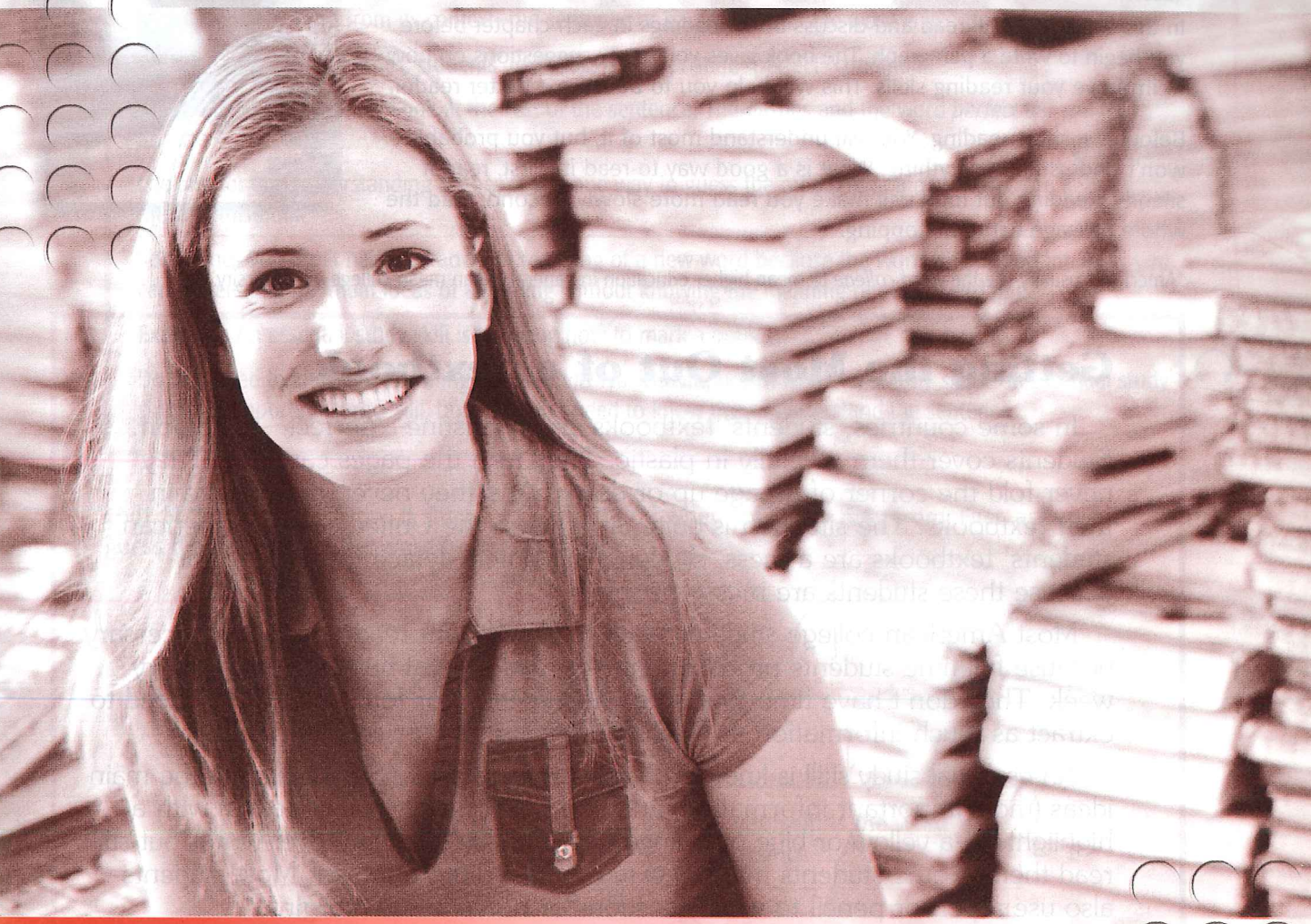
INTRODUCTION

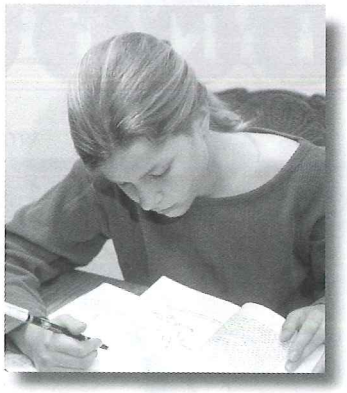


Getting Started

Discuss these questions:

- Look at the picture. Where is the woman?
- How much do you read every week?
- What are some ways you can improve your reading skills?
- What are some ways you can improve your writing skills?

INTRODUCTION TO READING



Reading is a very important part of college*. In college, you need to read a lot. You read to get new ideas and information. You read to learn new vocabulary. You read to discover your own opinions. In fact, you usually do a lot of reading before you write anything in college.

In this book, you will read and discuss three readings in each chapter before you begin to write a paragraph. The book gives you many suggestions on how to improve your reading skills. This will help you to become a better reader.

Below is a short reading. You will understand most of it, but you probably won't understand everything. What is a good way to read it? First, read it silently. Reading out loud will make you read more slowly. Second, read the whole passage without stopping.

*Americans usually use the word *college* to mean higher education in general. It can mean college or university.

Getting the Most Out of a Textbook

In some countries, students' textbooks are in pristine—perfect—condition. Students cover them carefully in plastic. They turn the pages carefully. They never fold the corner of a page up or down. And they never, never write in their textbooks. The situation is quite different in the United States. American students' textbooks are a mess. Students absolutely deface them—but not because these students are messy people.

Most American college students need to be efficient readers. This is necessary because full-time students probably have to read several hundred pages every week. They don't have time to read a chapter three or four times. They need to extract as much information as possible from the first or second reading.

An essential study skill is knowing how to mark a book. Students mark the main ideas (most important information) and important details (small points) with a highlighter—a yellow or blue or orange pen that lets you write over words but still read them. Some students mark new words in a different color. Most students also use a pen or pencil to write questions or notes in the margins.

Marking a book is a useful skill, but it's important to do it right. First, read a chapter with one highlighter in your hand and others next to you. Second, read a whole paragraph before you mark anything. Then don't mark too much; usually, you'll mark about 10 percent (%) of a reading. Third, decide on your own system for marking. For example, maybe you'll mark main ideas in yellow, important details in blue, and new words in orange. Maybe you'll put question marks (?) in the margin when you don't understand something.

When your chapter is a rainbow of markings, you don't have to read all of it again before an exam. Instead, you just need to review your marks, and you can save a lot of time.

You probably understood most of this reading. But what can you do about the new vocabulary?

Reading Strategy

Guessing the Meaning from Context

You often find new words in textbooks. But it's important not to use a dictionary for every new word. Instead, try to guess the word from its context—the sentence or paragraph that the word is in.

Example: In some countries, students' textbooks are in pristine—perfect—condition.

What does *pristine* mean? Look at the rest of the sentence. The dashes and the word *perfect* tell you that *pristine* = *perfect*.

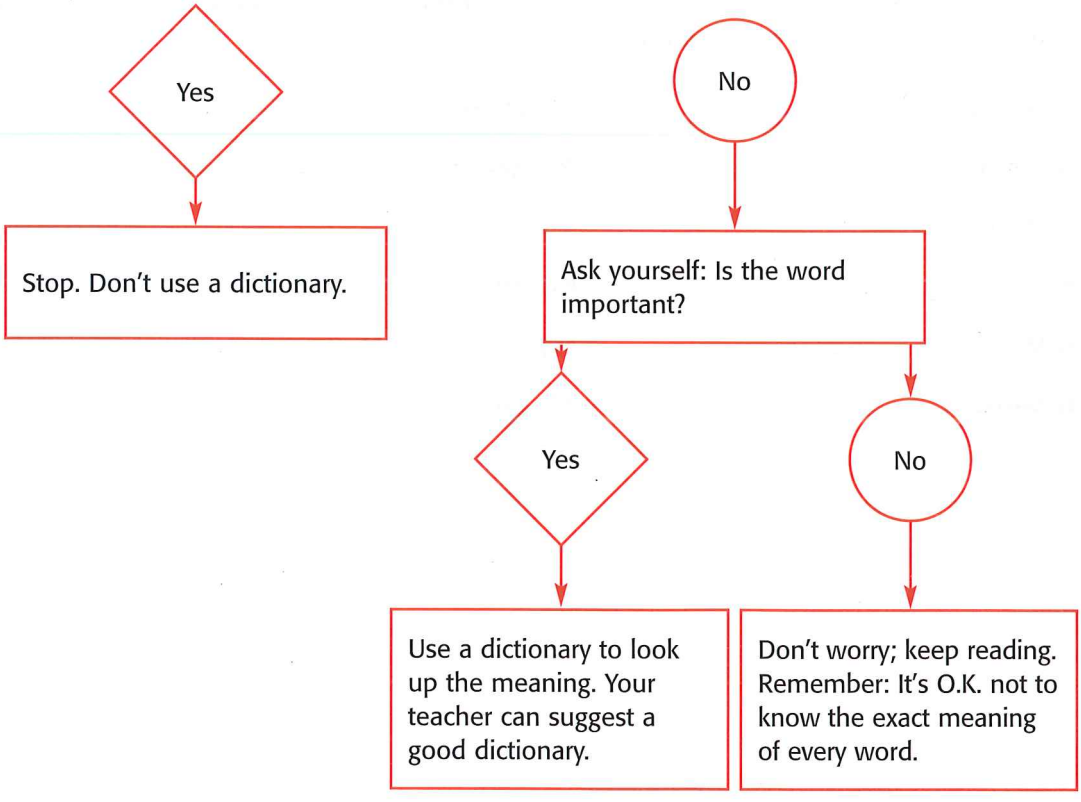
Looking for and understanding dashes is just one way to guess the meaning of a new word. You'll see many more in this book.

Sometimes you don't need to know the meaning of a new word because the word isn't important. Also, you can understand the main ideas of a reading without knowing the meaning of every word in it.

Example: An essential study skill is knowing how to mark a book.

Do you need to know the meaning of *essential*? No. The important words are *study skills*. An essential study skill is an important study skill, but you don't need to know this to understand the sentence.

Look at the diagram below. It shows you what to do when you see a new word. First, ask yourself: Can I guess the meaning of the word from its context?



A. GUESSING THE MEANING FROM CONTEXT Reread the passage on page 2. As you read, look for words that you don't know. When you find one, ask yourself the questions from the diagram on page 3.

Write the new words you find in the chart below. Fill in the bubbles of your answers to the questions.

New Word: _____	Can I guess?	YES	NO
	Is it important?	YES	NO
New Word: _____	Can I guess?	YES	NO
	Is it important?	YES	NO
New Word: _____	Can I guess?	YES	NO
	Is it important?	YES	NO
New Word: _____	Can I guess?	YES	NO
	Is it important?	YES	NO
New Word: _____	Can I guess?	YES	NO
	Is it important?	YES	NO
New Word: _____	Can I guess?	YES	NO
	Is it important?	YES	NO
New Word: _____	Can I guess?	YES	NO
	Is it important?	YES	NO

B. GUESSING THE MEANING FROM CONTEXT Which new words from Activity A can you guess? Write the words and your guesses on the lines.

New Word: _____ **My guess:** _____

New Word: _____ **My guess:** _____

New Word: _____ **My guess:** _____

New Word: _____ **My guess:** _____

New Word: _____ **My guess:** _____

New Word: _____ **My guess:** _____

Reading Strategy

Keeping a Word Journal

A Word Journal is a notebook for new words. When you learn the meaning of a new word, write it down in a special notebook–a notebook just for words–or one section in your three-ring binder. Writing down a new word, its meaning, and the part of speech helps you remember it. Also, if you forget what the new words mean or how to spell them, you can look them up in your Word Journal. It's like a personal dictionary.

Get your special Word Journal notebook before you start Chapter 1 of this book. Each chapter has a Word Journal assignment.

Here is an example of a Word Journal entry:

January 18

1. pristine	perfect
adj	Textbooks are in _____ condition.

Reading Strategy

Understanding Parts of Speech

Before you look up a word in the dictionary, you need to know its part of speech. The part of speech is the form of the word: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, etc. A dictionary uses abbreviations for the parts of speech: n = noun; v = verb; adj = adjective; adv = adverb.

A noun is a word for a person, place, thing, or situation. **Examples: student, college, textbook**

A verb is usually an action word. **Examples: is, are, cover, turn**

An adjective modifies (describes) a noun. **Examples: necessary, new, short**

An adverb modifies an adjective or verb. **Examples: carefully, easily, never**

Many words can have two or three different parts of speech. An easy way to decide the part of speech is to look at the context–the sentence that the word is in. In the following sentences, notice that you can decide the part of speech of the "new words" (XXs) from the context.

Examples: She picked up her **XX**.
(**Noun:** It's after the possessive pronoun *her*.)

She picked up her **XX** book.
(**Adjective:** It's before a noun.)

After she picked up her book, she **XX** it.
(**Verb:** It comes after the subject, *she*, and in this example, it also has an object, *it*.)

She **XX** picked up her book. OR: She picked up her book **XX**.
(**Adverb:** It modifies the verb, *picked up*.)

She picked up her **XX** heavy book.
(**Adverb:** It modifies an adjective, *heavy*.)

C. UNDERSTANDING PARTS OF SPEECH Write the part of speech of the words in these sentences. Don't use a dictionary.

1. Taylor's textbook looks quite colorful.

   looks = _____

   quite = _____

   colorful = _____

2. Students absolutely deface their textbooks.

   students = _____

   absolutely = _____

   deface = _____

   textbooks = _____

3. An essential study skill is knowing how to mark a book.

   essential = _____

   skill = _____

   mark = _____

Reading Strategy

Understanding Parts of Speech: Suffixes

Another way to decide the part of speech is from the suffix (the ending) of the word. Here are some common suffixes.

Suffixes for Nouns	Suffixes for Adjectives	Suffixes for Adverbs
-tion	-less	-ly
-sion	-ful	-ily
-ence	-ent	-fully
-ance	-ant	
-er, -or, -ist	-al	
-ment	-ible	
-ness	-able	

D. UNDERSTANDING PARTS OF SPEECH: SUFFIXES Decide the part of speech of each word below from its suffix. Write *n* (noun), *adj* (adjective), or *adv* (adverb).

1. _____ reader
2. _____ usually
3. _____ possible
4. _____ difference
5. _____ situational
6. _____ condition
7. _____ beautifully
8. _____ careless
9. _____ teacher
10. _____ possibly
11. _____ efficient
12. _____ careful
13. _____ question
14. _____ efficiently
15. _____ questionable
16. _____ discussion
17. _____ happiness
18. _____ distant
19. _____ assignment
20. _____ importance

Reading Strategy

Using a Dictionary: Alphabetizing

When you need to use a dictionary, you want to be able to find words quickly. Words in a dictionary are in alphabetical order.

Example: These words are in alphabetical order.

after
cover
necessary
write

In a group of words, if the first letter is the same, look at the second letter. If the first and second letters are the same, look at the third letter, and so on.

Example: These words are in alphabetical order.

still
student
study

E. ALPHABETIZING As quickly as possible, put the words in each group in alphabetical order. Number the words from 1 to 9.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
_____ paragraph	_____ skill	_____ need
_____ mark	_____ third	_____ must
1 decide	_____ review	_____ efficient
_____ full-time	_____ difficult	_____ messy
_____ rainbow	_____ pen	_____ essential
_____ from	_____ reader	_____ much
_____ probably	_____ several	_____ maybe
9 right	_____ passage	_____ never
_____ first	_____ different	_____ margin

Reading Strategy

Recognizing Main Ideas and Details

In both reading and writing, it's important to know the difference between main ideas and details. A main idea is a general idea. It tells you the central idea. A detail is specific information. It supports (explains or gives reasons and examples for) a main idea.

Good writers think about the difference between main ideas and details as they write. They put main ideas first and details next. They organize their ideas like this:

Main Idea
- Detail 1
- Detail 2
- Etc.

This makes their writing easier for readers to understand.

Examples: **Students have a lot of homework.**
(This sentence talks about a main idea: homework.)

They often have to read several hundred textbook pages a week.
(This sentence gives a detail: an example of homework.)

They also have to write several long papers.
(This sentence also gives a detail: another example of homework.)

F. RECOGNIZING MAIN IDEAS AND DETAILS The following groups of ideas are mixed up. Each has one main idea and two details. Read the sentences. Find the main idea and put a *M* next to it. Put a *D* next to each detail sentence.

1. _____ College textbooks have a lot of new ideas.

_____ College textbooks can be difficult.

D College textbooks have many new words and expressions.

2. _____ College students need notebooks.

_____ College students need highlighters.

_____ College students need a lot of supplies to do good work.

3. _____ Good writers organize their ideas logically.

_____ Good writers help readers understand their ideas.

_____ Good writers explain their ideas completely.

Reading Strategy

Recognizing Phrases and Clauses

In both reading and writing, it's important to understand the difference between a phrase and a clause.

A phrase is a group of two or more words. It is not a sentence. There are different kinds of phrases.

Examples:	**Noun Phrases**	**Verb Phrases**	**Prepositional Phrases**
	messy people	turn the page	in the margin
	a short reading	get new ideas	with a pencil
	study skills	mark a book	after the reading

A clause has at least a subject, a verb with a tense, and (if necessary) an object. An independent clause with a capital letter at the beginning and a period at the end is a sentence.

Examples: students absolutely **deface their books** **(Independent clause)**
S V O

Students absolutely deface their books. **(Sentence)**

G. RECOGNIZING PHRASES AND CLAUSES Identify these groups of words. Write *P* for phrases and *C* for clauses. Then change the clauses into sentences.

1. C they marked the paragraph They marked the paragraph.
2. _____ marking a book
3. _____ with a yellow highlighter pen
4. _____ students from many different countries
5. _____ it is useful
6. _____ they don't have time
7. _____ from the first or second reading

Reading Strategy

Recognizing Topics and Main Ideas

In both reading and writing, it's important to recognize the topic of a paragraph and the main idea of a paragraph. A topic is a word or phrase that states what a paragraph is about. The main idea is a complete sentence that says something about the topic. (Remember, a complete sentence has at least a subject and a verb.)

Examples: The condition of textbooks **(topic)**
In some countries, students' textbooks are in pristine condition. **(main idea)**

The first item, *the condition of textbooks*, is a topic. It isn't a complete sentence. The second item is a main idea–a complete sentence that says something about the topic. (It's the main idea of the first paragraph from the reading on page 2.)

H. RECOGNIZING TOPICS AND MAIN IDEAS Identify these groups of words. Write *T* for topics and *MI* for main ideas. Remember, a complete sentence has at least a subject and a verb.

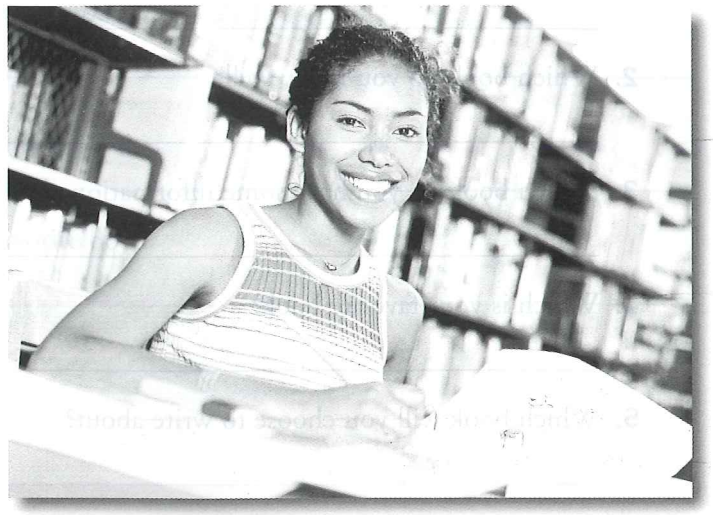
1. T textbooks
2. _____ getting the most out of a textbook
3. _____ good readers
4. _____ good readers organize their ideas logically
5. _____ how to read a book
6. _____ a highlighter pen is an important tool
7. _____ highlighter pens as important tools

INTRODUCTION TO WRITING

In this section, you are going to write a paragraph. As you write, you are going to learn a **process**—a way of doing something—that makes writing easier. The writing process has five main steps: Choosing a Topic, Planning your Paragraph, Writing the Paragraph, Editing, and Rewriting. When you finish the five steps, you will have a good paragraph.

The writing assignment is to write one paragraph to answer these questions:

- What is your favorite book? Why is it your favorite?



Writing Strategy

Step A. Choosing a Topic

Often when you write for school, you get to choose your own topic. It's important to choose carefully. Choose a topic that is easy for you to write about. An easy topic is a topic that:

- is interesting to you
- you know well
- you have information about

STEP A. CHOOSING A TOPIC Here are some possible topics for the writing assignment. In this case, they are about specific books. Write your answers on the lines. Then add some ideas of your own.

- a book that I read last summer: The History of Xenrovia
- a book that I read when I was a child: _____
- a book that I am reading right now: _____
- a textbook: _____
- other books that I have read:

_____ : _____
(Type of book) (Title)

_____ : _____
(Type of book) (Title)

_____ : _____
(Type of book) (Title)

Now answer these questions.

1. Which book from the list on page 11 is the most interesting for you to write about?

_____

2. Which book do you know well?

_____

3. Which book do you have some information about?

_____

4. Which is your favorite book?

_____

5. Which book will you choose to write about?

_____

Writing Strategy

Step B. Planning Your Paragraph

Planning your paragraph means getting ideas and organizing them. You can get ideas for your paragraph from readings, discussion with other students, and thinking. As you plan your paragraph, take notes.

There are many ways to organize ideas in a paragraph. You will learn them in this book. However, all good paragraphs have a main idea and several **supporting ideas**—details that support the main idea. When you plan your paragraph, think of your main idea. Then make a list of reasons that support it.

Look at this example of main and supporting ideas about a favorite book:

My favorite book is *The History of Xenrovia*. **(main idea)**
The History of Xenrovia is very well written. **(detail)**
The History of Xenrovia has beautiful pictures. **(detail)**

The first sentence is the main idea. It answers the question: What is your favorite book? It's narrow enough to talk about in one paragraph. The second and third sentences are details. They give examples of why *The History of Xenrovia* is the writer's favorite book.

STEP B. PLANNING YOUR PARAGRAPH Answer these questions.

1. What is your favorite book?

_____

2. What is one reason that this is your favorite book?

_____

What is an example of this reason?

_____

3. What is another reason that this is your favorite book?

_____

What is an example of this reason?

_____

4. What is one more reason that this is your favorite book?

_____

What is an example of this reason?

_____

Writing Strategy

Step C. Writing the Paragraph

The next step is to put the sentences that you wrote from your notes into a first draft of your paragraph. A paragraph has a main idea sentence and several sentences that support the main idea. Write complete sentences and connect them with transition words (such as *for example* or *another reason*). Indent the first sentence in the paragraph, and end each sentence with a period.

What does a first draft look like? It might be missing some information, it might have some information that is not in a logical order, or it might have some grammar or spelling mistakes.

Look at this example of a first draft:

My favorite book is *The History of Xenrovia*. It's my favorite because its very well written. Many history books are boring but *The History of Xenrovia* includes interesting stories about the important people in the history of the country. *The History of Xenrovia* also has wonderful pictures. For example there is beautiful fotographs of the capital city Xenoville at night and during a rainstorm. Another reason that *The History of Xenrovia* is my favorite book is that it's very complete It begins with stories about the first people who lived in the area and it ends with informations about life in the country today. I still have many friends in Xenrovia.

As you can see, this first draft is quite good. However, the first sentence in the paragraph is not indented. Also, there are a few grammar and spelling mistakes. (Can you find them?) Finally, the last sentence isn't really necessary.

STEP C. WRITING THE PARAGRAPH Use your notes from Step B (pages 12–13). On a separate piece of paper, write complete sentences in paragraph form. You might make some mistakes, but don't worry about them at this point.

Writing Strategy

Step D. Editing

It's important to check your own work for mistakes before you give it to a teacher. Checking your own work helps you to be an independent writer. You won't always have a teacher to help you! Editing helps you write better drafts before your teacher even sees your work. For each assignment in this book, you will edit your own work.

When you edit look for:

- organization (no unnecessary sentences; correct order of ideas)
- form (indentation; margins)
- spelling
- grammar

STEP D. EDITING Read the paragraph you wrote and answer these questions.

1. Is the paragraph form correct? Did you indent the first line?

   _____

2. Is there a main idea statement about your favorite book?

   _____

3. Are there sentences that support your main idea?

   _____

4. Are there specific examples for each supporting idea?

   _____

5. Are there transition words that connect the sentences?

   _____

6. Is there any information that doesn't fit?

   _____

7. Are there any spelling or grammar mistakes?

   _____

Writing Strategy

Step E: Rewriting

After you edit your paragraph, rewrite it. Try to write it without the mistakes. Ask yourself: Do I have only one main idea? Did I support my main idea? Did I capitalize and punctuate correctly? Is my paragraph free of spelling and grammar mistakes?

Here is an example of a second draft of the paragraph on page 13. The mistakes have been corrected.

My favorite book is *The History of Xenrovia.* It's my favorite because it's very well written. Many history books are boring, but *The History of Xenrovia.* includes interesting stories about the important people in the history of the country. *The History of Xenrovia* also has wonderful pictures. For example, there are beautiful photographs of the capital city, Xenoville, at night and during a rainstorm. Another reason that *The History of Xenrovia* is my favorite book is that it's very complete. It begins with stories about the first people who lived in the area, and it ends with information about life in the country today.

STEP E. REWRITING Use the answers from Step D to help you rewrite your paragraph.