

Week 4

Comm 1133

Writing Strategies

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Warm-up

- Although he believed weight loss was possible, you don't know how hard it can be until you try to lose a few pounds.
- She caught the ball and then throws it to the catcher for the out.
- Because Senator Martin is less interested in the environment than in economic development, he sometimes neglects it.

Plan for today

- Mechanics
 - Parallel structure
 - Semi-colons & colons
- Process
 - Choosing a question
 - Developing a core argument

Faulty parallelism

- A sentence suffers from faulty parallelism when the items in a list fit into different categories:
 - I am a **student** and **work**. (noun, verb)
 - She was **smart**, **dedicated**, and **walked to school every day**. (adjective, adjective, verb phrase)
 - We went to **London**, **Paris**, and **loved them both**. (noun, noun, verb phrase)

Faulty parallelism

- She was smart, dedicated, and walked to school every day.
- Can be fixed by:
 - Separating the items into two lists according to their categories:
 - She was smart and dedicated, and she walked to school every day.

Faulty parallelism

- We went to London, Paris, and loved them both.
- Can be fixed by:
 - Separating the items into two lists according to their categories:
 - We went to London and Paris, and we loved them both.

Faulty parallelism: practice

1. The company offers special training to help employees move into careers like engineering management, software development, service technicians, and sales trainees.
2. The frustrated customer wanted to exchange the article, to obtain a refund, or she wanted to speak to the manager.
3. Physical and mental health and wellness rest on four pillars: regular exercise, healthy diet, social interaction, and getting sufficient sleep.

Semi-colons

- Semi-colons separate independent clauses (logically complete ideas) that are not connected by a coordinating conjunction (*and, or, but, etc*):
 - The project was finally completed; we had done a good week's work.
- The semi-colon can replace the comma-plus-conjunction combination that joins two independent ideas:
 - The project was finally completed, **and** we were elated.
 - The project was finally completed; we were elated.

Semi-colons

- Semi-colons must precede transitional words/phrases such as *besides, otherwise, still, however, furthermore, moreover, consequently, therefore, on the other hand, in contrast, and in fact*.
 - The job is filled; **however**, we will keep your resume on file.
 - Your background is impressive; **in fact**, it is the best among our applicants.

Semi-colons

- Semi-colons can also separate items in a series, when those items contain internal commas.
 - I am applying for summer jobs in Santa Fe, New Mexico; Albany, New York; Montgomery, Alabama; and Moscow, Idaho.
 - Members of the survey crew were Juan Jimenez, a geologist; Hector Lightfoot, a surveyor; and Mary Shelley, a graduate student.

Colons

- Usually, a colon follows an introductory statement that requires a follow-up explanation.
 - We need this equipment immediately: a voltmeter, a portable generator, and three pairs of insulated gloves.
 - She is an ideal colleague: honest, reliable, and competent.

Colons

- Colons should always follow grammatically complete thoughts. The following is *wrong*:
 - My plans include: finishing college, traveling for two years, and settling down in Santa Fe.
- No punctuation should follow *include*.
- Colons can introduce quotations.
 - The supervisor’s message was clear enough: “You’re fired.”
- A colon can replace a semicolon between two related, complete sentences when the second one explains or amplifies the first.
 - Pam’s reason for accepting the lowest-paying job offer was simple: she had always wanted to live in the Northwest.

Checking your semicolons & colons

- If you think your sentence calls for a semicolon, make sure it fits this pattern:
 - [complete thought]; [complete thought].
- If you think your sentence calls for a full colon, make sure it fits one of these patterns:
 - [complete thought]: [complete thought].
 - [complete thought]: [list of 1 or more items].

Semicolons & colons: practice

1. June had finally arrived it was time to graduate.
2. I have two friends who are like brothers Sam and Daniel.
3. Joe did not get the job however, he was high on the list of finalists.
4. I'm tired which is why I'm going to bed.
5. The wine was superb an 1898 Margaux.
6. Our student senators are Joan Blake, a geology major Helen Simms, a nursing major and Henry Drew, an English major.

Essay questions

- Should recreational marijuana be legalized?
- Should children under the age of 14 be legally allowed to work?
- Should voting be mandatory?
- Should parents be forced to attend parenting classes before having a child?
- Should adults have the right to own a gun?
- Should physician-assisted suicide be legal?

Why is it so hard to start an essay?

- Thoughts?
- Our thoughts are disorganized.
- We have unrealistic expectations for early drafts.
- There are tons of distractions.

Goals during the planning stage

- Thoughts?
- Choose a **question**
- Settle on an **answer** (thesis)
- Write your core **argument** in standardized form
- Expand your argument into a full **outline**

How to optimize the planning stage?

- Thoughts?
- Remember:

Goals

- Choose thesis
- Determine core argument
- Write outline

Obstacles

- Lack of organization
- Perfectionism
- Distractions

Freewriting

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EA0QOWv9sU>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4O0EMX0nnl4>

Freewriting

- Find something to write with and something to write on.
- Turn off distractions.
- Write continuously for ten minutes.
- Write down whatever comes to mind.
- Don't even THINK about grammar/spelling.

Choose a thesis

- Performance-enhancing drugs should be allowed in sports.
- OR
- Performance-enhancing drugs should not be allowed in sports.
- Etc.
- ...

Standardize your argument

- P1. Performance-enhancing drugs would make sports more entertaining.
- P2. Performance-enhancing drugs would make sports more fair.
- P3. Performance-enhancing drugs would make sports more fun for participants.
- C4. Therefore, performance-enhancing drugs should be allowed in sports.

Warm-up

- The candidate's goals include winning the election, a national health program, and the educational system.
- When under pressure, humans may exhibit the following behaviours; anger, anxiety, sleeplessness, aggression, and poor concentration.
- Most dogs are: friendly, furry; and well-behaved.

Plan for today

- Expanding your core argument
- Completing an outline

Expanding each premise

- P1. Hockey fans would be less entertained, not more, if suddenly every NHL player was half as good.
- P1. Sports become more entertaining when the players show greater athleticism.
- P2. Performance-enhancing drugs would increase the athleticism of the players.
- C3. Therefore, performance-enhancing drugs would make sports more entertaining.

Expanding each premise

- P1. No matter how hard I practice, I will never be good enough at basketball to play in the NBA.
- P2. It's unfair that my natural ability—which I have no control over—affects my opportunities in life.
- P3. Performance-enhancing drugs could help me compensate for my weaker natural abilities as a basketball player.
- C4. Therefore, performance-enhancing drugs would make sports more fair.

Standardize your premises

- P1. Playing guitar is more fun when you're good at it than when you're not.
- P2. Writing is more fun when you're good at it than when you're not.
- P3. Soccer is more fun when you're good at it than when you're not.
- P4. Being better at anything makes it more fun.
- P5. Performance-enhancing drugs would make people better at sports.
- C6. Performance-enhancing drugs would make sports more fun for participants.

All that's left

- Introduction needs a hook.
 - Have you ever wondered what it would be like to swim like Michael Phelps? To skate like Wayne Gretzky? To golf like Tiger Woods?
 - “Don’t do drugs.” We all hear this countless times throughout childhood. Is it always justified?
 - I’ll never forget the moment when I realized that my dreams of going to the Olympics would never materialize.

All that's left

- Conclusion needs a “so what?” factor.
- You could argue directly for the *importance* of the thesis.
 - P1. Human rights are at stake.
 - P2. The strength of the economy is at stake.
 - P3. Athletes’ physical and mental health are at stake.
 - C4. *You should care* that performance-enhancing drugs should be allowed in sports.
- You could use a quotation, or you could call back to your hook from the beginning.

Outline

- Introduction
 - Hook
 - Thesis
 - Body paragraph x 3
 - Core premise
 - Evidence/examples
 - Conclusion
 - “So what?”
- Should recreational marijuana be legalized?
 - Should children under the age of 14 be legally allowed to work?
 - Should voting be mandatory?
 - Should parents be forced to attend parenting classes before having a child?
 - Should adults have the right to own a gun?
 - Should physician-assisted suicide be legal?