

# **English 103**

## **Course Reader**

**Nsu Book Shop**

# Contents

## SECTION A

1. Introduction to the Paragraph .....	03
2. From Paragraph to Essay .....	26
3. Descriptive Essay .....	56
4. Narrative Essay .....	76
5. Compare & Contrast Essay .....	95
6. Process Essay .....	130
7. Cause & Effect Analysis Essay .....	161

## SECTION B

1. Transitions .....	202
2. Summary Writing .....	207
3. Writing Titles .....	217
4. Correcting Common Errors .....	219

## SECTION C

1. Recognizing Word Meanings .....	245
2. Reading Comprehension Practice 1 .....	250
3. Reading Comprehension Practice 2 .....	253

*Introduction to  
the Paragraph*

What is a paragraph? You probably know that a paragraph is a group of sentences and that the first sentence of this group is indented; that is, it begins a little bit more to the right of the margin than do the rest of the sentences in this group. But it is not enough to say that a paragraph is a group of sentences. How do these sentences relate to each other? How does a paragraph begin, and where does it end? What constitutes a good paragraph? These are the questions we answer in this first unit.

## The Topic of a Paragraph

To begin with, a *paragraph* is defined as a group of sentences that develops one main idea; in other words, a paragraph develops a topic. A *topic* is the subject of the paragraph; it is what the paragraph is about. Read the following paragraph, which is *about* the habit of smoking cigarettes.

Smoking cigarettes can be an expensive habit. Considering that the average price per pack of cigarettes is about two dollars, people who smoke two packs of cigarettes a day spend \$4.00 per day on their habit. At the end of one year, these smokers have spent at least \$1,460.00. But the price of cigarettes is not the only expense cigarette smokers incur. Since cigarette smoke has an offensive odor that permeates clothing, stuffed furniture, and carpet, smokers often find that these items must be cleaned more frequently than those belonging to nonsmokers. Although it is difficult to estimate the cost of this additional expense, one can see that this hidden expense does contribute to making smoking an expensive habit.

**EXERCISE 2-1** Study the following paragraphs to find their topics. Write the topic for each paragraph in the space provided.

1. A final examination in a course will give a student the initiative to do his or her best work throughout the course. Students who are only taking notes and attending classes in order to pass a few short tests will not put forth their best effort. For instance, some of my friends in drama, in which there is no final examination, take poor notes, which they throw away after each short test. Skipping classes also becomes popular. Imagine the incredible change a final examination would produce. Students would have to take good notes and attend all classes in order to be prepared for the final examination.

—Suzanne Gremillion

This paragraph is about \_\_\_\_\_.

*Introduction to the Paragraph*

2. Another reason why I like the beach is its solitary atmosphere. At the beach I have no witness but the beach, and I can speak and think with pleasure. No one can interrupt me, and the beach will always be there to listen to everything I want to say. In addition, it is a quiet place to go to meditate. Meditation requires solitude. Many times when I am confused about something, I go to the beach by myself, and find that this is the best place to resolve my conflicts, solve problems, and to think.

—M. Veronica Porta

This paragraph is about \_\_\_\_\_

3. Some seeming English-Spanish equivalents are deceptive. Their forms are similar, but they have developed different shades of meaning in the two languages. These are sure to cause trouble for Spanish speakers learning English. The Spanish word *asistir* looks like the English word *assist* but has none of the latter's meaning of "help." Instead, *asistir* means "to attend" or "to be present." Thus, Spanish English speakers will say that they assisted a class when they mean that they were present at it. *Actual* in Spanish means "present," not English "actual"; *desgracia* means "misfortune" not "disgrace," *ignorar* means "not to know" instead of "to ignore."\*

This paragraph is about \_\_\_\_\_

4. When we make attributions about ourselves or about others, we tend to attribute the behavior in question to either *internal* or *external* forces. When you see someone crash his car into a telephone pole, you can attribute that unfortunate piece of behavior either to internal or external causes. You might conclude that the person is a terrible driver or emotionally upset (internal causes), or you might conclude that another car forced the driver off the road (external cause). If you fail an exam, you can attribute it to internal causes such as stupidity or a failure to study, or you can attribute it to external causes such as an unfair test or an overheated room.†

This paragraph is about \_\_\_\_\_

*The Paragraph**Prewriting: Planning* ↗

When you are assigned topics to write about, they will often be too general to be developed adequately in one paragraph. Therefore, you will need to *restrict* your topic; that is, you will need to narrow down your topic to a more specific one. For example, suppose that you are asked to write about your favorite place and you choose a country such as Mexico. Although you could easily write several sentences naming all the things you like about Mexico, it would be more interesting for your reader if you narrowed down the topic *Mexico* to a particular place in Mexico, such as the Great Temple in the Aztec ruins. Your topic should be narrowed down as much as possible. Look at how the topic *Mexico* is narrowed here:

M E X I C O

MEXICO CITY

Historical Sites

Aztec Ruins

The Great  
Temple

Of course, there are many other ways to narrow the same topic. For example:

*Introduction to the Paragraph*

M E X I C O

YUCATAN PENINSULA

The City of Progreso

The Beach  
South of  
Progreso

D R U G S

Marijuana

Effects of Smoking  
MarijuanaEffect on  
Memory

This paragraph will discuss one of the effects of smoking marijuana: memory loss. Like most topics, this one can be narrowed down in several ways. Observe

*The Paragraph***M A R I J U A N A****Reasons People  
Smoke It****Peer Pressure  
As a Reason**

This paragraph will discuss one of the reasons people smoke marijuana: peer pressure.

 **EXERCISE 2-2.** Fill in each line that follows by narrowing down the topics given. For the last one, select your own topic and then narrow it down.

1. Cigarettes

Effects of Smoking CigarettesEffects on HealthEffects on Lungs

2. Cigarettes

Cigarette SmokersTypes of Cigarette Smokers

3. Technology

ComputersThree Uses of Computers

*Introduction to the Paragraph*

Fatal Diseases

Cancer

5.

My Hometown

6.



## The Topic Sentence

The topic of a paragraph is usually introduced in a sentence; this sentence is called the *topic sentence*. However, the topic sentence can do more than introduce the subject of the paragraph. A good topic sentence also serves to state an idea or an attitude about the topic. This idea or attitude about the topic is called the *controlling idea*; it controls what the sentences in the paragraph will discuss. All sentences in the paragraph should relate to and develop the controlling idea. To illustrate, look at the following topic sentence to identify the topic and the controlling idea:

Smoking cigarettes can be an expensive habit.

In this sentence, the topic is the *habit of smoking cigarettes*; the controlling idea is that smoking can be *expensive*. A paragraph that develops this topic sentence

*The Paragraph*

should demonstrate that smoking cigarettes can indeed be an expensive habit. Reread the paragraph on page 15 and see if it develops the idea of expensive.

Of course, there are many other controlling ideas one could have about the topic of smoking cigarettes. Indeed, one of the most popular is that smoking is hazardous to health. See how this idea is developed in the following paragraph:



Smoking cigarettes is hazardous to your health. Several years ago, a United States government study was released that linked the intake of tar and nicotine, found in cigarettes, with the development of cancer in laboratory animals. The evidence was so overwhelming that the United States government required cigarette manufacturers to put a warning on the outside of each package of cigarettes, which says, "Warning: The Surgeon General has determined that cigarette smoking is hazardous to your health." Aside from the most serious and feared disease, cancer, cigarette smoking also can aggravate or promote other health problems. For example, smoking can increase the discomfort for people with asthma and emphysema. It can give one a "smoker's cough" and contribute to bronchitis. Finally, recent studies have shown that cigarette smokers are more susceptible to common colds and flu. Whether you get an insignificant cold or the major killer, cancer, smoking cigarettes is hazardous. Is it worth it?

*Introduction to the Paragraph*

 **EXERCISE 2-3** Study the topic sentences that follow. Circle the controlling idea and underline the topic in each sentence. Note: The controlling idea and the topic may be expressed in more than one word. The first one is done for you.

1. Another way to reduce the rate of inflation is to balance the federal budget.
2. Einstein's unsuccessful attempt to get nuclear weapons banned was disappointing to him.
3. Savings bonds are also a safe investment.
4. Another problem for students is finding a part-time job.
5. A properly planned science fiction course should include a unit on political implications.
6. Some seeming English-Spanish equivalents are deceptive.
7. Another reason air pollution is hazardous is that it damages the Earth's ozone layer.
8. Although bright, Maria is a very shy girl.
9. A final advantage Martina Navratilova has on the court is her constant aggressiveness.
10. One of the biggest problems with athletic scholarships is that more attention is paid to sports than to education.

## IMPROVING THE TOPIC SENTENCE

As indicated, a topic sentence introduces the topic and the controlling idea about that topic. However, it is not enough merely to have a topic and a controlling idea. The controlling idea should be clear and focused on a particular aspect. For example, consider the following topic sentence:

Drinking coffee is bad.

This sentence has a topic—*drinking coffee*—and a controlling idea—bad—but they are vague. In what way is coffee bad? For whom or what is it bad? Is drinking only a little coffee bad, or is drinking a lot of coffee bad? As you can see, this topic sentence opens a lot of questions that probably cannot be answered effectively in one paragraph. The sentence needs more focus, and that focus can come from the controlling idea:

Drinking over four cups of coffee a day can be harmful to pregnant women.

*The Paragraph*

In this version, the topic itself is narrowed down some more and the controlling idea is more precise.

**25 EXERCISE 2-4** Study the following groups of sentences. Circle the number of the better topic sentence in each pair. The first one is done for you.

1. There are many things that make learning the English language difficult.
2. What makes English particularly difficult to learn is pronunciation.
3. Enrolling in college is not an easy task.
4. Registration at State College is a painful process.
5. *Gone with the Wind* may be an old movie, but it is still a good movie.
6. The acting in *Gone with the Wind* was superb.
7. The wide variety of merchandise makes Sears convenient.
8. The home-repair department in Sears is convenient.
9. The architecture in Chicago reflects trends in modern design.
10. Chicago is an interesting city because of its history, architecture, and sports activities.

**25 EXERCISE 2-5** Read the following weak topic sentences. Rewrite each one to make it more specific. You can narrow down the topic and/or the controlling idea. The first one is done for you.

1. The Honda Civic is an excellent automobile.

*The Honda Civic is economical to maintain.*

---

2. My hometown is a wonderful place.
- 

3. Many improvements are needed at this school.
- 

4. Exercise is good for you.
-

*Introduction to the Paragraph*

5. Driving a car can be hazardous.

---

6. Computers are useful.

---

7. There are many interesting things to do at the park.

---

8. Watching television is bad for you.

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## RECOGNIZING THE TOPIC SENTENCE

A topic sentence serves to introduce the topic and the controlling idea. But where should the topic sentence be placed in the paragraph? Generally, because the topic sentence does introduce, it is a good idea to place it at or near the beginning of the paragraph. However, depending on the kind of paragraph it is in, the topic sentence may be placed near the middle of the paragraph or even at the end. Sometimes neither the topic nor the controlling idea is explicitly stated in one sentence; however, this does not mean that a topic and controlling idea are not present. In this kind of paragraph, the topic and controlling idea are implied; that is, they are clearly suggested in the development of the paragraph. Nevertheless, it is usually a good idea to state topic sentences clearly, not only to be certain that the idea is clear but also to help control the development of the paragraph.

 **EXERCISE 2-6** Study the following paragraphs. In the space provided, write out the topic sentence for each paragraph, underlining the topic and circling the controlling idea. If the topic sentence is implied, write one out.

1. In 1944 the United States signed a treaty with Mexico guaranteeing that country 1.5 million acre-feet of Colorado River water a year. But the big division of the Colorado's precious water had occurred in 1922 under the Colorado River Compact, signed by the seven states along the river and the federal government. What makes the agreement shaky—some describe it as "a house of cards"—is that it is based on an overly optimistic estimate of the river's average flow. About 15 million acre-feet of water were originally apportioned to

*The Paragraph*

the states; actually, the average annual supply is only 13.8 million. In addition, the Compact did not take into account Mexico's right to any Colorado River water at all, so the 1.5 million acre-feet later guaranteed to Mexico widen the gap between demand and supply. The Colorado is, in short, overbooked.\*

Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Sagebrush covers 58,000 square miles of Wyoming. The biggest city has a population of 50,000, and there are only five settlements that could be called cities in the whole state. The rest are towns, scattered across the expanse with as much as 60 miles between them, their populations 2000, 50 or 10. They are fugitive-looking, perched on a barren, windblown beach, or tagged onto a river or a railroad, or laid out straight in a farming valley with implement stores and a block-long Mormon church.†

Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Anyone who saw him once never forgot his nose and his body. The first time anyone saw him, they were very surprised. The second time, they looked at his nose with admiration, as if it were a valuable treasure. His nose, which was longer than Barbra Streisand's, occupied most of his face. When he smiled, nothing but his nose was visible. He was recognized by it even in a crowd. The treasure made one think that in his previous life he had been a collie or an ant-eater. In addition, his nose was as thin as a razor. If he had flown like a jet, he could have divided the clouds. His body was also very skinny. He looked as if he had not eaten for ten days. He was a heavy eater, but one couldn't imagine where he kept food in his body. Finally, on a windy day, he was blown away and gone, like Mary Poppins.

— Nobutaka Matsuo

Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

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\* Adapted from David Sheridan, "The Colorado: An Engineering Wonder Without Enough Water," *Smithsonian* 13 (February 1983): pp. 46—7.

† Gretel Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces* (New York: Viking, 1985), p. 4.

*Introduction to the Paragraph*

4. We write because we want to understand our lives. This is why my closets are filled with boxes and boxes of musty old journals. It is why I found pages of poetry under my stepdaughter Kira's mattress when she went off to camp. It is why my father tells me he will soon begin his memoirs. As John Cheever explains, "When I began to write, I found this was the best way to make sense out of my life."<sup>\*</sup>

Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Sometimes on Friday, our Sabbath day, my father would take us to the Old City, marked by the Bab el-Metwalli, or Gate of the Holy Man, named after the Sufi sheikh who reportedly sat there centuries before, performing miracles for passersby. For all that Cairo is my hometown, I never ceased to marvel at the sights and the exotic history that made up my city. The streets of the Old City, far too narrow for automobiles, were choked instead with the traffic of horses, donkeys and even people laden down with loads of fresh vegetables, firesticks, vases of copper and brass to be sold in the bustling Khan el-Khalili bazaar. Cairo had been the greatest trading center in the world for centuries, and it was here in the caravanserai of the Khan el-Khalili that medieval traders from all over the Arab world had unloaded their camel trains. It was near here also that the Fatimid sultans had kept a zoo for the giraffes, ostriches and elephants sent to them as tribute from kingdoms in Africa.<sup>†</sup>

Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

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## FORMULATING THE TOPIC SENTENCE

### *Prewriting: Generating Ideas*

Thus far you have been given topics and controlling ideas to recognize and improve, but often you must find your own controlling idea. Once you have found a manageable topic for a paragraph, you need to examine that topic more closely to determine your feelings or attitudes about it.

\* Lucy McCormick Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Writing* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1986), p. 3.

† Jahan Sadat, *Woman of Egypt* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), p. 42.

*The Paragraph*

To decide on the controlling idea and what you want to say about a topic, begin by using one or more of the prewriting techniques for generating ideas you learned in Chapter One. For example, suppose you are asked to write about a place in your country and you narrow that broad topic down to a certain resort. The following is one example of a brainstorm on the topic:

Topic: Lehai Resort

Notes:

- Pretty sandy beaches, palm trees along the shore, clear turquoise water, gorgeous mountains
- Tourists swarming everyplace, new hotels cropping up every month; one hotel blocks the view of the sea from the road, many tourist shops
- Resort provides many jobs, brings in \$1 million in revenue from tourists, has attracted some new companies to the city

Of course, the list could be expanded. Once you have brainstormed your ideas, look through the list for something striking. For example, you might realize that the resort has provided economic benefits to the local area. Or you might find that you want to write about the beauty of the resort area. Several ideas could emerge from this brainstorming session. Here are a few:

Lehai Resort is set in one of the most scenic coastal areas in the world.

Lehai Resort has been ruined by the excessive influx of tourists.

Lehai Resort has brought direct and indirect economic benefits to our area.

**EXERCISE 2-7.** Choose one of the following topics or one of your own and brainstorm the topic. After writing everything that comes to mind on the topic, sort through the list and choose an idea that interests you. Write a topic sentence that has a controlling idea. In the space provided, write your topic sentence, underline the topic and circle the controlling idea. If necessary, narrow down the topic further. If your teacher suggests, you may repeat this process for one or more of the other topics.

superstitions

pollution

an interesting custom

your major

a memorable teacher

an important decision

*Introduction to the Paragraph*

## Support

### Prewriting: Planning

Once you have generated ideas and formulated a controlling idea about your topic, the next step is to get from your prewriting notes the material you can use to develop the paragraph. This material is used to support the opinion or attitude expressed in your topic sentence. It serves to back up, clarify, illustrate, explain, or prove the point you make in your topic sentence. Most often we use factual detail to support a point. Such detail may include facts from resource material, such as magazines, journals, and books, or details about things you or others have observed. Basically, support comes from the information you use to arrive at the view you express in your topic sentence.

When you are examining your notes to find support for your topic sentence, you may find it necessary to add material to your notes. At this point you will want to use another invention technique to help you discover material. Let's take as an example this topic sentence: "Lehai Resort has nearly solved our local employment problem." From the notes on this topic, we might get "Lehai Resort provides many jobs" and "has attracted some new companies to the city." These two bits of information can serve as the basis for more notes and support. To generate more notes at this stage, you may find it useful to ask WH- questions (see Chapter One, p. 9), such as "What are the companies that have opened up? How many jobs have they brought to our city? How else has the resort provided jobs? What are those jobs? What was the employment situation before the resort opened? What is the employment rate now?" The answers to these questions will serve as a foundation for the support for your paragraph. Your revised notes might read as follows:

Unemployment rate in 1980 = 35%; in 1990 = 8%

Hotel jobs—Statler Hotel, 100

Modern Inn, 50

New Wave Spa, 35

Five new shops on Beach Highway for tourists—fifteen new jobs

New companies (since 1982)—Jones Batiking

Mary's Dollworks

Julio's Tour Guide Service

J & M Corporation

Menk's Manufacturing Company

*The Paragraph*

Now you are ready to write the support out as sentences and list them under your topic sentence in outline form, grouping related details together. For example, for the Lehai Resort , your paragraph outline might look like this:

Topic Sentence:

Lehai Resort has nearly solved our local employment problem.

Support:

1. The unemployment rate has dropped from 35% in 1980 to 8% in 1990.
2. The tourist industry has created many jobs.
  - a. Three new hotels have opened up.
    - (1) The Statler Hotel employs 100 local residents.
    - (2) The Modern Inn hired fifty.
    - (3) The New Wave Spa has thirty-five new workers.
  - b. Five new shops have opened on Beach Hwy., for a total of fifteen jobs.
  - c. Tourist-related industries have opened up: Jones Batikking, Mary's Dollworks, and Julio's Tour Guide Service.
3. The resort has attracted two nontourist companies: J & M Corp. and Menk's Mfg. Co.

Such an outline is useful in two ways: It provides a means for quickly checking your sentences to see if they deal with the topic, and it serves as a guide for checking whether the sentences are logically arranged. Here is an outline of the paragraph on page 16:

Topic Sentence:

Smoking cigarettes can be an expensive habit.

Support:

1. Cigarettes cost about two dollars a pack.
2. The average smoker smokes two packs a day.
3. The annual expense for this smoker is \$1,460.00.
4. The smoker must also pay for extra cleaning of carpeting, furniture, and clothes.

*Introduction to the Paragraph*

Obviously, not all the sentences in the original paragraph are listed or recorded verbatim. For example, the sentence "But the price of cigarettes is not the only expense cigarette smokers incur" is omitted here. This sentence certainly relates to the topic and the controlling idea, but its main function is to provide a link in the sentences; it joins the section discussing the price of cigarettes with the section dealing with the hidden expense of cigarette smoking. This type of sentence is called a *transition*. Also omitted from the outline is the last sentence: "Although it is difficult to estimate the cost of this additional expense, one can see that this hidden expense does contribute to making smoking an expensive habit." This type of sentence, which summarizes the main idea in the paragraph, is called the *concluding sentence*. Not all paragraphs need concluding sentences, but they are useful for smoothly ending the development of the support.

How you organize your sentences within a paragraph will depend on your topic and purpose. In the following chapters, you will learn how to support various kinds of topics and how to organize that support. At this stage, it is important to understand that the material you use to write the sentences in your paragraph should be directly supportive of the view you express in your topic sentence.



**EXERCISE 2-8** Study the paragraph about cigarette smoking on page 22. In the space provided here, write the topic sentence, circle the controlling idea, and outline the support given in the paragraph. Write the concluding sentence if there is one.

Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Support:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*The Paragraph*

**EXERCISE 2-9** Using the material you brainstormed in Exercise 2-7, write the topic sentence and circle the controlling idea in the space provided below. Then study your notes and decide on relevant support. If you do not have enough support, generate more by using another prewriting technique—for example, WH-questions. Then list the support in sentence form.

Topic Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

Support:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_



Each sentence within a paragraph should relate to the topic and develop the controlling idea. If any sentence does not relate to or develop that area, it is irrelevant and should be omitted from the paragraph. Consider the topic sentence discussed earlier in this chapter:

Smoking cigarettes can be an expensive habit.

If a sentence in this paragraph had discussed how annoying it is to watch someone blow smoke rings, that sentence would have been out of place, since it does not discuss the expense of smoking.

A paragraph that has sentences that do not relate to or discuss the controlling idea lacks *unity*. Note the following example of a paragraph that lacks unity:

Another problem facing a number of elderly people is living on a reduced income. Upon retiring, old people may receive a pension from their company or Social Security from the government. The amount of their monthly checks is often half the amount of the checks they received when they were

*Introduction to the Paragraph*

employed. Suddenly, retirees find that they can no longer continue the life-style that they had become accustomed to, even if that life-style was a modest one. Many find, after paying their monthly bills, that there is no money left for a movie or a dinner out. Of course, sometimes they can't go out because of their health. Maybe they have arthritis or rheumatism and it is painful for them to move around. This can also change their life-style. Some older people, however, discover that the small amount of money they receive will not even cover their monthly bills. They realize with horror that electricity, a telephone, and nourishing food are luxuries they can no longer afford. They resort to shivering in the dark, eating cat food in order to make ends meet.

The topic of this paragraph is "another problem facing a number of elderly people," and the controlling idea is "living on a reduced income." Therefore, all the sentences should deal with the idea of the problem of living on a reduced income. In the paragraph, however, there are three sentences that do not discuss this particular topic: "Of course, sometimes they can't go out because of their health. Maybe they have arthritis or rheumatism and it is painful for them to move around. This can also change their life-style." These sentences should be taken out of this paragraph and perhaps developed in another paragraph.

**EXERCISE 2-10** Read the following paragraphs. Underline the topic sentence in each paragraph and cross out any sentences that do not belong in the paragraph. There may be one or more irrelevant sentences.

1. Since the mid-1960s, there has been a tremendous increase in the popularity and quality of Latin and South American novelists; in fact, some call this literary movement "El Boom." Mexico has produced, for example, Carlos Fuentes, who wrote *The Death of Artemio Cruz*. The 1967 Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to the Guatemalan novelist Miguel Ángel Asturias. Argentina has given us numerous impressive writers, such as Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, Luisa Valenzuela, and Manuel Puig, whose *Kiss of the Spider Woman* was made into a film. William Hurt won the Oscar for Best Actor for his role in that movie. Another recent novelist who has impressed the world is Chile's Isabelle Allende (*The House of the Spirits*). The list could go on, but probably the biggest name associated with this movement is Gabriel García Márquez, a Colombian whose enormously popular *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, published in 1967, helped him earn the 1982 Nobel Prize for Literature.
2. Despite their reputation, some workers in American factories take pride in helping their companies. A good example of this is the 14,400 employees of the Lockheed-Georgia Company who submit ideas to management to help reduce production costs. In one year, these ideas, ranging from a new way to

*The Paragraph*

recharge a dead battery to a more efficient way to paint airplane wings, saved the company \$57.5 million. Since 1979, employee suggestions have resulted in savings of over \$190 million. While we might think that workers submit ideas in order to receive large rewards, this is not the case. According to Executive Vice President Alex Lorch, the financial benefit is minimum. The employee with the best idea each year receives only \$100. The employees, Lorch says, submit ideas because they are motivated by a desire to do a good job. Japanese workers, on the other hand, are generally considered the best example of workers loyal to their company.\*

3. The most obvious problem with being unemployed is not having the money you need for daily life. Most people need money just for the necessities—paying the rent and buying food. And even though buying clothes may not be a necessity, it is still important. If you don't have a job, who is going to give you the money for rent and food? Maybe you have an uncle or a cousin who will let you borrow a little bit of money for a month or two, but most people can't afford to pay for other people's rent. So if you don't have a job, you will have trouble paying the rent and buying food.
4. I would not want to live to be five hundred years old if I was the only really old person, if everyone else died at the normal time. One reason is that people would always keep coming to me and asking questions about the past. They would want to know when this happened and that happened and did such-and-such really happen. They would keep bothering me. I think now sometimes old people do not like being bothered. The other reason is that it would be too sad. If everyone else died at the normal time, I would have to watch all my friends and family die. I would not want to see my children die or my grandchildren. I would be like a freak.

## Coherence

We have seen that a paragraph must have a topic and controlling idea, support, and unity. Another element that a paragraph needs is coherence. A coherent paragraph contains sentences that are logically arranged and that flow smoothly.

Logical arrangement refers to the order of your sentences and ideas. There are various ways to order your sentences, depending on your purpose. For example, if you want to describe what happens in a movie—that is, the plot—your sentences would follow the sequence of the action in the movie, from beginning to end. If, on

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\* Information from *The Times-Savoyne*, 27 May 1984, sec. 7, p. 7.

*Introduction to the Paragraph*

the other hand, you want to describe the most exciting moments in the movie, you would select a few moments and decide on a logical order for discussion—perhaps presenting the least exciting moments first and the most exciting last to create suspense. (In the following chapters, we study the various principles for ordering ideas and sentences.)

A paragraph can be incoherent even when the principle for ordering the ideas is logical. Sometimes, as students are writing they remember something that they wanted to say earlier and include it as they write. Unfortunately, this sentence often ends up out of place. Study the following paragraph, in which one or more sentences are out of order:

Although Grants Pass, Oregon, is a fairly small town, it offers much to amuse summer visitors. They can go rafting down the Rogue River. They can go swimming in the Applegate River. Lots of people go hunting for wild berries that grow along the roadsides. Campers will find lovely campgrounds that are clean. There are several nice hotels. Tourists can browse through a number of interesting shops in town, such as antique stores. One fun activity is shopping at the open market where local folks sell vegetables grown in their gardens. Grants Pass has a lot of places to eat, ranging from a low-calorie dessert place to lovely restaurants. Some of these restaurants offer good food and gorgeous views. One store to visit is the shop that sells items made from Oregon's beautiful myrtlewood. Fishing in the area is also a popular activity. Water sports are by far the main attraction. As you can see, Grants Pass offers a lot to do in the summer. If you want to give your family a nice, wholesome vacation, try visiting Grants Pass.

The paragraph seems to have a principle of organization: The first half is devoted to activities in the areas just outside of the city itself, and the last half discusses activities within the city. However, toward the end of the paragraph the writer seems to throw in a few sentences as an afterthought. Three sentences—"One store to visit is the shop that sells items made from Oregon's beautiful myrtlewood," "Fishing in the area is also a popular activity," and "Water sports are by far the main attraction"—are out of place. This paragraph could be revised as follows:

Although Grants Pass, Oregon, is a fairly small town, it offers much to amuse summer visitors. Water sports are by far the main attraction. Visitors can go rafting down the Rogue River. They can go swimming in the Applegate River. Fishing in the area is a popular activity. Lots of people go hunting for wild berries that grow along the roadsides. Campers will find lovely campgrounds that are clean. There are several nice hotels. Tourists can browse through a number of interesting shops in town, such as antique stores. One store to visit is the shop that sells items made from Oregon's beautiful myrtlewood. One

*The Paragraph*

fun activity is shopping at the open market where local folks sell vegetables grown in their gardens. Grants Pass has a lot of places to eat, ranging from a low-calorie dessert place to lovely restaurants. Some of these restaurants offer good food and gorgeous views. As you can see, Grants Pass offers a lot to do in the summer. If you want to give your family a nice, wholesome vacation, try visiting Grants Pass.

The order of the sentences in this revised version is improved, but it is still not completely coherent, for the sentences do not always flow smoothly.

*Smooth flow* refers to how well one idea or sentence leads into another. Smooth flow can be achieved through sentence combining and through the use of certain expressions, called transitions, that provide the links between ideas. Some transitional expressions are *for example*, *to begin with*, *in contrast*, *however*, and *also*; there are many others that we will cover throughout this text. Note how the addition of some expressions and the combining of some sentences improve the coherence of this paragraph:

Although Grants Pass, Oregon, is a fairly small town, it offers much to amuse summer visitors. Water sports are by far the main attraction. Visitors can go rafting down the Rogue River or swimming in the Applegate River. Fishing in the area is another popular activity. Lots of people also go hunting for wild berries that grow along the roadsides. In addition, there are lovely, clean campgrounds where campers can park their vehicles. For those who prefer to stay in town, Grants Pass offers several nice hotels. In town, tourists can browse through a number of interesting shops, such as antique stores and the shop that sells items made from Oregon's beautiful myrtlewood. Another fun activity is shopping at the open market where local folks sell vegetables grown in their gardens. And finally, Grants Pass has a lot of places to eat, ranging from a low-calorie dessert place to lovely restaurants, some of which offer good food and gorgeous views. As you can see, Grants Pass offers a lot to do in the summer. If you want to give your family a nice, wholesome vacation, try visiting this charming town.

The expressions *another*, *also*, *in addition*, and *finally* bridge the gaps in ideas. Some of the sentences have been combined as well. Combining sentences and adding transitions make the ideas and sentences easier to follow.

If the sentences are not logically arranged or if they do not connect with each other smoothly, the paragraph is *incoherent*. Coherence is an important quality of writing.

*Introduction to the Paragraph***EXERCISE 2-11** Study each of the following paragraphs, in which one or more sentences are out of order. Revise these paragraphs for greater coherence by arranging the sentences in logical order.

1. In the hotel business, computers ease the load at the front desk. With a computer, a clerk can make a reservation easily and quickly, without the use of cards, racks, or registration books. So when guests come in to register, their reservations can be checked and they can be given available rooms without much fuss or bother. The hotel business is just one type of enterprise that has profited by the invention of computers. And with a computer, the clerk can get an instant update of the room status. This tells the clerk which rooms are available to guests.
2. Political conventions in America attract all kinds of people besides delegates. You are sure to see an artist or two doing chalk portraits of the candidates on the sidewalks. Groups who wish to attract attention to their political and social causes demonstrate outside the convention halls. The pro-life people, the pro-choice groups, the supporters of nuclear energy, those against nuclear energy, and the pro-gays and anti-gays are probably the most common groups. Others just like to poke fun at the candidates. For instance, at most conventions you will find at least a couple people wearing masks of their favorite or least favorite candidates. Others dress in costumes and carry signs with outrageous comments about the candidates or the political process. Another social-political group is the one advocating more civil rights and better economic opportunities for minorities. No matter who they are or what their reasons are for going to the conventions, these people always add color to the sometimes boring conventions.
3. An example of this kind of prejudice happened to me when I was in the fourth grade. I remember one time when all the students were being allowed to choose a book they wanted to read. When it was my turn to choose a book, she laughed at me and said, "Oh, that one is too hard for you. I'll choose one for you." I was so embarrassed. I thought that she should not embarrass me in front of the class like that. My teacher treated me as if I was about two grade levels below my classmates. My family had just moved here from California, and she did not think I was up with the rest of my class.

# From Paragraph to Essay

## A. EXPANDING THE PARAGRAPH

As you know, a paragraph consists of three parts: a topic sentence, supporting sentences (body), and a concluding sentence. Similarly, an essay is composed of three sections: an introductory paragraph, supporting paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

Some paragraphs can be expanded quite simply to essay length. Look at the paragraph from Chapter 2 about personal computers which is reprinted below. Put boxes around the three parts of this paragraph. (See page 19 for a paragraph with similar boxing.)

### Example 1

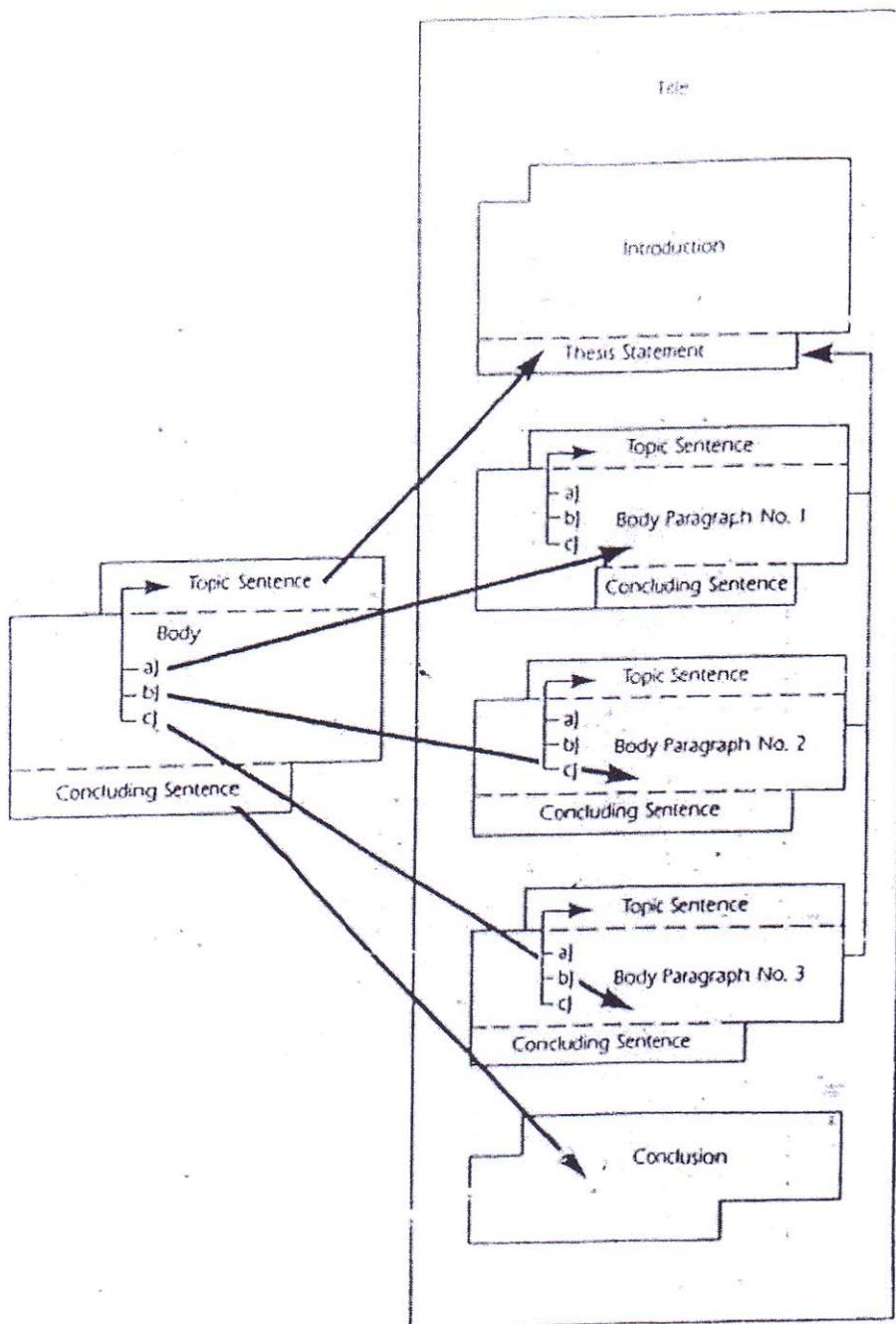
### Personal Computers

A personal computer consists of three main components which have different functions. The first is the central processing unit, or CPU. This is the brain of the computer. This unit contains the memory of the machine and the micro-chips which make the computer able to perform its functions. The CPU has one or more disk drives, where we can put program diskettes to make the machine add numbers, do word-processing, or play games. The second component is the monitor. This looks much like a small TV, but of course it doesn't have any channel buttons. On the monitor screen we can observe what we are telling the computer to do, such as move words, draw figures, or shoot down space aliens. The third component is the keyboard. It has the shape of a typewriter keyboard with letters and numbers, but, in addition, it also contains specialized keys for computing: function keys, cursor movement arrows, and command keys. We use the keyboard to write and edit the text we want. With a CPU, a monitor, and a keyboard, we have a complete computer.

Now look at the following diagram to see how a paragraph such as this can be expanded into an essay. The topic sentence of the paragraph becomes the THESIS STATEMENT of the essay at the *end* of the introductory paragraph. The paragraph body with its description of the three parts of a computer is divided into three separate supporting paragraphs in the essay. Finally, the concluding sentence is expanded and made into a concluding paragraph.

Two other aspects of the diagram are important to note. First, see how each body paragraph mirrors the construction of the original paragraph. Just as the paragraphs you have written so far have a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence, so does each body paragraph. Second, notice how the body paragraphs support the essay thesis statement as the supporting sentences in a paragraph support the topic sentence.

- You're In Charge



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From Paragraph to Essay —

The following essay is an expansion of the paragraph about personal computers. First, draw boxes around the three components of the essay (introductory paragraph, supporting paragraphs, and concluding paragraph). Next, using another color pen, underline the topic and concluding sentences in each body paragraph.

Example 2Personal Computers

Of all modern technological inventions, the computer is probably the most useful. There are many kinds of computers, from large mainframes to small laptop machines, but most people are best acquainted with the personal computer. A personal computer consists of three main components which have different functions.

The first component is the central processing unit, or CPU. This is the brain of the computer. It contains the memory of the machine and the microchips which make the computer able to perform its functions. By memory we mean storage capacity, that is, the amount of space the machine has internally to store information. Most CPUs also have one or more disk drives, where we can put program diskettes to make the machine add numbers, do word-processing [writing], or play games. The CPU is, in fact, that part of the computer which "computes."

The second component is the monitor. This looks very much like a TV, but of course it doesn't have any channel buttons. Monitors come in basically two kinds: black and white and color. The monitor has a screen just like a TV, and on this screen we can observe what we are telling the computer to do, such as move words around, draw figures and charts, or play video games. Although the monitor isn't necessary to make the computer work, it sure helps to see what you are doing. The monitor is, for me, an essential component of the computer.

The third component is the keyboard. It has the shape of a typewriter keyboard with letters and numbers, but, in addition, it also contains specialized keys for computing: function keys, cursor movement arrows, and command keys. The function keys usually have numbers such as F1, F2, etc. Combined with the command keys, they can create as many as 40 different functions. Some of these functions are underlining the text, setting the margins, or listing the files you have on a disk. The cursor movement arrows move the little blinking light up or down, right or left. With these you can edit your work at any point. Command keys are keys with special built-in functions such as setting capital letters, printing, adding, or deleting. We use this keyboard to create and change the text we want.

With a CPU, a monitor, and a keyboard, we have a complete computer. Once you are familiar with these three components, you can learn to use any personal computer. Perhaps you should type your next essay on a computer?

*The Essay*

The emphasis thus far has been on writing paragraphs with good, detailed support. Since a paragraph develops only one idea, the topics being developed are necessarily quite limited. Often, however, topics are too complex or too broad to be developed in a single paragraph. In this case, it is necessary to write an essay. An essay is a group of paragraphs that develops one central idea. How are the paragraphs organized in an essay? How many paragraphs are there in an essay? How does an essay begin and end? These are questions this unit will answer.

Unlike the paragraph, the essay is a more formal composition. Each paragraph in an essay has a designated function:

1. *Introduction.* The introduction is usually one paragraph (sometimes two or more) that introduces the topic to be discussed and the central idea (the thesis statement) of the essay.
2. *Developmental paragraphs.* These paragraphs develop various aspects of the topic and the central idea. They may discuss causes, effects, reasons, examples, processes, classifications, or points of comparison and contrast. They may also describe or narrate.
3. *Conclusion.* This paragraph concludes the thought developed in the essay. It is the closing word.

How many paragraphs an essay contains depends entirely on the complexity of the topic; some essays have only two or three paragraphs, whereas others may have twenty or thirty. However, for most purposes, the essays written in class for most first-year college English courses contain from four to six paragraphs, with an introductory paragraph, several developmental paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

## *The Thesis Statement*

The essay, like the paragraph, is controlled by one central idea. In the essay, the sentence containing the central idea is called the *thesis statement*. The thesis statement is similar to the topic sentence in that it contains an expression of an attitude, opinion, or idea about a topic; unlike the topic sentence, however, the thesis statement is broader and expresses the controlling idea for the entire essay. In fact, each of the developmental paragraphs should have a controlling idea that echoes or relates to the controlling idea—the central idea—in the thesis statement.

Here are a few points to remember about the thesis statement:

1. *The thesis statement should be expressed in a complete sentence.* Since the thesis statement is the main statement for the entire essay, it should express a

*Introduction to the Essay*

complete thought; therefore, it should be expressed in a complete sentence. And since it makes a statement, it should not be written as a question.

Not a thesis statement:

*My fear of the dark.*

Thesis statement:

*My fear of the dark has made my life miserable.*

2. *A thesis statement expresses an opinion, attitude, or idea; it does not simply announce the topic the essay will develop.*

Not a thesis statement:

*I am going to discuss the effects of radiation.*

Thesis statement:

*The effects of radiation are often unpredictable.*

3. *A thesis statement should express an opinion; it should not express a fact. Since the thesis statement expresses an attitude, opinion, or idea about a topic, the thesis statement is really a statement that someone could disagree with. Therefore, the thesis statement is a statement that needs to be explained or proved.*

Not a thesis statement:

*Cows produce milk.*

Thesis statement:

*The milk cows produce is not always fit for human consumption.*

Not a thesis statement:

*There are many advantages and disadvantages to going to college. (This is not an arguable point.)*

Thesis statement:

*The advantages to going to college far outweigh the disadvantages.*

*The Essay*

4. A thesis statement should express only one idea about one topic; if a thesis statement contains two or more ideas, the essay runs the risk of lacking unity and coherence.

Not a thesis statement:

Going to college in the Midwest can be fun, and I have found that living in a suburb of a large city is the best way to live while at college.

Thesis statement:

Going to college in the Midwest can be fun.

**25 EXERCISE 6-1** Study the following statements carefully. If the statement is a thesis statement, write *yes* in the blank; if it is not a thesis statement, write *no*.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The advantages of majoring in engineering.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I would like to discuss my views on the Olympic Games.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Students should be allowed to manage the bookstore.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ When I first came to the United States, I wasn't used to eating in fast-food places, and I was amazed at the shopping centers.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Why do I want to be a lawyer?
6. \_\_\_\_\_ The differences between Mandarin and Hunan dialects.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Knowing a foreign language can be beneficial to anyone.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ This advertisement attempts to appeal to the reader's sense of patriotism.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ I am going to describe my home.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ There are many similarities and differences between New York and Hong Kong.

**26 EXERCISE 6-2** Study the following statements, which are not thesis statements. Rewrite each of the sentences to make it a thesis statement. The first one is done for you.

*Introduction to the Essay*

1. I am going to explain why I decided to go to college.

*Choosing to go to college was a difficult decision.*

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2. The hazards of storing chemical wastes.

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3. There are many similarities and differences between life in the country and life in the city.

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4. New York City is the largest city in the United States.

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5. Universities in the United States. Should require more humanities courses; they should also have more social activities.

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## *The Introduction*

The thesis statement is the main statement for the entire essay. But where should the thesis statement be placed? Although there is no law that requires the thesis statement to be placed in any particular place in the essay, it is usually in the introductory paragraph. After all, the thesis is the statement that the developmental paragraphs are going to explore. But where in the introduction should it be placed? Before we answer this question, let us look at the characteristics of an introductory paragraph.

*The Essay*

1. *An introductory paragraph should introduce the topic.* Do not forget that the introductory paragraph is the first thing that a reader sees. Obviously, this paragraph should inform the reader of the topic being discussed.
2. *An introductory paragraph should indicate generally how the topic is going to be developed.* A good introductory paragraph should indicate whether the essay is going to discuss causes, effects, reasons, or examples; whether the essay is going to classify, describe, narrate, or explain a process.
3. *Generally speaking, an introductory paragraph should contain the thesis statement.* This is a general rule, of course. In more sophisticated writing, the thesis statement sometimes appears later in the essay, sometimes even at the end. In some cases, too, the thesis is just implied. For college essays, however, it is a good idea to state the thesis clearly in the introduction.
4. *Ideally, an introductory paragraph should be inviting; that is, it should be interesting enough to make the reader want to continue reading.* Since the introductory paragraph functions to introduce the topic and since the introductory paragraph should be inviting, it makes good sense not to put the thesis statement right at the beginning of the introductory paragraph. Not only should you introduce the topic before you state an opinion about it (the thesis statement), but you should also try to entice the reader to continue after reading the first sentence. Stating an opinion about something in the first sentence is not usually very inviting; in fact, if readers disagree with the opinion, it may very well discourage them from reading your essay. Therefore, it is generally a good idea to place the thesis statement at or near the end of the introductory paragraph.

*Prewriting; Planning* ↗

Since the introduction is the first paragraph the reader reads, it is often the first paragraph the student plans and can therefore be the most difficult. There are many ways to begin an essay. In this unit we discuss four basic types of introductions: (1) the "Turnabout," in which the author opens with a statement contrary to his or her actual thesis (Chapter Nine); (2) the "Dramatic Entrance," in which the author opens with a narrative, description, or dramatic example pertinent to the topic (Chapters Ten and Eleven); (3) the "Relevant Quotation," in which the writer opens with a quotation pertinent to the topic (Chapter Eleven); and (4) the "Funnel."

The Funnel approach is perhaps the most common type of introductory paragraph. It is so-called because the ideas progress from the general to the specific just as a funnel is wide at the top and narrow at the bottom. The approach is to open with a general statement about the topic and then work toward the more specific

*Introduction to the Essay*

thesis statement at or near the end of the introduction. Not only should the opening statement be general, it should be congenial as well: Do not alienate the reader. See how this technique is applied in this introductory paragraph:

Traveling to a foreign country is always interesting, especially if it is a country that is completely different from your own. You can delight in tasting new foods, seeing new sights, and learning about different customs, some of which may seem very curious. If you were to visit my country, for instance, you would probably think that my people have some very strange customs, as these three examples will illustrate.

In this introductory paragraph, the writer introduces the general topic of "traveling to a foreign country" in the first sentence and narrows down that topic to a more specific aspect—the customs in the writer's country. The thesis statement comes at the end, with the central idea being "strange." Illustrations should appear in the developmental paragraphs.

Just how general should the introductory paragraph be? One way to avoid beginning too generally or too far back is to have one key word in the first sentence reappear in the thesis statement, or if not the word itself, a synonym of the word or an idea. In the preceding paragraph, *visit* echoes *traveling*, and the word *country* appears both in the first and the last sentence.

Here is another example of this type of introduction, taken from a popular science magazine:

America is a throwaway society. From both industrial and municipal sources, the U.S. generates about 10 billion metric tons of solid waste per year. Every five years the average American discards, directly and indirectly, an amount of waste equal in weight to the Statue of Liberty. Municipal solid waste alone accounts for 140 million metric tons per year. The municipal solid waste produced in this country in just one day fills roughly 63,000 garbage trucks, which lined up end to end would stretch 600 kilometers, the distance from San Francisco to Los Angeles. The repercussions of our waste habits, however, stretch to every city. Let us demonstrate by example.\*

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\* P. O'Leary, P. Walsh, and R. Ham, "Managing Solid Waste," *Scientific American* 6 (Dec. 1988): p. 36. Copyright ©1988 by Scientific Am. Inc. All rights reserved.

*The Essay***25 EXERCISE 6-3** Study the following introductory paragraphs. Underline the word or words that appear in the first sentence and are restated in the thesis statement.

1. Computers are advanced machines that can store and recall information at very high speed. Computers are easy and interesting to use; however, some people are afraid of computers. I used to be afraid of computers, too, because of the fear of failure and because I know nothing about programming. But actually I have learned that the procedures of working on computers are very easy.

—Nader Alyousha

2. When we were very young, we believed that parents could do no wrong. Indeed, they seemed to us to be perfect human beings who knew all the answers to our problems and who could solve any problems that we had. However, as we grow older, we find that parents can make mistakes, too.

3. We live in an era where television is the national pastime. Since the invention of the television set, people have been spending more of their free time watching television than doing anything else. Many of the television addicts feel that this particular pastime is not a bad one; indeed, they argue that people can learn a great deal watching television. I am sure that if you look long and hard enough, you can probably find some programs that are educationally motivating. But, for the most part, I say that watching television is a waste of time.

—Pamela Moran

4. Today's children are our future men and women. They will become the dominant force one day. If they receive proper guidance and have a nice childhood, they will contribute immeasurably to our society after they have grown up. In other words, today's children are going to have a significant impact on our society in the future; therefore, parents should not neglect the proper conditions that children need during their childhood.

—Chun Lee

5. When we see a blind person nearing a street corner or a door, many times we try to help by opening the door or taking the person's arm and guiding him or her across the street, and while we do that, some of us talk to the blind person in a loud voice, as if the blind person is not only helpless but also deaf. Rushing to help a blind person without asking if that person needs help and speaking loudly are just two of the inappropriate ways people react to blind people. If you want to help a blind person whom you perceive as in need of help, you should bear in mind the following tips.

*Introduction to the Essay*

**25 EXERCISE 6-4** On page 126 are the characteristics of a good introductory paragraph. Using those characteristics, evaluate the following introductory paragraphs. Does the paragraph introduce the topic? Does it indicate how the topic is going to be developed? Does it contain a thesis statement? Is it inviting? If one or more of these are missing, write the missing element in the space provided. Some of the paragraphs may be good introductory paragraphs.

1. We are all familiar with the image of the fat, jolly person, right? Unfortunately, this is an inaccurate stereotype. Fat people are not always so happy.
- 
- 

2. "We are moving to the city!" These are the words of many villagers today. When they are asked to give reasons for their movement, they simply reply that life in the city is more developed than that in the village. In the city, there are communication, transportation, education and medical services. Also there are more chances for jobs. I positively agree with these people, but have these people thought about their lives and health? Have they thought about the danger that might happen to their children? It might not be during the first six months of living, but in the future when the city becomes more inhabited by different people of different nationalities and when the streets get crowded with cars. Although the village is lacking some of the services mentioned above, it is still the best type of environment for me to live in.

—Habeeb Al-Saeed

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3. I would like to tell you about my hometown, Hlatikulu, Swaziland. It is a small town of only 8,000 people. The main industries there are farming and working for the government, since it is the capital of the southern region.
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4. Last year, my cousin, Julio, went to a bank to apply for a job. As you know, when you apply for a job, you must be ready to answer a lot of ambiguous

*The Essay*

questions. Some of the questions that an interviewer may ask you include: educational background, previous jobs, and salaries you earned. The problem with Julio was that he wasn't prepared for the questions. The interviewer asked Julio a lot of things that he couldn't answer. Because Julio wasn't prepared for the interview, he didn't get the job. If you do not want to be in that situation, you may want to follow these steps.

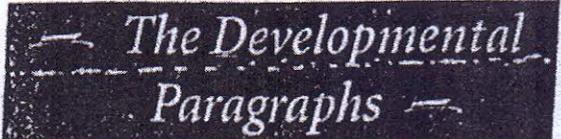
—Mauricio Rodriguez

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**EXERCISE 6-5** Writing Assignment. Here are six possible thesis statements. For each, use one of the prewriting techniques given in Chapter One and generate some information on the topic. Then choose the three topics you like best and write introductory paragraphs.

1. My country has some of the most beautiful sights you will ever see.
2. Speaking more than one language is a great advantage.
3. The AIDS virus is a worldwide problem.
4. Watching television is not a waste of time.
5. I can suggest several improvements needed at this school.
6. The New Year is one of the happiest occasions. (You may choose a favorite holiday in your country.)



*The Developmental  
Paragraphs*

Developmental paragraphs, which range in number in the typical student essay from about two to four, are the heart of the essay, for their function is to explain, illustrate, discuss, or prove the thesis statement. Keep in mind these points about developmental paragraphs:

1. *Each developmental paragraph discusses one aspect of the main topic.* If, for example, you were asked to write a paper about the effects of smoking cigarettes on a person's health, then each paragraph would have as its topic one effect.

*Introduction to the Essay*

2. *The controlling idea in the developmental paragraph should echo the central idea in the thesis statement.* If your thesis statement about the effects of smoking cigarettes is "Cigarette smoking is a destructive habit," then the controlling idea in each paragraph should have something to do with the destructiveness of the effect.
3. *The developmental paragraphs should have coherence and unity.* The order of your paragraphs should not be random. As you have seen in the last three chapters, there are various ways to order the sentences in a paragraph; similarly, there are various ways to order your paragraphs. The same principles apply as you learned in Chapter Five, and additional strategies will be presented in this chapter. Just as your sentences need to flow smoothly, the train of thought at the end of one paragraph should be picked up at the beginning of the next paragraph. This can be achieved through the use of transitions. Again, much attention will be devoted to transition use in this text.

*Prewriting: Planning* ↗

In Chapter Two, you learned how to formulate a restricted topic sentence from your prewriting notes. The same technique can be used to arrive at a thesis statement; you need simply to remember that the thesis statement is more general than a topic sentence. After all, each developmental paragraph does discuss an aspect of the main topic expressed in the thesis statement. Once you have decided on your thesis, you need to break the thesis down logically into topics for your paragraphs. In essence, these topics are supporting points for your thesis. Let us say, for example, that you wanted to write about the beautiful sights in your country—perhaps to persuade people to visit there or simply to inform your reader about your country. After you have taken considerable notes on the topic, you might come up with this thesis statement: "My country has some beautiful sights." The main topic of the essay is "sights in my country," and the central idea is "beautiful." The main topic then needs to be broken down into topics for paragraphs, perhaps two to four. Logically, the topics would be sights, with one sight discussed per paragraph, and the controlling idea for each of these topics should be something akin to "beautiful," such as "charming," "lovely," "enchanting," and "glorious." We could illustrate this breakdown as follows for an essay about beautiful sights in Mexico:

MEXICO HAS SOME BEAUTIFUL SIGHTS
----------------------------------

=	beach at Progreso	+	Aztec Ruin	+	Monument
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*The Essay*

Just how you break down your thesis into topics depends on your thesis statement. There are several principles for logically breaking down your thesis. You can break it into topics according to causes, effects (benefits, advantages, disadvantages, results), steps in a process, types (kinds, categories, classes), examples, points of comparison and contrast, and reasons; these are the basic principles and the ones that we will cover in depth in this text. One way to break your thesis down logically into topics is to turn your thesis statement into a question, keeping in mind what your topic and central idea are. The answers to this question might help you come up with possible topics for your developmental paragraphs; they can also help you determine a strategy for organizing your essay. (These strategies, or patterns of organization, are discussed in great detail in subsequent chapters.) Here are some thesis statements and possible breakdowns into topics for the developmental paragraphs:

**1. Thesis Statement:**

The village is the best environment for me to live in.

Question:

What makes it a good environment?

Answers:

The cooperation among people.

Its lack of pollution.

Its security.

The central idea in the thesis statement is *best environment*, so this is a logical basis for the breakdown. Each paragraph would discuss a different element of the environment that is attractive to the writer.

**2. Thesis Statement:**

In order to make a good impression at a job interview, you should prepare well for the interview.

Question:

What should you do to prepare for the interview?

*Introduction to the Essay***Answers:***Plan your answers to the possible questions.**Plan and prepare what you are going to wear.**Make sure you arrive on time.*

The central idea in the thesis is *prepare well*. Here the writer chose to break down the thesis into the steps of a process.

**3. Thesis Statement:***Watching television is not a waste of time.***Question:***Why isn't it a waste of time?***Answers:***Because it is a valuable educational tool.**Because it cheers us up.**Because it provides something for our family to discuss.*

With the central idea of *not a waste of time*, the writer's approach here is to discuss the reasons television is not a waste of time, in other words, to discuss the advantages of having television.

**4. Thesis Statement:***New York and Hong Kong are more alike than people think.***Question:***In what ways are they alike?***Answers:***They are both enormous.**They both have lots of different ethnic groups.**They are both port cities.*

In this breakdown, the writer selected points of similarity to develop the thesis.

*The Essay*

## 5. Thesis Statement:

Students should be allowed to manage the bookstore.

## Question:

Why should they be allowed to manage it?

## Answers:

Because it would benefit the students.

Because the bookstore would benefit.

Because the school would benefit.

Here, the student discusses the reasons for allowing students to manage the bookstore, and in this case the reasons are the benefits.

**EXERCISE 6-6** The following are thesis statements, each with two supporting topic sentences. Study the thesis statements and their supporting topics sentences to determine the logic or the principle behind the breakdown. Then fill in a topic sentence for each one.

## 1. Thesis Statement:

The city is the place for me to live.

## Topic Sentences:

1. I like its excitement.

2. I like the availability of resources.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Thesis Statement:

Smoking cigarettes is harmful to your health.

## Topic Sentences:

1. Heavy cigarette smoking can cause throat diseases.

2. Smoking can damage the lungs.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Introduction to the Essay*

## 3. Thesis Statement:

Jogging isn't the only way to improve your circulation.

## Topic Sentences:

1. Many have found cycling an excellent aerobic exercise.

2. Another way to improve your circulation is to swim.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Thesis Statement:

A foreign student enrolled at an American university often finds that his or her life isn't such a happy one.

## Topic Sentences:

1. The complex registration procedure is frustrating.

2. It is difficult to make friends.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Thesis Statement:

Taking a foreign language should be required in high school.

## Topic Sentences:

1. Students can learn about other cultures.

2. It can help in business in the future.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**EXERCISE 6-7** Study the following thesis statements. On a separate sheet of paper, brainstorm on two of them. Then write out at least three possible topic sentences for the two thesis statements.

1. Learning English isn't so easy.

2. My country has some of the most beautiful sights you will ever see.

3. Being unemployed can cause people to lose their self-respect.

4. You can see some unusual people on the bus.

*The Essay*

5. Logging on to the computer is not a difficult task.
  6. Students whose native language is not English may face many problems that English speakers do not encounter.
  7. People go to shopping centers for many reasons.
  8. Athletic teams bring universities a number of advantages.
- 

Read the following student essay about sights to see in Quebec, Canada. Try to find the central idea for the essay; then try to find the controlling idea for each of the developmental paragraphs.

#### MY FAVORITE SIGHTS

In each country in the world, there are always some beautiful sights to see. They might be a monument, a garden, or a cathedral. Every country is proud of them, and everyone is interested in talking about them. In my country, three important points of interest attract a great number of tourists all year. No portrait of these sights is complete without mentioning their historical and seasonal aspects. Because of these aspects, Quebec is a place where you can find some of the most interesting sights you will ever see.

Old Quebec City is the living witness of our history. The first example is the church Notre-Dame des Victoires. Located at the bottom of Cap Diamant, this

*Introduction to the Essay*

church was the first one built in North America. It commemorates the establishment of Quebec in 1608. It is a modest and charming church, constructed of stones and dominated by a single belfry from where you can still hear authentic chimes ringing. Another example is the Ramparts. Originally, they were long fortifications all around the city with three main doors to enter in. Now, the three doors are renovated and part of the fortifications is preserved, offering a harmonious blend of history and innovation. Finally, the focal point of Old Quebec City is the Plaines d'Abraham. It is a very large hill from which we can have a scenic view of the Saint Lawrence River and the city. It was on this site that our founders won many battles, but unfortunately, lost the most important one. Nevertheless, the spot is now a wonderful park where is still present, with its many cannons, a past which is not so far away. Regardless of the season, those three points are colorful: red in autumn, white in winter, light green in spring, and dark green in summer.

From the Plaines d'Abraham, it is easy to discover the majestic Saint Lawrence River. This beautiful broad river was the open door for our founders. Traveling in canoes, they established the first three cities in the lands drained by the Saint Lawrence: Quebec, Montreal, and Trois-Rivières. They must have been impressed with the clear, sweet water, the tree-studded islands, and the banks lined with pine and hemlock. Today, the river is an exceptional waterway extending 1,500 miles into the interior. Like the Mississippi River, it is, in every season, the location for great activities. Although the most important one is commercial, pleasure and sport are considerable; for example, boating, water-skiing, and fishing. These are particularly popular in summer. Furthermore, even though there are three to five feet of ice on the river in the winter, the Saint Lawrence is still navigable.

On the north shore of the Saint Lawrence River, five miles from Quebec, the famous Montmorency Falls are located. These beautiful falls were discovered by a French explorer in the sixteenth century. About 350 feet high, and with frothing, foaming sheets of water, they are the highest falls in North America. During the summer, it is popular to go to one of the huge park areas near the falls to admire their cascades. At night, it is possible to hear and see a lovely sound and light show. During the winter, the main activity is at the bottom. The small drops of vapor in the air form a huge, round block of ice at the bottom of the falls which becomes bigger and bigger. This strange sight draws a lot of children and adults who spend time climbing up and down.

Is it possible to find a country where the beauty, the history, and the variety in the scenery are combined in such perfect harmony? Of course, our four seasons mean four different aspects of the same sight. I don't know if it is because I am far from my country, but I am convinced that Quebec has some of the most beautiful sights that I have ever seen.

—Louise le Caron

*The Essay***25 EXERCISE 6-8** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions about the preceding essay.

1. What is the main topic of the essay? What is the central idea?
2. What are the subtopics? What are the controlling ideas for the subtopics?
3. Are the paragraphs descriptive, narrative, expository, or are they a combination?

In general, *interesting* is considered rather vague and general for a controlling idea; however, in "My Favorite Sights," Caron clarifies what she means by *interesting*: interesting for its history and beauty during the seasons. When choosing *interesting* as a controlling idea, restrict its meaning by clarifying what you mean by this word.

Sometimes the writer chooses to present part of the thesis statement in the introduction and the rest of it later in the essay, often in the conclusion. This approach is useful when the writer wants to build up to a point rather than stating it prematurely. The following essay is an example of this approach. The writer gives a generalized thesis statement at the end of the introductory paragraph and specifies what the generalized thesis statement means in the conclusion. As you read the essay, underline the two parts of the thesis statement.

### WHY PEOPLE SAVE BOOKS

Many people who like to read also save the books they have read. If you walk into any home, you are likely to see anywhere from a single bookshelf to a whole library full of all kinds of books. I know a family whose library has shelves reaching up to their ceiling; they keep a ladder for climbing up to the high books. Obviously, they have collected books for many years, and though they rarely actually open the books again, they keep them on the shelves, dusted and lined up neatly. Why do people save their books? There may be several reasons, but three stand out.

One reason people save their books is to use them as reference materials. People whose job training included studying a lot of textbook material may save some of those books for future reference. For instance, a doctor may keep his *Gray's Anatomy* and his pharmacology books; an English teacher will hold on to *The Norton Anthology of British Literature* and other anthologies and novels for reference; a lawyer usually keeps her case books. But it isn't only the professionals who save their books. People who like to cook keep recipe books. Those interested in electronic equipment hold on to their books about stereos, computers, videotape machines, and the like. Many families keep encyclopedias and almanacs handy for their children to use for school. Having your own reference book available is so much more convenient than running to the library every time you want to check a fact.

*Introduction to the Essay*

Another reason some people save books is to make a good impression. Some think that a library full of literary classics, dictionaries, and books about art, science, and history make them look well read and therefore sophisticated. Of course, this impression may be inaccurate. Some have never bothered to read the majority of those books at all! In fact, a few people even have libraries with fake books. Also, some people like to reveal to visitors their wide range of tastes and interests. They can subtly reveal their interests in Peruvian art, Indian music, philosophy, or animals without saying a word.

While some people may keep books for practical reference and for conveying an impression, I suspect that there is a deeper reason. People who enjoy reading have discovered the magic of books. Each book, whether it's *The Treasury of Houseplants* or *Murder on the Orient Express*, has transported the reader to another place. Therefore, each book really represents an experience from which the reader may have grown or learned something. When I sit in my study, I am surrounded by my whole adult life. *The Standard First Aid and Personal Safety* manual, in addition to providing information, reminds me of the first-aid course I took and how more assured I felt as a result. Bulfinch's *Mythology* brings the oral history of Western civilization to my fingertips, reminding me of my link with other times and people. Of course, all of the novels have become part of the mosaic of my life. In short, saving books makes me feel secure as I hold on to what they have given me.

In fact, if you think about it, security is at the bottom of all these reasons. It's a secure feeling to know you have information at hand when you need it. There is a kind of security, even though it may be false, in knowing you make a good impression. Finally, books that you've read and kept envelop you with a warm and cozy cloak of your life.

**EXERCISE 6-9** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions about the preceding essay.

1. What is the main topic of the essay?
2. The generalized thesis can be stated as "People save books for three reasons." What is the central idea about those reasons?
3. What are the subtopics (reasons)? What are the controlling ideas for the subtopics?
4. What kind of paragraph is each developmental paragraph?
5. Identify specific details in each of the developmental paragraphs.

*The Essay*

## ← *The Conclusion* →

Just as the introductory paragraph functions to open the essay discussion by introducing the topic and the central idea (thesis), so the concluding paragraph wraps up the discussion, bringing the development to a logical end. If the developmental paragraphs have done their job—that is, developed the thesis—then the conclusion should follow logically.

But what does one say in the conclusion? What is said depends entirely on what was developed in the essay. However, there is a standard approach to writing concluding paragraphs. Here are some points about conclusions:

1. *A conclusion can restate the main points (subtopics) discussed.* This restatement should be brief; after all, you have already discussed them at length.
2. *A conclusion can restate the thesis.* Generally, to avoid sounding repetitious, it is a good idea to restate the thesis in different words. The restatement of the thesis is really a reassertion of its importance or validity.
3. *A conclusion should not, however, bring up a new topic.*

For example, an essay about the most interesting places to visit in Mexico could conclude as follows:

There are, of course, many more things to visit while you are in Mexico, but the beach at Progreso, the Aztec ruin, and the famous monument represent some of the more significant and beautiful sights to see. When you go to Mexico, visit these sights and you will be guaranteed a fond memory after you go home.

A concluding paragraph about allowing students to manage the bookstore might look like this:

Providing jobs for students, jobs that would help cut the cost of managing the bookstore and provide on-the-job experience—which can only enhance the university's reputation for graduating knowledgeable students—are excellent reasons for allowing students to manage the bookstore. In fact, it is amazing that such a system is not in practice now.



**EXERCISE 6-10** Reread the essay "My Favorite Sights" by Lorraine Caron on pages 136–137. Then answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

*Introduction to the Essay*

1. Are the main points in Caron's essay mentioned in the conclusion?
2. If not, does the conclusion seem appropriate anyway? Why?
3. If yes, what are the main points she restates?

**EXERCISE 6-11**

The following are thesis statements, their supporting topic sentences, and conclusions. Study each conclusion to determine if it is logical. If the conclusion is not appropriate, write *not good* in the blank and also write the reason it is not good. If the conclusion is appropriate, simply write *logical* in the blank.

**1. Thesis Statement:**

Watching television is not a waste of time.

- a. It is a valuable educational tool.
- b. It provides entertainment to cheer us up.
- c. It provides something our family can have in common to discuss.

Critics of television will continue to put down the "boob tube." But, because of its educational value, its entertainment value, and its supply of things we can discuss together, our family is going to continue watching television for a long time, and so should others. Indeed, watching television is a good way to spend one's time.

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**2. Thesis Statement:**

Communicating in a foreign language can create some embarrassing misunderstandings.

- a. Mispronouncing words can lead to real embarrassment.
- b. Misunderstanding what someone says to you can create amusing problems.
- c. Misusing vocabulary words can really make you blush.

*The Essay*

Everyone who speaks a foreign language is bound to have misunderstandings from time to time. What you need to do is go to the laboratory as often as you can to improve your language skills. The people there are very nice, and they will help you with your grammar and pronunciation.

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**3. Thesis Statement:**

Television commercials are entertaining.

- a. The Coca-Cola commercial is a good example of an entertaining commercial.
- b. The Chevrolet commercial is as good as any situation comedy.
- c. The Fritos commercial is particularly amusing.

If you do not have a television, you are certainly missing out on the fun of commercials. There are also a lot of entertaining programs to see. In addition, the news programs can keep you informed about the world. Indeed, everyone should have a television set.

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**4. Thesis Statement:**

My reasons for coming to State University center around the services it provides.

- a. State University offers a superior program in my major.
- b. In addition, the university has high-quality academic resources.
- c. State also offers quality student services.
- d. The recreational activities make State even better.

*Introduction to the Essay*

The challenge of a diversified and excellent program, the academic resources, the student services, the recreational activities, and the low tuition are the reasons I decided to come to State University. I really think I made a wise decision. If you are looking for a quality education at a reasonable price, then consider State as the place to enroll.

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**5. Thesis Statement:**

In order to make a good impression at a job interview, you should prepare well for the interview.

- a. The first thing you should do is plan your answers to the possible questions the interviewer might ask.
- b. Then you should carefully plan and prepare what you are going to wear.
- c. Finally, you should make sure that you arrive on time.

As you can see, it is necessary to be well prepared for the job interview. Having the answers ready, being properly dressed, and being on time can all help to make a good impression on the interviewer. If you follow these steps, you will find yourself sitting behind the desk at that coveted job in no time at all.

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## *The Outline*

**Prewriting: Planning**

One way to determine if an essay is well organized and if the paragraphs discuss the thesis statement is to outline the essay. In Unit One, the paragraph outlines were essentially topic sentences with the supporting sentences written out on separate

*The Essay*

lines. In outlining an essay, however, you do not need to write out all the sentences in the paragraphs. An outline is the skeleton of the essay; it is the structure around which the details and explanations are organized.

There are many ways to write outlines for essays. It is not necessary to follow any strict outline form. For example, in an outline if there is a 1 there must be a 2 and if there is an "A" there must be a "B." When you are asked to write formal outlines for formal papers, you should follow this rule; but for most other purposes, an outline can be informal. Here is a suggestion for an outline form for planning your essay:

## Thesis Statement:

Write out the thesis statement in a complete sentence.

## I. Write out the first developmental paragraph topic sentence.

A. Identify the support. This can be a detail or an idea that the paragraph will discuss.

1. Mention any additional detail about "A."

2. If appropriate, mention another detail about "A."

B. If you have another detail or example you are going to discuss in this paragraph, mention it here.

## II. Write out the next topic sentence.

A. Support.

B. Support.

## III. Write out the next topic sentence.

A. Support.

1. Detail if necessary.

B. Support.

A quick glance at such an outline should reveal if the paragraphs are unified and coherent. Study the following outline of Caron's essay:

## Thesis Statement:

Because of these aspects, Quebec is a place where you can find some of the most interesting sights you will ever see.

*Introduction to the Essay*

I. Old Quebec City is the living witness of our history.

A. Historical aspects.

1. Notre-Dame des Victoires.
2. Ramparts.
3. Plaines d'Abraham.

B. Seasonal aspects—beautiful in all seasons.

II. From the Plaines d'Abraham, it is easy to discover the majestic Saint Lawrence River.

A. Historical aspects.

1. Open door for our founders who established cities.
2. Today, the river is an exceptional waterway.

B. Seasonal aspects.

1. The location for great activities in every season, particularly boating, water-skiing, and fishing in summer.
2. The river is navigable in winter.

III. On the north shore of the Saint Lawrence River, five miles from Quebec, the famous Montmorency Falls are located.

A. Historical aspects.

1. Discovered by a French explorer in the sixteenth century.
2. Highest falls in North America.

B. Seasonal aspects.

1. During the summer.
  - a. Go to park to admire falls.
  - b. Sound and light show.
2. During the winter—play on the block of ice.

Supporting details can be expressed in words or phrases in an outline.

 **EXERCISE 6-12** Reread "Why People Save Books" on pages 138–139 and write an outline using the form given on page 144.

*The Essay***EXERCISE 6-13**

The following are some topics for your final essay in this chapter. Using one of the prewriting techniques you learned in Chapter One, generate a great deal of material on your chosen topic. Then find a central idea on which to base your thesis statement, and decide on supporting points. Write an informal outline and then the first draft of your essay. Use the Revision Checklist at the end of the chapter to evaluate your essay.

1. What are some noteworthy or interesting (unusual, beautiful, historically significant) sights in your country or hometown?
2. What are some of the areas where computers are being used? Write about some of the uses of computers. Or discuss another important invention, such as satellites.
3. Write an essay explaining why you think people save books or some other objects. For example, many people save stamps, coins, dolls, and even toys!



## *Composition Skills*

### REVISION

#### *Peer Review Checklist*

When you have finished writing the first draft of your essay, give it to a classmate to read and review. Use the following questions to respond to each other's drafts.

Writer \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Is the introduction inviting?



143      *The Essay*

9. Do you have any suggestions about the first developmental paragraph?

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10. Answer questions 7, 8, and 9 about the remaining developmental paragraphs.

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11. Is the conclusion logical? Is it interesting?

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13. What is the best part of the essay?

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14. What part needs the most attention?

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*Revision Checklist for the Essay*

1. Is your introduction inviting? Does it introduce the topic?
2. Does your essay have a clear thesis?
3. Do your topic sentences support the thesis?
4. Does the support in your paragraphs support the topic sentences?
5. Does your conclusion end the discussion logically?
6. Is your essay coherent? Unified?

*Introduction to the Essay*

2. Does the introduction introduce the topic?

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State the thesis?

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3. Do you have any suggestions about the introduction?

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4. What is the thesis for the essay? Write it here:

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5. Is the thesis clear and sufficiently narrowed down?

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6. Do you have any suggestions about the thesis?

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7. Does the first developmental paragraph support the thesis? Explain how;

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8. Does the first developmental paragraph have a topic sentence? Write it here:

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## THE DESCRIPTION APPROACH TO WRITING ESSAYS

**D**escriptions—whether short, long, or essay length—are used all the time. You will find descriptions in nonfiction and fiction books, magazine and newspaper articles, product literature, and user manuals for appliances or computer software. Descriptions help the reader form a mental image or picture so that he or she can understand the writer's point. The reader may simply enjoy the description, as with a profile of a famous person, or use the product, as with an appliance or piece of machinery. You will include description when you feel the reader needs to understand the physical aspects in your writing.

### SUCCESS WITH THE DESCRIPTION APPROACH TO ESSAYS

The description approach to writing essays is one that describes a physical person, place, or object in detail. To *describe* generally means to give information about a noun to create a mental picture in the reader's mind. From your description the reader should be able to experience your topic with the five senses.

Description often takes on expanded meanings in conversation. For example, you might say you will describe a person, place, object, concept, event, or function. In this book, however, describing is used for physical nouns: a person, place, or object. Other approaches are necessary to discuss abstract ideas or processes. For example, to write about a concept or idea—an abstract noun—you write a definition. To write of an event, situation, or story, you write a narration. The steps of an operation or task are written as a

process analysis. Each of these different writing approaches involves a different way of thinking about the topic, which translates into a different approach to writing the essay. Your approach to a topic will depend on your assignment's requirements.

In this chapter, you will learn how to describe a noun with physical properties: dimension, color, shape, size, and texture. You will describe the object using as many of the five senses as possible: sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. To find enough material to fill an entire essay, you must list many specific details about the noun.

To describe a person, you might include sight details: facial expressions, hair color, height, weight, body shape, ethnic background (for skin color, eye color, facial features, bone structure, and body description). You might include hearing details: how the person sounds when talking, walking, crying, or laughing. You might include smell: how the person smells in certain situations, body odor, perfume or aftershave used, smell of clothes worn. You might include how the person feels to touch: dry skin, soft skin, fluffy hair. You probably will not include taste, although you could in certain writing situations.

To describe a place, include sight details: the environment, the people there, the vehicles, and animal life. You might include hearing details: the sound of a rushing river, snow falling, or ocean waves crashing on a shore. You might include smell: the smell of a redwood forest, a new car, a downtown street, or the interior of a new apartment or house. Include details of touch: what a tree feels like or a handful of sand, cold river water, an old brick building's walls, the counter of a coffee shop. Include taste associated with the place: a fresh doughnut, buttered popcorn at the theater, a cold can of soda pop on a hot day.

To describe an object of some kind, you might include sight: the size, shape, color, dimensions; and hearing: what does it sound like when it's working or when it's broken? How does the world react to this sound? You might include smell: does the object have a typical odor or aroma: sweet, sour, dead, poisonous (as with gas fumes)? You might include touch or texture details: grainy, slimy, smooth, bumpy, gravelly. You might include taste: sweet or tart, bitter or sour.

In this essay, student writer Genevieve Valentine describes Mount St. Helens in Washington. Note how she gives the reader detailed information and uses the five senses in her description.

## MOUNT ST. HELENS

Genevieve Valentine

Mountains dominate many landscapes, rising above the ocean and landforms around them. Mountains can be classified as beautiful pieces of natural art, which keep the human in awe. But the eye fails to see the vicious devastating potential within some of these pieces of art. Volcanoes are special kinds of mountains, in that they sustain the continuing primeval process that originally made the surface of the earth. Mount St. Helens looks the way most mountains look: smooth sides, pointed crest, and snow capped. It is a scene made for calendars and postcards, yet is still one of the most destructive volcanoes of all time.

Mount St. Helens is located in southwestern Washington, about 50 miles northwest of Portland, Oregon. It is one of the several lofty volcanic peaks that dominate the Cascade Range of the Pacific Northwest. Mount St. Helens and her Cascade Range sisters—Lassen, Shasta, Hood, Rainier, and Baker—are part of a chain of volcanoes stretching from northern California to southern British Columbia, which is one part of what geologists call the "Ring of Fire." This Ring of Fire is a notorious zone that produces frequent, often destructive, earthquakes and volcanic activity (Tilling 3). The Cascade volcanoes date back more than one million years. They are all relative newcomers to their surroundings. Among the latecomers to this geographic scene is Mount St. Helens. The entire visible part of the mountain has been built up since 500 B.C. Even in human terms, that's not very old; in geological terms, it's hardly a tick on the clock. Though being the youngest of the Cascades, some geologists say "she is more powerful than the elders surrounding her" (Boly 7).

Mount St. Helens is a composite or "stratovolcano." These volcanoes are made up of alternating layers of lava and fragment material, and their particles conceal the remains of older volcanoes, which a scientist dated back 37,000 years. Composite volcanoes are formed by the most viscous lava. The composite volcano forms a steeper, conical hill by a variety of eruptive processes: blasts of debris that include everything from large blocks to minute pieces of ash, hot avalanches, viscous, sticky magma, and hot lava flows.

Geological records show that Mount St. Helens has been an explosive performer, going off every 100 years for the past millennium. The mountain's first well-documented eruption occurred in the 19th century. This eruption carried south and eastward to the Dallies in Oregon, some 65 miles away. These kinds of fireworks lasted intermittently for 15 years. The peak apparently quit for about three years, and

the last report of activity was in 1857. After that, the volcano fell into a deep sleep from which it would not awaken for 123 years.

The magnitude of a 4.2 earthquake on the Richter scale at 3:47 P.M., Thursday, March 20, 1980, preceded by several smaller earthquakes, was the first indication that Mount St. Helens was awaking from her slumber. Yet no one realized that the eruption of Mount St. Helens was underway (Tilling 7). Many scientists failed to acknowledge her awakening, but within two months Mount St. Helens was at full force. On May 18, 1980, two record earthquakes over 5.0 on the Richter scale, at 8:30 and 8:32 A.M., were the triggers of the eruption. The volcano exploded with a force equivalent to more than 27,000 atom bombs. Instead of bursting straight up, which is most common for eruptions, this eruption followed the lateral lines—sideways to the north. "The shock wave from the eruption focused like a rifle shot by the intact semi-circle of the crater to the south, east and west, slammed across the miles of forest and county lakes of the north" (Boly 21). A billion feet of timber fell like pieces of straw. In the course of a few hours, 234 square miles of forest land were destroyed and virtually all life on the mountain ceased to exist. Mount St. Helens killed more than 60 people that day, some of them 18 miles away, 300 families lost their homes, seven of eight bridges were washed away, and 5,000 acres of farmland disappeared, as well as the town of Castle Rock. This flood of lava reached 1000+ Fahrenheit degrees.

Gray bumps, the ghosts of once-lush hills, stand in the swath of destruction that fans north of Mount St. Helens. Lumpy mats of mud, miles wide and hundreds of feet deep, trail down the valley west of the mountain. There are steam bubbles popping out here and there. This is the way the day after the blast looked. Nearly 20 years later, parts of the valley still resemble this. In late May 1980, President Carter flew over it and called it "indescribable and hellish" (Tilling 52).

The amount of land destroyed in the eruption was not that vast when viewed in context. It amounted to less than 0.7 percent of the forest land in Washington, though the psychological impact was much larger. The eruption changed the way people structured their lives. People were made painfully aware that nature can be unpredictable and deadly. According to Reverend Arthur Morgan, "If the Holocaust didn't do it, the blast of this mountain would have flattened any remnant of faith based on the natural world" (Boly 101).

The question is asked constantly: Is Mount St. Helens going to erupt again? In the long term, the answer is yes. Mount St. Helens will erupt again, as it has for 40,000 years and as some of its ancestors in the Cascade Range have done for ten to fifty million years. Scientists are

getting better at the guesswork needed to predict volcanic activity, but when will Mount St. Helens erupt again? No one is certain when she will reawaken from her slumber.

#### WORKS CITED

Boly, William. *Fire Mountain*. Portland, OR: Catheo Publishing, Inc. 1981.

Tilling, Robert. *Eruptions of Mount St. Helens: Past, Present, and Future*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984.

#### Questions for Analysis

1. What sense does Valentine use primarily in this piece?
2. What other senses could have been used in the essay and where?

## TOPIC CRITERIA AND SELECTION

Topics for an essay using the description approach include any noun that is of a physical nature. However, the noun must be of a size and complexity that can be described in the length required for the assignment. If you must keep the essay to a few hundred words (one to two pages typed), then you need to find a simple object, such as a hammer or door—something that can be fully described in a short length. If, on the other hand, you have a thousand words or so (about four typed pages), then you should pick a noun that has more to it than a few details, one that can be divided into subtopics. For example, describing a person would take more space than describing a nail (hopefully). The description of a person might be divided into main ideas: physical body, physical appearance, and mannerisms or behaviors, with each main idea described in one paragraph. Some topics suggestions for a description essay are given in Table 7.1.

**TABLE 7.1** *Topic Suggestions for Description Essays*

Person	a favorite person, a relative, a famous person you admire or despise, a childhood playmate, a person displaying a strong emotion, yourself
Place	your bedroom, your personal sanctuary, your house or apartment, a favorite vacation spot, your school, your classroom, a favorite hiding place, a mall or shopping area, a cave, a beach, a ship
Object	the thing you use in your hobby, your mode of transportation, a birthday or holiday present you got as a child, a lucky charm or favorite small object, a piece of clothing, something very old

**TRY-IT****EXERCISE**

Determine if each of the following topics is appropriate for an essay using the description approach.

1. making a basket
2. a pen
3. a butterfly
4. love

The first topic describes a process. Topics two and three are physical objects, so they are appropriate. The final topic is a concept, so you should use the definition approach.

**PRACTICE****EXERCISE 7-1****IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE TOPICS**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Identify appropriate topics for a description essay. Put a Y for yes or an N for no on the line provided.

**EXAMPLE:** Y a dog

1. \_\_\_\_\_ computer mouse
2. \_\_\_\_\_ freedom
3. \_\_\_\_\_ ghost
4. \_\_\_\_\_ campground
5. \_\_\_\_\_ peach tree in full bloom
6. \_\_\_\_\_ fixing a tire
7. \_\_\_\_\_ talk-show host
8. \_\_\_\_\_ earthquake
9. \_\_\_\_\_ school campus
10. \_\_\_\_\_ a blueprint for a house
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Washington, D.C.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ book about hurricanes
13. \_\_\_\_\_ friendship
14. \_\_\_\_\_ grandma
15. \_\_\_\_\_ making a cake
16. \_\_\_\_\_ horse
17. \_\_\_\_\_ democracy
18. \_\_\_\_\_ calculator
19. \_\_\_\_\_ coffee bean
20. \_\_\_\_\_ airplane ride

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTOR \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS TIME \_\_\_\_\_

**PRACTICE**  
**EXERCISE 7-2****TOPIC DEVELOPMENT**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Pick one of the ideas shown in Table 7.1 (or your own) and think of at least ten sensory details for each of two topics.

**EXAMPLE:** Topic: at the seashore

Details: *the feel of the water; the smell of the salt air over the ocean; the sound of waves crashing along shore; the feel of different armstrokes used while swimming; the feel of sand underfoot; the look of small pebbles and shells that have washed ashore; the sound of sea-gulls and other birds; the smell of fish; the sight of fishers with their poles and buckets; the sound of the wind rustling through beach grass.*

1. Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Details:

2. Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Details:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTOR \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS TIME \_\_\_\_\_

## STRUCTURE FOR A DESCRIPTION ESSAY

The description approach to essays uses the standard keyhole structure discussed in Chapter 5. This approach has an introduction with thesis statement, body paragraphs, and conclusion. Remember to focus on the physical characteristics of the person, place, or object being described.

The introduction paragraph in a description essay grounds the reader in the general topic so that the reader can understand the specific physical noun being described. For example, if you describe a hammer, your introduction might start by discussing hand tools. With each sentence, your paragraph will contain more specific details until you reach your thesis statement.

Each body paragraph focuses on one main idea about your topic. One paragraph might discuss different sizes of hammers, while another paragraph might describe different materials used to make hammers. Within the paragraph, your information should be presented in a logical manner, one that makes sense to you and the reader, using generalizations and details to prove your point.

The conclusion paragraph wraps up the essay, bringing the reader to a conclusion.

<b>TRY-IT</b>
<b>EXERCISE</b>

Fill in the following information for a topic for each paragraph.

*Topic:*

*Introductory paragraph's general topic:*

*Thesis Statement:*

*Body paragraph 1 topic sentence:*

*Body paragraph 2 topic sentence:*

*Body paragraph 3 topic sentence:*

*(and so on, until . . .)*

*Conclusion:*

Here is one outline with a stapler as the object for description:

*Topic:* a stapler

*Introductory paragraph's general topic:* discuss typical desk or office equipment

*Thesis statement:* A stapler comes in a variety of sizes and styles but performs the same function—to push a piece of metal through pieces of paper so they are attached together.

*Body paragraph 1:* desk staplers are larger, more stable, and come in a variety of colors, sizes, and textures.

*Body paragraph 2:* handheld staplers are lighter but rarely sit well on a flat surface.

*Conclusion:* What would we do without staplers?

**PRACTICE****EXERCISE 7·3****SELECT APPROPRIATE THESIS  
STATEMENTS**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Identify appropriate thesis statements for a description essay. Put a Y for yes or an N for no on the line provided.

**EXAMPLE:** Y My childhood memories of trips to Disneyland are filled with wonderful sights, delicious foods, and nauseating rides.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ A diamond is a multi-faceted stone with many uses.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Freedom impacts every aspect of modern life.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Beauty changes with each generation and age.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The cafeteria offers a myriad of sensations.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ My grandpa's cane fascinated me with its many badges from exotic lands.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Love comes in many flavors.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ A can of soda pop right out of the refrigerator satisfies many needs.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ My pet terrier Max bounces around all day.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Yosemite National Park offers the visitor a variety of sights.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The oak tree on the village green is magnificent.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTOR \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS TIME \_\_\_\_\_

**PRACTICE****EXERCISE 7.4****STRUCTURE A DESCRIPTION  
PARAGRAPH**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Pick a topic from Table 7.1 or one of your own and create an outline for an essay.

**EXAMPLE:** Topic: *My truck*

Introductory paragraph's general topic: *Various modes of transportation*

Thesis statement: *My truck is not much to look at.*

Body paragraph 1: *Exterior*

Body paragraph 2: *Interior*

Body paragraph 3: *Truckbed and camper.*

Conclusion: *My truck may look a bit worn, but I like it.*

1. Topic:

Introductory paragraph's general topic:

Thesis statement:

Body paragraph 1:

Body paragraph 2:

Body paragraph 3:

Conclusion:

2. Topic:

Introductory paragraph's general topic:

Thesis statement:

Body paragraph 1:

Body paragraph 2:

Body paragraph 3:

Conclusion:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTOR \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS TIME \_\_\_\_\_

A profile is a description of a person. In this profile, Harrison describes many aspects of Oprah Winfrey, the famous talk-show host. This essay is an abbreviation (a shortened version) of a much longer essay.

Note the many physical details used to describe this person. Watch for how the author uses a section with several paragraphs to discuss one main idea. You might want to jot down each paragraph's topic in the margin as you read the essay. Also, some of the paragraphs are quite short; your paragraphs will be longer and more fully developed.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING OPRAH

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison

Looking at pictures of herself as a young girl—"a *nappy*-haired little colored girl"—Oprah Winfrey sees herself on a porch swing, "scared to death of my grandfather. I feared him. Always a dark presence. I remember him always throwing things at me or trying to shoo me away with his cane. I lived in absolute terror.

"I slept with my grandmother, and my job was to empty the slop jar every morning. And one night my grandfather came into our room, and he was looming over the bed and my grandmother was saying to him, 'You got to get back into bed now, come on, get back in the bed.' I thought maybe he was going to kill both of us. I was four. Scared. And she couldn't get him to get back in his room. And there was an old blind man who lived down the road, and I remember my grandmother going out on the porch screaming 'Henry! Henry!' And when I saw his light going on I knew that we were going to be saved. But for years I had nightmares that he would come in the dark and strangle me."

The girl who emptied out the slop jar is the woman who now wears Valentino, Ungaro, Krizia clothes: powerful, glamorous, rich. She doesn't know what got her from there to here. How does one make a self? Why? Oprah Winfrey's rushed headlong to get the answers, sometimes in advance of framing the questions.

Her audiences are co-creators of the self and the persona she crafts. Her studio is a laboratory. She says hosting a talk show is as easy as breathing.

Here she is, an icon, speaking: "I just do what I do—it's amazing. . . . But so does Madonna. . . . Everybody's greatness is relative to what the Universe put them here do (sic) do. I always knew I was born for greatness."

"If it's not possible for everybody to be the best that they can be, then it has to mean that I'm special, and if I'm special then it means

the Universe just goes and picks people, which you know it doesn't do. . . . I've been blessed—but I create the blessings. . . . Most people don't seek discernment, it doesn't matter to them what the Universe intended for them to do. I hear the voice, I get the feeling. If someone without discernment thinks she hears a voice and winds up being a hooker on Hollywood and Vine, it is meaningful for the person doing it, right now. She is where the Universe wants her to be . . .

"According to the laws of the Universe, I am not likely to get mugged, because I am helping people be all that they can be. I am all that I can be. . . . I am not God—I hope I don't give that impression—I'm not God. I keep telling Shirley MacLaine, 'You can't go around telling people you are God.' It's a very difficult concept to accept."

She brings her audiences into her life. No one who watches Oprah Winfrey—and an estimated 16 million people do—does not know about her weight loss—by her reckoning, 67 pounds on a 400-calories-a-day liquid diet (Optifast), not her meanest achievement—or about her hairdresser, her seamstress, her history of childhood abuse, her golden retriever, her boyfriend, Stedman Graham. There appears to be no membrane between the private person and the public persona.

The woman herself embodies a message, and a sanguine one. It says: You can be born poor and black and female and make it to the top.

In a racist society, the majority needs, and seeks, from time to time, proof that they are loved by the minority whom they have so long been accustomed to oppress, to fear exaggeratedly, or to treat with real or assumed disdain. They need that love, and they need to love in return, in order to believe that they are good. Oprah Winfrey—a one-person demilitarized zone—has served that purpose.

Last year, Oprah Winfrey made \$25 million. Her production company, Harpo Productions Inc., gained ownership and control of her top-rated television talk show; she secured the unprecedented guarantee that ABC would carry "The Oprah Winfrey Show" on its owned and operated stations for five additional years. She also bought, reputedly for \$10 million (including partial renovation costs), an 88,000-square-foot studio in Chicago, which, when renovated, will provide facilities for producing motion pictures and television movies, as well as her talk show. It will, says Harpo's chief operating officer, Jeffrey Jacobs, be "the studio between the coasts, the final piece in the puzzle" that will enable Winfrey to do "whatever it is she wants to do, economically, and under her own control." It is also in the path of Chicago real-estate development.

Winfrey, whose television production of Gloria Naylor's "The Women of Brewster Place" won its time-period ratings on two successive nights, owns the screen rights to Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and to

*Kaffir Boy*, the autobiography of the South African writer Mark Mathabane. She has bought a 162-acre farm in Indiana. She is part-owner of three network-affiliated stations. She has an interest in The Eccentric, a Chicago restaurant which she often works three nights a week, going from table to table, shaking every hand. She says she entered into partnership because she "wanted a place to dance."

Winfrey embodies the entrepreneurial spirit; she is a Horatio Alger for our times. Salve to whites' burdened consciences? She shoves the idea aside. Role model for black women? For all women, she says, her aim being to "empower women."

An active fund-raiser, not necessarily for glamorous causes, she is philanthropic and fabulously generous. She set up a "Little Sisters" program in Chicago's Cabrini-Green housing projects, to which she devotes time. She annually endows ten scholarships to Tennessee State University, her alma mater. The story that she made her longtime and best friend Gayle King, a newscaster in Hartford, a millionaire with a Christmas check of \$1,250,000 is part of the Oprah legend.

Oprah Winfrey's weight concerns viewers as much as her nuptials. She is now a size 8, down from a high of over 200 pounds—"but I was always shapely," she says with a forgivable vanity. When she amiably carted 67 pounds of animal fat on her show in a little red kiddie wagon to illustrate her weight loss, Stedman called in to say, to millions of viewers, that her not being fat made it easier for them to walk into a crowded room. That was a bad moment for Oprah. She says now that he was misunderstood. He now says, "The only problem I had with her weight was that she had problems with it."

When Winfrey was fat, she hugged and touched her studio guests a lot. She practically cuddled. Now that she is slim and awfully glamorous, she maintains a far greater distance. The touch of a woman with perceived sexual allure is scarier, more charged, dangerous. Paradoxically, her body seemed more loose, her movements more flowing, when she was fat. When she is with Stedman, her body regains its comfortable eloquence. She vamps.

She wakes up at 5 or 5:30. She runs six miles along Lake Michigan or works out in a gym daily. She gets to the studio about 8. As she is prepared for the camera by her hairdresser and makeup man, she has a "talk session"—which she terms "redundant"—with her producer. By 9, she is in front of the cameras.

She will have prepared for her show the night before for less than an hour. "She wings it," says Debra DiMaio, her executive producer. "She gets on camera and asks the questions ordinary people would ask."

She has survived a nightmare childhood, things it bruises the mind to think of. She hasn't accomplished her own creation yet. One wishes Oprah Winfrey well at the task—for her sake, and for the sake of the millions of viewers who, lonely and uninstructed, draw sustenance from her, from the flickering presence in their living rooms they call a friend.



#### Questions for Analysis

1. Overall, how does Harrison feel about Oprah Winfrey?
2. How does Harrison portray the audience of Winfrey's shows?

## ◆ CREATING A DESCRIPTION ESSAY USING THE WRITING PROCESS

Use the step-by-step process below to write an essay using the narration approach.

#### PLANNING

1. Select a topic by finding a person, place, or object of interest to you.
2. Gather and organize information.
3. Create an outline that lays out the skeleton of the essay.

#### DRAFTING

4. Using your outline as a guide, write a first draft of the essay.
5. Simmer.

#### REVISING

6. Revise, revise, revise.
7. Edit for grammar, punctuation, and other mechanical errors.
8. Print and turn it in.

### **ASK YOURSELF ABOUT THE DESCRIPTION APPROACH TO ESSAYS**

- Does your topic have physical aspects or characteristics that need to be explained?
- Is your topic the right size and complexity for the essay's assigned length?
- Is your thesis statement located at the end of the introduction?
- Do your topic sentences introduce or sum up the paragraph's main idea?
- Can your topic sentences combine to prove the thesis statement?
- Have you included enough specific details so the reader can experience your topic?
- Have you used as many of the five senses as possible in your essay?
- Have you structured your essay well?
- Have you taken enough time to revise and edit to create the best essay possible?

### **COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES**

1. In groups, think up possible topics for an essay using the description approach. Take one idea from this list and outline it. Put your outline on the classroom board for all to see and comment on (if your instructor decides to do this).
2. In pairs, take a walk outside around the campus. Pick an object and have each person think out loud about its physical properties while the other takes notes. Return to the classroom and draft a paragraph describing the object. Present your object and writing to the class.
3. Write a description of a fairly common object but without naming the object in the writing. Then read your piece to the class and see if they can guess what the object is. How soon into the writing did they know?

## Student Essays to Consider

### Family Portrait

My great-grandmother, who is ninety-five years old, recently sent me a photograph of herself that I had never seen before. While cleaning out the attic of her Florida home, she came across a studio portrait she had had taken about a year before she married my great-grandfather. This picture of my great-grandmother as a twenty-year-old girl and the story behind it have fascinated me from the moment I began to consider it.

The young woman in the picture has a face that resembles my own in many ways. Her face is a bit more oval than mine, but the softly waving brown hair around it is identical. The small, straight nose is the same model I was born with. My great-grandmother's mouth is closed, yet there is just the slightest hint of a smile on her full lips. I know that if she had smiled, she would have shown the same wide grin and down-curving "smile lines" that appear in my own snapshots. The most haunting feature in the photo, however, is my great-grandmother's eyes. They are an exact duplicate of my own large, dark brown ones. Her brows are plucked into thin lines, which are like two pencil strokes added to highlight those fine, luminous eyes.

I've also carefully studied the clothing and jewelry in the photograph. Although the photo was taken seventy-five years ago, my great-grandmother is wearing a blouse and skirt that could easily be worn today. The blouse is made of heavy eggshell-colored satin and reflects the light in its folds and hollows. It has a turned-down cowl collar and smocking on the shoulders and below the collar. The smocking (tiny rows of gathered material) looks hand-done. The skirt, which covers my great-grandmother's calves, is straight and made of light wool or flannel. My great-grandmother is wearing silver drop earrings. They are about two inches long and roughly shield-shaped. On her left wrist is a matching bracelet. My great-grandmother can't find this bracelet now, despite our having spent hours searching through the attic for it. On the third finger of her left hand is a ring with a large, square-cut stone.

The story behind the picture is as interesting to me as the young woman it captures. Great-Grandmother, who was earning twenty-five dollars a week as a file clerk, decided to give her boyfriend (my great-grandfather) a picture of herself. She spent almost two weeks' salary on the skirt and blouse, which she bought at a fancy department store downtown. She borrowed the earrings and bracelet from her older sister, Dorothy. The ring she wore was a present from another young man she was dating at the time. Great-Grandmother spent another chunk of her salary to pay the portrait photographer for the hand-tinted print in old-fashioned tones of brown and tan. Just before giving the picture to my great-grandfather, she scrawled at the lower left, "Sincerely, Beatrice."

When I study this picture, I react in many ways. I think about the trouble that my great-grandmother went to in order to impress the young man who was to be my great-grandfather. I laugh when I look at the ring, which was probably worn to make him jealous. I smile at the serious, formal inscription my great-grandmother used at this stage of the budding relationship. Sometimes, I am filled with a mixture of pleasure and sadness when I look at this frozen long-ago moment. It is a moment of beauty, of love, and—in a way—of my own past.

### The Diner at Midnight

I've been in lots of diners, and they've always seemed to be warm, busy, friendly, happy places. That's why, on a recent Monday night, I stopped in a diner for a cup of coffee. I was returning home after an all-day car trip and needed something to help me get through the last forty-five miles. I'd been visiting my cousins, whom I try to get together with at least twice a year. A diner at midnight, however, was not the place I had expected—it was different, and lonely.

Even the outside of the diner was uninviting. My Focus pulled to a halt in front of the dreary gray aluminum building, which looked like an old railroad car. A half-tit neon sign sputtering the message "Fresh baked goods daily," reflected on the surface of the rain-slick parking lot. Only half a dozen cars and a battered pickup were scattered around the lot. An empty paper coffee cup made a hollow scraping sound as it rolled in small circles on one cement step close to the entrance. I pulled hard at the balky glass door, and it banged shut behind me.

The diner was quiet when I entered. As there was no hostess on duty, only the faint odor of stale grease and the dull hum of an empty refrigerated pastry case greeted me. The outside walls were lined with vacant booths that squatted back to back in their black vinyl upholstery. On each black-and-white checkerboard-patterned table were the usual accessories—glass salt and pepper shakers, ketchup bottle, sugar packets—silently waiting for the next morning's breakfast crowd. I glanced through the round windows on the two swinging metal doors leading to the kitchen. I could see only part of the large, apparently deserted cooking area, with a shiny stainless-steel range and blackened pans of various sizes and shapes hanging along a ledge.

I slid onto one of the cracked vinyl seats at the Formica counter. Two men in rumpled work shirts also sat at the counter, on stools several feet apart, smoking cigarettes and staring wearily into cups of coffee. Their faces sprouted what looked like a day-old stubble of beard. I figured they were probably shift workers who, for some reason, didn't want to go home. Three stools down from the workers, I spotted a thin young man with a mop of curly black hair. He was dressed in new-looking jeans and a black polo shirt, unbuttoned at the neck. He wore a blank expression as he picked at a plate of limp french fries. I wondered if he had just returned from a disappointing date. At the one occupied booth sat a middle-aged couple. They hadn't gotten any food yet. He was staring off into space, idly tapping his spoon against the table, while she drew aimless parallel lines on her paper napkin with a bent dinner fork. Neither said a word to the other. The people in the diner seemed as lonely as the place itself.

Finally, a tired-looking waitress approached me with her thick order pad. I ordered the coffee, but I wanted to drink it fast and get out of there. My car, and the solitary miles ahead of me, would be lonely. But they wouldn't be as lonely as that diner at midnight.

**About Unity**

1. In which supporting paragraph of "The Diner at Midnight" does the topic sentence appear at the paragraph's end, rather than the beginning?
  - a. paragraph 2
  - b. paragraph 3
  - c. paragraph 4
2. Which sentence in paragraph 1 of "The Diner at Midnight" should be eliminated in the interest of paragraph unity? (*Write the opening words.*)

---

3. Which of the following sentences from paragraph 3 of "Family Portrait" should be omitted in the interest of paragraph unity?
  - a. Although the photo was taken fifty years ago, my great-grandmother is wearing a blouse and skirt that could easily be worn today.
  - b. It has a turned-down cowl collar and smocking on the shoulders and below the collar.
  - c. My great-grandmother can't find this bracelet now, despite our having spent hours searching the attic for it.
  - d. On the third finger of her left hand is a ring with a large, square-cut stone.

**About Support**

4. How many separate items of clothing and jewelry are described in paragraph 3 of "Family Portrait"?
  - a. four
  - b. five
  - c. seven
5. Label as sight, touch, hearing, or smell all the sensory details in the following sentences taken from the two essays. The first one is done for you as an example.

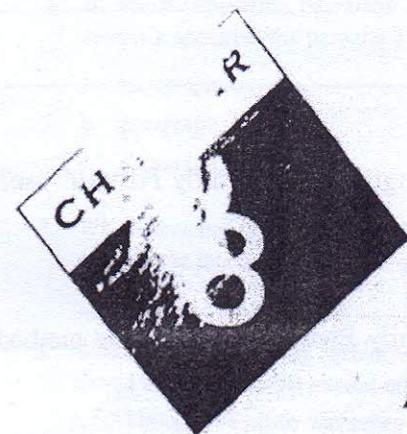
sight	smell
a. "As there was no hostess on duty, only the faint odor of stale grease and <i>hearing</i> <i>sight</i> the dull hum of an empty refrigerated pastry case greeted me."	
b. "He was staring off into space, idly tapping his spoon against the table, while she drew aimless parallel lines on her paper napkin with a bent dinner fork."	
c. "The blouse is made of heavy eggshell-colored satin and reflects the light in its folds and hollows."	
d. Her brows are plucked into thin lines, which are like two pencil strokes added to highlight those fine, luminous eyes.	
6. What are three details in paragraph 3 of "The Diner at Midnight" that reinforce the idea of "quiet" expressed in the topic sentence?

### About Coherence

7. Which method of organization does paragraph 2 of "Family Portrait" use?
  - a. Time order
  - b. Emphatic order
8. Which sentence in paragraph 2 of "Family Portrait" suggests the method of organization? (*Write the opening words.*)
9. The last paragraph of "The Diner at Midnight" begins with a word that serves as which type of signal?
  - a. time
  - b. addition
  - c. contrast
  - d. illustration

### About the Introduction and Conclusion

10. Which statement best describes the introduction to "The Diner at Midnight"?
  - a. It starts with an idea that is the opposite of the one then developed.
  - b. It explains the importance of the topic to its readers.
  - c. It begins with a general statement of the topic and narrows it down to a thesis statement.
  - d. It begins with an anecdote.



## THE NARRATION APPROACH TO WRITING ESSAYS

**N**arration is a skill you learn early in childhood. You tell your friends what you did during your vacation, or you tell why you were late to school, or you tell how your new puppy just chewed up your homework. You use narratives to relate your life experiences, both in spoken and written language.

### SUCCESS WITH THE NARRATION APPROACH TO ESSAYS

The narrative approach to essays involves telling short stories taken from personal experience, which might be funny or serious. A narrative involves a series of events told in chronological order. It usually ends by discussing the revelation, insight, lesson, or understanding that resulted from the experience. You should know your purpose for using a narrative before picking one to write about. This purpose is usually stated in the writing assignment given to you by your instructor and will direct your topic search. With your purpose in mind, you can evaluate the appropriateness of your chosen narrative.

Using the narrative approach means that you will prove your topic through personal experiences or narratives. The story's events or lesson will relate directly to the topic. The essay may be one long narrative, or it might have points illustrated with shorter narratives. You must decide which way is most effective for your writing situation.

## ELEMENTS OF A NARRATIVE

A narrative is composed of several different elements. A story has a title and is told through one point of view using one tense; it involves characters in action or conflict; it uses dialogue and details to tell the story. These elements must be used correctly in order for the story to work.

### Title

Generally, you need a title for your story. The title might come from the assignment ("A Scary Experience"), or it might be specific to your story ("A Night in a Real Haunted House"). You may have the title as you begin the story, or your title may come to you during the writing. Try taking a cliché or saying and turning it around for your own purposes. Change words to make it relevant to your story but still recognizable as that cliché or saying. For example, you might change "Once Upon a Time" to "Once Upon a Football Field."

### Point of View

One of your first decisions, after finding a story to tell, is to decide the right point of view to use. Point of view for narratives can be first person (I) or third person (he/she/they/one/it). Many personal narratives use first-person point of view. Reading a story with the narrator using "I" gives the reader a feeling of immediacy and closeness to the story, so the reader feels part of the action. However, if you are telling someone else's story, you will use third person. This distances the reader from the story, as if the reader were watching the story with the rest of the audience.

You might also choose to write your own story in the third person if you want to distance your reader from the story because the story is horrendous or scary, or if you want to make the story sound more objective. If you decide on the objective view, you must be careful not to report details that cannot be seen by the character whose viewpoint you are using. For example, if Mary is your main character, you cannot tell Brian's thoughts but only the actions that Mary sees.

### Tense

Narratives can be written in one of two tenses: past tense, which is the most common, or present tense. Each has its advantages. Narratives usually are told in past tense since the story has already happened. However, using present tense brings the story to the reader as if it is happening right now. This can be an effective choice, but you must make sure you maintain present

tense throughout the story; slipping into past tense is all too easy to do. During revision, read for tense consistency.

## Characters

All stories have characters. Narratives use real people in real conflicts, with real feelings, goals, and fears. Readers read stories so they can identify with the characters and their problems. The details of these characters are used to make the story more real and exciting for the reader. Reveal characters through dialogue and action.

## Action or Conflict

Each narrative has one major action or event. All discussion leads up to the final, climactic scene, the final explosion or insight. All good stories involve conflict. Without conflict, the story is boring. The story can have the character in conflict against someone else, against himself or herself, against society, or against nature. The conflict keeps our attention and interest alive because we are cheering for the main character.

## Dialogue

Dialogue between characters—or having characters talk to themselves—brings the story alive for the reader. Dialogue, however, is not real, everyday conversation. Spoken language often stops in mid-sentence, makes all kinds of grammatical errors, shifts direction of thought. Spoken language is less formal than written language because we use contractions and slang, clichés and jargon, and incomplete sentences. Spoken language varies according to the speaker's level of education, socioeconomic status, and intelligence. Your dialogue, on the other hand, must make sense but still read well.

Your dialogue must be grammatically correct. Many beginning writers assume that if they record the exact words of someone, they will be fine. If the speaker does not stop talking between sentences, then a period is not required—but this idea is wrong. A conversation in dialogue must be grammatically correct because it is written. For example, in this line of dialogue, the first is written as heard, while the second is written for the printed page:

- ▲ **SPOKEN:** "Like your hair. You'll be a hit Saturday night."
- ▼ **WRITTEN:** "I really like the way your hair looks. You'll be a hit Saturday night."

The spoken example shows a fragment. The written example corrects this error. The contraction is correct because people do use them in conversations, and their presence makes the dialogue sound more natural.

## Details

The details for a narrative will make or break the narrative. Narratives should be as descriptive as possible, so think about how you can use all five senses to make the writing come alive. Find details that help tell the story but that will not bore your readers.

You can also have too many details, often irrelevant to the story. Elmore Leonard, a famous novelist, once said, "I try to leave out the parts people skip." This sounds funny, but this advice is important for writers to understand. You must keep the audience in mind; include only those details relevant for the reader to create correct mental images of the story's setting and events.

How do you know which details are most important to include and which can be safely left out? You must understand your story and audience. Do not include mundane details everyone knows, unless these details are special to the story. For example, we all know what most people do when they get up in the morning; you do not need to repeat these details unless they show something special about your character or story. You must ask yourself about each detail: is it really important for the reader's understanding? If not, delete it because too many unnecessary details will bog down the reader. Put in only those important details that are essential for that mental image and understanding of the story.

One of the ways to eliminate unnecessary details is to start your story at the right place. Start right before the action of the story begins. If you start too soon, the reader will ask, "Where is the story?" or "Why is this important?" If there is an explosion in your story, start right before someone lights the fuse—not when the employees arrive for work hours before.

## TOPIC CRITERIA AND SELECTION

The best ideas for a narration essay are those that tell a story of a personal event that allows you to teach a lesson or share a revelation. For the essay, use a story that is large enough to fill an entire essay, or a series of experiences (as done in the student essay) that help explain the topic and prove the point. In addition, you need to find one with a lesson learned. Table 8.1 gives some topic suggestions for narration essays.

**TABLE 8.1 Topic Suggestions for Narration Essays**

Argue a point	schools should encourage creativity in children (relate an experience about childhood creativity), danger can show us what we value most
Teach a lesson or insight	an experience taught a valuable lesson about fear, love, friendship, learning, or another important aspect of life
Childhood memory	when you were teased or humiliated by other kids at school
A scary experience	a roller coaster, a near loss of life, Halloween as a child
When you were a hero	when you saved someone's life or property, helped someone who was in trouble
An embarrassing event	about a holiday, journey, class, school event, relationship, a relative, meeting a famous person
A prank or practical joke	describe the experience of pulling or having pulled on you a practical joke or prank
Your first . . .	kiss, date, car, day at kindergarten, day at a new school
On the job	a job interview, the first day of work, an experience with a co-worker
Accomplishment	one you are especially proud of, one that you struggled to achieve, an award earned

<b>TRY-IT</b>
<b>EXERCISE</b>

Pick a topic and fill in the details requested. Do this on a separate piece of paper.

*Purpose:*

*Narrator/point of view:*

*Tense:*

*Main character:*

*Main character's goal:*

*Other characters:*

*Action/conflict:*

*Lesson learned:*

Here is one answer, "Saturday Morning at the Farmer's Market."

*Purpose:* To illustrate a family outing.

*Narrator/point of view:* Myself/first person

*Tense:* Past tense.

*Main character:* Myself at age 10 or so.

*Main character's goal:* To help Dad with shopping; to get the missile popsicle.

*Other characters:* Dad and two sisters.

*Action/conflict:* Being essentially a lazy kid, I did not want to walk all over the Farmer's Market because I got tired, I wanted the popsicle now, but Dad really enjoyed shopping and talking with the farmers.

*Lesson learned:* You have to be patient if you want to get what you want.

**PRACTICE****TOPIC SELECTION****EXERCISE 8-1**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Pick two topics from Table 8.1 and jot down notes about the experience.

**EXAMPLE:**

Purpose: *to inform*

Narrator/point of view: *first person*

Tense: *past*

Main character: *me*

Main character's goal: *to get the best deals at the after-Christmas sales*

Other characters: *two friends, LaTonya and Norma*

Action/conflict: *The stores were so crowded that we couldn't get to the items we wanted to buy.*

Lesson learned: *some deals are better left alone.*

1. Purpose:

Narrator/point of view:

Tense:

Main Character:

Main Character's goal:

Other characters:

Action/Conflict:

Lesson learned:

2. Purpose:

Narrator/point of view:

Tense:

Main Character:

Main Character's goal:

Other characters:

Action/Conflict:

Lesson learned:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTOR \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS TIME \_\_\_\_\_

**PRACTICE****TOPIC DEVELOPMENT****EXERCISE 8.2**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Pick one of the narrative ideas you outlined in Practice Exercise 8.1 and think about more details, using descriptive language.

**EXAMPLE:**

Topic/Narrative: *shopping after Christmas sales*

Details: *Crowded parking lot; people standing in line for hours; difficulty finding anything because the shelves are disheveled; holiday music playing over the loudspeakers; some people being nice and friendly, others crabby and greedy.*

Topic/Narrative: \_\_\_\_\_

Details:

Topic/Narrative: \_\_\_\_\_

Details:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTOR \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS TIME \_\_\_\_\_

## STRUCTURE FOR A NARRATION ESSAY

The narration essay has a structure of its own. First, the thesis statement can begin the introductory paragraph (unlike any other approach described in this book). You might start the essay with a statement such as this: *When I was thirteen, I experienced the scariest roller-coaster ride of my life.* Readers know up front what they will be reading, that this is a real life experience. Or you can begin the essay with general information, as with other approaches, and end the introductory paragraph with your thesis statement telling readers about the narrative to come. Either way is acceptable.

A narration is structured in the following manner, with each element essential to the telling of the narrative.

1. Start with a character who has a goal. Describe both the character and the goal.
2. Something happens to prevent the character from achieving that goal. This is called the **central conflict**. Without this central conflict, the character's life would be unchanged, and there would be no story.
3. Someone or something opposes the main character, creating problems and conflicts to prevent the accomplishment of the goal.
4. Obstacles and more obstacles stand in the character's way.
5. Finally, the character achieves the goal; or not, but there is a final result.
6. The conclusion states the lesson learned from the experience.

Use this sequence to make sure all of the important events of the story are included.

Most narratives are structured in chronological sequence, written in the order in which the events actually happened. Sometimes authors get fancy and use flashbacks, but if these flashbacks are not done right, they will only confuse the reader. For your narrative essays, use a chronological sequence. Do not leave out huge chunks of the story because this leaves huge gaps in the time sequence. State all major and relevant events of the story. As for the use of transitions, try to find other ways to indicate a next step or event, other than "first this happened, then that happened."

<b>TRY-IT</b>
<b>EXERCISE</b>

Think of an experience you would like to recount as a narrative. Fill in the essential details of the structure, using the following guides.

*Character:*

*Goal:*

*Central conflict:*

*Opposing force(s):*

*Obstacle 1:*

*Obstacle 2:*

*Obstacle 3:*

*(and so on until . . . )*

*Result (get the goal or not)*

*Lesson learned:*

Here is one example, continuing the Farmer's Market story.

*Characters:* Myself, my dad, my two sisters.

*Goal:* To finish shopping and get the popsicle.

*Central conflict:* Dad decides to spend more time talking to the farmers.

*Opposing force(s):* Dad, the large area to cover (endless aisles of leafy stalls).

*Obstacle 1:* Dad wants to go down each aisle.

*Obstacle 2:* My feet hurt after the fourth aisle is finished; only a thousand more.

*Obstacle 3:* My sisters are being pains so I have to chase them around

*(and so on until . . . ).*

*Result (get the goal or not):* We finally finish shopping and buy the popsicles.

*Lesson learned:* Patience eventually earns the reward.

**PRACTICE****EXERCISE 8-3****SELECT APPROPRIATE THESIS  
STATEMENTS**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Identify appropriate thesis statements for a narration essay. Put a Y for yes or an N for no on the line provided.

**EXAMPLE:** Y When I was young, I was terrified of anything furry—until I got a kitten.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ To change a tire, first you need a bunch of tools.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ My first pet was a guinea pig called Squeaker.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Flooding is often caused by mistakes farther up the river.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Mistakes in calculations with the floodgates caused the floods of 1998.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The first day of kindergarten can be a terrifying experience.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ My first sale is engraved forever on my memory.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Writing an essay about experiences can be a complicated effort.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ History is full of stories about people making a life for themselves.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ One event in American history is especially telling.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The idea of family life involves many activities and emotions.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTOR \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS TIME \_\_\_\_\_

**PRACTICE****EXERCISE 8-4****STRUCTURE THE NARRATIVE ESSAY**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Pick a topic from Table 8.1 or one of your own. Structure the topic in the narrative approach.

**EXAMPLE:** *Writing a paper.*

Character: *Me.*

Goal: *To write a good paper, on time.*

Central conflict: *Family vacation took me away from my writing.*

Opposing force(s): *Family members involved in vacation.*

Obstacle 1: *Vacation scheduled for the week before the paper is due.*

Obstacle 2: *Family members want me to stay on vacation longer.*

Obstacle 3: *I'm having a good time on vacation and don't really want to go home.  
(and so on until . . . )*

Result (get the goal or not): *I worked on my paper in the mornings and had fun  
in the afternoons. I got my paper done and had a good time, too.*

Lesson learned: *Compromise often works.*

Title:

Character:

Goal:

Central conflict:

Opposing force(s):

Obstacle 1:

Obstacle 2:

Obstacle 3:

(and so on until . . . )

Result (get the goal or not):

Lesson learned:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTOR \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS TIME \_\_\_\_\_

In this essay, Elizabeth Wong examines her experiences and struggles while growing up in a Chinese household. Even if you are not Chinese, think about how you have struggled with conflicts between your parents' expectations and the world you live in.

## THE STRUGGLE TO BE AN ALL-AMERICAN GIRL

Elizabeth Wong

It's still there, the Chinese school on Yale Street where my brother and I used to go. Despite the new coat of paint and the high wire fence, the school I knew ten years ago remains remarkably the same.

Every day at 5 P.M., instead of playing with our fourth- and fifth-grade friends or sneaking out to the empty lot to hunt ghosts and animal bones, my brother and I had to go to Chinese school. No amount of kicking, screaming, or pleading could dissuade my mother, who was solidly determined to have us learn the language of our heritage.

Forcibly, she walked us the seven long, hilly blocks from our home to school, depositing our defiant tearful faces before the stern principal. My only memory of him is that he swayed on his heels like a palm tree, and he always clasped his impatient twitching hands behind his back. I recognized him as a repressed maniacal child killer and knew that if we ever saw his hands we'd be in big trouble.

We all sat in little chairs in an empty auditorium. The room smelled of Chinese medicine, an imported faraway mustiness. Like ancient mothballs or dirty closets. I hated that smell. I favored crisp new scents. Like the soft French perfume that my American teacher wore in public school. There was a stage far to the right, flanked by the American flag and the flag of the Nationalist Republic of China, which was also red, white, and blue but not as pretty.

Although the emphasis at the school was mainly language—speaking, reading, and writing—the lessons always began with an exercise in politeness. With the entrance of the teacher, the best student would tap a bell and everyone would get up, kowtow, and chant, "Sing san ho," the phonetic for "How are you, teacher?"

Being ten years old, I had better things to learn than ideographs copied painstakingly in lines that ran right to left from the tip of a *moc but*, a real ink pen that had to be held in an awkward way if blotches were to be avoided. After all, I could do the multiplication tables, name the satellites of Mars, and write reports on *Little Women* and *Black Beauty*. Nancy Drew, my favorite book heroine, never spoke Chinese.

The language was a source of embarrassment. More times than not, I tried to disassociate myself from the nagging, loud voice that followed me wherever I wandered in the nearby American supermarket outside Chinatown. The voice belonged to my grandmother, a fragile woman in her seventies who could outshout the best of the street vendors. Her humor was raunchy, her Chinese rhythmless, patternless. It was quick, it was loud, it was unbeautiful. It was not like the quiet, lilting romance of French or the gentle refinement of the American South. Chinese sounded pedestrian. Public.

In Chinatown, the comings and goings of hundreds of Chinese on their daily tasks sounded chaotic and frenzied. I did not want to be thought of as mad, as talking gibberish. When I spoke English, people nodded at me, smiled sweetly, said encouraging words. Even the people in my culture would look and say that I'd do well in life. "My, doesn't she move her lips fast," they would say, meaning that I'd be able to keep up with the world outside Chinatown.

My brother was even more fanatical than I about speaking English. He was especially hard on my mother, criticizing her, often cruelly, for her pidgin speech—smatterings of Chinese scattered like chop suey in her conversation. "It's not 'What it is,' Mom," he'd say in exasperation. "It's 'What is it, What is it, What is it!'" Sometimes Mom would leave out an occasional "the" or "a," or perhaps a verb of being. He would stop her in mid-sentence: "Say it again, Mom. Say it right." When he tripped over his own tongue, he'd blame it on her: "See, Mom, it's all your fault. You set a bad example."

What infuriated my mother most was when my brother cornered her on her consonants, especially "r." My father had played a cruel joke on Mom by assigning her an American name that her tongue wouldn't allow her to say. No matter how hard she tried, "Ruth" always ended up "Luth" or "Roof."

After two years of writing with a *mac but* and reciting words with multiples of meanings, I finally was granted a cultural divorce. I was permitted to stop Chinese school.

I thought of myself as multicultural. I preferred tacos to egg rolls; I enjoyed Cinco de Mayo more than Chinese New Year.

At last I was one of you; I wasn't one of them.

Sadly, I still am.

**EXERCISE 3-3** Comprehension/Discussion Questions

1. What did Elizabeth Wong and her brother do every day after school?
2. What was their attitude about this activity? How do you know?
3. Who wanted them to do this? Why?
4. According to Wong, what kind of man was the school principal?
5. Wong compares the smells of the Chinese school with those of the public school. What smells does she remember of each? How do these smells suggest her attitude toward each?
6. Wong compares what she learns at each school. What does she learn at Chinese school? At public school? In her opinion, which is more important? Why?
7. According to Wong, what was her grandmother like? What was Wong's attitude toward her? Why?
8. What was her brother's attitude about speaking English?
9. How did Wong's brother treat his mother when she spoke English? How do you account for this behavior?
10. Explain the problem Wong's mother had with her American name, Ruth.
11. Wong sees herself as multicultural. What does she mean? What examples does she give to prove this? Are these examples surprising? Why?
12. Who are the "you" and "them" in paragraph 14?
13. Explain the significance of the last sentence. As an adult, what is Wong's attitude toward Chinese school?
14. Wong and her brother resented being forced to attend Chinese school. Do you think their mother was right in making them go? Why?
15. Wong describes the clash of two cultures and the conflicts that can occur from it. Do you think it is possible for someone to maintain connections with his or her original culture and at the same time become an "all-American"? What does one gain or lose in becoming completely Americanized?



**EXERCISE 3-4** Vocabulary Development. When you read, you often do not know the meanings of all the words in the essay. Even so, you may not always look up words in your dictionary but instead try to guess at the meanings of the words from the context, the words and sentences surrounding the unknown word.

In this exercise, you will practice guessing at the meaning of words in context.

- A. The following is a paragraph from Elizabeth Wong's essay. First, underline all the words you do not know and choose five to write on the blanks below. Then read the paragraph again and guess the meaning of each word. In the blank, write what you think the word means. Finally, check with your classmates and/or the dictionary to confirm your guesses. The first one is done as an example:

Forcibly, she walked us the seven long, hilly blocks from our home to school, depositing our defiant tearful faces before the stern principal. My only memory of him is that he swayed on his heels like a palm tree, and he always clasped his impatient twitching hands behind his back. I recognized him as a repressed maniacal child killer, and knew that if we ever saw his hands we'd be in big trouble.

1. defiant      *angry, resistant*  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_

- B. Now use each of your words in a sentence of your own.

**Questions for Analysis**

1. What points does Wong make in her essay?
2. How are these points supported by narratives?

## ◆ CREATING A NARRATION ESSAY USING THE WRITING PROCESS

Use the step-by-step process below to write an essay using the narration approach.

**PLANNING**

1. Select a topic by finding a personal story of interest to you.
2. Gather and organize information.
3. Create an outline that lays out the skeleton of the essay.

**DRAFTING**

4. Using your outline as a guide, write a first draft of the essay.
5. Simmer.

**REVISING**

6. Revise, revise, revise.
7. Edit for grammar, punctuation, and other mechanical errors.
8. Print and turn it in.

**ASK YOURSELF ABOUT THE NARRATIVE APPROACH TO ESSAYS**

- Have you told the events in chronological order?
- Have you started the narrative just as the story really gets exciting?
- Have you crossed out all unnecessary details?
- Have you kept the point of view consistent: all in first person or third person? Is the tense consistent?
- Have you named all the characters and kept their behavior and dialogue consistent?
- Does the narrative have a conflict?
- If possible, have you included dialogue?
- Does the narrative have a lesson learned?

**COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES**

1. Have each member of the group present a written narrative. The group's job is to question the storyteller in order to stimulate more ideas and details to fill in gaps. The storyteller should write down these questions and the ideas they generate.
2. As a group, think about the stages of life you have gone through so far. Divide the years into stages. You might pick the decade marker (0-9, 10-19, 20-29, and so on), or another grouping (child, teenager, young adult, adult, middle-aged, senior). For each stage in life, remember narratives about the toys or entertainments you enjoyed. Were teddy bears big in your life? When did you replace teddy bears with another toy, such as a skateboard, or even a car? Write down the ideas generated from this discussion

### A Night of Violence

According to my history instructor, Adolf Hitler once said that he wanted to sign up "brutal youths" to help him achieve his goals. If Hitler were still alive, he wouldn't have any trouble recruiting the brutal youths he wanted; he could get them right here in the United States. I know, because

I was one of them. As a teenager, I ran with a gang. And it took a frightening moment for me to see how violent I had become.

The incident was planned one Thursday night when I was out with my friends. I was still going to school once in a while, but most of my friends weren't. We spent our days on the streets, talking, showing off, sometimes shoplifting a little or shaking people down for a few dollars. My friends and I were close, maybe because life hadn't been very good to any of us. On this night, we were drinking wine and vodka on the corner. For some reason, we all felt tense and restless. One of us came up with the idea of robbing one of the old people who lived in the high-rise close by. We would just knock him or her over, grab the money, and party with it.

The robbery did not go as planned. After about an hour, and after more wine and vodka, we spotted an old man. He came out of the glass door of the building and started up the street. Pine Street had a lot of antique stores as well as apartment buildings. Stuffing our bottles in our jacket pockets, we closed in behind him. Suddenly, the old man whipped out a homemade wooden club from under his jacket and began swinging. The club thudded loudly against Victor's shoulder, making him yelp with pain. When we heard that, we went crazy. We smashed our bottles over the old man's head. Not content with that, Victor kicked him savagely, knocking him to the ground. As we ran, I kept seeing him sprawled on the ground, blood from our beating trickling into his eyes. Victor, the biggest of us, had said, "We want your money, old man. Hand it over."

Later, at home, I had a strong reaction to the incident. My head would not stop pounding, and I threw up. I wasn't afraid of getting caught; in fact, we never did get caught. I just knew I had gone over some kind of line. I didn't know if I could step back, now that I had gone so far. But I knew I had to. I had seen plenty of people in my neighborhood turn into the kind of people who hated their lives, people who didn't care about anything, people who wound up penned in jail or ruled by drugs. I didn't want to become one of them.

That night, I realize now, I decided not to become one of Hitler's "brutal youths." I'm proud of myself for that, even though life didn't get any easier and no one came along to pin a medal on me. I just decided, quietly, to step off the path I was on. I hope my parents and I will get along better now, too. Maybe the old man's pain, in some terrible way, had a purpose.

What sentence in paragraph 3 of "A Night of Violence" should be omitted in the interest of paragraph unity? (Write the opening words.)

- 
2. What sentence in the final paragraph of "A Night of Violence" makes the mistake of introducing a new topic and so should be eliminated? (Write the opening words.)

# The Comparison and Contrast Essay

*The Essay*

## — Readings: Styles of Communication —

Communicating with other people is part of our daily lives. On any given day, we may talk with spouses, children, friends, teachers, co-workers, store clerks, and government bureaucrats. While we might talk with each of these people differently, we all have a particular way of communicating that seems self-evident and natural to us. Thus we can be surprised, frustrated, or hurt when someone misunderstands us. Yet there are many different styles of communication. Within a specific culture, we can find differences between individuals—one teacher talks faster than another—and between large groups. For example, American women and American men communicate differently. If we compare two different cultures, we again find different styles of communication, different ideas of what is polite and impolite, of who talks first and who second, and of how the conversation should proceed. It should not be surprising, then, to realize that these different styles of talking lead to misunderstandings between people of the same culture and between people of different cultures.

In the following readings, you will read about the differences in styles of communication between the two genders (men and women) and between two cultures. As you read, try to answer the following questions:

1. What is the difference between eastern- and western-style conversations?
2. What is the difference between men's and women's styles of communicating? In this culture? In your culture?
3. Have you ever been misunderstood because of different styles of communication?



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### READING I

#### Conversational Ballgames

Nancy Masterson Sakamoto

*In the following reading, Nancy Masterson Sakamoto explains the difference between Japanese and American conversational styles. Born in the United States, Sakamoto has lived and taught English in Japan. She is currently professor of American Studies at Shitennoji Gakuen University, Hawaii Institute. The following selection is an excerpt from her textbook, Polite Fictions (1982).*

*By: Classroom and Computer Class*

After I was married and had lived in Japan for a while, my Japanese gradually improved to the point where I could take part in simple conversations with my husband, his friends, and family. And I began to notice that often, when I joined in, the others would look startled, and the conversational topic would come to a halt.<sup>1</sup> After this happened several times, it became clear to me that I was doing something wrong. But for a long time, I didn't know what it was.

2 Finally after listening carefully to many Japanese conversations, I discovered what my problem was. Even though I was speaking Japanese, I was handling the conversation in a western way.

3 Japanese-style conversations develop quite differently from western-style conversations. And the difference isn't only in the languages. I realized that just as I kept trying to hold western-style conversations even when I was speaking Japanese, so my English students kept trying to hold Japanese-style conversations even when they were speaking English. We were unconsciously playing entirely different conversational ballgames.

4 A western-style conversation between two people is like a game of tennis. If I introduce a topic, a conversational ball, I expect you to hit it back. If you agree with me, I don't expect you simply to agree and do nothing more. I expect you to add something—a reason, for agreeing, another example, or an elaboration to carry the idea further. But I don't expect you always to agree. I am just as happy if you question me, or challenge me, or completely disagree with me. Whether you agree or disagree, your response will return the ball to me.

5 And then it is my turn again. I don't serve a new ball from my original starting line. I hit your ball back again from where it has bounced. I carry your idea further, or answer your questions or objections or challenge, or question you. And so the ball goes back and forth, with each of us doing our best to give it a new twist, an original spin, or a powerful smash.

6 And the more vigorous the action, the more interesting and exciting the game. Of course, if one of us gets angry, it spoils the conversation, just as it spoils a tennis game. But getting excited is not at all the same as getting angry. After all, we are not trying to hit each other. We are trying to hit the ball. So long as we attack only each other's opinions, and do not attack each other personally, we don't expect anyone to get hurt. A good conversation is supposed to be interesting and exciting.

## THREE

7. If there are more than two people in the conversation, then it is like doubles in tennis, or like volleyball. There's no waiting in line. Whoever is nearest and quickest hits the ball, and if you step back, someone else will hit it. No one stops the game to give you a turn. You're responsible for taking your own turn.

8. But whether it's two players or a group, everyone does his best to keep the ball going, and no one person has the ball for very long.

9. A Japanese-style conversation, however, is not at all like tennis or volleyball. It's like bowling. You wait for your turn. And you always know your place in line. It depends on such things as whether you are older or younger, a close friend or a relative, stranger to the previous speaker, in a senior or junior position, and so on.

10. When your turn comes, you step up to the starting line with your bowling ball, and carefully bowl it. Everyone else stands back and watches politely, murmuring encouragement. Everyone waits until the ball has reached the end of the alley, and watches to see if it knocks down all the pins, or only some of them, or none of them. There is a pause, while everyone registers your score.

11. Then, after everyone is sure that you have completely finished your turn, the next person in line steps up to the same starting line, with a different ball. He doesn't return your ball, and he does not begin from where your ball stopped. There is no back and forth at all. All the balls run parallel.<sup>o</sup> And there is always a suitable pause between turns. There is no rush; no excitement, no scramble for the ball.

12. No wonder everyone looked startled when I took part in Japanese conversations. I paid no attention to whose turn it was, and kept snatching the ball halfway down the alley and throwing it back at the bowler. Of course the conversation died. I was playing the wrong game.

13. This explains why it is almost impossible to get a western-style conversation or discussion going with English students in Japan. I used to think that the problem was their lack of English language ability. But I finally came to realize that the biggest problem is that they too, are playing the wrong game.

14. Whenever I serve a volleyball, everyone just stands back and watches it fall, with occasional murmurs of encouragement. No one hits it back. Everyone waits until I call on someone to

*The Comparison as Contrast Essay*

take a turn. And when that person speaks, he doesn't hit my ball back. He serves a new ball. Again, everyone just watches it fall.

is So I call on someone else. This person does not refer to what the previous speaker has said. He also serves a new ball. Nobody seems to have paid any attention to what anyone else has said. Everyone begins again from the same starting line, and all the balls run parallel. There is never any back and forth. Everyone is trying to bowl with a volleyball.

16 Now that you know about the difference in the conversational ballgames, you may think that all your troubles are over. But if you have been trained all your life to play one game, it is no simple matter to switch to another, even if you know the rules. Knowing the rules is not at all the same thing as playing the game.

*too late without thinking* 17 Even now, during a conversation in Japanese I will notice a startled reaction, and belatedly<sup>o</sup> realize that once again I have rudely interrupted by instinctively<sup>o</sup> trying to hit back the other person's bowling ball. It is no easier for me to "just listen" during a conversation than it is for my Japanese students to "just relax" when speaking with foreigners. Now I can truly sympathize with how hard they must find it to carry on a western-style conversation.

**EXERCISE 3-1** Comprehension/Discussion Questions

1. What happened when Sakamoto first began participating in Japanese conversations? Why?
2. Sakamoto uses two *analogies*, long comparisons of familiar things with unfamiliar things, to ultimately contrast the two styles of conversation. In her first analogy, what does she compare a western-style conversation to?
3. Explain the analogy. How is a western-style conversation like a game of tennis?
4. What does she compare an eastern-style conversation to? Explain the analogy.
5. In drawing the analogies, Sakamoto contrasts the two styles of conversation. Explain the differences in the following:
  - a. taking turns
  - b. approach to the topic (the ball)
  - c. pausing
  - d. reactions of participants
  - e. determining the score

*The Essay*

6. What is the author's thesis? Where in the essay is it stated?
7. In what ways does Sakamoto establish her authority to speak on this topic?
8. In paragraph 17, why are "just listen" and "just relax" in quotation marks?
9. Have you had experience conversing with Asians, especially Japanese? If so, do you agree with Sakamoto's thesis? Is her analysis of eastern-style conversations accurate? Support your answer with specific examples.
10. Have you ever been in different "conversational ballgames"? What "rules" were you following? What "rules" was the other person following? What happened in the conversation?
11. Are the conversational rules in your culture similar to the western style or the eastern style? Be prepared to explain the similarities and differences between the conversational styles in your culture and those of another culture.
12. Try to think of an analogy to describe the conversational style of your culture.

 **EXERCISE 8-2** Vocabulary Development

A. Because the author is comparing conversations to games, she uses some vocabulary associated with tennis, volleyball, and bowling. Some of these words and phrases are listed below. Be prepared to explain their meaning.

1. (Paragraph 5) *serve a new ball*
2. (Paragraph 5) *a powerful smash*
3. (Paragraph 7) *doubles* in tennis
4. (Paragraph 10) *the end of the alley*
5. (Paragraph 10) *knocks down all the pins*

B. Here are some lists of words associated with various games. Be prepared to explain the meanings of the words. Then add as many words as you can to each list.

1. Tennis: court, net, racquet, in bounds, out of bounds
- 

2. Bowling: strike, spare
-

*The Communication Reader*

3. Basketball: court, basket, hoop, tip-off, free throw

4. Soccer: field, goal, goal post

C. Be prepared to explain how to play each of these games.

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## READING 2



### Intimacy and Independence

Deborah Tannen

*In the following excerpt from her book, You Just Don't Understand, Deborah Tannen examines the different ways that American men and women view decision making. She notes that the different notions of communication that women and men have can lead to conflict between couples. Tannen, a well-known sociolinguist who teaches at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., bases her research on Americans. As you read the excerpt, consider whether men and women in your culture have similar conflicts in communication.*

feeling close to other people / build, bargain to reach agreement / make less important / agreement / position, rank

1. Intimacy<sup>o</sup> is key in a world of connections where individuals negotiate<sup>o</sup> complex networks of friendship, minimize<sup>o</sup> differences, try to reach consensus<sup>o</sup> and avoid the appearance of superiority, which would highlight differences. In a world of status,<sup>o</sup> independence is key, because a primary means of establishing status is to tell others what to do, and taking orders is a marker of low status. Though all humans need both intimacy and independence, women tend to focus on the first and men on the second. It is as if their lifeblood ran in different directions.

friend

2. These differences can give women and men differing views of the same situation, as they did in the case of a couple I will call Linda and Josh. When Josh's old high-school chum<sup>o</sup> called him at work and announced he'd be in town on business the following month, Josh invited him to stay for the weekend. That evening he informed Linda that they were going to have a houseguest, and that he and his chum would go out together the first night to shoot the breeze<sup>o</sup> like old times. Linda was upset. She was going

stay for an important talk

to be away on business the week before, and the Friday night when Josh would be out with his chum would be her first night home. But what upset her the most was that Josh had made these plans on his own and informed her of them, rather than discussing them with her before extending the invitation.

3 Linda would never make plans, for a weekend or an evening, without first checking with Josh. She can't understand why he doesn't show her the same courtesy and consideration that she shows him. But when she protests, Josh says, "I can't say to my friend, 'I have to ask my wife for permission!'"

4 To Josh, checking with his wife means seeking permission, which implies that he is not independent, not free to act on his own. It would make him feel like a child or an underling.<sup>8</sup> To Linda, checking with her husband has nothing to do with permission. She assumes that spouses discuss their plans with each other because their lives are intertwined,<sup>9</sup> so the actions of one have consequences<sup>10</sup> for the other. Not only does Linda not mind telling someone, "I have to check with Josh"; quite the contrary—she likes it. It makes her feel good to know and show that she is involved with someone, that her life is bound up with someone else's.

*a subordinate; a person with low status*

*closely woven together / results, effects*

*The Comparison and Contrast Essay*

5 Linda and Josh both felt more upset by this incident, and others like it, than seemed warranted,<sup>9</sup> because it cut to the core of their primary concerns. Linda was hurt because she sensed a failure of closeness in their relationship; He didn't care about her as much as she cared about him. And he was hurt because he felt she was trying to control him and limit his freedom.

6 A similar conflict exists between Louise and Howie, another couple, about spending money. Louise would never buy anything costing more than a hundred dollars without discussing it with Howie, but he goes out and buys whatever he wants and feels they can afford, like a table saw or a new power mower. Louise is disturbed not because she disapproves of the purchases, but because she feels he is acting as if she were not in the picture.

7 Many women feel it is natural to consult<sup>10</sup> with their partners at every turn, while many men automatically make more decisions without consulting their partners. This may reflect a broad difference in conceptions<sup>11</sup> of decision making. Women expect decisions to be discussed first and made by consensus. They appreciate the discussion itself as evidence of involvement and communication.<sup>12</sup> But many men feel oppressed by lengthy discussions about what they see as minor decisions, and they feel hemmed in<sup>13</sup> if they can't just act without talking first. When women try to initiate<sup>14</sup> a freewheeling<sup>15</sup> discussion by asking, "What do you think?" men often think they are being asked to decide.

8 Communication is a continual balancing act, juggling the conflicting needs for intimacy and independence. To survive in the world, we have to act in concert with<sup>16</sup> others, but to survive as ourselves, rather than simply as cogs in a wheel,<sup>17</sup> we have to act alone. In some ways, all people are the same: We all eat and sleep and drink and laugh and cough, and often we eat, and laugh at, the same things. But in some ways, each person is different, and individuals' different wants and preferences may conflict with each other. Offered the same menu, people make different choices. And if there is cake for dessert, there is a chance one person may get a larger piece than another—and an even greater chance that one will think the other's piece is larger, whether it is or not.

*The Essay***25 EXERCISE 8-3:** Comprehension/Discussion Questions

1. Explain what Tannen means by *intimacy* and *independence*.
2. According to Tannen (paragraph 1), what is important to women in order to get along with others? To men?
3. In paragraph 2, the author begins with "These differences." What differences is she referring to?
4. In paragraphs 2–5, Tannen gives the example of Linda and Josh. Explain the situation that caused the conflict.
5. Why was Linda upset with Josh?
6. What was Josh's reaction when she protested?
7. Explain the basic difference in their reactions in terms of intimacy and independence.
8. What is the point of the second situation, the example of Louise and Howie?
9. In paragraph 7, Tannen connects different ways of making decisions with communication. What is the connection?
10. In paragraph 8, Tannen says, "Communication is a continual balancing act." What does she mean?
11. In paragraph 8, does Tannen suggest that one style of communication is better than another? Support your answer.
12. In this excerpt, Tannen is discussing American women and men. Do men and women in your culture have similar or different conflicts in communication? Can you give a specific example?

**26 EXERCISE 8-4:** Vocabulary Development. Paragraph 1 of the Tannen reading has a lot of abstract words that may make it difficult to understand. In this exercise you will paraphrase, or state in other words, the sentences in this paragraph. The long sentences are broken down into parts. First paraphrase each part. Then combine the parts to make a complete, grammatical sentence. The first one is done for you.

Sentence 1:

1. Intimacy is key in a world of connections

*Feeling close to other people is the most important thing when*

*society emphasizes personal relationships.*

*The Comparison and Contrast Essay*

2. in a world of connections, individuals negotiate complex networks of friendship

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3. they minimize differences

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4. they try to reach consensus

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5. they avoid the appearance of superiority

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6. an appearance of superiority would highlight differences

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*The Essay*

Sentence 2:

1. In a world of status, *independence* is key

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2. because a primary means of establishing status is to tell others what to do

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3. and because taking orders is a marker of low status

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Sentence 3:

1. Though all humans need both intimacy and independence

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*The Comparison and Contrast Essay*

2. women tend to focus on the first

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3. and men tend to focus on the second

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*Comparison &*

1. It is as if their lifeblood ran in different directions.

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Although details and examples can be used in all kinds of expository writing, not all essay topics are best developed in an example essay pattern. Very often, for example, you are asked to compare and contrast two things, ideas, or people. In your history class you might be asked to compare and contrast the Greek and Roman empires; in your biology class you might be required to compare and contrast DNA and RNA. Comparing and contrasting is a process we all do every day. We compare and contrast to determine the superiority of one thing over another. When we buy a car, for instance, we usually shop around and compare deals. We explain something that is unknown by comparing it to something that is known. We might explain what a barometer is by saying it looks like a thermometer but

*The Essay*

measures atmospheric pressure instead of temperature. We also compare and contrast when we want to show that two apparently similar things are in fact quite different in important ways, or to show that two apparently dissimilar things are really quite similar in significant ways. For instance, it might be quite enlightening to discover that two very different cultures have some important things in common. We also compare and contrast to show how something or someone has changed, such as California before and after the earthquake in 1994.

We have many reasons for comparing and contrasting, and since the process of comparison and contrast is such a common method of thinking and of developing topics, it is important to write well-organized comparison and contrast papers. There is one thing to keep in mind, however. With comparison and contrast, the purpose is not just to point out similarities and differences or advantages and disadvantages; the purpose is to persuade, explain, or inform. Think of comparison and contrast as a method of development—not as a purpose for writing.

When you are planning a comparison and contrast essay, there are several points to consider.

## POINTS OF COMPARISON

Suppose that you are asked to compare and contrast two people—perhaps two generals, two politicians, or two religious leaders. What would you compare and contrast about them? You could compare their looks, backgrounds, philosophies, the way they treat people, their attitudes toward life, their intelligence, their lifestyles, and so on. The list could continue, but this is the problem: You would have just a list. When comparing and contrasting two things, people, countries, and so forth, especially for a standard 300- to 500-word essay, it is best to restrict the points of comparison to two to four. Therefore, be selective and choose the most significant points for comparison that will support the central idea in your essay. For instance, if you wanted to compare two politicians in order to show that one is a better public servant, you would not bother comparing and contrasting their tastes in food because this point would be irrelevant.

### EXERCISE 8-5 Writing Assignment. Choose one of the following writing assignments:

1. Think of two educational systems that you are familiar with, such as the university system in your country and the system in this country. Brainstorm a list about the things they have in common—their similarities—and another list about the ways they differ—their differences. From these lists, find three or four general points of comparison.

*The Comparison and Contrast Essay*

2. Choose two people or two products (such as two different automobiles, cameras, hair dryers, or stereos) and brainstorm a list of their similarities and differences. From that list, find three or four general points of comparison.

## *B* EMPHASIS ON COMPARISON OR CONTRAST

In a comparison and contrast essay, the emphasis is usually on one or the other; that is, you spend more time either comparing or contrasting, depending on your purpose. If you are comparing two rather similar things, you should acknowledge the obvious similarities but focus on the differences. If you are comparing two obviously dissimilar things, you should acknowledge the obvious contrasts but emphasize the similarities.

## *B* PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION

There are two basic patterns of organization for developing the comparison and contrast essay. Although they are called by various names, we refer to them here as Pattern A and Pattern B. To show how these patterns work, let's consider the topic of two automobiles: the Road Runner XL and the Speed Demon 280. Your points of comparison might be cost of maintenance, performance, and comfort. Using Pattern A, you could organize the essay in this way:

### Pattern A (Point-by-Point)

#### Thesis Statement:

The Speed Demon 280 is a better car than the Road Runner XL.

#### I. Cost of Maintenance

- A. The Road Runner XL
- B. The Speed Demon 280

#### II. Performance

- A. The Road Runner XL
- B. The Speed Demon 280

#### III. Comfort

- A. The Road Runner XL
- B. The Speed Demon 280

*The Essay*

Pattern A—point by point—is useful for organizing more complex topics. It is also an easy pattern to follow because the comparison/contrast is made clear throughout the essay.

A developmental paragraph in a comparison and contrast essay following Pattern A appears to be more complex than a developmental paragraph in an example essay. In the developmental paragraph in a comparison and contrast essay, the writer introduces a topic (the point of comparison), but the topic is broken down into two parts to make the comparison. For example, suppose you were asked to compare the two automobiles, the Road Runner XL and the Speed Demon 280. For one of your points of comparison, you have chosen the cost of maintenance. You have found that the Road Runner XL is expensive to maintain and the Speed Demon is economical. What you have, then, are really two controlling ideas: one for each car. Here is how that paragraph might be developed:

The Road Runner XL and the Speed Demon 280 differ in cost of maintenance. The Road Runner is rather expensive to maintain. This car gets rather poor mileage, with 23 miles per gallon on the highway and 18 miles per gallon in the city. Moreover, it requires the more expensive premium gasoline. In addition, the Road Runner has to have a tune-up every four months and an oil change every ninety days. The average driver who owns a Road Runner must pay approximately \$1,400 a year to keep this car running. The Speed Demon, on the other hand, is quite economical. It gets an impressive 40 miles per gallon on the highway and 35 in the city, and unlike the Road Runner, the Speed Demon takes the less costly regular gasoline. In addition, whereas the Road Runner requires tune-ups and oil changes, the Speed Demon requires little maintenance. It needs to be tuned up only every twelve months; the oil needs to be changed only every four months. In summary, instead of paying \$1,400 per year to keep the car running, the owner of a Speed Demon only has to pay \$600, which is significantly less.

This paragraph can be outlined as follows:

- I. The Road Runner XL and the Speed Demon 280 differ in cost of maintenance.
  - A. The Road Runner is rather expensive to maintain.
    1. Mileage.
    2. Tune-ups.
    3. Oil changes.
    4. Average cost of maintenance.

*The Compare-and-Contrast Essay*

B. The Speed Demon is economical to maintain.

1. Mileage.
2. Tune-ups.
3. Oil changes.
4. Average cost of maintenance.

In this outline, the Roman numeral *I* introduces the point of comparison (the topic); the next point of comparison would be outlined as Roman numeral *II*. Since the paragraph is rather long, it is possible to break it into two paragraphs, with the second one beginning "The Speed Demon, on the other hand, is quite economical."

 **EXERCISE 8-6** Writing Assignment. Study the following information about the comfort of the Road Runner XL and the Speed Demon 280, and find a controlling idea about the difference in comfort. Then write a paragraph comparing and contrasting the comfort of the Road Runner and the comfort of the Speed Demon.

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THE ROAD RUNNER XL

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1. Spacious interior—ample head and leg room in both front and back.
2. Two people can sit comfortably in the front and three in the back.
3. Uncomfortable seats—although the seats are large, they are vinyl and get hot in spring and summer.
4. Cooling and heating not ideal—the air conditioner does not cool the backseat area; the heater is effective.

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THE SPEED DEMON 280

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1. Not as spacious interior—ample head and leg room in front, but cramped in the back (less used).
2. Two can sit comfortably in front, but only two can sit comfortably in back.
3. Comfortable seats—suede seats are cool in the summer and pleasant all year round.
4. Excellent air conditioning and heating system—the air conditioner cools the entire car rapidly; the heater is equally effective.

This same topic can be developed in another way: Pattern B, called "all of one/all of the other."

*The Essay*

## Pattern B (All of One/All of the Other)

Thesis Statement:

The Speed Demon 280 is a better car than the Road Runner XL.

- I. The Road Runner XL
  - A. Cost of Maintenance.
  - B. Performance.
  - C. Comfort.
- II. The Speed Demon 280
  - A. Cost of Maintenance.
  - B. Performance.
  - C. Comfort.

Note that the points of comparison are the same and that they are discussed in the same order under each section in both patterns of organization. One of the problems with Pattern B, however, is that it is sometimes difficult to remind the reader in the second section of how the points compare or contrast with the points mentioned in the first section. Therefore, generally speaking, Pattern B is more useful for very limited topics.

Read the sample student essay that follows. As you read the essay, determine whether it focuses more on comparison or contrast and note which pattern of development it uses.

**MY TWO BROTHERS**

No two people are exactly alike, and my two older brothers, Nhan and Hung, are no exceptions. When I think of them, I think of Rudyard Kipling's words:

East is East  
West is West  
Never the twain shall meet.

Even though they have the same parents, their considerable differences in looks, personality, and attitude toward life reflect the differences between Eastern and Western cultures.

Like the majority of Asian men, Nhan is short, small, and has a full, moon-shaped face. His smooth white skin and small arms and feet make him look somewhat delicate. Nhan always likes to wear formal, traditional clothes. For example, on great holidays or at family rite celebrations, Nhan appears in the traditional black gown, white pants and black silky headband, all of which make him look like an early twentieth-century intellectual.

In contrast to Nhan, Hung, who is his younger brother by ten years, looks more like an American boxer. He is tall, muscular and big-boned. He is built straight as an arrow and his face is long and angular as a western character. Unlike Nhan, Hung has strong feet and arms, and whereas Nhan has smooth skin, Hung's shoulders and chest are hairy, large and full. Unlike Nhan, too, Hung likes to wear comfortable T-shirts and jeans or sports clothes. At a formal occasion, instead of wearing traditional formal clothes, Hung wears stylish western style suits.

Nhan and Hung also differ in personality. I don't know how my father selected their names correctly to reflect their personalities. Nhan's name means "patience," and his patience is shown in his smile. He has the smile of an ancient Chinese philosopher that western people can never understand. He always smiles. He smiles because he wants to make the other person happy or to make himself happy. He smiles whenever people speak to him, regardless of whether they are right or wrong. He smiles when he forgives people who have wronged him. Nhan likes books, of course, and literature and philosophy. He likes to walk in the moonlight to think. Nhan also enjoys drinking hot tea and singing verses. In short, in our family, Nhan is the son who provides a good example of filial piety and tolerance.

Hung, on the other hand, does not set a good example of traditional respectful behavior for his brothers and sisters. His name means "strength," but his strength is self-centered. As a result, unlike Nhan, Hung only smiles

*The Body*

when he is happy. When he talks to people, he looks at their faces. Because of this, my eldest brother Nhan considers him very impolite. As one might expect, Hung does not like philosophy and literature; instead, he studies science and technology. Whereas Nhan enjoys tea and classical verses, Hung prefers to take sun baths and drink Coca-Cola while he listens to rock and roll music. And like many American youths, Hung is independent; in fact, he loves his independence more than he loves his family. He wants to move out of our house and live in an apartment by himself. He is such an individualist that all the members in my family say that he is very selfish.

My brothers' differences do not end with looks and personalities. Concerning their attitudes toward life, they are as different as the moon and the sun. My eldest brother Nhan is concerned with spiritual values. He is affected by Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist theories. These theories consider that the human life is not happy. Therefore, if a man wants to be happy, he should get out of the competitiveness of life and should not depend on material objects. For example, if a man is not anxious to have a new-model car, he does not have to worry about how to make money to buy one. Or, if he does not have a car, he does not have to worry about the cost of gas. My oldest brother is deeply affected by these theories, so he never tries hard to make money to buy conveniences.

In contrast to Nhan, my brother Hung believes that science and technology serve human beings and that the West defeated the East because the West was further advanced in these fields. Therefore, each person must compete with nature and with other people in the world in order to acquire different conveniences, such as cars, washing machines, and television sets. Hung is affected by the western theories of real values; consequently, he always works hard to make his own money to satisfy his material needs.

In accordance with the morality of the culture of my country, I cannot say which one of my brothers is wrong or right. But I do know that they both want to improve and maintain human life on this earth. I am very lucky to inherit both sources of thought from my two older brothers.

—Ha Sau Hoa

**EXERCISE 8-7** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions about the essay.

1. What is the thesis of the essay? What are its points of comparison?
2. Does the essay focus more on comparison or on contrast?
3. Which pattern of organization does the writer follow? Why was this pattern selected?

*The Comparison and Contrast Essay*

4. Does the essay have topic sentences that state the controlling idea for each point of comparison? If so, what are they?
5. Is the essay unified? Coherent?
6. Is the conclusion logical?
7. Make a detailed outline of the essay.



**EXERCISE 8-8:** Writing Assignment. Using the preceding essay as a model and the brainstorming notes you made in Exercise 8-5, write a first-draft essay that compares and contrasts two educational systems, two people, or two products.

As you read the essay that follows, try to locate its thesis statement and determine its purpose—that is, why the author is writing about this topic. Before reading, however, you might need to look up some vocabulary words. For example, the writer uses the word *branch* to mean a “branch of a river,” probably a small stream. Here are some other terms to check: *medieval, pirate, bin, chute, instinct, honeysuckle, alligator, disrepair, graffiti, knight, adolescent, idyllic*.

### MY OLD NEIGHBORHOOD

Several years ago I returned to Washington, D.C., and visited one of my old neighborhoods. I had not been on Nash Street for more than twenty years and as I walked along the street, my mind was flooded by waves of nostalgia. I saw the old apartment building where I had lived and the playground where I had played. As I viewed these once-familiar surroundings, images of myself as a child there came to mind. However, what I saw and what I remembered were not the same. I sadly realized that the best memories are those left undisturbed.

As I remember my old apartment building, it was bright and alive. When I was a child, the apartment building was more than just a place to live. It was a medieval castle, a pirate's den, a space station, or whatever my young mind could imagine. I would steal away with my friends and play in the basement. This was always exciting because it was so cool and dark, and there were so many things there to hide among. Our favorite place to play was the coal bin. We would always use it as our rocket ship because the coal chute could be used as an escape hatch out of the basement into “outer space.”

All of my memories were not confined to the apartment building, however. I have memories of many adventures outside of the building also. My mother restricted how far we could go from the apartment building, but this placed no restrictions on our exploring instinct. There was a small branch in back of the building where my friends and I would play. We enjoyed it there because

honeysuckles grew there. We would go there to lie in the shade and suck the sweet smelling honeysuckles. Our biggest thrill in the branch was the day the police caught an alligator there. I did not see the alligator and I was not there when they caught it, but just the thought of an alligator in the branch was exciting.

This is how I remembered the old neighborhood; however, as I said, this is not how it was when I saw it.

Unlike before, the apartment building was now rundown and in disrepair. What was once more than a place to live looked hardly worth living in. The court was dirty and broken up, and the windows in the building were all broken out. The once-clean walls were covered with graffiti and other stains. There were no medieval knights or pirates running around the place now, nor spacemen; instead, there were a few tough looking adolescents who looked much older than their ages.

As for the area where I used to play, it was hardly recognizable. The branch was polluted and the honeysuckles had died. Not only were they dead, but they had been trampled to the ground. The branch itself was filled with old bicycles, broken bottles, and garbage. Now, instead of finding something as romantic as an alligator, one would expect to find only rats. The once sweet-smelling area now smelled horrible. The stench from my idyllic haven was heart wrenching.

I do not regret having seen my old neighborhood. However, I do not think my innocent childhood memories can ever be the same. I suppose it is true when they say, "You can never go home again."

—Floyd Bonner

**25 EXERCISE 8-9** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions about "My Old Neighborhood."

1. What is the thesis? Where is it stated?
2. What is the controlling idea about the apartment building as it was when the author was a child?
3. What is the controlling idea about the apartment building when he visited it twenty years later?
4. What is the controlling idea about the branch as it was when he was a child?
5. What is the controlling idea about the branch as he saw it twenty years later?
6. One of the paragraphs is only one sentence long. What function does that sentence serve?

*The Comparison and Contrast Essay*

7. What pattern of organization does the writer use? Why? Does he cover the same points in the first part as he does in the second?
8. What do you think the writer's purpose is in writing about this topic?
9. Is the essay coherent? Unified?
10. In a couple of places the author uses *would* when referring to the past. What kind of action does "*would + verb*" indicate when referring to the past?
11. What are some of the expressions the author uses to indicate the change from the past to the present? Reread the essay and underline the expressions and phrases that clarify the changes. (For example, "The *once-clean walls* were covered with graffiti....")
12. Make an outline of the essay.

**EXERCISE 8-10** Writing Assignment. Choose one of the following writing assignments. Begin by prewriting, using one of the techniques given in Chapter One.

1. Have you ever visited a place you had left a long time ago and found it had changed considerably? Write an essay comparing and contrasting the "way it was" with the "way it is now." Try to formulate a controlling idea about the change. Have things changed for the better or the worse?
2. Before you came to this country, you undoubtedly had certain ideas and expectations about it. After you had been here awhile, did any of those ideas change? Did you find certain things to be different from what you expected? Choose several aspects of your life and experiences in this country, and contrast the way you thought they would be with how you find them now.

*The Essay*

## *Composition Skills*

### COHERENCE

#### *Transitions for Comparison and Contrast*

Transitional expressions give writing coherence; that is, they help you to move smoothly from one idea to the next. In addition, a variety of transitions adds interest to an essay. In this lesson you will practice using transitions that will give a comparison-contrast essay both coherence and interest. Note the transitional expressions used in these sentences:

*In contrast to American universities, Lebanese universities have stricter admissions requirements.*

*American and Lebanese universities also differ in graduation requirements.*

*In Lebanon, on the other hand, only one limit exists.*

*Whereas American students may go part-time, Lebanese students must attend school full-time.*

*Unlike before, the apartment building was now rundown and in disrepair.*

*Even though both systems provide a good education, one system makes earning a college degree much easier than the other.*

There are quite a large number of transitions that can be used for comparison and contrast. They fall into the following three major groups. Study them carefully and note the necessary punctuation for each type.

#### 1. Transitions in Phrases

All the transitions in this group need to be followed by a noun. The phrase in which they occur is often used at the beginning of a sentence and is generally followed by a comma. The following transitions indicate similarity: *similar to, like*. The following indicate difference: *different from, in contrast to, compared with, unlike*. Note the following examples:

*Similar to New Orleans, San Francisco attracts many tourists.*

*Like this American university, a Lebanese university also asked for my high school grades.*

*The Comparison and Contrast Essay*

*Different from the Road Runner, the Speed Demon has comfortable seats.*

*Compared with New Orleans, San Francisco has a very cold climate. (This means that the climate in San Francisco is not really that cold; it is just that the climate in New Orleans is extremely hot.)*

*Unlike the Road Runner, the Speed Demon is quite economical.*

### 2. Coordinating Conjunctions as Transitions

The coordinating conjunctions *but* and *yet* are often used as transitions to indicate the opposite of what was expected. Coordinating conjunctions occur between two complete sentences and are preceded (but not followed) by a comma. Study these examples:

San Diego is very dry, *but* Houston is not.

The Speed Demon 280 is cheaper than the Road Runner XL, *yet* it has a better air-conditioning system.

Note: Sometimes these conjunctions are used as transitions at the beginning of a sentence:

Several events contributed to my depression last year. *But* my greatest sadness was losing the mathematics contest.

### 3. Transitional Expressions Between Sentences

The transitions in this group generally occur between two independent clauses. When they do, they must be preceded by either a period or a semicolon.

Ecuador ships out a lot of bananas. *In addition*, it is an exporter of oil.

Ecuador ships out a lot of bananas; *in addition*, it is an exporter of oil.

Ecuador exports oil. *Moreover*, it is a coffee producer.

Ecuador exports oil; *moreover*, it is a coffee producer.

Occasionally, these transitional expressions are used in an independent clause. In this case, the expressions (except *also*) should be set off with commas:

Ecuador ships out a lot of bananas. *It is, in addition*, an exporter of oil.

Ecuador exports oil. *It is, moreover*, a producer of coffee.

Ecuador exports oil. *It is also* a coffee producer.

This group of transitions has the greatest number of words and phrases. Examine them in three parts:

*The Essay*

- a. Additive Transitions: *first, next, besides, in addition, moreover, furthermore, also, then.* We discussed most of the transitions in this group in Chapters Three and Five. They can be used to indicate chronological order, to number or list examples, or to add more information to something that was just stated. In comparison-contrast, they can fulfill all these functions.

*The tropical rain forest is a beautiful and fascinating place. Besides, it is extremely important to our ecosystem.*

*In addition, the tropical rain forest contains many important species of plants.*

*Moreover, valuable plant life is threatened.*

*The rain forest is also home to a wide variety of animals.*

*Also, the rain forest is home to a wide variety of animals.*

- b. Transitions to Indicate Similarity: *likewise, similarly, in the same way.* These words are used to indicate a similarity between the items given in the two sentences.

*Smog is adversely affecting the trees in the mountains near Los Angeles. Likewise, acid rain is harming trees in the Northeast.*

*New Orleans has a big seafood business. Similarly, a great deal of fishing and oyster farming is done around San Francisco.*

- c. Transitions to Indicate Difference: *on the other hand, conversely, in contrast, however.* These words are used to indicate a difference or a contrast between the items given in the two sentences.

*Senator Smith wants to reduce the budget deficit by raising taxes. Jones, on the other hand, advocates making more cuts in spending.*

*New Orleans has hot, humid summers. In contrast, San Francisco's summers are cool and windy.*

*As I viewed these once familiar surroundings, images of myself as a child there came to mind. However, what I saw and what I remembered were not the same.*

*The Comparison and Contrast Essay*

The expression *on the contrary* is also in this group, but it is very restricted in its use. It indicates that the two ideas being expressed cannot both be true. It is often confused with *on the other hand*. Compare the following:

- Jose: It's rather hot today.  
 Hong: It is not very hot today. *On the contrary*, it is quite cool.  
       It is not very hot today. *On the other hand*, it is not cool either.
- Jose: The Earth is the fifth planet from the Sun.  
 Hong: The Earth is not the fifth planet from the Sun. *On the contrary*, it is the third.  
       The Earth is not the closest planet to the Sun. *On the other hand*, it's not the farthest either.

Note that *on the contrary* really means "No, it isn't." Another transition that can sometimes be used in its place is *in fact*.

It is not very cold today; *in fact*, it's quite hot.

**25 EXERCISE 8-11** Fill in the blanks with either *on the other hand* or *on the contrary*, whichever is appropriate.

1. New Orleans does not have a harsh winter. \_\_\_\_\_  
       \_\_\_\_\_, it is quite mild.
2. New Orleans does not have a harsh winter. \_\_\_\_\_  
       \_\_\_\_\_, its summers are terrible.
3. New Orleans does not have a large population. \_\_\_\_\_  
       \_\_\_\_\_, it is not a village.
4. Many people think that New Orleans is a large city. \_\_\_\_\_  
       \_\_\_\_\_, it has quite a small population.
5. New Orleans was not originally settled by the Spanish; \_\_\_\_\_  
       \_\_\_\_\_, its first European settlers were French.
6. New Orleans is a big seaport. \_\_\_\_\_, its manufacturing industry is quite small.

**EXERCISE 2**

Read the following paragraph about the writer Jorge Luis Borges.

Jorge Luis Borges is one of the greatest modern writers in Spanish. Born in Argentina, he was educated in Europe, and in his early days he served as a municipal librarian in Buenos Aires. Borges has written a variety of works, including poetry, essays, film criticism, and short stories. He was at odds with the policies of the Peron government in Argentina in the 1940s and 1950s. After the Peron government was overthrown, Borges became a professor of literature at the University of Buenos Aires. Many of his works have been translated into English and other languages.

For each of the following items, write sentences, using the transitions given, comparing or contrasting Borges with the Japanese writer Yukio Mishima. The first one is done for you.

1. Yukio Mishima is considered one of the greatest modern Japanese writers.

*like* \_\_\_\_\_ *Like Borges, Mishima is considered one of the greatest modern writers.*

*also* \_\_\_\_\_ *Borges is a great modern writer. Mishima is also considered a great modern writer..*

*similarly* \_\_\_\_\_ *Borges is a great modern writer. Similarly, Mishima is considered by many people to be a great modern writer.*

2. Mishima was educated in his native country of Japan.

*unlike* \_\_\_\_\_

*but* \_\_\_\_\_

*in contrast* \_\_\_\_\_

3. In his early days, Mishima worked for the Finance Ministry.

*in contrast to* \_\_\_\_\_

*whereas* \_\_\_\_\_

*however* \_\_\_\_\_

*The Comparison and Contrast Essay*

4. Mishima was a prolific writer, authoring short stories, poems, plays, essays, and novels.

*similar to* \_\_\_\_\_

*likewise* \_\_\_\_\_

*like* \_\_\_\_\_

5. Mishima was critical of the Japanese military policies.

*in the same way* \_\_\_\_\_

*similar to* \_\_\_\_\_

*similarly* \_\_\_\_\_

6. Mishima performed as an actor.

*unlike* \_\_\_\_\_

*but* \_\_\_\_\_

*in contrast* \_\_\_\_\_

7. Many of Mishima's works have been translated into English and other languages.

*like* \_\_\_\_\_

*similar to* \_\_\_\_\_

*likewise* \_\_\_\_\_

**EXERCISE 8-13** Writing Assignment. In the following essay, transitions have been omitted from the italicized parts. Rewrite the essay, using a variety of transitional devices.

When scientists first examined the human brain, they found it to be divided into two halves, or hemispheres, which are nearly identical in appearance, mirroring each other just as the two sides of the body do. When Roger Sperry examined patients whose connection between the two hemispheres—the corpus callosum—was severed, he found that the two sides of the brain seemed to have different functions. Many investigators have studied the differences between the functions of the two hemispheres and found their rela-

tionship to be quite complex. Unfortunately however, most people have tended to over-generalize. The left brain is supposed to be logical, rational, and analytical, whereas the right brain is supposed to be creative and emotional. The brain's hemispheres are not so simplistically split into two neat divisions. In fact, both halves of the brain participate in almost all our mental activity.

To begin with, both sides of the brain are in operation when we reason. The left brain seems to dominate in the kind of reasoning it takes to translate symbols, recognize abstract differences, and handle algebra and geometry problems. *The left hemisphere may be dominant in these types of reasoning. The right hemisphere also reasons.* The right half functions to integrate information and draw conclusions. *The left hemisphere is dominant in recognizing abstract differences. The right hemisphere tends to recognize sameness.* For example, the right side is where we mediate facial recognition and recognize shapes.

*The two hemispheres act as partners in language and communication.* It appears that the left hemisphere is dominant when it comes to understanding grammar and syntax, but when it comes to interpreting emotions in communication, the right brain excels. *The right brain can interpret tone of voice and facial expressions.* Whenever we use language, both sides of the brain process the information.

*The brain is not totally divided about music.* Many people assume that music is mediated solely in the right brain. That is not so. It is true that the right brain recognizes chords and melodies and seems to mediate pure and slow tones. *The left hemisphere is also involved in music.* Fast music, such as bluegrass, requires judgments about sequencing and rhythm, and for this the left hemisphere lends its services. When words are involved, again the left brain dominates.

*Both halves of the brain are involved in our mental activities.* The corpus callosum and other bridges between the two hemispheres obviously serve to integrate the functions of the two halves, which are in constant communication to make sense out of life.\*



**EXERCISE 8-14** Writing Assignment. Read the following paragraphs. Revise the paragraphs in two ways. First rewrite them using Pattern B. Be sure to divide them into shorter paragraphs. Then rewrite them using Pattern A. Use appropriate transitions. Use the following thesis sentence for your essay.

Thesis Sentence:

There are some interesting parallels between the Roman and Chinese empires, even though these empires ended differently.

\* Information from Richard Thompson, *The Brain: An Introduction to Neuroscience* (New York: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1985), pp. 315–17, and Camille B. Wortman and Elizabeth F. Loftus, *Psychology* (New York: Alfred H. Knopf, 1985), pp. 84–89.

*The Comparison and Contrast Essay*

The Roman Empire ruled the Mediterranean world from about 500 B.C. to about 500 A.D. From a geographic base around Rome, it spread out to include North Africa, the Middle East, and Northern Europe. It developed a higher level of civilization than the areas surrounding it. It had a complex governmental structure and a bureaucracy, while the people surrounding it were barbarians and nomads. These barbarians were a constant threat to the Roman Empire. The leaders of the empire devised three ways to protect the empire. First, they conquered territory whose outer boundaries were natural barriers. Examples are the Rhine and Danube Rivers. They also built fortifications to keep out invaders. They built some, for example, between the Rhine and Danube and between Scotland and England. Third, they used precautionary buffer states, like colonies, which were midway between barbarism and civilization. These all helped to protect the base of the empire, Rome itself. However, toward the end of the empire's rule, some of the buffer states revolted. The final collapse occurred when the German and Slavic barbarians broke through the fortifications. In a short two hundred years, the Roman Empire fell to the power of the Germans.

The Chinese Empire grew and remained intact from 221 B.C. to 1911 A.D. From a geographic base around the Yellow River, it spread northward to Peking, west to the Central Plain, and south to Canton. It developed a higher level of civilization than the areas surrounding it. It became a center for art and philosophy, while the people surrounding it were nomads and barbarians. These barbarians, Huns and Mongols, were a constant threat to the empire. The leaders of the empire devised three ways to deal with them. First, they used natural boundaries like the Yellow and later the Yangtze Rivers. They built the incredible Great Wall of China, and they used buffer states that learned much from China, becoming civilized in the process. However, at times the barbarians broke through the fortifications and the buffer states. The barbarians did not destroy the Chinese Empire, however. Because the barbarians admired the superior culture of China, they set up dynasties imitating the Chinese way of life. Examples are the Chau, Yuan, and Manchu dynasties. In other words, the Chinese Empire absorbed its intruders and lived on. The one exception to this was a short rule by the Mongols, Genghis and Kublai Khan, from 1215 to 1279. The subjugated Chinese dynasty reasserted itself shortly, however. The Chinese Empire continued to decline slowly until the Manchu dynasty ended in 1911 and a republic was declared.\*

\* Information from C. Harold King, *A History of Civilization: Earliest Times to the Mid-Seventeenth Century* (New York: Scribner's, 1964).

*the essay***EXERCISE 8-15**

Writing Assignment. Look again at the essays you wrote for Exercises 8-8 and 8-10. Can you make them more coherent by adding appropriate transitions? Revise your essays, trying to use a variety of coherence devices.

### Grammar Review

If you want to review grammatical structures that will help you achieve coherence and grammatical accuracy in your writing, see the Grammar Review Unit. The following sections are designed to coordinate with the comparison/contrast essay:

Comparisons, pages 408–413

Adverbial Clauses of Comparison, Contrast, and Concession, pages 391–396

In addition to practice with these grammatical structures, you will find additional writing assignments focused on the comparison/contrast essay.

**EXERCISE 8-16**

Writing Assignment. Choose one of the following writing topics. Before you begin writing, prewrite using one of the techniques you studied in Chapter One. From the information you generate, decide on a controlling idea and thesis statement. Then choose the support. Decide whether to use organizational pattern A or B. Then write an essay.

1. In "Conversational Ballgames," Nancy Sakamoto shows the contrast between eastern- and western-style conversations. Can you find any differences between conversational styles in this country and in your home country?
2. In "Intimacy and Independence," Deborah Tannen shows that conflicts between men and women can result from different ideas about communication. Do men and women in your culture have different styles of communication?
3. Review the paragraphs about the Roman and Chinese empires in Exercise 8-14. Then write an essay comparing and/or contrasting two periods in your country's history.

*Topic Comparison and Contrast Essay*

4. Review the information about the writers Borges and Mishima in Exercise 8–12. Write an essay comparing and/or contrasting two famous people—two political leaders, two artists, two performers, and so on. Be sure to include a thesis expressing your attitude about the two people.
5. Write an essay comparing or contrasting two life-styles. You might choose a life-style in this country and compare/contrast it to one in your country. You might choose two in this country or two in your country.
6. Write an essay comparing or contrasting two different attitudes. For example, you might choose the attitude toward punctuality in the United States compared with the attitude toward punctuality in your country.
7. Write an essay comparing or contrasting your parents' attitude toward something with your attitude toward it.
8. Compare and contrast two teachers of the same subject.

**REVISION*****Peer Review Checklist***

When you have finished writing the first draft of your essay, give it to a classmate to read and review. Use the following questions to respond to each other's essays.

Writer \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the thesis of the essay? Write it here as a complete sentence:

---

---

2. What is the writer's *attitude* about the topic? Write it here:

---

---

*The Essay*

3. What are the points of comparison or contrast the writer has chosen? List them briefly:

---

---

4. Are the points chosen significant and insightful?

---

---

5. Are the points chosen sufficiently developed?

---

Has the writer given enough detail, example, and explanation?

---

---

Explain:

---

---

6. What pattern of organization has the writer used?

---

---

Do you have any suggestions about the organization?

---

---

*The Comparison and Contrast Essay*

7. Has the writer used transitions to give coherence?

Suggestions on coherence:

8. What is the most effective part of the essay? What has the writer done well?

9. What is the least effective part of the essay? Suggestions:

*Revision Checklist for the Comparison and Contrast Essay*

1. The purpose of the comparison and contrast essay is to persuade, explain, or inform, not just to list differences or similarities. Is your thesis sentence persuasive? Does it express an attitude?
2. The points chosen for comparison or contrast should be the most significant, interesting, and insightful points that support your thesis. Have you been selective in choosing your points of comparison?
3. Most essays emphasize either comparison or contrast. Which one have you emphasized?
4. There are two basic patterns for organizing a comparison-contrast essay. Have you chosen one of these patterns? Is the organization of your essay logical and consistent?
5. Is your essay coherent? That is, does it flow smoothly?

*The Process Analysis  
Essay*

## Prc ESSAY

## ← Readings: The World of Work →

Work is love made visible. And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy.

—Kahlil Gibran

All work, even cotton spinning, is noble; work is alone noble. ...  
A life of ease is not for any man, nor for any god.

—Thomas Carlyle

I don't like work—no man does—but I like what is in work—the chance to find yourself. Your own reality—for yourself, not for others—what no other man can ever know.

—Joseph Conrad

Whether we find work noble, enriching, or boring, for most of us work is a part of life. A major part of our lives is taken up with work—whether we are students, parents, engineers, farmers, or television personalities. Because we work throughout most of our lives, it is easy to see work as a process—something that starts and then continues through time.

In the following readings, the writers present descriptions of two different people at work. As you read the selections, ask yourself these questions:

1. What is the attitude of each worker toward his work?
2. What is the attitude of other people toward the worker and his work?
3. What do you like or dislike about work?

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### READING 1



#### From *The Dark Child*

Camara Laye

*Camara Laye, originally from French Guinea in West Africa, was studying engineering in Paris when he wrote The Dark Child (1954), from which this reading is taken. In this book, Laye describes his early life, his family, and the village he lived in. In the excerpt that follows, Laye describes his father, a goldsmith and metal worker, making a piece of*

jewelry for a customer. Note that while the reading describes the process of making the trinket, it also has a clearly stated thesis. As you read, try to answer those questions:

1. What kind of man was the writer's father? What was the attitude of other people toward him?
2. What are the steps in the process of making a piece of gold jewelry?
3. What is the writer's attitude, or thesis, about the process of making the gold jewelry?

1. Of all the different kinds of work my father engaged in, none fascinated me so much as his skill with gold. No other occupation was so noble, no other needed such a delicate touch. And then, every time he worked in gold it was like a festival—indeed it was a festival—that broke the monotony of ordinary working days.

2. So, if a woman, accompanied by a go-between, crossed the threshold of the workshop, I followed her in at once. I knew what she wanted: she had brought some gold, and had come to ask my father to transform it into a trinket. She had collected it in the placers<sup>o</sup> of Sigiri where, crouching over the river for months on end, she had patiently extracted grains of gold from the mud.

3. These women never came alone. They knew my father had other things to do than make trinkets. And even when he had the time, they knew they were not the first to ask a favor of him, and that, consequently, they would not be served before others.

4. Generally they required the trinket for a certain date, for the festival of Ramadan or the Tabaski or some other family ceremony or dance.

5. Therefore, to enhance<sup>o</sup> their chances of being served quickly and to more easily persuade my father to interrupt the work before him, they used to request the services of an official praise-singer, a go-between, arranging in advance the fee they were to pay him for his good offices.<sup>o</sup>

6. The go-between installed<sup>o</sup> himself in the workshop, tuned up his cora, which is our harp, and began to sing my father's praises. This was always a great event for me. I heard recalled the lofty deeds of my father's ancestors and their names from the earliest times. As the couplets<sup>o</sup> were reeled off it was like watching the growth of a great genealogical tree<sup>o</sup> that spread its branches far and wide and flourished its boughs and twigs before my mind's eye. The harp played an accompaniment to this vast utterance of names, expanding it with notes that were now soft, now shrill.

*make better,  
improve*

*service  
established,  
set up*

*two successive  
lines of poetry /  
a diagram of  
one's ancestors*

*The Essay*

*e.g., self-esteem /  
excited,  
increased*

7 I could sense my father's vanity<sup>6</sup> being inflamed,<sup>7</sup> and I already knew that after having sipped this milk-and-honey<sup>8</sup> he would lend a favorable ear to the woman's request. But I was alone in my knowledge. The woman also had seen my father's eyes gleaming with contented pride. She held out her grains of gold as if the whole matter were settled. My father took up his scales and weighed the gold.

8 "What sort of trinket do you want?" he would ask.

9 "I want..."

10 And then the woman would not know any longer exactly what she wanted because desire kept making her change her mind, and because she would have liked all the trinkets at once. But it would have taken a pile of gold much larger than she had brought to satisfy her whim, and from then on her chief purpose in life was to get hold of it as soon as she could.

11 "When do you want it?"

12 Always the answer was that the trinket was needed for an occasion in the near future.

13 "So! You are in that much of a hurry? Where do you think I shall find the time?"

14 "I am in a great hurry, I assure you."

*beautify, get  
dressed up*

15 "I have never seen a woman eager to deck herself out<sup>9</sup> who wasn't in a great hurry! Good! I shall arrange my time to suit you. Are you satisfied?"

*melting, refining*

16 He would take the clay pot that was kept specially for smelting<sup>10</sup> gold, and would pour the grains into it. He would then cover the gold with powdered charcoal, a charcoal he prepared by using plant juices of exceptional purity. Finally, he would place a large lump of the same kind of charcoal over the pot.

*without too  
much delay*

17 As soon as she saw that the work had been duly<sup>11</sup> undertaken, the woman, now quite satisfied, would return to her household tasks, leaving her go-between to carry on with the praise-singing which had already proven so advantageous.

*people learning  
the trade /  
device for  
blowing air /  
place for the  
fire, where the  
smithy does his  
work*

18 At a sign from my father the apprentices<sup>12</sup> began working two sheepskin bellows.<sup>13</sup> The skins were on the floor, on opposite sides of the forge,<sup>14</sup> connected to it by earthen pipes. While the work was in progress the apprentices sat in front of the bellows with crossed legs. That is, the younger of the two sat, for the elder was sometimes allowed to assist. But the younger—this time it was Sidafa—was only permitted to work the bellows and watch

\* Been made agreeable by compliments and praise.

*supernatural  
being, spirit /  
unchangeable*

which could not be given up to the furnace, so that neither they nor the first one and then the other worked hard at the bellows; the flame in the forge rose higher and became a living thing, a genie,<sup>2</sup> implacable<sup>3</sup> and full of life.

19 Then my father lifted the clay pot with his long tongs and placed it on the flame.

20 Immediately all activity in the workshop almost came to a halt. During the whole time that the gold was being smelted, neither copper nor aluminum could be worked nearby, lest some particle of these base metals fall into the container which held the gold. Only steel could be worked on such occasions, but the men, whose task that was, hurried to finish what they were doing, or left it abruptly to join the apprentices gathered around the forge. There were so many, and they crowded so around my father, that I, the smallest person present, had to come near the forge in order not to lose track of what was going on.

21 If he felt he had inadequate working space, my father had the apprentices stand well away from him. He merely raised his hand in a simple gesture; at that particular moment he never uttered a word, and no one else would; no one was allowed to utter a word. Even the go-between's voice was no longer raised in song. The silence was broken only by the panting of the bellows and the faint hissing of the gold. But if my father never actually spoke, I know that he was forming words in his mind. I could tell from his lips, which kept moving, while, bending over the pot, he stirred the gold and charcoal with a bit of wood that kept bursting into flame and had constantly to be replaced by a fresh one.

22 What words did my father utter? I do not know. At least I am not certain what they were. No one ever told me. But could they have been anything but incantations?<sup>4</sup> On these occasions was he not invoking the genies of fire and gold, of fire and wind, of wind blown by the blast-pipes of the forge, of fire born of wind, of gold married to fire? Was it not their assistance, their friendship, their espousal<sup>5</sup> that he besought?<sup>6</sup> Yes. Almost certainly he was invoking<sup>7</sup> these genies, all of whom are equally indispensable<sup>8</sup> for smelting gold.

23 The operation going on before my eyes was certainly the smelting of gold, yet something more than that: a magical operation that the guiding spirits could regard with favor or disfavor. That is why, all around my father, there was absolute silence and anxious expectancy. Though only a child, I knew there could be no craft greater than the goldsmith's. I expected a ceremony. I

*special words  
and formulas in  
magic spells and  
rituals*

*bringing together;  
marrying / was  
looking for /  
asking for help /  
necessary*

## The Craft

*drawn out, long  
idea*

had come to be present as a ceremony, and it actually was one, though very protracted." I was still too young to understand why, but I had an inkling<sup>8</sup> as I watched the almost religious concentration of those who followed the mixing process in the clay pot.

24 When finally the gold began to melt I could have shouted aloud—and perhaps we all would have if we had not been forbidden to make a sound. I trembled, and so did everyone else watching my father stir the mixture—it was still a heavy paste—in which the charcoal was gradually consumed. The next stage followed swiftly. The gold now had the fluidity of water. The genies had smiled on the operation!

25 "Bring me the brick!" my father would order; thus lifting the ban that until then had silenced us.

26 The brick, which an apprentice would place beside the fire, was hollowed out, generously greased with Galam butter. My father would take the pot off the fire and tilt it carefully, while I would watch the gold flow into the brick, flow like liquid fire. True, it was only a very sparse trickle of fire, but how vivid, how brilliant! As the gold flowed into the brick, the grease sputtered and flamed and emitted<sup>9</sup> a thick smoke that caught in the throat and stung the eyes, leaving us all weeping and coughing.

*dispelling,  
getting rid of*

27 But there were times when it seemed to me that my father ought to turn this task over to one of his assistants. They were experienced, had assisted him hundreds of times, and could certainly have performed the work well. But my father's lips moved and those inaudible, secret words, those incantations he addressed to one we could not see or hear, was the essential part. Calling on the genies of fire, of wind, of gold and exorcising<sup>10</sup> the evil spirits—this was a knowledge he alone possessed.

28 By now the gold had been cooled in the hollow of the brick, and my father began to hammer and stretch it. This was the moment when his work as a goldsmith really began....

*eat up, look at  
hungrily*

29 The woman for whom the trinket was being made, and who had come often to see how the work was progressing, would arrive for the final time, not wanting to miss a moment of this spectacle—as marvelous to her as to us—when the gold wire, which my father had succeeded in drawing out from the mass of molten gold and charcoal, was transformed into a trinket.

30 There she would be. Her eyes would devour<sup>11</sup> the fragile gold wire, following it in its tranquil and regular spiral around the little slab of metal which supported it. My father would catch a

## The Ancient English Story

glimpse of her and I would see her slowly beginning to smile. Her avid attention delighted him.

ii. "Are you trembling?" he would ask.

iii. "Am I trembling?"

iv. And we would all burst out laughing at her. For she would be trembling! She would be trembling with covetousness<sup>o</sup> for the spiral pyramid in which my father would be inserting among the convolutions, tiny grains of gold. When he had finally finished by crowning the pyramid with a heavier grain, she would dance in delight.

v. No one—no one at all—would be more enchanted than she as my father slowly turned the trinket back and forth between his fingers to display its perfection. Not even the praise-singer whose business it was to register excitement would be more excited than she. Throughout this metamorphosis<sup>o</sup> he did not stop speaking faster and ever faster, increasing his tempo, accelerating his praises and flatteries as the trinket took shape, shouting to the skies my father's skill.

vi. For the praise-singer took a curious part—I should say rather that it was direct and effective—in the work. He was drunk with the joy of creation. He shouted aloud in joy. He plucked his corn like a man inspired. He sweated as if he were the trinket maker, as if he were my father; as if the trinket were his creation. He was no longer a hired censer-bearer; a man whose services anyone could rent. He was a man who created his song out of some deep inner necessity. And when my father, after having soldered<sup>o</sup> the large grain of gold that crowned the summit, held out his work to be admired, the praise-singer would no longer be able to contain himself. He would begin to intone the dougo, the great chant which is sung only for celebrated men and which is danced for them alone....

vii. At the first notes of the dougo my father would arise and emit a cry in which happiness and triumph were equally mingled; and brandishing<sup>o</sup> in his right hand the hammer that was the symbol of his profession and in his left a ram's horn filled with magic substances, he would dance the glorious dance.

viii. No sooner had he finished, than workmen and apprentices, friends and customers in their turn, not forgetting the woman for whom the trinket had been created, would flock around him, congratulating him, showering praises on him and complimenting the praise-singer at the same time. The latter found himself laden with gifts—almost his only means of support, for the praise-singer leads a wandering life after the fashion of the troubadours<sup>o</sup> of old. Aglow

fused together

waving, shaking

wandering  
singers

*The Gold*

with dancing and the praises he had received, my father would offer everyone cola nuts, that small change<sup>3</sup> of Guinean courtesy.

Now all that remained to be done was to redder the gold  
in a little water to which chlorine and sea salt had been  
added. I was at liberty to leave. The festival was over!

**EXERCISE 10-1** Comprehension/Discussion Questions

1. In the first part of the reading, Laye describes a typical woman who came to his father to have a piece of jewelry made. What are the woman's characteristics? Is she clever? In a hurry? Decisive?
2. Early in the selection, Laye gives an account of a particular process—a woman trying to get the goldsmith to make a piece of jewelry for her. What are the steps in this process?
3. Throughout most of the essay, Laye describes the process of making a piece of jewelry. What are the steps in the physical process of making the trinket?
4. In addition to the physical process of making the gold trinket, Laye describes a mystical or spiritual process that accompanies it. For each step in the physical process you described in question 3, give the accompanying mystical element or step (if there is one).
5. According to Laye, the praise-singer took a "direct and effective" part in the process. What part does the praise-singer play in the process of making the piece of jewelry?
6. What is the attitude of the people toward the goldsmith? Support your answer with examples from the text.
7. What is Laye's attitude toward the gold-working process? In which paragraph or paragraphs does he state his thesis?
8. Although the process of requesting a piece of jewelry to be made and the process of making it occur in all cultures, which elements of Laye's description of these processes are particular to the West African culture? Which are universal?
9. What is the attitude of people in your culture toward a skilled craftsperson? Support your answer with examples.
10. If you wanted to ask someone to make something for you—for example, a piece of jewelry, a suit, or a dress—what process would you go through in order to accomplish this?

## The Prose Analysis Essay

 **EXERCISE 10-2** Vocabulary Development. The following are some idiomatic expressions used in the reading passage. Read the sentence containing the expression and write a word or short phrase that means approximately the same thing as the italicized words. Then write an original sentence using the idiomatic expression.

1. broke the monotony (par. 1)

And then, every time he worked in gold it was like a festival—indeed it was a festival—that *broke the monotony* of ordinary working days.

---

---

2. lend a favorable ear (par. 2)

I could sense my father's vanity being inflamed, and I already knew that after having sipped this milk-and-honey he would *lend a favorable ear* to the woman's request.

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---

3. deck herself out (par. 15)

"I have never seen a woman eager to *deck herself out* who wasn't in a great hurry!"

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4. in progress (par. 18)

While the work was *in progress* the apprentices sat in front of the bellows with crossed legs.

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*The Egg*

## 5. to lose track of (par. 20)

There were so many, and they crowded so around my father, that I, the smallest person present, had to come near the forge in order not to *lose track of* what was going on.

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## 6. shouting to the skies (par. 34)

Throughout this metamorphosis he did not stop speaking faster and ever faster, increasing his tempo, accelerating his praises and flatteries as the trinket took shape, *shouting to the skies* my father's skill.

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**READING 2****Portraits of a Cop**

N. R. Kleinfield

*In this essay, the writer presents an account of an unusual but interesting occupation. As you read, try to answer these questions.*

1. What is the meaning of the title of the essay?
2. What are the steps in the process described?
3. What makes this essay interesting?

*moves nervously*      1. A pencil poking out from behind his ear, Arthur Hagenlocher fidgets<sup>o</sup> on his high-legged chair in his box-like office in the old Loft's candy factory at 400 Broome St in the New York City Hall area. Staring at him are an uncompleted sketch<sup>o</sup> and all manner drawing of pencils and soft erasers. Tacked up on the walls are sketches he and his colleagues have drawn. Except for one of Richard Nixon and another of Alfred E. Newman ("What me worry?").

the sketches resemble no one recognizable, and Mr. Hagenlocher himself doesn't have any idea who they are supposed to be.

2 "They're just faces to me," he says. "I don't know what their names are, what their occupations are, where they live. To be frank, I haven't any notion<sup>6</sup> who they are. With most of them, I never will."

3 Arthur Hagenlocher makes a career of sketching people he has never met. Told by other people what they look like, he sketches them plainly, without much fine detail or embellishment.<sup>8</sup> When he sketches them well enough, they will look, at best, like any one of several thousand or several million people; at worst, they will look like no one. Every so often, however, his sketches lead to the apprehension<sup>9</sup> of a criminal, which, in fact, is what they are intended to do. Arthur Hagenlocher is a police artist, and everyone he draws is a suspected criminal....

4 When a crime that is witnessed occurs and a detective wishes a sketch, he calls an artist as quickly as possible (one artist is always on call). Either the detective will bring witnesses to the artist's office, or else the artist will hustle<sup>10</sup> to the scene of the crime and work there.

5 First off, Mr. Hagenlocher "buttonholes"<sup>11</sup> all available witnesses, and weeds out<sup>12</sup> those who, by his judgment, are unreliable.

*The Story*

Almost always, Mr. Hagenlocher prefers to deal with just one reliable witness, rather than with many conflicting voices that simply befuddle<sup>6</sup> him. All too often when he works with several witnesses, there is a clash of facts. "The more witnesses there are, the more confusing it gets," the artist says.

*understanding / questioning*

6 Determining who makes the most reliable witness involves perception,<sup>7</sup> interrogation,<sup>8</sup> and luck. "There's a lot of psychology involved," Mr. Hagenlocher says. "You can sort of feel a good witness. If someone hesitates, or changes his mind, he's no good. If you have to pull things out of someone, he's no good. If the person just starts telling you about mouths and ears right away, then he's good."

7 Usually, the younger the witness, the better. "Fourteen-year-old kids make great witnesses," Mr. Hagenlocher says. "They remember everything. Old ladies make terrible witnesses. They can't remember anything. You ask a child about a nose, and he'll tell you about a nose. You ask an adult about a nose, and he'll start telling you about the color of the person's socks."

Youngsters also tend to draw their own sketches to help out

*moving clumsy and crudely*

8 Initially, Mr. Hagenlocher tries to put witnesses at ease so they trust him, rather than barging up<sup>9</sup> and identifying himself as a police officer. When questioning someone, the artist tries to exact<sup>10</sup> as much detail as possible about the suspect, though he can get by on remarkably few facts. As a rule, he looks for five features: shape of face, hair, eyes, ears, and mouth. Distinguishing scars,<sup>11</sup> birthmarks,<sup>12</sup> beards, and mustaches are an artist's dream for producing a useful sketch, but they don't often crop up.<sup>13</sup>

*get*

*permanent marks left after wound or burn / skin blemishes present at birth / occur, come along / bring / pictures of the faces of suspects / slight, small*

9 Mr. Hagenlocher always carts along<sup>14</sup> 150 to 200 of the 900,000 mug shots<sup>15</sup> the police force keeps. Witnesses are asked to leaf through these to try to find a similar face, and then subtle<sup>16</sup> changes can be made in the sketch. "You could use just one photo and work from that," Mr. Hagenlocher says. "Using that as a base, you have the witness compare the hair—is it longer or shorter?—the mouth is it thinner or wider? and so forth. But that's harder and takes more time. It's usually much quicker to show him a lot of photos and have them pick one that's close."

10 "But I remember one time," the artist goes on, "when a girl flipped through a mess<sup>17</sup> of photos and finally picked one. 'That looks exactly like him,' she said, 'except the hair was longer, the mouth was wider, the eyes were further apart, the nose was smaller and the face was rounder.' She was a big help."

*a lot of bunch of*

*The Sketching Room**characteristics*

11 Besides the five basic features, Mr. Hagenlocher also questions witnesses about a suspect's apparent nationality and the nature of the language he used. This can be of subtle assistance in sketching the suspect, but it can also sometimes link several sketches together. For instance, if over a short period of time three suspects are described as soft-spoken, in addition to having other similar traits,<sup>9</sup> then chances are they are the same person. It is also a good idea to ask a witness if a suspect resembled a famous person. Suspects have been compared to Marlon Brando, Rod Steiger, Winston Churchill, Nelson Eddy, Jack Palance, Jackie Gleason, Mick Jagger and a Greek god.

12 After Mr. Hagenlocher completes a sketch, he shows it to the witness or witnesses for their reaction. Usually there will be lots of minor, and sometimes not too minor, changes to be made. When it's finished, the sketch isn't intended to approach the polished form of a portrait. "We're just trying to narrow down the possibilities," Mr. Hagenlocher says. "If you've just got a big nose and a thin mouth to go with, then at least you've ruled out all the people with small noses and thick mouths. There are still millions of people still in the running, but millions have also been eliminated."

13 From time to time, Mr. Hagenlocher produces no sketch at all. This happens when he receives too many conflicting reports from witnesses, or when a witness can't make up his mind or can't supply sufficient detail. "The whole point is to completely satisfy the witness," Mr. Hagenlocher says. "If the witness isn't satisfied, then I don't turn in a sketch. Some women have cried when they saw my sketch. Others have said, 'No way, no way. That's nothing like him.'"

*divisions**guilty people*

14 Once a sketch is completed, two photographs are taken of it. These go to the detective who requested the sketch, who can then order copies that can be distributed among police precincts<sup>10</sup> and other forces and departments. The sketch itself, designated by an identification number, the case number, the date drawn and the artist's initials, is filed away in the sketching room. When a suspect is apprehended, the sketch is filed in a different place. Though they are supposed to, detectives don't always notify artists when culprits<sup>11</sup> are caught because they are tied down with new cases....

15 For the time being, Mr. Hagenlocher is content with turning out sketches of people he doesn't know. "There's a tremendous satisfaction," he says. "If you can take a picture of a person after he's apprehended and have it look like your sketch, you say, 'Wow, I can't believe I did that! But you did!'"

*This Essay***25 EXERCISE 10-3** Comprehension/Discussion Questions

1. What is the process described in this essay?
2. In which paragraph is the process made clear?
3. Why does Kleinfield wait until then to make the topic clear?
4. What are the steps that Hagenlocher goes through to sketch a particular suspect?
5. How does Hagenlocher determine which witness to use for his information?
6. What features of the human face does Hagenlocher look for?
7. What is Kleinfield's point in paragraph 10?
8. Besides the basic features of the face, what other information does Hagenlocher ask his witness for? Why?
9. What finally happens to Hagenlocher's sketches?
10. Do you think Hagenlocher likes his job? Support your answer with examples from the text.
11. Is there a clearly stated thesis? If so, what is it and where does it appear? If not, where and how is it implied?
12. What makes this essay interesting?

**25 EXERCISE 10-4** Vocabulary Development. Kleinfield uses a number of colloquial, or informal, words and expressions in his essay. These words help give the essay an informal, conversational tone, as if the writer were actually talking with the reader. These informal words also help make the essay interesting, because they are specific. Although colloquial expressions are appropriate in informal writing, they are often inappropriate in formal academic writing.

Some of the informal words and expressions that Kleinfield uses in his essay are given here. For each one, write a short definition and then write an original sentence.

1. fidgets (par. 1)
- 

2. hustle (par. 4)
-

*The Process Analysis Essay*

3. buttonholes (par. 5)

4. weeds out (par. 5)

5. befuddle (par. 5)

6. barging up (par. 8)

7. crop up (par. 8)

8. carts along (par. 9)

9. mess of (par. 10)

 ← *Writing* ←

A process is a series of actions leading to an expected or planned outcome. There are two types of process essays: those that instruct or direct and those that explain or analyze. Directional process essays tell how to do something. For example, a directional process might explain how to find an apartment. The purpose of this type of essay is to clarify the steps in the procedure so that the reader can re-create the steps and the results. An informational process essay explains or analyzes a process—it tells how something works, how something happened, or how something is or was done. For example, you could explain how World War II began or how hurricanes form. The informational process essay has a purpose different from that of a directional process essay. Its main purpose is to inform, explain, or

The reader is gaining an understanding of the process; he or she does not necessarily expect to be able to recreate the process.

Although process essays that explain or instruct have different purposes, they can be developed by using the same pattern of development and organization. In this chapter, then, our concentration is on developing and organizing the process analysis essay.

## PLANNING THE PROCESS ANALYSIS ESSAY

When you are planning your essay, you should bear in mind the following advice:

*Be aware of the audience.* When you are planning a process essay, your first question should be "What do my readers know about my topic?" Identifying the audience is important in deciding what to include and what to omit in the essay. For instance, suppose that you decided to explain how to paint a room to an inexperienced audience—people who have never before painted a room. You would have to be very specific and assume that the readers know little or nothing about the process. However, if your audience is made up of professional or experienced painters, you would have to approach the assignment differently. In this case, you would probably explain a special technique that your audience may not be aware of.

In general, though, you should assume that readers know little about the topic being explained but have the same general knowledge you do. For instance, it can be assumed that most people know what a paintbrush is, but it cannot be assumed that your readers know which kind of brush is best to use with a certain type of paint.

*Order the steps chronologically.* Since a process paper describes a sequence of steps leading to some preconceived end, it is important that the steps be discussed in the order that they occur; in other words, the steps should be arranged in chronological order. This principle of organization is the same as the one used for narration (see Chapter Three). In a process essay, ordering ideas chronologically is vital, especially if readers are to be able to re-create the process. The only time to break from chronological order is when you explain some unfamiliar term or give some word of advice or caution.

**25 • EXERCISE 10-5** Think of a process that you are familiar with—for example, how to get a visa, how to develop a photograph, how to wait on a customer. Brainstorm a list of the steps in the process. When you have finished brainstorming, arrange the steps chronologically.

*Make sure that the process is complete.* Whether you are explaining how to do something or how something was done, make sure to include all the steps in the

*The Process Analysis Essay*

process. Obviously, if you are explaining how to do something and leave out one of the steps, your readers will not be able to re-create the process and get the same result. A good way to test the thoroughness of the steps of a process is to have someone follow each step exactly as explained.

Let us say, for example, that you wanted to write an essay for the campus International Student Association's newsletter about how to get a driver's license. You can assume that the audience is the international student who has probably recently arrived in this country and does not yet have a driver's license. You might list the steps as follows:

1. Go to the Motor Vehicle Department in your area.
2. At the Motor Vehicle Department, the first thing you will do is take a vision test.
3. After that, you will take a written test.
4. Then you will take a driving test.
5. Finally, you will pay the fee.

Is this list complete? Certainly, these are the major steps involved, but there are many other things that the reader will need to know to get a driver's license. The following is an example of the expanded list of steps:

1. First obtain a pamphlet with the driving rules from the Motor Vehicle Department. You can do this by telephoning them at 555-3333 and asking them to mail you the pamphlet.
2. Study the pamphlet carefully.
3. Before you go to the Motor Vehicle Department, be sure that your car is in proper working order.
4. Take your birth certificate or your passport with you.
5. Take \$30 in cash.
6. Have a friend drive you to the MVD on Main Street and Vine Avenue. You can park at the rear of the building.
7. Get in the line marked "Driver's License Exam."
8. Fill out the information on the card they give you.
9. Take the vision test.
10. Then take the written exam.
11. If you pass, then you will take the driving test.
12. If you pass that, you can pay the fee of \$30.

*The Essay*

This version is certainly more thorough than the original list, but it is still incomplete. For example, it would be a good idea to give the reader some more instructions about taking the written and the driving tests. Can you think of any other specific steps that should be included?

**EXERCISE 10-6:** Using the list of steps you made for Exercise 10-5, test its thoroughness by having someone follow the steps you have outlined. Now revise the list to make it more complete.

*Be sure to define new or unfamiliar terms.* This is especially true for process essays that give instructions. Sometimes a process description may introduce a word or phrase that the reader might not understand. Since it makes little sense to have the reader attempt to complete a process without understanding the particular terms involved, always define what he or she might not know. If you are explaining how to repair a flat tire, for example, you might have to describe or define what a lug wrench is; otherwise, the reader would not know which tool is being discussed and could not continue with the process. In the example of the process of getting a driver's license, it might be necessary to explain the meaning of a few terms that will be used during the test—for example, "oncoming traffic" or "Class A License":

When you are filling out the form, check the box that says "Class A." A Class A license is for those who want to drive automobiles, not trucks or motorcycles.

*Warn your reader of difficulties in the process.* When planning a process essay, try to anticipate what problems the reader might have in understanding or re-creating the process. If one step is particularly difficult, warn the reader of this. Be sure to warn the reader of what not to do as well. For example, if you are explaining how to get a driver's license, it is a good idea to warn the reader about some of the tricky things that might come up during the driving test. Perhaps you should warn your reader to practice parallel parking before going to take the driving test, or advise the reader to fill out the forms carefully and to ask questions if he or she is confused. You might also advise the reader what to do if the car stalls.

**EXERCISE 10-7:** Go back over the list you revised for Exercise 10-6. Add definitions of new or unfamiliar terms and warnings of difficulties in the process.

*Explain the purpose of a step when necessary.* A process essay is more than just a list of steps. Expect that the reader wants to understand the process, whether he or she will attempt to re-create it or merely to read it. Therefore, you should explain the rationale behind the steps when the rationale is not obvious. In other words, try to explain—if only briefly—the purpose of the step. This kind of explanation is especially useful when the reader might skip the step because he or she

**Process Analysis Essay**

think about it does not serve any real purpose. For example, in step 3 of the driver's license process (page 263), explain why the reader should see to it that the car is in proper working order (for example, the driver may get a citation for having a brake light out).

*Try to make your thesis statement persuasive.* A thesis statement for a process essay does not have to have a strong central idea; in fact, it can be as simple as "There are three major steps involved in changing a flat tire." However, since the essay has as its underlying purpose more than just a listing of steps (those steps should be explained and analyzed), it is a good idea to have a thesis that contains a strong central idea. The thesis statement might be "Changing a flat tire is really quite easy." This statement will require showing that the process is indeed easy. However, if the thesis is "Changing a flat tire is a horrible experience," it would be necessary to show how horrible the process is.

**EXERCISE 10-8** Go back over the list of steps you have been working on in the three preceding exercises. Formulate a thesis statement that contains a central idea about the process you are describing.

## ORGANIZING THE PROCESS ANALYSIS ESSAY

One of the more difficult aspects of writing a process essay is deciding where to divide the essay into paragraphs. Generally speaking, most processes break down into a beginning, a middle, and an end. Here are a few pointers for dividing process steps logically into paragraphs:

1. *Introduction.* The introductory paragraph should introduce the topic and establish the purpose for writing the process. The reader should understand why the process is being described and in what situations the process is used.
2. *Developmental paragraphs.* The actual description of the process usually begins in the first developmental paragraph. However, if you are describing how to do something and the process requires that the reader obtain some items first, then you may need to point out in the first developmental paragraph what items are needed.

The actual steps of the process usually can be divided into three or four major steps. For example, if you were explaining how to change a flat tire, the first section could deal with getting the car jacked up, the next section could deal with removing and replacing the tire, and the last section could deal with removing the jack. In most cases, each major section can be described in a separate paragraph. Note, too, that the topic sentence in a process essay is often implied rather than stated directly.

*The Essay*

3. Conclusion. How to conclude a process essay depends on the type of process being described. Often the conclusion discusses the results of the process. Take special note of the conclusions in the model process essays in this chapter.

**EXERCISE 10-9** Think of a persuasive thesis for the driver's license process. Then break down the steps on page 263 into logical groups.

**EXERCISE 10-10** Using the process you have been working on in the preceding exercises, break down the steps into logical groups.

Now that you are familiar with some of the major points concerning process essays, examine the following process essay. Observe the paragraphing, locate the thesis, and determine if there is a central idea and if that idea is carried out in the process. Also, try to find explanations, examples, warnings, and definitions in the essay. Finally, note if the process description is complete.

### STUDYING MATH

Math is probably the most difficult course for most people. However, I think that what makes math difficult is the power that the term *mathematics* has upon people's minds. Most students are afraid of not passing because of the reputation the course has of being hard. The study of math needs lots of concentration and practice, but it isn't really hard; it just deals with the relationship and symbolism of numbers and magnitudes. What is the most difficult part of math? Working problems progressively probably. How should students study math in general? They should follow some guidelines, like the ones I have prepared, in order to feel less nervous about the subject.

Concentration is the first thing that a student should acquire before even trying to think about studying math. Full concentration is needed to study math as well as to be free of any thoughts outside the study of math. Preparing to study starts the concentration because at that moment the student starts to think about what he or she is going to cover or what he or she will need in order to solve some problems. Also, a student should be completely rested, because if a student is tired he or she may end up taking a lot longer to accomplish what he is supposed to.

In order for the student to understand the material involved, the student should read all sections completely. I think the most appropriate way of doing this is by reading a section completely first. Then, the student should analyze that section and he or she should take all the formulas and write them down on a separate sheet in order to memorize and analyze them completely. Right after this, the student should take a break of about ten minutes in order to be relaxed to work some of the problems given in the section. Most stu-

students do all the problems at once, but I don't think that is the appropriate way. A student should only do the problems he can figure out. If he can't do one of the problems in the section, he should leave it and go on to the next one. Then the student should take another short break. After that, he is ready to read the next section and follow the same procedure.

Right after a student has read all the sections, he or she should look at the problems that he or she couldn't do. The student should try again to work them out, but only to a limit. The student shouldn't have to think more than five or ten minutes to figure out what is going on. Instead a student should take those problems to the professor in order to get a complete understanding of the problems. If a student takes too much time to do a problem, he or she will get burned out and will end up hating the material.

Then right after the student has finished all sections, he should start doing the problems in the review section in order to have a better understanding and to increase his or her speed while working out a problem. At this stage, the student should find a partner to work with. Believe it or not, working with a partner helps a lot, because if a problem comes into action there are two minds that will solve the problem easily.

Math can be difficult if an individual thinks that it is difficult. But if a student follows some of my guidelines, I'm sure that he or she will do well and will like the material.

—Igor Gonzalez

**25 EXERCISE 10-11** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions about "Studying Math."

1. What is the thesis? The central idea?
2. Does the author establish a need for this process? If so, where?
3. Look at the paragraph divisions. Why does the author divide up the steps as he does?
4. What is the controlling idea for the second paragraph?
5. Is there a topic sentence for each paragraph? If not, is it implied?
6. Why should you take frequent breaks?
7. Is this essay unified? Coherent?
8. Are the steps clearly explained? Is the process complete?
9. Who is the audience?
10. Is this essay a directional or an informational process explanation?

*The Essay*

11. What verb tenses are used in this essay? Underline them in the essay.
12. Outline this essay.

**EXERCISE 10-12** Writing Assignment. Using the brainstorming notes you started in Exercise 10-5, write the first draft of your process essay.

Now let us look at a different kind of process essay. As you read "Cognitive Development," try to determine whether it's an informational or a directional process explanation. Also, take note of the verb tenses used by the author. If you are not familiar with the meaning of the word *cognitive*, refer to your dictionary before reading the essay.

### COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

When I was talking to my three-year-old niece on the telephone, I asked her if she liked preschool. I heard nothing. I asked her again but still there was no response. Then her mother took the telephone and told me that my niece had been nodding her head to indicate "yes." At age three, my niece was not able to understand that I could not see what she could see or do while she was on the phone talking to me. This kind of observation of children led the great Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget to conclude that children are not born with a cognitive structure. He argued that children's cognitive understanding of the world emerges with experience; in other words, it develops. Knowledge, then, is a process rather than a "state." A child knows or understands an object by interacting with it, and from this interaction he expands his ability to comprehend. According to Piaget, just as all children grow and mature physically in the same basic sequence, they also develop cognitively in a process that is the same for all children, regardless of cultural upbringing.

Piaget called the first stage that children go through the sensorimotor period, which extends from birth to around age two. The child develops a "sense" of the objects around her by her "motor," or physical, action on the objects. Her understanding of the world is limited to her physical actions on the objects in her world. For example, newborns have certain reflexes, such as sucking and grasping a finger that touches their hand. From these reflexes the infant begins to learn about and recognize objects, and she can generalize to other objects. At about eight to twelve months, the infant is able to act intentionally and even plan her actions. If she kicks hard enough the rattle in the crib will make the noise she wants to hear. An important developmental milestone during this stage is what Piaget terms object permanence. By the end of this stage, the infant recognizes that an object continues to

*For Primary Authors Only*

exist even when she cannot see it or touch it. For instance, a person who walks behind a screen is still there even though the infant cannot see her.

Object permanence is the beginning of the child's awareness that people and objects exist independent from him, but this is only the beginning. The achievements of the sensorimotor stage just prepare him for the next stage, called the preoperational period, lasting from about age two to seven. During this stage, a child perceives and interprets the world in terms of self. He cannot comprehend that another person sees objects differently. He thinks other people see and hear what he does. Thus, my three-year-old niece nodded her head to indicate "yes" because she assumed I could see her. During this stage, Piaget describes children as being rigid in thought. They base their conclusions on one obvious factor or feature of an object. For instance, if a bowl of water is poured into a tall jar, the child will conclude that the tall jar has more water because its level is higher. But toward the end of this period, the child is beginning to learn about objects in a new way. For instance, he begins to understand that water poured from the bowl into the tall jar is still the same water; that is, an object can change its shape but still be the same basic object. A good example is that a child now understands that if a person puts on a mask he or she is still the same person. The child is developing representational thought.

This increasing flexibility prepares the child for what Piaget called the concrete operational period. From about seven to eleven years old, a child makes great strides in her cognitive development. She develops the ability to make mental transformations with regard to concrete objects. A child begins to comprehend the concepts of reversibility, compensation, and addition and subtraction. Piaget uses the concept of conservation to illustrate this development. If you pour the water back from the tall jar to the bowl, during this stage the child can understand that the amount of water that was in the jar is the same as what's in the bowl, even though the water levels are different. She can understand that the width of the bowl makes up—or compensates for—its lack of height. The child also understands that no water has been removed or added.

In the next stage, called the formal operational period, from about eleven to fifteen years old, the child develops more sophisticated reasoning abilities. He can reason now; he can see more logical relationships between objects and can think more systematically before acting. In other words, he can think in more abstract terms; he can use information from the past to predict consequences. One game that requires such skills is chess. During this stage of development, a child can learn not only the rules and movements involved but also can use strategies.

*The Essay*

Refinement of cognitive skills continues on into adulthood, but Piaget felt that the development of structure of thought is achieved by about age fifteen. After that, the content and quality of thought may develop. Although not all researchers in cognitive development agree with Piaget's scheme and all of his conclusions, he can be credited for having a tremendous impact on our understanding of how children develop their understanding of the world around them. Children are not miniature adults who reason as adults do; they understand and interpret their environment in terms of their cognitive development. This is important to realize if we want to understand our children and ourselves better.\*

**25 EXERCISE 10-13** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions about "Cognitive Development."

1. What kind of process is being analyzed in this essay?
2. What is the central idea about the process of cognitive development?
3. What is the topic of the second paragraph?
4. What does Piaget mean by object permanence? Can you give another example?
5. During which stage does the child make a lot of progress?
6. What do you think is the writer's purpose for writing this essay?
7. Does the conclusion logically follow?
8. What verb tense is used frequently? Is it active or passive?
9. Make an outline of this essay.

\* from Patricia H. Millet, *Theories of Developmental Psychology* (New York: W.H. Freeman, 1983), pp. 30-66.

*The Process, English 103*

## Composition Skills

### INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

#### *The Dramatic Entrance*

The two types of introductions that you have been writing, the Funnel and the Turnabout, are good approaches to beginning essays. However, as your writing skills improve, you should strive not only for sentence variety but also for variety in essay openings as well. A dramatic, humorous, or otherwise interesting opening will generate interest in the reader. It is important, after all, to capture the reader's attention. The type of introduction that serves this purpose can be called the "Dramatic Entrance."

There are various ways to make a Dramatic Entrance. One way is to describe a scene that introduces your reader to the subject of your essay. Note how this writer opens an article on carbohydrates and depression:

On May 16, 1898, the intrepid Arctic explorer Frederick A. Cook made the following notation in his journal: "The winter and the darkness have slowly but steadily settled over us.... It is not difficult to read on the faces of my companions their thoughts and their moody dispositions. The curtain of blackness which has fallen over the outer world of icy desolation has also descended upon the inner world of our souls. Around the tables...men are sitting about sad and dejected, lost in dreams of melancholy from which, now and then, one arouses with an empty attempt at enthusiasm. For brief moments some try to break the spell by jokes, told perhaps for the fiftieth time. Others grind out a cheerful philosophy, but all efforts to infuse bright hopes fail."

We now know that the members of the Cook expedition were suffering from classic symptoms of winter depression, a condition related to a recently described psychiatric disorder, known as seasonal affective disorder, or SAD.\*

For process papers, it is often useful to begin with a description of a scene that establishes the need for a process explanation. Observe here how one student uses a description to set up a process paper:

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\* Richard J. Wurtman and Judith J. Wurtman, "Carbohydrates and Depression," *Scientific American* (Jan. 1989): p. 68. Copyright ©1989 by Scientific American, Inc. All rights reserved.

*The Essay*

The rain pours down as if running from a faucet, lightning streaks across the dark restless sky, and thunder pounds the roof and walls of the house. All of a sudden the wind kicks up. Trees sway madly back and forth; loose objects are picked up and thrown all around. The house creaks and moans with every gust of wind. Windows are broken by pieces of shingle from a neighbor's roof or by loose objects picked up by the wind. Power lines snap like thread. The unprepared house and its occupants are in grave danger as the awesome hurricane approaches. Had they prepared for the hurricane, they might not be in such danger. Indeed, careful preparation before a hurricane is essential to life and property.

—Donald Landry

 **EXERCISE 10-14** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions about Donald Landry's introductory paragraph.

1. How is this description organized? Is it organized chronologically, spatially, or both? Why has the writer selected this pattern of organization?
2. What is the process that will be explained?
3. Does the introduction establish a need for the process?

 **EXERCISE 10-15** Study the following process topics. Select one and brainstorm a list of steps for the process. When you begin drafting, try to write an introduction that is a Dramatic Entrance.

1. How to do a particular job
2. What to do in case of an accident
3. How to study for a particular course
4. How something is made (you choose)
5. How something works
6. The life cycle of an insect
7. How to repair something
8. How to prepare for a natural disaster (such as a flood, storm, or the like)

## COHERENCE

### *Participial Phrases*

Since process analysis essays are organized chronologically, like narrations, many of the transitional devices discussed in Chapter Three are used: sequence markers (*first, next, after that, and so forth*) and adverbial clauses of time. To achieve even more coherence in chronologically developed essays, participial phrases can be used to indicate the sequence of actions between clauses. Participial phrases not only make writing more *coherent*; they also add variety in sentence structure, thus improving the writing. Note the following examples:

After melting the gold, he began to shape the trinket.

Having finished the written test, you must wait to take the driving test.

Having been asked, the witness will describe the person.

Adverbial clauses of time are used to clarify the time relationship between the action in one clause and the action in another. Adverbial clauses of time are used when you combine two independent clauses, making one subordinate, or dependent. Adverbial clauses of time can be reduced to participial phrases when the subject of the adverbial clause is the same as the subject of the independent clause. Study the following examples:

First he melted the gold. Then he began to shape the trinket.  
(two independent clauses)

After he melted the gold, he began to shape the trinket.  
(adverbial clause + independent clause)

After melting the gold, he began to shape the trinket.  
(participial phrase + independent clause)

Having melted the gold, he began to shape the trinket.  
(participial phrase + independent clause)

Using participial phrases will give your writing coherence.

*For Essay*

## Grammar Review

If you want to review grammatical structures that will help you achieve coherence and grammatical accuracy in your writing, see the Grammar Review Unit. The following sections are designed to coordinate with the process essay:

Adverbial Clauses of Time Reduced to Participial Phrases, pages 366-370

Adverbial Clauses of Purpose, pages 396-398

Conditionals, page 453

**EXERCISE 10-16** Choose one of the following topics for a process analysis essay. First decide if you want to write a directional process or an informational process. Then generate ideas, using one of the prewriting techniques you learned in Chapter One. Then make a list in chronological order of the steps involved in the process. Make sure the process is complete. Define any unfamiliar terms and give the reader appropriate warnings. Be sure to use appropriate transitions.

1. Choose a simple process from one of the sciences. For example, explain how to make a slide, how to use a particular kind of microscope, or how to use a Bunsen burner.
2. Choose a simple process from one of the arts. For example, explain how to learn to read music, how to prepare a canvas for painting, or how to take or develop a photograph.
3. Choose a life cycle of a particular animal. Explain the stages.
4. Choose one of the topics suggested in Exercise 10-15.

## REVISION

### *Peer Review Checklist*

When you have finished writing the first draft of your essay, give it to a classmate to read and review. Use the following questions to respond to each other's essays.

**The Process Analysis Essay**

Writer \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the thesis of the essay? Write it here:

---

---

2. Is the thesis persuasive? If so, what is the controlling idea?

---

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3. Does the rest of the essay support the controlling idea? Explain:

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---

4. Are the steps in the essay arranged in chronological order?

---

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5. Is the process complete? \_\_\_\_\_ Are there steps in the process that need more explanation? If so, explain.

---

6. Are there any terms you do not understand? List them here:

---

---

*The Essay*

7. Does the writer warn the reader of difficulties in the process? \_\_\_\_\_  
Can you suggest places where warnings might be useful?

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8. What kind of introduction has the writer used (Funnel, Turnabout, Dramatic Entrance)?

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Is the introduction interesting? Suggestions on the introduction:

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9. Is the essay coherent? Has the writer used topic sentences and transitions?  
Explain:

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10. What is the most effective part of the essay? What has the writer done well?

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11. What is the least effective part of the essay?

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Suggestions:

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*The Process Analysis Essay**Revision Checklist for the Process Analysis Essay*

1. A process analysis essay either tells how to do something or explains how something happens. Have you chosen an appropriate subject—process—for your essay?
2. In writing a process analysis essay, you need to be aware of your audience, to order the steps of the process chronologically, to make sure your explanation of the process is complete, and to define any new or unfamiliar terms for your reader. Have you accomplished these tasks in your essay?
3. Your process analysis essay should warn your reader of difficulties in the process, explain the purpose of a step where necessary, and make a persuasive thesis statement. Does your essay perform these functions?
4. Does your essay have an interesting introduction?
5. Is your essay coherent?

*B*

*The Cause-and-Effect  
Analysis Essay*

*Pre-Character-and-Effect Analysis Essay*

## → Readings: Parents, Children, and Society ←

The family is a basic unit of society. Our mother, father, siblings, and relatives help orient us to the world and to our place within it. Although each particular family may have its own unique characteristics, overall the family serves to familiarize us with the basic assumptions and values our society holds. These assumptions and values will have a strong hold on us for the rest of our lives; they will mold us, guide us, make us who we are.

The following essays investigate the role of the family in society. As you read them, ask yourself these questions:

1. What effect have the individual members of your family had on you?
2. What values in society do you see as important for your life?
3. Do you want to be different from your parents in your relationship to your family?

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### READING I



#### Lift Your Feet

Andrew Ward

Born in Chicago in 1946, Andrew Ward is the author of a number of books and articles and has been a contributing editor of *Atlantic Monthly*. In the following essay, taken from *Fits and Starts: The Premature Memoirs of Andrew Ward* (1970), Ward describes the effects of one of his mother's personal traits on the family. As you read, try to answer these questions:

1. What behavioral characteristic of Ward's mother causes the effect described in his essay?
2. What effect does this characteristic have on the members of his family?
3. What is Ward's attitude toward his subject? How does he feel about his mother?

All her life, my mother wanted busy children. Nothing irritated<sup>o</sup> her more than the sight of one of her offspring lying<sup>o</sup> around, staring into space. But she had a conflicting ambition<sup>o</sup> which proved paramount<sup>o</sup> that her house remain at all times tidy.  
made her angry  
of great importance

*The Essay*

*without germs,  
clean* and hygienic,<sup>2</sup> that it exhibit, in effect, as little evidence of human activity as possible.

2 You could turn your back for a moment in my mother's house, leave a half-written letter on the dining room table, a magazine open on the chair, and turn around to find it had been "put back," as my mother phrased it, "where it belonged."

3 My wife, on one of her first visits to my mother's house, placed on an end table a napkined packet of cheese and crackers she had made for herself and went to the kitchen to fetch a drink. When she returned, she found the packet had been removed. Puzzled, she set down her drink and went back to the kitchen for more cheese and crackers, only to return to find that now her drink had disappeared. Up to then she had guessed that everyone in my family held onto their drinks, sometimes with both hands, so as not to make water rings on the end tables. Now she knows better...

*cause to lose  
one's place,  
confusing* 4 These disappearances had a disorienting<sup>3</sup> effect on our family. We were all inclined to forgetfulness, and it was common for one of us, upon returning from the bathroom and finding that every evidence of his work-in-progress had vanished, to forget what he'd been up to. "Do you remember what I was doing?" was a question frequently asked, but rarely answered, for whoever turned to address himself to it ran the risk of having his own pen, paper, book, tatting,<sup>4</sup> suddenly disappear into the order of my mother's universe...

5 My mother's cleaning seems to have come to a head while I was in college. She started to get terrible headaches and psychosomatic<sup>5</sup> digestive problems. Pretty soon, she hired some cleaning women to come in every week. They were Teutonic,<sup>6</sup> like her grandmother, and did a good job, and she was delighted to find that she didn't have to clean up after them half so much as she had cleaned up after her family. My sister has developed a second-hand passion for clean windows, and my brother does the vacuuming in his house, perhaps to avoid having to be the one to lift his feet. I try not to think about it too much, but I have lately<sup>7</sup> taken to cleaning the baseboards once a week. I figure if you don't keep after them they'll just get filthy, and then where will we be?

*kind of  
needlework*

*physical  
disorder caused  
or aggravated by  
one's emotional  
state / of  
Germanic origin*

*at this later time*

*The Causes and Effects, Analyzed, Essay***EXERCISE II-1:** Comprehension/Discussion Questions

1. What behavioral characteristic of Ward's mother causes the effect described in the essay?
2. What is the effect of the mother's ambition on the writer's wife?
3. What is the effect of the mother's ambition on the family?
4. What have been the long-term effects on members of Ward's family?
5. What is Ward's attitude toward his subject? Is he serious, lighthearted, hurt, angry?
6. How does Ward feel about his mother? Is he criticizing her? Praising her?
7. What is the author's purpose in this essay? To inform? Analyze? Entertain? How do you know?
8. What reaction does Ward expect from his readers? Explain your answer.
9. Do you have a family member or friend with a peculiar habit that has an effect on the rest of the family? Be prepared to explain the peculiar habit and its effects.



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READING 2

### Why They Excel

Fox Butterfield

*In this excerpt from an article written for Parade magazine, Fox Butterfield investigates the causes or reasons for the achievement of young Asians in the United States. She finds the causes rooted in the traditional values of their culture. Butterfield, who worked as a journalist in Asian countries for many years, is implicitly suggesting that Americans have something to learn from these immigrants. As you read this article, try to answer the following questions:*

1. *What are the reasons Asian students succeed in school?*
2. *What values in your culture have helped you succeed in school?*
3. *What particular people have helped in your success?*

1 Kim-Chi Trinh was just 9 in Vietnam when her father used his savings to buy a passage for her on a fishing boat. It was a costly and risky sacrifice for the family, placing Kim-Chi on the small boat, among strangers, in hopes she would eventually reach the United States, where she would get a good education and enjoy a better life. Before the boat reached safety in Malaysia, the supply of food and water ran out.

2 Still alone, Kim-Chi made it to the United States, coping with a succession of three foster families. But when she graduated from San Diego's Patrick Henry High School in 1988, she had a straight-A average and scholarship offers from Stanford and Cornell Universities.

3 "I have to do well—it's not even a question," said the small diminutive 19-year-old, now a sophomore at Cornell. "I owe it to my parents in Vietnam."

4 Kim-Chi is part of a tidal wave of bright, highly motivated Asian-Americans who are suddenly surging into our best colleges. Although Asian-Americans make up only 2.4 percent of the nation's population, they constitute 17.1 percent of the undergraduates at Harvard, 18 percent at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and 27.3 percent at the University of California at Berkeley.

*10. Cause-and-Effect Analysis Essay*

*people who do nothing but study / intelligence quotient; a test to measure intelligence*

3 Why are the Asian-Americans doing so well? Are they grinds,<sup>8</sup> as some stereotypes suggest? Do they have higher IQs?<sup>9</sup> Or are they actually teaching the rest of us a lesson about values we have long treasured but may have misplaced—like hard work, the family and education?

*the opposite of what is expected*

6 Not all Asians are doing equally well. Poorly educated Cambodian and Hmong refugee youngsters need special help. And Asian-Americans resent being labeled a "model minority," feeling that is just another form of prejudice by white Americans, an ironic<sup>10</sup> reversal of the discriminatory laws that excluded most Asian immigration to America until 1965.

*come together  
develop  
conclusion  
fill, inspire*

7 Fortunately, the young Asians' achievements have led to a series of intriguing studies. Perhaps the most disturbing [results] have come in a series of studies by a University of Michigan psychologist, Harold W. Stevenson, who has compared more than 7000 students in kindergarten, first grade, third grade and fifth grade in Chicago and Minneapolis with counterparts in Beijing, Sendai, Japan, and Taipei, Taiwan. On a battery of math tests, the Americans did worst at all grade levels.

8 Stevenson found no differences in IQ. But if the differences in performance are showing up in kindergarten, it suggests something is happening in the family, even before the children get to school.

9 It is here that the various studies converge.<sup>11</sup> Asian parents are able to instill<sup>12</sup> more motivation in their children. "My bottom line" is, Asian kids work hard," said Professor Dombusch [Professor of Sociology at Stanford].

10 The real question, then, is how do Asian parents imbue<sup>13</sup> their offspring with this kind of motivation? Stevenson's study suggests a critical answer: When the Asian parents were asked why they think their children do well, they most often said "hard work." By contrast, American parents said "talent."

11 "From what I can see," said Stevenson, "we've lost our belief in the Horatio Alger myth that anyone can get ahead in life through pluck and hard work. Instead, Americans now believe that some kids have it and some don't, so we begin dividing up classes into fast learners and slow learners, where the Chinese and Japanese believe all children can learn from the same curriculum."

12 The Asians' belief in hard work also springs from their common heritage of Confucianism, the philosophy of the 5th-century B.C. Chinese sage who taught that man can be perfected through practice. Confucius is not just some character of the past—he is

the family

an everyday reality to these people," said William Liu, a sociologist who directs the Pacific Asian-American Mental Health Research Center at the University of Illinois in Chicago.

*developing  
inward towards  
the center  
value of hard  
work*

13 Confucianism provides another important ingredient in the Asians' success. "In the Confucian ethic," Liu continued, "there is a centripetal<sup>9</sup> family, an orientation that makes people work for the honor of the family, not just for themselves." Liu came to the United States from China in 1948. "You can never repay your parents, and there is a strong sense of guilt," he said. "It is a strong force, like the Protestant Ethic" in the West."

14 Liu has found this in his own family. When his son and two daughters were young, he told them to become doctors or lawyers—jobs with the best guaranteed income, he felt. Sure enough, his daughters have gone into law, and his son is a medical student at UCLA, though he really wanted to be an investment banker. Liu asked his son why he picked medicine. The reply: "Ever since I was a little kid, I always heard you tell your friends their kids were a success if they got into med school. So I felt guilty. I didn't have a choice."

*excessive, too  
much*

*childish, simple-  
minded*

15 Underlying this bond between Asian parents and their children is yet another factor I noticed during 15 years of living in China, Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam. It is simply that Asian parents establish a closer physical tie to their infants than do most parents in the United States. When I let my baby son and daughter crawl on the floor, for example, my Chinese friends were horrified and rushed to pick them up. We think this constant attention is overindulgence<sup>10</sup> and old-fashioned, but for Asians, who still live through the lives of their children, it is highly effective.

16 Can we learn anything from the Asians? "I'm not naive<sup>11</sup> enough to think everything in Asia can be transplanted," said Harold Stevenson, the University of Michigan psychologist. But he offered three recommendations.

17 "To start with," he said, "we need to set higher standards for our kids. We wouldn't expect them to become professional athletes without practicing hard."

18 Second, American parents need to become more committed to their children's education, he declared. "Being understanding when a child doesn't do well isn't enough." Stevenson found that Asian parents spend many more hours really helping their children with homework or writing to their teachers.

**The Chinese School Attitude Survey**

3. And third, schools could be reorganized to become more effective—without added costs, said Stevenson. Nearly 90 percent of Chinese youngsters said they actually enjoy school, and 60 percent can't wait for school vacations to end. These are vastly higher figures for such attitudes than are found in the United States. One reason may be that students in China and Japan typically have a recess after each class, helping them to relax and to increase their attention spans.

10 "I don't think Asians are any smarter," said Don Lee, a Korean-American at Berkeley. "There are brilliant Americans in my chemistry class. But the Asian students work harder. I see a lot of wasted potential among the Americans."

**EXERCISE II-2 Comprehension/Discussion Questions**

1. In paragraphs 1-3, how does the writer introduce the article? Is the introduction effective?
2. In paragraph 4, what is the general reputations of the three universities listed? How do you know from the paragraph?
3. What is the thesis of the article? Where is it first stated?
4. What is the point of paragraph 6? How does it relate to the thesis?
5. What do the scientific studies comparing American and Asian children show? According to researcher Stevenson, why is this so?
6. What is the first cause the writer gives for the Asian students' success?
7. What aspect of Asian culture gives rise to this first cause?
8. What is the second cause the writer gives for the success of Asian students? How is it related to Asian culture?
9. In paragraph 15, Butterfield suggests that methods of child-rearing are a factor in the relationships between parents and children. Explain the connection.
10. What difference does she note between American and Asian approaches to physical ties between parents and children?
11. What suggestions does Harold Stevenson give to improve American education?
12. Given the last paragraph, what do you think is Butterfield's purpose in writing this article?

**Pre-essay**

13. Summarize Butterfield's overall point. Do you agree with it? Support your answer.
14. What connection do you think exists between hard work and success? Between a strong family and success? Support your answer.
15. Do you think methods of child rearing affect children's success in school? Support your answer.
16. What are some values of your culture that contribute to students' success?
17. In paragraph 6, Asian-Americans are called a "model minority." Explain this term. According to the paragraph, how do some Asian-Americans feel about this term? Is this a stereotype?
18. In paragraph 14, William Liu's son says he didn't have a choice about his major. Do you think that parents push children too hard? Should children be urged to choose their own majors or not? Support your answer.

**EXERCISE 11-3** Vocabulary Development. Below are listed some terms that relate to myths or philosophies that underlie cultures. Using the library, friends, or other sources, find out what each of these means and write a paragraph in explanation.

1. the Horatio Alger myth (paragraph 11)
2. Confucianism (paragraph 12)
3. the Protestant Ethic (paragraph 13)
4. an important myth or philosophy in your culture

## Writing

When we classify and divide, we are attempting to impose order on—or perhaps find order in—the world around us, thereby hoping to understand the world. When we analyze a process, we are also seeking to understand something, in this case how a sequence of events leads to an expected outcome. Similarly, when we analyze causes, we are attempting to understand the relationship of events that brought about an outcome, but in this case one that was probably unexpected and not likely to be repeated in exactly the same way. When we analyze effects, we consider the results of some action. Unlike process analysis, the relationship among events in cause-and-effect analysis is not chronological; it is causal:

Something causes something else, or many things cause something—something results from something else or many things result from one thing.

Every day we try to figure out the causes for something. When a problem arises, we start to examine the cause for it. For example, if police cars burst into flames in a large metropolitan police department, officials would immediately investigate to establish the reasons for the incidents. When any significant change in our lives occurs, such as the success of someone or something, we try to look at the factors that contributed to that change. When we identify an emotional problem, psychologists and other concerned people attempt to understand the causes. Understanding causes is not an idle pastime. We need to know why the police cars burst into flames in order to prevent this from happening again. We would like to know what it takes to be successful so that we can try to be successful. We try to learn the causes of mental disorders so that we can cure the problem the person has. Therefore, understanding causes is an important analytical process.

Likewise, we try to analyze—or, if the situation warrants it, predict—results, or effects. When a legislative body considers a tax-cut proposal, for example, it must examine the probable results the tax cut will have. Also, as more tropical rain forests are destroyed, observers, scientists, and politicians are becoming increasingly concerned about the magnitude of the problems that the destruction is causing and will cause for the ecology of the world.

In short, cause-and-effect analysis is an important analytical skill to develop. Writing the essay that analyzes causes and effects will require examining the topic carefully in order to be complete and logical. In this chapter, then, our focus is the approaches to writing the cause-and-effect essay.

Since student essays are ordinarily between 300 and 500 words in length, these essays can deal effectively and thoroughly only with an analysis emphasizing one or the other—causes or effects. And since most topics have more than one cause or effect, our focus here is on cause-and-effect essays that analyze more than one cause or effect. We will discuss three types of cause-and-effect papers.

## MULTIPLE CAUSES → EFFECT

When we analyze the causes of something, we usually find that there are numerous contributing factors, or multiple causes; just how many factors depends on the complexity of the problem. Each cause may or may not be sufficient to produce the effect. Usually, however, we find that it is a combination of the causes that produces the result. For example, take the problem of obesity. Obesity is a complex problem, for it does not mean simply overweight. A person is considered obese if he or she weighs 20 percent above the generally accepted desirable weight for his or her height and age, in addition to having a certain amount of excess body fat. A person can be overweight because he or she has large bones, for exam-

*The Cause:*

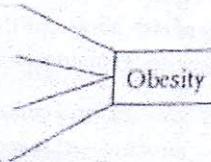
ple, but he or she is not considered obese. What causes obesity? Usually there is not a single cause; rather, a combination of factors leads to obesity.

Hereditary influences

Lack of exercise

Slow metabolic rate

Overeating



In this example we might find that for some people, only overeating and a lack of exercise lead to obesity; for others a slow metabolic rate might suffice; for still others hereditary influences might be the culprit. Of course, in the discussion of overeating, one might find that behind it lies a deeper cause: emotional problems. A person might overeat to satisfy emotional deprivation. Or perhaps some people overeat because they have a deficiency in a certain enzyme that researchers believe is a factor in signaling the body to stop eating when it has had enough. And true, a further examination of the topic might yield even more causes, such as social or environmental factors.

In writing your analysis of this topic, you could plan to spend about one paragraph on each of the causes; each paragraph would have to provide an explanation of the cause to show how it contributes to the effect. To illustrate, look at how a paragraph explaining the factor of lack of exercise might be developed:

A lack of exercise is one of the major factors contributing to obesity. When we eat, we consume energy (measured as calories). When we exercise, we expend energy or burn up calories. For example, when we run for an hour, we burn up approximately 450 calories, depending on our body size. When the number of calories we consume exceeds the number we burn up, the excess energy is stored in the body in the form of fat. If a person is inactive, it is more likely that he will not burn up all the calories consumed, so obesity can result. Moreover, studies have shown that inactivity can cause an obese person to expend less energy during a certain activity than a nonobese person. This is because inactivity lowers the basal energy rate (the basic minimum rate at which the body burns up energy). Therefore, if an obese person and a nonobese person try to run one mile, the obese person unused to activity will expend less energy because he has a lower basal energy rate.

**25 EXERCISE 11-4** On a separate sheet of paper, answer these questions about the preceding paragraph.

1. What is the topic sentence? The controlling idea?
2. What kind of support does the writer use to explain the factor?

**EXERCISE** Study the paragraphs that follow. Each one attempts to explain a reason, but not all of the paragraphs are successful. Circle the number of each paragraph that does not adequately explain the reason given in the topic sentence. Explain your choices.

1. One reason I came to the United States was to learn English. English is the most important language in the world. It is the language spoken at the United Nations; it is also the official language of diplomacy. In addition, English is useful in many occupations. For example, air-traffic controllers all over the world must be able to speak English. Since English is so important, I decided to come to the United States.
2. Another reason I came to the United States was to go to college. In my country only a very small percentage of the applicants to the universities get accepted. Since I was unable to get accepted at a university at home, I had to go to a college outside of my country. I chose this university not only because I was able to get accepted at it, but also because it offers a program that I want to pursue: computer science.
3. One of the reasons for anxiety among American men is their changing role in society. In the past, it was simple. Men were strong, tough, and aloof. The models for these masculine qualities were movie stars like John Wayne, Humphrey Bogart, and Clint Eastwood. Today, however, most women want men to be more sensitive, more gentle, more understanding—more like Robert Redford, Dustin Hoffman, and Alan Alda. So men who grew up following the old role model are suddenly told that they are not right, not good enough. They should be different. They are being asked to change the way they think about themselves and their concept of manhood, and they are being asked to change in their relationships with women. This shift in expectations calls into question men's sense of who they are and how they relate to others, giving rise to self-doubts and problems of identity. Of course, this uncertainty about their role in society can cause men serious anxiety.
4. The major reason for anxiety among American men is their changing role in society. According to all accounts, this anxiety is pervasive. It is particularly so among men in their 30s and 40s, but it can also affect men in their 50s. One psychologist tells of a 56-year-old man who originally supported his wife's desire to go back to work and get a job. But when she was promoted to a managerial position and began to travel a lot, the husband began to have anxiety attacks. Many men respond to this anxiety by refusing to commit themselves in marriage or by taking refuge in the new "macho man," the man who thinks women really do want the strong silent type and he will be that man.

*The Essay***EXERCISE J-6**

Writing Assignment. Select one of the paragraphs in Exercise 11-5 that does not explain the reason adequately. Rewrite the paragraph and explain the reason.

**EXERCISE J-7**

Writing Assignment. A. Choose one of the following topics and brainstorm about causes. Then, circle three or four of the main causes.

1. What causes people to emigrate to the United States?
  2. What caused you to come to the United States?
  3. What causes people to be successful in school?
  4. Select a bad habit that you have. Why do you have that bad habit?
  5. Select an idiosyncrasy of a family member or friend. Why does she or he have that peculiarity?
- B. Select one of the causes that you wrote about and write a topic sentence for a paragraph. Write the paragraph by explaining the cause. Give enough detail and support for your generalization. Use the paragraph on lack of exercise as a model (page 288).

*Organizing the Causal Analysis Essay*

When you are discussing multiple causes for an effect, you need to be aware of the types of causes you are analyzing. The causes may be unrelated to each other, but all are related to the effect. These types of causes are often called *factors*; they are not causally related to each other, but they do work to contribute to the effect. When discussing these kinds of causes, as in the case of the obesity example, arrange the paragraphs (causes) according to your own preference. However, the most common principles are *order of familiarity* (obvious to less obvious) and *order of interest* (less interesting to more interesting). These two principles are useful when the causes are of equal significance. When one cause is more significant, order the paragraphs according to importance, with the most important last. Remember to identify the most important cause as the most significant.

Causes are not always unrelated, however. Sometimes a cause could not have brought about an effect unless certain *conditions* existed. In this case, the causes are related to each other. For example, the incident that launched Europe into World War I was the assassination of the Austrian heir to the throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, on June 28, 1914, by a young Serb nationalist. However, it is generally felt that this incident alone would not have caused the war if certain other conditions had not existed in Europe at that time: economic rivalries, heightened nation-

**The Cause and Effect Analysis**

alism, imperialism, and so forth. In this kind of causal analysis the causes that directly precede the effect are called *immediate causes* (sometimes called *direct causes*), and those causes that are further removed in time from the effect are called *remote causes* (sometimes called *indirect causes*). In the case of World War I, the immediate cause was the assassination, but the remote causes were the conditions mentioned earlier, such as heightened nationalism.

Although remote causes are also often the most important ones (as in the case of the World War I example), they are not always the most important or the most reasonable ones. For instance, you might blame the overcrowded conditions in the public schools on overpopulation and blame overpopulation on the failure of the government to encourage birth control (remote), but a more reasonable explanation might be on the failure of the local officials to provide adequate educational facilities (immediate).

When you are analyzing causes that are not of equal importance or that are immediate and remote, it is generally a good idea to organize the paragraphs beginning with the immediate and proceeding to the remote, or from the less important to the most important.

**EXERCISE 11-8** Following are two sets of causes that are given in no particular order. For each set, decide which of these causes are immediate and which are remote. Then organize them into an outline for an essay.

**A. Causes for My Fear of the Water**

1. I can't swim.
2. When I was a child, my mother wouldn't let me go near the water.
3. I don't like the feel of being immersed in water.
4. My mother had an unreasonable fear of the water.
5. My eyes are very bad. When I take off my glasses in the water, I can't see.
6. I don't trust the water. I don't think it will hold me.
7. I associate the water with being disciplined by my father.
8. When I was ten years old, I saw someone drown.

**B. Causes for Air Pollution in Los Angeles**

1. There are a lot of cars.
2. There are a lot of factories and oil refineries.
3. Weak legislation for antipollution devices in factories and refineries exists.

*The Essay*

4. People remove antipollution devices from their cars.
5. The life-style requires that people live in suburbs a long distance from their work and commute to work.
6. Air is trapped between the mountains, not allowing the winds to disperse it.
7. Los Angeles is built in and around hills, so the suburbs are very spread out.

*The Thesis Statement for the Causal Analysis Essay* ↗

In a causal analysis essay, the thesis statement does not have to be persuasive, since a topic is being analyzed and the central idea is found in that analysis. A thesis statement for a causal analysis can simply state briefly the causes to be discussed, or it may express the most significant cause. Consider this example:

Conflicts over money, interfering relatives, and career problems all contributed to the demise of their relationship.

The topic is *the demise of their relationship*, and the central idea is *reasons for its demise*.

Now study the following causal analysis essay. As you read, try to determine whether the author is discussing causes of equal significance, causes of unequal significance, or immediate and remote causation.

**CAUSES OF MENTAL RETARDATION**

A couple who is expecting a baby looks forward to the birth of their child with high hopes and expectations. Fortunately, most babies are born in good health, with their brains and bodies intact. Sometimes, of course, a baby is born with physical and/or mental defects. One such defect is mental retardation. There is no single cause of mental retardation, but researchers have uncovered several causes, some of which are preventable.

Brain damage due to genetic conditions is a well-known cause of mental retardation. Most people are familiar with Down's syndrome, which occurs more often in babies whose mothers are over 35 years old. Down's syndrome is caused by the formation of an additional chromosome. The normal number of chromosomes for people is 46; babies born with Down's syndrome have 47. Another chromosome-related cause of mental retardation is a malformation of the X-chromosome. Evidently, the X-chromosome breaks in two, thereby, altering the normal development of the fetus. There are also several recessive-gene diseases that result in mental retardation. For example, an infant born with the recessive-gene disease called phenylketonuria will end up with profound mental retardation because this disease affects the transmittal of information between the cells in the brain, particularly the neurons in the frontal lobes. Fortunately, blood tests can detect this problem at birth and

immediate measures can be taken to limit the damage. Another disorder caused by recessive genes is Tay-Sachs disease, which is found primarily among Jewish families of northeastern Europe ancestry. This disease also affects the nerve cells, though not in the same way as phenylketonuria. But there are blood tests that can detect carriers, so it can be prevented.

Not all brain damage resulting in mental retardation occurs because of problems in the genetic makeup of the infant. Certain infectious diseases that the mother may contract during pregnancy can adversely affect the developing brain of the baby, particularly if the mother catches these diseases during the first three months of her pregnancy. The most commonly known diseases include rubella (German measles), herpes simplex, and syphilis. Because these diseases are infectious, to a certain extent they are preventable.

Another preventable cause of mental retardation in newborns relates to what the pregnant woman ingests. Certain drugs are known to hinder the development of the baby's brain. In the early 1960s, for instance, some pregnant women suffering from pregnancy-related nausea were prescribed a drug called thalidomide. This drug interfered with the development of the embryo and resulted in physical deformations and mental deficits. These women had no way of knowing at the time what this drug could cause, but now we know that many drugs can adversely affect the development—both physical and mental—of the fetus. The most easily preventable cause of mental retardation is fetal alcohol syndrome. Drinking as little as one or two glasses of wine during the first three months of pregnancy can result in physical and intellectual impairments in the infant. The mother's diet is also important during her pregnancy. Researchers find mental retardation more common among babies whose mothers were malnourished during pregnancy.

Once the child is born other factors can cause mental retardation, such as head injuries and environmental pollutants, such as mercury and lead. But even before the child is born the damage may already have been done. Fortunately, much of this damage can be prevented by the pregnant woman. Genetic counseling caution to avoid infectious diseases, avoidance of drugs, including alcohol, and proper diet can increase the chances that a woman will bear a child whose intellectual functioning will be in the normal range.\*

**EXERCISE 11-9** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions about "Causes of Mental Retardation."

1. What is the thesis statement?

\* from Gerald C. Davison and John M. Neale, *Abnormal Psychology: An Experimental Clinical Approach*, 4th ed. (New York: Wiley, 1986), pp. 407-15.

*The Essay*

2. What is the controlling idea of the second paragraph? In other words, what is the reason discussed in that paragraph?
3. What are the controlling ideas in the paragraphs that follow?
4. Is the writer discussing immediate and remote causes, or are the causes of equal significance?
5. Does the conclusion follow logically?
6. How does the role of the pregnant woman contribute to the prevention of mental retardation?
7. Make an outline of this essay.

*A Problem in Reasoning* 

When discussing causes and effects, be certain that your analysis is logical. One of the logical fallacies—errors in reasoning—to avoid is called *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, a Latin phrase meaning "after this, therefore because of this." This problem in logic occurs when the writer assumes that an incident that precedes another is the cause of that incident: "President X was elected in January. Three weeks later our nation suffered a severe depression. Therefore, President X caused that depression." This is an example of post-hoc reasoning. In this example, the illogic is clear, but be careful not to confuse chronological order with cause and effect; in addition, be certain to explain clearly the cause-and-effect relationship.

**25 EXERCISE 11-10** Study the following groups of sentences. If the relationship is solely chronological, put "Time" in the space provided; if the relationship is also causal, put "C/E" (for cause/effect) in the blank.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Every time I ride my moped to school, it rains. I am not going to ride it today, so it won't rain.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Chemicals were dumped in the Love Canal area of New York. People who lived in Love Canal have a high rate of cancer.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The sun came out. The dew on the grass dried.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ A meteor was seen in the sky over Los Angeles. An earthquake occurred the next morning.

*The Cause-and-Effect Analysis Essay*

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Last winter an unusually small amount of snow fell in the mountains. This summer the water supply in the plain below dried up.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ It rained last Tuesday. Now I have a cold.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ A strong hurricane formed in the Gulf of Mexico. Tidal waves hit the coast of Texas.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ There was a severe drop in car sales. Several workers were laid off.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ I touched a dead fish. The next day I developed pain in my fingers.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Ten movies shown in movie theaters this year showed adultery. There is an increase in adultery in our society.

 **EXERCISE 11-11** The following are some topics for a causal analysis essay. After you choose a topic, brainstorm about causes. Are they multiple causes or factors? Can you distinguish immediate and remote causes? Using this information, decide on the organizational pattern. Be sure to support the causes with

1. Develop the topic that you wrote on in Exercise 11-6.
2. Choose another of the topics in Exercise 11-7.
3. Give the causes for your particular fear of something.
4. Give the causes for pollution in a particular area or city (either in this country or in your country).
5. Give the causes for a recent social condition or change (for example, a change in men's roles, women's roles, divorce rates, family size, number of smokers versus nonsmokers, amount of stress in children).

 **CAUSE → MULTIPLE EFFECTS**

Just as an effect can have multiple causes, so can a cause have *multiple effects*. For example, several years ago most people thought that processed sugar (such as granulated sugar) was a relatively harmless sweetener that produced a pleasant taste, provided a small burst of energy, and perhaps contributed to tooth decay. There

*The Effect*

was little concern about the seemingly minor effects of eating sugar. But in recent years our consumption of sugar has increased tremendously; in addition, we have begun to uncover some unpleasant and serious effects of eating so much sugar. Although sugar may not be the sole cause of some of the following more remote effects, research has shown it can contribute to them:



When an analysis is primarily of effects, as in this case, expect to devote a paragraph to each effect. The paragraph would have to explain the relationship between the cause and the effect. Note how the effect of tooth decay is explained in the following paragraph:

One of the major effects of eating too much sugar is a high incidence of tooth decay. When we eat something with sugar in it, particularly refined sugar, enzymes in the saliva in the mouth begin to work immediately to change that sugar into a type of carbohydrate. As one eats, particles of the sugary food get lodged between the teeth and around the gums. As the food changes its chemical composition, the resultant carbohydrate produces bacteria that begin to eat away at the enamel on the outside of our teeth. This is actually the decaying of the tooth. Now, if this process happens each time we eat sugar, we can see that eating excessive amounts of sugar causes more and more tooth decay. It is true that some tooth decay can be avoided with immediate brushing after eating, dislodging all the particles of food trapped in the teeth. However, sweets are often eaten as snacks between meals and during the day, times when people generally do not brush after eating. Therefore, the dangerous process of tooth decay is allowed to continue.

**EXERCISE 11-12** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions about the preceding paragraph.

1. What is the topic sentence?
2. Does the paragraph show how eating too much sugar can result in tooth decay?
3. Is the paragraph unified? Coherent?

*The Causal-Effect Analysis Essay*

**EXERCISES** A. Select one of the following topics and brainstorm about three or four effects that might come from the cause.

1. What are some of the effects of drinking products that contain caffeine, such as cola and coffee?
2. What are some of the effects of smoking cigarettes?
3. Have you ever witnessed a disaster, such as an earthquake, a hurricane, or a severe storm? What were some of the effects of that disaster?
4. In what ways has coming to the United States affected you?

B. Using your brainstorming about effects, choose one effect, develop a topic sentence, and write a paragraph explaining that effect. Use the paragraph about tooth decay as a model.

### *Organizing the Effect Analysis Essay*

The principles for organizing an effect paper are much the same as those for organizing a causal analysis. Like causes, effects can be unrelated (causally) to each other even though they all stem from the same cause. For instance, when a killer hurricane hits, several effects result: death, property damage, energy failures, and so on. These effects are not necessarily related causally; they were all just caused by the same thing—the killer hurricane. Although effects can be of equal value or importance, usually some are more important than others. In this case, as with causes, organize the paragraphs dealing with effects according to order of importance (although focus should be on the more important—or major—ones):

Effects, like causes, can be immediate or remote. In the example of excessive sugar consumption, an immediate effect of eating sugar is a boost in energy, but more remote are the blood sugar problems and tooth decay. In this case, the remote effects happen to be the most important. An immediate effect of the earthquake in Soviet Armenia in 1988 was the death of thousands of people; a more remote effect will be, perhaps, buildings constructed under a safer and more stringent building code. In this case, although the immediate effect is the most important, the remote effect is still worth discussing.

If an analysis is of effects that occur in the same time relationship with the cause—in other words, they are all either basically immediate or basically remote—it is a good idea to order the effects according to importance. However, if the discussion is of immediate and remote effects, it is a good idea to begin with the immediate and continue to the remote. Reminder: Identify the quality of the effect (immediate, major, and so on) to the reader to clarify the type of effect being discussed.

*The Essay*

 **EXERCISE 4** Below are two sets of effects that are given in no particular order. For each set, decide which of the effects are immediate and which are remote. Then organize them into an outline for an essay.

*A. The Effects of Watching Television*

1. More people get eyestrain.
2. There is more violent crime in our cities.
3. People get fat.
4. There are more divorces.
5. Husbands and wives do not talk to each other anymore.
6. People do not enjoy reading anymore.
7. People are more afraid of each other.
8. People are lonely.

*B. The Citizens of This City Have Passed Legislation to Lower Property Taxes. (First divide effects into negative and positive.)*

1. Many city employees will lose their jobs.
2. Police patrols in the suburbs and downtown area will be reduced.
3. Citizens will have more money to spend on consumer items.
4. There will not be money for street repair.
5. The school budget will be reduced.
6. New business will be attracted to the city.
7. The park service will not be able to plant new trees along the highways.
8. The garbage will be picked up only once a week instead of twice a week.
9. More jobs will open up.
10. The local high schools will no longer have football teams.

*The Thesis Statement for the Effect Analysis Essay* 

As with a causal analysis essay, the thesis statement for an effect analysis essay does not have to be persuasive. The thesis statement can have a more simply stated central idea:

*The Cause and Effect Analysis Essay*

The tax increase will bring benefits to our city.

Here, of course, the topic is *tax increase*, and the central idea is that it will bring *benefits* to the city.

Now read the following essay, which analyzes effects. As you read, locate the thesis and determine whether the writer has clarified the type of effects being discussed.

**DO IT!**

Some do it to music, some while watching television; others do it in the privacy of their own homes, others in gyms. For some, they do it in the morning, others at night. But no matter where or when, millions of people all over the world do it, and that is exercise. But, unfortunately millions of people do not get enough exercise. The benefits of regular aerobic exercise are so great that it's a wonder everybody doesn't start on a program today.

Probably the most well-known effect of aerobic exercise can be achieved in a relatively short period of time, and that is improved cardiovascular and pulmonary functions. When a person exercises long and hard enough, the heart pumps faster and blood is circulated throughout the body. Since the heart is a muscle, exercise serves to strengthen it. As the heart becomes stronger, a person's stamina improves as well as her energy level. The same is true of the lungs. It doesn't take long to reap these benefits. A person can get such results within a few weeks just by walking briskly for 30 minutes three or four times a week.

Another physical benefit of regular aerobic exercise takes longer to achieve, but it is well worth the effort, particularly for women. Exercise can help prevent the crippling bone degeneration called osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a gradual process of bone loss that occurs naturally as people age, but it can be halted by regular aerobic exercise. Exercise actually helps increase bone mass and is said to be the best preventive measure to take to avoid osteoporosis.

Just as regular exercise can help people achieve cardiovascular and skeletal fitness, it can also help people improve their emotional fitness. One of the good things about exercise is that it reduces stress. It does this in different ways. By improving one's overall fitness, aerobic exercise makes a person more capable of handling stress because he is less tense. When exercising, blood circulation improves and people burn off the adrenalin that stress causes the body to produce. Another way that exercise helps people handle stress is that after sufficient aerobic exercise, the body produces beta-endorphins, which are natural stress-relieving chemicals. In addition to helping people cope with stress, exercise can also help to alleviate depression.

There are no doubt many other benefits of regular aerobic exercise. It doesn't require that much time or effort to become a healthier person within weeks. Instead of watching television so much, people would be better off cycling or walking.

**EXERCISE II-15:** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions about "Do It!"

1. What is the thesis?
2. Does the writer establish a need or purpose for writing this essay?
3. Which kind of effect does the writer begin with?
4. What is the controlling idea in the third paragraph?
5. Why did the writer discuss the emotional fitness last?
6. Make an outline of this essay.

**EXERCISE II-16:** Writing Assignment. Choose one of the following topics for an essay that analyzes effects. Begin by prewriting; use one of the techniques you learned in Chapter One to generate ideas. Then develop your thesis sentence and support. Be sure to distinguish between major and minor causes or between immediate and remote causes, whichever is appropriate.

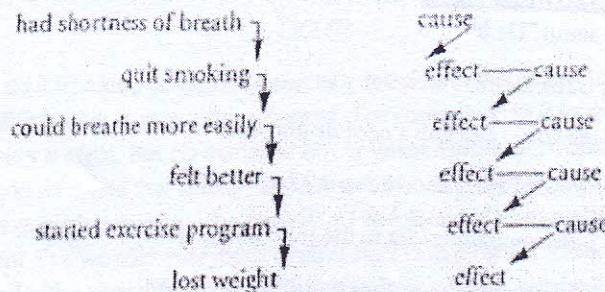
1. Choose one of the topics in Exercise II-13.
2. Analyze the effects of a change in your life. For instance, how has living away from home for the first time affected you?
3. Every family has problems. Perhaps a family member is unemployed, homesick, depressed, ill, angry, an alcoholic, or physically or mentally disabled. Problems like these affect the other family members. Discuss the effects of a family member's problem on your family.
4. Discuss the effects of a political or social change in your country.
5. Discuss the effects of your parents' values on you.

## **B THE CAUSAL CHAIN**

Another type of cause-and-effect analysis is the *causal chain*. Unlike the multiple cause-and-effect analysis, the causes and effects in a causal chain are always directly related; in fact, they are linked. In the causal chain, one effect can become a cause of another effect, ... , n, can become a cause of another effect, and so on.

## Cause-and-Effect Analysis... Essay

For example, suppose an overweight smoker is inactive because of shortness of breath. The doctor told her to quit smoking and she did. Soon she was able to breathe more easily; as a result, she felt better physically. She started an exercise program and as a result of this increased activity, she lost weight. This domino-like chain might be diagrammed as follows:



There are two major uses of the causal chain. First, it is sometimes useful for explaining one of the causes in a multiple-cause essay. For instance, in the example of obesity, the cause of overeating could be explained as follows:

The most obvious cause of obesity is overeating. But why do people overeat? One reason is emotional problems. For example, consider the case of Debbie. When Debbie was a child, her parents rewarded her for good behavior with candy and other sweet things. As she grew older, she began to reward herself quite regularly. As a result, she began to gain weight. By the time she was a teenager, Debbie had become rather heavy. Her weight then became a target for the other young people at school. They teased her unmercifully, as youngsters will do. She was teased so much that she started feeling sorry for herself and consoled herself by eating more and more. She gained more weight, and the vicious cycle continued until her self-image was so bad that she could not really perceive herself as anything but fat; therefore, diets were unsuccessful because she would inevitably get depressed during or after a diet and go on an eating binge to soothe her feelings.

**EXERCISE 11-17.** On a separate sheet of paper, make a causal chain diagram of the preceding paragraph.

The other major use of the causal chain is used in science to analyze various kinds of cycles, such as biological or chemical chains. Study the following essay, which analyzes a causal chain. Determine if the cause-effect relationship is clarified and explained.

### The End

#### UPSETTING THE BALANCE OF NATURE

The members of a living community exist together in a particular balanced relationship, or ecosystem. One animal species eats another animal species which in turn eats another. Over years, a balance is worked out among the plants and animals in a community and it remains basically stable. It is like a huge puzzle with all of the pieces in their proper places. However, at times this balance in nature is disturbed, resulting in a number of possibly unforeseen effects. Perhaps a disease results in the near extinction of one species, leaving another species with no natural predator. The result can be a terrific increase in that one species' population. This could further result in the devastation of a shared food supply, which could in turn affect another species. It is possible for the disruption in the balance of nature to have natural causes: disease, drought, fire. Sometimes, however, human beings intervene in a natural environment, perhaps only slightly and with good intentions. The result is the same. The balance of nature becomes unbalanced and results in an entire chain reaction of unforeseen and unwanted effects.

A good example of this occurred in the Antilles in the 1870s. Sugar cane was a major crop there, but rats were eating and nesting in the cane, causing a great deal of damage. The mongoose, a one-and-a-half-foot-long mammal of the East Indies, was known to be an excellent rat hunter. Several males and females were imported in 1872, and laws were established that forbade the killing of them or their offspring. The mongoose flourished in the Antilles. After ten years it had multiplied abundantly and had significantly reduced the rat population. Consequently, damage to the cane fields was greatly reduced. It seemed that the scheme to add another piece to the ecological puzzle in the Antilles had been successful.

However, that is not the end of the story. The influence of the mongoose did not stop there. As the rat population decreased and the mongoose population increased, the mongoose needed to enlarge its menu. It attacked young pigs and goats, game, poultry, and began to destroy bananas, maize, and pineapples. Because the mongoose could not be hunted, its numbers increased rapidly, and it became a terrible pest. All of the indigenous animals suffered damage. The mongoose learned to enjoy the native birds, snakes, lizards, and turtles and their eggs. Now, it was specifically these animals that kept the local insect population in check. There were in the ecosystem of the Antilles a number of beetles, borers, and other insects that lived on and in the sugar cane. Until that time, they had not caused significant damage to the cane, because they were the natural food of so many local animals that kept their numbers down. However, as the birds, snakes, lizards, and turtles disappeared, the insect population began to increase. With no natural predators to keep them in check, the insects began to do more and more damage to the cane fields.

*The Cause-and-Effect Analysis*

Finally, the people of the Antilles realized that the introduction of the mongoose had caused a finely and delicately balanced system to go awry. The law against killing the mongoose was rescinded, and the mongoose population was reduced. Gradually, the different members of the plant and animal community came back into balance with each other and equilibrium was reestablished. However, the human members of the community would not soon forget that a single change in an ecosystem can cause a chain reaction that results in completely unforeseen and sometimes unwanted effects.\*

**EXERCISE 11-18.** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions about "Upsetting the Balance of Nature."

1. What is the topic of the essay? What is the central idea?
2. What is the incident in the Antilles an example of?
3. Is this causal chain logical? That is, is the relationship among the causes and effects clearly and logically presented?
4. Does the conclusion logically follow?
5. Make an outline of this essay.

**EXERCISE 11-19.** Following are two sets of information, each giving the steps in a causal chain. What is the causal chain in each one? Devise a topic sentence for each set of information and write a paragraph explaining the causal chain. (You may need to add steps.)

A. *Disaster in Southern California*

1. Summers are hot and dry.
2. In fall, high winds come from the desert.
3. Forest fires begin and spread.
4. In spring, heavy rains fall.
5. In spring, mudslides and floods occur.

B. *Poverty*

1. People lack capital.
2. They buy items on credit.
3. They pay high interest on credit accounts.

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\* Adapted from Karl von Frisch, *Biology: The Science of Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

*The Essay*

4. This reduces their capital and puts them in debt.
5. They buy more items on credit.
6. This reduces their capital even more; it puts them further in debt.



**EXERCISE 11-20** Writing Assignment. Choose one of the following topics for an essay that develops a causal chain. First, think through the chain carefully. Do not leave out any important steps. Develop a thesis sentence and outline. Then write an essay.

1. Choose a chain from one of the sciences—for example, a biological food chain.
2. Reread the essay on the balance of nature. Write an essay describing an upset in the balance of nature that you are familiar with.
3. Choose a chain from geography. What has happened to the land in a particular area?
4. Choose a social problem like alcoholism, poverty, divorce, overpopulation, teenage pregnancy, or teenage drug use.



## *Composition Skills*

### INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

#### *The Dramatic Entrance*

In Chapter Ten, we learned how a description of a scene can be used to open an essay. There are, of course, other approaches to use for a Dramatic Entrance. For instance, your essay can begin with a particularly interesting example that illustrates your thesis or is pertinent to your topic; it can open with an effect if your paper is analyzing causes or with a cause if it is analyzing effects. Note how the writer Anastasia Toufexis uses interesting examples in the following opening to her essay on mother-and-son relationships:

Industrialist Andrew Carnegie's mother begged him not to marry until after she died; he waited one year after her death and finally wed at fifty-two. Dwight Eisenhower interrupted planning of the Allied invasion of France in May 1944 to send a Mother's Day greeting to Ida Eisenhower in Kansas.

### Effects and Effects of Effects

When Franklin Roosevelt was quarantined with scarlet fever at boarding school, his distraught mother Sara climbed a ladder each day to peer through the window of his room to check on his recovery. Actor James Dean explained his troubled life this way: "My mother died on me when I was nine years old. What does she expect me to do? Do it all alone?"

The bond that unites mother and son may be Western society's most powerful bond, yet attitudes toward the relationship are either murky or coated over with cliché. "We think we're comfortable with it, but culturally what we get are caricatures," argues Carole Klein, a longtime observer of the dynamics of family relationships....\*

When you are writing an essay that analyzes causes, you might consider opening with an effect, or vice versa. Look at how student writer Carolyn Udell opens her essay in which she analyzes the causes and effects of her fear of cockroaches; she describes a dream—one of the effects of her fear.

### ROACHES

1 Roaches crawling all over the walls, all over the floor pouring into the bedroom door, where can I run? I jump on top of the bed. They follow me up. Oh, my God, they're starting to fly all around me.... "Oh, it was just a dream." Vile and repugnant are two of the best words used to describe the most despicable creature on earth, the roach. The Bible portrays the devil as a serpent in the Garden of Eden. However, I am sure that God meant the roach to play the part. My feelings for these creatures are of spasmodic disgust, but especially fear.

2 I am not sure when this fear started, somewhere back in my early childhood. As far back as I can remember, I have never had the desire to touch a roach. The first thing I think of when a person says the word roach is its abhorrent looks. Their prehistoric appearance makes me cringe. The dark brown color reminds me of something dirty and gives me a feeling of disgust, which is exactly what a roach is—disgusting, with its long, skinny, black feelers protruding from its head, always moving and twitching in an erratic way no matter if it is squatting still or scurrying away beneath your feet. This is certainly an immediate cause of my fear.

3 Maybe the fear stems from the fact that they will eat anything, including the dead body of another animal, humans not excluded. This fact makes them seem disease-ridden. Every disease ever known to man or imagined by man can be caught from a roach, or so it seems.

\* Anastasia Toufexis, "The Most Powerful Bond of All," *Time* 1 Oct. 1984 p. 86.

*The Essay*

4 Granted, some of the fear I have for these parasites might be learned from my mother. You would think you could call good ole Mom to the rescue when you spot a big two-inch roach on the wall and count on her to take care of it for you, but this is not so with my mother. Oh, she may come when you call her all right, but when she spots the two-incher on the wall, she hands me the can of Raid and runs for cover.

5 Another thing about roaches is that they are nocturnal insects. This may be an indirect cause of my fear of them, but maybe not. A psychiatrist might evaluate it this way. Roaches are nocturnal creatures. People are afraid of the night and associate it with evil things. Therefore, I, ultimately, am afraid of roaches. Now, I do not know how valid this is, because I am not afraid of roaches because of the night. It is more like I am afraid of the night because of roaches. I do not know why, but roaches seem to be scarier at night.

6 Anyway, it all comes down to this. This nightmare I recounted earlier is just an example of the many bad dreams I have had as a kid, and still do have, occasionally. These dreams are a direct result of my fear of roaches. I imagine them crawling on my bed and all over me. These dreams leave me wide awake, scared to death, and unable to go back to sleep.

7 I can't walk into a dark room without some trepidation. I could not stand to touch one of these things. This would leave me a mental case. The only way I can kill a roach is with Raid. This kind of apprehension makes life very difficult for me when I am roughing it or camping out. I'll lie there in my sleeping bag in my tent and I will not budge, with my can of Raid by my side and a light on, of course. An actual encounter with a roach, and I lose my sense of logic. I become unable to function in a controlled manner. I remember one time when I was down in the French Quarter in New Orleans, and if roaches are manufactured somewhere, that's the factory. Anyway, I was walking through a doorway when this big black roach crossed my path. He started flying—right from the floor into midair—at me! I almost died. I did not know whether to run backward or make a dive for the floor. This would have gone on, running backward contemplating a dive for the floor, until I was all the way to Baton Rouge, had not the roach decided to divert its course.

8 In a controlled situation, such as that of a classroom, I am mentally as well as physically agonized. I saw a roach in a class once, about a chair ahead of me. I did not want to make a scene and start screaming, especially since the roach was not that big. My mind was telling me to get up calmly and casually stroll away. However, my body was wanting to jump up and run. It was a terrible strain on me. I did manage to walk a far enough distance back without making a scene.

9 There is one way and only one way to overcome this fear. And that is to walk up boldly to the biggest, blackest roach I can find and grasp it with both hands, and hold it firmly. It would only take a minute. Then, all the bad

*The Cause-and-Effect Analysis Essay*

dreams would stop. I would have confidence when I entered a dark room.  
And my mental and physical state of being would bear no strain. . . ."Oh,  
not A roach! Quick! Raid!"

—Carolyn Udell

**EXERCISE II-21:** On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions about the essay "Roaches."

1. What is the writer's purpose in analyzing this topic?
2. What is the thesis statement? Is it stated directly, or is it implied?
3. Is the essay primarily a causal analysis, an effect analysis, or both?
4. Why is "Oh, it was just a dream" in quotation marks (paragraph 1)?
5. Is the introduction inviting? That is, does it make you want to read the rest of the essay? Explain.
6. What is the topic of paragraph 2? The controlling idea?
7. Does the writer focus on immediate or remote causes?
8. What purpose or function does paragraph 6 serve?
9. What is the topic of paragraph 7?
10. What does the example of the incident in New Orleans illustrate?
11. Does the writer primarily discuss immediate or remote effects?
12. Does there seem to be any hope that the writer will overcome her fear of roaches?
13. Does the writer seem to be serious about this topic? What clues do we get that she has a sense of humor about her fear?
14. What does "Granted" at the beginning of paragraph 4 refer to?
15. Make an outline of this essay.

***The Relevant Quotation***

Another frequently used approach to opening essays is the Relevant Quotation. An essay with this type of introduction opens with a quotation by an authority on the topic or by someone who says something relevant to what is discussed in the essay. Sometimes writers begin with a famous quotation and then work it into their topic. Observe how this writer uses a quotation to introduce an article about the harvesting of saffron in Spain:

"The saffron is an arrogant flower," begins an old Spanish zarzuela named for this lush, purple blossom. "It is born with the sunrise and dies at sunset." For a couple of weeks in October of every year, in Spain's La Mancha region, the arrogant crocus is harvested frenetically as fast as it flowers.

For saffron is the world's most precious spice, often rivaling, ounce for ounce, the cost of gold. A pound of its tiny threads—the stigmas, or female organs, of *Crocus sativus*, an autumn crocus—currently costs well over \$2,000. There is such a demand for these little fibers the Spanish call "red gold" that virtually all that is grown will be sold.\*

In the following introduction, the author uses a quotation by a famous Englishman to introduce an article about the United States Constitution:

It took an Englishman, William Gladstone, to say what Americans have always thought: "The American Constitution is, so far as I can see, the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man." From this side of the water, however, the marvel has not been so much the unique system of government that emerged from the secret conclave of 1787 as the array of ordered and guaranteed freedoms that the document presented. "Every word of [the Constitution]," said James Madison, the quintessential Founding Parent, "decides a question between power and liberty."<sup>t</sup>

**EXERCISE 11-22** Writing Assignment. Select one of the following topics and use a Dramatic Entrance or a Relevant Quotation for your introduction. Assume that your essay will discuss causes.

1. An unreasonable fear you have (such as a fear of roaches, flying, heights)
2. A particular like or dislike you have (such as a passion for a certain sport)
3. The causes of something tragic (such as a hotel fire, a bomb explosion, or an accident)

\* Diane Raines Ward, "Flowers Are a Mine for a Spice More Precious Than Gold," *Smithsonian*, Aug. 1988; p. 105.

t H. B. Zobel, "How History Made the Constitution," *American Heritage*, Mar. 1988; p. 54.

*The Chapter on Cause and Effect*

## COHERENCE

### *Transitions and Expressions for Cause and Effect*

Transitions are important for coherence. In writing cause-and-effect essays, transitions are necessary to introduce causes and effects. In addition to the transitions you studied in earlier chapters, there are other transitions that are particularly useful in cause-and-effect essays. Pay close attention to the punctuation required for each type of transition.

**Transitions in Phrases.** Each transition in this group must be followed by a noun. If the phrase containing the transition comes at the beginning of the sentence, it is usually followed by a comma. The following transitions indicate cause: *because of* and *as a result of*. Study these examples:

*Because of* the possibility of fetal brain damage, pregnant women should not consume alcohol.

*As a result of* exercising regularly, a person can handle stress better.

**Expressions in Sentences.** The transitions in this group are verbs that express cause or effect. The following transitional verbs indicate cause: *caused by* and *results from*. Study these examples:

Premature aging of the skin *results from* too much exposure to the sun.

Her fear of roaches was *caused by* an early childhood trauma.

The following transitional verbs indicate effect: *cause and result in*. Study these examples:

Lack of exercise can *cause* obesity.

Walking regularly can *result in* improved health.

#### **Special Note: *the reason is that...***

The expression *the reason is that* is often used to introduce a cause. It must be followed by a complete sentence. Note this example:

Why do people exercise? *The reason is that* they are tryin' to stay healthy.

**Transitions**

**Coordinating Conjunctions as Transitions.** The coordinating conjunctions *so* and *for* are often used as transitions. *So* indicates a result. However, it is somewhat colloquial and is usually avoided in formal writing. *For* indicates a cause and is quite formal. Study these examples and note the punctuation for coordinating conjunctions:

The mongoose was protected by law, *so* it increased in number rapidly.

We stopped at a restaurant, *for* we had not eaten since early morning.

**Transitional Expressions Between Sentences.** The transitions in this group usually occur between two complete sentences. They must be preceded by either a period or a semicolon. They cannot be preceded by a comma, but a comma often follows them. The following transitions indicate an effect or result: *thus, therefore, consequently, as a result, for this reason*.

Mathematics and science teachers do not encourage young girls to study science; *thus*, there are not many female scientists.

She perceived herself as fit; *therefore*, diets were unsuccessful.

It significantly reduced the rat population. *Consequently*, damage to the cane fields was reduced.

Debbie ate constantly. *As a result*, she became rather heavy.

The students were protesting against the food served in the cafeteria. *For this reason*, the president canceled classes and closed the university.

Note: These transitions can also occur within an independent clause. When they do, they are set off by commas:

He had exceeded the speed limit. He was, *therefore*, charged a fine.

**EXERCISE 11-23** Fill in the blanks with the appropriate transitions and expressions of cause and effect. Pay careful attention to the punctuation given.**CAUSES OF TEENAGE SMOKING**

A 13-year-old boy standing in the doorway of his school, puffs on a cigarette.

He holds it carelessly, like an adult, yet in plain view. He looks around to make sure that the other guys are watching. If you ask how long he has smoked, you will find out that he started when he was eleven. By now, he is an

*The Good-and-Efficient Argument Essay*

addicted smoker. If you ask him why he smokes, he will probably say that he enjoys it. \_\_\_\_\_ you wonder if that is really the reason. It seems to me that the causes for teenage smoking are more complex. More specifically, they have more to do with the ambiguous role of teenagers in society. Teenage smoking is \_\_\_\_\_ by personal insecurity, a desire to be like adults, and peer pressure.

The \_\_\_\_\_ cause of teenage smoking is the personal insecurity young people often feel. They are at a difficult age. They are no longer children, \_\_\_\_\_ the ways in which they have behaved in the past are inappropriate. On the other hand, they are not yet adults; \_\_\_\_\_, they do not know the ways of the adult world. This conflict can \_\_\_\_\_ feelings of insecurity. \_\_\_\_\_, if children want attention from their parents or a toy or sweet, they can cry to draw attention to their desires. For teenagers, \_\_\_\_\_, crying will be labeled childish and they will be told to "act their age." Often, \_\_\_\_\_, the teenager does not know how to act his or her age. \_\_\_\_\_ teenagers do not know what to do, they often turn to smoking as a way to hide their nervousness and insecurities.

As we have just seen, teenagers need to learn how to behave as adults. They of course realize this and spend time emulating adults. \_\_\_\_\_ they try to adopt more adult attitudes and manners. They pay attention to their dress and the opposite sex. One thing that young

*The Essay*

teenagers perceive as "very adult" is smoking cigarettes. Perhaps a boy sees his father or older brother smoke. He thinks of his father as a man and \_\_\_\_\_ he wants to be "a man" like his father; he starts to smoke, \_\_\_\_\_ beginning a habit that most adults know is unhealthy.

While it is true that teenagers are attempting to become adults, this effort is often not fully conscious. \_\_\_\_\_ they often see the adults closest to them, their parents and teachers, as enemies. \_\_\_\_\_ they turn to their peer group for support. We are all familiar with the teenagers who want to look, act, and dress exactly like all of the other teenagers in their peer group. This peer group can exert \_\_\_\_\_ pressure. \_\_\_\_\_ often teenagers do things in the group that they would not normally do. One of these things is smoking cigarettes. Imagine a group of guys playing pool together after school. One says to the others, "I'm going to buy a pack of cigarettes. Do you want to smoke one with me?" The peer pressure here is \_\_\_\_\_ great. \_\_\_\_\_ most normal boys will succumb.

We can see that personal insecurity, desire to be like adults, and peer pressure can cause many teenagers to start something that they will later regret.

*The Cause-and-Effect Review Unit*

### *Grammar Review*

If you want further review of grammatical structures that will help you achieve coherence and grammatical accuracy in your writing, see the Grammar Review Unit. The following sections are designed to coordinate with the cause-and-effect analysis essay:

- Adverbial Clauses of Cause and Result, pages 398–401
- Unreal Conditions, pages 455–458
- Articles, pages 370–381

In addition to practice with these grammatical structures, you will find additional writing assignments focused on the use of cause and effect.

**EXERCISE 11-24** Writing Assignment. Choose one of the following topics for a cause-effect essay. Begin by generating ideas. Then look at your notes to determine the best support. Be sure to think through the causes and effects carefully. Write a thesis sentence and an outline. Use transitions and specific detail in the essay.

1. Complete the essay you started in Exercise 11-22.
2. Choose another topic from Exercise 11-13, 11-16, 11-20, or 11-22.
3. Discuss the effects of watching television often.
4. Discuss the effects your parents have had on you.
5. Discuss the specific values you hold that have caused you to do something.

### **REVISION**

#### *Peer Review Checklist*

When you have finished writing the first draft of your essay, give it to a classmate to read and review. Use the following questions to read and respond to each other's essays.

Writer \_\_\_\_\_

Reader \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*The Essay*

1. What is the topic or subject of the essay?

---

2. Does the essay focus mostly on causes or mostly on effects?

---

For questions 3-6 below, answer focusing either on causes or effects.

3. What is the first cause/effect given? Write it here:

---

4. What support does the writer give for this cause/effect? Write it here:

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5. Is this analysis clear and sufficient?

Give suggestions on the development of the first cause/effect:

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6. Now look at the remaining causes/effects and accompanying support the writer gives. List each cause/effect and its support.

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Analyze the support. Is it clear, sufficient, insightful?

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Give suggestions on the support:

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*The Cause-and-effect Strategy Form*

7. Does the essay use a causal chain? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, are the links in the chain clear? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is the principle of organization for the essay?

Is it effective? \_\_\_\_\_ Suggestions on organization:

9. Is the introduction interesting? \_\_\_\_\_

Suggestions on the introduction:

10. Is the essay coherent? \_\_\_\_\_ List a place in the essay where the coherence is effective: \_\_\_\_\_

List a place in the essay that lacks coherence:

Suggestions on coherence:

11. What is the most effective part of the essay? What has the writer done well?

12. What is the least effective part of the essay? Suggestions:

316      *The Essay*

### *Revision Checklist for the Cause-and-Effect Analysis Essay*

1. A cause-and-effect essay most often focuses on either the causes or the effects of some event or situation. Does your essay focus on either causes or effects?
2. If your essay focuses on causes, have you analyzed the causes sufficiently and in enough detail? If your essay focuses on effects, is your analysis insightful and sufficient? If your essay focuses on a causal chain, are the links in the chain clear?
3. Some common principles of organization for the cause-and-effect essay are order of familiarity, order of interest, and order of importance. Does your essay follow a logical pattern of organization?
4. The thesis statement for a cause-and-effect essay should contain the central idea of the essay. Does your essay have an effective thesis statement that expresses your central idea?
5. Does your essay have an interesting introduction?
6. Is your essay coherent?

# Section B

### ◆ Using transitional expressions

Transitional expressions are words or word groups that connect ideas, both within sentences and between them. Some common transitional expressions are listed below by the connecting function they perform. To become expert in using them, observe carefully how they are used by other writers.

#### Transitional expressions

##### To add or show sequence

again, also, and, and then, besides, equally important, finally, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, second, still, too

##### To compare

in the same way, likewise, similarly

##### To contrast

although, and yet, but, but at the same time, despite, even so, even though, for all that, however, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, notwithstanding, on the contrary, on the other hand, regardless, still, though, yet

##### To give examples or intensify

after all, an illustration of, even, for example, for instance, indeed, in fact, it is true, of course, specifically, that is, to illustrate, truly

##### To indicate place

above, adjacent to, below, elsewhere, farther on, here, near, nearby, on the other side, opposite to, there, to the east, to the left

##### To indicate time

after a while, afterward, as long as, as soon as, at last, at length, at that time, before, earlier, formerly, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, lately, later, meanwhile, now, presently, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, subsequently, then, thereafter, until, until now, when

##### To repeat, summarize, or conclude

all in all, altogether, as has been said, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, in simpler terms, in summary, on the whole, that is, therefore, to put it differently, to summarize

##### To show cause or effect

accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this purpose, hence, otherwise, since, then, therefore, thereupon, thus, to this end, with this object

---

##### Punctuating transitional expressions

Transitional expressions are usually, but not always, set off by commas from the rest of the sentence:

The average hot dog, *for example*, supplies 5 to 7 grams of protein for 150 calories. *Moreover*, a glass of nonfat milk supplies 8 grams of protein for only 90 calories.

### ◆ 7 Combining devices to achieve coherence

Coherence in writing is commonly achieved through a combination of devices. In the following paragraph, transitional expressions are italicized, parallel structures are underlined, and key words plus their synonyms and pronouns are in boldface.

People who wear seat belts *while* traveling in automobiles are much more likely to **survive accidents** than those who do not. *When* an automobile strikes another heavy object, the reaction can be described in terms of two **collisions**, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The **first collision** is the car striking the other object. At this collision, the car, *once* driving at, say, 30 miles per hour, suddenly comes to a complete stop. *Inside*, **unbelted** occupants are still moving at 30 miles per hour. The **second collision** occurs within 0.02 seconds, *when* the unbelted occupants strike something inside the car—the steering wheel, dashboard, or windshield—at a force of 30 miles per hour. The force of this **collision** of person and object is comparable to his or her falling off a three-story building—head first. **Serious injuries and fatalities** resulting from the force of the second **collision** are greatly reduced by **seat belts** worn properly.

## EXERCISE

<sup>1</sup>The octopus is an eight-armed sea creature that makes its home at the bottom of the sea. <sup>2</sup>With its eight tentacles, it can crawl along the seabed, build its house, and fight enemies. <sup>3</sup>In addition, its powerful arms are useful for seizing prey and gripping it with double rows of suckers that hold fast anything from crabs, crayfish, and mollusks to lobsters. <sup>4</sup>Then, to break through hard shells, the octopus drills holes with its tongue, which is covered with small, sharp teeth. <sup>5</sup>Its prey is at a further disadvantage because of the octopus's ability to disguise itself. <sup>6</sup>It can change colors to become almost invisible, and it can squirt a dark cloud of ink to confuse the other animal. <sup>7</sup>Moreover, the octopus is surprisingly intelligent, having a well-developed brain and nervous system that enable it to outsmart less clever neighbors. <sup>8</sup>Its main enemies are moray and conger eels, dolphins, and sharks, but it is well equipped to evade them. <sup>9</sup>The octopus population is being depleted mainly by overfishing.

1. List at least five transitional expressions in the paragraph.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_ e. \_\_\_\_\_  
b. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_

**EXERCISE****Analyzing an Essay's Coherence**

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Working individually or in a group, analyze the following essay for coherence both within and between paragraphs. Circle all repetitions of key words (and related synonyms and pronouns), drawing lines to connect them. Underline all instances of parallelism, connecting them with dotted lines. Enclose transitional expressions in boxes.

**SUNNY DAYS**

- 1 There are many places in the world I would like to visit. Yet, if I could visit any place of my own choosing, I would choose a place within the boundaries of the United States. It's a place everyone knows of, yet no one quite knows how to get there. Still, through the power of imagination almost everyone has been there. This place is none other than Sesame Street.
- 2 Sesame Street is an amazing place that is full of wonder and magic. The heart of this wonder and magic is the street's innocence. It is not a place of perfection. The rules must be broken (but never on purpose) in order for a lesson to be learned. A toy might not be shared or feelings might be hurt, but everything always comes out all right in the end with a hug.
- 3 How I would love to walk the sidewalks of Sesame Street. I'd ride on the tire swing that hangs in the corner, right by the staircase. I'd visit

Oscar in his trash can, and when he tells me to scram I would just smile.

I'd say "Hi" to Big Bird and let him know that I always knew Mr. Snuffleupagus was true. I'd shake Bob's hand because he's Bob—one of the "People in My Neighborhood." Maybe I'd have a snack with Cookie Monster, or go counting with the Count. Before the end of the day, I might take my toaster over to the Fix-It Shop to be fixed. Then I'd "Dance Myself to Sleep" with Ernie.

4     Sesame Street's appeal is unique. As a young child I first watched because it was something my parents put in front of me. It was a learning tool that gave me a jump start on all I would be exposed to once I was old enough for school. However, as the years went by, it was I who would get up early in the morning on my own just to visit this street and my friends who lived there. But there comes a point when enough is enough. I eventually came to realize that I was too smart for Sesame Street. I refused to watch the show out of pride because I was sure I was so smart, even though I secretly still loved every minute of it. As time passed and I came to be in junior high, it once again became "OK" to like Sesame Street. I didn't watch it now, but there was no longer any reason to deny that Ernie was my favorite Muppet on the Street.

5     As an adult, not only do I continue to hold a special place in my heart for my Sesame Street friends, but I now realize how lucky I was to have them. Thanks to cable television I can watch and revisit the Sesame Street I saw as a kid; for the current Street is now home to many new monsters

and other creatures whose names I don't even know. As I watch and experience what I laughed at as a small child, I now see that everything happened for a purpose. Each clever sketch had a lesson--about sharing or cooperation or whatever lesson a child may need to learn. I also see that Sesame Street has a certain appeal for adults. A young child sees just another person hanging out on the Street and singing; an adult sees Stevie Wonder singing a simple song he could sing only in the presence of Muppets. And all those conversations between Muppets and kids about color of skin (or fur) meant much more than I was possibly able to comprehend. For this reason, I think the world could stand to revisit Sesame Street with me.

6 It's a place where everyone can feel at home, children and adults alike. Rubber Duckie is everyone's best friend, and there is the sudden urge to dance along with Bert anytime he's "Doin' the Pigeon." It's not always easy "Bein' Green," but you soon realize that what is most important is to be yourself and be proud of that person, no matter how hard it may be. Yes, this is where I'd like to visit. If even only for a day, that day would create an additional lifetime of memories to add to the ones I already have of Sesame Street and all who live there.

—ROSEMARY REEVE (STUDENT WRITER)

## The UVic Writer's Guide: *Summaries*

*How Writing Summaries Can Help You:* Practice in writing summaries will benefit you in important ways as a student and as a writer:

- It will give you practice in close, attentive reading, and train you to do justice to what you read (rather than reading into a work only what is familiar to you).
- It will strengthen your sense of structure in writing: how a writer organizes material, develops his or her points, and moves from one point to another.
- It will develop your sense of what is important in a written work, enabling you to distinguish between key points, the material backing them up, specific examples and illustrations, and mere asides.

*Grasp The Main Trend Of Thought:* In writing a summary, make sure that you grasp the main trend of thought in the work being summarized. Above all, you need to understand the work's organization clearly. To help you, concentrate on these three closely related tasks:

1. Identify key sentences (underline them as you read): **thesis statements** (which sum up the major point of the whole work or its particular sections); and **topic sentences** (which are developed in the rest of the paragraphs they begin).
2. Look for the author's own compact summaries, either at the beginning or end of a passage, or at points of transition.
3. Finally, formulate in your own words major points that seem to be implied by the author but not spelled out in any sentence (remembering that your purpose is to report what is said, not to interpret it).

*Reduce Explanation:* To reduce explanation and illustration to the essential minimum:

- Omit passages that restate a point for clarity or emphasis.
- Drastically condense lengthy details, examples, statistics--but do not omit information or examples that are necessary to a clear understanding of the summarized work.
- Be specific whenever possible.

*Use The Most Economical Wording Possible*

- Where the original uses a whole clause, try to sum up the same idea in a phrase; where it uses a phrase, try to use a single word; where several near synonyms restate the same idea, choose the one that gives the central common meaning
- Use a simple or complex sentence rather than a compound sentence to summarize a paragraph (unless the original paragraph itself is poorly organized). A compound sentence implies that there are two or more equally important ideas in the paragraph. If you find that you have written a compound summarizing sentence, recheck the paragraph to make sure that the author did not imply some subordinating relationship that you missed.
- In determining the author's intent, be alert to such writing techniques as parallel clauses and phrases (which indicate ideas of equal weight), and transitional words and phrases (which show relationships between ideas).

Unless the original page is already severely condensed, a summary of about one-third or one-fourth the length of the original can usually preserve the essential points. The shorter the summary, however, the greater the danger of oversimplification or outright misrepresentation. Be careful to preserve the essential conditions or distinctions:

- *if-* and *unless-* clauses;
- differences between *is*, *will*, and *might*;
- words like *only*, *almost*, or the phrase *on the whole*.

Moreover, preserve the relative emphasis of the original, giving more prominence to a point treated at length than to one mentioned in passing.

**A Sample Passage To Summarize:** Read the following passage--how would you summarize it?

The invention of the process of printing from movable type, which occurred in Germany about the middle of the fifteenth century, was destined to exercise a far-reaching influence on all the vernacular languages of Europe. Introduced into England about 1476 by William Caxton, who had learned the art on the continent, printing made such rapid progress that a scant century later it was observed that manuscript books were seldom to be met with and almost never used. Some idea of the rapidity with which the new process swept forward may be had from the fact that in Europe the number of books printed before the year 1500 reached the surprising figure of 35,000. The majority of these, it is true, were in Latin, whereas it is in the modern languages that the effect of the printing press is chiefly felt. But in England over 20,000 titles in English had appeared by 1640, ranging all the way from mere pamphlets to massive folios. The result was to bring books, which had formerly been the expensive luxury of the few, within the reach of all. More important, however, was the fact, so obvious today, that it was possible to reproduce a book in a thousand copies or a hundred thousand, every one exactly like the other. A powerful force thus existed for promoting a standard uniform language, and the means were now available for spreading that language throughout the territory in which it was understood. (Baugh, *A History of the English Language*)

Now look at two summaries of it, one from a textbook and a second from a student. The two may be compared with each other, and with your own, checking for conciseness, clarity, and accuracy in the sentences, and the selection of information (major points and qualifications).

**Textbook:** Printing from movable type, invented in Germany about 1450 and brought to England about 1476, had a far-reaching influence on all European languages. Within a hundred years, manuscript books had become rare. Though at first most printed books were in Latin, over 20,000 titles in English had appeared by 1640. Books were now within the reach of everyone and could exert a powerful standardizing influence upon the language. (67 words)

**Student:** Printing, invented in Germany in the mid-fifteenth century, was introduced into England in 1476 by William Caxton. A century later manuscript books had almost disappeared. Before 1500, 35,000 books, most in Latin, were printed in Europe, but in England over 20,000 books in English had appeared by 1640. Books, within reach of poor and rich alike, promoted the spread of standardized English throughout the English linguistic territory. (68 words)

## WRITING SUMMARIES



Writing good summaries requires accurate reading and the ability to find the main idea and most important supporting evidence in a piece of writing. Summaries are always quite a bit shorter than the original texts, perhaps 75 percent shorter. Sometimes, particularly for a book, the summary is much shorter than the original, perhaps 99 percent shorter. When you write a summary, you give your readers an idea of the content of an article or book and save them the time and trouble of reading the entire original.

To write a good summary, keep the following in mind:

1. Read the original carefully.
2. Mention the source and the author at the beginning of the summary.
3. State the author's main idea without distorting those ideas or adding your own.
4. State the author's most important supporting evidence or subpoints without distorting them. Do not include details.
5. Use your own wording. Occasionally, however, a phrase in the original may be especially striking, interesting, or controversial. In that case, you may use the author's exact words if you put quotation marks around them.
6. Don't include your own ideas or comments. The summary should include only the author's ideas.
7. Periodically remind the reader that you are summarizing someone else's idea.

The following selection discusses the problems of staying up all night to study for exams. Before you read, answer these questions:

1. What do you think of the idea of staying up all night to study for an exam?
2. What do you think of using stimulants to help stay alert?
3. Do you think students usually recover well from staying up all night?
4. Have you ever stayed up all night studying for an exam?

## PROFESSIONAL WRITING

### The Dangers of Cramming

Midnight, and the spiral notebook is barely half full. The rest of its pages, scribbled with organic chemistry equations, litter the dorm-room floor. Every few minutes the figure hunched over the desk tears away another page, having memorized as much as he can, and passes it on to his friend. And thus the two roommates continue all night, dropping the pages to the carpet after each has absorbed his fill.

Welcome to the all-night cramming session, which most students resort to at some desperate point in their college careers. Armed with the energy of youth, they simply ignore their bodies' cries for sleep, trying to fend off fatigue with doses of coffee or, occasionally, drugs. Teachers and parents have long argued that cramming does more harm than good—and the latest research into sleep needs and patterns suggests that they are right.

For some people, disruptions in the regular sleep cycle can cause temporary intellectual lapses—and stimulants can set off severe side effects. Thus, for every student who manages to memorize the chemical synthesis of bona-S-rubber at 5 A.M. and then triumphantly finds that precise question on his test at 9, there are more than a few who lament the "obvious" answers they blew on a multiple-choice exam because they "just couldn't focus."

The outcome of all-nighters is unpredictable because the impact of sleep loss varies so widely. "Some people are markedly impaired by even a small decrease in sleep time," says David Buchholtz, a neurologist and sleep therapist at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, "while others can go without sleep for a few nights without any demonstrable loss of performance." People also have vastly different minimum requirements: a full night's rest can range from 4 to 10 hours. It is critical, experts stress, for each person to know how much sleep he needs.

Heavy use of stimulants can compound the problem. Many students assume that large quantities of coffee or a few amphetamines will increase alertness; they don't. In fact, stimulants merely disguise—briefly—a reduced capacity to grasp, retain, and retrieve information. "Caffeine does not correct the cognitive impairment caused by lost sleep," Buchholtz says. "A person may be awake, but

he'll have to deal with an intellectual deficit, and his concentration won't be there. He can actually have 'microsleeps' and stare at the same word for five minutes."

Nor are unpredictable naps the only penalty of substance abuse. Coffee drinkers should watch out for Caffeine Intoxication Syndrome, an onset of anxiety, panic, headaches and a frustrating inability to sleep. Most people would have to drink about 10 cups to fall into this condition, but some are so sensitive that it can hit them after only 2 to 3 cups. Speed [an amphetamine] is far more hazardous. Overdoses can lead to auditory hallucinations and paranoia. In addition, according to Larry Alessi, assistant professor of psychiatry at The Johns Hopkins Medical School, "if someone uses speed for many weeks and then stops, he may 'crash' into severe depression."

Unless a person abuses his body with stimulants, he should be able to snap back fairly quickly from an all-nighter. One full night of rest will usually produce complete recovery from up to 48 hours of sleep deprivation; normal, healthy people have been known to stay awake for as long as a week without lasting ill effects. On the second night, there is usually an increase in REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, the phase in which dreaming occurs. Normally, REM sleep is beneficial, but some people report particularly graphic and disturbing nightmares associated with a sudden increase in REM.

Then there are the problems of students who want to get a good night's sleep before an exam but just can't. Stress often promotes insomnia. It may cause the reticular activating system, the structure in the brain that is responsible for alertness, to stay on too long; this prevents sleep-inducing mechanisms from doing their job. What do experts advise a student who finds himself tossing and turning for a half hour or so on the eve of a test? He should get up and try an ordinarily relaxing activity, like snacking or watching television, until he is tired. Some people find that making notes about what's worrying them can exorcise those concerns until the morning.

Sleeping too much, authorities agree, should not worry most people. Even after an extended night of "rebound" sleep, the brain arouses itself when its needs have been fulfilled. Clinically depressed people do often retreat into slumber to avoid the waking hours, but true clinical depression is accompanied by other noticeable symptoms such as loss of appetite, decreased self-esteem and even thoughts of suicide.

In the end, the best formula to follow when finals arrive is one that students have been taught for years—moderation. There will surely be times when excelling, or perhaps just passing, requires pushing bedtime back, but any major changes in sleep patterns should be

made cautiously. As Buchholtz suggests, "The key is keeping perspective and not ever overdoing it."

(Keith Ablow, *Newsweek on Campus*  
May 1985, p.9)

### EXERCISE 1: SUMMARY

Now read the selection again and summarize it in one sentence of not more than 25 words. As with most summaries, use the present tense. (You needn't mention the name of the author or the title of the article yet.)

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Write several of the one-sentence summaries from the class on the board. Choose the best ones. Here is one possibility:

Staying up all night to study, especially with the help of stimulants, does not help you learn and can have negative side effects.

Next, label each paragraph with a subheading indicating the subject discussed in that paragraph. The first three paragraphs have been done for you.

1 introduction—description of a cramming session

2 cramming, more harm than good

3 temporary mental lapses

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

6 \_\_\_\_\_

7 \_\_\_\_\_

8 \_\_\_\_\_

9 \_\_\_\_\_

10 \_\_\_\_\_

When you have finished, compare your subheadings with those of your classmates. If the headings for any paragraph are quite

different from one another, reread that paragraph and select the heading that best states the subject of the paragraph.

Which paragraph seems to state the main point the author wants to make in this article? Paragraph \_\_\_\_\_

Write that main point or thesis here. \_\_\_\_\_

Now look at your list of subheadings and group together headings that deal with similar subjects. Give each grouping a name.

How many paragraphs seem to make up the introduction? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the other groupings you formed?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now write a short summary (100 to 150 words) of this article. Remember that the summary should be in the present tense. Begin by mentioning the original source. Here are possible ways to include the source.

In his article entitled "The Dangers of Cramming," Keith Ablow { informs us } that . . .  
{ states }  
{ claims }  
{ shows us }

Or:

In "The Dangers of Cramming," Keith Ablow { indicates }  
the problems { discusses }  
{ explores }

Or:

The article "The Dangers of Cramming" by Keith Ablow examines the negative effects . . .

Or:

Cramming, according to Keith Ablow in his article "The Dangers of Cramming," can do more harm than good.

(Note the correct punctuation and capitalization of the citation.)

Continue the summary, using your list of subheadings and your groupings as a guide to help you remember the main points covered in the article. At least once in your summary, remind your readers that you are summarizing by using a phrase like the following:

The author goes on to say . . .

Or:

Ablow also reports that . . .

Or:

The article further states that . . .

### EXERCISE 2: SUMMARY

Now read the following summaries of this article. Each summary has good features, and each also has some weaknesses. Look back to the beginning of this section to review the points to keep in mind when writing a summary. After you have finished reading each summary, list its strong and weak features. Use the following checklist.

A good summary should do the following:

- Include a mention of the source.
- Correctly interpret the original.
- Include no editorial comments.
- Include only the most important points, without details.
- Use the summarizer's own words, not those of the original author (unless in quotation marks).

#### Summary 1

In "The Dangers of Cramming," Keith Ablow explains that students who try to stay up all night studying for exams are probably doing themselves more harm than good. Most of these students did

not bother to study hard enough during the term and when exams come they feel they have to try to catch up and learn everything all at once. The problem with disrupting normal sleep patterns in this way is that the students may fall into a temporary intellectual lapse and after the exam the next day they lament the obvious answers they blew because they just couldn't focus. Ablow points out that using stimulants to stay awake can be dangerous because they can cause unexpected side effects. On the other hand, most young people can recover from an "all-nighter" with one good night's sleep. Some students suffer from not being able to fall asleep when they are nervous and others may worry about sleeping too much, but the author advises moderation and regular sleeping habits as the best formula.

### Summary 2

Contrary to what many students think, staying up all night to study for an exam is not very efficient. Such a disruption in sleeping habits can actually make the student less mentally alert the next day and cause "microsleeps," in which the student cannot concentrate. Taking drugs to help stay awake can cause "Caffeine Intoxication Syndrome" with accompanying headaches and feelings of anxiety, according to neurologist and sleep therapist David Buchholtz of The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. Although for most people it would probably take at least 10 cups of coffee to produce this syndrome, some people are so sensitive that they can develop unpleasant side effects with only 2 or 3 cups of coffee. In most young people other kinds of sleep disorders are rare or temporary and one good night's sleep can get them back to normal. As with many other things, the best advice is to not make major and drastic changes in sleeping habits and always think in terms of moderation.

### Summary 3

According to Keith Ablow in "The Dangers of Cramming," if you stay up all night trying to study for an exam, you may find yourself the next morning actually less prepared for the exam than if you had just gone to bed, gotten a good night's sleep, and taken your chances with the exam. The reason is that major disruptions in sleep patterns can cause a lack of mental alertness, so that even if you studied for the exam you may not be able to remember much the next day. Furthermore, no matter what people say about not needing much sleep, scientists know that everyone needs a good night's

sleep before a big day, usually 7–9 hours. Stimulants used to help students stay up all night may trick the students into feeling awake even when their minds are going to sleep on them and they stare vacantly for minutes at a time. In addition, even mild stimulants such as caffeine can cause unpleasant side effects if taken in too great a quantity. Moderation is the watch word. Study during the whole term, not just before the exam; you are sure to do better in school if you don't overdo it.

*Summary 1***Strong features**

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**Weak features**

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*Summary 2***Strong features**

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**Weak features**

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*Summary 3***Strong features**

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**Weak features**

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Now look at your own summary again. List its strong and weak features just as you did for the sample summaries.

**Strong features**

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**Weak features**

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## Writing Titles

- Capitalize the first and last words of a title plus all words in between except for articles (*a, an, the*), prepositions (*to, between*, and so forth), and coordinating conjunctions (such as *and, but, or*).

*The Unfolding Drama of the Bible*

*Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*

- Italicize or underline the following:

### BOOKS

*The Scarlet Letter*

*War and Peace*

EXCEPTIONS Do not italicize titles of sacred books, such as the Bible or the Koran.

### FILMS

*Gone with the Wind*

*Get Shorty*

### JOURNALS

*Critical Inquiry*

*The American Scholar*

### LONG MUSICAL WORKS

*Cats*

*Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue*

*La Traviata*

EXCEPTION Do not italicize works with numbered titles, such as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

### MAGAZINES

*Newsweek*

*Playboy*

## NEWSPAPERS

*the Washington Post**the Los Angeles Times*

*Note:* Do not italicize the initial *the* even when it is part of the name.

## PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURE

*Rembrandt's Night Watch**Beverly Pepper's Thel*

## PLAYS

*Death of a Salesman**Angels in America*

## TELEVISION AND RADIO PROGRAMS

*All Things Considered**Roseanne**Nightline*

## RECORDINGS

*the Beatles' Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band**the Grateful Dead's Hundred Year Hall*

- Use double quotation marks for the titles of short works such as articles, short stories, and songs.

"Seal Hunting in Alaska" (magazine article)

"Born in the U.S.A." (song)

"Amateurs Go to War" (chapter in a book)

EXCEPTION Use *no* quotation marks for public documents such as The Magna Carta and the Declaration of Independence. Change *double* to *single* quotation marks when the title of a short work appears within another title that needs quotation marks.

An essay titled "Fences and Neighbors in Frost's 'Mending Wall'" has deepened my interest in the poem.

- The essay's title is enclosed by double quotation marks because an essay is a short work. Within this title is the title of a poem—another short work—which is enclosed by single quotation marks.
- Use underlining or italics inside quotation marks if the title of a short work includes the title of a major work.

"On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Again" (poem)

- Do not use italics or underlining or quotation marks when writing your own title at the head of an essay unless your title includes a reference to another title.

The Way to Treat Nuclear Waste

The Ghost in Shakespeare's Hamlet

# Correcting Common Errors

In most college papers you are expected to follow the rules of Standard American English. Since some of these rules are troublesome, this chapter shows you how to correct and avoid errors that writers commonly make. We list the errors alphabetically.

## 12a

### Abbreviations Misused

- Do not abbreviate the days of the week, the months of the year, and the names of most geographical entities.

On the last <sup>Sunday</sup> <sup>Aug</sup>, we hauled our boats from the Saco <sup>River</sup> and  
^ ^  
Nova Scotia.  
headed for N.S.  
^

EXCEPTION Abbreviate the name of a state, province, or district when it forms part of an address.

Austin TX

Washington DC

Sherbrooke Que.

- Do not abbreviate units of measurement.

Giraffes grow up to eighteen <sup>feet</sup> tall.

Most porcupines weigh between fifty and sixty <sup>pounds</sup> lbs.

A 50-lb. bag of fertilizer will feed about 2500 <sup>square feet</sup> sq-ft of lawn.

**12a**

## Correcting Common Errors

- Do not use any abbreviation that is not widely known without first explaining its meaning.

*Committee on Instruction (COI)*

The COI has been considering a proposal to lengthen the school year.

After explaining its meaning, you may use the abbreviation on its own.

**12b**

## Colon Misused

- Do not use a colon after *such as*, *including*, or a form of the verb *be*.

On rainy days at camp, we played board games such as Monopoly, Scrabble, and Trivial Pursuit.

One morning, I woke up to find that someone had taken all of my valuables, including my watch, my camera, and my money.

Still in my locker, though, were my toilet kit, my flashlight, and my wallet—now empty.

- Do not use a colon between a verb and its object.

We needed pasta, a window screen, and a bottle of gin.

- Do not use a colon between a preposition and its object.

So on the way home we stopped at the supermarket, the hardware store, and the liquor store.

**12c**

## Comma Misused

**1 Between Basic Parts of a Sentence**

- Do not use a comma between a subject and its predicate.

In August, all the members of the Johnson clan gathered for their annual picnic.

**EXCEPTION** Use a pair of commas to set off a *phrase or clause* that comes between the subject and its predicate.

In August, all the members of the Johnson clan, *from ancient Winona to little Susie*, gathered for their annual picnic.

- Do not use a comma between a verb and its object.

Altogether we ate */* 40 hamburgers and 6 big watermelons.

## 2 With a Conjunction

- Do not use a comma before a conjunction within a series of just two words or phrases.

The baseball season of 1994 was exciting */* but short-lived.

The election results of 1994 delighted the Republicans */* and dismayed the Democrats.

**EXCEPTION** You may use a comma to set off a contrasting phrase.

There is no hope without fear, nor any fear without hope.

—Benjamin Franklin

- Do not use a comma after a conjunction.

I like running my own business, *but* the hours are long.

**EXCEPTION** Use a pair of commas after a conjunction to set off a word or word group.

I like running my own business, *but, I must admit*, the hours are long.

## 3 With Restrictive Modifiers

- Do not use commas with **restrictive modifiers**. These are modifying words, phrases, or clauses that restrict the meaning of their **headwords**—the words they are meant to modify.

All customers */* who are caught shoplifting */* will be reported to the police.

No one */* without a ticket */* will be admitted.

**12c**

## Chapter 12: Correcting Common Errors

In 1994, former U.S. president / Jimmy Carter / helped to negotiate a change of government in Haiti.

- A name that follows a noun or noun phrase (like "former U.S. president") is restrictive and should not be set off by commas. But when the name comes first, the common noun or noun phrase that follows it is nonrestrictive and should be set off by commas.

In 1994, Jimmy Carter, the former U.S. president, helped to negotiate a change of government in Haiti.

**4 The Comma Splice**

The **comma splice** is the error of joining two independent clauses with nothing but a comma.

**COMMA SPLICE** Gail was stunned, she had been fired without warning.

To fix the error, you may add a conjunction after the comma or replace the comma with a semicolon or a period.

Gail was stunned, <sup>for</sup> she had been fired without warning.  
                          ^

Gail was stunned, <sup>;</sup> she had been fired without warning.  
                          ^  
                          She

Gail was stunned, <sup>,</sup> she had been fired without warning.  
                          ^

**12d****Comparison Fault**

A **comparison fault** is the failure to specify clearly *both* of the items that are being compared.

**COMPARISON FAULT** The river is cleaner now than two years ago.

This sentence seems to compare the *river* with *two years ago*. To make the comparison clear, specify both of its terms.

The river is cleaner now than <sup>it was</sup> two years ago.  
                          ^

Here are two more examples. First:

## Dangling Modifier

**12e**

COMPARISON FAULT Tokyo's population is larger than New York.

This sentence compares a population with a city. A small revision can solve the problem.

Tokyo's population is larger than New York.<sup>is</sup>  
<sup>A</sup>

or

Tokyo's population is larger than <sup>that + of</sup> New York.  
<sup>A</sup>

Second:

COMPARISON FAULT Roger jumps higher than any player on the team.

If Roger himself is a player on the team, this sentence makes him jump higher than he himself does. To clarify the comparison, keep Roger distinct from his teammates.

Roger jumps higher than any <sup>other</sup> player on the team.  
<sup>A</sup>

**12e****Dangling Modifier**

A dangling modifier occurs when its headword—the word it is meant to modify—is missing. Since a modifier always needs a headword, it will attach itself to a false one if the true one is not in the sentence.

DANGLING MODIFIER After doing my homework, the dog was fed.

To fix this kind of sentence, break it up into two sentences in the *active voice*.

I did my homework.

Then I fed the dog.

Then combine the sentences by turning the first into a modifier of the second.

After doing my homework, I fed the dog.

or

After I did my homework, I fed the dog.

**12f**

## Chapter 12: Correcting Common Errors

**12f**

### Direct and Indirect Reporting of Discourse Confused

**Discourse**, which is anything spoken or written, may be reported directly or indirectly.

**Direct reporting** of discourse—quoting the exact words of anything spoken or written—requires quotation marks. (See section 10h.) **Indirect reporting** requires *no* quotation marks but, as is shown in the following, does call for changes in wording:

DIRECT REPORTING The senator said, "I favor federal subsidizing of day care."

Tense changed to match tense of introductory verb

INDIRECT REPORTING The senator said that she favored federal subsidizing of day care.

First person pronoun becomes third person

DIRECT REPORTING The business owner asks, "How can we have free enterprise with government interference?"

Question mark changed to period

INDIRECT REPORTING The business owner asks how we can have free enterprise with government interference!

DIRECT REPORTING The customer sat down at the counter and asked, "Do you have any scruples?"

Tense matches tense of introductory verb

INDIRECT REPORTING The customer sat down at the counter and asked if we had any scruples.

Normally, an indirect question begins with the opening word of the original question—a word such as *how*, *why*, *what*, *when*, or *where*. If the question begins with an auxiliary such as *can* or *did*, the indirect question starts with *if* or *whether*.

## 12g

### Double Negatives

A **double negative** occurs when the writer uses two negative words to make one negative statement.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE People sitting in the back *couldn't hardly* hear the speaker.

DOUBLE NEGATIVE<sup>1</sup> The car *didn't give me nothing* but trouble.

Standard American English allows just one negative word for each negative statement.

People sitting in the back couldn't hardly hear the speaker.

The car <sup>gave</sup> ~~didn't~~ give me nothing but trouble.

Negative words include *not (n't), never, hardly, scarcely, barely, none, nothing, no one, no, neither, and nor*.

## 12h

### Fragments

Complete sentences help the writer to sound well organized and the reader to grasp the writer's point. Sentence fragments often do just the opposite.

#### 1 Using and Misusing Sentence Fragments

A **sentence fragment** is part of a sentence punctuated as if it were a whole sentence.

A new mountain to be climbed.

In conversation, we often use fragments that make perfectly good sense.

"When?"

"Tomorrow."

12h

"Really?"

"No question about it."

In writing also, you can sometimes use a sentence fragment effectively.

For so many years college had seemed far off, but all of a sudden it was there, staring me in the face. A new mountain to be climbed.

—College student

But you should handle sentence fragments with care. Otherwise, your writing will sound disorganized.

In conclusion I feel Falstaff proves to be a most likable character. And interesting too. Showing an ability to think quickly in tight spots. But above all he lends a comical light to the play. Which I feel makes it all the more enjoyable.

—College student

Unless you're sure that you know how to use fragments effectively *and* that your reader will accept them, make all of your sentences complete.

**EXCEPTIONS** Fragments are commonly used in résumés and marginal notes.

## 2 Spotting and Editing Fragments

If you aren't sure whether or not a particular word group makes a complete sentence, try these questions:

- Does the "sentence" start with a subordinator and have only one verb? If so, the "sentence" is a fragment and must be attached to an independent clause.

One Halloween night some years ago, a full-grown man with a sick sense of humor disguised himself as a ghost, <sup>so</sup> <sub>^</sub> that he could terrify little children.

- Does the "sentence" start with a relative pronoun and have only one verb? If so, this "sentence," too, is a fragment and must be attached to an independent clause.

## Misplaced Modifiers

## 12i

In 1994, the British and French established service on a new train,  
<sup>which</sup>

<sup>which</sup> travels between London and Paris in just three hours.

- Does the "sentence" lack a subject? If so, furnish one.  
<sup>He defeated</sup>  
<sup>Defeated</sup> the great warriors in the kingdom.

- Does the "sentence" lack a predicate? If so, you can often combine the fragment with the sentence that follows it.

<sup>is</sup>  
<sup>Bungee jumping</sup> is not for everyone.

- Is the "sentence" merely a modifying phrase? If so, combine it with the sentence that contains what the phrase modifies.

<sup>with</sup>  
<sup>Our room had a big picture window,</sup> With a view of the Grand Canyon.

## 12i

## Misplaced Modifiers

A **misplaced modifier** does not clearly point to its **headword**—the word or phrase it modifies.

MISPLACED MODIFIER I practiced the speech that I had to give in French class *while taking a bath*.

Since the writer here seems to say that he or she had to give a speech while taking a bath, the modifier (in italics) is misplaced. It belongs right before its headword:

EDITED *While taking a bath*, I practiced the speech that I had to give in French class.

## 1 Squinting Modifiers

A **squinting modifier** is one placed where it could modify either of two possible headwords.

SQUINTING MODIFIER The street vendor she saw on her way to school occasionally sold wild mushrooms

**12i**

## Correcting Common Errors

Did the writer see the vendor occasionally, or did the vendor sell wild mushrooms occasionally?

EDITED The street vendor she occasionally saw on her way to school sold wild mushrooms.

or

EDITED The street vendor she saw on her way to school sold wild mushrooms occasionally.

**2 Misplaced Restricter**

A **restricter** is a one-word modifier that limits the meaning of another word or a word group. Restricters include *almost, only, merely, nearly, scarcely, simply, even, exactly, just, and hardly*. Usually a restricter modifies the word or phrase that immediately follows it.

*Only* the Fabulous Fork serves brunch on Sundays.

The Fabulous Fork serves *only* brunch on Sundays.

The Fabulous Fork serves brunch *only* on Sundays.

A restricter placed at the end of a sentence modifies the word or phrase just before it.

The Fabulous Fork serves brunch on Sundays *only*.

A carelessly placed restricter leaves the meaning unclear.

MISPLACED RESTRICTER The Fabulous Fork *only* serves brunch on Sundays.

Is brunch the only meal served on Sundays, or is Sunday the only day on which brunch is served? To make the meaning clear, place the restricter carefully, as shown above.

**12j****Mixed Constructions**

A **mixed construction** is a combination of word groups that do not fit together grammatically or meaningfully. Here are three examples:

### 1 Modifier Misused as Subject

MISUSED MODIFIER <sup>S?</sup> Fearful of the dark in the old bedroom / <sup>P</sup> kept the boy awake all night.

To correct a sentence like this, you can do one of two things:

- Turn the modifier into a noun.

<sup>S</sup> EDITED <sup>P</sup> Fear of the dark in the old bedroom / <sup>P</sup> kept the boy awake all night.

- Furnish a noun as the subject.

<sup>MODIFIER</sup> <sup>S</sup> <sup>P</sup> EDITED Fearful of the dark in the old bedroom, the boy / <sup>P</sup> lay awake all night.

### 2 Verb Misused with Direct Object

MISUSED VERB <sup>V</sup> The president of the company congratulated the achievement of the workers.

An achievement cannot be congratulated; only people can be. To correct this kind of error, change the verb or the object so that the two fit together.

EDITED The president of the company congratulated the workers on their achievement.

or

The president of the company praised the workers' achievement.

### 3 Incompatible Items Joined by a Linking Verb

JOINED INCOMPATIBLE ITEMS Another kind of flying is a glider.

An activity (*flying*) cannot be equated with a concrete thing (*glider*). To correct a sentence like this, make the linked items compatible.

EDITED Another kind of flying is gliding. [two activities]

**12j**

## Correcting Common Errors

OR

EDITED Another kind of aircraft is a glider. [two concrete things]

Here is another example:

The greatest thrill of the trip was <sup>riding</sup> when we rode the rapids.

A thrill is not a time but an experience, which is what riding is.

**12k**

## Parallel Structure Faulty

**Faulty parallelism** occurs when two or more sentence elements that are coordinate in meaning do not match in form. Since faulty parallelism can jar your reader, you should make coordinate items parallel.

I like swimming, skiing, and <sup>hiking</sup> to-hike.

or

I like <sup>to swim, ski</sup> swimming, skiing, and to hike.

The Allies decided to invade Italy and then <sup>that</sup> <sup>they would</sup> launch a massive assault on the Normandy coast.

In sentences containing correlatives, the items after each correlative should be exactly parallel in form.

Either we must make nuclear power safe or stop using it.

or

We either  
Either <sup>we</sup> must make nuclear power safe or stop using it.

In a series of phrases beginning with a word such as *to* or *in*, repeat the word before each phrase or don't repeat it at all after the first phrase.

They fought in the streets, the fields, and <sup>in</sup> the woods.

or

They fought in the streets, the fields, and in the woods.

Possessive Needed before a Gerund

**12n****12l****Passive Voice Misused**

Avoid switching from active-voice verbs to passive-voice verbs when you have no good reason for doing so.

Usually I run two miles each day, but that morning ~~I was decided~~  
<sup>I</sup>  
~~to run~~  
~~that a four mile run should be taken.~~

The active version snaps the sentence into shape and keeps the focus on the one who is acting. Switch to the passive only to keep the focus on someone who is acted upon, as in the following:

Usually I run two miles each day, but that morning *I was kept* in bed by the flu.

**12m****Past Participle Misformed**

The past participle of a regular verb is misformed when it lacks the ending *-d* or *-ed*.

**MISFORMED PAST PARTICIPLES** I was suppose to keep the station open until midnight, but when business was slow, I use to close early.

If you write this way, it may be because you speak this way, not pronouncing the final *-d* or *-ed* when they are needed. To hear the difference these endings make, see if you can make them audible as you read the following sentence aloud:

**EDITED** I was supposed to keep the station open until midnight, but when business was slow, I used to close early.

**12n****Possessive Needed before a Gerund**

A **gerund** is a verbal noun—a noun that is made from a verb and used as the name of an action (*running, singing, playing*). Because

**12n**

## Correcting Common Errors

the gerund always ends in *-ing*, it looks like a participle serving as a modifier. But see the difference:

## MODIFIER

The conductor, tapping a baton, called us to attention.

## GERUND

The conductor's tapping of a baton called us to attention.

A noun or pronoun used before a gerund should normally be in the possessive case.

Jake winning surprised everyone.

Everyone was surprised by him winning the race.

A noun or noun phrase that follows a gerund is sometimes preceded by *of*.

**12o**

## Pronoun Case Forms Misused

The **case** of a pronoun is the form it assumes according to its grammatical role in a sentence.

SUBJECTIVE CASE      POSSESSIVE CASE

OBJECTIVE CASE

When *they* finished *their* dinner, the waiter handed *them* the bill.

To avoid misusing pronoun case forms, observe the following guidelines:

- Use the same case forms for pronouns linked by *and*.

*She*  
Her and I went swimming every day. [both subjects of *went*]  
^            ^

He and *myself* took turns driving. [both subjects of *took*]  
^

Jake told Cynthia that he wanted the proceeds split between her and  
*me*.  
I [both objects of *between*]  
^

- Do not use *me, him, myself, himself, herself, or themselves* as the subject of a verb. Use pronouns in the subjective case.

*Me* and Sally talked for hours.  
^

*Then herself* and Sam left the party.  
^

## Pronoun Reference Unclear

**12p**

- Do not use a pronoun ending in *-self* as the object of a verb (V) or preposition (PR) unless the pronoun refers to the subject.

The director chose Bob and <sup>V</sup>*myself* for two minor parts and then cast herself in the leading role.

The letter was addressed to <sup>PR</sup>*me*.

The ball dropped right between Jennifer and <sup>PR</sup>*myself*.

- Do not use *I*, *he*, *she*, *we*, or *they* as the object of a verb or preposition.

My uncle always brought presents for my sister and <sup>me</sup>*I*.

- Use the subjective case after *than* or *as* when a pronoun is compared to a subject.

<sup>S</sup> Ramona runs faster than <sup>I</sup>*me*.

- Use the objective case after *than* or *as* when the pronoun is compared to an object.

The company paid the newcomer as much as <sup>me</sup>*I*.

- Do not use *hisself*, *theirself*, or *theirselves* under any condition in Standard English. Use *himself* and *themselves*.

The mayor <sup>himself</sup>*hisself* came to the party.

The voters <sup>themselves</sup>*theirselves* want change.

- Avoid confusing *its* and *it's*; *their*, *there*, and *they're*; *whose* and *who's*. For help with these, see section 9j.

**12p****Pronoun Reference Unclear**

A **definite pronoun** is a word that commonly takes the place of a noun or noun phrase, which is called the **antecedent (A)** of the pronoun.

Brenda thought <sup>A</sup>*she* had lost the dog, but <sup>A</sup>*it* had followed her home.

In contrast, an **indefinite pronoun** such as *everybody* has no antecedent, and the pronouns *I* and *you* need no antecedent. But all definite pronouns (such as *he*, *she*, *it*, and *they*) take antecedents and should clearly refer to them.

When using a definite pronoun, make it clearly refer to its antecedent. Avoid the following:

### 1 Ambiguity

A pronoun is **ambiguous** when it has more than one possible antecedent.

**AMBIGUOUS ANTECEDENT** Whenever Mike met Dan, *he* felt nervous.

To eliminate the ambiguity, replace the pronoun with a noun.

**EDITED** Whenever Mike met Dan, Dan felt nervous.

Or, to avoid repeating the name, you can put the pronoun first.

**EDITED** Whenever Mike met him, Dan felt nervous.

### 2 Broad Reference

A pronoun reference is **broad** when *this*, *that*, *which*, or *it* refers to a whole statement that contains one or more possible antecedents within it.

**BROAD REFERENCE** The Congressman opposes [gun control], which rankles many of his constituents.

**EDITED** The Congressman's opposition to gun control rankles many of his constituents.

Here is another example.

**BROAD REFERENCE** [Judge Ito finally ruled that a TV camera would be allowed to film the trial of O. J. Simpson.] *This* was a mistake.

Pronoun Reference Unclear

12p

Does *this* refer to the judge's ruling or the trial?

EDITED Judge Ito finally ruled that a TV camera would be allowed to film the trial of O. J. Simpson. This ruling was a mistake.

### 3 Muffled Reference

A pronoun reference is **muffled** when the pronoun refers to something merely implied by what precedes it.

MUFFLED REFERENCE The chief fact of life in Eastern Europe is *their* struggle to recover from forty years of Soviet domination.  
<sup>A7</sup>

EDITED The chief fact of life in Eastern European countries is their struggle to recover from forty years of Soviet domination.

Also consider the following:

MUFFLED REFERENCE Lincoln spoke immortal words at Gettysburg,  
<sup>A8</sup> but most of the large crowd gathered there couldn't hear *it*.

EDITED Lincoln gave an immortal address at Gettysburg, but most of the large crowd gathered there couldn't hear it.

or

EDITED Lincoln spoke immortal words at Gettysburg, but most of the large crowd gathered there couldn't hear them.

### 4 Free-Floating *They*

*They* is **free-floating** when it has no definite antecedent.

FREE-FLOATING *THEY* In England, *they* allow off-track betting.  
<sup>A9</sup>

EDITED In England, the law allows off-track betting.

or

EDITED In England, off-track betting is legal.

or

EDITED English law allows off-track betting.

**12p**

## Correcting Common Errors

**5 Indefinite You and Your**

*You* and *Your* are **indefinite** when they are used to mean anyone but the reader.

In Lincoln's day, *you* didn't have microphones.  
<sup>there were no</sup>  
<sup>A</sup>

To call <sup>is to say</sup>  
<sup>A</sup> By calling a man a fundamentalist-*you* are saying that he considers  
 the Bible historically true.

**12q****Question Mark Misused**

Do not use a question mark at the end of a question reported indirectly.

I wonder who wrote this <sup>song.</sup>  
<sup>A</sup> song?

**12r****Quotation Misfitted**

A quotation is **misfitted** when it fails to combine with your own prose to make a complete, coherent sentence.

MISFITTED QUOTATION According to Orwell, "When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims."

Neither the introductory phrase nor the quoted words make a complete sentence, so we are left to wonder what happens "when there is a gap." To correct the error, do one of the following:

- Quote a complete sentence.

EDITED According to Orwell, "When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttle fish squirting out ink."

- Make the quoted matter part of a complete sentence.

EDITED According to Orwell, one resorts to obscure language "when there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims."

## 12s

## Run-On (Fused) Sentences

A **run-on sentence**, sometimes called a **fused sentence**, joins two independent clauses—two possible sentences—with no punctuation or conjunction between them.

**RUN-ON SENTENCE** Bears can be huge the Kodiak stands 9 feet high and weighs over 1600 pounds.

Here the first independent clause (*Bears can be huge*) simply pushes into the second. To spot this kind of error in your writing, try reading each of your sentences aloud, listening for the drop in your voice to tell you where one statement (or independent clause) ends and another begins. When you find that point and see no punctuation to mark it, do one of the following:

- Use a comma and a conjunction between the clauses.

Bears can be huge the North American Kodiak stands 9 feet high and ^ weighs over 1600 pounds.

- Use a semicolon between the clauses.

Bears can be huge ; the North American Kodiak stands 9 feet high and ^ weighs over 1600 pounds.

- Use a semicolon between the clauses and a conjunctive adverb.

Bears can be huge ; for instance, the North American Kodiak stands 9 feet high and ^ weighs over 1600 pounds.

- Use a period between the clauses, and make two sentences.

Bears can be huge . The North American Kodiak stands 9 feet high and ^ weighs over 1600 pounds.

## 12t

## Semicolon Misused

- Do not use a semicolon to separate a main clause from a phrase or a subordinate clause.

**12t**

## Correcting Common Errors

The band played for three hours<sup>y</sup> but without much heart.

Most of the crowd left<sup>y</sup> before the concert ended.

Though we had expected a great night<sup>y</sup> we did not get one.

- Do not use a semicolon to introduce a list. Use a colon.

The prophets denounced three types of wrongdoing<sup>y</sup> idolatry, fornication, and neglect of the poor.

**12u****Split Infinitives**

When one or more modifiers are wedged between *to* and a verb form, the infinitive is **split**.

**SPLIT INFINITIVE** Detectives needed special equipment *to thoroughly and accurately investigate* the crime.

To eliminate a cumbersome split such as this, put the adverbs at the end of the infinitive phrase.

**EDITED** Detectives needed special equipment to investigate the crime *thoroughly and accurately*.

or

**EDITED** To investigate the crime *thoroughly and accurately*, detectives needed special equipment.

**12v****Subject-Verb Agreement Faulty**

The rules of agreement in Standard English differ from the rules of agreement in regional and ethnic dialects. To write Standard English correctly, observe the following guidelines:

- In writing about what anything or anyone (except you and your reader) does, make sure you add *-s* or *-es* to the verb.

## Subject-Verb Agreement Faulty

12v

My brother work for the post office.

<sup>es</sup>  
^

He rush to keep up with the mail.

<sup>es</sup>  
^

- In writing about what you, we, or they (any group of two or more) are doing now, use only the bare form of the verb.

I need/<sup>s</sup> a job.

We all want/<sup>s</sup> opportunity.

Politicians love/<sup>s</sup> to make promises.

They want/<sup>s</sup> votes.

- The only verb to use between *I* and a verb with *-ing* added is *am* or *have been*.

I be taking calculus this semester.

<sup>am</sup>  
^

- In writing about what anything or anyone (except you and your reader) is at present, use *is*.

Veronica be a dancer.

<sup>is</sup>  
^

Chain-smoking be risky.

<sup>is</sup>  
^

- In writing about what two or more persons or things are, use *are*.

Banks be closed on holidays.

<sup>are</sup>  
^

We be friends.

<sup>are</sup>  
^

- Use *has* after any one thing or person except yourself and your reader.

Cheryl have a new apartment.

<sup>has</sup>  
^

It have two bedrooms.

<sup>has</sup>  
^

- Use *have* after *I, you, we, they*, or nouns naming more than one.

I has a lot of bills to pay.

<sup>have</sup>  
^  
<sup>has</sup>

My feet has been hurting.

<sup>has</sup>  
^

- Before *been*, always use *has*, *have*, or *had*.

Everyone been hurt by the layoffs.

<sup>has</sup>  
^

**12v**

## : Correcting Common Errors

*have*

I been studying chemistry.

<sup>^</sup> *had*

She done been watching the news when the phone rang.

<sup>^</sup>**12w**

## Tangled Sentence Structure

It is sometimes hard to put several ideas into a single sentence without getting them tangled up in the process. Consider this sentence:

The author of "The Cold Equations" is saying, in effect, that the main difference of life on the frontier for people living there after living in settled communities is because their lives are now ruled by the laws of nature instead of people making the laws.

To untangle such a sentence, break it up into single ideas:

The author of "The Cold Equations" is saying, in effect, something. There is a difference between life on the frontier and life elsewhere. The lives of people on the frontier are ruled by laws of nature. They aren't ruled by laws people make.

Then reassemble the ideas as clearly as you can.

According to the author of "The Cold Equations," the difference between life on the frontier and life elsewhere is that the lives of frontier people are ruled by laws of nature rather than by laws people make.

**12x**

## Verbs: Faulty Tense Shift

When a sentence has more than one verb, the writer may shift from one tense to another. But the shift in tense is **faulty** if there is no good reason for it.

- When all the verbs in a sentence describe actions or states that occur at or about the same time, their tenses should be the same.

The novel *describes* the adventures of two immigrant families who enter the United States at New York, *withstand* the stresses of culture shock, and <sup>travel</sup><sub>A</sub> traveled to the Dakota Territory to make their fortune.

- Shift tenses only when the sentence describes actions or states occurring at different times.

PAST

PAST  
PERFECT

By the time Columbus *sighted* land, most of his crew *had lost* all hope of survival.

PRESENT

PRESENT  
PERFECT

Most children *learn* to talk after they *have learned* to walk.

## 12y

### **Would Have Misused in a Conditional Clause**

Do not use *would have* to express a condition of any kind.

If I <sup>had</sup><sub>A</sub> *would have* found the key, I could have entered the house easily.

Use *would have* only to express the *result* of the condition—not the condition itself.

*Editing Exercises*

In this section you will find a series of short texts that contain grammatical, mechanical, and word form errors frequently made by advanced non-native writers. You can sharpen your editing skills by trying to find and correct the errors in the articles. Do one or more of these exercises just before you are ready to edit one of your own papers.

Before you begin to edit a text, read it through completely at least once to be sure you understand the meaning of the entire article. The number of errors is indicated for each text.

### *When Babies Cry*

New parents will be interesting in a recent discovery discussed in a well-known medical journal. As hospital personnel work in maternity wards are aware for a long time now, infants crying in the nursery have quite an effect on calm babies. When the calm infants hear the sound of other infant crying, they too begin to sob. In reported experiment, psychologists were making recordings of newborns crying; then have let the infants listen to the sound of their own cries. Amazing, most of infants stopped crying as soon as they heard themselves on tape. Furthermore, if the infants had not been crying, listen to their own cries did not make them begin. Other observations had shown that the cries of older babies will not cause the newborns to start crying. Thus, researchers have conclude that newborns are capable of making distinction between their own crying and that of other babies, furthermore, they react differently depending who the baby's crying they hear, their own, that of another infant, or that of an older baby. The exact mechanism by which this discrimination has been occurred, however, remains a mystery.

17 errors

### *Women Executives and Daddies*

What makes some women success in a man's world where few women even operate? Is it genetic? Are success women just a character type? According to a study done on 25 top women executives, presidents and vice-presidents of major corporations, the answer is apparent no. But these women do have several fascinate feature in common. All 25 women were the first born in their families, a position gave them both extra privileges and responsibilities. Second, none of this women wished they were boys when they were youngs. They were all quite happy to be girls, except when people told them they were doing things girls shouldn't do. These girls were ignored people who told them to wear dresses, to be passive, not to engage in sports, or to be interest in cook instead of in building things. But the most important element in this picture was their relationship with their fathers. In each case their fathers encouraged them to do as they pleased regardless of what did society say. This does not mean their fathers treated them like boys or wished they were boys. On the other hand, their fathers admired their feminine while never assuming that their femininity should avoid them from striving for experience and freedom. All these fathers also spent time with these girls, playing sports with them, going for walks, or just talk. Furthermore, whereas boys may become rivals for their fathers, these girls were apparently never threat to their fathers. Therefore, these fathers prouded very much when their girls were competitive successful in any area. It seems clear that the combination of the close comradeship and continual encouragement of their fathers gave these women the strong and the sense of self-worth that allowed them to succeed where a few women do.

20 errors

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Information taken from Gail Sheehy, *Passages* (New York: Dutton, 1976).

# Section C

# Recognizing Word Meanings

## 1a Finding Out What Words Mean

Most of us know enough vocabulary to read from the many sources of information around us. We can read newspapers, magazines, signs, posters, advertisements, credit card and job applications, instructions, and recipes, to name a few examples. The richer our vocabulary, the more sources of information are available to us. The more we read, the more our vocabulary grows. You may not be as confident about reading a textbook or a set of directions on how to work your iPOD, as you are about reading newspaper ads or signs in the supermarket. Still, adding to your usual readings with a wide variety of materials can help you expand your knowledge of words. It also can improve your reading skills.

First, you should realize that you cannot know the meaning of every word you see. Sometimes you may say to yourself, "I sort of know what this means" or "I can get by without figuring this one out." Often, however, you need to find out exactly what an unfamiliar word means. In the short run, not paying attention to words you don't know may save you some work. In the long run, not paying attention to words means you just won't know as much as you should.

Here are some ways to find the meanings of difficult words:

- Learn to use the context—that is, the clues that surrounding words and sentences give about the meanings of new words.
- Learn to use visual clues, such as pictures, drawings, signs, and symbols, that can help you figure out meanings. Often a picture starts you thinking about an unfamiliar word on the page, and you can work out a usable definition.

### Recognizing Word Meanings

- Look for familiar parts within a word you don't know; you might know what the parts mean. For example, if you know the meaning of *art*, you might be able to guess at the meaning of *artistic* or *artful*.
- Learn the difference between what a word means and what a word suggests or makes you feel. Even words that have the same meaning can suggest different things to different people. Although *happy* and *joyous* both suggest good feelings, *joyous* is a much stronger word; it creates a feeling of powerful happiness.
- Be aware that one word can have many meanings. The word *check*, for example, has more than thirty separate meanings! We check our facts, write a check to pay bills, get a checkup at the doctor's, and put a check next to a correct answer, just to name a few.
- Learn to use a dictionary so you can find meanings easily. Dictionaries help you in many ways, not only for finding the meanings of words but also for finding how to pronounce the words, how to spell them, how to use them correctly, and how to change their forms, among many other uses.
- Keep a list of words that you want to add to your vocabulary. By writing down new words and trying to learn them, you can improve your vocabulary.

### 1b Remembering New Words

Once you've learned a new word and you think you understand it, try to make sure you don't forget it. To remember new words, do the following:

- Write the word and its definition often, just for practice.
- Say the word. Learn to pronounce it correctly by using the pronunciation clues in your dictionary.
- Use the word when you talk—in class, with friends, at home. Make sure you pronounce the word correctly.
- Try to learn the word and its meaning the first time you see it.
- Use index cards to study vocabulary. Write the word on one side of a card and its definition on the other side.
- Make up a sentence you can understand using the word.

**1c**

## Using Context Clues

- Change the ending of the word. Try to make it plural; try to change the tense; try to add *ly*.
- Use the word whenever you can in your writing assignments.
- Say the word and its meaning over and over again in your mind.
- Don't try to learn long lists of new words. Study just a few words each day for several days so you can learn by repeating.

**1c** Using Context Clues

An important part of building your reading skills is learning how to guess what unfamiliar words mean. Very often a word you have never seen before appears in a sentence. Perhaps it is a word you *have* seen before, but you don't remember its meaning. Maybe it is a word whose meaning you thought you knew, but the meaning doesn't make sense in the sentence you're reading.

All readers, even the best and most experienced, come across such words from time to time. You see a word and it stumps you. You don't know its meaning quickly. But don't reach for the dictionary right away! (Use your dictionary when nothing else works.) Often you can figure out what a word means from clues in the sentence in which it appears or in surrounding sentences. These clues are *context clues*. *Context* here means surrounding words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that help you find out meanings.

Sentences give clues that help a reader guess at definitions of unfamiliar words. Try to use clues to figure out the meaning of the word *pillory* from the sentences below.

- (1) An early form of punishment in America was the pillory.  
(2) A wooden framework with holes for the hands and head, the pillory stood in a central place for everyone to see. (3) A person who committed a crime was locked in the structure so that people could make fun of the criminal. (4) Even now, when we say that a person is *pilloried*, we are saying that the person is exposed to scorn or ridicule.

What is a pillory?

### Recognizing Word Meanings

You probably wrote something like this: *A pillory is a wooden structure used for punishing criminals in America many years ago. The criminal's head and hands were locked in the pillory, and he or she was put in a public place for everyone to make fun of.*

How did you figure out the meaning? You didn't stop reading when you saw the word *pillory* even though you might not have known its meaning right away. You knew from the first sentence that *pillory* was a form of punishment in early times in our country. Later sentences gave you other clues. You saw from sentence 2 that a *pillory* was a structure made of wood and that it had holes for people's hands and heads. You saw, too, that criminals were placed in these wooden traps so others could make fun of them. Sentence 4 explains how we use the word *pillory* today.

Words you think you don't know may be words you can figure out. Use the words and the sentences around the unfamiliar word to guess at the meaning. Of course, not every unfamiliar word is made clear by surrounding sentences. Sometimes context gives you no help at all. In many cases, however, you can come up with definitions from sentence clues.

The following chart names kinds of context clues, gives examples, and explains how to use the clues to find word meanings.

### Using Sentence Clues to Find Word Meanings

Clue	Example	Explanation
Some sentences set off the definition for a difficult word by means of punctuation.	The <i>principal</i> —the money he put in his savings account to earn interest—was safe even though the bank was closed by the police.	The pair of dashes sets off the definition of <i>principal</i> , here used to mean "sum of money." Other punctuation that can set off meaning includes commas,, parentheses (), and brackets [].
Sometimes helping words, along with punctuation, introduce important clues to meaning.	Carlos looked <i>dazed</i> , that is, stunned, as if someone had shocked him with bad news or with a heavy blow to the head.	Helping words: <i>that is</i> , <i>meaning</i> , <i>such as</i> , <i>or</i> , <i>is called</i> .

## 1c

## Using Context Clues

9

Clue	Example	Explanation
Some sentences tell the opposite of what a new word means. From its opposite, you can figure out the meaning of the word.	During office hours, he looks <i>very tense</i> , but on weekends he is quite relaxed.	The word <i>but</i> helps you understand that <i>relaxed</i> is the opposite of <i>tense</i> . If you know that <i>relaxed</i> means "at ease," you can figure out that <i>tense</i> means "tight" or "at attention."
Sometimes you can use your own experience to figure out the definition of a word.	Martha's husband and mother died within a month of each other. She cried often at her terrible <i>sorrows</i> .	You know that family tragedy would fill a person with "great sadness," the meaning of <i>sorrows</i> .
Sentences before or after a sentence that contain a difficult word sometimes explain the meaning of the word.	The lovely wooden tray had grown <i>brittle</i> . It was dry and hard, and it cracked easily.	Anything dry, hard, and easily cracked can be called <i>brittle</i> .
Some sentences provide exact definitions of difficult words—words readers need to know to understand what they are reading.	She wanted baked clams for her <i>appetizer</i> . An appetizer is the first course of a meal.	The second sentence defines the word <i>appetizer</i> exactly.
Some sentences give examples for a new word, on which you can build a definition.	<i>Legumes</i> , such as string beans, lima beans, and green peas, are important in your diet.	The sentence doesn't say that <i>legume</i> is a name for a group of vegetables with pods, but you can figure out some of that meaning from the examples.
Some sentences use a word you do know to help explain a word you don't know.	The mayor wanted <i>privacy</i> because she knew that being alone would help her solve her problems.	You can tell from the sentence clues that <i>privacy</i> means "being alone."

## SECTION 1: READING COMPREHENSION

### Deceit: The Silent Chinese Stereotype

(1) When it comes to the words Chinese and stereotypes, legendary American author Mark Twain may have said it best in his work *Roughing It* (1872): "They [The Chinese] are quiet, peaceable, tractable, free from drunkenness; and they are as industrious as the day is long. A disorderly Chinaman is rare, and a lazy one does not exist."

(2) A stereotype, like bias, creates an idea about a certain group of people so that those people are not seen as individuals with distinct differences, but altogether they are viewed as a mass where all act in the same manner. While these stereotypes personify what may be viewed as desirable traits amongst the Chinese, there is another stereotype that dates back over 200 years in the United States, and has more recently resurfaced amongst many American citizens. Words such as deceit, dishonesty, and even cheat can be silently heard amongst many Americans although many will avoid openly admitting it for fear of being seen as racist. In conjunction with this stereotype, I will present a brief look at the historical, political, and global implications of these labels.

(3) Some of the first signs of deceit amongst Americans concerning Chinese can be traced to the mid 1800's. As the first Chinese immigrants came to America via California in search of a better life, they were originally viewed as hard workers. However, as recession set in on the American West Coast, many people saw these immigrants as taking away American jobs. Slogans such as "The Chinese Must Go," made famous by labor leader Dennis Kearney, created resentment towards the immigrants. Coinciding with these developments, several violent attacks against Chinese occurred in San Francisco, Tacoma, and other areas throughout the West Coast. Further emphasizing this hatred for the Chinese during this period, one could find in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* information such as: "The Chinese is cold, cunning, and distrustful, always ready to take advantage of those he has to deal with, extremely covetous and deceitful, quarrelsome, vindictive, but timid and dastardly." In all, there was a significant amount of hatred that was fostered through stereotyping during this period.

(4) Through the course of the 20th century, several developments influenced the stereotypes. The "Yellow Menace" views of the 1930's, the torturing of prisoners by the Chinese during the Korean War and the distrust created by the Cold War, a subject that some may be able to write books on in itself, created views of distrust, inferiority, and deceit amongst many. Hollywood has even been accused of, perhaps falsely, promoting a deceitful atmosphere of late with the depiction of "Asian women as "dragon ladies" - exotic and deceitful objects of desire".

(5) However, the actions of the Chinese government of late may be the most compelling source for distrust and deceit amongst not only Americans, but members of the European Community and other countries as well. As one reporter states, the "Chinese government's self-damaging denial of the spreading of the SARS emergency" not only affects their stability, but we can also recall the fear and anguish that was spread throughout Europe and other parts of the world as the story unfolded. Hence, not only has deceit derived from perhaps racist views from many, it has been fueled by their own government's actions as well.

(6) Hence, deceit, dishonesty, and even cheat are stereotypes that Chinese people residing in the U.S. and elsewhere may have to deal with. As presented, there is evidence available to show how some can hold these stereotypes to be true, but emphasis should be made that the actions of a few can have unfair implications for all associated. In assuming that all Chinese meet the stereotypes presented would be wrong, narrow-minded, and foolish. Instead, one should realize that stereotypes are crude generalizations made by some and are not representative of the population as a whole.

**A. True/False/Not Given**

Write the appropriate response to each of the following questions, by deciding if the information is True (T), False (F) or Not Given (N), according to the information in the passage above.

1. Mark Twain said that there are no lazy Chinese people. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Americans openly discuss their negative opinions about Chinese people. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Many Western encyclopedias and books discuss negative stereotypes of Chinese. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Hollywood also contributes to negative stereotypes of the Chinese in America. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Racism is a reflection of national character and is acceptable in most cases. \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Vocabulary**

The first column words are highlighted in the reading passage. Circle the word following closest to the meaning the first word as used in the text.

1. Industrious	Strong	Smart	Hard-working	Ugly
2. Resentment	Hardness	Bitterness	Foolishness	Inflation
3. Cunning	Sneakiness	Fast	Hording	Violent
4. Unfolded	Straightened	Simplified	Crisp	Revealed
5. Crude	Rough	Barbaric	Infantile	Militant

**C. Short Answer**

Write a short answer for each of the following questions. Use complete sentences, without copying from the text.

1. Why has the author chosen to begin the essay with this quote from Mark Twain?
2. Why did negative stereotypes about Chinese first develop in America?
3. What are two factors in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that have added to the negative stereotypes of Chinese?

4. How did the SARS incident affect the Chinese stereotype?
  
  5. If these stereotypes are based on true incidents, why shouldn't they be assumed as generally true?

#### **D. Summary Writing**

In the space below, write a summary of the Reading Comprehension article above. It should be between 75 and 100 words in length.

## SECTION 1; READING

### The Decline of Reading

[1] America is caught in a tide of indifference when it comes to literature, according to a new survey released by the National Endowment for the Arts, which describes a **precipitous** downward trend in book consumption by Americans and a particular decline in the reading of fiction, poetry and drama.

[2] The survey, called "Reading at Risk," is based on data from a survey of 17,135 Americans conducted by the Census Bureau in 2002. Among its findings are that fewer than half of Americans over 18 now read novels, short stories, plays or poetry; that the consumer pool for books of all kinds has diminished; and that the pace at which the nation is losing readers, especially young readers, is quickening. In addition, it finds that the downward trend holds in virtually all demographic groups.

[3] "What this study does is give us accurate numbers that support our worst fears about American reading," said Dana Gioia, the chairman of the endowment. "It gives numbers to the anecdotal stories people have been telling, but the news is that it has been happening in a more rapid and more **pervasive** way than anyone thought possible. Reading is in decline among all groups, in every region, at every educational level and within every ethnic group."

[4] The study, with its **stark** depiction of how Americans now entertain, inform and educate themselves, does seem likely to fuel debate over issues like the teaching and encouragement of reading in schools and the prevalence in American life of television and the other electronic media that have been increasingly stealing time from readers for a couple of generations at least. It also raises questions about the role of literature in the contemporary world.

[5] The survey makes a striking correlation between readers of literature and those who are socially engaged, noting that readers are far more likely than nonreaders to do volunteer and charity work and go to art museums, performing arts events and ballgames. "Whatever good things the new electronic media bring, they also seem to be creating a decline in cultural and civic participation," Mr. Gioia said. "Of literary readers, 43 percent perform charity work; only 17 percent of nonreaders do. That's not a subtle difference."

[6] Still, in a world where information is more readily available than ever, where people know more than they ever have, and where visual acuity is becoming ever more important, it is worth asking: What, if anything, does literature's **diminished** importance to Americans represent? The study has already produced conflicting reactions.

[7] "It's not just unfortunate, it's real cause for concern," said Professor James Shapiro of Columbia University. "A culture gets what it pays for, and if we think democracy depends on people who read, write, think and reflect — which is what literature advances — then we have to invest in what it takes to promote that."

[8] On the other hand Kevin Starr, librarian emeritus of California, said that having close to 50 percent of Americans reading literature is not bad, actually. "In an age where there're no books all educated people must read, where there are so many other forms of information, and where we're returning to an oral culture based on television," he said, "I think that's pretty impressive." Mr. Starr continued: "We should be alarmed, I suppose, but the horse has long since run out of the barn. There are two distinct cultures that have evolved, and by far the smaller is the one that's tied up with book and high culture. You

can get through American life and be very successful without anybody ever asking you about the real motivation of Jay Gatsby."

[9] The Census Bureau study upon which the survey was based shows that the number of readers of literature fell even more precipitously than that of general readers: by 5 percent between 1982 and 1992, and by 14 percent in the following decade; this means that in the last decade the erosion accelerated significantly. The survey also found that men were doing less literary reading than women, minorities less than whites, but that all categories were declining. The steepest declines of any demographic group are among the youngest adults. Between 1982 and 2002, the percentage of those who read literature dropped from 59.8 to 42.8 among 18-to-24-year-olds, and from 62.1 to 47.7 among 25-to-34-year-olds.

[10] The conclusion seems inevitable: reading is becoming outmoded.

*(by Bruce Weber, New York Times, July 2004)*

1. Answer the following questions about the passage above BRIEFLY in the space provided below each question.

[a] What is actually new for Dana Gioia in the information provided by the study?

[b] What is it that James Shapiro thinks we have to "invest" in? Why?

[c] What negative effects does Dana Gioia see in the new electronic media?

[d] Summarize briefly, in your own language, paragraph 8, namely Kevin Starr's opinion of the study's findings (use only one or two sentences).

2. Check the best answer for the following questions, based on the information in the passage.

[a] A reader of poetry would be more likely to

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|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> use big words. | <input type="checkbox"/> hoard money.         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> help others.   | <input type="checkbox"/> buy expensive items. |

[b] Jay Gatsby, referred to by Kevin Starr, is most likely to be

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a person of high culture. | <input type="checkbox"/> a character in a novel.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a famous professor.       | <input type="checkbox"/> a character in a television serial. |

3. Considering their use in the passage, circle the best meanings for the following words.

precipitous [para 1]:	expensive	perceptive	falling	steep
pervasive [para 3]:	invasive	widespread	persuasive	permanent
stark [para 4]:	clear	optimistic	verbose	confused
diminished [para 6]:	indirect	minimal	lessened	enlarged
erosion [para 9]:	rise	destruction	decline	corrosion