

PART 1: Essay Writing

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

Chapter 1: An Introduction to Writing

This chapter will explain and illustrate

- the importance of supporting a point in writing
- the structure of the traditional essay
- the benefits of writing the traditional essay

This chapter also

- presents writing as both a skill and a process of discovery
- suggests keeping a journal



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

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

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

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

Here are the four steps in a nutshell:

- 1 Discover a clearly stated point, or thesis.
- 2 Provide logical, detailed support for your thesis.
- 3 Organize and connect your supporting material.
- 4 Revise and edit so that your sentences are effective and error-free.

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

Point and Support

An Important Difference between Writing and Talking

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

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

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

Point and Support in a Paragraph

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

your point would have to be backed up with specific reasons and details.

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

The Hazards of Moviegoing

Although I love movies, I've found that there are drawbacks to moviegoing. One problem is just the inconvenience of it all. To get to the theater, I have to drive for at least fifteen minutes, or more if traffic is bad. It can take forever to find a parking spot, and then I have to walk across a huge parking lot to the theater. There I encounter long lines, sold-out shows, and ever-increasing prices. And I hate sitting with my feet sticking to the floor because of other people's spilled snacks. Another problem is my lack of self-control at the theater. I often stuff myself with unhealthy calorie-laden snacks. My choices might include a bucket of popcorn, a box of Milk Duds, a giant soda, or all three. The worst problem is some of the other moviegoers. Kids run up and down the aisle. Teenagers laugh and shout at the screen. People of all ages drop soda cups and popcorn tubs, cough and burp, and talk to one another. All in all, I would rather stay home and watch a DVD in the comfort of my own living room.

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

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

The paragraph on moviegoing, like almost any piece of effective writing, has two essential parts:

(1) a point is advanced, and (2) that point is then supported. Taking a minute to outline "The Hazards of Moviegoing" will help you understand these basic parts.

Write in the following space the point that has been advanced in the paragraph. Then add the words needed to complete the paragraph's outline.

1 Activity

Point Support : _____

1. _____

- a. Fifteen-minute drive to theater
- b. _____
- c. Long lines, sold-out shows, and increasing prices
- d. _____

2. Lack of self-control

- a. Often stuff myself with unhealthy snacks
- b. Might have popcorn, candy, soda, or all three

3. _____

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. People of all ages make noise.

Point and Support in an Essay

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

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

Structure of the Traditional Essay

A Model Essay

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



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The Hazards of Moviegoing

Introductory paragraph

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

First supporting paragraph

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

ridiculous amount of money—up to \$11—for a ticket. That entitles me to sit while my shoes seal themselves to a sticky floor coated with spilled soda, bubble gum, and crushed Raisinets.

Second supporting paragraph

Second, the theater offers tempting snacks that I really don't need. Like most of us, I have to battle an expanding waistline. At home I do pretty well by simply not buying stuff that is bad for me. I can make do with snacks like celery and carrot sticks because there is no ice cream in the freezer. Going to the theater, however, is like spending my evening in a 7-Eleven that's been equipped with a movie screen and comfortable seats. As I try to persuade myself to just have a Diet Coke, the smell of fresh popcorn dripping with butter soon overcomes me. Chocolate bars the size of small automobiles seem to jump into my hands. I risk pulling out my fillings as I chew enormous mouthfuls of Milk Duds. By the time I leave the theater, I feel disgusted with myself.

Third supporting paragraph

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

Concluding paragraph

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

Parts of an Essay

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

Introductory Paragraph

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

Activity

1. In “The Hazards of Moviegoing,” which sentence or sentences are used to attract the reader's interest?
 - a. First sentence
 - b. First two sentences
 - c. First three sentences
2. In which sentence is the thesis of the essay presented?
 - a. Third sentence
 - b. Fourth sentence
3. Does the thesis include a plan of development?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Write the words in the thesis that announce the three major supporting points

in the essay:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Body: Supporting Paragraphs

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

3 Activity

1. What is the topic sentence for the first supporting paragraph of the model essay?

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

a. Have to drive fifteen minutes

b. _____

c. Endless ticket line

d. _____

e. _____

f. Sticky floor

3. What is the topic sentence for the second supporting paragraph of the essay?

4. The second topic sentence is then supported by the following details:

a. At home, only snacks are celery and carrot sticks.

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

(1) fresh popcorn

(2) _____

(3) _____

5. What is the topic sentence for the third supporting paragraph of the essay?

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

a. _____

b. _____

c. Adults talk loudly and reveal plot twists.

d. People of all ages create distractions.

Concluding Paragraph

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

Activity

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

a. First and second

b. Second and third

c. Third and fourth

2. Which sentence in the concluding paragraph contains the final thought of the

essay?

a.Second

b.Third

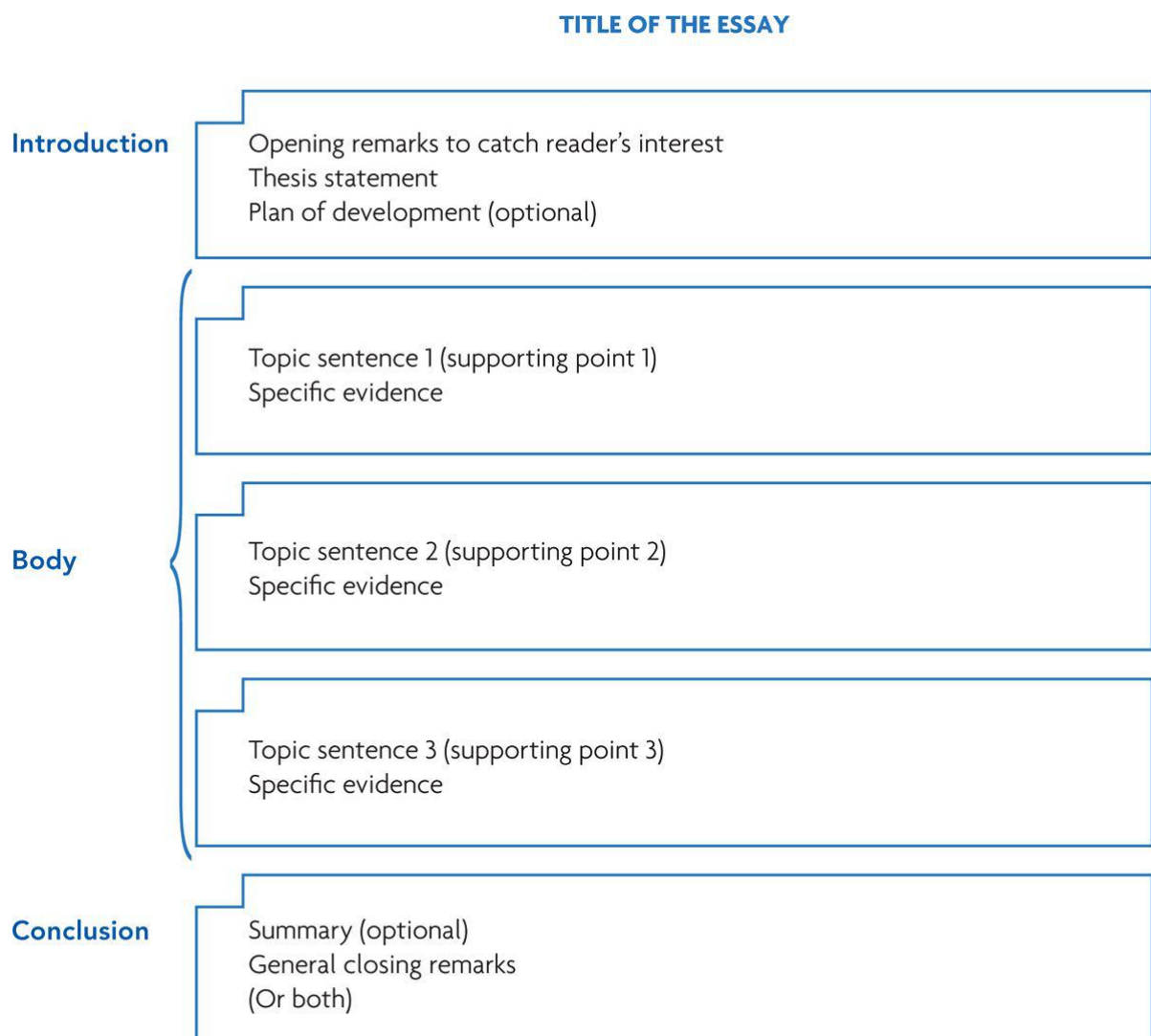
c. Fourth

Diagram of an Essay

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

Teaching Tip

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



You now have an overview of the traditional form of the essay. In [Chapter 2](#),

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

Benefits of Writing the Traditional Essay

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

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

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

Writing as a Skill

A realistic attitude about writing must build on the idea that *writing is a skill*, not

a “natural gift.” It is a skill like driving, typing, or cooking; and, like any skill, it can be learned. If you have the determination to learn, this book will give you the extensive practice needed to develop your writing skills.

People often fear they are the only ones for whom writing is unbearably difficult. They believe that everyone else finds writing easy or at least tolerable. Such people typically say, “I’m not any good at writing,” or “English was not one of my good subjects.” They imply that they simply do not have a talent for writing, while others do. Often, the result of this attitude is that people try to avoid writing, and when they do write, they don’t try their best. Their attitude becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: their writing fails chiefly because they have brainwashed themselves into thinking that they don’t have the “natural talent” needed to write.

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

Writing as a Process of Discovery

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

Seldom the Case

Starting point —————→ Finished paper

Usually the Case

Starting point ———→ Finished paper



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

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

The point is that writing is often a process of continuing discovery; as you write, you may suddenly switch direction or double back. You may be working on a topic sentence and realize suddenly that it could be your concluding thought. Or you may be developing a supporting idea and then decide that it should be the main point of your paper. [Chapter 2](#) will treat the writing process more directly. What is important to remember here is that writers frequently do not know their exact destination as they begin to write. Very often they discover the direction and shape of a paper during the process of writing.

Writing as a Way to Communicate with Others

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

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

TIP

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

Keeping a Journal

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

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



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

Your instructor may ask you to make journal entries a specific number of times a week, for a specific number of weeks. He or she may have you turn in your journal every so often for review and feedback. If you are keeping the journal on your own, try to make entries three to five times a week every week of the semester.

Tips on Using a Computer

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

2. Every word-processing program allows you to save your writing by pressing one or more keys. Save your work frequently as you write your draft. A saved file is stored safely on the computer or network. A file that is not saved will be lost if the computer crashes or if the power is turned off.
3. Keep your work in two places—the hard drive or network you are working on and a backup USB drive. At the end of each session with a computer, copy your work onto the USB drive or e-mail a copy to yourself. Then, if the hard drive or network fails, you'll have the backup copy.
4. Print out your work at least at the end of every session. Then you will have not only your most recent draft to work on away from the computer but also a copy in case something should happen to your electronic file.
5. Work in single spacing so that you can see as much of your writing on the screen at one time as possible. Just before you print out your work, change to double spacing.
6. Before making major changes in a paper, create a copy of your file. For example, if your file is titled “Worst Job,” create a file called “Worst Job 2.” Then make all your changes in that new file. If the changes don't work out, you can always go back to the original file.



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Using a Computer at Each Stage of the Writing Process

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

Prewriting

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

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

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

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

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

Writing Your First Draft

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

If you feel comfortable composing directly on a computer, you can benefit from its special features. For example, if you have written an anecdote in your freewriting that you plan to use in your paper, simply copy the story from your freewriting file and insert it where it fits in your paper. You can refine it then or

later. Or if you discover while typing that a sentence is out of place, cut it out from where it is and paste it wherever you wish. And if while writing you realize that an earlier sentence can be expanded, just move your cursor back to that point and type in the additional material.

Revising

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

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

TIP

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

Editing and Proofreading

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

If the word-processing program you're using includes spelling and grammar checks, by all means use them. The spell-checker function tells you when a word is not in the program's dictionary. Keep in mind, however, that the spell-checker cannot tell you how to spell a name correctly or when you have mistakenly used, for example, *their* instead of *there*. To a spell-checker, *Thank ewe four the complement* is as correct as *Thank you for the compliment*. Also, use the grammar-checker with caution. Any errors it doesn't uncover are still your responsibility.

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

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

Using This Text

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

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

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

3 Turn to Part Three as needed for help with types of writing you will do in college: exam essays, summaries, reports, the résumé and cover letter, and the

research paper. You will see that these kinds of writing are variations of the essay form you have already learned.

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

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

For your convenience, the book includes the following:

On the inside back cover, there is a checklist of the four basic steps in effective writing.

On [page 632](#), there is a list of commonly used correction symbols.

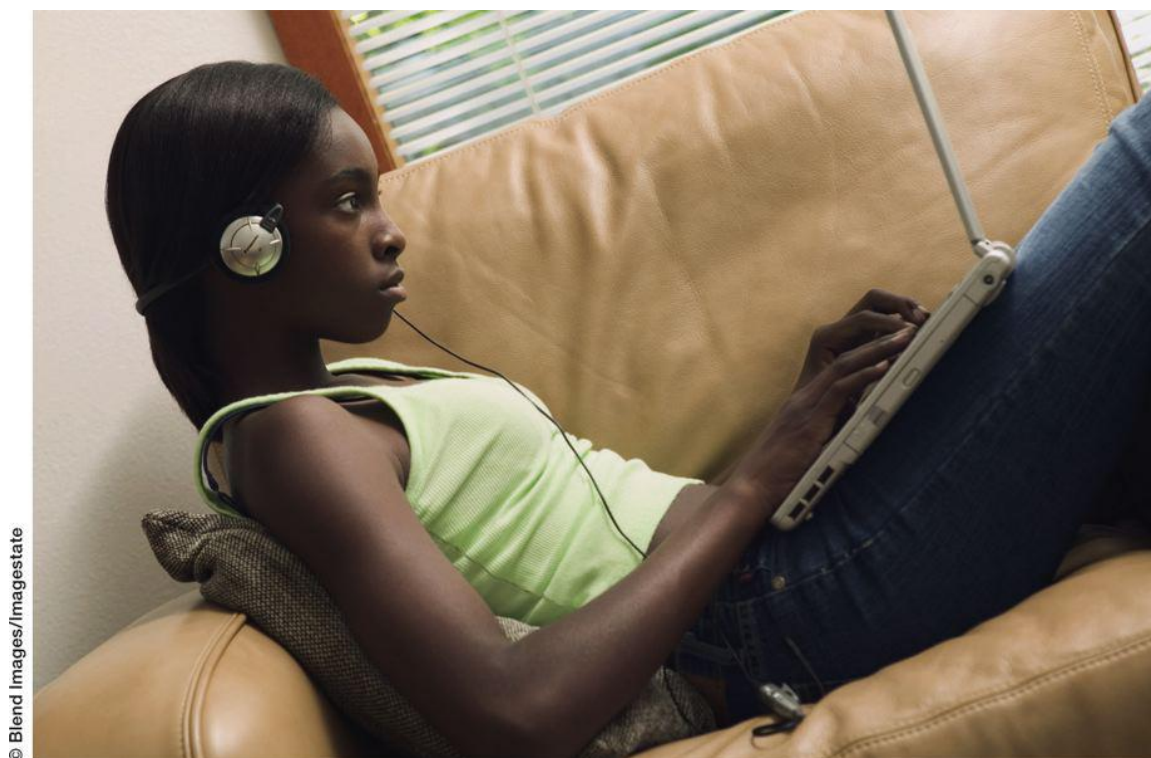
Get into the habit of regularly referring to these guides; they'll help you produce clearly thought-out, well-written essays.

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

Chapter 2: The Writing Process

This chapter will explain and illustrate

the sequence of steps in writing an effective essay
prewriting
revising
editing



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

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

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

- 1 Discovering a thesis—often through prewriting.
- 2 Developing solid support for the thesis—often through more prewriting.
- 3 Organizing the thesis and supporting material and writing it out in a first draft.
- 4 Revising and then editing carefully to ensure an effective, error-free essay.

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

rework an essay until it is a strong and effective piece of writing. And you'll be able to edit your writing so that your sentences are clear and error free.

Prewriting

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

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

Technique 1: Freewriting



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Freewriting means jotting down in rough sentences or phrases everything that comes to mind about a possible topic. See if you can write nonstop for ten minutes or more. Do not worry about spelling or punctuating correctly, about erasing mistakes, about organizing material, or about finding exact words. Instead, explore an idea by putting down whatever pops into your head. If you get stuck for words, repeat yourself until more words come. There is no need to feel inhibited, since mistakes *do not count* and you do not have to hand in your freewriting.

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

Freewriting: A Student Model

Diane Woods's essay "The Hazards of Moviegoing" on [page 6](#) was developed in response to an assignment to write about some annoyance in everyday life. Diane began by doing some general freewriting and thinking about things that annoy her. Here is her freewriting:

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

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

then did more focused freewriting to accumulate details for an essay on problems with moviegoing:

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

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

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

1 Activity

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

Technique 2: Questioning

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



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Questioning: A Student Model

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

| Questions | Answers |
|---|---|
| <i>Why don't I like to go to a movie?</i> | <i>Just too many problems involved.</i> |
| <i>When is problem? going to the movies</i> | <i>a Could be any time—when a movie is popular, the theater is too crowded; when traffic is bad, the trip is a drag.</i> |
| <i>Where are problems with moviegoing?</i> | <i>On the highway, in the parking lot, at the concession stand, in the theater itself.</i> |
| <i>Who creates the problems?</i> | <i>I do by wanting to eat too much. The patrons do by creating disturbances. The theater owners do by not having enough parking space and showing too many commercials.</i> |
| <i>How can I deal with the problem?</i> | <i>I can stay home and watch movies on DVD or cable TV.</i> |

Asking questions can be an effective way of getting yourself to think about a

topic from a number of different angles. The questions can really help you generate details about a topic.

2 Activity

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

Technique 3: Making a List

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



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Making a List: A Student Model

After Diane did her freewriting about moviegoing, she made up the following list of details. *Traffic is bad between my house and theater Noisy patrons Don't want to run into Jeremy Hard to be on a diet Kids running in aisles I'm crowded into seats between strangers who push me off armrests Not enough parking Parking lot needs to be expanded Too many previews Can't pause or fast-forward as you can with a DVD Long lines High ticket prices Too many temptatons at snack*

stand Commercials for food on the screen Can prepare healthy snacks for myself at home Tubs of popcorn with butter Huge chocolate bars Candy has always been my downfall Movie may be sold out People who've seen movie before talk along with actors and give away plot twists People coughing and sneezing Icky stuff on floor Teenagers yelling and showing off

One detail led to another as Diane expanded her list. Slowly but surely, more details emerged, some of which she could use in developing her paper. By the time she was done with her list, she was ready to plan an outline of her paragraph and then to write her first draft.

Activity

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

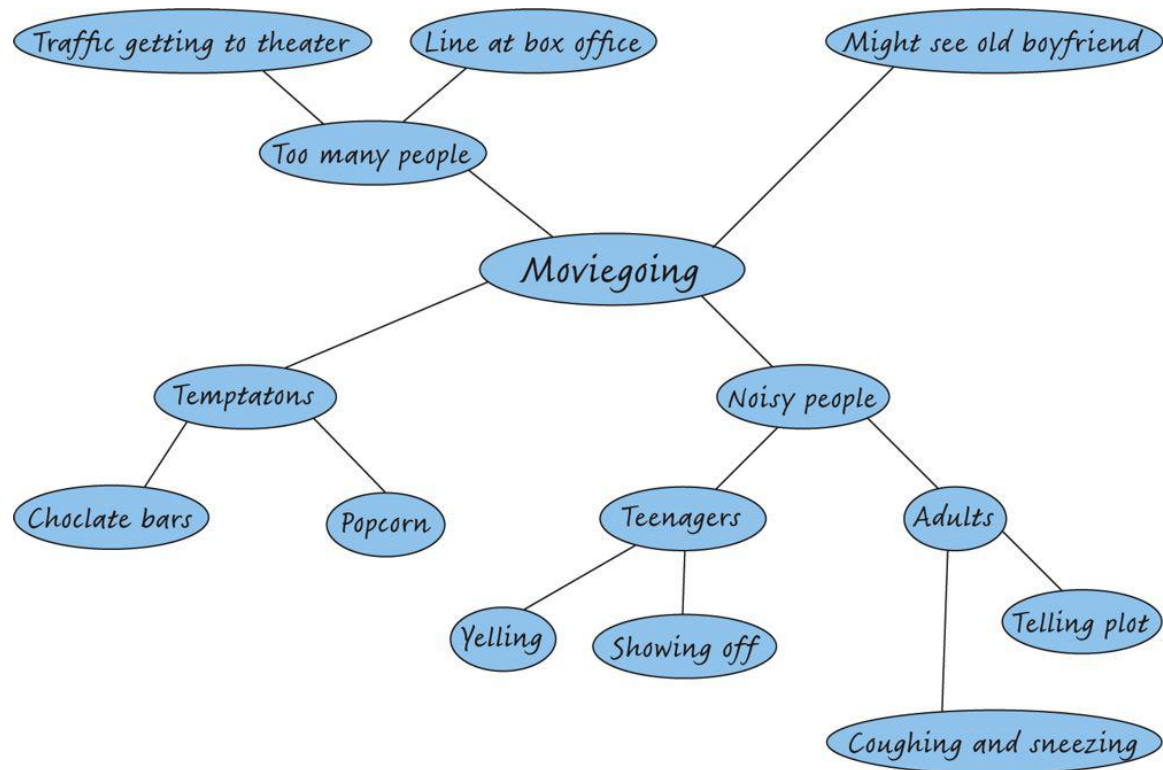
Technique 4: Clustering

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

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

Clustering: A Student Model

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



TIP

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

Activity

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

Technique 5: Preparing a Scratch Outline



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

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

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

Scratch Outline: A Student Model

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

1 Traffic is bad between my house and the theater

3 Noisy patrons

~~Don't want to run into Jeremy~~

2 Hard to be on a diet

3 Kids running in aisles

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

1 Not enough parking

1 Parking lot needs to be expanded

1 Too many previews

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

1 Long lines

1 High ticket prices

2 Too many temptations at snack stand

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

2 Can prepare healthy snacks for myself at home

2 Tubs of popcorn with butter

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

2 Huge chocolate bars

1 Movie may be sold out

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

3 People coughing and sneezing

1 Icky stuff on floor

3 Teenagers yelling and showing off

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

outline: *Going to the movies offers some real problems.*

1 *Inconvenience of going out*

2 *Tempting snacks*

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

TIP

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

Activity

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

Writing a First Draft

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

Writing a First Draft: A Student Model

Here is Diane's first draft:

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

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

The theater offers temptations in the form of snacks I really don't need. Like most of us I have to worry about weight gain. At home I do pretty well by simply watching what I keep in the house and not buying stuff that is bad for me. I can make do with healthy snacks because there is nothing in the house. Going to the theater is like spending my evening in a ~~market~~ Eleven that's been equiped with a movie screen and there are seats which are comfortable. I try to persuade myself to just have a diet soda. The smell of popcorn soon overcomes me. My friends are as bad as I am. Choclate bars seem to jump into your hands, I am eating enormous mouthfuls of milk duds. By the time I leave the theater I feel sick and tired of myself.

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

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

TIP

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



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

6 Activity

- 1 Diane has a very brief introduction—no more than an opening sentence and a second sentence that states the _____. She knows she can develop the introduction more fully in a later draft.
- 2 Of Diane's three supporting paragraphs, only the _____ paragraph lacks a topic sentence. She realizes that this is something to work on in the next draft.
- 3 There are some misspellings—for example, _____. Diane doesn't worry about spelling at this point. She just wants to get down as much of the substance of her paper as possible.
- 4 There are various punctuation errors, such as the run-on sentences in the _____ paragraphs. Again, Diane is focusing on content; she knows she can attend to punctuation and grammar later.
- 5 At several points in the essay, Diane revises on the spot to make images more _____. She changes “is sticky” to “seems coated with rubber cement,” “market” to “7-Eleven,” and “cups of soda” to “cups of crushed ice and soda.”
- 6 Near the end of her essay, Diane can't think of added details to insert so she simply puts the letters “_____” at that point to remind herself to “be more specific” in the next draft. She then goes on to finish her first draft.
- 7 Her _____ is as brief as her introduction. Diane knows she can round off her essay more fully during revision.

Revising

Revising is as much a stage in the writing process as prewriting, outlining, and doing the first draft. *Revising* means rewriting an essay, building on what has already been done, to make it stronger. One writer has said about revision, “It's like cleaning house—getting rid of all the junk and putting things in the right order.” But it is not just “straightening up”; instead, you must be ready to roll up

your sleeves and do whatever is needed to create an effective essay. Too many students think that the first draft *is* the essay. They start to become writers when they realize that revising a rough draft three or four times is often at the heart of the writing process.

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

There are three stages to the revising process:

- revising content
- revising sentences
- editing



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Revising Content

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

1. Is my essay **unified**?

- Do I have a thesis that is clearly stated or implied in the introductory paragraph of my essay?
- Do all my supporting paragraphs truly support and back up my thesis?

2. Is my essay **supported**?

- Are there three separate supporting points for the thesis?
- Do I have specific evidence for each of the three supporting points?
- Is there plenty of specific evidence for each supporting point?

3. Is my essay **organized**?

- Do I have an interesting introduction, a solid conclusion, and an accurate title?
- Do I have a clear method of organizing my essay?
- Do I use transitions and other connecting words?

[Chapters 3](#) and [4](#) will give you practice in achieving **unity, support, and organization** in your writing.

Revising Sentences

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

- 1 Do I use parallelism to balance my words and ideas?
- 2 Do I have a consistent point of view?
- 3 Do I use specific words?
- 4 Do I use active verbs?
- 5 Do I use words effectively by avoiding slang, clichés, pretentious language, and wordiness?
- 6 Do I vary my sentences?

Editing

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

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

An Illustration of the Revising and Editing Processes:

Revising with a Second Draft: A Student Model

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

Second, ^{tempting} The theater offers ~~temptations~~ ^{in the form of snacks} I really don't ^{battle an expanding waistline.} need. Like most of us I have to ~~worry about weight gain.~~ At home I do pretty well by simply ~~watching what I keep in the house and not buying~~ ^{like celery and carrot sticks} stuff that is bad for me. I can make do with ~~healthy~~ ^{no ice cream} snacks ^{however} because there is ~~nothing~~ in the freezer. Going to the theater ^{is} like spending my evening in a 7-Eleven that's been equipped with a movie screen ^{comfortable} and ~~there are~~ ^{As} seats ~~which are comfortable.~~ I try to persuade myself to just have a diet soda ^t ^{dripping with butter}. The smell of fresh popcorn ^{soon} overcomes me.

~~My friends are as bad as I am.~~ Chocolate bars seem to jump into ^{my} ~~your~~ ^{risk pulling out my fillings as I chew} hands. I ~~am eating~~ ^{disgusted} enormous mouthfuls of milk duds. By the time I leave the theater I feel ~~out of sorts~~ with myself.

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

Teaching Tip

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

Activity

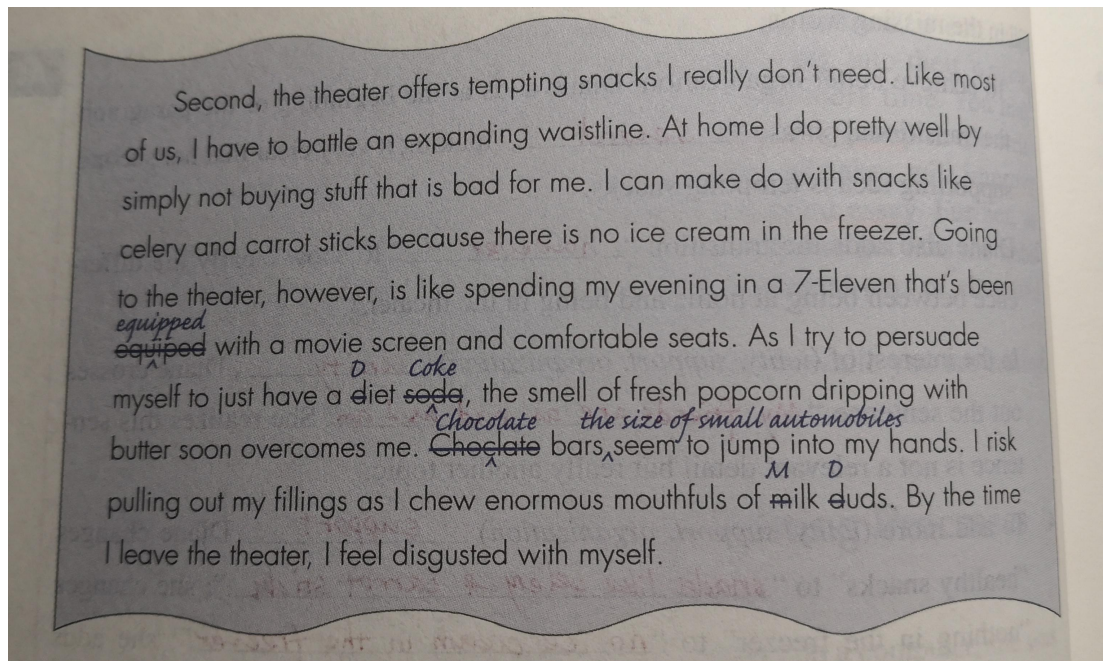
Fill in the missing words.

- 1 To achieve better organization, Diane adds at the beginning of the paragraph the transitional phrase “_____,” making it very clear that her second supporting idea is tempting snacks.
- 2 Diane also adds the transition “_____” to show clearly the difference between being at home and being in the theater.
- 3 In the interest of (*unity, support, organization*) _____, Diane crosses out the sentence “_____.” She realizes this sentence is not a relevant detail but really another topic.
- 4 To add more (*unity, support, organization*) _____, Diane changes “healthy snacks” to “_____”; she changes “nothing in the freezer” to “_____”; she adds “_____” after “popcorn”; and she changes “am eating” to “_____”
- 5 In the interest of eliminating wordiness, she removes the words “_____” from the third sentence.
- 6 In the interest of parallelism, Diane changes “and there are seats which are comfortable” to “_____.”
- 7 For greater sentence variety, Diane combines two short sentences, beginning the first sentence with the subordinating word “_____.”
- 8 To create a consistent point of view, Diane changes “jump into your hands” to “_____.”
- 9 Finally, Diane replaces the vague “out of sorts” with the more precise “_____.”

Editing: A Student Model

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

to editing changes, illustrated below with her work on the second supporting paragraph:



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

8 Activity

Fill in the missing words.

- 1 As part of her editing, Diane checked and corrected the _____ of two words, *equipped* and *chocolate*.
- 2 She added _____ to set off two introductory phrases (“Like most of us” in the second sentence and “By the time I leave the theater” in the final sentence) and also to set off the interrupting word *however* in the fifth sentence.
- 3 She realized that “milk duds” is a brand name and added _____ to make it “Milk Duds.”
- 4 And since revision can occur at any stage of the writing process, including editing, she makes one of her details more vivid by adding the descriptive words “_____.”

Outlining

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

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

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



11 Activity

- 1 Thesis: My high school had three problem areas.
- 2 Thesis: Working as a dishwasher in a restaurant was my worst job.

Involved with drugs
 Leaky ceilings
 Students
 Unwilling to help after class
 Formed cliques
 Teachers
 Buildings
 Ill-equipped gym
 Much too strict

- a. Students
 - (1) Involved with drugs
 - (2) Formed cliques
- b. Teachers
 - (1) Much too strict
 - (2) Unwilling to help after class
- c. Buildings
 - (1) Leaky ceilings
 - (2) Ill-equipped gym

Ten-hour shifts
 Heat in kitchen
 Working conditions

- a. Working conditions
 - (1) Heat in kitchen
 - (2) Noisy work area

Minimum wage
 Hours changed every week
 No bonus for overtime
 Hours
 Pay
 Noisy work area

- b. Hours
 - (1) Ten-hour shifts
 - (2) Hours changed every week
- c. Pay
 - (1) Minimum wage
 - (2) No bonus for overtime

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

Make new friends
 Reduces mental stress
 Social benefits
 Strengthens heart
 Improves self-image
 Mental benefits
 Tones muscles
 Meet interesting instructors

- a. Physical benefits
 - (1) Strengthens heart
 - (2) Tones muscles
- b. Mental benefits
 - (1) Reduces mental stress
 - (2) Improves self-image
- c. Social benefits
 - (1) Make new friends
 - (2) Meet interesting instructors

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

Lighter workload
 Teachers more relaxed
 Pep rallies
 Less work in class
 Friendlier atmosphere
 Less homework
 Holiday concerts
 Students happy about vacation

- a. Lighter workload
 - (1) Less work in class
 - (2) Less homework
- b. Friendlier atmosphere
 - (1) Teachers more relaxed
 - (2) Students happy about vacation
- c. Appealing activities
 - (1) Pep rallies
 - (2) Holiday concerts

12 Activity

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

Losing Touch

Steve, a typical American, stays home on workdays. He logs onto his e-mail. Evenings, he listens to his iPod, watches a DVD, or surfs the Internet. On

many days, Steve doesn't talk to any other human beings, and he doesn't see any people except those on television. Steve is imaginary, but his lifestyle is very common. More and more, the inventions of modern technology seem to be cutting us off from contact with our fellow human beings.

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

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

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

Support:

- 1 Many people now work alone at home.
- 2 Workers' salaries are automatically credited to their bank accounts.
3. Personal banking is becoming a detached process.
 - a. Customers interact with machines to make deposits and withdrawals.
 - b. Some loans are accepted or rejected by computer programs, not loan officers.

Another area that technology is changing is entertainment. Music, for instance, was once a group experience. People listened to music in concert halls or at small social gatherings. For many people now, however, music is a solitary experience. Walking along the street or sitting in their living rooms, they wear headphones to build a wall of music around them. Movie entertainment is changing, too. Movies used to be social events. Now, some people are not going

out to see a movie. Some are choosing to wait for a film to appear on cable television or DVD. Instead of being involved with the laughter, applause, or hisses of the audience, viewers watch movies in the isolation of their own living rooms.

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

Support:

- 1 *Music is a solitary experience.*
- 2 *Fewer people go out to see movies.*

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

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

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

Support:

- 1 *Students sit alone in front of computers at school.*
- 2 *Students use software at home instead of interacting with others.*
- 3 *DVDs are replacing class instruction.*

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