

University of Toronto
Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering

Final Examination, April 2001
ENG 182H1S: Effective Technical Writing
Exam Type: A
Examiner: H. Price

Allot sufficient time for each section. In your answer booklets, write the section number, question number, and letter (if applicable) at the head of each answer.

SECTION I (30 marks)

1. (10 marks: 2 marks each) Without changing the meaning, rewrite the following sentences to correct any errors in grammar or punctuation. (There may be more than one error per sentence.)

- a) A good writer relies upon strong conviction, and clear thought.*
- b) With modern word-processing programs a writer no longer has to worry about their spelling and grammar, therefore, you can concentrate on being creative.*
- c) Every writer must deal with the fear, that the source of their inspiration is drying up.*
- d) He knew that he was supposed to acknowledge his sources, he just wasn't certain of the correct method.*
- e) The professor told the student that his final essay was a great improvement over the one he wrote earlier in the term.*

2. (4 marks: 2 marks each) Rewrite the following definitions in proper form.

- a) Democracy is when the people rule through their elected representatives.*
- b) The spark plugs are the little things that ignite the air-gas mixture in the cylinder.*

3. (4 marks: 2 marks each) Supply the appropriate connective between the two sentences in each of the following passages.

- a) The new social program was projected to cost \$300,000. The final cost was \$600,000.*
- b) Your Honour, I admit that driving a car while sipping hot coffee and talking on the phone is a dangerous practice. It remains perfectly legal.*

4. (4 marks: 2 marks each) Rewrite the following passages to clarify their meaning.

a) *The new parking regulations require that all employees pay for parking permits. These are scheduled to be discussed at the next council meeting.*

b) *This procedure will increase the handling of toxic materials outside the plant, where adequate safety measures can be taken.*

5. (8 marks: 2 marks each) Each of the following sentences has been extracted from an instructional process narrative. Rewrite each sentence to make its meaning clear and precise. (Hint: Pay attention to poor word choice, improper forms of the verb, and faulty syntax.)

a) *To make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, the following items should be gathered: peanut butter, jelly, and bread.*

b) *With the plastic cover removed from the new plug, the black wire should be attached to the brass terminal.*

c) *Now the task of downloading the new software is ready to begin.*

d) *The brake is engaged by the right foot of the driver when depressed.*

SECTION II (30 marks: 2 marks each)

Throughout the term, we have discussed a number of strategies used by writers in a variety of genres (for example, acknowledgment, accommodation, or refutation of objections; analogy; classification; comparison; contrast; counterargument; definitions of various types; detailing; forecasting statements; metaphors; naming; narrating; process narration; scenarios; similes; supporting assertions with anecdotes, authorities, examples, hypothetical examples, reasons, or statistics; temporal transitions; thesis statements; topic sentences; transitional sentences; verb-tense markers, and so on). Below, you will find excerpts from some of the essays you have read. For each excerpt, name the writing strategy or strategies most clearly illustrated by each passage in italics.

1.

Since I was a boy I have searched for ways to *slingshot myself into the distance*, faster and faster. When you turn the key on a car built for speed, when you hear that car rumble *like an approaching storm*...

2.

Let's put love under a microscope.

When rigorous people with Ph.D.s after their names do that, what they see is not some silly, senseless thing. No, their probe reveals *that love rests firmly on the foundations of evolution, biology, and chemistry.*

3.

Lovers often claim that they feel as if they are being swept away [by emotions]....If love looks suspiciously like stress, the reason is simple: the chemical pathways are identical.

Above all, there is the sheer euphoria of falling in love--a not-so-surprising reaction, considering that many of the substances swamping the newly smitten are chemical cousins of amphetamines. They include dopamine, norepinephrine and especially phenylethylamine...

4.

Fizzling chemicals spell the end of delirious passion; for many people that marks the end of the liaison as well....They crave the intoxication of falling in love so much that they move frantically from affair to affair just as soon as the first rush of infatuation fades.

Still, many romances clearly endure beyond the first years.

5.

Indeed, like alcoholics with favorite drinking buddies, Internet addicts form close bonds that fuel their compulsions. *Dan, a college student, earned a 3.2 grade point average his freshman year. Then he moved in with roommates who played an interactive Multi User Dungeon computer game..., and soon began logging on 50 to 60 hours a week. Dan's grade point average nose-dived to 1.6. His fiancée began to complain that he spent too much time with his computer friends; they in turn griped when he signed off to spend time with her...*

6.

A cloud of anthrax germs is unleashed in the main shopping mall of a small American town. At first, the 500 or so victims think they have mild influenza; only when their lungs start filling with fluid does anyone realize that a terrorist attack has occurred. For every actual sufferer, at least ten panic-stricken people besiege local hospitals, demanding medical treatment; medical services quickly run out of drugs, and the police are overwhelmed by angry mobs.

7.

The hallmarks of the new terror include amorphous religious and millenarian aims and vehemently anti-government forms of populism, reflecting far-fetched conspiracy notions.

8.

Old terrorism generally had a specific manifesto: the overthrow of a colonial power, or the capitalist system, and it was keen to draw attention to those aims in lengthy communiques. It was carried out by well-organized clandestine networks and often sponsored by radical governments who hardly bothered to hide the fact that they viewed guerrilla violence as a sort of foreign policy by other means. While the old terrorists were not shy about planting bombs or diverting aircraft, their desire for political legitimacy set some limit to their brutality: killing too many innocent people could put their natural supporters off.

9.

It is biological terror--more than the chemical or nuclear sort--that keeps American security chiefs awake at night. Both chemical weapons and biological ones are relatively easy for anyone with a science degree to produce. But killing large numbers of people with chemical weapons would require a big stockpile of deadly substances. With germ warfare, tiny quantities could be enough to inflict tens of thousands of casualties.

10.

If we assume there is some reality to the reports about cannibalism, how can we best understand this concept? Cannibalism can be broken down into two main categories: exocannibalism, the eating of outsiders or foreigners, and endocannibalism, the eating of members of one's own social group. Within these categories are several functional types of cannibalism, three of the most common being survival cannibalism, dietary cannibalism, and religious or ritual cannibalism.

Survival cannibalism occurs when...

11.

Survival cannibalism occurs when people trapped without food have to decide whether to starve or eat fellow humans. In the case of the Vietnamese refugees, the crew and passengers on the boat ate human flesh to stay alive.... Another case of survival cannibalism occurred in 1945, when General Douglas MacArthur's forces cut supply lines to Japanese troops stationed in the Pacific Islands....

12.

The defenders of team names that use variations on the Indian theme argue that tradition should not be sacrificed on the altar of political correctness.... Another argument is that ethnic group leaders are too inclined to cry wolf in alleging racial insensitivity. Often this is the case. But no one should overlook genuine cases of political insensitivity in an attempt to avoid accusations of hypersensitivity and political correctness.

13.

Imagine a debilitating disease for which there are effective treatments. Imagine that this treatable disease costs society \$110 billion a year. Can you imagine not using the treatments?...

Addicts are frequently denied treatment that would not only improve their lives, but also would improve our own lives--by cutting crime, reducing disease and improving the productivity of employees and the economy.

14.

The fight for college football's life includes arguing that football is the cash cow upon which all the women's programs suckle, even though this is a lie....In 91 percent of all colleges, the football program does not make enough money to pay for itself....

15.

One readily understandable danger of overly competitive sports is that they entice children into physical actions that are bad for growing bodies....Leonard Koppett in *Sports Illusion, Sports Reality* claims that a twelve-year-old trying to throw a curve ball, for example, may put abnormal strain on developing arm and shoulder muscles, sometimes resulting in lifelong injuries....Thomas Tutko, a psychology professor at San Jose State University and coauthor of the book *Winning is Everything and Other American Myths*, writes:...

SECTION III (20 marks)

Write on only ONE of the following three topics:

1. Choose ONE of the following: a pair of pliers; a pair of scissors. In a paragraph, write an extended definition of the item you have chosen. Define its function, describe its form, and explain its operation.

OR

2. In a paragraph, write a description of a friend, acquaintance, or family member. Include details that not only describe the person's physical appearance but suggest his or her character or personality.

OR

3. In a paragraph, write a description of a room or location that evokes strong personal memories.

SECTION IV (20 marks)

Write on only ONE of the following two topics:

1. Choose ONE of the following tasks: cleaning your bedroom; finding a book in the library; sending an e-mail message. In ONE succinct paragraph, instruct your reader on how to accomplish this task. Be clear and concise.

OR

2. Choose ONE of the following two themes:

Whether being able to write well is important to a person's education, culture, or success in life.

Whether, in university, "offensive" speech ought to be restricted.

Take a position on the question, and write the opening paragraph of your argument. Introduce the issue, assert your thesis, and forecast the points you might take up in the course of a fully-developed argumentative essay. However, write ONLY THE FIRST PARAGRAPH.