

Part Three

# **ANALYTICAL WRITING**

## Format of the Analytical Writing Section

The analytical writing section is 75 minutes long and requires you to respond to two essay questions. The *Present Your Perspective on an Issue* essay comes first and is 45 minutes long. Then the *Analyze an Argument* essay is presented and is 30 minutes long.

FORMAT
<i>Present Your Perspective on an Issue</i>
<i>Analyze an Argument</i>

## How to Get a “Top-Half” Score

Writing essays for standardized exams can raise anxieties in people who are poised when answering other kinds of test questions. Perhaps this is because critical and creative skills are being tested and evaluated in a more subjective manner than they are within the objective multiple-choice format. Performance anxiety can lead to a host of problems, from having a difficult time understanding exactly what is being asked to having debilitating uncertainties about how to begin an answer.

The best way to reduce such anxieties, and therefore increase your chance of obtaining a top-half score, is through *rehearsal*, which encompasses four activities that need to take place before taking the GRE:

- 1) understanding the two writing tasks and how they differ
- 2) knowing what the evaluators expect to find in top-half essays
- 3) anticipating an organizational scheme for each of the two essays
- 4) writing out at least one answer for each of the two question types

Having completed these four steps, you will be in an excellent position to approach the Analytical Writing Test with confidence and competency.

# ANALYTICAL WRITING

- **INTRODUCTION**
- **PUNCTUATION**
  - Commas
  - Semicolons
  - Colons
  - Dashes
  - Apostrophes
  - Sentence Fragments
  - Run-On Sentences
- **USAGE**
  - Pronoun Errors
  - Subject-Verb Agreement
  - Misplaced Modifiers
  - Faulty Parallelism
  - Faulty Verb Tense
  - Idiom
- **GENERAL TIPS ON WRITING YOUR ESSAYS**
  - Structure
  - Style
- **PRESENT YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON AN ISSUE**
  - Patterns of Development
  - Writing Your Issue Essay
  - Sample Issues & Essays
  - Practice
  - More Sample Issue Essays
- **ANALYZE AN ARGUMENT**
  - Logic
  - Inductive vs. Deductive Logic
  - Logical Fallacies
  - Writing Your Argument Essay
  - Sample Arguments & Essays
  - Practice
  - More Sample Argument Essays

# Introduction

The Analytical Writing Section requires you to respond to two essay questions within 75 minutes. The first section, *Present Your Perspective on an Issue* (45 minutes), asks that you discuss the complexities of an issue and take a position on the problem. The second section, *Analyze an Argument* (30 minutes), asks that you evaluate an argument or critique a line of reasoning. You are not required to agree or disagree with the argument, but you must clearly point out the strengths and weaknesses in the argument.

ETS has an official Web site, [www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org), where you can view the pool of topic questions from which the questions on your test will be randomly drawn. It is helpful to review this list of questions, but do not try to write a sample essay for each topic because the list of topics is much too extensive. Moreover, the wording of the question on the test may be altered, so it is best just to become familiar with the kind of topics and arguments you will be required to address. The more familiar you are with the material that will be on the test, the more prepared and confident you'll be on test day.

You will type your essay on a computer using a very basic word processor. The Analytical Writing Section starts with a tutorial that shows how the word processor works. You may write your essay on the computer or on paper supplied at the center. However, handwritten essays can take up to six weeks to be scored. After completing the Issue section, you may move on to the Argument section. There is no break between sections, and, once you exit either section, you cannot return, even if you finish with time remaining.

## Scoring the Analytical Writing Section

Your Issue and Argument scores are combined into one average score that is reported to the colleges. Although you can view your math and verbal scores at the test center shortly after the test, your analytical writing score will not be available until 10–15 days after the test.

Each of your two essays will be graded holistically, receiving a score between 0 and 6. With the holistic grading method, papers are read quickly and a score is assigned based on the general impact of the writing on the reader. Papers awarded 6's are considered to be *outstanding*, 5's are *strong*, 4's are *adequate*, 3's are *limited*, 2's are *seriously flawed*, and 1's are *fundamentally deficient*. Notice that papers graded with “top-half” scores—4, 5, or 6—are described as having positive attributes, whereas papers receiving “bottom-half” scores—1, 2, or 3—are described as being problematic.

Before we begin studying particular essays, we need to review some fundamentals of sentence structure and punctuation. No matter how inspired an essay is, its score may be hurt by punctuation errors that make the essay difficult to read or inadvertently change its intended meaning.

# Punctuation

Although you can receive a high score on the Analytical Writing Section even if your essays contain some grammatical errors, the official guidelines indicate that grammar is given some weight in the scoring. Knowing the rules that govern punctuation will reduce your error rate dramatically. Moreover, knowledge of grammar and punctuation will be invaluable in your graduate writing, where mistakes can be costly. In this section, we will discuss the most commonly used punctuation marks: commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, apostrophes, and quotation marks. We will also discuss the use of punctuation to correct run-on sentences and sentence fragments.

## Commas

Use a comma:

- (Rule 1) in series and lists.
  - (Rule 2) after an introductory phrase.
  - (Rule 3) to set off nonrestrictive clauses.
  - (Rule 4) to set off interjections and transitional phrases.
  - (Rule 5) with a coordinating conjunction to separate two independent clauses.
- **Rule 1** – Use a comma to separate each item in a series or list of three or more words, phrases, or clauses. Also, use commas with descriptive words where two or more adjectives modify the same noun.

### Example:

I made the beds, swept the floors, vacuumed the carpet, and scrubbed the bathtub to get ready for our guests. Then I went shopping to stock the refrigerator with drinks, vegetables, and fruit. I hope I'm ready to welcome them into our home and to have a great visit.

In this example, the four underlined clauses in the opening series are separated by commas, and the three underlined words in the list are separated by commas. Notice that the concluding sentence does not contain any commas. In this sentence, the clause *to welcome them into our home* and the clause *to have a great visit* are part of a series of only two elements and are simply separated by the conjunction *and*. Note that a series of words or phrases is marked by a relationship between the elements, whereas a list is simply a notation of two or more words that may or may not be related. For instance, in the example above, the first sentence contains a series of clauses. Each clause is related because they are all actions that the person took. The second sentence contains a list of items such as you would take to the grocery store.

Commas are also used with descriptive words. Use a comma in a series of two or more adjectives that modify the same noun.

### Example:

The long, narrow, winding road lead to a beautiful, serene lake.

In this example, *long*, *narrow*, and *winding* are adjectives that all modify the noun *road*. Thus, they are separated by commas. Likewise, *beautiful* and *serene* modify *lake* and are separated by commas. Note that

no comma follows the last adjective in the series; also be careful in determining the function of the last word of the series. You must make sure that all the adjectives equally modify the noun. For example,

Before you watch TV, I want you to clean the dirty, grimy kitchen sink.

In this example, *kitchen sink* acts as a single noun because without *kitchen*, *sink* is not adequately identified. Therefore, *grimy* is the last adjective before the noun in the series and no comma should be placed after it.

✓ **Check your work**

Look through your work for any series of words, phrases or clauses. If there are two or more of these elements, place a comma after all but the last one.

**Example (without punctuation):**

He thought taking a road trip would help him feel rejuvenated allow him to work through his feelings and provide some much needed solitude in which to get his studying done.

Here the three clauses are underlined. Once you have identified these clauses, you should place commas after each clause except the last one:

He thought taking a road trip would help him feel rejuvenated, allow him to work through his feelings, and provide some much needed solitude in which to get his studying done.

This example contains a list of adjectives:

She looked longingly through the window at the lovely elegant pearl necklace.

First, identify the list of words: *lovely*, *elegant*, and *pearl* modify *necklace*. Now confirm that each adjective equally modifies the noun *necklace*. To do this, insert the word *and* in between each adjective:

She looked longingly through the window at the lovely *and* elegant *and* pearl necklace.

Clearly, the sentence does not make sense with the *and* between *elegant* and *pearl*. Therefore, you should place the commas appropriately:

She looked longingly through the window at the lovely, elegant pearl necklace.

- **Rule 2** – Use a comma to set off an introductory word, phrase, or clause from the independent clause that follows. Introductory elements that require a comma are prepositional phrases, subordinating clauses, transitional words or phrases, and verbal phrases.

A *prepositional phrase* begins with a preposition and includes any modifiers or objects. Prepositional phrases usually signal a relationship, particularly a relationship of time or location.

**Examples:**

In the movie *Titanic*, Leonardo di Caprio's character Jack dies.

Since the accident last year, she has been afraid to drive on the highway.

Both introductory clauses in these examples begin with prepositions. The clauses indicate a relationship of location (*In the movie...*) and time (*Since the accident...*) between the introductory phrases and the independent clauses that follow. Therefore, they must be set off by commas.

A *subordinating clause* begins with a *subordinator*, which is a word that indicates a relationship—usually a relationship of time or location—between the clause it begins and the independent clause that follows. This relationship makes a subordinating clause similar to a prepositional phrase. However, unlike a prepositional phrase, a subordinating clause can also be referred to as a dependent clause because it has both a subject and a verb. It is a dependent clause, not an independent clause, because it cannot stand alone as a sentence.

**Example:**

When I first entered the workforce, we didn't have all the modern technological conveniences that make today's business world move at such a rapid pace.

Here the phrase *When I first entered the workforce* begins with the subordinator *When*, which signals a time relationship between the subordinating clause and the independent clause that follows. Although this clause has a subject (*I*) and a verb (*entered*), it cannot stand alone as a sentence and requires the independent clause to complete the thought. Here is another example:

Before I had a chance to answer, he snatched the paper out of my hands and threw it in the fire.

Here again an introductory subordinating clause requires the independent clause to complete the sentence. In both examples, a comma is required to set off the subordinating clause from the independent clause.

*Transitional words and phrases* add coherence to your writing. They help connect one sentence to the next. A comprehensive list of transitional words and phrases appears later in this chapter, but here are some of the most commonly used transitions: *finally*, *furthermore*, *moreover*, and *next* indicate sequence; *again*, *likewise*, and *similarly* indicate comparison; *although*, *but*, *however*, *by contrast*, and *on the other hand* indicate contrast; *for example*, *in fact*, and *specifically* indicate examples; *accordingly*, *as a result*, *consequently*, and *therefore* indicate cause and effect.

**Example:**

Dear Employees,

I am writing to tell you about a new incentive program we are beginning here at ABC Company. Specifically, this incentive program will focus on rewarding sales. Our customer base has dropped drastically this year. Consequently, we must look for new ways to increase sales. Although we have offered incentives in the past, this program will be different because it will reward you for improvement in sales rather than for your sales numbers. Furthermore, you will not only be able to earn monetary rewards, but you may also be awarded with extra vacation days.

Happy selling,  
Mr. Smith

In this example, transitional words and phrases are used to make the text flow more smoothly. A comma is required after each transitional word or phrase.

*Verbal phrases* contain verb elements but function as nouns, adjectives or adverbs rather than verbs. There are two kinds of verbal phrases that can act as introductory phrases and therefore must be set off by commas: participial phrases and infinitive phrases.

Participial phrases are made up of a present participle (the *-ing* form of a verb) or a past participle (the *-ed* form of a verb) as well as any modifiers or objects. Participial phrases act as adjectives because they describe, or modify, the subject in the independent clause.

**Examples:**

Standing alone by the door, Ricky watched the rest of the boys dance with their dates.

Angered by the kids' cutting remarks, Naomi stormed out of the room and then burst into tears.

The first example contains a participial phrase that contains the present participle *Standing*. The introductory phrase *Standing alone by the door* describes Ricky. In the second example, the past participle *Angered* makes up the participial phrase, and the full introductory phrase describes Naomi.

Infinitive phrases are made up of an infinitive as well as any modifiers or objects.

**Examples:**

To win a gold medal, you must work very hard.

To earn a high score on the GRE, you must study this guide thoroughly.

*To win* is the infinitive in the first sentence, and *To earn* is the infinitive in the second sentence. Both infinitives serve as part of the introductory phrase, which must be set off by commas.

✓ **Check your work**

To find introductory phrases that should be set off with a comma, first look for the subject and verb of the independent clause. Then note any words that precede the subject and verb. Other than articles and adjectives, any words or phrases that precede the subject and verb make up the introductory phrase. You can then confirm this by identifying the introductory phrase.

**Example:**

The strongest qualities of a teacher are patience and understanding.

Here *qualities* is the subject (don't be thrown off by *of a teacher*) and *are* is the verb. *The* and *strongest* precede the subject in this sentence. *The* is an article and *strongest* is an adjective, so there is no need for a comma here. Now look at this example:

Knowing that the strongest qualities of a teacher are patience and understanding, Beth highlighted these qualities on her résumé.

Here *Beth* is the subject and *highlighted* is the verb. The phrase *Knowing that the strongest qualities of a teacher are patience and understanding* is a participial phrase and therefore should be set off with a comma.

Many writers do not place a comma after a short introductory clause.

**Example:**

This morning I stopped at the bagel shop for coffee.

Here a comma is acceptable after *This morning*; however, it is not necessary. You can use your ear to make a decision in cases like these. Often commas may be placed where there would be a pause if the sentence is spoken. When in doubt, however, use a comma.

- **Rule 3** – Use a comma to set off nonrestrictive clauses and phrases, clauses and phrases that are not essential in identifying the words they modify. Adjectival clauses and appositives (words that rename a noun) are most often nonrestrictive.

Adjectival clauses are phrases that begin with *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, *that*, *when*, *where*, or *why*. In many cases, an adjectival clause is nonrestrictive such as in the following example:

The heart, which pumps the body's blood, is necessary to sustain life.

In this sentence, the adjectival clause *which pumps the body's blood* is set off by commas because it is not essential to the sentence. The sentence would have the same meaning without the clause. By contrast, the adjectival clause in the next sentence is restrictive because it is necessary to convey the meaning of the sentence:

The police who are investigating the murders in Maryland are using geographic profiling to aid in their search for the perpetrator.

The adjectival clause *who are investigating the murders in Maryland* is necessary to provide the reader with full details about the police and the murderer for whom they are searching. Without this phrase, the reader would not know that the police are in Maryland and that they are investigating a murderer.



*Appositives* act as nouns or noun substitutes by modifying the noun that precedes the appositive. Just as with adjectival clauses, nonrestrictive appositives are set off by commas, whereas restrictive appositives are not.

**Nonrestrictive examples:**

My high school English teacher, Mr. Roper, taught me how to use commas properly.  
She drove her new car, a Honda Accord, to the senior center to pick up her grandmother.  
The book club will be meeting this Wednesday to discuss the latest book, Grisham's Rainmaker.

In these examples, the underlined phrases are nonrestrictive appositives, which rename the noun preceding them. These phrases add interesting description to the sentences, but they are not necessary to make the sentences complete and understandable. On the other hand, some appositives are essential to capture the full meaning of the sentence. Such restrictive appositives should not be set off with commas as shown in the following examples:

My son Michael is two years old, and my other son Jacob is five months old.  
Meet me at 6:00 at the new restaurant Vinny's Vittles that just opened on Main Street.  
My friend Tammy met me at the beach yesterday.

The appositives in these examples are necessary in specifying the subjects. This information is necessary so the reader has a clear understanding of the subject involved in the text.

✓ **Check your work**

Review each sentence in your writing. Identify the adjectival phrases and appositives and the nouns they modify. For each adjectival phrase or appositive, ask yourself if the phrase provides important identifying information about the noun, or if it just provides “extra” information. If you are still unsure, read the sentence without the adjectival phrase or appositive. Does the sentence still have its full meaning? If so, set the phrase off with commas. If not, omit the commas.

➤ **Rule 4** – Use a comma to set off interjections and transitional phrases.

An *interjection* is usually one or two words that interrupt the flow of a sentence and give extra information about the content of the sentence. Although an interjection provides added detail that enhances the reader's knowledge, generally the information provided by an interjection could be omitted with little or no effect on the meaning of the sentence. Therefore, most interjections should be set off by commas as in the following examples:

I could probably take, say, five people in my van for the carpool.  
She was, oddly enough, the only one who entered the contest.  
I was thinking, by the way, that we could stop by the store on the way home.

A *transitional phrase* directs the flow of an essay. Often, transitional phrases are helpful in leading to a conclusion and therefore should not be set off with commas such as in these two examples:

His strategy was to impress the boss and thus receive the promotion.  
I was tired and therefore did not want to go to the party.

In these examples, the transitional words serve to fully define the meaning of the sentences. There are instances, however, where a transitional word could be omitted without affecting the meaning of the sentence.

**Examples:**

I was not confident, however, that he knew the answer.  
The message when on to say, furthermore, that he would not be coming home for dinner.

The transitional words in these examples enhance the text by emphasizing the direction in which the meaning of the sentence is moving. However, the meaning of the sentences would be the same without the transitional words.

✓ **Check your work**

To double-check your use of commas with interjections, identify any word or words that interrupt your sentence and have little or no effect to the meaning of the sentence. Set these words off with commas. Next, check for transitional words, keeping in mind the list of common transitional phrases we discussed earlier. Once you have identified the transitional words, ask yourself if the words are necessary to convey the meaning of the sentence. If they are necessary, don't set them off with commas; if they aren't, use commas.

➤ **Rule 5** – Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction to join two independent clauses.

An *independent clause* is a group of words that contain both a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a sentence.

**Example:**

I drove my car to work. (*I* is the subject, and *drove* is the verb.)

A *coordinating conjunction* is a word that serves as a link between a word or group of words. These conjunctions are easy to remember by using the acronym BOYFANS:

But  
Or  
Yet  
For  
And  
Nor  
So

Short, choppy sentences can make your writing tedious to read. To provide some interest and variety to your writing, you will want to join some of the sentences in your essays. To do so, you will need to use a comma and a coordinating conjunction. Let's look at some examples:

**Too choppy:**

I took a long lunch. I went back to work. I got behind on my work. I had to stay late.

**Better:**

I took a long lunch, and I went back to work. I got behind on my work, so I had to stay late.

**Too choppy:**

My guests were arriving in an hour. I wanted to throw a memorable New Year's Eve party. I made the punch and hors d'oeuvres ahead of time. I found that I still had a lot to get done to get ready. I decided to put the ice in the punch. Then I discovered that my icemaker was broken. I didn't have time to go to the store. I wasn't prepared to serve anything else either. I hurried to the pantry to view my options. All I had were some tea bags. I decided to throw a New Year's Eve tea party instead.

**Better:**

My guests were arriving in an hour, and I wanted to throw a memorable New Year's Eve party. I made the punch and hors d'oeuvres ahead of time, yet I found that I still had a lot to get done to get ready. I decided to put the ice in the punch, but then I discovered that my icemaker was broken. I didn't have time to go to the store, nor was I prepared to serve anything else. I hurried to the pantry to view my options. All I had were some tea bags, so I decided to throw a New Year's Eve tea party instead.

In both examples, combining sentences with commas and conjunctions make them more interesting and easier to read. We will learn more ways to create interest in your writing when we discuss writing style later on. For now, let's make sure we can apply Rule 5 correctly.

✓ **Check your work**

To properly combine two independent clauses with a comma and a conjunction, you must check to make sure that the clauses joined by the comma and conjunction are indeed independent clauses. To do this, first find all the conjunctions. Then look at the clauses on either side of each conjunction. Does each clause have a subject and a verb? Can each clause stand alone as sentences? If so, the conjunction is properly placed and a comma should precede the conjunction.

**Incorrect:**

We went to the mall last night, and bought some new dresses for work.

**Correct:**

We went to the mall last night and bought some new dresses for work.

**Correct:**

We went to the mall last night, and Terri bought some new dresses for work.

In the first example, *and* is the conjunction. *We went to the mall last night* is an independent clause (*we* is the subject, *went* is the verb). However, *bought some new dresses for work* is not an independent clause because there is no subject. Therefore, the sentence can be corrected by simply omitting the comma as seen in the second example. Or, if there is a possible subject for the sentence, it can be added and the comma can stay as seen in the third example. Here is another example where the same guidelines apply:

**Incorrect:**

He committed the crime, but didn't think the judge's ruling was fair.

**Correct:**

He committed the crime but didn't think the judge's ruling was fair.

**Correct:**

He committed the crime, but he didn't think the judge's ruling was fair.

Using a semicolon is another way to correctly join two independent clauses, and we will discuss it next.

## Semicolons

Use a semicolon

- (Rule 1) to join two independent clauses.
- (Rule 2) to join more than two independent clauses.
- (Rule 3) to separate items in a series.
- **Rule 1** – Use a semicolon to join two independent clauses that are closely related. You may also use a semicolon in coordination with a transitional word and in place of a comma and a conjunction.

Sometimes a period seems like too strong of a mark to use to separate two closely related sentences, but a comma does not emphasize both sentences adequately. In cases like this, you can use a semicolon to join two independent clauses. Using a semicolon to join two independent clauses gives you as the writer a subtle way of showing a relationship between two clauses. You might use a semicolon, for example, if your second sentence restates your first. Or perhaps your second sentence more clearly defines your first sentence by giving an example or by presenting a contrast. Finally, you may want to link two clauses with a semicolon if they have a cause and effect relationship.

**Example:**

Loyalty is the foundation upon which relationships are built; without loyalty, friendships and marriages crumble.

In this example, the second sentence restates the first sentence. A semicolon is appropriate here and functions to convey the close relationship between the two sentences.

**Example:**

The puppy scooted blindly across the floor; his eyes hadn't opened yet leaving him totally dependent on his mother.

The second sentence in this example more clearly defines why the puppy is moving around blindly. The semicolon ties the explanation of the first clause to the description in the second clause. A semicolon is also functional in this last example:

Of course it's pouring down rain on the day of the picnic; it was sunny the day we were inside roller-skating!

The semicolon here emphasizes the irony that is portrayed in this sentence by connecting the two contrasting sentences.

Contrasting clauses may also be joined by using a semicolon along with a transitional word.

**Example:**

These days there is a cure for every ailment; however, the side effects of many medications are worse than the condition for which the medication is prescribed.

Here two independent clauses are joined with a semicolon and the transitional word *however*. The second clause shows that medicines don't always produce positive effects in contrast with the first clause, which indicates that almost every ailment can be cured. The transitional word *however* further defines this contrasting relationship. A transitional word may also serve to emphasize a cause-effect relationship such as in this example:

The drought has greatly affected many farmers; therefore, the price of produce is expected to rise.

You may choose to use semicolons to portray a close relationship between two clauses as seen in the examples above. In other cases, you may recognize that using a variety of punctuation marks adds interest to your writing. Based on this recognition, the choice to join two clauses with a semicolon and a transitional word may be a stylistic choice rather than a grammatical one. Likewise, adding variety to your writing may be the purpose when it comes to replacing a comma and conjunction with a semicolon.

**Example:**

The slippery rock presented the climbers with a challenge, so they watched their footing very closely.

Becomes:

The slippery rock presented the climbers with a challenge; they watched their footing very closely.

In the first example, the two independent clauses are joined with a comma and a conjunction, and in the second sentence, a semicolon replaces the comma and the conjunction. While both sentences are correct and function equally well, you may choose to use the semicolon this way to add variety. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to replace the comma with a semicolon in order to provide clarity. In these cases, you may or may not omit the conjunction. For example,

From such a great distance, the man could not make out the faces of the evil, crafty conspirators, but, if he moved any closer, he would be taking an unnecessary, careless risk of being seen.

Because this sentence contains so much punctuation, it is a bit tedious to read and can be confusing. To remedy this, a semicolon can be used to join the two clauses. In this case, the conjunction *but* is important in enhancing the cause and effect relationship in the sentence and therefore it should remain:

From such a great distance, the man could not make out the faces of the evil, crafty conspirators; but, if he moved any closer, he would be taking an unnecessary, careless risk of being seen.

The semicolon in the example above provides much needed clarity to the sentence by separating the two independent clauses.

✓ **Check your work**

To use a semicolon to join two independent clauses, analyze the two clauses carefully to make sure there is a close relationship between the two before placing the semicolon. Be careful not to misuse semicolons, especially when you use them with a transitional word or in place of a comma and conjunction. For example:

**Incorrect:**

I was forced; therefore, to take the detour around the construction site.

**Correct:**

I was forced, therefore, to take the detour around the construction site.

In this example, *therefore* is a transitional word and should be set off with commas. Furthermore, the clause *I was forced* is an independent clause and *to take the detour around the construction site* is not, so the clauses cannot be set apart by a semicolon.

Take the same caution when replacing a comma and conjunction with a semicolon. Remember that, to join two clauses with a comma and a conjunction, both clauses must be independent. That is, each clause must be able to stand alone as a separate sentence. For example,

**Incorrect:**

He completed the yard work, and then enjoyed a lemonade break with his mom.

**Incorrect:**

He completed the yard work; and then enjoyed a lemonade break with his mom.

**Correct:**

He completed the yard work and then enjoyed a lemonade break with his mom.

The subject in this sentence is *He* and the compound verb is *completed* and *enjoyed*. There is no subject in the second part of the sentence, so it is incorrect to use a comma and conjunction in the sentence. Likewise, a semicolon cannot be used.

➤ **Rule 2** – Use a semicolon to join more than two independent clauses.

In Rule 1, we discussed using a semicolon to join two independent clauses. Semicolons can also be used to join multiple independent clauses in more complex sentences:

**Example:**

Over the past few years, violence has adopted a new calling card; it is more random, gruesome and sinister than ever. In this country of freedom, violence has made its presence known in all areas of life. In schools, students take the lives of other students before taking their own; a close knit community is gripped by fear because of random shootings by a sniper; a father kills another father over their sons' hockey game.

This example could be written as a few separate sentences; however, since the independent clauses are all closely related, it is acceptable to link them with semicolons. Joining multiple independent clauses is often a stylistic choice and an effective one because it makes an impact by more closely connecting the sentences. When not serving just a stylistic choice, joining more than two independent clauses with a semicolon adds clarity such as in the following example:

**Confusing:**

The Thompsons spent two exciting weeks on safari in Africa and returned with wild tales of their trip. They saw all the sights anyone who goes on safari dreams of: They saw zebras, rhinoceroses, and giraffes grazing on the savanna, they witnessed a lion chasing after an antelope, a herd of elephants stomped across the road in front of their truck, and some curious, chattering monkeys came up to their truck and took food out of their hands.

**Better:**

The Thompsons spent two exciting weeks on safari in Africa and returned with wild tales of their trip. They saw all the sights anyone who goes on safari dreams of: They saw zebras, rhinoceroses, and giraffes grazing on the savanna; they witnessed a lion chasing after an antelope; a herd of elephants stomped across the road in front of their truck; and some curious, chattering monkeys came up to their truck and took food out of their hands.

In the first example, the writer uses commas to separate the series of clauses. However, because the clauses themselves contain lists of words separated by commas, the sentence is confusing; the semicolons in the second example provide clarity by dividing the clauses.

**✓ Check your work**

To join multiple independent clauses with a semicolon, make sure the clauses you are joining are related. Also consider using a semicolon instead of a comma to join clauses. To do this, check for commas within the clauses. Too many commas cause confusion and can be eliminated by using semicolons instead. Be careful, however, not to use semicolons too often because overuse can make a writer sound pedantic. When used conservatively, semicolons can add a great deal of impact. To avoid overusing semicolons, reread your text and make sure your use of semicolons is sporadic; semicolons should never appear as often as commas or periods.

**Too many semicolons:**

My next interviewee came in and sat across from me; she tried to put on a confident face; she maintained eye contact throughout the interview; I could tell she was nervous, though; she played anxiously with her ring; she shifted positions every few seconds; her voice quivered a bit.

**Better:**

My next interviewee came in and sat across from me. She tried to put on a confident face by maintaining eye contact throughout the interview. I could tell she was nervous, though; she played anxiously with her ring, shifted positions every few seconds and her voice quivered a bit.

Semicolons are used in place of periods and almost all of the commas in the first example. In the rewrite of the example, all but one semicolon is replaced with a period. The remaining semicolon is placed after *I could tell she was nervous, though*. The clause that follows gives a description that further defines the assumption that the interviewee was nervous.

- **Rule 3** – Use a semicolon to separate items in a series when the items themselves contain commas.

Just as you should use semicolons to join independent clauses when the clauses contain commas, you should also use semicolons to separate words and phrases in a series when those words and phrases contain commas. For example,

**Confusing:**

I boarded a flight in Los Angeles, California, had a two-hour layover in Detroit, Michigan, and finally landed in London, England.

**Better:**

I boarded a flight in Los Angeles, California; had a two-hour layover in Detroit, Michigan; and finally landed in London, England.

This sentence contains a series of clauses, which must be separated. However, each clause contains the name of a city and a state, which also must be separated. Using only commas in this example causes confusion because it is difficult to tell which commas separate clauses and which ones separate the elements within each clause. Separating the clauses with semicolons clarifies the meaning. Here is another example:

All employees must bring a pen, paper, and a notebook to the first day of training; a laptop, highlighter and paperclips to day two; and a sample report, pie chart and three markers to the last day.

Here again, too many commas creates confusion, so in order to simplify the sentence and make it more clear, the clauses in the series are separated by semicolons.

✓ **Check your work**

Check each of the independent clauses you have joined with commas. Do any of the independent clauses contain commas? If so, joining the independent clauses with a semicolon instead of a comma will probably make the sentence clearer.

**Confusing:**

My pottery class is on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and I baby sit my nephew, niece, and neighbor's son on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

**Better:**

My pottery class is on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; and I baby sit my nephew, niece and neighbor's son on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Again, be careful not to overuse semicolons. If, after you review your writing, you feel you have used semicolons too often, consider using other methods to join phrases. For example, you might use a period to divide clauses into separate sentences. Remember that semicolons can make a big impact but only when used conservatively and correctly.

## Colons

Use a colon:

- (Rule 1) to introduce an explanation or example.
- (Rule 2) to introduce a series, list, or quotation.

- **Rule 1** – Use a colon to relate two independent clauses when introducing an explanation or example.

When a comma does not place adequate emphasis on the relationship between two independent clauses, you can use a semicolon. When a semicolon does not provide adequate emphasis, you can use a colon. A colon joins two independent clauses to emphasize the relationship between the two clauses and is often used to introduce an explanation or an example.

**Example:**

When I picture my dream house, it is set in beautiful scenery: the beach or mountains, for example, would provide an ideal setting for a home.

In this sentence, the colon serves to introduce two examples of a dream home. The colon in this example strengthens the relationship between the idea of a beach or mountain home and the subject of dream homes in the first clause. A colon can also introduce an explanation such as in the following example:

Dave and Stephanie's presentation lacked the usual enthusiasm: this could be because they were at the office all night working on the ad campaign.

The second clause in this example explains the first clause and therefore may be introduced with a colon.

**✓ Check your work**

Just as with semicolons, the choice to use colons can be a stylistic one. If you do choose to use a colon to introduce an explanation or example, make sure that both the preceding clause and the clause that follows are independent clauses.

Capitalize the clause that follows a colon if it is a formal statement or if the content that is introduced contains more than one sentence.

**Example (formal statement):**

Our club bylaws shall set forth the following: Rules for meetings, code of conduct, and membership procedures.

**Example (more than one clause):**

When thinking of a future career, there are many choices: Becoming a lawyer would be a good financial decision. On the other hand, teaching may provide more personal satisfaction.

**➤ Rule 2** – Use a colon after an independent clause to introduce a series, list, or quotation.

Use a colon to introduce a series or list such as in the following examples:

We need to get several things done before our trip: pay the bills, water the plants, and take the dog to the kennel.

Before we can take off, you must do the following: fasten your seat belt, turn off your cell phone, and return your tray table to its upright position.

The names of the people who made the volleyball team are as follows: Ruth, Mary Lynn, Amy, Sarah, Alicia, and Elizabeth.

Note that when the word *following* or *follows* is used to introduce a list or series you must use a colon. You should also use a colon to introduce a quotation.

**Example:**

As people seek to build relationships and, in so doing, break down the walls of racism, they should remember Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous words: "I have a dream that [we] will one day live in a nation where [we] will not be judged by the color of [our] skin but by the content of [our] character."

**✓ Check your work**

Use a colon to introduce a series or list. Always use a colon if the clause that introduces the list or series contains the term *follows* or *following*.



**Example:**

The following improvements need to be made to your house before you try to sell it: new carpet should be installed, the outside trim should be painted, and the fixtures in the downstairs bathroom should be replaced.

Do not use a colon if the list or series is introduced by phrases such as *especially*, *such as*, *namely*, *for instance*, *for example*, or *that is* unless the series is made up of one or more independent clauses.

**Incorrect (colon introducing a series of phrases):**

Some of my life goals, for example: to ski in the Alps, bungee jump from Victoria Falls, and visit the Great Wall of China.

**Correct (colon introducing a series of independent clauses):**

I have set some goals that I wish to achieve before I get too old to do so. For example: I want to ski in the Alps, bungee jump from Victoria Falls, and visit the Great Wall of China.

Note that a comma would work in this sentence as well. The colon following *For example* places more emphasis on the text that follows.

Do not use a colon to introduce a series that is the object of the verb in the sentence. For example,

**Incorrect:**

After the maitre d' seated us, I ordered: French onion soup, a Caesar salad, and filet mignon.

**Correct:**

After the maitre d' seated us, I ordered French onion soup, a Caesar salad, and filet mignon.

You may use a colon to introduce a quotation and, in this instance, you must capitalize the first word of the quotation.

**Example:**

The principles of this country are founded on the *Declaration of Independence* and its famous words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

## Dashes

Use dashes

- (Rule 1) to interrupt a sentence.
- (Rule 2) to emphasize parenthetical or explanatory information.
- **Rule 1** – Use a dash to interrupt the normal word order of a sentence.

**Example:**

If you are interested in martial arts—and who wouldn't be interested in such a disciplined art?—there are many centers for instruction.

The dashes in this example allow you to break into the sentence in an informal way. Here is another example:

I was unable—unwilling, really—to head up the new committee at the office.

✓ **Check your work**

Although commas may be used to set off phrases that interrupt a sentence, dashes add emphasis to the clause that is set off. In addition, dashes set an informal tone in your writing. Because of their informality, dashes should be used sparingly, if ever, in graduate writing. When you do choose to use dashes, you may include question marks and exclamation points in the clauses that are set off by dashes (as in the first example above).

- **Rule 2** – Use dashes to set off parenthetical or explanatory information.

**Example:**

The editor of the *Banner Herald* often employs hyperbole—deliberate exaggeration or overstatement to show special emphasis or create humor—to express his political views.

Here dashes set apart the definition of *hyperbole*. Though not necessary to the meaning of the sentence, the definition adds useful information. Again, dashes are an informal way of setting off information; a comma would serve the same purpose here.

✓ **Check your work**

Review each sentence in your writing and identify any information that is parenthetical or that explains a topic in the sentence. You may set this information off with dashes. Remember, though, that dashes should seldom be used in formal writing. In formal writing, you should use commas to set off these elements from the rest of the sentence.

## Apostrophes

Use an apostrophe

- (Rule 1) in contractions.
- (Rule 2) to show possession.
- **Rule 1** – Use an apostrophe in a contraction, a word that is a shortened combination of two words.

Contractions are used in informal writing and serve to shorten two words by leaving out some letters and joining the two words with an apostrophe. Following is a chart that lists some common contractions and the words that form them:

Words that combine to form a contraction	Contractions
it is	it's
I am	I'm
he will	he'll
they are	they're
you are	you're
we will	we'll
could not	couldn't
would not	wouldn't
cannot	can't
does not	doesn't
do not	don't
will not	won't
let us	let's
I would	I'd
they would	they'd
was not	wasn't
I will	I'll
should not	shouldn't
we had	we'd
they will	they'll

**✓ Check your work**

The use of contractions is quite simple: if you wish to shorten two words into one and it is appropriate to do so using an apostrophe, you simply replace the words with the correct contraction. There are, however, some common mistakes people make when using contractions. There are a few contractions that sound like possessive words, and these are often confused. For example, the contraction *they're* sounds like the possessive *their*, but the two words have very different meanings.

**Example (they're):**

I don't know where they think *they're* going, but *they're* going to end up at a dead end.

**Example (their):**

When I saw them heading toward the dead end, I assumed they did not know *their* way.

**Example (they're and their):**

*They're* going to run into a dead end because they don't know *their* way.

Remember that *they're* is short for *they are*. *Their* is the third person plural possessive. The next pair of words to watch out for is the contraction *you're* and the possessive *your*.

**Example (you're):**

*You're* not going to succeed in school if you don't study hard.

**Example (your):**

*Your* success in school is dependent upon hard work.

**Example (you're and your):**

*You're* not going to succeed in school if you don't try *your* best in all that you do.

*You're* is short for *you are*, and *your* is the second person singular possessive. The final pair of words that can be confusing are *it's* and *its*.

**Example (it's):**

*It's* seemingly impossible for a cat to travel that far to get home.

**Example (its):**

A cat will travel a long way to find *its* home and the family it loves.

**Example (it's and its):**

*It's* amazing the distance a cat will travel to find *its* way back home.

Be careful when you use *it's* or *its*; remember that *it's* is the contraction for *it is* and *its* is the third person singular possessive.

To check for proper use of a contraction, especially those that can be tricky, substitute the words that have been replaced by the contraction. If the full-length word makes sense, the contraction is correct. If not, you need to check your spelling. Once again, though, keep in mind that contractions are more appropriate for use in informal writing.

➤ **Rule 2** – Use an apostrophe to show possession.

To show the possessive form of singular nouns, add an apostrophe and an *-s*

**Examples:**

Teddy cleaned the *dog's* house before he and his family went on vacation.

The teacher used *Julia's* homework as an example because it was exceptional.

She didn't feel comfortable borrowing *Harris's* car.

To show the possessive form of plural nouns, add an *-s* and an apostrophe:

**Examples:**

Coach Hannigan distributed the *girls'* uniforms at soccer practice.

Some plural nouns, however, do not end in *-s*. In these instances, add an apostrophe and an *-s*.

**Examples:**

The *women's* meeting will be held in the gymnasium on Thursday night.

All of the *children's* bikes were parked in the driveway.

Competition between *men's* sports teams is fierce.

✓ **Check your work**

Check for the correct use of apostrophes with possessives by first identifying the nouns that show possession. Then identify whether the noun is singular or plural. If the noun is singular, add an apostrophe and an *-s*. If the noun is plural, add an *-s* and an apostrophe. Finally, take note of any irregular plural nouns that do not end in *-s*. Add an apostrophe and an *-s* to irregular nouns.

## Quotation Marks

Use quotation marks to set off quotations and dialogue.

**Example (quotation):**

In his famous inaugural address, President John F. Kennedy implored, "My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you: Ask what you can do for your country."

**Example (dialog):**

"Where are you going tonight?" asked Greg.

"Beth and I are going to the library to get some research done," Susan replied. "Then we're heading to the mall to do some shopping."

When using quotation marks

- (Rule 1) commas and periods go inside the quotation marks.
- (Rule 2) semicolons and colons go outside the quotation marks.
- (Rule 3) question marks and exclamation points go outside the quotation marks.
- **Rule 1** – Commas and periods should be placed inside quotation marks.

**Example:**

"I don't understand what you're trying to say," Glen said. "You need to speak up."

Don't use a comma and quotation marks for indirect quotes.

**Example (direct quote):**

He said, "I don't have time to take the car for an oil change today."

**Example (indirect quote):**

He said that he didn't have time to take the car for an oil change today.

✓ **Check your work**

Place commas and periods inside quotation marks. To determine if a quote is a direct or indirect quote, ask yourself if the quote comes directly from the speaker and if the quote contains the exact words of the speaker. If so, place quotation marks around the quote. If not, there should be no comma or quotation marks.

- **Rule 2** – Place semicolons and colons outside quotation marks.

**Example (semicolon):**

My mom always used to say, “A stitch in time saves nine”; I always remember that quote when I am tempted to procrastinate.

**Example (colon):**

Patrick Henry made a strong statement when he said, “Give me liberty or give me death”: he felt that it would be better to die than to live in a country without freedom.

✓ **Check your work**

When you use quotation marks with a semicolon or colon, first determine whether you are using the semicolon or colon correctly. Then make sure you place the semicolon or colon outside the quotation marks.

- **Rule 3** – Place question marks and exclamation points outside quotation marks unless they are a part of the quotation.

**Examples (question mark):**

Did you hear Professor Johnston say, “You must read the first 500 pages for a quiz on Monday”?

Stunned, she implored, “Why didn’t you tell me you were leaving for good?”

In the first example, the quotation is a statement that does not require a question mark; however, the overall sentence that contains the quotation is a question. Therefore, the question mark goes outside the quotation marks. In the second example, though, the quotation is a question, so the question mark goes inside the quotation marks.

**Examples (exclamation point):**

I can’t believe she finally said, “I love you”!

The woman ran after the thief yelling, “Hey, come back with my purse!”

Overall, the first sentence is an exclamatory sentence, but the phrase *I love you* is not; therefore, the exclamation point goes outside the quotation marks. *Hey, come back with my purse* in the second sentence, however, is an exclamation, so the exclamation point goes inside the quotation marks.

✓ **Check your work**

Examine all quotations in your writing. If the quotation itself is a question or exclamation, place the appropriate punctuation mark inside the quotation marks. If, however, the overall sentence is a question or exclamation but the actual quote is not, the punctuation should be placed outside the quotation marks.

## Sentence Fragments

A *sentence fragment* is a clause that is punctuated like an independent clause, but it lacks a grammatical element required to make it a complete sentence. As we discussed before, an independent clause must have a subject and a verb. Without both a subject and a verb, a clause is a sentence fragment because it cannot function alone.

**Example (independent clause):**

I ran down the road.

**Examples (sentence fragments):**

Ran down the road.

Running down the road.

The independent clause above has both a subject (*I*) and a verb (*ran*). The first example of a sentence fragment, however, has only a verb (*ran*). The last example contains the participle *Running*, which needs a helping verb like *was* as well as a subject like *He*: He was running down the road.

To correct sentence fragments in your writing

- (Step 1) identify them.
- (Step 2) revise them.
- **Step 1** – Identify sentence fragments in your writing.

To find sentence fragments in your writing, first analyze each sentence. In your analysis, mark the subject and verb by underlining the subject once and the verb twice. Following are some examples:

On our way to the store tomorrow, we need to stop at the bank.

Sprinting toward the finish line, Dan took a deep breath and pressed on.

Providing equal opportunity to all citizens is of utmost importance.

The first two examples begin with introductory phrases, which can be confusing so take care in identifying these types of clauses and isolating them from the independent clause. The third example contains a gerund, *providing*, which acts as a noun. Now let's analyze each sentence of a paragraph. First, we will underline each subject and each verb. Then we will flag each sentence that is a fragment with a star.

Dan always has busy days at his law office. \*In the morning, stops for breakfast at a coffee shop near the office. \*Upon entering the office. Dan gets his messages from his secretary. For the rest of the day Dan keeps busy. \*Reviewing briefs and preparing witnesses. Usually Dan does not have time to go out to lunch, but his secretary generally has something delivered to him. Dan's afternoon progresses in much the same way as his morning. \*When he gets home. He is exhausted. \*Because he is so tired. He goes to bed at 8:00.

Clearly, many of the sentences in this paragraph need to be revised. Before we can complete the revisions, though, we need to analyze what the problem is in each of the identified sentence fragments. Let's look at each sentence:

Dan always has busy days at his law office. (This sentence is fine.)

\*In the morning, stops for breakfast at a coffee shop near the office. (The introductory phrase here can make the sentence tricky because you may be tempted to identify *morning* as the subject. Although *stops* is the verb, the subject is missing.)

\*Upon entering the office. (This introductory phrase has been set off by itself.)

Dan gets his messages from his secretary. (This sentence is fine.)

For the rest of the day, Dan keeps busy. (This sentence is fine, but again there is an introductory phrase, which can be deceiving.)

\*Reviewing briefs and preparing witnesses. (This clause should act as the object of the sentence and therefore is missing both the subject and the verb.)

Usually Dan does not have time to go out to lunch, but his secretary generally has something delivered to him. (Two independent clauses are correctly joined here with a comma and a conjunction. In a sentence like this, identifying the subject and verb can be confusing. In the second clause, for example, it would be easy to mistake *his* as the subject when *his* is actually an adjective modifying the subject *secretary*.)

Dan's afternoon progresses in much the same way as his morning. (This sentence is fine, but again, *Dan's* could be confused as the subject when *afternoon* is actually the subject.)

\*When he gets home. (The subject here is *he*, and the verb is *gets*. However, the subordinator *when* makes the sentence a dependent clause and it therefore cannot stand alone as a sentence.)

He is exhausted. (This sentence is fine.)

\*Because he is so tired. (The subject here is *he*, and the verb is *is*. However, the subordinator *because* makes the sentence a dependent clause and it therefore cannot stand alone as a sentence.)

He goes to bed at 8:00. (This sentence is fine.)

- **Step 2** – After you have identified the sentences that are fragments, you must revise them. There are two ways to revise sentence fragments:

- Combine sentences to make them complete.

**Example:**

(Fragments) Because I was at the office working. I didn't make it to dinner.

(Revised) Because I was at the office working, I didn't make it to dinner.

- Add the necessary elements to the fragment to make it complete.

**Example:**

(Fragments) From the beginning. Wanted to practice law in a small town.

(Revised) From the beginning, he wanted to practice law in a small town.

Now, let's revise our example from Step 1:

Dan always has busy days at his law office. In the morning, he stops for breakfast at a coffee shop near the office. Upon entering the office, Dan gets his messages from his secretary. For the rest of the day Dan keeps busy reviewing briefs and preparing witnesses. Usually Dan does not have time to go out to lunch, but his secretary generally has something delivered to him. Dan's afternoon progresses in much the same way as his morning. When he gets home, he is exhausted. Because he is so tired, he goes to bed at 8:00.

\*In the morning, stops for breakfast at a coffee shop near the office. (We corrected this sentence by adding the subject *he* after the introductory phrase.)

\*Upon entering the office. (We corrected this sentence by replacing the period after *office* with a comma and thereby making it an introductory phrase and combining it with the next sentence.)

\*Reviewing briefs and preparing witnesses. (We corrected this fragment by simply combining it with the complete clause that preceded it.)

\*When he gets home. (We corrected this sentence by replacing the period after *home* with a comma and thereby making it an introductory phrase and combining it with the next sentence.)

\*Because he is so tired. (We corrected this sentence by replacing the period after *tired* with a comma and thereby making it an introductory phrase and combining it with the next sentence.)

Once you have made your revisions, make sure you reread your writing. Identify the subject and verb in each sentence once again to make sure your revisions corrected the fragments.

## Run-On Sentences

A *run-on sentence* contains one or more independent clauses but does not have all the proper words and marks of punctuation that are required to join independent clauses.

**Example:**

David went on a field trip to an aquarium with his classmates and they saw a large variety of fish.

In this example, two independent clauses are joined with a coordinating conjunction, but there is no comma. This type of run-on sentence is called a *fused sentence*. A fused sentence can also lack both a comma and a conjunction such as in the following example:

The debate over alien existence will probably continue for years some are sure they have seen aliens.

This next sentence contains a comma but no coordinating conjunction:

Many people believe in the powers of a psychic, sometimes even detectives depend on psychics to help solve crimes.

Because this sentence contains a comma but no coordinating conjunction, it is called a *comma splice*.

To correct run-on sentences in your writing

- (Step 1) identify them.
- (Step 2) revise them.
- **Step 1** – Identify run-on sentences in your writing.

To find run-on sentences in your writing, first analyze each sentence. In your analysis, mark the subject and verb by underlining the subject once and the verb twice. Following are some examples:

Osteoporosis is very common among women but drinking milk and taking calcium supplements can help prevent it.

This example is a fused sentence because it contains two independent clauses linked by a coordinating conjunction but no comma.

History provides us with interesting stories, it also helps us in the future because we can learn from mistakes made in history.

This example is a comma splice because it contains two independent clauses linked by a comma but no coordinating conjunction. These examples contain only two independent clauses that are not combined correctly. Many writers also link multiple clauses incorrectly. If you are prone to this error, it is important that you take the time to go through each sentence and identify the subjects and verbs. From there, you can revise your sentences accurately.

- **Step 2** – Revise your run-on sentences by using one of five methods:

- Separate the clauses in to complete sentences.

**Example:**

(Run-on) Working together as a team is more productive than working individually, a team can get more accomplished than one person.

(Revised) Working together as a team is more productive than working individually. A team can get more accomplished than one person.



- Link the clauses with a semicolon.

**Example:**

(Run-on) Writing is great therapy letting off steam through the written word is a good way to work through frustration.

(Revised) Writing is great therapy; letting off steam through the written word is a good way to work through frustration.

- Link the clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

**Example:**

(Run-on) I went to Florida last week to go to Disney World with a friend but it rained the whole time that I was there.

(Revised) I went to Florida last week to go to Disney World with a friend, but it rained the whole time that I was there.

- Rewrite the clauses to form just one independent clause.

**Example:**

(Run-on) This summer has been a very hot one, it has been humid also.

(Revised) This summer has been a very hot and humid one.

- Rewrite the clauses to form one independent clause with an introductory dependent clause.

**Example:**

(Run-on) We re-painted our house, the old paint was peeling and fading.

(Revised) Because the old paint was peeling and fading, we re-painted our house.

Make sure you review your work after making revisions to ensure that all run-on sentences have indeed been corrected. In addition, try to use all five methods of revision in your writing; don't correct each run-on with the same method. Using different forms of revision will result in varying sentence patterns, which will enhance your writing style. We will discuss writing style shortly as well as strengthening the structure of your essay. First, however, let's make sure you know how to apply the rules of punctuation we just covered.

### **Warm-Up Drill I**

**Directions:** Read each sentence and then make necessary punctuation and spelling corrections. Pay special attention to sentence fragments and run-on sentences and re-write them so that they are grammatically correct. Answers and solutions begin on the next page.

1. Dana is a foster mother. Takes care of newborns. When babies are put up for adoption a social worker places the baby in Dana's house where the baby stays until the adoption is completed usually the baby stays no longer than six weeks unless there is no adoptee lined up yet.
2. Buying a new car is a big decision their are many factors to consider dependability for example is a key factor in choosing the car to suit your needs.
3. The energetic boisterous boy climbed the jungle gym hung from the monkey bars jumped down and then ran to the merry-go-round.
4. What do you think he meant when he said, "Your going to have to figure that one out on you're own"
5. A cool sparkling stream meandered through the peaceful forest and some deer stopped to take a drink and glanced up for a moment to look at me they disappeared into the trees.
6. Some people claim even boast that they've never read an entire book. This is there loss because reading leads to knowledge knowledge leads to power power enables people to influence those around them.
7. That Halloween night can't have been spookier if it had come out of a story a horror story. Patches of fog enveloped the trees in some places and the trees cast dark eerie shadows in others. Because of the full moon.
8. The mens' group did charity work this weekend they completed the following projects they helped rebuild a church that had been damaged in a tornado they completed some of the landscaping on the church grounds and they began repairs to the pastors home nearby the church.
9. Many people suffer from "diet fatigue" they try diet after diet only to meet failure with each one. What they should be focusing on instead is nutritional eating and fitness nutritional eating consists of eating well-balanced servings of meats vegetables fruits and grains drinking lots of water and indulging in junk food sparingly. Proper fitness can come in the form of aerobic exercise walking sports or weight training making just a few adjustments in daily eating and exercise habits can make all the difference in a persons physical and emotional well-being.
10. The beautiful grand stain-glassed windows added a majestic feeling to the old cathedral.

### **Solutions to Warm-Up Drill I**

1. Dana is a foster mother who takes care of newborns. When babies are put up for adoption, a social worker places the baby in Dana's house where the baby stays until the adoption is completed. Usually the baby stays no longer than six weeks unless there is no adoptee lined up yet.

*Takes care of newborns* is a fragment; it was corrected by joining it to the first clause *Dana is a foster mother*. *When babies are put up for adoption* is an introductory dependent clause and should be followed by a comma. The last clause is a run-on sentence, and it was corrected by placing a period after *completed*.

2. Buying a new car is a big decision. There are many factors to consider: dependability, for example, is a key factor in choosing the car to suit your needs.

The first clause is a run-on sentence and should be divided into two sentences; thus, a period was placed between *decision* and *There*. Moreover, *their* was replaced with the correct word *there*. Once you have divided the sentence into two separate clauses, notice that *dependability* is an example. Therefore, a colon should follow *consider*. In addition, *for example* should be set off by commas because it is an interjection.

3. The energetic, boisterous boy climbed the jungle gym, hung from the monkey bars, jumped down, and then ran to the merry-go-round.

*Energetic* and *boisterous* are adjectives that modify *boy*. Because there are two adjectives modifying the same noun, they should be separated by a comma. In addition, a set of four phrases follows—*climbed the jungle gym, hung from the monkey bars, jumped down, and then ran to the merry-go-round*—and should also be separated by commas.

4. What do you think he meant when he said, "You're going to have to figure that one out on your own"?

*Your* and *you're* are misspelled. The contraction *you're* should be the first word in the quotation, and the possessive *your* should precede *own*. The question mark in the sentence should be placed outside the quotation marks because the quotation itself is not a question; however, the complete sentence is a question.

5. A cool, sparkling stream meandered through the peaceful forest. Some deer stopped to take a drink. Before they disappeared into the trees, they glanced up for a moment to look at me.

First, a comma should separate the series of adjectives *cool* and *sparkling*. Second, this clause is a run-on sentence and was corrected by dividing it into two independent clauses by placing a period between *forest* and *Some*. Finally, a third clause was created by converting the sentence fragment into an introductory clause.

6. Some people claim, even boast, that they have never read an entire book. This is their loss because reading leads to knowledge; knowledge leads to power; power enables people to influence those around them.

*Even boast* is an interjection and should be set apart by commas. You should use commas instead of dashes because the topic of the sentences is formal. The contraction *they've* should be changed to *they have* to maintain the formality. The next sentence should contain the possessive *their*. Finally, the last clause is a run-on sentence. Because the clauses are closely related, they should be separated by semicolons.

7. That Halloween night couldn't have been spookier if it had come out of a story—a horror story. Patches of fog enveloped the trees in some places. Because of the full moon, the trees cast dark, eerie shadows in others.

*Can't* is the wrong contraction here. You can test it by plugging in the full-length words—*That Halloween night cannot have been spookier. A horror story* at the end of the sentence provides further explanation of *story* and thus can be set apart with a dash. A dash was used instead of a comma because of the informal topic. A comma should separate the adjectives *dark* and *eerie*. Finally, *Because of the full moon* is a sentence fragment and was converted into an introductory phrase for the last independent clause.

8. The men's group did charity work this weekend. They completed the following projects: they helped rebuild a church that had been damaged in a tornado, they completed some of the landscaping on the church grounds, and they began repairs to the pastor's home nearby the church.

Because the word *men* is a plural noun that does not end in *-s*, its possessive should be spelled with an apostrophe and then an *-s*. Also, the first clause is a run-on, so there should be a period between *weekend* and *They*. Next, there should be a colon after *projects* in order to introduce the series of clauses that follow. The word *following* is your clue to use a colon in this instance. Each clause in the series should be separated by a comma. Finally, *pastor's* is possessive and should contain an apostrophe.

9. Many people suffer from “diet fatigue”; they try diet after diet only to meet failure with each one. What they should be focusing on instead is nutritional eating and fitness. Nutritional eating consists of eating well-balanced servings of meats, vegetables, fruits, and grains; drinking lots of water; and indulging in junk food sparingly. Proper fitness can come in the form of aerobic exercise, walking, sports, or weight training. Making just a few adjustments in daily eating and exercise habits can make all the difference in a person's physical and emotional well-being.

The first clause is a run-on and should be divided into two separate sentences; since they're closely related, you may use a semicolon. The semicolon should be placed outside the quotation marks around *diet fatigue*. A period should follow *fitness* in order to separate the next run-on sentence into separate sentences. In the third sentence, you are presented with a series of clauses; one of the clauses contains a list of words that require commas to separate them. Because so many commas can be confusing, the series of clauses should be separated by semicolons. The series of words in the sentence that follows should be separated by commas as well. A final sentence should be set off starting at *Making*. Finally, the possessive of *person's* must contain an apostrophe.

10. The beautiful, grand stain-glassed windows added a majestic feeling to the old cathedral.

A comma should separate *beautiful* and *grand*. Notice that there is no comma after *grand*. You can double-check this by placing *and* between each adjective: *The beautiful and grand and stain-glassed window*. The *and* between *grand* and *stain-glassed* does not make sense; therefore, there should be no comma preceding *stain-glassed*.

# Usage

Even if you know all of the rules that govern the proper use of punctuation, your knowledge will not enhance your writing if you do not use correct grammar in your writing. The field of grammar is huge and complex—tomes have been written on the subject. This complexity should be no surprise since grammar deals with the process of communication.

Usage concerns how we choose our words and how we express our thoughts: in other words, are the connections between the words in a sentence logically sound, and are they expressed in a way that conforms to standard idiom? We will study six major categories:

- **Pronoun Errors**
- **Subject-Verb Agreement**
- **Misplaced Modifiers**
- **Faulty Parallelism**
- **Faulty Verb Tense**
- **Faulty Idiom**

## Pronoun Errors

A pronoun is a word that stands for a noun, known as the antecedent of the pronoun. The key point for the use of pronouns is this:

- Pronouns must agree with their antecedents in both number (singular or plural) and person (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>).

**Example:**

Steve has yet to receive his degree.

Here, the pronoun *his* refers to the noun *Steve*.

Following is a list of the most common pronouns:

**PRONOUNS**

<b>Singular</b>
I, me
she, her
he, him
it
anyone
either
each
many a
nothing
one
another
everything
mine
his, hers
this
that

<b>Plural</b>
we, us
they
them
these
those
some
that
both
ourselves
any
many
few
several
others

<b>Both Singular and Plural</b>
any
none
all
most
more
who
which
what
you

Reference

- A pronoun should be plural when it refers to two nouns joined by *and*.

**Example:**

Jane and Katarina believe *they* passed the final exam.

The plural pronoun *they* refers to the compound subject *Jane and Katarina*.

- A pronoun should be singular when it refers to two nouns joined by *or* or *nor*.

**Example:**

Incorrect:

Neither Jane *nor* Katarina believes *they* passed the final.

Correct:

Neither Jane *nor* Katarina believes *she* passed the final.

- A pronoun should refer to one and only one noun or compound noun.

This is probably the most common pronoun error. If a pronoun follows two nouns, it is often unclear which of the nouns the pronoun refers to.

**Faulty Usage**

The breakup of the Soviet Union has left *nuclear weapons* in the hands of unstable, nascent *countries*. It is imperative to world security that *they* be destroyed.

Although one is unlikely to take the sentence to mean that the countries must be destroyed, that interpretation is possible from the structure of the sentence. It is easily corrected:

The breakup of the Soviet Union has left *nuclear weapons* in the hands of unstable, nascent *countries*. It is imperative to world security that ***these weapons*** be destroyed.

**Faulty Usage**

In Somalia, *they* have become jaded by the constant warfare.

This construction is faulty because *they* does not have an antecedent. The sentence can be corrected by replacing *they* with *people*:

In Somalia, *people* have become jaded by the constant warfare.

Better:

The people of Somalia have become jaded by the constant warfare.

- In addition to agreeing with its antecedent in number, a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person.

**Faulty Usage**

*One* enters this world with no responsibilities. Then comes school, then work, then marriage and family. No wonder, *you* look longingly to retirement.

In this sentence, the subject has changed from *one* (third person) to *you* (second person). To correct the sentence either replace *one* with *you* or vice versa:

*You* enter this world with no responsibilities. Then comes school, then work, then marriage and family. No wonder, *you* look longingly to retirement.

*One* enters this world with no responsibilities. Then comes school, then work, then marriage and family. No wonder, *one* looks longingly to retirement.

### **Warm-Up Drill I**

In each of the following sentences, part or all of the sentence is underlined. The answer-choices offer five ways of phrasing the underlined part. If you think the sentence as written is better than the alternatives, choose A, which merely repeats the underlined part; otherwise choose one of the alternatives. Answers begin on page 550.

1. Had the President's Administration not lost the vote on the budget reduction package, his first year in office would have been rated an A.
  - (A) Had the President's Administration not lost the vote on the budget reduction package, his first year in office would have been rated an A.
  - (B) If the Administration had not lost the vote on the budget reduction package, his first year in office would have been rated an A.
  - (C) Had the President's Administration not lost the vote on the budget reduction package, it would have been rated an A.
  - (D) Had the President's Administration not lost the vote on its budget reduction package, his first year in office would have been rated an A.
  - (E) If the President had not lost the vote on the budget reduction package, the Administration's first year in office would have been rated an A.
  
2. The new law requires a manufacturer to immediately notify their customers whenever the government is contemplating a forced recall of any of the manufacturer's products.
  - (A) to immediately notify their customers whenever the government is contemplating a forced recall of any of the manufacturer's products.
  - (B) to immediately notify customers whenever the government is contemplating a forced recall of their products.
  - (C) to immediately, and without delay, notify its customers whenever the government is contemplating a forced recall of any of the manufacture's products.
  - (D) to immediately notify whenever the government is contemplating a forced recall of any of the manufacturer's products that the customers may have bought.
  - (E) to immediately notify its customers whenever the government is contemplating a forced recall of any of the manufacturer's products.
  
3. World War II taught the United States the folly of punishing a vanquished aggressor; so after the war, they enacted the Marshall Plan to rebuild Germany.
  - (A) after the war, they enacted the Marshall Plan to rebuild Germany.
  - (B) after the war, the Marshall Plan was enacted to rebuild Germany.
  - (C) after the war, the Marshall Plan was enacted by the United States to rebuild Germany.
  - (D) after the war, the United States enacted the Marshall Plan to rebuild Germany.
  - (E) after the war, the United States enacted the Marshall Plan in order to rebuild Germany.
  
4. In the 1950's, integration was an anathema to most Americans; now, however, most Americans accept it as desirable.
  - (A) to most Americans; now, however, most Americans accept it as desirable.
  - (B) to most Americans, now, however, most Americans accept it.
  - (C) to most Americans; now, however, most Americans are desirable of it.
  - (D) to most Americans; now, however, most Americans accepted it as desirable.
  - (E) to most Americans. Now, however, most Americans will accept it as desirable.

5. Geologists in California have discovered a fault near the famous San Andreas Fault, one that they believe to be a trigger for major quakes on the San Andreas.
- (A) one that they believe to be a trigger for
  - (B) one they believe to be a trigger for
  - (C) one that they believe triggers
  - (D) that they believe to be a trigger for
  - (E) one they believe acts as a trigger for
6. A bite from the tsetse fly invariably paralyzes its victims unless an antidote is administered within two hours.
- (A) its victims unless an antidote is administered
  - (B) its victims unless an antidote can be administered
  - (C) its victims unless an antidote was administered
  - (D) its victims unless an antidote is administered to the victims
  - (E) its victims unless they receive an antidote



## Subject-Verb Agreement

Within a sentence there are certain requirements for the relationship between the subject and the verb.

- The subject and verb must agree both in number and person.

**Example:**

We have surpassed our sales goal of one million dollars.

Here, the first person plural verb *have* agrees with its first person plural subject *we*.

Note that, ironically, third person singular verbs often end in *s* or *es*:

He *seems* to be fair.

- Intervening phrases and clauses have no effect on subject-verb agreement.

**Example:**

Only one of the President's nominees was confirmed.

Here, the singular verb *was* agrees with its singular subject *one*. The intervening prepositional phrase *of the President's nominees* has no effect on the number or person of the verb.

Collective nouns followed by intervening phrases are particularly easy to miss.

**Example:**

The *content* of the boxes *is* what she wants.

The *meaning* of her sentences *is* not clear.

A *group* of lions *is* called a "pride."

Be careful when a simple subject is followed by a phrase beginning with *as well as*, *along with*, *together with*, *in addition to*, or a similar expression. Be sure to make the verb agree with the simple subject, not with a noun in the intervening phrase.

**Example:**

Our *Senator*, along with most congressmen, *opposes* the bill.

Here, the singular verb *opposes* agrees with its singular subject *Senator*. The intervening phrase *along with most congressmen* has no effect on the number or person of the verb.

- When the subject and verb are reversed, they still must agree in both number and person.

**Example:**

*Attached are* copies of the contract.

Here, the plural verb *are attached* agrees with its plural subject *copies*. The sentence could be rewritten as

*Copies* of the contract *are attached*.

**Warm-Up Drill II**

Answers and solutions begin on page 552.

1. The rising cost of government bureaucracy have made it all but impossible to reign in the budget deficit.
  - (A) The rising cost
  - (B) Since the rising costs
  - (C) Because of the rising costs
  - (D) The rising costs
  - (E) Rising cost
  
2. In a co-publication agreement, ownership of both the material and its means of distribution are equally shared by the parties.
  - (A) its means of distribution are equally shared by the parties.
  - (B) its means of distribution are shared equally by each of the parties.
  - (C) its means of distribution is equally shared by the parties.
  - (D) their means of distribution is equally shared by the parties.
  - (E) the means of distribution are equally shared by the parties.
  
3. The rise in negative attitudes toward foreigners indicate that the country is becoming less tolerant, and therefore that the opportunities are ripe for extremist groups to exploit the illegal immigration problem.
  - (A) indicate that the country is becoming less tolerant, and therefore that
  - (B) indicates that the country is becoming less tolerant, and therefore
  - (C) indicates that the country is becoming less tolerant, and therefore that
  - (D) indicates that the country is being less tolerant, and therefore
  - (E) indicates that the country is becoming less tolerant of and therefore that
  
4. The harvest of grapes in the local valleys decreased in 1990 for the third straight year but were still at a robust level.
  - (A) The harvest of grapes in the local valleys decreased in 1990 for the third straight year but were
  - (B) The harvest of grapes in the local valleys began to decrease in 1990 for the third straight year but were
  - (C) In 1990, the harvest of grapes in the local valleys decreased for the third straight year but were
  - (D) The harvest of grapes in the local valleys decreased for the third straight year in 1990 but was
  - (E) The harvest of grapes in the local valleys began decreasing in 1990 for the third straight year but was
  
5. Each of the book's protagonists—Mark Streit, Mary Eby, and Dr. Thomas—has a powerful, dynamic personality.
  - (A) Each of the book's protagonists—Mark Streit, Mary Eby, and Dr. Thomas—has
  - (B) Each of the book's protagonists—Mark Streit, Mary Eby, and Dr. Thomas—have
  - (C) All the book's protagonists—Mark Streit, Mary Eby, and Dr. Thomas—has
  - (D) Mark Streit, Mary Eby, and Dr. Thomas—the book's protagonists—each has
  - (E) Each of the book's protagonists—Mark Streit, Mary Eby, and Dr. Thomas—could have had

## Misplaced Modifiers

A modifier is a phrase or a clause that describes something. A misplaced modifier, therefore, is one that describes the wrong item in a sentence, often creating an illogical statement.

- As a general rule, a modifier should be placed as close as possible to what it modifies.

**Example:**

Following are some useful tips for protecting your person and property from the FBI.

As written, the sentence implies that the FBI is a threat to your person and property. To correct the sentence put the modifier *from the FBI* next to the word it modifies, *tips*:

Following are some useful tips from the FBI for protecting your person and property.

- When a phrase begins a sentence, make sure that it modifies the subject of the sentence.

**Example:**

Coming around the corner, a few moments passed before I could recognize my old home.

As worded, the sentence implies that the moments were coming around the corner. The sentence can be corrected as follows:

As I came around the corner, a few moments passed before I could recognize my old home.

or

Coming around the corner, I paused a few moments before I could recognize my old home.

### **Warm-Up Drill III**

Answers and solutions begin on page 554.

1. By focusing on poverty, the other causes of crime—such as the breakup of the nuclear family, changing morals, the loss of community, etc.—have been overlooked by sociologists.
  - (A) the other causes of crime—such as the breakup of the nuclear family, changing morals, the loss of community, etc.—have been overlooked by sociologists.
  - (B) the other causes of crime have been overlooked by sociologists—such as the breakup of the nuclear family, changing morals, the loss of community, etc.
  - (C) there are other causes of crime that have been overlooked by sociologists—such as the breakup of the nuclear family, changing morals, the loss of community, etc.
  - (D) crimes—such as the breakup of the nuclear family, changing morals, the loss of community, etc.—have been overlooked by sociologists.
  - (E) sociologists have overlooked the other causes of crime—such as the breakup of the nuclear family, changing morals, the loss of community, etc.
  
2. Using the Hubble telescope, previously unknown galaxies are now being charted.
  - (A) Using the Hubble telescope, previously unknown galaxies are now being charted.
  - (B) Previously unknown galaxies are now being charted, using the Hubble telescope.
  - (C) Using the Hubble telescope, previously unknown galaxies are now being charted by astronomers.
  - (D) Using the Hubble telescope, astronomers are now charting previously unknown galaxies.
  - (E) With the aid of the Hubble telescope, previously unknown galaxies are now being charted.
  
3. The bitter cold the Midwest is experiencing is potentially life threatening to stranded motorists unless well-insulated with protective clothing.
  - (A) stranded motorists unless well-insulated
  - (B) stranded motorists unless being insulated
  - (C) stranded motorists unless they are well-insulated
  - (D) stranded motorists unless there is insulation
  - (E) the stranded motorist unless insulated
  
4. Traveling across and shooting the vast expanse of the Southwest, in 1945 Ansel Adams began his photographic career.
  - (A) Traveling across and shooting the vast expanse of the Southwest, in 1945 Ansel Adams began his photographic career.
  - (B) Traveling across and shooting the vast expanse of the Southwest, Ansel Adams began his photographic career in 1945.
  - (C) Having traveled across and shooting the vast expanse of the Southwest, in 1945 Ansel Adams began his photographic career.
  - (D) Ansel Adams, in 1945 began his photographic career, traveling across and shooting the vast expanse of the Southwest.
  - (E) In 1945, Ansel Adams began his photographic career, traveling across and shooting the vast expanse of the Southwest.

## Faulty Parallelism

- For a sentence to be parallel, similar elements must be expressed in similar form.
- When two adjectives modify the same noun, they should have similar forms.

**Example:**

The topology course was both *rigorous* and *a challenge*.

Since both *rigorous* and *a challenge* are modifying *course*, they should have the same form:

The topology course was both *rigorous* and *challenging*.

- When a series of clauses is listed, the verbs in each clause must have the same form.

**Example:**

During his trip to Europe, the President will *discuss* ways to stimulate trade, *offer* economic aid, and *trying* to forge a new coalition with moderate forces in Russia.

In this example, the first two verbs, *discuss* and *offer*, are active. But the third verb in the series, *trying*, is passive. The form of the verb should be active:

During his trip to Europe, the President will *discuss* ways to stimulate trade, *offer* economic aid, and *try* to forge a new coalition with moderate forces in Russia.

- When the first half of a sentence has a certain structure, the second half should preserve that structure.

**Example:**

*To acknowledge* that one is an alcoholic is *taking* the first and hardest step to recovery.

The first half of the above sentence has an infinitive structure, *to acknowledge*, so the second half must have a similar structure:

*To acknowledge* that one is an alcoholic is *to take* the first and hardest step to recovery.

**Warm-Up Drill IV**

Answers and solutions begin on page 556.

1. Common knowledge tells us that sensible exercise and eating properly will result in better health.
  - (A) eating properly will result
  - (B) proper diet resulted
  - (C) dieting will result
  - (D) proper diet results
  - (E) eating properly results
  
2. This century began with war brewing in Europe, the industrial revolution well-established, and a nascent communication age.
  - (A) war brewing in Europe, the industrial revolution well-established, and a nascent communication age.
  - (B) war brewing in Europe, the industrial revolution surging, and a nascent communication age.
  - (C) war in Europe, the industrial revolution well-established, and a nascent communication age.
  - (D) war brewing in Europe, the industrial revolution well-established, and the communication age beginning.
  - (E) war brewing in Europe, the industrial revolution well-established, and saw the birth of the communication age.
  
3. It is often better to try repairing an old car than to junk it.
  - (A) to try repairing an old car than to junk it.
  - (B) to repair an old car than to have it junked.
  - (C) to try repairing an old car than to junking it.
  - (D) to try and repair an old car than to junk it.
  - (E) to try to repair an old car than to junk it.
  
4. Jurassic Park, written by Michael Crichton, and which was first printed in 1988, is a novel about a theme park of the future in which dinosaurs roam free.
  - (A) Jurassic Park, written by Michael Crichton, and which was first printed in 1988,
  - (B) Jurassic Park, written by Michael Crichton and first printed in 1988,
  - (C) Jurassic Park, which was written by Michael Crichton, and which was first printed in 1988,
  - (D) Written by Michael Crichton and first printed in 1988, Jurassic Park
  - (E) Jurassic Park, which was written by Michael Crichton and first printed in 1988,

## Faulty Verb Tense

A verb has four principal parts:

### 1. Present Tense

- a. Used to express present tense.

*He studies hard.*

- b. Used to express general truths.

*During a recession, people are cautious about taking on more debt.*

- c. Used with *will* or *shall* to express future time.

*He will take the GRE next year.*

### 2. Past Tense

- a. Used to express past tense.

*He took the GRE last year.*

### 3. Past Participle

- a. Used to form the *present perfect tense*, which indicates that an action was started in the past and its effects are continuing in the present. It is formed using *have* or *has* and the past participle of the verb.

*He has prepared thoroughly for the GRE.*

- b. Used to form the *past perfect tense*, which indicates that an action was completed before another past action. It is formed using *had* and the past participle of the verb.

*He had prepared thoroughly before taking the GRE.*

- c. Used to form the *future perfect tense*, which indicates that an action will be completed before another future action. It is formed using *will have* or *shall have* and the past participle of the verb.

*He will have prepared thoroughly before taking the GRE.*

### 4. Present Participle (-ing form of the verb)

- a. Used to form the *present progressive tense*, which indicates that an action is ongoing. It is formed using *is*, *am*, or *are* and the present participle of the verb.

*He is preparing thoroughly for the GRE.*

- b. Used to form the *past progressive tense*, which indicates that an action was in progress in the past. It is formed using *was* or *were* and the present participle of the verb.

*He was preparing for the GRE.*

- c. Used to form the *future progressive tense*, which indicates that an action will be in progress in the future. It is formed using *will be* or *shall be* and the present participle of the verb.

*He will be preparing thoroughly for the GRE.*

## PASSIVE VOICE

The passive voice removes the subject from the sentence. It is formed with the verb *to be* and the past participle of the main verb.

Passive:

*The bill was resubmitted by the Senator.*

Active:

*The Senator has resubmitted the bill.*

Unless you want to de-emphasize the doer of an action, you should favor the active voice.

**Warm-Up Drill V**

Answers and solutions begin on page 558.

1. In the past few years and to this day, many teachers of math and science had chosen to return to the private sector.
  - (A) had chosen to return to the private sector.
  - (B) having chosen to return to the private sector.
  - (C) chose to return to the private sector.
  - (D) have chosen to return to the private sector.
  - (E) have chosen returning to the private sector.
  
2. Most of the homes that were destroyed in last summer's brush fires were built with wood-shake roofs.
  - (A) Most of the homes that were destroyed in last summer's brush fires were
  - (B) Last summer, brush fires destroyed most of the homes that were
  - (C) Most of the homes that were destroyed in last summer's brush fires had been
  - (D) Most of the homes that the brush fires destroyed last summer's have been
  - (E) Most of the homes destroyed in last summer's brush fires were being
  
3. Although World War II ended nearly a half century ago, Russia and Japan still have not signed a formal peace treaty; and both countries have been reticent to develop closer relations.
  - (A) have not signed a formal peace treaty; and both countries have been
  - (B) did not signed a formal peace treaty; and both countries have been
  - (C) have not signed a formal peace treaty; and both countries being
  - (D) have not signed a formal peace treaty; and both countries are
  - (E) are not signing a formal peace treaty; and both countries have been
  
4. The Democrats have accused the Republicans of resorting to dirty tricks by planting a mole on the Democrat's planning committee and then used the information obtained to sabotage the Democrat's campaign.
  - (A) used the information obtained to sabotage
  - (B) used the information they had obtained to sabotage
  - (C) of using the information they had obtained to sabotage
  - (D) using the information obtained to sabotage
  - (E) to have used the information obtained to sabotage



## Idiom

### Accept/Except

*Accept* means “to agree to” or “to receive.” *Except* means “to object to” or “to leave out.”

We will *accept* (receive) your manuscript for review.

No parking is allowed, *except* (leave out) on holidays.

### Account for

When explaining something, the correct idiom is *account for*:

We had to *account for* all the missing money.

When receiving blame or credit, the correct idiom is *account to*:

You will have to *account to* the state for your crimes.

### Adapted to/for/from

*Adapted to* means “naturally suited for.” *Adapted for* means “created to be suited for.” *Adapted from* means “changed to be suited for.”

The polar bear is *adapted to* the subzero temperatures.

For any “New Order” to be successful, it must be *adapted for* the continually changing world power structure.

Lucas’ latest release is *adapted from* the 1950 B-movie “Attack of the Amazons.”

### Affect/Effect

*Effect* is a noun meaning “a result.”

Increased fighting will be the *effect* of the failed peace conference.

*Affect* is a verb meaning “to influence.”

The rain *affected* their plans for a picnic.

### All ready vs. Already

*All ready* means “everything is ready.”

*Already* means “earlier.”

### Alot vs. A lot

*Alot* is nonstandard; *a lot* is the correct form.

### Among/Between

*Between* should be used when referring to two things, and *among* should be used when referring to more than two things.

The young lady must choose *between* two suitors.

The fault is spread evenly *among* the three defendants.

**Being that vs. Since**

*Being that* is nonstandard and should be replaced by *since*.

(Faulty) *Being that* darkness was fast approaching, we had to abandon the search.

(Better) *Since* darkness was fast approaching, we had to abandon the search.

**Beside/Besides**

Adding an *s* to *beside* completely changes its meaning: *Beside* means “next to.” *Besides* means “in addition.”

We sat *beside* (next to) the host.

*Besides* (in addition), money was not even an issue in the contract negotiations.

**Center on vs. Center around**

*Center around* is colloquial. It should not be used in formal writing.

(Faulty) The dispute *centers around* the effects of undocumented workers.

(Correct) The dispute *centers on* the effects of undocumented workers.

**Conform to (not with)**

Stewart’s writing does not *conform to* standard literary conventions.

**Consensus of opinion**

*Consensus of opinion* is redundant: *consensus* means “general agreement.”

**Correspond to/with**

*Correspond to* means “in agreement with”:

The penalty does not *correspond to* the severity of the crime.

*Correspond with* means “to exchange letters”:

He *corresponded with* many of the top European leaders of his time.

**Different from/Different than**

The preferred form is *different from*. Only in rare cases is *different than* acceptable.

The new Cadillacs are very *different from* the imported luxury cars.

**Double negatives**

(Faulty) *Scarcely nothing* was learned during the seminar.

(Better) *Scarcely anything* was learned during the seminar.

**Doubt that vs. Doubt whether**

*Doubt whether* is nonstandard.

(Faulty) I *doubt whether* his new business will succeed.

(Correct) I *doubt that* his new business will succeed.

**Farther/Further**

Use *farther* when referring to distance, and use *further* when referring to degree.

They went no *further* (degree) than necking.

He threw the discs *farther* (distance) than the top seated competitor.

**Fewer/Less**

Use *fewer* when referring to a number of items. Use *less* when referring to a continuous quantity.

In the past, we had *fewer* options.

The impact was *less* than what was expected.

**Identical with (not to)**

This bid is *identical with* the one submitted by you.

**In contrast to (not of)**

In *contrast to* the conservative attitudes of her time, Mae West was quite provocative.

**Independent of (not from)**

The judiciary is *independent of* the other branches of government.

**Not only ... but also**

In this construction, *but* cannot be replaced with *and*.

(*Faulty*) Peterson is *not only* the top salesman in the department *and also* the most proficient.

(*Correct*) Peterson is *not only* the top salesman in the department *but also* the most proficient.

**On account of vs. Because**

*Because* is always better than the circumlocution *on account of*.

(*Poor*) *On account of* his poor behavior, he was expelled.

(*Better*) *Because* he behaved poorly, he was expelled.

**One another/Each other**

*Each other* should be used when referring to two things, and *one another* should be used when referring to more than two things.

The members of the basketball team (more than two) congratulated *one another* on their victory.

The business partners (two) congratulated *each other* on their successful first year.

**Plus vs. And**

Do not use *plus* as a conjunction meaning *and*.

(*Faulty*) His contributions to this community are considerable, *plus* his character is beyond reproach.

(*Correct*) His contributions to this community are considerable, *and* his character is beyond reproach.

Note: *Plus* can be used to mean *and* so long as it is not being used as a conjunction.

(*Acceptable*) His generous financial contribution *plus* his donated time has made this project a success.

In this sentence, *plus* is being used as a preposition. Note that the verb *has* is singular because an intervening prepositional phrase (*plus* his donated time) does not affect subject verb agreement.

**Regard vs. Regards**

Unless you are giving best wishes to someone, you should use *regard*.

(*Faulty*) In *regards* to your letter, we would be interested in distributing your product.

(*Correct*) In *regard* to your letter, we would be interested in distributing your product.

**Regardless vs. Irregardless**

*Regardless* means “not withstanding.” Hence, the “ir” in *irregardless* is redundant. *Regardless* is the correct form.

**Retroactive to (not from)**

The correct idiom is *retroactive to*:

The tax increase is *retroactive to* February.

**Speak to/with**

To *speak to* someone is to tell them something:

We *spoke to* Jennings about the alleged embezzlement.

To *speak with* someone is to discuss something with them:

Steve *spoke with* his friend Dave for hours yesterday.

**The reason is because**

This structure is redundant. Equally common and doubly redundant is the structure *the reason why is because*.

(*Poor*) The *reason why* I could not attend the party *is because* I had to work.

(*Better*) I could not attend the party *because* I had to work.

**Whether vs. As to whether**

The circumlocution *as to whether* should be replaced by *whether*.

(*Poor*) The United Nations has not decided *as to whether* to authorize a trade embargo.

(*Better*) The United Nations has not decided *whether* to authorize a trade embargo.

**Whether vs. If**

*Whether* introduces a choice; *if* introduces a condition. A common mistake is to use *if* to present a choice.

(*Faulty*) He inquired *if* we had decided to keep the gift.

(*Correct*) He inquired *whether* we had decided to keep the gift.

**Warm-Up Drill VI**

Answers and solutions begin on page 559.

1. Regarding legalization of drugs, I am not concerned so much by its potential impact on middle class America but instead by its potential impact on the inner city.  
(A) but instead  
(B) so much as  
(C) rather  
(D) but rather  
(E) as
  
2. Unless you maintain at least a 2.0 GPA, you will not graduate medical school.  
(A) you will not graduate medical school.  
(B) you will not be graduated from medical school.  
(C) you will not be graduating medical school.  
(D) you will not graduate from medical school.  
(E) you will graduate medical school.
  
3. The studio's retrospective art exhibit refers back to a simpler time in American history.  
(A) The studio's retrospective art exhibit refers back to  
(B) The studio's retrospective art exhibit harkens back to  
(C) The studio's retrospective art exhibit refers to  
(D) The studio's retrospective art exhibit refers from  
(E) The studio's retrospective art exhibit looks back to
  
4. Due to the chemical spill, the commute into the city will be delayed by as much as 2 hours.  
(A) Due to the chemical spill, the commute into the city will be delayed by as much as 2 hours.  
(B) The reason that the commute into the city will be delayed by as much as 2 hours is because of the chemical spill.  
(C) Due to the chemical spill, the commute into the city had been delayed by as much as 2 hours.  
(D) Because of the chemical spill, the commute into the city will be delayed by as much as 2 hours.  
(E) The chemical spill will be delaying the commute into the city by as much as 2 hours.

## Points to Remember

1. A pronoun should be plural when it refers to two nouns joined by *and*.
2. A pronoun should be singular when it refers to two nouns joined by *or* or *nor*.
3. A pronoun should refer to one and only one noun or compound noun.
4. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in both number and person.
5. The subject and verb must agree both in number and person.
6. Intervening phrases and clauses have no effect on subject-verb agreement.
7. When the subject and verb are reversed, they still must agree in both number and person.
8. As a general rule, a modifier should be placed as close as possible to what it modifies.
9. When a phrase begins a sentence, make sure that it modifies the subject of the sentence.
10. For a sentence to be parallel, similar elements must be expressed in similar form.
11. When two adjectives modify the same noun, they should have similar forms.
12. When a series of clauses is listed, the verbs must be in the same form.
13. When the first half of a sentence has a certain structure, the second half should preserve that structure.
14. A verb has four principal parts:
  - I. Present Tense**
    - a. Used to express present tense.
    - b. Used to express general truths.
    - c. Used with *will* or *shall* to express future time.
  - II. Past Tense**
    - a. Used to express past tense.
  - III. Past Participle**
    - a. Used to form the *present perfect tense*, which indicates that an action was started in the past and its effects are continuing in the present. It is formed using *have* or *has* and the past participle of the verb.
    - b. Used to form the *past perfect tense*, which indicates that an action was completed before another past action. It is formed using *had* and the past participle of the verb.
    - c. Used to form the *future perfect tense*, which indicates that an action will be completed before another future action. It is formed using *will have* or *shall have* and the past participle of the verb.
  - IV. Present Participle (-ing form of the verb)**
    - a. Used to form the *present progressive tense*, which indicates that an action is ongoing. It is formed using *is*, *am*, or *are* and the present participle of the verb.
    - b. Used to form the *past progressive tense*, which indicates that an action was in progress in the past. It is formed using *was* or *were* and the present participle of the verb.
    - c. Used to form the *future progressive tense*, which indicates that an action will be in progress in the future. It is formed using *will be* or *shall be* and the present participle of the verb.
15. Unless you want to de-emphasize the doer of an action, you should favor the active voice.

### **Solutions to Warm-Up Drill I**

1. Had the President's Administration not lost the vote on the budget reduction package, his first year in office would have been rated an A.
- (A) Had the President's Administration not lost the vote on the budget reduction package, his first year in office would have been rated an A.
  - (B) If the Administration had not lost the vote on the budget reduction package, his first year in office would have been rated an A.
  - (C) Had the President's Administration not lost the vote on the budget reduction package, it would have been rated an A.
  - (D) Had the President's Administration not lost the vote on its budget reduction package, his first year in office would have been rated an A.
  - (E) If the President had not lost the vote on the budget reduction package, the Administration's first year in office would have been rated an A.

Choice (A) is incorrect because *his* appears to refer to *the President*, but the subject of the subordinate clause is *the President's Administration*, not *the President*.

Choice (B) changes the structure of the sentence, but retains the same flawed reference.

In choice (C), *it* can refer to either *the President's Administration* or *the budget reduction package*. Thus, the reference is ambiguous.

Choice (D) adds another pronoun, *its*, but still retains the same flawed reference.

Choice (E) corrects the flawed reference by removing all pronouns. The answer is (E).

2. The new law requires a manufacturer to immediately notify their customers whenever the government is contemplating a forced recall of any of the manufacturer's products.
- (A) to immediately notify their customers whenever the government is contemplating a forced recall of any of the manufacturer's products.
  - (B) to immediately notify customers whenever the government is contemplating a forced recall of their products.
  - (C) to immediately, and without delay, notify its customers whenever the government is contemplating a forced recall of any of the manufacturer's products.
  - (D) to immediately notify whenever the government is contemplating a forced recall of any of the manufacturer's products that the customers may have bought.
  - (E) to immediately notify its customers whenever the government is contemplating a forced recall of any of the manufacturer's products.

Choice (A) is incorrect because the plural pronoun *their* cannot have the singular noun *a manufacturer* as its antecedent.

Although choice (B) corrects the given false reference, it introduces another one. *Their* can now refer to either *customers* or *government*, neither of which would make sense in this context.

Choice (C) also corrects the false reference, but it introduces a redundancy: *immediately* means "without delay."

Choice (D) corrects the false reference, but its structure is very awkward. The direct object of a verb should be as close to the verb as possible. In this case, the verb *notify* is separated from its direct object *customers* by the clause "*that the government is contemplating a forced recall of any of the manufacturer's products that.*"

Choice (E) is correct because the singular pronoun *its* has the singular noun *a manufacturer* as its antecedent. The answer is (E).

3. World War II taught the United States the folly of punishing a vanquished aggressor; so after the war, they enacted the Marshall Plan to rebuild Germany.

- (A) after the war, they enacted the Marshall Plan to rebuild Germany.
- (B) after the war, the Marshall Plan was enacted to rebuild Germany.
- (C) after the war, the Marshall Plan was enacted by the United States to rebuild Germany.
- (D) after the war, the United States enacted the Marshall Plan to rebuild Germany.
- (E) after the war, the United States enacted the Marshall Plan in order to rebuild Germany.

Choice (A) is incorrect. Since *United States* is denoting the collective country, it is singular and therefore cannot be correctly referred to by the plural pronoun *they*.

Choice (B) is not technically incorrect, but it lacks precision since it does not state who enacted the Marshall Plan. Further, it uses a passive construction: “*was enacted.*”

Choice (C) states who enacted the Marshall Plan, but it retains the passive construction “*was enacted.*”

Choice (E) is second-best. The phrase “*in order*” is unnecessary.

Choice (D) corrects the false reference by replacing *they* with *the United States*. Further, it uses the active verb *enacted* instead of the passive verb *was enacted*. The answer is (D).

4. In the 1950’s, integration was an anathema to most Americans; now, however, most Americans accept it as desirable.

- (A) to most Americans; now, however, most Americans accept it as desirable.
- (B) to most Americans, now, however, most Americans accept it.
- (C) to most Americans; now, however, most Americans are desirable of it.
- (D) to most Americans; now, however, most Americans accepted it as desirable.
- (E) to most Americans. Now, however, most Americans will accept it as desirable.

The sentence is not incorrect as written. Hence, the answer is choice (A).

Choice (B) creates a run-on sentence by replacing the semicolon with a comma. Without a connecting word—*and, or, but*, etc.—two independent clauses must be joined by a semicolon or written as two separate sentences. Also, deleting “*as desirable*” changes the meaning of the sentence.

Choice (C) uses a very awkward construction: *are desirable of it*.

Choice (D) contains an error in tense. The sentence progresses from the past to the present, so the verb in the second clause should be *accept*, not *accepted*.

Choice (E) writes the two clauses as separate sentences, which is allowable, but it also changes the tense of the second clause to the future: *will accept*.

5. Geologists in California have discovered a fault near the famous San Andreas Fault, one that they believe to be a trigger for major quakes on the San Andreas.

- (A) one that they believe to be a trigger for
- (B) one they believe to be a trigger for
- (C) one that they believe triggers
- (D) that they believe to be a trigger for
- (E) one they believe acts as a trigger for

Choice (A) is incorrect since the relative pronoun *that* is redundant: the pronoun *one*, which refers to the newly discovered fault, is sufficient.

Although choice (C) reads more smoothly, it still contains the double pronouns.

Choice (D) is incorrect. Generally, relative pronouns such as *that* refer to whole ideas in previous clauses or sentences. Since the second sentence is about the fault and not its discovery, the pronoun *that* is appropriate.



Choice (E) is very tempting. It actually reads better than choice (A), but it contains a subtle flaw. *One* is the direct object of the verb *believes* and therefore cannot be the subject of the verb *acts*. Since *they* clearly is not the subject, the verb *acts* is without a subject.

Choice (B) has both the correct pronoun and the correct verb form. The answer is (B).

6. A bite from the tsetse fly invariably paralyzes its victims unless an antidote is administered within two hours.
- (A) its victims unless an antidote is administered
  - (B) its victims unless an antidote can be administered
  - (C) its victims unless an antidote was administered
  - (D) its victims unless an antidote is administered to the victims
  - (E) its victims unless they receive an antidote

Choice (A) is incorrect since it is unclear whether the victim or the fly should receive the antidote.

Choice (B) is incorrect since *is* is more direct than *can be*.

Choice (C) is incorrect. A statement of fact should be expressed in the present tense, not the past tense.

Choice (D) is wordy. A pronoun should be used for the phrase *the victims*.

Choice (E) is the answer since *they* correctly identifies who should receive the antidote.

### **Solutions to Warm-Up Drill II**

1. The rising cost of government bureaucracy have made it all but impossible to reign in the budget deficit.
- (A) The rising cost
  - (B) Since the rising costs
  - (C) Because of the rising costs
  - (D) The rising costs
  - (E) Rising cost

Choice (A) is incorrect because the plural verb *have* does not agree with its singular subject *the rising cost*.

Both (B) and (C) are incorrect because they turn the sentence into a fragment.

Choice (E) is incorrect because *rising cost* is still singular.

Choice (D) is the correct answer since now the plural verb *have* agrees with its plural subject *the rising costs*.

2. In a co-publication agreement, ownership of both the material and its means of distribution are equally shared by the parties.
- (A) its means of distribution are equally shared by the parties.
  - (B) its means of distribution are shared equally by each of the parties.
  - (C) its means of distribution is equally shared by the parties.
  - (D) their means of distribution is equally shared by the parties.
  - (E) the means of distribution are equally shared by the parties.

Choice (A) is incorrect. Recall that intervening phrases have no effect on subject-verb agreement. In this sentence, the subject *ownership* is singular, but the verb *are* is plural. Dropping the intervening phrase clearly shows that the sentence is ungrammatical:

*In a co-publication, agreement ownership are equally shared by the parties.*

Choice (B) is incorrect. Neither adding *each of* nor interchanging *shared* and *equally* addresses the issue of subject-verb agreement.

Choice (D) contains a faulty pronoun reference. The antecedent of the plural pronoun *their* would be the singular noun *material*.

Choice (E) is incorrect since it still contains the plural verb *are*. The answer is choice (C).

3. The rise in negative attitudes toward foreigners indicate that the country is becoming less tolerant, and therefore that the opportunities are ripe for extremist groups to exploit the illegal immigration problem.

- (A) indicate that the country is becoming less tolerant, and therefore that
- (B) indicates that the country is becoming less tolerant, and therefore
- (C) indicates that the country is becoming less tolerant, and therefore that
- (D) indicates that the country is being less tolerant, and therefore
- (E) indicates that the country is becoming less tolerant of and therefore that

Choice (A) has two flaws. First, the subject of the sentence *the rise* is singular, and therefore the verb *indicate* should not be plural. Second, the comma indicates that the sentence is made up of two independent clauses, but the relative pronoun *that* immediately following *therefore* forms a subordinate clause.

Choice (C) corrects the number of the verb, but retains the subordinating relative pronoun *that*.

Choice (D) corrects the number of the verb and eliminates the subordinating relative pronoun *that*. However, the verb *being* is less descriptive than the verb *becoming*: As negative attitudes toward foreigners increase, the country becomes correspondingly less tolerant. *Being* does not capture this notion of change.

Choice (E) corrects the verb's number, and by dropping the comma, makes the subordination allowable. However, it introduces the preposition *of* which does not have an object: less tolerant of what?

Choice (B) both corrects the verb's number and removes the subordinating relative pronoun *that*. The answer is (B).

4. The harvest of grapes in the local valleys decreased in 1990 for the third straight year but were still at a robust level.

- (A) The harvest of grapes in the local valleys decreased in 1990 for the third straight year but were
- (B) The harvest of grapes in the local valleys began to decrease in 1990 for the third straight year but were
- (C) In 1990, the harvest of grapes in the local valleys decreased for the third straight year but were
- (D) The harvest of grapes in the local valleys decreased for the third straight year in 1990 but was
- (E) The harvest of grapes in the local valleys began decreasing in 1990 for the third straight year but was

Choice (A) is incorrect since the singular subject *the harvest* requires a singular verb, not the plural verb *were*.

Choice (B) is illogical since it states that the harvest began to decrease in 1990 and then it states that it was the third straight year of decrease.

In choice (C) the plural verb *were* still does not agree with its singular subject *the harvest*.

Choice (E) contains the same flaw as choice (B).

Choice (D) has the singular verb *was* agreeing with its singular subject *the harvest*. Further, it places the phrase *in 1990* more naturally. The answer is (D).

5. Each of the book's protagonists—Mark Streit, Mary Eby, and Dr. Thomas—has a powerful, dynamic personality.
- (A) Each of the book's protagonists—Mark Streit, Mary Eby, and Dr. Thomas—has  
 (B) Each of the book's protagonists—Mark Streit, Mary Eby, and Dr. Thomas—have  
 (C) All the book's protagonists—Mark Streit, Mary Eby, and Dr. Thomas—has  
 (D) Mark Streit, Mary Eby, and Dr. Thomas—the book's protagonists—each has  
 (E) Each of the book's protagonists—Mark Streit, Mary Eby, and Dr. Thomas—could have had

The sentence is grammatical as written. The answer is (A).

When *each*, *every*, or *many a* precedes two or more subjects linked by *and*, they separate the subjects and the verb is singular. Hence, in choice (B) the plural verb *have* is incorrect.

Choice (C) is incorrect since the singular verb *has* does not agree with the plural subject *all*.

When *each* follows a plural subject it does not separate the subjects and the verb remains plural. Hence, in choice (D) the singular verb *has* is incorrect.

Choice (E) also changes the meaning of the original sentence, which states that the protagonist do have powerful, dynamic personalities.

### **Solutions to Warm-Up Drill III**

1. By focusing on poverty, the other causes of crime—such as the breakup of the nuclear family, changing morals, the loss of community, etc.—have been overlooked by sociologists.
- (A) the other causes of crime—such as the breakup of the nuclear family, changing morals, the loss of community, etc.—have been overlooked by sociologists.  
 (B) the other causes of crime have been overlooked by sociologists—such as the breakup of the nuclear family, changing morals, the loss of community, etc.  
 (C) there are other causes of crime that have been overlooked by sociologists—such as the breakup of the nuclear family, changing morals, the loss of community, etc.  
 (D) crimes—such as the breakup of the nuclear family, changing morals, the loss of community, etc.—have been overlooked by sociologists.  
 (E) sociologists have overlooked the other causes of crime—such as the breakup of the nuclear family, changing morals, the loss of community, etc.

Choice (A) is incorrect since it implies that *the other causes of crime* are doing the focusing.

Choice (B) has the same flaw.

Choice (C) is incorrect. The phrase *by focusing on poverty* must modify the subject of the sentence, but *there are* cannot be the subject since the construction *there are* is used to introduce a subject.

Choice (D) implies that *crimes* are focusing on poverty.

Choice (E) puts the subject of the sentence *sociologists* immediately next to its modifying phrase *by focusing on poverty*. The answer is (E).

2. Using the Hubble telescope, previously unknown galaxies are now being charted.

- (A) Using the Hubble telescope, previously unknown galaxies are now being charted.  
 (B) Previously unknown galaxies are now being charted, using the Hubble telescope.  
 (C) Using the Hubble telescope, previously unknown galaxies are now being charted by astronomers.  
 (D) Using the Hubble telescope, astronomers are now charting previously unknown galaxies.  
 (E) With the aid of the Hubble telescope, previously unknown galaxies are now being charted.

Choice (A) is incorrect because the phrase *using the Hubble telescope* does not have a noun to modify.

Choice (B) is incorrect because the phrase *using the Hubble telescope* still does not have a noun to modify.

Choice (C) offers a noun, *astronomers*, but it is too far from the phrase *using the Hubble telescope*.

In choice (E), the phrase *with the aid of the Hubble telescope* does not have a noun to modify.

Choice (D) offers a noun, *astronomers*, and places it immediately after the modifying phrase *using the Hubble telescope*. The answer is (D).

3. The bitter cold the Midwest is experiencing is potentially life threatening to stranded motorists unless well-insulated with protective clothing.

- (A) stranded motorists unless well-insulated
- (B) stranded motorists unless being insulated
- (C) stranded motorists unless they are well-insulated
- (D) stranded motorists unless there is insulation
- (E) the stranded motorist unless insulated

Choice (A) is incorrect. As worded, the sentence implies that the cold should be well-insulated.

Choice (B) is awkward; besides, it still implies that the cold should be well-insulated.

Choice (D) does not indicate what should be insulated.

Choice (E), like choices (A) and (B), implies that the cold should be well-insulated.

Choice (C) is the answer since it correctly implies that the stranded motorists should be well-insulated with protective clothing.

4. Traveling across and shooting the vast expanse of the Southwest, in 1945 Ansel Adams began his photographic career.

- (A) Traveling across and shooting the vast expanse of the Southwest, in 1945 Ansel Adams began his photographic career.
- (B) In 1945, Ansel Adams began his photographic career, traveling across and shooting the vast expanse of the Southwest.
- (C) Having traveled across and shooting the vast expanse of the Southwest, in 1945 Ansel Adams began his photographic career.
- (D) Ansel Adams, in 1945 began his photographic career, traveling across and shooting the vast expanse of the Southwest.
- (E) Traveling across and shooting the vast expanse of the Southwest, Ansel Adams began his photographic career in 1945.

Choice (A) has two flaws. First, the introductory phrase is too long. Second, the subject Ansel Adams should immediately follow the introductory phrase since it was Ansel Adams—not the year 1945—who was traveling and shooting the Southwest.

Choice (B) is incorrect because the phrase “*traveling across... Southwest*” is too far from its subject Ansel Adams. As written, the sentence seems to imply that the photographic career was traveling across and shooting the Southwest.

Choice (C) is inconsistent in verb tense. Further, it implies that Adams began his photographic career after he traveled across the Southwest.

Choice (D) is awkward.

The best answer is choice (E).

### **Solutions to Warm-Up Drill IV**

1. Common knowledge tells us that sensible exercise and eating properly will result in better health.

- (A) eating properly will result
- (B) proper diet resulted
- (C) dieting will result
- (D) proper diet results
- (E) eating properly results

Choice (A) is incorrect since *eating properly* (verb-adverb) is not parallel to *sensible exercise* (adjective-noun).

Choice (B) offers two parallel nouns, *exercise* and *diet*. However, a general truth should be expressed in the present tense, not in the past tense.

Choice (C) is not parallel since it pairs the noun *exercise* with the gerund (a verb acting as a noun) *dieting*.

Choice (E) makes the same mistake as choice (A).

Choice (D) offers two parallel nouns—*exercise* and *diet*—and two parallel verbs—*tells* and *results*. The answer is (D).

2. This century began with war brewing in Europe, the industrial revolution well-established, and a nascent communication age.

- (A) war brewing in Europe, the industrial revolution well-established, and a nascent communication age.
- (B) war brewing in Europe, the industrial revolution surging, and a nascent communication age.
- (C) war in Europe, the industrial revolution well-established, and a nascent communication age.
- (D) war brewing in Europe, the industrial revolution well-established, and the communication age beginning.
- (E) war brewing in Europe, the industrial revolution well-established, and saw the birth of the communication age.

Choice (A) is incorrect. Although the first two phrases, *war brewing in Europe* and *the industrial revolution well-established*, have different structures, the thoughts are parallel. However, the third phrase, *and a nascent communication age*, is not parallel to the first two.

Choice (B) does not make the third phrase parallel to the first two.

Choice (C) changes the meaning of the sentence: the new formulation states that war already existed in Europe while the original sentence states that war was only developing.

Choice (E) is not parallel since the first two phrases in the series are noun phrases, but *saw the birth of the communication age* is a verb phrase. When a word introduces a series, each element of the series must agree with the introductory word. You can test the correctness of a phrase in a series by dropping the other phrases and checking whether the remaining phrase agrees with the introductory word. In this series, each phrase must be the object of the preposition *with*:

This century began *with* war brewing in Europe

This century began *with* the industrial revolution well-established

This century began *with* saw the birth of the communication age

In this form, it is clear the verb *saw* cannot be the object of the preposition *with*.

Choice (D) offers three phrases in parallel form. The answer is (D).

3. It is often better to try repairing an old car than to junk it.

- (A) to try repairing an old car than to junk it.
- (B) to repair an old car than to have it junked.
- (C) to try repairing an old car than to junking it.
- (D) to try and repair an old car than to junk it.
- (E) to try to repair an old car than to junk it.

Choice (A) is incorrect since the verb *repairing* is not parallel to the verb *junk*.

In choice (B), the construction *have it junked* is awkward. Further, it changes the original construction from active to passive.

Choice (C) offers a parallel construction (*repairing/junking*), but it is awkward.

Choice (D) also offers a parallel construction (*repair/junk*), but the construction *try and* is not idiomatic.

Choice (E) offers a parallel construction (*repair/junk*), and the correct idiom—*try to*. The answer is (E).

4. Jurassic Park, written by Michael Crichton, and which was first printed in 1988, is a novel about a theme park of the future in which dinosaurs roam free.

- (A) Jurassic Park, written by Michael Crichton, and which was first printed in 1988,
- (B) Jurassic Park, written by Michael Crichton and first printed in 1988,
- (C) Jurassic Park, which was written by Michael Crichton, and which was first printed in 1988,
- (D) Written by Michael Crichton and first printed in 1988, Jurassic Park
- (E) Jurassic Park, which was written by Michael Crichton and first printed in 1988,

Choice (A) is incorrect since the verb *written* is not parallel to the construction *which was ... printed*.

Choice (B) is the correct answer since the sentence is concise and the verb *written* is parallel to the verb *printed*.

Choice (C) does offer a parallel structure (*which was written/which was printed*); however, choice (B) is more concise.

Choice (D) rambles. The introduction *Written by ... 1988* is too long.

Choice (E) also offers a parallel structure (*which was written/[which was] printed*); however, choice (B) again is more concise. Note that *which was* need not be repeated for the sentence to be parallel.

### **Solutions to Warm-Up Drill V**

1. In the past few years and to this day, many teachers of math and science had chosen to return to the private sector.
- (A) had chosen to return to the private sector.
  - (B) having chosen to return to the private sector.
  - (C) chose to return to the private sector.
  - (D) have chosen to return to the private sector.
  - (E) have chosen returning to the private sector.

Choice (A) is incorrect because it uses the past perfect *had chosen*, which describes an event that has been completed before another event. But the sentence implies that teachers have and are continuing to return to the private sector. Hence, the present perfect tense should be used.

Choice (B) is incorrect because it uses the present progressive tense *having chosen*, which describes an ongoing event. Although this is the case, it does not capture the fact that the event began in the past.

Choice (C) is incorrect because it uses the simple past *chose*, which describes a past event. But again, the sentence implies that the teachers are continuing to opt for the private sector.

Choice (D) is the correct answer because it uses the present perfect *have chosen* to describe an event that occurred in the past and is continuing into the present.

Choice (E) is incorrect because it leaves the thought in the sentence uncompleted.

2. Most of the homes that were destroyed in last summer's brush fires were built with wood-shake roofs.
- (A) Most of the homes that were destroyed in last summer's brush fires were
  - (B) Last summer, brush fires destroyed most of the homes that were
  - (C) Most of the homes that were destroyed in last summer's brush fires had been
  - (D) Most of the homes that the brush fires destroyed last summer's have been
  - (E) Most of the homes destroyed in last summer's brush fires were being

Choice (A) is incorrect because the simple past *were* does not express the fact that the homes had been built before the fire destroyed them.

Choice (B) merely rearranges the wording while retaining the simple past *were*.

Choice (C) is the correct answer because it uses the past perfect *had been* to indicate that the homes were completely built before they were destroyed by the fires.

Choice (D) is incorrect because it uses the present perfect *have been*, which implies that the homes were destroyed before being built.

Choice (E) is incorrect. Although dropping the phrase *that were* makes the sentence more concise, the past progressive *were being* implies that the homes were destroyed while being built.

3. Although World War II ended nearly a half century ago, Russia and Japan still have not signed a formal peace treaty; and both countries have been reticent to develop closer relations.
- (A) have not signed a formal peace treaty; and both countries have been
  - (B) did not signed a formal peace treaty; and both countries have been
  - (C) have not signed a formal peace treaty; and both countries being
  - (D) have not signed a formal peace treaty; and both countries are
  - (E) are not signing a formal peace treaty; and both countries have been

The sentence is grammatical as written. The present perfect verb *have ... signed* correctly indicates that they have not signed a peace treaty and are not on the verge of signing one. Further, the present perfect verb *have been* correctly indicates that in the past both countries have been reluctant to develop closer relations and are still reluctant. The answer is (A).

In choice (B), the simple past *did* does not capture the fact that they did not sign a peace treaty immediately after the war and still have not signed one.

Choice (C) is very awkward, and the present progressive *being* does not capture the fact that the countries have been reluctant to thaw relations since after the war up through the present.

In choice (D), the present tense *are* leaves open the possibility that in the past the countries may have desired closer relations but now no longer do.

In choice (E), the present progressive tense *are ... signing*, as in choice (D), leaves open the possibility that in the past the countries may have desired closer relations but now no longer do.

4. The Democrats have accused the Republicans of resorting to dirty tricks by planting a mole on the Democrat's planning committee and then used the information obtained to sabotage the Democrat's campaign.
- (A) used the information obtained to sabotage
  - (B) used the information they had obtained to sabotage
  - (C) of using the information they had obtained to sabotage
  - (D) using the information obtained to sabotage
  - (E) to have used the information obtained to sabotage

Choice (A) is incorrect because the simple past *obtained* does not express the fact that the information was gotten before another past action—the sabotage.

Choice (B) is incorrect because *used* is not parallel to *of resorting*.

Choice (C) is correct because the phrase *of using* is parallel to the phrase *of resorting*. Further, the past perfect *had obtained* correctly expresses that a past action—the spying—was completed before another past action—the sabotage.

Choice (D) is incorrect because *using* is not parallel to *of resorting* and the past perfect is not used.

Choice (E) is incorrect because *to have used* is not parallel to *of resorting* and the past perfect is not used.

### **Solutions to Warm-Up Drill VI**

1. Regarding legalization of drugs, I am not concerned so much by its potential impact on middle class America but instead by its potential impact on the inner city.
- (A) but instead
  - (B) so much as
  - (C) rather
  - (D) but rather
  - (E) as

The correct structure for this type of sentence is *not so much by \_\_\_\_\_ as by \_\_\_\_\_*. The answer is (E).

2. Unless you maintain at least a 2.0 GPA, you will not graduate medical school.
- (A) you will not graduate medical school.
  - (B) you will not be graduated from medical school.
  - (C) you will not be graduating medical school.
  - (D) you will not graduate from medical school.
  - (E) you will graduate medical school.

Choice (A) is incorrect. In this context, *graduate* requires the word *from*: “you will not *graduate from* medical school.”



The use of the passive voice in choices (B) and (C) weakens the sentence.

Choice (D) is the answer since it uses the correct idiom *graduate from*.

Choice (E) changes the meaning of the sentence and does not correct the faulty idiom.

3. The studio's retrospective art exhibit refers back to a simpler time in American history.

- (A) The studio's retrospective art exhibit refers back to
- (B) The studio's retrospective art exhibit harkens back to
- (C) The studio's retrospective art exhibit refers to
- (D) The studio's retrospective art exhibit refers from
- (E) The studio's retrospective art exhibit looks back to

Choice (A) is incorrect. *Retrospective* means looking back on the past. Hence, in the phrase *refers back*, the word *back* is redundant.

Choice (B) is incorrect because *harkens back* is also redundant.

Choice (C) is correct. Dropping the word *back* eliminates the redundancy.

Choice (D) is incorrect because the preposition *from* is non-idiomatic.

Choice (E) is incorrect because *looks back* is also redundant.

4. Due to the chemical spill, the commute into the city will be delayed by as much as 2 hours.

- (A) Due to the chemical spill, the commute into the city will be delayed by as much as 2 hours.
- (B) The reason that the commute into the city will be delayed by as much as 2 hours is because of the chemical spill.
- (C) Due to the chemical spill, the commute into the city had been delayed by as much as 2 hours.
- (D) Because of the chemical spill, the commute into the city will be delayed by as much as 2 hours.
- (E) The chemical spill will be delaying the commute into the city by as much as 2 hours.

Choice (A) is incorrect. Although many educated writers and speakers begin sentences with *due to*, it is almost always incorrect.

Choice (B) is incorrect: it is both redundant and awkward.

Choice (C) is incorrect. The past perfect *had been delayed* implies the delay no longer exists. Hence, the meaning of the sentence has been changed.

Choice (D) is correct. In general, *due to* should not be used as a substitute for *because of*, *owing to*, *by reason of*, etc.

Choice (E) is incorrect. The future progressive *will be delaying* is unnecessary and ponderous. Had choice (E) used the simple future *will delay*, it would have been better than choice (D) because then it would be more direct and active.

# General Tips on Writing Your Essays

## Structure

Now that you know when to use a semicolon instead of a comma, how do you get started writing your essay? Learning the rules that govern written English is one thing; putting your knowledge to use is another. We will discuss some specific tips in each of the essay sections later, but for now, we will look at some general techniques to make your essay the best it can be. We begin by looking at the proper structure for your introduction and for your conclusion.

### Introduction

Your introduction should serve two structural purposes: It should restate your topic so that the reader need not review the given question, and it should offer a clear thesis so the reader knows what your purpose is. Simply defined, a thesis states the main idea of your essay. Because the strategy you need to employ for developing your thesis differs for each type of essay, however, we will discuss it in further detail later on in this chapter.

Your introduction should, in effect, restate the given topic. In other words, your reader should be able to ascertain the issue or argument without reading the given topic. Suppose the GRE gives you this argument:

*The following letter was sent by a group of homeowners from the Rivermill Subdivision to all homeowners in that subdivision.*

“Providence Golf Community down the street has a homeowner’s association. Part of the role of this association is to develop bylaws, which dictate the outside appearance of all homes in the community. For example, according to the rules set forth in the covenant, homeowners may only build privacy fences around their yard; no chain link is permitted. Property values in this community are double property values in our subdivision. In order to raise our property values, we need to improve the look of our neighborhood. Therefore, we should start an association and develop a covenant.”

Your initial reaction to this prompt may be to begin your essay with a direct response such as *This letter presents a faulty argument*. However, this introductory sentence does not provide adequate information because it does not specify *which* letter and therefore it would leave the reader confused. Following is the beginning of an introduction that does give adequate information to the reader:

Does the adoption of covenants in housing communities result in rising property values? In a letter to the residents of Rivermill Subdivision, a small group of homeowners stated that property values in nearby Providence were double the property values in Rivermill because of such a covenant.

Not only should you restate the topic, but you should also do so in a way that will spark interest. It may seem like a tall order to restate your topic, create a thesis, AND make it captivating, but if you don’t grab your reader’s attention in the introduction, it doesn’t matter how interesting the body of your essay is because he won’t feel compelled to read on. Think of your introduction as the worm on a fishhook, just dangling there enticing the fish to bite. There are several techniques you can employ to get your reader to “bite” and, thus, read on.

- Begin your introduction with a question. Naturally, when a question is posed to your reader, he or she will want to keep reading to find out the answer.
- Begin your introduction with a quote. Because you will not have time to research your topic for the GRE test, this may not be as feasible as, say, on a term paper for a graduate class; however, if you can remember a specific quote pertinent to your topic, use it.
- Begin with an anecdote. An anecdote is entertaining and will thus draw in the reader.
- Begin with an illustration or a hypothetical example based on the topic you are going to discuss.
- Begin with a true-to-life example.
- Begin with vivid description of something pertaining to your topic.

It is particularly important that, in the context of the GRE, you make a concerted effort to create a captivating introduction. Keep in mind that the scorers of your essays are the scorers of everyone else's essays. They read hundreds of responses to the same issues and arguments. You must make your essay stand out. What better way to make it stand out than to make it exceptional from the beginning?

### **Conclusion**

The conclusion of your essay is just as important as the introduction because it wraps up your thoughts and evidence and should leave your reader satisfied that a convincing discussion has just taken place. Your conclusion should include a restatement of your thesis and then end with a more general statement, perhaps a warning or a call for action. Tip: If time is running out and you get stuck trying to formulate a conclusion, try beginning with "In conclusion" or "In summary." Then continue by restating your thesis.

## **Style**

We have examined the rules that govern the English language, and we have learned some techniques on structure. But how does a writer make a piece of writing his own? And how does a writer add interest to his essays? The way a writer uses words and phrases to add personality to his writing is called *style*. A writer is to style as a figure skater is to skating. A writer can learn all the rules that make his writing correct, just as a figure skater can learn how to accomplish her jumps and footwork. But just learning the rules of grammar is not enough to create a well-written essay; learning just the rules of skating is not enough to earn a gold medal. The writer must bring his own methods and personality to his writing just as a skater must invest her own personality and flair to her performance.

Many elements combine to form a writer's style, and, even though many of these elements can be identified, each is unique to a writer. Moreover, a good writer does not allow any elements of his style to stagnate. Rather, he continues to practice writing in order to continually improve and develop his style. We will touch briefly on how you can develop your writing style, but first let's look at some specific elements of style.

### **Transitions**

Transitional phrases are an important element of style because they create coherence. They guide the reader from point A to point B. On the GRE, the reader will read through your essay quickly, scoring according to his first impression of what you wrote. If your essay is choppy and does not flow well, the reader will not gain a good first impression. Therefore, it is imperative that your essay exhibits solid cohesiveness. Look at the lists below for some examples of transitional words and phrases that will help you write a smooth, coherent essay.

**Agreement:** also, plus, in addition, further, furthermore, moreover, additionally, to add to that, next, in accordance with, accordingly, in agreement, finally, for instance, for example, in exemplification, exemplifying that, in fact, factually speaking, in terms of, and so forth, in coordination with, along those lines, collectively speaking, generally speaking, indeed, undoubtedly, obviously, to be sure, equally

**Contrast:** however, in contrast, on the contrary, on the other hand, from a different angle, nonetheless, nevertheless, but, yet, a catch to this is, sadly enough, as a hindrance, oddly enough, instead, in direct opposition, still, rather

**Result:** as a result, as a consequence, consequently, thus, therefore, hence, thereby, resulting in, ultimately, in the end, finally, in the overall analysis, in hindsight, in retrospect, retrospectively, vicariously, the long term effect, as a short term result, significantly, as a major effect, effectively, heretofore, hereafter, thereafter, in short, generally, over all, concluding

Transitional words and phrases are helpful not only in linking your ideas between sentences, but also in providing cohesiveness from paragraph to paragraph. Each paragraph of your essay should include a topic sentence, which can also act as a transitional sentence. This transitional sentence should link your paragraphs by relating to some element in the preceding paragraph. Take a look at the following example:

The size of your house will probably be a factor in how you decide to decorate. If you have a large house, you may opt for a grand, sophisticated look. Over-sized furniture and ornate fixtures will complement solid-colored walls accented with artwork. On the other hand, a cozy look suits a smaller home. This look can be achieved by choosing less formal furniture, simple accents and warm colors. Equally, patterned wall-coverings add a lovely touch to a small home.

Regardless of the size of your house, your financial situation will also likely play a large role in the style of décor you choose. Limited funds may force you to make some of your own decorations, like curtains and knick knacks. However, unlimited funds may offer the option of hiring an interior decorator to do all the work for you.

The first sentence of the second paragraph is not only the topic sentence of the paragraph (it lets the reader know what the paragraph will be about), but also the transitional sentence that links the two paragraphs. Notice that the phrase “Regardless of the size of your house” refers to the topic of the first paragraph, thereby tying together the topics of both paragraphs. In addition, the word “also” in this sentence indicates that a second factor of decorating is being introduced.

Other more subtle transitions occur in the first paragraph. For example, “over-sized furniture” in the third sentence refers to the “large house” in the preceding sentence. This provides a transition without using a transitional word. Notice further that “large” is part of the subordinate clause in the second sentence but “over-sized” is part of the main subject in the third sentence, thus providing transition while also giving the reader some variety in sentence pattern. (We will discuss varying your sentences later on.)

More obvious are the transitional words we discussed previously. In the first paragraph, for example, the phrase “On the other hand” depicts the contrast between a large and a small house while “equally” continues the thoughts pertaining to a cozy home. In the second paragraph, “However” is used to show contrast in a pattern much like in the first paragraph.

Using transitions, both subtle and obvious, in your sentences and between paragraphs is essential in creating cohesiveness in your essay. Without this clarity, your essay will likely be choppy and difficult for the scorer to read and understand. A word of caution, however, before we move on: Since time is limited on the writing assessment sections, you must be concise and to the point. Be careful not to overuse transitional words and phrases because overuse can make you sound like a pedantic writer rather than an intelligent one.

### **Varying Your Sentences**

No matter how well your essay flows, the reader will easily get bored if your essay consists only of sentences that contain the same words and follow the same structure. Consider this paragraph:

Dogs are smarter than cats. They are often used to help handicapped people. Dogs help blind people. Dogs also help epileptic people. Dogs can sense when an epileptic person is about to have a seizure. Dogs are also used in rescue work. They help rescue skiers. They also help in catastrophic events. They rescue people after earthquakes.

There are several things wrong with this paragraph:

- Almost every sentence is the same length.
- The structure in each sentence is almost identical: Subject + Verb + Direct Object.
- The same words are used over and over: “dogs,” “they,” “also,” “help,” “rescue.”
- No description is used to further illustrate the writer’s points.

To add more interest to your writing, you need to vary your sentence length and structure. Try different beginnings for your sentences. Employ a variety of words and use these words to paint a vivid picture of your subject. Let's apply these tips to the paragraph above:

Dogs are more intelligent than your average feline. A cat cannot, for example, guide a blind person across busy streets and along crowded sidewalks. Amazingly enough, a dog is also a perfect companion for a person with epilepsy because a dog seems to be able to sense when a seizure is coming on. While dogs help keep the handicapped away from danger, they also aid in rescuing people who have fallen victim to dangerous situations, like skiers trapped in an avalanche. Moreover, when catastrophic events, like earthquakes, leave victims pinned beneath debris and rubble, a canine team often comes to the rescue.

A good way to vary your sentences is to begin them in different ways. For example, you could begin your sentence with the subject and predicate and then build on them using various words and phrases. This type of sentence is called a *cumulative sentence*. By contrast, in a *periodic sentence*, you use words and phrases to build up to the subject and the predicate at the end of the sentence. Here are some examples:

**Cumulative sentence:**

The energetic children played hard, chasing each other in all directions, occasionally falling and then scrambling to their feet, giggling at each other's antics and never stopping for even a moment to catch their breath.

**Periodic sentence:**

With flour in her hair, dough in between her fingers and sauce all over her face, she attempted to make a gourmet pizza.

Both types of sentences not only add variety, but also bring rhythm and cadence to writing. This rhythm creates interest and is pleasant to the reader. Additionally, descriptive words paint a clear picture for the reader.

**Figurative Language**

Another excellent way to paint vivid pictures for your reader is to use figures of speech. Figures of speech—like similes, metaphors, analogies, personification, hyperbole, irony, and allusion—when used correctly, add extra flair to your writing. They add to your style of writing an element that takes your writing from ordinary to extraordinary.

Similes show a marked comparison between two things by using the phrases “like,” “as,” or “as if.”

**Example:**

The cat stood poised and still as a statue, waiting for the opportune moment to pounce.

Here the cat is described “as a statue” because it is standing so still.

Metaphors show absolute comparison by omitting “like,” “as,” or “as if.”

**Example:**

She is Mother Theresa when it comes to her generosity and compassion.

Here the comparison is absolute because the writer states that this person *is* Mother Theresa; the writer does not say that this person is just *like* Mother Theresa.

Analogies compare the similar features of two dissimilar things. Analogies often bring clarity to writing by showing a reader another way of seeing something. Analogies are not limited to a sentence; sometimes an analogy streams its way through an entire piece of writing.

**Example:**

Office cooperation is like a soccer game. Each employee has a position on the playing field, and each position dictates an employee's function. Working together, the office completes passes by communicating well within each department. Shots on goal are taken when employees meet with prospective clients to pitch ideas. And the whole office triumphs when a goal is scored and a prospect becomes a client.

Here one element, an office working together, is compared to another, a soccer team playing a game. Although an office and a soccer team are two very unrelated things, the writer sees similarities in some aspects between the two and uses these similarities to show more clearly how an office works together.

Personification gives human characteristics to animals, inanimate objects and ideas in order to make them more real and understandable.

**Example:**

The rusty car groaned, coughed, then gave one last sputter and died.

The car in this sentence comes to life even as it “dies” because of the human characteristics it is given.

Hyperbole uses deliberate exaggeration or overstatement to show special emphasis or create humor.

**Example:**

Fat-free foods have become so popular that soon all vendors will want to give it a shot. Before you know it, Kentucky Fried Chicken will have fat-free fried chicken. Big Macs will contain 0 grams of fat. And the amount of fat in a Pizza Hut cheese pizza? You guessed it—none!

In order to show how far out of hand peoples' obsession with fat-free foods has become, this description purposefully exaggerates a world where the most unlikely things are fat-free.

Irony uses language that makes a suggestion that directly contrasts with the literal word or idea. It can offer humor to writing, or a bitter tone when it is used in sarcasm.

**Example:**

Scientists have worked hard to develop ways to decrease infant mortality rates and increase longevity. As a result, more people are living longer and scientists will soon have to develop some methods with which to control overpopulation.

This sentence uses irony by predicting that, because scientists have now discovered ways to increase a person's life span, they will soon have to deal with another problem—overpopulation. This is because, with everyone living longer, there will soon be too many people for the earth to support.

Allusion makes indirect reference to known cultural works, people or events. The familiarity allusions bring to writing helps the writer make connections with the reader.

**Example:**

I have so much to do today, I feel like David must have felt as he approached Goliath.

Most people are familiar with the Bible story of David and Goliath. David is a small shepherd who slays the giant, Goliath, with a slingshot and one stone after the army's best soldiers fail. Even through his feat, however, David must have felt a bit intimidated when facing Goliath, a feeling this writer intimates when thinking about everything that needs to be done.

**Figures of speech to avoid**

*Clichés* are overused phrases that prevent your writing from being fresh and original, so don't use clichés like "Cute as a button" or "Busy as a bee."

*Mixed metaphors* are comparisons that are not consistent; they only cause confusion. For example, "The infant was like a baby bird, opening his cavernous well for food." Here the simile that an infant is like a baby bird holds true, but the following words that equate the baby's mouth to a cavernous well are not consistent.

**Tone**

The words you choose will greatly affect the tone of your essay. Likewise, the tone you wish to achieve will depend on your audience. In this case, you know your audience will consist of men and women who will be quickly reading your essay and then assigning a score based on their impression and how well you handled the topic. Knowing this, you will want to use a professional, formal tone, the kind you will probably use in most of your graduate work. Using a formal tone means that you will want to keep some distance between you, the writer, and your audience, the scorer. Be courteous and polite but avoid being chummy or intimate in any way. Furthermore, you should avoid all colloquialisms and slang.

**Diction**

While tone defines the overall language you use, diction deals with the specific kinds of words and phrases you choose for your essay. Since you have already determined your audience and thus ascertained that you need to portray a formal tone in your essay, you must be consistent with your diction, or word choice. Diction may be classified as technical (*homo sapien* rather than *human*), formal (*Please inform me when you are ready to depart.*), informal or colloquial (*Give me a buzz when you're ready to go.*), or slang (*She's a real couch potato and watches the tube from early morning 'til the cows come home.*) Knowing that your audience dictates a formal tone, you must also be consistent in maintaining formal diction. Look at the following example of inconsistent diction:

Violence in schools has become an epidemic problem. School shootings occur regularly, and fights erupt daily in the nation's classrooms. Even with the addition of metal detectors at school entrances, violence will never be eradicated because the jocks are always ganging up on the geeks. If only we could just all get along.

This example begins with a formal tone and formal diction; however, it takes a quick turn when the writer uses slang words like "jocks" and "geeks." The paragraph is concluded informally with "If only we could just all get along."

As you write your essay, and later when you proofread it, you will want to make sure that you preserve the formality your audience requires.

**Person**

It is important to maintain consistency in person. For example, if you begin your essay in second person (*you*) do not shift to third person (*he, she, it, one, or they*). Let's look at a couple of examples illustrating a shift in person:

**Example:**

One can get excellent grades in school if you study hard.

The switch from "one" to "you" is confusing and awkward.

**Example:**

Off the coast of Puerto Rico, on the island of Vieques, is an old French mansion turned hotel. Here one can enjoy spacious guest rooms and a cozy library. One can lounge around the pool and indulge in the honorary pool bar. Because the hotel is not far from the ocean, you can also take a leisurely walk down to the white sandy beach where one can spend a lazy day basking in the sun.

The switch from *one* to *you* is confusing in this paragraph and detracts from the imagery. Decide from the beginning of your essay what person you wish to employ and make a conscious effort to stick to it.



### Developing Your Style

Your goal as a writer is to create interest and coherence through your unique writing style. Using figures of speech and maintaining consistent use of tone, diction and person are effective ways to create interest. Using transitions creates coherence. Also remember that part of creating coherence is being concise. Use only the details that are necessary to support your topic and avoid tedious description. This is not to say that you should avoid vivid imagery, but that you should take care to ensure that your information adds to your writing rather than detracts from your writing.

In taking all of these elements of style into account, the most important aspect to remember about developing your style is that it only comes through practice. Practice your writing and proofread, proofread, proofread. If you do all of these things, you will be well on your way to becoming an effective, skillful writer. Are you ready to start practicing? Let's move on and discuss the two different essays you will be asked to write.

### Warm-Up Drill II

**Directions:** Read each paragraph in the following essay and rewrite it, making necessary changes in order to enhance the effectiveness of the essay. Pay close attention to all of the elements you learned about writing style. Answers and solutions begin on the next page.

Issue prompt:

*It is more beneficial to complete independent study than to attend college.*

1. This opinion is not valid and is clearly not based on any evidence that would prove its validity. One can't gain more knowledge by completing independent study instead of attending college. It is necessary to look at some evidence to prove this.
2. Some people think that there are too many distractions at college because there are so many other students who take up class time. Interaction with other students can provide valuable insight into topics you study in college. Other people's backgrounds and experience add differences in perspectives and, in some cases, valuable expertise. Professors add expertise as well since they are the experts in the areas they are teaching. When a student studies on his own, he is dependent only on what he knows. He is also dependent on what he can read about. He is also dependent on his own background and experiences. This is very limiting to the value he can obtain from his education.
3. Some people think that students can learn more discipline by studying independently at home instead of going to college. College students learn a lot of discipline. They are held accountable by their college professors. They are held accountable by fellow students too. They depend upon them to contribute to the class. Students who study on their own are only accountable to themselves. Many times, studies get set aside when life gets too busy. Studies get the boot when a student encounters a subject they're not too excited about.
4. Studying at home independently is not as beneficial as attending college because the degree you get, if you get a degree at all, will not carry as much weight with potential employers as will a college degree from an accredited college or university. Employers place more weight on someone whose expertise they can depend on. Employers feel they can depend more on the expertise of someone who has been trained at a college or university.
5. People should go to college. You can't depend on your own motivation to finish your studies at home. A student gains a lot more from the interaction they receive between other students and professors in college. Students who get a degree from a college may have a better chance of getting a good job after college.



## **Solutions to Warm-Up Drill II**

1. The opening sentence in this paragraph does not make an effective introduction. It does not restate the topic but rather makes a direct address to the topic question. A good introduction should not require the reader to read the topic. The second sentence of the paragraph gives a concise thesis statement but should be elaborated on a bit. Also, the contraction *can't* does not fit with the formal tone of the essay. The last sentence serves as a transition to the next paragraph, but it does not show much sophistication or subtlety.

**Better:**

Should a student give up a college education in order to complete an independent study at home? Although the financial savings of independent study may be substantial, one can gain more benefits by obtaining a college or university education. Studying at a college or university can give a student a broader education, can help him learn discipline through accountability, and can pay off in the long run.

This introduction begins with a question, which is more effective than directly addressing the question/topic. The thesis statement concisely lists three reasons a formal education is better than independent study; this sentence gives the reader a clear idea of what the essay will be about.

2. The first sentence serves as a topic sentence for the paragraph; however, it should be reworded to act as a better transitional sentence, one that would tie in with the last sentence of the preceding paragraph. The second sentence would function better with a transitional phrase like *On the contrary* to introduce it. Also in this sentence, the use of second person *you* is inconsistent with the rest of the essay. The fourth sentence uses the same two words *add* and *expertise* that were used in the preceding sentence. These should be changed to add some variety. The next three sentences are repetitive and should be combined.

**Better:**

Some people think that distractions at college from other students who take up class time results in a narrow education. On the contrary, interaction with other students can provide valuable insight into the topics one studies in college. Other people's backgrounds and experience add different perspectives and, in some cases, valuable expertise. Professors offer much value as well since they are the experts in the areas they are teaching. When a student studies on his own, he is dependent only on what he knows or can read about and on his own background and experiences. This severely limits the value he can obtain from his education.

The first sentence works as a transition because it uses the word *narrow*, which contrasts with the word *broader* from the thesis statement in the preceding paragraph.

3. The first sentence works well as a topic sentence, but it uses the same wording as the topic sentence for the preceding paragraph. In the fifth sentence, the use of *they* and *them* is confusing because it is unclear whether the pronoun reference is to the student or fellow students. The remaining sentences are all the same length and therefore choppy. The last sentence strays from the formal tone of the essay. In addition, the word *they* does not agree in person with *a student*.

**Better:**

One valuable lesson students can learn at college is discipline. College students learn a lot of discipline because they are held accountable by their professors. Moreover, they are often held accountable by fellow students who depend upon them to contribute to the class. Students who study on their own are accountable only to themselves. Many times, studies get set aside when life gets too busy or when a student encounters a subject for which he is not enthusiastic.

The word *valuable* ties in well with the word *value* in the last sentence of the preceding paragraph. Thus, this sentence serves not only as a topic sentence but also as a transitional sentence.

4. Again, the first sentence provides a good topic sentence but not a good transition from the preceding paragraph. The second sentence unnecessarily repeats the word *weight* from the first sentence. In the third sentence, the text shifts to second person *you*. The last sentence repeats the word *depend* from the preceding sentence.

**Better:**

Studying at a college or university may not make every topic seem scintillating; however, when a student is held accountable, he is more driven. As he is driven to succeed, he will eventually earn a degree. Studying at home independently is not as beneficial as attending college because the degree a student gets, if he gets a degree at all, will not carry as much weight with potential employers as will a degree from an accredited college or university. Employers place more confidence in someone whose expertise they can rely on. Employers feel they can depend more on the expertise of someone who has been trained at a college or university.

The topic sentence in this paragraph provides transition because it refers to the preceding paragraph by relating *scintillating* courses to being *enthusiastic* about subjects.

5. The first sentence does not act as a thorough topic sentence, nor does it provide a good transition. The second sentence uses *you* and *your*, which is an inconsistent use of person. In addition, the contraction *can't* takes away from the formal tone of the essay. Overall, this last paragraph is not effective; it has short, choppy sentences and does not adequately conclude the subject by restating the topic and giving final remarks.

**Better:**

Whether one is trained at a university or opts to stay home to study independently, an education is extremely important; however, it is clear that a student can benefit more from a formal education than from independent study. Students should not depend on their own motivation to finish their studies, nor should they miss out on the opportunity to benefit from the interaction they will receive from other students and professors in college. Despite any financial savings a student may earn by studying independently, the rewards of a college education will pay off in the long run.

The transition here works well because the first sentence uses the word *trained*, which is used in the sentence before it. This final paragraph functions effectively as a conclusion because it restates the topic. It also brings the writing full circle by once again mentioning the monetary aspect of education, which, as you recall, was mentioned in the introductory paragraph.

# Present Your Perspective on an Issue

The *Present Your Perspective on an Issue* section of the test asks you to do just that—present your perspective on a given issue. In addition, you are required to provide solid evidence to support your position. You will be given two essay prompts, and you have 45 minutes to choose one of the prompts and then plan and write your essay. Following is the grading scale for the Issue essay. Remember that the highest possible score is a 6.

## SCORE

### 6 OUTSTANDING

A 6 essay presents a cogent, well-articulated discussion of the issue and demonstrates mastery of the elements of effective writing.

A typical paper in this category

- explores ideas and develops a position on the issue with insightful reasons and/or persuasive examples
  - sustains a well-focused, well-organized discussion of the subject
  - expresses ideas with language that is clear and precise
  - varies sentence structure and vocabulary appropriate to the subject
  - demonstrates superior facility with the conventions (grammar, usage, and mechanics) of standard written English but may have minor flaws
- 

### 5 STRONG

A 5 essay presents a well-developed discussion of the issue and demonstrates a strong control of the elements of effective writing.

A typical paper in this category

- develops a position on the issue with well-chosen reasons and/or examples
  - is focused and generally well organized
  - uses language fluently, with varied sentence structure and appropriate vocabulary
  - demonstrates facility with the conventions of standard written English but may have minor flaws
- 

### 4 ADEQUATE

A 4 essay presents a competent discussion of the issue and demonstrates adequate control of the elements of writing.

A typical paper in this category

- develops a position on the issue with relevant reasons and/or examples
  - is adequately organized
  - expresses ideas clearly
  - demonstrates adequate control of language, including diction and syntax, but may lack sentence variety
  - demonstrates adequate control of the conventions of standard written English but may have some flaws
-

**3 LIMITED**

A 3 essay presents some competence in its discussion of the issue and in its control of the elements of writing but is clearly flawed.

A typical paper in this category exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

- is vague or limited in developing a position on the issue
- is poorly focused and/or poorly organized
- is weak in the use of relevant reasons and/or examples
- has problems expressing ideas clearly
- has problems in fluency, with poorly formed sentences or inappropriate vocabulary
- has occasional major errors or frequent minor errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

**2 SERIOUSLY FLAWED**

A 2 essay presents a weak discussion of the issue and demonstrates little control of the elements of writing.

A typical paper in this category exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

- is unclear or seriously limited in presenting and developing a position on the issue
- is unfocused and/or disorganized
- provides few, if any, relevant reasons or examples
- has serious and frequent problems in the use of language and sentence structure
- contains frequent errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that interfere with meaning

**1 FUNDAMENTALLY DEFICIENT**

A 1 essay is seriously deficient in basic writing skills.

A typical paper in this category exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

- provides little evidence of the ability to organize or develop a coherent response on the issue
- has severe and persistent errors in language and sentence structure
- contains a pervasive pattern of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that interfere with meaning

- 0** Any paper that is blank, totally illegible, or obviously not written on the assigned topic receives a score of zero.

Using the scoring criteria for the *Present Your Perspective on an Issue* essay, make sure that your writing demonstrates that you can:

- develop a position (which is different from merely stating a position)
- organize to present a focused discussion
- use standard written English and appropriate vocabulary
- express ideas in clear and precise language

## Patterns of Development

Just as there is no universal answer to every question, there are many ways to write a persuasive Issue essay. There are specific strategies that you can use to more effectively respond to different types of Issue topics. These strategies, or methods, are called patterns of development. The type of pattern you choose to employ in writing your essay is dependent upon the question or prompt to which you are responding. Usually, an essay question will contain certain clues, which enable you to determine which pattern of development to use. After choosing a method to use, you will find it much easier to develop a clear, concise thesis, which, in turn, will affect the way you organize your essay.

There are three main patterns of development. Let's examine them now so we have a better understanding of how to apply them. For each, we will discuss clues in an Issue question that prompt the use of a particular pattern of development, we will look at an example of such a question, and we will determine what your job as a writer will be in applying this method.

### **Comparison – Contrast**

An Issue question that commands the use of the Comparison – Contrast pattern of development:

- will use words that suggest similarity or difference.
- will seek to persuade the reader that one item is superior to another.

#### **Example:**

“American cars are better than foreign cars.”

The author uses the word *than* to compare the two cars, and he seeks to persuade the reader that an American car is a wiser choice than a foreign one.

Your job: By employing the Comparison – Contrast pattern of development, you will portray similarities and differences between two items to prove which one is superior, either in agreement or disagreement with the author's opinion.

### **Cause – Effect**

An Issue question that requires the use of the Cause – Effect method of response:

- may include an “If...then” statement.
- may lack an effect.

#### **Example (if...then):**

“If college and university faculty spent time outside the academic world working in professions relevant to the courses they teach, then the overall quality of higher education would greatly increase.”

The author argues that if a certain action is taken, a desirable effect is achieved.

Your job: In your essay, you must prove that a particular cause results in a particular effect, either in agreement or disagreement with the author.

#### **Example (lack of effect):**

“More restrictions should be set on teenage drivers.”

In this “call for action” statement, the author offers no effects that will result if the action is taken, but surely it is implied that, if the author feels the action should be taken, he assumes something positive will result.

Your job: In your responsive essay, it would be your responsibility to support your position in agreement with this statement or against it, thus proving the implied effect.

**Definition**

An Issue question that dictates the use of the Definition pattern of development:

- will attempt to show that, by definition, a particular idea or concept is of great value.
- may portray a very limited definition of an idea or concept.

**Example (great value):**

“Patriotism breaks down the walls of division.”

The author believes that a concept can do a great thing.

Your job: Define the idea or concept and show that, because of its attributes and qualities, it has value or it lacks value.

**Example (limited definition):**

“A person’s generosity can be determined by examining what he or she has given to charity.”

In this example, the author seeks to provide a very limited definition of a particular concept.

Your job: Support the author’s definition with evidence, or show that the definition is much broader.

## Writing Your Issue Essay

Now that you are familiar with the different methods you can employ to write your essay, let’s get down to the nitty gritty of organizing your thoughts by using these patterns of development. Remember, you are aiming for a 6 essay, one that presents clear, concise evidence to support your view. Writing a 6 essay doesn’t have to be a difficult task. All you have to do is follow seven simple steps, some of which will ask you to plug information into formulas. Note that some steps may include specific formulas for each pattern of development. Also note that you need not enter complete, descriptive sentences into the formulas; simple notes and phrases will suffice.

### ➤ **Step 1 – Understanding the Issue**

In order to properly present your perspective on an issue, you must first understand the issue you are being asked to discuss. Understanding the issue allows you to fully develop your position, presenting your evidence in a way that is most effective and appropriate for the topic. There are two steps that will help you understand the issue.

First, take a couple of minutes to read the given question carefully. Second, ask yourself the following questions:

- What does the statement mean?
- What is the issue at hand?
- What is implied by the statement?
- What is the writer’s stand on the issue?
- What, if any, evidence does the writer use to support his position?

### ➤ **Step 2 – Choosing Your Pattern of Development**

Keeping in mind our discussion of the three patterns of development, look for the necessary criteria in your question. If you think the question requires more than one method, choose the one you think works the best. On a timed writing assignment, your essay will be fairly short and therefore you cannot adequately utilize two methods.

### ➤ **Step 3 – Developing Your Thesis**

The next, and perhaps the most important, step is to develop your thesis. Your thesis states the purpose of your essay. Without a thesis statement, your reader does not know what you are setting out to prove. And without a thesis statement, it would be very difficult to organize your essay with clarity and coherence. Don’t be intimidated by the task of formulating what is to be the crux of your essay. It can be quite simple. Just use the formulas below:

THESIS FOR COMPARISON – CONTRAST ESSAY (*formula 1-1*):

I believe that Item A, \_\_\_\_\_, is better than Item B, \_\_\_\_\_, because  
1) \_\_\_\_\_, 2) \_\_\_\_\_, 3) \_\_\_\_\_.

THESIS FOR CAUSE – EFFECT ESSAY (*formula 1-2*):

If \_\_\_\_\_, then \_\_\_\_\_, because  
1) \_\_\_\_\_, 2) \_\_\_\_\_, 3) \_\_\_\_\_.

THESIS FOR DEFINITION ESSAY (*formula 1-3*):

By definition, \_\_\_\_\_ possess(es) these qualities: 1) \_\_\_\_\_,  
2) \_\_\_\_\_, 3) \_\_\_\_\_ which have a positive effect because  
A) \_\_\_\_\_, B) \_\_\_\_\_, C) \_\_\_\_\_.

➤ Step 4 – Understanding Counter Arguments

Have you ever been in an argument and find that you're just not getting very far very fast? This could be because you are failing to see things from the other person's point of view. Being able to see the "flip side of the coin" can go a long way in proving your point and disarming your opponent's objections. By showing that you are aware, though perhaps not understanding, of the opposing side you are adding credibility to your argument because it is clear that you have viewed the issue from all angles. To write an effective position essay, you must present your knowledge of a counter argument. In other words, you must show that you have considered the other side of the argument. Organize your counter argument this way:

COMPARISON – CONTRAST COUNTER CLAIM (*formula 2-1*):

Others may think Item B is better than Item A because 1) \_\_\_\_\_,  
2) \_\_\_\_\_, 3) \_\_\_\_\_.

(Note that these three points should contrast directly with the three points of your thesis. (see *formula 1-1*))

CAUSE – EFFECT COUNTER CLAIM (*formula 2-2*):

Some may feel that \_\_\_\_\_ would cause \_\_\_\_\_ based on \_\_\_\_\_.

(Note that this point should contrast directly with point #1 of your thesis. (see *formula 1-2*))

DEFINITION (*formula 2-3*):

By definition some may feel that \_\_\_\_\_ exhibits or is defined by \_\_\_\_\_ which could be positive / negative.

(Note that this point should contrast directly with point #1 of your thesis. (see *formula 1-3*))

➤ Step 5 – Organizing Your Thoughts

Now let's organize all of our information so that writing the essay will be quick and simple. Following are formulas specific to each pattern of development. These formulas will prompt you to plug in your thesis and counter argument points. (Note that the following formulas require you to plug in the three numbered items from your thesis in succession. Although it is not necessary that you discuss them in this order, we will label it that way for simplicity.) In addition, there are spaces in the formula for you to insert 1 or 2 pieces of supporting evidence.

COMPARISON – CONTRAST ESSAY FORMULA (*formula 3-1*):

- I. Introduction – Paragraph 1
  - A. Restate your topic
  - B. Thesis statement (*formula 1-1*)
- II. Support – Paragraph 2
  - A. Counter Claim point #1 (*formula 2-1*)
  - B. Thesis point #1 (*formula 1-1*)
    1. Support for thesis point #1
    2. Support for thesis point #1

- III. Support – Paragraph 3
  - A. Counter Claim point #2 (*formula 2-1*)
  - B. Thesis point #2 (*formula 1-1*)
    - 1. Support for thesis point #2
    - 2. Support for thesis point #2
- IV. Support – Paragraph 4
  - A. Counter Claim point #3 (*formula 2-1*)
  - B. Thesis point #3 (*formula 1-1*)
    - 1. Support for thesis point #3
    - 2. Support for thesis point #3
- V. Conclusion – Paragraph 5
  - A. Restate thesis
  - B. Issue a warning or a call for action

#### CAUSE - EFFECT ESSAY FORMULA (*formula 3-2*):

- I. Introduction – Paragraph 1
  - A. Restate your topic
  - B. Thesis statement (*formula 1-2*)
- II. Support – Paragraph 2
  - A. Counter Claim (*formula 2-2*)
  - B. Thesis point #1 (*formula 1-2*)
    - 1. Support for thesis point #1
    - 2. Support for thesis point #1
- III. Support – Paragraph 3 – Thesis point #2 (*formula 1-2*)
  - A. Support for thesis point #2
  - B. Support for thesis point #2
- IV. Support – Paragraph 4 – Thesis point #3 (*formula 1-2*)
  - A. Support for thesis point #3
  - B. Support for thesis point #3
- V. Conclusion – Paragraph 5
  - A. Restate thesis
  - B. Issue a warning or a call for action

#### DEFINITION ESSAY FORMULA (*formula 3-3*):

- I. Introduction – Paragraph 1
  - A. Restate your topic
  - B. Thesis statement (*formula 1-3*)
- II. Support – Paragraph 2
  - A. Counter Claim (*formula 2-3*)
  - B. Thesis point #1 (*formula 1-3*)
    - 1. Support by using thesis point A (*formula 1-3*)
    - 2. Support by using thesis point A (*formula 1-3*)
- III. Support – Paragraph 3 – Thesis point #2 (*formula 1-3*)
  - A. Support by using point B (*formula 1-3*)
  - B. Support by using point B (*formula 1-3*)
- IV. Support – Paragraph 4 – Thesis point #3 (*formula 1-3*)
  - A. Support by using point C (*formula 1-3*)
  - B. Support by using point C (*formula 1-3*)
- V. Conclusion – Paragraph 5
  - A. Restate thesis
  - B. Issue a warning or a call for action

#### ➤ Step 6 – Writing Your Essay

Now that you have organized your thoughts and support, it is time to write! The best strategy under the pressure of a time restraint is to just begin writing—as quickly as you can while still being careful. (You should allow yourself about 25 of the 45 minutes for writing.) Organization should not be difficult with the help of your formulas. In following your formula, don't forget to add transitional words, phrases and sentences to help give your essay coherence. As you write, remember the mechanical rules you learned at



the beginning of this chapter and keep in mind the techniques we discussed in the section *General Tips on Writing Your Essays*. The key to successful timed writings is to reserve a bit of time at the end so that you can go back and proofread and add finishing touches that will make your essay flow well and that will present your ideas clearly.

➤ **Step 7 – Revising Your Essay**

Because you have written quickly, you must spend some time, about 5-8 minutes, at the end of the section reviewing your essay, making necessary changes to enhance the clarity, coherence and grammatical accuracy of your writing. You must look for misspellings and mechanical errors while at the same time keeping in mind the following questions:

- Is my introduction captivating?
- Is my thesis statement concise?
- Do my body paragraphs clearly support my thesis?
- Have I used logical transitions that help the text flow smoothly between sentences and between paragraphs?
- Have I maintained a formal tone and diction throughout my essay?
- Have I maintained consistent use of person (i.e., first, second, third)?
- Is there a word, or are there words, which I have employed too often throughout the essay?
- Do my sentences vary in length and structure?

As you ask yourself these questions, make the necessary changes. If you still have time left after you have completed the initial revision, go back and read your essay again. A writer makes many, many revisions to his manuscript before it is ready to be published, so you can never proofread too many times!

## Sample Issues & Essays

Now let's apply the 7 steps to three examples.

**Example 1: Comparison – Contrast Essay**

Prompt: "A new custom home is a much better purchase than an older, run-down home."

➤ **Step 1 – Understanding the Issue**

- What does the statement mean? *If you are in the market to buy a house, a new home would be a better value.*
- What is the issue at hand? *What kind of home is the best to buy?*
- What is implied by the statement? *That one who purchases an old home is not making a wise choice. Also implied is that an older home is run-down.*
- What is the writer's stand on the issue? *He believes a new home is superior to an old one.*
- What, if any, evidence does the writer use to support his position? *Old houses are run-down, new homes can be custom built.*

➤ **Step 2 – Choosing My Pattern of Development**

This prompt requires me to employ the Comparison – Contrast pattern of development because the statement uses the word "than," a contrasting word. Moreover, the author is trying to convince me that it is better to buy a new home than an old one.

➤ **Step 3 – Developing My Thesis**

THESIS FOR COMPARISON – CONTRAST ESSAY (*formula 1-1*):

I believe that Item A, an old home, is better than Item B, a new home, because

1) an old home exemplifies old-style motifs that are unique in today's market, 2) foundations are stronger in older homes, 3) can remodel an old home in any way.

➤ Step 4 – Understanding Counter Argument

COMPARISON – CONTRAST COUNTER CLAIM (*formula 2-1*):

Others may think Item B is better than Item A because 1) you can “keep up with the Joneses” with your modern décor, 2) new homes may be built quickly for easy occupancy, 3) new homes can be custom-built. (Note that these three points should contrast directly with the three points of your thesis. (see *formula 1-1*))

➤ Step 5 – Organizing My Thoughts

COMPARISON – CONTRAST ESSAY FORMULA (*formula 3-1*):

- I. Introduction – Paragraph 1
  - A. Some people feel that the purchase of a new home is a smarter investment choice than the purchase of an older home.
  - B. For anyone who puts stock in the aged and unique, the traditional home may be the choice of a lifetime with its old-fashioned motifs, its strong foundations, and its versatility to become the house its owner designs.
- II. Support – Paragraph 2
  - A. keeping up with the Joneses – modern décor
  - B. bring back old-time motifs
    1. More choices – can choose from different time periods
    2. More unique versus “cookie cutter” homes of today
- III. Support – Paragraph 3
  - A. Homes can be built quicker
  - B. As a result, foundations not as strong in new homes
    1. Mass production of homes – builder doesn’t establish good foundation
    2. Older homes in better condition over long period of time because built more solidly
- IV. Support – Paragraph 4
  - A. Custom-built
  - B. Can remodel any way owner wants
    1. No allowance restrictions placed on owner by builder
- V. Conclusion – Paragraph 5
  - A. Modern homes just don’t offer the old-fashioned charm an older well-built, unique home can offer.
  - B. When it comes to such an important decision as purchasing a home, the choice is clear: an older home has much more to offer and will last for many years to come.

➤ Step 6 – Writing My Essay

Modern-day housing developments are springing up everywhere, dotting hills and filling in every open space available. Characterized by “cookie cutter” homes, houses all cut from the same mold, the look of these communities lacks distinctiveness. For anyone who puts stock in the aged and unique rather than the new and ordinary, the traditional house may be the choice of a lifetime with its old-fashioned motifs, its strong foundations, and its versatility to become the home of its owner’s design.

Many homeowners do not feel the need to be the designer behind their home. Rather, they strive to “keep up with the Joneses” by filling their houses with the same modern décor that fills the homes of their neighbors. On the flip side, when seeking to invest in a traditional home, the buyer has a plethora of options because older homes offer so much uniqueness. This uniqueness can be seen in the motifs of style, which are almost non-existent in today’s market of prefabricated homes but are powerful reminders of days gone by in older structures. These are the structures that offer a homeowner an admirable individuality.

Clearly, modern-day homes, which lack individuality, are built more quickly than homes of the past, a fact that seems to fit today’s hurried society. But what does a homeowner have to show for this efficiency years down the road? There is much value added to a home constructed by a builder who takes time and pays attention to detail instead of putting up as many homes as possible in the shortest amount of time possible. For example, in the past when builders did take extra time and care, the foundations and overall structures were, and still are, much stronger. This is because many builders today, eager to make a quick buck, do not give homes ample time to “settle” on their foundation before continuing with the construction. Overall, older houses are in better condition, even over the course of time, because they were more solidly built.

Many prospective buyers today overlook the quality of a home's structure and are compelled to purchase by the alluring idea of "custom building" their house. These homebuyers enjoy the process of choosing paint colors, fixtures and floor coverings. Consider an older home, however. Here the possibilities are endless, and traditional buyers may even negotiate remodeling into the price of the house. What is more, there are no spending restrictions which contemporary builders often impose on their buyers.

Spending restrictions represent just one of many ways that freedom is limited when purchasing a new home instead of an older home. Whether one prefers an elegant, plantation-style mansion or a peaceful, rustic country getaway, the distinctive older home has much more to offer than the commonplace modern home set in communities of houses that all look the same. Simply put, it comes down to whether the prospective buyer is willing to trade quality and originality for expediency.

➤ Step 7 – Revising My Essay

When critiquing other essays, you often learn a lot about the strengths and weaknesses in your own writing. So here's an assignment: Let's take our revision questions; your job is to complete the task required for each question.

- Is the introduction captivating? Why or why not? Do you recognize a certain method the author employed to make the introduction interesting?
- Is the thesis statement concise? Does it clearly show the purpose of the essay?
- Do the body paragraphs clearly support each point made in the thesis? If not, where does the essay lack necessary support?
- Are there logical transitions that make the text flow smoothly between sentences and between paragraphs? Underline each word, phrase or sentence that acts as a transition.
- Is the tone and diction consistent throughout the essay? If not, point out the places where consistency breaks down.
- Is the use of person consistent? If not, point out the places where consistency is not maintained.
- Is there a word, or are there words, which have been used too often in the essay? List these words. Also list the words that have been used to provide variety in the essay.
- Do the sentences vary in length and structure?

**Example 2: Cause – Effect Essay**

Prompt: “Students should not be required to take courses outside their field of study.”

## ➤ Step 1 – Understanding the Issue

- What does the statement mean? *Colleges should not make students take courses, like General Education courses, if they do not pertain to their area of study.*
- What is the issue at hand? *Whether or not students benefit from taking college courses that don't pertain to their major.*
- What is implied by the statement? *That a student will be adequately prepared for the “real world” without taking a wide range of classes.*
- What is the writer's stand on the issue? *That students should not be required to take these classes.*
- What, if any, evidence does the writer use to support his position? *The writer does not give any evidence to support his view.*

## ➤ Step 2 – Choosing My Pattern of Development

This prompt is a “call for action” statement, and, although no effect is discussed, the writer implies that his recommended course of action would result in a positive effect.

## ➤ Step 3 – Developing My Thesis

THESIS FOR CAUSE-EFFECT ESSAY (*formula 1-2*):

If students are not required to take courses outside their field of study, then they will not be prepared, because 1) they will be ill-prepared if they fail to get a job in their field, 2) they will be lacking in important skills – communication or thinking/reasoning skills, 3) they will be close-minded and ignorant to things happening in the world around them.

## ➤ Step 4 – Understanding Counter Argument

CAUSE – EFFECT COUNTER CLAIM (*formula 2-2*):

Some may feel that requiring students to take courses only in their field of study would cause students to be more knowledgeable in their field because they would have more thoroughly studied this area.  
(Note that this point should contrast directly with point #1 of your thesis. (see *formula 1-2*))

## ➤ Step 5 – Organizing My Thoughts

CAUSE - EFFECT ESSAY FORMULA (*formula 3-2*):

- I. Introduction – Paragraph 1
  - A. Some feel students should not be required to take courses outside their field of study.
  - B. If students are not required to take courses outside their field of study, they will be ill-prepared should they fail to get a job in their field, they will lack important skills, and they will be close-minded and ignorant to things happening in the world around them.
- II. Support – Paragraph 2
  - A. Some may feel that requiring students to take courses only in their field of study would cause students to be more knowledgeable in their field because they would have more thoroughly studied this area.
  - B. Many people are unable to get a job in their field after they graduate.
    1. Without some knowledge of other fields, these highly trained people will be stuck working menial jobs.
- III. They will be lacking in important skills.
  - A. Students studying the sciences will lack communication skills.
  - B. Students studying the arts will lack critical thinking and reasoning skills.
- IV. They will be close-minded and ignorant of things happening in the world around them.
  - A. Lack of familiarity with certain fields promotes disinterest in these topics as they pertain to current events (politics, scientific research).
  - B. This disinterest promotes apathy in participating in or supporting causes that result from these current events.

## V. Conclusion – Paragraph 5

- A. Students must take a well-rounded schedule of classes in order to be prepared for work outside their field and so they will have adequate skills to use toward a common interest in society.
- C. Students should welcome an opportunity to learn about all areas of study.

## ➤ Step 6 – Writing My Essay

Colleges and universities require students, regardless of their majors, to complete General Education courses, basic courses that cover general subject areas. These classes include basic literature and writing courses, basic science and math courses, and basic arts classes like music and drama. Some feel students should not be required to take these General Education classes. However, if students are not required to take courses outside their major, they will be ill-prepared should they fail to get a job in their field, they will lack important skills, and they will be close-minded and ignorant of things happening in the world around them.

Many opponents of General Education classes are themselves unaware of the advantages of a well-rounded education. They focus only on the theory that students will be more fully prepared to enter their field as a result of more extensive study in their area. What they fail to see, however, is that many graduates are not able to find jobs in their field of expertise. So, without a broad range of knowledge, these highly trained graduates would be stuck in menial jobs.

Even if graduates do get jobs within their field, such a wide range of skills are required in the workplace in order to be successful that, without a diverse educational background, a graduate will not be fully competent in any job. For example, when a graduate begins looking for a job, she will discover that excellent communication skills are invaluable in the workplace, both in dealing with customers and with colleagues. Without some base of communication knowledge, such as a student would receive in a basic English class, the candidate will be overlooked for someone who does show strength in communication. Moreover, most jobs require strong problem-solving skills, skills that develop from learning how to think and reason critically. These skills are reinforced in math and science classes.

Lack of familiarity in certain educational arenas, like math and science, results in a provincial attitude. This lack of familiarity leads to disinterest in the areas where a student has not gained knowledge. Likewise, this disinterest leads to apathy in participating or supporting any causes that are linked to these fields of study. For example, a student who has not studied science will be indifferent to scientific ideas, ideas which could become theories and could help all of mankind. A student who does not study politics and government will likely be apathetic toward participating in important political events such as elections.

It is important that a country's citizens take part in supporting causes and concepts that generate a common interest in society. Without a well-rounded schedule of classes in college, however, the citizen base will soon be filled with people who are unprepared and indifferent to anything that does not directly pertain to their area of interest. Instead of complaining about an opportunity to gain a broad range of knowledge, students should consider it a privilege and an asset.

## ➤ Step 7 – Revising My Essay

Read over the essay above and then answer the following questions.

- Is the introduction captivating? Why or why not? Do you recognize a certain method the author employed to make the introduction interesting?
- Is the thesis statement concise? Does it clearly show the purpose of the essay?
- Do the body paragraphs clearly support each point made in the thesis? If not, where does the essay lack necessary support?
- Are there logical transitions that make the text flow smoothly between sentences and between paragraphs? Underline each word, phrase or sentence that acts as a transition.
- Is the tone and diction consistent throughout the essay? If not, point out the places where consistency breaks down.
- Is the use of person consistent? If not, point out the places where consistency is not maintained.
- Is there a word, or are there words, which have been used too often in the essay? List these words. Also list the words that have been used to provide variety in the essay.
- Do the sentences vary in length and structure?

**Example 3: Definition Essay**

Prompt: “The positive effects of competition in a society far outweigh the negative effects.”

## ➤ Step 1 – Understanding the Issue

- What does the statement mean? *Competition affects society in a good way, not a bad way.*
- What is the issue at hand? *Whether or not competition is good for society.*
- What is implied by the statement? *That a society benefits from competition amongst its members.*
- What is the writer’s stand on the issue? *That competition is good and provides benefits.*
- What, if any, evidence does the writer use to support his position? *The writer does not give any evidence to support his view.*

## ➤ Step 2 – Choosing My Pattern of Development

Although the comparison between a society driven by competition and one where competition plays little or no role seems to hint that the Comparison-Contrast method should be used, the Definition pattern of development is a better fit because it is necessary to look at the qualities of *competition* that make it a positive influence rather than a negative one.

## ➤ Step 3 – Developing My Thesis

THESIS FOR DEFINITION ESSAY (*formula 1-3*):

By definition, competition possesses these qualities: 1) gives everyone the same chance at the beginning, 2) drives people to succeed, 3) provides a way to recognize people who advance which have a positive effect because A) no one can use the excuse that they didn’t have the same opportunities; everyone has a chance to succeed, B) people want to be the best, and gives everyone their “place” in life, C) gives self-worth to those who are recognized for their accomplishments.

## ➤ Step 4 – Understanding Counter Argument

DEFINITION (*formula 2-3*):

By definition, some may feel that competition helps only a few/pushing only a few to the top, leaving others feeling left out or insignificant which could be positive or **negative**.

(Note that this point should contrast directly with point #1 of your thesis. (see *formula 1-3*))

## ➤ Step 5 – Organizing My Thoughts

DEFINITION ESSAY FORMULA (*formula 3-3*):

- I. Introduction – Paragraph 1
  - A. Competition benefits a society.
  - B. Everyone is given a chance to succeed in a society where competition drives people to be the best and recognizes the accomplishments of the many who advance.
- II. Support – Paragraph 2
  - A. Some feel that competition helps only a few, leaving others feeling left out or insignificant. There is a push to eliminate salutatorian/valedictorian recognition speeches at graduation.
  - B. Competition gives everyone the same chance at the beginning.
    1. Just like a marathon – everyone begins at the same starting line.
    2. No one has an excuse – it is up to each individual to decide how to run the race. Some want to work harder than others and therefore deserve recognition.
- III. Competition drives people to be their best
  - A. Everyone’s “best” is different.
  - B. Gives everyone their place in life – if no competition, we’d have a world full of custodians, no CEO’s or vice versa.
- IV. With competition comes the chance to recognize winners.
  - A. Gives self-worth to those recognized, causing them to set even greater goals.
  - B. Encourages those who were not recognized to try harder so that they too may be recognized.

## V. Conclusion – Paragraph 5

- A. Competition is vital to a growing and thriving society.
- B. How will you run the race? Will you strive to be the best?

## ➤ Step 6 – Writing My Essay

*On your mark!* All the runners are at the starting line. *Get set!* The runners are poised, in position. *Go!* The runners take off. The spirit of competition is the driving force behind these runners' desire to win. And, as an integral part of a society, competition brings many benefits. Everyone is given a chance to succeed in a society where competition drives people to be their best, and competition recognizes the accomplishments of those who advance.

Some feel that, although competition recognizes winners, there are so few winners that many are left feeling insignificant and alienated. This attitude has, for example, led to a movement to eliminate salutatorian and valedictorian recognition and speeches at graduation ceremonies. Those in the movement claim that acknowledging salutatorian and valedictorian students for their scholastic achievements causes other students to feel slighted. This is a misguided assumption. Government gives everyone equal opportunity to attend school and to excel. Some students work harder than others and deserve special honors at graduation. Just like in a race, everyone begins at the same starting line and therefore has the same chance to succeed. Each person makes his own decision about how he will run the race. No one has an excuse, then, for not trying his best to succeed.

Competition drives people to achieve a goal. For most, this goal represents a person's best. Since everyone's concept of "best" is different, achievement differs for each person. Therefore, when an individual reaches his goal, this gives him a certain status. This status is different for each person, depending on the goal that was attained. This is extremely important because if competition did not place people at different positions in life, the resulting equality would be stultifying to society. For example, the work force would consist of only custodians and no CEO's or vice versa.

CEO's get to where they are only through competition. As an employee works hard and competes within a company, he is rewarded for his accomplishments with promotions. Not only does competition award people through tangible benefits like promotions, but competition also gives long-lasting psychological awards such as a feeling of self-worth or pride. This recognition encourages people who succeed to raise their personal goals even higher. Recognition also drives those who were not recognized to do better so that they too may be rewarded.

Because competition results in rewards, both tangible and emotional, it is essential for a growing and thriving society. Everyone begins at the same starting line and is given the same chance to succeed. When the starting gun fires, it is up to each runner to decide how he will run the race. This decision will ultimately determine who will become the winners. Driven by competition, these winners, along with the losers, comprise a successful society.

## ➤ Step 7 – Revising My Essay

Read over the essay above and then answer the following questions:

- Is the introduction captivating? Why or why not? Do you recognize a certain method the author employed to make the introduction interesting?
- Is the thesis statement concise? Does it clearly show the purpose of the essay?
- Do the body paragraphs clearly support each point made in the thesis? If not, where does the essay lack necessary support?
- Are there logical transitions that make the text flow smoothly between sentences and between paragraphs? Underline each word, phrase or sentence that acts as a transition.
- Is the tone and diction consistent throughout the essay? If not, point out the places where consistency breaks down.
- Is the use of person consistent? If not, point out the places where consistency is not maintained.
- Is there a word, or are there words, which have been used too often in the essay? List these words. Also list the words that have been used to provide variety in the essay.
- Do the sentences vary in length and structure?



## Practice

Now it's your turn to practice some Issue essays. Consider the five prompts below and write your responsive essays, making sure you follow the 7 steps we discussed.

**Prompts:**

"Museums should have the liberty to exhibit whatever displays they want without the interference of government censorship."

"When people work in teams, they are more productive than when they work individually."

"If everyone would closely examine their past, they would realize that only a few individuals have played a role in shaping their behavior and their way of thinking."

"Success is easily obtained but difficult to maintain."

"Society is governed by two types of laws, just and unjust. People must obey just laws but are at liberty to defy those laws which they determine are frivolous or unjust."

## More Sample Issue Essays

**Issue prompt:**

*"There is little need for books today because one can learn just as much or more from television."*

When I was little, I would line up my stuffed animals and "read" to them. Although I was not old enough to know the letters formed words and the words formed sentences, I knew there was a story to tell, and I knew there was an audience who would be interested in hearing the story. Now I watch my two-year-old daughter do the same thing. In this media age, books often take a back seat to television, which is unfortunate because books offer so much more. Books are a better tool with which to build imagination. Moreover, readers can gain much more knowledge from the wide variety of books that are available.

Satellite dishes and improved cable offer hundreds of channels, a variety that some TV viewers argue is sufficient to replace reading. However, libraries and bookstores offer thousands, not hundreds, of titles from which to choose. Among these choices, a reader can find books on any theme he chooses, from topics of today to stories of every era in the past. Television, unfortunately, is controlled mostly by popular trends. Aside from a handful of specialty channels like *The History Channel*, there is little on TV about historical events. Furthermore, TV viewers' choices are limited since the television broadcasting companies choose what they will offer on each channel.

A limited choice of TV channels results in limited knowledge. The written word offers much more detail than television. Most TV shows are limited to two hours or less, and because of this time restriction, fewer details can be included in shows like movies and documentaries. For example, a TV documentary on orangutans would most likely be a one hour program which would offer some basic knowledge about orangutans, their habitat and their way of life. A book about orangutans, on the other hand, would educate the reader far beyond the basic knowledge he would gain from watching a television program.

In addition to offering more information on a greater number of subjects, the added description included in books helps readers improve vocabulary. In books, readers see unfamiliar words in context, enabling them to decipher the meaning. For TV viewers, unfamiliar words in conversation usually go unnoticed. In fact, many people watch TV simply to "veg," or, in other words, to sit and do nothing but be vaguely aware of the images flickering across the screen. Watching television requires little of the concentration that is required for reading books; consequently the viewer overlooks many details.

Because watching TV does not require active participation, the imagination suffers. Television programs take the viewer quickly from one scene to the next, prohibiting the viewer from taking notice of the details of the setting. Books inspire imagination, allowing the reader to picture for herself the setting and characters of the story. A book's character may be described as tall, dark complected, and wearing a bright purple robe; it is up to the reader to imagine exactly what the character looks like. Is the character Italian or perhaps Native American? Is the bright purple robe rather gaudy looking, or does it give the



character an air of sophistication? Television makes those decisions for the viewer by placing in the program a specific actor in garb chosen by costume designers, thus leaving little room for imagination.

Imagination is the key to forward thinking, thinking that brings a person success in what he does. Without imagination, problems go unsolved and new and inventive ideas never make it to the drawing board. Imagination produces creativity, which inspires dreamers. I hope my daughter will continue to be a dreamer, allowing her imagination to blossom. And when the letters, then words, then sentences take form for her, she will have the added benefit of gaining boundless knowledge from books.

**Issue prompt:**

*“Many of today’s technological conveniences were developed to save time. Ironically, these developments have created an even more hurried, fast-paced society, where people actually have less leisure time.”*

Ah, the good ol’ days! When people sat on their front porch talking and watching the world go by instead of finishing up last-minute work on their laptops. When letters took a week to spread the latest news instead of a few seconds through e-mail. In a world of pagers, faxes, cell phones, and computers, a very hurried society is characterized by impatient workaholics whose nerves are on edge and whose lives are unknowingly empty.

Many of today’s conveniences were developed to meet growing impatience with the speed it took to spread information. Through the development of such things as faxes, cell phones and e-mail, however, a new impatience was born. This new impatience is characterized by frustration with the sophistication and complexity of modern technology. Office workers grit their teeth in frustration when an e-mail takes too long to download. In annoyance, they may shut down their computer assuming there is something wrong with the machine. This wastes even more time while restarting the computer and finally retrieving the culprit e-mail. Overnight delivery services emerged to meet this all-consuming impatience as well. Oftentimes, however, even this speedy service is not expedient enough. Some find it necessary to rush a package to the airport so that it may arrive at its destination just a few hours earlier.

This annoyance with our more efficient world has thrown society into a frenzy where even the most technologically advanced equipment is unsatisfactorily slow. The resulting annoyance and impatience can turn into rage in the office and on the highway, with stressed out employees who “go postal,” losing all rationale and even causing injury to colleagues. Preventable injuries occur on highways as road rage consumes drivers who are eager to get to their next destination.

In a world where people are eager to pass information ever more quickly and get to their next destination ever more quickly, this has truly become a society of workaholics. Because the transfer of information is so much more efficient with modern technologies, workers find they can accomplish much more in a given day. Driven by this fact, they work more hours. There is always time to make that last call or send a quick e-mail at the end of the day. And portable conveniences like laptops and palm pilots make it possible for people to work essentially anywhere; work is no longer confined to the office and is often completed at home.

Perhaps the most detrimental aspect of our more hurried society lies at home. Because many people spend more time working, and because work is transportable, many spouses discover that their partners spend more time with their computers and cell phones than with their family. Additionally, other conveniences like microwave meals encourage quick meals on-the-go. Rushed families rarely spend quality time together around the dinner table. Rather, they all go their separate ways to eat in front of the TV, at the computer, or at a desk reviewing reports.

At home, in the office and on the streets, a fast-paced society continues to become more hurried as technology continues to match a perpetually growing impatience. Is all of this annoyance, frustration, and rage worth the added convenience that technology has brought to our society? It hardly seems so. In fact, in looking back at the good ‘ol days, it seems that in a world with far less vexation and anger, there was more happiness.

**Issue prompt:**

*“Character is created in a crisis.”*

In 1992, Hurricane Andrew slammed into Florida causing millions of dollars of damage. Many residents lost everything, including their homes. Those houses that had the strongest foundations withstood the storm most favorably. Additionally, the homes that had been adequately prepared to face the storm fared better than those whose windows were not boarded. Character is like a house. If your character has a strong foundation and displays traits of preparedness, you can weather a storm well. In this light, it is clear that character is not born from crisis, but rather, it merely emerges during difficult times.

It is not adversity but the small moments of life that create character. Poor decisions, regardless of how insignificant, break down your character. Anytime you are inconsistent in following your principles, no matter how small the compromise, cracks in your foundation undoubtedly weaken your character. On the positive side, though, you can learn a lot from your mistakes. In fact, lessons learned from failures are indispensable in building character. To discern the lesson to be learned, however, takes conscious effort. If you are unwilling to put effort into developing character, you will continue to repeat your mistakes, and your life will stagnate.

Part of building character and thus avoiding stagnation is building on your strengths. Taking what is good and making it exceptional is what character building is all about. Continued improvement in life makes you stronger. This too takes a conscious effort in using strengths to positively affect others around you. Channeling the positive to help others results in personal growth, which in turn builds character.

Only when you are willing to learn from your mistakes and make a conscious effort to grow can you face a crisis successfully. It is during this adversity that character comes to light. If you have learned from past failures, you will have the strength to face a crisis head on. You will have adequate problem-solving skills to overcome obstacles set before you. If you have made the conscious effort to build on your positive traits, you will have the means with which to get through the crisis positively with the will to move ahead.

The will and ability to move forward from crisis is the defining moment of your character. As you move forward, though, you should never stop working to improve, because the stronger your foundation is, the better it will weather any type of storm. What kind of storm can the foundation of your character withstand?

**Issue prompt:**

*“People should pursue careers that provide financial security even if they do not enjoy the work.”*

“I want to be a fireman when I grow up!” A simple dream from a young child in response to the question every youngster faces at one point or another: What do you want to be when you grow up? The innocence of a child, however, protects him from the world of finances; something everyone is forced to face later on in life. And when that realization hits, what path is best for a person to take: the path that leads to a career with large financial promises, or the one that leads to a career that provides more personal satisfaction? Because contentment has so many rewards, it is better for a person to choose the job that will provide happiness even if it does not pay as well as other jobs.

Some people find it necessary to get the best paying job to make financial ends meet. Often someone in financial dire straits will stick with a good paying job just long enough to get ahead and then, because they are unhappy at the job, they quit to find work elsewhere. This has several negative effects. First, the transition to a new job is difficult, and it can be made worse for a new employee if they are followed by negativity. Company officers are reluctant to invest training time and money in employees only to have them leave after a short time and therefore may not be willing to provide favorable references. Second, workers who leave jobs after short periods of time are not with a company long enough to advance within the company. These workers may find that they would have done just as well to begin in a job that they like even if it did not pay as well, because by the time they start all over, they could have already been promoted. The increase in salary that comes with most promotions could equal the wages they were earning at the job they did not enjoy.

The potential for promotion should be a major consideration when deciding between the high paying job and the job that provides satisfaction. Employees in positions they do not enjoy often work with a poor attitude. This promotes laziness and apathy. Managers quickly pick up on this and likely pass up these types of employees for promotions. On the other hand, workers who enjoy their job greet each workday with enthusiasm, fresh creativity and perseverance. Bosses commend this type of work ethic and reward such employees with promotions.

Careers that offer promotions and, most importantly, job satisfaction stimulate self-respect and pride. These characteristics are priceless and have an enormously positive impact on a person and their job performance. The employee who has pride in what he does takes ownership. He is empowered to take charge of the position he holds and give it 110 percent. This attitude has a domino effect and soon colleagues begin to take more pride in their work as well. Managers notice this natural leadership and reward it with promotions.

Taking pride in a job leads to success, not just monetarily, but also personally. Personal success and satisfaction far outweigh monetary gain. So if the little boy still wants to be a fireman when he grows up, he should be a fireman, even if it means he will live in a modest home instead of a mansion. He will never regret the happiness and contentment he will feel by following his dream instead of following the green.

**Issue prompt:**

*“The idea that individuals should focus on personal self-improvement assumes that there is something inherently wrong with people.”*

A best-selling book offers “Seven Ways to Become a Better Person.” A radio ad promises you will feel great in 30 days or less just by taking some pills. “If you buy our exercise equipment,” a TV ad guarantees, “you’ll have the body you’ve always wanted.” And don’t miss that talk show today because the guest speaker will teach you how to have confidence. In today’s society, we are continually bombarded with the latest techniques of how to better ourselves, a focus which some feel is unhealthy. On the contrary, a focus on self-improvement is very important in helping people grow in character.

Although some may believe that focusing on the need for self-improvement assumes that there is something inherently wrong with people, this focus maintains quite the opposite. In fact, self-improvement helps build character. Building character involves taking a person’s strengths and building on them. Such strengths as unselfishness can be developed into a lifelong habit of generosity, a positive spirit into an unfailing compassion for others. Everyone has strength in character and the ability to build on these strengths through self-improvement.

Everyone also has weaknesses. Weaknesses are not flaws, but rather negative traits that, through self-improvement, can be developed into more positive traits. For example, impatience can be turned into determination to accomplish goals. Strong will can be turned into perseverance. If a person can just find a way to capitalize on a weakness, it can be turned into a strength. Self-improvement is the best way to do this.

Recent focus on self-improvement is valuable because of the wealth of resources such a focus offers. There is a plethora of different ways a person can work on self-improvement. Groups offer support for improvement, and individual strategies are available in many different forms. Books and videos offer plans for developing a positive attitude. Gyms and health stores offer ways to build self-esteem by building better health.

No matter the method a person chooses for self-improvement, every individual has room to improve. Even when a person reaches a specific goal of improvement, there are still ways to build on character and become a person with more positive traits. Those who grow in character, grow in self-esteem, which then breeds confidence. Confidence and a feeling of self-worth give people the power to positively influence those around them. Positive influences are invaluable in our society, so we should never stop making an effort to improve ourselves.

**Issue prompt:**

*Public figures should expect their private lives to be scrutinized.*

Television shows, newspapers, books, magazines and tabloids delve into the lives of singers, actors, athletes and politicians on a daily basis. Should these public figures expect to lose some of their privacy? Whether they want to or not, people who are in positions that will sometimes place them in the spotlight open themselves to scrutiny from their audience, because people have a natural curiosity and interest in those who have achieved fame.

Although public figures should expect some scrutiny in their lives, there is a point where it can become dangerous. For example, it was reported in 1997 that the driver of Princess Diana’s car was driving recklessly to get away from aggressive Paparazzi. As a result, the car spun out of control killing Diana. Other similar stories report stalkers and “Peeping Toms” who take too much liberty in examining the private lives of stars, athletes and politicians. While these are extreme cases of obsession, public figures must realize that there is a natural human desire to more intimately know the familiar faces on TV or on the

sports field. This is especially true of actors and actresses. Television and movie viewers get to know their favorite characters on screen and therefore have a desire to “get to know” the actors behind these characters.

Not only do people want to get to know those whom they look up to, but they also strive to be like their favorite stars. Ads on TV encourage viewers to “Be like Mike [Michael Jordan].” On Halloween, teenage girls can emulate their favorite pop singer by obtaining a Britney Spears costume. Although many people admittedly would not choose a life of glamour and fame, there is something alluring about the lifestyle, and therefore admirers of people in the limelight are driven to discover personal facts about those whom they admire. Knowing these intimate details makes a famous person seem more down-to-earth and thus allows the ordinary person to feel like they have something in common with the rich and famous.

The media makes a concerted effort to give viewers a chance to become acquainted with public figures. They splash familiar stars’ faces on the cover of magazines. Channels like *E!* and *VH1* feature behind the scenes stories about singers and actors, their highs and lows and how they became famous. Tabloids are a huge business supported by readers who hungrily devour the latest gossip about their favorite star. Even the news capitalizes on human interest stories that feature public figures. For example, although long and drawn-out, OJ Simpson’s murder trial dominated the news, yet no one seemed to complain.

The news often highlights human interest stories that uncover the blunders of politicians. Former President Clinton’s escapades with Monica Lewinsky, for example, made headlines for months. Many public figures, especially politicians, anticipate the scrutinizing eye under which they will find themselves and proactively confess to past mistakes. This takes some of the media pressure off them. Sadly, others find themselves on the front cover of every magazine and newspaper and in every headline when marital infidelity or an encounter with drugs is exposed.

Politicians are of deep interest to the public because they are the nation’s leaders. Since people must place some trust in political figures to run the country effectively, politicians should expect their private lives to be examined. Not only should they expect ordinary citizens to dig into their lives, but they should also anticipate other political figures to look closely at their lives. Political campaigns, unfortunately, often focus on tearing apart the opponent. To do this, a politician must find a way to attack his opponent, which requires investigating the personal life of the candidate. This comes with the territory. If a would-be politician cannot stomach having some negative aspect of his life exposed, he should not enter the world of politics.

Although many people work hard to achieve the fame of a popular singer, actor, athlete, or politician, some become bitterly disenchanted with the lifestyle when they realize they may lose much of their privacy. This should certainly be a matter of consideration before pursuing any career that places a person in the spotlight. It is, after all, natural that admirers will be interested in the details of the life of public figures. Public figures should consider this admiration flattery rather than an intrusion on their privacy.

**Issue prompt:**

*“It is necessary for a leader to compromise his principles if compromising them is favorable to a greater number of people.”*

This nation has seen many outstanding leaders, like George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Have you ever wondered what separates great leaders from ineffective leaders? Contrary to popular belief, great leaders are not born. Rather, if you want to be an effective leader, you must realize that it takes a lot of work and perseverance. Furthermore, of all the character traits that can be cultivated to make a good leader, the ability to stick to your principles is the most important; to be a great leader, you should never compromise your principles, no matter how high the price.

As a leader, you may sometimes pay a price by losing favor with the majority because of a decision you have made. At these times, it may be tempting for you to give in to the demands of your followers. However, remember that, regardless of the capacity in which you lead, you are in a position of leadership because there are people who thought your ideas were good, and therefore they made a conscious decision to follow you. Knowing this, you should be encouraged to stick to your decisions since, in the end, even if your followers still disagree with your decision, they will respect you for standing firm on your principles. If you possess honor in your word, your followers will entrust you with more responsibility knowing that, since you did not compromise your beliefs in one decision, you are not likely to go back on your word in other situations.

As followers take note that you refuse to give in by compromising your principles, they will come to the realization that they made an excellent choice in a leader, and they will gain a deeper respect for you as

their leader. As people gain new respect for you, they will be more willing to follow you in all of your decisions, even if they do not fully agree with all of them. This type of respect is important for your leadership because it creates an atmosphere conducive to cooperation and teamwork. In this cooperative environment, your followers will be willing to step up and take on some of the responsibility if they believe in you and what you stand for.

With you as their guide, your team's confidence will grow. As their confidence grows, your self-confidence will flourish. A confident leader is much more effective than one who is unsure of himself. If you do not portray confidence in what you do, others will not feel confident in your decisions either. Moreover, if you lack confidence in your ability as a leader, you will likely at some point give in to others' wishes over your own principles. Your followers will perceive you as weak and will recede from your leadership. If you believe in yourself, however, you will benefit from lifelong supporters who respect your confidence and the consistency of your principles.

Unwillingness to compromise principles breeds the stalwart leader within you. Becoming an effective leader requires this confidence in the actions that you take and the decisions that you make. The respect you will earn by standing firm in what you believe will take your leadership farther than you ever thought possible.

**Issue prompt:**

*"Parents must be involved in their children's education in order to make them successful."*

Sally is a Sophomore in high school. Although she is a bright girl and has the potential to excel in school, she lacks the ability to apply herself and therefore is not doing well. As a result, she does not enjoy school and often cuts classes to hang out at the mall with friends who share her same ethic. Sally enjoys athletics and earned a spot on the Girls' Softball team. She competed in six matches, but when progress reports were issued, she was forced to leave the team because her grades were not up to par. Sally's father is a lawyer and often works so late, the family rarely sees him. Sally's mother works in an office, but after work, she enjoys going out with her colleagues. Often, Sally is on her own when she gets home and must prepare dinner for herself and her 12-year-old sister. Sally's parents have missed countless parent-teacher conferences and have yet to meet most of her teachers. They are aware of only one instance of Sally's truancy; usually she gets home in time to erase the school's message from the answering machine. When her parents heard about her "first" unexcused absence from school, they did nothing but tell her not to do it again.

Tommy is also a Sophomore. He is intelligent and works hard to obtain near-perfect grades. He enjoys school and enthusiastically participates in all of his classes. Tommy is the goalie on the Boys' Soccer team and can be depended upon to maintain his important position on the team. Tommy's parents are divorced, and Tommy and his twin 10-year-old brothers live with their mother. She works in an office and gets home promptly by 5:30. Although she must rely on Tommy to watch the twins after school, she always prepares dinner when she gets home. After dinner, Tommy and his brothers must finish their homework before they are permitted to do anything else. Tommy's mom checks everyone's homework when they are done and helps them with work they do not understand. Although Tommy's father lives an hour away, he often meets Tommy's mother for parent-teacher conferences, and he consistently makes it to Tommy's games. Tommy has never considered skipping school because he knows the consequences at home would be great.

Two students, two very different results at school and two opposite attitudes about life. The difference? Parental involvement. Although teachers can equip a student with the tools he needs to succeed in life, it is up to parents to instill in their children the motivation and determination to use these tools to be successful. To do this, parents must be willing to be involved in every aspect of their children's lives, particularly in their education. It is unfair for parents to expect teachers and school administrators to take sole responsibility for the complete education and training that prepares a student for his adult life.

Some parents feel inadequate to help their children in school because they are unfamiliar with their children's school subjects, or because they did not do well in school themselves. No matter how little academic knowledge parents have, however, they can play an integral part in her child's education. For example, there are many opportunities to volunteer in schools. Parents can become a part of the school's Parent-Teacher Association or Parent-Teacher-Student Organization. Parents can help with sports' teams or at the very least, make an effort to support the athletes by coming to the games. If parents' jobs hinder them from attending school functions, they can play an important role at home by keeping their children accountable in school matters like homework. They can help their children with things the children do not understand or get a tutor if they do not understand it either.

Although parents cannot always help a child scholastically, they can teach their children lifelong lessons in motivation and determination. If a man wants to learn how to fish, he can obtain a net and a boat

and learn how to cast the net. But he is not a fisherman simply because he has the right tools and knowledge. Someone must instill in him the motivation and determination to sit on a boat day after day performing the tedious task of casting a net that does not always produce a big catch. In the same way, a teacher can give their students the book knowledge they need to be experts in various fields; however, it is the parents who must empower their children to use the knowledge to be successful. This requires parents to teach their children the value of education and thus inspire motivation; parents must teach their children never to give up and thus inspire determination.

Only motivated learners have the determination to gain the knowledge and responsibility that will enable them to succeed in life. It is the responsibility of parents to instill in their children these qualities. One of the most effective ways parents can teach their children the importance of such qualities is by modeling them in their own lives. Parents should make an effort to model responsibility through motivation and determination in their own lives. Such examples provide the best lessons a student will ever learn.



# Analyze an Argument

The *Analyze an Argument* section of the test requires you to critique an argument and discuss the logical soundness of it. You are not required to agree or disagree with it. You have 30 minutes to plan and write your critique. Following is the grading scale for the Argument essay. Remember that the highest possible score is a 6.

## SCORE

### 6 OUTSTANDING

A 6 essay presents a cogent, well-articulated discussion of the issue and demonstrates mastery of the elements of effective writing.

A typical paper in this category

- clearly identifies and insightfully analyzes important features of the argument
  - develops ideas cogently, organizes them logically, and connects them smoothly with clear transitions
  - effectively supports the main points of the critique
  - demonstrates superior control of language, including diction and syntactic variety
  - demonstrates superior facility with the conventions (grammar, usage, and mechanics) of standard written English but may have minor flaws
- 

### 5 STRONG

A 5 paper presents a well-developed critique of the argument and demonstrates a good control of the elements of effective writing.

A typical paper in this category

- clearly identifies important features of the argument and analyzes them in a generally thoughtful way
  - develops ideas clearly, organizes them logically, and connects them with appropriate transitions
  - sensibly supports the main points of the critique
  - demonstrates clear control of language, including diction and syntactic variety
  - demonstrates facility with the conventions of standard written English but may have minor flaws
- 

### 4 ADEQUATE

A 4 essay presents a competent critique of the argument and demonstrates adequate control of the elements of writing.

A typical paper in this category

- identifies and capably analyzes important features of the argument
  - develops and organizes ideas satisfactorily but may not always connect them with transitions
  - supports the main points of the critique
  - demonstrates adequate control of language, including diction and syntax, but may lack syntactic variety
  - displays control of the conventions of standard written English but may have some flaws
-

**3 LIMITED**

A 3 paper demonstrates competence in its critique of the argument and in its control of the elements of writing but is clearly flawed.

A typical paper in this category exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

- does not identify or analyze most of the important features of the argument, although some analysis is present
- is limited in the logical development and organization of ideas
- offers support of little relevance and value for points of the critique
- uses language imprecisely and/or lacks sentence variety
- has occasional major errors or frequent minor errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

**2 SERIOUSLY FLAWED**

A 2 paper demonstrates serious weaknesses in analytical writing skills.

A typical paper in this category exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

- does not understand, identify, or analyze main features of the argument
- does not develop ideas or is disorganized
- provides little, if any, relevant reasonable support
- has serious and frequent problems in the use of language and sentence structure
- contains frequent errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that interfere with meaning

**1 FUNDAMENTALLY DEFICIENT**

A 1 paper demonstrates fundamental deficiencies in analytical writing skills.

A typical paper in this category exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

- provides little evidence of the ability to understand and analyze the argument or to develop an organized response to it.
- has severe and persistent errors in language and sentence structure
- contains a pervasive pattern of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics, thus resulting in incoherence

**0** Any response totally illegible, or obviously not written on the assigned topic receives a score of zero.

Using the scoring criteria for the *Analyze an Argument* essays, make sure that your writing demonstrates that you can:

- identify and analyze important features of an argument
- develop ideas clearly and logically, using appropriate transitions
- support ideas
- express ideas in standard written English, using appropriate diction



## Logic

Because the *Analyze an Argument* section of the test requires you to critique an argument and discuss the logical soundness of it, we will study the logic of arguments before we begin writing our essays.

### Conclusions

Most argument questions hinge, either directly or indirectly, on determining the conclusion of the argument. The conclusion is the main idea of the argument. It is what the writer tries to persuade the reader to believe. Most often the conclusion comes at the end of the argument. The writer organizes the facts and his opinions so that they build up to the conclusion. Sometimes, however, the conclusion will come at the beginning of an argument; rarely does it come in the middle; and occasionally, for rhetorical effect, the conclusion is not even stated.

#### Example:

The police are the armed guardians of the social order. The blacks are the chief domestic victims of the American social order. A conflict of interest exists, therefore, between the blacks and the police. —Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*

Here the first two sentences anticipate or set up the conclusion. By changing the grammar slightly, the conclusion can be placed at the beginning of the argument and still sound natural:

A conflict of interest exists between the blacks and the police because the police are the armed guardians of the social order and the blacks are the chief domestic victims of the American social order.

The conclusion can also be forced into the middle:

The police are the armed guardians of the social order. So a conflict of interest exists between the blacks and the police because the blacks are the chief domestic victims of the American social order.

It is generally awkward, as in the previous paragraph, to place the conclusion in the middle of the argument because then it cannot be fully anticipated by what comes before nor fully explained by what comes after. On the rare occasion when a conclusion comes in the middle of an argument, most often either the material that comes after it or the material that comes before it is not essential.

**In summary:** To find the conclusion, check the last sentence of the argument. If that is not the conclusion, check the first sentence. Rarely does the conclusion come in the middle of an argument.

Writers use certain words to indicate that the conclusion is about to be stated. Following is a list of the most common conclusion indicators:

#### CONCLUSION INDICATORS

hence	therefore
so	accordingly
thus	consequently
follows that	shows that
conclude that	implies
as a result	means that

These conclusion flags are very helpful, but you must use them cautiously because many of these words have other functions.

#### Example:

All devout Muslims abstain from alcohol. Steve is a devout Muslim. Thus, he abstains from alcohol.

In this example, *thus* anticipates the conclusion that necessarily follows from the first two sentences. Notice the different function of *thus* in the following argument.

**Example:**

The problem is simple when the solution is thus stated.

In this example, *thus* means “in that manner.”

Most often the conclusion of an argument is put in the form of a statement (as with every example we have considered so far). Sometimes, however, the conclusion is given as a command or obligation.

**Example:**

All things considered, you ought to vote.

Here, the author implies that you are obliged to vote.

**Example:**

Son, unless you go to college, you will not make a success of yourself. No Carnegie has ever been a failure. So you will go to college.

Here the conclusion is given as an imperative command.

The conclusion can even be put in the form of a question. This rhetorical technique is quite effective in convincing people that a certain position is correct. We are more likely to believe something if we feel that we concluded it on our own, or at least if we feel that we were not told to believe it. A conclusion put in question form can have this result.

**Example:**

The Nanuuts believe that they should not take from Nature anything She cannot replenish during their lifetime. This assures that future generations can enjoy the same riches of Nature that they have. At the current rate of destruction, the rain forests will disappear during our lifetime. Do we have an obligation to future generations to prevent this result?

Here the author trusts that the power of her argument will persuade the reader to answer the question affirmatively.

Taking this rhetorical technique one step further, the writer may build up to the conclusion but leave it unstated. This allows the reader to make up his own mind. If the build-up is done skillfully, the reader will be more likely to agree with the author, without feeling manipulated.

**Example:**

He who is without sin should cast the first stone. There is no one here who does not have a skeleton in his closet.

The unstated but obvious conclusion here is that none of the people has the right to cast the first stone.

When determining the conclusion's scope be careful not to read any more or less into it than the author states. Certain words limit the scope of a statement. These words are called quantifiers—pay close attention to them. Following is a list of the most important quantifiers:

**Quantifiers**

<b>all</b>	<b>except</b>	<b>likely</b>
<b>some</b>	<b>most</b>	<b>many</b>
<b>only</b>	<b>could</b>	<b>no</b>
<b>never</b>	<b>always</b>	<b>everywhere</b>
<b>probably</b>	<b>must</b>	<b>alone</b>

**Example:**

Whether the world is Euclidean or non-Euclidean is still an open question. However, if a star's position is predicted based on non-Euclidean geometry, then when a telescope is pointed to where the star should be it will be there. Whereas, if the star's position is predicted based on Euclidean geometry, then when a telescope is pointed to where the star should be it won't be there. This strongly indicates that the world is probably non-Euclidean.

Although the opening to the passage states that we don't know whether the world is non-Euclidean, the author goes on to give evidence that it is non-Euclidean. The author doesn't say that the world is non-Euclidean, just that evidence strongly indicates that it is. In the last sentence, the word *probably* properly limits the scope of the main idea that the world is most likely non-Euclidean but can't be stated so definitively.

### **Warm-Up Drill III**

**Directions:** Find, then underline, the conclusion to each of the following arguments. If an argument does not state the conclusion, complete it with the most natural conclusion. Answers and solutions begin on page 598.

1. When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford. — Samuel Johnson
2. Some psychiatrists claim that watching violent movies dissipates aggression. Does watching pornography dissipate one's libido?
3. By the age of 10 months, purebred golden retrievers display certain instinctive behaviors. Because this 11-month-old golden retriever does not display these instinctive behaviors, it is not a purebred.
4. Most people would agree that it is immoral to lie. But if a kidnapper accosts you on the street and asks which way his escaped victim went, would it be immoral to point in the opposite direction?
5. Beware, for I am fearless, and therefore, powerful. — Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
6. The continuous stream of violent death depicted on television has so jaded society that murder is no longer shocking. It's hardly surprising, then, that violent crime so permeates modern society.
7. Existentialists believe that our identity is continually evolving, that we are born into this world without an identity and do not begin to develop one until the act of retrospection. So one's identity is always trailing oneself like the wake of a boat. As one goes through life, the wake becomes wider and wider defining him more and more precisely.
8. In time I began to recognize that all of these smaller complaints about rigidity, emotional suffocation, the tortured logic of the law were part of a more fundamental phenomenon in the law itself. Law is at war with ambiguity, with uncertainty. In the courtroom, the adversary system—plaintiff against defendant—guarantees that someone will always win, someone loses. No matter if justice is evenly with each side, no matter if the issues are indefinite and obscure, the rule of law will be declared. — Scott Turow, *One L*
9. Either God controls all of man's behavior or God does not control any of man's behavior. God must not control man's behavior since there is so much evil in the world.

## **Premises**

Once you've found the conclusion, most often everything else in the argument will be either premises or "noise." The premises provide evidence for the conclusion; they form the foundation or infrastructure upon which the conclusion depends. To determine whether a statement is a premise, ask yourself whether it supports the conclusion. If so, it's a premise. Earlier we saw that writers use certain words to flag conclusions; likewise writers use certain words to flag premises. Following is a partial list of the most common premise indicators:

### **PREMISE INDICATORS**

<b>because</b>	<b>for</b>
<b>since</b>	<b>is evidence that</b>
<b>if</b>	<b>in that</b>
<b>as</b>	<b>owing to</b>
<b>suppose</b>	<b>inasmuch as</b>
<b>assume</b>	<b>may be derived from</b>

Premise indicators are very helpful. As with conclusion indicators, though, you must use them cautiously because they have other functions. For example, *since* can indicate a premise, or it can merely indicate time.

#### **Example:**

Since the incumbent's views are out of step with public opinion, he probably will not be reelected.

Here *since* is used to flag the premise that the incumbent's positions are unpopular. Contrast this use of *since* with the following example.

#### **Example:**

Since the incumbent was elected to office, he has spent less and less time with his family.

In this case, *since* merely expresses a passage of time. The statement as a whole expresses an observation, rather than an argument.

## **Suppressed Premises**

Most arguments depend on one or more unstated premises. Sometimes this indicates a weakness in the argument, an oversight by the writer. More often, however, certain premises are left tacit because they are too numerous, or the writer assumes that his audience is aware of the assumptions, or he wants the audience to fill in the premise themselves and therefore be more likely to believe the conclusion.

#### **Example:**

Conclusion: I knew he did it.

Premise: Only a guilty person would accept immunity from prosecution.

The suppressed premise is that he did, in fact, accept immunity. The speaker assumes that his audience is aware of this fact or at least is willing to believe it, so to state it would be redundant and ponderous. If the unstated premise were false (that is, he did not accept immunity), the argument would not technically be a lie; but it would be very deceptive. The unscrupulous writer may use this ploy if he thinks that he can get away with it. That is, his argument has the intended effect and the false premise, though implicit, is hard to find or is ambiguous. Politicians are not at all above using this tactic.

#### **Example:**

Politician: A hawk should not be elected President because this country has seen too many wars.

The argument has two tacit premises—one obvious, the other subtle. Clearly, the politician has labeled his opponent a hawk, and he hopes the audience will accept that label. Furthermore, although he does not state

it explicitly, the argument rests on the assumption that a hawk is likely to start a war. He hopes the audience will fill in that premise, thereby tainting his opponent as a warmonger.

When attacking an argument, we often challenge its suppressed premises. Finding the suppressed premise, or assumption, of an argument can be difficult. To test whether something is a suppressed premise, ask yourself whether it would make the argument more plausible. If so, then it is very likely a suppressed premise.

**Example:**

American attitudes tend to be rather insular, but there is much we can learn from other countries. In Japan, for example, workers set aside some time each day to exercise, and many corporations provide elaborate exercise facilities for their employees. Few American corporations have such exercise programs. Studies have shown that the Japanese worker is more productive than the American worker. Thus it must be concluded that the productivity of American workers will lag behind their Japanese counterparts, until mandatory exercise programs are introduced.

The unstated essence of the argument is that exercise is an integral part of productivity and that Japanese workers are more productive than American workers because they exercise more.

**Example (Suppressed false premise):**

The petrochemical industry claims that chemical waste dumps pose no threat to people living near them. If this is true, then why do they locate the plants in sparsely populated regions? By not locating the chemical dumps in densely populated areas the petrochemical industry tacitly admits that these chemicals are potentially dangerous to the people living nearby.

The suppressed *false* premise of the argument is that, all things being equal, there is no reason to prefer locating the sites in sparsely populated areas. To weaken the argument, we need to show it is not true that all things are equal. In other words, there are advantages other than safety in locating the sites in sparsely populated areas, such as cost and ease.

**Example (Suppressed true premise):**

The news media is often accused of being willing to do anything for ratings. However, recent action by a television network indicates that the news media is sometimes guided by moral principle. This network discovered through polling voters on the east coast that the Republican candidate for President had garnered enough votes to ensure victory before the polls closed on the west coast. However, the network withheld this information until the polls on the west coast closed so that the information would not affect the outcome of key congressional races.

The suppressed premise in this argument is that the network expected its ratings to increase if it predicted the winner of the presidential race, and to decrease if it did not predict the winner.

### **Warm-Up Drill IV**

**Directions:** For each of the following arguments, identify the suppressed premise and state whether it is a reasonable assumption for the author to make. Answers and solutions begin on page 598.

1. Sacramento is the capital of California; thus it is located northeast of San Francisco.
2. I read it in a book, so it must be true.
3. Any government action that intrudes on the right of privacy is unconstitutional. Therefore, requiring government employees to take a drug test is unconstitutional.
4. After studying assiduously for three months, Sean retook the SAT and increased his score by more than four hundred points. Therefore, the Educational Testing Service canceled his score.
5. When explorers arrived in the Americas in the 1500's A.D., they observed the natives hunting with bronze tipped arrows. Archaeological evidence shows that bronze was not smelted in the Americas until the 1200's A.D. Therefore, native Americans must have begun hunting with arrows sometime between 1200 and 1500 A.D.
6. Fiction is truer than history, because it goes beyond the evidence.—E. M. Forster
7. In Knox's theory of military strategy, all decisions about troop deployment must be made by a committee of generals. If, however, his model of command were in effect during World War II, then daring and successful operations—such as Patton's unilateral decision to land paratroopers behind enemy lines during the Battle of the Bulge—would not have been ordered.
8. In recent years many talented and dedicated teachers have left the public school system for the private sector because the public school system's salary scale is not sufficient for a family to maintain a quality standard of living. To lure these dedicated teachers back to the public schools, we must immediately raise the pay scale to a level comparable to that of the private sector, and thereby save our schools.

### **Solutions to Warm-Up Drill III**

1. When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford. — Samuel Johnson
2. The conclusion is not stated, but the arguer implies that watching violent movies does *not* dissipate aggression.
3. By the age of 10 months, purebred golden retrievers display certain instinctive behaviors. Because this 11-month-old golden retriever does not display these instinctive behaviors, it is not a purebred.
4. No conclusion is stated. But the author implies that to lie is not always immoral.
5. Beware, for I am fearless, and therefore, powerful. — Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
6. The implied conclusion is that violence depicted on television contributes to society's high rate of violence.
7. Existentialists believe that our identity is continually evolving, that we are born into this world without an identity and do not begin to develop one until the act of retrospection. So one's identity is always trailing oneself like the wake of a boat. As one goes through life, the wake becomes wider and wider defining him more and more precisely.
8. In time I began to recognize that all of these smaller complaints about rigidity, emotional suffocation, the tortured logic of the law were part of a more fundamental phenomenon in the law itself. Law is at war with ambiguity, with uncertainty. In the courtroom, the adversary system—plaintiff against defendant—guarantees that someone will always win, someone loses. No matter if justice is evenly with each side, no matter if the issues are indefinite and obscure, the rule of law will be declared. — Scott Turow, *One L*
9. Either God controls all of man's behavior or God does not control any of man's behavior. God must not control man's behavior since there is so much evil in the world.

### **Solutions to Warm-Up Drill IV**

1. The suppressed premise is that the capital of California is located northeast of San Francisco. This is a reasonable assumption because it is true!
2. The suppressed premise is that only the truth is published. Clearly this is not a reasonable assumption.
3. The suppressed premise is that being forced to take a drug test is an invasion of privacy. This is a reasonable assumption.
4. ETS's suppressed premise is that extremely high score improvements indicate cheating. This is arguably a reasonable assumption, but it is not consistent with the tradition of assuming one innocent until proven otherwise. (By the way, this is a true story. Sean sued ETS and the courts ordered them to release his score.)
5. The suppressed premise is that hunting with arrows did not begin until the arrows were tipped with bronze. This seems to be a questionable assumption.
6. The suppressed premise is that what goes beyond the evidence is truer than what does not. This is a questionable assumption; arguably just the opposite is the case.
7. The suppressed premise is that only decisions made by a single individual can be daring. This assumption has some truth to it, but it's a bit extreme.
8. The suppressed premise is that comparable pay would be sufficient to entice the teachers to change their careers again. This is probably a reasonable assumption since the teachers were described as dedicated.

## Inductive vs. Deductive Logic

An argument is deductive if its conclusion *necessarily* follows from its premises—otherwise it is inductive. In an inductive argument, the author presents the premises as evidence or reasons for the conclusion. The validity of the conclusion depends on how compelling the premises are. Unlike deductive arguments, the conclusion of an inductive argument is never certain. The *truth* of the conclusion can range from highly likely to highly unlikely. In reasonable arguments, the conclusion is likely. In fallacious arguments, it is improbable. We will study both reasonable and fallacious arguments.

We will classify the three major types of inductive reasoning—generalization, analogy, and causal—and their associated fallacies.

### Generalization

Generalization and analogy, which we consider in the next section, are the main tools by which we accumulate knowledge and analyze our world. Many people define *generalization* as “inductive reasoning.” In colloquial speech, the phrase “to generalize” carries a negative connotation. To argue by generalization, however, is neither inherently good nor bad. The relative validity of a generalization depends on both the context of the argument and the likelihood that its conclusion is true. Polling organizations make predictions by generalizing information from a small sample of the population, which hopefully represents the general population. The soundness of their predictions (arguments) depends on how representative the sample is and on its size. Clearly, the less comprehensive a conclusion is the more likely it is to be true. For example,

During the late seventies when Japan was rapidly expanding its share of the American auto market, GM surveyed owners of GM cars and asked them whether they would be more willing to buy a large, powerful car or a small, economical car. Seventy percent of those who responded said that they would prefer a large car. On the basis of this survey, GM decided to continue building large cars. Yet during the ‘80’s, GM lost even more of the market to the Japanese.

The argument generalizes *from* the survey *to* the general car-buying population, so the reliability of the projection depends on how representative the sample is. Suppose eighty percent of the owners who wanted big cars and only 40 percent of the owners who wanted small cars replied to the survey. Then the survey would not represent the entire public and therefore would not be reliable.

### Analogy

To argue by analogy is to claim that because two things are similar in some respects, they will be similar in others. Medical experimentation on animals is predicated on such reasoning. The argument goes like this: the metabolism of pigs, for example, is similar to that of humans, and high doses of saccharine cause cancer in pigs. Therefore, high doses of saccharine probably cause cancer in humans.

Clearly, the greater the similarity between the two things being compared, the stronger the argument will be. Also, the less ambitious the conclusion, the stronger the argument will be. The argument above would be strengthened by changing *probably* to *may*. It can be weakened by pointing out the dissimilarities between pigs and people.

The following words usually indicate that an analogy is being drawn:

### ANALOGY INDICATORS

<b>like</b>	<b>likewise</b>
<b>similar</b>	<b>also</b>
<b>too</b>	<b>compared to</b>
<b>as with</b>	<b>just as . . . so too . . .</b>

Often, however, a writer will use an analogy without flagging it with any of the above words.

Just as the fishing line becomes too taut, so too the trials and tribulations of life in the city can become so stressful that one’s mind can snap.

The argument compares the tautness in a fishing line to the stress of city life; it then concludes that the mind can snap just as a fishing line can.



**Causal Reasoning**

Of the three types of inductive reasoning we will discuss, causal reasoning is both the weakest and the most prone to fallacy. Nevertheless, it is a useful and common method of thought.

To argue by causation is to claim that one thing causes another. A causal argument can be either weak or strong depending on the context. For example, to claim that you won the lottery because you saw a shooting star the night before is clearly fallacious. However, most people believe that smoking causes cancer because cancer often strikes those with a history of cigarette use. Although the connection between smoking and cancer is virtually certain, as with all inductive arguments, it can never be 100 percent certain. Cigarette companies have claimed that there may be a genetic predisposition in some people to both develop cancer and crave nicotine. Although this claim is highly improbable, it is conceivable.

There are two common fallacies associated with causal reasoning:

**1. Confusing Correlation with Causation.**

To claim that A caused B merely because A occurred immediately before B is clearly questionable. It may be only coincidental that they occurred together, or something else may have caused them to occur together. For example, the fact that insomnia and lack of appetite often occur together does not mean that one necessarily causes the other. They may both be symptoms of an underlying condition.

**2. Confusing Necessary Conditions with Sufficient Conditions.**

*A is necessary for B* means “B cannot occur without A.” *A is sufficient for B* means “A causes B to occur, but B can still occur without A.” For example, a small tax base is sufficient to cause a budget deficit, but excessive spending can cause a deficit even with a large tax base. A common fallacy is to assume that a necessary condition is sufficient to cause a situation. For example, to win a modern war it is necessary to have modern, high-tech equipment, but it is not sufficient, as Iraq discovered in the Persian Gulf War.

## Logical Fallacies

Now that we have examined the components of logic that make up an argument, let’s define some logical fallacies. Fallacies in an argument are elements of faulty reasoning that weaken the argument and may even make it invalid.

**Contradiction**

Contradiction is the most glaring type of fallacy. It is committed when two opposing statements are simultaneously asserted. For example, saying “it is raining *and* it is not raining” is a contradiction. Typically, however, the writer obscures the contradiction to the point that the argument can be quite compelling. Take, for instance, the following argument:

“We cannot know anything, because we intuitively realize that our thoughts are unreliable.”

This argument has an air of reasonableness to it. But *intuitively realize* means “to know.” Thus the writer is in essence saying that we *know* that we don’t know anything. This is self-contradictory.

**Equivocation**

Equivocation is the use of a word in more than one sense during an argument. This technique is often used by politicians to leave themselves an “out.” If someone objects to a particular statement, the politician can simply claim the other meaning.

Individual rights must be championed by the government. It is right for one to believe in God. So government should promote the belief in God.

In this argument, *right* is used ambiguously. In the first sentence, it is used in the sense of a privilege, whereas in the second sentence *right* is used to mean proper or moral. The questionable conclusion is possible only if the arguer is allowed to play with the meaning of the critical word *right*.

**Circular Reasoning**

Circular reasoning involves assuming as a premise that which you are trying to prove. Intuitively, it may seem that no one would fall for such an argument. However, the conclusion may appear to state something additional, or the argument may be so long that the reader may forget that the conclusion was stated as a premise.

**Example:**

The death penalty is appropriate for traitors because it is right to execute those who betray their own country and thereby risk the lives of millions.

This argument is circular because “right” means essentially the same thing as “appropriate.” In effect, the writer is saying that the death penalty is appropriate because it is appropriate.

**Example:**

Democracy is the best form of government yet created. Therefore, we must be vigilant in its defense; that is, we must be prepared to defend the right to freedom. Because this right is fundamental to any progressive form of government, it is clear that democracy is better than any other form of government.

This argument is circular. It is incumbent on the writer to give evidence or support for the conclusion. In this argument, though, the writer first states that democracy is the best government, the rest is merely “noise,” until he restates the conclusion.

**Shifting the Burden of Proof**

It is incumbent on the writer to provide evidence or support for her position. To imply that a position is true merely because no one has disproved it is to shift the burden of proof to others.

**Example:**

Since no one has been able to prove God’s existence, there must not be a God.

There are two major weaknesses in this argument. First, the fact that God’s existence has yet to be proven does not preclude any future proof of existence. Second, if there is a God, one would expect that his existence is independent of any proof by man.

**Example:**

Astronomers have created a mathematical model for determining whether life exists outside our solar system. It is based on the assumption that life as we know it can exist only on a planet such as our own, and that our sun, which has nine planets circling it, is the kind of star commonly found throughout the universe. Hence it is projected that there are billions of planets with conditions similar to our own. So astronomers have concluded that it is highly probable, if not virtually certain, that life exists outside our solar system. Yet there has never been discovered so much as one planet beyond our solar system. Hence life exists only on planet Earth.

This argument implies that since no planet has been discovered outside our solar system, none exist and therefore no life exists elsewhere in the universe. Hence the burden of proof is shifted from the arguer to the astronomers.

Reasoning by shifting the burden of proof is not always fallacious. In fact, our legal system is predicated on this method of thought. The defendant is *assumed* innocent until proven guilty. This assumption shifts the onus of proof to the state. Science can also validly use this method of thought to better understand the world—so long as it is not used to claim “truth.” Consider the following argument: “The multitude of theories about our world have failed to codify and predict its behavior as well as Einstein’s theory of relativity. Therefore, our world is probably ‘Einsteinian.’” This argument is strong so long as it is qualified with *probably*—otherwise it is fallacious: someone may yet create a better theory of our world.

**Unwarranted Assumptions**

The *fallacy of unwarranted assumption* is committed when the conclusion of an argument is based on a premise (implicit or explicit) that is false or unwarranted. An assumption is unwarranted when it is false—these premises are usually suppressed or vaguely written. An assumption is also unwarranted when it is true but does not apply in the given context—these premises are usually explicit. The varieties of unwarranted assumptions are too numerous to classify, but a few examples should give you the basic idea.

**Example (False Dichotomy):**

Either restrictions must be placed on freedom of speech or certain subversive elements in society will use it to destroy this country. Since to allow the latter to occur is unconscionable, we must restrict freedom of speech.

The writer offers two options: either restrict freedom of speech, or lose the country. He hopes the reader will assume that these are the only options available. This is unwarranted. He does not state how the so-called “subversive elements” would destroy the country, nor for that matter, why they would want to destroy it. There may be a third option that the author did not mention; namely, that society may be able to tolerate the “subversives” and it may even be improved by the diversity of opinion they offer.

**Example:**

To score in the ninetieth percentile on the GRE, one must study hard. If one studies four hours a day for one month, she will score in the ninetieth percentile. Hence, if a person scored in the top ten percent on the GRE, then she must have studied at least four hours a day for one month.

You may have noticed that this argument uses the converse of the fallacy “*Confusing Necessary Conditions with Sufficient Conditions*” mentioned earlier. In other words, it assumes that something which is sufficient is also necessary. In the given argument, this is fallacious because some people may still score in the ninetieth percentile, though they studied less than four hours a day for one month.

**Example:**

Of course Steve supports government sponsorship of the arts. He’s an artist.

This argument is fallacious—and unfair—because it assumes that all artists support government sponsorship of the arts. Some artists, however, may have reasons for not supporting government sponsorship of the arts. For example, they may believe that government involvement stifles artistic expression. Or they may reject government involvement on purely philosophical grounds. The argument suggests a person’s profession taints his opinion.

**Appeal to Authority**

To appeal to authority is to cite an expert’s opinion as support for one’s own opinion. This method of thought is not necessarily fallacious. Clearly, the reasonableness of the argument depends on the “expertise” of the person being cited and whether she is an expert in a field relevant to the argument. Appealing to a doctor’s authority on a medical issue, for example, would be reasonable; but if the issue is about dermatology and the doctor is an orthopedist, then the argument would be questionable.

The legalization of drugs is advocated by no less respectable people than William F. Buckley and federal judge Edmund J. Reinholt. These people would not propose a social policy that is likely to be harmful. So there is little risk in experimenting with a one-year legalization of drugs.

The only evidence that the author gives to support her position is that respected people agree with her. She is appealing to the authority of others.

**Personal Attack**

In a personal attack (*ad hominem*), a person's character is challenged instead of her opinions, thereby deflecting attention away from a solid argument.

Politician: How can we trust my opponent to be true to the voters? He isn't true to his wife!

This argument is weak because it attacks the opponent's character, not his positions. Some people may consider fidelity a prerequisite for public office. History, however, shows no correlation between fidelity and great political leadership.

A reporter responded with the following to the charge that he resorted to tabloid journalism when he rummaged through and reported on the contents of garbage taken from the home of Henry Kissinger.

"Of all the printed commentary . . . only a few editorial writers thought to express the obvious point that when it comes to invasion of privacy, the man who as National Security Advisor helped to bug the home phones of his own staff members is one of our nation's leading practitioners."—*Washington Monthly*, October 1975

The reporter justifies his actions by claiming that Kissinger is guilty of wrongdoing. So, instead of addressing the question, he attacks the character of Henry Kissinger.

**True But Irrelevant**

This tactic is quite simple: the arguer bases a conclusion on information that is true but not germane to the issue.

**Example:**

This pain relief product is available over the counter or in a stronger form with a prescription. But according to this pamphlet, for the prescription strength product to be effective it must be taken at the immediate onset of pain, it must be taken every four hours thereafter, and it cannot be taken with any dairy products. So it actually doesn't matter whether you use the prescription strength or the over-the-counter strength product.

It is unreasonable to reject the effectiveness of a product merely because it has modest requirements for use. All medications have directions and restrictions. So, it cannot be concluded that just because the prescription strength product has certain guidelines and restrictions on its use that it is not more effective.

Identifying the conclusion of the argument you are given is essential in your analysis. From there, recognizing the author's premises will enable you to identify any flaws in the argument. Only then will you be able to write an effective analysis.

## Writing Your Argument Essay

Now that you are familiar with techniques for analyzing an argument, it is time to discuss techniques that will help you write an effective critique. You will have only 30 minutes to complete this portion of the test and, luckily, there are only 5 steps you need to take. As with the *Present Your Perspective on an Issue* section, we will create some formulas to simplify the task. Plugging information into these formulas will help you organize your ideas and prepare you for your critique.

### ➤ Step 1 – Understanding the Argument

Remember that your goal in the Argument section is to analyze the given argument. You cannot effectively analyze the argument until you completely understand it. To understand the argument, first read it and then answer the following questions. Keep in mind that you have a short amount of time, so spend more time mulling over the questions than jotting down notes. If you do write notes, make sure they are just short words and phrases that will help you formulate a plan, not long notations that will take time to write and then review.

- Identify the conclusion.
- What premises does the author offer to support the conclusion?
- What fallacies or flaws do you recognize in the argument?
- What assumptions are made in the argument?
- What does the argument fail to address?
- What necessary evidence is omitted from the argument?

### ➤ Step 2 – Developing Your Thesis

Your thesis statement will set up your entire essay by letting the reader know what direction your critique will take. It will also provide you with a blueprint by which you can organize your essay.

ANALYZE AN ARGUMENT THESIS (*formula 1*):

The argument that \_\_\_\_\_ creates several problems because

1) it assumes that \_\_\_\_\_, 2) it fails to address

\_\_\_\_\_, 3) it omits the following important evidence:

\_\_\_\_\_.

### ➤ Step 3 – Organizing Your Thoughts

Once you have formulated a thesis, it is time to organize the information that you will present in your essay. This is now a simple task since you have already developed a thesis. You only need to plug in the correct information in the formula below. (Note that the following formula requires you to plug in the three numbered items from your thesis in succession. Although it is not necessary to discuss them in this order, we will label it that way for simplicity.) In addition, there are spaces in the formula for you to insert 1 or 2 pieces of supporting evidence.

ANALYZING AN ARGUMENT ESSAY FORMULA (*formula 2*):

#### I. Introduction

- A. Restate topic
- B. Thesis (*formula 1*)

#### II. The argument assumes that ... (thesis point #1)

- A. Support
- B. Support

#### III. The argument never addresses ... (thesis point #2)

- A. Support
- B. Support

#### IV. The argument omits important evidence ... (thesis point #3)

- A. Support
- B. Support

#### V. Conclusion

- A. Restate thesis
- B. Offer solution to strengthen argument

➤ Step 4 – Writing Your Essay

Writing your essay should not be difficult now that you have organized your points and the support for each point. Paying close attention to the general tips you learned earlier and the more specific techniques in this section, start writing. Following your essay formula, make sure you include transitional words and phrases, which will enhance the flow of your critique. You should spend about 20 minutes writing, reserving about 5 minutes at the end for proofreading and revising.

➤ Step 5 – Revising Your Essay

You should spend about 5 minutes proofreading and revising your essay. Look for misspellings and grammatical errors while keeping in mind the following questions:

- Is my introduction captivating?
- Does my thesis clearly tell the reader what my essay will be about?
- Have I thoroughly, yet concisely, proven my points?
- Do my body paragraphs support my thesis?
- Have I used logical transitions that help the text flow smoothly between sentences and between paragraphs?
- Have I maintained a formal tone and diction throughout my essay?
- Have I maintained consistent use of person (i.e., first, second, third)?
- Is there a word, or are there words, which I have used too often in the essay?
- Do my sentences vary in length and structure?

If time is still remaining after you have made any necessary changes, go back and revise your essay again. You may catch more errors the second time around.

## Sample Arguments & Essays

Following is an example of an *Analyze an Argument* essay. Let's complete each of the five steps to illustrate the process.

**Argument:**

The following appeared in a memo from a human resources manager at Presto Products.

“Over the past year, we have had 25 percent more on-the-job accidents than Mega Manufacturing, which is just down the street. Mega Manufacturing’s employees begin work at 9:00 instead of 8:00, like Presto Products, and they end at 5:30 just like we do. This means that their employees work one hour less than our employees do. We should adopt the same working hours as Mega Manufacturing so our employees are more rested. This would decrease the number of on-the-job accidents since it would take away the fatigue factor.”

➤ Step 1 – Understanding the Argument

- Identify the conclusion. *Presto has had more on-the-job accidents than Mega, and the HR manager feels this is caused by fatigue since Presto employees work one hour longer than Mega employees.*
- What premises does the author offer to support the conclusion? *Mega employees begin work later and have fewer on-the-job accidents.*
- What fallacies or flaws do you recognize in the argument? *The author makes a hasty generalization, comparing the two companies as if they are identical.*
- What assumptions are made in the argument? *That fatigue is the main factor in accidents. Also that Presto’s employees are suffering from fatigue just because of one extra hour of work. Also assumes that break times at both companies are the same.*
- What does the argument fail to address? *What each company does. (Maybe one company’s employees spend more time working with hazardous equipment.)*
- What necessary evidence is omitted from the argument? *What each company does. Also, the size of each company – size both of the actual building and of the number of employees (more people in a smaller space could lead to more accidents).*

➤ Step 2 – Developing My Thesis

The argument that Presto's occurrences of on-the-job accidents would be less if the employees worked an hour less creates several problems because 1) it assumes that fatigue is the main factor in on-the-job accidents and that breaks are the same at both companies, 2) it fails to address what each company does, 3) it omits the following important evidence: What the companies do and the size of the companies.

➤ Step 3 – Organizing My Thoughts

ANALYZING AN ARGUMENT ESSAY FORMULA (*formula 2*):

I. Introduction

- A. A memo recently went out to Presto employees regarding on-the-job accidents. It seems that Presto's rate of accidents is 25 percent higher than that of nearby Mega Manufacturing. The memo suggested that Presto employees' workdays should be shortened by one hour by starting work at 9:00 instead of 8:00.
- B. The argument that Presto's occurrences of on-the-job accidents would be less if the employees worked an hour less creates several problems because it assumes fatigue is the main factor in the accidents, it fails to address what each company does, and it does not discuss the size of the companies.

II. The argument assumes that ... (thesis point #1)

- A. Fatigue is the main factor in on-the-job accidents
- B. Both companies give their employees the same time for breaks

III. The argument never addresses ... (thesis point #2)

- A. What the companies do
- B. How the companies' industries differ

IV. The argument omits important evidence ... (thesis point #3)

- A. What the companies do
- B. The size of the companies, both in actual building size and number of employees

V. Conclusion

- A. Restate thesis
- B. Presto should examine other elements in the location where the majority of the accidents occur. Such things as machinery, workspace and employee experience may be important factors to consider.

➤ Step 4 – Writing My Essay

On-the-job accidents are a major concern to companies. Every year, workplace injuries cost companies thousands of dollars in medical expenses and wages paid to recovering employees. Naturally, these companies look for ways to reduce risks and make the workplace safer. Recently, a memo went out to Presto Product employees regarding on-the-job accidents. It seems that Presto's rate of accidents is 25 percent higher than that of nearby Mega Manufacturing. The memo suggested that Presto employees' workdays should be shortened by one hour by starting work at 9:00 instead of 8:00. However, this argument has several flaws: Based on an assumption that Presto employees work more hours than Mega Manufacturing, it offers fatigue as the main factor in these accidents, and it does not discuss the size of the companies or describe what each company does.

By not taking into account what each company does, the Presto memo fails to accurately identify the cause of on-the-job accidents. For example, perhaps Presto Products uses forklifts and Mega Manufacturing does not. If this were the case, Presto could have a higher rate of accidents involving those workers who operate the heavy machinery. In addition, the type of work Presto employees do could be more of a contributing factor to fatigue than the number of hours worked. If workers at Presto Products spend a majority of the day on their feet, they would clearly be more affected by fatigue than a company whose employees spend much of their time at desks.

In addition to the misguided assumptions the Presto memo makes about fatigue, it also fails to consider break times during a workday. By law, companies are required to give their employees a certain number of timed breaks. The number of breaks required is dependent upon the number of hours an employee is required to work. Therefore, it is possible that at Mega Manufacturing employees get fewer breaks than Presto employees do. Moreover, perhaps lunch time at Mega Manufacturing is shorter than at Presto. Over



the course of a day, then, Presto employees may work the same number of hours as the workers at Mega Manufacturing.

Besides failing to consider break times during the workday, the Presto memo also omits important information. The memo should address various concrete factors such as the size of the Presto's building and the number of employees working there. By comparing this information to the same type of information from Mega Manufacturing, it may be possible to draw an accurate comparison. For example, perhaps Presto's staff has outgrown their facility while Mega Manufacturing's small staff enjoys the luxury of private offices and a large spacious warehouse. For Presto, a crowded building could become a hazard.

There are many potential hazards at the workplace. A company like Presto cannot validly assume that fatigue is the main cause of on-the-job accidents without supplying solid evidence to support such a finding. If they wish to prove that fatigue is the primary cause of on-the-job accidents, they must rule out other potential causes. Discussing other potentially hazardous factors with their employees would also go a long way toward finding a solution.

#### ➤ Step 5 – Revising My Essay

Just like in *Present Your Perspective on an Issue*, here is your chance to revise an essay. Answer the following questions regarding the essay above.

- Is the introduction captivating? Why or why not? Do you recognize a certain method the author employs to make the introduction interesting?
- Is the thesis statement concise? Does it clearly show the purpose of the essay?
- Do the body paragraphs clearly support each point made in the thesis? If not, where does the essay lack necessary support?
- Are there logical transitions that make the text flow smoothly between sentences and between paragraphs? Underline each word, phrase or sentence that acts as a transition.
- Is the tone and diction consistent throughout the essay? If not, point out the places where consistency breaks down.
- Is the use of person consistent? If not, point out the places where consistency is not maintained.
- Is there a word, or are there words, which have been used too often in the essay? List these words. Also list the words that have been used to provide variety in the essay.
- Do the sentences vary in length and structure?



## Practice

Consider the Argument prompts below and, using the five steps we have discussed, practice analyzing some arguments.

### **Arguments:**

The manager at WKAM radio station recently sent out a memo that included the following:

“At the beginning of this past year, we removed ‘Fred Kalin’s Sports Talk’ from the 11:00 news. Since then, our ratings have gone down. Therefore, we will reinstate Fred’s spot so that our ratings will be revived.”

The following is from a letter from the Barrow County School Board:

“Two years ago, we formed a committee whose sole purpose is to examine area schools and identify potential problems. This year, the committee’s study noted that the 10 worst schools were run by principals with the least experience. Next year, these principals will be replaced by people with more experience so that the schools will begin to improve.”

The following appeared in a letter from Smiler Toothpaste’s marketing department to its CEO:

“Glamour Teeth just introduced Mr. Tooth in their new advertising campaign. Mr. Tooth is a cute cartoon tooth who encourages everyone to try the new Glamour Teeth toothpaste. Since the new ad campaign began, sales of the new Glamour Teeth toothpaste have risen 67%. We should develop our own cartoon mascot to star in a new ad campaign. This would give our sales the boost they need to compete with or even surpass Glamour Teeth’s sales.”

The following appeared in a business plan for ABC Company, located in Hankville:

“All of the successful small businesses in the neighboring town of Sharpston are family-owned. Since we are a small business, if we want to be successful, we should offer employment to family members of any employees we hire. This will create a more family-oriented atmosphere.”

Health stores get most of their business from people who are into fitness. Therefore, when considering where to locate, a health store should open only in towns where sports equipment stores flourish and fitness centers are full.

## More Sample Argument Essays

### Argument

A national news station recently reported the following:

*“Over the past few years, the number of women leaving the workforce to stay at home with their children has increased by 47%. More mothers are exploring this option because they dislike dropping their children off at daycare. Therefore, if companies wish to retain these mothers as employees, they should build onsite daycare centers.”*

### Analysis

Over the last two decades, women have made great strides in improving the equality between men and women in the workforce. However, although women are climbing the corporate ladder faster and more frequently than ever, a new trend has evolved. A national news station discussed this trend citing the results of a recent survey, which shows a dramatic increase in the number of women who are leaving their careers to stay at home with their children. The news report suggested that mothers are quitting their jobs because they dislike leaving their children at daycare. Therefore, they implored, if companies wish to retain these mothers as employees, they should build onsite daycare centers. Although the survey results in this argument are valid, they are not fully developed and the suggested solution makes generalized assumptions and omits other important avenues companies could explore to retain employees.

The news station was accurate in reporting that many women are opting to stay home with their children rather than to go to work. Basing this claim on a survey adds credibility to the report. However, the writers at the news station should have considered investigating the matter more thoroughly and thus fully developing the story. In addition to obtaining the results from the survey that indicated the increase in the number of homemakers, they should have requested more detailed results that would explain the reasons more women are leaving their jobs to stay at home. If these results were not readily available, the station should have considered conducting their own survey to obtain these answers.

Had the station obtained more details about the reasons so many women are leaving the workforce, they would not have made the mistaken assumption that mothers' dislike of daycare is the main reason behind the trend. Perhaps they would have realized that, although it is true that mothers do not like having to drop their children off at daycare, there are more specifics to the dilemma. For example, some families discover that the cost of daycare, commuting, and a work wardrobe surpasses the cost to a one-income family where the father works and the mother saves on the added expense that comes from holding a job. Many mothers are staying home simply because they feel more comfortable being the one to raise their children. They realize that they are missing many important aspects of their children's lives and make the necessary monetary adjustments to become a one-income family.

Clearly, there are many reasons some families are opting to live on one salary, and these reasons go beyond the daycare factor. If the news station had discussed these reasons, they would probably have made several other suggestions to companies who wish to retain these women as employees. For example, companies could explore alternate scheduling options such as flex schedules and part-time work. Flex schedules would allow mothers to take part in important events in their children's lives by scheduling their workday around their children's schedules. An employee on a flex schedule could, for example, come in earlier than other employees and leave in time to catch her child's baseball game. Part-time opportunities not only give mothers more time with their children, but they also help alleviate the cost of daycare and commuting. A part-timer may choose to just work three days a week, spending the other two at home. Many women would likely stay with their company if they were given an opportunity to telecommute. This would be an excellent option for companies to offer to mothers whose jobs require excessive computer work or research as this can easily be done from a remote location.

Although the news station's suggestion that companies should build onsite daycare centers was a viable one, the station should certainly have taken more time to fully address the issue. They should consider giving a follow-up report in which they discuss other reasons women are returning home to be with their children. These details will likely lead to further suggestions they can give to companies struggling with the popular trend of women giving up their careers to be homemakers.

### Argument

The following is from a speech by the president of the Best Charity Club to her club members:

*“Three months ago, the Charity for Youth Club held a bake sale at the annual Fourth of July Bash in town. They raised over \$2,000. Our club budget currently has a deficit of \$1,000, and we have some pending purchases and contributions which total over \$1,000. This brings our monetary need to \$2,000. We should hold a bake sale at the annual Christmas Party at the civic center in order to raise the funds we need to cover these costs.”*

### Analysis

Every year, charities raise thousands of dollars for good causes. Recently in a speech to her club members, the president of the Best Charity Club mentioned that at the last Fourth of July Bash, the Charity for Youth Club raised over \$2,000 by conducting a bake sale. To meet monetary needs of \$2,000, the president stated that it would be in the best interest of the Best Charity Club to hold a similar fundraiser at the annual Christmas Party. Although the president was probably correct in recounting the profit the Charity for Youth Club made at the Fourth of July Bash, she is too quick to assume that her club can make similar profits; she has failed to analyze specific details about the Charity for Youth Club’s fundraiser to confirm that her club can duplicate the bake sale and its favorable results.

The president of the Best Charity Club assumes that her club can duplicate the results of the Charity for Youth Club’s summer bake sale. However, along with this assumption is the presumption that charitable givers will be as willing to donate to her club’s charity as to the cause of the Charity for Youth Club. She does not discuss either cause, so we do not have a reference from which to judge. Perhaps the Charity for Youth Club raises money for children who have cancer. Perhaps the Best Charity Club donates money to political causes. Clearly, children with cancer pull at peoples’ heartstrings more strongly than do politicians. Causes that tug at a person’s heart are more likely to get people to open their wallets as well. Regardless of the specific cause, however, the president of Best Charity assumes that people will be just as likely to give at the Christmas party as at the Fourth of July event. Since people often spend a lot of money on Christmas gifts, they may not be as willing to give to charity as during the summer months.

Not only will the Best Charity Club need to plan for a bake sale at a different time of year than the Charity for Youth’s sale, but they will also need to project how many baked goods to prepare and what kinds. The president of the Best Charity Club failed to address these specifics of the Charity for Youth Club’s bake sale. For example, it would be helpful for the Best Charity Club to be knowledgeable about what types of baked goods sold well at the Charity for Youth’s bake sale and what pricing was set for each item. If the president does not address these details, her club’s bake sale may not be as successful.

The president must look even further than the pricing her club should set for the baked goods. She must also look at the costs that her club will incur. She has omitted these costs from her speech, but without some knowledge of a budget for baking products and rent for a selling space at the Christmas party, she cannot accurately calculate the profit her club can make. Without this calculation, she will have a difficult time setting goals with her club members.

Many specifics still need to be discussed with all club members. The president of Best Charity Club should not assume that her club can hold a bake sale that will add the necessary profit of \$2,000 to their bank ledger. Even though another charity has been successful in this way, she cannot guarantee to her club members that they can equal this effort. She must give her club members more details from the Charity for Youth Club’s bake sale such as items sold, pricing, and cost to the club. From there, she should brainstorm with her club about other fundraising ideas in case their bake sale does not ring up the necessary number of sales to meet the deficit in her club’s budget.

### Argument

The following is from a television campaign ad:

*“Residents of Lawrence County should elect Thornton Campbell as school superintendent in the next election. Thornton Campbell has served as superintendent for 16 years in neighboring Downs County. Since he became superintendent, Downs County Schools have improved their test scores by 43%. If we elect Campbell, Lawrence County School test scores will improve.”*

### Analysis

You’ve seen them on TV around election time—political ads, one after another, bombarding you with the accomplishments of one candidate and the “dirt” on another. Knowing what to believe and what to dismiss as mere drivel can be difficult. It is easy to believe things that are stated as fact. For example, in a recent television political ad, supporters of Superintendent Thornton Campbell suggested that he should be elected superintendent of Lawrence County. The ad offered support by reviewing Campbell’s past record as superintendent of neighboring Downs County. Apparently, test scores in this county went up by 43%. The ad suggested, then, that if Campbell were elected superintendent of Lawrence County, their test scores would improve as well. Although the ad states a positive statistic, it does not provide enough information for voters to make a well-informed decision to vote for Campbell as superintendent.

The ad does not provide adequate information because its assumptions are misleading. The ad assumes that the improvement in test scores is a direct result of Campbell’s efforts; however, there are other factors that could have played a vital role in the higher scores. For example, perhaps the test has changed. Standardized tests are under continual revision. Revisions over a number of years could result in higher scores as students adapt to the test. This improvement could have coincidentally corresponded with Campbell’s term as superintendent of Downs County Schools making it seem as though it was a result of Campbell’s service as superintendent.

Even if the ad did prove that the improved test scores at Downs County were a direct result of Campbell’s work, it assumes that he can duplicate the results in a different county. The most significant element of any county is its people. There is no mention of the population that makes up each county. For example, suppose Lawrence County is more ethnically diverse than Downs County. Campbell’s strengths may not lie in dealing with a diverse student body and work staff; he may not be as successful in such a situation.

Perhaps the ad should have focused on other positive efforts that made Campbell successful when he served as superintendent of Downs County. Many voters may be more interested in knowing how the candidate dealt with violence in Downs County School, for example, than they are in test scores. In addition, if the ad gave voters more information about Campbell’s past, they would be able to compare him more intelligently with other candidates.

Voters need many details to make good decisions when they cast their vote. This ad does not provide enough details about Thornton Campbell. Campbell’s supporters should submit another ad that cites examples of programs that Campbell instituted that played a direct role in improving the students’ test scores. In addition, they should expand the ad to include details about other positive efforts that made a difference during Campbell’s term as superintendent in Downs County. From these details, voters can get an idea of what Campbell could bring to Lawrence County Schools that would benefit students and teachers. Voters not only want a superintendent who can help a school system raise test scores, but they also want to be assured that he will effectively combat violence in school, make it a priority to get graduates in to college, improve athletic programs and institute a quality curriculum. Voters must see more details about Thornton Campbell in order to cast a well-informed vote.