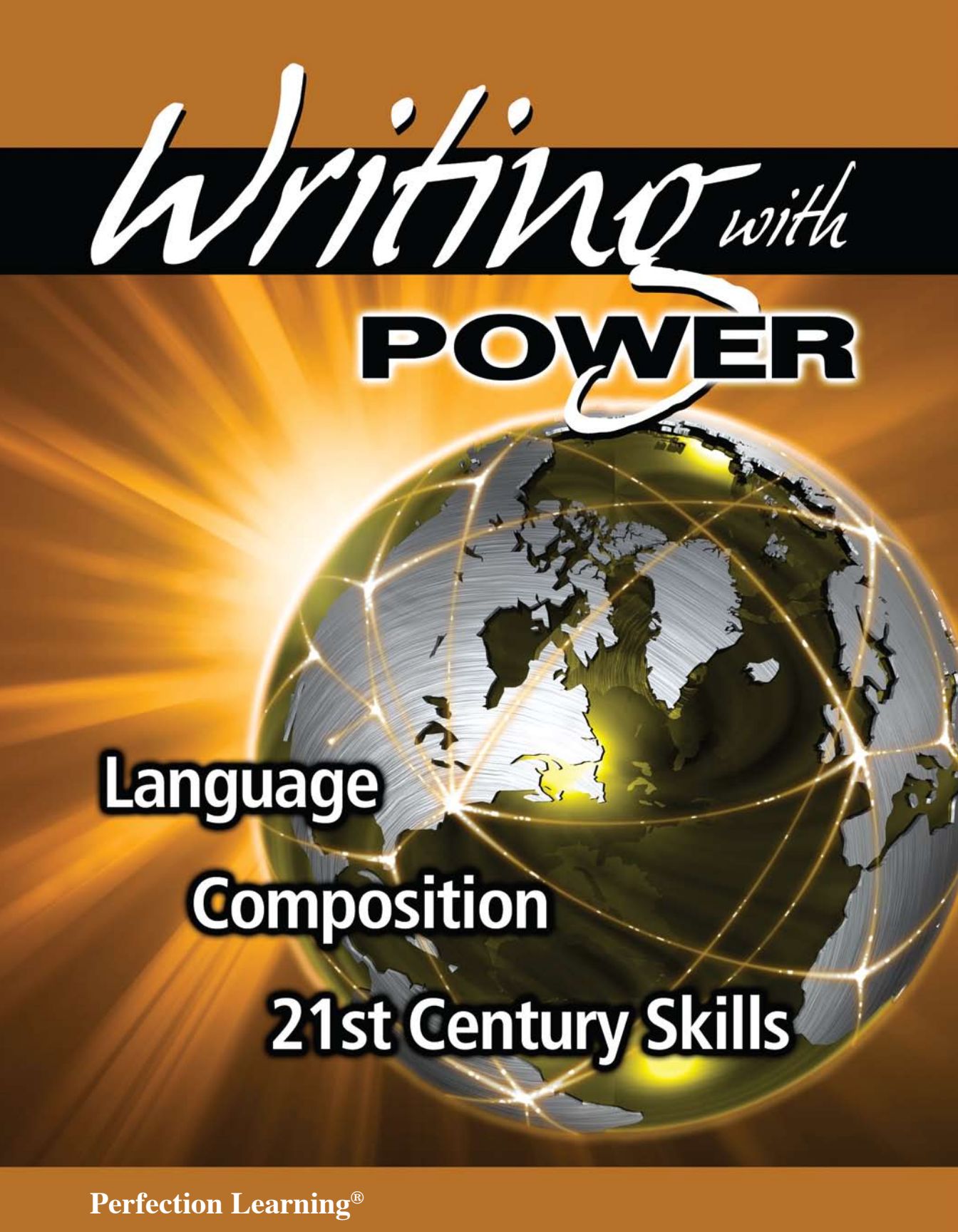
Writing with POWER



Perfection Learning®

Writing with POWER

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Language

Composition

21st Century Skills

Perfection Learning®

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Special thanks to Joan McElroy, Ph.D., for contributions to the research strand of *Writing with Power,* and to David Kulieke, English instructor and consultant, for his review of the grammar, usage, and mechanics chapters.

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Peter Smagorinsky wrote the activities that form the project-centered "structured process approach" to teaching writing at the heart of the composition units of *Writing with Power*. A high school English teacher for fourteen years, Smagorinsky has also taught in the English Education programs at the University of Oklahoma (1990-1998) and University of Georgia (1998-present). In addition to numerous articles, he has published books through Heinemann (*Teaching English by Design*, 2007, and *The Dynamics of Writing Instruction: A Structured Process Approach for the Composition Teacher in the Middle and High School,* with Larry Johannessen, Elizabeth Kahn, and Thomas McCann, 2010); through Teacher's College Press (*Research on Composition: Multiple Perspectives on Two Decades of Change*, ed., 2006); through Cambridge University Press (*Vygotskian Perspectives on Literacy Research: Constructing Meaning through Collaborative Inquiry*, with Carol D. Lee, 2000); and through the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Press (*Standards in Practice, Grades 9–12*, 1996). For NCTE, he also chaired the Research Forum, co-edited *Research in the Teaching of English*, co-chaired the Assembly for Research, chaired the Standing Committee on Research, chaired the Research Foundation, and served as President of the National Conference on Research in Language and Literacy.





Constance Weaver developed the "power" concept and features for *Writing with Power,* identifying strategies for using grammatical options to add power to writing and thinking as well as developing the "Power Rules," beginning with ten "must know" conventions for success in school and the workplace and expanding into features more relevant for advanced writers. Weaver has shaped English education for more than thirty years, illuminating the relationship between grammar and writing and providing practical, effective teaching guidance, from her earliest works on the subject, the best-selling *Grammar for Teachers* (NCTE, 1979) and the widely acclaimed *Teaching Grammar in Context* (Boynton/Cook, 1996), to her most recent *Grammar Plan Book* (Heinemann, 2007) and *Grammar to Enrich and Enhance Writing* (with Jonathan Bush, Heinemann, 2008). She has also long been a leader in literacy and reading. Her book *Reading Process and Practice* (Heinemann, 1988) is authoritative in its field. In 1996, Weaver was honored by the Michigan Council of Teachers of English with the Charles C. Fries award for outstanding leadership in English education. Weaver is the Heckert Professor of Reading and Writing at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, and Professor Emerita of English at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.

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Writing with Power proudly and gratefully presents the work of the following students, whose writing samples—from effective opening sentences to in-depth literary analyses—show so clearly the power of writing.

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Common Core State Standards Focus



W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.



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W.3 (d) Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.



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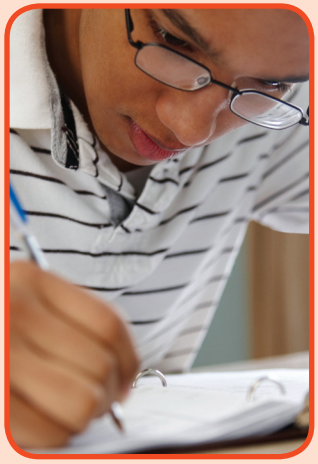
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Common Core State Standards Focus

W.3 (a) Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.



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Common Core State Standards Focus



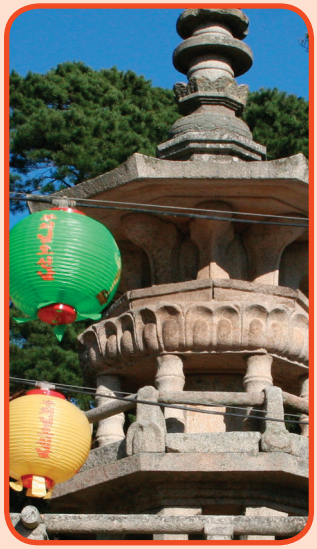
W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

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L.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

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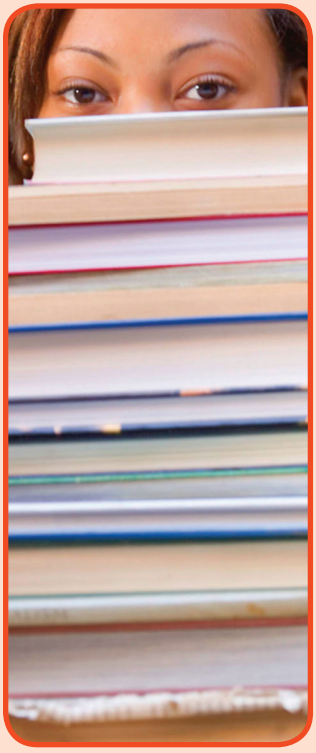
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SL.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

W.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.



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W.3 (c) Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.



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Common Core State Standards Focus



(a) Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.

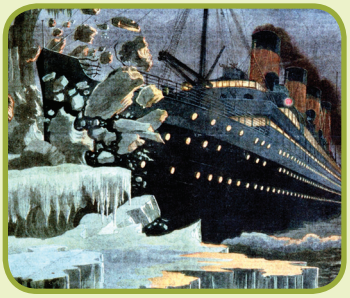


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Common Core State Standards Focus



(a) Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.



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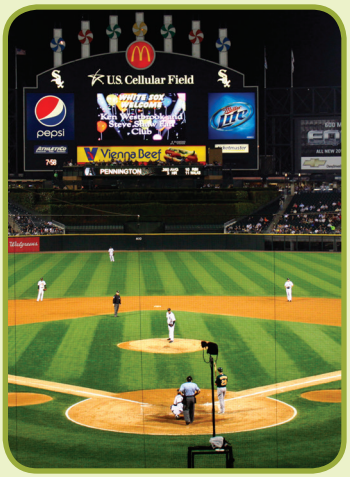
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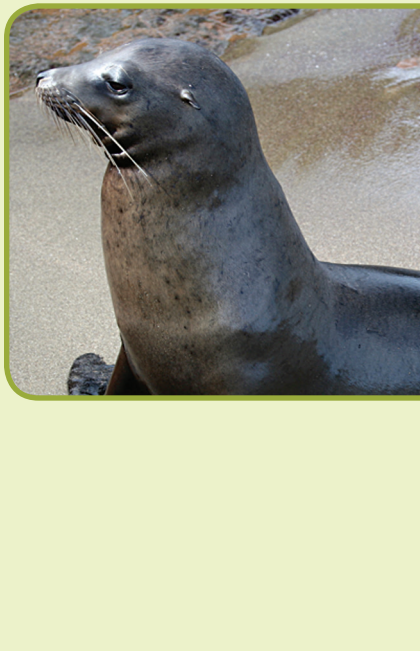
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L.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.



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Common Core State Standards Focus

L.2 (a) Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.
(b) Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation.



L.2 (c) Spell correctly.

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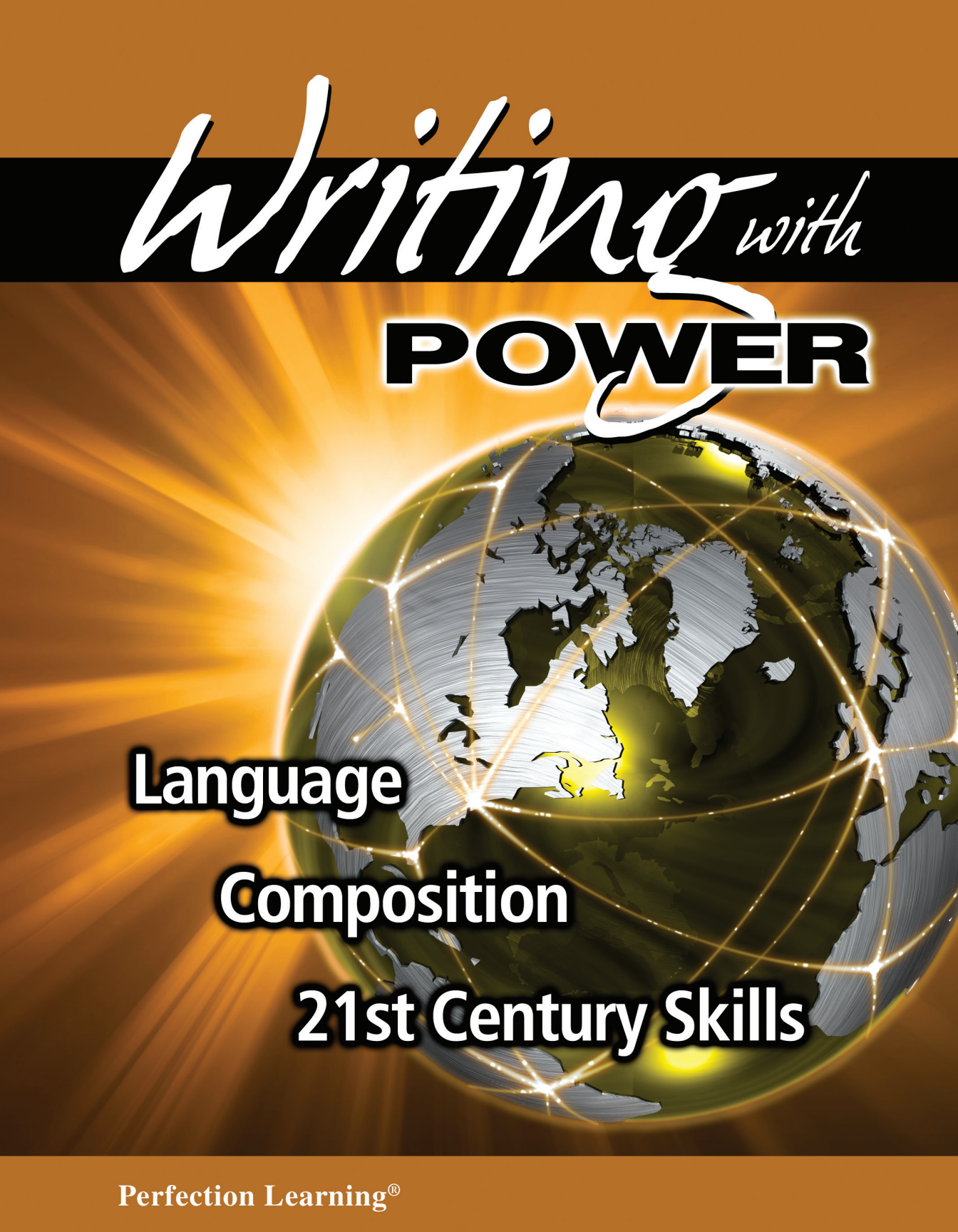
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Common Core State Standards Focus

L.6 Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.



Writing with POWER



Language
Composition
21st Century Skills

Perfection Learning®

Unit 1

Style and Structure of Writing

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Writing often begins quietly, slowly. You jot down a promising word. You type a sentence. You take a break. At some point, though, as you sit at your desk or brainstorm with others, the ideas and words may begin to grow wildly. This exciting phase may produce pages and pages of writing, some of it overgrowing your original idea. The best writing emerges after stepping away from those first pages and returning later, with editorial "scissors" in hand. In this unit you will learn to work with others to develop and shape ideas. You will learn to find your unique voice. You will also learn to snip and cut like a gardener until only a sound structure, strong ideas, and vigorous words remain.



I believe more in the scissors than I do in the pencil.
—Truman Capote

CHAPTER 1

A Community of Writers

The title of this program is *Writing with Power*. Why is it important to learn how to write with power, and what does that even mean? What is it about language and communication in the 21st century that makes writing with power an essential skill? This chapter will begin to answer those questions and lay the foundation for the writing instruction and activities presented in future chapters.



Writing with Power

You encounter many written texts every day. Without even knowing why, you can probably tell when one of those communicates with power. Such writing usually

- demonstrates the **six traits** of good writing
- uses **language in varied, interesting ways** to show relationships and provide details
- follows the **conventions** appropriate for the purpose, occasion, audience, and genre

This program will help you learn how to think, communicate, and write with power.

1 The Six Traits

Ideas

The foundation of strong writing is a clear idea, message, or theme. Good writing builds on that foundation with well-chosen details that help explain or back up the message and that bring it to life. Powerful writing keeps the focus on the message and avoids unnecessary or off-topic details.

Organization

Well-organized writing has a clear beginning, middle, and ending. It presents details in a logical order. Clear and appropriate transitional words and phrases, including those listed in the chart below, show readers the connections among the ideas.

WRITING PURPOSE	ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS	COMMON TRANSITIONS
Expository (to explain or inform)	Order of importance	*First, next, most important*
	Comparison/contrast	*Similarly, in contrast, on the other hand*
	Cause/effect	*As a result, for that reason, because*
Narrative (to tell a real or imaginary story)	Chronological (time) order	*First, yesterday, the next day, last year, next, until*
Descriptive	Spatial (location) order	*At the top, near the middle, to the right, on the other side, next to, behind*
Persuasive	Order of importance	*The most important, equally important, in addition, also, in fact*

Voice

Voice is the quality in writing that makes it sound as if there is a real, live person behind the words. It is the writer's personal and distinctive way of expressing ideas. However, it must also be suited to the writer's audience and purpose. For example, a personal narrative for sharing with the class and an expository essay for a writing contest might call for different voices.

WRITING PURPOSE	WHAT THE WRITER'S VOICE SHOULD CONVEY
Expository and persuasive writing	Genuine interest in the subject, often including personal insights about why the subject is important to the writer and what the reader might expect to gain from it; respect for differing viewpoints; confidence without swagger
Descriptive and narrative writing	A genuine, not phony, personality; often some personal statements that show a willingness to trust readers with sensitive ideas

Word Choice

Good writing uses specific, lively, and natural sounding language. Verbs are mostly in the active voice (see pages 704–705). Nouns and modifiers are precise rather than general or trite. The writing may use, but not overuse, colorful comparisons or figurative language to reinforce meaning. (You will learn more about word choice in Chapter 2.)

Sentence Fluency

In good writing, one sentence seems to flow smoothly into another with the help of transitions, repeated words, and words such as pronouns that refer back to an earlier word. At times you may need to rearrange the sentences so all of your ideas follow in a logical order. You may need to add transitions and occasionally repeat a key word or replace it with a pronoun, a synonym, or a substitute. (You will learn more about sentence fluency in Chapter 2.)

Conventions

Good writing is free of errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Word choice is accurate, and constructions within sentences follow grammar and usage rules. Paragraphing is appropriate. Writing that follows conventions makes a strong positive impression; writing that does not follow conventions loses the respect of readers. (You will learn more about some of the most important conventions on pages 8–10.)

2 The Power of Language

Some experts have claimed that language is so rich and flexible that speakers and writers can, in theory, produce an infinite number of sentences. Simple pictures can communicate an idea like "the girl played tennis," but language can add detail, meaning, subtlety, and feeling to that idea in seemingly endless ways: "The strong young girl, soaked in sweat from the heat of the summer and the ferocity of the competition, played the best tennis game of her life while thousands cheered her on, hardly believing that a girl so young could take on the mighty champion."



The ability of language to be used to express so many ideas gives people who are in command of language great power. For this reason, each composition chapter in this program includes a warm-up activity called "The Power of Language" to give you experience in creating interesting and varied patterns that add shades of meaning to your thoughts. Each language strategy has a two-part name. The first part identifies the language concept. The second part following the colon suggests the purpose and function of the strategy. The "Power of Language" strategies in this book are:

- Participial Phrases: Getting into the Action, page 57
- Parallelism: The Power of 3s, page 89
- Appositives: Who or What? page 127
- Adjectival Phrases: Adjectives Come Lately, page 157
- Fluency: Let It Flow, page 184
- Semicolons: Catch and Release, page 223
- Adverbial Phrases: Scene Setters, page 272
- Dashes: Dash It All, page 314
- Adverbial Clauses: Tip the Scale, page 370

Learning Tip

With a partner, take the simple sentence "the girl played tennis" and use your language power to expand it with details and subtlety of meaning. Share your revised sentence with the rest of the class.

Using these strategies will help you transform your writing from "the girl played tennis" to all the detailed, interesting, and original expressions your imagination can create. That ability is language *power*.

3 The Power Rules

Language also has the power to open or shut doors. The language you use—the word choices and the grammar—mark you as members of this or that group or groups. In casual speech and writing, you use the grammar heard in your home and community, or possibly different forms used by your peers. Some of you naturally say, "He doesn't have any," while others naturally say "He don't have none." The language you use depends on the language you hear around you and the language of those with whom you want to identify. Your casual language is the language of power among your friends and family, so you use it comfortably and confidently.

However, your casual language may not be the language of power in the larger society, where "public language" or "mainstream English"—the language of those with decision-making power in mainstream society—is the norm. Its grammar may or may not be close to the casual speech forms you use in your family, culture, peer, or other in-group. However, when you seek success in mainstream society—in school, in the job market, or in college—you increase your chances by using the language of power in those settings. Viewed this way, the grammar you use is not a matter of right or wrong; it's a matter of which choices are best for what circumstances and audiences.

Some studies have identified the language patterns that send up a red flag, or warning signal, to potential employers and academic decision makers who expect adherence to the rules of mainstream English, also called "Standard English." Since these have such an impact on future success, you should edit your work carefully to avoid them. Following are ten of the most important conventions to master—the Power Rules. Always check for them when you edit.

Editing for Mainstream Conventions: The Power Rules

1. **Use only one negative form for a single negative idea.** (See pages 789–790.)

Before Editing	After Editing
They won't bring *nothing* to the picnic.	They won't bring *anything* to the picnic.
There wasn't *nothing* we could do.	There wasn't *anything* we could do.

2. **Use mainstream past tense forms of regular and irregular verbs.** (See pages 684–703.) It's a good idea to memorize the parts of the most common irregular verbs.

Before Editing	After Editing
I already *clean* my room.	I already *cleaned* my room.
Yesterday he *come* to study with me.	Yesterday he *came* to study with me.
She *brung* her new album with her.	She *brought* her new album with her.
I should have *went* along with them.	I should have *gone* along with them.

3. Use verbs that agree with the subject. (See pages 750–767.)

Before Editing	After Editing
He / she / it *don't* make sense.	He / she / it *doesn't* make sense.
Carlos always *reach* for the top.	Carlos always *reaches* for the top.
The sisters or Elena *sing* next.	The sisters or Elena *sings* next.
Either Maya or her friends *knows* what happened.	Either Maya or her friends *know* what happened.

4. Use subject forms of pronouns in subject position. Use object forms of pronouns in object position. (See pages 716–725.)

Before Editing	After Editing
Her and Morgan always show up together.	*She* and Morgan always show up together.
Him and Jamal went to the same college.	*He* and Jamal went to the same college.
Her and *me* are going to the movies.	*She* and *I* are going to the movies.

5. Use standard ways to make nouns possessive. (See pages 895–897.)

Before Editing	After Editing
Do you have the *coach* jacket?	Do you have the *coach's* jacket?
Is that *Deidres* book?	Is that *Deidre's* book?
Josh wrote the *committees* report.	Josh wrote the *committee's* report.
All the *kids* ideas are important.	All the *kids'* ideas are important.

6. Use a consistent verb tense except when a change is clearly necessary. (See pages 693–703.)

Before Editing	After Editing
The lake level *rises* when it rained.	The lake level *rose* when it rained.
After she forgot her lines, she *doesn't* want to be in the play.	After she forgot her lines, she *didn't* want to be in the play.

7. Use sentence fragments only the way professional writers do, after the sentence they refer to and usually to emphasize a point. Fix all sentence fragments that occur before the sentence they refer to and ones that occur in the middle of a sentence. (See pages 666–671.)

Before Editing	After Editing
One day. The rain finally stopped.	*One day,* the rain finally stopped.
Driving in the city can be difficult. *During the evening rush hour.* So we try to avoid it.	Driving in the city can be difficult *during the evening rush hour,* so we try to avoid it.
I missed the bus today. *The reason being that I took too long at lunch.*	I missed the bus today *because* I took too long at lunch.

8. Use the best conjunction and/or punctuation for the meaning when connecting two sentences. Revise run-on sentences. (See pages 672–674.)

Before Editing	After Editing
We went to the *store we* decided to buy ice cream.	*When we went to the store,* we decided to buy ice cream.
Micah drove the *car, Inez* gave him directions from her map.	*While Micah drove the car,* Inez gave him directions from her map.
Then Inez drove for a *while,* Micah slept in the back seat.	Then Inez drove for a while*, and* Micah slept in the back seat.

9. Use the contraction *'ve* not *of* when the correct word is *have,* or use the full word *have*. Use *supposed* instead of *suppose* and *used* instead of *use* when appropriate. (See pages 801, 805, and 808.)

Before Editing	After Editing
You should *of* finished your homework.	You should *have* finished your homework.
We might *of* missed the whole show.	We might *have* missed the whole show.
Reggie could *of* let me know.	Reggie could *have* let me know.
Jack was *suppose* to call me.	Jack was *supposed* to call me.
Reggie *use* to be on the team.	Reggie *used* to be on the team.

10. For sound-alikes and certain words that sound almost alike, choose the word with your intended meaning. (See pages 796–811.)

Before Editing	After Editing
Mia went *too* her violin lesson. (*Too* means "also" or "in addition".)	Mia went *to* her violin lesson. (*To* means "in the direction of".)
She practiced *to* times today. (*To* means "in the direction of".)	She practiced *two* times today. (*Two* is a number.)
Are these *you're* tickets? (*You're* is a contraction of *you are.*)	Are these *your* tickets? (*Your* is the possessive form of *you.*)
They're new school is very modern. (*They're* is a contraction of *they are.*)	*Their* new school is very modern. (*Their* is the possessive form of *they.*)
I put your books over *their*. (*Their* is the possessive form of *they.*)	I put your books over there. (There means "in that place".)
Its not a good time to bring up that problem. (*Its* is the possessive form of *it.)*	*It's* not a good time to bring up that problem. (*It's* is a contraction of *it is.*)

The proofreading symbols shown on the next page are convenient shorthand notations that writers frequently use to make changes during the editing stage to make sure their writing follows expected conventions, especially those reflected in the Power Rules.

PROOFREADING SYMBOLS

^	insert	We went on a fantastic journey.
^,	insert comma	Meg enjoys hiking, skiing and skating.
⊙	insert period	Gary took the bus to Atlanta⊙
ℊ	delete	Refer ~~back~~ to your notes.
¶	new paragraph	¶ Finally Balboa saw the Pacific.
no ¶	no paragraph	no ¶ The dachshund trotted away.
. . .	let it stand	I appreciated her ~~sincere~~ honesty.
#	add space	She will beback in a moment.
⁀	close up	The airplane waited on the run way.
tr	transpose	They only have two dollars left.
≡	capital letter	We later moved to the south.
/	lowercase letter	His favorite subject was Science.
SP	spell out	I ate 2 oranges.
‟ ‟	insert quotes	I hope you can join us, said my brother.
=	insert hyphen	I attended a school related event.
'	insert apostrophe	The ravenous dog ate the cats food.
	move copy	I usually on Fridays go to the movies.

CHAPTER 1

Learning Tip

Write the following sentence on a piece of paper, just as it's written here.

"Did youmiss the bus this mornig Maxs teacher asked

Add proofreading symbols to show corrections. Compare your work with a partner's. Did you find the same errors and mark them in the same way?

4 Writing in the 21st Century

Nobody knows better than your generation what 21st century writing is all about. You do it every day. You text your friends and family at an average rate of 96 messages a day. You spend about an hour a day on the Internet, using some of that time to update your social-networking page on Facebook or a similar network. You may keep a blog to share your news and thoughts, and you may respond to the writing of others in their blogs or on their profile pages. You post pictures and videos and other illustrations, and viewers often comment on them. Although some of what you post is for anyone to see, often you restrict your postings to a circle of chosen friends. When you write, you are very aware of who will be reading your writing. You chat one-on-one and sometimes have several conversations going on at once.

You also write in school. You keep notes about science experiments, express math problems in words, write formal papers for English and other classes, and answer essay questions on tests.

You write thank-you notes to relatives who give you a present, make lists of things to take with you on your trip, write a script for a silly video you make with your friends, and leave a note for your mom about when you'll be home.

The Right Kind of Writing?

With all these kinds of writing, what is the "right" way to write?

There is no one "right" way to write. The right way to write is the way that's right for the situation you are in, your purpose for writing, and whoever will be reading your writing.

Global Interactions

The technology that makes it possible for you to be as connected as you are to others has helped bring about many changes beyond those in writing. Every aspect of life today has a global element: the economy is global; the opportunities for interacting with people of diverse cultures are greatly increased; environmental challenges affect the entire globe.

Facing global challenges and competing effectively in the global economy require **creative thinking** and the ability to **work creatively with others,** including those from a culture different from your own. They require **critical thinking** with sound reasoning and effective **problem-solving.** They require excellent **communication skills** and **expertise in using technology** to find and evaluate information. Writing can develop all of those skills and prepare you for leadership in the 21st century.

Collaborating Through the Writing Process

When you think of the writing process, do you picture a tortured, solitary artist toiling away in an unheated attic, waiting for inspiration to light the way? Certainly some activities during the writing process can be done only by a lone writer. Picture, though, how real-world writing is actually produced. In school, you confer with your lab partners to write up the results of an experiment, maybe even dividing the work of creating the report among group members. In businesses, workers meet often and discuss ideas for new products or better service and then write proposals and other business documents based on those discussions. Writing does have some solitary stages, but it is nonetheless a social act. For the writing in this program, you and your classmates will create and participate in a **community of writers** and work in **collaboration** throughout the writing process. Most often, you will be working in writing groups of three to four students.

1 Prewriting: Getting Started

Strategies for Finding a Subject

A good subject is one that holds genuine interest for you and your readers. The following strategies will also help you identify possible subjects.

Taking an Inventory of Your Interests A good way to start thinking about possible subjects is to think about your life. Try the technique of self-interview or interview a partner. Make a chart like the one below to record your ideas.

Personal Interest Inventory	
Subjects I know a lot about	
Hobbies	
Unusual experiences I have had	

Keeping a Journal A **journal** is a daily notebook in which you record your thoughts, feelings, and observations. Because you use your journal to write about subjects that interest you, it becomes an excellent source of writing ideas. Be sure to write in your journal every day and to date each entry. You can also use your journal in other ways to get writing ideas.

Reading, Interviewing, and Discussing You can also develop ideas for subjects using the following strategies. In each case, take notes to remember the ideas that surfaced.

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Thinking of Subjects

- Do some background reading on general topics that interest you. If you are interested in aviation, for example, read some articles about aviation in the library or online.
- Interview someone who knows more about a subject than you do.
- Discuss subjects of mutual interest with members of your writing group or other classmates, friends, and/or family to find interesting and fresh angles on a subject.

Keeping a Learning Log A Learning Log is a section of your journal where you can write down ideas or information about math, science, history, health, or any other subject that interests you. You can use it to capture what you know about a subject and what you still need or want to learn about it. You can also use it to keep track of what you learn about writing.

Choosing and Limiting a Subject

How can you use the prewriting work you have done so far to find a good subject? The following guidelines will help.

HERE'S HOW

Guidelines for Choosing a Subject

- Choose a subject that genuinely interests and engages you and your readers.
- Choose a subject that you know well or can research in a reasonable amount of time.
- Consider your purpose for writing, the occasion for writing, and the readers of your work. (See the next page for more on purpose, occasion, and audience.) Be sure your topic is appropriate for each of those factors.

When you choose a subject, you will often start with a general topic, such as "sports" or "current events." Those general topics are too broad to cover adequately in a single work, so you need to limit your subject. When you limit a subject, you make it specific enough to cover completely in the amount of space you have for writing. To limit your subject, use one or a combination of the following strategies.



HERE'S HOW

Guidelines for Limiting a Subject

- Limit your subject to one person or one example that represents the subject.
- Limit your subject to a specific time or place.
- Limit your subject to a specific event.
- Limit your subject to a specific condition, purpose, or procedure.

As always, share your thinking with your peers and get feedback from them at each stage of your progress.

Purpose, Occasion, Audience, and Genre

Purpose is your reason for writing or speaking. In successful communication, the purpose of your message is appropriate to both the occasion that prompts it and the audience who will receive it. The following chart lists the most common purposes.

WRITING PURPOSES	POSSIBLE FORMS
Expository to **explain** or **inform;** to focus on your subject matter and audience	**Factual writing** scientific essay, research paper, business letter, summary, descriptive essay, historical narrative, news story
Creative (literary) to **create;** to focus on making imaginative use of language and ideas	**Entertaining writing** short story, novel, play, poem, dialogue
Persuasive to **persuade;** to focus on changing your readers' minds or getting them to act in a certain way	**Convincing writing** letter to the editor, persuasive essay, movie or book review, critical essay (literary analysis), advertisement
Self-expressive to **express** and **reflect** on your thoughts and feelings	**Personal writing** journal entry, personal narrative, reflective essay, personal letter

Occasion is your motivation for composing—the factor that prompts you to communicate. Occasion usually can be stated well using one of the following sentences.

- I feel a need to write for my own satisfaction.
- I have been asked to write this by [name a person].
- I want to write an entry for [name a publication].
- I want to enter a writing contest.

As you plan your writing, you also need to remember the audience you will be addressing, or who will be reading your work. What are their interests and concerns? How can you best communicate to this particular audience?

HERE'S HOW

Audience Profile Questions

- Who will be reading my work?
- How old are they? Are they adults? teenagers? children?
- What do I want the audience to know about my subject?
- What background do they have in the subject?
- What interests and opinions are they apt to have? Are there any words or terms I should define for them?

Your writing will also be influenced by the **genre,** or form of writing, you choose. (See the chart on the previous page for a listing of common forms or genres of writing.) Each genre has characteristics that make it different from the others, and readers expect these characteristics to be present. If you are reading a novel, for example, you expect that there will be narrative and descriptive passages. If instead you find dialogue and stage directions, you wouldn't know what to make of them. In the same way, if you are writing a thank-you note to your grandmother for a gift certificate to a movie theater, she will expect certain characteristics—a greeting, a body, a closing. If instead she finds that you have sent her a bulleted list of reasons you like the gift, without an opening or closing, she is likely to be mystified, even though you are still writing about the gift.



Collaboration in Action

Prewriting

Chelsea, Joaquin, and Rakesh are in a writing group together. It's their first writing activity of the year. They are supposed to come up with topics and choose the purpose and audience for their writing. Here's how their discussion might go:

Chelsea: I don't know what to write about. I'm overwhelmed getting used to high school. How about you guys?

Rakesh: I don't know either.

Chelsea: I just finally got used to middle school and now I have to get used to this.

Joaquin: Maybe you could write about that.

Chelsea: About what?

Joaquin: Adjusting to high school

Chelsea: I guess I could, yeah.

Rakesh: Who would you write it for?

Chelsea: Myself, maybe, or maybe for my younger brother who will start here next year.

Rakesh: What would you say?

Chelsea: I don't know. Maybe that it's very different from middle school, though actually I guess there are some things that are similar.

Joaquin: Sounds like you could talk about just that—the similarities and the differences.

Chelsea: Yeah. Maybe I could focus on just a few of each. I could do that.

Talking and listening help Chelsea focus her thoughts and start to get a good subject. After the group finishes talking about Chelsea's topic, they have a similar conversation about the subjects Joaquin and Rakesh will write about.

Collaboration Practice

Meet with a small group for 10 minutes. Use what you have learned to try to come up with a good writing topic for each member.

2 Prewriting: From Ideas to a Plan

Developing a Subject

After you have chosen and limited a subject and determined your purpose, audience, and occasion, you can flesh out your ideas with supporting details. **Supporting details** are the facts, examples, incidents, reasons, or other specific points that back up your ideas. Following are some strategies for developing supporting details.

Brainstorming **Brainstorming** means letting ideas come to you freely, without judgment. Work with a partner or a group of classmates and freely list all ideas related to your subject as they occur to you.

HERE'S HOW

Collaborating: Guidelines for Group Brainstorming

- Set a time limit, such as 10 minutes.
- Write the subject on a piece of paper and assign one group member to be the recorder. If your group meets frequently, take turns recording ideas.
- Start brainstorming for supporting details, such as facts, reasons, and examples. Since you can eliminate irrelevant ideas later, record any and all ideas.
- Build on the ideas of other group members. Add to those ideas or modify them to improve them.
- Avoid criticizing the ideas of other group members.

When you have finished brainstorming, get a copy of all the supporting details from the group recorder. From that list, select the details related to your own writing task.



Clustering Another strategy for developing supporting details is **clustering,** a visual brainstorming technique that lets you both record and group your ideas. A cluster looks something like a wheel. At the hub, or center, you write your limited subject. Each idea or detail you think of to develop your subject is connected to the hub like a spoke in a wheel. Sometimes supporting ideas become new hubs with spokes of their own. After her discussion with Rakesh and Joaquin, Chelsea created the following cluster.

MODEL: Clustering



Inquiring Another good way to generate the supporting details you need to develop your subject is to ask yourself questions. Questions that begin *who, what, where, when, why,* and *how* can produce answers that are helpful in developing a subject.

Organizing Details

Focusing Your Subject Before you arrange your ideas logically, decide on a focus, or **main idea,** for your essay. A main idea is also known as a **controlling idea** because all other ideas and details in the text need to relate directly to it.

HERE'S HOW

Guidelines for Deciding on a Focus

- Look over your details. Can you draw meaningful generalizations from some or all of the details? If so, the generalization could be the focus of your writing.
- Choose a main idea that intrigues you.
- Choose a main idea that suits your purpose and audience.

For her composition on differences between middle school and high school, for example, Chelsea came up with the following possible main ideas:

MODEL: Possible Main Ideas

- Of the differences between middle school and high school, three have had the greatest effect on me.
- Because of the differences between middle school and high school, I have sometimes felt lost in high school.
- The differences between middle school and high school are all for the best.

After talking over these choices in her writing group, Chelsea chose the first idea as the focus because it seemed most meaningful and because it suited the writing purpose she had chosen (to inform) and the audience (younger students).

Classifying and Ordering Details

Your supporting details will often fall naturally into groups, or categories. For example, if you are explaining good study habits, you might create categories such as advance preparation and time management. You may find that some details don't fit into any category and may eventually have to be discarded.

Chelsea decided to group her details into three categories: (1) different subjects, (2) more homework, and (3) crowded feeling. By presenting her ideas in logical groups, she will help readers understand what she is trying to say.

After classifying your details, place them in an order that will best achieve your purpose and also make the most sense to your reader.

WAYS TO ORGANIZE DETAILS

Types of Order	Definition	Examples
Chronological	the order in which events occur	story, explanation, history, biography, drama
Spatial	location or physical arrangement	description (top to bottom, near to far, left to right, etc.)
Order of Importance	degree of importance, size, or interest	persuasive writing, description, evaluation, explanation
Logical	logical progression, one detail growing out of another	classification, definition, comparison and contrast

Chelsea made the following list of organized details. Notice that the list includes only those details from the cluster on page 19 that relate to the main idea and that the details are listed in order of importance. She used this list as a guide when writing the first draft.

MODEL: Ordering Details

Focus (Main Idea): Of the differences between middle school and high school, three have had the greatest effect on me.

Order of Ideas	Reasons
1. Different subjects —math versus algebra —science versus biology —foreign languages	Good to start with because the course schedule is the first you see of high school
2. More homework —1 hour versus 2 hours —study hall	Next in importance and follows logically from above
3. Crowded feeling —halls jammed —kids I don't know —competition	Save for last as the most important difference; makes my point that you have to get used to high school



3 Drafting

When you have some good ideas to work with and a logical organization, you can test your plan by writing a first draft. Unlike your prewriting notes, which are for you and your writing group only, your first draft is targeted for your audience, so your language should be appropriate to the subject and the occasion. As you start to express your ideas in complete sentences, be aware of voice and tone and make sure they, too, are appropriate for the subject, audience, and occasion. (See pages 14–16.)

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Drafting

- Write an introduction that will capture the reader's interest and express your main idea.
- After you write your introduction, use your organized prewriting notes as a guide. Feel free to depart from those notes, however, when a good idea occurs to you.
- Write fairly quickly without worrying about spelling or phrasing. You will have the opportunity to go back and fix your writing when you revise.
- Stop frequently and read what you have written. This practice will help you move logically from one thought to the next as you draft.
- Return to the prewriting stage whenever you find that you need to clarify your thinking. You can always stop and brainstorm or cluster to collect more ideas.
- Write a conclusion that drives home the main point of the essay.

Following is Chelsea's first draft. Notice the three features identified in the sidenotes:

MODEL: First Draft

High school was a real surprise for me. I knew it would be different from middle school, but not this different. There were three things especially that made me realize that high school would never be the same.

One difference you notice write away from middle School is the courses you take. In middle school for example you take science and and math. In high school the courses are definately more avanced. In highschool you take Biology in stead of science and Algebra insteadof math. High school offers also foriegn languages which some middle schools don't, I'm taking spanish.

You also find you have more homework in high school. I find I have twice as much homework in high school. In middle school I used to spend about an hour every week

The first and last paragraphs serve as an introduction and conclusion, which give a sense of wholeness to the text.

The draft follows the planned order of ideas (see page 21).

night doing homework. Now that I'm in high school I spend about two hours a night and sometimes even week ends. It does help that high schools have longer study hall periods. In study halls you can get some of your work do during school hours. There should be some way to keep things quieter in study halls at least some of the time.

High school is also much more crowded than middle school. The halls are jammed with students, and I dont even know alot of them. You sometimes feel lost. The other thing about so many students is that high school has a pretty competative atmosphere. There are more kids trying out for the same spots on sports teams, or in other groups. The added competition is a plus because it keeps you on you toes you really have to do your best at all times.

I guess I'm getting used to the idea that high school is a hole new experience. There are a lot of diffrences between middle school and high school and these are only three of them. Such differences can be unsettling at first but you will find that they all have a strong plus side too.

Chelsea made several mistakes in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. These mistakes will be corrected at a later stage in the writing process.

Drafting a Title

You may think of a good title at any stage in the writing process. Whenever you come up with a title, however, consider carefully whether it will get your readers' attention. The title should also be appropriate to your subject, purpose, and audience.

HERE'S HOW

Guidelines for Choosing a Title

- Choose a title that identifies your subject or relates to your subject focus.
- Choose a title that is appropriate for your purpose and audience.
- Choose a title that will capture the reader's interest.



4 Revising

When you revise, you stand back from your writing and try to look at it with a fresh eye. Following are some strategies you can use to improve your draft. If you can answer *no* to any of the questions in the first column, you can try the fixes suggested in the second.

STRATEGIES	QUICK FIXES
• **Check for Clarity and Creativity** • Are your ideas interesting and fresh, rather than ones that people have heard over and over? Does the text satisfy its purpose?	• Insert a personal experience or example. • Think of an unlikely comparison between your subject and something else. • Talk with others to get ideas.
• **Elaborate by Adding Details** • Does your writing seem fully developed? Are your ideas fully supported? Have you used details that would help bring a scene or idea to life for a reader?	• Explore your subject from someone else's point of view. • Use one of the prewriting strategies on pages 18–19 to come up with lively elaborations. • Get into the action with participial phrases (page 57), tell who or what with appositives (page 127), add scene setters (page 272) and/or add adjectival phrases (page 157) and other descriptive words. • Show, don't tell. • Take a mental snapshot of a scene and write what you see.
• **Rearrange Out-of-Order Items** • Check the organization of your words, sentences, and ideas. Does one idea lead logically into another? • Can any ideas be combined?	• Use your word processor to rearrange and reorganize your sentences or paragraphs so the reader can easily follow your thoughts. • Use transitions to show the relationships between ideas.
• **Delete Unnecessary Words or Details** • Do all of the details in your draft relate clearly to your controlling idea?	• Delete, or remove, them. Also delete any extra or unneeded words and repetitive sentences.
• **Substitute Words and Sentences** • Are all parts of your draft clear enough for a reader to follow easily? Are your words lively and precise?	• Ask a "test reader" to tell you where you need to provide clearer information. • For a dull, general word, find a richer and more vivid synonym.

Using a Six-Trait Rubric

A rubric like the one below can help you determine what you need to do to improve your draft. You can also use it to evaluate the work of your writing group partners. Each row focuses on a specific aspect of writing. Each column describes a different level of quality, with the highest quality traits labeled 4.

Ideas	**4** The main idea is clear. Plenty of details such as facts, examples, and anecdotes provide support.	**3** The main idea is clear. There is enough support for the main idea to back it up adequately.	**2** The main idea could be clearer. There are some supporting details, but more details would be helpful.	**1** The main idea statement is missing or unclear. Few examples and facts are provided in support.
Organization	**4** The organization is clear with abundant transitions.	**3** A few ideas seem out of place or transitions are missing.	**2** Many ideas seem out of place and transitions are missing.	**1** The organization is unclear and hard to follow.
Voice	**4** The voice sounds natural, engaging, and unique.	**3** The voice sounds natural and engaging.	**2** The voice sounds mostly natural but is weak.	**1** The voice sounds mostly unnatural and is weak.
Word Choice	**4** Words are specific, powerful, and appropriate to the task.	**3** Words are specific and language is appropriate.	**2** Some words are too general and/or misleading.	**1** Most words are overly general and imprecise.
Sentence Fluency	**4** Varied sentences flow smoothly.	**3** Most sentences are varied and flow smoothly.	**2** Some sentences are varied but some are choppy.	**1** Sentences are not varied and are choppy.
Conventions	**4** Punctuation, usage, and spelling are correct. The Power Rules are all followed.	**3** Punctuation, usage, and spelling are mainly correct and Power Rules are all followed.	**2** Some punctuation, usage, and spelling are incorrect but all Power Rules are followed.	**1** There are many errors and at least one failure to follow a Power Rule.

Using a Checklist

A checklist like the one below is another tool for improving a draft.

Evaluation Checklist for Revising

- ✓ Did you clearly state your main idea? (pages 19–20)
- ✓ Does your text have a strong introduction, body, and conclusion? (page 22)
- ✓ Did you support your main idea with enough details? (pages 19–21)
- ✓ Do your details show instead of merely telling what you want to say? (pages 19–21)
- ✓ Did you present your ideas in a logical order? (pages 20–21)
- ✓ Do any of your sentences stray from the main idea? (pages 21 and 27)
- ✓ Are your ideas clearly explained? (page 24)
- ✓ Are your words specific and precise? (pages 24 and 46)
- ✓ Are any words or ideas repeated unnecessarily? (pages 64–66)
- ✓ Are your sentences varied and smoothly connected? (pages 55–62)
- ✓ Is the purpose of your text clear? (pages 5–6 and 15–16)
- ✓ Is your writing suited to your audience? (pages 15–16)

Conferencing

You have been **conferencing,** meeting with others to share ideas or identify and solve problems, throughout the writing process. Conferencing is especially helpful during revising when weaknesses in the writing can be addressed. However, offering something that might sound like criticism isn't easy. Yet to help your writing group members, you need to be honest. Use the following for guidance in conferencing.

HERE'S HOW

Guidelines for Conferencing

Guidelines for the Writer

- List some questions for your peer. What aspects of your work most concern you?
- Try to be grateful for your critic's candor rather than being upset or defensive. Keep in mind that the criticism you are getting is well intended.

Guidelines for the Critic

- Read your partner's work carefully. What does the writer promise to do in this text? Does he or she succeed?
- Point out strengths as well as weaknesses. Start your comments by saying something positive like, "Your opening really captured my interest."
- Be specific. Refer to a specific word, sentence, or section when you comment.
- Be sensitive to your partner's feelings. Phrase your criticisms as questions. You might say, "Do you think your details might be stronger if....?"

Collaboration in Action

Revising

Chelsea's writing group has already discussed Joaquin's and Rakesh's drafts. They made notes on their papers about where they could make improvements based on their peers' feedback. Now it is Chelsea's turn to have her paper discussed.

Rakesh: Your ideas are really good. I agree about everything.

Joaquin: Me too. And you presented them in logical order.

Chelsea: Thanks.

Joaquin: One thing I noticed was the last sentence of the third paragraph. It seemed like the idea about keeping study halls quiet didn't quite fit in with your main idea.

Chelsea: Hmm, okay. I'll make a note of that. Maybe I'll cut that.

Joaquin: In your fourth paragraph, do you think you have two different ideas going? The crowded hallways and the competition.

Chelsea: Don't they both fit under the idea of a bigger number of students?

Rakesh: They do, yeah, but it seems your main idea for that paragraph talks about crowding. Maybe you could turn that paragraph into two paragraphs, one about the crowds and one about the competition.

Chelsea: Ok, I see.

Rakesh: I was just thinking maybe you could add more details about the crowded halls to fill out that paragraph.

Joaquin: Yeah, like sights and sounds and even smells.

Chelsea: Yeah, I see how I could do that.

Collaboration Practice

Choose a paper you are working on or have completed previously and make two copies, one for each member of your group. Conference with one another to improve your drafts. Use the rubric on page 25 as a guide. Then try the revision strategies on page 24 to make the changes suggested by your peers.

Using Feedback from Your Teacher

Your teacher is a member of the community of writers and both a collaborator and mentor. He or she is probably with you for each stage of the writing process. The chart shows different ways your teacher can provide feedback and how you can use that feedback to improve your writing.

TEACHER FEEDBACK	HOW TO USE FEEDBACK
During prewriting your teacher might • meet briefly with you to discuss and approve your topic • suggest ways you might gather information and other supporting materials • comment on your organization	**You can use this feedback to improve your work by** • rethinking if necessary to come up with a sharply focused topic • following the suggestions with an open mind • experimenting with different organizational patterns
During drafting your teacher might • move from desk to desk to offer suggestions on your process of drafting (for example, continually going back and rereading what you've written) • offer suggestions or concerns about a direction your draft seems to be taking	**You can use this feedback to improve your work by** • trying out the suggestions, even if they are uncomfortable at first • saving your work and then coming back to it with a fresh eye to try to see the concerns your teacher raised • asking questions if you don't understand the concerns your teacher has
During revising your teacher might • meet with you to go over some issues face to face • make written comments on your work about ideas, organization, and flow	**You can use this feedback to improve your work by** • making a good effort to change the things you discussed • using the comments as positive guides rather than negative criticisms
During editing your teacher might • identify errors • offer mini-lessons on challenging points	**You can use this feedback to improve your work by** • making corrections and adding items to your personalized checklist
During publishing your teacher might • give you presentation ideas • help you reach your audience	**You can use this feedback to improve your work by** • gaining confidence in sharing your work with readers and being willing to take risks

5 Editing and Publishing

Editing for Wordiness: Editing Star

The Environmental Protection Agency works with makers of consumer products to ensure "energy star" efficiency. Products marked with an energy star are proven to get the same results as others like them but with less power. The less power needed to get the job done, the more energy-efficient the product is.

Word power, like other kinds of power, needs to be used efficiently. The fewer words needed to get the job done, the more energy-efficient the writing. Notice how much stronger the efficient version is.

Word Guzzler Due to the fact that it was my birthday, I decided to treat myself and give myself the gift of seeing two movies in a row, one after the other.

Fuel Efficient On my birthday I treated myself to two movies in a row.



Throughout the composition chapters in this book, you will see the language arts version of the energy star logo: the editing star. It will accompany a brief activity which can remind you to cut out wordiness.

Using a General Editing Checklist

The best way to use a checklist is to go over your paper several times, each time looking for a different kind of problem. For instance, you might look for spelling errors in one reading and comma errors in the next. You might also want to read your essay backward, word by word. You will find that you are able to spot many errors that you might otherwise miss. The following checklist will help you guard against some common errors.

Editing Checklist

- ✓ Are your sentences free of errors in grammar and usage?
- ✓ Did you spell each word correctly?
- ✓ Did you use capital letters where needed?
- ✓ Did you punctuate each sentence correctly?
- ✓ Did you indent paragraphs as needed and leave proper margins on each side of the paper?

Using a Manual of Style

As you edit, you may wish to consult one of the following style guides or handbooks to review rules for grammar, usage, and mechanics.

- *The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers.* 15th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.* 7th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009.
- Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.* 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Creating a Personalized Editing Checklist

You may want to reserve an eight-page section at the end of your journal to use as a Personalized Editing Checklist. Here you can record errors that you seem to make over and over. Write one of the following headings on every other page: Grammar, Usage, Spelling, and Mechanics (capitalization and punctuation). Use these pages to record your errors. See the index in this book to find the pages on which each problem is addressed. Write the page numbers in your journal next to the error, with examples of the corrected problem. Add to this checklist and refer to it when you edit your work.

Proofreading

Proofreading means carefully rereading your work and marking corrections in grammar, usage, spelling, and mechanics. Following are useful techniques.

HERE'S HOW

Proofreading Techniques

- Focus on one line at a time.
- Exchange essays with a partner and check each other's work.
- Read your essay backward, word by word.
- Read your essay aloud, very slowly.
- Use a dictionary for spelling and a handbook for grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Here's how Chelsea used proofreading symbols to edit a portion of her revised draft.

One ~~difference~~ I notice ~~write~~ right away is the courses I am taking which are definately more avanced. In middle school for example I took courses called science and ~~and~~ math. In highschool I take Biology in stead of science and Algebra instead of math. High school offers also more subjects than middle

school, including foreign languages. I find that all the new courses make the subjects more interesting.

Publishing

Following are just a few ways you could share your writing.

HERE'S HOW

Publishing Options

In School

- Read your work aloud to a small group in your class.
- Display your final draft on a bulletin board in your classroom or school library.
- Read your work aloud to your class or present it in the form of a radio program or video.
- Create a class library and media center to which you submit your work. This library and media center should have a collection of folders or files devoted to different types of student writing and media presentations.
- Create a class anthology to which every student contributes one piece. Use electronic technology to design a small publication. Share your anthology with other classes.
- Submit your work to your school literary magazine, newspaper, or yearbook.

Outside School

- Submit your written work to a newspaper or magazine.
- Share your work with a professional interested in the subject.
- Present your work to an appropriate community group.
- Send a video based on your written work to a local cable television station.
- Create and broadcast a podcast.
- Post your work on your blog or social networking site.
- Enter your work in a local, state, or national writing contest.



Using Standard Manuscript Form The appearance of your text may be almost as important as its content. A marked-up paper with inconsistent margins is difficult to read. A neat, legible paper, however, makes a positive impression on your reader. The section of this book called *Electronic Publishing* on pages 473–487 offers tips for presenting texts effectively.

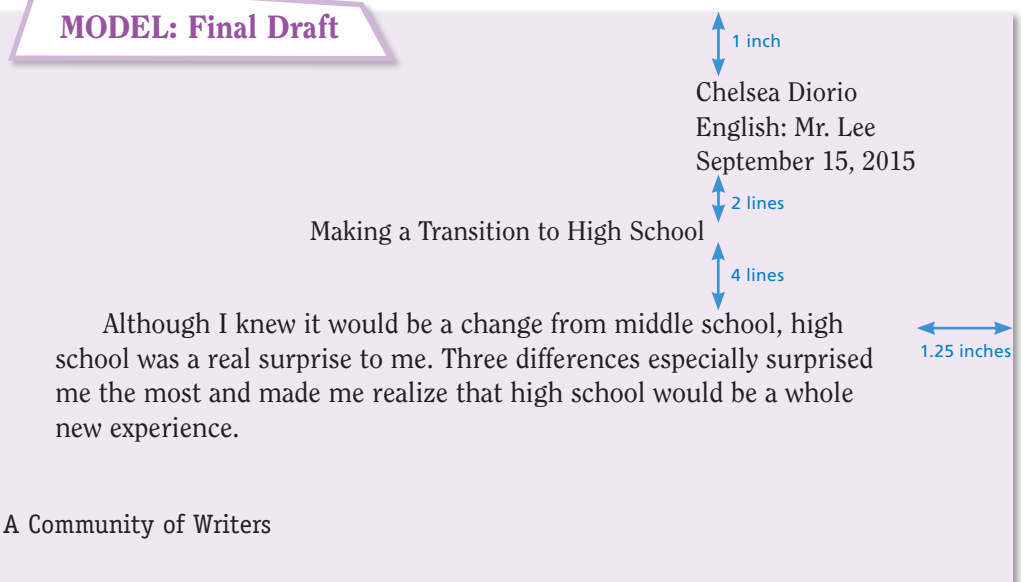
Many compositions will use standard manuscript form. The model on pages 32–33 shows how the writer used the following guidelines to prepare her final draft on the differences between middle school and high school.

HERE'S HOW

Standard Manuscript Form

- Use standard-sized 8½-by-11-inch white paper. Use one side of the paper only.
- If handwriting, use black or blue ink. If using a word-processing program or typing, use a black ink cartridge or black typewriter ribbon and double-space the lines.
- Leave a 1.25-inch margin at the left and right. The left margin must be even. The right margin should be as even as possible.
- Put your name, the course title, the name of your teacher, and the date in the upper right-hand corner of the first page. Follow your teacher's specific guidelines for headings and margins.
- Center the title of your essay two lines below the date. Do not underline or put quotation marks around your title.
- If using a word-processing program or typing, skip four lines between the title and the first paragraph. If handwriting, skip two lines.
- If using a word-processing program, indent the first line of each paragraph five spaces. If handwriting, indent the first line of each paragraph 1 inch.
- Leave a 1-inch margin at the bottom of all pages.
- Starting on page 2, number each page in the upper right-hand corner. Begin the first line 1 inch from the top. Word-processing programs allow you to insert page numbers.

MODEL: Final Draft



One difference I noticed right away is the courses I am taking, which are definitely more advanced. In middle school, for example, I took courses called science and math, while in high school I take biology instead of science and algebra instead of math. High school also offers more subjects than middle school, including foreign languages. I find that all the new courses make the subjects more interesting.

Another surprise was the amount of homework. I find I have twice as much homework in high school. In middle school I spent about an hour every weeknight doing homework, but now I spend about two hours a day, sometimes even on weekends. Longer study hall periods, however, help me to get some of my homework done during school hours. Although the homework takes longer and is harder than before, I usually feel like I'm accomplishing things.

1.25 inches

When I discovered I was having trouble concentrating in study hall, I realized how much more crowded high school is compared to middle school. The halls are jammed with students, many of whom I don't even know. It can be overwhelming.

With so many students, high school has a more competitive atmosphere than middle school. Many kids are trying out for the same spots on sport teams, for example. The added competition does have a positive side, however. It keeps me sharp.

I'm getting used to the idea that high school is a whole new experience. Although the differences between middle school and high school unsettled me at first, I find they all have a strong plus side. The changes, such as the different courses, more homework, and a bigger crowd, become less surprising every day.

1 inch



Keeping a Writer's Portfolio

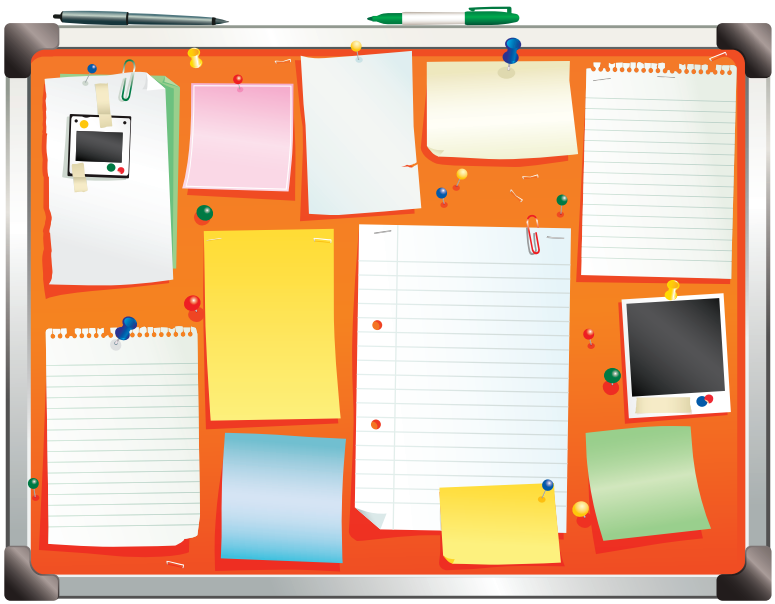
In addition to publishing your work for others to read, you might want to keep a **portfolio**—a collection of your work that represents various types of writing and your progress in them. The following guidelines will help you make the most of your portfolio.

HERE'S HOW

Guidelines for Including Work in Your Portfolio

- Date each piece of writing so that you can see where it fits into your progress.
- Write a brief note to yourself about why you included each piece—what you believe it shows about you as a writer.
- Include unfinished works if they demonstrate something meaningful about you as a writer.

On occasion, you will be asked to take "Time Out to Reflect." Use your written reflections to think about what you have learned, what you want to learn, and how you can continue to grow as a writer.



TIME OUT TO REFLECT

After working through the five stages of the writing process, ask yourself how closely this process matches your previous experiences as a writer. What might account for any differences between the writing process as described in this chapter and the writing process as you have previously experienced it? How did the experience of working with your peers affect your writing?

Timed Writing: On Your Own

There are times in school, such as during testing, when you will not be able to benefit from collaboration. The more you collaborate when you can, however, the less alone you will feel in those situations. You will no doubt be able to remember things your writing partners have said during your group meetings and then use them in your solo writing as well. For example, you might catch yourself writing a word or phrase that your group members thought was overused and too general. Or you might remember that time after time, your group members reminded you to use transitions to connect ideas. Use these memories to help you do your very best on timed writing tasks.

The following chart shows the stages of a timed writing experience. In each, imagine what your writing partners would be saying to help you.

HERE'S HOW

Working Through Timed Writing Tasks

- Begin by understanding the task. Read the prompt carefully. Identify the key words in the directions: they will tell you what kind of writing to produce. Ask yourself what your audience—the examiners—will be looking for and try to provide it.
- Think about the time you have for the test and make a budget. Leave the most time for drafting, but build in time for planning and revising as well.
- Plan your writing by jotting down ideas, making lists, or using any other format that helps you (such as a cluster diagram). When you have good ideas to work with, arrange them in a logical order.
- Think through how to begin your writing. Begin drafting when you know what your main idea will be and you have ideas for introducing it.
- Use your notes to draft the body of your work. Be sure to use transitions.
- Remember what you have learned about strong conclusions and write a good ending to your work.
- Read over your work. If something seems confusing or out of place, fix it.
- Even though you are under time pressure, take the time to "step it up" and make your writing the best it can be. Look for places where such rhetorical devices as metaphors, similes, and analogies can add subtle meaning to your message.
- Check your work for errors in grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling. Try to remember the mistakes you have made in the past so that you can avoid them.

Like everything else, writing under time pressure gets easier with practice. Each composition chapter in this book ends with a timed writing activity that you can use to practice.

You can learn more about preparing for timed writing experiences on pages 420–421.

CHAPTER 2

Developing Style and Voice

Your writing style is the distinctive way you express yourself through the words you choose and the way you shape your sentences.

As you develop your own personal writing style, you will also develop a voice that comes through in your writing. (See page 6.) Just as you can make choices to create a style, you can choose the appropriate voice for your purpose and audience.

> **Voice** is the quality in writing that makes it sound as if there is a real and unique person behind the words, a verbal fingerprint.

Writing Project Memoir

A Lifeline ***Develop your unique style and voice by writing a memoir about a situation in which someone threw you a lifeline.***

Think Through Writing A lifeline is a floatation device attached to a long rope that can be thrown to a drowning swimmer, who can then be pulled to safety. More generally, "lifeline" refers to any help offered to someone in dire need. Think of a situation in which someone "threw you a lifeline"—that is, offered you help when you thought all was lost. Describe what you were struggling with, the person who "saved" you, the kind of lifeline this person threw you, and how you responded to the help. For now, just try to get your thoughts on paper without worrying too much about your spelling, grammar, and other features of writing that you can fix up later.

Talk About It In a group of three to five students, discuss the situations you have each written about. Discuss the sorts of situations that call for lifelines, the kinds of people who throw them, and the changes that a lifeline makes in a person's life. Share your conclusions with the rest of the class.

Read About It In the following passage, Maya Angelou writes about "the lady who threw me my first lifeline." Read it and think about your own situation in light of hers.

MODEL: Memoir

From

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Maya Angelou

For nearly a year, I sopped around the house, the Store, the school and the church, like an old biscuit, dirty and inedible. Then I met, or rather got to know, the lady who threw me my first lifeline.

The comparison of Angelou with "an old biscuit, dirty and inedible," is startling and grabs the reader's attention.

Mrs. Bertha Flowers was the aristocrat of Black Stamps. She had the grace of control to appear warm in the coldest weather, and on the Arkansas summer days it seemed she had a private breeze which swirled around, cooling her. She was thin without the taut look of wiry people, and her printed voile dresses and flowered hats were as right for her as denim overalls for a farmer. She was our side's answer to the richest white woman in town.

Specific words make Mrs. Flowers easy to picture.

Expressions such as "our side's" make clear that Angelou is an African American in a community sharply divided by race. Part of her voice is her pride in being an African American.

Her skin was a rich black that would have peeled like a plum if snagged, but then no one would have thought of getting close enough to Mrs. Flowers to ruffle her dress, let alone snag her skin. She didn't encourage familiarity. She wore gloves too.

I don't think I ever saw Mrs. Flowers laugh, but she smiled often. A slow widening of her thin black lips to show even, small white teeth, then the slow effortless closing. When she chose to smile on me, I always wanted to thank her. The action was so graceful and inclusively benign.

She was one of the few gentlewomen I have ever known, and has remained throughout my life the measure of what a human being can be . . . .

One summer afternoon, sweet-milk fresh in my memory, she stopped at the Store to buy provisions. Another Negro woman of her health and age would have been expected to carry the paper sacks home in one hand, but Momma said, "Sister Flowers, I'll send Bailey up to your house with these things."

What effect does the phrase "sweet-milk fresh in my memory" have on the reader's expectation of what is to come?

She smiled that slow dragging smile, "Thank you, Mrs. Henderson. I'd prefer Marguerite,[1] though."

Describing a smile as "dragging" is unusual and fresh.

1 **Marguerite:** Maya Angelou was named Marguerite Johnson at birth.

My name was beautiful when she said it. "I've been meaning to talk to her, anyway." . . .

She said, without turning her head, to me, "I hear you're doing very good school work, Marguerite, but that it's all written. The teachers report that they have trouble getting you to talk in class." We passed the triangular farm on our left and the path widened to allow us to walk together. I hung back in the separate unasked and unanswerable questions.

"Come and walk along with me, Marguerite."
I couldn't have refused even if I wanted to. She pronounced my name so nicely. Or more correctly, she spoke each word with such clarity that I was certain a foreigner who didn't understand English could have understood her.

"Now no one is going to make you talk—possibly no one can. But bear in mind, language is man's way of communicating with his fellow man and it is language alone which separates him from the lower animals." That was a totally new idea to me, and I would need time to think about it.

"Your grandmother says you read a lot. Every chance you get. That's good, but not good enough. Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with the shades of deeper meaning."

I memorized the part about the human voice infusing words. It seemed so valid and poetic. She said she was going to give me some books and that I not only must read them, I must read them aloud. She suggested that I try to make a sentence sound in as many different ways as possible . . . .

The sweet scent of vanilla had met us as she opened the door.

Mouth-watering details make the reader feel right inside the scene.

"I made tea cookies this morning. You see, I had planned to invite you for cookies and lemonade so we could have this little chat. The lemonade is in the icebox." . . .

They were flat round wafers, slightly browned on the edges and butter-yellow in the center. With the cold lemonade they were sufficient for childhood's lifelong diet. Remembering my manners, I took nice little lady-like bites off the edges. She said she had made them

expressly for me and that she had a few in the kitchen that I could take home to my brother. So I jammed one whole cake in my mouth and the rough crumbs scratched the insides of my jaws, and if I hadn't had to swallow, it would have been a dream come true.

As I ate she began the first of what we later called "my lessons in living." She said that I must always be intolerant of ignorance but understanding of illiteracy. That some people, unable to go to school, were more educated and even more intelligent than college professors. She encouraged me to listen carefully to what country people called mother wit. That in those homely sayings was couched the collective wisdom of generations.

When I finished the cookies she brushed off the table and brought a thick, small book from the bookcase. I had read *A Tale of Two Cities*[2] and found it up to my standards as a romantic novel. She opened the first page and I heard poetry for the first time in my life.

"It was the best of times and the worst of times. . . ."[3] Her voice slid in and curved down through and over the words. She was nearly singing. I wanted to look at the pages. Were they the same that I had read? Or were there notes, music, lined on the pages, as in a hymn book? Her sounds began cascading gently. I knew from listening to a thousand preachers that she was nearing the end of her reading, and I hadn't really heard, heard to understand, a single word.

"How do you like that?"

It occurred to me that she expected a response. The sweet vanilla flavor was still on my tongue and her reading was a wonder in my ears. I had to speak.

I said, "Yes, ma'am." It was the least I could do, but it was the most also.

"There's one more thing. Take this book of poems and memorize one for me. Next time you pay me a visit, I want you to recite."

One rhetorical strategy that Angelou uses often is contrasting pairs of words or phrases. In this paragraph, the difference between "little lady-like bites" and "jammed one whole cake in my mouth" reflects her shifting relationship with Flowers.

2 **A Tale of Two Cities:** Novel by Charles Dickens.
3 **"It was . . . times":** First sentence of *A Tale of Two Cities.*

I have tried often to search behind the sophistication of years for the enchantment I so easily found in those gifts. The essence escapes but its aura remains. To be allowed, no, invited, into the private lives of strangers, and to share their joys and fears, was a chance to exchange the Southern bitter wormwood[4] for a cup of mead[5] with Beowulf[6] or a hot cup of tea and milk with Oliver Twist.[7] When I said aloud, "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done . . ."[8] tears of love filled my eyes at my selflessness.

Angelou draws contrast between the essence and the aura of a memory, and between being allowed and being invited. Like her earlier contrasts, these contribute to her voice, which is one of a careful observer.

On that first day, I ran down the hill and into the road (few cars ever came along it) and had the good sense to stop running before I reached the Store.

I was liked, and what a difference it made. I was respected not as Mrs. Henderson's grandchild or Bailey's sister but for just being Marguerite Johnson.

Childhood's logic never asks to be proved (all conclusions are absolute). I didn't question why Mrs. Flowers had singled me out for attention, nor did it occur to me that Momma might have asked her to give me a little talking to. All I cared about was that she had made tea cookies for me and read to me from her favorite book. It was enough to prove that she liked me.

4 **wormwood:** Something bitter.
5 **mead:** Drink of the Middle Ages made from honey.
6 **Beowulf:** Hero of an Old English epic poem.
7 **Oliver Twist:** Hero of a novel by Charles Dickens.
8 **"It is. . . done":** Line in *A Tale of Two Cities,* spoken by a character who dies so that another may live.

Respond in Writing In your journal, write about the language that Maya Angelou uses in her autobiography. What sort of voice does she have? In other words, what in her method of personal expression makes her unique as a writer? Identify words, phrases, point of view, and any other techniques or personal qualities that stand out when you read her writing.

Develop Your Own Criteria Work with your classmates to develop an understanding of Maya Angelou's writing techniques and the qualities that make her a unique writer.

Small Groups: In your writing group, share the insights from your journal writing. Discuss each person's assessment of Angelou's voice and compile a list of traits that distinguish her as a unique writer.

Whole Class: Report your list to the class. One student should serve as the class recorder, using the board or a projection screen to characterize Angelou's writing voice. When all lists have been reported and recorded, evaluate Angelou's writing style. Do you like it, dislike it, or have mixed feelings about it? Would you want your own writing to take on the qualities that distinguish hers? What can you learn from studying another writer's methods, techniques, and style?

Write About It You will next write about a situation in which someone threw you a lifeline, with attention to how you present your memoir in a unique voice. You might, for instance, produce writing of the sort described in the chart below.

Possible Topics	Possible Audiences	Possible Forms
• a time when you felt nobody cared about you, and someone demonstrated caring toward you • a time when you lacked an essential resource, and someone provided it for you • a time when you needed knowledge or help in performing properly, and someone reached out to share it with you • a time when you did not realize that you lacked something, and someone pointed out what was missing and helped you acquire it	• readers of your social networking Web site • the person who threw you the lifeline • admirers of the person who helped you • readers of your life story	• a text designed to help other young people stay hopeful when times are bad • a letter of thanks • a Web page commemorating this person's life and achievements • a chapter in your memoir or autobiography

Understanding the Varieties of English

1 American Dialects

As you explore and develop your style, you have a very rich language on which to draw. The English language has more than a million words. People in different English-speaking countries and even different regions of the same country often have their own way of pronouncing certain words. In the United States, for example, New Englanders are said to speak with a twang and Southerners with a drawl. The different ways of speaking the same language are called **dialects.** Dialects find their way into writing and help shape voice and style.

American English varies among three main regional dialects: Eastern, Southern, and General American. Each of these dialects contains many subdialects. For instance, the Southern dialect includes distinctive subdialects spoken in Texas and Louisiana.

Dialects can be different from one another in vocabulary, pronunciation, and even grammar. In Columbus, Ohio, for instance, a green pepper may be called a mango, and in parts of New York City, many local residents pronounce *birds* as *boids.* Although dialects vary across the country, none is so different that one group cannot understand another. In fact, dialects add color and richness to American English.

PROJECT PREP *Analyzing* ***Identifying Dialects***

With a small group, discuss the dialect that is spoken in your region of the country. Brainstorm examples of the vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar that characterize the dialect. For example, do speakers of the dialect say *sofa, lounge, davenport, couch,* or *settee?* Do they say *soda, pop,* or *tonic*? Is the dialect influenced by another language, such as Spanish? Make a chart, index, or dictionary of words to introduce your regional dialect to people from other parts of the country.



2 Standard American English

Dialects have appropriate uses in informal conversation and in creative writing. In a formal speech or informative writing, however, you should use standard English, or mainstream English (see page 8). **Standard English** is the formal English taught in school and used in newspapers, scholarly works, and many books.

Writing Tip

Use **standard English** when writing for school and for a large general audience.

Practice Your Skills

Comparing Dialects with Standard English

After you have developed a list of examples of the dialect, compare and contrast them with standard English. Make a T-chart, with the dialect words and phrases in one column and the standard English version in the other.

Practice Your Skills

Reviewing the Power Rules

Take another look at the Power Rules on pages 8–10. For each one, determine whether or not the dialect you naturally speak conforms to the rule or differs from it. Write a paragraph explaining the results of your analysis.

PROJECT PREP Analyzing *Identifying Voice*

Prepare a first draft of your writing project (see page 41 for ideas). In your writing groups, take turns reading a portion of your text aloud, and listen especially to phrasing. Does the speaker sound like you? If not, how can you use your analysis of your local dialect to help express yourself more naturally? For each writer in your group, make suggestions on how to revise the writing so the voice sounds natural, conversational, and unique. Then revise, incorporating the feedback.



3 Colloquialisms, Idioms, Slang, and Jargon

Besides dialect, another source of the richness of English is found in its colloquialisms, idioms, slang, and jargon. Because these types of expressions are informal, they are sometimes not appropriate in your writing.

Colloquialisms

A **colloquialism** is an informal phrase or colorful expression that is appropriate for conversation, but not for formal writing.

As soon as Dan and Luis met, **they hit it off.** (got along well together)

For dinner the Hendersons certainly **put out a spread.** (served a generous amount of food)

Idioms

An **idiom** is a special type of colloquialism. It is a phrase or expression of a given group of people that has a meaning different from the literal translation of the words. Idioms do not often make sense when taken literally, yet they are quite meaningful to most people who speak a particular language.

Elise was **beside herself with worry** (very concerned) because she had not heard from Barbara.

When Henry came home that night, **he looked like something the cat dragged in.** (didn't look very good)

Slang

Slang consists of English expressions that are developed and used by particular groups. Such expressions are highly colorful, exaggerated, and often humorous. Although most slang goes out of fashion quickly, a few slang expressions—such as those that follow—have become a permanent part of the language.

Simone earned ten **bucks** (dollars) by mowing the Henshaws' lawn.

Sitting and waiting for someone in an airport can be **a real drag.** (tiresome)

Jargon

Jargon is the specialized vocabulary that people within the same profession use to communicate precisely and efficiently with one another. Using jargon to communicate

with other experts, such as in an article for a scientific journal, is appropriate. However, using jargon to communicate with a general audience can cause a lack of understanding. The second sentence below would be much clearer to a general audience than the first sentence.

Jargon There is no locality similar to a structure that is used exclusively for a permanent residential domicile and/or noncommercial purpose.

Translation There is no place like home.

Practice Your Skills

Using Appropriate Standard English

Substitute words or phrases in standard English for the underlined colloquialisms, idioms, jargon, and slang expressions in the following sentences.

1. The gymnastics coach told Midori to go all out in her next routine.
2. It can be difficult and time-consuming to score a part-time summer job.
3. Maria asked her little brother to stop bugging her while she tried to read.
4. Julia would jump at the chance to work for the newspaper during the summer.
5. The library has tons of books, articles, and pamphlets on that topic.
6. Are you going to see them off at the train station tomorrow afternoon?

Writing Tip

Idioms, colloquialisms, slang, and **jargon** can make the style and voice of your fiction and poetry convincing and lively. They are not, however, appropriate for the formal writing you will do in school and at work.

PROJECT PREP Revising *Voice and Audience*

In your effort to sound more "natural," you also need to take into account the expectations of the writing situation. In your writing group, return to the writing that you focused on in the previous Project Prep. Discuss each writer's voice in relation to each writer's choice of audience and form or genre. Is the voice appropriate to the job of communicating effectively with these readers in this setting? If not, how would you modify the style to suit the situation? Make revisions as appropriate.

Choosing Vivid Words

To make writing shine, choose words and expressions that express what you mean specifically.

1 Specific Words

Specific words help readers visualize what they read and make a writer's style sparkle. Consider the following example, which describes the same item on a restaurant menu. The first example uses general words that leave only a vague impression. The second uses specific words that whet the appetite.

General Cooked meat covered with a good sauce, served with tasty potatoes and cooked fresh vegetables

Specific Barbecued spareribs smothered in a tangy sauce, served with sizzling French-fried potatoes and crisp steamed broccoli

General words may mean different things to different people, but specific words call specific images and feelings to mind. Compare the following general and specific words.

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC WORDS

	General	Specific	More Specific
Nouns	meat	pork	spareribs
	clothes	pants	blue jeans
Adjectives	uneasy	nervous	jittery
	thin	delicate	fragile
Verbs	went	walked	strolled
	saw	watched	examined
Adverbs	happily	gleefully	exuberantly
	soon	promptly	now

PROJECT PREP *Revising Specific Words*

In your writing group, read aloud a section of your work in progress. Are your nouns, verbs, and modifiers vivid and memorable? For each writer, make suggestions on how to make the language come alive in ways that are appropriate to the writer's voice, the readers, and the situation. Then revise that section, using fresh, specific words, including any from the second two columns of the chart above that may work.

2 Denotation and Connotation

All words convey a literal meaning, or **denotation,** the direct, specific meaning found in a dictionary. Many words, however, also stir up emotions or suggest associations; this is called **connotation.** The words *trip* and *vacation,* for example, have similar denotations; but *vacation* has an extra level of meaning. Its connotation brings many feelings to mind: freedom from the usual routine, fun, relaxation, different surroundings.

Understanding connotations is important when you write because some words have similar denotations but opposite connotations.

Positive Connotation	The city was **bustling** with people during the holiday.
Negative Connotation	The city was **mobbed** with people during the holiday.

In these examples the words *bustling* and *mobbed* both mean "filled." *Bustling,* however, suggests a positive feeling of energy and excitement, while *mobbed* suggests a negative feeling of overcrowding, noise, and restricted movement. A word's connotation helps to stir readers' emotions. You can convey subtle meanings by choosing words with connotations that evoke feeling.

Practice Your Skills

Using Connotation to Convey Subtle Meaning

Write the word in each of the following sentences that has the connotation given in brackets.

Example	Ellen is very (frank, blunt). [negative]
Answer	blunt

1. Every October the old maple (paints, litters) the lawn with its falling leaves. [positive]
2. The girl ran (courageously, recklessly) into the flaming barn to save her colt. [positive]
3. We walked at a (leisurely, sluggish) pace. [negative]
4. The rabbit (scrambled, scampered) across the lawn. [positive]
5. Facing his parents' concerned expressions, the boy gathered up his courage and (truthfully, factually) told how the window got broken. [positive]

Loaded Words

Subjective words that are interjected into a seemingly objective report of an event are **loaded words.** These words are meant to sway the audience emotionally one way or another without the audience's awareness. You can find loaded words in advertisements, in political campaigns, and on television. Writers use the connotations of loaded words to convey bias while trying to sound objective.

The writer of this news item is using loaded words to get across the point that he or she thinks the school committee is ineffectual; the writer's opinion has crept into the news story. Another writer may have seen the meeting differently.

Loaded Words

The school committee meeting got off to another slow start, with the committee members arguing among themselves. Finally the board settled down to review the budget for the proposed school annex. While the clock ticked, the committee still could not come to a decision.

Practice Your Skills

Using Connotation to Add Meaning

Identify the loaded words in the following version of the school committee report.

(1) Once again, the school committee members tackled the monumental task of sorting out the budget for the proposed school annex. (2) The ten members wrestled with the budget throughout the evening and adjourned, having made significant progress but not yet having brought the matter to a close.

PROJECT PREP Revising *Consistent Connotations*

In your writing group, read aloud a section of your writing and listen carefully. Are the connotations of the words you have chosen consistent? Do they convey the subtle meanings you intend? For instance, if you said, "The regal woman scurried over to greet me," you might be implying that the woman was like both a queen ("regal" refers to royalty) and a rat (often described as scurrying). Such conflicting connotations cause confusion in readers. Revise so that your use of connotation creates unified images of the people and situation you are describing.

3 Figurative Language

You can create vivid pictures in your readers' minds not only by using specific words and subtle shades of meaning that connotations provide, but also by using **figurative language.** The two most common types of figurative language are similes and metaphors.

Similes and Metaphors

These figures of speech stimulate the reader's imagination by expressing a similarity between two things that are essentially different.

Similes state a comparison by using the words *like* or *as*. **Metaphors,** in contrast, imply a comparison by simply saying that one thing is another.

Simile Her skin was a rich black that would have peeled **like a plum** if snagged. . . .

Metaphor To be allowed, no, invited, into the private lives of strangers, and to share their joys and fears, was **a chance to exchange the Southern bitter wormwood for a cup of mead with Beowulf or a hot cup of tea and milk with Oliver Twist.**

A woman's skin and the skin of a plum are different things, of course. Maya Angelou suggests that Mrs. Flowers had skin as plump and smooth, and as richly hued, as a plum. By evoking the image of a peeling plum, the author also conveys a sense of how vulnerable to harm that smooth skin might be.

A human life is not like a drink, but the metaphor suggests that to enter the private world of Mrs. Flowers and the literary England of the eighth and nineteenth centuries is sweet nourishment for Marguerite.

Practice Your Skills

Identifying Similes and Metaphors

Write simile or metaphor to identify each underlined figure of speech in the following sentences.

1. My brother's room <u>is a federal disaster area.</u>
2. With crashing cymbals and booming drums, the symphony <u>was like a thunderstorm.</u>
3. Good friends revolve around Keisha <u>as the planets revolve around the sun.</u>
4. Hope went through me <u>like a faint breeze over a lake.</u> —Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

5. The coach growled when his players quit too soon.
6. Her secret was as dark as her eyes.
7. Hermit crabs, like frantic children, scamper on the bottom sand. —John Steinbeck
8. All the strength went out of me, and I toppled forward like an undermined tower. —Mark Twain
9. Memories poured from every corner of the old house.
10. The black bat, night, has flown. —Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Practice Your Skills

Identifying Figurative Language

Identify the figurative language in the following passage.

Summer burned the canals dry. Summer moved like a flame upon the meadows. In the empty Earth settlement, the painted houses flaked and peeled. Rubber tires upon which children had swung in back yards hung suspended like stopped clock pendulums in the blazing air.

—Ray Bradbury, "Dark They Were and Golden Eyed"

Writing Tip

Create clear and vivid images by using **specific words, appropriate connotations,** and **figurative language.**

editing

Figurative language can help you write concise, vivid sentences. Notice how the long, wordy first passage is improved by use of a metaphor in the second. Rewrite the first passage using a different metaphor or simile.

He was a very important book critic in the literary world. He was a kind and supportive reviewer who would never intentionally want to harm or slow down any writer's career. Any slight criticism from him, though, could cause great damage to a writer's career.

He was the elephant among book critics: kindly, but with such power that he could cause great damage without meaning to.

Think Critically

Developing Vivid Comparisons

When you write a simile or a metaphor, you are using a thinking skill called comparing. When you **compare,** you tell how two things are similar. Thinking of a fresh comparison to use in a simile or metaphor, however, is sometimes difficult. The following chart illustrates a thinking strategy that will help you develop vivid comparisons.

QUALITIES OF A STRAWBERRY	THINGS WITH SIMILAR QUALITIES
plump	a marshmallow, a baby's cheek
juicy	a watermelon, an orange
red	a ruby, a clown's nose
rough	a cat's tongue; cornmeal

To create a comparison chart, first think about what you want to describe. Then make a list of its most important qualities. Next to each quality list some other things that have the same quality. Stretch your imagination and avoid overused comparisons like "red as a rose." Once you have a list of comparisons, you can select the best one for your simile or metaphor.

Simile Red, ripe strawberries gleamed under the shadowy leaves **like unmined rubies in a gem field.**

Thinking Practice

Use the thinking strategy described above to help you write a fresh simile or metaphor for each of the following items.

1. waves hitting rocks
2. a Ferris wheel at night
3. a stubbornly determined child going up stairs



Clichés

Some comparisons that were once clever and striking have become dull with overuse. Such worn-out expressions are called **clichés.** If you find yourself using a cliché, replace it with a fresh comparison or with specific words.

Cliché	make a mountain out of a molehill
Specific Words	exaggerate unnecessarily; needlessly make more difficult
Cliché	as cool as a cucumber
Specific Words	relaxed; nonchalant
Fresh Comparisons	as calm as a blind man in the dark; as self-possessed as a snail

Practice Your Skills

Revising to Eliminate Clichés

Revise the following personal narrative by replacing each underlined cliché with a fresh simile or metaphor or with specific words.

Everyone told me the tryouts for the school play would be (1) as easy as A, B, C, but by the time I was called to read my lines, I was (2) shaking like a leaf. Somehow I managed to (3) spit out my lines, but after I flubbed I had (4) to start from scratch. This time my voice was (5) as clear as a bell.

Tired Words and Euphemisms

Like a cliché, a **tired word** has been so overused that it has been drained of meaning. Take, for example, the word *awesome.* This word traditionally meant "inspiring a mixed emotion of reverence, respect, dread, and wonder inspired by authority, genius, great beauty, sublimity, or might." Now, through overuse, the word just means "good."

A **euphemism** is a vague word or phrase that substitutes for something considered blunt or offensive. Euphemisms are polite, inoffensive terms that are used to conceal an unpleasant fact. Following are common euphemisms you can find in your newspaper.

EUPHEMISM	TRANSLATION
peace-keeper	soldier
let go	fired
handyman special	run down house
preowned automobile	used car

Practice Your Skills

Tired Words and Euphemisms

Write the tired words and euphemisms in the following sentences. Then rewrite each sentence, using vivid, specific language.

1. Our trip to the city was really neat, and we had a great time.
2. The custodial engineer will mop the cafeteria floor after the meal is finished.
3. Tina's new video game has some awesome graphics.
4. Harold was walking on eggshells when he entered the class late.
5. The football game was an emotional roller coaster.

Writing Tip

Avoid **clichés** and **tired words** to keep your writing fresh and precise.

Use the following rubric to evaluate your word choice.

Word Choice Rubric

4 Words are specific and powerful, rich in sensory images.	3 Words are specific and some words appeal to the senses.	2 Some words are overly general and/or tired.	1 Most words are overly general and tired.
• I used Standard English if required. • I used Nonstandard English if appropriate. • I used words with connotations that match my intended meaning. • I used fresh, not tired words. • I used words that appeal to the senses.	• I was aware of differences between Standard and Nonstandard English and made reasonable choices. • My word choice conveyed my meaning. • I used fresh words often. • I made an effort to appeal to the senses but might have done more.	• I was not always aware of differences between Standard and Nonstandard English. • I still need to work on finding the best, most specific word. • I used a few tired expressions. • I appealed to only one or two senses.	• I was not aware of differences between Standard and Nonstandard English. • Few of my words were as specific and vivid as they need to be. • I used many tired expressions. • I didn't really appeal to the senses.

PROJECT PREP Revising *Figurative Language*

In your writing group, make suggestions to each writer for adding figurative language and eliminating worn out phrases or euphemisms. Using the rubric above, look for other ways to strengthen your word choice and make revisions accordingly.

In the Media

Newspapers

How do writers find ways to keep their stories lively and fresh? One way is to search for fresh synonyms for tired words. Another is to add powerful descriptive words. Here is an example from sports journalism.

The Chicago Bears were leading the Green Bay Packers in the first game since Bears legend Walter "Sweetness" Payton passed away. Green Bay was poised for a game-winning field goal. Here's how two *Chicago Tribune* writers described what happened.

> With a nod to Payton for the assist, [Bryan] Robinson capitalized on a low snap by the Packers and blocked what would have been a game-winning field goal by Ryan Longwell as time expired to preserve a 14–13 victory. . . .
>
> "I have just one word," said running back James Allen. "It's sweet. Sweetness."

> It will be Walter's Game forever now that the Bears have won it, the 159th rendering of pro football's most storied border war. This is, of course, absurd in any real, touchable sense. It was Bryan Robinson's and not Walter Payton's hand that blocked the dead-certain Packer field goal at the end. . . .
>
> Was it Payton who raised Robinson up to block that kick, the first blocked kick of Robinson's career?
>
> "Walter Payton picked me up in the air," insisted Robinson. "I can't jump that high."

There is some language that is the same in both pieces. *Field goal* and *blocked kick* mean something specific and cannot easily be replaced by synonyms. But there is plenty of variety for the many other actions and reactions that happen on the field.

Media Activity

Imagine you work at the rewrite desk of a newspaper. Rewrite the opening sentence of each story above. Keep the meaning the same, but rewrite using synonyms and fresh descriptions.

Creating Sentence Fluency and Variety

Good writing flows with the natural, varied rhythms of speech. As you read the passage below by Ernest Hemingway, notice how the varied rhythm of his sentences contributes to the pleasure of reading the paragraph.

MODEL: Sentence Variety

Before it was really light he had his baits out and was drifting with the current. One bait was down forty fathoms. The second was at seventy-five and the third and fourth were down in the blue water at one hundred and one hundred and twenty-five fathoms.

—Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea*

To appreciate how important rhythm is in writing, try reading a paragraph that consists only of a string of short sentences. Too many short sentences in a row make the writing choppy and difficult to read. When you revise your writing, you can improve the flow of short sentences by combining them to make longer, varied ones.

1 Combining Sentences with Phrases

One way to combine short sentences is to express some of the information in a phrase. The following examples show how to combine sentences using three kinds of phrases.

A. Handlers can usually train dogs. Training is in basic obedience. Training takes about eight weeks.

Handlers can usually train dogs **in basic obedience in about eight weeks.** (prepositional phrases)

B. Handlers and dogs work together. This strengthens the bond between pet and master.

Handlers and dogs work together, **strengthening the bond between pet and master.** (participial phrase)

C. A training collar helps the handler correct the dog. It is the handler's most important tool.

A training collar, **the handler's most important tool,** helps the handler correct the dog. (appositive phrase)

Practice Your Skills

Combining Sentences with Phrases

Using the examples on page 55, combine each pair of sentences. The letter in parentheses indicates which example to use. Remember to insert commas where needed.

1. W. Timothy Gallwey wrote a classic book. He wrote about becoming a winner. (A: prepositional phrase)
2. His book captured great attention. His book is *The Inner Game of Tennis.* (C: appositive phrase)
3. Gallwey identifies an "inner game." This is a game between the player's actions and his or her thoughts and feelings. (B: participial phrase)
4. The inner game influences the play between opponents. The inner game tests a player's confidence and powers of concentration. (B: participial phrase)
5. Playing the inner game well brings rewards. The rewards are in concentration. The rewards are in relaxation. The rewards are in success in the game. (A: prepositional phrase)
6. Each player plays two roles that determine his or her skill. These are the director and the doer. (C: appositive phrase)
7. The director is the inner player. The director gives the doer such instructions as, "OK, hit the next volley high." (B: participial phrase)
8. In good players the director and the doer interact. They interact in harmony. (A: prepositional phrase)
9. In weaker players, the doer can become frustrated. The doer tries too hard and fails. (B: participial phrase)
10. Mastering the inner game has value. The value is in life as well as in tennis. (A: prepositional phrase)

PROJECT PREP Drafting *Style and Voice*

Using the feedback from your writing group, write a whole new draft of your composition. Make an effort to apply each lesson to each section so that your style and voice have continuity throughout the text.

The Power of Language

Participial Phrases: Getting into the Action

Adding *–ing* modifiers to sentences can make your writing come alive. Try using them to describe a person, thing, or action. (See pages 526 and 621–622.) Look, for instance, at how Maya Angelou used *–ing* phrases.

At the Beginning of a Sentence

Remembering my manners, I took nice little lady-like bites off the edges.

At the End of a Sentence

She had the grace of control to appear warm in the coldest weather, and on the Arkansas summer days it seemed she had a private breeze which swirled around, **cooling her.**



You can pack even more action into a sentence by using an absolute phrase. One way to create an absolute phrase is to add a noun before an *-ing* phrase. Consider these two sentences.

We passed the triangular farm on our left. The path widened to allow us to walk together.

You can smooth out these sentences by combining them with an absolute phrase.

We passed the triangular farm on our left, **the path widening to allow us to walk together.**

Try It Yourself

Write one sentence with an *–ing* phrase at the beginning and another with the *–ing* phrase at the end. You may imitate the sentences above if you wish. Try to write sentences on the topic you have chosen for your project and incorporate them into your draft if you can. During revision, check to see where adding other *–ing* modifiers might be good.

Punctuation Tip

When you add "extra" details like this, making the writing more interesting, separate the *–ing* phrase from the main part of the sentence with a comma.

2 Combining Sentences by Coordinating

Another way to smooth out short, choppy sentences is to link ideas of equal importance with a coordinating conjunction.

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS						
and	but	for	nor	or	so	yet

The following sentences about dog training show how to combine sentences with coordinating conjunctions.

A. Kindness is important. Praise is important, too.

Kindness and **praise** are also important. (compound subject)

B. Soon your dog will heel on command. Soon your dog will sit on command.

Soon your dog **will heel** and **sit** on command. (compound verb)

C. The dog should be confined before each session. The place of confinement should be comfortable.

The dog should be confined before each session, but **the place of confinement should be comfortable.** (compound sentence)

Practice Your Skills

Combining Sentences by Coordinating

Combine each pair of sentences, using the model identified in parentheses following each pair. Add punctuation as needed.

1. F. M. Alexander, who lived in the 1800s, acted. He also gave speeches. (B: compound verb)
2. In the 1880s he suddenly lost his voice. His career ground to a halt. (C: compound sentence)
3. He visited doctors. None of them could help him. (C: compound sentence)
4. He had little choice but to help himself. He had no medical training. (C: compound sentence)
5. His head moved when he talked. His neck also moved. (A: compound subject)

PROJECT PREP *Revising* ***Peer Response***

Bring your new draft to your writing group. As you read one another's papers, focus on the degree to which you find a consistent style and voice and on the ways in which the author has constructed sentences. Make suggestions that you think would improve each writer's draft.

3 Combining Sentences by Subordinating

If the ideas in two short sentences are of unequal importance, you can combine them by subordinating. To subordinate, express the less important idea in an adjective clause that begins with a relative pronoun or in an adverb clause that begins with a subordinating conjunction. The pronouns and conjunctions below are often used to begin clauses.

FOR ADJECTIVE CLAUSES Relative Pronouns			FOR ADVERB CLAUSES Subordinating Conjunctions		
who	which	whose	after	because	unless
whom	that		although	whenever	until

The following sentences show how to combine sentences by subordinating.

A. Mother dogs use a barking sound to get their pups to obey. The barking sound resembles the word *out*.

Mother dogs use a barking sound, **which resembles the word *out,*** to get their pups to obey. (adjective clause)

B. Handlers can also use this sound. Dogs have a long memory of their mothers' stern corrections.

Handlers can also use this sound **because dogs have a long memory of their mothers' stern corrections.** (adverb clause)

Practice Your Skills

Combining Sentences by Coordinating and Subordinating

Use the method in brackets to combine the sentences. Add needed punctuation.

(1) We wanted to do something different on our vacation. We chose backpacking in the wilderness. (compound sentence) (2) We walked the entire distance. We had packs on our backs. (prepositional phrases) (3) At one point we came to a lookout tower. It was in good condition. (adjective clause) (4) I climbed the tower. I strapped my camera around my neck. (participial phrase) (5) Fog had covered the valley. I could barely see the river below. (compound sentence) (6) A footpath followed the river. An old railroad track followed the river. (compound subject) (7) That foggy view has stayed in my memory to this day. It was a highlight of the vacation. (appositive phrase)

PROJECT PREP *Revising* ***Using Feedback***

Use feedback from your writing group as you write a new draft of your text.

4 Varying Sentence Beginnings

The most natural way to begin a sentence is with the subject. If too many sentences begin in the same way, however, even a gripping story will sound dull. Look at how Hal Borland varied the beginnings of sentences in his novel *When the Legends Die:*

Subject **The boy** caught trout in the pool and watched for his friend, the bear.

Adverb **Reluctantly** the boy fastened the collar on the bear cub.

Phrase **For days** he watched them. (prepositional phrase)
Driving with one hand, he headed for home. (participial phrase)

Clause **If he rode the horse with its own rhythm,** he could ride every horse in the herd. (adverb clause)

As you revise, vary the rhythm of your writing by starting sentences in different ways.

Practice Your Skills

Varying Sentence Beginnings

Vary the beginning of each of the following sentences by using the openers suggested in parentheses.

1. The universe, stretching endlessly beyond the reaches of our imagination, holds many mysteries. (participial phrase)
2. There are 100 billion stars in just our own galaxy, the Milky Way. (prepositional phrase and appositive phrase)
3. However, only the nearest and brightest stars are visible when we gaze into the vast sea of stars. (adverb clause)
4. We can see fewer than 3,000 stars on a clear night. (prepositional phrase)
5. The Milky Way would look like a giant fried egg if we could look down on it. (adverb clause)
6. Our galaxy, bulging in the middle, spans 10,000 light-years at the center. (participial phrase)



PROJECT PREP *Revising* *Fluency*

Reread your draft, looking for opportunities to combine short sentences into longer ones to improve the flow. Make revisions accordingly.

5 Varying Sentence Structure

Another way to achieve a natural rhythm in your writing is to vary the sentence structure. In the following example, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings describes a stay near an orphanage using a variety of sentence structures to create a flowing rhythm.

Complex

Complex

At daylight I was half wakened by the sound of chopping. Again it was so even in texture that I went back to sleep. When I left my bed in the cool morning, the boy had come and gone, and a stack of kindling was neat against the cabin wall. He came again after school in the afternoon and worked until it was time to return to the orphanage. His name was Jerry; he was twelve years old, and he had been at the orphanage since he was four.

—Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, "A Mother in Manville"

Simple

Compound-Complex

Compound-Complex

Practice Your Skills

Revising for Sentence Variety

Revise the following paragraph, combining the sentences according to the structure indicated in parentheses. Use commas where needed.

Handwriting Analysis

(1) Handwriting analysis is not an exact science. Police often seek the opinion of a handwriting expert in cases of forgery. (complex) (2) The handwriting in question is placed under a microscope. A known piece of handwriting is placed beside it. (compound) (3) The handwriting expert analyzes the two samples. The expert does this by comparing significant details. These details include the dots above *i*'s, the crosses through *t*'s, the angle of the pen, and the beginnings and ends of pen strokes. (simple) (4) Experts sometimes contradict each other's analyses. Many people doubt the reliability of handwriting analysis. (complex) (5) Doubts persist. Courts allow handwriting experts to testify. Juries are often persuaded by the testimony of these experts. (compound-complex)

Writing Tip

Create sentence rhythm by varying **the beginning, length, and structure** of your sentences.

The Language of Power *Fragments*

Power Rule: Use sentence fragments only the way professional writers do, after the sentence they refer to and usually to emphasize a point. Fix all sentence fragments that occur before the sentence they refer to and ones that occur in the middle of a sentence. (See pages 666–671.)

See It in Action In the passage below from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,* Angelou begins with a compound sentence. What follows that is a sentence fragment, since it has no verb.

> I don't think I ever saw Mrs. Flowers laugh, but she smiled often. A slow widening of her thin black lips to show even, small white teeth, then the slow effortless closing.

To avoid a sentence fragment, Angelou could have used a comma instead of a period after the first sentence. A period, though, forces the reader to slow down, and that slowing down emphasizes the "slow widening" and "slow effortless closing."

In writing for school or the workplace, avoid sentence fragments. If you do use them in creative or expressive writing, be sure you use them effectively and for a reason.

Remember It Record this rule and example in the Power Rule section of your Personalized Editing Checklist.

Use It Read your text aloud, noting where your voice pauses and stops. When it stops, is it always after a complete sentence? If not, revise to eliminate the fragment.

PROJECT PREP Revising *Peer Revising*

Exchange papers with another student and help each other recognize opportunities to combine adjacent short sentences into longer ones. Also watch for places to correct sentence fragments by combining them with adjacent complete sentences.

Writing Concise Sentences

1 Rambling Sentences

A sentence that rambles on too long is dull and hard to understand. In the following description, too many ideas are strung together in one sentence.

Rambling The buzz saw screams as you watch the tree come up the conveyor belt, and as the tree hits the saw, chips fly left and right, and when it reaches the end of the saw, the log folds over into two slabs.

When you revise, eliminate rambling sentences by separating the ideas into a variety of short and long sentences.

Revised The buzz saw screams as you watch the tree come up the conveyor belt. As the tree hits the saw, chips fly left and right. When it reaches the end of the saw, the log folds over into two slabs.

Practice Your Skills

Revising Rambling Sentences

Revise the following paragraph by breaking up the rambling sentence. Use capital letters and punctuation where needed.

Winchester House

Winchester House is the name of a huge, rambling mansion in San José, California, that was built by Sarah Winchester, who was heir to the Winchester fortune and who believed that she would go on living as long as she was adding to the house, which has 160 rooms, 200 doors, and 47 fireplaces.

PROJECT PREP Editing ***Rambling Sentences***

Exchange papers with a partner. Look over each other's writing for rambling sentences. If you find any, make suggestions for how your partner can break up the rambling sentence into separate sentences that flow smoothly.

2 Unnecessary Words

Redundancy

Unnecessary repetition is called **redundancy.** In a redundant sentence, the same idea is expressed more than once with no new or different shades of meaning.

Redundant	The **hungry** wolf ate **ravenously.**
Concise	The wolf ate **ravenously.**
Redundant	The **hot, steamy** asphalt shimmered.
Concise	The **steamy** asphalt shimmered.

Practice Your Skills

Revising to Eliminate Redundancy

Revise each of the following sentences by eliminating the redundancy:

1. Do you have a spare pencil that you are not using?
2. Friday is the final deadline for the report.
3. Each and every member of the class must help.
4. Can you keep this secret confidential?

Wordiness

The use of words and expressions that add nothing to the meaning of a sentence is called **wordiness.** Like redundancy, wordiness is tiresome and distracting to a reader.

Empty Expressions One way to avoid wordiness is to rid your sentences of empty expressions. Notice how the revisions for conciseness improve the following sentences.

Wordy	I can't go out **due to the fact that** I have my guitar lesson tonight.
Concise	I can't go out **because** I have my guitar lesson tonight.
Wordy	**There are** dozens of games **that** resemble checkers.
Concise	Dozens of games resemble checkers.

EMPTY EXPRESSIONS

what I want is	in my opinion	the thing that	due to the fact that
the thing/fact is	the reason that	on account of	there is/are/was/were
It is/was	it seems as if	what I mean is	I believe/feel/think that

Practice Your Skills

Eliminating Empty Expressions

Revise each sentence by eliminating or replacing the empty expressions.

1. We canceled the game due to the fact that it rained.
2. The reason that I called is to ask if you need help.
3. Because of the fact that he was sick, his report is late.
4. The thing that I really hate is getting up early.
5. There are some places in the river that are dangerous.

Wordy Phrases and Clauses Another way to avoid wordiness is to shorten wordy phrases and clauses. In many cases a phrase can be reduced to a single word.

Wordy	Archaeologists found ancient tools **made of stone.** (participial phrase)
Concise	Archaeologists found ancient **stone** tools. (adjective)
Wordy	Elana spoke to the shy horse **in a gentle tone.** (prepositional phrase)
Concise	Elana spoke **gently** to the shy horse. (adverb)
Wordy	**To be tardy** is often a sign of laziness. (infinitive phrase)
Concise	**Tardiness** is often a sign of laziness. (noun)

Similarly, a clause can be reduced to a phrase or even to a single word.

Wordy	People **who are in show business** lead a hectic life of rehearsals and performances. (clause)
Concise	People **in show business** lead a hectic life of rehearsals and performances. (prepositional phrase)
Wordy	In Yosemite, **which is a national park in California,** cars are forbidden past a certain point. (clause)
Concise	In Yosemite, **a national park in California,** cars are forbidden past a certain point. (appositive phrase)
Wordy	Climates **that are dry** are good for people with allergy problems. (clause)
Concise	**Dry** climates are good for people with allergy problems. (adjective)

Practice Your Skills

Revising Wordy Phrases and Clauses

Revise each of the following sentences by shortening the underlined wordy phrase or clause.

1. Misha likes chicken <u>cooked with barbecue sauce</u>.
2. Students <u>who are trying out for band</u> should come to school on Saturday morning.
3. An exchange student <u>who came to our neighborhood from France</u> lives with our neighbors.
4. Tamara, <u>who is an accident victim</u>, competed in the marathon in a wheelchair.
5. Games <u>that are in good condition</u> will be accepted for the charity drive.

Writing Tip

Create **concise** sentences by expressing your meaning in as few words as possible.

Practice Your Skills

Applying Revision Techniques

Revise the following paragraph to eliminate the problems indicated in parentheses.

(1) Some people do not like going into skyscrapers. Being so high up makes them feel sick as a dog. (cliché, short and choppy sentences) (2) The fact is that acrophobiacs, who are people with a fear of heights, may even suddenly lose their balance and fall. (empty expression, wordy clause) (3) The tallest skyscrapers are the most frightening, since the top of one of these buildings can sway as much as three feet in the wind, and on a windy day, people who are riding in the elevator can hear it hitting the sides of the shaft. (rambling sentence, wordy clause) (4) Because of the fact that skyscrapers sway and move, some people feel airsick when they are on the upper floors. (empty expression, redundancy)

PROJECT PREP Revising *Concise Sentences*

In your writing group, point out any unnecessary words, phrases, and clauses in your partners' work. Then revise your composition to eliminate extraneous words, phrases, clauses, and ideas.

Using a Sentence Fluency Rubric

Evaluate your sentence fluency with the following rubric.

4 Sentences are varied in length and structure. Every sentence matters.	3 Sentences are mostly varied in length and structure. A few words and sentences seem unnecessary.	2 Many sentences are the same in length and structure. A number of words and sentences seem unnecessary.	1 Most sentences are the same in length and structure. A number of words and sentences seem unnecessary.
• I combined short, choppy sentences into varied, longer ones. • I used coordinating and subordinating conjunctions to improve the flow and show the relationship of ideas. • I started my sentences in a variety of ways, not always with the subject first. • I avoided rambling sentences.	• I combined some short, choppy sentences into varied, longer ones, but in a few places there is still some choppiness. • I sometimes used coordinating and subordinating conjunctions to improve the flow and show the relationship of ideas. • I started most of my sentences in a variety of ways, not always with the subject first. • I avoided rambling sentences.	• A few parts of my work flow, but there is still choppiness. • I used a few conjunctions to improve the flow and show relationships, but I see now that I could have used more. • Many of my sentences start the same way, with the subject. • Several of my sentences ramble or contain unnecessary information.	• I didn't quite achieve a flow. My writing seems to start and stop. • I didn't often combine ideas into one sentence to improve the flow and show relationships. • Most of my sentences start the same way, with the subject. • Many of my sentences ramble or contain unnecessary information.

PROJECT PREP Publishing *Final Version*

Using the rubric above, evaluate your composition with a focus on sentence fluency and make any changes that would improve the flow. Make sure that in your final polishing you do not lose your unique style and an appropriate voice.

TIME OUT TO REFLECT

As you learn more ways to improve your writing style, consider the impact of this improvement on your work in other classes. Is your writing for other subjects getting a better response?

Writing Lab

Project Corner

Speak and Listen Debate Pros and Cons: Lifelines

Some people feel that lifelines give people advantages that only make them lazy; these people believe that everyone is better off struggling on his or her own to achieve success. "If it doesn't kill you," they say, "it makes you stronger." **Debate this issue** as a class, using either formal or informal debating techniques. (You can find information on group discussions and oral presentations on pages 457–464 and 468–470.)

Get Dramatic Act It Out

In your writing group, select one person's memoir and **prepare a short play** that you either perform for the class or record and show to the class. Be sure to capture the mood of the story in your script and express the overall theme or underlying meaning the story conveys. (You can find information on writing scripts on pages 192–200 and on making videos on pages 480–485.)



Communicate with Technology Twitter or Blog

Send a tweet in which you answer the question "What's happening?" with a pointer to a story in the local or national news about how someone has helped someone else by throwing a lifeline. What kinds of responses do you get? Or **write in your blog** about the role of lifelines in a healthy society. Who in society should receive lifelines? Who should provide the lifelines?

Apply and Assess

In Everyday Life
Oral Announcement

1. During National Fire Prevention Week, your school is inviting one student each day to deliver a fire safety message over the intercom. ***Prepare and deliver an oral announcement*** explaining a potentially life-saving strategy students can use. Remember that your audience is made up of listeners, not readers. Be sure to make your style and voice appropriate for the situation, purpose, and audience. (You can find information on oral presentations on pages 457–464.)

In the Workplace Memo

2. You have recently been promoted in your job at WZAP, a local television station. Your new task is to recommend four classic programs for the station's Saturday morning cartoon line-up. ***Write a memo to your boss*** listing your four favorite Saturday morning shows. Explain in concise terms what you like about each program. Vary your sentence beginnings and avoid redundancy. Try to make your writing style vivid and clear so your boss can see an image of each show in his mind. (You can find information on writing business memos on pages 451–453.)

Timed Writing Album Review Rewrite

3. You run *The Groove Gazette,* an online music newsletter. You want to run a review of a new album, *Head 2 Paradise* by the Blister Sisters, but the writer's submission needs work. Revise the following review using specific words, varied sentences, and fresh language rather than clichés. Trim away wordiness, the passive voice, and redundancy. Use transitions to combine sentences and create flow. Also use rhetorical devices to convey subtle meaning. You have 15 minutes to complete your work.

> The Blister Sisters' *Head 2 Paradise* is like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. In collaborating on this album, the Sisters really worked together. Due to the fact that a record was not made by them since *Porcupine Love,* I feared that the Sisters might sound rusty, but I was relieved to hear an album tailor-made for all the fans who follow their music. *Head 2 Paradise* has a slow song. It is called "Chalkboard Blues." It is a sad song that made me feel pensive. The mellow new sound is a breath of fresh air.

After You Write Evaluate your review with the rubrics on pages 25, 53, and 67.

CHAPTER 3

Structuring Writing

The structure of a written text is the arrangement of its parts.

Structures for texts take a variety of forms, as the following examples show.

- **A letter from an employer** begins with "Dear Applicant," continues with the news that the recipient has gotten the job, and ends with "Sincerely yours."
- **A fairy tale begins with "Once upon a time,"** moves on to tell a story with a conflict and a resolution, and ends with "And they all lived happily ever after."
- **A restaurant menu begins with appetizers,** moves on to main courses, and finally ends with desserts.
- **A biologist writes a hypothesis** about predators and their prey and then gathers evidence to test the hypothesis.

Writing Project

Essay

Survival! ***Write a carefully structured essay about someone or something that survives a threat.***

Think Through Writing The worlds of nature and society reward those who survive: animals or plants that withstand threats while preying on other life forms, people who endure through challenges and threats, even yourself if you have lived through dangerous circumstances. Choose a living subject you regard as a survivor. What is this person, creature, or plant? What threatens its life or well-being? What does it rely on to survive or defeat these threats? Write informally on this subject and explain in detail how it copes with threatening situations and grows into a stronger being.

Talk About It In a group of three to five students, discuss the subjects you have chosen. What characterizes the qualities, abilities, and natural defenses each subject calls on to survive? What characterizes the threats to its survival and health? What is common to the subjects and situations that each writer has focused on?

Read About It In the following account, Charles G. Finney describes a baby rattlesnake and its survival skills that enable it to compete and thrive in a dangerous world. Think about how the rattlesnake's condition compares to the ones you have written about and discussed in your writing group.

MODEL: Structured Writing

From

The Life and Death of a Western Gladiator

Charles G. Finney

He was born on a summer morning in the shady mouth of a cave. Three others were born with him, another male and two females. Each was about five inches long and slimmer than a lead pencil.

Their mother left them a few hours after they were born. A day after that his brother and sisters left him also. He was all alone. Nobody cared whether he lived or died. His tiny brain was very dull. He had no arms or legs. His skin was delicate. Nearly everything that walked on the ground or burrowed in it, that flew in the air or swam in the water or climbed trees was his enemy. But he didn't know that. He knew nothing at all. He was aware of his own existence, and that was the sum of his knowledge.

The direct rays of the sun could, in a short time, kill him. If the temperature dropped too low he would freeze. Without food he would starve. Without moisture he would die of dehydration. If a man or a horse stepped on him he would be crushed. If anything chased him he could run neither very far nor very fast.

Thus it was at the hour of his birth. Thus it would be, with modifications, all his life.

But against these drawbacks he had certain qualifications that fitted him to be a competitive creature of this world and equipped him for its warfare. He could exist a long time without food or water. His very smallness at birth protected him when he most needed protection. Instinct provided him with what he lacked in experience. In order to eat he first had to kill, and he was eminently adapted for killing. In sacs

The first sentence in this paragraph states the topic for the paragraph: the snake's traits that would help it survive.

in his jaws he secreted a virulent[1] poison. To inject that poison he had two fangs, hollow and pointed. Without that poison and those fangs he would have been among the most helpless creatures on earth. With them he was among the deadliest.

He was, of course, a baby rattlesnake, a desert diamondback, named *Crotalus atrox* by the herpetologists[2] Baird and Girard and so listed in the *Catalogue of North American Reptiles* in its issue of 1853. He was grayish brown in color, with a series of large, dark, diamond-shaped blotches on his back. His tail was white with five black crossbands. It had a button on the end of it.

Little Crotalus lay in the dust in the mouth of his cave. Some of his kinfolk lay there too. It was their home. That particular tribe of rattlers had lived there for scores of years.

The cave had never been seen by a white man.

Sometimes as many as two hundred rattlers occupied the den. Sometimes the numbers shrunk to as few as forty or fifty.

The tribe members did nothing at all for each other except breed. They hunted singly; they never shared food. They derived some automatic degree of safety from their numbers, but their actions were never concerted toward using their numbers to any end. If any enemy attacked one of them, the others did nothing about it.

Young Crotalus's brother was the first of the litter to go out into the world and the first to die. He achieved a distance of fifty feet from the den when a Sonoran racer, four feet long and hungry, came upon him. The little rattler, despite his poison fangs, was a tidbit. The racer, long skilled in such arts, snatched him up by the head and swallowed him down. Powerful digestive juices in the racer's stomach did the rest. Then the racer, appetite whetted, prowled around until it found one of Crotalus's little sisters. She went the way of the brother.

Nemesis[3] of the second sister was a chaparral cock. This cuckoo, or road runner as it is called, found the baby amid some rocks, uttered a cry of delight, scissored

1 **virulent:** Extremely malignant.
2 **herpetologists:** Researchers who study reptiles.
3 **nemesis:** A victorious rival, from the name of a Greek goddess.

it by the neck, shook it until it was almost lifeless, banged and pounded it upon a rock until life had indeed left it, and then gulped it down.

Crotalus, somnolent[4] in a cranny of the cave's mouth, neither knew nor cared. Even if he had, there was nothing he could have done about it.

On the fourth day of his life he decided to go out into the world himself. He rippled forth uncertainly, the transverse[5] plates on his belly serving him as legs.

He could see things well enough within his limited range, but a five-inch-long snake can command no great field of vision. He had an excellent sense of smell. But, having no ears, he was stone deaf. On the other hand, he had a pit, a deep pock mark between eye and nostril. Unique, this organ was sensitive to animal heat. In pitch blackness, Crotalus, by means of the heat messages recorded in his pit, could tell whether another animal was near and could also judge its size. . . .

Each sentence in this paragraph tells something about the snake's senses. Most of the paragraph focuses on the snake's most distinctive sense, its ability to sense heat.

The single button on his tail could not, of course, yet rattle. Crotalus wouldn't be able to rattle until that button had grown into three segments. Then he would be able to buzz.

He had a wonderful tongue. It looked like an exposed nerve and was probably exactly that. It was weird, and Crotalus thrust it in and out as he traveled. It told him things that neither his eyes nor his nose nor his pit told him.

Snake fashion, Crotalus went forth, not knowing where he was going, for he had never been anywhere before. Hunger was probably his prime mover.[6] In order to satisfy that hunger, he had to find something smaller than himself and kill it.

He came upon a baby lizard sitting in the sand. Eyes, nose, pit, and tongue told Crotalus it was there. Instinct told him what it was and what to do. Crotalus gave a tiny one-inch strike and bit the lizard. His poison killed it. He took it by the head and swallowed it. Thus was his first meal.

The last sentence in this paragraph provides a conclusion to the events described in the paragraph.

4 **somnolent**: Drowsy.
5 **transverse:** Crosswise.
6 **prime mover:** The source of motion.

During his first two years, Crotalus grew rapidly. He attained a length of two feet; his tail had five rattles on it and its button. He rarely bothered with lizards any more, preferring baby rabbits, chipmunks, and roundtailed ground squirrels. Because of his slow locomotion,[7] he could not run down these agile little things. He had to contrive[8] instead to be where they were when they would pass. Then he struck swiftly, injected his poison, and ate them after they died.

At two he was formidable.[9] He had grown past the stage where a racer or a road runner could safely tackle him. He had grown to the size where other desert dwellers—coyotes, foxes, coatis, wildcats—knew it was better to leave him alone. . . .

7 **locomotion**: Way of moving from place to place.
8 **contrive**: To plan with cleverness; scheme.
9 **formidable**: Arousing fear; inspiring awe.

Respond in Writing Write about how the rattlesnakes survive. How are they like and unlike the survivors your group members have chosen as subjects?

Develop Your Own Traits Chart Work with your classmates to come up with your own ideas on qualities needed for survival.

Small Groups: In your writing group, create a chart that describes the characteristics of the survivors from your own writing and from Finney's.

Whole Class: Share your chart with the class while a student records each survival trait on a large sheet of paper or on the board. You can refer to this master chart as you write your essay.

Write About It You will write an informative text on your subject's survival. Use the following possibilities or others of your choice.

Possible Topics	Possible Audiences	Possible Forms
• a first-year student in a high school • a migrating goose • a palm tree in a hurricane-prone environment • a young teenager in a dangerous neighborhood	• other students • the school's science club • the television weather station • the police	• a guide to incoming students about high school • a formal report • a script for a special report • a letter to the police commissioner

Paragraphs

You will be creating most of the texts you write by forming a series of paragraphs. Each paragraph is made up of sentences. While each sentence *expresses* a complete thought, a paragraph *develops* a thought.

A **paragraph** is a group of related sentences that present and develop one main idea.

1 Paragraph Structure

In a good paragraph, every sentence plays a role. Notice the role of each sentence in the paragraph that follows, also from "The Life and Death of a Western Gladiator."

His venom was his only weapon, for he had no power of constriction. Yellowish in color, his poison was odorless and tasteless. It was a highly complex mixture of proteins, each in itself direly toxic. His venom worked on the blood. The more poison he injected with a bite, the more dangerous the wound. The pain rendered by his bite was instantaneous, and the shock accompanying it was profound. Swelling began immediately, to be followed by a ghastly oozing. Injected directly into a large vein, his poison brought death quickly, for the victim died when it reached his heart.

- Topic Sentence: States the main idea
- Supporting Sentences: Develop the main idea
- Concluding Sentence: Adds a strong ending

Paragraph structure varies. While the model paragraph begins with a topic sentence and ends with a concluding sentence, you might construct a paragraph differently. You might express the main idea in two sentences rather than one. You might put the topic sentence in the middle or end of the paragraph. You might not end with a concluding sentence, particularly if the paragraph is part of a longer composition. Whatever structure you choose, the most important goal is to make sure the main idea is clear.

HERE'S HOW

Guidelines for a One-Paragraph Composition

- Make your main idea clear.
- Develop your main idea fully.
- Provide a strong ending.

You may accomplish these three goals by including a clear topic sentence, a body of supporting sentences, and an effective concluding sentence in your paragraph.

Topic Sentence

Wherever your topic sentence appears—as the first sentence in the paragraph, the last sentence, or any one of the middle sentences—it serves the same purpose.

A **topic sentence** states the main idea of the paragraph.

Because it states the main idea, a topic sentence is usually more general than the sentences that develop that idea. At the same time, the topic sentence is specific enough to be developed adequately in one paragraph.

FEATURES OF A TOPIC SENTENCE

A topic sentence:

- states the main idea.
- focuses the limited subject to one main point that can be adequately covered in the paragraph.

MODEL: Topic Sentence

The Heavy Task of Fighting Fires

Fighting a major fire takes tremendous strength and endurance. The protective clothing that a fire fighter wears into a burning building will weigh more than 20 pounds. To protect himself from the smoke, the fire fighter will usually wear an oxygen tank and mask. These self-contained breathing units may weigh as much as 50 pounds. The weight of the hose and other tools that the fire fighter carries will raise the total weight to more than 100 pounds.

—Walter Brown and Norman Anderson, *Fires*

Topic Sentence



As the following example shows, the topic sentence in the model is general enough to cover all the details yet specific enough to develop adequately in one paragraph.

Too General	Fire fighting is hard work.
Specific Enough	Fighting a major fire takes tremendous strength and endurance.

Practice Your Skills

Evaluating Topic Sentences

Write the letter of the topic sentence that is specific enough to be covered adequately in a single paragraph.

1. a. Bats use sonar to locate prey.
b. Bats are complex animals.

2. a. Many people like camping.
b. Pitching a tent is easy if you follow directions.

Practice Your Skills

Writing Topic Sentences

For each general statement below, write a topic sentence that is specific enough to be developed adequately in a single paragraph.

1. Life can be difficult at times.
2. Good health is important.
3. Holidays are nice.

Supporting Sentences

A topic sentence on an interesting subject will usually prompt readers to ask questions as they read. Supporting sentences answer those questions and form the body of the paragraph.

> **Supporting sentences** explain the topic sentence by giving specific details, facts, examples, or reasons.

The following topic sentence begins a paragraph about Robert Peary's successful return from the North Pole.

MODEL: Topic Sentence

On the sixth of September, 1909, the gallant little *Roosevelt* steamed into Indian Harbor, Labrador, and from the wireless tower on top of a cliff two messages flashed out.

Readers will naturally wonder, What were the two messages? The supporting sentences answer that question.

MODEL: Supporting Sentences

The first was to Peary's anxiously waiting wife, more eager, if the truth be known, to hear of her husband's safety than of the discovery of the Pole. This message read: "Have made good at last. I have the Pole. Am well. Love." The second one was to his country, for which he had sacrificed so much. It read: "Stars and Stripes nailed to the North Pole. Peary."

—Marie Peary Stafford, *Discoverer of the North Pole*

When you write supporting sentences, think of the questions readers might ask and then answer those questions.

Practice Your Skills

Writing Supporting Sentences

Write three sentences that would support each item.

1. Styles of dress may reveal people's personalities.
2. Life without a computer seems impossible.
3. Old photographs can help you understand history.

Concluding Sentence

A paragraph often needs a concluding sentence to summarize the ideas.

A **concluding sentence** recalls the main idea and adds a strong ending to a paragraph.

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Ending a Paragraph

- Restate the main idea using different words.
- Summarize the paragraph.
- Add an insight about the main idea.
- Express how you feel about the subject.

MODEL: Strong Concluding Sentence

An All-Around Player

Although Babe Ruth is best remembered for his home runs, he was also a great pitcher. In 1916, he led the American League in lowest earned-run percentage. He won 23 games that year, including 9 shutouts. The next year he won 24. Until 1961, Ruth held the record for pitching scoreless innings in the World Series. Ruth's impressive pitching statistics show that he was more than a great hitter.

Concluding Sentence

Practice Your Skills

Writing Concluding Sentences

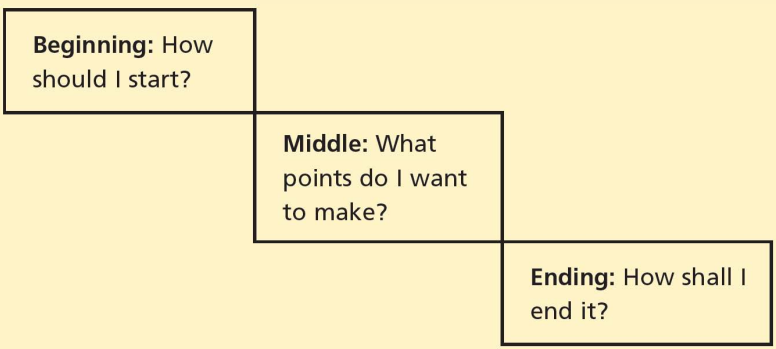
Write three more sentences that could each provide a strong conclusion to the paragraph about Babe Ruth.

PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Developing a General Plan*

In your writing group, discuss the possible points you wish to make about your topic and how you would present your explanation. Following is one possible way to organize your thoughts on the subject of surviving threats.

Beginning: Introduce your subject and how it is threatened in general.
Point 1: Discuss one specific threat and how the subject survives it.
Point 2: Discuss a second specific threat and how the subject survives it.
Point 3: Discuss a third specific threat and how the subject survives it.
Point 4: Discuss a fourth specific threat and how the subject survives it.
Additional points: Discuss additional threats and how the subject survives them.
Conclusion: Draw a conclusion about how your subject survives in a threatening world.

After the discussion, make a rough sketch of your composition. You might want to use a simple graphic organizer like the one below.



2 Paragraph Development

A topic sentence is like a baseball score. It gives the general idea without the specifics of how the game developed. Readers, like sports fans, want to know the details. They want to see the idea developed play by play.

Methods of Development

You can use a variety of methods to develop a topic sentence.

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Developing Your Main Idea

- Give descriptive details.
- Give facts, examples, or reasons.
- Relate an incident.
- Make a comparison or draw a contrast.
- Give directions or explain the steps in a process.

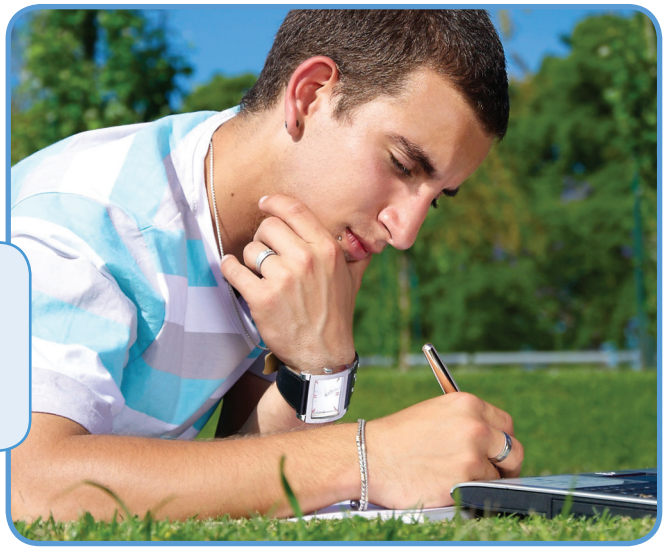
Writing Tip

List **details** that suit the main idea of your paragraph and that explain the subject clearly.

Adequate Development

Insufficiently developed writing makes readers quickly lose interest. Even an interesting idea loses merit if not backed up with sufficient information. The supporting sentences in a paragraph develop the main idea with specific details. These specific details can take the form of facts or examples, reasons, incidents, or descriptive images. Regardless of the form, supporting details must be numerous and specific enough to make the main idea clear, convincing, and interesting. This is called **adequate development.**

The paragraph on the next page provides such ample specific details that readers can clearly picture the subject.



Writing Tip

Use specific details and information to achieve **adequate development** of your main idea.

MODEL: Adequate Paragraph Development

Childhood Treasures

Aunt Sally's cabinet of art supplies was like a toy chest to me. The top shelf, beyond my reach, had an endless supply of paper. There was stiff, brilliant-white paper for watercolors, blank newsprint for charcoals, glossy paper, dull paper, tracing paper. On the second shelf sat oozing tubes of bright-colored oils, bottles of the blackest ink, and cartons of chalk in sunrise shades of pastels. The third shelf—my favorite—held the damp lumps of gray clay, waiting to be shaped into creatures only my aunt and I would recognize. On the bottom shelves were brushes and rags for cleaning up. Despite the thorough cleanups Aunt Sally insisted on, that cabinet was a paradise of play for me on countless Sunday afternoons.

Using a Rubric to evaluate Idea development

Refer to the following rubric to gauge how well you have developed your ideas.

4 Ideas are presented and developed in depth.	3 Most ideas are presented and developed with insight.	2 Many ideas are not well developed.	1 Most ideas are not well developed.
• I developed each idea thoroughly with specific details. • My presentation of ideas is original. • I made meaningful connections among ideas. • I took some risks to make my writing come alive.	• I developed most ideas thoroughly with specific details. • My presentation of some ideas is thoughtul. • I made some connections among ideas. • I played it safe and did not really put much of myself into the composition.	• I tried to develop ideas but was more general than specific. • I listed rather than developed ideas. • I made few connections among ideas. • I left a few things out but I think my meaning comes across.	• I was more general than specific. • I listed rather than developed ideas. • I did not make connections among ideas. • I left some important things out so my meaning isn't really clear.

PROJECT PREP *Evaluating* ***Developing Ideas***

In your writing group, discuss each person's main idea, ways to develop it adequately, and where additional information about each subject can be located. Take notes. You can use them when you create a second draft.

3 Unity

In developing a paragraph fully, avoid straying from the main idea, which can confuse the reader. In a well-developed paragraph, all the supporting sentences relate directly to the main idea expressed in the topic sentence. This quality of a well-written paragraph is called **unity.** It is also called **focus.**

Writing Tip

Achieve **unity** by deleting sentences that do not relate directly to the paragraph's main idea.

In the following example, sentences that detract from the focus of the paragraph are underlined.

MODEL: A Paragraph Lacking Unity

Candlelight

Candles, which go back to prehistoric times, were a chief source of light for 2,000 years. The first candle may have been discovered by accident when a piece of wood or cord fell into a pool of lighted fat. In ancient times crude candles were made from fats wrapped in husks or moss. Early people also used torches. Later a wick was placed inside a candle mold, and melted wax was poured into the mold. Candles could be used to carry light from place to place and could be stored indefinitely. The first lamps used a dish of oil and a wick.



Although the underlined sentences relate to the general subject, they do not relate directly to the specific main idea expressed in the topic sentence.

Practice Your Skills

Checking for Unity

Write the two sentences that destroy the paragraph's unity.

The First Cheap Car

Henry Ford was not the first person to build a car, but he was the first to figure out how to make cars cheaply. His assembly-line methods resulted in huge savings and changed the car from a luxury to a necessity. The mass-produced Model T sold for about $400, a price the average wage earner could afford. Ford sold over 15 million cars from 1908 to 1927. Ford reduced the workday for his employees from nine to eight hours. He set the minimum wage at $5 a day. By building a cheap, easy-to-operate car, Ford changed the nation.

PROJECT PREP Drafting *First Quick Draft*

1. Using all your work so far, write a quick draft including everything you know or have learned about your subject. You can use the plan you developed in the graphic organizer (see page 79), but write quickly just to get your thoughts down on paper.
2. Exchange papers with a partner. Read each other's drafts. Is there anything that does not belong? If so, point it out. Delete unnecessary points in your own draft.



4 Coherence

In a **coherent** paragraph, each idea leads logically and smoothly to the next.

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Achieving Coherence

- Organize your ideas logically.
- Use transitional words and phrases.
- Occasionally repeat key words.
- Use synonyms or alternative expressions in place of key words.
- Use pronouns in place of key words.

Writing Tip

Achieve **coherence** by presenting ideas in logical order and by using transitions.

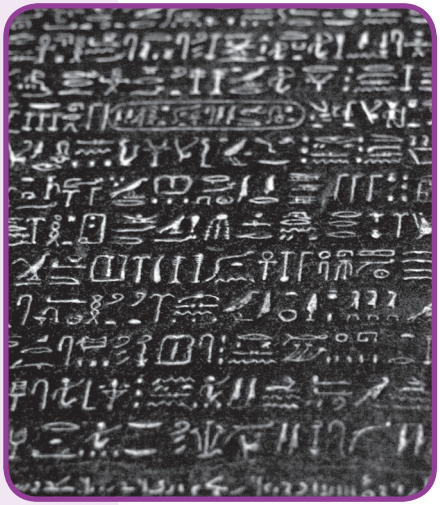
Chronological Order

This kind of order, also called time order, is used in stories to tell what happened first, second, third, and so on. It is also used to explain a sequence of steps in a process.

MODEL: Chronological Order

Cracking an Ancient Code

The Rosetta Stone was discovered in 1799, but the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics on it were a mystery. The first person to try cracking the code was Silvestre de Sacy. He figured out that some signs referred to proper names, but the rest stumped him. Then a Swedish expert, David Akerblad, made a little more progress. Next, Sir Thomas Young discovered that some of the signs stood for sounds as well as ideas. Finally, Jean François Champollion tackled the code. He had his first breakthrough in 1821. The puzzle pieces then began to fall swiftly into place. Others paved the way, but Champollion deserves the credit for discovering a 1,500-year-old secret.



Spatial Order

Spatial order is used in descriptions to show how objects are related in location.

MODEL: Spatial Order

A Formidable Mountain Barrier

The Sierra Nevada is a chain of peaks 400 miles long, longer than any one range of the American Rockies. The range stretches from Tehachapi Pass in the south nearly to Lassen Peak in the north where the Sierra block disappears beneath sheets of younger volcanic rocks. The Sierra's western flank rises gradually from one of the world's richest agricultural areas, the great Central Valley, while to the east the mountains rise in a magnificent abrupt escarpment to soar 7,000 to 10,000 feet above the arid basin of the Owens Valley. With not a single river passing through the range, the Sierra forms a formidable mountain barrier.

—Fred Beckey, *Mountains of North America*

Order of Importance, Interest, or Degree

This method is often used in paragraphs that describe, persuade, or explain. It presents ideas in order of importance, interest, or size.

MODEL: Order of Importance

Training a Seeing-Eye Dog

Dogs who will aid the blind must be trained to overcome some basic fears. To learn how to keep calm in a crowd, the dogs are taken to playgrounds when students are leaving school. The dogs are sharply corrected if they get excited in all the bustle. To overcome any fear of loud noises, they must hold still while blanks are fired above their heads. Sometimes they are even trained on an airport runway. Especially important is overcoming a fear of heights, for the day may come when a dog will have to lead its master down a fire escape. A well-trained dog is more than a pair of eyes; it can also be a lifesaver.

Sequential Order

This method is used in paragraphs that explain how to do something or how something works. It can also be used in paragraphs that explain a cause and effect.

MODEL: Sequential Order

Rope Jumping for Tennis Players

There are very few exercises that really help a tennis player get in shape and stay there. One form of exercise that I strongly urge on a player is to skip rope. It is wonderful for the wind and legs. If it is to do you any good at all, it must be done systematically, and not just now and again. Start slowly for your first week or so. Jump a normal "two-foot" skip, not over ten times without resting, but repeat five separate tens and, if possible, do it morning and evening. Take the ten up to twenty after two days, then in a week to fifty. Once you can do that, begin to vary the type of skipping. Skip ten times on one foot, then ten times on the other. Add a fifty at just double your normal speed. Once that is all mastered, simply take ten minutes in the evening and skip hard, any way you want and at any speed. Let your own intelligence direct you to what gives you the best results. Remember always that stamina is one of the deciding factors in all long, closely contested tennis matches, so work to attain the peak of physical conditioning when you need it most.

—Bill Tilden, *How to Play Better Tennis*

Transitions

Transitional words and phrases connect your ideas. The chart below lists commonly used transitions used with various forms of order.

You can learn more about ordering information on pages 20–21 and 84–88.

COMMONLY USED TRANSITIONS

Order of Importance	Chronological/ Sequential Order	Spatial Order	General Transitions
even more	after	above	also
finally	as soon as	ahead	besides
first	at first	behind	despite
more important	at last	below	for example
most	first, second	beneath	however
one reason	later	inside	in addition
to begin with	meanwhile	outside	while

Practice Your Skills

Revising for Coherence

Revise the following paragraph, adding needed transitional words and phrases.

Days of Our Lives

Although the calendar we use today is the most accurate one yet devised, it has many irregularities. We have two different types of years: common years and leap years. The number of days in each month varies. April and June have 30 days. May and July have 31 and February 28 or 29. Many holidays fall on a different day each year, which causes considerable confusion. The calendar we use today has been keeping time successfully for more than 400 years.

Practice Your Skills

Identifying Method of Organization

Write *chronological, spatial, sequential,* or *order of importance, interest, or degree* to identify the method of organization used in "Childhood Treasures" on page 81.

PROJECT PREP Drafting *Ordering*

Look back over your general plan (page 79) and first quick draft. Decide which organizational strategy to use to present your information. In your writing group, describe your strategy and listen for feedback. Offer suggestions to other members of your group on their plans.

Using an Organization Rubric

Use the following rubric to determine how effectively you have organized a composition.

4 Ideas progress smoothly and the organizational strategies clarify meaning.	**3 Most ideas progress smoothly and the organizational strategies are clear.**	**2 Some ideas progress smoothly but the organizational pattern is not consistent.**	**1 Few ideas progress smoothly and there is no clear organization.**
• I stated the main idea creatively in the introduction and captured attention. • I used the best organization pattern to present the supporting paragraphs. • My conclusion helped make the composition feel complete. • My paragraphs and sentences flowed smoothly from one into another. • I used transitions to keep the order clear.	• I stated the main idea in the introduction and captured attention. • I used an appropriate organization pattern to present the supporting paragraphs. • My conclusion helped make the composition feel complete. • Most but not all of my paragraphs and sentences flowed smoothly from one into another. • I used some transitions to keep the order clear.	• I stated the main idea in the introduction but did not capture attention. • I used an appropriate organization pattern to present the supporting paragraphs but had some things out of order. • My conclusion provided an ending but it did not feel strong. • I repeated some ideas unnecessarily. • I could have used more transitions to keep the order clear.	• I did not state my main idea clearly. • I did not really use an organizational pattern. • I forgot about writing a conclusion. • I repeated some things and also had some things out of order or not related to the topic. • I did not use many transitions so the order was hard to follow.

TIME OUT TO REFLECT

As you work to improve your skills for developing topic, supporting, and concluding sentences, what have you learned about your writing? What are your strengths and weaknesses? On what areas do you spend the most time? In what areas do you feel confident? Do you have a talent for writing strong conclusions but find that your supporting sentences lack some necessary details? Take some time to note any weaknesses in your writing and jot down strategies for correcting them in the future. Record your thoughts in the Learning Log section of your journal.

The Power of Language

Parallelism: The Power of 3s

Informational writing does not have to plod along, one sentence after another, but can be enlivened with a variety of grammatical options, as Charles Finney amply demonstrates in his descriptive piece about the rattlesnake. One device he uses is **parallelism:** the same kind of word or group of words, grammatically speaking, in a series of three or more. Read the following sentence aloud, noticing the impact of the series of verbs:

> This cuckoo, or road runner as it is called, found the baby [snake] amid some rocks, uttered a cry of delight, scissored it by the neck, shook it until it was almost lifeless, banged and pounded it upon a rock until life had indeed left it, and then gulped it down.

Why do you think Finney chose to describe all these actions in one sentence? What effect does that have on you as a reader?

Now look at another way to express action in a series of parallel elements, from Annie Dillard's "Living Like Weasels" (pages 141–144):

> Or did the eagle eat what he could, gutting the living weasel with his talons before his breast, bending his beak, cleaning the beautiful airborne bones?

Compare the effect of this series of participial phrases with the effect of the parallel verbs in the first example.

Try It Yourself

Think about some person or animal whose actions you might describe in an informative piece. Brainstorm for possibilities, choose one, and write a sentence with at least three parallel verb phrases, as in the sentence from Finney's piece. Then follow the same steps again, this time using three participial phrases to convey the action.

Punctuation Tip

Use commas to separate items in a series. Use a comma before the final item and the word *and*.

Paragraph Writing Workshops

1 Narrative Paragraphs

Any time your purpose in writing is to tell what happened, you will be writing a narrative. Learning how to write a narrative paragraph will help you develop the skills for any kind of narrative writing.

A **narrative paragraph** tells a real or imaginary story.

HERE'S HOW

Structuring a Narrative Paragraph

- In the **topic sentence,** capture the reader's attention and make a general statement that sets the scene.
- In the **supporting sentences,** tell the story event by event, often building suspense.
- In the **concluding sentence,** show the outcome, summarize the story, or add an insight.

MODEL: Narrative Paragraph

Rescue!

For thirteen-year-old Karen Edwards, July 17, 1972, became a day to remember. She was resting on the side of a motel pool in Duncansville, Pennsylvania, when she saw a young boy struggling in the deep end. Then she saw the boy's father dive in after him and not come up. While others stood by, Karen jumped in and towed the drowning boy to the side. Tired but not waiting to rest, she went back for the father, who was floating face down. As she dragged him to the side, he began struggling, his waving arms splashing water in Karen's eyes. Her chest heaving, she finally made it to the side of the pool, and in a few minutes father, son, and Karen were all well. Karen's quick thinking and heroic effort had saved two lives.

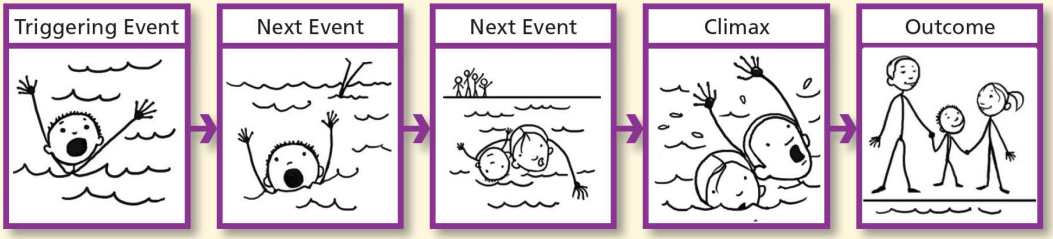
—L. B. Taylor, Jr., *Rescue!*

Topic Sentence

Supporting Sentences

Concluding Sentence

You can make a storyboard like the one below to help you plan a narrative paragraph. Include as many events as necessary to tell the story fully.



QuickGuide for Writing Narrative Paragraphs

- → Brainstorm, write freely, tell your story out loud, or create a storyboard to think of all the events in the story you want to tell. When you have them all, arrange them in chronological order.
- → Include the event that started the story in motion, the conflict and how it was approached, and the resolution.
- → Use transitions such as *first, the next day, at last* to keep the order clear.
- → Include a clear introduction and conclusion.
- → Collaborate with a partner, sharing drafts and making suggestions for improvements.

Create Real-World Texts

1. Write a paragraph telling the story of a "first" in your life.
2. Write a story about a relative or ancestor who has become part of your family lore. Make an audio recording of your story and play it for family members.
3. Write a plot summary of a movie you have recently seen or know well.
4. Write about a decisive battle for your social studies class.
5. Relate to your brother the story of how you broke the mp3 player he let you borrow.

2 Descriptive Paragraphs

Any time your writing purpose is to give someone a picture they can "see" in their minds, you will be writing a description. Learning how to write a descriptive paragraph will help you develop the skills for any kind of descriptive writing.

Descriptive writing creates a vivid picture in words of a person, an object, or a scene.

HERE'S HOW

Structuring a Descriptive Paragraph

- In the **topic sentence,** make a general statement about the subject and suggest an overall impression.
- In the **supporting sentences,** supply specific details that help readers use their five senses to bring the picture to life.
- In the **concluding sentence,** summarize the overall impression of the subject.

MODEL: Descriptive Paragraph

The Big Day

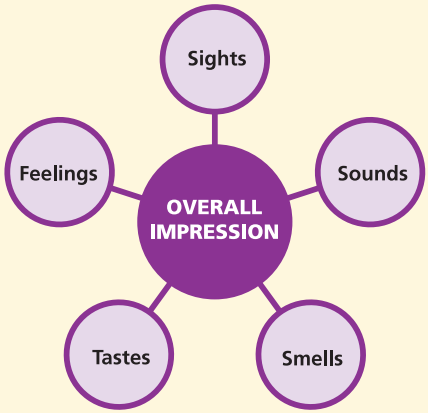
The most important game of the year was almost under way. José Magarolas of our team crouched at center court, waiting to jump against Tech's big man. Positioned so that the tips of their sneakers nearly touched the white arc of the jump circle, our forwards, Jimmy Jones and Don Fox, stood against Tech's forwards. All four pairs of eyes already looked up into the space where the ball would soon be tossed. Outside the jump circle, behind one pair of forwards, Blake Roberts and a Tech guard of equal height readied themselves. Ken Wan, our captain, and Tech's other guard jogged to their positions at opposite ends of the court, still farther outside the center circle. The lights of the scoreboard showed only "Home 00, Visitor 00." Leaping and shouting along the edges of the court, cheerleaders for both teams stirred the crowd. From every seat around the court, in a multitude of red and green hues, Central and Tech fans screamed their delight that the championship game was about to begin.

Topic Sentence

Supporting Sentences

Concluding Sentence

You can make a wheel-spoke diagram like the one on the following page to help you plan a descriptive paragraph. Your overall impression goes in the center.



QuickGuide for Writing Descriptive Paragraphs

- → Brainstorm, write freely, or draw a picture to help you think of vivid sensory details that would bring your subject to life.
- → Choose details to create an overall impression, and organize them in spatial order or another logical order.
- → Use transitions such as *beyond*, *on the other side,* and *to the right* to keep the order clear.
- → Include a clear introduction and conclusion.
- → Collaborate with a partner, sharing drafts and making suggestions for improvements.

Create Real-World Texts

1. Write a paragraph for an ad in the newspaper describing an item you want to sell.
2. Think of a TV show you like and know well. For a game, describe the setting without naming it and ask a friend to guess which show you are describing.
3. Describe a parade for a newspaper story.



3 Expository Paragraphs

Expository writing is the most common and practical of the four types of writing. In writing an expository paragraph, your goal is always to help your readers understand something. Any time your purpose is to explain or to inform, you will be using expository writing. Expository writing is also known as **informative** or **explanatory writing.**

Expository writing explains or informs.

HERE'S HOW

Structuring an Expository Paragraph

- In the **topic sentence,** introduce the subject and state the main idea.
- In the **supporting sentences,** supply specific details such as facts and examples that support the main idea.
- In the **concluding sentence,** draw a conclusion about the subject or in other ways bring the paragraph to a strong ending.

MODEL: Expository How-To Paragraph

Orphans from the Wild

A small baby [mammal] that has no hair or whose eyes are not yet open may be picked up in your bare hands. Gently slide your fingers under the baby, scoop it up, and cradle it in your palms. Most babies, particularly very small ones, will enjoy the warmth of your hands. Adjust your fingers to fit snugly around the baby, so it can absorb the maximum warmth from your fingers, but not so snugly that it can't shift its position. The tiny, hairless baby will become quiet almost at once and will soon drop off to sleep.

—William J. Weber, *Wild Orphan Babies*

Topic Sentence

Supporting Sentences

Concluding Sentence



You might want to use one of the graphic organizers on pages 241–253 to help you organize your paragraph.

QuickGuide for Writing Expository Paragraphs

- → Brainstorm, write freely, or talk with others to help you think of facts, examples, reasons, or steps in a process that would help you explain your subject.
- → Arrange the details in a logical order. (See pages 84–86.)
- → Use transitions such as *for example, in contrast*, and *however* to keep the order clear.
- → Include a clear introduction and conclusion.
- → Collaborate with a partner, sharing drafts and making suggestions for improvements.

Create Real-World Texts

1. Send an e-mail to an older relative explaining what a typical day at school is like.
2. For health class, explain how to read the nutritional label on packaged food.
3. Write a paragraph to yourself planning the week ahead.



4 Persuasive Paragraphs

Whenever you are defending or disagreeing with a viewpoint or an action, you are using your skills of persuasion. Learning how to write a persuasive paragraph will help you develop the skills for any kind of persuasive writing. The kind of persuasive writing you will most commonly do in school is called **argumentative writing.**

Persuasive writing states an opinion or claim and uses facts, examples, and reasons to convince readers. See pages 254-283 for more on argument.

HERE'S HOW

Structuring a Persuasive Paragraph

- In the **topic sentence,** assert an opinion or claim.
- In the **supporting sentences,** back up your assertion with facts, examples, reasons, and, if necessary, citations from experts. Appeal to the reader's reason but also engage the reader by appealing to emotion as well.
- In the **concluding sentence,** restate the assertion and draw a conclusion that follows from the supporting details.

MODEL: Persuasive Paragraph

UFOs?

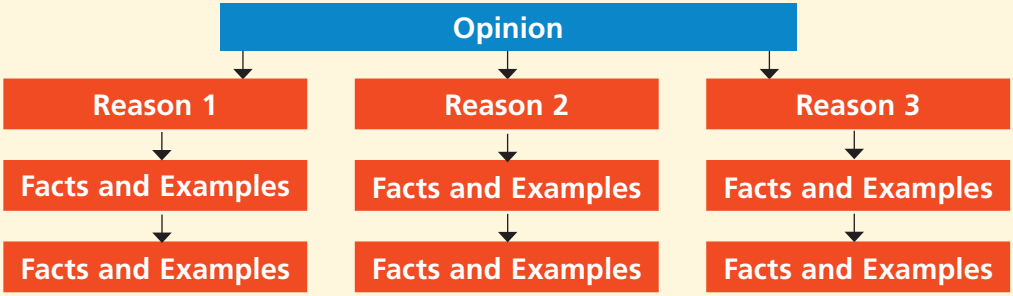
Although the United States Air Force has dismissed reports of UFOs, there is so much evidence that UFOs exist that we should take them seriously. More than 12,000 sightings have been reported to various organizations and authorities. Many of these reports were made by pilots, engineers, air-traffic controllers, and other reliable people. According to a Gallup poll, five million Americans believe they have sighted UFOs, and some have even taken photographs. The great number of sightings warrants an open mind on the subject of UFOs.

Topic Sentence

Supporting Sentences

Concluding Sentence

You can make a graphic organizer like the one on the following page to help you plan a persuasive paragraph. The arrows represent transitional words and phrases.



QuickGuide for Writing Persuasive Paragraphs

- → In discussions or through reading or watching television, identify subjects about which you have a strong opinion.
- → Brainstorm, write freely, or talk with others to help you think of facts, examples, reasons, or steps in a process that would help you back up your opinion.
- → Arrange the details in a logical order. (See pages 84–86.)
- → Use transitions such as *for example, in contrast,* and *most important* to keep the order clear.
- → Include a clear introduction and conclusion.
- → Collaborate with a partner, sharing drafts and making suggestions for improvements.

Create Real-World Texts

1. Send a letter to the editor of your local newspaper expressing an opinion on a current civic event.
2. Your family is trying to decide where to go on vacation. Write a paragraph suggesting a place and giving reasons for your choice.
3. You want your class to lead the way on a school-wide canned food drive. Write an announcement to read to your class convincing them that the food drive is a good idea.

In the Media

Nightly News, Newsmagazines, Documentaries

Though they are primarily visual media, TV broadcasts also pay attention to structure. Understanding these structures can help you make the structure of your texts as strong as possible. The chart below shows the characteristics, elements, and arrangement that make three forms unique: the nightly news, newsmagazines, and documentaries.

NIGHTLY NEWS	NEWSMAGAZINES	DOCUMENTARIES
very brief (two to three minutes)	usually twenty-minute segments	fifty minutes or longer
introduction by anchor	introduction by anchor	dramatic visual before introduction
brief videotape shots	lengthy videos	carefully crafted
brief interview or quote from person involved	lengthy interviews/ multiple quotes and sources	multiple quotes and sources, real-life conversations
editing to stay within time limit, balanced presentation	editing with much concern for effect and balance	editing to enhance overall effect—music and voiceover added
closing by anchor	closing by anchor	conclusion strong
can be made on day news happens	requires preparation time (weeks at least)	requires longest preparation time

Media Activity

For practice, view an example of each of these visual media. Then describe how each type might present a major news event. Write a paragraph for each medium telling what the story might be like, giving special attention to how the length of each type might affect the quality and balance of the coverage. Then write another paragraph explaining how you might improve your writing by using some of the techniques used in these media.

Compositions

Effective communication in writing usually involves more than a single paragraph. On many subjects, you need to write several paragraphs to fully develop your main idea and communicate what you want to say. In short, you need to write a composition. Paragraphs within a composition can have a number of purposes. They can introduce the topic, provide supporting material, serve as a transition, and provide a conclusion.

The composition is one of the most flexible and familiar pieces of writing. You can use the composition form for a variety of purposes: to explain or inform, to create, to persuade, and to express your thoughts and feelings.

1 Structure of a Composition

A composition has three main parts—an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. As the following chart shows, these three parts of a composition parallel the three-part structure of a paragraph.

Paragraph Structure		Composition Structure
	Introduction	
topic sentence that introduces the subject and expresses the main idea	← →	introductory paragraph that introduces the subject and expresses the main idea in a **thesis statement** (See pages 101–102.)
	Body	
supporting sentences	← →	supporting paragraphs
	Conclusion	
concluding sentence	← →	concluding paragraph

As you read the following composition, notice how the three-part structure introduces the thesis statement and works to present the subject.

Cat Lovers, Dog Lovers

One controversy in this highly controversial era is that between those who love only cats and those who love only dogs. "I love dogs, but I can't stand cats" is a statement I often hear; or "I hate dogs, but I adore cats." I stand firmly on my belief that both dogs and cats give richness to life, and both have been invaluable to humankind down the ages.

Historians agree that dogs moved into humans' orbit in primitive days when they helped hunt, warned of the approach of enemies, and fought off marauding wildlife. In return, bones and scraps were tossed to them, and they shared the warmth of the first fires. Gradually they became part of the family clan.

As for cats, it was cats who saved Egypt from starvation during a period when rats demolished the grain supplies. . . . When the cats died, they were embalmed and were put in the tombs of the Pharaohs along with jewels, garments, and stores of food to help masters in their journey to the land of the gods. There was even a cat goddess, and a good many bas-reliefs picture her.

So far as service to humankind goes, I do not see why we should discriminate between dogs and cats. Both have walked the long roads of history with humankind. As for me, I do not feel a house is well-furnished without both dogs and cats, preferably at least two of each. I am sorry for people who limit their lives by excluding either. I was fortunate to grow up with kittens and puppies and wish every child could have that experience.

—Gladys Taber, *Country Chronicle*

Introduction

Thesis Statement

Body Paragraphs

Conclusion

Practice Your Skills

Analyzing a Composition

Write answers to the following questions about "Cat Lovers, Dog Lovers."

1. What is the main idea that the author expresses in the introduction?
2. How does each paragraph of the body relate to the thesis statement?
3. What is the conclusion? How does it relate to the main idea?

PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Review and Evaluate*

Look back over the prewriting work you have done so far. Evaluate your plan. Does it still seem like the best way to proceed with your composition? If not, revise it.

2 Introduction of a Composition

Like the topic sentence of a paragraph, the introduction of a composition prepares the reader for what will follow. When you write a short composition, you can usually complete the introduction in one paragraph.

FUNCTIONS OF THE INTRODUCTION

- It introduces the subject of your composition.
- It states or implies your purpose for writing.
- It presents the main idea of your composition in a thesis statement.
- It establishes your tone.
- It captures your readers' interest.

Thesis Statement

The thesis statement is usually a single sentence. It may appear anywhere in the first paragraph, although it often has the strongest impact when it is first or last.

The **thesis statement** states the main or controlling idea and makes the purpose of the composition clear.

In the following example, the thesis statement is highlighted.

MODEL: Thesis Statement

My coming to America in 1979 was not very pleasant. When I was twelve, my parents had to leave my homeland, Vietnam. We lived near My Tho all my years and I did not want to leave, but they said we must. My two sisters were younger, four and seven, and they did not know what it meant to leave. My mother said that we must not tell any of our friends, that our going was a secret. It was hard for me to think I would never see my home or some of my family again. Some of my story I tell here I remember well, but some is not clear and is from stories my family tells.

—Hieu Huynh, "Coming to America"

Practice Your Skills

Identifying Thesis Statements

Read the following introductory paragraph and write the thesis statement. Then below the thesis statement, identify the purpose for writing: *to express thoughts and feelings, to explain or inform,* or *to persuade.*

> Running is the sport of the people. If it is not the largest participant sport already in terms of numbers, it no doubt is in terms of time devoted to it. It requires little in the way of skills or money, and no particular body type or age or location. It doesn't discriminate. Even at competitive levels it thrives on friendship. Where has it been all this time?
>
> —Robert E. Burger, *Jogger's Catalogue*

Practice Your Skills

Writing a Thesis Statement

Write a thesis statement for each of the following subjects based on the ideas and information provided.

1. Subject	Savings accounts
Ideas and Information	Anyone can open one by making a deposit. Each deposit is added to the balance. Deposits and withdrawals are recorded. Banks pay interest on the balance. When interest is compounded daily, interest is paid on the interest and added to the balance. Banks may pay higher interest rates on an account that keeps a high minimum balance.
2. Subject	Brasília
Ideas and Information	Became capital of Brazil in 1960 Was built from scratch in Brazil's interior to open up the frontier to settlers Has buildings with unique, modern design Is a source of national pride Is isolated from older cities on coast Has problems: overpopulation, poverty

Think Critically

Drawing Conclusions

Before you can write a thesis statement, you will need to draw conclusions about your subject. When you **draw a conclusion,** you make a reasoned judgment based on all the information you have. The following list shows how Finney looked at the details of rattlesnake tribes and drew a conclusion about them.

Information	They hunted singly.
	They never shared food.
	They never worked together or defended one another.
Conclusion	"The tribe members did nothing at all for each other except breed."

Thinking Practice

Analyze the information given below and write three possible conclusions you could draw from it.

Subject	the Louisiana Purchase of 1803
Ideas and Information	Napoleon unexpectedly offered French territory in North America for sale
	purchase price only $15 million
	Jefferson almost passed up the opportunity because he thought the Constitution did not give a president the right to buy land.
	purchase doubled the size of the U.S.
	provided valuable waterways and natural resources



Capturing the Reader's Interest

In her introduction to "Cat Lovers, Dog Lovers," Gladys Taber uses two eye-catching quotations. In "Life and Death of a Western Gladiator," Charles Finney provides a dramatic description of the first hours of a rattlesnake's life and the threatening dangers all around. He draws readers in by personalizing the young snake and making readers care for him. Below are several strategies for starting an introduction.

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Capturing the Reader's Interest

- Start with an interesting quotation.
- Start with a question.
- Present an unusual or little-known fact.
- Present an idea or image that is unexpected.
- Cite a statistic that is alarming or amusing.
- Lead in with a line of dialogue from a conversation.
- Give an example or illustration of the main idea.
- Relate an incident or personal experience.

The following introduction is from an essay by Elise Miller of Canton High School in Ohio. What strategy does she use to capture attention?

STUDENT MODEL: *Essay Introduction*

My Grandma Is My Hero

My grandma has taught me too many things to put down on this one sheet of paper. She has demonstrated a plethora of admirable characteristics that anyone striving to be a better person would desire to have. My grandmother has an incredible amount of wisdom, strength, patience, love, and courage. The person I am today and want to become is a direct result of how my grandma has affected my family life, faith, and my academics.

PROJECT PREP Drafting *The First Paragraph*

Using the information you have just learned about writing thesis statements, draft the introductory paragraph to your essay. For Charles Finney's article on a baby rattlesnake, a thesis statement might be, "Baby rattlesnakes are threatened by predators from the moment they are born and must rely on a combination of quickness, awareness, instinct, and their poisonous fangs in order to survive." Draft an introductory paragraph in which you state and develop the thesis that will guide the rest of your writing. Share this introduction with your writing group and use any feedback as the basis for a revision.

3 Body of a Composition

Following the introduction, the body of a composition explains the thesis statement by developing the main idea in supporting paragraphs. A composition body, therefore, is much like the body of a paragraph.

PARAGRAPH BODY	COMPOSITION BODY
The body consists of **sentences** that support **the topic sentence.**	The body consists of **paragraphs** that support the **thesis statement.**
All the sentences relate to the **main idea** expressed in the topic sentence.	All the paragraphs relate to the **main idea** expressed in the thesis statement. At the same time, each paragraph has a topic sentence, a body, and a conclusion of its own.
Each sentence develops a **supporting detail** that supports the main idea.	Each paragraph develops a **supporting idea** that supports the main idea. At the same time, each supporting idea contains **supporting details.**

Supporting Paragraphs

The information in the body of your composition may come from your own experience and observations or from research. Wherever it comes from, the information proves or supports your thesis by serving as the supporting paragraphs in the body of your composition.

The **supporting paragraphs** of a composition develop the thesis statement with specific details.

The topic sentence of each supporting paragraph supports the thesis statement of the composition. The sentences in each paragraph then develop that paragraph's topic sentence by giving supporting details. As you continue to read the student model, notice how each paragraph of the body develops the main idea that is expressed in the thesis statement. Also notice how each paragraph has its own structure, with a topic sentence and a body of supporting sentences.

STUDENT MODEL: *Essay Body*

First, my grandma amazes me with the amount of unconditional love she provides for my family. No matter whom she talks to, my grandma is open to everyone's opinions and thoughts on any topic. Everyone's feelings are important to her, and she loves hearing any ideas people might want to share. I applaud my grandma because she never has to get something to give something. She never wants anything but love in return for her gracious gifts to the family. Whether it is food, presents, or money that she distributes on holidays and birthdays, she never ever expects anything back for it. Overall, she loves to give people what makes them happy, and for that I praise her. Without my grandma, my family would not gather as often as we do. She assembles everyone into the wonderful environment she calls her home. When we walk in the door, we can smell the cinnamon bun scent sweeping through the air, and it makes everyone feel welcome. I feel just like I am at home. After all, togetherness with the people you love is the best gift you could give, isn't it? I definitely think so.

Secondly, my faith has been impacted immensely by my grandmother. My entire family attends church, but my grandma has been accompanying generation after generation of people to our house of God. Her firm religious beliefs have been helpful in keeping the church alive through tough times. She has lost so many people that were close to her in the past few years that I wonder how she does not break down and give up. She replies, "I know they're in a better place now with God. Heaven will keep them safe." From my grandma I receive the hope that I will be able to continue the tradition of faithfulness that she has begun. I will always aim to be as dependable and devoted to my church someday as she is.

Third and finally, my approach to academics has been inspired by my grandma beyond compare. After she graduated from high school, she went to medical school to become a nurse. Not only did she have to pay her own way through college, she had to finance herself completely on her car, gas, housing, food, and anything else that she needed because she had seven other siblings at home that her parents had to attend to also. When she was twelve years old, her father died leaving my great-grandmother with eight children to raise. Much was required of my grandma at a young age. I respect how hard working and driven my grandma is and was when she went to school. I would not have the motivation to pull the honorable grades that I do without the inspiration of her accomplishments despite the challenges she faced.

The body of this model can be presented in a simple outline.

Thesis Statement The person I am today and want to become is a direct result of how my grandma has affected my family life, faith, and academics.

I. First, my grandma amazes me with the amount of unconditional love she provides for my family.

II. Secondly, my faith has been impacted immensely by my grandmother.

III. Third and finally, my approach to academics has been inspired by my grandma beyond compare.

Practice Your Skills

Listing Supporting Ideas

For the following thesis statement, list at least two supporting ideas that could be developed into two supporting paragraphs for the body of a composition. After you write each supporting idea, add at least two details you could use to develop that paragraph.

Thesis Statement Holidays have important meanings in American life.

