The Language of Power — *Pronouns*

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

See It in Action Sometimes usage that may sound natural in informal speech does not transfer well to formal writing. In speech you would be likely to say, for example: "No matter who you talk to, you get the same answer." In formal writing, though, you need to replace the subject form of the pronoun *who* with the object form, since in that construction the word serves as direct object. (See pages 716–725.) Elise Miller used the right choice in her essay on her grandmother.

> No matter whom she talks to, my grandma is open to everyone's opinions and thoughts on any topic.

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

Use It Read over your project text looking for the pronouns *who* and *whom*. Be sure that the subject forms of these pronouns are used in subject position and object forms in object position.



PROJECT PREP Drafting — ***The Body Paragraphs***

Draft the remainder of your composition, making sure that each paragraph is aligned with the thesis statement. Develop your ideas as fully as possible.

4 Unity, Coherence, and Clarity

Like a paragraph, a composition should keep to the subject, move smoothly from one idea to the next in a logical order, and make sense to the reader.

Unity

A composition has **unity** if none of the ideas wanders off the subject. Every sentence in each paragraph of the body should develop the main idea expressed in the paragraph's topic sentence. At the same time, every paragraph in the composition should develop the thesis statement.

You can find more information on unity on pages 82–83 and 134.

Coherence

A composition has **coherence** if the ideas follow in logical order and if transitions are used to connect those ideas.

You can find more information on coherence on pages 84–87 and 134.

Clarity

A composition has **clarity** if the meaning of the paragraphs, sentences, and words is clear. One way you can achieve clarity is by writing sentences that are not wordy or rambling. You can also add clarity to your paragraphs by making sure they are adequately developed. Using specific words and precise images also helps you make your writing clear.

You can find more information on clarity and adequate development on pages 80–81 and 133–134.

PROJECT PREP Revising *Using Feedback*

Bring your completed draft to your writing group. For each writer, provide feedback that enables the writer to present the subject's survival of threats as clearly as possible.

editing

Make the following wordy passage more "fuel efficient" by cutting out needless words and phrases.

> Ash trees, which grow straight and tall, face a new threat from a type of bug called the emerald ash borer.

5 Conclusion of a Composition

In the conclusion of a composition, you might summarize your supporting ideas and recall the main idea expressed in your thesis statement. As in the conclusion of a paragraph, you may also want to add an insight in the concluding paragraph of a composition. This concluding paragraph may be long or short, but it should end with a memorable sentence—the clincher. As the last sentence in your composition, the clincher sentence should leave as strong an impression as does the opening line of your introduction.

The paragraph below is the conclusion to the model composition about the heroic grandmother. Notice how it reinforces the main idea stated in the introduction: "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."

Writing Tip

The **concluding paragraph** completes the composition and reinforces the main idea.

STUDENT MODEL: *Conclusion*

Regardless of the struggles that my grandma has been through, she is still as courageous and restless as a fearless child. Sometimes I ponder how someone who is significantly older than me can be packed with so much energy. I hope that eventually I will develop the wisdom, strength, patience, love, and courage that my grandma possesses. After contemplating for almost sixteen years how she completes all the miraculous acts of generosity and grace that she does, I still am boggled by her surplus of amazing attributes. I am not sure that I will ever be able to live up to the gift from God that I call my grandmother, but someday I hope in every way to be just like her. For others, heroes can resemble anything from cartoon characters to celebrities, and may change over time, but for me my grandma is and always will be my hero.

PROJECT PREP Drafting *Conclusion*

Add a strong ending to your composition. Try to leave a lasting impression in the mind of your readers through the force of your final sentence. (See pages 78–79.)

Using a Six-Trait Rubric — Compositions

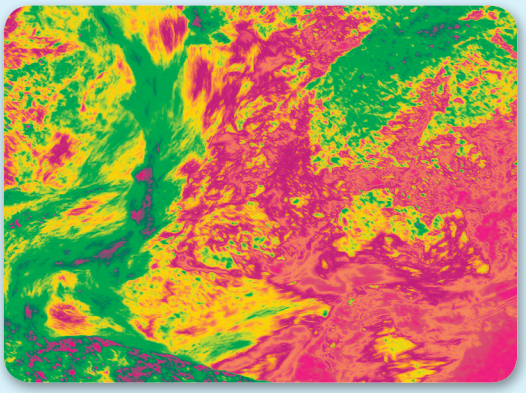
Ideas	**4** The text conveys an interesting idea with abundant supporting details and is well chosen for the purpose and audience.	**3** The text conveys a clear idea with ample details and suits the purpose and audience.	**2** The text conveys a main idea with some supporting details and suits the purpose and audience.	**1** The text does not convey a main idea and fails to suit the purpose and audience.
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 personal.	**3** The voice sounds natural and personal.	**2** The voice sounds mostly unnatural with a few exceptions.	**1** The voice sounds mostly unnatural.
Word Choice	**4** Words are specific, powerful, and precise.	**3** Words are specific and some words are powerful and precise.	**2** Some words are overly general.	**1** Most words are overly general.
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.

PROJECT PREP — Revising and Editing — *Final Draft*

Based on the feedback from your writing group, prepare a final, polished version of your essay. You might exchange papers with a writing partner for one final critique before you consider it done. When you are satisfied with your essay, publish it to the audience you targeted or in another appropriate way.

Writing Lab

Project Corner



Write Smart
Target Your Audience

Some of the possible audiences you could have chosen for your project are:

- other students
- the school's Science Club
- the television weather station
- the police

Find a partner who chose to write for the same audience you chose. Together, choose a different audience and discuss how your writing would need to change for that audience. Choose one paragraph each from each of your original essays and **rewrite that paragraph for your new audience**. Be prepared to read the original and the revision to the class and explain the changes you made and why you made them.

Speak and Listen Teach Street Smarts

In a small group, **develop a brief presentation** on how to stay safe on the streets. You could focus on keeping safe from criminals, or you could focus on safety issues related to transportation—biking, driving, crossing the streets. As you work on your presentation, make sure it contains solid information. However, think creatively about how to present it so that it will leave a lasting impression. After all the presentations, discuss with your classmates which were presented in the most creative way and what qualities made them stand out from the others.

Get Technical Produce a Public Service Announcement

With the group with whom you created your street smart presentation, use technology to **produce a public service announcement** that conveys the essence of your presentation. You can make a short video (see pages 480–485) or a Power presentation. Share your completed work with the class and ask for feedback.

Apply and Assess

In Everyday Life
Persuasive Letter

1. Your community is considering whether to build a new commuter railroad to a large office park where many people work. The train will go right through a residential neighborhood with homes, parks, and schools. ***Write a persuasive one-paragraph letter*** to a newspaper or blog, arguing either that the new railroad is a threat or that the failure to build the railroad is a threat to the community. Write a well-crafted paragraph that has a topic sentence, supporting ideas, and a conclusion.

In the Workplace Note to the Boss

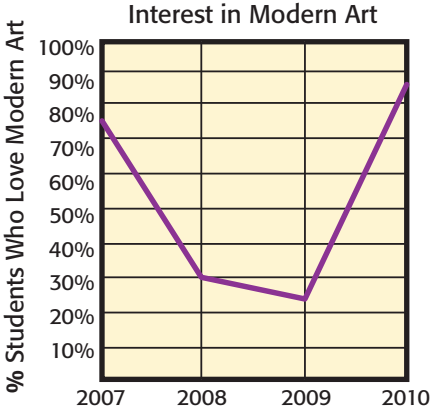
2. You work at a company that designs roller coasters. Your boss has asked everyone on the staff to submit a detailed note for a brand-new kind of coaster. Right now Ms. Drudge just wants rough ideas, so you are free to let you imagination run wild. You can use tunnels and loops, laser lights, or any other features. ***Write a note to your boss*** explaining why the company should build your fantasy coaster. Be sure to include specific details and effective transitions. Check your paragraphs for unity, coherence, and clarity.

Timed Writing Proposal for After-School Program

3. Using the line graph below, write a brief proposal to the director of the Modern Art Museum for an after-school art program and explain why it is a good idea. You have 15 minutes to complete your work.

Before You Write Consider the following questions: What is the subject? What is the occasion? Who is the audience? What is the purpose?

After You Write Evaluate your proposal using the rubrics on pages 81, 88, and 111.



Unit 2

Purposes of Writing

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Chapter 9	Writing About Literature	284

All writing tasks require a well-defined goal and a specific audience. Good movie reviews, for example, aim to summarize plot, analyze filmmaking technique, and give a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down." A review of the latest thriller will be written with teens and adults in mind, not young children. Writers tailor the style, tone, and content of each piece to specific goals and audiences. In this unit you will learn how to identify your purpose and your audience and keep a steady eye on both. Be sure, though, to find a seat in your own audience. If you aim to please yourself, good writing will follow.



Keep in mind that the person to write for is yourself. Tell the story that you most desperately want to read. —Susan Isaacs

CHAPTER 4

Personal Writing

A personal narrative expresses the writer's personal point of view on a subject drawn from the writer's own experience.

You encounter many examples of personal narratives, and you use personal narratives in different ways. Here are just a few examples.

- **A sports star writes an autobiography,** telling about the opportunities her career in soccer has given her.
- **Musicians reflect on the music they listened to while growing up** and the singers who influenced their own work for a magazine article.
- **An archaeology student working in Nepal writes letters to friends,** including stories about the foods she has tasted and the people she has met.
- **Teenagers share stories about their experiences volunteering in the community** and reveal the lessons they have learned from helping others.
- **A student writes a reflection** on what he learned by moving to a new neighborhood and entering a new school.

Writing Project Personal Narrative

Rebooting Your Life ***Tell a story of when you started over, either by your own choice or because you had to.***

Think Through Writing Many people have an experience of starting over. You might have started over when you moved to a new neighborhood, started in a new school, left old friends for new, or got yourself a fresh start in some other way. Think of a time when you started over. What did you leave behind? Did you do so voluntarily or not? What was the experience of starting over like? What was exciting, frightening, different, unusual, or welcome about the change? Write informally, focusing on recording your experience and emotions more than on correctness at this point in the process.

Talk About It Share your writing with your writing group. What is common to each experience? What is unique about each writer's story?

Read About It In the following narrative Ernesto Galarza describes moving from the *barrio*—that is, a Latino neighborhood—to a neighborhood with few Latinos. Think about his experience of starting over in light of your writing. Prepare to talk about it as if Galarza were a member of your writing group.

MODEL: Personal Narrative

From *Barrio Boy*

The New House

Ernesto Galarza

To make room for a growing family it was decided that we should move, and a house was found in Oak Park, on the far side of town where the open country began. The men raised the first installment for the bungalow on Seventh Avenue even after Mrs. Dodson explained that if we did not keep up the monthly payments we would lose the deposit as well as the house.

The first sentence states the setting for the rest of the story. Galarza's family is moving to a new home. Noting that it is on the "far side" of town suggests that it is going to be significantly different from his family's current home.

The real estate broker brought the sale contract to the apartment one evening. Myself included, we sat around the table in the living room, the gringo[1] explaining at great length the small print of the document in a torrent of words none of us could make out. Now and then he would pause and throw in the only word he knew in Spanish: "Sabe?"[2] The men nodded slightly as if they had understood. Doña[3] Henriqueta was holding firmly to the purse which contained the down payment, watching the broker's face, not listening to his words. She had only one question. Turning to me she said: "Ask him how long it will take to pay all of it." I translated, shocked by the answer: "Twenty years." There was a long pause around the table, broken by my stepfather: "What do you say?" Around the table the heads nodded agreement. The broker passed his fountain pen to him. He signed the contract and after him Gustavo and José. Doña Henriqueta opened the purse and counted out the greenbacks. The broker pocketed the money, gave us a copy of the document, and left.

1 **gringo:** An English-speaking foreigner, especially from North America.
2 **Sabe?:** You know?
3 **Doña:** Respectful term of address, used before women's first names.

The last thing I did when we moved out of 418L was to dig a hole in the corner of the backyard for a tall carton of Quaker Oats cereal, full to the brim with the marbles I had won playing for keeps around the *barrio*.[4] I tamped the earth over my buried treasure and laid a curse on whoever removed it without my permission.

Adding this story shows how attached Galarza felt to his old home. He apparently thought he might come back to it someday.

Our new bungalow had five rooms, and porches front and back. In the way of furniture, what friends did not lend or Mrs. Dodson gave us we bought in the secondhand shops. The only new item was an elegant gas range, with a high oven and long, slender legs finished in enamel. Like the house, we would be paying for it in installments.

It was a sunny, airy spot, with a family orchard to one side and a vacant lot on the other. Back of us there was a pasture. . . . On every side our windows looked out on family orchards, platinum stretches of wild oats and quiet lanes, shady and unpaved.

We could not have moved to a neighborhood less like the *barrio*. All the families around us were Americans. The grumpy retired farmer next door viewed us with alarm and never gave us the time of day, but the Harrisons across the street were cordial. Mr. Harrison loaned us his tools, and Roy, just my age but twice my weight, teamed up with me at once for an exchange of visits to his mother's kitchen and ours. I astounded him with my Mexican rice, and Mrs. Harrison baked my first waffle. Roy and I also found a common bond in the matter of sisters. He had an older one and by now I had two younger ones. It was a question between us whether they were worse as little nuisances or as big bosses. The answer didn't make much difference but it was a relief to have another man to talk with. . . .

In this paragraph, Galarza starts by emphasizing the differences between his old and new neighborhoods. He ends, though, by showing what he and Roy had in common.

I transferred to the Bret Harte School, a gingerbread two-story building in which there was a notable absence of Japanese, Filipinos, Koreans, Italians, and the other nationalities of the Lincoln School. It was at Bret Harte that I learned how an English sentence could be cut up on the blackboard and the pieces placed on different lines connected by what the teacher called a diagram.

4 ***barrio:*** neighborhood of Spanish-speaking residents

The idea of operating on a sentence and rearranging its members as a skeleton of verbs, modifiers, subject, and prepositions set me off diagramming whatever I read, in Spanish and English. Spiderwebs, my mother called them, when I tried to teach her the art.

My bilingual library had grown with some copies of old magazines from Mexico, a used speller Gustavo had bought for me in Stockton, and the novels my mother discarded when she had read them. Blackstone was still the anchor of my collection and I now had a paperback dictionary called *El inglés sin maestro*.[5] By this time there was no problem of translating or interpreting for the family I could not tackle with confidence.

It was Gustavo, in fact, who began to give my books a vague significance. He pointed out to me that with diagrams and dictionaries I could have a choice of becoming a lawyer or a doctor or an engineer or a professor. These, he said, were far better careers than growing up to be a *camello*,[6] as he and José always would be. *Camellos,* I knew well enough, was what the *chicanos*[7] called themselves as the worker on every job who did the dirtiest work. And to give our home the professional touch he felt I should be acquiring, he had a telephone installed.

It came to the rest of us as a surprise. The company man arrived one day with our name and address on a card, a metal tool box and a stand-up telephone wound with a cord. It was connected and set on the counter between the dining room and the parlor. There the black marvel sat until we were gathered for dinner that evening. It was clearly explained by Gustavo that the instrument was to provide me a quick means of reaching the important people I knew at the Y.M.C.A., the boy's band, or the various public offices where I interpreted for *chicanos* in distress. Sooner or later some of our friends in the ***barrio*** would also have telephones and we could talk with them.

"Call somebody," my mother urged me.

With the whole family watching I tried to think of some important person I could ring for a professional conversation. A name wouldn't come. I felt miserable

Like many personal narratives, Galarza's includes remembered feelings as well as events.

5 ***El inglés sin maestro:*** English without a Teacher.
6 ***camello*:** Camel.
7 ***chicanos*:** Mexican Americans.

and hardly like a budding engineer or lawyer or doctor or professor.

Gustavo understood my predicament and let me stew in it a moment. Then he said: "Mrs. Dodson." My pride saved by this ingenious suggestion, I thumbed through the directory, lifted the earpiece from the hook, and calmly asked central for the number. My sisters, one sitting on the floor and the other in my mother's arms, never looked less significant, but they, too, had their turn saying hello to the patient Señora[8] Dodson on the other end of the line.

8 ***Señora:*** Mrs.

Respond in Writing In your journal, write about Galarza's experiences. If you were he, how might you have coped with this new situation? How might the move change your life?

Develop Your Own Ideas Work with your classmates to gather information on starting over.

Small Groups: In your writing group, discuss the following questions: Why do people start over? How much choice do they have in the matter? What do they leave behind? What does the change accomplish for them? On the whole, is starting over a positive experience for someone?

Whole Class: Share your answers with the class while a student tabulates the small group contributions on the board. Discuss what both Galarza and your classmates think about what it means to start over, especially for a teenager.

Write About It You will next write a personal narrative about an experience in which you started over. You can choose from any of the possibilities below or others of your own devising.

Possible Topics	Possible Audiences	Possible Forms
• moving to a new neighborhood • starting in a new school • living in a new home following a parent's divorce or remarriage • starting new friendships after old ones have ended	• other teenagers whose parents decide to move or are forced to move • teenagers in your school • parents of such children • either your new or old group of friends	• an article in a teen magazine • a guide to your school's incoming students • an article in a parenting magazine • a letter to a friend or relative

1 Getting the Subject Right

During prewriting, your mind should be free to roam through your memories and reflect on your experiences. As you think freely, you will discover ideas that you might develop into subjects of personal narratives. For example, you may recall an important conversation, a surprise, a disappointment, or a decision that had fateful consequences. In the following excerpt from a novel, the narrator recalls how she learned her personal history as a child.

MODEL: Subject of a Personal Narrative

From time to time, my mother would fix on a certain place in our house and give it a good cleaning. If I was at home when she happened to do this, I was at her side, as usual. When she did this with the trunk, it was a tremendous pleasure, for after she had removed all the things from the trunk, and aired them out, and changed the camphor balls, and then refolded the things and put them back in their places in the trunk, as she held each thing in her hand she would tell me a story about myself. Sometimes I knew the story first hand, for I could remember the incident quite well; sometimes what she told me had happened when I was too young to know anything; and sometimes it happened before I was even born. Whichever way, I knew exactly what she would say, for I had heard it so many times before, but I never got tired of it.

—Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John*

Drawing on Personal Experience

To think of subjects for a personal narrative, look through your **journal** entries and use freewriting, inquiring, or brainstorming to stimulate your thinking. You may also find the following sources helpful in jogging your memory.

IDEA SOURCES FOR SUBJECTS OF PERSONAL NARRATIVES	
letters	family stories
photographs	favorite things
souvenirs or mementos	albums, scrapbooks, or old journals

Exploring the Meaning of an Experience

American novelist John Irving wrote, "Every writer uses what experience he or she has. It's the translating, though, that makes the difference." In this context, *translating* means "finding meaning in an experience." That insight could be the main idea of a personal narrative. The expression of your main idea then serves the same function as the thesis statement in other kinds of writing.

MODEL: Expressing the Meaning of an Experience

As she told me the stories, I sometimes sat at her side, leaning against her, or I would crouch on my knees behind her back and lean over her shoulder. As I did this, I would occasionally sniff at her neck, or behind her ears, or at her hair. She smelled sometimes of onions, sometimes of sage, sometimes of roses, sometimes of bay leaf. At times I would no longer hear what it was she was saying; I just liked to look at her mouth as it opened and closed over words, or as she laughed. How terrible it must be for all the people who had no one to love them so and no one whom they loved so, I thought.

—Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John*



As Kincaid makes clear, the narrator's experience taught her the importance of loving and being loved. This insight is the main idea of her narrative.

PROJECT PREP *Prewriting* ***Choosing a Subject***

Review what you have already written. Is the subject one you want to pursue in a fully developed narrative? If not, brainstorm, talk with others, or try another strategy that usually works to help you think of a better subject.

Think Critically

Interpreting Experience

Think about an event in your life that seems important to you now. Why is it important? What is the meaning of this event for you? Such questions may be hard to answer because when you are experiencing events, it is often difficult to stand back from them to see their significance. Only after some time has passed can you gauge their meaning. When you reexamine an experience to interpret its meaning, you might begin by completing a checklist like the one below.



Checklist for Interpreting Experience

Experience: I unexpectedly received an award in sixth grade for showing the greatest improvement.

This experience is important to me now because it

helped me see something in a new way.
changed the way I felt about someone.
✓ changed the way I felt about myself.

I will always remember this experience because it

strongly affected my emotions.
✓ gave me new knowledge or understanding.
had important consequences.

This experience is worth writing about because

✓ it will be familiar to many readers.
it is unique or extraordinary.
writing will help me to understand it better.

Interpretation: This event boosted my self-confidence. It was the first time I realized I might amount to something. I became a better student because of it.

Thinking Practice

Think of any memorable experience and interpret it by developing a checklist like the preceding one.

2 Refining Your Subject

When you have decided on a subject and its meaning for your personal narrative, you need to think about your writing purpose and your audience.

Considering Purpose

The overall purpose of personal narratives is to express thoughts and feelings in a way that will interest readers and win their appreciation. However, you may include paragraphs with various purposes to achieve specific aims within the broader purpose.

You can learn more about other kinds of paragraphs on pages 90–97.

PURPOSE IN PERSONAL WRITING

Overall Purpose: to express thoughts and feelings about participating in an outdoor survival program

Specific Aims	Kinds of Paragraphs
to explain why I felt ashamed	informative
to tell a funny story	narrative
to help readers see a mountain I climbed	descriptive

Writing Tip

Determine your purpose and audience when writing a personal narrative to help ensure that you capture and hold your readers' interest.

Considering Your Audience

Also take into account the interests and knowledge of your readers so you can make sure they will understand your purpose and meaning. Whether you write for friends, classmates, or wider audiences, your audience will partly determine the kinds of details you select to include in your narrative.

PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Reflecting on Your Experience*

In your writing group, discuss the following questions about your subject:

- Did the experience you are writing about help you see something in a new way, change the way you felt about others, or change how you understood yourself? Explain.
- Is this experience memorable because it strongly affected your emotions, gave you new knowledge or understanding, or had important consequences? Explain.
- Will this experience, when written about, hold the interest of a reader? Explain.

3 Developing and Organizing Details

Selecting Details

When you write a personal narrative, you want your readers to understand the event, experience it with you, and share your feelings about it. For this sharing to occur, you must give your readers ample details *showing* the event rather than just *telling* about it (for clarity) to bring your experience to life. **Descriptive details** help readers visualize the experience you describe. **Sensory details** engage all the senses of your readers and vividly convey your ideas, making your audience see, hear, smell, and feel the impression that you are trying to create. **Background details** provide a context so your readers can understand what is happening.

The following guidelines will help you choose the details to include in your personal narrative.

HERE'S HOW

Guidelines for Selecting Details

- Choose details that develop your main idea.
- Choose details that are appropriate for your purpose.
- Choose details that are appropriate for your audience.
- Use factual details to provide background information.
- Use vivid descriptive and sensory details to bring your experience to life.

Practice Your Skills

Identifying Different Types of Details

Reread parts of *Barrio Boy* on pages 117–120 and find details the author uses to make his experience real to you. List five examples under each category of details identified in the above guidelines.

Organizing Details

After you select your details, group them into categories and decide on an appropriate order. Each category becomes the basis of a supporting paragraph. The examples on the next page show common ways of organizing details in personal narratives.

You can find more information on types of order on pages 221–222.

ORGANIZING DETAILS

Kind of Details	Type of Order
events in a story, narrated beginning to end	chronological order
descriptive details to help readers visualize a person, object, or scene	spatial order
background details and details explaining the meaning of an experience	order of importance or interest
sensory details and details leading up to an impression or interpretation of an experience	developmental order

Practice Your Skills

Identifying Types of Order

Study paragraphs 4, 5, and 9 in *Barrio Boy* on pages 118–119. Identify the type of order used in each paragraph by writing *spatial, order of importance,* or *developmental*.

PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Noting Details*

In your writing group, discuss the details of your chosen experience that stand out to you in retrospect. Were there distinctive smells, tastes, sounds, views, and physical feelings? Did certain emotions arise in you? What differences were there In how people looked and acted around you? Based on your discussion, take notes that you could use in the next draft of your narrative.



The Power of Language

Appositives: Who or What?

Details that elaborate on a person, place, or thing that may be unknown to your reader will strengthen your personal narrative. You can add such details in the form of appositive phrases. An **appositive** is a noun or pronoun phrase that identifies or adds identifying information to a preceding noun. (See pages 860–861.) In the following sentence from *Barrio Boy*, for example, readers would not know who the Harrisons are without the appositive phrase, which comes in the middle of the sentence. Notice that the appositive phrase is set off by commas.

Appositive Phrase

The Harrisons, the people across the street, were cordial to us.

In a similar way, Galarza uses an appositive to elaborate on his school with descriptive details. This time it comes at the end of the sentence. Notice that a comma separates the appositive phrase from the rest of the sentence.

Appositive Phrase

I transferred to Bret Harte School, a gingerbread two-story building.

Try It Yourself

1. Write a sentence about your neighbors that imitates the structure and punctuation of the first example sentence above. Elaborate on the subject of your sentence with an appositive phrase.
2. Write a sentence about your school that imitates the structure and punctuation of the second sentence, with elaboration at the sentence end.
3. Write one sentence with each of the above structures on your project topic. Use the sentences in your draft if you can, and try creating other similar sentences. You can always add more details with appositives when you revise.

Punctuation Tip

Use **two commas** to enclose an appositive **in the middle** of a sentence. Use **one comma** to separate an appositive from the rest of the sentence when it appears **at the end.**

Personal Narrative Writing Drafting

When you draft your personal narrative, you transform your groupings of details into sentences and paragraphs. Personal writing is less formal than other kinds of writing. Unlike informative writing, for example, a personal narrative is written from the first-person point of view and does not have a formal thesis statement. Like all compositions, however, a personal narrative should have a clear main or controlling idea, an attention-getting introduction, a well-organized body, and a strong conclusion.

1 Drafting the Introduction

In a personal narrative, the introduction lets readers know what they are about to hear, who you are, and how you feel about your subject. The introduction should also interest readers enough so that they want to continue reading.

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for the Introduction of a Personal Narrative

- Make clear the subject, purpose, and main idea of your personal narrative.
- Set the tone to reveal the writer's point of view.
- Capture the readers' interest.

You can find more information on writing introductions on pages 101–102 and 224–226.

Creating a Tone

The **tone** of a personal narrative reveals the writer's attitudes toward the subject and the audience. The words and expressions you use give readers clues to your intentions. When you set the tone of your personal narrative, decide how you want readers to feel. Do you want them to laugh or cry, to feel nostalgic or reflective? Do you want them to feel sympathetic toward you and the insight you gained through your experience? The models on the next page show two different tones, each suited for its subject.



MODEL: Lighthearted Tone

It was four o'clock on a humid afternoon and the household was in an uproar. J.C. was riling up the dog, which had reached a fever pitch of hysterical barking. My sisters in the next room were each listening to a different rock station on their radios, and Gramps had raised the volume on the television set to compensate for all the noise. Amidst the nerve-racking roar of sports fans, the brain-numbing basses of the two rock numbers, and the dog's pandemonium, I grabbed my guitar and headed for the roof. Peace at last, peace at last, peace at last!

STUDENT MODEL: *Edgy Tone*

"My name is Gretchen, and I am anorexic." Never in a million years could I have imagined I would be standing in group therapy saying this bold statement to a bunch of ignorant strangers. I was better than this; I am a model. I always told myself that the skinnier you are, the more beautiful you appear. Models aren't fat; models aren't even a size two! Where did it all begin? Eighth grade, when I decided my future career.

—Lindsay Kerr, Canton South High School, Canton, Ohio

Practice Your Skills

Analyzing Tone

Reread each of the models of tone. Give examples of words and phrases that create the tone and explain how each captures the readers' interest.

Practice Your Skills

Determining Tone

In *Barrio Boy,* the writer's tone is one of optimism toward his family and his own growing confidence and accomplishments. Work with a partner to make a list of the words, phrases, and sentences from *Barrio Boy* that best communicate this optimistic tone.

PROJECT PREP Drafting *Writing the Introduction*

Produce a draft of the beginning of your narrative. If a consistent tone is appropriate, think about what tone you wish to adopt and make sure that you stick with it throughout the composition. Set the stage for the details you have Identified in your writing group discussions that will help you tell your story.

2 Drafting the Body

Use the groupings that you arranged to convert the details of your experience into paragraphs. As you write, make your interpretation of your experience clear and use vivid, well-organized details to hold your readers' attention.

HERE'S HOW Guidelines for Drafting the Body

- Make sure that each supporting paragraph has a topic sentence that supports the main idea.
- Write your ideas and details in logical order.
- Use transitions between sentences and paragraphs to give your personal narrative coherence.
- Include vivid details and sensory words to bring your experience to life.
- Add new details you discover if they will help you develop your main idea.

The writer who used the lighthearted tone in the introduction (page 129) drafted the following body for a short personal narrative.

MODEL: Body of a Personal Narrative

My escape to the rooftop started to work right away because I was listening only to my sounds for a change. As I sang along with my guitar, I could hear my own voice—however weak it may be. If I fingered the wrong strings or frets, then at least they were my mistakes. Whatever mistakes I make, my music always sounds good to me, because when I concentrate on playing the right notes and chords, the rest of the world seems far away.

The greatest value of escaping with my guitar, however, was the chance it gave me to express my feelings. The tunes I play depend on my mood. Sometimes I play simple, quiet ballads or sad, bluesy refrains. Other times I strum loud sets, joyous or angry, until my fingertips sting. On the rooftop that humid afternoon with my guitar, I felt as if I had had a good long talk with an understanding friend.

PROJECT PREP Drafting *Writing the Body*

Meet with your writing group to review your introductions. As you read one another's drafts, ask whether the text is appropriate for the audience and the form that the writer has selected. After the discussion, draft the body of your narrative.

3 Drafting the Conclusion

The conclusion of your personal narrative should emphasize the meaning of your experience. You might give your readers a sense of completion and make your last sentence as memorable as your first. You might also end your personal narrative in any of the following ways or a combination of them.

HERE'S HOW

Ways to End a Personal Narrative

- Summarize the body.
- Restate the main idea in new words.
- Add an insight that shows a new or deeper understanding of the experience.
- Add a striking new detail or memorable image.
- Refer back to ideas in the introduction to bring your personal narrative full circle.
- Appeal to the readers' emotions.

The following conclusion ends the personal narrative about the rooftop escape. This conclusion refers back to the introduction on page 129 and restates the main idea.

MODEL: Conclusion of a Personal Narrative

By the time I came down from the roof, the television did not seem so loud anymore, and the dog seemed like his old self again. I even smiled when I heard my sisters' noisy radios. Although I came back to reality, I was glad to know that my guitar would be there for me the next time I needed to escape.

Practice Your Skills

Analyzing a Conclusion

Reread the concluding paragraphs of *Barrio Boy* on pages 119–120. Using the suggestions on page 131, identify the techniques Galarza uses to end his personal narrative. Then write responses to these questions, using examples from the narrative: What makes this an effective conclusion? How does the author reinforce the significance of his family's leaving the *barrio*?

PROJECT PREP Drafting *Writing the Conclusion*

Review the ways to end a personal narrative above. Then write a conclusion to your narrative and share it with your writing group. Listen and take notes on feedback.

In the Media

Newsmagazines

A 19-year-old wins a multimillion dollar lottery. Despite his winnings, however, his life begins to fall apart. He no longer seeks a career. His friends treat him differently. This story is reported on a television newsmagazine, featuring interviews with the winner, his friends, and his family. There is a dramatic reenactment of an emotional scene with his destitute grandmother.

In another newsmagazine, a story appears about a report showing that a high percentage of lottery-ticket buyers are from the low-income group and that some in this group spend as much money on tickets as they do on groceries. Critics of the report say that in many states the money raised by lotteries goes back into low-income areas, often to help support schools. The story contains interviews with lottery-ticket purchasers, authors of the study, lottery officials, and elected representatives.

Where is the line between news and entertainment? When is a personal story the appropriate subject of a respectable newsmagazine? How each story is handled will answer those questions. Some people feel, however, that a personal story is only news if it is one example of many others like it and it touches on a matter that can be acted upon in the public arena (changing the law, for example).

Media Activity

Few stories are completely news or completely entertainment. To learn to see the distinctions, watch a story as it is covered on a television newsmagazine this week. Are the camera angles noteworthy? Is there any music? How does the way the shots are edited convey meaning? Then rate the story on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being pure entertainment and 10 being a pure news story. Write a paragraph explaining your rating.



Revising a personal narrative involves attention to three important points:

- Have you developed your personal narrative in sufficient detail?
- Have you made your ideas and feelings clear?
- Have you maintained a consistent tone?

1 Checking for Development of Ideas

In a strong personal narrative, the reader can clearly see and hear what you want to share. Be sure to include enough specific supporting details to give substance to your ideas. The following strategies will help.

Strategies for Revising for Adequate Development

Events	Close your eyes and slowly visualize the experience you are writing about. Write down the details as you "see" them in your mind's eye.
People	Visualize each person you are writing about. Start by visualizing the head and face of each person and slowly move down to the feet. Write down details as you "see" them.
Place	Visualize the setting for your narrative. Start at the left and visualize to the right, then from the foreground to the background.
Feelings	Imagine yourself repeating the experience you are writing about. Focus on your thoughts and feelings as you relive the experience.

PROJECT PREP Revising *Using Feedback*

Based on feedback from your writing group, revise your draft to include more details that help develop your ideas. Use the strategies in the chart above to elaborate on your experience and bring into sharp focus details that you remember.

editing

Make the following wordy passage more "fuel efficient" by combining the sentences and cutting out needless words.

Only one time did I feel comfortable that first day. The time I felt comfortable was the time I entered the bandroom.

2 Checking for Unity, Coherence, and Clarity

Use the checklist below to help you evaluate your personal narrative for unity, coherence, and clarity.

Evaluation Checklist for Revising

Checking Your Narrative

- ✓ Does your narrative fulfill its purpose? (page 124)
- ✓ Is your narrative appropriate for your audience and occasion? (pages 15–16 and 124)
- ✓ Does your story have all the features of the narrative genre? (pages 121–127)
- ✓ Does the beginning introduce the story by making a general statement, setting the scene, or capturing attention? (pages 128–129)
- ✓ Does the body tell the story event by event and answer the questions *Who? What? Where? Why? When?* and *How?* (page 130)
- ✓ Does each paragraph support the main idea in some way, giving it unity? (pages 82–83 and 134)
- ✓ Do the words you've used reflect your distinctive writing style and connect with the reader?
- ✓ Does your narrative have an organizational strategy with appropriate transitions to give it clarity? (pages 125–126 and 130)
- ✓ Did you use first person if you are a character in the story? Did you use third person if your story is about something that happened to someone else? (pages 173 and 181–182)
- ✓ Does your conclusion end the story by summarizing the events or making a strong point about the story? (page 131)

Checking Your Sentences

- ✓ Did you combine related sentences to avoid choppy sentences? (pages 55–59)
- ✓ Did you vary the length and beginnings of your sentences? (pages 60–62)
- ✓ Did you write concise sentences? (pages 63–66)

Checking Your Words

- ✓ Did you use precise, specific words? (pages 46–54)
- ✓ Did you use words that appeal to the senses? (pages 146–148)

PROJECT PREP *Revising* ***Peer Evaluation***

Meet with a partner to read one another's narratives. Each should check for unity, coherence, and clarity in the other student's writing. Make suggestions for the final copy.

Now you are ready to edit, or polish, your writing.

The Language of Power *Run-ons*

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

See It in Action The following passage is by Jamaica Kincaid. The incorrect version is a fused, or run-on, sentence. The correct version is the way she wrote it.

Incorrect At times I would no longer hear what it was she was **saying I** just liked to look at her mouth as it opened and closed over words, or as she laughed.

Correct At times I would no longer hear what it was she was **saying; I** just liked to look at her mouth as it opened and closed over words, or as she laughed.

Without the semicolon, the sentence rambles and is hard to follow. Kincaid used a semicolon to show how two sentences are clearly separate, but linked. You can think of the period part of the semicolon as separating the sentences, but the comma part as linking them.

Remember It Record this rule and example in the Power Rule section of your personalized checklist.

Use It Read through your personal narrative and look for run-on sentences. Use semicolons and conjunctions to fix any that you find.

PROJECT PREP Editing *Final Copy*

Based on your writing partner's suggestions, prepare a final copy of your narrative.

TIME OUT TO REFLECT

How have your editing skills progressed? Compare the edited version of your personal narrative with an edited piece of writing you did earlier in the year. Can you see new ways to strengthen your writing? In your Personalized Editing Checklist, summarize your plan for continuing to develop your editing capabilities.

Using a Six-Trait Rubric

Personal Narratives

Evaluate your personal narrative with the following rubric.

Ideas	**4** The text conveys a creative main idea which is well supported through the details of the narrative.	**3** The text conveys a main idea which is supported through the details of the narrative.	**2** The text relates a personal experience but does not draw meaning from it.	**1** The text does not relate a personal experience.
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 personal.	**3** The voice sounds natural and personal.	**2** The voice sounds mostly unnatural with a few exceptions.	**1** The voice sounds mostly unnatural.
Word Choice	**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.	**1** Most words are overly general.
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. All Power Rules are followed.	**3** Punctuation, usage, and spelling are mainly correct, and all Power Rules are 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.

Personal Narrative Writing — Publishing

Complete the writing process by sharing your writing with your intended audience or with someone who was part of your experience or may have an interest in it.

On page 120, you were presented with a number of possibilities for the format of a personal narrative:

- an article in a teen magazine
- a guide to your school's incoming students
- an article in a parenting magazine
- a letter to a friend or relative

Writing Tip

Be sure to shape your writing so that it fits the expectations of the **genre** you chose as your medium of expression.

As you have read, the format of your personal narrative, or any writing you do, is a factor in how you craft your writing.

For example, if you were writing your personal narrative for a teen magazine, such as *Teen Ink* (either the print version or the Web site, www.teenink.com), you would take some time to understand the format of the articles published in that magazine and read a number of the published pieces to get an idea of what Teen Ink editors and readers might expect. If instead you were writing your personal narrative as part of a guide for incoming students, you would probably be more informational and less literary about how you tell your story. You might emphasize the lesson learned from it more than the details of the story itself as a way to help others benefit from your experience.



PROJECT PREP — Publishing — *Final Copy*

Publish your narrative in an appropriate form.

Writing Lab

Project Corner



Get Visual
Make a Storyboard

Imagine that you have an opportunity to create a television show, film, or video game based on your narrative. In your writing group, select one narrative from which to **develop a storyboard** that could serve as the basis for one of these productions. Then work with your group members to create the storyboard. Show your proposed idea scene by scene.

Make History Narratives as Primary Sources

The narratives of former slaves are essential documents for learning not only about the lives of slaves but also about the race relations in the United States and about American social and political history. When the Civil War ended and slavery was abolished, many former slaves faced the challenge of starting over in a society from which they had in many important ways been excluded. **Research some of these narratives**, which you can find at the Web site of the Library of Congress and the University of Virginia. **Report to the class on your research,** focusing on how the narrative or narratives you read address the theme of starting over.



Experiment
Change Contexts

Assume you work in a place where someone Is hired as a new employee or transferred to a new job or project within the company. **Write a one-page summary** of advice you would give this person about starting over.

In Everyday Life
Narrative Friendly Letter

1. Your cousin lives on a llama farm in a town with one stoplight. You are a city-dweller who rarely sets foot on grass. Your mother has invited your cousin to spend the summer with your family. In every picture you've ever seen of her, your cousin has been wearing rubber boots and a straw hat. You are worried that she might not fit into life in the big city. ***Write a friendly letter*** to your cousin preparing her for city life. Describe your daily routine and facts about city life of which she might be unaware. Use as much detail as possible to give your cousin an idea of what to expect. (You can find information on writing friendly letters on pages 440–442.)

In the Workplace Journal Entry

2. You have recently been promoted to head of the design department at the video game company where you work. You are so excited that you can barely restrain yourself from jumping up and down on your desk and shouting out all of your ideas for new educational video games. ***Write a journal entry*** that describes your feelings about receiving your big promotion. Also describe your plans for the new award-winning educational video games you want to design. Use vivid details and be sure to arrange them in a logical and coherent order. (You can find information on writing journal entries on pages 12–15 and 121.)

Timed Writing Personal Narrative

3. Write a short essay addressed to your classmates describing a time when you were excited at a gathering of family, classmates, or friends, at a sporting competition, or at a public event. What happened? What did you see, hear, or feel? What did you do? In trying to explain the situation, be sure that your details convey the tone you want. Use chronological order, spatial order, or order of importance to organize your details. You have 20 minutes to complete your work. (For help budgeting time, see pages 420–421.)

Before You Write Consider the following questions: What is the situation? What is the occasion? Who is the audience? What is the purpose?

After You Write Evaluate your work using the six-trait evaluation form on page 136.

CHAPTER 5

Descriptive Writing

Descriptive writing creates a vivid picture in words of a person, an object, or a scene by stimulating the reader's senses.

A clear description can be a gift. Think of how important accurate, vivid descriptions are in each of the cases listed below.

- **A research scientist documents the appearance** of a cell as part of an experiment to find a cure for a serious illness.
- **A student traveling abroad describes the sights and sounds** of a foreign city in e-mails sent home.
- **A fiction writer sets the scene** and creates lifelike characters.
- **A nature writer records the activities** of animals in the wild.

Writing Project — Descriptive

Awestruck ***Follow the directions below to write a description of an unforgettable experience.***

Think Through Writing Have you ever had an experience so vivid, so gripping, and so life-changing that every second stands out to you in great detail? Write freely for five minutes as a way to recall such an event, trying to include important details that stand out to you even in retrospect.

Talk About It In a group of three to five students, discuss what you have written. Focus on what made this experience so powerful to you and describe the details that stand out to you the most.

Read About It In the following essay, author Annie Dillard describes an encounter with a weasel. She describes this event in extraordinary detail, even writing as though she had *become* the weasel in order to understand how it experiences the world. Based on her imaginative encounter, she concludes that humans can also seize their purpose in life tenaciously and with conviction.

MODEL: Descriptive Writing

From

Living Like Weasels

Annie Dillard

A weasel is wild. Who knows what he thinks? He sleeps in his underground den, his tail draped over his nose. Sometimes he lives in his den for two days without leaving. Outside, he stalks rabbits, mice, muskrats, and birds, killing more bodies than he can eat warm, and often dragging the carcasses home. Obedient to instinct, he bites his prey at the neck, either splitting the jugular vein at the throat or crunching the brain at the base of the skull, and he does not let go. One naturalist refused to kill a weasel who was socketed into his hand deeply as a rattlesnake. The man could in no way pry the tiny weasel off, and he had to walk half a mile to water, the weasel dangling from his palm, and soak him off like a stubborn label.

Dillard uses a specific example to demonstrate her general point of how weasels refuse to let go when they bite. This rhetorical strategy foreshadows the main point of the essay.

Comparing the weasel to a stubborn label is a *simile*, a type of figurative language that Dillard uses often.

And once, says Ernest Thompson Seton—once, a man shot an eagle out of the sky. He examined the eagle and found the dry skull of a weasel fixed by the jaws to his throat. The supposition is that the eagle had pounced on the weasel and the weasel swiveled and bit as instinct taught him, tooth to neck, and nearly won. I would like to have seen that eagle from the air a few weeks or months before he was shot: was the whole weasel still attached to his feathered throat, a fur pendant? Or did the eagle eat what he could reach, gutting the living weasel with his talons before his breast, bending his beak, cleaning the beautiful airborne bones?

Through visual details, Dillard creates a clear picture of the eagle in the mind of the reader.

I have been reading about weasels because I saw one last week. I startled a weasel who startled me, and we exchanged a long glance.

Near my house in Virginia is a pond—Hollins Pond. It covers two acres of bottomland near Tinker Creek with six inches of water and six thousand lily pads. There is a fifty–five mph highway at one end of the pond, and a nesting pair of wood ducks at the other. Under every bush is a muskrat hole or a beer

can. The far end is an alternating series of fields and woods, fields and woods, threaded everywhere with motorcycle tracks—in whose bare clay wild turtles lay eggs.

One evening last week at sunset, I walked to the pond and sat on a downed log near the shore. I was watching the lily pads at my feet tremble and part over the thrusting path of a carp. A yellow warbler appeared to my right and flew behind me. It caught my eye; I swiveled around—and the next instant, inexplicably, I was looking down at a weasel, who was looking up at me.

This paragraph and the one before help set the scene for the encounter.

Weasel! I'd never seen one wild before. He was ten inches long, thin as a curve, a muscled ribbon, brown as fruitwood, soft—furred, alert. His face was fierce, small and pointed as a lizard's; he would have made a good arrowhead. There was just a dot of chin, maybe two brown hairs' worth, and then the pure white fur began that spread down his underside. He had two black eyes I did not see, any more than you see a window.

Dillard describes the weasel in detail. What are some of the words she uses to convey precise images?

The weasel was stunned into stillness as he was emerging from beneath an enormous shaggy wild rose bush four feet away. I was stunned into stillness, twisted backward on the tree trunk. Our eyes locked, and someone threw away the key.

Our look was as if two lovers, or deadly enemies, met unexpectedly on an overgrown path when each had been thinking of something else: a clearing blow to the gut. It was also a bright blow to the brain, or a sudden beating of brains, with all the charge and intimate grate of rubbed balloons. It emptied our lungs. It felled the forest, moved the fields, and drained the pond; the world dismantled and tumbled into that black hole of eyes. If you and I looked at each other that way, our skulls would split and drop to our shoulders. But we don't. We keep our skulls.

Dillard examines the moment when she and the weasel looked at each other, not only observing but also recalling feelings.

He disappeared. This was only last week, and already I don't remember what shattered the enchantment. I think I blinked, I think I retrieved my brain from the weasel's brain, and tried to

memorize what I was seeing, and the weasel felt the yank of separation, the careening splashdown into real life and the urgent current of instinct. He vanished under the wild rose. I waited motionless, my mind suddenly full of data and my spirit with pleadings, but he didn't return.

Please do not tell me about "approach–avoidance conflicts." I tell you I've been in that weasel's brain for sixty seconds, and he was in mine. Brains are private places, muttering through unique and secret tapes—but the weasel and I both plugged into another tape simultaneously, for a sweet and shocking time. Can I help it if it was a blank?

What goes on in his brain the rest of the time? What does a weasel think about? He won't say. His journal is tracks in clay, a spray of feathers, mouse blood and bone: uncollected, unconnected, loose-leaf, and blown.

I would like to learn, or remember, how to live. I come to Hollins Pond not so much to learn how to live as, frankly, to forget about it. That is, I don't think I can learn from a wild animal how to live in particular—shall I suck warm blood, hold my tail high, walk with my footprints precisely over the prints of my hands?—but I might learn something of mindlessness, something of the purity of living in the physical senses and the dignity of living without bias or motive. The weasel lives in necessity and we live in choice, hating necessity and dying at the last ignobly in its talons. I would like to live as I should, as the weasel lives as he should. And I suspect that for me the way is like the weasel's: open to time and death painlessly, noticing everything, remembering nothing, choosing the given with a fierce and pointed will.

In this paragraph, Dillard states the purpose of her essay: to explore what she might learn about living from reflecting on the weasel she saw.

I missed my chance. I should have gone for the throat. I should have lunged for that streak of white under the weasel's chin and held on, held on through mud and into the wild rose, held on for a dearer life. We could live under the wild rose wild as weasels, mute and uncomprehending. I could very calmly go wild. I could live two days in the den,

As she did in the first paragraph, Dillard uses a short, punchy sentence to start the paragraph with a strong, clear point.

curled, leaning on mouse fur, sniffing bird bones, blinking, licking, breathing musk, my hair tangled in the roots of grasses. Down is a good place to go, where the mind is single. Down is out, out of your ever-loving mind and back to your careless senses. I remember muteness as a prolonged and giddy fast, where every moment is a feast of utterance received. Time and events are merely poured, unremarked, and ingested directly, like blood pulsed into my gut through a jugular vein. Could two live that way? Could two live under the wild rose, and explore by the pond, so that the smooth mind of each is as everywhere present to the other, and as received and as unchallenged, as falling snow?

Here is another example of a vivid simile. This one compares time and blood.

We could, you know. We can live any way we want. People take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—even of silence—by choice. The thing is to stalk your calling in a certain skilled and supple way, to locate the most tender and live spot and plug into that pulse. This is yielding, not fighting. A weasel doesn't "attack" anything; a weasel lives as he's meant to, yielding at every moment to the perfect freedom of single necessity.

I think it would be well, and proper, and obedient, and pure, to grasp your one necessity and not let it go, to dangle from it limp wherever it takes you. Then even death, where you're going no matter how you live, cannot you part. Seize it and let it seize you up aloft even, till your eyes burn out and drop; let your musky flesh fall off in shreds, and let your very bones unhinge and scatter, loosened over fields, over fields and woods, lightly, thoughtless, from any height at all, from as high as eagles.

The last two paragraphs provide a conclusion to this essay. What did Dillard learn from reflecting on the weasel?

Respond in Writing In your journal, write about what makes Dillard's story effective. What sorts of details does she use that help you to experience this encounter along with her?

Develop Your Own Descriptive Details Work with your classmates to identify the types of details that characterize Dillard's description.

Small Groups: Break into small groups of four or five students. Based on your journal writing, identify the details she uses and characterize them according to the senses of touch, smell, sight, sound, and taste.

Whole Class: Share your answers with the class while a student writes each one on a large sheet of paper or on the board. At the end of the discussion, you will have a list of answers from your entire class to the question: What sorts of details make Dillard's writing so memorable and gripping?

Write About It You will next write a description of your own that provides details that bring your subject to life for your readers. The following table provides possible ways in which you may write about this topic.

Possible Topics	Possible Audiences	Possible Forms
• an encounter with an animal • your first date • an experience that frightened you • something that happened at work	• teenagers sitting around a campfire • close friends • the general public • other teenagers	• an oral telling • a feature story for a local newspaper • a blog entry • an article in a teen magazine



Elements of Descriptive Texts

Analyzing

Like a descriptive paragraph (see pages 92–93) a descriptive essay or other type of text consists of three main parts.

HERE'S HOW

Structure of a Descriptive Text

- The **introduction** captures attention, introduces the subject, and often suggests an overall impression of the subject, or **tone**.
- The **body of supporting paragraphs** presents details, especially sensory details, that bring the subject to life.
- The **conclusion** reinforces the overall impression and gives a feeling of closure.

Vivid language plays an important role in each part of a descriptive text.

1 Specific Details and Sensory Words

A main impression or **tone** is at the core of good descriptive writing. This tone—no matter what it is—comes to life when you use your supporting details to *show* the subject rather than simply *tell* about it. When you *show* readers, chances are you are using strong specific details and words that appeal to the senses. You are making your readers see, hear, smell, and feel the impression you are creating. These are the flesh and blood of descriptive writing.

Writing Tip

Use **specific details** and **sensory words** to bring your description to life.

Writer Barry Lopez is especially good at painting word pictures. In the following selection, he describes a wolf moving through the northern woods.



MODEL: Sensory Details

He moves along now at the edge of a clearing. The wind coming down-valley surrounds him with a river of odors, as if he were a migrating salmon. He can smell ptarmigan and deer droppings. He can smell willow and spruce and the fading sweetness of fireweed. Above, he sees a hawk circling, and farther south, lower on the horizon, a flock of sharp-tailed sparrows going east. He senses through his pads with each step the dryness of the moss beneath his feet, and the ridges of old tracks, some his own. He hears the sound his feet make. He hears the occasional movement of deer mice and voles. Summer food.

Toward dusk he is standing by a creek, lapping the cool water, when a wolf howls—a long wail that quickly reaches pitch and then tapers, with several harmonies, long moments to a tremolo. He recognizes his sister. He waits a few moments, then, throwing his head back and closing his eyes, he howls. The howl is shorter and it changes pitch twice in the beginning, very quickly. There is no answer.

—Barry Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*

One reason this passage is so richly descriptive is that Lopez is really painting two pictures. First he recreates the wolf's experience from the wolf's point of view. Then Lopez presents the wolf from the perspective of an imaginary human observer. The most important reason this description succeeds so well, however, is the writer's generous use of specific details and sensory words.

SPECIFIC SENSORY DETAILS

Sights	edge of a clearing, hawk circling, flock of sharp-tailed sparrows
Sounds	his own footsteps, occasional movement of deer mice and voles, howl of other wolf with its distinctive sound, his own shorter howl with its own distinctive changes of pitch
Smells	ptarmigan and deer droppings; willow, spruce, and fireweed
Taste	cool water
Feelings	wind, dryness of moss and ridges of old tracks through pads of his feet, throwing head back, closing eyes

Practice Your Skills

Identifying Specific Details

The next two paragraphs continue Lopez's description of the wolf. Read them carefully, and then answer the questions.

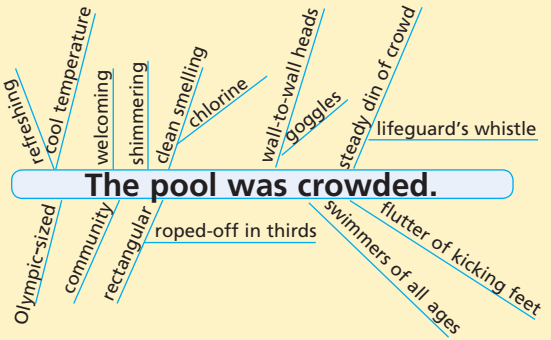
The female is a mile away and she trots off obliquely through the trees. The other wolf stands listening, laps water again, then he too departs, moving quickly, quietly through the trees, away from the trail he had been on. In a few minutes the two wolves meet. They approach each other briskly, almost formally, tails erect and moving somewhat as deer move. When they come together they make high squeaking noises and encircle each other, rubbing and pushing, poking their noses into each other's neck fur, backing away to stretch, chasing each other for a few steps, then standing quietly together, one putting a head over the other's back. And then they are gone, down a vague trail, the female first. After a few hundred yards they begin, simultaneously, to wag their tails.

In the days to follow, they will meet another wolf from the pack, a second female, younger by a year, and the three of them will kill a caribou. They will travel together ten or twenty miles a day, through the country where they live, eating and sleeping, birthing, playing with sticks, chasing ravens, growing old, barking at bears, scent-marking trails, killing moose, and staring at the way water in a creek breaks around their legs and flows on.

1. Compare the use of specific details and sensory details in this passage and in the previous passage. Which is richer in detail? Explain your answer.
2. Why do you think Lopez wrote such a long sentence (sentence 5) about the wolves' first meeting? What effect does it have?
3. The final sentence contains a long list of things the wolves do. Which of these activities is the most specific? Why do you think Lopez places that detail where it is?

PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Sensory Details*

To help you develop specific details, make a sensory diagram of a general idea related to your subject. Here's how a **sensory diagram** might look on the general idea of a crowded swimming pool:



2 Figurative Language

Many writers rely on imaginative comparisons to help pump life into their descriptions. These can be either similes or metaphors, or just general comparisons. Here are a few examples from selections about animals.

Metaphor	The wind coming down-valley surrounds him with **a river of odors**. . . . (The wind is compared to a river.)
Simile and Metaphor	He was ten inches long, **thin as a curve, a muscled ribbon,** brown as fruitwood, soft-furred, alert. (The weasel's thinness is compared to a curve with the word *as* signaling the simile; the weasel is also said metaphorically to be a ribbon.)
General Comparison	Hyenas eat the prey whole and cough back, like owls, the indigestible parts, such as hair and hooves. (The hyenas' eating habits are compared to those of owls.)

Practice Your Skills

Understanding Figurative Language

Read the following passage from a description of an eclipse of the sun. Write a few sentences explaining the comparison John Updike, the author, is making. Try "translating" the imaginative language into everyday descriptive language.

> The eclipse was to be over 90 percent in our latitude and the newspapers and television had been warning us not to look at it. I looked up, a split second Prometheus, and looked away. The bitten silhouette of the sun lingered redly on my retinas. The day was half-cloudy, and my impression had been of the sun struggling, amid a furious huddle of black and silver clouds, with an enemy too dreadful to be seen, with an eater as ghostly and hungry as time.

PROJECT PREP *Prewriting* ***Figurative Language***

Further develop the details that you charted in the previous project prep activity. Make a T-chart with the most important details in the left-hand column. In the right-hand column, brainstorm possible comparisons you might make to each detail using figurative language. Then share your T-charts with your writing group and provide feedback and constructive criticism to each author about the effectiveness of the figurative language. Use that feedback to improve your figures of speech and consider where and how you might use them in your description.

Some people think of writing as a product: a sentence, a paragraph, an essay. Yet writing is a process, a tool. Even though the term *prewriting* suggests an activity that takes place *before* writing starts, you should do your prewriting work *in writing*. Often you cannot really focus your thoughts until you put your ideas on paper.

1 Purpose, Subject, Audience, and Genre

Purpose

There *are* some purely descriptive texts—those whose purpose is to describe a subject as completely as possible. More often, though, writers use description in the service of some other writing purpose: to enrich a story they are narrating, to add interest and life to an explanation, to give heart and soul to an argument. Writing a description will give you the skills you need for enriching any essay you write.

Subject

To Dillard in "Living Like Weasels," locking eyes with a weasel taught a profound life lesson. A good subject for a description does not have to be about one of life's profound meanings, but it does have to have real meaning to *you* if it is to be any good.

The following guidelines can help you choose the best subject for your description.

HERE'S HOW

Guidelines for Choosing a Subject

- Choose a subject that matters to *you*. Your interest will carry over to the reader.
- Choose a subject that you can develop with descriptive details such as sensory words and figurative language.
- Choose a subject you know well enough to describe better than anyone else.

Audience

A naturalist writing for other naturalists would use scientific language and concepts that might not be familiar to the general reading public. A reader who does not know your school would need more background for a description of your campus than would a fellow student. Readers who do not know much about hyenas or weasels need some factual information to get a clear understanding. The following questions can help you shape your ideas for a specific audience.

HERE'S HOW

Questions for Analyzing an Audience

- What does my audience already know about my subject?
- What background information, if any, do I need to provide to make the description more meaningful?
- What attitude does my audience have toward my subject?
- Do I want to reinforce that attitude or try to change it?

Genre

What genre will you be using to express your thoughts? How you craft your writing depends in part on the answer to that question. For example, if you are writing a feature story for a local newspaper, you would probably use somewhat formal language and have a clear, traditional structure. If you are writing for your blog, your language might be more casual, your structure might be looser, and you may include links to Web sites with additional information and with images. Understanding your chosen genre will help you develop a crystal-clear subject.

PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Refining Your Subject*

So far you have written freely, charted details, and explored ways to use figurative language to help your reader experience what you experienced. Use all your previous work to home in now on a very focused subject that will be suitable for your purpose, audience, and genre. If you are writing about an unforgettable experience, for example, choose the exact experience you will write about, your purpose (will you be persuading someone to be more careful than you were, perhaps, or will you simply be relating an incident?), and your genre. Write a paragraph outlining your writing goals.



2 Creating an Overall Impression

If you tried to record every detail about your subject, the resulting writing would be a meaningless overload. Readers depend on writers to filter out the details they do not need to know so they can focus on what is important. To know what is important, you need to develop the overall impression you want to convey. What is the general feeling you have about your subject?

The overall impression Dillard wants to convey about the weasel is a fierce but positive one that it lived according to its nature, and that it pursued its nature and its living single-mindedly. Although she does not state this position in a thesis statement at the beginning of the essay, she does provide factual examples that make this point by way of introducing her subject.

Writing Tip

Filter your **details** and develop your **overall impression** to make your writing meaningful for a reader.

Practice Your Skills

Determining Overall Impressions

1. What overall impression does Barry Lopez create in his description of the wolves? (See page 147.)
2. Explain your answer to question 1 with examples from Lopez's writing.

PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Creating an Overall Impression*

1. In your writing group, share your prewriting work. Then discuss the dominant, overall impression you want to leave in the reader's imagination. In light of that overall impression, are you considering any details for the essay that may need to be filtered out because they suggest a different feeling?
2. Using the feedback, write a paragraph identifying the overall impression you want to create, the details that will help you create it, and the emotions you want to arouse in your readers.

In the Media

Product Packaging

The jolly faces of elves, a sports hero making a slam dunk, a fresh, ripe strawberry—all of these appear or have appeared on cereal boxes to help create a quick overall impression. Designers of product packaging work hard to choose an image that will appeal to potential buyers—an image that conveys a message. What message does this product convey?



Even if a busy shopper does not take the time to note the words about a free surprise, the colorful pieces of cereal suggest a kid-friendly cereal. Also, the smiling clown says, as if shouting from the shelf, "Children love this cereal!"

Media Activity

Try designing a package for a cereal product you know well. What is the main message you want to convey? What specific images and designs can you use to convey that message quickly? Describe the front of your box. Also draw a sketch and share it with your class.

3 Developing a Description

With your overall impression in mind, you can begin to flesh out the details you will use to develop your description. Consider your audience as well. With both of these in mind, use the strategies below for developing descriptive details.

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Developing a Description

- Use your memory and direct observation, if appropriate, to list the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings you associate with your subject. Making a chart like the one on page 148 may help.
- Brainstorm for a list of imaginative comparisons you might make to help readers understand your description. These could be metaphors, similes, or other types of comparisons.
- Gather any factual details and information you might need in order to provide background for your readers or to help set the stage for your overall impression.
- If you are describing a scene, draw a picture or a map so you can clearly see the relationship of one part of the subject to another.
- Apply your filter: Remember to test each detail against your desired overall impression to make sure it adds rather than detracts.

PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Developing Descriptive Skills*

For practice in harnessing descriptive details, try this classroom game:

1. Take a common object that several people in the class have with them and describe it so that a different student may identify it from the whole group of similar objects, based on the details of the description. Several students, for instance, might have watches, bracelets, earrings, pens, wallets, and scarves. Students should be grouped according to the common objects they will describe (all the scarf describers in one group, for example).
2. Individually, write the clearest, most meticulous description of your object as possible, without using overt descriptors such as brand names.
3. Place all of the objects that the group members have described on a desk along with your compositions. Each composition will then be given to a member of a different group who will try to find the corresponding object.
4. Students who could not find the correct object should provide feedback on what was lacking in the description.

Think Critically

Observing

A movie camera simply takes in images and places them on the film. This is an example of **objective observation:** observing facts, without opinion or perspective.

Most of the time, however, our observations are colored by our feelings and beliefs. In a hot, crowded lobby, the only details we notice are those that reinforce our discomfort. This is **subjective observation.**

Henry David Thoreau, an American author and philosopher, pointed out that there is no such thing as purely objective observation. We are always filtering what we see through our human prejudices and opinions. He writes, ". . . what the writer . . . has to report is simply some human experience."

Nonetheless, there may be some things about your subject that you can observe objectively. The following chart shows both objective and subjective observations Annie Dillard made about her weasel soulmate.

OBJECTIVE DETAILS	SUBJECTIVE DETAILS
size	quality of eyes
shape	alertness
colors	fierceness

If you compare the details, you can see that the objective ones can be verified by some tangible measure. The subjective details have no proof, but they are the details that make Dillard's essay as descriptive as it is.

Thinking Practice

Make a chart like the one above to record objective and subjective observations of an object in nature. Compare your work to that of other students.



4 Organizing a Description

How you organize your description depends on the goal or aim of your writing and the nature of your details. The chart below shows some good possibilities.

WRITING AIM	KINDS OF DETAILS	TYPE OF ORDER
to **describe** a person, place, object, or scene	sensory details	spatial (pages 20 and 85)
to **recreate** an event	sensory details, events	chronological (pages 20 and 221)
to **explain** a process or how something works	sensory and factual details, steps in a process, how parts work together	sequential (page 86)
to **persuade**	sensory and factual details, examples, reasons	order of importance (pages 20 and 221)
to **reflect**	sensory and factual details, interpretations	order of importance (pages 20 and 221)

Practice Your Skills

Analyzing Organization

Reread the paragraphs by Barry Lopez on page 148 about the wolves that meet. What type of organization does he use? Identify some of the transitions he uses to make the order clear.

PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Organizing Details*

Review your writing purpose. In light of that, and considering the details you have chosen, what is the best way to organize your essay? Share your decision with your writing group and invite feedback. Then sketch out an outline or graphic organizer showing the main parts of your essay and roughly what each part will contain.

The Power of Language

Adjectival Phrases: Adjectives Come Lately

Adjectives can come after the word they modify (see pages 538–541), and so can phrases—groups of words (see pages 610–630). Here are some examples from "Living Like Weasels" by Annie Dillard (pages 141–144):



Brains are private places, muttering through unique and secret tapes.

He was ten inches long, thin as a curve, a muscled ribbon, brown as fruitwood, soft-furred, alert.

I was stunned into stillness, twisted backward on the tree trunk.

There was just a dot of chin, maybe two hairs' worth, and then the pure white fur began that spread down his underside.

He sleeps in his underground den, his tail draped over his nose.

I waited motionless, my mind suddenly full of data and my spirit with pleadings, but he didn't return.

Try It Yourself

Write sentences imitating the structure of each of these sentences. If you can, add various kinds of descriptive phrases as you draft your own descriptive piece. Then later, see if there are other places where you might add details in phrases like these.

Punctuation Tip

These "extra detail" phrases are always set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma—or by two commas if they occur somewhere within the sentence. In that case, the interrupting modifier is enclosed by the two commas.

Descriptive Writing Drafting

If you have taken your prewriting work seriously, by now most of the hard work of writing your description is over. During the drafting stage, concentrate on the flow of your ideas, always thinking about your reader. Keep the following points in mind as you draft your description.

HERE'S HOW

Tips for Drafting a Description

- Experiment with interest-catching introductions. (Review the selections in this chapter for ideas.)
- Suggest your overall impression early in your writing to frame your description for readers.
- Follow your outline when drafting the body of your description, but feel free to make improvements as they occur to you.
- Use fresh, vivid, descriptive words that appeal to the senses as you write.
- Use transitions appropriate to the type of order you have chosen (pages 5 and 86) to help your reader get smoothly from one point to the next.
- Look for a strong way to end your description and consider referring back to an idea in your introduction to tie together the writing.

PROJECT PREP Drafting *Pulling It Together*

Draft your description, using the preceding tips along with what you have learned from the writing you have already. Write your description so that it is vivid for your readers and so that they can see, taste, feel, hear, and smell the situation just as you did. Be sure to use transitions to guide the reader along the way.



Descriptive Writing — Revising

Use the checklist below as a tool for revising your description.

Evaluation Checklist for Revising

Checking Your Introduction

- ✓ Does your introduction capture the reader's attention? (page 146)
- ✓ Does your introduction suggest an overall impression of your subject? (page 146) Does your introduction set the right tone for your subject and audience? (pages 146 and 150–151)
- ✓ Does your introduction provide enough background information for your audience? (pages 150–151)

Checking Your Body Paragraphs

- ✓ Have you supported your overall impression with appropriate details? (pages 152–153)
- ✓ Did you include well-chosen sensory words and details and avoid generalities? (pages 146–148)
- ✓ Is each paragraph within the body well developed, with a clear main idea and supporting details? (pages 146–149)
- ✓ Did you use comparisons and figurative language effectively? (page 149)
- ✓ Did you move logically from one paragraph to the next in a clear organization and with helpful transitions? (page 158)

Checking Your Conclusion

- ✓ Does your conclusion reinforce the overall impression you are trying to make? (pages 152 and 158)
- ✓ Do you refer back to your introduction to give a sense of completion? (page 158)
- ✓ Did you end with a memorable phrase or image that might linger in the reader's mind? (pages 110 and 158)

Checking Your Words and Sentences

- ✓ Are your words specific and lively, stimulating all the senses? (pages 46–54 and 146–149)
- ✓ Are your sentences varied? (pages 55–61)
- ✓ Have you used adjectives to bring your description alive for readers? (page 157)
- ✓ Have you varied the placement of adjectives for variety? (page 157)

PROJECT PREP — Revising — *Peer Response*

Revise your draft using the checklist above. Then share your draft with your writing group. Take notes on the suggestions they offer, and then revise further based on their feedback.

When you are happy with your latest revision, spend some time polishing it. During the editing stage, carefully go over your essay, looking for any errors. Consult your Personalized Editing Checklist to avoid repeating errors you are prone to make.

The Language of Power *Of v. Have*

Power Rule: Use the contraction *'ve* (not *of*) when the correct word is *have,* or use the full word *have.*

See It in Action In speech, *have* is often contracted to *'ve*, which sounds like *of*, as in phrases like *would've* or *should've*. Instead of writing the incorrect *would of* or *should of*, write these phrases as contractions, or write out the full word *have*.

> His face was fierce, small and pointed as a lizard's; he would have made a good arrowhead.

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

Use It Look for every instance of *would, should, could, may, might*, or *must* and see if it is followed by *of* instead of *'ve* or *have*. Fix that incorrect form whenever it occurs.

As you check for correct grammar, usage, and mechanics, also edit your work to eliminate needless words and phrases.

editing

Make the following wordy passage more "fuel efficient" by cutting out needless words and phrases.

> Rapidly moving toward me was a wolf that was gaining on me with every step as it chased me down the road.

Using a Six-Trait Rubric

Descriptive Writing

You can use the following rubric to do a final evaluation of your descriptive writing. Strive for a score of "4" for each trait.

Ideas	**4** The text conveys an overall impression with abundant vivid details and is well chosen for the purpose and audience.	**3** The text conveys an overall impression with ample details and suits the purpose and audience.	**2** The text conveys an overall impression with some vivid details and suits the purpose and audience.	**1** The text does not convey an overall impression and fails to suit the purpose and audience.
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 personal.	**3** The voice sounds natural and personal.	**2** The voice sounds mostly unnatural with a few exceptions.	**1** The voice sounds mostly unnatural.
Word Choice	**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.	**1** Most words are overly general.
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.

Online Collaboration

In addition to face-to-face collaboration during revising and editing, you can also collaborate online with a variety of tools. One of the most popular is Google Docs. With a (free) Gmail or Google account, anyone can create and share documents online. The chart below shows the basic procedure for using Google Docs for collaborative writing, revising, and editing.

HERE'S HOW

Using Google Docs for Collaborative Writing

- Navigate to http://docs.google.com and create an account if you don't already have one.
- Sign into Google Docs and select the Create New menu. From there choose the type of file you want to create (document, presentation, spreadsheet, form, or folder).
- If you choose Document, a blank page will appear that looks—and acts—like any other word processing program. Start typing.
- You can use the word processing features to format your text as you wish, and to delete and rearrange just as you would in a regular word processing program.
- When you save your work, you can name it whatever you want. You can also invite other people to share the file. Select Share and enter the e-mail addresses of the people you want to invite. They will receive an e-mail message from Google giving them instructions on how to access the file.
- You can decide when you are sharing your documents if your collaborators will be able to edit the text or just read it.
- More than one person can work at the same time on the same document, even if they are on opposite sides of the world.
- Google Docs keeps track of who works on each document so you can see who made which changes.
- You can use a built in spell checker to help you edit your text.
- You can publish your finished work with a simple click and share it with readers.



PROJECT PREP Editing *Polishing*

Using all the tools at your disposal, edit your descriptive essay. Make full use of the features on your word processor, such as the spell checker or the grammar checker. Also use the help of your writing group members. Read over one another's essays looking for any mistakes in grammar, usage, mechanics, or spelling.

Descriptive Writing — Publishing

You have been considering your purpose, audience, and occasion throughout the process of writing your descriptive essay and have been making revisions accordingly. The medium in which you publish writing also has a bearing on the style and format of your work. Consider the requirements of each of the following types of publications.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ASSORTED PUBLISHING FORMATS	
Blog	• style is often more casual than printed text • may be written to invite interaction from readers in the form of comments to the blog • reader-friendly formatting techniques, such as bullet lists and a clear heading structure, assist in reading from the computer screen • graphics may be added to enhance the message • hyperlinks lead to related stories
Magazine or newspaper feature article	• article's style and tone need to fit with the style and tone of the publication. For example, an article in a history magazine would likely need to be somewhat formal. • in some two-column magazines paragraphs tend to be short • graphics often accompany the article
Letter	• has standard parts: salutation, body, and closing • often uses a personal tone and style, addressing one reader
Diary	• generally has very personal tone and informal language • no set format

PROJECT PREP Publishing *Final Copy*

Consider how your chosen publishing medium (see pages 145 and 163) might affect the format of your final copy. Make any necessary adjustments, and then publish your descriptive essay.

TIME OUT TO REFLECT

In your Learning Log, write an analysis of how you have improved in writing descriptions. Also note what you think you need to work on to make further progress.

Writing Lab

Project Corner



Speak and Listen

Make Sense

Do an oral interpretation of your composition and **present a dramatic reading** that amplifies the sensory description in your writing. (For more on speaking and listening skills, see pages 457–468.)

Get Technical

Multimedia Presentation

Create a multimedia presentation based on your descriptive essay. Use features of the application that allow the five senses to figure prominently in the description. Use audio, video, and any other media that will help convey your experience.

Think Critically

Draw Conclusions from Settings

Work with a partner. Remember or watch again the openings of five of your favorite movies. What do the first few minutes of each movie establish as the overall impression or tone? What details contribute to this tone?



Next think about the movie as a whole. What is the relationship between the overall impression established at the beginning of each movie and the theme of that movie? In other words, **draw conclusions about the meaning of the descriptive setting** that establishes the framework for the rest of the story.

In Everyday Life

A Descriptive Letter

1. You are on vacation in Hawaii and are spending the day scuba diving. Unfortunately you knock your camera overboard while you are putting on your fins and goggles. Once underwater, you are amazed by the color of the water and the marine life that you see, and you regret not having your camera. ***Write a letter*** describing your experience to your friend Gina, who has never gone swimming in the ocean. Paint a written picture for her, including descriptions of what you saw, what it felt like to be underwater with the fish, and your excitement at being there. Try using similes and metaphors in your description. (You can find information on writing friendly letters on pages 440–442.)

In Spoken Communication

A Descriptive Phone Call

2. All of your friends have tickets to a rock concert tonight. You could not get a ticket. As you are walking home, a stretch limousine pulls up next to you. The back window rolls down and suddenly you are face to face with the artist who will be performing, giving him directions to the concert hall. ***Improvise a telephone conversation*** with your best friend describing the experience of meeting the artist. Use colorful words that will make your best friend see, hear, smell, and feel what you are describing. (You can find information on informal conversations on pages 43–45.)

Timed Writing

Descriptive Article

3. Your English class is creating a travel book with articles describing interesting places. The articles are to describe the terrain, weather, and architecture of places as vividly as possible. Write an article describing an amazing place you have visited. It does not have to be an exotic, far-away location—it can be a place in or near your hometown. Include specific details and vivid sensory words and figurative language to create an overall impression with your description. You have 20 minutes to complete your work. (For help budgeting time, see pages 420–421.)

Before You Write Consider the following questions: What is the situation? What is the occasion? Who is the audience? What is the purpose?

After You Write Evaluate your work using the six-trait evaluation rubric on page 161.

CHAPTER 6

Creative Writing

Stories, plays, and poems provide an opportunity for writers to express perceptions and points of view that they might not be able to express otherwise. They enable people to think about old issues in new ways. They give "voice" to new ideas and the unexplored.

Here are just some of the forms in which the creative power of stories, plays, and poems can be found in the real world.

- **People read stories for entertainment** in magazines, books and online and see stories performed in movies and on television.
- **People write poems** in journals to express their deepest feelings and to think about their problems and joys.
- **Parents and child-care workers read stories to children** to help them go to sleep.
- **Theater groups present plays** in community centers and senior centers.
- **Campers tell one another scary stories.**
- **Older people tell young people stories about the histories of their families** or communities.

Writing Project — Story, Scene, and Poem

Point of View ***Write a story about a conflict between people who view an event differently. When you are done, write the same story as a play or poem.***

Think Through Writing Think of a situation, either real or imagined, in which two or more people view the same situation from very different perspectives. It's often said, for instance, that a car accident is viewed differently by everyone who observes it. Your situation need not be as dramatic as a car accident. It may be a difference in how you and your parents view something you've done, how a student and teacher interpret the student's behavior, or a similar sort of conflict you have experienced yourself or seen your friends go through. Write

informally about such a situation and how the two different parties' points of view affect their interpretation and their interactions with one another.

Talk About It In a group of three to five students, discuss the situations you have each written about. Undoubtedly, you have sympathies more with one side than the other. With your classmates, do your best to elaborate each perspective so that it is understood. That is, try to sketch in greater detail who the two people might be, what their positions and perspectives are, and how they might express their point of view in words or actions to each other.

Read About It In the following model, writer Ernest Hemingway tells a story from the perspective of a father trying to comfort his son. The father and son view the son's condition from very different points of view and project very different outcomes. Read this story and consider the ways in which a single condition or event may be viewed from different perspectives.

MODEL: Short Story

A Day's Wait

Ernest Hemingway

He came into the room to shut the windows while we were still in bed and I saw he looked ill. He was shivering, his face was white, and he walked slowly as though it ached to move.

"What's the matter, Schatz?"

"I've got a headache."

"You better go back to bed."

"No. I'm all right."

"You go to bed. I'll see you when I'm dressed."

But when I came downstairs he was dressed, sitting by the fire, looking a very sick and miserable boy of nine years. When I put my hand on his forehead I knew he had a fever.

"You go up to bed," I said, "you're sick."

"I'm all right," he said.

When the doctor came he took the boy's temperature.

"What is it?" I asked him.

In the first paragraph, Hemingway begins to establish the main conflict in the story. The boy, Schatz, is ill and struggling to get healthy.

What do you think the father's short, direct sentences say about his personality?

"One hundred and two."

Downstairs, the doctor left three different medicines in different colored capsules with instructions for giving them. One was to bring down the fever, another a purgative, the third to overcome an acid condition. The germs of influenza can only exist in an acid condition, he explained. He seemed to know all about influenza and said there was nothing to worry about if the fever did not go above one hundred and four degrees. This was a light epidemic of flu and there was no danger if you avoided pneumonia.

The entrance of the doctor into the story moves the plot forward. It establishes the boy's temperature and that his illness is not dangerous.

Back in the room I wrote the boy's temperature down and made a note of the time to give the various capsules.

"Do you want me to read to you?"

"All right. If you want to," said the boy. His face was very white and there were dark areas under his eyes. He lay very still in the bed and seemed very detached from what was going on.

I read aloud from Howard Pyle's Book of Pirates; but I could see he was not following what I was reading.

"How do you feel, Schatz?" I asked him.

"Just the same, so far," he said.

I sat at the foot of the bed and read to myself while I waited for it to be time to give another capsule. It would have been natural for him to go to sleep, but when I looked up he was looking at the foot of the bed, looking very strangely.

"Why don't you try to go to sleep? I'll wake you up for the medicine."

"I'd rather stay awake."

After a while he said to me, "You don't have to stay in here with me, Papa, if it bothers you."

"It doesn't bother me."

"No, I mean you don't have to stay if it's going to bother you."

I thought perhaps he was a little light-headed and giving him prescribed capsules at eleven o'clock I went out for a while.

By going out, the father shows that he thinks the illness is not dangerous without having to say this directly.

It was a bright, cold day, the ground covered with a sleet that had frozen so that it seemed as if all the bare trees, the bushes, the cut brush and all the grass and the bare ground had been varnished with ice. I took the young Irish setter for a little walk up the road and along a frozen creek, but it was difficult to stand or walk on the glassy surface and the red dog slipped and slithered and I fell twice, hard, once dropping my gun and having it slide away over the ice.

We flushed a covey of quail under a high clay bank with overhanging brush and I killed two as they went out of sight over the top of the bank. Some of the covey lit in trees, but most of them scattered into brush piles and it was necessary to jump on the ice-coated mounds of brush several times before they would flush. Coming out while you were poised unsteadily on the icy, spongy brush they made difficult shooting and I killed two, missed five, and started back pleased to have found a covey close to the house and happy there were so many left to find on another day.

At the house they said the boy had refused to let anyone come into the room.

"You can't come in," he said. "You mustn't get what I have."

I went up to him and found him in exactly the position I had left him, white-faced, but with the tops of his cheeks flushed by fever, staring still, as he had stared, at the foot of the bed.

I took his temperature.

"What is it?"

"Something like a hundred," I said. It was one hundred and two and four tenths.

"It was a hundred and two," he said.

"Who said so?"

"The doctor."

"Your temperature is all right," I said. "It's nothing to worry about."

"I don't worry," he said, "but I can't keep from thinking."

"Don't think," I said. "Just take it easy."

"I'm taking it easy," he said and looked straight ahead. He was evidently holding tight onto himself about something.

"Take this with water."

"Do you think it will do any good?"

"Of course it will."

I sat down and opened the Pirate book and commenced to read, but I could see he was not following, so I stopped.

"About what time do you think I'm going to die?" he asked.

At this point, Schatz expresses the central issue in the story. Because of a misunderstanding, he thinks he is going to die.

"What?"

"About how long will it be before I die?"

"You aren't going to die. What's the matter with you?"

"Oh, yes, I am. I heard him say a hundred and two."

"People don't die with a fever of one hundred and two. That's a silly way to talk."

"I know they do. At school in France the boys told me you can't live with forty-four degrees. I've got a hundred and two."

He had been waiting to die all day, ever since nine o'clock in the morning.

"You poor Schatz," I said. "Poor old Schatz. It's like miles and kilometers. You aren't going to die. That's a different thermometer. On that thermometer thirty-seven is normal. On this kind it's ninety-eight."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely," I said. "It's like miles and kilometers. You know, like how many kilometers we make when we do seventy miles in the car?"

"Oh," he said.

But his gaze at the foot of the bed relaxed slowly. The hold over himself relaxed too, finally, and the next day it was very slack and he cried very easily at little things that were of no importance.

In the conclusion to the story, the boy is getting well, but the aftermath of the fear he felt continues.

Respond in Writing Write freely about how the two characters view the same situation. What is different in their perspectives?

Develop Your Own Story Ideas Work with your classmates to develop ideas that you might use in writing a story about two characters who see the same situation in very different ways.

Small Group: Discuss the writing you have done. Answer the following questions to help think of details for each author's story.

Questions for Thinking of Details

- What is the setting of the story? In what ways does the setting affect what happens in the story?
- What is the nature of the problem that is viewed differently by the two main characters?
- How is the situation viewed by one of the two characters?
- How is the situation viewed by the other main character?
- How, if at all, are the different perceptions resolved in the story?

Whole Group: Take part in a class discussion to see how different members of the class constructed characters who see the same situation in different ways.

Write About It You will next write a short story about two people who view the same situation in different ways. You can choose from any of the following possible topics, audiences, and forms.

Possible Topics	Possible Audiences	Possible Forms
• a parent and teenage son or daughter view the teenager's behavior in different ways • two friends view the same situation in different ways • two enemies see the same situation in different ways • a police officer and citizen view the same situation in different ways	• parents • teenagers • a teacher • a judge	• a short story • a narrative poem • a television or movie script • a graphic novel

Analyzing a Story

A **short story** is a fictional account of characters resolving a conflict or situation.

Your purpose in writing a short story is to create a piece of fiction that will entertain your reader. In the process you will be using both your narrative skills and your descriptive skills to express yourself. In a short story, you tell what happens to a character or characters who try to resolve a conflict or problem. As the narrative unfolds, you describe the characters, places, events, and objects in order to give the reader a clear picture of what happens.

You can learn more about narrative and descriptive writing on pages 90–93, 116–165.

Elements of a Short Story

All short stories have three main sections: a beginning, a middle, and an end. Usually in the beginning of a story, the writer provides all the necessary background information that readers will need to understand and to enjoy the story. For example, readers will find out where the story takes place, who the main characters are, and what problem, or **conflict,** the main character has to solve or overcome. The middle of the story then develops the plot; that is, the writer relates—usually chronologically—what happens to the characters as a result of the conflict and how the characters react to those events. The ending of the story tells the outcome or shows how the **resolution** of the central conflict is resolved.

For information about how the elements of a short story contribute to its meaning, turn to pages 297–298.

Engaging Plot and Central Conflict

The **plot**—the sequence of events leading to the outcome or point of the story—is the story's core. The plot tells what happens as the characters meet and struggle to resolve a central conflict. This conflict can come from within a character, such as a conflict of conscience; between characters, such as a conflict between friends; or between characters and the outside world, such as a struggle against the forces of nature. The plot usually begins with an event that triggers the central conflict. Once the central conflict is revealed, the plot develops more quickly, bringing the story to a **climax,** or high point. After resolving the conflict (or explaining why it remains unresolved), the story ends. If a story ends too abruptly, the resolution does not seem complete. In a well-developed resolution, the various strands of the plot are woven together and the future of the characters can be imagined.

Believable Characters

Most short stories focus on one main character who has or faces the conflict or on two main characters whose relationship is often the source of the conflict. The other characters in the story—the minor, or supporting, characters—either help or hinder the main character in resolving the crisis. In the best short stories, characters are colorful, believable, and memorable to readers in some way. Authors develop characters through the actions the characters take, the words they speak, and the words the narrator and others speak about them in the story.

Setting

The setting of a story is the environment in which the action takes place. It is like the backdrop of scenery and the props on a stage set. The setting also includes the time during which the story occurs. One of the functions of a setting is to create a **mood**—the overall feeling that the story conveys. The mood of the setting might reflect the story's theme. A neglected park at dusk, for instance, might make a tale of suspense more suspenseful. An author might also plan settings that either match or contrast with the main character's mood. For example, a confused character might be lost at sea in a dense fog or might wander around in a perfectly ordered formal garden.

Narrator

The person who tells a story is the narrator. Readers see the events of a story through the eyes of the narrator, or from the narrator's **point of view.** The following chart describes the different points of view from which a story can be told.

POINT OF VIEW	NARRATOR'S ROLE IN THE STORY
First-Person	Participant in the action; relates the events as he or she sees them; uses pronouns such as *I, me, we, us,* and *our*
Third-Person Objective	Does not participate in the action; relates the words and actions of characters but not thoughts or feelings; uses pronouns such as *he, she, they, him, her,* and *them*
Third-Person Omniscient ("All-Knowing")	Does not participate in the action; relates the thoughts and feelings of all the characters as well as their words and actions

Each point of view has certain advantages. For example, the third-person objective narrator can relate two events happening simultaneously in different places. The omniscient narrator can relate not only simultaneous events but also all of the characters' thoughts and feelings; that is, the inner life of the characters as well as the outer action. In the following excerpt, the narrator reports the characters' thoughts and feelings.

MODEL: Third-Person Omniscient Point of View

Neither [Mr. nor Mrs. Delahanty] wanted, in the midst of their sorrow for the good man whose life was ending, to enter into any discussion of Cress [their daughter]. What was the matter with Cress? What happened to her since she went away to college? She, who had been open and loving? And who now lived inside a world so absolutely fitted to her own size and shape that she felt any intrusion, even that of the death of her own grandfather, to be an unmerited invasion of her privacy . . . .

—Jessamyn West, "Sixteen"

Theme

Most short stories have a **theme,** or main idea, of some kind, such as the healing power of love, the rewards of showing courage, or the wastefulness of despair. The outcome of the story may then imply some lesson or moral about the theme, or it may affirm some meaningful observation or conclusion about life. However, some short stories aim chiefly to surprise or entertain readers rather than to give a message.

PROJECT PREP *Analyzing* *Short Story Elements*

Write answers to the following questions about "A Day's Wait" on pages 167–170.

1. What is the plot of the story? Briefly outline the main events.
2. What is the central conflict? Briefly describe it.
3. Who are all the characters in the story? Which one is the main character and how do you know that?
4. What is the setting? Describe it in a few sentences.
5. From what point of view is the story told? How do you think that point of view affects the story?
6. What do you think the theme of the story is? Express the theme in a few sentences in your own words.

Writing a Short Story — Prewriting

Author Kurt Vonnegut once compared writing fiction to making a movie, saying, "All sorts of accidental things will happen after you've set up the cameras. . . . You set the story in motion, and as you're watching this thing begin, all these opportunities will show up. Keeping your mind open to opportunities will help you imagine your story." Unless you think through the basic elements of your story, however, it may remain only as bits of "footage." For this reason your prewriting work should include building a plot.

1 Building an Engaging Plot

Many of your best ideas for a plot will come from your own experiences and observations, while others will come from your imagination. The following strategies may stimulate your thinking about plot ideas.

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Thinking of a Plot

- Brainstorm for a list of story ideas based on conflicts you have experienced or observed firsthand. Then use clustering or inquiring to develop plot details. For each conflict you think of, identify the triggering event and describe the resolution or outcome.
- Scan newspaper headlines and news items for an event you could build into a fictional story. Some items might suggest a comic or a tragic tale, for example, or might report a discovery or a mystery that you could explore in fiction.
- Think of conflicts or events in history—including your family history and local history—that might be interesting to develop in fiction writing.
- Observe people and events in your life. Sometimes even small events or snatches of conversation will suggest a conflict on which to build a plot. An incident that you noticed in a mall, for example, could become the basis of a story.

Once you have a story idea and a conflict, you can build the plot around it. A plot usually unfolds from the event that triggers the conflict to the event that resolves it. You will probably arrange the details of your plot so that they naturally unfold as the story progresses. The chart on the next page shows some steps for developing a plot, along with examples.

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Developing a Plot

1. Introduce the event or circumstance that triggers the action. Include descriptive details about the triggering event, making the source of the conflict clear.

From Within a Character	the desire to change one's circumstances
From the Outside World	the receipt of a letter or phone call an accident

2. Develop details describing the nature of the conflict.

Conflict with Self	one's conscience
Conflict with Others	friend or family members enemies or strangers
Conflict with Nature	severe weather conditions disease or disability

3. Develop details about the obstacles the characters will struggle against or overcome to resolve the central conflict.

Within a Character	fears or other emotions
In the Outside World	other characters trials of nature

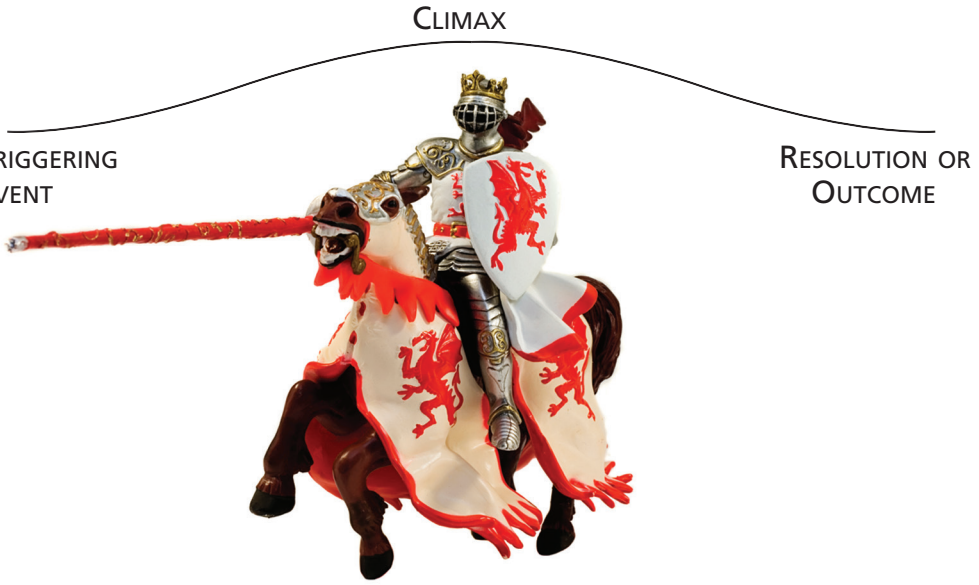
4. Develop details about how the main character might overcome the obstacles.

By the Character	strength of character perseverance
Through Outside Events	luck or chance new knowledge or understanding

5. Develop details about how the conflict will be resolved and how the story will end.

Obstacles Overcome	new wisdom success or satisfaction
Obstacles Not Overcome	acceptance of shortcomings decision to try again

The diagram on the next page shows the general shape of a storyline.



PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Plot, Central Conflict, and Characters*

In your small group, return to your own story sketch. Keeping in mind the elements of the story just reviewed, continue to plot a possible story line. For each member of your group, discuss and refine possibilities for:

Plot and Central Conflict What is the central conflict in the story, and how will the story unfold?

Characters Who are the characters who come into conflict, and what about their differences of perspective put them into conflict?

Setting Where does the story take place, and why is this a good setting for this conflict to come to the surface?

Narrator Who will tell the story? Will it be one of the main characters? Will it have more than one narrative perspective? Will someone other than the main characters tell the story? What advantages and disadvantages follow from this choice of narrator? How reliable is your choice of narrator in telling the story with some semblance of credibility? Is it possible to build in flaws so readers may doubt the narrator's perspective and appreciate other perspectives better?

2 Sketching Believable Characters

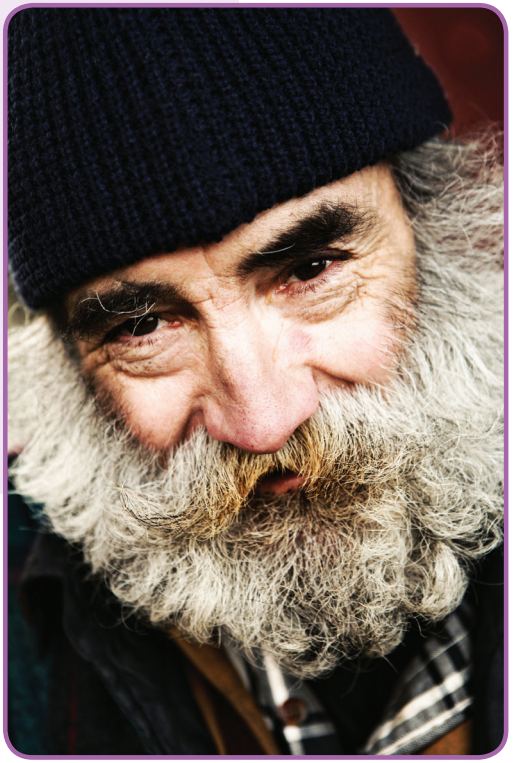
Readers usually enjoy and remember stories that have interesting, believable characters. As you plan your story, you should visualize the characters that will appear in it. You could, for example, write a brief sketch of each one by brainstorming for details such as the character's name, age, physical appearance, voice, mannerisms, background, and personality traits.

The more completely you visualize your characters, the more independent they can become in your imagination. Many fiction writers report that the characters themselves seem to come alive during writing, directing the plot and dictating the dialogue. In a sense, therefore, visualizing your characters gives them life. Notice how the following writer uses details that allow you to visualize the character.

MODEL: Characterization

In the smallest of these huts lived old Berl, a man in his eighties . . . Old Berl was one of the Jews who had been driven from their villages in Russia and had settled in Poland. In Lentshin, they mocked the mistakes he made while praying aloud. He spoke with a sharp "r." He was short, broad-shouldered, and had a small white beard, and summer and winter he wore a sheepskin hat, a padded cotton jacket, and stout boots. He walked slowly, shuffling his feet. He had a half acre of field, a cow, a goat, and chickens.

—Isaac Bashevis Singer,
"The Son from America"



To help you develop characters, learn to be a careful observer. Focus on details of how people move and stand, how they sound, and how they look and dress. Make notes in your journal for use later. You can also create a cluster of details to help you. Your objective is to use such details to develop characters.

MODEL: Character Cluster



PROJECT PREP *Prewriting* ***Character Sketch***

After visualizing the characters that will appear in your story, write a character sketch of each one. Make a character cluster if you wish, or draw a picture. Then review your sketches with the members of your group, using their feedback to expand on and elaborate the appearance, traits, and behavior of your characters.

Think Critically

Think Critically

Imaging

To create characters and events, fiction writers often use imaging—visualizing and feeling what it would be like to be a character and to experience an imaginary event. If you take time for imaging as you plan, later you will more easily find the right words to express yourself when you draft your story. The following passages from "A Day's Wait" on pages 167–170 are evidence of the author's imaging about Schatz's experience of his pain.

IMAGING CHART

Imaging of the Boy	Written Expression
in pain	"He was shivering, his face was white, and he walked slowly as though it ached to move." "He lay very still in the bed and seemed very detached from what was going on."
worrying about something he cannot discuss	"It would have been natural for him to go to sleep, but when I looked up he was looking at the foot of the bed, looking very strangely." "He was evidently holding tight onto himself about something."
realizing he is not dying	"He had been waiting to die all day, ever since nine o'clock in the morning."

Thinking Practice

For ten minutes, use imaging to visualize the conversation in which Schatz's French classmates tell him that people die when their body temperature reaches forty-four degrees. Describe to your classmates what you "saw" and "heard" during your imaging.



3 Framing Your Story

When you have your plot and characters in mind, you can frame your story by creating a meaningful setting and deciding on what point of view to use.

Creating a Setting

The setting of a story often mirrors the feelings of the main character. An early spring day, for example, might be a good setting for a story about a character on the verge of shedding a dark burden and starting a new life. By relating the setting to the central conflict and to the characters' feelings, you can create the mood you want for your story. In a sketch of your setting, you might note details you could use to describe the indoor or outdoor location where the action of the story takes place. For example, you might visualize objects, dimensions, terrain, the time of day, the weather, or the season of the year. Notice how the following description of a setting creates a suspenseful mood.

For more information about descriptive writing, turn to pages 92–93 and 140–165.

MODEL: Details of a Setting

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another . . . Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. . . . From the fourth side the bones had been thrown down . . . forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior crypt or recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven.

—Edgar Allan Poe, "The Cask of Amontillado"

Choosing a Point of View

As you read on page 173, you can choose among three different points of view for telling your stories: first-person, third-person objective, and third-person omniscient. If you are writing a story with a narrator who is a participant, the first-person point of view is probably the most natural. If the narrator is writing about other characters and is not a participant in the story, use third-person objective or omniscient. Use the same point of view throughout your story unless you have intentionally introduced another point of view to add interest and subtlety.

Writing Tip

Plot, characters, setting, point of view, and other story elements should all fit together so that the reader believes in the story and finds meaning in it.



PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Setting and Point of View*

1. Focus next on the setting of your story. Where would the characters you have created come into contact? What characterizes the physical setting of their meeting? What sensory details can you come up with that contribute to the construction of a suitable mood for their encounter? Write a description of the setting in which you help readers see, feel, hear, smell, and/or taste the environment.
2. When you have completed this description, share it with your small group. Help each other decide which of the elements you have included are effective and worth keeping and perhaps elaborating, and which do not belong in your story.
3. Next, imagine how your story would read if it were told from the point of view of your main character and from that of each of the other characters. (You might even want to write a draft from each character's point of view.) Also imagine how your story would sound if it were told from the first-person, the third-person objective, and the third-person omniscient points of view. Finally, choose the best point of view for your story and decide how you will tell the story from that character's perspective.

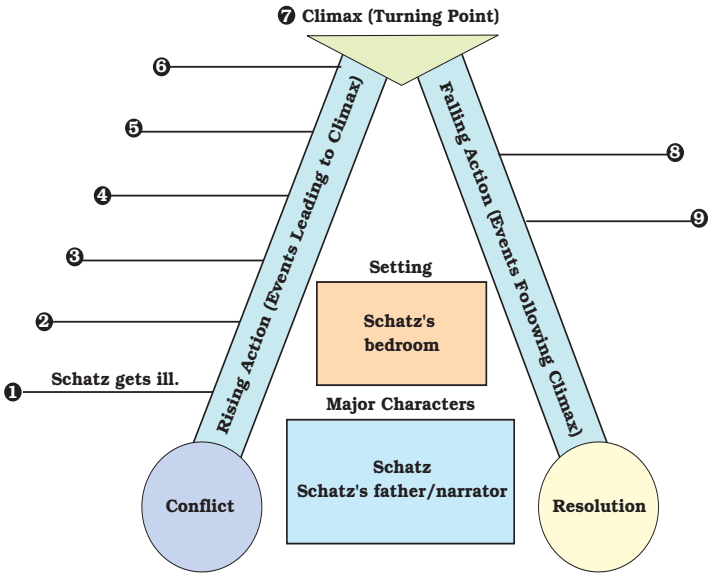
4 Ordering Events

After getting the basic story elements in mind, visualize all the events you want to include and arrange them in chronological order. You may later decide to deviate from this order. For instance, you could start your story at the end and then go back to the beginning, or you could start in the middle and remember back to the beginning in a flashback before ending your story (see page 187). Whatever order you decide to use when you draft, you will find it helpful to have a chronological list of all the events you plan to include.

Using a Story Map

A story map is a useful tool in helping you track the order of events in the story and in understanding their relation to the entire story. The following story map shows the shape of the plot in "A Day's Wait." The triggering event is written on the first line of the diagram.

❷ Doctor comes, takes his temperature, and leaves medications.
❸ Papa sits with him and reads.
❹ Papa goes out hunting with a young Irish setter.
❺ Papa returns home and finds Schatz does not want anyone in the room.
❻ Papa takes Schatz's temperature again and tries to read to him some more.
❼ Schatz reveals that he thinks he is going to die.
❽ Papa explains the confusion.
❾ Schatz relaxes.



PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Order of Events*

After you list all the events you plan to include in your story, arrange them in chronological order. As you study your list, think of other possible ways to order the events that would make sense to readers and would capture their interest. Create a story map that outlines the way in which the story will unfold. Then consult with the members of your writing group to get their feedback on the sequence you have drafted and revise it if necessary.

The Power of Language

Fluency: Let It Flow

To make your writing flow invitingly, vary the length and beginnings of your sentences. In the following passage from Hemingway's "The Big Two-Hearted River," the second sentence is a very short one amidst medium and long sentences. The varied beginnings of the sentences are highlighted: yellow for subjects first, blue for introductory phrases.

> The road ran on, dipping occasionally, but always climbing. He went on up. Finally after going parallel to the burnt hill, he reached the top. Nick leaned back against a stump and slipped out of the pack harness. Ahead of him, as far as he could see, was the pine plain. The burned country stopped off at the left of a range of hills. On ahead islands of dark pine trees rose out of the plain. Far off to the left was the line of the river. Nick followed it with his eye and caught glints of the water in the sun.

In "A Day's Wait," Hemingway varies the somewhat stark dialogue between the father and son with longer sentences describing the hunting expedition.

> After a while he said to me, "You don't have to stay in here with me, Papa, if it bothers you."
>
> "It doesn't bother me."
>
> "No, I mean you don't have to stay if it's going to bother you."
>
> I thought perhaps he was a little light-headed and giving him prescribed capsules at eleven o'clock I went out for a while.
>
> It was a bright, cold day, the ground covered with a sleet that had frozen so that it seemed as if . . . the bare ground had been varnished with ice. I took the young Irish setter for a little walk up the road and along a frozen creek, but it was difficult to stand or walk on the glassy surface and the red dog slipped and slithered and I fell twice, hard, once dropping my gun and having it slide away over the ice.

Punctuation Tip

Use a comma after certain introductory elements in a sentence. (See pages 852–853.)

Try It Yourself

Write a passage of about five sentences on your project topic. Use different colored highlighters to see how you started your sentences. If you have only one color, revise until you have variety. Also count the number of words in each sentence. If they are all about the same, look for ways to vary their length to achieve a smoother flow.

Writing a Short Story Drafting

As you write your story, keep in mind your reasons for writing and your audience. While the purpose of all creative writing is to create, you may have other writing goals as well. For example, you may want your readers to laugh or cry, or you may want them to identify with your main character. To achieve these purposes, you have available a variety of types of writing. For instance, you can use narrative writing to advance the plot. You can use descriptive writing to create the settings and characters' appearances (pages 146–149 and 178–179). Informative writing allows you to explain background information about the plot or characters (pages 210–253). In addition to these basic types of writing, you can use the following strategies, which are specific to fiction writing.

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Drafting a Short Story

- Use vivid language and interesting details to introduce the characters and the central conflict.
- Use sensory details to create a mood.
- Use background details to set the time and place of the story and to capture your readers' interest.
- Aim for originality in your writing by avoiding stereotypes and by using vivid words to bring the story to life.
- Start the plot early in the story by introducing the triggering event.
- Reveal the characters and unfold the plot through a combination of description, narration or action, dialogue, and reflection.
- Maintain a clear and consistent point of view. If you intentionally introduce another point of view, keep it clearly distinctive.
- Pace the plot so that the action moves along in an engaging way.
- Include only those events that have a direct bearing on the plot and the central conflict. Connect the events in your story by showing how each event in the plot relates naturally and logically to the central conflict.
- Use chronological order and transitions to show the passing of time and to build up tension.
- End your story in a way that makes the outcome clear and that leaves a strong emotional impression on your readers.

Using Dialogue

In many cases you can use dialogue to develop your characters and to advance your plot. The following examples from "A Day's Wait" show how Hemingway used dialogue for a variety of purposes.

EXAMPLES: Using Dialogue

To Present the Central Conflict

When the doctor came he took the boy's temperature.
"What is it?" I asked him.
"One hundred and two."

To Reveal Thoughts

After a while he said to me, "You don't have to stay in here with me, Papa, if it bothers you."
"It doesn't bother me."
"No, I mean you don't have to stay if it's going to bother you."
I thought perhaps he was a little light-headed and giving him prescribed capsules at eleven o'clock I went out for a while.

To Advance the Plot

"You can't come in," he said. "You mustn't get what I have."
I went up to him and found him in exactly the position I had left him, white–faced, but with the tops of his cheeks flushed by fever, staring still, as he had stared, at the foot of the bed.
I took his temperature.
"What is it?"
"Something like a hundred," I said. It was one hundred and two and four tenths.
"It was a hundred and two," he said.
"Who said so?"
"The doctor."
"Your temperature is all right," I said. "It's nothing to worry about."
"I don't worry," he said, "but I can't keep from thinking."
"Don't think," I said. "Just take it easy."

To Express the Climax

"About what time do you think I'm going to die?" he asked.
"What?"
"About how long will it be before I die?"
"You aren't going to die. What's the matter with you?"
"Oh, yes, I am. I heard him say a hundred and two."
"People don't die with a fever of one hundred and two. That's a silly way to talk."
"I know they do. At school in France the boys told me you can't live with forty–four degrees. I've got a hundred and two."

To Express the Resolution

"You poor Schatz," I said. "Poor old Schatz. It's like miles and kilometers. You aren't going to die. That's a different thermometer. On that thermometer thirty–seven is normal. On this kind it's ninety–eight."
"Are you sure?"
"Absolutely," I said. "It's like miles and kilometers . . ."

Practice Your Skills

Writing Dialogue

Imagine each of the following situations. Then select one of the situations or another of your choice and write a dialogue about 12 lines long between the characters. You may want to review the correct form for writing dialogue on the preceding pages and page 882.

1. A stranger asks for directions to the police station.
2. A hurried shopper seeks help from a salesclerk.
3. A student has a conference with his or her advisor.
4. Two teenagers discuss someone else's problem.
5. Two friends argue over what movie to see.

Enhancing the Plot

One of the great pleasures of reading is the sense of being swept up in a story. You may feel anxious as you read, fearing trouble ahead for the main character. You may be intrigued by missing pieces in the story that are only revealed in unexpected places or unexpected order. These feelings are the result of the writer's skill in using devices to enhance the plot. Try using these devices to add excitement and flavor to your plot.

DEVICES FOR ENHANCING THE PLOT	
Flashback	an event from the past that is presented out of sequence and interrupts the chronological order
Foreshadowing	clues that help the reader anticipate what is to come
Story within a Story	a story that is told during the telling of another story
Subplot	a secondary plot line that reinforces the main plot line
Juxtaposition	placing two normally unrelated events, characters, or words next to one another to create a surprise effect

Hemingway uses juxtaposition in "A Day's Wait" when the narrator leaves the fevered boy's sick room and heads into the "bright, cold day."

PROJECT PREP Drafting *Dialogue and Plot Techniques*

Review all your prewriting about conflct, character, setting, plot, and narrator. Then write the first draft of the short story you have been developing. Work in dialogue that sounds realistic and that advances the plot. Try using some devices from the chart above to enhance your plot and make it more gripping. Use peer conferencing to test your ideas or to get help with trouble spots. Keep writing until you have a workable first draft.

Writing a Short Story — Revising

Many fiction writers report that they often keep only the few best parts of a first draft and drop all the rest. When you revise, therefore, be ready to give up ideas or details that weaken your short story or that rob it of life. Look especially for ways of strengthening your plot, enhancing your descriptions, and sharpening your characterizations.

HERE'S HOW

Revising Strategies for Short Stories

Strengthening the Plot

- Add background details and transitions to ensure adequate development and coherence.
- Delete any plot details that do not relate to the central conflict and its resolution or to subplots.
- Check for clarity to ensure that readers will understand the story's meaning, point, or theme.
- Use such devices as flashbacks and foreshadowing to enhance the plot.

Enhancing Descriptions

- Add or substitute sensory details to enliven descriptions of characters, settings, and actions.
- Use imaging to visualize your descriptions again so you can improve them.
- Enrich your descriptions by using figurative language.

Sharpening Characterizations

- Add or eliminate details to sharpen the characterization of your main character.
- Look for ways to reveal characters and their motivations through dialogue, action, and reflection.
- Rewrite dialogue until it sounds as natural as real-life conversations.

After you have applied the revising strategies above, review the structure and content of your story. The checklist on the next page will help you remember the basic points to look for as you revise your short story.



HERE'S HOW

Evaluation Checklist for Revising

- ✓ Does the beginning of your story describe the setting, capture the readers' attention, introduce characters, and include the triggering event? (pages 172–182)
- ✓ Does the middle develop the plot by making the central conflict clear and by including events that are directly related to that conflict? (pages 175–177)
- ✓ Are events in the plot arranged in chronological order or in an order that makes the chronology of events clear? (pages 183 and 185)
- ✓ Does the story build until the action reaches a climax? (pages 172 and 185-186))
- ✓ Does the pacing of the events keep the story moving along in an engaging way? (page 185)
- ✓ Did you use dialogue and description to show subtleties of your characters' personalities? (pages 173, 178–179, and 185–187)
- ✓ Does the ending show how the conflict was resolved and bring the story to a close? (pages 172 and 185)
- ✓ Did you choose an appropriate point of view and stick to it throughout the story? (pages 173–174 and 181–182)
- ✓ Does the story have a theme or express your reasons for writing it? Does it accomplish your specific purpose for creative writing, and is it appropriate for your audience? (pages 171–174 and 185)

PROJECT PREP Revising *Using Strategies and a Checklist*

Use the **Revising Strategies for Short Stories** on page 188 to review and revise your story. Then, with your writing group members, exchange papers and use the checklist above for evaluating your partner's story. Revise your work based on your partner's feedback.



Writing a Short Story — Editing and Publishing

Once you have drafted your short story and revised it to your satisfaction, you are ready to edit it. In the editing stage, you correct your writing so that it shows accurate spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, as well as control over grammatical elements such as subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, verb forms, and parallelism.

The Language of Power — *Past Tense*

Power Rule: Use mainstream past tense forms of regular and irregular verbs. (See pages 684–703.)

See It in Action Some verb forms are especially tricky to keep straight. In the following passage from "A Day's Wait," Hemingway uses the correct form of the past tense of *lie*.

> His face was very white and there were dark areas under his eyes. He **lay** very still in the bed and seemed very detached from what was going on.

The verbs *lie* and *lay, sit* and *set,* and *rise* and *raise* are often confused, so it's a good idea to just memorize the correct forms of each. (See pages 691–692.)

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

Use It Read through your short story and check for places where you used the words *lie* and *lay, sit* and *set,* or *rise* and *raise* and make sure you have used the correct form.

PROJECT PREP — Evaluating — *Editing and Publishing*

Use the six-trait rubric to evaluate your story. Submit it to your teacher and make changes in response to his or her feedback. Create a class anthology of your finished stories.

Using a Six-Trait Rubric — Stories

Ideas	**4** The plot, setting, characters, and dialogue are original and creative.	**3** The plot, setting, characters, and dialogue are effective.	**2** Most aspects of the plot, setting, characters, and dialogue are effective.	**1** Most aspects of the plot, setting, characters, and dialogue are ineffective.
Organization	**4** The organization is clear with abundant transitions.	**3** A few events or ideas seem out of place or transitions are missing.	**2** Many events seem out of place and transitions are missing.	**1** The order of events is unclear and hard to follow.
Voice	**4** The story has an appropriate point of view. The storyteller's voice sounds natural.	**3** The story has an appropriate point of view. The storyteller's voice sounds mostly natural.	**2** The point of view is inconsistent. The storyteller's voice sounds unnatural at times.	**1** The story does not have an appropriate point of view. The storyteller's voice sounds unnatural.
Word Choice	**4** Specific words help readers picture characters and setting.	**3** Some words are specific and help readers picture characters and setting.	**2** Some words are overly general and do not bring characters or setting into focus.	**1** Most words are overly general and do not bring characters or setting into focus.
Sentence Fluency	**4** Varied sentences flow smoothly and dialogue reflects characters.	**3** Most sentences are varied and flow smoothly, and dialogue reflects characters.	**2** Some sentences are choppy and dialogue seems forced.	**1** Sentences are choppy and not varied, and dialogue seems forced or is missing.
Conventions	**4** Conventions, including dialogue and punctuation are correct and Power Rules are followed.	**3** Conventions including dialogue and punctuation are mainly correct. Power Rules are followed.	**2** Some conventions are incorrect but Power Rules are followed.	**1** There are many errors and at least one failure to follow a Power Rule.

Writing a Play

The main difference between plays and other kinds of writing is that plays are written to be performed, not just read. In a play, the story is told through the use of dialogue and the actions of the characters.

A **play** is a piece of writing intended to be performed on a stage by actors.

In the following scene from Arthur Miller's *The Price*, a husband and wife discuss the idea of asking his brother for help. The men's father has just died, and they are in his house trying to figure out what to do with his possessions. As you read the scene, think about your responses to the following questions: Why should the content in this play be performed and not just read? What makes this play a success or failure and why?

The Price

Esther: I don't want to be a pest—but I think there could be some money here, Vic.

He is silent.

You're going to raise that with him, aren't you?

Victor: *with a formed decision*: I've been thinking about it. He's got a right to his half, why should he give up anything?

This stage direction makes it clear how Victor is feeling.

Esther: I thought you'd decided to put it to him?

Victor: I've changed my mind. I don't really feel he owes me anything, I can't put on an act.

Esther: But how many Cadillacs can he drive?

Victor: That's why he's got Cadillacs. People who love money don't give it away.

Esther: I don't know why you keep putting it like charity. There's such a thing as a moral debt. Vic, you made his whole career possible. What law said that only he could study medicine—?

What do you learn about Esther from her words?

Victor: Esther, please—let's not get back on that, will you?

Esther: I'm not back on anything—you were even the better student. That's a real debt, and he ought to be

made to face it. He could never have finished medical school if you hadn't taken care of Pop. I mean we ought to start talking the way people talk! There could be some real money here.

Victor: I doubt that. There are no antiques or—

Esther: Just because it's ours why must it be worthless?

Victor: Now what's that for?

Esther: Because that's the way we think! We do!

Victor, *sharply*: The man won't even come to the phone, how am I going to—?

Esther: Then you write him a letter, bang on his door. This belongs to you!

Without ever being told directly, the audience gets a clear sense of what the relationship between Victor and his brother is like.

Victor, *surprised, seeing how deadly earnest she is*: What are you so excited about?

Esther: Well, for one thing it might help you make up your mind to take your retirement.

A slight pause.

Victor: *rather secretively, unwillingly*: It's not the money been stopping me.

Esther: Then what is it?

He is silent.

I just thought that with a little cushion you could take a month or two until something occurs to you that you want to do.

Victor: It's all I think about right now, I don't have to quit to think.

Esther: But nothing seems to come of it.

Victor: Is it that easy? I'm going to be fifty. You don't just start a whole new career. I don't understand why it's so urgent all of a sudden.

Esther—*laughs*: All of a sudden! It's all I've been talking about since you became eligible—I've been saying the same thing for three years!

Victor: Well, it's not three years—

Esther: It'll be three years in March! It's *three years*. If you'd gone back to school then you'd almost have your Master's by now; you might have had a chance

to get into something you'd love to do. Isn't that true? Why can't you make a move?

Victor—*pause. He is almost ashamed*: I'll tell you the truth. I'm not sure the whole thing wasn't a little unreal. I'd be fifty-three, fifty-four by the time I could start doing anything.

Esther: But you always knew that.

Victor: It's different when you're right on top of it. I'm not sure it makes any sense now.

Esther, *moving away, the despair in her voice*: Well . . . this is exactly what I tried to tell you a thousand times. It makes the same sense it ever made. But you might have twenty more years, and that's still a long time. Could do a lot of interesting things in that time. *Slight pause*. You're so young, Vic.

Victor: I am?

Esther: Sure! I'm not, but you are. God, all the girls goggle at you, what do you want?

Victor—*laughs emptily*: It's hard to discuss it, Es, because I don't understand it.

Esther: Well, why not talk about what you don't understand? Why do you expect yourself to be an authority?

What does the dialogue reveal about the relationship between Esther and Victor?

Victor: Well, one of us has got to stay afloat, kid.

Esther: You want me to pretend everything is great? I'm bewildered and I'm going to act bewildered! *It flies out as though long suppressed*: I've asked you fifty times to write a letter to Walter—

Victor, *like a repeated story*: What's this with Walter again? What's Walter going to—?

Esther: He is an important scientist, and that hospital's building a whole new research division. I saw it in the paper, it's his hospital.

Victor: Esther, the man hasn't called me in sixteen years.

Esther: But neither have you called him!

He looks at her in surprise.

Well, you haven't. That's also a fact.

Victor, *as though the idea were new and incredible*: What would I call him for?

Esther: Because, he's your brother, he's influential, and he could help—Yes, that's how people do, Vic! Those articles he wrote had a real idealism, there was a genuine human quality. I mean people do change, you know.

Victor, *turning away*: I'm sorry, I don't need Walter.

Practice Your Skills

Analyzing Dramatic Elements

Write answers to the following questions about the scene from *The Price*.

1. What is the central conflict? Briefly describe it.
2. Who are all the characters in the story? Which one is the main character and how do you know that?
3. What is the setting? Describe it in a few sentences.

Theme and Mood

Like stories and other works of literature, plays express themes. Some themes of Arthur Miller's *The Price,* for example, are materialism and family relationships. Themes can be explicit or implicit. An **explicit theme** is one that is stated clearly in the play. If a character in *The Price*, for example, says, "Money is the root of family evil," he would be expressing an explicit theme of the play. An **implicit theme,** in contrast, is not stated directly. Instead it is a message derived from the characters' actions and dialogue—a judgment the viewer makes by interpreting the characters' words and interactions. An implicit theme of *The Price* might be, "Issues of family justice are often played out through conflicts over money and material possessions."

Plays also convey moods. **Mood** is the atmosphere created by the setting and other details. The mood of *The Price* might be described as oppressive. The setting is the home of the recently deceased father of Victor and Walter, so a sense of heaviness accompanies that. The clearly unresolved issues between Esther and Victor hang heavy above them. The stage directions heighten this mood: Victor responds "secretly, unwillingly"; Esther speaks, "moving away, the despair in her voice."

Closely related to mood is tone. In drama, **tone** is the speaker's attitude toward his or her listener. The tone in the scene between Victor and Esther is frustrated, since both feel they can't get through to one another. Esther's tone might be further described as nagging, and Victor's might be described as defensive.

Tone might also refer to the writer's attitude toward his or her characters. Such tone might be sympathetic or judgmental, straightfoward or ironic.

Practice Your Skills

Experimenting with Tone

Choose a portion of the scene from *The Price* that you find especially tense. Rewrite the conversation between Victor and Esther so that it has a different tone.

Finding Ideas for a Play

Like stories and novels, plays are based upon conflict. A conflict can occur between two or more people. To find possible subjects for a play scene, think about conflicts you have seen and heard—or just heard of. They may come from your own life, the lives of people you know, or your imagination. Freewrite about some of them in your journal. Visualize them in all their drama. Use other prewriting techniques that you like, too, such as clustering or self-questioning.

Practice Your Skills

Finding Ideas for a Scene in a Play

Freewrite a response to each question below. Elaborate with details. Save your work.

1. What is the most dramatic conflict that you have lived through, witnessed, or heard about?
2. What events in the news or in history have made you feel most strongly?
3. Who are the most interesting two or three people you know, and why? What might happen if they clashed?
4. How would you change if, in a few years, you lived through a major event such as war, serious illness, or falling in love?
5. What might you be like if you had grown up in a different family or a different place?
6. What would be the most surprising thing that could happen to you today? How would you respond? How would it change you?

Developing Characters

As in stories and novels, characters are the basis of plays. In plays, the characters are brought to life by actors, real people who move and talk and have individual gestures and tones of voice. Each actor shapes a role in his or her own special way, but the character must be vividly brought out by the playwright's words.

Practice Your Skills

Sketching Characters

Return to your answer to Question 3 in the previous activity. For each of the people you named, write a character sketch. Each sketch should be a paragraph describing the important facts and details about the person. An actor preparing to play the role of the character should be able to learn a lot from the sketch.

Creating Setting

Novels, stories, and movies can wander from setting to setting: the action might be on Earth one minute and on Mars the next. In contrast, most plays remain within a very limited setting. It may be one room. That is the simplest of settings, for it requires no changes of scenery. If a play contains more than one setting—such as several rooms within a house, or the apartments of two different characters—the scenery must be changed, usually between acts. One of the playwright's first jobs is to visualize an interesting, dramatic setting that can be shown physically on a stage.

Practice Your Skills

Visualizing Settings

Make a list of five or six places in your community that might make good settings for stage plays. For each location, state briefly your reason for thinking it would make a good stage setting. Be sure your settings are specific enough to be physically shown on a stage. For example, "school" is not a specific setting, because an entire school cannot be shown onstage at one time. "The gym" is specific enough to be shown in that way.

Writing Dialogue

Because plays consist of live action, and because one of the things that makes human life interesting is talk, most plays contain a lot of dialogue—that is, the words spoken by the characters. Dialogue is the medium through which the action in most plays transpires; it expresses emotion and conveys meaning. It is through dialogue, in fact, that the audience is informed of the dramatic situation and its background.

As in a story, the dialogue in a play should seem real. Each character should have his or her own personal way of speaking. In addition, the dialogue in plays needs to deliver information to the audience. The audience watching a play is not reading any descriptions or any background information. Everything that the audience learns about the characters must be conveyed through action and dialogue. For example, if a character returned home injured from a war five years before the play began, some character at some point is probably going to say something like, "Well, it's been five years since Jill came home from that war with her arm in a cast." The need to express information and characterization at the same time makes the dialogue in plays particularly rich in content.

Practice Your Skills

Writing Dialogue

Write a conversation between a teenager and his or her parent in which the two characters disagree about the teen's goals. Set the conversation in a community like your own, and have the characters be people from a background similar to yours. Write at least two separate speeches for each character. Write only the dialogue; do not include descriptions. Save your work.

Writing Stage Directions

Playwrights usually supply some directions for the reader (and the actor and director) about how the characters speak and move. These are called **stage directions.** They are usually found in italic print. Most modern playwrights like to keep their stage directions short. They feel that the dialogue itself should convey most of what the audience learns about the characters. For example, if the character's words are angry, it should not be necessary to add a stage direction, *Angrily*. Stage directions are necessary at times, however. For instance, they state which characters are entering or exiting. They also express meaningful actions, such as *He stands slouched over, and Troy shoves him on his shoulder*. At the beginning of a play, there is usually a brief description of the set; when a new character appears, there is usually a brief physical description of the character, perhaps including how the character is dressed. **Props**—short for *properties,* or physical objects that appear on stage—are also mentioned in stage directions.

Practice Your Skills

Writing Stage Directions

Return to the parent-teen dialogue you wrote and add at least two stage directions. Make sure that they express aspects of the characters' speech or actions that the dialogue does not already express.



Using a Rubric for Dramatic Scenes

Use the rubric below as a guide to revising your dramatic scene.

Dramatic Elements	**4** The plot, setting, characters, and dialogue are original and creative. The theme is meaningful.	**3** The plot, setting, characters, and dialogue are effective. The theme is clear.	**2** Most aspects of the plot, setting, characters, and dialogue are effective, but the theme is unclear.	**1** Most aspects of the plot, setting, characters, and dialogue are ineffective. The theme is unclear.
Stage Directions	**4** The stage directions clearly indicate actions and states of mind and add depth and subtlety.	**3** The stage directions indicate actions and states of mind.	**2** The stage directions indicate actions but do not go deeper.	**1** There are few if any stage directions.
Mood and Tone	**4** The scene establishes a mood effectively and the mood is appropriate to the theme. The tone enhances the mood and theme.	**3** The scene establishes a mood effectively and the mood is appropriate to the theme. The tone reflects the mood and theme.	**2** The scene establishes a mood but some of the details included don't seem related to that mood. The tone is not clearly tied to the mood and theme.	**1** The mood and tone are hard to identify.

PROJECT PREP Changing Genres *From Story to Scene*

Return to the story you wrote (or another text from your portfolio). Choose a portion of it that you think would lend itself well to being enacted and write a script for it. Have members of your writing group read it aloud to make sure the dialogue sounds real. Then revise, thinking about how to strengthen your dialogue and how to make the action more vivid and believable. Also consider how effectively you conveyed mood, tone, and theme. Did you use details that help create the mood you want? What tone do your characters have with one another? Does a theme come through, whether it is explicit or implicit? Have you used language and stage directions to express subtle shades of meaning? Using feedback, revise again. Then make a final copy following the play-script format as in the scene from *The Price.* You might want to gather a group of friends and give a live or recorded performance of your scene.

In the Media

Across the Media: Evaluating Artistic Performances

Some literary works—even nondramatic ones—cannot be fully appreciated until they are performed. This process can in fact help both the performer and the audience understand the work more fully. Books on tape, poetry and short-story readings on the radio, and literary television shows attract faithful listeners and viewers.

How can you tell if such an artistic performance is effective? Here are some of the criteria that may help you evaluate artistic performances.

Criteria for Evaluating Artistic Performances

- ✓ Does the performance move you?
- ✓ Does the performance make confusing parts clearer?
- ✓ Are the performers confident and well prepared?
- ✓ Did the performers establish eye contact and use effective body language?
- ✓ Do the performers use vocal variety to express the work's underlying meanings?
- ✓ Does the performance use the stage effectively, with variety of pacing and use of space?
- ✓ For example, are camera angles, lighting, editing, and music used effectively? How do they contribute to the overall effect?

Media Activity

Use the criteria above to evaluate the poem "On the Pulse of the Morning" by Maya Angelou, read at President Clinton's first-term inauguration in 1993. Practice reading it aloud and take turns performing it for the class.

You can find a clip online of Maya Angelou reading her poem "On the Pulse of the Morning."

Writing a Poem

"Poetry is the art of understanding what it is to be alive," wrote Archibald MacLeish. Even before writing was invented, poets sang or chanted the deepest feelings of humanity, and people listened. Poetry is a way of using language that gets the most out of each word and syllable.

> **Poetry** is a writing form that expresses powerful feelings through sound, images, and other imaginative uses of language.

Feel how much is expressed in so few words as you read this poem written by Walt Whitman. Think about how these feelings would be expressed in a play or a short story.

When I Heard The Learn'd Astronomer

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,

When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,

When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,

When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,

How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,

Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,

In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,

Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.



1 Finding Ideas for Poems

Poetry is the form of writing that depends most upon the emotions of the writer. In choosing a subject for a poem, find something that moves you. It may move you to joy, to sadness, to anger, to laughter, or to any other emotional response. One good way to discover the emotionally powerful ideas that are already within you is to make an **Idea Chart** like the one below. List general subject areas on the left side of the chart. Write down some specific examples on the right-hand side. You can explore those examples further by additional brainstorming, freewriting, clustering, or questioning.

IDEA CHART	
Events	getting an A; buying shoes; playing trumpet
Scenes	an empty schoolyard at night; a crowded beach; a sailboat skimming the waves
Sensations	the sound of a subway train; the taste of hot peppers; the sight of sunset

Practice Your Skills

Charting to Find Ideas for a Poem

Create an idea chart using the following general topics as the left–hand entries. Think of at least five examples for each topic. Save your work.

1. growing up
2. emotions
3. places
4. hopes and dreams
5. imaginary worlds

Practice Your Skills

Freewriting to Find Ideas for a Poem

Select one of the specific examples you wrote in your Idea Chart and freewrite about it for two to five minutes. Save your work.

PROJECT PREP Changing Genres *From Story to Poem*

Return to the story you wrote (or another you have in your portfolio) and hold a magnifying glass to it, looking for moments in it—or feelings it evokes—that could be the substance of a poem. Choose a few and freewrite about those in your journal. Let your mind and pen run freely, exploring comparisons and imaginative ways of looking at the ideas.

2 Poetic Techniques

Not only can the sounds, rhythms, and meter of the words be beautiful in themselves, but they can make beautiful connections among ideas in a poem, highlight the poem's meaning, and affect how the reader feels.

Sound Devices

Poets use certain sound devices to please the ear and to stir the emotions. Use some of these devices when you write a poem.

SOUND DEVICES

Onomatopoeia	Use of words whose sounds suggest their meanings: *hum, splash, whistle, hoot, murmur, fizz*
Alliteration	Repetition of a consonant sound or sounds at the beginning of a series of words: **B**aa, **b**aa, **b**lack sheep
Consonance	Repetition of a consonant sound or sounds, used with different vowel sounds, usually in the middle or at the end of words: the pa**tt**er of li**tt**le feet
Assonance	Repetition of a vowel sound within words: the b**o**wling ball r**o**lled **o**ver and **o**ver
Repetition	Repetition of an entire word or phrase: O **Captain**! my **captain**! rise up and hear the bells; Rise up—**for you** the flag is flung—**for you** the bugle trills. —Walt Whitman, "Oh Captain! My Captain!"
Rhyme	Repetition of accented syllables with the same vowel and consonant sounds: The woods are lovely, dark, and **deep,** But I have promises to **keep,** And miles to go before I **sleep.** —Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"

Rhythm and Meter

Almost all poems have rhythm—a sense of flow produced by the rise and fall of accented and unaccented syllables. In many poems, the rhythm is a specific beat called a meter. The accented and unaccented syllables of metered poetry follow a regular, countable pattern like the beats of a piece of music. In the lines on the next page, the accented syllables are marked with ′ and unaccented syllables are marked with ˘. Read the lines and notice the strong, regular rhythm.

Tyger, tyger, burning bright,

In the forests of the night:

What immortal hand or eye

Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

—William Blake, "The Tyger"

Poetry without meter is called **free verse.** Poems in free verse have rhythm, but not a regular, patterned beat. "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" is free verse like most of Walt Whitman's poems. Its rhythm comes from repetition, variation, and the natural flow of speech. Notice the use of repetition in the following free-verse poem.

The Loon on Oak-Head Pond

cries for three days, in the gray mist.
cries for the north it hopes it can find.
plunges, and comes up with a slapping pickerel.
blinks its red eye.
cries again.
you come every afternoon, and wait to hear it.
you sit a long time, quiet, under the thick pines,
in the silence that follows.
as though it were your own twilight.
as though it were your own vanishing song.

—Mary Oliver

Practice Your Skills

Developing Sound Devices

Write a series of statements on the subject Life at School, as follows. Your statements may be either in prose or in verse, but they must contain the listed sound devices.

1. a statement containing rhyme
2. a statement containing alliteration
3. a statement containing assonance
4. a statement using a strong rhythm
5. a statement using onomatopoeia

Figurative Language

Good readers see mental pictures of the things they read about, and good poets help them by using figurative language that is vivid and imaginative. The following chart illustrates the major kinds of figurative language.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE	
Imagery	use of visual details or details that appeal to other senses Cold and raw the north wind blows/Bleak in the morning early. All the hills are covered with snow/And winter's now come fairly. —Nursery Rhyme
Simile	comparison using the words *like* or *as:* My love is like a red, red rose —Robert Burns, "My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose"
Metaphor	implied comparison that does not use *like* or *as:* Life is a broken-winged bird That cannot fly. —Langston Hughes, "Dreams"
Personification	use of human qualities to describe something non-human Because I could not stop for Death—He kindly stopped for me— —Emily Dickinson, "Because I Could Not Stop for Death"
Hyperbole	use of extreme exaggeration or overstatement And fired the shot heard 'round the world. —Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Concord Hymn"
Oxymoron	use of opposite or contradictory terms such as *living death, black snow, happy to be sad*
Symbol	use of an object or action to stand for another, as William Blake's tiger is a symbol of nature's untamed natural destructiveness Tyger, tyger, burning bright, In the forests of the night: What immortal hand or eye Could frame thy fearful symmetry? —William Blake, "The Tyger"

Practice Your Skills

Developing Figurative Language for Poems

Return to the subject of Life at School, which you wrote about in the previous activity. Now write statements (in prose or verse) as follows.

1. a statement using imagery
2. a statement using a simile
3. a statement using a metaphor
4. a statement using personification
5. a statement using hyperbole
6. a statement that includes an oxymoron
7. an explanation of how some object in school is a symbol for some idea or quality

PROJECT PREP Drafting *Poetic Techniques*

Using the freewriting from the previous Project Prep, work with your writing group to consider ways in which you could create a poem that distills the ideas and impressions from the writing. What would you need to do to convert prose to poetry? Based on this discussion, draft a poem that, in relatively few words, conveys important and provocative ideas.

editing

Poetry depends on brevity—saying as much as possible in as few words as possible. Rewrite the following bloated lines of poetry to make the words sing.

> The shady tree, tall and high, blocking the sun from the grass-covered ground
>
> Seemed ancient and old as the hills, as it stood in silence not making a sound.

3 Choosing a Form

The form of a poem should fit its subject, mood, and tone. For example, if your subject is a snake slithering quickly through the grass, you might choose the form of free verse in short lines to create a lively, dashing rhythm. In contrast, if your subject is the tragedy of world hunger, you might choose to write longer lines in a strong, solemn meter. If you are writing a comic poem, you might use bouncy, simple rhymes; if you are expressing deep, sincere feeling, you might omit rhyme. At times, you might find yourself writing a poem in a certain form simply because it feels right, without being able to explain exactly why.

If you choose to write in rhyme, you will need to use a **rhyme scheme**—a regular pattern of rhyming. A poem's rhyme scheme can be shown by letters of the alphabet. Each rhyming sound gets its own letter.

a It was many and many a year ago,
b In a kingdom by the sea,
a That a maiden there lived whom you may know
b By the name of Annabel Lee;
c And this maiden she lived with no other thought
b Than to love and be loved by me.

—Edgar Allan Poe, "Annabel Lee"

The six lines from "Annabel Lee," above, make up one stanza of that long poem. A **stanza** is a group of lines that the poet decides to set together, separated from other stanzas by a space. There are some specific kinds of stanzas in English, such as the quatrain (four lines). You do not need to choose stanzas of a specific length, but if you do, you should be consistent.

PROJECT PREP Drafting *Choosing a Form*

Using your latest draft as a base, write a poem consisting of two stanzas. For a poem based on the story of conflicting perspectives, provide one character's point of view in the first stanza and the other character's perspective in the second. After completing the stanzas, obtain feedback from your peers, and reread the poem yourself. Make any changes you feel would improve it, including changes of form. Read the final draft aloud to interested classmates or friends. Gather your poem with others by your classmates into a class anthology.

TIME OUT TO REFLECT

You have had opportunities to write a story, play scene, and poem in this chapter. Which form do you prefer working in and why? How has your experience in writing a story, a play, and a poem changed since you read this chapter? Which skills do want to practice more? Discuss your reflections or record them in your Learning Log.

Writing Lab

Project Corner

Speak and Listen Poetry Slam

Hold a poetry slam, a contest among people performing their poems. At a slam, poets do more than simply read their poems: they find imaginative ways to perform them that might include rap, broad gestures, and/or great vocal variety. Listeners don't just applaud politely afterwards—they get (appropriately) rowdy and hoot their pleasure. They also get a chance to judge the poets, and a winner is declared. You may wish to use the rubric below to help you choose a winner. At most poetry slams, contestants are rated on a scale of 1–10.

Poetry Slam Rubric

Poem

The poem moved me in some way.
The poem used poetic techniques (sound devices, rhythm, and meter) effectively.
The poem had a form, even if it was loose.
The poet's words were well chosen, and figurative language created vivid images.

Performance

The poet projected clearly and took the performance seriously, even if it was fun.
The poet knew the poem by heart.
The poet used gestures, movements, and vocal changes to express a range of feelings.

Collaborate and Create Collaborative Fiction

With your writing group members, **collaborate on a literary work** by taking turns writing sections of it. For example, one student might start it off by introducing the characters; the next might introduce the conflict; and the next might show the rising tide of the action, at which point the work returns to the first writer to continue the action. As a first step, come up with a list of rules for the collaboration. These might include such items as sticking to the chosen genre or not being silly (or being silly). With your rules in place, create your work. Share it with your classmates when you have finished it. Ask if they can tell where one person's work stopped and another's began.

Apply and Assess

In the Workplace
Narrative E-mail

1. This morning you were ten minutes late for work. When you arrived, the boss's secretary was not happy, and he vowed he would report your lateness. You have a good reason for being late, but you admit it is very hard to believe. You decide to ***write an e-mail*** to your boss explaining why you were late for work. Use the narrative form, with first-person point of view. Keep the events of your story ordered in a concise and chronological manner. Try to include strong and vivid physical and sensory details that will make your boss believe your story. (You can find information on writing e-mails in the *Guide to 21st Century School and Workplace Skills on* pages 445, 453, and 493–497.)

For Oral Communication Dramatic Scene

2. You work for a public radio station devoted to producing radio dramas. Your boss has finally given you a chance to write a short dramatic scene to be performed during the ten minutes of free airtime before the 3 a.m. news. Your boss gives you only one requirement for the scene—it has to be exciting enough to keep the late-night audience awake! ***Write a lively scene for a radio drama*** that will be performed by two or three actors. During the prewriting stage, consider the setting and make character sketches. Then perform the scene with other members of your class. (You can find information on writing plays on pages 192–199.)

Timed Writing Short Story

3. You have been chosen to submit an entry for a book of short stories about the experiences of contemporary American high school students. Although all the entries will be very short pieces of fiction—no more than 600 words long (about one paged typed)—the editors want you to base the stories on your own experience. Write a short story about an extremely important moment in your life. Use the third-person point of view. You have 30 minutes to complete your work.

Before You Write Consider your purpose and audience, and spend time prewriting. Include important and vivid details, but stay within the length limits. Use background details to set the time and place of the story and to capture your reader's interest. Be sure the story has a beginning, middle, and end. Decide what conflict was at the center of your important moment, and resolve it by the end of the story. Use rhetorical devices to deepen meaning.

After You Write Evaluate your story using the six-trait rubric on page 191.

Expository Writing

Expository writing presents information or offers an explanation. One type of expository writing is **analytical**, writing that analyzes or takes apart a subject.

You rely on expository writing in your everyday life: to obtain information you need, to obtain information that interests you, and to communicate information that you want to share. Consider all these examples:

- **A high school student gives an oral report** on the history of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).
- **A newspaper sportswriter reviews the highlights** of a local team's championship season.
- **A club secretary uses notes** from the last meeting to write the minutes, a record of what happened and what was decided.
- **A health and beauty magazine publishes a feature** on the 20 best foods and the 20 worst foods for your body.
- **A television writer creates a script** for a documentary on the behavior of gorillas in the wild.
- **A healthcare worker updates the hospital's Web site** with text, photographs, and video clips that summarize new research on happiness and how to achieve it.

Writing Project

Analytical

What Makes Teens Happy? ***Create your own analytical expository text on the subject of teenagers and happiness by completing the following project.***

Think Through Writing Do you think teenagers today are generally happy? How do you define happiness? What can people do to be happier? Write freely in your journal for five minutes trying to answer these questions.

Talk About It At the end of five minutes, share your ideas with your classmates. Also discuss what questions you would need to ask if you were to take a survey to determine the happiness level of teenagers in the United States.

Read About It The following text is from the Web site of Social Technologies, a research group. It presents information on a study of what makes teenagers and young adults happy. What do you think the study found?

MODEL: Analytical Expository Writing

The Future of Happiness

What makes 12–24 year olds happy? That was the topic of a study that MTV commissioned Social Technologies to conduct [in 2008]. The findings surprised many. "We knew friends and technology would be important to this demographic, but going in we also had the preconceived notion that 12 to 24 year olds were slightly indifferent, self-serving, and perhaps even a bit apathetic," explains Andy Hines, Social Technologies' director of custom projects, who led the study. "The biggest thing we learned was never to judge a book by its cover."

Introduction captures attention with a question.

Quotes by the leader of the study are worked into the article.

Key findings from the happiness study included:

BFF. Friends are and will continue to be the most important relationships contributing to youth happiness. 80% of the youth polled said that having lots of close friends is very or somewhat important; 23% said that when they go out with friends, they stop feeling unhappy.

Boldface headings present information in easy-to-grasp chunks.

No Body's Perfect. Body image and traditional routes to good health will be important aspects of happiness for many youth. "At my school, skinny is what everyone's trying to be," said Vanessa A., 13, of Philadelphia. "People make fun of fat [but] also of the skin-and-bones look."

My Life, My Time, My Way. Youth will take control of their own happiness. 91% said they have goals for the future (81% have career/work goals, 64% education, 62% family, 63% money, 48% travel, 17% sports, while 12% hope for fame).

Statistics back up the main ideas.

Virtual Community. Technology will be important for staying in touch as well as for the pleasure of the moment. 37% of the youths polled said they play videogames to stop unhappiness. 61% said technology helps them make new friends. In the 24

hours before the survey, half of the respondents said, they sent a text message; 71% said they received one.

So what does make American youth happy?

The bottom line is that today's 12–24 year olds define happiness differently than previous generations did, the Social Technologies team determined.

Results are interpreted to formulate general conclusions.

"The characteristic that will most shape their current and future pursuit of happiness may be a deep-seated pragmatism," explains project manager Traci Stafford Croft, who traveled to three cities (Philadelphia, Phoenix, and Atlanta) with MTV's staff to interview about five dozen 12-24 year olds. In the study's next phase, the Associated Press surveyed another 1,200 youths to further flesh out the findings.

In the end, the research showed that it is a popular misconception that today's youths are self-absorbed or indifferent to social issues. Instead, any apparent indifference "might reflect the fact that they have a good grasp on reality and are simply being practical about what they get upset about or involved in," Croft explains.

Hines adds: "No, this generation is not likely to march in DC to protest the war in Iraq. But they do care about the country, the environment, and the planet. They are just showing it in a way that is different from their parents and grandparents."

As for today's so-called helicopter parents, notorious for hovering protectively around their offspring in this generation, well, the respondents' views of this parental behavior were the finding that most amazed the Social Technologies team.

Article saves most surprising finding for the end.

"We thought the kids would really resent having their parents come in and make a fuss at school or on the playing field, but the youths didn't feel as if that was an obstacle to their happiness," Croft concludes. "Sure, it was a little embarrassing for them, but ultimately they said they appreciated that their parents are looking out for them."

Respond in Writing In your journal, write responses to the following questions. Do the findings reported in this article ring true? What do you think made your parents happy when they were teenagers? Do you agree that your generation finds happiness in a different way from that of your parents' generation? Is any element of teenage happiness missing in this report, in your opinion?

Develop Your Own Supporting Ideas Work with your classmates to come up with your own statistics on teenage happiness.

Small Groups: Break into small groups of four or five students. Ask one another what makes you happy and try to come up with at least four answers each, keeping track of all the answers mentioned.

Whole Class: Share your answers with the class while a student writes each one on a large sheet of paper or on the board. At the end of the discussion, you will have a list of answers from your entire class to the question: What makes you happy? You can use that information to complete the following activity.

Write About It You will write an analytical essay on the subject of happiness and teenagers. You will choose your topic, audience, and form from the options below. With your teacher's approval you may also develop your own topic, audience, and form.

Possible Topics	Possible Audiences	Possible Forms
• what the survey of your classmates tells you about what makes them happy • how the results of your survey are like and unlike the results reported in the article • how to make every day happier • the relationship between happiness and health • the effects of happy teenagers in families, in schools, in the community, and in the workplace	• your parents or guardian • a good friend • school officials in charge of extra-curricular activities • a younger sibling • advertising executives for companies that market their products to teenagers • a local elected official	• a letter • an essay • a powerpoint presentation • a video • an article for a Web site

The prewriting stage of the writing process helps you discover possible subjects for an expository text, develop your ideas, and shape those ideas into an organized plan.

1 Getting the Subject Right

If you get your subject just right, you will be off to a strong start. Choose a subject you care about, make sure it is appropriate for your audience, and limit it to a manageable scope.

Discovering and Choosing a Subject

In school you may often be given a subject to write about. For those times when you need to choose your own, use the following strategies to help you settle on a topic that is genuinely interesting to you.

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Finding Subjects for Expository Essays

- Brainstorm or freewrite to list subjects that you know well enough to explain.
- Ask yourself questions about your interests and skills.
- Review your journal entries to find possible subjects that are suitable for explaining or informing.
- Skim books, newspapers, and magazines for subjects that interest you.
- Read your notes from courses in other subject areas to find possible subjects.
- View television documentaries or educational television programs to discover subjects that you would like to explore in writing.
- Search for interesting contemporary topics on the Internet.

Determining Your Audience

Sometimes your choice of a subject will depend in part on who will be reading your essay. You might choose one subject if you were writing for a classmate, a very different one if you were writing for a teacher, and still another if you were writing to the editor of the school newspaper. At other times you will be able to choose both your subject and the audience you wish to write for. For example, you may decide to write an essay about synthesizers for an audience of musicians and others who are interested in electronic keyboards.

Whether you choose a subject to suit your audience or choose an audience for the subject you want to write about, you will need to take into account the interests, knowledge, opinions, and needs of your audience.

You can learn more about analyzing an audience on pages 15–16, 151, and 266.

Limiting and Focusing a Subject

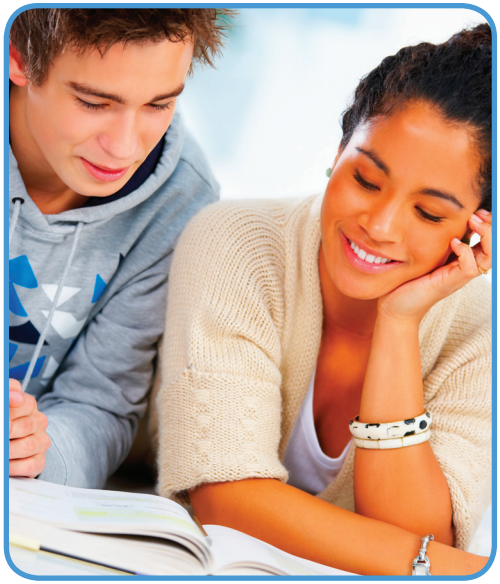
Many expository subjects—such as happiness—may be too broad to be developed adequately in a short essay. To limit a subject, think of specific aspects or examples of it. If your new subjects are still too broad, continue the process. The following example shows how a writer might limit the subject of happiness to arrive at subjects suitable for a short expository text.

EXAMPLE: Limited Subjects

Limited Subjects	More Specific Subjects
in teens	surveys about teen happiness
happiness and health	the physical effects of mental states
changing standards of happiness	past generations' versus present generation's
happiness self-help	books on how to be happy

After you have limited a subject, your next step is to focus. Read about your subject, or brainstorm general questions you could ask about the subject based on what you know about it.

For example, if you chose books on how to be happy as your limited subject, you might decide to focus on one that is a current best-seller whose author is making the rounds of talk shows. Focusing from a different angle, you might zero in on comparing and contrasting one self-help approach with another.



HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Focusing a Subject

- Focus on a specific event or incident.
- Focus on a specific time and place.
- Focus on one example that best represents your subject.
- Focus on one person or group that represents your subject.

The example below shows how the limited subject of books on how to be happy may have more than one possible focus.

Possible Focuses

- how one approach differs from another
- elements that several approaches have in common
- differences between books for females and books for males
- differences between books for young people and books for old people
- the most famous or popular book on achieving happiness

PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Subject/Audience*

1. Review the topic choices on page 213. Which one genuinely interests you the most? Write your topic and audience choice on a sheet of paper. Is the topic appropriately limited? Is it sufficiently focused? If not, use the strategies on pages 215–216 to limit and focus your subject.
2. Review the audience choices on page 213. Which audience seems best suited for an informational text on your topic? What considerations might you keep in mind to address your chosen audience in the most effective way? What would you tell this audience that you might not tell to others?
3. Review the choice of forms on page 213 and choose the one you want to use. What content, tone, style, and vocabulary are suitable for the form you chose? What content, tone, style, and vocabulary would you avoid?
4. Share your decisions with your writing group. Talk through how your decisions will affect the choices you make as you compose your expository text.

2 Exploring and Refining the Subject

Gathering Information

Once you have a focused subject, gather information so you can explain it clearly to your reader. Use brainstorming, freewriting, clustering, inquiring, or researching to explore your subject and find details that will help you to inform others about it. The details may include any of the types shown in the box below, including such rhetorical devices as analogies and examples. Remember that the type of detail often indicates the best method of development for your paragraphs.

You can learn more about gathering information on pages 332–336 and 460 and about methods of development on page 221.

TYPES OF DETAILS USED IN EXPOSITORY WRITING

facts and examples	analogies	similarities
reasons	incidents	differences
steps in a process	definitions	causes and effects

The information in the following model shows examples of books on happiness discovered by checking titles at an online bookseller's site. Notice that the information is not yet arranged in any logical order.

MODEL: Gathering Information

Current books on happiness

- *Mary Lou Retton's Gateways to Happiness*, 2000—former Olympian on giving 110%, refers to Christian faith
- *The Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living,* by Dalai Lama, 1998—based on Buddhist meditations
- *How to See Yourself as You Really Are*, by Dalai Lama, 2007—focuses on realistic self-knowledge
- *The How of Happiness*, Sonja Lyubomirsky, reprint edition 2008—takes scientific approach
- *Climb Your Stairway to Heaven: The 9 Habits of Maximum Happiness*, David Leonhardt, 2001—relies on psychology
- *Stumbling on Happiness*, by Daniel Gilbert, 2007—scientific look at how trying to predict the future steers us away from happiness

Developing a Working Thesis

As you gather information, a main idea for your essay will begin to emerge. At this point you should express this emerging main idea as a **working thesis**—a preliminary statement of what you think the main idea will be. For example, as you look over the books on happiness, you might write the thesis on the next page.

Working Thesis

Current books on happiness seem to approach the topic from many different angles.

This working thesis would guide you in selecting information to use in your essay. That is, you would select details from the list only about books on happiness and not about books on self-knowedge, even though the two topics might be related. If you wanted to include information about Dalai Lama's book on self-knowledge, you could broaden your working thesis.

Revised Working Thesis

Current books on happiness seem to approach the topic from many different angles, including the importance of really knowing who you are.

As you can see, a list of details can lead to several different theses. As you gather and think about information, you may wish to modify your working thesis. You may find the following steps helpful in developing a working thesis.

HERE'S HOW Steps for Developing a Working Thesis

- Look over the information you have gathered.
- Express the main idea you plan to convey.
- Select the details you will use to support your main idea.
- Check that the working thesis takes into account all of the information you selected to include in your essay.

Writing Tip

Think of a working thesis as a place to start in identifying the main idea of your informative essay. You can revise a working thesis as many times as needed to include new details that will make your essay more interesting and informative.

PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Working Thesis*

1. Review your focused topic. Do you have enough information to develop your idea fully? If so, make a list of all the relevant details. If not, develop a plan for gathering that information and carry it out.
2. As you gather information, keep track of the details that will help you develop your topic. Then look for patterns and draw conclusions. For example, on the subject of the class survey, you might draw these two conclusions from the many different responses:
   - kids enjoy doing things more than they enjoy being passive;
   - kids are happy when they are with other kids, either in person or online.
3. Develop a working thesis that reflects your conclusions. Meet with your writing group to discuss your working thesis and how you arrived at it. Be open to suggestions.

Think Critically

Evaluating Information for Relevance

To decide which ideas and details to include in an essay, evaluate the information for **relevance** by asking yourself the following questions: Is it appropriate for my purpose in writing? Does it relate directly to my working thesis? Will it help me support or prove my thesis? Study the following prewriting notes. Which ideas and information do you think lack relevance to the given thesis?

THESIS STATEMENT	The chambered shell of the nautilus has long fascinated marine biologists.
1. Supporting Idea	The nautilus is a marine mollusk.
Details	• soft-shelled sea animal • lives in warm waters of South Pacific
2. Supporting Idea	The nautilus grows a unique shell with many chambers.
Details	• adds chambers as it grows • moves into new chamber and closes old one
3. Supporting Idea	Oliver Wendell Holmes was inspired to write a poem about the nautilus.
	• calls it a "ship of pearls" • nautilus is a metaphor for the human soul

The first idea and its details are relevant because they describe the subject. The second idea and details are also clearly relevant because they are about the shell of the nautilus. The third idea, however, is not directly relevant.

Thinking Practice

Explain why item 3 above is not directly relevant. Then refine the thesis statement to make this item relevant to an essay about the nautilus.

3 Organizing Your Essay

Clear organization lets a reader follow your ideas without confusing distractions. There are several steps involved in discovering an effective organization. First you need to group your details into meaningful categories by examining connections and distinctions among ideas. Then you need to arrange those categories in a logical order.

Grouping Information into Categories

A **category** is a group, or class, of related pieces of information. When you examine the information you gather, look for ways that the separate pieces relate to one another. For example, if you have collected a lot of information on happiness books, you might notice that some of them draw on religious teachings while others seem to rely on science. The following example shows how the books might be arranged in categories.

MODEL: Classifying Details

Category 1

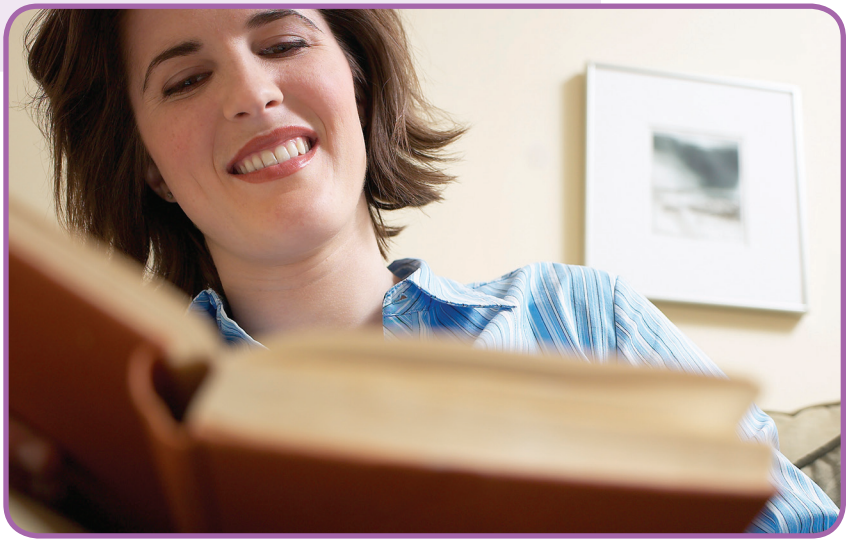
Religion

- *Dali Lama's The Art of Happiness* (Buddism)
- *Mary Lou Retton's Gateway to Happiness* (Christianity)

Category 2

Science

- *Climb Your Stairway to Heaven*
- *The How of Happiness*
- *Stumbling on Happiness*



Arranging Categories in Logical Order

Next arrange your categories in the order in which you want to present them in your text. The type you choose will depend partly on your subject and partly on your thesis. For example, the thesis that radioactivity is more common in nature than most people think lends itself to an organization based on order of importance or developmental order. The thesis that radioactivity was an important discovery in the history of science, on the other hand, suggests chronological order. Keep your audience and purpose in mind as you think about your organizing structure. The following chart shows some commonly used types of logical order.

TYPES OF ORDER	
Chronological Order	Information is presented in the order in which it occurred. **Example** books on happiness presented in the order of the oldest to the newest
Spatial Order	Information is given according to location. **Example** books on happiness presented according to the parts of the world where they are from
Order of Importance	Information is given in order of importance, interest, size, or degree. **Example** books presented in the order of least to most interesting, influential, or popular
Developmental Order	Information of equal importance is arranged to lead up to a conclusion. **Example** books on happiness presented in the order of the different sources they come from, such as religion and science
Comparison/Contrast	Information is arranged to point out similarities and differences (see pages 244–249 for more on comparison/contrast). **Example** books from different regions, or from different sources, or aimed at different ages, examined in terms of likenesses and differences

When you select and group details, you probably write simple outlines to keep track of your decisions. You might number the points you want to make, for example. By developing an even more detailed outline, you can plan the whole body of your text.

When you write a formal outline for the body of your text, you use Roman numerals for each idea that supports your thesis. Each idea becomes the **main topic** of a supporting paragraph. You then use capital letters for each category of information that comes under a topic. Then, under each subtopic, you use Arabic numerals to list the **supporting points** or details. The information below each Roman numeral in the outline will correspond with a separate paragraph when you draft the body of your work.

HERE'S HOW Guidelines for Making an Outline

- Use Roman numerals for topics.
- Use capital letters for subtopics and indent them under the topic. If you use subtopics, always include at least two of them.
- Use Arabic numerals for supporting points and indent them under the subtopic. If you use supporting points, include at least two of them.
- Use lowercase letters for any other details and indent them under the supporting point to which they refer. If you use supporting details, include at least two of them.

MODEL: Outline Form

I. (Main topic)
  A. (Subtopic)
    1. (Supporting point)
    2. (Supporting point)
      a. (Detail)
      b. (Detail)
  B. (Subtopic)
    1. (Supporting point)
      a. (Detail)
      b. (Detail)
    2. (Supporting point)

II. (Main topic) Etc.

PROJECT PREP Prewriting *Outline*

1. Review the conclusions you drew for your expository text. Each of them could serve as the topic sentence of a paragraph in your text. In what order should you present them? Decide on an ordering scheme from the Types of Order chart on page 221. You may also wish to review the **Writing Workshops** on pages 240–253 for ideas about organizing your text. Then arrange your conclusions and the details that support them accordingly. Sketch out the structure.
2. Refine your rough structure. Determine what your topics, subtopics, and supporting points will be. Follow the guidelines above to write an outline of the body of your article. Rework your outline until you are satisfied with the content, order of information, and form.

The Power of Language

Semicolons: Catch and Release

You can think of a semicolon as a hybrid of comma and period. The comma part joins two sentences closely related in meaning; the period part separates them grammatically. Look at the following examples from "The Future of Happiness" and think about why the semicolon is appropriate:

> 80% of the youth polled said that having lots of close friends is very or somewhat important; 23% said that when they go out with friends, they stop feeling unhappy.

The writer could have used two separate sentences, or used a word between them that spelled out their relationship. In the first example, the writer could have written:

> 80% of the youth polled said that having lots of close friends is very or somewhat important. For example, 23% said that when they go out with friends, they stop feeling unhappy.

By using only the semicolon, however, the writer lets the reader supply the connecting idea. In this way, the semicolon helps create an engaging style.

Try It Yourself

Write two complete sentences closely related in meaning and join them with a semicolon. Try this twice more, creating sentences on the topic of your project. Use these sentences in your draft if appropriate, and return during revision to see if there are other places where the semicolon seems to be the best stylistic choice.

Punctuation Tip

To simply connect and/or separate two complete sentences, there are usually three punctuation options. Which you choose is a stylistic decision.

Separate with a period: The comma part joins. The period part separates.

Join with a comma plus *and*: The comma part joins, and the period part separates.

Join/separate with a semicolon: The comma part joins; the period part separates.

During the drafting stage of the writing process, you will use your prewriting notes and outline to write an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

1 Drafting the Introduction

Writing a Thesis Statement

Before you begin drafting your whole essay, take time out to refine your working thesis into a thesis statement. The thesis statement, which expresses your main idea, should appear somewhere in the introduction of the essay. Thesis statements are often most effective when they appear at the beginning or at the end of the introduction.

The **thesis statement** makes the main idea of the essay clear to readers.

In an expository essay, the key feature of a thesis statement is that it accurately covers all of the information you include. You can follow the steps on the next page to refine your working thesis into an effective thesis statement.



HERE'S HOW

Drafting a Thesis Statement

- Look over your outline and revise your working thesis so that it covers all of your main topics.
- Express your working thesis in a complete sentence.
- Check your thesis statement for clarity and voice; use peer conferencing for feedback on both.
- Look over all your information again to make sure it is relevant to the thesis statement.
- Continue to refine your thesis statement as you take into account any changes you make in the main idea or in the information you include.

Capturing Attention

Besides stating the thesis, the introduction sets the tone of an essay and captures the reader's interest. Because the purpose of writing an expository essay is to inform, analyze, or explain, a formal style and objective tone are usually appropriate. The following are common ways to draw readers into an expository essay.

HERE'S HOW

Writing Introductions for Expository Essays

- Tell about an incident that shows how you became interested in your subject.
- Give some background information.
- Cite an example that illustrates your thesis.
- Cite a startling statistic about the subject.
- Define or describe the subject.
- Quote an expert on the subject.



The model on the next page presents an introduction for an essay about books on happiness. Notice how this introduction introduces the subject, captures interest, and sets the tone. Also the main idea is clearly expressed in a refined thesis statement.

MODEL: Introduction of an Expository Essay

Refined Thesis Statement

Self-help books on happiness line shelf after shelf of bookstores and libraries. Their covers promise 10 easy steps or 5 golden rules or whatever magic number or formula might be the latest key to happiness. Despite their great numbers, though, these guides to happiness tend to come in two main types: books that help people draw on their religious faith or spiritual beliefs, and books that explain the scientific side of happiness and how to achieve it.



PROJECT PREP Drafting *Introduction*

1. Review all your previous project work. Then refine your working thesis statement using the drafting strategies on page 225. Next, draft a whole introductory paragraph that captures attention and focuses your reader on your topic. As you draft, pay special attention to the needs of your audience. What approach will make your subject as clear as possible to your readers?
2. After drafting your opening paragraph, share your writing with your group and evaluate one another's drafts for:
   - The clarity and focus of the thesis statement.
   - The clarity of the introductory paragraph as it outlines the purpose of the text.
   - The effectiveness of the attention getting.
   - The appropriateness of the writing to the expectations of the reader(s).
   - The suitability of the writing to the form in which you are presenting your report.
3. Based on your group's feedback, revise your introductory paragraph.

In the Media

Grabbing Attention

Understanding how other media present information can help you improve your expository writing. Techniques for grabbing a reader's attention are especially useful to study. A newspaper story usually begins with the whole story summarized in the first sentence, for example. The rest of the story supplies the details, but the reader is drawn in by knowing the outcome. A newsmagazine, in contrast, might begin with a paragraph setting the scene, and then take time leading up to the outcome.

Media Activity

Skim through a newspaper until you find a headline that interests you. Read the first few paragraphs. Then scan the table of contents of a newsmagazine until you find an article in which you are interested. Read only the first few paragraphs. Finally, surf the Internet until you find a Web site that interests you. Read only the first screenful of text.

For each introduction, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the introduction grab my attention? Why or why not?
- What method did the writer use to get my attention?
- What is the implied or stated thesis statement? If it is stated, where is it placed in the introduction?

In a paragraph, sum up what you have learned about writing introductions to expository essays from the three pieces you examined from other media.



2 Drafting the Body

Follow your outline when you draft the body of your expository essay. Each main topic, with some or all of the subtopics and supporting points, will become at least one paragraph. If you have a number of supporting details, you may need two or more paragraphs to cover each topic adequately. Make sure to include enough detail to help support your ideas.

HERE'S HOW

Guidelines for Adequately Developing an Essay

- Include enough supporting ideas to develop your thesis statement fully.
- Leave no question unanswered that you would expect readers to ask.
- Include enough information to present each topic and subtopic fully.
- Use specific details and precise language to present each piece of information fully.

As you draft the body of your expository essay from your outline, connect your words, sentences, and paragraphs with transitions to make the essay read smoothly and to give it unity, coherence, and clarity.

Logical Development

The ideas you develop to support your thesis statement are claims.

Claims are statements asserted to be true.

In the opening reading "The Future of Happiness," some of the claims are:

- Friends are the most important relationships contributing to youth happiness.
- Body image will be related to youth happiness.
- Technology provides connections and enjoyment.



The study develops these claims with supporting information and examples.

CLAIMS	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
Friends are the most important relationships contributing to youth happiness.	80% of youth polled felt friendship was important.
Body image will be related to youth happiness.	Vanessa A. reports that skinny and fat kids are teased but that kids want to be skinny.
Technology provides connections and enjoyment.	37% of youth polled said they play games to avoid unhappiness; 61% credit technology with helping them make friends.

Simply providing examples for claims, however, does not support your assertion that they are true. You need to go further and provide a warrant for each claim.

> A **warrant** is a statement that explains how an example serves as evidence for a claim.

Warrants often use the word *because* as in the following example.

Claim	Friends are the most important relationships contributing to youth happiness.
Information	80% of youth polled felt friendship was important.
Warrant	Because four out of five youth polled in a study reported that friends were important to their happiness, friendship must be a key factor contributing to youth happiness.

Valid Inferences

In addition to providing warrants for your claims, you also need to make sure that your conclusions or inferences are valid. A **valid inference** is one that follows logically from the claims. For example, suppose you make these claims:

Claim	All teenagers like and use technology.
Claim	Amit is a teenager.
Valid Inference	Amit likes and uses technology.

That inference is valid because the first claim asserts that all teenagers like and use technology; in that case, if someone is a teenager, that person will like and use technology. Even though the first claim is false (of course, not *all* teenagers like and use technology), the inference still follows logically from the claim.

Suppose, though, you make these claims:

Claim	All teenagers like and use technology.
Claim	Amit likes and uses technology.
Invalid Inference	Amit is a teenager.

The inference is invalid because it does not follow logically from the claims. The original claim is that all teenagers like and use technology, not that *only* teenagers like and use technology. Just because Amit likes and uses technology does not logically lead to the inference that he is a teenager.

Coherence

As you draft the body of your expository essay, connect your words, sentences, and paragraphs with transitions to make the essay read smoothly and to give it unity, coherence, and clarity.

You can learn more about making transitions on pages 86–87. Check pages 80–88, 109, and 133–134 for guidance on achieving unity, coherence, clarity, and adequate development.

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Achieving Coherence

- Use transitional words and phrases.
- Repeat a key word from an earlier sentence.
- Use synonyms for key words from earlier sentences.
- Use a pronoun in place of a word used earlier.

PROJECT PREP Drafting *Body Paragraphs*

Following your plan, draft the body of your composition. Provide adequate development and support each claim with a warrant. You might want to make a chart like the one below to help you keep track of your claims and warrants.

Body Paragraphs	Topic sentence (claim)	Example/ Information	Warrant
First			
Second			
Third			

As you draft, provide smooth transitions from your introduction to the body and between body paragraphs. Ask yourself: are my voice, tone, and style appropriate?

3 Drafting the Conclusion

The conclusion sums up your information and reinforces your thesis. You might also add an interesting detail from your notes that you did not previously include.

You can learn more about the conclusion of an essay on page 110.

HERE'S HOW

Strategies for Writing a Conclusion

- Summarize the body of the essay.
- Restate the thesis in new words.
- Draw a conclusion based on the body of the essay.
- Add an insight about the thesis.
- Explain the implications or significance of your topic.

The following paragraph is a draft of a concluding paragraph for the essay on books for happiness. Notice that the conclusion adds some specific, interesting details about a very popular exception to the pattern and also restates the thesis in a memorable sentence.

MODEL: Conclusion of an Expository Essay

Of course, not all books fall into these two categories. A book called *14,000 Things to Be Happy About* presented, yes, 14,000 random things to be happy about and now has more than a million copies in print. That book celebrates such happiness-givers as "pitching a tent" and "running to a hug." Far more frequently, though, happiness-seekers will end up turning to the two realms most endeavors end up leading to: belief and reason.

Drafting a Title

To complete your first draft, think of an appropriate title. A good title suggests the main idea of your essay and captures the attention of your audience.

PROJECT PREP Drafting Conclusion

Reread the introduction and body of your text. Then draft a strong concluding paragraph with a final clincher sentence. Try to make the conclusion flow smoothly from the body. Write two or three possible titles. Choose the best one and save your draft for use later.

If time allows, put away your draft for a day or two so you can revise it with a fresh eye. Also read your draft aloud to notice parts that need improvement. A peer reader can also tell you whether your explanations are clear. During revising, also check the six traits: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency (see pages 5–6), and conventions.

1 Checking for Unity, Coherence, and Clarity

In revising, as in drafting, you should be alert for ways to improve the unity, coherence, and clarity of your essay. The following questions will help you to check for these qualities. Refer back to the pages mentioned for help with any of these.

Checklist for Unity, Coherence, and Clarity

Checking for Unity

- ✓ Does each idea and each piece of information relate to the subject? (pages 217–219 and 228–230)
- ✓ Does every paragraph support the thesis statement? (pages 228–230)
- ✓ Does every sentence in each paragraph support its topic sentence? (pages 228–231)

Checking for Coherence

- ✓ Did you follow a logical order of ideas or topics? (pages 220–222)
- ✓ Did you follow a logical order of supporting points or details? (pages 220–222)
- ✓ Did you use transitions to connect the introduction, body, and conclusion and clarify the relationships among ideas? (pages 228 and 230)
- ✓ Did you use transitions between paragraphs? (pages 228 and 230)
- ✓ Did you use transitions between sentences within each paragraph? (pages 228 and 230)

Checking for Clarity

- ✓ Does each word express clearly and precisely what you want to say?
- ✓ Does the introduction make your subject, purpose, tone, and thesis clear to readers? (pages 224–227)
- ✓ Does the body clearly support the thesis and lead to the conclusion? (pages 228–230)
- ✓ Does the conclusion make clear how the body supports the thesis? (page 231)

PROJECT PREP Revising *Unity, Coherence, Clarity*

Work with your group. Review one another's writing to point out places where unity, coherence, and emphasis could be improved. Revise until your text is the best it can be.

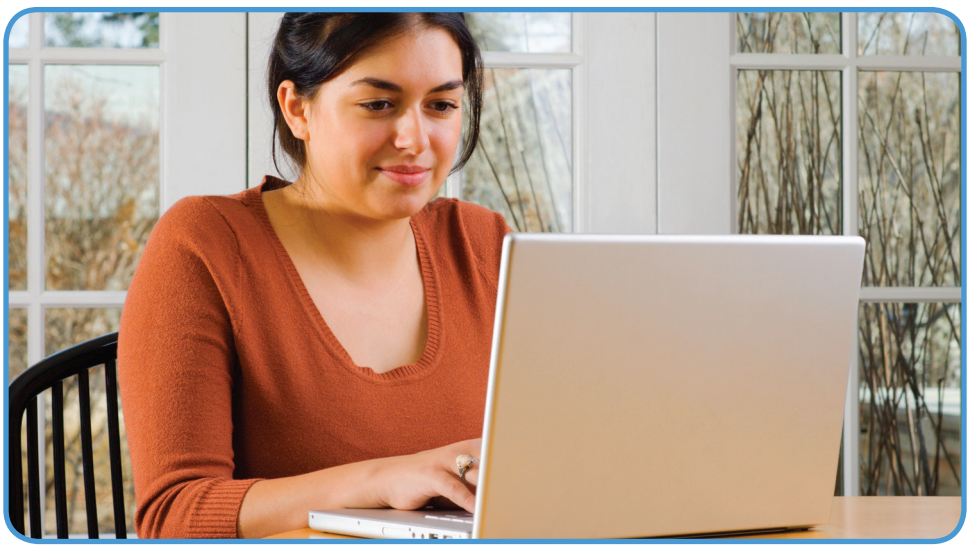
2 Strategies for Revising

As you see need for revisions, you can use four basic strategies for improving your draft. The following chart shows how you can use these strategies with expository writing.

HERE'S HOW

Revision Strategies

Elaborating	• Add supporting details such as facts, examples, extended definitions, concrete details, and quotations to boost the development of your ideas.
Deleting	• Cut out needless words and phrases and ideas that do not relate to your thesis statement.
Substituting	• If a word is overused or overly general, substitute a fresher, more specific and vivid word. If a supporting detail is weak, substitute a stronger one. If literal language seems too plodding, substitute a rhetorical device, such as a metaphor, simile, or analogy.
Rearranging	• If a better organizational structure occurs to you, rearrange the parts of your composition, redoing transitions as needed. If you need more sentence variety, rearrange the parts of the sentence so your sentences have a variety of beginnings.



The following excerpt from an essay titled "Fifties Fashions" shows these strategies in action.

MODEL: Elaborating, Deleting, Substituting, and Rearranging

Fifties Fashions

As every era, the 1950s had its own distinctive fashion code for teenagers. The uniform was ~~unmistakable and~~ easy to spot. Matching sweater sets were very popular. The fashionable teenage *often with a scarf around the rubber band* girl of the fifties wore her hair in a ponytail. The fifties girl also usually wore her hair with bangs. It was considered very ~~awesome~~ *cool* to wear a sweater clip connecting the two sides of the cardigan, rather than buttoning the sweater.

- **1 deleted:** redundant
- **2 rearranged:** moved closer to other details about sweaters
- **3 elaborated:** good detail added
- **4 substituted:** "awesome" is overused and current; "cool" is the term from the 50s

PROJECT PREP Revising Strategies

Work with your group. Review one another's writing to point out places where adding, deleting, substituting, or rearranging will strengthen the text to make your work the best it can be.

TIME OUT TO REFLECT

Compare your process of revising this piece of informative writing with the way you revised your writing earlier in the year. In what ways have you improved your writing? What strategies have helped you do a better job of revising, such as setting a draft aside for a few days? Record your responses in your Learning Log.

Expository Writing — Editing

As you revised your expository essay, you looked for ways to be sure it is clear, unified, and coherent. Now you are ready to edit your essay by checking for errors in usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Use the Spelling and Grammar Check features on your word processing software to help you.

The Language of Power — *Verb Tense*

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

See It in Action The conclusions from the study on teenage happiness are easy to follow in part because the verb tenses are consistent. The words in bold type are all future-tense verbs.

> Friends are and **will continue to be** the most important relationships contributing to youth happiness. Body image and traditional routes to good health **will be** important aspects of happiness for many youth. Youth **will take control** of their own happiness.

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

Use It Read through your personal narrative to make sure you have used consistent verb tenses. Highlight or underline verbs to help you keep track of tenses as you edit.

PROJECT PREP — Editing

Read through your paper several times, looking for different kinds of errors each time. Use the checklist on page 29 to be sure you have caught any mistakes. Check that you have followed the Power Rules. When you have finished, use the rubric on the following page to evaluate the six traits of writing in your work.

Using a Six-Trait Rubric

Expository Writing

Ideas	**4** The topic, focus, and details convey information powerfully with valid inferences.	**3** The text conveys information, using valid inferences.	**2** Some aspects of the topic are not clear and/or well developed.	**1** Most aspects are not clear and/or well developed.
Organization	**4** The organization is clear and easy to follow. Transitions provide coherence.	**3** The organization is clear, but a few ideas seem out of place or disconnected.	**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 and knowledgeable and is appropriate for the audience.	**3** The voice sounds mostly natural and knowledgable and is right for the audience.	**2** The voice sounds a bit unnatural and does not seem right for the audience.	**1** The voice sounds mostly unnatural or is inappropriate for the audience.
Word Choice	**4** Words are specific and figures of speech are used.	**3** Words are vivid and specific.	**2** Some words are overly general.	**1** Most words are overly general.
Sentence Fluency	**4** Varied sentences flow smoothly. Sentences vary in structure and length.	**3** Most of the sentences are varied and smoothly flowing.	**2** Some sentence patterns are not varied and some sentences are choppy.	**1** Sentences are not varied and are choppy.
Conventions	**4** Punctuation, usage, and spelling are correct and all Power Rules are followed.	**3** There are only a few errors in punctuation, usage, and spelling and no Power Rule errors.	**2** There are several errors in punctuation, usage, and spelling but no Power Rule errors.	**1** There are many errors and at least one Power Rule error.

PROJECT PREP Evaluating *Peer Evaluation*

Meet in small groups with other students who chose the same topic you did. Compare your treatment of the subject. Exchange papers with a group member. Use the evaluation form above to assign a number to each trait of that student's writing, and write a brief paragraph explaining your rating. Revise your own work as appropriate.

Expository Writing — Publishing

As you consider options for publishing your work, think about your audience and your purpose and choose the publishing format that suits those best. Your presentation should convey a distinctive point of view no matter what format you choose.

HERE'S HOW

Publishing Options for Expository Writing

- a formal essay (see pages 32–33 for proper manuscript form)
- an article (see pages 163 and 281 for reader-friendly formatting techniques)
- a speech (see pages 457–464 for a guide for presenting speeches)
- a multimedia presentation (see pages 471–485 for using presentation software effectively)
- a video (see pages 480–485 for a guide to creating video presentations)



PROJECT PREP — Publishing

Meet in small groups with others who chose to present their expository text in the same format you chose (letter, essay, power presentation, video, article for a Web site). Discuss the characteristics of the format you chose that make it a good way to present your information. Come up with a description of the features you need to include to make your published text as effective as possible.

Writing Lab

Project Corner



Speak and Listen
Discuss Happiness

In groups of five, **plan and present a panel discussion** on the subject of teen happiness. (See pages 468–470 on Group Discussions and pages 467–468 on Listening for Information.) Develop a set of questions based on your happiness project. Include a question-and-answer period. When your group is not presenting, be ready to contribute a comment or question.

Collaborate and Create Write a Summary



Work with two other students who wrote on the same topic as you did to **create a summary** of your projects. (See pages 337 and 397 for help with summarizing.) Figure out the process you will follow to complete the summary, and assign each group member a task. In the summary, use transitions to connect the various parts, and include direct quotes from each paper.

Experiment
Try a Different Form

Review the suggested project forms on page 213. Think about how your project would be different if it were in one of those forms you didn't use or another that you can think of. Choose a part of your project and **recast it in that new form**. What changes would you need to make? Write a brief paragraph explaining those changes.

In Everyday Life
An Informative E-Mail

1. You are trying to make plans to go to Chilly Thrills Amusement Park. A couple of your friends think the rides are dangerous. They say they are especially afraid of riding the new Icy Road Roller Coaster. ***Write an e-mail*** to your friends informing them about the safety precautions amusement parks take to make roller coasters safe. Gather the necessary information. Outline your ideas first so your friends get an organized, well-developed explanation.

In the Workplace An Informative Note

2. You have just been hired by Virtually Fun, an educational video-game company. Your boss wants you to help develop a new game that will appeal to fans of both rock music and skateboarding (or the sport of your choice). ***Write a note*** to your boss informing her of the features that make video games fun. Suggest ways to apply the features to the video game that incorporate both the sport and rock music. Arrange the information in your note in developmental order.

Timed Writing A Newspaper Article

3. Your principal plans to renovate the cafeteria. Your assignment as a reporter for the school newspaper is to write an article informing the faculty of how the students would like the new cafeteria to be designed. Write about what kind of furniture and what type of food you think the student body would prefer. You have 20 minutes to complete your work. (For help budgeting time, see pages 420–421.)

Before You Write Consider the following questions: What is the subject? What is the occasion? Who is the audience? What is the purpose?

Prewrite to develop ideas and create an outline. Draft a strong thesis statement and an introduction with background information. Organize the body of your article in spatial order. Use specific details and precise language to present each piece of information fully.

After You Write Evaluate your work using the six-trait evaluation form on page 236.

Expository Writing Workshops

Information can be "packaged" in many different ways depending on its purpose and audience. These workshops will give you practice in gathering and presenting information in a variety of ways.

1 How-To, or Procedural, Texts

A **procedural text** gives step-by-step instructions for doing or making something.

You will find procedural texts in directions, user manuals, school handbooks, and workplace memos.

MODEL: Procedural Text from Journalism Handbook

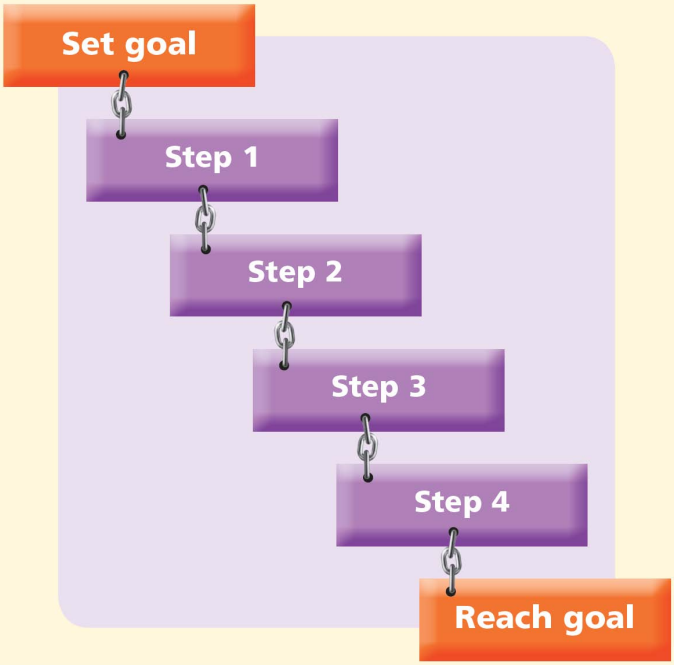
Interviewing an Expert

To conduct a successful interview with an expert, follow these steps.

- First, contact the person. Explain who you are and what your purpose is in seeking an interview. Then arrange a date and time to meet or speak by phone. Find out how much time the expert will have to talk so you know how many questions you can ask.
- Next, learn as much as you can about both the expert's background and the topic you want to discuss. Make a list of questions, and arrange them in a logical order. If you will be recording the interview, test your equipment in advance, and be sure to ask your subject's permission to record.
- On the day of the interview, be on time. Follow your list of questions and stick to the agreed-on schedule. End the interview by thanking the person for talking with you.

Following these steps will help make the interview pleasant and productive.

You can use a graphic organizer like the one below to help organize a how-to text. The chain links between steps represent transitions.



QuickGuide for Writing Procedural Texts

- → List the steps involved and arrange them in the order in which they need to be completed.
- → Use transitions such as *first, next,* and *finally* to emphasize the order.
- → Use reader-friendly formatting techniques, such as bullet points, boldface heads, and illustrations if they would be helpful.
- → Include a clear introduction and conclusion.

Create Real-World Texts

1. Write a paragraph providing instructions for a child on how to use a combination lock.
2. Compose an e-mail to someone you know well who has never been to your home giving directions on how to get to your house from school.
3. Write out your favorite recipe and give it as a gift to someone you like.

2 How-It-Works Texts

A **how-it-works text** describes how something happens, forms, or is put together.

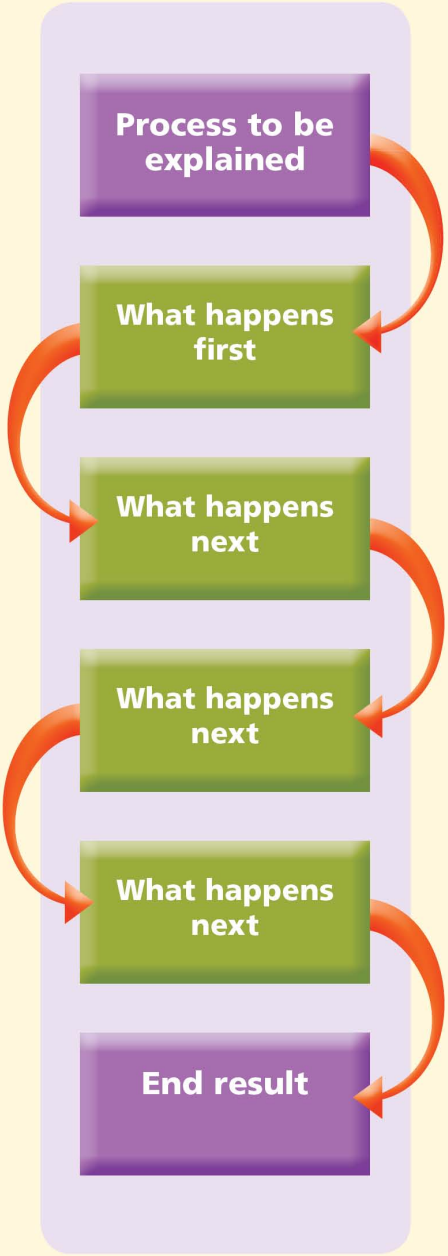
This type of writing explains a technical or abstract process rather than something readers could do themselves, as in how-to writing. How-it-works writing follows chronological order and resembles narrative writing.

MODEL: How-It-Works Paragraph from Science Magazine

The perfect condition for a tornado to form is when cold air meets hot air near Earth's surface. Here's what happens. Cold air is heavier than hot air, so it flows under the warmer air. The lighter hot air rises quickly and, as it does, it spins around and spreads out, creating a twisting funnel of air. (That's why tornadoes are often called twisters.) The small part of the funnel touches the ground, while the large part reaches into storm clouds in the sky. The air around a tornado all moves toward the funnel, feeding a roaring, spinning wind that can reach up to 300 miles an hour, the fastest wind on Earth. Meanwhile, storm winds push the funnel along the ground. Most tornadoes occur during April, May, and June, when Earth's surface is warming but cold air can still sweep in to disturb it. And what a disturbance a powerful tornado can be!



You can use a graphic organizer like the one below to help organize a how-it-works text. The arrows between steps represent transitions.



QuickGuide for Writing How-It-Works Texts

- List the steps or stages involved and arrange them in the order in which they happen.
- Use transitions such as *first, next,* and *finally* to emphasize the order.
- Use reader-friendly formatting techniques, such as bullet points, boldface heads, and illustrations or diagrams if they would be helpful.
- Include a clear introduction with a main idea, plenty of supporting details to make the process clear, and a strong conclusion.

Create Real-World Texts

1. For the school handbook, write out the process by which a student can try out for a sports team.
2. Your younger brother wants to know how an elevator works. Explain the process with a diagram.
3. On an invitation to your party, explain how laser tag works.
4. For science class, explain the process of mitosis.

3 Compare-and-Contrast Texts

A **compare-and-contrast text** examines the similarities and differences between two subjects.

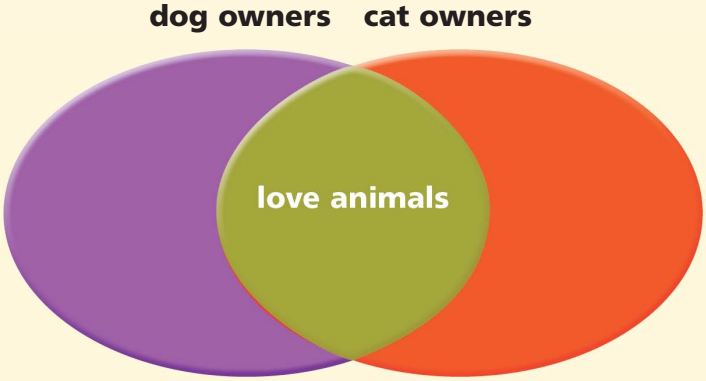
This type of text will help you interpret, understand, and explain two related subjects or events (such as a film and a book on the same topic).

MODEL: Compare-and-Contrast Text from a Veterinarian's Newsletter

Pet Personalities

If cats and dogs are different, so are cat owners and dog owners. Granted, both types of owners are alike in their willingness to share their homes with a furry creature they love. But they are different in some ways, too. For example, some cat owners are independent people. They admire their feline companions for their solitary ways and seem to secretly long to be as indifferent to the world as their "purrfect" pets. Many dog owners, on the other hand, are open, friendly, and as comfortable being part of a pack as their canine pals. They value the loyalty, trust, and eagerness to please that their good-natured hounds display. Of course, just as there are sociable cats and unfriendly dogs, there are exceptions among cat people and dog people, too. For the most part, however, if you want to get a snapshot of someone's personality, ask whether the person has or prefers a cat or a dog.

Venn diagrams can help you clearly see the similarities and differences between two subjects. In the Venn diagram below, you would note the things that cat owners and dog owners have in common in the middle (green) area. In the outer areas you would note the features that are specific to either cat owners or dog owners.



Organizing Comparison and Contrast

You have two ways to organize your information in a compare-and-contrast text. One way is to write first about one subject and then about the other subject. For example, if you were writing about cat owners (subject A) and dog owners (subject B), you would first write all your information about subject A (cat owners). Then you would write all your information about subject B (dog owners). For convenience this is called the **AABB pattern** of comparison and contrast.

You could use the AABB pattern within a paragraph by discussing subject A in the first half of the paragraph and subject B in the second half. As an alternative, you could use the AABB pattern in two paragraphs by discussing subject A in the first paragraph and subject B in the second one. The following portion of an essay for an American history class shows how the AABB pattern works.

MODEL: AABB Pattern of Organization

Conflict Between the North and the South

As Americans pushed westward during the early 1800s, conflict grew between the North (subject A) and the South (subject B). Since the nation's early days, the northern and southern parts of the United States had followed different ways of life. Each section wanted to extend its own way of life to the western lands.

(A)The North had a diversified economy with both farms and industry. **(A)Northern farmers** raised a variety of crops that fed the thriving northern cities. **(A)Mills and factories in the North** competed with Great Britain in making cloth, shoes, iron, and machinery. For both its farms and factories, **(A)the North** depended on free workers. Such workers could move from place to place to meet the needs of industry. They could also be laid off when business slumped.

(B)The South depended on just a few cash crops, mainly cotton. To raise cotton, **(B)planters in the South** needed a large labor force year-round. They relied on slave labor. **(B) Southerners** traded their cotton for manufactured goods from Europe, especially from Great Britain. **(B)The South** had little industry of its own.

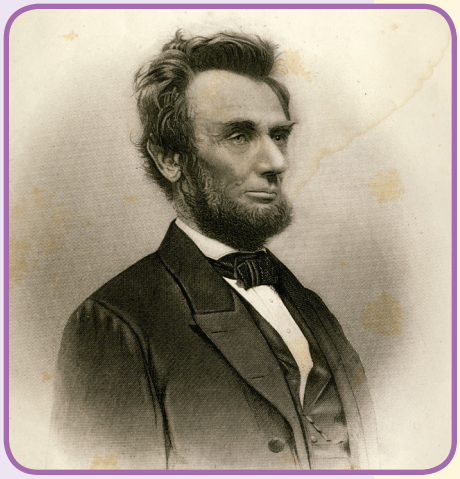
In the second paragraph on the previous page, the writer makes several points about the economy of subject A—the North. In the third paragraph, the writer turns to subject B—the South—and presents several ways in which the economy of the South was different from that of the North.

The second way to organize comparison and contrast is called the ABAB pattern. As you might expect, in the **ABAB pattern**, first you compare both subject A and subject B in terms of one similarity or difference. Then, you compare both of them in terms of another similarity or difference. The following continuation of the essay on the conflict that led to the Civil War switches to the ABAB pattern.

MODEL: ABAB Pattern of Organization

The economic differences between the two sections soon led to political conflicts. The worst conflicts arose over slavery. **(A)Many people in the North** considered slavery morally wrong. They wanted laws that would outlaw slavery in the new western territories. Some wanted to abolish slavery altogether. **(B)Most white Southerners, on the other hand,** believed slavery was necessary for their economy. They wanted laws to protect slavery in the West so that they could raise cotton on the fertile soil there.

(A)Northerners had great political power in the national government. **(B)Southerners** feared the North's rising industrial power and growing population. Soon, they reasoned, the North would completely dominate the federal government. The election of 1860 seemed to confirm their worst fears. Abraham Lincoln, a Northern candidate who opposed the spread of slavery, was elected president.



In this passage the writer discusses the differences between the North and the South regarding attitudes toward slavery. Then the writer discusses differences between the North and the South regarding political power at the federal level.

Making an Outline

Before you draft your compare-and-contrast text, you may want to outline it, following the organzational pattern you chose. The following outline served as the basis for the first half of the American history essay on the North and the South.

MODEL: Compare-and-Contrast Outline

I. The way of life in the North
   A. Had a diversified economy
      1. Had farms and industry
      2. Had a variety of crops
      3. Fed thriving cities
   B. Had industry
      1. Had mills and factories
      2. Competed with Great Britain in making goods such as cloth, shoes, iron, and machinery
   C. Depended on free workers
      1. Could move from place to place to meet the needs of industry
      2. Could be laid off when business slumped

II. The way of life in the South
   A. Depended on a few cash crops
      1. Grew mainly cotton
      2. Needed a large labor force year-round
      3. Depended on slave labor
   B. Depended on trade with Europe
      1. Traded cotton for manufactured goods
      2. Traded mainly with Great Britain
      3. Had little industry of its own

You can use the following graphic organizers for arranging your compare-and-contrast text.

AABB Organizer

Subject for Compare/Contrast

Topic 1 about subject A
Topic 2 about subject A
Topic 3 about subject A

Transition

Topic 1 about subject B
Topic 2 about subject B
Topic 3 about subject B

ABAB Organizer

Subject for Compare/Contrast

Topic 1 about subject A
Topic 1 about subject B

Transition

Topic 2 about subject A
Topic 2 about subject B

Transition

Topic 3 about subject A
Topic 3 about subject B

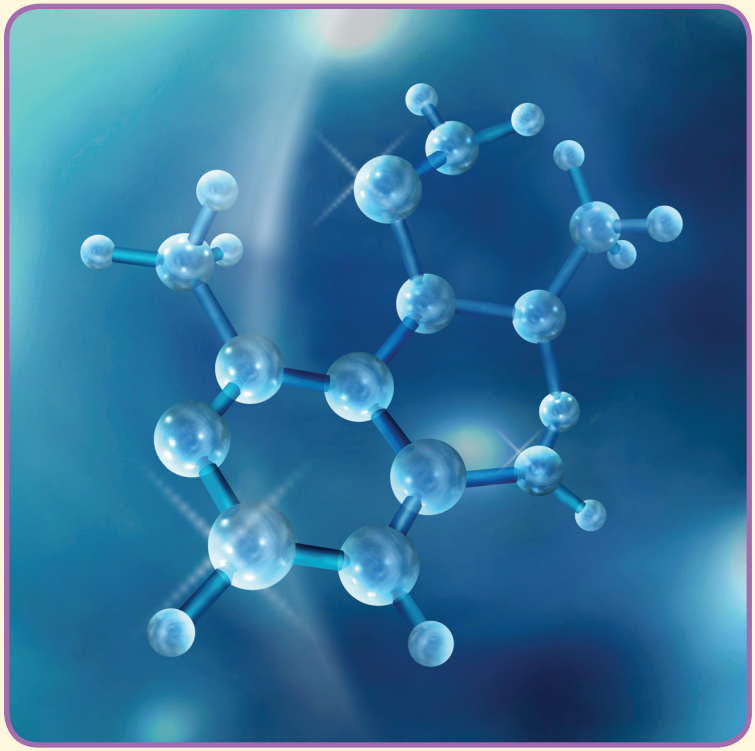


QuickGuide for Writing Compare-and-Contrast Texts

- → List the similarities and differences. Use a Venn diagram to help.
- → Decide how to organize your information.
- → Use transitions such as *in contrast, on the other hand,* and *similarly* to emphasize the order.
- → Include a clear introduction and conclusion.

Create Real-World Texts

1. Write a tribute to your best friend. Tell what traits you have in common and what traits are unique to each of you. Illustrate your tribute and give it to your friend.
2. For one of your classes, think of two subjects you could compare and contrast to understand them better. For example: atoms and molecules; Asia and Africa; Christianity and Judaism; octagons and triangles. Create a bifold to show your understanding.
3. Create a post on an electronic social network comparing yourself to your avatar.



4 Cause-and-Effect Analysis Texts

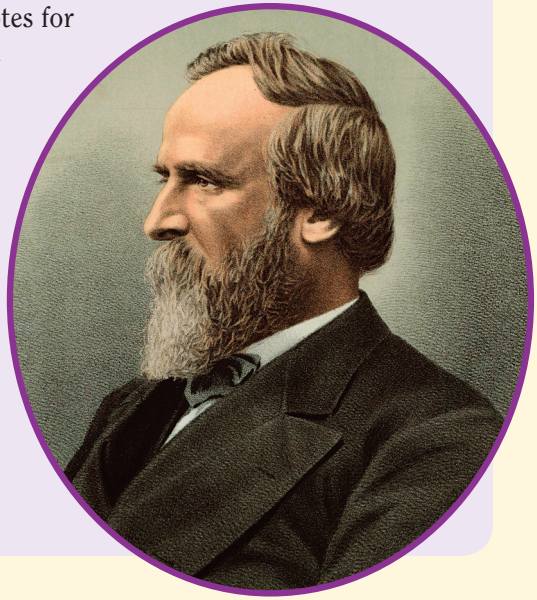
A **cause-and-effect text** explains why actions or situations (causes) produce certain results (effects).

A simple cause-and-effect explanation deals with a single cause, such as an icy sidewalk, and a single effect, such as a fall. A more complex analysis describes a series of causes and effects–a chain of events–each one dependent on the one before.

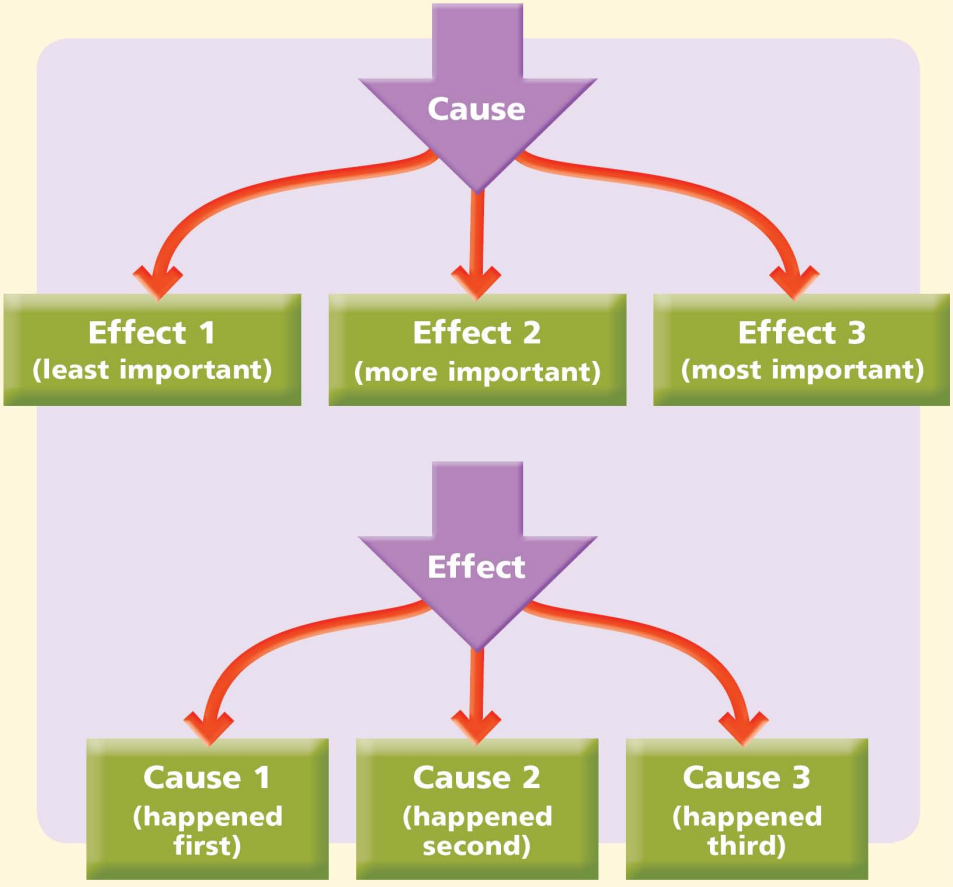
MODEL: Cause-and-Effect Text from a Web Site About Presidents

The Secret Oath

Rutherford B. Hayes is the only U.S. president ever to be secretly sworn into office before his public inauguration. In the election of 1876, Hayes lost the popular vote to his opponent, Samuel Tilden. But neither candidate won a majority of the electoral votes because there were votes, mainly from southern states, that were in dispute. Hayes promised to end Reconstruction and remove all federal troops from the South if the southern states would cast their votes for him. They agreed, and Hayes then won the electoral vote. However, Tilden's supporters were so angry at what they thought was a stolen election that there was fear they would riot to prevent Hayes's inauguration. So three days before the ceremony at the Capitol, Hayes took the oath of office in the Red Room of the White House, with the outgoing president, Ulysses S. Grant, as witness. Today, President Hayes's official portrait hangs in the Red Room, where his presidency secretly began.



You can use graphic organizers like the following one to help develop and organize a cause-and-effect text. You can start with the cause and explain the effects or you can start with the effect and explain the causes.



QuickGuide for Cause-and-Effect Texts

- → Identify the effect(s) you want to analyze and list the causes you know.
- → Gather information to check for accuracy and add details.
- → Use logical order. Explain multiple causes in the order they occurred, or list them by order of importance. Start with the effect and explain what caused it, or start with the cause(s) and build up to the effect.
- → Include a clear introduction and conclusion.

Create Real-World Texts

1. With a team, create a Go Green campaign for your school. Make posters showing the effects on the environment of energy-saving practices.
2. Write a paragraph explaining and interpreting the results of an experiment you recently completed in science.

5 Definition Texts

A **definition text** analyzes the nature and characteristics of a word, object, concept, or phenomenon.

The paragraph below is an example of a definition for an abstract concept.

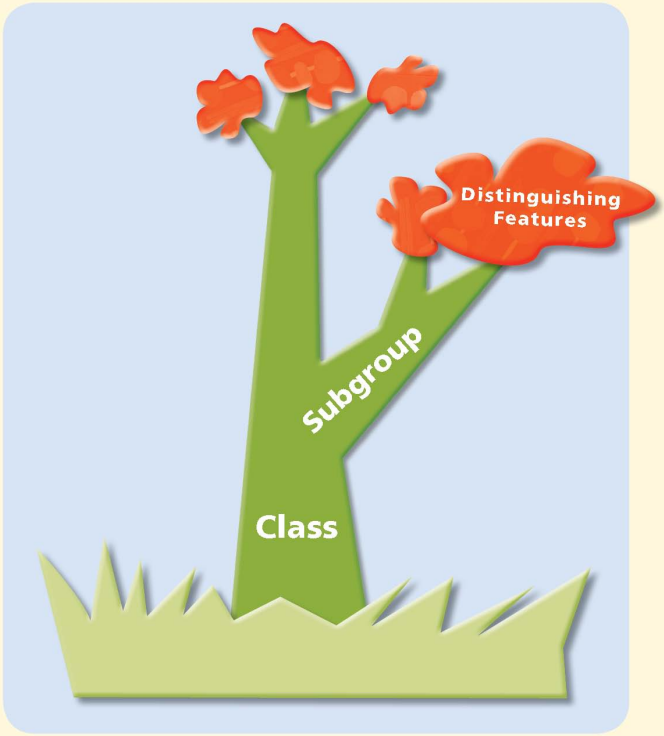
MODEL: Definition Text from an Encyclopedia

Democracy

Democracy is a form of government in which the people being governed play an active role. The concept originated in ancient Greece, where an elite group of educated citizens helped make laws. Roman imperial rule ended this early attempt, and it was not until the Middle Ages that kings began to appoint representatives to petition them on behalf of their subjects. Later political thinkers argued that a natural contract existed between ruler and ruled. If the contract were broken by the ruler, the ruled could take power. In Great Britain and especially in the United States, the idea of democracy was more fully developed to expand the freedoms to which people are entitled. Today, participation by representation, individual rights, and limits on governmental power are the hallmarks of Western democracy.



You can use a graphic organizer like the one on the following page to help develop a definition text.



QuickGuide for Writing Definition Texts

- → Brainstorm for what you know about the nature and characteristics of your subject. Gather information as needed and decide which order to present the characteristics of your subject.
- → Include three basic parts: the subject you are defining, the class it belongs in, and the characteristics that make it different from other members of that class.
- → Include a clear introduction and conclusion.
- → Use clear, everyday language and avoid phrases like "a democracy is when…" or "a democracy is where…."

Create Real-World Texts

1. Define *vertebrate* for your science class and create a chart to help explain it.
2. Make a valentine card. Inside it, write a definition of a true friend. When Valentine's Day comes, give the card to a true friend of yours.
3. Write a definition of the job you would love to have when you are finished with your education.

CHAPTER 8

Writing to Persuade

Persuasive writing states an opinion on a subject and uses facts, reasons, and examples to convince readers. Persuasive writing is also called **argumentative writing**.

All of the following examples show ways people in different positions and professions use persuasive writing to influence others' views and, ultimately, their actions and opinions.

- **The editor of the school newspaper writes an editorial** speaking out against a proposal that students be required to wear uniforms.
- **A candidate for state senator hands out a pamphlet** explaining her qualifications for office and why she is a better choice than her opponent.
- **A charity sends a letter** detailing a crisis overseas and asking for donations to help.
- **An outraged sports writer pens a column** calling for the dismissal of a coach whose team loses consistently.
- **The president gives a speech** asking people to work harder and save more money to create "a stronger America."

Writing Project — Argumentative

Expose a Stereotype ***Write an argumentative essay that focuses on the ways stereotyping is unfair.***

Think Through Writing Social, cultural, ethnic, and gender groups all seem to be subject to some kind of stereotyping—often in negative ways. Assumptions are made on the basis of gender, race, nationality, and even hair color. Think of ways in which group members you know or have read about have been the subject of stereotyping, for better or worse. Write freely about this situation: who is stereotyped, who does the stereotyping, what form the stereotype takes, what the consequences might be for the perpetuation of the stereotype. At this point, don't worry about using formal writing conventions. Rather, just express your ideas freely and worry about correctness later.

Talk About It Share your writing with your writing group. Were the same groups selected to write about, or different ones? Are there common observations made by the different writers, even if the topics are different? Think about what is common to all stereotyping and whether or not you yourself contribute to the stereotyping of other groups.

Read About It In the following two articles, Gary Kimble and Bob DiBiasio give two different perspectives on the stereotyping of Native Americans through the ways in which sports team nicknames featuring Native American groups are depicted. As you read, consider the ways in which the writers state and defend their positions on whether or not using a Native American nickname for a sports team involves stereotyping, and if so, what sorts of images and impressions are perpetuated by those who create and use the nickname.

MODEL: Persuasive Writing

Are Native American Team Nicknames Offensive?

YES

At the Association on American Indian Affairs, we support any Native American community that finds certain nicknames, logos, or portrayals of Native American people to be offensive. We support its right to express its pain, to go out and protest, and to work to try to get a nickname changed.

The writer's position is stated clearly and strongly.

A lot of the sentiment among Native Americans today has to do with their concern over other people's appropriation of Indian spiritual activities. Some non-Indian people are trying to create the idea that they have secret knowledge of the Indians. They disguise their own beliefs and theories as Indian beliefs. New Age gurus, for instance, pass themselves off as Indian medicine men. Native Americans' dissatisfaction with such practices is the foundation for the protest against names and logos in sports. One controversy energizes the other.

This is the most important reason. At the end of the paragraph, Kimble identifies it as the foundation for the protest against the use of Native American names in sports.

Any kind of portrayal of Native Americans that isn't respectful bothers me. Too many times, we're portrayed as hostile and criminal, as some kind of blood-thirsty savages. Or we're *noble* savages, nobler than other people because supposedly we're closer to nature. Both portrayals are stereotypes. Anytime you turn people into symbols and move away from reality, that's bad.

This paragraph puts forward another reason: disrespectful stereotypes.

A lot of people are offended by caricatures such as the one the Cleveland Indians use for their logo. When you do a caricature, you're dealing with someone's identity, and that puts you on thin ice. Even the name makes you wonder. They wouldn't call themselves the "Cleveland White People" or the "Cleveland Black People." What would happen if a soccer team in South Africa wanted to name itself the "Johannesburg White People"?

Often, showing a counter-example can reveal the weaknesses of a position or practice.

A name such as "Redskins"[1] causes concern because certain tribes feel the term is a holdover from the days when there was a bounty on American Indians. Suzanne Harjo, a Cheyenne, has written that "redskin" was a designation used by bounty hunters: Instead of bringing in the whole Indian, the hunters would just bring in the hide. They'd get paid the same for it, and it was less cumbersome than carrying around the whole body.

This paragraph focuses on one specific example and explains the very understandable reason—probably unknown to many—that the term is offensive.

Not all the relationships between sports and Native Americans are bad. When Joe Robbie was the owner of the Miami Dolphins, for example, his major philanthropy work involved American Indians. Few people know he was one of the best friends our people ever had. I also recognize the danger in becoming too politically correct. I wouldn't want to see things get to the point where we can't ever enjoy ourselves or create a fun atmosphere. The tomahawk chop[2] doesn't bother me that much, and a name such as "Braves"[3] is fairly neutral.

Here Kimble shows his respect for people in the sports world and his moderate views on less emotionally charged terms as "Braves" and the tomahawk chop.

However, there has to be some kind of balance struck, to make sure that no particular group is demeaned or damaged. And many Native Americans today believe that some of the teams they see in sports haven't found that balance.

Kimble returns to his main point but acknowledges a balance should be struck.

Gary N. Kimble, a Native American, was formerly executive director of the Association on American Indian Affairs in Sisseton, South Dakota. In 1994, President Clinton appointed him commissioner for the Administration for Native Americans in the Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.

1 **"Redskins":** Name of a football team based in Washington, D.C., the Washington Redskins.
2 **tomahawk chop:** Popular way for fans to root for the baseball team the Atlanta Braves.
3 **"Braves":** Name of a baseball team based in Atlanta, the Atlanta Braves.

NO

Our organization is very aware of the sensitivities involved in this issue, and we have gone to great lengths to respect those sensitivities. In no way do we intend to demean any group, especially one as proud as Native Americans.

DiBiasio is responding directly to Kimble's article, and he begins by stressing respect for cultural sensitivities.

Any discussion of the Cleveland Indians' name and the team logo, Chief Wahoo, must begin with a history lesson. Not many people realize the origin of "Indians," but there is a historical significance to how the Cleveland franchise got its name.

Much of DiBiasio's response depends on the reason the name was given in the first place. As it turns out, it was to honor professional baseball's first Native American player.

From 1901 to 1914, Cleveland's entry in the American League utilized three different names: Blues, Bronchos, and Nap—the last of which honored the legendary Nap Lajoie. Upon Lajoie's retirement in 1914, the officials of the Cleveland team determined a new name was in order for the following season. They turned to a local newspaper and ran a contest. The winning entry, Indians, was selected in honor of Louis Francis Sockalexis, a Penobscot Indian who was the first Native American to play professional baseball. *(Sockalexis played from 1897 to 1899 for the Cleveland Spiders of the National League.)*

Newspaper accounts at the time reported that the name Indians was chosen as "a testament to the game's first American Indian." Today, 79 years later, we're proud to acknowledge and foster the legacy of Sockalexis. That's why you don't see us animating or humanizing our logo in any way; it's simply a caricature that has enjoyed decades of fan appeal in the Northeast Ohio area. The name and logo received public support in the form of a recent "Save the Chief" campaign. We also go to great lengths to avoid any use of tomahawks, tepees, or warriors on horseback—Indian motifs that are questionable, at best.

Here DiBiasio indicates there is widespread "public support" for the name. In what way does that information contribute to his argument?

There is an inconsistency among Native American groups as to what they think on this matter. The team name is one issue, the logo is a separate issue, and the combination of the name and the logo is yet another issue. All three elements elicit different reactions, but many Native Americans in the Northeast Ohio area have an appreciation for our understanding of their sensitivity.

DiBiasio is saying here that even Native Americans don't agree on whether certain names and logos are offensive.

They consider our name to be an honoring of both their culture and the memory of Sockalexis.

Our view of this issue doesn't get a lot of publicity in the media, but we don't belabor it because we're comfortable with our position. Once you have an understanding of the historical significance of why we are named the Indians and understand the organization's conscious efforts to present that issue, we believe it becomes a matter of individual perception.

The main point is reinforced here—that if you know the history of the name, you wouldn't find it offensive.

When someone looks at our name and logo, he or she thinks of Cleveland Indians baseball, and the great moments in the team's history. They don't think of Native American people; they just think of Bob Feller,[4] Al Rosen,[5] Larry Doby,[6] and Sam McDowell.[7]

Bob DiBiasio is Vice President of Public Relations for the Cleveland Indians.



4 **Bob Feller:** Cleveland Indians pitcher elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962; pitched no-hit games during the 1940, 1946, and 1951 seasons.
5 **Al Rosen:** Cleveland Indians player who received the Most Valuable Player Award in 1953.
6 **Larry Doby:** Cleveland Indians player elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1998; first African American player in the American League.
7 **Sam McDowell:** Star Cleveland Indians pitcher in the 1960s.

Respond in Writing In your journal, write responses to the following questions. What was Kimble's main argument? What was DiBiasio's counter-argument? Which side of the argument did you find more persuasive? Why? Are there any additional points you would add on either side?

Develop Your Own Ideas Work with your classmates to come up with your own ideas on stereotyping that you might be able to use in your argumentative essay.

Small Groups: Discuss the writing you have done. Consider the two articles on Native American team mascots and:

- what it means to engage in stereotyping
- whether a stereotype contains any truth
- whether a stereotype can ever present a whole group of people fairly
- how stereotyping affects those people being stereotyped
- how stereotyping affects the people doing the stereotyping

Whole Class: Share your answers with the class while a student writes each idea on a large sheet of paper or on the board. At the end of the discussion, you will have a list of answers from your entire class that help to characterize stereotyping broadly speaking and how it affects people.

Write About It You will write an argumentative essay in which you explain why a particular stereotype is or is not fair to both the people being stereotyped and those who perpetuate and encounter the stereotype. You may choose from the options in the project possibilities chart below.

Possible Topics	Possible Audiences	Possible Forms
• lawyers who are stereotyped as people who care about winning but not about what is right • rappers who are stereotyped as illiterate social outcasts who have no formal musical training • computer experts who are stereotyped as geeks and nerds who have no social skills and don't like to have fun • overweight people who are stereotyped on television as "kooky" or gluttonous and are present mainly for comic relief	• the Screen Actors Guild • students on Career Day • newspaper readers • other teenagers	• a letter of protest • a speech to the school assembly • a letter to the newspaper editor following a story that perpetuates this stereotype • readers of a teen magazine

Elements of Persuasive Texts

Analyzing

Good persuasive writing is a response to real life—to events, problems, and questions in the here and now that people care about. It requires thought, reflection, and often research to develop an argument supported by solid evidence that will convince your readers.

1 Structure

Like all essays, the argumentative essay has three main parts: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The following chart shows how each part helps develop an argument.

HERE'S HOW

Structuring a Persuasive Essay

- In the **introduction,** capture the audience's attention, present the issue, and introduce your precise claim in a clear thesis statement. (See page 228 for more on claims.)
- In the **body of supporting paragraphs,** present reasons, data, facts, examples, and expert opinions to support your claims. Clearly distinguish your claims from others.
- In the **conclusion,** present a summary or strong conclusive evidence—logically drawn from the arguments—that drives home the writer's opinion.

Within these basic parts, a strong argumentative text also:

- considers a **whole range of information and views** on the topic and represents them honestly and accurately
- develops **claims and counterclaims** fairly, anticipating audience concerns and knowledge
- uses **language to link sections and clarify relationships** among claims, counterclaims, evidence, and reasons

PROJECT PREP Analyzing *Development*

With your writing group, discuss how your rough, first writing can be developed into an argumentative essay that will convince other people about your perspective on your topic. For example, have you provided solid reasons for your positions or mainly just stated your opinions? Did your writing take any form, or will you need to shape it into a well-structured composition? Help each writer focus on the task ahead.

2 Facts and Opinions

Stories in the front section of a newspaper report the news as it happened—simply presenting the facts. Facts are statements that can be proved. The editorial page presents opinions based on facts. Opinions are beliefs or judgments that can be supported but not proved.

A **fact** is a statement that can be proved.

An **opinion** is a belief or judgment that cannot be proved.

Facts and opinions work together in argumentative writing. The thesis statement is a claim—the author's reasoned judgment on a subject of controversy. The body of the essay backs up the thesis statement with facts and supporting examples.

There are several ways to test whether a statement is a fact or an opinion. First, ask yourself, "Can I prove this statement through my own experience and observation?"

Fact — Some physical education programs stress competitive sports. (Your own school may do this.)

Another test of a fact is to ask, "Can I prove this statement by referring to accepted authorities and experts?"

Fact — Muscle tension increases the risk of injury during sports. (You might suspect this yourself, but to know for sure you could ask a sports doctor.)

Some opinions, unlike facts, can never be proved. They are judgment calls, personal likes or dislikes, and interpretations that vary from person to person. Consider these opinions.

Movies are **more satisfying** on a big screen than on TV.

Competition **should be** downplayed in school sports.

Writing Tip

Use your own experiences and observations as well as reliable authorities to verify **facts.**