College Writing Skills

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Breadan Publishing
Preface

*College Writing Skills* is a process-oriented textbook written to help students develop their college-level writing skills. The intent of *College Writing Skills* is to help prepare students for success in required college writing courses, in courses across the curriculum that require writing, and in occupations beyond college. Students learn by writing, and the textbook provides a variety of writing assignments that require you to develop and apply different writing and thinking skills as you progress through the book.

Essay Writing

In college composition courses, students write a variety of essays. In *College Writing Skills*, you write a different type of essay in each unit of the textbook, twelve essays in all. To engage your interest and allow you to draw upon your experience and knowledge, you choose your own writing topic for each type of essay: narrative, expository, persuasive, comparative, problem/solution, and critique.

Along with your twelve essay assignments, you also write *timed in-class essays* which will help prepare you for in-class writing in other English courses as well as essay tests across the curriculum. Experience is the best teacher for writing under in-class time constraints, and *College Writing Skills* provides you with eleven such experiences.

Writing Process

In each unit, you use a writing process to develop your essays. The basic process of prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing is repeated in each unit, with new instructional elements presented in each section that apply to the type of essay you are writing. The process is repeated in each unit so that you become familiar enough with it to use for any writing you may do.

The text also recognizes the individual differences among writers. For some writers, prewriting may involve detailed planning while for others, it may involve coming up with an idea to get started. The text recognizes such differences and allows for individual flexibility within the writing process rather than a one-size-fits-all model. The textbook also recognizes that some students come to the course with considerable writing experience, and you are encouraged to take both what you find valuable from the text and from your previous writing experiences to create the most effective personal writing process.

Importance of Revision

*College Writing Skills* also strongly emphasizes the role of revision in the writing process. Throughout the text, you work on revising and improving your writing in a number of areas: wording, organization, content development, paragraphing, openings and conclusions, transitional wording, and so on. The text provides specific revision guidelines for the type of writing you do in each unit and emphasizes the role that revision has for all writers.
Writing Correctness

As the last step in the writing process, you proofread and edit your essay drafts to eliminate errors. Being able to write “correctly” – using correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling – is critical to your writing success in college and beyond and an achievable goal.

Within each unit, the text provides instruction in the areas of punctuation, grammar usage, and spelling where writers have the most problems: run-on sentences and comma splices, sentence fragments, comma usage, subject-verb agreement, and so on. You also learn to proofread a draft effectively, looking in particular for your personal error tendencies.

Writing as Communication

*College Writing Skills* also emphasizes writing as a form of communication. To that end, you write for different reading audiences, including your classmates, and for a particular purpose: to inform, entertain, influence, educate, or move readers to action. The writing assignments in the text are “real” in the sense that they are written for others to read and for particular purposes.

Writing Samples

Throughout the text are sample essays – first drafts and revised versions - that you can use in number of ways: to get ideas for your writing, to see how writers develop, organize, and paragraph their essays, to read and evaluate different openings and conclusions, to see how writers develop and support a thesis, or to see how writers incorporate research material into their essays. The sample essays also provide models for each type of essay that you write.

Readings

In each unit, you “take a break” from writing between essay assignments to read some in-text essays written by published writers. You read them for your personal enjoyment, to see how other writers develop their essays, and to get some ideas for your own writing. The “Questions for Discussion” at the end of each essay serve to initiate class or group discussions, including how the topics and issues in the essays may relate to your own experiences.
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Introduction

*College Writing Skills* is a process-oriented textbook written to help students develop their college-level writing skills. The intent of *College Writing Skills* is to help prepare students for success in required college writing courses and in courses across the curriculum that require writing. Beyond that, your ability to write well will benefit you well beyond college in whatever occupation you choose and in your personal communications.

*College Writing Skills* focuses on the most typical type of writing in college composition courses and other courses across the curriculum: the essay. Throughout the text, you write different types of essays that are most commonly assigned in writing courses: narrative, expository, persuasive, problem/solution, comparative, and critique. The ability to create well-organized, well-reasoned, well-written essays will serve you well through your college experience.

*College Writing Skills* helps you to continue developing the writing skills you have already acquired as you plan, write, revise, and edit twelve essays during the course. The text builds on your current writing ability and past writing experiences, recognizing that you are certainly not a novice to writing. You will continue to improve your writing throughout college and beyond, and even writers who make a living from it never stop learning and improving.

Of course, writing constantly over a period of months can lead to writing fatigue. Therefore, the text provides “reading breaks” in each unit, giving you time to read and discuss some interesting in-text essays by published writers, from which you may also get ideas for your own writing. The readings provide a nice change of pace, and you will also benefit from seeing how other writers develop their essays.

Finally, good writing and sharp thinking go together. Writing is the act of putting your thoughts on paper, and the quality of your thoughts largely determines the quality of your writing. The varied essay assignments in the text help you to sharpen your thinking skills, as do the eighteen “logic” activities interspersed throughout the text. Anyone who is a good thinker can become a good writer, and *College Writing Skills* is intent on helping you to become both.
Unit One: Narrative Writing

As you no doubt know, writing is a skill that improves with practice like any other skill. Through experience and practice, we become better drivers, better swimmers, more adept computer users. Writing is no different. The more you practice and the more experience you have, the better writer you become.

Since College Writing Skills is obviously a writing text, you can expect to do a lot writing throughout the course. While the text has its share of instruction to help develop your writing skills, you will write regularly to apply what you learn. To engage your interest, you will write primarily on topics of your choosing, about subjects that interest you personally. Most often, the best writing occurs when writers have a genuine interest in their topics. Selecting topics of interest will no doubt make your writing experience most enjoyable and produce the best results.

Practice does one other important thing. It enables you to apply your own unique intelligence and aptitudes to figure out what works best for you. In driving, you develop the best process for parallel parking a car. In swimming, you learn to move your arms underwater in ways that propel you fastest. You develop your own short-hand method of trolling the Internet quickly and efficiently. In writing, you devise a personal best method for revising and improving an essay effectively. Through practice, and some trial and error, you make the writing process your own.

Writing Reflection

You have probably done your share of writing in school over the years and have formed an opinion about it. Write for a few minutes about your writing background: your writing experiences in school, how you feel about writing, why you feel as you do, and how you
currently assess your writing ability. Include one or two examples, if you can recall, of particular writing experiences that have helped shape your opinion.

Here is a sample response for a similar topic:

**My Art Experience**

I’m not very good at art, so I can’t say I greatly enjoyed my art experiences in school. I remember drawing a poster in grade school for a school safety campaign and the penguin I drew looked more like an ostrich, which other students pointed out to me. The free-form drawings I did in junior high all looked very similar while I saw other students doing some really creative things with colors and shapes. I never had much talent.

I remember drawing horses in a freshman class. We were doing figure drawings. It took me a long time, but I finally was able to get the head, body, and leg proportions right so my drawings actually looked like horses. It was the first success I had at drawing, and all I wanted to do in class was draw horses. However, we moved on to other things, and I never had the same success that I had with my horses.

That was the last art class that I took until now and honestly, I wonder what I’m doing in here. Fortunately, we’re going to do more than draw in the class, and I think the other stuff like sculpting and making pots might be interesting. Maybe my attitude will change and I’ll find something I can do.

**Follow-up Writing**

Share your writing with a few classmates, something that you will be doing throughout the course, and read about their writing experiences, comparing their experiences to your own. Write for a few minutes about the similarities and differences in students’ writing experiences and attitudes towards writing and how they compare to your own. What conclusions about the writing experience of students can you draw from reading your classmates’ writing?

Sample response on art experience:

Other students enjoyed their art experiences more than I did. From their writing, most of the students really liked art and some continue to enjoy it. I didn’t read about any of the kinds of negative experiences that I had with art. One student said he wasn’t good at art but liked it anyway, which was just the opposite of me. It seems like most students enjoyed their art experiences, and one or two of them even won some art awards in elementary school. From what I read, it seems that liking art comes from having a good time with it and not taking it too seriously. I never approached it that way.

**Of Note:** In these short writing assignments, you applied a number of different thinking skills. You formed opinions based on your experience, assessed your own writing skills, analyzed the writing experiences of other students, compared and contrasted those experiences, and drew conclusions based on your evaluation of what your classmates wrote. You applied different types of thinking skills to your writing that you will use throughout the course and your college career.
Narrative Writing

You will undoubtedly do some narrative writing - writing about your own personal experiences - in future writing courses and perhaps in other courses across the curriculum. In college, you may do narrative writing for different purposes:

To share with readers a riveting experience that they may find inspiring, tragic, humorous, or thought-provoking.

To analyze the effect of an experience on you and why it has remained memorable.

To relate what you learned from the experience about yourself, other people, or some aspect of life.

To support a belief or viewpoint that the experience demonstrates (e.g. the value of hard work, the difficulty of working and going to school, how a teacher can make the difference between an interesting or boring class).

During this unit, you will write narrative essays for a couple of different purposes to share with your classmates and instructor. You might start thinking of different experiences now that you might want to write about: past experiences that stand out in your mind and that might be of interest to others.

Writing Process

As you write your first narrative paper, you will use a writing process that is similar for most writers, both amateur and professional, that includes prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing your essay. While all writers don’t follow the process in exactly the same way, and may combine and configure parts of the process differently, there are enough similarities about how people write to conclude that writing, at its best, is a process-oriented task that includes these steps:

**Prewriting**: anything you do to prepare to write your paper: thinking about your topic, jotting down some ideas, considering your essay’s organization, deciding your writing purpose.

**Drafting**: writing your essay for the first time – getting your ideas on paper - keeping in mind your prewriting thoughts.
Revising: making any changes in your draft that will improve it: adding some detail, rewording some sentences, strengthening your ending.

Editing: proofreading your paper for errors involving grammar, punctuation, or spelling and making any needed corrections.

The main essay assignments in each unit will be process-oriented. While the text presents new writing considerations in each unit, the basic writing process will be duplicated because it doesn’t differ greatly no matter what you are writing about.

The text also assumes that you have probably had considerable writing experience throughout your schooling. The process approach in the text may be similar to your current writing practice, or it may extend or alter what you are already doing. In the end, you may take what is most useful from the process approach in the text, combine it with what already works for you, and create a personalized approach that produces the best results. If you have done little writing in the past, or have not used a process approach, the process provided in the text should serve you well during this course and in your future writing.

Of course, not all writing that you do is process oriented. You seldom prepare, write, revise, and edit a text message or letter to a friend. If you write an in-class essay or an essay for a history or science test, you don’t have the time to do elaborate planning and revising. However, by using the process to create your best writing when time allows, you will also learn to create short-cut methods for revising and editing when you have limited time. The process approach will help you produce the best writing that time allows.

Writing Assignment One

Think of a particular experience to write about that you remember well and that has had some impact on your life. As you recall memorable experiences, consider those that you remember in detail and that have had the greatest effect on you. The experience may be from your childhood or more recent. You will write about one particular experience, analyzing its impact on you and why it has remained memorable.

Prewriting

In each “prewriting” section, you prepare to write the first draft of your paper by selecting a topic to write on and giving some thought to what you may want to include in your essay. In the prewriting sections of the text, you will use a variety of prewriting strategies that you may find useful for different writing tasks.
Focusing Your Topic

As you consider possible experiences to write about, focus on specific experiences that you could relate in detail in an essay. Think of single events or occurrences that stand out in your life as being particularly memorable.

For example, during the 7th grade, a student had attended a summer music camp held at a nearby college. She considered the week of experiences that she had – meeting new people, staying overnight in the dorms, practicing and playing with older students – and hit upon one experience that stuck in her mind. As a seventh grader, she had to play the clarinet in a trio with a more experienced high school and college student at the end-of-week recital for relatives and friends. It was a terrifying experience for her and one that didn’t end up at all as she had expected. She chose this specific experience to write about.

Another student thought about the past football season and recalled one incident that stuck out in his mind:

As defensive end, I was running downfield to cover a punt return and concentrating on the guy who was receiving the punt. All of a sudden I felt something hit me on the helmet hard. It was the football. It was really embarrassing and I didn’t want to return to the sidelines and face my coach. That incident summarized how the football season went for me.

As you consider different experiences to write about, narrow your potential topics to one specific incident to share with readers.

Free Writing

Free writing is a prewriting activity that can help you decide what you want to write about, what you may want to include in an essay, and how much you may remember about a particular experience. When you free write, you write whatever comes to your mind without concern for order, logic, or correctness. Free writing allows you to put your thoughts on paper without being judged, and you take from your free writing whatever might help you write your essay.

Prewriting Activity 1.1

Write freely for ten minutes or so on two or three different experiences that you remember well and that made an impact on your life. Write without hesitation or concern for how you put your thoughts on paper. From your free writing, you may decide on a topic for your first paper and create some material that you will use in your first draft.
Sample free writing:

#1
In elementary school I was never one of the best students in the class. If I got B’s and C’s on my report card I was doing well. We had four awards assemblies a year and all the students who had received the best grades or read the most books or got student of the quarter for their class got to go up on the stage and get their awards. I never got to go up and felt kind of lousy along with everyone else who never got anything. Then one assembly in the fourth grade I got a real shock. I was sitting as always through all of the awards and all of the students streaming up to the stage and I was daydreaming. All of a sudden the girl sitting next to me elbowed me and said, “Maggie, go up there. They called your name.” Everyone around me was looking at me and smiling, and someone said, “You’re student of the quarter for your class!” I don’t remember walking up or receiving my award or anything, but it was the proudest day of my school life.

#2
When I was a young child, my cousin had a little electric car that he rode on top of. It was a little car, but it would go pretty fast. Riding up and down in front of his house, he made it look easy, so I wanted to try. I got on and slowly moved forward. I went down the street a ways, turned around, and then went back by my uncle the other way. Somehow the car jumped forward fast and I slid off the back. Trouble was, I held onto the handle bars, so I was being dragged on the street behind the car. It stopped when it hit the curb, and my uncle ran over. I was in shock and crying, and my legs and stomach were burning. I ended up with bad road burns and more pain than I’d ever experienced. I remember that accident clearly and having to go to the emergency room of the hospital.

#3
When I was in junior high, I remember an incident that I am not proud of. I never thought of myself as a bully, but now that I look back I was a part of the group that bullied a kid that was different. Vernon was a year younger, skinny, wore glasses, had red hair and freckles, and wore his pants up high on his waist with his belt cinched tight. We would tease him and call him Vernon Highpants and make fun of him. One day we took it farther. We held him down, took the belt off his pants and threw it in a tree, pulled his pants down and left him on the ground as we laughed and walked away. It seemed funny at the time but putting myself in Vernon’s place, it must have been horrible. I think we made going to school miserable for Vernon but at the time I didn’t think about it.

Prewriting Activity 1.2
Take some time to reflect on your free writing and also on other experiences that you may have not included. In the end, select an experience to write about following these suggestions.
1. Choose an experience that you want to write about and that you remember clearly.

2. Choose an experience that readers - your classmates and instructor - may find interesting or get something out of.

3. Choose an experience that had a powerful effect on your life, or that may still affect you.

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**Prewriting Activity 1.3**

After you have decided upon a particular experience to write about, spend some time thinking about the impact of that experience on your life. Consider what you may have learned from it, how it may have changed you or your life circumstances, what you may have learned about yourself or other people, or how it may have changed your way of thinking about someone or something. Then write freely for a few minutes about the impact the experience has had on you, and include anything that comes to your mind.

**Sample Free Writing (from #3)**

Because of that experience, I’m more aware of what bullying is all about and I make sure not to be a part of it. I’m also more sensitive to people who are targets for bullies and how their lives can be affected really badly. I try to be nice to those kinds of people, try to treat them with some respect. I don’t ever want to be a bully again.
Drafting

After you have completed your prewriting work, you are ready to move on to the drafting process, putting your experience into words. Your first draft will be followed by a second revised draft and additional drafts if you feel necessary. Drafting is a part of the writing process for most writers, and your essay will undoubtedly improve with each draft.

Why do writers write drafts of an essay? Writing is a complex task, and seldom can any writer create a final, polished essay in one writing. The complexities of writing include choosing the best words to express your thoughts, organizing your thoughts in the most effective manner, including the best details and examples to develop your thoughts, adding new ideas as you write that you hadn’t previously considered, assessing the impact of your writing on readers, and making sure that your paper is free of spelling, punctuation, or grammar errors.

Even the most experienced writers can’t accomplish everything they want in a single draft. The drafting process is the natural way that most people improve a piece of writing. Writers create and revise drafts because that is how they write best. We have learned that through years of analyzing how writers write, including student writers.

Providing Description

In a paper relating an experience, writers often describe the sights, action, people, and feelings involved to heighten the readers’ interest and understanding. This does not mean bogging the essay down with irrelevant details but rather using vivid description to capture the experience and help the reader visualize what happened.

The following suggestions will help you provide effective description as you write your draft:

1. **Use details to describe the setting for readers and help them see and hear what is happening:**

   My four fifth-grade friends and I had a sleepover. We gathered on the bed in my small, green bedroom one evening and started playing with the Ouija board, a game board with numbers, letters and the words “yes” and “no” and a heart-shape piece of wood called a planchette which mysteriously moves on its own when players put their hands on it. You ask the Ouija board questions and it move to different letters and numbers or “yes” or “no” to answer them. We were laughing at the answers and having a great time until one of my crazier friends asked the Ouija board a scary question: “Will a monster sneak in the house tonight?” The answer wasn’t what we expected, and the rest of the night, whenever we heard a sound outside we cringed, thinking an evil monster was lurking.

2. **Use details to describe your thoughts and feelings during the experience so that readers can understand how it affected you:**
In a ceremony on the steps of city hall, I was given a medal by the chief of police for helping pull a child out of a shallow, dirt-banked canal. I didn’t feel like a hero because I just jumped in the water without thinking, and I knew I wasn’t risking my life because the water wasn’t deep. I was embarrassed when anyone called me a hero, and I felt I didn’t deserve any medal. I put the medal in a drawer and forgot about it.

3. **Use details to describe something or someone when that description is important to understanding the experience:**

   Maria was smaller than the rest of us doing the long jump. She was very short and had skinny legs. She was wearing old tennis shoes and yellow socks. When she whizzed down the runway and leaped high in the air, she jumped farther than anyone in the competition. We were all surprised and ran to congratulate her.

4. **When some action is an important part of the experience, describe it for readers to visualize:**

   Climbing up the walnut tree, I looked for branches that were big enough to stand on. I’d grab onto the trunk and hoist myself up to the next branch. The stranded cat wasn’t far out of my reach so I kept going. The last branch I needed to reach to get the cat down wasn’t real big, but I felt it could hold me. I grabbed the trunk and lifted myself onto the limb. Then I heard a cracking sound and the limb broke under my weight. I fell to the ground about ten feet below, landing on my back. Luckily, the grass was soft and cushioned the fall enough that I didn’t injure myself badly. Then I saw the cat climbing down the tree by herself.

5. **In general, use details to describe anything that will help bring your experience to life for readers:**

   His head stuck under the hood of his ‘68 Chevy as he replaced the sparkplugs, Henry was too preoccupied to notice that his eight-year old son Colson had climbed atop the tin shed roof with his Batman cape on and was getting ready to fly. Luckily, Colson’s mom saw him through the kitchen window and came to the rescue just before Batman launched himself.

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**Drafting Activity 1.1**

Read the following first draft paragraph. With a classmate, note places in the draft where you would recommend that the writer add some descriptive detail to help readers visualize and understand everything clearly, including the writer’s thoughts and feelings.

I’ll never forget my quinceanera party. My court of friends looked wonderful, and I wore a white gown which made me feel like a princess. Our back yard was turned into a wonderland. For one night, I was the center of attention. I’ll never forget dancing with my father, the changing of the shoes, or the delicious food. It was all like a dream, and the look on my mother’s face said everything.
College Writing Skills

Descriptive Words

Word choice obviously plays a big role in descriptive writing. Choosing the best combinations of words to describe something most vividly for readers is a great challenge. Of course, the more words at your disposal, the better your chances of selecting the most appropriate words to describe a particular image or thought. Broadening your vocabulary through reading and word study and using a thesaurus can help to enhance your descriptive powers.

The Power of Verbs

Verbs are the most powerful words for describing action, thoughts, and feeling. Consider how the italicized verbs in the following sentences provide visual or mental images for readers.

The drunken man staggered from the bar and collapsed on the sidewalk.
The hummingbirds flitted from flower to flower.
Irena agonized over what college to attend.
The losing coach was inundated by e-mails from frustrated fans.
The extreme fighting champion pummeled his opponent unmercifully.
The student’s behavior perplexed her teacher, who couldn’t fathom the reason for her sudden disruptive behavior.
Miriam’s little brother mimicked her every word and chortled loudly when she got mad.
The Kentucky Derby favorite bolted from the starting gate and surged into the lead.

Consider how the following italicized verbs change the action and visual image of the sentence:

The young boys ambled down the hillside.
The young boys careened down the hillside.
The young boys tumbled down the hillside.
The young boys trudged down the hillside.
The young boys scrambled down the hillside.
The young boys meandered down the hillside.
The young boys jetted down the hillside.

As you can see, there are a variety of verbs to describe different types of visual or mental activity, each providing a different image for readers. In descriptive writing, the challenge is to select the best verbs for describing each particular action or thought you are conveying.

To use verbs most effectively in your writing, consider these suggestions:
1. **Select verbs that most accurately describe the action for readers, and consider different options.** For example, what might be an appropriate verb for describing how a cat moves towards her prey, an unsuspecting bird? The cat *snuck up* on the robin? The cat *crept* slowly towards the robin? The cat *stalked* the robin? The cat *edged* closer to the robin?

2. **Avoid using the same verbs too frequently.** For example, in describing the running events at a track meet, the verb “raced” could be used regularly: The runners *raced* down the track. The milers *raced* around the curve. The 100 meter winner *raced* to the finish line and broke the tape. Instead of overusing the verb “raced,” a writer could use other verbs with similar meaning such as “sprinted,” “dashed,” “sped,” “tore,” “jetted,” or “flew.”

3. **If you can’t put your finger on the best verb to express an action or thought, check a thesaurus to consider some options.** For example, let’s say a math instructor didn’t say specifically that there would be a quiz on Friday, but he “hinted” at it. You want to express that idea in writing without using the verb “hinted.” In looking up “hinted,” a thesaurus would provide you with some verbs to consider such as “implied,” “insinuated,” and “inferred,” one which might suit your need best.

**Drafting Activity 1.2**

Fill in the following sentences with verbs that best convey the image that you have in mind. Consider different verb options before making your choices.

Example:

Julian rejoiced upon hearing the news that he had been accepted into the physical therapy program at Minter State College.

1. The spectators __________________ the efforts of the marathon runner who __________________ himself across the finish line.

2. Juanita’s success in high school ____________ hope to her younger siblings that they too could succeed.

3. Felix _______________________ to the fear of flying that had ________________ him for weeks and cancelled his flight.

4. Her classmates were ______________ when Michaela abruptly ______________ from the race for student body president.

5. The stock market __________________ dramatically on Thursday, and investors ______________ even more bad news on Friday.
6. The once mighty waterfall ____________ weakly down the mountainside, ____________ in flow by the dry winter.

7. The rocket ______________ slowly into the sky, its massive size and gravity ______________ its gradual ascent.

8. We were all ______________ by the sight of thousands of pelicans diving into the ocean in unison, which ______________ the surfers to abandon the water.

9. The smell that ______________ from the garbage bin ______________ of rotting food and dirty diapers.

10. The explosion ______________ the tall building and ______________ people on its top floors.

_____________________________________________________________________________

The Power of Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives and adverbs provide much of the detail of descriptive writing, helping readers see, hear, feel and understand most accurately what the writer is conveying. Note how the italicized adjectives in the following sentences add vivid description and help to create an both image and a mood for readers:

The languid stream cut a sinuous path through the lush jungle growth.  
A palpable cloud of despair hung over the campaign headquarters where dejected Hernandez loyalists gathered the night of the ill-fated election.  
The dark, ominous clouds gathering in the west could bring drenching rain to our campsite by evening.

Adverbs work in tandem with both verbs and adjectives to modify and enhance their meaning:

Nellie futilely tried to gather up her manuscript pages scattered by the sudden whirlwind.  
(The adverb “futilely” modifies the verb “tried.”)

We were terrifyingly close to going over the waterfall in our pontoon boat.  
(The adverb “terrifyingly” modifies the adjective “close.”)

The eagle soared majestically across the canyon.
The adverb “majestically” modifies the verb “soared.”

The violin solo by the first-year orchestra student was *excrutiatingly* bad.
(The adverb “excruciatingly” modifies the adjective “bad.”)

The ducks waddled *unhurriedly* across the street, stopping a line of traffic.
(The adverb “unhurriedly” modifies the verb “waddled.”)

Notice how in each sentence, the italicized adverb provides critical descriptive detail that sets the mood, creates an image, or describes a person’s efforts clearly for readers.

To use adjectives and adverbs most effectively in your writing, consider the following suggestions:

1. **Use adjectives and adverbs to provide the clearest, most accurate picture for readers.** You might use them to describe what the incoming clouds looked like, how the high school debate winner felt, how Chicago’s winter wind affected ill-prepared tourists, the pace of commuter traffic on Los Angeles’ I-5 freeway, or how spectators reacted to the plane crash at the air show.

2. **Vary your choice of adjectives and adverbs rather than relying on a few common words.** For example, the adjective “great” can be overused to describe how someone felt after pain-ending knee surgery, after losing 20 pounds, after winning the lottery, or after returning to college after years in the workforce. To vary adjectives rather than overusing the word “great,” a writer might consider adjectives such as “exhilarated,” “thrilled,” “fantastic,” “joyful,” “rapturous,” “ebullient,” or “terrific.”

3. **Avoid weighing down a sentence with too many adjectives and adverbs.** A sentence overladen with modifiers can slow down and distract readers and weaken the descriptive impact. For example, the sentence, “The short, stout, balding man in the green, rumpled, overly large sweat suit greatly, memorably surprised marathon spectators with his brisk, rapid, unrelenting pace through the 26 miles of the hot, grueling, crowded, competitive Philadelphia Marathon” wears a reader out.

   A stripped-down version of the sentence reads much more effectively: “The short, stout man in the rumpled sweat suit surprised marathon spectators with his brisk, unrelenting pace through the 26 miles of the grueling Philadelphia Marathon.” A few well-chosen modifiers usually best serve a writer’s purpose.

4. **Through overuse, some adjectives become cliched and lose much of their descriptive power.** For example, words such as “amazing” and “awesome” have become so commonplace that their meanings have been devalued. Other overused adjectives fall within the realm of “slang:” informal words more suited to speech than writing. Adjectives such as “cool,” “neat,” “bad” (meaning “good”), or “sweet” (meaning “really good”), are best suited for conversation or e-mail exchanges. As a general rule, avoid cliches and slang in your descriptive writing, neither of which has the power of more original, authentic description.

**Drafting Activity 1.3**
Fill in the following blanks with adjectives and adverbs that best describe the sights, sounds, smells, or feelings that you want to convey in each sentence. Feel free to use a *thesaurus* to consider possible word choices.*

Examples:

Quan was **exultant** after receiving an “A” on the most **challenging** calculus test of the semester.
The young children were playing **dangerously** close to the landfill area, **oblivious** to the danger it posed.

1. _______________ pain shot through Mary Ann’s shoulder whenever she tried _______________ to lift her right arm.

2. The _______________ lights of the boardwalk played upon the _______________ ocean waves crashing against the pier.

3. Feeling _______________ and _______________, I left the concert early and went straight to bed.

4. _______________, the _______________ contestant in the judo competition was among the _______________, _______________ flipping his opponents and winning matches.

5. _______________ by all of the attention, our fox terrier hid under the sofa, out of the _______________ hands of the _______________ children.

6. The _______________ movie was one of the most _______________ and _______________ I’ve seen in a long time.

7. Ramona’s _______________ disposition contradicted her _______________ behavior when she was defending a client in court.

8. The _______________ monkey hurled a banana peel at the _______________ teenage girl in front of his cage.

9. It was _______________ _______________ for anyone to climb the fence into the stadium, _______________ guarded by the _______________ security patrol.

10. No one looked more _______________ at the movie premiere than the leading actress, who astonished everyone with her _______________ attire.
*You’ll find a *thesaurus* online that provides you with a number of *synonyms* - words with the same or similar meaning - for the word that you enter. Some of the synonyms may perfectly match your word and provide good options while others may not be similar enough to use interchangeably with your word.

For example, for the word “depressed,” you’ll find in a thesaurus synonyms such as *despondent, dejected, unhappy, dispirited, dragged, hurting, bleeding, fed up.* While the first four words may provide good options to use in place of “depressed,” the last four don’t match up as well. Therefore, make sure that any synonym that you use from a thesaurus means very nearly the same as the word you are replacing.

**First Draft Guidelines**

As you begin writing the first draft of your paper, keep the following in mind.

1. **The purpose of your first draft is to get the experience on paper as clearly as you recall it.** Don’t worry about how you word each sentence or whether you make an occasional error.

2. **Provide some information in your draft to prepare readers for the experience lying ahead.** You might include your age at the time, describe where the experience took place, and relate what occurred leading up to it.

3. **As you write, you are leading to the heart of the experience: whatever happened that made the impact on your life.** Bring the experience to life for readers by describing it in detail.

4. **Include description in your draft to help readers visualize the experience, and include your thoughts and feelings so readers can understand its effect on you.**

5. **Include some dialogue in your draft if what you said, or what others said, is an important part of the experience.** Insert quotation marks (“ ”) before and after the spoken words, and identify the speaker: “I’ll never trust you again to borrow my car,” I told my brother. (Note the writer’s use of dialogue in the draft “Bullying” in Drafting Activity 1.4.)

6. **Conclude the draft by relating what happened as a result of the experience and the impact that it has had on your life: what you learned from it.**
7. **Write your draft in paragraphs, changing paragraphs as you move to something new in your experience: a different time, a different place, a different aspect of the experience.**

8. **Your reading audience for your essay are your classmates and instructor.** Keep them in mind as you write, providing them with your best recollection of the experience.

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**Drafting Activity 1.4**

Read the following first draft of “Bully” and discuss the following questions. Your instructor may make this a small group or whole-class discussion.

1. What does the writer include in the first paragraph to set the experience for readers?

2. What is the main incident that the essay builds to? What does the writer include in the paragraphs leading up to the incident?

3. What does the writer describe in the essay, including visual details and his thoughts and feelings? What is the purpose of the description?

4. Notice the use of dialogue in the essay. Why might the writer have used dialogue in those places?

5. How does the writer conclude the essay after the main incident? What did he learn, and how did it affect his life?

6. Notice how the essay is paragraphed. Why does the writer change paragraphs where he does?

**Sample First Draft**

**Bully**

When I was in junior high, I ran around with five or six guys. We all played sports and thought we were pretty cool. We liked to have fun and walked around campus after lunch, just messing around.

One way of having fun was teasing other kids. I thought it was pretty harmless and never thought much about it. One easy target was a kid named Vernon. He was very skinny, had red hair and lots of freckles, and had thick glasses which magnified his eyes. He wore his pants up high, cinched tight by a big belt. When we saw him, we’d call him things like Vernon Highpants or “highwaters” or “frecklehead.” Sometimes we called him meaner things like “wimp” or “four-eyed freak.” Vernon was always alone, so it was easy to pick on him. He’d never respond, so we’d just laugh and move on.

One day when we saw Vernon, I decided to take it a little further. “Come on guys,” I said as I walked up to where Vernon was standing. “Hey Vernon,” I said. “That’s a nice belt. Let me see it.” Vernon just stood there, saying nothing. “Come on Highpants,” I said. “I want to see your belt.” Vernon didn’t move. “Grab him guys,” I said, and a couple guys grabbed his arms. I pulled off his belt and threw it in a nearby tree as everyone laughed. Then we pulled down
Vernon’s pants and shoved him to the ground. When we left, I saw that Vernon was crying and his glasses were on the ground.

I thought about what I had done to Vernon later, and I didn’t feel really good about it. Seeing him on the ground crying didn’t make me feel good. I knew I had gone too far and I was starting to feel bad about it. I also thought I might get in trouble if Vernon told the principal what we’d done. The next time we saw Vernon a couple days later and guys started to taunt him I said, “Let him alone guys. We’ve got better things to do.” A couple of the guys said,”Yeah,” and we walked on.

One day when I was alone on campus I saw Vernon. I walked up to him and said, “Hey Vernon, sorry about what happened the other day.” He didn’t say anything. “Look,” I said. “I’m really sorry. You didn’t tell the principal did you?” He shook his head “no.” “That’s good,” I said. “because it won’t happen again. Okay?” He shook his head “yes” and I walked away.

That incident in particular made me realize later that I was a bully. You don’t think about it at the time, and you don’t think about how it is affecting the guy that you bully. But the taunting, the name calling, and the physical attack was all bullying. We were the cool guys and he was a loser in our eyes, so it was okay to bully him. I know now how wrong I was, and I realize how easy it is for some people to bully others and not think anything of it. That was me.

I did learn something from the things I did that year. Most important, as time went on and I got older, I stopped bullying people. I realized that it was a lousy way to have fun at someone else’s expense. I thought about Vernon, who had moved somewhere else, and how all the bullying affected him. He missed school quite a bit and I’ll bet it was because he hated school because of how he was treated. He was always alone, he never seemed to have any friends, and then he had to put up with all of the bullying. He must have been pretty miserable and I was one of the people that caused it.

Today I’m more aware of the kind of people who are targets for bullying, the kids that are different, that don’t fit in and have few friends. I think more about what life is like for those kids. I don’t make friends with them but I do make a point to say hello to them in the halls and not treat them like outcasts. It is easy to be a bully, and although I never considered myself a bad person, I was a bully who made lifer harder for other kids. You hear about kids who are constantly bullied committing suicide. Sometimes I think about that and then I think about Vernon.

Drafting Activity 1.5

Write the first draft of your paper keeping the drafting guidelines in mind and anything from the sample first draft that may help you. Provide a simple title for your essay that fits the experience.

A Little Logic

Writing is the act of putting your thoughts on paper in the most effective way. If you are a good thinker, you certainly have the potential to be a good writer. Since thinking skills and writing skills go hand in hand, working on both of them will help you continue to improve your writing.
Throughout the text you’ll find short segments called “A little logic” such as the following one. In these segments, you apply your thinking skills to a number of different tasks: figuring out cause-and-effect relationships, solving mysteries, detecting sequential patterns, completing analogies (e.g. shoe is to foot as glove is to _______), determining probabilities, and identifying true and false syllogisms (e.g. Dogs hate to take baths. Poncho is a dog. Therefore, Poncho hates to take baths.). In some segments, you are finding the “right” answer. In others, you are coming up with the best hypothesis (an educated guess) as to why something occurred.

The “A little logic” segments provide a change of pace from your writing and enable you to use a variety of thinking skills while having a little fun at the same time. Often people will provide a quick, superficial response to a problem, or if they can’t immediately think of something, they give up. The best thinkers don’t give up easily, digging deeply into the problem until they figure it out. Most of the “A little logic” segments compel you to do a little digging.

For different “logic” segments, your instructor may have you work in small groups, in pairs, or independently. The “answers” to the problems are in the instructor’s manual.

### A little logic 1

1. Two girls ate dinner together. They both ordered iced tea. One girl drank them very fast and had finished five in the time it took the other to drink just one. The girl who drank one died while the other survived. All of the drinks were poisoned. How did the girl who drank the most survive?

2. A woman shoots her husband, then holds him under water for five minutes. A little while later, they both go out and enjoy a wonderful dinner together. How can this be?

3. A man was found dead with a cassette recorder in one hand and a gun in the other. When the police came in, they immediately pressed the play button on the cassette. He said “I have nothing else to live for. I can’t go on,” then the sound of a gunshot. After listening to the cassette tape, the police knew that it was not a suicide, but a homicide. How did they know?
Revision

Now that you have written your first draft, you can read it over to see what you might improve. In each unit, you are given some specific guidelines for revising your drafts based on the type of writing you are doing and the revision emphasis for that unit. Revising essays in different units will help you develop a mental checklist for revising any writing you may do.

The purpose of revision is simple: to make your writing better. Improving a draft seldom means a major overhaul of what you’ve written. Instead, it might include adding a detail here or an example there to develop a thought, rewording some sentences to make them clearer or smoother, dividing an overly long paragraph into two, moving a particular sentence to a more effective location, or strengthening the opening or conclusion of the paper to make a greater impact on readers.

In this first “Revision” section, you work on improving your sentence wording. This consideration is common to all writers, something you will focus on throughout the course.

Improving Sentence Wording

In a first draft, you word your thoughts as they come to you the first time. As with most writers, your thoughts don’t always translate into written words as smoothly or clearly as you might like. Among your first draft sentences, you will usually find some that are wordy - overly long to make your point - and others that are a little awkward, not quite sounding the way you want. Sentence revision is a task shared by all writers, and the first draft of a sentence is often a beginning point for crafting a really good sentence.

For example, let’s say a writer wanted to express her opinion about global warming and our government’s lack of action on the issue. She may start out with a sentence like this:

The effects of global warming throughout the world can be disastrous, including the flooding of cities and millions of people displaced and homeless, and our government is doing nothing to solve the problem but in fact is adding to the problem by ignoring it.

The sentence contains a lot of good information, but it is also rather long and unwieldy. A revision of the sentence might read something like this:

Global warming can have disastrous effects throughout the world, such as flooded cities and millions of people losing their homes, and our government just adds to the problem by ignoring it.
The revised sentence is clearly more readable and less wordy, and no meaning has been lost. This final revision may improve the sentence further:

*Flooded cities and millions of homeless people are just two of the disastrous effects that global warming can cause in the world, and our government makes matters worse by doing nothing.*

Whether you favor the last sentence or the previous one is a matter of choice, with each about the same length and providing similar information with a different emphasis. Clearly, there is more than one way to revise and improve any sentence.

**Sentence Revision Guidelines**

To improve your first-draft sentences, consider the following suggestions:

1. **Look for overly long sentences that are “wordier” than necessary to express the thought.** When writers first express an idea, they often produce a lengthier version than needed: unnecessary words, repeated words or phrases, wordy sentence constructions. Revise wordy sentences to make them more concise and effective.

   *First-draft sentence:*
   
   Last night’s wind storm, which was the strongest of the year, blew off the remaining autumn leaves on our trees and covered the lawn with a brown and orange carpet of leaves.
   
   *Revised:*
   
   Last night’s wind storm, the strongest of the year, blew the remaining autumn leaves off our trees, carpeting the lawn in brown and orange.

2. **Replace questionable word choices with more appropriate words.** Finding the best word to express a thought or action or describe a situation most vividly is a challenge. Those more questionable words often stand out when you reread a draft, and when you revise, you have the opportunity to replace them.

   *First-draft sentence:*
   
   Unaccustomed as I was to public speaking, I had no choice but to speak before the high school board of trustees if I was to have the courage of my convictions and speak against the unfair treatment of freshmen.
   
   *Revised:*
   
   Unaccustomed as I was to public speaking, I felt obliged to address the college board of trustees because of my conviction that the treatment of freshmen was unfair.
The troubled congressman gave up his senate seat rather than treat himself to the rigors of a bribery investigation by the Ethics Committee.

Revised:

The *beleaguered* congressmen *resigned* his senate seat rather than *subject* himself to a bribery investigation by the Ethics Committee.

3. **Revise awkward sentences to improve their smoothness and readability.** Sometimes a first draft sentence just doesn’t read well, often the result of an awkward sentence structure. To revise an awkward-looking sentence, you may have to move words or phrases around, delete words, or completely restructure the sentence.

First-draft sentence:

Not only are there too many stop signs on Shaw Avenue, but also there are some that are difficult to see due to overhanging tree limbs that partially obscure them.

Revised:

There are too many stop signs on Shaw Avenue, some of which are partially obscured by overhanging tree branches.

4. **Revise vague sentences whose meaning may be unclear to readers.** Sometimes although you know what you want to say, the thought doesn’t come out clearly. If you run across a first-draft sentence whose meaning may not be clear to readers or that could be interpreted more than one way, revise it to clarify the thought.

First-draft sentence:

Clarence’s attitude was a factor in the way he was treated by his colleagues.

Revised:

Because of Clarence’s *upbeat attitude*, his colleagues *enjoyed* being around him.

5. **Some first draft sentences may contain slang - informal words that are more suitable for conversation.** Replace slang words and phrases - *cool, neat, hang out, hassle, dude* - with more appropriate ones.

First-draft sentence:

I give that dude his props for always sticking by his friends.

Revised:

I *respect* Tyrone for being *loyal* to his friends.
Revision Activity 1.1

Revise the following first draft sentences to make them clearer, smoother, and more concise by eliminating unnecessary words, replacing awkward wording, moving words or phrases around, and improving word choice. Try out different wording options until you are satisfied with the wording of each sentence.

Example:

First draft: The moon was rounder and brighter and bigger last night than I had ever seen it.

Revised: Last night’s moon was round, bigger, and brighter than ever.

1. The parking lot was full and overflowing with cars for the Beyonce concert at the SaveMart Center, so cars that were still coming in were directed to a large, huge dirt area south of the parking lot for the SaveMart Center to park.

2. The crowd inside of the SaveMart center was filled with all ages of people from young children with their parents to teenagers to young adults to older people all coming to see Beyonce.

3. Long lines of people inside of the Savemart Center were lined up at the souvenir booths to purchase all kinds of things with Beyonce’s name or picture on them like t-shirts, sweat shorts, coffee mugs, and posters.

4. The crowd, which were watching the warm-up group before Beyonce, grew restless waiting for Beyonce to come out, which took over an hour from the time the warm-up group began singing.

5. Many of the adults in the crowd were sipping on daiquiris, which cost $15.00, which is a ridiculous price for a daiquiri, but they were big enough to last the entire concert to the end of it.

6. When Beyonce finally came out onto the stage of the SaveMart Center, the crowd jumped to their feet and erupted in cheers and shouts and whistling that lasted for at least a good two minutes.

7. When Beyonce performed her faster songs, which happened quite often, most of the crowd would dance at their seats and seemed to obviously be having a great time.

8. Looking around the SaveMart Center arena, it looked like there were thousands of fireflies twinkling brightly around the Savemart Center arena, and these fireflies were actually the flash of cellphone cameras going off all the time.
9. When Beyoncé launched into one of her hit songs which she sang like “Single Ladies,” most of the ladies in the crowd, and especially the ladies that were a bit younger, sang along so that you could still hear Beyoncé but you could also hear the singing crowd of ladies around you.

10. Beyoncé went through about ten costume changes at the least, and it was always fun to see which costume she would wear as she came back on the stage from changing costumes.

Revision Activity 1.2

Read the following paragraph. Revise sentences to eliminate the types of problems you may encounter in your own drafts: wordiness, faulty word choice, awkward phrasing, vague meaning. The resulting sentences should be clearer, smoother, more concise, and easier and more enjoyable to read.

New electric cars such as the Nissan Leaf and Chevy Volt, which are two of the most popular electric cars in the country, sound better than they may be in reality. For example, while the Nissan Leaf advertises a cool 100-mile driving range between charges of the battery, if you go on their website and read the details, you find that the 100-mile range that they advertise can’t really be reached. In fact, if you drive a slow-like 55 m.p.h. on the freeway with no air conditioning or heater on the car turned on in the car, your driving range drops to around 65 miles, a masterful drop-off from the 100 miles that caught-off-guard motorists might expect to achieve. Don’t trust everything you read about electric cars, and especially don’t trust what you read about the maximum driving range of them. A man who lives in New Jersey actually sued the Nissan company when the Leaf that he got didn’t go nearly as far as advertised between battery charges, and the settlement between the man and Nissan was a return of his car, getting his money back, and a few thousand extra for his pains.

Revision Guidelines

When you read over your first draft looking for ways to improve it, consider these suggestions:
1. **Read the opening of your essay carefully.** Do you provide information to “set the stage” for the experience that is to come: where the experience occurs, how old you were, what was happening that led to the experience?

2. **What details might you add to help readers visualize the experience?** Are there places in the essay where some added description would help readers see or hear more clearly what happened? In particular, do you describe the main incident so that readers can clearly see and hear what occurred and how you reacted to it?

3. **Are there places where you could add your thoughts or feelings, or those of other people involved in the experience?** Make sure readers understand your feelings as the experience progresses.

4. **Check your paragraphing.** Do you change paragraphs as you move to different aspects of the experience: a different time, place, or situation? Do you have any overly long paragraphs that may need dividing or extremely short paragraphs that could be combined?

5. **Read each sentence to see if the wording could be improved in some way.** Look for sentences that are overly wordy, awkward sounding, or have some questionable word choices.

6. **Read your conclusion – whatever comes after the main experience – to see whether you have clearly related what happened as a result of the experience and what you learned or gained from it.** Will readers understand from your conclusion why the experience was so memorable?

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**Revision Activity 1.3**

Before revising your own draft, read the sample first draft “Playground Accident” and its revised version. With a classmate or in small groups, analyze the changes that the writer made and why you think he made each of them. (Notice that paragraph four in the first draft was divided into two paragraphs.) How do you think the changes improve the essay from the reader’s viewpoint?

The Playground Accident

One day when I was in the first grade, I was on the playground at recess and headed for my favorite piece of play equipment: the ocean wave. When riders were on the ocean wave, it would rock back and forth and spin around as we pulled and pushed on the rods to make the circular bench move.

As the bench rocked back and forth, it made a clanging sound as it hit against the center pole. It was great fun to rock as high as possible and make the loudest clanging noise as the bench
crashed into the pole and then shot back out again. Thinking back on it, it was a pretty dangerous apparatus, an accident just waiting to happen, and I was the unlucky one.

While I had always kept my hands on the rods to help move the bench, for some reason I gripped the front of the bench with one hand and held a rod with the other. When the bench came clanging down into the pole, my hand was caught between the two. When the bench hit the pole, the top of my ring finger was smashed between the bench and the pole, and I let out a sharp cry. The ocean wave stopped, and I looked down at the smashed nail on my finger, blood running down my hand. While I sat on the bench stunned, someone ran to get the on-duty teacher, and she immediately walked me to the principal’s office.

The next few minutes were a blur, and I think I was in shock because I didn’t feel any pain. The school nurse wrapped my finger and my mom came a few minutes later to take me to the doctor. On the way to the doctor, I remember the pain finally hit. My whole finger was throbbing. Luckily, the doctor’s office was nearby, and I was whisked into the doctor in front of other people in the waiting room. I lay down on the table and he took a look at my finger. “Boy, you sure did a number on that nail,” he said calmly. “We need to take it off so your finger can heal.” Before he pulled the mangled nail off my finger, he needed to numb the area with a shot, and out came a long needle. He stuck the needle into the bloody flesh behind the nail, and I screamed in pain. “That’s the last pain you’ll feel,” he assured me as the finger started getting numb. Then I heard a loud thud on the floor. My mom had passed out and hit her head on the floor. Now the doctor had one patient on the table and another bleeding from her head.

The doctor helped my mom into a chair, had her hold a towel to her forehead, and then pulled my nail off with some tweezers. He put some salve on my finger and then wrapped it with gauze, and then my mom and I traded places. Now she was the one to get the numbing shot along with seven stitches in her forehead. I remember my mom seemed more embarrassed from fainting than anything else, and I was so into my own situation that I didn’t think much about her. Finally, we walked out of the doctor’s office.

The doctor gave mom a pain medication prescription for my finger, and I took pills for the next few days when I felt the pain coming. My finger nail started slowly growing back, but strangely, it grew back as a weird-looking double nail, and people still ask today, “What happened to your finger?” My mom has a scar across her forehead which she sometimes covers with bangs, so we both have our life-long reminders of what happened long ago on that day.

The ocean wave was removed from the playground, and from every other playground in the school district. I guess the only good thing that came from my accident was that no other kid ever got a mangled finger from the ocean wave.

Revised version:

The Playground Accident (additions are in bold, italicized print, deletions are crossed out)

One on a warm spring day when I was in the first grade, I was on the playground at recess and headed for my favorite piece of play equipment: the ocean wave. **The ocean wave was composed of a circular bench attached to a center pole by several iron rods.** When riders were on the ocean wave, it would rock back and forth and spin around as we pulled and pushed on the rods to make the circular bench move.

As the bench rocked back and forth, it made a clanging sound as it hit against the
center pole. It was great fun to rock as high as possible and make the loudest clanging noise as the bench crashed into the pole and then shot back out again. *We riders would make whooping sounds* - “woooop, wooooo, woooop, wooooo” - with each up-and-down motion of the bench. Thinking back on it, it was a pretty dangerous apparatus, an accident just waiting to happen, and I was the unlucky one.

While I had always kept my hands on the rods before, to help move the bench, for some reason I gripped the front of the bench with one hand and held a rod with the other. When the bench came clanging down into the pole, my hand was caught between the *two bench and the pole*. When the bench hit the pole, the top of my ring finger was smashed between the *bench and the pole them*, and I let out a *loud*, sharp cry. The ocean wave stopped, and I looked down at the smashed nail on my finger, blood running down my hand. While I sat on the bench stunned, someone ran to get the on-duty teacher, and she immediately walked me to the principal’s office.

The next few minutes were a blur, and I think I was in shock because I didn’t feel any pain. The school nurse wrapped my finger and my mom came from work a few minutes later to take me to the doctor. On the way to the doctor, I remember the pain finally hit. My whole finger was throbbing and I started bawling. *It was the worst pain I had ever felt.*

Luckily, the doctor’s office was nearby, and I was whisked into the doctor in front of other people in the waiting room. I lay down on the table and he took a look at my finger. “Boy, you sure did a number on that nail,” he said calmly. “We need to take it off so your finger can heal.” *I was scared to death, but I tried not to show it.* Before he pulled the mangled nail off my finger, he needed to numb the area with a shot, and out came a long needle. *Now I was shaking badly.* He stuck the needle into the bloody flesh behind the nail, and I screamed in pain. “That’s the last pain you’ll feel,” he assured me as the finger started getting numb. Then I heard a loud thud on the floor. My mom had passed out and hit her head on the floor. Now the doctor had one patient on the table and another bleeding from her head.

The doctor helped my mom into a chair, had her hold a towel to her forehead, and then pulled my nail off with some tweezers. *I didn’t feel a thing.* He put some salve on my finger and then wrapped it with gauze, and then my mom and I traded places. *Now she was the one to get the She also got* a numbing shot along with seven stitches in her forehead. I remember my mom seemed more embarrassed from fainting than anything else, and I was so absorbed by my own situation that I didn’t think much about her. Finally, we walked rather slowly out of the doctor’s office.

The doctor gave mom a pain medication prescription for my finger, and I took pills for the next few days when I felt the pain coming. My finger nail started slowly growing back, but strangely, it grew back as a weird-looking double nail, and people still ask today, “What happened to your finger?” My mom has a scar across her forehead which she sometimes covers with bangs, so we both have our life-long reminders of what happened long ago on that day.

The ocean wave was removed from the playground and from every other playground in the school district. I guess the only good thing that came from my accident was that no other kid ever got a mangled finger from *hurt on the ocean wave*. *As for me, I got a lot less daring on the playground and always made sure that my hands and feet weren’t in the wrong places.*
Peer Review

During the course, you will often be exchanging drafts with a classmate or two, evaluating each other’s drafts, and making suggestions to improve the drafts. Sharing drafts with classmates is a common practice in college writing courses and perhaps in some of your previous classes. Reading and evaluating your classmates’ drafts will not only give them some ideas for improving their papers but will also help you develop your own revision skills.

When you read your classmates’ drafts and make suggestions, consider the following:

1. **You are not expected to be an “expert” evaluator at this point in your writing experience.** You will continue to get better as you evaluate drafts throughout the course and as you revise your own essays.

2. **Any revision suggestions you can make may help your classmate improve his paper:**
   - If you don’t understand what the writer is saying in a sentence, suggest that she reword it.
   - If some description could help you visualize something more clearly, point out the place.
   - If a sentence or paragraph seems to go on too long, suggest rewording the sentence or dividing the paragraph.
   - If you would like to know the writer’s thoughts or feelings at some point or another, suggest that she include them.
   - If the main incident at the heart of the experience isn’t given much attention, suggest that the writer emphasize it more.

3. **There are always positive things in a draft.** Point out what you like about the essay as well as what might be improved.

4. **The purpose of the peer review of drafts is simple: for classmates to help each other become better writers.** View the process positively, and consider suggestions given or received as helpful rather than negative or critical.

**Revision Activity 1.4**

Read the following first draft “Shop Class.” With a classmate, evaluate the draft and note where you would make revision suggestions to the writer in the following areas:
1. Sentences whose wording could be improved (i.e. overly wordy, awkward, or questionable word choices).

2. Places in the draft where some detail would make the draft clearer and more interesting.

3. Places in the draft where the writer’s thoughts or feelings would be of interest to readers.

4. Any overly long paragraph that could be effectively divided into two.

5. Any questions you have about the experience or that the draft doesn’t answer.

Your instructor may then have a class discussion for students to present their revision ideas.

Shop Class

When I was in seventh grade, I enrolled in a fifth-period wood shop class. I didn’t know anything about making things out of wood, but I figured it would be an easy class and an easy grade, so I decided to take the shop class.

I was a pretty good student, and I noticed a lot of the guys in the class weren’t among the best students at our school at the time. I soon learned, however, that being good in school had little to do with being good in shop class.

Some of the guys already had experience with shop equipment, and I had hardly ever even hammered a nail. I decided that my first project would be a small one, so I set about the making of a belt holder. I worked on it for a couple weeks, but I could never get the two sides balanced. It turned out to be just a worthless piece of crap that I threw away as soon as I got it home. The shop teacher, Mr. Aguilera, gave me a “D” on the project.

Christmas was nearing and I decided I wanted to make my mother something. I looked in the project book and found something that looked simple to make but very nice: a wooden candy bowl. It wouldn’t require any of the shop skills that I was bad at. Basically, all I needed were some chisels and sandpaper, so I thought at I was set.

While I attacked a piece of wood with a chisel, other guys were busy using a large variety of tools to create really impressive projects. I was amazed by their skill. However, I was determined to make the best candy bowl I could and I hoped my mom would like it.

I just kept chiseling and sanding, chiseling and sanding, and the candy bowl started taking shape. Mr. Aguilera would drop by the table occasionally, spending most of his time checking on the bigger projects. “As you get nearer the bottom of the bowl, use a finer chisel and sandpaper,” he recommended. “You bet,” I said. I could imagine the finished product in my mind and my mom’s surprise when she unwrapped it. It was getting nearer and nearer to Christmas break, and guys were starting to finish their projects. It was taking me a long time to finish a candy bowl, but as unskilled as I was, I took twice as long as anyone else would have taken for the same project. “You’ve got to finish it up, Flores,” Mr. Aguilera said somewhat sharply, wondering how one student could spend so much time on a little candy bowl. “I’m just about there,” I said, and kept on chiseling.
Rushing to finish, however, was the worst thing I could have done. I was in the most delicate stage, chiseling and sanding out the very bottom of the bowl, and with one clumsy thrust of the chisel, I gouged a hole through the bottom.

I ended up getting a “D” on the project, a “C-” in the class, the lowest of anyone in the class, and some final words from Mr. Aguilera: “Wood working may not be for you, Flores.”

Revision Activity 1.5

Reread and revise your draft taking into consideration the drafting guidelines. At this point in the course, you may want to evaluate one aspect of your draft at a time: its opening, its use of descriptive detail, the inclusion of your thoughts and feelings, its emphasis on the main incident, its sentence wording, its paragraphing, and its conclusion. Read the draft several times to make sure that you cover each aspect to see what might be improved.

Finally, write the next draft of your essay including all of the changes you have made.

Revision Activity 1.6

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and read and evaluate each draft as you did your own. Make any suggestions that you feel would help your classmates improve their drafts. Then based on your classmates’ input, make any additional changes to your own draft that you feel would improve it. Finally, write the revised version of your draft with all changes included.

Further Revision

When does the revision process end? The best answer is when you are satisfied with what you have written and ready for others to read it. You may feel that way now, or you may feel that you can still make some improvements, setting the draft aside for awhile and then taking another look. You may even find a couple of things to change and improve as you are proofreading your draft for errors during the “Editing” phase.

Whether you do further revision on a draft is up to you and, of course, your instructor. Writing is seldom the same clear-cut, step-by-step process for every writer, the revision process being a prime example.
Editing

You may have noticed that during all of the writing and revising instruction, not a word has been written about grammar, punctuation, or spelling. The reason is that editing your essay – finding and correcting any errors in grammar usage, punctuation, or spelling – is generally the final step in the writing process.

Why is that? There are two main reasons. First, students sometimes mistake content revision for error correction. While revising a draft, instead of looking for ways to improve an essay’s content, they are instead looking for misspelled words or run-on sentences. Revision and editing are two very different considerations, and while there may be some overlap in how writers work through a paper, it is best to keep them separate in the process so that both considerations get your full attention.

Second, there is little point to editing a paper until it is in its final revised form. It makes little sense to make error corrections in sentences that may change significantly, and you can’t find errors in material that hasn’t been added until a draft has been revised. Once you have your draft in its final revised form, you know that you are editing the essay that will be passed on to readers.

Correct Writing

Is it important to know how to write “correctly,” to make sure that your writing is relatively free of grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors? Most college instructors certainly think so, as do employers in occupations that require writing. In addition, anyone who reads your writing – classmates, friends, your instructor – would much prefer enjoying the content of your writing without being distracted by errors. There is little question that your ability to write “correctly” can contribute greatly to your success in college and beyond.

Each “Editing” section of the text includes instruction and activities covering the elements of grammar usage and punctuation where errors most commonly occur. Throughout the text the following areas are covered:

- Subject-verb agreement
- Correct pronoun usage
- Comparative adjectives
- Colon and semi-colon usage
- Possessives and contractions
- Sentence fragments
- Double negatives
- Pronoun-antecedent agreement
- Irregular verb usage
- Comma usage
- Quotation marks in dialogue
- Run-on and comma-splice sentences
- Dangling and misplaced modifiers
- Easily confused words (accept/except, there/their, then/than, its/it’s, advice/advise)
By this time in your education, you have probably gone over these grammar and punctuation basics many times, from elementary school on. The text, then, focuses on those error problems that seem to be the most ingrained in student writing, the ones that tend to persist despite previous instruction. In addition, as you work through the book, you will analyze your own personal error tendencies and focus most intently on those as you edit your drafts and correct errors.

**Irregular Verbs**

No doubt you wrote your personal experience essay in the *past tense* since you were writing about an experience that occurred in the past. Most students have little problem using *regular* past tense verbs correctly since they all end in “ed.” However, *irregular* verbs change in different ways in the past tense, so you basically have to learn the correct spelling of irregular verbs and how some of their *past tense* and *past participle* forms are different.

The following list of irregular verbs includes the most commonly used and misspelled verbs. The verbs are grouped by similarities in their spelling in the past tense and past participle forms.

**The following verbs have the same form for the past tense and past participle:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Tense</th>
<th>Past Tense</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bring</td>
<td>brought</td>
<td>brought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>build</td>
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<td>built</td>
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<td>burst</td>
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<td>catch</td>
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<td>cut</td>
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<td>find</td>
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<td>found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has</td>
<td>Had</td>
<td>had</td>
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<tr>
<td>lay (place down)</td>
<td>Laid</td>
<td>laid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Led</td>
<td>led</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quit</td>
<td>Quit</td>
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<td>Read</td>
<td>Read</td>
<td>read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set</td>
<td>Set</td>
<td>set</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The past participle of the following verbs ends in “en:”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Past Tense</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>choose</td>
<td>chose</td>
<td>chosen</td>
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<td>drive</td>
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<td>take</td>
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<td>write</td>
<td>wrote</td>
<td>written</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From the past tense to the past participle, one vowel changes from “a” to “o” or from “a” to “u” in the following verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Past Tense</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>become</td>
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<td>begin</td>
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<td>sing</td>
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<td>sung</td>
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<tr>
<td>swim</td>
<td>swam</td>
<td>swum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the following verbs, the past tense ends in “ew” and the past participle ends in “own,” with the exception of “drawn.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Past Tense</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>blow</td>
<td>blew</td>
<td>blown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>draw</td>
<td>drew</td>
<td>drawn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fly          flew          flown
grown        grew          grown
know         knew          known
throw        threw         thrown

The following commonly used irregular verbs follow no particular pattern.

do            did           done
go            went          gone
see           saw           seen
lie (lie down) lay          Lain

Past Tense and Past Participle

The following distinctions between the past tense and past participle verb forms will help you use and spell them correctly.

1. **The past tense verb is used to write about an action that occurred or a condition that existed in the past.** It is not preceded by a helping verb.

   Examples: Yesterday I *wrote* an e-mail to my cousin.
              Last Friday *was* the hottest day of the summer.

2. **The past participle is used to write about an action that occurred or a condition that existed over a period of time, and that may continue in the present and the future.** The past participle verb form is always preceded by a *helping* (auxiliary) verb such as *has, have, had, is, are, was,* or *were* and may be preceded by two or more helping verbs (*could have gone, has been written, will have been driven, shall be done*).

   Examples: I *have written* an e-mail to my cousin every week this month.
              Julie *has taken* care of her invalid aunt for several weeks.
              Miles *had grown* tomatoes on his apartment balcony every summer.
              Jerome *was bitten* by a dog and had to get a tetanus shot.
              Shana *should have gone* to her brother’s cello recital.

3. **Whether you use the past tense or past participle depends on the thought you are expressing in a particular sentence.** For example, note the distinction in meaning among the three following sentences.

   Examples: Yesterday I *drove* to school for the first time in a month.
              I *have driven* to school more than I *have ridden* my bike this semester.
              I *had driven* to school every Friday until my aunt started giving me rides.
The first sentence uses the past tense verb *drove*, and indicates an action that occurred in the past. The second sentence uses the past participle verb *driven* with the present tense helping verb *has* and indicates an action that occurred over a period of time and may continue into the future. The third sentence uses the past participle verb *driven* with the past tense helping verb *had* and indicates an action that occurred over a period of time but no longer occurs. As you can see, past tense and past participle verb forms carry different meanings, and writers use them in different situations.

**Editing Activity 1.1**

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with appropriate irregular verbs from the list. All of the sentences require *past tense or past participle* verbs forms; do not use *present tense* verbs. Remember to use the past participle verb form when the blank is preceded by a *helping* verb (*has, had, have, is, was, were*).

Example: No one has driven as many miles to school this semester as you have.

1. I have _______________ great care not to tear my new disposable contact lenses.
2. No American has _______________ the English Channel in the last twenty years.
3. A flock of geese have _______________ over our apartment every day this month.
4. The concert _______________ with a tribute band playing Jimmy Hendrix’ music.
5. I have _______________ to doubt your interest in sharing an apartment with him.
6. Mona had _______________ to work with her brother until his car broke down.
7. Home prices had _______________ more in 2005 than at any time in the past twenty years.
8. My T-shirt _______________ two sizes when I washed it in hot water.
9. Homero’s young daughter gleefully _______________ into the room.
10. I hadn’t _______________ too far into my calculus homework until I realized that I had no idea what I was doing.
11. The enrollment of new students has _______________ very smoothly since the college established its on-line enrollment site.
12. I _______________ your doorbell several times before you heard me.
13. Have you _______________ everything possible to get the cheapest airplane tickets?
14. Ronda hadn’t _______________ a solo before an audience since junior high.
15. Your letters to your state legislator were ____________ with great passion.
16. I should have ____________ that it would be impossible to find a parking space around the ferry building.
17. You ____________ a very difficult major, but you are certainly up to the challenge.
18. Franklin hasn’t ____________ in a restaurant for over a year.
19. We ____________ the horses down the rocky trail rather than try to ride them.
20. I ____________ your sweater back that I borrowed last week.
21. You should have ____________ more thought to subletting your back room.
22. Hiroko ____________ the musical Hairspray in four different cities.
23. I have never ____________ so many squirrels in one area of Central Park.
24. Ramona should have ____________ down for a nap this morning, for by late afternoon, she was extremely drowsy and still had to go to work.

Editing Activity 1.2
Read your draft carefully and identify any irregular verbs that you used. Make sure that you used the correct irregular verb form and correct any misspellings.

Example:
I have wrote written to my cousin in Maryland but she hasn’t responded. I hope she hasn’t got gotten sick and has just forgot forgotten to write back.

Correcting Run-on Sentences
A common error that writers make is running two sentences together rather than separating them with a period. Writers often run two relatively short sentences together whose content is related.

Readers can have problems with run-on sentences. They have expectations that a sentence will end with a period, and they rely on those periods to help move them from one thought to another. Run-on sentences can confuse readers, distracting them from the writer’s ideas.

When run-on sentences are brought to most writers’ attention, they can see where the period belongs to end the first sentence and make the correction. Run-on sentences are a solvable problem, one that most writers can eliminate from their papers once they are made aware of them.
Guidelines for Correcting Run-on Sentences

The following guidelines will help you avoid and correct run-on sentences in your writing.

1. **A sentence is a group of words expressing a complete thought.** The end of a sentence is designated by an end mark, most frequently a period.

   Example: The best place to park on campus in the late morning is behind the library.

2. **A run-on sentence most frequently involves two sentences run together as a single sentence without a period ending the first sentence.** The second sentence in a run-on sentence often begins with a *pronoun* (*I, he, she, it, they, you, we*) or an introductory word such as “there,” “here,” or “then.” A run-on sentence is an incorrect sentence form that needs editing.

   Example: The best place to park on campus is behind the library I frequently park there at 8:00 a.m.

   Corrected: The best place to park on campus is behind the library. I frequently park there at 8:00 a.m.

3. **One type of run-on sentence is called a comma splice, which has a comma placed between the two sentences rather than a period.** A comma splice is not a correctly punctuated sentence and needs to be corrected.

   Example: The grass in the meadow was dry and brown, it hadn’t rained all summer.

   Corrected: The grass in the meadow was dry and brown. It hadn’t rained all summer.

4. **Anytime you find a run-on sentence or a comma splice in your writing, to correct it, you can do one of two things:**

   a. Separate longer run-on sentences by ending the first sentence with a period and beginning the second sentence with a capital letter.

   Example: Joanna excels in track and field, plays stringed instruments, and loves to cook her brother Marvelle has none of the same interests.

   Corrected: Joanna excels in track and field, plays stringed instruments, and loves to cook. Her brother Marvelle has none of the same interests.

   b. Combine shorter run-on sentences with a joining word such as *and, but, or because* to form one complete sentence.

   Example: I enjoyed the Beyonce concert very much, Maria thought it lasted too long.

   Corrected: I enjoyed the Beyonce concert very much, *but* Maria thought it lasted too long.
Editing Activity 1.3

Identify and correct any run-on or comma-splice sentences. Separate longer sentences with a period and connect shorter sentences with a joining word.

Example: Global warming is raising the sea level in major oceans there is a serious risk of coastal towns and farmlands being flooded within the next two decades.

Corrected: Global warming is raising the sea level in major oceans. There is a serious risk of coastal towns and farmlands being flooded within the next two decades.

1. Global warming is caused by industrial and automotive emissions that remain in the atmosphere, these gases trap the sun’s heat, gradually raising temperatures.

2. Melting glaciers are one indication of global warming radical weather patterns are another.

3. Some politicians deny that man-made global warming exists despite much scientific evidence to the contrary, they have frequently blocked legislation to reduce emissions.

4. Farmers are beginning to see the effects of global warming drought conditions are more prevalent, and the warmer weather ripens crops earlier than normal.

5. Many scientists attribute milder winters to global warming, such winters have an impact on both agriculture and winter resort areas.

6. Man has been emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution as a consequence, the planet has warmed more in the past two-hundred years than in the previous fifty-thousand years.

7. It will take a huge effort to reduce global warming the U.S. needs to take a leading role.

8. The earth’s ozone layer is being replenished successfully due to a sharp reduction in the emission of ozone-destroying hydrocarbons through legislation a similarly aggressive approach must be taken if we are to turn the global warming situation around.

Editing Activity 1.4

The following paragraphs contain some run-on sentences and comma splices. Correct these sentences by separating longer sentences and combining shorter sentences.

Casual Dress

Over the years, the way that Americans dress has become more casual and informal. A good example was the way that people were dressed at my grandfather’s church last Sunday I went with him as I was visiting for the weekend. As always, my grandfather dressed in a coat and tie
as he has done all his life. However, he was the only person at the church in a tie, only a few were wearing coats. The majority of men wore colorful short-sleeved shirts not tucked in. Quite a few wore shorts instead of long pants, there were also a number in sandals. While the women were dressed somewhat better than the men, most of them wore pants instead of dresses.

The minister embraced the casual dress, his outfit included khaki pants, an open-necked shirt, and loafers. The casual dress also contributed to the loose, laid-back atmosphere inside the church and the relaxed, informal church service. This was very different from the church my grandfather grew up in, where everything was very formal, he hasn’t completely adjusted to the change. He also has no intention of removing his coat and tie.

Editing Activity 1.5

Proofread your latest draft for any run-on sentences or comma splices, and correct any you find by inserting periods or combining sentences with joining words.

Editing Guidelines

Now that you have edited your draft and corrected any errors involving irregular verbs or run-on sentences, you can do a final proofreading to find and correct any other types of errors that may have cropped up.

1. **Read over your draft and make sure that you have an “ed” ending on all regular past tense verbs** (married, planned, walked, tried, crossed, believed, loved, answered).

2. **Read each sentence to see if you have inserted commas where you think they are needed, and add commas in places where you feel they belong.** (We will be covering comma usage in detail in the next unit, so for now, rely on what you already know.)

3. **If you are using a word processing program, run the spell check for the entire draft to identify and correct any spelling errors.** If you are not using a computer, check for any words that don’t look right to you, find their correct spelling, and make any necessary corrections.

4. **Look for frequently confused words to make sure you have used to right word:** except/accept, to/too, affect/effect, there/their/they’re, no/know, then/than, its/it’s, were/we’re. (“Confusing duos” will be covered in detail in a later unit.)

Editing Activity 1.6
Proofread your draft for errors following the guidelines presented and make any needed corrections.

### Editing Activity 1.7

Exchange drafts with a classmate and proofread each other’s drafts, identifying any errors that you find. If you aren’t certain whether something is an error, check with your instructor. If your classmate finds some errors in your draft, make the necessary corrections. Then write the final draft of your personal experience essay to share with classmates and your instructor.

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### A little logic 2

1. Men are involved in significantly more car accidents than women. Therefore, women are better drivers than men. True?

2. Most car accidents occur within five miles of a person’s residence. Why?

3. Two-lane mountain roads often have “passing lanes” every few miles for vehicles going up the mountain but seldom have passing lanes for vehicles going down the mountain. Why?

4. Only one of the following statements is true. Which one is it? (There are only two boxes.)

   - The car is in box 1.
   - The car is not in box 2.
   - The car is not in box 1.

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### Reading Break
While you will do a lot of writing for the course, it is worthwhile to take an occasional “reading break” between writing assignments to change the pace. Essays by published writers are interspersed in the text between the two main writing assignments for each unit. These essays are intended for your reading enjoyment as well as for possible classroom discussions. You might also get some ideas from the essays to apply to your own writing.

Keep in mind that these essays are the “final products” of the writers after they have worked and reworked their drafts to prepare their essays for publication. All writers, professional and amateur alike, go through similar processes of drafting and revising their writing until they are satisfied with the end result. In that respect, all writers share much in common.

At the end of each essay are some questions that can be used to initiate a classroom discussion.

In the Face of Adversity

by Nelson Mandela

*This essay in an excerpt from Nelson Mandela’s autobiography Long Walk to Freedom. He is recounting the experience when he was sent to Robben Island, where he spent eighteen of the twenty-seven years he was in prison as a “political prisoner.” After his release, he was elected president of South Africa. Mandela died in 2013 at the age of 95.*

One night, toward the end of May, a warder came to my cell and ordered me to pack my things. I asked him why, but he did not answer. In less than ten minutes, I was escorted down to the reception office where I found three other political prisoners: Tefu, John Gaetswe, and Aaron Molete. Colonel Aucamp curtly informed us that we were being transferred. Where? Tefu asked. Someplace very beautiful, Aucamp said. Where? said Tefu. “De Eiland,” said Aucamp. The island. There was only one. Robben Island.

The four of us were shackled together and put in a windowless van that contained only a sanitary bucket. We drove all night to Cape Town, and arrived at the city’s docks in the late
afternoon. It is not an easy or pleasant task for men shackled together to use a sanitary bucket in a moving van.

The docks at Cape Town were swarming with armed police and nervous plainclothes officials. We had to stand, still chained, in the hold of the old wooden ferry, which was difficult as the ship rocked in the swells off the coast. A small porthole above was the only source of light and air. The porthole served another purpose as well: the warders enjoyed urinating on us from above. It was still light when we were led on deck and we saw the island for the first time. Green and beautiful, it looked at first more like a resort than a prison.

The island takes its name for the Dutch word for seal, hundreds of which once cavorted in the icy currents that wash the island’s shores. It became a prison in the early 1800’s and later was turned into a leper colony, a lunatic asylum, and a naval base. The government had only recently turned the island back into a prison.

We were met by a group of burly white warders shouting: “Dis die eiland. Hier gaan julle vrek!” (This is the island. Here you will die.) Ahead of us was a compound flanked by a number of guard houses. Armed guards lined the path to the compound. It was extremely tense. A tall, red-faced warder yelled at us: “Hier is ek jou baas! (Here I am your boss!) He was one of the notorious Kleynhans brothers, known for their brutality to prisoners. The warders always spoke in Afrikaans. If you replied in English they would say, “Ek verstaan nie daardie Kafferboetie se taal nie.” (I don’t understand that kaffir-lover’s language.)

As we walked toward the prison, the guards shouted, “Two-two! Two-Two!” --meaning we should walk in pairs, two in front, two behind. I linked up with Tefu. The guards started screaming “Haas! Haas!” The word hass means to move in Afrikaans, but it is customarily reserved for cattle.

The warders were demanding that we jog, and I turned to Tefu and under my breath said that we must set an example; if we gave in now we would be at their mercy. Tefu nodded his head in agreement. We had to show them that we were not everyday criminals but political prisoners being punished for our beliefs.

I motioned to Tefu that we two should walk in front, and we took the lead. Once in front, we actually decreased the pace, walking slowly and deliberately. The guards were incredulous. “Listen,” Kleynhans said, “this is not Johannesburg, this is not Pretoria, this is Robben Island, and we will tolerate no insubordination here. “Haas! Haas!” But we continued at our stately pace. Kleynhans ordered us to halt, and stood in front of us. “Look man, we will kill you, we are not fooling around, your wives and children and mothers and fathers will never know what happened to you. This is the last warning. Haas! Haas!”

To this I said, “You have your duty and we have ours.” I was determined that we would not give in, and we did not, for we were already at the cells. We were ushered into a rectangular stone building and taken to a large, open room. The floor was covered with water a few inches deep. The guards yelled, “Trek uit! Trek uit!” (Undress! Undress!) As we removed each item of clothing, the guards would grab it, search it quickly, and then throw it in the water. Jacket off, searched, thrown in the water. Then the guards commanded us to get dressed, by which they meant for us to put on our soaking clothes.

Two officers entered the room. The less senior of the two was a captain whose name was Gericke. From the start, I could see that he was intent on manhandling us. The captain pointed to Aaron Molete, the youngest of the four of us and a very mild and gentle person, and said, “Why is your hair so long?” Aaron said nothing. The captain shouted, “I’m talking to you. Why is your hair so long? It is against regulations. Your hair should have been cut. Why is it long . . .” and then he paused and turned to me, and said “. . . like this boy’s!” I began to speak, “Now, look here, the length of our hair is determined by the regulations . . .”
Before I could finish, he shouted in disbelief, “Never talk to me that way, boy!” and began to advance. I was frightened; it is not a pleasant sensation to know that someone is about to hit you and you are unable to defend yourself.

When he was just a few feet from me, I said, as firmly as I could, “If you so much as lay a hand on me, I will take you to the highest court in the land and when I finish with you, you will be as poor as a church mouse.” The moment I began speaking he paused, and by the end of my speech, he was staring at me in astonishment. I was a bit surprised myself. I had been afraid, and spoke not from courage, but out of a kind of bravado. At such times, one must put up a bold front despite what one feels inside.

“Where’s your ticket?” he asked, and I handed it to him. “What’s your name?” he said. I nodded to the ticket and said, “It’s written there.” He said, “How long are you in for?” I said again, gesturing at the ticket, “It is written there.” He looked down and said, “Five years! You are in for five years and you are so arrogant? Do you know what it means to serve five years?” I said, “That is my business. I am ready to serve five years but I am not prepared to be bullied. You must act within the law.”

No one had informed him who we were, or that we were political prisoners, or that I was a lawyer. I had not noticed it myself, but the other officer, a tall, quiet man, had vanished during our confrontation. I later discovered that he was Colonel Steyn, the commanding officer of Robben Island. The captain then left, much quieter than he had entered.

Questions for Discussion

1. Although Mandela wasn’t told why he was being transferred to Robben Island prison, why do you think he and the other political prisoners were transferred there? What was the South African government’s intent?

2. Why did Mandela refuse to abide by the warder’s order to jog? Why do you think the warder did nothing about Mandela’s disobedience other than to threaten?

3. Mandela showed great courage in the face of life-threatening situations despite his fear. Discuss situations where you or others you know have had to overcome fear and show courage.

Escape
Park Ji Woo grew up in North Korea. This essay is an account of her and her family’s difficult life in North Korea, the disintegration of her family, and how she and her mother escaped from North Korea to China.

I was born in North Ham-Gyong province, North Korea, which is located in the far northeast of the country. It is extremely cold in winter. When the North Korean food distribution system collapsed in the early 1990s, my father, who was a doctor and the breadwinner for my family, couldn’t bring us food anymore. Like other North Koreans, my parents had no idea how to get food when they stopped being paid at their jobs. They sold the family’s furniture, television, and radio, but we still didn’t have enough money for food and clothes.

My younger sister and I were always hungry, particularly in the winter. Since there was no food on the farms during winter, the price of food was unbelievably high. It goes without saying, my parents had no money to buy warm winter coats and shoes for us. My younger sister and I wore a pair of cotton, rubber-soled shoes during the winter that were not warm and got wet easily after being out in the snow. Our feet were always frozen and my mother forbid us from riding sleds, but we insisted on going outside to enjoy the snow. As a result, we suffered from frostbitten feet and hands.

One day, my sister and I had so much fun riding the sled that I didn’t realize my shoes fell off. I looked for them for a long time, but I couldn’t find them. I was frightened because I knew my mother would be really mad at me. I walked home on bare feet in the snow. When my mother saw me, she said nothing and just wiped my feet because my left heel was bleeding. She put my feet into a container with cold water. That was a well-known remedy for frostbite in North Korea because it made your feet warm up fast even though it was really painful. I screamed as the cold water became red with my blood. My mother cried. The next day, she gave me her winter shoes and she wore her flats, which were thin shoes meant for the summer. She didn’t have money to buy new winter shoes for me. That winter, her feet were frostbitten, too.

By the summer of 1996, the famine was even worse than expected. The government still didn’t give us any food. I vividly remember that many people died in the street because of hunger. I saw many children who were my age begging for food in Jang-ma-dang (North Korean Market), even stealing food. We only had one meal a day for three months. Even my 6-year-old younger sister, the youngest person in my family, wasn’t spared starvation.

One morning, somebody knocked on our door quietly when my younger sister and I were eating our only meal of the day. I thought that it was my mother, who had gone to the farm to look for food. I opened the door happily, but there stood a short, skinny girl. She looked about 8 years old, same as me. She had a pale and frightened face. Behind her, a little boy was smiling at me. He looked about five years old and had a red, dirty face. They wore ragged clothes. The girl
finally said, “Would you please lend us some food? We haven’t had anything to eat since two days ago. My parents went to Cheng-jin to get food and said they would be back in 3 days, but they haven’t come back yet. When they come back, we will have food to eat and I can give you back your food. I swear.”

I looked at her earnest face and said, “I am hungry, too. I have no food to give you.” I closed the door coldly and locked it quickly. Even though the girl kept knocking on the door desperately for a while, we ate all the corn porridge, which was all we had for the whole day. Now I feel sorry for them. Sometimes it makes me cry. I don’t know where they went and if anyone gave them food. However, at that time, sharing food was a crazy behavior for me and for most North Koreans because everyone knew that one day we would die in the street of hunger if we didn’t save as much food as we could. We had to compete for getting one more ear of corn. Sympathy was an extravagance for us.

On top of the hunger, my father contracted typhoid from his patients in the hospital. My mother sold everything we had, even the linens that my grandmother hand made for her when she got married. They were not only wedding gifts, but also an expression of a mother’s love for her daughter. My father was hospitalized for 3 weeks, where he regained his health speedily. But after his hospitalization, he was a changed man. He often yelled at my mother and complained about the food. My mother tried to endure all his anger and complaints. She usually skipped her one meal a day because she wanted to save more money to buy meat for my father. Like most North Korean women, she made great sacrifices for her husband and family. I asked her why father was always angry about everything. She said hunger and poverty made my father more sensitive and aggressive.

Despite all the effort that my mother put in, she and my father decided to divorce. That day was my 9th birthday. I woke up earlier than usual and I saw my mother was packing her things. My father told me I should stay with him and younger sister would live with my mother. My mother said, “We decided to live separately and I will live in your aunt’s house. You can come visit and see your sister and mom any time.” I didn’t know what to say. It was my birthday. How could my parents tell me they were going to get a divorce instead of saying “Happy birthday” to me? At that moment, I hated both of them. I thought they were brutal.

One evening in late December, 1998, my mother came to my house and told me she was going to China to restart her life. She said if I wanted to go with her, she would take me to China. She also told me my father had made the difficult decision to allow her to take me to China and that he would raise my younger sister instead. I was only 9 years old. All I knew about China was that it was a rich place full of delicious food and warm clothes. I was not old enough to know what it meant to escape from North Korea. I happily said “Yes” without any hesitation. I would go anywhere to be with my mother. My father cried a lot but said nothing.

I left the apartment that I had lived in since I was 5. I turned my head slowly and looked up at the window to our apartment. My father stood there in tears. My mother told my younger sister that she was going to my grandmother’s house and she would come back tomorrow. With a smile on her face, my sweet, trusting younger sister said “Bye-bye, mommy and older sister.” My mother kissed her forehead and said nothing, like my father did to me.

At midnight, my mother and I walked to the border. It took us almost 5 hours. The night was cold and my feet were freezing. I asked to stop and rest at times but she said that we must keep going. I didn’t realize the danger that we were in if we were caught. As we walked, our bodies were hidden by the forest close to the Tumen River.

Suddenly, a soldier was running toward us and waving his hands. My mother said, “Run as fast as you can!” I didn’t know what was happening. I just ran like crazy. When my mother
finally stopped running, I realized that the river had frozen over and there was no one following us. My mother told me we had already crossed the border into China.

I asked her who the soldier was. “I gave him money to guide us to China. I promised him we would be back in two days. I lied to him. We will never go back to our country. Do you understand?” she said quietly but firmly. I didn’t understand what she was saying and told her that it seemed like I could go back home whenever I wanted to because North Korea and China were so close. But mother said “No, we can’t,” so seriously that it made me terribly sad. I realized at that moment that I may never see my sister or father again. That thought haunted my dreams for a long time.

I stared at the frozen river. My home, North Korea, was already behind us. What lay ahead of us I couldn’t imagine. I gripped my mother’s hand tightly as we walked towards the light of morning.

Questions for Discussion

1. What details does the author provide to show the effects of the famine on her life?

2. What conditions led to the disintegration of her family? Why do you think her mother took the drastic step of leaving for China?

3. In what ways did being so young – nine years old – help protect the author from the realities of what was happening?

4. Discuss any traumatic events in your earlier years that have had a profound effect on your life.

Using Personal Experience for Support
For your first personal experience essay, you related a memorable experience and how it affected you. Writers also use personal experiences to help them make a particular point: *something of significance that they believe in or feel is true based on their experience.*

For your next writing assignment, you will write an essay using a personal experience – your own or a close friend’s or relative’s - to make a particular point. The experience you relate will help readers understand why you feel or believe as you do.

For example, on reflection, a student felt that joining a gang is one of the worst things that a young person can do: the main point that he wanted to make in an essay. To support his point, he decided to relate his experience and how his life changed when he joined a gang in junior high school: his attitude towards his mom, his attitude towards school, his getting into trouble, his getting into drugs, and eventually, his being stabbed one night outside a mini-mart. He felt that the downward spiral of his life would show how getting into a gang can be devastating, the point he wanted to make to his reading audience: younger boys who may be drawn towards gangs.

As another example, a student wanted to make the point that a person should never give up on her education. For the personal experience, she told the story of a friend who got pregnant in high school but continued with her education. She went to continuation school and got her GED. With her mother’s help with the baby, she was able to work days and attend night classes at the community college, she made many sacrifices, and after four years, she got her associate degree in secretarial science. Today, she works at the financial aid office at the college, has great benefits, and provides a life for her son that wouldn’t have been possible without her staying in school.

Finally, another student learned a lesson about how easily it is to hurt someone’s feelings when in eighth grade she pretended to be her cousin and sent a text from his cell phone to a girl saying how much he liked her. The girl was very happy and sent back a text that she felt the same. Needless to say, the cousin was infuriated and the girl, when she found out the truth, was humiliated as she had pass on the “good news” to her friends. The student felt awful about what she had done and shared what she learned with readers: a careless, insensitive act can hurt people’s feelings and cripple relationships.

**Writing Assignment Two**

For this assignment, you will write an essay that makes a particular point – something that you strongly believe – by relating a personal experience of your own or of someone you know well that supports that point and helps readers understand why you feel or believe as you do.

Using a personal experience to support a belief helps readers understand why you feel as you do. For example, a student lost a friend who was killed by a drunk driver. This experience kindled in her a strong belief that no one should drink and drive and that those who do should be dealt with harshly. She used her friend’s tragic experience, and the effect it had on her family and friends, to make her point in the essay.

**Prewriting**
The first step in preparing for your upcoming essay is to come up with a topic to write about: a point you want to make and an experience that supports that point. Consider the following suggestions to help you decide on a topic.

**Topic Selection**

1. **Think about memorable experiences that you or other people you know have had and consider whether an experience might reveal a particular belief or “truth” that you could share with readers.**

   For example, one writer reflected on her older sister’s experience of marrying a guy she didn’t love because she was pregnant. They spent three miserable years together, he wasn’t a good father, she regretted marrying him, and they finally got a divorce. The writer used her sister’s experience to make her point: “No woman should get married because she feels she has to.”

2. **Think of some of the things that you believe in - particular “truths” that you feel certain about - and then think of an experience that could support each belief.**

   For example, a writer came up with the following things that he believed in and an experience that could support each belief:

   - Dropping out of school is a bad choice.  (The experience of my friend Selena.)
   - Standing up to a bully is better than letting the bullying continue.  (My own experience with Bryson.)
   - Going out for a sport can help your life.  (My own experience going out for soccer.)
   - You can learn the most from mistakes you make. (My own experience with cheating in elementary school.)

3. **Provide the best experience to make your point.** What experience would have the biggest impact on readers? What experience would make your point in the most convincing way?

   For example, the writer who wrote about his brother’s gang experience felt that what happened to him as a result of being in a gang was the strongest way to make his point: being in a gang can have devastating consequences.

4. **Relate an experience you are most familiar with.** To support a point with the most effective detail and clearest insight, you need to remember and understand the experience well. Ask yourself, “What experience can I provide that I remember most vividly?”
For example, a student could never forget the car accident he caused which injured members of a family who were driving to church. He remembered that day vividly and used it to make what he felt was an important point: Driving is something that every teen should take very seriously since other people’s lives are at stake.

5. **Provide an experience that is substantial enough to fill an essay.** For your upcoming essay, the experience you relate is the central focus of the paper. Use an experience that has the significance and weight to fill an essay and have an impact on readers.

   For example, a student held the belief that the best way to deal with something bad that you have done is to “face the music.” He had two experiences that he could draw upon: getting questioned by his dad about smoking in seventh grade and swearing at the track referee in high school when he was disqualified from his event by being late. In the first case, he made the mistake of lying, which made the situation worse when his dad discovered the truth. In the second case, he made the mistake of not admitting to his coach what had happened, which resulted in his suspension when the coach found out. He chose the latter experience to write about since he felt it was a stronger example of the importance of facing up to something rather than hoping it will go away.

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**Prewriting Activity 1.5**

Decide on your writing topic: the point you will make in the essay and the experience you will support it with.

Sample student topic:

Main point: A lot of young people don’t know what hard work really is.

Experience: Working at a commercial laundry one summer

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**Drafting**
Your drafting experience will be similar to the first personal experience essay you wrote with one exception: you are making a point in the essay that your experience is supporting. As you write, you want to make sure that readers understand your point clearly and how your experience supports that point.

**Presenting Your Point**

There are two places where you can introduce the main point of your essay: in the opening or in the conclusion.

For example, the writer of the upcoming draft “Summer Job” waited until the conclusion to make his point. Here is his first paragraph which introduces the experience and his concluding paragraph which make his point:

**Opening paragraph:**

The summer after my senior year in high school, I was looking for some work and saw an add in the newspaper about job openings in a commercial laundry. There were never many jobs available in the summer, and that sounded like a pretty good job to me. Maybe I’d get to drive a truck to deliver laundry or something. I talked to my friend Kaden, and we decided to apply together.

**Concluding paragraph, main point underlined:**

Until I worked in the laundry, I realized that I had no idea what hard work really was. Millions of people spend their lives doing work that I could only handle for a few weeks. I gained a lot of respect for people who do the really hard work. I also felt lucky that I was going to go to college and hopefully, wouldn’t have to spend my life working in a commercial laundry. When you have to work hard, you learn something about yourself. I learned that I could work hard but that I didn’t like it at all.

Here is the same opening and conclusion of the essay with the main point presented in the first paragraph:

**Opening paragraph, main point underlined:**

The summer after my senior year in high school, I was looking for some work and saw an add in the newspaper about job openings in a commercial laundry. There were never many jobs available in the summer, and that sounded like a pretty good job to me. Maybe I’d get to drive a truck to deliver laundry or something. I talked to my friend Kaden, and we decided to apply
It turned out I was in for a real shock, and I learned that I, like a lot of young people, had no idea what hard work really was.

Concluding paragraph:

Millions of people spend their lives doing work that I could only handle for a few weeks. I gained a lot of respect for people who do the really hard work. I also felt lucky that I was going to go to college and hopefully, wouldn’t have to spend my adult life working in a commercial laundry. When you have to work really hard, you learn something about yourself. I learned that I could work hard if I had to but that I didn’t like it at all.

Whether you present your main point in the opening or the conclusion of the draft is up to you. An essay can be effective either way. If you present it in the opening, your readers clearly understand where your experience is heading. If you present it in the conclusion, readers can enjoy reading about your experience and then find out your purpose in relating it: to support your main point.

Drafting Activity 1.4

Decide whether you want to present your main point towards the end of the opening or in your conclusion. Try it out one way or the other, and if at some point you are not satisfied with it, you can always revise your opening or conclusion later.

Write a sentence that expresses the main point of your essay, which you may use in your draft.

Sample response:

Topic: Swimming in the canal

Main point: Taking needless chances can ruin your life.

Experience: My friend going over the canal falls and almost killing himself

Present main point:

I will present my main point at the end. I want readers to read about the experience and what happened to my friend, and then my main point will come across strongly after they read what happened.

Sample conclusion, main point underlined:

Richard nearly lost his life that day. If the churning water of the falls had not eventually thrown him out into calm water where we could rescue him, he would have drowned. And that could have been me. I too was getting as close to the falls as I could without going over, and maybe a foot further and I would have been pulled over. We all thought it was cool to see who would
take the most risk, but it was just stupid. I realized that taking needless chances like that could ruin your life. It just isn’t worth it. I never got close to the falls again and neither did my friends.

Drafting Guidelines

Consider the following suggestions, similar to those for your first personal experience essay, as you write your first draft.

1. **Set the stage for your experience in the opening paragraph.** You might include where it took place, how old you were, and the circumstances that led up to the experience. *If you decided to include the main point of your essay in the opening, present it in the final sentence.*

2. As you write, you are leading to the heart of the experience: whatever happened that helped to form the belief that the experience is supporting. Bring the experience to life for readers by describing it in detail.

3. Include description in your draft to help readers visualize the experience, and include your thoughts and feelings during the experience so readers can understand its effect on you.

4. You might include some dialogue in your draft if what you said, or what others said, is an important part of the experience.

5. Since you are relating the experience to support a particular point, keep that point in mind as you write so that by the end, readers will clearly understand how the experience supports it.

6. Conclude the draft with what happened as a result of the experience and include your main point if you chose to save it for the conclusion. If you presented the main point in your opening, reinforce the point in your conclusion and how the experience led you to that understanding.

7. Write your draft in paragraphs, changing paragraphs as you move to something new in your experience: a different time, a different place, a different aspect of the experience.

8. Your reading audience for the essay is your classmates. Your purpose is to share with them something that you believe is true and the experience that revealed this truth.
Drafting Activity 1.6

First, read the following first draft “Summer Job” noting its opening, the lead-up material to the main incident, the description of the main incident, how the writer presents the main point of the essay in the conclusion, his use of dialogue, and how he paragraphs the essay. Then write the first draft of your essay.

Summer Job

The summer after my senior year in high school, I was looking for some work and saw an add in the newspaper about job openings in a commercial laundry. There were never many jobs available in the summer, and that sounded like a pretty good job to me. Maybe I’d get to drive a truck to deliver laundry or something. I talked to my friend Kaden, and we decided to apply together.

I was surprised by the size of the laundry building. There were large machines all over the place. Pounding, whirring, sloshing, and loud buzzing sounds filled the air. Towels and sheets were piled high in bins, which were being wheeled in every direction. Over two-hundred workers worked silently at the machines.

In the office we met the foreman: a large guy who said, “Can you get started tonight?” “Sure,” we said, and he took us to the area with the large spinning dryers. He explained our job, which was to load the wet towels and sheets from the bin into the dryer, run the dryer, unload the towels and sheets into another bin, wheel the bin to the area with the hot-air dryers, and load the towels and sheets into the hot-air dryers. “You’ve got to keep moving,” he said, “so the bins from the washing machines don’t get backed up.”

We began loading the wet towels and sheets into the dryer, and they were heavier than I expected. Then we started the dryer on its five-minute cycle. Half way through the cycle, the dryer started kicking and making an awful racket. The foreman came over and turned it off and said, “That’s what happens when the load isn’t balanced. Rebalance the load better and start it again.” We moved the towels and sheets around and started it up. In the meantime, two more loads of wet towels and sheets had appeared.

Once the cycle finished, we loaded the laundry into another bin and I wheeled it quickly to the hot-air dryers while Kaden started loading the next batch into our dryer. I loaded the laundry into the hot-air dryers, turned them on, and ran back to help Kaden. We took turns wheeling the laundry and loading the hot-air dryers while the other began loading our dryer. It was a non-stop process.

When I got home from that night shift, I’d never been so tired in my life. My arms were aching and my legs were tired from standing for eight hours. At the end of the shift, all the foreman said was, “See you guys tomorrow night.”

The next day at work, all hell broke loose. The foreman had said, “We’ve got a really heavy load of wash today, so you’ve got to really move.” He wasn’t kidding. We loaded the spin dryers as fast as we could and then rushed the laundry to the hot air dryers. However, no matter how fast we worked, the bins of wet laundry kept stacking up behind us. “Move faster!” said the foreman. “You’re falling behind.”

Then as I was running a bin of laundry to the hot air dryers, I heard the spin dryer bucking and kicking. I rushed back to help Kaden balance it and we started it again. As soon as I went back to load the hot air dryers, I heard the same racket and rushed back to help. By now there were five bins of wet laundry waiting for us and we were hopelessly behind. The foreman ran over and said, “You’re messing up the whole assembly line!” Then he yelled to an older guy
named Marvin to come help us. With Marvin’s help, we finally got the dryer balanced and started catching up. But everyone working around us saw that we hadn’t been able to handle the work by ourselves. “Three guys to do a two-man job,” said the foreman. “That doesn’t cut it.”

Kaden and I returned to work the next day, and over the next weeks, we got better at the job. However, I hated every minute of it, and after that one big blow-out day, I knew this wasn’t for me. The nicest thing the foreman could say to us was, “Well, at least you didn’t screw up today.” We quit after a month.

You hear of the “backbreaking” manual labor that some people do. I experienced it first hand. I hated every minute working in the laundry, and I couldn’t believe that some people had worked their for ten or fifteen years. The heavy loads of laundry, the non-stop speed, the hot air, and the foreman seemed more than anyone could take in for long. When we quit, the foreman said, “You high school guys never last long.” I guess he was right.

I realized that I, like a lot of young people, had no idea what hard work really was. Millions of people spend their lives doing work that I could only handle for a month. I gained a lot of respect for people who do the really hard work. I also felt lucky that I was going to go to college and wouldn’t have to spend my adult life working in a commercial laundry.

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A little logic 3

What do each of these proverbs or sayings mean?

A stitch in time saves nine.
Necessity is the mother of invention.
The pen is mightier than the sword.
Discretion is the greater part of valor.
People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.
Don’t throw the baby out with the bath water.
Don’t cut off your nose to spite your face.
Make hay while the sun shines.
Revision

Once you have written your draft and put it aside for a while, on rereading it you can often see things that you would like to improve. Most writers gain that added perspective when they return to a draft with “fresh eyes.” When you are engaged in the actual process of writing the draft, you aren’t in a position to evaluate everything you are writing objectively. That is not the purpose of writing the draft.

On returning to your draft, you can see much better how everything fits together, what you included or perhaps need to include, how your sentences flow, how your paragraphing works, or whether a particular part of your draft needs strengthening. You “change hats” from being the writer to the evaluator, which usually results in some good revision decisions.

Using Dialogue

Using dialogue to help “tell the story” of a personal experience can be very effective. Dialogue brings people to life through what they say and creates interest for readers.

To use dialogue most effectively in your writing, use it sparingly. Include what you or others say when it is the strongest way to express what is happening. In other words, use dialogue for dramatic effect.

For example, a direct quote like, “I am going to tear your head off, Farley,” the class bully hissed in my face, has a greater impact than writing, The class bully said that he was going to tear my head off. A direct quote like, “Tajia, you’re an even better singer than Christina!” I told my friend, is more interesting than, I told Tajia that she was a better singer than Christina.

When you quote people, make sure to put quotation marks (“ ”) around the spoken words and identify the speaker:

Lucinda grimaced, “One more day of eating salmon loaf in the cafeteria and I’m going to puke!” “Yeah, and the mystery meat they serve on Mondays is just as bad,” I said in support.

Revision Activity 1.5

Have you used any dialogue in your draft? Are there places where including what someone said would help bring the experience to life? Consider adding some dialogue if what you or others said is an important part of the experience. (Note how the writer uses dialogue in the Summer Job” essay in Revision Activity 1.6.)
Revision Guidelines

Consider the following revision suggestions, similar to those that were provided for your first personal experience essay, as you revise your draft.

1. **Read the opening of your essay carefully.** Do you provide information to “set the stage” for the experience that is to come: where the experience occurs, how old you were, the situation that led to the experience? If you included the main point of your essay in the opening, did you word it in a way that readers would clearly understand?

2. **What details might you add to help readers visualize the experience?** Are there places in the essay where some added description would help readers see or hear more clearly what happened? In particular, do you describe the main incident so that readers can clearly see and hear what occurred and how you reacted to it?

3. **Are there places where you could add your thoughts or feelings or those of other people involved in the experience?** Make sure readers understand your thoughts and feelings as the experience progresses.

4. **Reread the main incident that is at the heart of the experience.** Can readers see, hear, and feel the experience as you remember it? Can you add anything to bring the incident to life more sharply?

5. **Check your paragraphing.** Do you change paragraphs as you move to different aspects of experience: a different time, place, or situation? Do you have any overly long paragraphs that may need dividing or extremely short paragraphs that could be combined?

6. **Read each sentence to see if the wording could be improved in some way.** Look for sentences that are overly wordy, awkward sounding, or have some questionable word choices.

7. **Read your conclusion to make sure that you have either presented the main point of your essay or concluded in a way that clearly shows the relationship between the main point and the experience that supports it.**

8. **Read your draft a last time taking into account the readers (your classmates) and your purpose: to show clearly how a particular experience helped you form a particular belief or truth.** Is there anything you might add bring that connection home more clearly for readers?
Revision Activity 1.6

Keeping in mind the revision considerations presented, read and revise your draft, including making any changes that you feel will improve the essay. Reread your draft a number of times, focusing on a specific revision consideration at a time (e.g. paragraphing, sentence wording, adding description, etc.).

Before you begin, read the revised draft of “Summer Job,” noting the kinds of revisions made and how they improved the essay.

Summer Job

(deletions crossed out, additions in bold italics)

The summer after my senior year in high school, I was looking for some work and saw an add in the newspaper about job openings in a commercial laundry. There were never many jobs available in the summer, and that sounded like a pretty good job to me. Maybe I’d get to drive a truck to deliver laundry or something or fold some clothes. I really had no idea what a commercial laundry was. I talked to my friend Kaden, and we decided to apply together.

I was surprised by the size of the laundry building: a huge warehouse full of noisy machinery. There were large washing machines, round, spinning dryers, big hot-air dryers, and huge rectangular-shaped steam irons. Pounding, whirring, sloshing, and loud buzzing sounds filled the air. Mounds of towels and sheets were piled high in canvas bins, which were being wheeled in every direction. Over two-hundred workers worked toiled silently at the machines.

In the small front office we met the foreman: a large, gruff guy who said, “Can you get started tonight?” “Sure,” we said, and he took us to the area with the large spinning dryers. He explained our job, which was to load the wet towels and sheets from the bin into the dryer, run the dryer, unload the towels and sheets into another bin, wheel the bin to the area with the hot-air dryers, and load the towels and sheets into the hot-air dryers. “You’ve got to keep moving,” he said, “so the bins from the washing machines don’t get backed up.” I realized for the first time that this was going to be real work.

We began loading the wet towels and sheets into the dryer, and they were heavier than I expected. Then we started the dryer on its five-minute cycle. Half way through the cycle, the dryer started kicking and making an awful racket. The foreman came over and turned it off and said, “That’s what happens when the load isn’t balanced. Rebalance the load better and start it again.” We moved the towels and sheets around and started it up. In the meantime, two more loads of wet towels and sheets had appeared. Bins were backing up already.

Once the cycle finished, we loaded the laundry into another bin and I wheeled it quickly to the hot-air dryers while Kaden started loading the next batch into our dryer. I loaded the laundry into the hot-air dryers, turned them on, and ran back to help Kaden. We took turns wheeling the laundry and loading the hot-air dryers while the other person began loading our dryer. It was a non-stop process that kept us almost running.

When I got home from that night shift, I’d never been so tired in my life. My arms were aching and my legs were tired from standing for eight hours. At the end of the shift, all the foreman had said was, “See you guys tomorrow night.” I’d hoped to hear a “good job,” but that never happened.

The next day at work, all hell broke loose, disaster struck. The foreman had said, “We’ve got a really heavy load of wash today, so you’ve got to really move.” He wasn’t kidding. We
loaded the spin dryers as fast as we could and then rushed the laundry to the hot air dryers. but
However, no matter how fast we worked, the bins of wet laundry kept stacking up behind us.
“Move faster!” said the foreman angrily. “You’re falling behind.”

Then as I was running a bin of laundry to the hot air dryers, I heard the spin dryer bucking
and kicking. I rushed back to help Kaden balance it and we started it again. As soon as I went
back to load the hot air dryers, I heard the same racket and rushed back to help. By now there
were five bins of wet laundry waiting for us and we were hopelessly behind. The foreman ran
over and said, “You’re messing up the whole assembly line!” Then he yelled to an older guy
named Marvin to come help us. With Marvin’s help, we finally got the dryer balanced and
started catching up. But everyone working around us saw that we hadn’t been able to couldn’t
handle it the work by ourselves. “Three guys to do a two-man job,” the foreman said to Kaden
and me sarcastically. “That doesn’t cut it.” I felt really lousy.

Kaden and I returned to work the next day, and over the next weeks, we got better at the job.
We learned to put the laundry in the dryer so it was always balanced and how to use our legs
more and our backs less in lifting heavy loads. However, I hated every minute of it, and after
ever since that one big bad blow-out day, I knew had known this wasn’t for me. The nicest thing
the foreman could say ever said to us was, “Well, at least you didn’t screw up today.” We quit
after a month.

You hear of the “backbreaking” manual labor that some people do. I experienced it first hand.
I hated every minute working in the laundry, and I couldn’t believe that some people had worked
their for ten or fifteen years. The heavy loads of laundry, the non-stop speed, the hot, stifling
air, and the a foreman who was always on your back seemed more than anyone could take in
stand for long. When we quit, the foreman said, “You high school guys never last long.” I guess On
that he was right.

From my experience at the laundry, I realized that I, like a lot of young people, had no idea
what hard work really was. Millions of people spend their lives doing work that I could only
handle for a month. I gained a lot of respect for people who do the really hard work. I also felt
lucky that I was going to go to college and hopefully wouldn’t have to spend my adult life
working in anything like a commercial laundry.

Revision Activity 1.7

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and make suggestions for improvement keeping in mind
how you revised your own draft. Based on your classmates’ suggestions, make any additional
changes that you feel will improve the essay. Then write the second revised version of your draft
with all changes included.
Now that you have revised your essay to improve its content, wording, and organization, you are ready to proofread your latest draft to identify any errors and make corrections. Your goal is to make the final draft as error-free as possible so that your classmates and instructor can focus solely on its content.

In the first “Editing” section, you received instruction on irregular verb forms and on correcting run-on and comma-splice sentences. In this section, you apply what you learned to a sample paragraph before proofreading your own draft for errors.

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**Editing Activity 1.8**

Correct any errors involving irregular verb forms and run-on or comma-splice sentences in the following paragraph. Provide the correct verb forms and correct the run-on or comma-splice sentences by either separating them with a period or combining them with a joining word. If necessary, refer back to the sections on irregular verbs and run-on sentences to refresh your memory.

Example:

I hadn’t drove my car on a really slippery road before when it started sliding and losing traction, I nearly lost control and almost hit a snow bank on the side of the road.

Corrected:

I hadn’t driven my car on a really slippery road before. When it started sliding and losing traction, I nearly lost control and almost hit a snow bank on the side of the road.

I wasn’t feeling like taking my algebra test because I had went without much sleep the night before. The streets in our neighborhood were flooding badly from the continual storms, the water was rising close to our houses. We had all got sand bags from the city’s public works yard to pile up along our house fronts to keep the water out. We piled the bags four-high all along the front of our house then we helped other neighbors do the same. The water had almost came up to the sand bags before we were finished. It was an extremely cold night and my hands and feet were froze. At school the next morning, I was much too tired to do well on any test. My algebra teacher was very understanding, she said I could take the test the next day.
Editing Guidelines

Consider the following editing suggestions when you proofread your draft for errors.

1. **Check your draft for any run-on or comma-splice sentences.** Correct longer run-ons by inserting a comma between sentences and shorter run-ons by inserting an appropriate joining word between sentences (e.g. and, but, or, because).

2. **Check your use of irregular verbs.** Make sure that you have the correct past tense and past participle verb forms. You might refer to the list of irregular verbs in the first “Editing” section to keep in mind the kind of verbs you are looking for. Also make sure you have an “ed” ending on all regular past tense verbs.

3. **Check your use of commas.** Insert commas in your sentences where they are needed based on your current understanding of comma usage. (Commas will be covered in detail in the next unit.)

4. **Check your spelling.** Run the spell check on your word processing program if you are using one. Otherwise, check the spelling of any word that doesn’t look quite right to you.

5. **Check your use of any commonly confused words (effect/affect, their/there/they’re, accept/except, then/than, to/too, know/no, etc.).** Make sure that you have used the correct word for each sentence. (“Confusing words” will be covered in detail later in the book.)

6. **Check in particular for any common error tendencies.** Did you discover any type of error or errors that you made most frequently in your previous personal experience essay? If so, pay particular attention to those types of errors as you proofread your draft.

**Editing Activity 1.9**

Keeping the editing suggestions in mind, proofread your draft for errors and make any needed corrections. Read your draft a number of times, looking for a particular type of error each time (e.g. run-on and comma-splice sentence, comma usage, irregular verbs, spelling, confusing duos).
Editing Activity 1.10

Exchange drafts with a classmate and proofread each other’s draft, pointing out any errors that were overlooked. If you are not sure whether something is an error, check with your instructor. Based on your classmate’s input, make any additional corrections to your own draft as needed. Then write the final draft of your essay that includes all error corrections to share with classmates and your instructor.

Timed Writings

The timed writing assignments in this text will help prepare you for any in-class writing you may in English courses, in other courses across the curriculum, and in any writing that you may do in the future where time is a factor. The writing topics are similar to those often given for college English placement tests, which frequently ask students to take a position on an issue and support it.

Writing the Essay

Since you will not know your writing topic until do the time writing, your pre-writing preparation time is obviously limited to a few minutes before you begin your essay. In addition, as you write your essay, you won’t have the time to revise and edit in the manner that you have done for your previous essays. Therefore, you need to compress each aspect of the writing process into a much shorter period of time.

To write an effective timed essay, consider the following suggestions:

1. **Study the writing prompt** — the topic question that you answer in your essay — very carefully so that you understand exactly what you are being asked to write about.

2. **Since most writing prompts will require you to take a position on a particular topic,** decide what position you want to take: the position on the topic that you believe in and feel you can support most convincingly.

3. **Think about the ideas you want to include to support your position:** the reasons that you feel or believe as you do. Before writing, you might make a quick written list of reasons you may include or think through the ideas you want to present.

4. **When you write your essay, include the topic of the essay and the position you are taking in the opening paragraph, your main points of support in the middle paragraphs, and some final reinforcement of your position in the final paragraph.** Your final paragraph, for example, might restate your position in some manner, summarize your main points, and give readers a final idea to think about regarding the topic.

5. **When you complete your essay, go over it as you would the drafts you have written for this unit.** Decide if there are some changes you can make to improve the essay: additions, deletions, or sentence improvement. Then check your essay carefully for errors and make any
needed corrections. Look as you have done throughout this unit for run-on or comma-splice sentences, places to insert commas, mispelled words.

Obviously, you don’t have time to make any major revisions, so only make what you feel are the most important changes. Make sure to give yourself time to proofread your essay carefully for errors.

6. Keep track of the time so that you don’t run out of time before finishing your essay or having a chance to review and correct it.

7. The more you practice timed writings, the better you will get at it. You will learn how to balance your time among preparation, writing, and revising. You will get better at opening and concluding your essays. You will also improve your ability to support the positions that you take effectively.

8. Don’t expect the greatest results on your first or second timed essay in the text. By the time you write a number of timed essays, you will be a great deal more comfortable with the task and produce better results.

Sample Timed Writing

Before you write your first timed essay, read the following timed-essay sample and note the following:

1. The position that the writer takes in the essay.

2. The prewriting preparation that she does.

3. How she opens the essay.

4. The support that she provides for her position in the middle paragraphs

5. How she concludes the essay by reinforcing her position on the topic.

Writing prompt:

Tabor School District requires all upper elementary students - fourth, fifth, and six grade - to take one period of either instrumental music (band or orchestra) or vocal music (choir). Neighboring Cutler School District has no music requirement for upper elementary students, who may elect to take an instrumental or vocal music class. Do you believe that music for upper elementary school students should be mandatory, like at Tabor, or voluntary, like at Cutler? Support your opinion using your knowledge, personal experience, and/or the experience of others.

Position: I believe that a music class should be mandatory at the elementary level.

Supportive reasons: Music offers a great outlet for students. Music is an important part of a child’s education. Music helps students learn other things. Music may become an important part of a student’s school life.
Timed essay:

Music should be an important part of the elementary school curriculum. While some schools leave it up to the children as to whether to take an instrumental or vocal music class, other schools make it mandatory. I believe that mandatory participation in a music class is a good idea for elementary students, and I know that it was good for me.

School can be very stressful, and there is a lot of emphasis placed on getting good grades and on being good in reading, writing, and math. A music class provides a different experience. It is fun rather than stressful and gives students something to look forward to. I know I always looked forward to choir in elementary school and most of my friends did also.

Music is also a part of a well-rounded education. School and life should not all be about heavy subjects and hard work. There needs to be enjoyment also, and music can provide that enjoyment for students. Students can also take pleasure in getting good at singing or playing an instrument, and it can help their self-esteem and confidence. I know that my music experience added to my confidence because it was something that I could do well at.

Music can also help students learn in general. With instrumental music, for example, you have to learn how to read notes, how to play an instrument, how to practice a piece of music, how to discipline yourself to practice, and how to fit in and play with others as a team. Everything you learn from music can help you in your general studies such as discipline, practice, and teamwork.

Finally, music may become an important part of a student’s life. While I didn’t continue in choir after eighth grade, I had friends that went on and performed in choir or orchestra through high school. Music became an important part of their education and something that they really loved doing. Music can be a student’s greatest outlet for enjoyment and also for improvement, and some of my friends became very good musicians and singers, and they may not only continue in college but make music participation a part of their adult life.

There are many good reasons to make music mandatory in the upper elementary levels and really no good reasons not to. Music certainly never hurt anyone, and there is the great chance that it will be very helpful to many students, giving them something to enjoy, to gain confidence from, to learn from, and even to become a big part of their lives.

(The writer had about five minutes time to make the following changes in her essay.)

Timed essay revised:

Music should be an important part of the elementary school curriculum. While some schools leave it up to the children as to whether to take an instrumental or vocal music class, other schools make it mandatory. I believe that mandatory participation in a music class is a good idea for elementary students, and I know that it was good for me.

School can be very stressful, and there is a lot of emphasis placed on getting good grades and on being good in reading, writing, and math. A music class provides a different experience. It is fun rather than stressful and gives students something to look forward to. I know I always looked forward to choir in elementary school, (comma inserted) and most of my friends did also.

Music is also a part of a well-rounded education. School and life should not all be about heavy-difficult subjects and hard work. There needs to be enjoyment also, and music can
provide that enjoyment for students. Students can also take pleasure in getting good at singing or playing an instrument, and it can help their self-esteem and confidence. I know that my music experience added to my confidence because it was something that I could do well—excel at. For me, it was a valuable part of my overall education.

Music can also help students learn in general. With instrumental music, for example, you have to learn how to read notes, how to play an instrument, how to practice a piece of music, how to discipline yourself to practice, and how to fit in and play with others as a team. Everything—all of the things—you learn from music can help you in your general studies such as discipline, practice, teamwork, and developing a skill.

Finally, music may become an important part of a student’s life. While I didn’t continue in choir after eighth grade, I had friends that went on and performed in choir or orchestra throughout high school. Music became an important part of their education and something that they really loved doing. Music can be a student’s greatest outlet for enjoyment and also for improvement, and some of my friends became very good—accomplished musicians and singers, and they may not only continue in college but make music participation a part of their adult life. In addition, many people continue their singing or instrument playing privately for their own enjoyment.

There are many good reasons to make music mandatory in the upper elementary levels and really no good reasons not to. Music certainly never hurt anyone, (comma inserted) and there is the great chance that it will be very helpful to many students, giving them something to enjoy, to gain confidence from, to learn from, and even to become a big part of their lives.

Timed Writing One

This is a timed writing assignment. You will probably have one period to complete it but a maximum of sixty minutes. Before starting, review the timed-writing suggestions to help you write this first essay.

Do not expect to write the “perfect” essay in this first timed writing. Feel no pressure, and just do the best that you can. You will definitely improve with practice as you become more comfortable with the types of writing required and the time limits imposed.

Woodrow Elementary School requires all children grades fourth, fifth, and sixth to participate in at least one after-school sport, feeling that it is beneficial to all students. Practices last one hour and are held four days a week. Fleming Elementary School does not require students to participate in sports, and participation is strictly voluntary. Do you believe that children in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade should be required to participate in at least one after-school sport a year, like Woodrow Elementary, or that participation in a sport should be strictly voluntary, like at Woodrow? Use your knowledge, personal experience, and the experience of others to support your position.
Unit Two: Expository Writing

In each unit, you write a different kind of essay similar to the types of writing you will do in other college writing courses and courses across the curriculum. In this unit, you write expository essays: essays that provide information to help readers understand how to do something, how something works, or how something happens, or to relate a particular event or occurrence.

There are many examples of expository writing that you often find in your reading:

- Newspaper articles that relate some newsworthy event or occurrence.
- Scientific reports that detail specific research studies and their results.
- Historical accounts of famous events: a Civil War battle or the effects of the Great Depression.
- Magazine articles that explain a process: baking a cake, adding computer software, training a dog.
- Essays that explain how something occurs or works: evolution, nuclear fission, how a college evaluates prospective students, the four-corners offense in basketball.

Expository writing is usually intended for a particular purpose: to inform readers about an important occurrence, to make readers more knowledgeable on a particular topic, to show readers how to do something themselves, or to help readers understand how something may affect them. In addition, expository writing is often directed at a specific reading audience: readers of a particular newspaper or magazine, people who are interested in sports, people who are interested in cooking, Democrats or Republicans, people who love video games. Your expository essays for this unit will be written for particular reading audiences for a specific purposes, both of which you will decide on.

Writing Assignment Three

For this assignment, you will write an essay describing in detail how to do something or how something works. Pick a topic that you are knowledgeable about and that may be of interest to some reading audience. The following sample topics give you an idea of the range of possible subjects:
How to put your video onto YouTube
How ocean tides are affected by the moon
How to watch online streaming sports’ events on your television
How to succeed in high school academics
How to crochet a Christmas stocking
How to transfer cellular phone pictures onto your computer
How bullies intimidate other kids

**Prewriting**

Your first prewriting consideration is to decide on a topic to write about. Then you can decide on your reading audience and your purpose in writing to them. Finally, you will give some thought to the process you are going to describe and the steps that are involved, which should help prepare you to write the first draft of your essay.

**Topic Selection**

Nothing is more important in the prewriting process than selecting an interesting topic to write on. To select your topic for the upcoming expository essay, consider the following suggestions:

1. **Select a process that you are knowledgeable about.** For this essay, you are the “expert” on the topic and should be able to explain it clearly to readers. For example, you may be knowledgeable about cars, computers, video games, sports, cooking, music, history, or science. Think of a particular process that you are familiar with in different subject areas.

2. **Select a process that some reading audience may be interested in and have little knowledge of.** You don’t want to explain a process to readers that they already understand.

3. **Select a topic that is complex enough to develop in an essay.** “How to heat water to boiling” would not qualify as such a topic, but “How to make a four-layer upside-down cake from scratch” just might. “How to wash your car” is too obvious a process, but “How to set up the blue tooth hands-free phone function in your car” might work.

4. **Select a topic that really interests you.** Often the best writing occurs when the writer is deeply interested and engaged in the topic. Your enthusiasm for the topic will carry over to your readers.
Prewriting Activity 2.1

Keeping the topic-selection suggestions in mind, decide on a topic for your expository essay that explains how to do something or how something works. Consider different possibilities, and select the one that you are the most knowledgeable about and that could interest some readers.

Sample topic: How to put a video on YouTube

 Audience and Purpose

Writing is a form of communication. Much of our writing is written for others to read, and we usually have some purpose for writing. Most of the essays that you write during the course will be to communicate with particular readers for specific purposes.

To decide on a reading audience and writing purpose for your upcoming essay, consider these suggestions.

1. **Who may be interested in learning more about the process you are writing about?** They may be people who are most interested in sports, in cooking, in technological gadgets, in video games, in science, in music, or in cars.

2. **Are there classmates who may be interested in your topic?** You may have to look no further than your classmates to find your reading audience.

3. **Who might benefit the most from learning more about the process?** Consider readers for whom the process may give them something to try or greatly enhance their knowledge.

4. **What is your purpose in writing to your readers?** Are you informing them so they will be more knowledgeable, explaining a process that they can duplicate for their own use, or piquing their interest so they may get involved with the topic?

Once you decide on your reading audience and your purpose in writing, you can craft your essay in ways that best accomplish your purpose for your readers.

Prewriting Activity 2.2

Decide on your reading audience, which may include some of your classmates, and your writing purpose for the upcoming essay.

**Sample audience and purpose:**

**Topic:** Putting a Video on YouTube

**Audience:** Classmates who may be interested in uploading a video on YouTube

**Purpose:** To explain the process so that readers can do it themselves
**Process Considerations**

Before writing the first draft of your essay, take some time to think through the specific steps of the process that you are explaining and describing by considering these suggestions:

1. **What are the steps of the process, and what order should they come in?** Is it vital to the process that the steps be followed sequentially? Do any steps need to be repeated?

2. **If you are writing a “how to” essay, what materials may be needed to complete the process?** Are there tools required? Connecting cables? eggs and flour? What will readers need to duplicate the process?

3. **Are there some particularly critical or difficult steps in the process that need emphasizing?** Do you need to make readers aware of the most challenging steps?

**Prewriting Activity 2.3**

Make a list of the steps included in the process you are describing. Once you have written them down, take a look to make sure they are in the correct order, and reorder any step that may be out of place. Then make a list of the materials, if any, that are needed to complete the process so that you will make sure to include them in your essay.

Sample topic: Putting a Video on YouTube

Process steps: Create your video  
Save your video on a computer  
Convert video format to MP3  
Upload video on YouTube

Material: camcorder or cell phone, firewire cable, computer, Internet
Drafting

Now that you have done considerable prewriting preparation, you are ready to write the first draft of your essay. Before you begin, you will learn more about writing effective opening and concluding paragraphs for an essay. How an essay begins often determines whether readers will continue to read with interest. How an essay concludes may leave a lasting final impression.

Opening Paragraphs

While opening paragraphs may vary depending on the topic of an essay and the writer’s purpose, there are some basic elements that most openings include:

1. **The topic of the essay is introduced in some manner.** Readers want to know what they are reading about from the beginning to determine their interest in the topic.

2. **The writer creates some interest in the topic for readers.** Why should readers care about this topic? Will it be good for their health? Will they learn to do something really fun or interesting? Will they learn about something that could affect their lives? Will it provide them with knowledge that they will want to pass on to others? Writers create interest in different ways, always with their readers in mind.

3. **The writer presents her opinion on the topic.** For an expository process essay, that opinion may be “Getting your video onto YouTube is a lot of fun and not that hard to do,” or “Getting to the top level on Super Mario 63 requires some team strategies,” or “The photosynthesis process by which all plants use sunlight to live and grow is not as complicated as the chemical formula may indicate,” or “Computerized automotives have completely changed how auto mechanics troubleshoot engines.”

Here are examples of opening paragraphs that writers may have used for the four topics presented in number 3. above. Read each paragraph and notice how the writer introduces the topic, tries to create reader interest, and presents her opinion on the topic. The sentence where the writer expresses his opinion on the topic is underlined in each paragraph.

I took piano lessons in the fifth grade from a friend of my mom. I didn’t enjoy taking lessons, I hated practicing, and I froze up at the end-of-year recital. I quit after one year. However, I picked up something that would help me learn to play by ear. My recital piece, “Country Gardens,” contained three basic chords. By experimenting, I found out that I could play many other songs using these three chords. Today, I can play most popular songs after hearing them a
Learning to play the piano or keyboard by ear isn’t that difficult, and it can become an enjoyable hobby.

Super Mario 63 is a great video for gamers. I like playing the team game with my brother, and we have learned to work well together to get through the different levels successfully. Playing Super Mario can be great fun or it can be very frustrating, depending on how you work your way through the levels and how much experience you have. My brother and I have figured out some successful strategies which have helped us get all the way to the top level and which may help you too.

When you look at the formula for photosynthesis, the process through which plants convert the sun’s energy into chemical energy to grow and thrive, it seems very complicated. However, when our instructor explained the process in simple terms, it wasn’t that difficult to understand. Photosynthesis may not seem like an interesting process, but the more I understood it, the more fascinating I found it. It is truly amazing how plant life exists through a unique combination of natural factors involving the sun, the earth, and the earth’s atmosphere.

In the past, when auto mechanics wanted to figure out what was wrong with a car, they stuck their head under the hood and manually checked out every part of the engine. That was before today’s highly computerized cars were invented. Now when auto mechanics want to detect a problem with your car, they use computer diagnosis. If you want to be an auto mechanic today, you need to be as computer savvy as handy with a wrench. The computer diagnosis process is a great example of how today’s auto mechanics are more technicians than “grease monkeys.”

Drafting Activity 2.1

Write an opening paragraph for your expository essay. Introduce your topic, create reader interest in some way, and provide your opinion on the topic. Then share openings with a few classmates to see how other writers opened their essays.

Sample opening paragraph:

Topic: Putting a Video on YouTube

Opening paragraph:

Have you ever thought about creating a video to put on YouTube? It might be a humorous video, a music video of your band, a short skit or movie, a cartoon you created, a “how to” video, or whatever strikes your interest. No one ever knows what YouTube video may go viral, and yours might be the next one. The good news is that the process for putting a video on YouTube is not that difficult, and once you’ve done it, you may want to do more.

Closing Paragraphs
As with opening paragraphs, writers conclude their essays in different ways depending on their topic, their audience, and their writing purpose. Here are some of the more common features of closing paragraphs.

### Closing Paragraphs

1. **Conclusions often restate the writer’s opinion on the topic in some manner.** For example, for the upcoming essay “Putting a Video on YouTube” in Drafting Activity 2.3, the writer began her conclusion with, “Once you have gone through the process, you will see how easy it is to upload your next video on YouTube..”

2. **Conclusions often summarize the main points of the essay.** For example, for the “Putting a Video on YouTube” essay, the writer included this summary sentence: “Once you have a video made to upload, you can complete the entire process in about fifteen minutes, including transporting and saving the video to computer, reformatting it in MP3, and uploading it onto YouTube.”

3. **Conclusions often bring something new to an essay for the readers’ interest: a final point, a new consideration, a look into the future.** For example, in the “Putting a Video on YouTube,” the writer added the following: “Annoying Orange started as a YouTube video, and now Annoying Orange products are in toy stores nationwide and there is an Annoying Orange cable cartoon show. Who knows? You may create the next Annoying Orange.”

4. **Since conclusions should follow logically from what has come before in the essay, most writers figure out their conclusions after having written the rest of the essay.** For example, the writer of “Putting a Video on YouTube” didn’t know how she was going to conclude until she had presented the process in the middle paragraphs. Then she decided to emphasize the ease of the process to encourage readers to try it and came up with “Annoying Orange” example.

### Drafting Activity 2.2

Read the sample draft “Putting Your Video on YouTube” in Drafting Activity 2.3 to see how the writer concludes her essay and how her ending ties in with the rest of the essay.
Drafting Guidelines

As you write your first draft, consider the following suggestions.

1. **Introduce your topic in the opening, create reader interest, and provide your opinion.** Why should readers be interested in this particular topic? How might it benefit them? Create an opening that will encourage readers to keep reading and let them know how you feel about the topic.

2. **Write the draft as if you were talking readers through the process.** If you are explaining a process that readers can duplicate, you might use the pronoun “you” (meaning your readers) so that readers feel that they are going through the process themselves.

3. **Present each step in the process in the order it occurs, and change paragraphs as you move to different steps.** Provide as much detail as necessary for readers to understand each step, explaining clearly how to complete it (or how it occurs) and **defining any terms** that readers may be unfamiliar with.

4. **Provide your expertise on the topic through suggestions and reminders.** Knowing the process well, you can interject that expert knowledge that will help readers avoid common problems that can arise, the best way to complete a particular step successfully, or reminders of particular steps that are crucial to completing the process.

5. **Conclude your draft in a manner that keeps readers interested in the process.** Since you may have explained a process that readers can duplicate, your conclusion might provide the motivation that will get readers to try it. Your conclusion should tie in logically with the paragraphs that precede it and reinforce your opinion on the topic that you provide in the opening.

Drafting Activity 2.3

Read the following first draft of the expository essay “Putting a Video on YouTube.” Note in particular the following aspects:

1. How the writer opens her draft.
2. How each step in the process is explained in some detail.
3. How particular terms that readers may not understand are defined.
4. How the steps are divided into paragraphs.
5. How the writer concludes her draft.

Then write the first draft of your essay keeping the drafting guidelines in mind.
**Putting A Video on YouTube**  (First Draft)

**Audience:** Any classmates unfamiliar with the process

**Purpose:** To explain the process so that readers can perform it themselves

Have you ever thought about creating a video to put on You Tube? It might be a humorous video, a music video of your band, a short skit or movie, a cartoon you created, a “how to” video, or whatever strikes your interest. No one ever knows what YouTube video may go viral, and yours might be the next one. The good news is that the process for putting a video on YouTube is not that difficult, and once you’ve done it, you may want to do more.

The first step, of course, is deciding what to put in your video, and that is entirely up to you. You might want to go onto YouTube and sample the wide range of videos to get some ideas. You might also consider collaborating with a friend or two if you have similar interests. The most important thing is to make a video that you’d have fun doing and that could be entertaining, interesting, or instructive to some YouTube viewers.

Filming your video with a camcorder is your best option. While you can also do video filming with some digital cameras and I-Phones, the visual and audio quality of the video is a prime consideration when putting it online, and the camcorder will produce the best quality. If you don’t have your own camcorder, no doubt you can borrow one from a friend or even rent one from a camera shop.

Since you are now in the “movie making” business, you will probably want to film your video several times to get the best possible result, unless you have unexpectedly captured some hilarious, shocking, or outrageous event with your camcorder such as you might see on “America’s Funniest Videos.” If you are interested in a more polished final product, Windows XP has a program called Windows Movie Maker which allows you to edit your video and create special effects, and you can download it free on the Internet.

Once you have shot your video, the next step is to load it onto your computer. For that, you’ll need a Firewire cable, which you can buy at any number of stores such as Radio Shack, Target, or Best Buy for under $10.00. The firewire cable will have a smaller and larger plug at its ends. The smaller end plugs into the camcorder port, and the larger end plugs into the computer port in the back of the computer. While most computers have a firewire port, some do not. If you find that there is no compatible port in your computer to plug the firewire into, you need to get a USB adaptor for the computer-end of the firewire cable, which will allow you to plug into the USB port. Once your camcorder is connected to the computer, your computer will import the video to whatever file you choose.

Once you have the video on your computer, the next step is to convert it to the best format for YouTube. While YouTube takes different video formats, MPEG4 (MP4) is the recommended format for the best quality video. To convert your video file to MP4, go to the Any Video Converter website to download its video-conversion software for free. Once the download is completed, click on the video conversion button and your computer files will come up so that you can select the video file you want to convert. The conversion process takes less than a minute, and your video is MP4 formatted and ready to upload at You Tube.

Now you are ready to put your video on YouTube, which is a simple process. Go to the YouTube site and click on “Create Account” if you aren’t already signed in, which is required to upload your video. Once you have created your free account, hit the “upload” icon and your computer document files will come up. Click on the Any Video Converter file and when it comes up at YouTube, type in the name of the file, which will be a number. Your video will now
be uploaded to YouTube. Next, you will provide a brief description of your video, check the category it belongs in, and check whether you want it viewed by the public or only privately by friends and family. You can locate your video by entering your description in the “Search” window.

Once you have gone through the process once, you will see how easy it is to upload your next video on YouTube. Once you have a video made to upload, you can complete the entire process in about fifteen minutes, including transporting and saving the video to computer, reformatting it in MP3, and uploading it onto YouTube. Putting your videos on YouTube can be a lot of fun for you and your friends, and it might become your next big hobby. And you never know when you might have a hit. Annoying Orange started as a YouTube video, and now Annoying Orange products are in toy stores nationwide and there is an Annoying Orange cable cartoon show. Who knows? You may create the next Annoying Orange.

A little logic 4

1. A study revealed that elephants in the wild live nearly twice as long as elephants in captivity (zoos). Why?

2. Why do some birds migrate and others stay in the same location year around?

3. In the last twenty years, the wings of some migratory birds have lengthened and grown stronger. What has caused this evolution?

4. Why do bears hibernate in winter and deer don’t?
Revision

Now that you have written your first draft, you are ready to revise and improve it. If you set aside your draft for awhile before revising, you often can see more clearly what you did well and what you might improve.

In this “Revision” section, you are introduced to a new writing consideration: transitional wording. In addition, you do a review activity on improving your sentence wording, revise a sample draft, revise your own draft, and provide revision suggestions for a classmate’s draft. The type of revision work that you do for this draft can be applied to most writing that you will do in college and beyond.

Transitional Wording

*Transitional wording* is used by writers to tie sentences and paragraphs together in ways that show the relationship among the different parts of the essay and that connect those parts to the whole.

*Transitions* can serve several functions in a paper: to show how events are related in time, how different ideas are related to one another, how one paragraph relates to another, how one sentence relates to another, or how a process moves from step to step. The use of simple, well-placed transitions such as *next, in addition, second, or finally* help guide readers through an essay, indicating what comes next and its relation to what has come before.

No doubt you are already using some transitions in your writing. You may include them quite naturally as you move from one idea or step to another. The purpose of this section is to make you more aware of using transitions in your writing and to present some useful transitions that you may not be as familiar with.

Commonly Used Transitions

The following transitions include a variety of words and phrases writers use to connect their ideas.

1. **Transitions that show the order in which ideas are presented, the steps in a process, or the events in a sequence:** *first, second, next, then, now, finally.*

2. **Transitions that add one idea to another:** *furthermore, in addition, also, moreover, additionally, on top of that, beyond that, besides that.*

3. **Transitions that introduce an example:** *for instance, for example, such as.*
4. Transitions that indicate a conclusion: *finally, lastly, as you can see, in conclusion, in summary.*

5. Transitions that show a contrast between ideas or events: *however, on the other hand, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the contrary, despite, in spite of, whereas, even so.*

6. Transitions that show a cause-effect relationship - one thing occurring as the result of another: *therefore, consequently, thus, as a result, to that end, because of that.*

7. Transitions that emphasize a particular point or idea: *in fact, actually, of course, in reality, needless to say.*

8. Transitions that show a relationship in time: *meanwhile, in the mean time, at the same time.*

9. Of the transitions, you may be least familiar with the following:

   *moreover*: even more importantly (similar to *beyond that* or *on top of that*)

   Example: Jules is an excellent student; *moreover*, he is a wonderful human being.

   *consequently*: because of that (similar to *therefore* or *thus*)

   Example: There was a power outage in the neighborhood; *consequently*, all houses were dark inside.

   *nevertheless*: similar to *in spite of, despite that, or nonetheless*

   Example: It was raining hard all morning; *nevertheless*, we still went to the soccer game.

   *as you can see*: based on what has been written; judging from what has come before

   Example: Yesterday it was 95 degrees with clear skies. Today it is only 72 degrees with high winds and clouds. *As you can see*, the weather this time of year is quite variable.

10. Notice that when a transition ties two sentences together, it is often preceded by a semi-colon (;), a punctuation mark which unites two related sentences. Here are some examples:

    The last subway train ran a half hour ago; *therefore*, we’ll have to catch a bus downtown.

    Ike had problems on his last calculus exam; *however*, he’s still doing well in the class.

    Noprakan has had a head cold for a month; *despite that*, she hasn’t missed a day of work.
To give you an idea of the value of transitional wording, read the following two versions of the same paragraph. The first paragraph contains no transitional wording. The second paragraph contains transitional wording in bold italics to tie sentences and paragraphs together.

Many newer cars do not require an ignition key to start them. Make sure that you have the key to the car in your pocket or purse. You won’t need to take it out because the car “knows” the key is present. Put your foot on the break pedal and push in the large ignition button on the dash. The car’s engine will start up automatically. The push-button starting mechanism is much easier than having to insert and turn a key, and it’s also faster. If you aren’t used to the push-button starter, it is easy to forget to push the button to turn the car off, leaving the car running. I taped a reminder message on the dash after I left my the car idling overnight one time.

Many newer cars do not require an ignition key to start them. **First**, make sure that you have the key to the car in your pocket or purse. You won’t need to take it out because the car “knows” the key is present. **Next**, put your foot on the break pedal and push in the large ignition button on the dash. The car’s engine will start up automatically. **As you can see**, the push-button starting mechanism is much easier than having to insert and turn a key, and it’s also faster. **However**, if you aren’t used to the push-button starter, it is easy to forget to push the button to turn the car off, leaving the car running. **Consequently**, I taped a reminder message on the dash after I left the car idling overnight one time.

As you can see, the transitional wording in the second paragraph introduces the steps in the process (**first, next**) and shows how the ideas in the paragraph relate to one another (**as you can see, however, consequently**). Transitional wording can help readers navigate the paragraph with greater understanding.

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**Revision Activity 2.1**

Fill in the blanks in the following paragraphs with transitions that connect the writer’s thoughts and tie sentences and paragraphs together. Refer to the lists of transitions in the book.

The Columnar Manor apartment complex on “R” Street is in bad shape. ______________, the roof is sagging in several places, an indication of rotting roof beams. ______________, the white paint on the building is chipping off, exposing patches of pink paint beneath it. The garbage bins at the back of the complex are often overflowing with garbage, with trash blown onto the driveway and sidewalks and a foul smell hanging over the apartments. ______________, the tenants complain regularly to the apartment manager about the conditions. ______________, their complaints usually go unheeded, and since many of them are undocumented workers, they don’t cause too much of a ruckus.
there is the problem of the apartments’ location. The complex lies just outside the city limits. it isn’t subject to city inspections and ordinances, which would force the owners to bring the apartments up to code. The apartments are under the purview of the county, which appears to have no interest in improving the safety or health conditions of apartments such as Columnar Manor.

the city has been trying to annex the property south of town, which includes Columnar Manor. If that happens, changes will definitely occur.

the apartment complex will continue to deteriorate, and unfortunately, most of the residents can’t afford to live any place better.

Revision Activity 2.2

The following paragraphs contain no transitional wording. Insert transitions in places where they will help readers move from one point to the next and tie sentences and paragraphs together effectively.

My old car is in pretty bad shape. The tires have over forty thousand miles of wear, and they have lost most of their tread. I don’t have four hundred dollars for a new set, so I can’t replace them for awhile. The front window has a good-sized crack in it. A rock hit the window when I was driving on a freeway about a year ago, and the crack has continued to grow across the width of the window. The seats are torn in the front. The car is over twenty years old, so the seats have gotten a lot of wear. I put on cloth seat covers to cover the tears. They look very tacky.

The car is leaking and burning oil. It leaves oil spots on the ground wherever I park it, and I have to put in at least a quart of oil every thousand miles or so. The engine doesn’t engage smoothly when I press on the gas pedal, which probably means my transmission is slipping.

My car has a lot of problems, and they all require money to fix. When I get enough money, I’ll replace the tires first because they are the biggest safety hazard. I’ll just keep driving as safely as possible and hope I don’t get a blowout. Some day I hope to replace my car with a better one. I’m stuck with my old car for awhile.

Revision Activity 2.3

Read over your draft to see whether you have used some transitions to help readers move from step to step in the process and to tie sentences and paragraphs together. Insert transitions wherever you think they would help present your thoughts more clearly to readers.

Revision Activity 2.4

In the first unit, you learned that first-draft sentences can sometimes be overly wordy, awkwardly worded, vague, or contain some questionable word choices. Such sentences are not uncommon among writers when you are putting your thoughts on paper for the first time.
For more practice revising sentences, read and revise sentences in the following first-draft paragraph. Eliminate unnecessary words, smooth out awkward sentences, and replace questionable word choices.

Example:

I have tried everything to get rid of the stain on my new jeans, but nothing that I tried seems to really help much.

Revised:

Nothing I have tried to remove the stain on my new jeans has helped.

The last two weeks of the summer were the hottest on record in the valley that were ever recorded in history. You could step outside in the morning to get the morning paper and be covered with beads of perspiration in a matter of a minute or so. We had fourteen days in a row of temperatures that were over 100 degrees. To make matters worse, there were power shortages in the area that were brought on by the heavy usage of air conditioning units, and many people were without air conditioning for part of the time. At least six deaths in the valley were caused by or at least their cause was devoted to heat prostration caused by lack of air conditioning. All six were senior citizens. In addition, the air was saturated with humidity at a record rate, and so what was actually 100 degrees felt more like 110 with the combination of heat and humidity. It was the most miserable two weeks of weather I had ever engaged in.

**Revision Guidelines**

Consider the following suggestions when you revise and improve your draft.

1. **Read through your entire draft once or twice to get an overall sense of how well you have explained the process.** Note any concerns that you have - a flat opening, a process step out of order, an explanation that isn’t clear, a pair of noticeably short paragraphs - and keep them in mind as you begin revising your draft.

2. **Reread your opening to evaluate how well you have introduced your topic and drawn your readers into the essay.** What changes might you make to ensure that readers will continue with enthusiasm?

3. **Evaluate how well you explain each step of the process.** Is there anything you could add or change that would make a step easier or clearer for readers to follow? Have you provided any expert tips that would help readers perform each step of the process most successfully?
4. **Check the order in which you presented the steps in the process.** Are they in the proper sequence to produce the result or outcome that the process leads to?

5. **Check the terms that you used and whether some may need defining.** If there is any word that some readers may not be familiar with, explain what that word means.

6. **Read each sentence to see how it may be improved.** Delete unnecessary words or phrases, smooth out awkward sentences, and replace questionable word choices.

7. **Check your use of transitional wording.** Make sure that you have used transitions to move readers through the steps of the process and to tie sentences and paragraphs together.

8. **Check your paragraphing, making sure that you change paragraphs as you move to different steps in the process or different parts of the draft – opening to middle, middle to conclusion.** Divide any overly long paragraphs and combine or develop shorter ones.

9. **Evaluate your conclusion and its impact on readers.** Does your conclusion follow logically from the previous paragraphs? Have you added anything new to interest readers? Make any changes in your conclusion to make it more substantial or interesting.

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**Revision Activity 2.5**

Read the following first draft of a process essay. With a partner, discuss any revisions you would suggest to the writer by applying the revision guidelines. Be prepared to share your revision ideas with the class.

Sample first draft

Playing the Piano by Ear

**Audience:** Classmates who may be interested in learning to play popular songs

**Purpose:** To help readers learn to play the piano by ear

I took a year of piano lessons when I was ten and hated every lesson. I hated practicing, and I wasn’t interested in the songs that the teacher assigned me that I was having to learn by practicing. My mom knew I didn’t like it, and she let me quit. However, one song that I had learned, “Country Gardens,” stuck on me. It contained four basic chords which I discovered could be used to play other songs. Today I can play most songs that I hear by ear. It’s a lot of fun and a great hobby, even for anyone who hated piano lessons or who never took lessons.

First, you need to learn the four basic left-handed chords, two beginning with the “C” note, one beginning with “B,” and one with “A.” Each chord contains three notes. The “C” chord includes every-other note – “C,” “E,” and “G” - and the “F” chord includes “C,” “F,” and “A.” The “G” chord includes “B,” “D,” and “G,” and the “A” chord includes “A,” “C,” and “E.” Play the three notes in each chord all at the same time with your left hand, creating one sound, and
then alternate between the four chords. Practice playing them in different orders as you will in different songs.

Once you know the chords well, you can learn which chords go with which right-handed melody notes. In most cases, the chords go with the same right-handed notes that are in the chord. For example, the “C” chord is played with the “C,” “E,” and “G” melody notes and the “F” chord is played with the “F,” “A,” and “C” melody notes. Practice playing the right-handed melody notes and the left-handed chords that go with the melody notes together, one melody note at a time. You will notice that there is some overlap of chords with certain notes; the “C” melody note can be played with the “C” chord, the “F” chord, and the “A” chord. In playing a song, the trial and error comes about by listening to which chord sounds the best with a particular melody note for a particular song.

After you have practiced playing the four left-handed chords with their corresponding right-handed melody notes, you are ready to try a simple melody. Start with something simple like “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” Play the right-handed melody first: C, C, G, G, A, A, G, F, F, E, D, D, C, G, F, F, E, E, D, G, F, F, E, E, D, C, G, A, A, G, F, F, E, E, D, C. Play this simple melody a few times until you can play it easily. Then you are ready to play the left-hand chords with the melody. Play a left-handed chord together with the first melody note, and then play a chord each time you change notes on the right hand. In most cases, you will be hitting a chord with every-other right-hand melody note. Beginning with the first melody note, play the chords in this order: C, C, F, C, F, C, C, F, C, C, F, C, F, C, C, F, C, C, F, C, G, C. Play the song very slowly to begin with until you are comfortable playing the right-handed melody notes and the left-hand chords together. Gradually increase the tempo. You have now learned how to play a song which includes playing three of the four chords you have learned. The fourth chord - the “A” chord - has a more “minor” sound. Now the fun part begins, and the fun part is to figure out for yourself the right-hand notes for a particular melody, which you learn through the process of trial and error, and then adding the best-sounding left-hand chord for each melody note, which is often the same combination you used in “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”

Start with some other simple songs like “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” “Mary Had A Little Lamb,” and “Silent Night” (a bit more challenging). Begin “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” and “Mary Had A Little Lamb” with the “C” note and “Silent Night” with “G.” Move on to some popular songs that you like. You will find that many of them are swimmingly easy to play. Others are tougher and will take more time to learn to play them.

Learning to play the piano by ear is not all of that difficult of a process. As you progress, you will learn more chords on your own to do to different songs, including some that use the black keys. You will also learn to play “broken” chords when they sound best for a particular song. You will discover all of these things on your own, just as I have discovered all of these things on my own over the years, and you now know the stuff to get started. Hopefully you have the regular in-home usage of a piano (our family piano is like fifty years old and clinky) or a keyboard, which can cost very little money and in which you can learn the basics of the playing-by-ear process yourself. If you want to become a great piano player, you need to take lessons and learn to read music. If you want to just have fun playing the piano and learning to play popular songs, playing by ear is a great way to indulge.

Revision Activity 2.6

Read the following revised draft of “Putting Your Video on YouTube,” noting the types of changes the writer made to improve her essay. Then revise your draft keeping in mind the revision suggestions and the revision work you did on the sample draft.
It may be helpful to read your draft through several times, concentrating on one revision consideration at a time: your opening, how well you explain each part of the process, your sentence wording, your paragraphing, your conclusion, etc. In that way, you will do a thorough revision, which usually produces the best results.

Sample revised draft  (deletions crossed out, additions italicized in bold)

**Putting Your Video on YouTube**

**Audience:** Any classmates unfamiliar with the process

**Purpose:** To explain the process so that readers can perform it themselves

Have you ever thought about creating a video to put on YouTube? It might be a humorous video, a music video of your band, a short skit or movie, a cartoon you created, a “how to” video on debugging your computer, or whatever strikes your interest. **No one ever knows Who knows** what YouTube video may go viral, and yours might be the next one. **The good news is that The process for putting a video on YouTube is not that difficult, and once you’ve done it, you may want to do more—** not stop at one.

The first step, of course, is deciding what to put in your video, and that which is entirely up to you. You might want to go onto YouTube and sample the wide range of videos to get some ideas. You might also consider collaborating with a friend or two if you who have similar interests. **The Most importantly thing is to make a video that you’d have fun doing and that could be entertaining, interesting, or instructive to some YouTube viewers.**

Filming. **Shooting** your video with a camcorder is your best option. While you can also do shoot videos with some digital cameras and I-Phones **cell phones**, the visual and audio quality of the video is a prime consideration when putting it online, and the camcorder will produce the best visual and audio quality. If you don’t have your own camcorder, no doubt you can probably borrow one from a friend or even rent one from a camera shop.

Since you are now in the “movie making” business, To get the very best results, you will probably want to film shoot your video several times to get the best possible result, unless you have unexpectedly captured some hilarious or shocking or outrageous event with your camcorder such as like you might see on “America’s Funniest Videos.” If you are interested in a more polished final product, Windows XP has a program called Windows Movie Maker which allows where you can to edit your video and create special effects, and— You can download it free on the Internet by googling WindowsMovieMaker.com to check out the special effect available.

Once you have shot your video, the next step is to load it onto your computer. For that, You’ll need a firewire cable, a cable used to connect various electronic devices to a computer, in this you’re your camcorder. which You can buy the cable at any number of stores such as Radio Shack, Target, or Best Buy for under $10.00. The firewire cable will have a smaller and larger plug connector at its ends. The smaller end plugs into the camcorder port, an outlet for the cable connector, and the larger end plugs into the computer port, the outlet in the back of the computer. (divide to start a new paragraph)

While most computers have a firewire port, some do not. If you find that there is no compatible port in your computer for the firewire cable to plug into, to plug the firewire insert into, you need to get a USB adaptor for the computer-end of the firewire cable. You attach the USB adaptor to the connector, which you can also buy at the same stores, which will allowing you to plug
into the USB port **in the back of the computer.** Once your camcorder is connected to the computer, your computer will import the video to **whatever** file you choose.

Once you have the video **is** on your computer, the next step is to convert it to the best format for YouTube. While YouTube takes different video formats, MPEG4 (MP4) is the recommended format for the best quality video. To convert your video file to MP4, go to the AnyVideoConverter.com website to download its video-conversion software for free. Once the download is completed, click on the “video conversion” button and your computer files will come up. **Then** you can select the video file you want to convert to upload onto YouTube. The conversion process takes less than a minute, and your video is MP4 formatted and ready to upload at YouTube.

Now you are ready to put your video on YouTube, which is a simple process. Go to the YouTube site and click on “Create Account” if you aren’t already signed in, which **is** required to upload your video. Once you have created your free account, hit the “upload” icon and your computer document files will come up. Click on the “Any Video Converter” file. **And** when it comes up at YouTube, type in the name of the file, which will be a number. Your video will now be uploaded to YouTube. Next, you will provide a brief description of your video, check the category it belongs in, and check whether you want it viewed by the public or only privately by friends and family. You can locate your video by entering your description in the “Search” window.

**Once After** you have gone through the process once, you will see how easy it is to be able to upload your next video on YouTube easily. Once you have a video made to upload, you can complete the entire process in about fifteen minutes. Putting your videos on YouTube can be a lot of fun for you and your friends, and it might become your next big hobby. And you never know when you might have a hit. **What video could go viral.** Annoying Orange started as a YouTube video, and now Annoying Orange products are in toy stores nationwide and **and a line of products sold nationwide.** You may not create the next Annoying Orange, **but you will have fun entertaining your friends and yourself.**

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**Revision Activity 2.7**

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two. Read one another’s drafts and make any suggestions that you feel could improve the essay as well as letting the writer know what he did well. Sometimes steps in the process that seem clear to the writer may not be as clear to a reader. That is why reading your classmates’ drafts and getting their responses to your own can be helpful.

Then make any final revisions to your draft based on any classmate’s suggestions that you find useful. Finally, rewrite your draft including all of your revisions.

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**Revision Activity 2.8**

For your instructor’s benefit, write briefly on the types of changes that you made to your draft during the revision process and how you feel they improved your essay. From your input, your instructor will have a better idea on what to emphasize during the next essay revision.
Editing

Now that you have written and revised your expository essay, you are ready to check it over for errors and eliminate any mistakes that you may find. In evaluating essays, most English instructors are looking for well-written essays containing a minimum of errors, and instructors across the college curriculum are also evaluating their students’ ability to write “correctly.” There is no question that the ability to use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling in your writing will serve you well in your college courses and beyond.

In each unit, you receive instruction on particular elements of grammar usage and punctuation that often cause writers problems. In Unit One, you received instruction on using correct irregular verb forms and on recognizing and eliminating run-on and comma-splice sentences. In this unit, you work on subject-verb agreement and on correct comma usage. Then you apply what you learn when proofreading your draft for errors and making corrections. Finally, you write final draft of your essay to share with classmates and your instructor.

Since certain error tendencies persist with students from year to year, don’t expect these early essays to be perfectly correct. As you work through the course, you will get better at identifying and correcting errors, and your editing process will become easier and more proficient. A realistic goal is to be writing error-free essays by the end of the course. Each time you edit an essay, identify errors, and make corrections, you move closer to that goal.

Subject-Verb Agreement

An important element of correct grammar usage is subject-verb agreement: making sure that you use the correct present tense verb form, depending on whether the subject is singular or plural. When you use the correct verb form, the verb agrees with its subject.

You probably have covered subject-verb agreement in different English classes, and you may have little difficulty using the correct verb form when the subject and verb are close to each other in a sentence. However, when they are separated by a group of words or when their order is inverted, with the verb coming first, writers can have problems. This section will be devoted primarily to these more problematic constructions.
For example, in the sentence “That smell sickens me,” it is obvious that the verb form sickens, ending is s, agrees with the subject smell: smell sickens. If the s were left off of sickens, the sentence, “That smell sicken me,” would sound wrong to most writers. However, in the sentence, “That smell from the sewer farm beside the housing projects sicken me,” the verb form sicken may not sound as bad, although it is still incorrect. The separation of a subject and verb in a sentence often makes it more difficult to “hear” the correct verb form.

**Subject-Verb Agreement Rules**

The following basic rules and guidelines will help you avoid subject-verb agreement problems in your writing.

1. **The subject of a sentence is what the sentence is about: the main person, place, thing, or idea on which the sentence is centered.**

   Examples (subject underlined):
   
   Your aunt from Wisconsin is a very friendly person.
   
   The separation of subject and verb in a sentence makes selecting the correct verb form more difficult.
   
   In the end, a person’s wealth is a poor indicator of happiness.

2. **The verb in a sentence expresses an action or a state of being. It tells what the subject is doing or thinking (action) or the condition of the person or thing (state of being).**

   Examples (verb italicized, subject underlined)
   
   The separation of subject and verb creates agreement problems for some writers.
   
   The mouse constantly darts out of the closet and down the hallway.
   
   Your aunt from Wisconsin is tired from her long flight.

3. **Subject-verb agreement involves present tense verbs: verbs that express something that is happening or existing in the present.** The following agreement rules apply to present tense verbs.

   a. If the subject of the sentence is singular (one person, one place, one idea), the present tense verb ends in “s.”

   Examples (subject underlined, verb italicized):
   
   My baby niece enjoys banging on the piano.
   
   The Empire State Building is no longer the tallest building in the world.
   
   My best friend works in her dad’s delicatessen on weekends.
b. If the subject of the sentence is plural -two or more persons, places, or ideas - the present tense verb does not end in “s.” (Exception: verbs already ending in “s” like dress, press, or guess.)

Examples:

My baby nieces enjoy banging on the piano.
The Empire State Building and Sears Tower are no longer the two tallest buildings in the world.
My two best friends work in a delicatessen on weekends.

c. The subject pronouns you and I are considered plural when applying the agreement rule.

Examples:

I like early morning classes.
You prefer afternoon classes.

4. When there is a group of words separating the subject and verb, ignore these words when determining subject-verb agreement. (An exception is explained in 6.a.)

Examples: (subject underlined, verb in italics)

The boys in the back of the room seldom participate in discussion.
The women working in the cold storage plant on “N” Street belong to the retail employees’ union.
The woman who works in several different store departments is seventy years old.
Only one of the men works the night shift year around.

5. When a sentence begins with There + a to be verb (is, are, was, were), the subject comes after the verb, so find the subject to determine the correct verb form. (Note: The verbs was and were are the only past tense verbs to which the subject-verb agreement rules apply. Was is used with singular subjects, and were is used with plural subjects.)

Examples:

There is a full moon tonight.
There are very few stars in the sky tonight.
There were several students absent on the day of the concert.

6. Four other subject-verb agreement situations warrant some attention.

a. If the subject most, more, some, a lot, or all is followed by a prepositional phrase (most of the cake, more of the men, some of the rules, a lot of money, all of the
lobsters), the last word in the prepositional phrase determines the correct verb form.

Examples:

Most of the spectators sit under the covered bleachers. (Since spectators is plural, the verb sit does not end in “s.”)
All of the cake needs to be eaten before tomorrow. (Since cake is singular, the verb needs ends in “s.”)

b. **In some sentences, two or more verbs go with the subject. In such cases, each verb must agree with the subject.**

Examples:

My cat always mews under my bedroom window in the morning and then scratches on the window screen to awaken me.
The eastbound train that runs from Hanford to Bakersfield is often late.

c. **In some sentences, there are two or more pairs of subjects and verbs. In such cases, each present tense verb agrees with its subject.**

Examples:

The moon is yellowish-white when it rises above the horizon, but it turns a pale orange as it moves higher.
While Joshua vacuums the hallway carpet, you mop the bathroom floor.

d. **If a relative pronoun such as that, who, or which precedes the verb, the verb must agree with the subject that the relative pronoun refers to.**

Examples:

The men who pour foundations for the houses being built in the neighborhood work very long hours.
The one garage sale item that attracts me the most is the reading lamp.

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**Editing Activity 2.1**

Underline the subjects and circle the verbs in the following sentences, and be prepared to explain why each verb ends or doesn’t end in “s.”

Example: Camryn and I walk to school in the fall, but we usually drive in the winter when the weather gets colder. (subjects underlined, verbs in italics)
1. The sudden sound of a car alarm in a parking garage always startles me.

2. One of the reasons that I go to movies frequently is that I enjoy getting out of the house on weekends.

3. There are several large bins behind the apartment building that we dump our trash in.

4. Students who do the most reading often possess the best vocabularies.

5. Concert attendees in the back of the arena have the least expensive seats.

6. The aroma of barbecued hamburgers lingers in our back yard.

7. The lottery for student basketball tickets is at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow in the cafeteria, but few students seem to know about it, and those students that know appear rather indifferent.

8. A lot of students really like the cafeteria’s donuts because by the time I get there in the morning, the donuts are all gone.

9. The colorful ornaments that you put on the Christmas tree give it a festive look.

10. The head of Tosh’s golf club loosens every time he hits the ball near the bottom of the club, so he tries to hit the ball in the center.

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**Editing Activity 2.2**

Underline the subject or subjects in each sentence, and then underline the correct verb forms in parentheses.

Example: Julian and Lucinda (try, tries) hard when they (play, plays) doubles in tennis but seldom (win, wins).

1. One of your friends (enjoy, enjoys) teasing me about my collection of rubber bands.

2. There (appear, appears) to be several large pigeons nesting in the eaves of the science building.

3. The sounds coming from the upstairs apartment (indicate, indicates) that someone (are, is) in trouble.

4. Most of the wedding cake (were, was) eaten, but few of the anchovy appetizers (were, was) touched.

5. My best guess from analyzing the early election returns (are, is) that all of the incumbent board members on the voting ballot (are, is) likely to win.
6. Maxine and Lacy (realize, realizes) that their friend Nagumi, who frequently (attend, attends) campus functions with them but (go, goes) to another school, (like, likes) her school very much, and despite their pleas for her to switch colleges, (plan, plans) to stay where she (are, is).

7. In the back of the classroom by the double doors (sit, sits) a guy who (sleep, sleeps) through most of the class and sometimes even (snore, snores).

8. Most of the people who (attend, attends) presidential debates (mill, mills) about outside the auditorium after the debate and (discuss, discusses) the candidates’ performances.

9. The debate over whether the recent global warming (are, is) man-made or part of the natural weather cycle (appear, appears) to favor the side who (believe, believes) that man and his creations (are, is) responsible.

10. Most meteors from distant space that (fall, falls) towards earth (burn, burns) up in the atmosphere long before they (get, gets) close to our planet.

Editing Activity 2.3

Proofread the following draft for any subject-verb agreement errors, and make the necessary corrections.

Example: The plans for the new performing art center is impressive, but there are no timetable in place for its construction.

Corrected: The plans for the new performing art center are impressive, but there is no timetable in place for its construction.

The foul smells coming from the garbage bin beside the apartment spreads across the complex and leaves everyone feeling nauseous. No person in the apartments are to blame, but everyone suffers from the effect.

   The problem is that garbage collection for the apartments occur on a two-week cycle. You can imagine the combination of unpleasant odors that come from rotting food, souring milk, and dirty diapers that sits in the garbage bin for two weeks. Each day the odor gets worse, and by the end of the week, the smell is beginning to creep inside the apartments. Besides that, by the end of the second week, the garbage bin is overflowing, and garbage is dragged around by dogs.

   The answer to our garbage problems are a weekly garbage collection schedule by the city. For some reason the city does a weekly collection at individual houses in the area but collect at the apartment complexes every other week. That seems unfair to all of the apartment residents, and it make little sense when you consider that the garbage trucks are in the neighborhood every week.
Editing Activity 2.4

Proofread your draft for any problems with subject-verb agreement and make any needed corrections. Find the subject or subjects of each sentence and make sure that the present tense verbs agree with them.

Comma Usage

Using commas correctly is an important part of effective writing. Fortunately, there are some basic punctuation rules that govern the use of commas within sentences. In this section you are introduced to those rules and then apply them to your draft.

As with many grammar and punctuation elements in the text, you have undoubtedly been exposed to comma usage in the past. If that is the case, consider this section a review of the basics that will keep you mindful of using commas correctly in any writing you may do.

The main purpose for using commas is to show readers where to pause within your sentences. These pauses create help readers follow your thoughts most clearly, and the comma rules indicate where the pauses occur most naturally.

For example, read the following paragraphs, the first containing no commas and the second with commas inserted correctly into sentences.

No commas

When you drive across the college campus you run into a number of problems. First there are a number of roads that dead-end into a building or a grass area so you have to turn around. Next there are a number of one-way streets but there is no pattern to them which makes it baffling getting to where you want to go. In fact after trying to get across campus many different ways I still haven’t found a way to drive from one side to the other without going out to one of two main roads adjacent to campus.

I have finally come to the conclusion which I have no doubt is correct that the university doesn’t want anyone to cross the campus using internal roads. Instead they want you to use the outside roads and keep the internal roads free for students seeking parking spaces. I guess that makes sense but it would sure be nice to have at least one internal road that goes all the way across campus.
Commas inserted

When you drive across the college campus, you run into a number of problems. First, there are a number of roads that dead-end into a building or a grass area, so you have to turn around. Next, there are a number of one-way streets, but there is no pattern to them, which makes it baffling getting to where you want to go. In fact, after trying to get across campus many different ways, I still haven’t found a way to drive across campus without going out to one of two main roads adjacent to the school.

I have finally come to the conclusion, which I have no doubt is correct, that the university doesn’t want you to cross the campus using internal roads. Instead, they want you to use the outside roads and keep the internal roads free for students seeking parking spaces. I guess that makes sense, but it would sure be nice to have at least one internal road that goes all the way across campus.

Notice how each comma in the second paragraph creates a brief reading pause that prepares you for the next idea in the sentence and makes it easier to follow the writer’s thoughts

Comma Usage Rules

The following general rules will help you use commas effectively in your writing.

1. Use commas to separate three or more items joined by and or or, or to separate two or more words in succession that modify (describe in some manner) the word immediately following them.

Examples:

Post, Kelloggs, and Sunnyside Select all had their bite-sized shredded wheat cereal on sale. Your back pack could be in the bedroom closet, in the hall closet, or on the back porch. The shortest, thinnest girl on the basketball court was also the fastest. Halloween fell on a cold, windy night.

2. Use commas to separate any introductory group of words which leads to the main thought in a sentence: dependent clauses, participial phrases, prepositional phrases.

Examples:

If you don’t tie the string of the balloon to your niece’s wrist, it will fly away. While I was crossing the street at the intersection, a motorcycle turning to the right almost hit me. Trying to study for the test, Angie shut herself up in her bedroom and put on her ear plugs. Angered by his friend’s drinking and driving, Javier refused to ride with him.
In the middle of the darkest night of the year, Felix walked in his sleep from his room to the next door neighbor’s back door. From the looks of your backpack, you could use a new one for next semester.

3. Use commas to separate the two halves of a compound sentence - two sentences connected by a coordinate conjunction - by inserting a comma after the last word before the conjunction (and, but, for, so, yet, or).

Examples:

I’m going to the midnight concert at the campus pavilion, but no one else from my dorm wing is going.
The wind blowing off of Lake Erie was extremely cold, and we were wearing nothing but shorts and t-shirts.
Retail sales were up for the quarter for most major retail chains, yet the stock market continued its descent.

4. Use commas to set off an introductory dependent clause in a complex sentence beginning with a subordinate conjunction such as when, while, as, before, after, since, because, if, unless, or until. The comma is inserted before the independent clause which completes the sentence.

Examples:

If you plan on going to the debate contest, I’ll pick you up at 7:30 a.m.
When it became apparent that the rain wasn’t stopping, we canceled the jog-a-thon.
Unless there is some unanticipated change, finals’ week will be the first week of June.
Until the movie starts, let’s sit outside and enjoy the sunshine.
Because the fog was so thick this morning, school was postponed until 11:00 a.m.

(Notice that the second half of each sentence, the independent clause, could stand alone as a sentence and that the first half, beginning with a subordinate conjunction, cannot stand alone as a sentence and is therefore dependent on the independent clause.

5. Use commas to separate groups of words at the end of a sentence which follow the main thought, relate to it in some manner, and frequently begin with which or an ing or ed-ending word.

Examples:

The favored horse for the Kentucky Derby wouldn’t get in the starting gate, rearing up and beating at the gate with its hooves.
One little boy at the party covered his face with birthday cake frosting, which didn’t seem to bother anyone.
Allison finally left the store that was having the big discount sale, frustrated by the length of the check-out lines.
6. **Place commas around a group of words beginning with who, which, or whose that provides information that is not essential for the sentence to make sense (called a non-restrictive relative clause).** The sentence could stand alone and make sense without the group of words.

Examples:

The Empire State Building, *which* was once the tallest building in the world, no longer is among the top-five tallest buildings.
Detective Longtree, *who* works for Scotland Yards in London, has been a detective for over forty years.
The sound of the dripping faucet kitchen, *which* I hear every night in our apartment, can drive a person mad.

(Note: If the group of words beginning with who, which, or whose provides essential information for the sentence to make sense (called a restrictive relative clause), do not insert commas: The man *who* works in the library is my next-door neighbor. The book *which* you requested is on order in the bookstore. Anyone *who* wants to learn geometry should take Ms. Iketa’s class.)

7. **Use commas after introductory transitional words or phrases and before and after “interrupting” words and phrases that require a reading pause in the sentence.**

Examples:

*First*, there were no cooking utensils in the cabin. *Second*, there was no silverware. *In conclusion*, I’d like to thank everyone who made today’s auction a big success.
The owner of that red Honda, *by the way*, is a Toyota salesman.
Most of the damage, *fortunately*, was superficial and didn’t harm the house’s structure or foundation.
The hockey team, *as you can see*, needs a lot of work before it begins playing games.

8. **Often a sentence will need multiple commas in situations where more than one comma rule applies.**

Examples:

That particular jersey comes in red, white, or black, but the college store, unfortunately, only has the small size left.

(Commases are used within a series of three or more items, after the last word before a coordinate conjunction in a compound sentence, and before and after an “interrupter.”)

When I decide whether to enroll in summer school, which might take a week or two, I’ll let you know, but in the meantime, feel free to enroll without me.
(Commas are used after an introductory group of words, before and after a non-restrictive “which” clause, before a coordinate conjunction in a compound sentence, and after a second introductory group of words - in the meantime - beginning the second sentence within the compound sentence.)

9. Sometimes writers use commas in places where they don’t belong. As a general rule, don’t use commas in the following situations.

a. Before a subordinate conjunction beginning the second half of a complex sentence.

Examples:

You can return the hedge clippers whenever you want to.
I don’t want you to come to the tupperware party because you feel obligated.
We’re not going to attend the concert in the park if it’s still raining.

b. Before a coordinate conjunction (and, but, so, for, yet, or) that connects two words or groups of words but not two complete sentences.

Examples:

Janette is tired of working year after year for the college’s outreach program and never getting a raise.
Student mentors at the high school work primarily with freshmen and often form close friendships with them.
Adults attending football games can carry bottled water and sodas into the stadium but not food or alcoholic beverages.

Editing Activity 2.5

Insert commas in the following sentences by applying the comma usage rules presented. Some sentences will require more than one comma, and one sentence requires no commas.

Example: When using any of the welding equipment in the shop please follow all the safety rules posted on the equipment which are there for your protection.

Corrected: When using any of the welding equipment in the shop, please follow all the safety rules posted on the equipment, which are there for your protection.

1. Judging by the quality of the soil and slope of the lot you will need to bring in a lot of top soil for your class landscaping project.

2. I would suggest bringing in at least enough top soil to provide a six-inch top to the current soil.
3. You can not begin digging trenches for the sprinkler system until you’ve brought in the top soil but you can lay out the design of your system in advance which will take some time.

4. Although the back area is rather small you will still need a number of sprinkler heads to provide coverage for the lawn the trees along the fence and the flowers and plants around the borders.

5. The area which requires the most watering is the lawn so you need a separate timing system for it and the other parts of the yard.

6. Since you may not be able to do the entire project by yourself I’ll be glad to help but I know you are required to do as much as possible on your own.

7. I would suggest using rolls of sod for the lawn rather than grass seed because the lawn comes fully grown and with rolls of sod weeds aren’t a problem.

8. The only thing you’ll need to get from the landscaping department is a power hole digger which will make planting the trees easier and faster.

9. Putting in the sprinkler system will require measuring and cutting a lot of PVC pipe for the water lines but the pipe is light and easy to connect allowing you to work quickly.

10. I’d suggest giving yourself a full weekend to smooth out the top soil put in the sprinkler system and then lay out the sod and then I’d schedule a second weekend for all of the planting giving you enough time to complete the project.

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**Editing Activity 2.6**

Insert commas in the sentences of the following draft by applying the rules for comma usage. Some sentences will require multiple commas, and some will require none.

Example: Weather conditions in many parts of the world have become more erratic in recent years. The world has experienced warmer warms, colder colds, more frequent and stronger hurricanes, and more tornadoes. While some weather experts attribute the changes to the natural weather cycles that have occurred throughout time others attribute the changes to man-made global warming.

Edited: Weather conditions in many parts of the world have become more erratic in recent years. The world has experienced warmer warms, colder colds, more frequent and stronger hurricanes, and more tornadoes. While some weather experts attribute the changes to the natural weather cycles that have occurred throughout time, most attribute them to man-made global warming.
The Old Dorm

The dormitory my sister stayed in her first year of college was an old army barracks. Many barracks’ buildings were converted to dorms when the college was built on the former military base years ago and her dormitory barracks was one of the few left standing twenty years later. The barracks consisted of an end-to-end hallway with ten small dorm rooms on each side. Each room had just enough space for two twin beds and a sink. There was no closet space anywhere so she and her roommate strung a wire along one side of the room and hung their clothes. In addition since there was no space for a study desk they’d study on their beds or go to the library.

There was one communal bathroom for the entire dormitory with two shower stalls and two toilets. Needless to say there was often a line for the bathroom and sometimes my sister would use the bathroom in one of the newly built dorms rather than wait in line. There was also no cooling unit in any of the rooms so they got very warm in the late spring and the summer. It was also a noisy place since the thin uninsulated walls between the rooms were a conduit for sound.

Finally the dorm was in bad shape since the college was planning on tearing it down soon and didn’t want to put any money into it. There were holes in the walls cracked and chipped tiles on the floor and permanent mildew in the concrete shower stalls. The entire dorm had an old dank musty smell that always lingered and clung to everyone’s clothes. There were also holes in the walls cracks in the ceilings and cracks in the enamel sink basins. The only good thing about the dorm which was the only reason that my sister stayed was that the cost per semester was half as much as for the new dorms. As you can see no one would have lived there otherwise.

Editing Activity 2.7

Proofread your latest draft and evaluate your comma usage in each sentence. Insert commas where they are needed in accordance with the comma usage rules, and delete any commas that aren’t required.

Editing Activity 2.8

This review activity covers the grammar and punctuation concerns introduced in Unit One: run-on and comma-splice sentences and irregular verbs. The review activities throughout the units focus on the most common types of errors that writers commit, which will help you avoid them in your writing.

Correct any run-on or comma-splice sentences in the following paragraphs by inserting a period between sentences or combining them with a joining word. Replace any incorrect irregular verb with the correct forms.

The food in the cafeteria has improved since the school “outsourced” the cooking to a private company. They done a good job of choosing a company that cooked for a number of different schools and knewed what students liked.

The best thing about the food now is the variety, we used to get almost nothing but American food. Now we get enchiladas, burritos, pasta, pizza, chow mein, and chicken bowls. We had grew sick of eating nothing but fish sticks, mashed potatoes, chicken tenders, and what we called
“mystery meat.” Now we have a variety of ethnic foods every week students actually look forward to eating in the cafeteria.

The other bad thing before was that every meal used to taste like a frozen meal. We joked that the only oven they ever used in the kitchen was a microwave. Today they actually cook a lot of the food in the cafeteria, eating freshly cooked food after having ate heated-up frozen food is a real treat.

The school is also much happier with the new arrangement. It had got deeply into the “red” financially because most students weren’t eating in the cafeteria the school still had to buy the food and pay the cafeteria workers the same. Today the cafeteria is full of students Monday through Friday, the school is bringing in a lot more money without having to pay much more for food and cooking services. The cafeteria has went from a financial liability to a revenue generator for the school, and everyone has benefited from the change.

Editing Guidelines

1. Check your draft for any run-on or comma-splice sentences. If you find any, correct them by inserting a period between sentences or combining them with a joining word.

2. Check your sentences for correct subject-verb agreement, making sure that your present-tense verbs end in “s” with singular subjects and do not end in “s” with plural subjects. Look in particular for sentences where the subject and verb are separated by a group of words or where they are inverted.

4. If you are using a word processing program, run the spell check for the entire draft to identify and correct any misspelled words. If you are not using a computer, check for any words that don’t look right to you, find their correct spelling, and make any needed corrections.

5. Look for frequently confused words to make sure you have used to right word: except/accept, to/too, affect/effect, there/their/they’re, then/than, its/it’s, were/we’re. (“Confusing duos” will be covered in detail in a later unit.)

Editing Activity 2.9

Proofread your current draft for errors following the guidelines presented and make any needed corrections. Read the draft several times looking for one type of error at a time (run-on sentences, subject-verb agreement, spelling, etc.) so as not to overlook any grammar or punctuation element.
Editing Activity 2.10

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and proofread one another’s drafts for errors. Point out any errors that you find in their drafts, and correct any errors that your classmates find in your draft. Then write your final draft to share with classmates and your instructor.

Timed Essay

In each unit you write timed essays to help prepare you for any in-class writing that you may do in courses across the curriculum or any time-restricted writing outside of college. As previously mentioned, your pre-writing preparation time is limited to a few minutes before you begin your essay. You will also have limited time to revise and edit. Therefore, you need to compress the process for a timed writing.

Here is a review of the suggestions for writing an effective timed essay.

1. **Study the writing prompt very carefully so that you understand exactly what you are being asked to write about.**

2. **Since most writing prompts will require you to take a position on a particular topic, decide what position you want to take: the position that you feel you can support most convincingly.**

3. **Think about the ideas you want to include to support your position: the reasons that you feel or believe as you do.** Before writing, you might make a list of reasons you may include or think through the ideas you want to present. As you write, new ideas will no doubt come to you to help develop the essay.

4. **When you write your essay, include the topic of the essay and the position you are taking in the opening paragraph, your main points of support in the middle paragraphs, and some final reinforcement of your position in the final paragraph.** Your final paragraph, for example, might restate your position in some manner, summarize your main points, and give readers a final thought regarding the topic.

5. **When you complete your essay, go over it as you would the drafts you have written for this unit.** Decide if there are some changes you can make to improve the essay: additions, deletions, or sentence wording improvement. Then check your essay carefully for errors and make the necessary corrections. Obviously, you don’t have time to make any major revisions, so only make what you feel are the most important changes. Make sure to give yourself time to proofread your essay carefully for errors.

6. **Keep track of the time so that you don’t run out before finishing your essay or having a chance to review and correct it.**

7. **The more timed essays that you write, the better you will get at it.** You will learn from experience how best to balance your time among preparation, writing, revising, and editing.
Timed-writing Activity 2.1

Before doing your own timed writing, read the following timed essay along with the writer’s position on the topic and the “prewriting” ideas that he listed. Notice how the writer opens his essay, how he develops a different supporting point in each paragraph, how he uses personal experience, knowledge, and reasoning skills (clear, rational thinking) to support his opinion, and how he concludes the essay.

Sample timed essay

Topic: Should the length of the high school day be extended to give students time to take electives like music, art, or creative writing?

Writer’s position: Don’t lengthen the school day.

Prewriting ideas:
- School day is already long enough
- Couldn’t do after-school activities
- Could be included in after-school activities rather than added periods
- Could be optional
- Students and sleep (a study I had read)

There are people who believe that lengthening the school day to allow students more time to take elective classes like music, art, or creative writing would be a good thing. While those may be good classes to take, lengthening the school day is not the answer. Perhaps there are better ways to deal with the situation.

The school day already runs from 8:00 to 3:30. That is seven and one half hours of school. After school, there is also homework to be done, which may take another hour or two. That means that between school and homework, many students are already putting in nine-to-ten hour days. How many adults have to work that much at their daily jobs?

There are also after-school activities like sports, cheerleading, and ROTC. These activities can last until 5:30 or sometimes later. If the school day was lengthened, these activities wouldn’t even start until 4:30 or 5:00, and students wouldn’t get home until 7:00 or 8:00. I played volleyball and often didn’t get home until 6:00. I can’t imagine getting home an hour or two later.

A newspaper article that I read also says that high school students aren’t getting enough sleep, which can affect their school work and their health. These studies recommend that the school day should start later and end at the same time, shortening, not lengthening, the school day.

Music, art, and creative writing may be good courses to take for many students, and I wouldn’t mind taking an art class. But why lengthen the school day? They could be included as a part of the after-school activities so students could be involved in music or art while others are doing sports or cheerleading. That makes sense. Another option would be to add a period or two for those types of classes and make them voluntary for students. Those who wanted to take them could, but others could end their school day at the regular time.

There may be some people who want to make those types of classes mandatory because they feel that they are important. However, extending the school day is a bad way to do it. If they are so important, include them in the regular school day as electives that students can take along with the subjects that are required. It’s possible to do both, even if you have to shorten the
periods by a few minutes, shorten the breaks, or even shorten the lunch period by five minutes or so. There are definitely ways to take care of the situation without lengthening the school day which, as I have pointed out, would cause more problems than it would solve.

**Timed Writing Two**

Milburn High has a “closed campus” at lunch time due to some trouble that students got into downtown two years ago. No students can go off of campus to eat, so they either bring their lunch or eat at the cafeteria or snack bar. Neighboring Sierra High has an open campus. Students can eat off of campus and take their cars out. Should high school students be allowed to eat off campus at lunch time – an “open” campus - or should they be required to remain on campus during lunch time – a closed campus? Use your personal experience, knowledge, and reasoning skills to support your opinion.

**A little logic 5**

Seventeen people are in an underground shelter that saved them from a nuclear attack. However, there is only enough air left for nine of them to survive underground for a month. Of the seventeen people, who stays and who goes, if anyone: a pregnant woman, a seven-year-old boy, an elderly man, a plumber, teenage twin girls, a nurse, a male lawyer, a homeless man, a husband and wife who bicker constantly, a female nutritionist, a male weight-lifting champion, the male governor of the state, a woman in her forties who speaks seven languages, an English teacher, and yourself.
Reading Break

Take a “reading break” from your writing. The essays by published writers between the two main writing assignments for each unit provide a change of pace. Read these expository essays for enjoyment, for possible classroom discussions, and as a source for ideas that you might apply to your own writing. At the end of each essay are some questions that can be used to initiate a discussion.

What Pregnant Women Won’t Tell You – Ever

By Elyse Anders

(Elise Anders is a regular poster on StepChick.com. In this essay, Anders, with a good dash of humor, reveals the significant downside pregnancy that women seldom share.)

Are you pregnant? Know someone who is? Might you become pregnant in the future? Have you ever seen or heard of a baby? Have you or any of your friends ever expressed interest in creating a human being from scratch? If you’ve answered “yes”, “maybe”, “perhaps”, or “I’d like to” to any of the above questions, this post is for you!

While the human-baking process has been going on for like at least 6000 years or so, it’s hardly a process that’s been perfected. And shockingly, a good portion of the process is not discussed. Really. If you think that being pregnant is anything like what you’ve seen in the movies or heard from your friends or co-workers, you might be surprised to hear that normal uncomplicated pregnancies can suck.

So I made a list of things no one tells you about pregnancy until you’re already sucked in. Not everyone experiences all of these. Some women experience none of these. Some women experience all of these and more. And these do not include any of the things no one tells you about complications, miscarriages, infertility or unwanted pregnancy. So this list is only for the lucky ones.

You must be happy!

You’re pregnant with a baby you want and you and your husband planned for! Congrats! You must be thrilled! Everyone else is! Don’t you love being pregnant? Everyone else does! It’s magical! It’s wonderful!

Except… you’re not. Don’t try to talk about it with anyone. It’s like explaining mustard to a frog. Women who are already parents will explain to you that you’re just dealing with some stress, and that everything will be fine. Everyone who is not a mother will just be confused or think you’re joking.
Reality: Pregnancy is terrifying. You don’t know what’s going on with your body. No one tells you what’s normal and what’s not. And suddenly, no matter how excited and prepared you thought you were, you realize you are totally and completely not ready to be responsible for another human being. You’re filled with doubt. You’re sure you’re making a mistake… and you know what? You might be. No one will tell you that either (unless you’re not married, in which case you are not to be happy at all and any mention of being happy will be met with feigned congratulations and followed up with lectures to your face and whispers behind your back about how naive/stupid/irresponsible you are.) But really, parenting isn’t for everyone. And even if you once thought it was for you, it might not be. For you, it is entirely possible that you made a mistake.

But even if it’s not a mistake (BTW, it probably isn’t), it can sure feel like it. And it’s not only okay, but normal to feel overwhelmed and confused… even angry. On top of being one of the biggest life changing events you will ever experience, you’re uncomfortable and your hormones are messing with your mind… and your body. And on top of that is the fact that it’s hard to find sympathy from anyone other than women who are currently pregnant and women who are dealing with their newborns.

Morning sickness

Ok, everyone talks about morning sickness. But I don’t think it gets proper credit for being as awful as it is. Somehow, barfing endlessly for months has gained a reputation as being a romantic rite of passage. It’s not. It’s like being hungover with the flu for 6 weeks – 9 months.

People will think they’re laughing along with you as you struggle to keep anything down. They will either be completely unsympathetic or think it’s an amusing practical joke to expose you to smells that will bring on your nausea. They will even insist that you’re wrong that the smell of chicken a block away will keep you sick for days because “but you love chicken!”

Don’t be fooled into thinking “morning sickness” has anything to do with mornings. Noon doesn’t change anything. “Morning” sickness is better termed “all the damn time” sickness. It’s sweet that Hollywood is naive enough to believe that preggos throw up three times before 9 am then go on to have a normal day. And by “sweet” I mean that it makes me want to puke.

Staying awake

The first trimester, it’s not even worth it to try. You will not stay awake. You can’t fight it. You can’t sleep your way into more energy. You will feel narcoleptic. The second trimester you won’t be able to sleep. You will be full of energy. Anything that can be done, must get done now! Before bed! Who needs sleep! You will feel like a manic on meth. The third trimester you will be motivated but exhausted. You will want to sleep all the time but will not be able to. You will not be able to get comfortable. Once you are comfortable and dozing off, your baby will decide that it’s time to throw a uterus rave. You will feel like a narcoleptic with a conjoined manic-meth-head twin.

Aches

Everything will hurt. Your head, your boobs, your teeth, your back, your belly, your thighs, your feet. If nothing hurts, something is probably wrong. If everything hurts too much, something is probably wrong. If everything hurts the right amount, that is a great sign and it means that everything is going perfectly. How do you know the right amount? You don’t. And every day,
the “right amount” can change. Good luck. You can take Tylenol (paracetamol for the foreigners), but don’t expect it to work for anything ache-related.

**Cervix kicks**

Oh your sweet little baby is healthy and moving around and kicking. You can feel him bumping around. It’s magical. HOLY SHIT! WHAT WAS THAT? That? That crazy sudden pain that almost made you collapse? That feeling that someone just sent an electric fireball down your vagina and through your legs? That, my dear, was your sweet little baby kicking you in the cervix. You can’t prepare for it. You can’t stop it. You can only hope that each time it happens, you are near something to break your fall. Or that you are in a place where no one cares if you scream.

**Bladder kicks**

It’s probably unfair to say no one talks about this one. But I don’t think it’s talked about enough. Once your kid starts kicking hard enough to feel it on the outside, it’s time to go to the pharmacy and pick up some Poise pantyliners. Do it. Do not be embarrassed. Do not wait to see if I am making this up.

At this point, your kid can kick with some force. Your bladder lives next to her feet. Think of your bladder as a crudely fastened water balloon. A quick punch aaaaand……hopefully you have access to new pants. Otherwise you have to start yelling at invisible people about Zeus to get away with walking around smelling like pee.

**Gaining sympathy**

Don’t expect anyone to ever be sympathetic to any of the things you are going through. Maybe this is why no one talks about these things. Your friends who want kids don’t want to hear this. Your friends who don’t want kids will want you to shut up and snap, “You’re the one who wanted kids.” (Because wanting a family means that you want to be kicked in the cervix while urinating on yourself with a back that aches so bad you can hardly move… that’s what YOU GET!) Your partner might try to be sympathetic, but is going through all this for the first time, too. He won’t have much advice, and will pretty much feel helpless.

With the exception of women with newborns, everyone who doesn’t fall into the first three groups just wants to tell you how great it will be when the kid comes out. Yeah, it is worth it in the end… but that doesn’t change anything you’re going through right now. Even though you’re literally never alone, pregnancy can be a very lonely time.

**Swelling junk**

Everyone knows things swell when you’re pregnant. Your hands swell. Your feet swell. Your face swells. Your boobs enter a room 5 minutes before you, and 10 minutes after your belly. But no one tells you that your genitals swell. No one. And once they start, there’s nothing you can do to stop them. And it hurts. It feels like someone punched you in the crotch with brass knuckles. Sitting hurts. Standing makes the blood rush down. Laying down keeps the pressure off, which
feels better, but also helps everything engorge for when you do sit or stand. And as the baby gets heavier, it acts like a tourniquet, trapping your entire blood supply inside your labia.

**Feet**

New moms always talk about how they want to get back into their pre-pregnancy jeans. This is their way of coping with the loss of every pair of shoes they ever loved. By the middle of your 3rd trimester, none of your shoes will fit. Your feet will be swollen and all the muscles and ligaments in your feet will have relaxed, spreading your feet out. The swelling does go away once you’ve pushed your little doll out. The spreading does not. I hope you didn’t buy your dream Manolos to celebrate your growing family. Now, the only place they’re going to fit is the donation bin. Bright side: some hobo out there is gonna look FABulous!

**Advice**

Everyone you meet who has ever met another pregnant woman is an expert on your pregnancy. Everything they will tell you defies logic, and is likely the opposite of anything your OB would ever tell you. The longer ago and the farther away they gave birth, the more advice they will have and the more they will insist your doctor is wrong. Example: 95 year old woman who birthed her youngest 80 years ago in Siberia knows more than your doctor, and will terrify you while going on for hours about what the best way to be pregnant is (using vodka to douche every hour is important for a healthy fetus! You don’t need prenatal care! Birth defect screening is rubbish; try a dowsing rod for your answers! Pickled fish make the best pantyliners!). Your 25 year old friend next door with a 3 month old daughter will not impose her advice on you. Your husband will give you advice based on what he remembers from his aunt being pregnant in 1989. Everyone else will ask you questions, benign questions compared to the stuff I’ve listed here, and will be horrified by your answers. “OMG YOU HAVE TO DO WHAT ON THE PREGNANCY TEST STICK? OOOOOOOh YUCK!” “Transvaginal ultrasound? What’s that? OOOOOOOOH YUCK!” “They look THERE? On the BABY? To find out what sex it is? OOOOOOH YUCK!” “Wait, it’s moving right NOW? Like while we talk? OOOOOOOOOOH YUCK!” “Can you still have sex? OOOOOOH YUCK!”

So there you have it. Everything you may or may not have wanted to know about being pregnant that no one would have ever told you anyway. Now, I need to go ice my crotch and change my Poise pad.

**Discussion Starters**

1. What is your overall reaction to the essay? Did you find it enlightening, amusing, somewhat sickening, all of the above, or something else?

2. What did you learn about being pregnant that you didn’t already know? After reading the essay, how do you view pregnancy differently, if at all?

3. While the information in the essay was perhaps sobering for women who haven’t experienced pregnancy, the tone of the essay was light. Why do you think the author juxtaposed the “heavy” information with the light, humorous tone?
Helping the Homeless

By Eduard Guzman

In this essay, Mr. Guzman reveals what life is like as a homeless person, who the homeless are, and how he turned his life around to help others.

I help the homeless. I give money to non-profit organizations that help street people. I volunteer at shelters and soup kitchens. I pass out cards to homeless people that list local shelters. I donate food, clothing, and toys for homeless children. On occasion I take a homeless person to an AA meeting or a drug rehab center. I don’t help the homeless out of any noble or altruistic sentiment. I don’t help them out of guilt. I help the homeless for one reason: they are my brothers and sisters.

I was homeless for over five years. I am an alcoholic, and I lost my job and family when drinking took over my life. I lost interest in everything but my next bottle, and before long I was on the streets living from drink to drink. Unless you are an alcoholic, it is hard to understand how a person could lose everything just to pursue the pathetic goal of staying drunk. I hit rock bottom on the streets and stayed there for five years.

Life on the streets is tough for everyone. I slept on sidewalks, under bridges, in parks, in abandoned cars, and in shelters. I panhandled for money to buy booze and rummaged through dumpsters and garbage cans behind restaurants for food and recycled cans and bottles. I was beaten up by thugs or someone who wanted my bottle more than me, and I was arrested several times for loitering. I was often sick and in and out of free medical clinics. Cold and hunger were constant companions along with uncontrollable tremors when I went too long between drinks. I figured I’d be dead in a few years.

I made a few friends on the streets, and we hung out together, sleeping in a park until we’d get kicked out, then moving under a bridge, and then back to another park. We shared bottles and food when someone didn’t have anything, and we watched each other’s back. We also shared our pasts - other lives once lived and how we got where we were. You can’t judge a person by their life circumstance, and I met some good people on the streets: decent, honest, and yes, hardworking. I also met some bad people, as there are in all walks of life, who preyed upon their homeless brothers and sisters.

Who are the homeless people? Many are drug addicts or alcoholics like me who didn’t get or seek out treatment for their disease as their lives spiraled downward. Other homeless, through no fault of their own, have lost their jobs and can’t pay rent. Many are war veterans who returned with emotional or physical problems that prevented them from holding jobs or fitting back into society. Many abandoned or abused women end up on the streets, sometimes with children in tow. They often turn to prostitution to survive and drugs to escape.
People you see muttering to themselves or sitting lifelessly on a sidewalk often suffer from mental illness such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or depression that goes untreated year after year. Younger people who run away from home or who believe living on the streets is an adventure are among the transient homeless who come, eventually leave, and are replaced by an endless flood of alienated youth. Many people who have lost their jobs eventually find other work and vanish from the streets. The older homeless are a more entrenched group, often living out their lives on the street.

People seldom see the homeless as individuals, and they are generally viewed as the dregs of society, unworthy of human contact. These filthy, bedraggled human flotsam and jetsam have committed the cardinal sin of our society: financial failure. Become a street person for one day, sitting on a sidewalk, and you will see in the faces of passersbys what every homeless person sees: disgust, scorn, hatred, curiosity reserved for freaks. Of course, there are always the exceptions who treat you like a human being, but most of society would rather cross the street to avoid the slightest contact. And homeless people, who already blame themselves for their plight, often perceive themselves as they are perceived by society, adding to the guilt and self-loathing many already carry.

I was one of the lucky ones. I was staying in a shelter during one bitterly cold winter week and began talking with a volunteer. He was an alcoholic who had been sober for five years. He invited me to an AA meeting and said he’d come by the next day to pick me up. I’d been invited before, but I’d never wanted to give up the only thing I lived for. This time, however, I felt particularly vulnerable, maybe because I was feeling ill or because of the frigid cold or the fatigue in my bones from five years on the street. When he came to pick me up the next day, I didn’t run.

After five years of drunkenness, getting sober wasn’t easy and I fell off the wagon more than once. However, the volunteer named Jermaine never gave up on me, so I was accountable to someone who cared about me. I had a dream that kept me going -to someday be reunited with my family -and although it was an improbable dream, it was something to hold onto. Jermaine finally got me into a half-way house that had the structure I needed and a part-time job with a soft drink distributing company. Eventually as I got physically and mentally stronger, I was able to work full-time and move into my own apartment. They speak of the lure of the streets calling the homeless back to their carefree, independent life, but I never heard it. That was the last place I wanted to go, and there is nothing carefree about living on the streets.

Jermaine helped me find out where my family was living, but their lives, naturally, had moved forward. My wife had remarried and my two teenage children were in a stable family situation with a good step-father. My ex-wife had no interest in seeing me again, and I didn’t blame her. However, she let me meet with my kids in a restaurant while she and their step-dad waited next door. Just to see my kids brought a flood of emotion I couldn’t restrain. I hugged both of them when I left, and it was the best feeling I had had in years. Just to be a small part of their lives would be my dream come true.

I don’t remember the moment when I decided to start helping the homeless, but I know they had never left my mind from the time I left the streets. They were the only family I knew for over five years, and I couldn’t abandon them. So I do what I can do, never enough and with no delusion that I am making a big difference. But if I can help get one person off the streets from time to time, or make life a little more tolerable for others who may always be homeless, the gift I receive is greater than the one I give.

There are thousands of people like myself who help the homeless, but there are never enough. The homeless need our help, and there are things that we can all do. The next time you
pass by a homeless person, look him or her in the eye, smile, and say, “How are you doing today?” In other words, acknowledge their humanity. I know how much that can mean.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. How do the first paragraph and last two paragraphs of the essay tie together? How does the final paragraph bring readers into the essay and reveal the author’s purpose in writing?

2. What is the purpose of the paragraphs in which the author relates his own experiences on the street?

3. What did you learn from the essay about homeless people that you didn’t know, and how may it affect your attitude towards them?

4. If you are aware of such a situation, discuss how alcoholism has affected someone that you know and the people are around him or her.
Writing Assignment 4

For your next expository essay, you will explain to readers what you believe to be the most important qualities that a person in a certain position should possess. You can base your belief on personal experience, the experience of others, your knowledge, and your reasoning skills.

The following are some examples of possible writing topics. You may choose any one that you like or come up with another person of your choice.

The most important qualities of a good -

- teacher
- mother (or father)
- friend
- coach
- sister (or brother)
- cook
- principal
- employer
- tutor
- wrestler (badminton player, basketball player, volleyball player, soccer player)
- musician

Prewriting

Prewriting can include anything you do to prepare to write your first draft: selecting a writing topic, thinking about the topic, deciding on a position to take that reflects your opinion, listing some possible ideas to include, considering how to open your draft. Prewriting preparation helps writers develop their drafts with more confidence, knowing the general direction their writing will take and some of the ideas they may include.

Topic Selection

To decide on the best topic for your upcoming essay, ask yourself the following questions.
1. **What kind of person would you most like to write about?** A coach? A teacher? A mother or father? A friend? An employer? A particular kind of athlete or musician? Pick a topic that most interests you and that you have some knowledge of.

2. **Do you know someone that possesses the kinds of qualities that you feel are most important in being a good teacher, mother, oboe player, coach, or friend?** You might use this person as a model when considering the qualities to present in your essay.

3. **What kind of person do you think some of your classmates - your reading audience - may be interested in reading about?**

4. **What kind of person are you most knowledgeable of given your personal experience?** Your essay will probably be most insightful and interesting if you are writing from your experience with this type of person.

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**Prewriting Activity 2.4**

Keeping the topic selection questions in mind, select a topic for your essay: **The most important qualities of a good _____________.** Consider two or three possible topics and choose the one that interests you the most and that you can write most knowledgeably on.

Sample student topic:

**The most important qualities of a good minister**

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**Generating Material**

During prewriting, writers generate potential material for an essay in different ways: by writing freely about the topic for a few minutes, by doing some type of outline that includes the main points and some development for each point, or by making a list of ideas they may want to include. Generating potential material for an essay gives you a good start towards writing your first draft. You have a good sense of how you are going to proceed.

For your current topic, you are deciding on the most important qualities that a particular kind of person possesses. For this topic, making a tentative list of qualities to include in your essay would be useful. If you can come up with four or five important qualities, you already have some main points to develop in your essay. You may not use all of the qualities from your list, and you may include different ones as you write your draft. Either way, the material you generate gives you a great start for writing your draft.

There is one thing to keep in mind about your prewriting ideas. They provide you with a good start towards writing your draft, but you certainly aren’t limited to them as you write. As you have probably discovered through your writing, the actual writing/thinking process often triggers new ideas that you hadn’t considered during prewriting, some of which may be your most insightful or interesting. Be open to new ideas that come to you as you write, and never restrict yourself to your prewriting thoughts.
Prewriting Activity 2.5

Make a list of the most important qualities that a person needs to be a good _______________. Think carefully about what you want to include and list all of those qualities that you believe are essential. Write down all of your ideas, and later you can decide which qualities that you want to focus on in your essay.

Student sample response

Topic: The most important qualities of being a good minister

Qualities:
- Being a good listener
- Being a good friend
- Being optimistic
- Being a good person
- Having a positive message
- Knowing how to give a good sermon
- Knowing the Bible

Once you have made a list of qualities, evaluate the importance of each quality and if necessary, pare down the list to those qualities that you definitely want to develop in your essay. Then consider the order that you may want to present them.

Audience and Purpose

The reading audience for your upcoming essay is your classmates or any individual or group of classmates that you feel would have an interest in your topic. Your writing purpose is up to you. What do you want readers to get out of your essay? How would you like them to respond? What can they learn or how might they benefit from reading the essay?

Prewriting Activity 2.6

Decide on your reading audience for your essay: an individual, a group of classmates that you feel would have an interest in it, or the entire class. Then decide on your writing purpose: what you want readers to take from your essay.

Student sample response

Topic: The most important qualities of being a good minister

Audience: Any classmates who have an interest in religion or who go to church

Purpose: To share my ideas on what a good minister is like and perhaps get some responses
Drafting

Now that you have done considerable prewriting work for your essay, you are ready to write your first draft. In this section, you will first receive some instruction on paragraph development that will help you elaborate on your prewriting ideas in each paragraph. Next, you are given some “Drafting Guidelines:” suggestions on how to structure your draft and what to include in each segment. Then you read and evaluate a sample student draft to see how another writer presented her ideas. Finally, you will write the first draft of your essay.

Paragraph Development

Essays are written in paragraphs to help readers follow the writer’s thoughts most easily. In general, when a writer changes paragraphs, she is letting readers know that she is moving on to something new: a different point, a new idea, a different time or place, the next step.

Paragraphing is not an exact science, and there is no absolute right or wrong way to paragraph a paper. Paragraphing is effective when it helps move readers smoothly through a writer’s thoughts. A well-paragraphed essay reveals to readers that the writer is in command of her material and knows how to present it in the most understandable way.

Paragraphing Guidelines

The following guidelines will help you paragraph your essays effectively.

1. As a general definition, a paragraph is a group of related sentences focusing on one idea, point, example, or thought.

2. Paragraphs often begin with a topic sentence which provides the main idea of the paragraph. The rest of the sentences develop that idea.

3. You change paragraphs as you move to something new in your paper: a different idea, a new example, a different part of an experience, a different time or place.

4. You also change paragraphs to avoid overly long paragraphs that readers can get bogged down in, ending a paragraph at a natural break in your thoughts.

5. If you find yourself writing series of short paragraphs -two or three sentences each -you need to consider combining the paragraphs or developing them further.
5. **Writers develop paragraphs in a number of different ways.** Here are some examples with their *topic sentences* underlined.

a. **By using personal experience to develop the main point of the paragraph:**

   The landlord at our apartments seems like a nice guy. Whenever we’ve had a problem with the water heater going out or the kitchen sink getting plugged, he takes care of the problem that day. He makes an effort to know the tenants by name, and he’ll shout “Hey Sophia” when he sees me heading to school in the morning. When my dad’s disability check is late, he doesn’t hassle us for rent because he knows we’ll pay. He has a good relationship with all the tenants except the bad ones, and he gets rid of them as fast as he can.

b. **By providing an example or examples to help readers understand the writer’s thought:**

   It’s a lot cheaper to buy food at FoodCo than at a supermarket. For example, at the supermarket we shop at, a box of Kellogg’s Raisin Brain costs $3.50. At Foodco, you get a big box of Kellogg’s Raisin Bran containing two large bags for $5.00. At Foodco, the cost of fruit like bananas, apples, or cherries is about half the price of a supermarket. Foodco sells food in bigger bulk containers, and that’s why it costs less. If you have a family of four or more, the bulk-sized packaging is no problem.

c. **By providing an explanation to help readers understand the main idea of the paragraph:**

   Fracking is a controversial way of getting natural gas out of the ground. Fracking is the process of drilling and injecting a high-pressure water mixture into the ground to fracture shale rocks to release the natural gas inside. Fracking has proven highly effectively for releasing natural gas that couldn’t be tapped otherwise. The problem is that the mixture of water and chemicals used for fracking can seep into the water system and contaminate it, potentially leading to health problems for residents of an area. Fortunately, most fracking is done far from residential areas, but that doesn’t minimize the concern for the potential health danger it poses.

d. **By providing evidence to support a particular point:**

   There is no question that global warming is occurring. Glaciers are melting at an unprecedented rate. As a result, the world’s oceans are rising, and flooding is occurring in some coastal areas for the first time in recorded history. Globally, the past three years have been the warmest recorded, and record-high daily temperatures have become commonplace. Global warming has also produced longer, more severe droughts in several parts of the world, and it has been linked to many of the extreme weather events that have been occurring with greater frequency, including hurricanes, tornadoes, and flooding. The effects of global warming are beginning to be felt, and unless we reduce man’s major contribution to global warming, the worst effects may lie ahead.

e. **By providing a comparison or contract:**
Principal Samuelian is not particularly popular with the elementary children at her school. They miss their old principle, Ms. Nishida. While Ms. Samuelian hasn’t gotten to know the students very well, Ms. Nishida made an effort to know every student by name and greet them every day. While Ms. Samuelian is a slow-moving, almost lethargic person, Ms. Nishida was full of energy, and children loved to try and keep up with her as she dashed around campus. Ms. Samuelian seldom smiles while Ms. Nishida always had a smile on her face and laughed easily. Most importantly, Ms. Nishida made the children feel like she loved them and that she was sincere. When Ms. Samuelian hugs a child, it seems forced, and children feel no real connection.

f. **By providing description to help readers see, hear, or feel what the writer does:**

The fog grew continually thicker, and I could see only one line of the broken lines dividing the north and southbound lanes. I followed the red taillights of the car in front of me as long as I could, but it was moving faster and the lights slowly faded into the fog. I could barely see ten feet in front of me. All of a sudden I realized I was sweating badly, my body revealing the tension I was feeling. I was still forty miles from home, and I was going only thirty miles an hour in the fog. If I pulled over and stopped, I knew I would have to wait until morning or even longer for the fog to lift. Finally, I saw the dim taillights of another car ahead me, and I sped up to gain contact. I would stay with those taillights as long as I could, my lone guide through the dark, foggy night. **This was going to be the most nerve-wracking forty miles of my life.**

g. **By using different types of development in the same paragraph:**

Life is more boring since the bowling alley in town closed down. It was the place where I met my friends on a Friday or Saturday and played video games or bowled a game or two. Girls would also come to the bowling alley, which made it more interesting. The food there was also great and not expensive. For example, you could get a huge mound of fries and a burger for $4.00 or some nachos for $1.50. The fries were the best anywhere. Unfortunately, the bowling alley wasn’t doing too well financially. Most of us did more hanging out than spending money because we didn’t have much. In addition, a new bowling alley had been built fifteen miles away, which took some customers away. It just isn’t the same without the bowling alley. We really have no place to go when we always had the bowling alley. I miss that bowling alley smell, the sound of crashing pins, and the good times we had.

This paragraph was developed through personal experience, examples, description, a comparison (life with and without the bowling alley), and evidence (why the bowling alley had financial problems).

**Drafting Activity 2.4**

Choose any two of the following topics to develop a paragraph on. The sentence provided is the **topic sentence** for the paragraph. The sentences that you write to complete the paragraph will **support** the topic sentence in some manner.
When writers develop a paragraph, they seldom think of the type or types of development they are using: personal experience, examples, comparisons, evidence, explanation, etc. They develop the paragraph in ways that they feel best support the main idea of the paragraph.

You no doubt develop paragraphs of an essay the same way, with no real thought to different types of development. After you write your paragraphs, however, you can reread them, see how you developed each paragraph, and see whether you could add some type of development – description, an explanation, an example – to improve the paragraph.

Fill in the blanks in the following topic sentences to personalize the paragraph. Then write your paragraph to support the topic sentence in some manner.

Examples:

**My worst day of the week is usually Monday.** During school, I love my weekends where I can relax, watch some TV, and be with my friends. As Sunday night approaches, I start thinking about Monday and getting a little depressed. Usually I wait until the last minute on Sunday night to do any homework I have, so that brings a bad end to the weekend. Then I have to wake up early Monday for school after sleeping in on the weekend. One problem with Mondays is you know there are still four more days of school ahead until Saturday. Another problem is I have my long day on Mondays because I tutor middle school kids in math after school every Monday. I don’t mind tutoring, but I get home later and the evening is always rushed. Tuesday gets a little better, Wednesday is “hump” day, and once over the hump, Thursday and Friday move faster. But every Monday, it’s like, “Will I ever make it all the way to Friday?”

**As far as politics go, I really don’t have much interest.** To me politics is mainly for adults. The issues that they talk about don’t really interest me, and it seems like it’s mainly a bunch of older people arguing all the time and never getting anywhere. I was glad that Obama was elected president, but since then I haven’t paid much attention to what’s been going on. I read about the terrorists and what’s happening with ISIS in the Middle East, but it’s all really confusing and the politicians don’t seem to agree on much. All the stuff about taxes and how the economy is doing is boring and doesn’t affect my life. One issue I do care about is how expensive college is and whether I could ever afford four years, but no politician seems to have much interest in the problem. My dad’s a Democrat so I tell people I’m a Democrat if anyone asks. But most students I think are like me. Politics isn’t something on our minds.

Select any two of the following topic sentences to begin your paragraphs. Fill in the blanks with a word or group of words to complete the topic sentence.

1. One thing I really enjoy doing on weekends is ____________________________.
2. One car that I really like is a ____________________________.
3. ________ music (e.g. rap, country, rock, alternative, classical) is really ____________________________.
4. If I could have my dream job some day, it would be ______________________________.
5. My favorite holiday is ____________________________.
6. One television show that I always like to watch is _______________________________.

7. In my opinion, smoking marijuana is ________________________________.

8. I’d much rather go to a ______________ than to a ______________.

When you finish, exchange paragraphs with a couple classmates to see how different writers developed their paragraphs. Then reread your own paragraphs and see whether you might add something to improve it— an example, some description, an explanation— or delete something that doesn’t really support the main idea. Make any changes in your paragraphs that you feel will improve them.

____________________________________________________________________________

Providing Examples

Since providing examples is the most common and effective way for writers to help readers understand their ideas, it deserves some emphasis. Writers use examples for a variety of purposes: to help readers understand a particular idea or concept, to provide evidence that something exists or occurs, to support a particular point the writer is making, to “show” readers what a particular statement means, or to clarify an idea.

For example, a writer used the following example to help readers understand a theory and to provide evidence to support it:

Evolution is still occurring today. For example, in the past few years, scientists have noted a significant increase in wing span among certain species of migratory birds. In other words, some birds are growing longer, larger wings than their predecessors. The reason for the evolving wing span, scientists speculate, is that these birds are having to fly longer distances in search of food, often against heavier winds brought about by climate change. Their wings have grown larger and longer through extended, vigorous use, adapting to survive in a changing environment.

The writer provides an example that helps readers understand how a specie evolves and provides evidence that such evolution is occurring today.

Another writer used the following example to show readers what she meant by “hands-on learning.”

Seventh grade science instructor Michaela Renteria regularly provides students with “hands-on” learning. For example, rather than explain to students how carbon
dioxide from auto and industrial emissions traps heat in the atmosphere and raises temperatures, she lets them discover the effect on their own. In the classroom, they create an artificial, enclosed environment, pump carbon dioxide into its atmosphere, and note any change in atmospheric temperature. As the temperature rises with the increased levels of CO2, they see first-hand the warming effect of CO2.

The writer provided an example of “hands-on learning” that helps readers understand how Ms. Renteria’s students learn by doing rather than being told.

Another writer provided the following example to develop the thought that good friends are people that you can count on when you need them:

Best friends are there when you need them. For example, my friend Wyndell has always been there for me when I needed help. I was the little guy with a chip on his shoulder, and I wouldn’t let anyone pick on me. Wyndell was usually around, and he was a peacemaker. When I stood up to a guy twice my size, Wyndell, who was a big guy himself, stepped in and said with a laugh, “Come on guys. I’ll fight both of you blindfolded.” Usually guys like to find a way out of a fight without losing face, so we backed off. Wyndell kept me out of some fights where I would have probably gotten whipped. Friends have your back, and you know you can rely on them when you are in trouble.

Guidelines for Providing Examples

To provide examples effectively in your writing, consider the following suggestions:

1. **When you present a general statement, provide an example to make it particular to the person or situation you are writing about.** For example, if you write, “Nathan can make anyone laugh,” you are providing a general statement that could apply to many people. A good example, however, makes the statement particular to Nathan:

   Nathan can make anyone laugh. He can imitate how anyone walks or talks, and he does hilarious imitations of some of our teachers. If you turn your back on him and hear people laughing, you can guess who he’s imitating. He does it in a good-natured way, however, and no one is offended.

   The example reveals Nathan’s own special brand of humor and personalizes the general statement, “Nathan can make anyone laugh.”

2. **When you present a thought that readers may not fully understand, provide an example to clarify the thought.** For example, a writer presented the following example to clarify the statement, “Failure is often a self-fulfilling prophesy:”

   Failure is a self-fulfilling prophesy. If you think you are going to fail, there is a greater likelihood that you will. In a research study, one group of students were told that the task they faced was very difficult and that successful outcomes were
rare. Another group of students were told that the same task was relatively easy and they could expect good results. The students who expected to do poorly were significantly less successful than those who expected to do well. If you expect to fail, you often will.

The example helps readers understand what the writer meant by “self-fulfilling prophesy” and provides some evidence of its validity.

3. **Provide the best example possible to clarify a thought and create reader interest.** When you decide to use an example in your writing, ask yourself, “What is the best possible example or examples I can provide that will both interest and inform readers?” For example, compare the impact of the following two paragraphs describing the effects of a hurricane.

The effects of the hurricane on parts of the Southern coast were devastating. Seaside homes and businesses were inundated with water, and roads were flooded. Windows were broken, trees were blown over, and electricity was knocked out. The cost of property damage was incalculable, and insurance companies were working overtime to sort out the claims.

The effects of the hurricane on parts of the Southern coast were devastating. People were forced to evacuate their seaside homes, businesses were overrun by water, and cars were stranded in the flooded streets. People were injured by broken windows and blown-down trees, and electricity was knocked out for days, leaving hundreds of thousands of residents without heat or light. The cost of property damage was incalculable, and many residents lost everything they had. While insurance companies worked overtime to sort out the claims, the thousands of uninsured poor struggled to survive the disaster.

While both paragraphs present stark examples of the devastating effects of the hurricane, the second paragraph includes the human element that readers can relate to. The destruction of property is terrible, but its effect on human lives is even more gripping for most readers.

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**Drafting Activity 2.5**

For practice providing examples, write an example for any two of the following statements. To personalize each statement, fill in each blank with your own word or words.

**Student Examples:**

The best cooks can make all kinds of dishes. For example, my aunt Mariah can make anything from spaghetti to enchiladas to stuffed peppers. She is always expanding her cooking repertoire, and recently she learned to make sushi and fish cakes. She also likes to experiment with different seasonings and sauces, and she loves to spice things up. Like the best cooks, there is hardly anything that Aunt Maria can’t cook, and I love eating at her house.
I hate being cold. In the winter, mom won’t turn the heater beyond 67 degrees, so I have to wear sweaters and sweats to stay warm. In the summer, when I go to the movies or a restaurant, I always take a sweater because the air conditioning freezes me out. When I swim in cold water, my body turns blue and I shake uncontrollably. I am very skinny, so I have no insulation. My friends make fun of me for wearing a sweater when they are in short sleeves. I wish I lived in Hawaii.

1. _____________________ is a _____________________ person.

2. I spend a lot of time ____________________________.

3. _____________________ is very hard for me.

4. _____________________ is not very _____________________
   when it comes to ____________________________.

5. On of the most important qualities of a ________________ is ________________.
   __________________________________________________________________________

Drafting Activity 2.6

Read the following sample first draft. With a classmate, answer the following questions.

1. What does the writer include in her opening paragraph? What sentence expresses the main idea of the essay?
2. What is the topic sentence in each paragraph: the sentence that expresses the main idea that is developed in the paragraph? Analyze how the writer develops each paragraph to support the topic sentence. Notice in particular how she uses examples to show readers what she means.
3. Identify any transitions that the writer uses to tie her paragraphs together. In what way do these transitions help readers follow the writer’s thoughts?
4. How is the essay paragraphed? When does the writer end one paragraph and begin another?
5. How does the writer conclude her paper? Why does she bring in her uncle in the end? What impact did her uncle being a minister have on her opinion about ministers and about going to church?

The Most Important Qualities of a Good Minister  (first draft)
Audience: Classmates who may be religious or go to church

Purpose: To share my ideas on what makes a good minister and perhaps get some response

I have gone to church on and off since I was in first grade. Over the years, some of the ministers I remember, some I don’t since we had a few. A couple of ministers stand out in mind, one in a good way and the other not so good. I didn’t think about it when I was young, but now I realize that a good minister can make all the difference in a person’s church-going. I think that the best ministers all have similar qualities that make people glad to be a part of their church.

The best ministers make every member feel special. They always greet you at the end of a service and have something to say or ask you something about how your life is going. They know you by name and make you feel that they are really glad to see you. They make you feel that they are a friend as well as a minister, someone you can talk to and who enjoys talking to you. That is a special quality for anyone to have, and it is really important for a minister.

Next, a minister needs to be a good person. The minister sets the example for everyone who attends church, and what he does is probably as important as what he says because he is a role model. For example, we should see the minister as a good family man, a good husband and father if he has a family. We should see him as a caring man, a person who goes out of his way to visit someone who is sick or having other problems and who you can count on to help out when you need it. As a minister, he should be judged as a whole person and not just someone who gives sermons and shakes your hand. You can tell if a minister is truly a good person by what he does in and out of church.

I feel a minister should be involved in church activities a lot. For example, if there is a potluck dinner for the women’s Wednesday church group, he should be there occasionally. If the teen group is having some function like a field trip or some other function, he could show up. It is great to see the minister involved in lots of different church activities so we can see that he really enjoys the activities and being around all the different age groups in the church.

I also believe that a minister should have a strong positive message whether he is giving a sermon or just how he interacts with people. We have had a minister or two who seemed to concentrate more on the negative, on how people should always be better and how we need to live our lives more like Christ and how there are so many negative influences in the world. I think that kind of message doesn’t make people feel good and brings more guilt on and always feeling sinful. I think a minister should be more positive and make people feel good about being Christians and about leading a good life and accepting that no one is perfect or ever will be. There should be some joy in going to church and being religious, and the minister has a lot to do with that I think.

I think a good minister is also a good teacher. For example, the Bible is a big book and much of it is not that easy to read. A good minister helps people understand the Bible better and how they can apply what is in the Bible to their lives. For that, a minister needs to know the Bible well himself and be able to communicate its meaning in ways that everyone can understand. Ministers are teachers, and the best ones can bring parts of the Bible to life.

When I thought of the most important qualities of a good minister, I thought of my uncle. Everyone in the church loved him because he was everything a good minister should be. He made going to church a good experience rather than a boring experience where you felt you were wasting your time.
Drafting Guidelines

As you write the first draft of your essay, consider the following suggestions.

1. Open your paper by introducing your topic, creating some reader interest, and indicating why you are writing about it. Ask, “How can I open the essay to make readers want to read further?

2. Introduce your main points – the most important qualities of the type of person that you are writing about – in your middle paragraphs. Begin each middle paragraph with a topic sentence that introduces one of the qualities, and develop that paragraph to support the topic sentence in some manner. Change paragraphs as you move to different qualities.

3. Include examples to show readers various qualities and create interest. If you can provide examples of how particular people you know exemplify one quality or another, you help bring the qualities to life for readers. For example, the author of the previous “Qualities of a Good Minister” essay used her uncle as an example to show those qualities.

4. Conclude your draft in a way that “wraps up” the essay for readers, maintains the readers’ interest, and gives them something new.

5. As you write, keep the people in mind that you are writing for – that particular group of classmates – and your purpose in writing to them.

6. Write your first draft freely without great concern for your sentence wording or an occasional error. The purpose of the first draft is to get your ideas on paper as best you can without fretting over every sentence. You will have plenty of time to revise your draft later in the process.

7. While using your prewriting material is helpful, be open to new ideas. You may decide to add a new quality or delete one on your list as you work through the draft. Frequently, new ideas will come to you as you write, sometimes better than the ones you originally considered. Allow the creative process to continue as you write, and don’t disregard new ideas.
Drafting Activity 2.7

Read the following first draft “The Qualities of a Good Coach,” noting how the writer used examples from personal experience to reveal the qualities of a good coach. Then keeping the drafting guidelines in mind, write the first draft of your essay.

The Qualities of a Good Coach (first draft)

Beginning my freshman year in high school, I was just ready to go through the motions and stick around until I turned 16 my sophomore year, when I could legally drop out of school. I didn’t like school and wasn’t good at it. It was like prison to me and I couldn’t wait to get out.

One day in my P.E. class the teacher came up and asked if I had ever done any wrestling. Being a small guy, I’d been in some fights to prove myself but I’d never wrestled. The teacher introduced himself as Coach Zinkin and suggested I drop by the wrestling room after school. “You look like you could be a pretty good wrestler,” he said. That one word of encouragement changed my life, and over my wrestling career, I learned that Coach Zinkin had all of the qualities of a great coach.

A good coach is one that has faith in you. No one had ever told me I could be good at anything except ditching school, but Coach Zinkin saw something in me, which helped me see something in myself. I went to the wrestling room after school. The team was doing pre-season activities: running laps, lifting weights, getting in shape. I watched for a while and then left. It didn’t look like any fun to me.

A good coach has a positive attitude with his athletes. The next day Coach told me to come back again, that they were going to do some wrestling practice. I went back and watched some guys wrestle for a while, and then coach said, “Hey Juan, come on over and give it a try.” He paired me up with a guy similar to my size, and he pinned me in about twenty seconds. We went at it again and this time I lasted about forty seconds. I was ready to give up. Coach came over and said, “Not bad for someone who’s never wrestled. You’ve got the quickness and strength. All you need is to learn technique.” Some coaches might have been negative about how badly I did against the other wrestler, but Coach Zinkin instead looked at the positive and made me feel better about myself. I decided to keep trying.

A good coach puts in extra time to help his athletes. I went back the next couple days and ran and lifted weights with the team. Then after practice, Coach stayed around and helped me learn some basic wrestling holds and moves, showing me what was legal and what wasn’t. I couldn’t believe he was taking extra time just to help me, but it made an impression.

A good coach is also interested in your education, not just in your sport. I was on the J.V. team my freshman year and won about half of my matches. But the hardest thing wasn’t the wrestling, it was school. Coach made it clear to me and the rest of the team that ditching school or missing practice wasn’t an option, and that we had to maintain at least a “C” average to stay
on the team. Coach got me a tutor to help with my reading, and I stayed eligible for the year. He talked as much to us about our education as about wrestling.

My sophomore year I moved up to varsity and won all of my matches the first semester. However, I had fallen behind in my school work and didn’t make a “C” average that semester. I couldn’t wrestle second semester and I figured it was all over. I had blown it. I’d be sixteen in a couple months and could finally get out of there.

However, a good coach doesn’t give up on you easily. I had started ditching school again and one evening there was a knock at our apartment door. It was Coach. He introduced himself to my mom and then sat down to talk to me. “What’s going on, Juan?” he asked. “Don’t know, Coach,” I said. “I messed up and figure school wasn’t for me. I’m almost sixteen.” Coach was silent for a while and then he said, “It’s your decision, Juan. But realize this is the most important decision of your life. You can drop out, which will take you down one path, or you can stay in school, get your grades up, and wrestle in the fall. You know what I want you to do, and you know I’ll be there for you. But it’s your choice.”

After Coach left, I broke down and cried. Here was this man that cared enough about me to come to my house and try to keep me from dropping out. All I had done was let him down and he wasn’t giving up on me. I just knew I couldn’t let him down again.

But I did. I got eligible for my junior year and had a great season. I placed first in league in my weight division, third in valley, and I made it to state. At state I got schooled by the eventual state champion, but after the match, Coach said, “That guy’s a great wrestler, but all he’s got on you is experience. You did great and I’m proud of you.” A good coach knows how to pick you back up when you are down, and Coach made me understand that winning isn’t everything.

I was looking forward to my senior year. I proudly wore my letterman’s jacket, I had my teammates to hang out with and had a little status for the first time in my life. But it went to my head. I wrestled great first semester but slacked off in class. I was a cool senior and everything would be fine. But it wasn’t. I dropped below a “C” average and was ineligible for second semester, meaning no league, no valley, and no state. I was crushed.

A good coach knows when to be tough on you. The hardest thing I ever did was go to Coach and tell him I was ineligible. “I’m sorry Coach. I let you down,” I said. Coach looked at me sharply and said, “You didn’t let me down, Juan. You let yourself down. And you let your teammates down.” And that’s all he said. After a few moments of silence, I walked out. I’d never felt worse in my life. He hadn’t tried to pump me up or make me feel better because he knew I didn’t deserve it. He was really disappointed in me and let me know it.

I didn’t see or hear from Coach, and I stayed away from the wrestling matches. Then after a few weeks there was a call over the room intercom for me to go to Coach Zinkin’s office. I didn’t want to go, but I went. When I went into his office, Coach was there was another man who I didn’t know. “Juan,” said Coach, “I want you to meet Coach Zavala, who’s the wrestling coach at Sequoia College.

“Nice to meet you, Juan,” said Coach Zavala. “Coach Zinkin said you weren’t eligible to wrestle this semester but that you were a good kid who deserved another chance. From what I’ve heard, I think you could wrestle for the college team next year.”

I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. Here was Coach, who I had let down badly, trying to help me go to college and be on the wrestling team. “It won’t be easy, Juan,” said Coach. You have to graduate to be eligible to enroll in the fall at Sequoia, which means you’ll have to work your tail off the rest of the semester and probably go to summer school. You’re going to have to really want it.” “I want it, Coach,” I said without hesitation. “I want it bad.”
I started going to wrestling practice after school, helping the younger guys and doing whatever Coach needed doing. I sat on the bench every match and rooted my guys on. I tried to be as much a part of the team as I could. That’s the least I could do.

Needless to say, I would never have had a chance to go to college if it weren’t for Coach Zinkin. I’ll be on the wrestling team, but I won’t forget what Coach told me: “Wrestling is great, Juan, but a college education is a thousand times greater. Keep your priorities straight.” And at every college wrestling match, I know I will look up in the stands to see two people sitting together: my mom and Coach. The last and most important quality of a great coach is being your friend and caring about you beyond your sport. Coach Zinkin will be my friend forever, and I know many other wrestlers who feel the same way.

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A little logic 6

1. Cloudy days tend to be more windy than sunny days.
   Foggy days tend to be less windy than cloudy days.
   Sunny days tend to be less windy than foggy days.
   Is the third statement true, false, or undetermined?

2. At a parking lot, a sedan is parked to the right of a pickup and to the left of a sport utility vehicle.
   A minivan is parked to the left of the pickup.
   The minivan is parked between the pickup and the sedan.
   Is the third statement true, false, or undetermined?

3. The bookstore has a better selection of postcards than the newsstand does.
   The selection of postcards at the drugstore is better than at the bookstore.
   The drugstore has a better selection of postcard than the bookstore or the newsstand.
   Is the third statement true, false, or undetermined?
Revision

Now that you have written your first draft, you are well on your way towards your final essay. You have most of your ideas on paper, you have an opening and conclusion, and you have developed your ideas in paragraphs. Now you can take a good look at your draft to evaluate what you have done well and what you might improve.

Revision Guidelines

Consider the following suggestions when you revise and improve your draft.

1. **Read through your entire draft once or twice to get an overall sense of how well you presented your ideas.** Make note of anything in the draft that could use a little more work: an awkward sentence, an underdeveloped paragraph, a paragraph that seems out of place, a dull conclusion.

2. **Reread your opening to evaluate how well you have introduced your topic and drawn your readers into the paper.** What changes might you make to ensure that after reading the opening, readers will want to continue?

3. **Evaluate how well you develop each quality that you present in the middle paragraphs.** Do your middle paragraphs begin with topic sentences that introduce each quality to readers? Do you change paragraphs as you move to a new quality? Are there places where some description, an example, a comparison, or an explanation will help readers understand a quality better?

4. **Check the order in which you present the different qualities.** Are they presented in an order to make the greatest impact on readers? Have you ended the middle paragraphs with one of the most important qualities?

5. **Read each sentence to see how it may be improved.** Delete unnecessary words or phrases, smooth out awkward sentences, replace questionable word choices, and reword vague sentences.

6. **Check your use of transitional wording.** Make sure that you have used transitions to tie paragraphs together (first, next, another, finally, etc.) and to show relationships between ideas (therefore, however, consequently, in addition, as you can see, etc.).
7. **Evaluate your conclusion and its impact on readers.** Have you added anything new in the conclusion? Does your conclusion bring your essay to an interesting end? Make any changes that will leave readers with a positive final impression.

8. **Read your draft a final time to evaluate how well you have accomplished your writing purpose for your reading audience.** Make any final revisions that will help you achieve that purpose.

**Revision Activity 2.9**

Read the following revised draft of the “The Most Important Qualities of a Good Minister” essay. With a classmate, answer the following questions.

1. Pick two or three paragraphs with considerable cross-outs and add-ons and analyze the changes that the writer made. What kind of changes were made and how did they improve the paragraphs?

2. Notice that the writer added a completely new paragraph (fourth paragraph), developing a quality that didn’t appear in her first draft. Why do you think she did that?

3. Notice that the writer added considerably to the concluding paragraph. How did the additions strengthen the conclusion and make it more interesting for readers?

4. Notice that the writer added transitions to begin the fifth and seventh paragraphs. What do those transitions indicate to readers?

**The Most Important Qualities of a Good Minister**

(deletions crossed out, additions in bold italics)

I have gone to church on and off since I was in first grade. Over the years, some of the ministers I remember, some I don’t since we had a few. A couple of ministers stand out in mind, one in a good way and the other not so good less favorably. I didn’t think about it when I was young, but now I realize that a good minister can make all the difference in a person’s church-going how much a person enjoys church. I think that the best ministers all have similar qualities that make people glad to be a part of their church that stand out to church members. The best ministers make every member feel special. They always greet you at the end of a service, and have something nice to say, or ask you something about how your life things are going. They know you by your name and make you feel that they are really glad to see you. They make you feel that they are treat you like a friend, someone you can talk to and who enjoys talking to you. That is a special quality for anyone to have, and it is really important for a minister. They make you feel that you are important to them.

Next, a minister needs to should be a good person. The minister sets the example for everyone who attends church all church members, and what he does is probably
what he says, because he is a role model. We should see the minister as **should be** a good family man: a good husband and father. If he has a family, we should see him as a caring man, a person **someone** who goes out of his way to visit someone who is **sick** or **someone** having other problems. And we **should be** someone you can count on to help out when you need it. **He should also be someone** who volunteers occasionally in the community, someone you might see helping on Christmas at a soup kitchen or participating in a cancer-awareness drive. As a minister, **He** should be judged as a whole person, and not just someone who gives sermons and shakes your hand. You can tell if a minister is truly a good person by what he does in and out of church.

**Another important quality of a good minister is being down-to-earth.** With some ministers, you feel they are way up there and you are way down here. They come off as being superior even if they don't mean to. I feel that a good minister doesn't put himself above everyone else. Sure, he is a minister, but he should talk like a regular person and make you feel that he is no better than you are. **He shouldn’t always talk church but also enjoy talking with you about the local soccer team, the latest movie, or a great place to get a hamburger. He should be a real person.**

In addition, I feel a minister should be involved in church activities a lot. If there is a potluck dinner for the women’s Wednesday church **Bible study** group, he should be there occasionally. If the teen group is having some function like a field trip, or some other function, he could show up. It is great to see the minister involved in lots of different church activities so we can see that he really enjoys the activities and being around all the different age groups in the church—to support the activities and the people who attend them. Of course, he can’t be everywhere, and no one should expect that.

I also believe that a minister should have a strong positive message whether he is giving a sermon or just how he interacting with people. We have had ministers or two who seemed to concentrate focused more on the negative, on how people should always be better, and how we need to live our lives more like Christ, and how there are so how we must avoid many negative all the bad influences in the world. I think that kind of message doesn’t make people feel good, and brings on causing more guilt on and making people always feeling-sinful. I think a minister should be more positive and make people feel good about being Christians—and about leading a good life, and accepting that no one is can ever be perfect or ever will be. There should be some joy in Going to church and being religious should be a joyful experience, and the minister has a lot to do with that I think. can help to make that happen.

**Finally,** I think a good minister is also should be a good teacher. The Bible is a big book, and much of it is not that easy to read understand. A good minister helps people understand the Bible better and teaches them how they can apply what is in the Bible its lessons to their lives. For that, a minister needs to know the Bible well himself and be able to communicate explain its meaning in ways that everyone can understand. Ministers are teachers, and the best ones can bring parts of the Bible to life, like stories in the Old Testament, and help people understand things like the parables, which aren’t easy to understand the meaning.

**My uncle was one of the best ministers ever,** and he had all of the qualities that a good minister should have. When I thought of the most important qualities of a good minister, I thought of him. Everyone in the church loved him because he was everything a good minister should be. **He was a great person, a friend to everyone, a happy person who believed in the goodness of people, a great preacher who gave down-to-earth sermons, and someone who devoted himself completely to the members of his congregation.** He made going to church—a good experience something to look forward to, rather than a boring one where you felt you were
and you never felt you were wasting your time. If a minister can accomplish that, he is definitely a good minister.

Revision Activity 2.10

Keeping the “Revision Guidelines” in mind, revise your current draft and make any changes that you feel would improve it. Read the draft a number of times, concentrating on one revision consideration at a time - opening, sentence wording, paragraph development, transitions, etc. – to make sure you evaluate each aspect of the draft.

Revision Activity 2.11

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and make any suggestions that you feel would help improve their essays as well as pointing out what they did well. Then from your classmates’ suggestions, make any additional changes that you feel would improve your draft and write the revised draft of your essay.
Editing

All that is left to complete the final draft of your essay is to check your draft for errors and make any needed corrections. Most writers tend to have certain error tendencies that appear most frequently in their writing. Be aware of the types of errors that have cropped up in previous papers and work to eliminate them in your current draft.

Editing Review

Throughout the text are editing review activities that give you practice identifying and correcting the most common errors that writers make. Each activity covers areas of grammar usage and punctuation that you have worked on previously in the text. Such proofreading practice helps you improve your error identification/correction skills, which you can apply to your own drafts.

Editing Activity 2.11

The following paragraphs contains some errors involving run-on sentences or comma splices, subject-verb agreement, irregular verb forms, and comma usage. Identify and correct all errors.

Example
I get very sleepy during my biology lab after lunch, I can barely stay awake. Sometimes my lab partners who is also my roommates has to nudge me when I start drifting off. I yawn the entire period I have trouble keeping my mind on the lab experiment.

Corrected
I get very sleepy during my biology lab after lunch, and I can barely stay awake. Sometimes my lab partners, who are also my roommates, have to nudge me when I start drifting off. I yawn the entire period, and I have trouble keeping my mind on the lab experiment.

House Calls

In England today doctors actually still make house calls which is unheard of in America. For example in London if you have a very bad stomach ache you call a doctor from a list of physicians that makes house calls in your area. Within half an hour a doctor will be at your doorstep, he will treat you at home unless your condition requires hospitalization.

In America the house call is a thing of the past it happens very rarely and only in the smallest towns. Americans who experience sudden onsets of pain sits endless hours in
emergency waiting rooms with other patients. Any person who has went through the experience know how unpleasant it is, compare that experience to having a doctor assist you in the privacy of your home.

Such comparisons with other health care systems have drove many Americans to question our health care practices. London is just as big as New York City so why can’t American doctors make house calls? It seems that in England the doctor-patient relationship is different than in America. In England the doctor goes where he must to serve the patient, in America, the patient goes where he must to see the doctor. In England, the doctor is saw more as a public servant who serve the people, in America, the doctor is saw more as an elite person who see the people when he is available.

**Editing Guidelines**

1. **Check your draft for any run-on or comma-splice sentences.** If you find any, correct them by inserting a period between sentences or combining them with a joining word.

2. **Check your use of commas to make sure that you have inserted them in sentences according to the rules and don’t have commas in places where they don’t belong.**

3. **Check your sentences for correct subject-verb agreement, making sure that your present-tense verbs end in “s” with singular subjects and do not end in “s” with plural subjects.** Look in particular for sentences where the subject and verb are separated by a group of words or where they are inverted.

4. **If you are using a word processing program, run the spell check for the entire draft to identify and correct any misspelled words.** If you are not using a computer, check for any words that don’t look right to you, find their correct spelling, and make any needed corrections.

5. **Look for frequently confused words to make sure you have used to right word:** except/accept, to/too, affect/effect, there/their/they’re, then/than, its/it’s, were/we’re. (“Confusing duos” will be will be covered in detail in a later unit.)

**Editing Activity 2.12**

Keeping the revision suggestions in mind, proofread your latest draft for errors and make any needed corrections. Read through your draft several times checking on one grammar or punctuation element at a time: run-on or comma-splice sentences, subject-verb agreement, comma usage, etc. Look in particular for the types of errors you have found in previous papers.
Editing Activity 2.13

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and prooread one another’s drafts, pointing out any errors you find. If you aren’t sure whether something is an error, check with your instructor. Make any additional corrections to your own draft that your classmates pointed out. Your final draft should be relatively error-free and ready to share with classmates and your instructor.

Timed Writing Three

Write an in-class essay on the following topic allowing a maximum of sixty minutes. Do some brief planning before you write, and leave yourself time to make some changes and to proofread your essay for errors. Make sure that your essay has an opening and conclusion and that you develop your main points in the middle paragraphs.

Today students use social media more than ever before: texting, facebook, twitter, instagram, snapchat, etc. Discuss both the pros and cons of teenagers using social media, including the role, if any, that it plays in your own life. Use personal experience, the experience of others, your knowledge, and your reasoning skills to develop the essay and make your points.
Unit Three: Persuasive Writing

Much of the essay writing that you will do for college involves taking and supporting a position on an issue on which people’s viewpoints differ: the persuasive or argumentative essay.

Persuasive writing is not new to you. When you wrote the timed essay earlier on whether elementary students should be required to participate in at least one sport, you wrote a persuasive essay. You took a position on the topic – yes, children should be required or no, children shouldn’t be required --, and you supported your position with the reasons you believe as you do. When you wrote the timed essay on whether high school students should be allowed to go off-campus for lunch or be required to remain on campus, you wrote a persuasive essay. You took a position on the topic and provided reasons to support your position.

In this unit, you will write persuasive essays on topics of your choice. You will learn how to present your viewpoint on an issue in a thesis statement, support your thesis using different types of development, refute (counter or disprove) opposing arguments, and decide on the best reading audience and purpose for your essay.

In addition, for your second essay, you will research a topic to find support for your position and incorporate your research findings into your essay. What you learn in this unit will serve you well for much of the college writing you will do.

Writing Assignment Five

For this essay assignment, you will select as your topic an issue on which people have different opinions. You will take a position on the issue – the position that reflects your opinion on the topic – and support it in ways that will influence your readers. Think of topics you are familiar with on which people’s opinions differ. For example, they may involve school or education, hometown issues, teenage issues, children’s issues, sports’ issues, political issues, music issues, etc. They may be issues in which you or other people you know are personally involved.

The following list of topics gives you an idea of the range of issues to write on. You might find one, or a similar topic, that you would consider for your essay.

Should people be allowed to download music for free on the Internet?
Should pre-school education (i.e. pre-kindergarten) be required of all children?
Should boy’s hair length and facial hair be a part of a high school’s dress and grooming code?
Would more guns purchased for personal protection reduce violent crime and make people safer?
Should state legislators have term limits?
Should there be limits on campaign financing, whereby candidates running for state or national offices could only raise and spend a specified amount of money?
Should college athletes have to attend at least two years of college before turning professional in any sport?
Should sex education begin in upper elementary school (i.e. fifth, sixth grade)?
Should high schools have a “one strike” policy on drug use (for a student caught on campus with drugs or arrested by police off of campus) whereby the student is permanently expelled?

Prewriting

In preparing to write the first draft of your persuasive essay, you will first spend some time deciding on an essay topic, brainstorming ideas to generate some potential topics. Next, you will think about how you feel or what you believe about the issue, and then express that viewpoint in a thesis statement that you will support in your upcoming essay. Finally, you will make a list of some of the supporting reasons you may include in your essay and also consider why some people may believe differently than you.

Topic Selection

For your upcoming paper, you will choose an issue that you feel is important enough to write on and that people may have differing opinions on. In deciding upon a topic, consider the following:

1. **What is a particular issue that interests you and that also may interest other people?**

2. **What is a particular issue that people have different opinions on?** For this essay, you are selecting a topic on which people’s opinions differ.

3. **What is a particular issue that you know something about and that you have an opinion on?** Since this is not a research paper, choose a topic that you are familiar with, perhaps something that affects you personally or that is an issue at your school, in your community, or among your friends. Consider topics about which you have some knowledge, some personal experience, or know of other people’s experiences.

4. **You may write about an issue from any subject area: sports, music, college, family, food, health, children’s issues, television, etc.**

5. **Persuasive essay topics can often be expressed in a question beginning with “should:”**
   Should the legal drinking age be lowered to eighteen? Should the legal driving age be raised to eighteen? Should high school students be required to take a foreign
language? Try putting potential essay topics in question form which shows there are at least two opposing sides to the issue.

6. **Select a topic that is specific enough to development in an essay.** For example, the topic “America’s War on Drugs” could fill a book, but the topic, “Should marijuana be legalized for recreational use?” could be developed in an essay. When considering topics, ask, “Is this topic specific enough to develop in an essay?

### Brainstorming

Needless to say, there are many issues in different fields that could be subjects for your paper. One way to consider a number of possible writing topics is to brainstorm the topics: writing down any issue that comes to mind without evaluating it. When you brainstorm, you try to get as many ideas on paper as possible.

The purpose of this brainstorming session is to generate and consider different topic choices with the goal of deciding upon the best topic for your paper. The freewheeling nature of brainstorming helps you come up with ideas you may not have thought of otherwise, perhaps leading to a topic you hadn’t considered.

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### Prewriting Activity 3.1

Brainstorm as many issues as you can think of within different subject areas. Write down any issue that comes to mind without evaluating it.

**Sample Brainstorming:**

- public vs. private schools
- school uniforms
- juveniles tried as adults
- elementary school sex education
- playoffs for college football
- outsourcing American jobs
- gangs and violence
- torn-up streets in town
- loud music and hearing loss
- reality TV

In analyzing the brainstormed list, we see one topic that isn’t really controversial: no one would argue against fixing up torn-up streets. Another topic would produce an expository (informative) essay rather than a persuasive essay: loud music and hearing loss. Another essay would probably require some research, which would eliminate it for this assignment: outsourcing
American jobs. Another topic is probably too general to develop in an essay: gangs and violence. The rest of the issues, it seems, could be topics for a persuasive essay:

Are public or private high schools better for a student’s overall education?
Should elementary-school children wear uniforms?
Should juveniles who commit violent crimes be tried as adults?
Should upper-elementary school children receive sex education?
Should colleges have a playoff system for football like they have for basketball and baseball?
Is most reality TV not worth watching?

Prewriting Activity 3.2

From your brainstormed list and other topics you may be considering, choose an issue for your upcoming paper, keeping in mind the six suggestions for topic selection. Avoid topics that are frequently written on and where fresh ideas are rare such as gun control, abortion, gay marriage, or capital punishment. Since this is not a “research” paper, select a topic that you know enough about to develop your essay with your own ideas. Finally, select a topic different from your classmates so that the class will have the opportunity to read essays on many different issues.

Sample essay topic: The impact of illegal immigrants on America

Thesis Statement

Many essays that you write in college will develop a thesis: the position on a topic that you are supporting in your essay. In a persuasive essay, the thesis statement expresses the viewpoint or position you are taking. The thesis statement accomplishes a number of purposes: letting readers know what your paper is about, providing direction for you as the writer, giving your essay a focus that influences everything you write, and sharing with readers what you believe.

The following guidelines will help you write effective thesis statements for your essays.
Thesis Statement Guidelines

1. **A thesis statement expresses the main point of your paper: the primary idea that you want to convey about your subject to readers.** For example, if a writer chose to write about mainstreaming special ed children in regular classes, her thesis might be, “Mainstreaming special ed children is beneficial for all children in a class.”

2. **A thesis statement generally reveals the writer’s opinion or viewpoint on the topic: what she believes or how she feels.** For example, on the topic “politicians,” if a writer’s thesis is, “Politicians say nothing in a lot of different ways,” her opinion is quite clear.

3. **The thesis statement is usually found in the opening so readers know what lies ahead.** For example, the thesis statement, “Bird watching is an exciting hobby” lets readers know that they will learn in the essay what the writer finds exciting about bird watching.

4. **An essay is written in support of its thesis.** For example, following the thesis statement on mainstreaming special ed children, the writer would present her reasons for favoring mainstreaming and its benefits for all children.

5. **A thesis statement should express what a writer believes about his subject.** When a writer writes with conviction, it often lead to the most interesting and authentic writing.

6. **Essays by writers on the same topic may have different thesis statements.** For example, on the topic “politicians,” one writer’s thesis may be, “Politicians serve the public in thankless jobs,” while another’s may be “Politicians are the puppets of special interests groups that elect them,” statements that would produce very different essays.

Prewriting Activity 3.3

For practice generating thesis statements, write a thesis statement for at least four of the following topics: a sentence that expresses your viewpoint or position on the issue which you could develop in an essay.

The following examples of thesis statements represent only one of many possible viewpoints on each topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th>Thesis statement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starbucks coffee chain</td>
<td>I don’t understand the great appeal of Starbucks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fast-food restaurants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thesis statement: Fast-food restaurants are greatly responsible for the obesity epidemic among American children.

Topic: Presidential debates
Thesis statement: Presidential debates can make or break a presidential candidate.

Topic: Popular music
Thesis statement: Many of today’s popular “Top 50” songs are all rhythm and no melody.

Topic: Teachers’ salaries
Thesis statement: Compared to other professions, teachers are underpaid for the work they do.

1. Topic: music videos
   Thesis statement:

2. Topic: reality TV programs
   Thesis statement:

3. Topic: tackle football for 8-12 year old boys
   Thesis statement:

4. Topic: continuation schools (for high school students removed from the regular high school)
   Thesis statement:

5. Topic: the emphasis on standardized testing in grades one through six
   Thesis statement:

6. Topic: television commercials
   Thesis statement:

7. Topic: Internet pornography
   Thesis statement:

8. Topic: Mandatory community service for high school students
   Thesis statement:

Prewriting Activity 3.4

Decide on a tentative thesis statement for your upcoming essay. Generate a sentence that clearly expresses your viewpoint on the topic and that you can support in an essay.

Sample thesis statements
Thesis Support

Some writers initially believe that if they have a good thesis, the essay will take care of itself. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Some readers may disagree with your thesis and have an opposing viewpoint. Others may be disinterested in your topic and your thesis. Still others may take a “wait and see” attitude, deciding how they feel about your viewpoint after reading your essay.

How well a writer supports her thesis determines the effectiveness of the essay and its impact on readers. A good assumption is that every reader will need to be convinced that the writer’s viewpoint is valid and sensible. A good question for the writer to ask is, “How can I write this paper so that readers may agree with me by the time they finish reading?”

Thesis Support Guidelines

You can support your thesis in a variety of ways.

1. **By explaining the issue clearly so readers understand it.**

2. **By presenting and developing strong reasons in support of your viewpoint.** To develop your reasons, you may include your own personal experiences or the experiences of others, factual information, common-sense arguments, and your general knowledge of the topic.

3. **By using comparisons to support your thesis.** For example, the writer whose viewpoint was that fast-food restaurants help create the obesity problem among children compared the
For example, let’s take the topic “Electric cars” and the thesis, “Electric cars are the transportation of the future.” Let’s assume we have some knowledge of the topic. How can we convince readers that electric cars will replace gas-powered cars as our primary mode of transportation?

Let’s apply the five thesis-support guidelines to consider how we might accomplish our purposes:

1. **By explaining the issue clearly so readers understand it.**

   We will explain exactly what an “electric car” is and the central issue: can electric cars replace traditional gas-powered cars in the near future?

2. **By presenting and developing strong reasons in support of your viewpoint.**

   To support our viewpoint, we need to answer the question, “Why will electric cars replace gas-powered cars?” Some of the reasons we generate may include the following:

   Electric cars provide “clean energy” while gas-powered cars pollute the environment.
   Electric cars are much cheaper to run since electricity is much cheaper than gasoline.
   Electricity is an infinite source of energy while oil, from which gas is manufactured, is a finite source. We’ll run out of oil some day. We’ll never run out of electricity.
   Based on our test-driving, electric cars are as smooth operating and safe as gas-powered cars.
   We will no longer have to depend on “foreign oil” to power our cars.
   People will ultimately choose the car that is cheaper to run and doesn’t pollute.

   (Note: We used a number of facts, a number of comparisons, our personal experience, and a common-sense argument (the last reason) to support our thesis.

3. **By using comparisons to support your thesis.**

   We used comparisons throughout our supportive reasons in number 2.
4. **By anticipating some readers’ arguments against your thesis and addressing them in your essay.**

We might respond to the argument that electric cars don’t go far without a recharge by pointing out that the distance range of electric cars is increasing with each new model. We’ll admit that today’s electric cars are relatively small, four-passenger vehicles but point out that car companies are working on larger electric sedans and SUVs for the future. We’ll admit that electric-recharge stations are few and far between but point out that in states where electric cars are selling the fastest, new recharge stations are being built.

5. **By showing readers how they may be affected by the issue and how your viewpoint is in their best interests.**

We will show readers that in an electric-car future, they will save a great deal of money and do their part to reduce pollution and global warming.

As another example, a student wrote an essay on the topic of “Texting.” Her thesis statement was, “Texting is a great way for teenagers to communicate.” She applied the five thesis-supporting guidelines to generate the following ideas.

1. I’ll explain exactly what “texting” is and present the issue: Is texting a good way for teenagers to communicate?

2. I’ll present the following reasons to answer the question, “Why is texting a good way for teenagers to communicate?” based on my personal experience and my knowledge:

   You can text someone any time or from any place that you take your cell phone.
   You can text people anywhere in the country or world.
   You can carry on “live” back-and-forth conversations with a friend or group of friends.
   You communicate with friends much more frequently than before texting was available.
   You can send the same text to many people at once.
   Texting is more convenient and faster than phoning or emailing, and responses are quicker.

3. With my supportive reasons (2.), I used comparisons with phoning and emailing.

4. Some people feel that teenagers do too much texting, and I agree that texting can become rather addictive and should be done in moderation.
   Harmful messages can be sent via text but that is no different than harmful messages sent via phone, email, or face-to-face.

5. Through texting, you can stay in close contact with your friends and relatives, or if you are shy and have trouble talking to people, texting offers you a great way to communicate.

**Making a List**
Making a list of supporting points for your thesis helps you think about why you believe as you do, determine whether you have some good supportive reasons, see where the strengths of your upcoming essay may lie, and develop some material for your paper. If you find that you can’t think of many supporting ideas, you may be better off writing about a different topic.

Prewriting Activity 3.5

Based on your personal experience, the experience of others, your knowledge of the topic, and your reasoning ability, make a list of four or five supporting points for your thesis statement which you may develop in your first draft. List any point that you feel may be relevant.

Sample list

Topic: Illegal Immigration

Thesis: America has benefitted greatly from the contribution that illegal immigrants have made and continue to make.

List of points: My grandparents’ story
  U.S. agricultural success built on back of illegal immigrants
  Contribute to the economy as consumers
  Form the backbone of many rural American towns
  Commit few crimes compared to Americans

Opposing Viewpoints

As mentioned earlier, some readers will initially not agree with your thesis, and they will have their own reasons for believing otherwise. Identifying and addressing their arguments may make readers reconsider. Refuting (disproving) opposing arguments may have as great an influence on readers as presenting your own support.
For example, let’s say you support the creation of the downtown lake to attract people and help revitalize the downtown area. However, you are also aware of the opposition’s arguments: that a lake project is too expensive, and that since no other plans have worked to revitalize the downtown, a lake probably won’t help either. If you raise those arguments in your paper and then reveal their flaws to readers, you may win over some people who had based their opinion on those arguments.

**Prewriting Activity 3.6**

Come up with two or three arguments that opponents of your thesis might make and consider how you could counter them in your draft.

Sample arguments:

**Topic:** Illegal Immigration

**Thesis:** America has benefitted greatly from the contribution that illegal immigrants have made and continue to make.

**Opposing arguments:**

1. Illegals take jobs from Americans.
2. Illegals are an economic drain on the country.
3. Illegals have a high crime rate.

**Counters:**

1. Illegal aliens have always done the jobs that Americans won’t do.
2. Illegal aliens contribute much more to the economy than they cost the country in services.
3. Illegal aliens have a low crime rate compared to their American counterparts.

**Drafting**
Persuasive writing is different in some ways from the writing you have done in earlier units. Rather than writing primarily to inform, as you did in previous essays, you are now writing both to engage your readers’ interest and to influence their beliefs. The writing challenge is different and somewhat more complex, an important step in your continuing development as a writer and college student.

**Audience and Purpose**

Two primary concerns with persuasive writing are your reading audience and your purpose: whom you are writing for and why. For example, if you support the creation of a downtown lake in your city, you may have at least three different audiences that you may consider writing to: the city council members who will decide the fate of the lake project, the residents who are opposed to the lake, and the residents who like yourself favor the idea. All three audiences may have an impact on whether the lake is ever built, and you might target each group for your writing.

Your purpose for writing, however, and what you write to each audience may differ. For example, your purpose in writing to the council members would be to support those who favor the project and to change the minds of those who don’t. Your purpose in writing to residents in opposition would be to change them into supporters or at least neutralize their influence with the council. Your purpose in writing to residents who favor the project would be to get them to support it actively and influence the council directly.

**Reading Audience**

When you consider your reading audience for your upcoming paper, ask yourself the following:

1. **What people would be most interested in the issue?**
2. **What people might have an impact on the outcome of the issue?**
3. What people would support your viewpoint and who would probably oppose it?
4. Whom do you want to influence with your essay?

**Drafting Activity 3.1**

Considering the preceding four questions, decide on the primary reading audience for your paper: the people that you feel should definitely read your paper. It may be your classmates, a particular group of classmates, college students in general, the school board, all adults residing in the area, a certain state legislator, all music lovers, men in particular, women in particular, wild animal lovers, and so on.

**Sample audience:**

**Topic:** Illegal Immigrants

**Thesis:** America has benefitted greatly from the contribution that illegal immigrants have made and continue to make.

**Primary audience:**

The general public, who will help determine what immigration “reform” will look like.

**Writing Purpose**

Going hand in hand with your reading audience is your writing purpose: what you hope to accomplish by writing to this audience. Once you determine your purpose, you can consider the best ways to accomplish it, which will influence how you present your ideas in your essay.

To decide on your writing purpose for the upcoming paper, consider the following:

1. What do you hope to accomplish by writing to this audience?
2. What is the most that you can realistically expect to achieve?
3. How do you think you can best accomplish your purpose through your writing?
For example, a student wrote on the topic of “Free Internet Music Downloading” with the thesis, “No one should be able to download music free off the Internet.” She decided on the following audience and writing purpose.

**Audience:** People who think downloading music for free is alright.

**Purpose:** To change their minds and get them to stop doing it.

Another student wrote on the topic of “Our Messy, Littered Campus” with the thesis, “All students should take pride in the campus and keep it clean.” She decided on the following audience and purpose.

**Audience:** All of the students at the school

**Purpose:** To convince students to pick up their trash and keep the campus clean

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### Drafting Activity 3.2

Decide on your writing purpose for your upcoming paper.

**Sample writing purpose**

**Topic:** Illegal Immigration

**Purpose:** To get readers to see illegal immigrants in a positive way

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### Drafting Activity 3.3

Read the following first draft and with a classmate and analyze it by answering the following questions.

1. What is accomplished in the opening paragraph? What is the *thesis statement*, which presents the writer’s position on the topic?

2. What is the purpose of the author relating the story of his grandfather? What is he trying to accomplish?

3. What are the main supporting points for the thesis, and how are they developed?

4. What are the opposing arguments that are raised, and how are they countered in the draft?

5. What is accomplished in the final two paragraphs? What is the writer’s primary purpose in communicating with his reading audience?
Illegal Immigrants

When I read about immigration “reform” recommendations like sending all illegal Mexican immigrants back to Mexico or not allowing children of illegal immigrants to attend public school or receive medical care, I think of my grandfather. He is one of these illegal immigrants that some people claim are ruining America: taking our jobs, living off our benefits, and committing crimes. In fact, America has benefitted greatly from the contribution that illegal immigrants have made and continue to make.

My abuelo came to America as a young man from the Mexican state of Jalisco. He came from a large, poor family and like millions of Mexicans, came to America for a better life. Later, he was joined by a brother and two sisters, but to his deep regret, he never saw his parents again although he sent them money for as long as they lived.

Had my abuelo been able to enter the U.S. legally, he certainly would have done so because crossing the border illegally was risky and dangerous. However, U.S. quotas for Mexican immigrants didn’t begin to cover the number of Mexicans wishing to immigrate, so my abuelo’s options were to live in poverty in Mexico or come to America illegally. It is not hard to understand why he, like so many Mexicans, left Mexico.

Once in America, my abuelo found work on the West Coast as a migrant farm laborer, moving at different times of year from the strawberry and garlic fields of Salinas and Gilroy to the grape fields of California’s Central Valley to the apple orchards of Washington. The work was backbreaking and the life was hard, but my abuelo followed the crops for ten years. In a grape field near Selma one year he met a young female worker who would become my abuela. They had three children, including my father Gilbert, who worked alongside his father in the fields when he was a child.

My abuelo was a good worker and a smart man, and after ten years as a migrant, he was given a year-around work at a farm outside of Dinuba in the Central Valley. He began by pruning vines and trees in the winter, fertilizing and thinning crops in the spring, and picking grapes, peaches, and plums in the summer and early fall. He went on to do irrigating, tractoring, and machine repair work, and within a couple years he was helping to manage the farm and oversee the migrant workers. He rented a house on the farm property with two bedrooms and an indoor bathroom, a great change for a family used to living in labor camps.

Living in one place, my dad, his sister and brother were enrolled at a Dinuba elementary school, where they began getting an education for the first time. My abuelo realized that education was the key to escaping a life of manual labor, and he and my abuela made sure that their children were in school every day and did their lessons. Given the opportunities my abuelos never had, my father didn’t take his life for granted, doing well in school, graduating from college, and becoming a high school counselor. Thanks to my father and mother, who works as an administrative assistant in the county schools’ office, I along with my sister and brother grew up in a middle class family with a nice house and a life my abuelos couldn’t have imagined.
I am currently a sophomore in college, my older brother is attending law school, and my sister recently graduated with a degree in physical therapy. Our futures are bright, and we learned to work hard from our parents, who learned from their parents.

Most young Mexican-Americans my age in the Valley have similar family histories, with either their grandparents or great-grandparents coming to the U.S. from Mexico illegally. They, like my abuelos, worked hard, lived poorly, took nothing from the government, and sacrificed so their children could have a better life. They worked for low wages and helped build the largest agricultural industry in the world, which today’s illegal immigrants continue to do.

Recognizing the work ethic and willingness of Mexican immigrants to work for lower wages, U.S. employers also hire today’s illegal immigrants in many occupations including housing construction, gardening, house and hotel cleaning, a variety of mechanical work and, of course, agriculture. And these immigrants will follow the pattern started long ago by people like my abuelos: get married, raise families, send their children to school, and produce future generations of hard-working U.S. citizens.

Right-wing politicians portray illegal immigrants falsely. Undocumented immigrants from Mexico contribute much more to the economy than they get in educational and health services. They are not welfare recipients, they are workers. They don’t take jobs from Americans, they do the back-breaking work that most Americans won’t do. They commit significantly fewer crimes than American citizens do. They make life easier for Americans by mowing their lawns and cleaning their houses. And like American immigrants in the past, they produce future generations of U.S. citizens who continue to help make this country great.

Is there an illegal immigrant “problem” in the U.S.? Certainly not in the way that right-wing politicians would have people believe. First, illegal immigrants have not only been welcome but are recruited by employers throughout the U.S. who rely on their employment. If there were no jobs available, there would be little immigration, but employers and the American public profit greatly from illegal immigrants.

The first step in any attempt at “reform” would be to grant citizenship to all immigrants who have lived and worked in this country for a given time, say at least five years. They have earned their citizenship by the good they have provided our country. I do not believe that employers who hire illegal immigrants should be “punished.” Too many American industries rely on the hard work and lower salaries of illegal immigrants. In addition, no flood of Americans is going to rush in to fill the backbreaking jobs at low wages if illegal immigrants were not here to do it.

Will there be a time when the flow of illegal immigrants is greater than America’s need for low-income laborers? I don’t know, but one thing is certain: when the jobs dry up, so does the flow of illegal immigrants. People emigrate for a better life and for jobs that aren’t available in their country. If those jobs aren’t available in America, they don’t come.

In the meantime, current illegal immigrants who are long-term U.S. residents should be granted citizenship, and every illegal immigrant in the country should be treated with dignity and respect. My abuelo and abuela certainly deserved that, and America is a better country because of them and immigrants like them. So right-wing politicians should quit talking badly about illegal immigrants to stir up hatred and fear. When it comes to the economy, illegal immigrants have always been a part of the solution, not the problem.
Drafting Guidelines

Consider the following suggestions when writing the first draft of your essay.

1. **In your opening paragraph, introduce your topic, create reader interest, and include your thesis statement at or near the end of the paragraph.**

2. **Develop the support for your thesis statement in your middle paragraphs, presenting the supportive reasons on your prewriting list.** To develop your supportive points, you might include your personal experience, the experience of others, your general knowledge, any common-sense arguments, and relevant comparisons.

3. **Towards the end of the middle paragraphs, introduce and counter one or two opposing arguments to your viewpoint.**

4. **Include transitional wording in your draft to tie paragraphs together (first, next, in addition, finally) and to show the relationship between ideas (however, therefore, moreover, consequently, for example,).**

5. **Conclude your paper in a manner that reinforces your thesis statement and makes your purpose clear, whether it be to move readers to action or to reconsider their viewpoint on the topic.** Leave readers with a strong final impression.

6. **Keep your reading audience and purpose in mind as you write.**

7. **Don’t limit yourself to the ideas that you developed during prewriting.** Often new ideas will come to mind as you write, so keep your mind open to new thoughts and feel free to include them.

**Drafting Activity 3.4**

Write the first draft of your persuasive essay, keeping in mind the drafting suggestions.
Five cities all got more rain than usual this year. The five cities are: Last Stand, Mile City, New Town, Olliopolis, and Polberg. The cities are located in five different areas of the country: the mountains, the forest, the coast, the desert, and in a valley. The rainfall amounts were: 12 inches, 27 inches, 32 inches, 44 inches, and 65 inches.

- The city in the desert got the least rain; the city in the forest got the most rain.
- New Town is in the mountains.
- Last Stand got more rain than Olliopolis.
- Mile City got more rain than Polberg, but less rain than New Town.
- Olliopolis got 44 inches of rain.
- The city in the mountains got 32 inches of rain; the city on the coast got 27 inches of rain.

Which city got the most rain? Which city is in the desert?
Revision

A critical part of the writing process is revising your drafts. All writers share the task, and it is an invaluable part of producing your best writing. When writing your first draft, your main concern is getting your ideas on paper without a lot of thought to your wording or organization, or the effect your writing may have on readers.

When you begin to revise, you shift your focus to evaluating how well you have expressed your ideas and the impact your writing may have on readers. Your focus has shifted from getting your ideas on paper to expressing those ideas in the most effective way. In this section, you revise your draft based both on revision considerations from previous units and new considerations that apply to your persuasive essay.

Organization

An important element of an effective essay is its organization: the order in which its content is presented to readers. In a well-organized paper, ideas are presented in an order that best conveys the writer’s ideas. There is a logic to the organization, and the ideas in one paragraph follow naturally from the previous paragraph and lead sensibly into the next one.

While different types of writing favor particular organizational schemes, there is one organizational constant in most writing. Writers begin with an opening that introduces their topic, continue with a middle that develops what they have to say about the topic, and end with a conclusion that “wraps up” the paper for readers, providing a sense of completion. This basic organizational scheme provides writers with the most efficient structure for communicating with readers. Within this basic framework, however, there are other organizational decisions you make with any essay that you write.

Persuasive Essay Organization

A persuasive essay is not that difficult to organize. The following organizational guidelines will apply to most persuasive essays that you write.

1. Introduce your topic and thesis statement in the opening paragraph.

2. Present your support for your thesis statement in the middle paragraphs: the main points that support your position. You might present your reasons in one of the following orders:
a. Begin and conclude your middle paragraphs with the two most important reasons.

b. Order your reasons from the least important to the most important.

c. Order your reasons from the most important to the least important.

d. Group related reasons to present them in successive paragraphs. For example, in supporting the creation of a downtown lake to attract more people to the area, you might begin with financial reasons, follow with aesthetic reasons, and conclude with ethical reasons: why it is the right thing to do for downtown residents.

The order in which you present your supportive reasons should be the one that you feel will have the greatest impact on readers.

3. Conclude your essay by reinforcing your thesis statement in some manner and by making sure that readers understand your writing purpose.

Revision Activity 3.1

For the following topics, number the points in the the best order for presenting them in an essay. Decide what the most important points are and where to place them most effectively.

1. Topic: Rugby
   Thesis statement: Rugby is a great sport that most Americans know little about.
   Supporting Points: Requires great stamina and running ability
                      Extremely fast, tough sport
                      Tremendous individual skills of top players
                      Originated in Europe
                      Basic rules of the game
                      Exciting to watch

2. Topic: Elementary school teacher
   Thesis statement: Being an elementary school teacher is a challenging job.
   Supporting Points: Discipline problems to deal with
                      Long hours
                      Teaching non-English speaking children
                      Responsible for children testing at grade level

3. Topic: School truancy
   Thesis statement: Students who are regularly truant are most likely to drop out.
Supporting points:  Truant students get behind in classwork.  
Truant students have problems and conflicts outside of school.  
Truant students don’t like school and don’t want to be there.  
Truant students often are having little success in school.  
Truant students often have parents who aren’t involved  
Truant students often have a brother or sister who has dropped out.

4.  
Topic:  Class size  
Thesis statement:  In our overcrowded schools, large class sizes hurt students.  
Supporting points:  There are more discipline problems in crowded classrooms.  
Students who need the most help can’t get it.  
Meaningful class discussions are difficult to have.  
Students have more health problems in overcrowded classrooms.  
Students are more easily distracted in crowded classrooms.  
Crowded classrooms are usually hotter.

Revision Activity 3.2

Read the first draft of your persuasive essay to evaluate the order in which you presented your supporting points in the middle paragraphs. Might there be a more effective order for presenting them to readers? Did you add a new point in a paragraph that would fit more logically in a different place? Make any changes in the order of your supporting points that you feel would present them more effectively.

Revision Guidelines

When you revise your current persuasive essay draft, consider the following suggestions.

1.  Read your draft to get a general sense of what you did well and what may be improved. If some problems stand out, make note to address them as you revise.

2.  Check your opening paragraph to make sure you have clearly introduced your topic, created some interest for readers, and included your thesis statement. Is there anything you can add or change to make your opening more effective?

3.  Check your middle paragraphs to make sure that each paragraph relates to and supports your thesis statement, that you have used topic sentences to express the main idea of most paragraphs, and that you have presented your supporting points in the best order.
In addition, evaluate how well you have developed each supporting point, and add anything to strengthen a point or make it clearer: an example, an explanation, a comparison, some personal experience. *Finally, make sure you have included one or two opposing arguments and countered them effectively.*

4. **Check your concluding paragraph to make sure that it provides readers with a sense of completion, relates to your thesis statement, and adds something new for readers.** Make any changes that you feel would leave a stronger final impression on readers and convince them of the validity of your viewpoint on the topic.

5. **Check the wording of each sentence, and revise sentences to make them clearer, smoother, and more concise by eliminating unnecessary words or phrases, rewording awkward or unclear sentences, and replacing questionable word choices.**

6. **Check your use of transitional wording to tie sentences and paragraphs together.** Add any transitions (e.g. *first, second, also, in addition, finally, therefore, however, etc.*) that will help readers understand your ideas and how they are related.

7. **Check your paragraphing to make sure you have begun a new paragraph when you move to something new in your paper: a different part, a different reason, a new example.** Divide overly long paragraphs, and consider developing further any short paragraph of one or two sentences.

8. **Read your paper to make sure that your purpose is clear to readers and that you did everything possible to accomplish that purpose.**

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**Revision Activity 3.3**

Keeping the revision suggestions in mind, make any changes in your current draft that you feel would improve it. Read your draft several times, focusing on one revision consideration at a time: your opening, your middle paragraph development, improving sentence wording, your conclusion, etc.

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**Revision Activity 3.4**

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two. Evaluate their drafts as you did your own, and make any suggestions that you feel would improve the essays. Then based on your classmates’ input, make any further revisions to your own draft that you feel would improve it.
Editing

You are nearing completion of your persuasive essay, with little left to do but clean up any errors and perhaps make a last-minute revision or two as you proofread your draft. Apply the same thorough, meticulous approach you used to evaluate the content, wording, and organization of your essay to proofreading your draft for errors. An error-free final essay is certainly a worthy goal.

In this section, you are introduced to two new editing concerns - *sentence fragments* and *commonly confused words*, and you review the punctuation and grammar elements covered in previous units. Then you apply what you have learned to editing your latest draft for errors.

Sentence Fragments

In the first editing section, you proofread and edited your draft for run-on sentences: two or more sentences run together without a period. A second punctuation problem occurs when writers insert a period *before* the sentence ends, creating a *sentence fragment*: an incomplete sentence. While sentence fragments are not as common as run-on sentences, they do create problems for some writers.

The following guidelines will help you avoid sentence fragments and correct those you find.

1. A **sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence.** It does not express a complete thought or idea, and it leaves readers with an unanswered question. Here are some examples of sentence fragments.

   - Because you are such a hard worker. (What will happen?)
   - Sitting outside on our new rocking chairs. (Who was sitting?)
   - After we finish cleaning out the garage. (What will happen?)
   - The woman wearing the green and white running shoes. (What about her?)

2. Most typically, **fragments are created by separating one half of a sentence from the other by a period.** If you remove the period, you have a complete, correctly punctuated sentence. Here are some examples, with the fragment in bold underline.

   - The manager is going to promote you. **Because you are such a hard worker.**
   - (The second half is a fragment which belongs with the first sentence.)
Corrected: The manager is going to promote you because you are such a hard worker.

**Before I go to the park and play softball.** I am going to get a lot of work done around the apartment.
(The first half is a fragment which belongs with the sentence.)

Corrected: Before I go to the park and play softball, I am going to get a lot of work done around the apartment.

Courtney really enjoys watching cooking shows. **Especially the ones where the cooks compete against one another.**
(The second half is a fragment which makes no sense without the previous sentence.)

Corrected: Courtney really enjoys watching cooking shows, especially the ones where the cooks compete against one another.

I enjoy doing many things in the winter. **Skating on the frozen pond in the park, going to hockey games, and drinking hot chocolate.**
(The list of activities – skating on a frozen pond, going to hockey games, drinking hot chocolate – is not a sentence. It needs to be attached to the sentence before it.)

Corrected: I enjoy doing many things in the winter such as skating on the frozen pond in the park, going to hockey games, and drinking hot chocolate.

3. To correct a sentence fragment, do one of the following:

   a. **Attach the fragment to the sentence it belongs with by deleting the period.**

      Example (fragment in bold underline)

      You wear the most interesting clothes. **While I wear the most boring.**

      Corrected: You wear the most interesting clothes while I wear the most boring.

   b. **Add words to the fragment to make it a complete sentence.**

      Example (fragment in bold underline)

      There’s a lot we can do without spending money. **For example, window shop at the mall, hike to the top of Barker Hill, or bike across town to the pier.**

      Corrected: There’s a lot we can do without spending money. For example, we can window shop at the mall, hike to the top of Barker Hill, or bike across town to the pier.
Editing Activity 3.1

Eliminate any sentence fragment by either deleting the period that separates the fragment from the sentence it belongs with or by adding words to the fragment to make it a complete sentence. First, identify the fragment and then make the correction.

Example: No one should stand around the excavation site. Until the cyclone fence is erected. Corrected: No one should stand around the excavation site until the cyclone fence is erected.

Example: Alphonse is a strong looking man. Tall and muscular, with a thick chest. Corrected: Alphonse is a strong looking man. He is tall and muscular, with a thick chest.

1. The cafeteria food has improved. Since the school privatized the operation.

2. Instead of a school-run cafeteria with your usual food. The cafeteria is now a food court with a number of different vendors selling food.

3. Today you can get practically any kind of food you want. For example, Mexican, Chinese, Japanese, or Italian.

4. The cafeteria also looks much different today. At least a dozen food booths around the walls of the cafeteria, with seating in the middle.

5. The cafeteria is more crowded than ever. Especially at the early lunch time.

6. Although I don’t eat there very often. I’ve always enjoyed my food when I’ve gone.

7. The cafeteria has taken away a lot of lunch business from the fast food restaurants in the area. Because it has fast food choices itself.

8. The purpose of changing the cafeteria was to keep more students on campus for lunch by offering a variety of good food. Which seems to be working out well.

Editing Activity 3.2

Correct any sentence fragments in the following paragraph by deleting a period that separates the fragment from the sentence it belongs with or by adding words to the fragment to form a complete sentence.

Example

The shift key on my computer keyboard keeps sticking. Whenever I hit it accidentally. When it is stuck in the down position. I can’t type at all. Everything gets highlighted when I want to highlight a single word or sentence. My keyboard is old, and I think I need to replace it. The sooner the better.
Corrected

The shift key on my computer keyboard keeps sticking whenever I hit it accidentally. When it is stuck in the down position, I can’t type at all. Everything gets highlighted when I want to highlight a single word or sentence. My keyboard is old, and I think I need to replace it, and the sooner the better.

Scheduling Problems

At our local community college, getting the classes you need in a particular semester is difficult. Especially if you are trying to schedule them around work. If you are working, you may only have certain times you can take classes. For example, before noon, after 2:00 p.m., or just in the evening. The most difficult time to schedule classes is in the morning. Because that is the most popular time. Most students like to finish their classes by noon or early afternoon, so morning classes close fast.

Late afternoon classes are the easiest to schedule since many students are working or just don’t want to be in class. However, even afternoon classes are sometimes difficult to get into because fewer classes are offered then. If you can go only in the evening, you are lucky to get into one or two classes. Meaning that it will take many semester to finish school. Some working students take at least three years to complete two years of college course work. My brother being a good example.

Editing Activity 3.3

Prooread your latest draft for any sentence fragments and make any needed corrections by either removing the period between the fragment and the sentence it belongs with or by adding words to the fragment to make it a complete sentence.

Commonly Confused Words

Spelling errors often occur when writers use a word that looks or sounds similar to the word they should have used. Computer spell checks often don’t pick up the errors because the words are correctly spelled. Such mistakes are frequently caused by mental lapses, such as writing “Their is” rather than “There is,” and are easily correctable.
Commonly Confused Words

**accept**  
 to take what is offered: I **accept** your apology.

**except**  
 not including: Everyone attended the lecture **except** Jolinda.

**advice**  
 (noun) guidance: Please take my **advice** and get a check-up.

**advise**  
 (verb) to give advice: I would **advise** you to get a check-up.

**affect**  
 (verb) to influence: You **affect** my thinking on religious issues.

**effect**  
 (noun) result of a cause: What is the **effect** of light on plants?

**allowed**  
 permitted: Smoking is not **allowed** in the hotel.

**aloud**  
 audibly; not silently: Please read the poem **aloud** to the class.

**altar**  
 a table for religious offerings: The **altar** was covered with a white cloth.

**alter**  
 to change in appearance: We need to **alter** the setting for the play.

**bare**  
 naked; unadorned: The cupboard was **bare**.

**bear**  
 to withstand: I cannot **bear** the smell of sour milk.

**break**  
 shatter; stop working: The printer **breaks** down if overused.

**brake**  
 to slow or stop: You need to **brake** your car on that sharp curve.

**course**  
 field of study: What science **course** are you taking?

**coarse**  
 rough; vulgar: Don’t use such **coarse** language.

**compliment**  
 to praise: I **complimented** Anastasia on her piano solo.

**complement**  
 to go well together: The carpet and wall colors **complement** each other.

**council**  
 an elected body: The city **council** voted against annexing more land.

**counsel**  
 to give advice: Jonathan **counseled** Beatrice on budgeting her money.

**desert**  
 barren, dry region: **Desert** plants require little water.

**dessert**  
 after-dinner sweets: I love apple pie ala mode for **dessert**.

**elicit**  
 to draw out: It is difficult to **elicit** a response from the mayor.

**illicit**  
 forbidden: The governor had an **illicit** relationship with his secretary.

**its**  
 possessive pronoun: The house lost it**s** roof in the tornado.

**it’s**  
 contraction for “it is:” **It’s** time to start watering the lawn daily.

**lead**  
 to take charge: Please **lead** the way to the aquarium.

**led**  
 past tense of “lead:” The football team **led** until the last quarter.

**loose**  
 not tight: Amanda prefers **loose**-fitting sweaters.

**lose**  
 not to win; misplace: I often **lose** my sunglasses.
new not existing before: The book store has a new section on biographies.
knew past tense of “know:” Ralph knew his study habits needed to improve.

principal primary importance: A principal reason for attending college is to prepare yourself for future employment.

principle moral value: Your principles set an example for your siblings.

site area of ground: That vacant lot is the perfect site for a dental office.
sight something seen: The sight of that fresh water spring was welcome.
cite reference a source: Please cite your research sources in your essay.

stationary not moving: I prefer riding a stationary bicycle for exercise.
stationery writing paper: I don’t like flowery stationery.

their possessive pronoun: Their dorm room is quite large.
there location; introductory word: There are many ways to cook chicken.
they’re contraction for “they are:” They’re considering leasing an apartment.

then at that time: I attended morning classes; then I went to work.

than comparative word: You are much taller than your father.

who’s contraction for “who is:” Who’s going to the concert tonight?
whose possessive pronoun: Whose purse was left in the classroom?

were past tense of “are:” Were you surprised by the turnout at the concert?
we’re contraction for “we are:” We’re very sorry that your cat ran away.
where location Where should we plant the gladiolas?

your possessive pronoun: Your car is parked by a fire hydrant.
you’re contraction for “you are:” You’re an excellent impersonator.

Writing Activity 3.4

Proofread the following paragraph, replacing any incorrect words with the correct words.

Example:

For desert, sorbet has fewer calories and less sugar then ice cream.

Corrected:

For dessert, sorbet has fewer calories and less sugar than ice cream.

The high school debate team did very well in the regional competition. There preparation was excellent, clearly much better then some of the teams. Their extemporaneous presentations illicit ed thunderous applause from the audience, who’s responses were usually muted. It was a
wonderful site to see the diverse team members - Asian, Latino, Indian, white, and African-American - working together and complementing one another after each performance. The team’s principle attribute, however, was their reasoning ability. Time and again they outreasoned their opponents, and the affect on the judge’s scores was evident. The eight team members won every debate except two, and those two we’re lost by narrow margins. Their advise to future team members who watched the debate was to do your research, prepare diligently, practice mock debates, get along with you’re teammates, and have fun.

Editing Activity 3.5

For additional practice with commonly confused words, underline the correct word in parentheses in the following paragraphs.

Example:

You (we’re, were) expected to take heavy doses of Vitamin C on (your, you’re) doctor’s advice.

Birthday Party

(Your, You’re) niece Nan’s birthday party that you planned at the amusement park was a great success. As for Nan’s parents, I’m sure that (their, there, they’re) very happy with the results. All of the children had a great time, and I know that (their, there, they’re) telling all (there, their, they’re) friends about it. (It’s, Its) the first time many of the children played miniature golf, and they (new, knew) little about the game. All of them had fun, however, (accept, except) for Jason, who knocked all of his balls in the water.

The park is also reasonably priced, and I’m glad that Nan’s mother took (your, you’re) (advice, advise) and held it (their, there, they’re). By the end of the party, the (affect, effect) of the long day was evident in all the children, and I’m sure it (effected, affected) the parents similarly. However, I think everyone was willing to (except, accept) being a little tired for a for a great day of fun.

Now (were, we’re) thinking of having our next family birthday party (they’re, their, there). I don’t know (were, we’re, where) we could have more fun. Would you (advise, advice) us to rent a room by the arcade for eating lunch and opening presents? (Then, Than) parents could keep track of (there, their, they’re) kids much easier (then, than) if we rented a room elsewhere.

Editing Activity 3.6

Proofread your draft for any possible errors involving the commonly confused words from the list. Look for words from the list in your draft and make sure that you have used the correct word in each case.
**Editing Activity 3.7**

Most editing sections provide grammar and punctuation review activities to give you more practice identifying and correcting common errors. Proofread the following draft and correct any errors involving run-on sentences or comma splices by separating sentences with a period or combining them with a joining word; insert commas where they are required, and correct any misspelled irregular verbs.

Example: The mother cat had hid some of her babies behind the washing machine, we didn’t realize how many kittens she had until we heared them crying.

Corrected: The mother cat had hidden some of her babies behind the washing machine, and we didn’t realize how many kittens she had until we heard them crying.

**Too Many Geese**

A big drainage pond sat behind our apartment complex in the city, it filled with water during the rainy winter season. The pond attracted a variety of migrating birds which flew in before Christmas and left sometime in March.

We enjoyed the egrets ducks coots and geese that came to visit, but we were also ready for them to leave in the spring. The problem was they would spend a lot of time on the back apartment lawn eating the grass seed, they leaved their droppings all over the lawn and concrete walkways. It was a real mess and we couldn’t walk back there without stepping on something.

Last winter while most of the birds were leaving in March some Canadian geese hatched their babies. Rather than leave, they settled in to raise their brood which consisted of at least ten ducklings. Apartment tenants started feeding them which was a mistake they grew accustomed to their environment and when the ducklings were old enough to fly no one leaved.

Today we have fourteen large geese living year around behind our apartments, it is not a good situation. They keep the back area littered with their droppings and they have drove off families by running at their children and squawking. They have became more and more aggressive and now consider the back lawn area their territory. To make matters worse a new brood of ducklings has hatched and the numbers are going to keep growing.

The situation has got so bad that the apartment owners have brung in fish and game experts to see what can be done that was a few months ago and nothing has happened. Apparently one option was to gather up and relocate the geese to a wild region. However domesticated “city” geese often don’t survive in the wild, that option was eliminated. Another option was to spay the male geese to cease reproduction and let the current geese eventually die out. Unfortunately there is too movement within the city among geese flocks so there would be no way to control reproduction. It looks like there is no good option to the problem.

I seen the old movie classic “The Birds” on television where flocks of birds start attacking people. I wonder if those geese have similar plans for us. Not long ago a child playing in the back of the apartments was attacked by a mother goose who was protecting her goslings, the child wasn’t hurt but the incident scared all of the parents. If there are too many incidents such as this residents may demand that the geese be dealt with lethally. No one really wants to see the geese killed but they have definitely become a menace that needs to be dealt with.
Editing Your Draft

When you proofread your paper for errors, read it several times, looking for a particular type of error each time. If you try to find all types of errors in one reading, you may overlook some. The more proficient you become at proofreading and the fewer errors you make, the easier it becomes to edit your drafts.

By now, you may have found particular types of errors that continue to crop up in your essays. Certain persistent errors can plague writers for years, so don’t be surprised if it takes some time to eliminate them in your writing. You know what they are, you are probably getting better at detecting them, and you will ultimately prevail. And once you rid yourself of a particularly troublesome error, it seldom returns.

Editing Guidelines

The following guidelines will help you proofread and edit your papers effectively.

1. **Proofread your sentences to make sure you haven’t run any together or put a comma between sentences instead of a period.** Correct run-on sentences or comma splices by separating longer sentences with periods and combining shorter, related sentences with a joining word.

2. **Proofread your sentences one last time for any sentence fragments: incomplete sentences with a period after them.** To correct fragments, attach them to the complete sentence they belong with or add words to make them complete.

3. **Read each sentence to make sure the subjects and present tense verbs agree.**

4. **Check your use of irregular past tense verbs, making sure you have used the correct irregular forms and spelled them correctly.**

5. **Check your comma usage, making sure you have inserted commas into your sentences following the rules presented in the text, and delete any unnecessary commas.**

6. **Check the spelling of any word you are uncertain of, and run the spell check on your word processing program to eliminate any spelling errors.**

Editing Activity 3.8
Proofread your latest draft for errors and make any needed corrections. Read your draft several times, focusing on one grammar or punctuation element at a time: run-on sentences, fragments, commas, subject-verb agreement, etc.

Editing Activity 3.9

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and proofread each other’s drafts for errors, pointing out any errors that you find. Make any additional corrections in your own draft that your classmates identify. Then write the final draft of your persuasive essay with all corrections made.

Timed Writing Four

Rachelle sprained her ankle badly in a basketball game and was out for five weeks. However, during that time, she practiced her three-point shooting as much as possible and worked on her upper-body strength in the weight room. When she returned, she was a better shooter than ever and was a stronger defender and rebounder. She had turned a negative experience into a positive result.

Write an in-class essay answering the question, “Is it possible to turn an obstacle or disadvantage into something positive or good? Take a position in the essay and support your viewpoint. Use your personal experience, the experience of others, your knowledge, and your reasoning skills to develop the essay. The use of examples may be helpful in supporting your viewpoint.
A Little Logic 8

Come up with the artificial language word that means the English words given based on the artificial language and English word translations.

1. What artificial language word means “big house?”
   granamelke means big tree
   pinimelke means little tree
   melkehoon means tree house

2. What artificial language word means “bright sky?”
   tamceno means sky blue
   cenorax means blue cheese
   aplmitl means star bright

3. What artificial language word means “ceiling tile?”
   gorblflur means fan belt
   pixngorbl means ceiling fan
   arhtusl means tile roof

4. What artificial language word means “horse ride?”
   myncabel means saddle horse
   conowir means trail ride
   cabelalma means horse blanket
Take a break from your writing to read the following persuasive essays. Read them for your enjoyment, to discuss with classmates, and to see what you might learn from them to apply to your own writing.

**Is College Worth It?**

by Alondra Frey

*In this essay, the author raises the question of whether attending college is worth it and comes down on the affirmative side.*

Go to college, get your degree, and get that good-paying job. That has been the common wisdom for decades for anyone who wants to secure a piece of the America Dream. But does it still apply today? Many young people are questioning the value of a college education, wondering if the time and money spent are worth it. Is a college education the best chance for success that it once was?

Naysayers and skeptics point to a multitude of factors that have eroded faith in the college pathway to success: a down job market for college graduates, increasing numbers of good jobs outsourced to other countries, skyrocketing college costs and years of student loan repayments, the need for a “higher” degree to get hired in many professions, and the outrageous success of some college drop-out entrepreneurs, proof that you don’t need that sheepskin.

It is easy to see why some young people aren’t particularly keen on beginning a long college trek that may lead to nowhere certain, and the falling numbers of male college students nationwide indicate that many young men are opting out. However, while a college degree may have lost some of its luster, the options to attending college are even less attractive.
What kinds of jobs are available for high school graduates? In the days of America’s industrial heyday, there were many decent-paying, unionized blue-color jobs for high-school grads. But the industries that provided those jobs – e.g. manufacturing, steel, textiles, automobile – have either shrunk or disappeared, and millions of jobs along with them. Most of today’s high school grads face the prospect of hourly wage jobs and little job security, whether as clerks, salespeople, nursing home aides, manicurists, auto mechanics, maintenance workers, waiters, or cooks. The prospects for high school drop-outs are, of course, even grimmer.

Studies invariably show that college graduates make significantly more money than high school graduates. A 2012 Census Bureau report estimates the lifetime earnings of American workers by educational level, calculated from 2011 statistics in its American Community Survey. The report predicts $1.371 million in lifetime earnings for a high school graduate with no higher education compared with $2.422 million for a four-year bachelor’s degree graduate. This gives a college graduate a lifetime earnings advantage of more than $1 million. In addition, holders of two-year college associate degrees also earn significantly more in lifetime earnings than high school grads. It is clear that the longer one stays in school, based on the degree obtained, the more money that he or she will make.

Of course, money isn’t everything, and many people for whom money is the Holy Grail are always searching for that elusive happiness. It is the lack of money that is the problem: not enough money to live in a safe neighborhood, to buy a reliable car, to afford health insurance, to ever buy a house, to save enough to weather a catastrophe, to escape poverty. Having enough money helps to keep the budget balanced, to stay out of credit card debt, to raise healthy, happy children, to have health care, to save for the future, to live with peace of mind. A job, and the salary, obtained by a college degree gives you the best chance of enjoying a living wage and everything positive that comes with it.

It is not surprising, yet worth noting, that college graduates are also more likely to marry than high school graduates and more like to stay married. Greater financial security is no doubt the main reason. College graduates are also more likely to be healthier, to live longer, and to travel more frequently. The children of college graduates are more likely to get better grades in school and to graduate from college themselves, enjoying the advantages that college-educated parents can provide. Getting a college degree can provide dividends not only for the degree holder but for generations of his or her family to come. Of course, many first-generation college students from working-class families excel wonderfully, and their growing numbers affirm the fact that the will to succeed is the greatest indicator of college success.

But what of that bleak job market for college graduates? It may not be as great as it was ten or fifteen years ago, but all of the professional jobs available – doctor, lawyer, engineer, teacher, researcher, computer programmer, CPA, architect, administrator, agronomist, geologist, registered nurse – go only to college graduates. Future graduates may have to evaluate the job market carefully before choosing a major, be a bit patient before getting the job they want, and have to move out of their desired area of residence, but that is nothing new. A college education has never been a guarantee of a good job, but it’s far closer to a guarantee than any alternative.

Of course, college isn’t for everyone, and there are alternate paths to success for some young people. But even two years of college to get licensed or certified in, for example, automotive tech, radiology, fire science, forestry, office management, dental assisting, aeronautics, welding, or health information technology opens doors to jobs that would not be available to high school graduates. And compared to four-year schools, a community college education is still a bargain.

There are also the less tangible advantages of getting a college education. College graduates tend to read more, to be more knowledgeable of the world, to have a greater appreciation of the
fine arts, to be more tech savvy, and to be more politically engaged. With the knowledge gained and thinking skills honed in college, they are best prepared to understand and navigate the evermore complex world in which we live. None of this makes them any better than the next person, but it gives them advantages that can lead to a richer, fuller life.

Is a college education still worth getting? When considering the alternatives, it is perhaps more worth getting today than ever before. And given our ever-more diverse population and the growing numbers of Americans living below the poverty level, it is essential for America’s future that the doors of our colleges remain wide open for everyone. Financial hardship should block no one’s entry to college.

Questions for Discussion

1. What evidence does the essay present to support the value of a college education? What evidence do you find the most compelling?

2. Why do you think that the enrollment of men in colleges throughout the nation has been in decline? What might be some of the reasons, and how might that trend be reversed?

3. Do you agree with the essay regarding the value of a college education? Discuss your own college aspirations and career goals.
The Intelligence of Beasts

By Colin Woodward

In this essay, the author contends that many animal species beyond commonly studied primates are much more intelligent than most humans realize.

If you’ve ever doubted that elephants are contemplative, Joshua M. Plotnik has some video you should watch. Plotnik, a postdoctoral fellow in experimental psychology at the University of Cambridge, wanted to see if Asian elephants could pass a classic cooperation test designed for chimpanzees. The elephants already knew how to use a rope to pull a food-bearing table within reach. But what if the only way to move the table was two elephants pulling on separate ropes simultaneously?

On one video, one elephant ambles up to the rope and waits patiently, trunk and tail gently swinging, for its counterpart to arrive, half a minute later. Then, without hesitation, they grasp their respective ropes in synchronicity, pulling the food to themselves. In another segment, a young female simply stands on her rope, which—the way the mechanism is set up—forces her colleague to do all the work for the both of them. In 60 trials, all six pairs of elephants waited for their partners, with an average success rate of over 93 percent, suggesting that they easily understood cooperation.

“We were very excited by the results,” Plotnik says into his cellphone as he walks home, after midnight, through the streets of Chiang Mai, Thailand, not far from his research sites. “Their behavior was comparable to that of the chimpanzees. We’re getting further into understanding how intelligent they are.”

For much of the last century, research on animal cognition focused almost exclusively on primates, on account of their relatively close evolutionary kinship with humans. But in recent years, many researchers wishing to understand how higher intelligence evolved have taken a different approach, looking to apparently intelligent species that are only distantly related to ourselves, like elephants, dolphins, or ravens. In the process, many cognitive traits once thought to be exclusive to humans—including some that are considered definitive of human uniqueness—have been found in far-flung provinces of the animal kingdom.

“In understanding evolution, human cognition is like the elephant’s trunk: It’s a very unusual thing, and it really stands out,” says Evan L. MacLean, a doctoral student in evolutionary anthropology at Duke University, which is coordinating a collaborative project to compare 30 species, as varied as dogs and octopuses. “The best source of evidence we have are the closest relatives—chimps and bonobos—but we’ve been missing a ton of very interesting variation by just looking at primates.”

Nine-week-old puppies have been shown to be very good at recognizing human gestures and interpreting them for their own benefit, while adult dogs provide and request information, predict social events, and perhaps even speculate on what their masters are thinking—for
example, finding hidden food by picking up on subtle human cues. Dolphins recognize themselves in mirrors, while the New Caledonian crow fashions tools with which to capture grubs. The common raven has demonstrated the ability to test actions in its mind, solving complicated puzzles to obtain food on the first try.

“There used to be this chimpocentrism in the field, with research narrowly concentrated on primates,” says Ádám Miklósi, a professor of ethology at Budapest’s Eötvös Loránd University and an expert on canine cognition. “It’s really great to see research in other species expand exponentially, because we really need the breadth and depth of species to be able to say anything meaningful about animal cognition.”

While there are many reasons to study the thinking ability of animals—devising better conservation strategies, opening new pathways in artificial intelligence—the great evolutionary question driving many researchers is this: Under what evolutionary pressures do different types of cognitive abilities tend to develop? If several entirely unrelated species turn out to have a given intellectual ability—mirror recognition in humans, dolphins, and elephants, for instance—are there common denominators in the conditions they confront (membership in complex social groups, for example) that might explain the development? Can the study of such examples of convergent evolution help us understand how and why higher intelligence arises in nature? Researchers have taken only the first steps toward finding definitive answers to both of those questions.

Elephants are fascinating subjects in this regard. They have enormous brains, bigger than those of humans. Like many other animals thought to possess unusual intelligence, they live in complex societies in which individuals cooperate and interact to solve problems. They’re also unrelated to humans. Whereas we and chimpanzees had a common ancestor about five million years ago, with elephants (and their relations, the aardvark and manatee), it was 100 million years ago, a relationship even more distant than the ones we have with dolphins and whales.

“If you find an elephant and a human sharing an ability that most other primates don’t have, you can be pretty sure” it’s an example of convergent evolution at work, says Richard W. Byrne, a professor of psychology at the University of St. Andrews, in Scotland, who has studied cognition in both primates and elephants. “If you can see shared circumstances in which these animals use this ability, that can help show what its biological function is.”

Researchers like Byrne are finding that elephants have all sorts of intriguing cognitive abilities comparable to—and sometimes exceeding—our own. They recognize their reflections in mirrors. They act empathically toward fellow elephants in distress and offer them assistance. They mourn and even bury their dead. As Plotnik has shown, they’re not flummoxed by cooperative problem solving. And both Asian and African elephants make tools for a variety of purposes, from flyswatters to backscratchers.

Byrne’s fieldwork has taken place in Kenya’s Amboseli National Park, site of a long-term, multidisciplinary study of elephants, in its 39th year. (That research is described in an edited collection, *The Amboseli Elephants: A Long-Term Perspective on a Long-Lived Mammal*, published this spring by the University of Chicago Press.) In recent years, Byrne and his colleagues have conducted field experiments that show two additional mental abilities not seen in any other animal.

In one experiment, elephants were presented garments worn by two different human ethnic groups: the Masai (who sometimes spear elephants) and the Kamba (an agrarian people who rarely interact with elephants). Whether given access to smells of previously worn clothing or to visual inspection of unworn clothing, the elephants responded with greater fear or aggression toward the Masai clothing. This led Byrne and his colleagues to conclude that elephants are able
to categorize another species, humans, into subclasses. “We don’t know any other animals that categorize dangers in this way, but that may be because they haven’t been tested,” he says.

In the second experiment, the researchers wanted to test if elephants understand “person permanence” and “invisible displacement”—that is, if they are aware that absent individuals exist and if they contemplate the movements and activities of those individuals in absentia, an ability that human beings develop in infancy. Knowing that the members of the extended elephant family they were working with sniffed one another’s urine deposits, the researchers began moving the deposits around. “The nice thing was to see their surprised reaction when they encountered a sample from an individual who was actually a half-kilometer or more behind them, a much greater reaction than if the sample was from someone who was actually ahead of them,” Byrne explains.

The results suggested that each elephant was keeping track of the location and expected movements of everyone else in its foraging group—17 individuals, in this case—a remarkable display of working-memory capacity.

“They don’t use their eyes in the bright Amboseli sun, but they’re still able to keep track of 17 individuals in an environment that they cannot scan,” Byrne notes. “Think of a parent with 17 kids roaming around a department store; I think we would find it extremely challenging to keep track in our minds of where everyone is. This is an ability that appears to be rather more than humans can do.”

Miklósi, who is using cognition work with dogs to program robots that will, doglike, anticipate, serve, and respond to human needs, suspects that scientists will discover many more instances in which animals are found to have mental powers that humans lack. “So far, no matter how much you read in the literature, there is this notion that humans are always the best at everything,” he says. “If the tests were not so anthropocentric, we would probably lose a lot more often.”

Some other researchers agree that animal-cognition research will inevitably challenge human presumptuousness. “From ancient times, it’s always been us versus the rest of the animal world, and it wasn’t really considered that animals were thinking creatures,” says Diana Reiss, a professor of cognitive psychology at Hunter College of the City University of New York, who studies elephants and dolphins. “The big message is that we’re not the pinnacle of the tree, the only creatures who are thinking complexly. We share the upper branches of the tree with many species, each so beautifully evolved for their own environmental niche and social structures.”

But other scientists take a more skeptical view. They include David Premack, a professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania and the father of the influential “theory of mind,” which refers to the ability to infer the mental states of others. “I have a prejudice that’s not common among people who study animals, who tend to do so primarily to show similarities between the animal and the human,” he explains. “That’s a noble cause, but I feel it’s easily abused, as when they leap from similarity to equivalence.”

Humans and certain animals might similarly recognize that a large rock is more likely to break a branch than a small one, but Premack says there’s no evidence that this understanding of a physical action is equivalent to causal reasoning. That is, if an animal comes across a large rock lying beside a crushed plant, it won’t infer, as a human might, that the rock crushed the plant, he argues.

Microscopic study of the human brain, he notes, has revealed neural structures and forms of connectivity not found in any other animal. And cognitive research has not been able to keep pace with those developments. “Things that the naked eye can see—that the human is a very different entity than the nonhuman—is very much corroborated under the microscope,” he says.
“If you can’t see we’re special, you have to be permanently drunk.”

Byrne agrees that it would be foolish to jump from similarity to equivalence, but he says comparative-cognition researchers are by no means trying to show that animals are “little humans in disguise.” “None of the interpretations we make of our experiments require one to treat superficial resemblance as deep equivalence,” he says.

As for his own research interests, Byrne would like to explore what creatures in other, unstudied corners of the animal kingdom might be thinking. Most species thought to be especially intelligent are social creatures, but what about large-brained nonsocial species? “I don’t know anybody who’s looking at bears. They have very large brains—I wonder why,” he says. “If someone offered me a long-term study of grizzlies, I’d take it.”

Questions for Discussion

1. Why has the study of intelligence in animals other than primates been lacking historically? How do recent findings change our thinking about the intelligence of some non-primates?

2. What evidence does the author use to support his contention that different animal species are more intelligent than most people realize? How convincing is the evidence?

3. How might the treatment of animals change given our understanding of their intelligence? What current practices regarding animal captivity should be examined?

4. What does the intelligence found in completely unrelated species – e.g. elephants, birds, dogs – infer about animal intelligence? What does it infer about evolution across the species?
Incorporating Research in an Essay

For your next writing assignment, you will write a second persuasive essay with an additional element. Along with using your own experience and knowledge to develop the essay, you will seek information from other sources – books, magazines, the Internet, experts – to incorporate in your essay.

Some of the subjects that may interest us go beyond our personal experience and knowledge, so to write on such a subject, we need to learn more about it. For example, we may be interested in why teenagers drop out of school or why the coral reefs in many oceans are deteriorating. While we may have some ideas, we would need to consult other sources in order to write an informative essay.

As writers, we may research a particular topic to learn more about it, to evaluate different viewpoints on the subject, or to help formulate our own viewpoint. A wide range of topics for persuasive essays may require some research: global warming, the electoral college, pre-school education, endangered species, marijuana legalization, escalating college tuition costs, legislative term limits, the connection between football and brain damage.

Your upcoming persuasive essay assignment will require you to do some research. The purpose of the assignment is to help you learn to research a topic effectively and to incorporate research material into an essay to support your thesis. The assignment will also help prepare you for longer, more formal research papers you will do for college English courses and other courses across the curriculum.

Writing Assignment Six

For this assignment, you will write a persuasive essay on a topic of interest that will require you to do some research to become more knowledgeable. Think of topics that people may have differing viewpoints on and that you would need to learn more about to write effectively. The following topics show the range of possible subjects to consider. You may consider one of the topics or a similar topic to write on.

Many zoos have just one elephant, which is kept in a relatively small, confined area. Is this a good practice given the nature of elephants?
Given the injuries and deaths associated with high school football, should it be banned?
Should colleges rely more on standardized test scores (e.g. SAT, ACT) or on a student’s high school grades to evaluate applicants?
Should the government subsidize the private school education of a student (private-school vouchers) like it does the public school education?
Should illegal immigrants be granted citizenship after five-ten years of working and paying taxes in the U.S.?
Should minors who commit violent crimes be tried and sentenced as adults?
Should children be required to attend pre-school if it is publicly funded?
Should adults (eighteen and over) be allowed to carry concealed weapons?
Should state legislators have term limits or be able to serve as long as they are elected?
Should elementary-school children wear uniforms?
Should Americans be allowed to purchase cheaper medical drugs outside the U.S. (e.g. Canada or Mexico)?
Is smoking marijuana a pathway to harder drugs (e.g. cocaine, heroin, methadone)?
Should the legal drinking age be lowered nationally to eighteen?
Does the benefit of stomach reduction surgery outweigh the possible harm?

Prewriting

The prewriting emphasis for this persuasive essay is on the research: finding sources for your topic, reading the material, and deciding what you want to include in your paper. Once you have completed the research, you can evaluate the information and formulate (or confirm) your viewpoint on the topic: the thesis you will support in your essay.

Topic Selection

To select a topic for your persuasive essay, follow these guidelines.

1. Select a topic that you are interested in and would like to know more about.

2. Select a topic on which people’s opinions may differ. For example, since almost everyone agrees that child abuse is a terrible thing, there is no audience to “persuade.” However, people may disagree on how abusers should be sentenced for their crime: the same as murderers? with no chance at parole? with a sentence that includes rehabilitation and parole? The sentencing of abusers could be a topic for a persuasive essay.

3. Select a topic that you can research on the Internet and in the library.

4. Select a topic that you believe some reading audience would be interested in. Steer away from traditional topics such as abortion, gun control, gay marriage, or capital punishment that have been debated ad naseum (going on forever).
5. **Select a topic that is limited enough to cover in an essay.** For example, while the general topic “rap music” could fill a book, the topic “Does “gangsta” rap lead to violent behavior among teens?” could be developed in an essay.

6. **Select a topic that other classmates aren’t writing about.** Everyone writing on a different topic produces a lot of interesting reading material for the class.

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**Prewriting Activity 3.7**

Keeping the topic-selection guidelines in mind, decide on a topic for your persuasive essay. You may want to come up with two or three potential topics and settle on the most “researchable” topic, one that hasn’t been selected by another classmate. Consult with your instructor to make sure that the topic you select is appropriate for a persuasive essay.

Sample topic: High-speed Railway System

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**Researching Your Topic**

Your current persuasive essay will be developed through a combination of your own ideas and your research material. You may already have some good ideas on your topic which you can augment with your research findings. Your best research material will contain reliable information from credible sources.

For example, if you wanted to know which mid-sized Japanese car performed better, the Honda Accord or Toyota Camry, you wouldn’t get the most objective information from an advertising brochure at a Honda or Toyota dealership. Instead, you would be better off reading consumer magazines that do road testing on comparable vehicles and analyze the results. If you wanted to find out whether guns in the home prevented in-home invasions, you wouldn’t look to the NRA (National Rifle Association) for credible information since it is a pro-gun organization with a strongly biased viewpoint. Instead, you might look for findings from the National Institute of Justice or the Office of Juvenile Justice, federal agencies that would provide more objective information.

**Finding Sources**

The following suggestions will help you find the best sources and the most relevant information.
1. **Your college librarian can be of great help.** When in doubt, seek out a librarian, tell her the topic you are researching, and ask the best way to proceed.

2. **Many school libraries index their books by topic on computers.** The computers have simple instructions for entering the name of your topic and finding what books are available.

3. **Some schools have computer programs that locate information on topics in periodicals or newspapers, with the articles found online.** Ask your librarians about programs such as Proquest, Lexis Nexus, SIRS, and GALE, and learn how to access them on the library computers to research your topic.

4. **You can probably find information on your topic on the Internet by using a topic search engine such as Google or Yahoo.** As you probably know, you can find both useful and useless information on the Internet, so check the source of an article carefully to determine whether the information is credible.

5. **Use the most credible sources** (convincing and believable) for your topic: articles from respected periodicals or newspapers, books from experts, studies from well-known journals. Avoid using material that is obviously biased (prejudiced against or in favor of something) since the information may not be valid.

6. **Use the most recent information you can find on a topic, and always look for the publication date.** For example, statistics on teen pregnancy differ greatly from the 1980’s to the 2000’s. Using information from a 1987 article would provide a false picture of teen pregnancy today.

7. **When you find something that you may want to use in your essay, write down the information and include its source: the author, the title of the article or book, the name of the magazine, periodical, or newspaper, and if from the Internet, the site where the information was found.** You will reference the source of any research material you use in your essay with this information.

### Directed Research

As you look up information on your topic, exactly what kinds of information are you looking for? Knowing what to look for helps to focus your search on relevant material and to ignore articles or any information that isn’t useful.
To conduct a “directed research” investigation for your persuasive essay, consider the following suggestions.

1. **Look for any information that helps you understand the topic.** The better you understand your topic, the better your readers will understand it. For example, the writer who researched the topic “High-speed rail system” needed to learn exactly what high-speed rail was and how it worked.

2. **Look for differing viewpoints on the topic.** If you find differing viewpoints as you research, you know that you have a persuasive essay topic. For example, the writer on the “High-speed rail system” discovered quickly that people held two strongly opposite viewpoints: those in support and those opposed to high-speed rail.

3. **Look for the main points that support the differing viewpoints on the topic.** Write down those points, and any evidence to validate them, which will provide some material for whatever position you take on the topic and some opposing arguments to counter in your essay.

   For example, the writer of the high-speed rail essay found that proponents contended that high-speed rail would help the state’s economy, provide more jobs for residents, be cost effective, and provide an affordable, rapid way to travel across the state. Opponents, on the other hand, cited the extremely high cost of building the system and believed that most people would still travel by car rather than train.

4. **Keep an open mind as you research your topic.** You may have a good idea of your viewpoint on the topic prior to doing your research, but what you discover as you investigate the topic may influence how you feel about it. Don’t be locked into a position on the topic that your research doesn’t support.

   For example, while the writer of the high-speed rail had her doubts before doing the research, she discovered enough good reasons for building the rail system to support it enthusiastically in her essay.

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**Prewriting Activity 3.8**

Following the research suggestions provided, research your topic using library sources and the Internet. As you read, make sure to write down any information that you might use in your essay along with the source information (author, title of article, title of book, Internet site, etc.) for each piece of information.

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**Thesis**

When you have completed your research, you should have a pretty good idea of the position you want to take on your topic: the *thesis* for your essay. Your research may have confirmed what you already believed to be the best position to take, helped you decide on the best position, or even changed your mind on the topic.
To generate your thesis statement, consider the following:

1. **Decide on a thesis that your research supports.** Since you will be using your research findings as a part of your thesis support, decide on a thesis that those findings strongly support.

2. **Decide on a thesis that you believe in and can support enthusiastically.** While researching, you no doubt found reasons to support different positions on the topic. Take the position that you believe is most valid, most reasonable, fairest, or most logical.

**Prewriting Activity 3.9**

Generate a potential thesis statement for your essay: the position on the topic that you want to present and support in your essay.

Sample thesis statement:

A high-speed rail system will be good for the state of California and its residents.

**Thesis Support**

When considering ideas to support your thesis, you are answering the readers’ question, “Why does the writer believe as he does?” For example, why does the writer support building a high-speed rail system? Why does the writer believe that juveniles should never be tried as adults for violent crimes? Why does the writer believe that global warming is the greatest danger to mankind? Why does the writer believe that preschool is not vital to a child’s educational success?

To answer the readers’ question, you provide the most compelling reasons possible to convince readers that your position is the right one and present any evidence that will help to convince them. To develop your thesis support, answer these questions.

1. **What are the most important points that I want to present to support my thesis?** From your research findings and your own experience, knowledge, and reasoning ability, decide on those reasons that will provide the strongest support and be most convincing for readers.

2. **What evidence do I have to support each reason?** For example, the writer of the “high-speed rail” essay presented this supportive reason: High-speed rail will create thousands of jobs for Californians. Discerning readers will not accept the statement unless some
evidence is presented. What kinds of jobs will be created? What experts say this will happen? What proof do you have? You can provide evidence to support your points in different ways:

a. **By providing factual information.** Anytime you can support a point with facts, you have presented a strong argument. For example, the writer used the following fact to support her point that high-speed rail is not a risky, crazy idea: *Japan, France, and Spain have been operating high-speed rails successfully for many years.*

b. **By providing examples.** Examples help readers see and understand your supportive points. The writer of the high-speed rail essay used the following examples to support her point that high-speed train travel is faster than by car: *For example, while it takes a car driver three and one-half hours on average to go from Los Angeles to Fresno, it takes a high-speed train one and a half hours. While drivers need at least seven hours to get from Los Angeles to San Francisco, they can get there in three hours by high-speed rail.*

c. **By providing personal experience.** Any time you can provide relevant personal experience to support a point, you capture the readers’ interest. For example, the writer of the high-speed rail essay presented the experience of her aunt to support the point that residents will use the high-speed rail if it is built: *My aunt, whose mother lives in Japan, has visited her several times, and she never rents a car. She says that taking the bullet train is so much faster and easier that she doesn’t even consider driving.*

d. **By providing credible sources.** If you write that America’s Surgeon General has stated that childhood obesity has led to an increase in Type 2 diabetes among children, most readers will believe you. If you write that the International Association of Climatologists confirmed that the planet’s fast-melting glaciers are creating a rise in ocean levels, most readers won’t argue.

e. **By providing a comparison.** Relevant comparisons are a great way to help readers understand a point and its logic. For example, the writer of the high-speed rail essay used the following comparison to make the point that historically there are always dissenters when new, large projects are undertaken: *When the Erie Canal was built, many New Yorkers scoffed at the idea as being ridiculous. When the transcontinental railroad was first proposed, a group of Congressmen attempted to block its approval. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is opposition to the high-speed rail.*

3. **Are you presenting a fact or an opinion?** For example, the writer of the high-speed rail wrote, “Japan’s bullet trains travel at an average speed of one-hundred and fifty miles per hour,” a fact that few readers would question. She also presented the opinion, “High-speed rail travel will be less stressful and healthier for Californians than driving.” Without some support, discerning readers will not accept an opinion on face value.

When you present an opinion in an essay, try to support it in the most reasonable, logical manner. The writer of the high-speed rail essay supported her opinion with some examples:

*High-speed rail travel will be less stressful and healthier for Californians than driving. Sitting back and reading a book or taking nap on a train is much less stressful than*
navigating California's freeways. Trying to find a parking place in San Francisco or Los Angeles is much more stressful than just getting off a train and being there. Since stress has been linked to heart disease, diabetes, and obesity, it makes sense that frequent train riding would be healthier than driving.

The writer has supported her opinion, and readers can decide whether she has made a convincing case.

Prewriting Activity 3.10

Drawing from you research and your own ideas, make a list of reasons to support your thesis. In addition, consider how you might develop each each reason and what evidence you might use to convince readers of its validity.

Sample list of reasons and support:

Topic:  High-speed rail system

Thesis:  A high-speed rail system would be good for California and its residents.

Reasons and evidence:

1.  It will be cost effective.
    (support: Rider usage analysis from the Department of Transportation)

2.  It will create many jobs.
    (support: editorial from Sacramento Bee on types of jobs it will create)

3.  It is not a risky gamble.
    (support: online evidence of long-time successful rail systems in Japan, France, and Spain)

4.  It will reduce pollution.
    (support: common-sense opinion - High-speed rail doesn’t pollute, and it will reduce the number of cars on freeways, which will cut emissions.)

5.  It will provide a great travel option for business people and all Californians who travel.
    (support: fact - It will get people to their destinations much faster than cars and be much cheaper than flying.)
Opposing Arguments

Writers are sometimes so focused on supporting their thesis that they don’t consider contrary positions. They may simply ignore opposing arguments or not be aware of them. The first step in addressing the concerns of skeptics is to find out what their concerns are. The next step is to figure out the best way to respond to them.

To address opposing arguments effectively in your upcoming essay, consider the following suggestions:

1. **Determine the opposition’s position on the issue.** For example, with the high-speed rail issue, the writer determined through her research that there were two opposite viewpoints on the issue: people who supported building the system and people who opposed it.

2. **Identify the main reasons that support the opposition’s position.** For example, the writer of the high-speed rail system essay discovered two main arguments against its being built: it is far too costly and not enough people will ever use it.

3. **Consider how you can best address the arguments in your essay.** If an argument is factually inaccurate, has no factual basis, is not reasonable or logical, or is an unsupported opinion, you should point out its flaws to readers.

4. **Be respectful of the opposing viewpoint of readers.** The best way to get readers to change their minds on an issue is to point out the flaws in their arguments without offending them. You can be respectful of a reader’s position and strongly oppose it at the same time.

Prewriting Activity 3.11

Write down two or three arguments that support the main opposing position on your topic. Then consider the most effective way of refuting (disproving) each argument.

Sample arguments and responses:

**Topic:** High speed-rail system
**Thesis:** A high-speed rail system will be good for California and its residents.

**Opposition argument #1:** The system will cost too much to build.

**Refute:** Yes, it will be expensive to build, but that is a one-time expense for a transportation system that will last forever. In addition, the federal and state governments are
providing the funding, and no new taxes will be raised to build the system.

**Opposition argument #2:** It won’t be used enough to justify building it. People won’t give up traveling by car.

Refute: That is an unsupported opinion. Factual evidence shows otherwise: people in Japan, France, and Spain travel by high-speed train frequently. Californians will do the same.

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**Audience and Purpose**

Since you are writing a persuasive essay, your readers will include people who may not agree with your position on the issue or who don’t have a firm opinion. You obviously don’t need to convince readers who already agree with you.

Decide on that group of readers whose minds you would like to change on the issue: people who view it differently than yourself. For example, the writer of the “high-speed rail” essay wrote to a group of people who could “derail” the project: state legislators who currently opposed it.

Your writing purpose depends on your topic, your audience, and what you hope to accomplish. Your purpose may be to encourage people to support a particular proposal or to oppose something that you feel is unfair or unnecessary. If you are writing to readers with strongly entrenched viewpoints, your purpose may be, at the least, to open their minds to a different perspective. The writer of the “high-speed rail” essay had a clear purpose: to convince skeptical legislators to get onboard the project.

**Prewriting Activity 3.12**

Decide on the most appropriate reading audience for your essay, including people who disagree with your viewpoint, and your purpose in writing to them.

Sample audience and purpose:

**Topic:** A high-speed rail system

**Thesis:** Building a high-speed rail system will be good for California and its residents.

**Audience:** State legislators who oppose or are skeptical of the project

**Purpose:** To convince legislators to support building a high-speed rail system
Drafting

Now that you have done considerable prewriting work for your persuasive essay, you are close to writing your first draft. First, one new writing consideration needs to be covered: incorporating research material into your essay. You need to do this in a way that distinguishes your own thoughts and ideas from the research material that you present, which is not a difficult task.

Incorporating Research

When you use material in an essay that came from a research source such as a book, magazine, newspaper, or online site, you need to let readers know the source. You do this for different reasons:

To acknowledge your sources so readers know where each piece of information came from.

To lend credibility to the research information by presenting reliable sources.

To distinguish your own thoughts and ideas from any “borrowed” material and to avoid plagiarism: passing off someone else’s written ideas as your own.

You will find source references in many newspaper editorials, periodical articles, online articles, and books such as the following:

According to meteorologist Issac Freeman,
In Germaine White’s book White Collar Criminals,
In the December 12th edition of Time,
According to the latest Gallop Poll,

You need to provide similar source references for any of the research material that you use in your essay. To provide clear source references in your essay, follow these suggestions:

1. Whenever you introduce material from a source, provide a clear reference for readers.
   You might include the author’s name and title of her book (In Nora Ashley’s book Wall Street Meltdown.), the title of an article and the online site or periodical where it was found (The article “The Asthma-Pollution Connection” in Science Today confirmed . . .), the name of a particular study (The British Health Department’s four-year study on diabetes in children discovered . . .), or the name of a particular expert (Renown podiatrist Dr. Patricia DeRoot recommended . . .). Provide the source reference information that most accurately reveals the source of the material and shows its credibility.

2. When you use the same source later in an essay, refer back to the original reference.
   While you needn’t provide the entire source reference again, provide enough information so
readers know what source you are referring to: Ashley also contends that . . ., The “Asthma-Pollution” article goes on to suggest . . ., The British Health Department’s study concludes that . . ., Dr. Fernandez also argues that . . .

3. **When you write your essay, paraphrase – put into your own words – most of the research information that you use.** Make sure to provide a source reference for all paraphrased research material. Use direct quotes from the research sparingly, putting them in quotation marks and providing a source reference when you do.

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**Paraphrasing**

As you write your draft, you *paraphrase* – put into your own words – most of the research information that you use. For example, in an essay on breast implants, you could retain some key words in the original text – e.g. *breast implants, silicone and saline implants, post-surgical scarring* - but present most of the information in your own words. The purpose of paraphrasing is to include research material in your paper while maintaining your own writing voice.

**Drafting Activity 3.5**

Read the original and paraphrased versions of the “Vincent” paragraph to see how the paraphrased wording differs. Then put the second “Vincent” paragraph into your own words. Change the wording enough to make your paraphrased paragraph distinct from the original.

**Original: “Vincent” by Gretchen Wilder**

Vincent Van Gogh never made a penny from his art during his lifetime. His fame came long after his death at age thirty-seven. Without the help of his younger brother Theo, Vincent would have never had an art career to begin with. He owed everything to Theo’s lifetime of financial support, which he often repaid in recriminations and excessive demands for more money.

**Paraphrased:**

According to Gretchen Wilder’s essay “Vincent,” Vincent Van Gogh didn’t profit from his art while he was alive. His fame came long after he died at age thirty-seven. If it hadn’t been for his younger brother Theo’s help, Vincent would have never had an art career to begin with. Theo supported Vincent financially his entire life, which he often “repaid in recriminations and excessive demands for more money.” *(Direct quote from original in quotation marks.)*

**Original: “Vincent” by Gretchen Wilder**

Throughout much of Vincent’s artistic career, he was not deemed even a passably good artist. His black and white pictures of orchards and fields were viewed by art critics as crudely drawn. His pictures with peasants in them revealed a lifetime shortcoming in drawing symmetrical human figures: hands too large for their arms, torsos too short for their legs.
Drafting Activity 3.5

Read the following first draft of the “High-Speed Rail System” essay and note how the writer incorporates research material in her essay. All of the writing that is not referenced is the writer’s own thoughts and her general knowledge of the topic.

You may use this essay as a model for incorporating research material in your own draft. The source references are in **bold italics**.

High-speed Rail System (first draft)

**Audience:** state legislators

Imagine high-speed passenger trains running the length of the state connecting Southern California and the Bay Area. Trains traveling up to 200 miles/hour could zip passengers from Los Angeles to San Francisco in less than two hours. Residents in the central part of the state could reach Disneyland or Fisherman’s Wharf in about an hour. High-speed trains could revolutionize travel in California, provide a model for other states, and benefit Californians in many ways.

A high-speed rail system is a passenger train system that would connect the Northern and Southern population centers of the state and run down its middle. It would make few stops, only at the larger cities on its route, and get passengers to their destination as quickly as possible. Trains would run regularly throughout the day and evening, providing transportation for thousands of passengers daily. *According to the Department of Transportation,* the system would be modeled most closely on the German Transrapid system that uses magnetic levitation, or “Maglev,” a system of transportation that suspends, guides and propels trains rapidly and safely.

Skeptics depict high-speed rail as some risky, futuristic gamble. In fact, *Wikipedia’s* information on high speed trains reveals that Japan’s high-speed rail, the “bullet” train, has been around for over thirty years, and that today high-speed passenger train systems also operate in China, Taiwan, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and the UK. Rather than being some “far out” venture, high speed rail is a common, viable form of transportation in many countries.

Skeptics also point to the multi-billion dollar price tag for building a high-speed rail system. However, the cost of building didn’t keep Japan, China, Taiwan, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, or the UK from building their high-speed rail systems, and *according to the Department of Commerce,* California has the eighth largest economy in the world compared to entire countries. *In addition, the state’s High-Speed Rail Department points to* the thousands of jobs that the construction project will create, adding to the state’s economic growth. It also contends that building the high-speed rail system would cost no more than renovating and expanding the current freeway system. Beyond that, as with all construction work, the longer that California waits, the more expensive the project will become.

What if California builds a high-speed passenger train system and no passengers show up? Skeptics question whether car-crazy Californians will leave their cars at home to jump on a high-speed train. *However, according to the article “Will Californians Ride The Rail?” at the Huffington Post website,* the California High Speed Rail Department conducted an extensive two-year “ridership” study that projected a level of usage that would make the operation of the system cost effective. There is also the fact that the level of usage in the eight countries that
operate high-speed rail systems has proven cost effective since they have been operating for years.

The advantages of having a high-speed rail system are tremendous, something that skeptics tend to ignore. First, it would reduce statewide travel time dramatically for the vast majority of people who traverse the state, or parts of it, by car. This would be particularly beneficial, according to Nordic Air CEO Tyrone Glass, for the hundreds of thousands of Californians whose business takes them to different parts of the state. Second, it would no doubt remove thousands of cars from California’s vehicle-choked freeways, providing safer, faster, and more convenient travel for those car drivers traveling shorter distances and for California’s commercial truckers. As a result, it would significantly reduce the unhealthy level of pollution throughout the state, getting thousands of emission-spewing cars off the freeways. Finally, according to the High-Speed Rail Department, it would be a permanent boost to the economy and California’s employment situation, creating thousands of construction, operating, and maintenance jobs.

Of course there is some risk to building a high-speed rail system since it has never been done in the U.S. However, the benefits greatly outweigh the risk, and all great construction projects have had their risks and their skeptics: the Erie Canal, the U.S. transcontinental railway, Hoover Dam, California’s statewide waterway system, the great subway systems of our Eastern cities. There are always people who are fearful of progress and the unknowns that come with it. It is when we overcome those fears that we accomplish great things, and building the high-speed rail system will be one of the state’s greatest accomplishments, one that all Californians will benefit from.

There are some things we can all agree that our state needs: more jobs, a stronger economy, less pollution, fewer cars clogging the freeways, lower gas prices. While the high-speed rail may not be a magic bullet, it can help out tremendously in all of these areas. Please support current legislation for the construction of the high-speed rail. The longer we wait, the more expensive the project gets, the more polluted and unhealthy our air becomes, the more clogged and unsafe our freeways grow, and the more the economy and employment lag. The time to build is now, and you can help make the greatest transportation advancement in California’s history a reality.

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**Drafting Guidelines**

As you write the first draft of your persuasive paper, keep the following suggestions in mind.

1. **Create an opening that catches the readers’ attention and reveals the topic’s importance.** Why is this an issue that people should take an interest in? What is a creative way to present the topic? Include your thesis statement at or near the end of your opening
2. Include any explanatory information or definitions that readers may need to understand your topic clearly. (See the second paragraph of the “High-speed Rail” draft, which explains what high-speed rail is and how it works)

3. Following the opening, present your supportive points and then address the opposing arguments. Develop each of your supportive points fully, providing any evidence that helps to validate each point. Then present and refute the main opposing arguments.

4. Provide source references for all of your research material. Paraphrase – put into your own words – most of the research material, use quotation marks (“ “) to set off direct quotes, and provide source references for all paraphrased and quoted material.

5. Write your essay in paragraphs, beginning a new paragraph as you introduce the next supporting point or opposing argument. Use topic sentences to present the main idea of each middle paragraph. (Note how the writer of the “High-speed Rail” begins each middle paragraph with a topic sentence that expressed the paragraph’s main idea.

6. Conclude your draft in a way that reinforces your thesis and makes your purpose clear to readers. How can you make the strongest final impact?

7. As you write, be open to new ideas that may come to you. While your prewriting preparation no doubt gave you some good ideas, the drafting process may trigger new ideas and connections you hadn’t considered. Consider any new idea that comes to mind.

8. Keep your readers in mind. For this essay, you are writing for a different type of audience: people whose viewpoint on the topic may differ from yours. Present your ideas in ways that you feel will get the best response from such readers.

Drafting Activity 3.6

Keeping the drafting suggestions in mind, write the first draft of your persuasive essay. Remember, the purpose of your first draft is to get your ideas, and the relevant material from your research, on paper in a relatively organized fashion. Don’t spend time trying to make every sentence and paragraph perfect. As you have probably learned, often it is often easier to spot any problems in a draft after you have set it aside for awhile and returned to view it through “fresh eyes.”
A Little Logic

1. A crime has been committed at Freemont Street. The main suspect is a man named Sean Baker. It was said that a man had been walking along the pathway when he was suddenly shot in the stomach. The suspect had brown hair, blue eyes and wore a baggy Armani suit just like Sean Baker’s. Sean was asked to tell the story right from the beginning.
   "Well," said Sean, "I was just hanging around the park when I saw this man walking along the pathway. Suddenly, a guy came up from behind him and shot him! I ran home as fast as I could." The policemen asked him to give a description of the murderer. "He had a red mustache, red hair and a baggy Armani suit on." "I think this man is telling a lie," said one of the policemen. How did he know?

2. A dead body is found at the bottom of a multistory building. Seeing the position of the body, it is evident that the person jumped from one of the floors, committing suicide. A homicide detective is called to look after the case. He goes to the first floor and walks in the room facing the direction in which the body was found. He opens the window in that direction and flips a coin towards the floor. Then he goes to the second floor and repeats the process. He keeps on doing this until he reaches the last floor. Then, when he climbs down he tells the team that it is a murder not suicide. How did he come to know that it was a murder?
Revision

Now that you have written the first draft of your persuasive essay, you are ready to revise it and make any changes you feel would improve its content, organization, or wording. As you reread your draft, you may find a better way to organize your middle paragraphs, a more concise way to word some of your sentences, or some research material that you had forgotten to reference. As you revise, be open to new ideas that may come to you, and feel free to incorporate new material as you improve what you have already written.

Varying Sentence Structures

Writers sometimes get into ruts, relying too much on the same sentence structures and connecting words. In the following example, the writer overuses compound sentences joined by and or but, creating a rather monotonous reading rhythm.

We flew into Los Angeles at night from New Orleans, and we noticed flames on the ground. The flames were on the far western side of the LA basin, and they appeared to cover a large stretch of area. I thought it might be a controlled weed burn in the foothills, but the flames appeared to stretch lower than that. I tried to determine the exact city where the fire might be burning, but we were too high to tell. I read the paper the next morning, and the fire was in the Malibu area. It covered over 10,000 acres, and hundreds of residents had to evacuate their homes. A number of people were treated in hospitals, but there were no fatalities. The fire was caused by an arsonist, and it spread due to powerful Santa Ana winds and extremely hot Southern California weather.

As you can see, the writer relies solely on one sentence structure, the compound sentence, and on two joining words: and and but. The following revised version of the paragraph provides some structural variety. The structural changes are in italics.

Flying into Los Angeles at night from New Orleans, we noticed flames on the ground. The flames, which were on the far western side of the LA basin, appeared to cover a large stretch of area. I thought it might be a controlled weed burn in the foothills, but the flames appeared to stretch lower than that. Although I tried to determine the exact city where the fire might be burning, we were too high to tell. I read in the paper the next morning that the fire was in the Malibu area. It covered over 10,000 acres, and hundreds of residents had to evacuate their homes. A number of people were treated in hospitals; however, there were no fatalities. The fire was caused by an arsonist and spread by powerful Santa Ana winds and extremely hot Southern California weather.
As you can see, the revised paragraph contains a variety of sentence structures and is more interesting to read. When a writer relies too heavily on one or two structures and a limited number of joining words, the writing can become monotonous to read and detract from the writer’s ideas.

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**Revision Activity 3.5**

Combine the following sentences into single sentences to create different sentence structures using the joining words provided.

**Example:**

I don’t think I would like eating sushi. I might give it a try.

*Although* I don’t think I would like eating sushi, I might give it a try.

**Combine the following simple sentences with and, but, yet, so, for, or or to form compound sentences.**

1. A lot of alternative rock music today sounds the same. That could be said of rock music from any time period.

2. The new river walk on the east bank of the Thames is easily accessible. Tourists and locals take the walk from the London Eye ferris wheel to the new restaurants farther down river.

3. Disney World Orlando attracts more visitors than Disneyland in Los Angeles. It is located in a less heavily populated area.

**Combine the following sentences with the joining words although, if, when, because, since, unless, of, while, before, until, whenever, or as to form complex sentences.** The joining word can begin either the first sentence or the second sentence.

4. I know that you want to get at least a 3.0 GPA this semester. It will be difficult with your tough schedule of classes.

5. For a few hours, the river actually reverses directions at its mouth. The ocean tide rises higher than the river that feeds it.

6. I have been traipsing all over the library looking for books on the Druids. You have been wisely researching the ancient religious sect on the Internet.

7. You want to get the best seats possible for the concert. Go on-line to Ticketron a month in advance.

**Combine the following sentences with the joining words who, whose, whom, which, or that to create relative clauses within the sentences.** Delete or replace unnecessary words,
move words or phrases around if necessary, and set off relative clauses with commas when rules require it.

8. The Brooklyn Bridge connects Brooklyn with Manhattan. It is a walking bridge and a driving bridge.

9. St. Johns, New Brunswick was settled in 1781 by British loyalists. They had been living in the New England colonies before the Revolutionary War.

10. I’d suggest taking the Washington D.C. subway to Georgetown. That is the fastest way to get there.

11. The Dalai Lama has been hired as a professor at Emory University in Atlanta. He is an internationally famous Tibetan monk.

Combine the following sentences into single sentences by creating compound subjects or compound verbs.

12. Freda is doing well in Dr. Taylor’s calculus class. Matthew is also doing well. Their friend Felix is also doing well.

13. Samantha enjoys visiting her grandma on holidays. She also likes browsing yard sales on weekends. Finally, she relishes taking long walks with her dog in Central Park.

Keeping in mind the different kinds of sentence structures you created in 1.-14., combine the following sentences into single sentences by adding joining words and deleting unnecessary words to form the best sentences.

14. Freeman likes doing experiments in his chemistry class. He gets bored sitting through lectures on chemistry. He prefers the active, hands-on learning that the experiments provide.

15. The destruction of the old school building occurred over six months ago. Workers are still clearing the site. Construction on a replacement building won’t begin for many months.

16. My sister is going to register on-line for college classes for the fall semester. It will be easier than going through on-campus registration. She will also have the best chance of getting the classes and times that she needs.

17. I’ve been studying for tests earlier in the morning. I’ve gotten better grades. The material is fresh in my head.

18. The Chicago Cubs haven’t won a World Series in over fifty years. Their record is improving almost every year. They may have a good chance in the next five years.

Revision Activity 3.6

The following paragraphs contains a number of similarly structured sentences that readers would find monotonous. Combine pairs or groups of related sentences into single sentences using a
variety of sentence structures and joining words. Add, delete, and replace words and move them around to combine sentences most effectively.

Example:

My mom and I set the thermostat in our apartment at eighty-two degrees in the summer. We set it there so that the air conditioner won’t run all the time. In the winter we set the thermostat at sixty-eight degrees. We set it there to save on the heating bill. I go around the apartment in shorts and a t-shirt in the summer. It is always a little warm. I go around the apartment in sweats in the winter. It is always a little cold. It is difficult to adjust to a fourteen-degree change in temperature in our apartment. That change occurs between summer and winter. It is necessary. We save a lot of money on utilities.

Revised:

My mom and I set the thermostat in our apartment at eighty-two degrees in the summer so the air conditioner won’t run all the time. In the winter, we set the thermostat at sixty-eight degrees to save on our heating bill. Since it is always a little warm, I go around the apartment in shorts and a t-shirt in the summer while in the winter, I wear sweats since it is always a little cold. It is difficult to adjust to the fourteen-degree change in temperature that occurs in our apartment between summer and winter, but it is necessary because we save a lot of money on utilities.

Smart Nephew

My five-year old nephew Jamal is in kindergarten, but he is already reading at 3rd grade level. He also has a great memory. He has memorized all of the planets. He also knows all of the states and their capitals. He also knows the order in which they were admitted into the Union. He can also add and subtract two-column figures in his head. He can do basic multiplication and division, and he won’t have that in school for three years.

Kindergarten is extremely easy for him. He already knows everything that they are doing, and that makes school boring at times. Kindergarten is where he belongs socially. He is an average five year old, and he likes to play and have fun. He would be out of place in a higher grade, but he could certainly do the work. There are no gifted programs for kindergarten students. His teacher gives him extra work for home. That includes more challenging reading. It also includes more advanced math. His mother serves as his tutor at home. She is a middle school teacher, and home is where he does most of his learning.

Revision Activity 3.7

Read your current draft to evaluate your sentence structures. If you are relying too much on the same joining words or sentence structures, revise sentences to add more variety. Combine any short, related sentences with joining words to create more meaningful sentences. Keep in mind the variety of joining words at your disposal: and, but, yet, so, for, or, although, if, when, because, since, unless, of, while, before, until, whenever, as. who, whose, whom, which, that.
Revision Guidelines

When revising your current draft, consider these suggestions.

1. **Read your opening paragraph and evaluate how well you have introduced your topic, created interest for readers, and presented your thesis statement.** Make any changes that will entice your readers to read further.

2. **Read each middle paragraph and evaluate how well you have presented and developed your main supporting points.** Do you begin paragraphs with *topic sentences* and change paragraphs as you move to different points? Do you provide the best evidence to support your points? Add anything that would strengthen the support for your thesis. Finally, evaluate the *order* in which you present your supporting points. If an important point may stand out more prominently in a different location, move the paragraph.

3. **Make sure that you presented and refuted two or three opposing arguments in your draft.** Do your refute the arguments in ways that will cause skeptical readers to reconsider their position?

4. **Check to make sure that you referenced each source of material from your research.** Will readers know with certainty when you are presenting research material and when you are presenting your own ideas? Did you paraphrase most of the research material and use quotation marks (“ “) for direct quotes? Did you reference sources in ways that show their credibility? Add any source references that you may have omitted.

5. **Read each sentence to see how you might improve its wording.** Eliminate unnecessary words, smooth out awkward sentences, reword vague sentences, and replace questionable word choices.

6. **Check your use your transitions to tie your paragraphs together (first, next, in addition, finally, as you can see) and show relationships between sentences (therefore, however, consequently, for example, moreover, etc.).**

7. **Read your conclusion and evaluate how well you have reinforced your thesis and made your writing purpose clear to readers.** Revise your conclusion to make the greatest impact on readers and leave them with a lasting final impression.
Revision Activity 3.8

In the following revised version of the “high-speed rail” draft, notice the types of changes the writer made: improving her sentence wording, providing detail to explain how high-speed rail works, adding information to help support her points, deleting repetitive material, and dividing a long paragraph into two paragraphs. Then revise your draft following the revision guidelines.

High-Speed Rail System - revised draft

(deletions cross out, additions in bold)

Imagine high-speed passenger trains running the length of the state connecting Southern California and the Bay Area. Trains You could be traveling up to 200 miles/hour could, zipping passengers from Los Angeles to San Francisco in less than two hours. Residents If you live in the central part of the state, you could reach Disneyland or Fisherman’s Wharf in about an hour. Your car could remain in the garage, not burning fuel, polluting the air, or clogging the freeways. High-speed trains could revolutionize travel in California, provide a model for other states, and benefit Californians in many ways.

A High-speed rail system is a passenger train system that would connect the Northern and Southern population centers of the state California and run down through its middle. It would make few stops only at the larger cities on its route, and getting passengers to their destinations as quickly as possible. Trains would run regularly throughout the day and evening, providing transportation for thousands of passengers daily. The system would will be modeled most closely on the German Transrapid system that, like most high-speed systems, uses magnetic levitation, or “Maglev,” a system of transportation using magnetic coils, rather than fossil fuels, to create a magnetic field that suspends, guides and propels trains rapidly and safely.

Many skeptics depict high-speed rail as some risky, futuristic gamble. In fact, Wikipedia’s information on high-speed trains reveals that Japan’s high-speed rail, the “bullet” train, has been around in operation for over thirty years, and today high-speed passenger train systems also operate in China, Taiwan, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and the UK all have high-speed rail systems. Rather than being some “far out” venture, high speed rail is a common, viable form of transportation in many countries. There is no reason why it can’t be successful in California.

Skeptics also point to the multi-billion dollar price tag for cost of building a high-speed rail system. However, the cost of building didn’t keep Japan, China, Taiwan, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, or the UK from building their high-speed rail systems, and according to the Department of Commerce, California has the eighth largest economy in the world compared to entire countries. In addition, the state’s High-Speed Rail Department points to emphasizes the thousands of jobs that the construction project will create, adding to the state’s economic growth, lowering the unemployment rate, and providing more state revenues to fund the high-speed rail. It also contends that building the high-speed rail system would cost no more than renovating and expanding the current freeway system. Beyond that, Of course, as with all construction work, the longer that California waits, the more expensive the project will become.

What if California builds a high-speed passenger train system and no passengers show up? Skeptics question whether car-crazy Californians will leave their cars at home to ride on a high-speed train. However, according to the article “Will Californians Ride The Rail?” at the Huffington Post website, the California High Speed Rail Department conducted an extensive two-year “ridership” study that projected a usage level of usage that would make the operation of the system cost effective. There is also the fact that In addition, the usage level of usage in
the eight countries that operate high-speed rail systems has proven cost effective since they have been operating for many years.

The advantages of having a high-speed rail system are tremendous. First, it would reduce statewide travel time dramatically for the vast majority of people who traverse the state, or parts of it, by car. **With high-speed trains traveling at speeds up to one-hundred and fifty miles per hour, travel time would be cut in half compared to traveling by car.** This would be particularly beneficial, according to Nordic Air CEO Tyrone Glass, for the hundreds of thousands of Californians whose business takes them to different parts of the state. (end paragraph and begin new paragraph)

Second, it would no doubt remove thousands of cars from California’s vehicle-choked freeways as Californians opted to travel by train, which would provide safer, faster, and more convenient travel for those car drivers traveling shorter distances and for California’s commercial truckers. As a result, it would significantly reduce the unhealthy level of pollution throughout the state, getting thousands of emission-spewing cars off the freeways. **Finally, according to the High-Speed Rail Department, it would be a permanent boost to the economy and California’s employment situation, creating thousands of construction, operating, and maintenance jobs.** (already stated in previous paragraph)

Of course there is some risk to building a high-speed rail system since it has never been done in the U.S. However, the benefits greatly outweigh the risk, and all great construction projects have had their risks and their skeptics: the Erie Canal, the U.S. transcontinental railway, Hoover Dam, California’s statewide waterway system, and the great subway systems of our Eastern cities. There are always people who are fearful of progress and the unknowns that come with it, and there are others who will never support any costly project. It is when we overcome those fears that we accomplish great things, and **However, once it is built, building the high-speed rail system will be one of the state’s greatest accomplishments, one that all Californians will benefit from.**

There are some things we can all agree that our state needs: more jobs, a stronger economy, less pollution, fewer cars clogging the freeways, lower gas prices. While the high-speed rail may not be a magic bullet, it can help out tremendously in all of these areas. Please support current legislation for the construction of the high-speed rail. The longer we wait, the more expensive the project gets, the more polluted and unhealthy our air becomes, the more clogged and unsafe our freeways grow, and the more the economy and employment lag. The time to build is now, and you can help make the greatest transportation advancement in California’s history a reality.

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**Revision Activity 3.9**

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and evaluate their drafts as you did your own. Make any suggestions that you feel will help improve their drafts. Then based on your classmates’ input, make any additional changes in your draft that you feel will improve it.
Now that you have revised your draft and are satisfied with its content, organization, and wording, you are ready to edit your draft, correct any errors you find, and produce your final, “publishable” essay for your classmates and instructor.

By this time in the course, you have edited a number of drafts and are probably aware of some recurring error tendencies, and you may have eliminated others. As you make fewer errors in your drafts and become more adept at identifying and correcting recurring errors, the proofreading process becomes easier and more efficient, and producing an error-free final draft is an achievable goal.

**Double Negatives**

While *double negatives* are more commonly found in speech than writing, they occasionally appear in student drafts and therefore deserve some attention. The following are examples of sentences with *double negatives*: two negative words used together to express a thought.

{(negative words in italics)}

I *don’t* know *nothing* about where the concert will be held.
Joleen *won’t* go *nowhere* without her twin sister.
That flashlight *won’t* do you *no* good because it *doesn’t* have *no* batteries.
I *can’t* find my keys *nowhere*.
You *can’t* see *no one* in this crowd.
There *aren’t* *no* presents left to open.
The pilot *can’t* find *no* place to land.
We *haven’t* *never* seen a tornado that big.
The hospital *won’t* allow *no* more visitors.
After falling in the mud, Shawna *didn’t* want *no one* to see her.

A double negative in a sentence is grammatically incorrect since the writer is using two negative words to express one negative thought. The following suggestions will help you eliminate any double negatives in your writing.

1. **In grammar, the following words are negative:**
no, not, none, no one, nobody, nothing, neither, nowhere, never, doesn’t, isn’t, wasn’t, shouldn’t, wouldn’t, couldn’t, won’t, can’t, don’t, haven’t.

Notice that the last ten words are contractions: the verb + not. Any contraction that includes not is a negative word.

2. **It is incorrect to use two negative words to express a thought in a sentence.**

   I’m not going nowhere this evening.

   Felix can’t do nothing about his stammering.

   Juanita hasn’t gotten no one to babysit her child this evening.

   Tran wasn’t never going to let his little sister get picked on.

3. **To correct a double negative, either change one of the negative words to a positive word (nowhere to anywhere, no one to anyone, nothing to anything, none to any), or delete one of the negative words.** Here are two ways to correct the double negatives in the sentences in 2:

   I’m not going anywhere this evening. (Nowhere changed to anywhere, eliminating the double negative)

   I’m going nowhere this evening. (Not is deleted, eliminating the double negative)

   Felix can’t do anything about his stammering. (Nothing changed to anything, eliminating the double negative)

   Felix can do nothing about his stammering. (Can’t changed to can, eliminating the double negative.

   Juanita hasn’t gotten anyone to babysit her child this evening. (No one changed to anyone, eliminating the double negative)

   Juanita has gotten no one to babysit her child this evening. (hasn’t changed to has, eliminating the double negative.

   Tran wasn’t ever going to let his little sister get picked on. (Never changed to ever, eliminating the double negative.

   Tran was never going to let his little sister get picked on. (Wasn’t changed to was, eliminating the double negative.
Editing Activity 3.10

Correct the double negatives in the following sentences by either deleting a negative word (including the not in a contraction) or changing a negative word to a positive word (nowhere to anywhere, no one to anyone, nothing to anything, none to any). Eliminate the double negative in a way that produces the best sentence.

Examples (double negative and revised sentences):

1. I do not understand nothing that you are talking about. (double negative)
   I understand nothing that you are talking about. (not eliminated)
2. Shania never went nowhere during the school week. (double negative)
   Shania never went anywhere during the school week. (nowhere changed to anywhere)
3. Felicia doesn’t know nothing about how the cat got out of the house.
4. Malcomb won’t travel nowhere without his favorite sneakers.
5. Your cell phone won’t do you no good in the mountains.
6. Hermione doesn’t seem to be able to relax nowhere.
7. I don’t think that there is no one here who doesn’t like Usher’s music.
8. There isn’t no chance that we’re going to win the volleyball game.
9. Pardeep hadn’t never seen a sunset that beautiful.
10. The movie theatre will not dispense no more discount tickets this month.
11. I really didn’t want no one to know that I was taking accordion lessons.
12. Don’t be concerned about being called into the principal’s office because you haven’t done nothing wrong and don’t have nothing to worry about.

Editing Activity 3.11

Check each sentence of your draft to make sure you haven’t used any double negatives. If you find any, make the needed corrections.
Editing Activity 3.12

For more editing practice, proofread the following draft for errors involving run-on sentences or comma splices, sentence fragments, comma usage, subject-verb agreement, and commonly confused words, and make the necessary corrections.

Unique Campus

The community college campus in Mason is built on a hill. At the top of the hill is two small ponds which provides water for the water features on campus. Some of the water from the ponds run down several copper troughs. Which are located on each side of several stairways that run from the top of the hill to the bottom across the campus. Water from the ponds also create several small waterfalls which feeds into small water basins. Water is pumped back up the hill from the basins, its recycled into the ponds on top of the hill.

With all the water features you can hear water running everywhere on campus it creates a relaxing sound. In addition the beauty of the waterfalls and the water running down the copper troughs makes the campus very special. Unlike any campus I’ve ever seen. With the ponds above the campus the water features throughout the campus the hilly environment and the pine and eucalyptus trees growing between the buildings the Mason campus almost feel like a resort area, students enjoy just hanging out their after there classes.

There is some people who don’t think that the campus is so great. They think that it is a waste of water and electricity to keep the water flowing and that a community college campus should not look or feel like a resort, a college environment should motivate students to learn, not to relax. At least two members of the college board has proposed cutting off the water flow and diverting the pond water for better uses. A proposal that students clearly don’t support.

These board members don’t realize that a beautiful, tranquil college atmosphere is great for student morale for attracting future students and for serious thought and study. If students enjoy being on campus because of the environment that is a certainly positive thing, fortunately a majority of board members feel the same.

Editing Guidelines

When you proofread your latest draft for errors, consider these suggestions.

1. **Check your sentences to make sure you haven’t run any sentences together or put a comma between sentences instead of a period.** Correct run-on sentences or comma splices by separating longer sentence with periods and combining shorter, related sentences with a joining word.
2. **Check your draft for any sentence fragments:** Incomplete sentences with a period after **them**. To correct fragments, attach them to the sentence they belong with, or add words to make them complete.

3. **Check your present tense verbs** to make sure that they agree with their subjects. In addition, make sure that you have correctly spelled any past tense irregular verbs.

4. **Check your comma usage**, making sure you have inserted commas into your sentences correctly and not in places they aren’t required.

5. **Check to make sure** that you have used the correct word with words that are commonly confused: *there/their/they’re, its/it’s, advice/advise, accept/except, effect/affect, were/we’re/where, your/you’re, here/hear, then/than.*

6. **Check your spelling** by running the spell check on your word processing program or by looking up the spelling of any word you are unsure of.

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**Editing Activity 3.13**

Keeping the editing suggestions in mind, proofread your latest draft for errors and make any needed corrections. Pay particular attention to the types of errors that have appeared in your previous drafts. Read your draft several times, looking for a different type of error each time.

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**Editing Activity 3.14**

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and proofread one another’s drafts, pointing out any errors that you find. Make any additional corrections that are needed in your draft based on your classmates’ input. Then write the final, error-free draft of your essay to share with classmates and your instructor.

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**Timed Writings**

If you are doing a timed writing on a topic that you aren’t sure how much you have to say, begin writing what comes to your mind. It is surprising how often the process of writing triggers new ideas that lead to more new ideas, creating something of a chain reaction of thoughts. Sometimes getting into the writing helps you discover that you know more about a topic than you imagined. Writing stimulates thinking, so if you keep writing, good things may come of it.
We all have role models that we look up to, whether they are great athletes, individuals that show great courage, extremely hard workers, or self-sacrificing people who help others. Role models provide us with examples of the best individuals that we can become. But admiring role models unquestioningly is dangerous because they are only human and will ultimately fail in some way or another, making us question everything we believed about them.

In an essay, answer the question, “Is it dangerous to look up to role models?” Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with examples from your personal experience and knowledge and through well-reasoned ideas.

Suppose you’re on a game show, and you’re given the choice of three doors. Behind one door is a car, behind the others, goats. You pick a door, say number 1, and the host, who knows what’s behind the doors, opens another door, say number 3, which has a goat. He says to you, “Do you want to pick door number 2?”

Is it to your advantage to switch your choice of doors? Why?
In each unit, you write a different type of essay to experience the range of writing you will do in other composition courses and to provide you with different writing challenges. In this unit, you will investigate a particular problem that interests you, determine its causes and effects, and consider possible solutions to the problem.

Problem/solution essays are commonly assigned in college composition courses. Beyond that, writers in the “real world” frequently address the myriad of problems that face us and offer solutions to help solve those problems. On any day in the newspaper you might find the following.

- an article on the dangers of global warming and how it can be combated
- an article on the recent local drought and how residents can help by using less water
- a response on how to solve a marital problem posed by a reader of an “advice” column
- an article on local school districts confronting the problem of declining enrollments

Since problems confront us all of the time - the loss of a job, an unreliable car, the unhealthy effects of increasing pollution, the rising cost of gasoline and housing, how to reduce childhood obesity - there is always something to write about. In addition, writing about problems helps to develop our problem-solving abilities, which we can apply at school, in future jobs, and in our personal relationships.

Writing a problem/solution essay may involve determining exactly what the problem is, how serious it is, what may have caused it, what its effects are, who or what is affected, how the problem might be solved, and why we should care about the problem. Since most problems worth writing about don’t have any simple, obvious solution, one of the greatest challenges is coming up with solutions that might actually work and are worth trying.

In this unit, you write about a particular problem of your choice and how it might be solved. This assignment draws upon your analytical, evaluative, and creative thinking skills. In addition, writing about problems and solutions may help you find a new solution to a nagging problem and also help readers who may have similar problems.
Prewriting

Since a problem/solution essay contains a number of different elements, each element requires some attention during the prewriting process. A prewriting activity introduced in this section helps writers analyze those elements: asking questions. The traditional journalistic questions of who, what, where, when, and why help writers probe a subject and generate material for a paper.

Topic Selection

Writers can usually find problems to write about since they are seldom in short supply. The decision to be made is which problem stands out as the best topic for your upcoming essay. To help you decide on a problem to write about, consider the following suggestions.

1. **Choose a problem that is affecting you or other people that you know in some way.** You will take the most interest in your essay if the problem you choose has a direct effect on your life or other people you are close to. It may involve school, family, personal relationships, finances, health issues, legal issues, or local issues.

2. **Choose a problem that is serious enough to engage readers’ interest.** For example, if you have a problem finding dry cat food that your finicky cat will eat, readers may find the problem more amusing than engaging. However, if a neighbor has at least twenty cats in her house and yard, some who look terribly malnourished, and there is a foul odor that drifts towards your house, you would have a topic that could interest and concern many readers.

3. **Choose a problem that doesn’t have an obvious solution that you have discovered.** One purpose of this paper is to try and find solutions to a problem where no simple solution is apparent. For example, if the problem is that your car has a flat tire, the solution - to get it fixed - is a bit too obvious. However, if a student’s family car has broken down and there is not enough money to fix it, leaving the student and his sisters without rides to different schools and his dad without a ride to work, he may have a family problem worth writing about.

4. **Choose a problem that is nagging and persistent rather than passing.** For example, if gang issues have seeped into a high school and are affecting students, you probably have a problem that won’t go away on its own.
5. Since this is not a “research” paper, choose a topic that you are knowledgeable about. A second problem/solution essay that you write later requires some research.

Prewriting Activity 4.1

To generate possible topics for your paper, brainstorm some ideas, writing down any problems that come to mind without evaluating them. From this list, you may find your writing topic.

Sample Brainstorming Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution 1</th>
<th>Solution 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness at new school</td>
<td>Lack of school activities</td>
<td>Lack of jobs for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship problems</td>
<td>Managing time better</td>
<td>My family problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation for grades</td>
<td>Violence where I live</td>
<td>Lack of computer lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying at sister’s school</td>
<td>Cliques of students</td>
<td>City pollution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torn-up city streets</td>
<td>Not having a car</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prewriting Activity 4.2

Choose a topic for your upcoming problem/solution paper keeping in mind the suggestions presented and your brainstormed list of problems. Select the problem that most interests you, that doesn’t have a simple solution, and that would interest some group of readers.

Sample Topic Selection

Working and going to school

Analyzing the Problem

Now that you have selected a problem to write on, you can begin analyzing the problem with the goal of finding a workable solution. To help you analyze the problem, you can answer questions that will help you probe its various elements.
Asking Questions

Asking and answering questions helps writers think more deeply about a problem/solution topic and analyze its different parts. The following questions will help you dissect the problem you are writing about.

1. What exactly is the problem? How serious is it?
2. When did the problem begin? How did it get started?
3. What are the causes of the problem?
4. What are the effects of the problem? Who or what is affected?
5. Why should readers be concerned or have an interest in the problem?

Prewriting Activity 4.3

To help you analyze the problem and generate some material for your upcoming paper, answer the five questions just presented. Take some time to consider each question since your answers may help lead you towards a solution.

Sample Answers

Topic: working and going to school

1. **What exactly is the problem?**
   The difficulty of working and going to school at the same time.

2. **When did the problem begin? How did it get started?**
   The problem began when I started working my senior year of high school to have some money. I got a job at a supermarket in town stocking shelves after school.

3. **What are the causes of the problem?**
   I got a car, so I have to pay insurance and gas. I also need money if I want to go to out with friends once in a while. If I want to keep my car and go out occasionally, I need to work.

4. **Who or what is affected by the problem?**
   I’m obviously affected by the problem as well as any students who are doing the same thing. I know other students who also have to work.
5. **What are the effects of the problem?**

   It seems that I don’t have enough time to do everything: go to school, work, study, get enough sleep. I’m tired most of the time and I have to stay up late studying. I’m not as focused at work or at school as I’d like to be. I also don’t have much social life since I’m busy most of the time. I think I could be doing better in school if it weren’t for work and I wouldn’t feel tired so much.

**Finding Solutions**

Solving difficult problems isn’t easy. Sometimes unresolved problems between a brother and sister, a parent and child, two former friends, or a student and instructor or coach can poison relationships and even damage lives. While some problems eventually work themselves out with time, others stubbornly persist despite the best efforts to solve them.

In seeking solutions to a problem, the following suggestions will help you consider different possibilities and evaluate their chances for success.

---

**Solution Guidelines**

1. **Exactly what does solving the problem mean?** What do you hope to accomplish? For example, if there is a parking problem for students on campus, does solving the problem mean that every student would be able to find a parking place or that the problem would be alleviated enough to satisfy most students?

2. **How can the solution get to the root of the problem, its underlying causes?** If a solution doesn’t address the causes of a problem, it seldom succeeds.

3. **What are possible alternative solutions to the problem?** Often with difficult problems, different solutions have to be tried before something works, or different combinations of solutions. For example, with the parking problem, a possible solution might include encouraging car pooling, the school renting a space across from the campus for parking, or building a new parking lot.
4. **Is compromise an important part of the solution?** With problems involving individuals, groups, or even nations, there often has to be some give on both sides for a solution to work. If the solution is good for one party and not another, it probably won’t work.

5. **What is the most realistic solution to the problem?** Can the right solution completely eliminate the problem, or can it at the least make a bad situation better? What solution has the best chance of working?

**Prewriting Activity 4.4**

Based on the five suggestions presented, consider some possible solutions to your problem. Come up with different solutions without evaluating their relative worth. At this point, you don’t need to decide on a particular solution or solutions for your first draft. Get some ideas on paper to think about, and be open to discovering different solutions as you give the problem more thought.

**Sample Alternative Solutions**

**Topic:** Working and going to school

**Solutions:** Cut back on work hours  
Find someone to study with  
Cut back on extra curricular activity  
Take some pills to help keep me awake  
Sell my car and get a bike  
Ask my folks to share my car expenses

---

**Thesis**

Now that you have generated some material for your essay, you should have a good idea of your viewpoint on the problem, which your thesis statement will reflect. For a problem/solution essay, your thesis may emphasize the seriousness of the problem, the consequences if the problem continues unresolved, or the impact that the problem has on those who are affected. The following thesis statements provide examples of those different emphases.

**Topic:** Problems at my former high school with non-students

**Thesis:** Former high school students – mainly drop-outs and other non-graduates – create some of the school’s most serious problems during and after school.

**Topic:** Summer crime
Thesis: Crime in my neighborhood in the summer months has become a real problem.

Topic: Polluted drinking water

Thesis: One of the most serious health problems facing our town’s residents is lead-contaminated drinking water.

Topic: high school bullying

Thesis: Bullying of freshmen at my former high school by senior football players has got to be stopped.

Topic: Drugs on campus

Thesis: The presence of drugs on campus is a problem that the administration seems oblivious to.

Topic: Younger sister

Thesis: In our family, my younger sister can do nothing wrong and I can do nothing right.

Prewriting Activity 4.5

Generate a thesis statement for your problem/solution essay that reflects your viewpoint on the topic and will motivates readers to keep reading.

Sample thesis statement:

Topic: Working and going to school

Thesis statement: Working and going to school creates problems for many students.

Drafting
Now that you have selected a problem to write about, analyzed the problem in some depth, and considered possible solutions, you are ready to write your first draft. Before you begin, consider the people you want to read this paper—your reading audience—and your reason for writing to them—your purpose.

**Audience and Purpose**

Since most writing is a form of communication, your reading audience and your reasons for writing to them help shape the content of your essay. Your audience and purpose influence what you include in your paper, what you emphasize, the types of examples you may provide, and how you open and conclude the essay. Writing for readers with a purpose in mind brings both direction and meaning to your writing.

In deciding on your audience and purpose for your paper, consider these suggestions.

1. Whom would I like to read this essay?
2. Who might benefit from reading the essay?
3. By reading this essay, who might help to solve the problem in some way?
4. What is my purpose in writing to this audience? What do I hope to accomplish?

**Drafting Activity 4.1**

Decide on a reading audience and purpose for your upcoming essay

**Sample audience/purpose**

**Topic:** Working and going to school

**Audience:** college students

**Purpose:** to share my work/school experience with others in the same situation and perhaps provide some solutions they might consider

**Organization**
As mentioned earlier, your problem/solution essay contains a number of different elements: the problem, its causes, its effects, who or what is affected, and possible solutions. The following suggestions will help you organize those elements most effectively for readers.

1. **Present the problem in your opening so readers know what the essay is about.**

2. **In the middle paragraphs, include the causes of the problem and its effects, including who or what is affected.** Whether you present the causes or effects first is up to you, depending on which order you feel would be most effective.

3. **Present your solution or possible solutions in the conclusion, and why you think it/they would work.**

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**Drafting Activity 4.2**

Decide on the best organization for your middle paragraphs. Would it be more effective to present the causes of the problem first or its effects? Try one way or the other in your first draft, and you can always change the order when you revise the draft if you’re not satisfied.

**Sample Organization:**

Topic: Working and going to school

Organization: After introducing the problem, I will present its causes and then tell how the problem affects me. That seems like the most natural order for my topic.

---

**Drafting Guidelines**

As you write your first draft, keep the following considerations in mind.

1. **Introduce the problem in your opening, its significance, and why your particular readers may be interested in it, and include your thesis statement.** Make sure to explain exactly what the problem is so readers will have a clear understanding as they proceed.

2. **In the middle paragraphs, incorporate material from your question-and-answer activity to help readers understand when and how the problem started, its causes, and its effect, including who is affected.** Add any additional causes or effects that may come to mind as you write.
3. **Change paragraphs as you move to different aspects of the problem: its causes, its effects, a possible solution.**

4. **Conclude your draft by presenting a possible solution or solutions to the problem and making your writing purpose clear to readers.** What might the solution have to do with them?

5. **As you write, keep your reading audience and purpose in mind.** This will help you write the essay in ways that will have the greatest impact on readers.

### Drafting Activity 4.3

Read the following first draft of a problem/solution essay to see how the writer introduced the topic, presented and paragraphed the causes and effects of the problem, and concluded with a possible solution. Then write the first draft of your problem/solution essay following the guidelines presented.

Sample First Draft

**Working and Going to School**

Audience: Students who work and go to school or who may have to someday

Working and going to school at the same time is challenging to say the least. I work at least twenty hours a week and go to school all day. I know other students with similar schedules, and they have the same complaints. It’s a problem that’s not going away for me, and one that I’m going to have to deal with better than I currently am.

The reason for working and going to school at the same time is the same for most students: the need for money. In my case, I need money for car insurance and gas and to have a little spending money. Without working, there is no way that I could own a car, even if it’s just my thirty-year old Chevy, and having a car means a lot to me.

The effects of working and going to school are somewhat obvious to anyone who does it. First, time is the biggest factor. I’m rushing from school to work every week day, trying to squeeze in time for dinner during my break time. If there were more hours in the day, that would be a big help. Since there aren’t, I have to get along with the time I have and try to do a better job of managing it.

Second, working fairly long hours leaves me significantly less time to study, which makes it harder to do well in classes. My study time is basically restricted to evenings, and I often end up studying until 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. and then getting up by 7:00. Sometimes I’m too tired to study
very long, and I just blow off studying for the night or end up falling asleep while I’m studying and not waking up until morning. I usually end up paying for it when I do poorly on a test or don’t get a paper turned in on time.

Third, like most students who work and go to school, I’m tired much of the time. The lack of sleep affects me at work and at school. It is harder to have the energy to do your best and much easier to lose focus while at work or trying to take notes in class. It’s no fun to always wish that you could get in a few more hours of sleep or take a nap, but it’s just something you try to get used to.

Finally, if you have to work and go to school at the same time, you can pretty well forget having much of a social life. First, you don’t have the time. Second, you seldom have the energy. By the time a Friday or Saturday night comes around, I look forward to nothing more than getting some much needed sleep, not going to a concert or movie. In addition, when most all of my money is going towards my car, there’s not much left for any social life.

Since I’m not going to be able to quit working while going to school any time soon, I’m going to have to live with it. However, I definitely want to think of ways to handle the situation better than currently. First, I’ve never really kept a budget or kept track of how I spend my money. I’m going to keep track of my expenditures for a month and see where I might be able to cut back. The only way that I can reduce my work hours would be to spend less each month. If I can figure a way to cut back on my spending, I’d love to cut back on my hours, which my boss would allow, and which would give me more time for school and sleep.

Second, I’m starting to study with a partner who is in a similar situation as myself. Instead of studying at home where the nice, soft sofa is always calling me to fall asleep, we meet in a library three evenings a week after work, get a study room, and study until the library closes. Not only does this keep us from the temptations at home, we push each other to keep going and stay with it. My study partner has more energy than I do, and she’ll say, “Come on, suck it up!” when I slack off or come up with excuses to go home.

Of course, I could sell my car and quit working, but I knew what I was getting into when I bought the car. I knew that I’d have to work to pay for insurance and gas. I really like having a car for the first time, and I don’t want to give it up. I could ask my parents for help with gas, but I already know the answer since they helped me buy the car. So for now, I’ll keep working, keep studying with a partner and keep a budget, and if I can figure out a way to spend less money, maybe I could cut back on work hours. I can’t think of any other solutions.

---

**Revision**
Now that you have written the first draft of your problem/solution paper, you are ready to revise it and make any changes you feel would improve its content, organization, or wording. As you reread your draft, you may find a better way to organize your middle paragraphs, better wording options for some of your sentences, and perhaps a new solution that you hadn’t previously considered. As you revise, be open to new ideas that may come to you, and feel free to incorporate new material as you improve what you have already written.

Before revising your draft, here are a couple of activities that give you practice revising and improving your sentence wording and structures.

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**Revision Review**

Throughout the text are practice activities that will help you revise your drafts most effectively. The more experience you have improving sentence wording, using transitions, or evaluating the strength of an opening, a piece of supporting evidence, or a conclusion, the more proficiently you will apply this experience to your writing. Revision is an important part of writing well for any writer, and the review activities emphasize that importance.

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**Revision Activity 4.1**

Improving your sentence wording is a constant revision consideration for any writing you do. This activity provides you with additional practice in revising sentences, which will help you revise your own sentences more effectively.

The following paragraph has a number of sentences with common first-draft problems: wordiness, awkward phrasing, and some poor word choices. Revise and improve the sentences by eliminating unnecessary words, smoothing out awkward sentences, and replacing questionable word choices. Feel free to move words or phrases around to improve any sentence.

Aranya’s science project didn’t turn out the way she had hoped that it would turn out. She and a friend of hers combined on an experiment to try and prove that greenhouse gases, most notably CO2, were responsible for a change in the climate of today’s earth. They built a large, rectangular plastic box and with a hole in the side of it for putting in a rubber hose into the box. The box’s size was three-feet long, two-feet wide, and two feet high. The outside end of the rubber hose that they used was attached to a pump that they’d extricated from the chemistry lab. The pump’s chamber was filled with CO2 gas in the chamber, and when they turned on the pump, the box’s inside filled up with the gas. As the CO2 gas trapped heat inside the box, they guessed that the temperature inside the box should increase, as would be indicated by a
thermostat that they had placed inside the box for that purpose. They awaited anxiously for the thermostat’s red bubble to begin to go up inside the box.

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**Revision Activity 4.2**

The following paragraph contains sentences that rely too much on similar structures and joining words and short sentences that could be combined to form better sentences. Revise and improve the sentences by varying sentence structures and joining words and by combining short, related sentences. Feel free to move words around or eliminate words to create different structures. Keep in mind the variety of joining words and transitions at your disposal: *and, so, or, but, yet, for, while, as, if, when, whenever, since, because, unless, although, that, which, who, whom.*

It’s clear that Aranya’s experiment had a significant flaw. CO2 traps heat in the earth’s atmosphere. It would otherwise escape into space. The gas acts like a giant lid that retains more heat. It warms the air. That was the problem with the experiment. The “atmosphere” inside the plastic box already had a lid on it, and it allowed no heat to escape. Whatever heat was inside the box was already trapped, and adding CO2 to the box had no effect. Aranya didn’t abandon the experiment, and she is considering ways to allow heat to escape from the box. They could drill some holes in its lid. They would try to duplicate the heat loss in the earth’s atmosphere. They have put a lot of time and effort into the experiment, and they would love to provide a working model of mankind’s contribution to global warming. They have two weeks before the project is due, and they will make good use of the time.

---

**Revision Guidelines**

When you revise your draft, consider the following suggestions.

1. **From your opening, do readers clearly understand the problem you are writing about and its significance to you or others?** Have you included a thesis statement which expresses your viewpoint on the problem? Is there anything that you can add or change in your opening to engage the readers’ interest further?

2. **From your middle paragraphs, can readers clearly understand the causes of the problem? Do they see its effects and understand who is affected and how?** Did you present the causes or the effects first, and is this the most effective order for your topic? Might there be an additional cause or effect to add as you revise your draft?

3. **Read your draft to make sure that your ideas are organized in the most effective way.** Does each paragraph follow logically from the previous one? Is there any paragraph or
sentence that seems out of place and could be moved to a more logical location? Do you change paragraphs as you move from one idea to the next?

4. **Read each sentence to see how its wording may be improved by eliminating unnecessary words, smoothing out awkward phrasing, rewording a vague sentence, or replacing questionable word choices.**

5. **Read your sentences to see whether you have used a variety of sentence structures and joining words.** Keep in mind the wealth of joining words available (*and, but, yet, so, for, when, while, if, as, before, after, because, since, although, unless, who, which, that*) to create varied structures. In addition, combine short, related sentences to create more meaningful ones.

6. **Read your draft to see whether you have included transitional wording to tie your paragraphs together (*first, second, next, in addition, finally*) and show relationships between ideas (*therefore, consequently, however, moreover, nonetheless*).

7. **Read your conclusion to make sure you have presented your solution or solutions clearly.** You may even think of a new or different solution to add as you revise your draft.

8. **Read your draft with your readers and writing purpose in mind.** Make any changes that would make the essay more interesting or informative for readers or that would help you accomplish your purpose.

**Revision Activity 4.3**

Keeping the revision suggestions in mind, revise your current draft, making any changes that you feel will improve the essay. Read the draft several times, focusing on a different revision element each time.

Before you begin, look at the kinds of revisions that the writer made in the following draft “Working and Going to School,” including improving sentences wording, varying sentence structures, and adding material - a new effect, a new solution - that he thought of as he revised.

**Working and Going to School**

audience: high school students who work and go to school or who may have to someday

(deletions lined out, additions in bold italics)

Working and going to school at the same time is challenging to say the least. I work at least twenty hours a week and go to school all day. I know other students with similar schedules, and they have the same complaints. It’s a problem that’s not going away for me, and one that I’m going to have to deal with better than I currently am.
The reason for working and going to school at the same time is the same for most students: the need for money. In my case, I need money for car insurance and gas and to have a little spending money. Without working, there is no way that I couldn’t own a car, even if it’s just my thirty-year old Chevy, and having a car means a lot to me.

The effects of working and going to school are somewhat obvious to anyone who does it. First, time is the biggest factor. I’m rushing from school to work every week day, trying to squeeze in time for dinner during my break time. If I wish there were more hours in the day, that would be a big help, but since there aren’t, I have to get along with manage the time that I have and try to do a better job of managing it.

Second, working fairly long hours leaves me significantly less time to study, making it harder to do well in classes. My study time is basically restricted to evenings, and I often end up studying until 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. and then getting up by 7:00. Sometimes I’m too tired to study very long, and so I just blow off studying. for the night or end up falling or I fall asleep while I’m studying and not waking. don’t wake up until morning. I usually end up paying for it when I do by doing poorly on a test or don’t get a not turning a paper in on time.

Third, like most students who work and go to school, I’m tired much of the time. The lack of sleep affects me at work and at school. It is harder to have the I don’t have the energy to do your: my best, and I easily much easier to lose focus while at work or trying to take notes in class. It’s no fun to always wish wishing that you could get in a few more hours of sleep or take a nap, but it’s just something you just try to get used to it.

Finally, Fourth, if you have to work and go to school at the same time, you can pretty well forget having much of a social life. First, you don’t have the time. Second, you seldom have the energy. By the time a Friday or Saturday night the weekend comes around, I look forward to nothing more than getting some much needed sleep, not going to a concert or movie. In addition, when most all of my money is going towards my car, there’s not much left for anything else social life.

Finally, if you work after school, you can’t do much else. I was on the cross-country in high school, but I didn’t go out in college because I was working. I was also interested in ROTC, but I can’t do that because they meet in the late afternoons. When you work after school, it’s just school and work and no chance for school activities. I miss that, but that’s the choice I made when I got my car.

Since I’m not going to be able to can’t quit working while going to school any time soon, I’m going to have to live with it. However, I definitely want to think of ways to handle the situation better. than currently. First, I’ve never really kept a budget or kept track of how I spend my money. I’m going to keep track of record all my expenditures for a month and see where I might be able to could cut back. The only way that I can reduce my work hours would be to spend less each month. If I can figure a way to cut back on my spending, I’d love to cut back on reduce my work hours, which my boss would allow, and which would giving me more time for school, study, and sleep.

Second, I’m starting to study with a partner friend who is in a similar situation as myself also works. Instead of studying at home where the nice, soft sofa is always calling me to fall asleep, beckons me to sleep, we meet in a the town library three evenings times a week after work, get a study room, and study until the library it closes. Not only does this keep us from the temptations at home, We push each other to keep going and stay with it. My study partner has more energy than I do, and she’ll say, “Come on, suck it up!” when I slack off or come up with make excuses to go home.

Third, I may drop my afternoon botany class, which would give me more time to study and relax before work. Botany is not a required course for me, and I only took it because some of
my friends were in the class. I still have a full load without it, so dropping it wouldn’t affect my financial aid.

Of course, I could sell my car and quit working, but I knew what I was getting into when I bought the car. I knew that I’d have to work to pay for insurance and gas. I really like having a my first car for the first time, and I don’t want to give it up. I could ask my parents for help with gas, but I already know the answer since they helped me buy the car. So for now, I’ll keep working, keeping studying with a friend, keep a budget, and try to get into study hall. and if I can figure out a way to spend less money, maybe It will be great if I could can cut back on work, even for a couple hours a week. I can’t think of any other solutions.

Revising Activity 4.4

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and evaluate their drafts as you have done your own. Make any constructive suggestions that you feel would improve their essays. Then based on your classmates’ input, make any additional changes to your draft that you feel would improve it. Finally, write your next draft with all of the revisions included.
The final phase of the writing process for most writers is to correct any errors in punctuation, spelling, or grammar usage in a draft to get it in “publishable” form. With all of the work that you put into writing and revising each essay, you owe it both to yourself and your readers to produce as “clean” a final draft as possible.

In this section, you are introduced to new punctuation marks – colons, semi-colons, and dashes – and to a new grammar consideration: pronoun usage. The use of colons, semi-colons, and dashes gives you more punctuation options for expressing yourself most effectively, and learning to use pronouns correctly will help to eliminate some of the more common grammatical errors that writers make.

**Colons, Semi-Colons, and Dashes**

While colons, semi-colons, and dashes are used somewhat sparingly by most writers, they nonetheless serve useful functions. Once you clearly understand how to use them, you will find ways to insert them into your writing naturally and effectively. The following guidelines will help you incorporate colons, semi-colons, and dashes in your writing.

1. **A colon (:) is used to set off a word or group of words following it that finishes the thought presented in the statement preceding it.**

   Examples:

   There is one thing that most students look forward to: Christmas break.

   We will need several items for the camping trip: tents, sleeping bags, food, and flash lights.

   I usually get my best grades on one type of test: multiple choice.

   One misnomer leads to disappointment among many first-time stock market investors: unrealistic expectations about making fast money.

   One trait stands out among people who are successful in the sales business: perseverance.

   There are several things that trouble us about Theodore: his slovenly appearance, his poor hygiene, his sarcastic manner, and his habit of borrowing books and not returning them.
2. A semi-colon (;) joins two sentences that are closely related in meaning. A transitional word such as however or therefore often follows the semi-colon.

Examples:

I’m going to pull weeds in the front yard for a while; you can continue planting bulbs if you want.

The morning has been warm and mild; however, a powerful storm is coming in later this afternoon.

There is no way to study for Dr. Garcia’s government tests; therefore, you just have to relax and do the best that you can.

I don’t really want to go to a movie this evening; I’d much rather stay home and watch TV.

Sam got a speeding ticket in a 35 mile an hour zone; consequently, he has to go to traffic school.

(Note: For clarity, semi-colons can also be used in place of commas to separate series of long phrases or clauses. Example: The feeding frenzy created by the huge school of grunion included thousands of small seafaring birds that blackened the water; hundreds of pelicans dive bombing the surfing area; waves of seagulls launching their attacks from the beach; and numerous dolphins encircling their prey like sharks.)

2. A dash (-) is used similarly to a colon, setting off information that often provides specific examples of the subject that precedes it. Most frequently, dashes are used in pairs, before and after the information referred to, and the sentence continues after the second dash.

Examples:

Most of the migratory birds on the lake - mallards, coots, geese, and mergansers - feed off of the thousands of minnows that populate the waters.

Three are many ways to cook chicken - bake, fry, boil, grill, or roast - but my favorite is to barbecue.

Everyone who attends plays on campus - students, townspeople, and parents - raves about the quality of the performances.

The most frequent errors that writers make - running sentences together, misspelling words, omitting commas - are usually caught and corrected during the proofreading phase of the writing process.

One thing that my history professor harped on - never waiting until the night before a test to study - finally sunk in before I took my mid-term exams.
The following paragraphs provide examples of how colons, semi-colons, and dashes can be incorporated in your writing.

Playing powder-puff football at school is fun. My friends and I all play once a week; it’s a good way to get some exercise. We just play touch football – touch the ball carrier to stop her – and don’t take it seriously. Guys from the football team are our “coaches,” but we don’t pay much attention to what they say. They sometimes get mad because we laugh a lot; however, they seem to like being out there too.

There’s one thing I’ve never learned very well: the basic rules of football. I’m not a fan – never even attended a football game – and don’t really care to learn about “encroachment,” “interference,” or “illegal block.” I’m just out there to have some fun with my friends. There is one thing that I don’t like: the name “powder-puff” football. How sexist is that? Someone said they’ve called it that forever, so I guess it’s no big deal.

Drafting Activity 4.1

Punctuate the following paragraphs correctly by inserting colons, semi-colons and dashes where they are needed.

Example: You will need the following ingredients to make tacos hamburger meat, taco flavoring mix, tomatoes, onions, cheese, lettuce, avocados, corn tortillas, and salsa.

Corrected: You will need the following ingredients to make tacos: hamburger meat, taco flavoring mix, tomatoes, onions, cheese, lettuce, avocados, corn tortillas, and salsa.

1. To make tacos, put a pound of hamburger meat in a skillet then break up the meat with a fork.

2. When the meat is browned, add one ingredient a packaged taco mix from the store to flavor the hamburger meat.

3. Next, cut up your vegetables tomatoes, onions, lettuce, and avocados and then grate your cheese.

4. Then put a thin layer of cooking oil in a second skillet cook your tortillas in the skillet one at a time.

5. Next, take a tortilla and fill it with all of your ingredients hamburger meat, cheese, and vegetables and then add salsa on top.

6. Make sure not to fill the tortilla too full of meat the bottom could fall out while you are eating it.

7. You have now learned to make a great meal homemade tacos.
8. If you get tired of hamburger meat, replace it with something else—chicken, fish, or even shrimp—to add variety to your tacos.

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**Editing Activity 4.2**

Read the following paragraphs and insert colons, semi-colons, or dashes where they are needed.

**Example:**

At the natural art museum, the side-by-side skeletons of a young gorilla and an eight-year old boy who lived 20,000 years ago are eerily similar: the same skeletal frames with the exception of the gorilla’s longer arms and bigger feet. The other difference is the size of the skull the boy’s skull is larger and rounder, housing a larger, more advanced brain.

**Corrected:**

At the natural art museum, the side-by-side skeletons of a young gorilla and an eight-year old boy who lived 20,000 years ago are eerily similar: the same skeletal frames with the exception of the gorilla’s longer arms and bigger feet. The other difference is the size of the skull; the boy’s skull is larger and rounder, housing a larger, more advanced brain.

We have a large family living in a three-bedroom rental for four kids and two parents. A few months ago, my aunt and uncle immigrated to the U.S. with their kids. They moved in with us until they could find a place to stay, and they are still here. Now there are ten people living the house. The obvious problems three kids to a bedroom, no privacy, constant noise will only be solved when they move out.

They are nice people and we get along well, but with that many people in one small house, things are going to come up. My uncle is a smoker he keeps it out of the house, but he brings the smell in on his clothes. My aunt does a lot of the cooking, but unfortunately, she’s not a very good cook. It’s hard having my friends over because wherever we go, my little nieces have to be there, giggling and annoying us all the time. It’s crazy around the house, and studying is practically impossible. There’s one thing that I’d love to have peace and quiet.

**Editing Activity 4.3**

Write six original sentences, two that include colons, two with semi-colons, and two with dashes.

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**Editing Activity 4.4**

Read your current draft to make sure that you have used semi-colons, colons, and dashes correctly in your sentences. If you haven’t used any, see if there are any related sentences that could be connected effectively with a semi-colon or any sentences that could be reworded effectively to include a colon or dashes.
Pronoun Usage

Pronouns are among the most frequently used parts of speech. We use them to replace words rather than repeat the same words over and over in our writing. For example, if pronouns didn’t exist, a sentence might read like this:

Jason brought Jason’s dog with Jason to the restaurant.

Of course, such a sentence sounds ridiculous because the repeated word “Jason” is usually replaced by pronouns:

Jason brought his dog with him to the restaurant.

Most of the time, writers use pronouns correctly because the correct forms sound and look right. However, when errors do occur, they usually involve subject pronouns or pronoun-antecedent agreement, where the pronoun must agree in gender and number with the word it replaces. You will learn how to avoid such errors in this section.

Subject Pronouns

Subject pronouns are only a problem when the subject is compound: two or more subjects joined by and or or. When there is only one subject, the correct subject pronoun form sounds right: I like to study late at night. He likes to study in the morning. They prefer studying together. We would never write, “Me likes to study late at night,” or “Them prefer studying together.”

However, when the subject pronoun is compound, the incorrect form doesn’t sound as bad to some writers. For example, while you would never write, “Me likes to go to outdoor concerts,” someone might write, “Alicia, Munro, Condoleeza, and me like to go to outdoor concerts,” rather than “Alicia, Munro, Condoleeza, and I like to go to outdoor concerts.”

To use the correct subject pronoun forms with compound subjects, follow these rules and suggestions.

1. A subject pronoun is a pronoun used as the subject of a sentence: I am tired of this heat.

2. Always use the correct subject pronoun forms in your writing: I, he, she, it, you, they, we. When the subject is compound - two or more subjects joined by and or or - you use the same correct subject pronoun forms.

3. Never use the following object pronouns as subject pronouns: me, him, her, them, us.
4. To always use the correct pronoun with a compound subject, mentally cross out the other subject(s) and decide which form sounds best by itself.

Examples:

Breanna, Jordana, and (we, us) went to the county fair on Sunday. (Would you say “We went” or “Us went?” The correct pronoun - we - is obvious when you separate it from the other subjects.)

Matt, Raja, Monroe, and (he, him) enjoy eating breakfast at McDonald’s across from campus. (Would you say “He enjoys” or “Him enjoys?” The correct pronoun - he - is obvious when you separate it from the other subjects.)

Editing Activity 4.5

Underline the correct subject pronoun form in each of the following sentences.

Example: Rashida and (her, she) have been friends since childhood.

1. The Gomez brothers and (us, we) enjoy sitting in the end zone seats at the football game.

2. Gloria and (she, her) have roomed together for three semesters.

3. Julius, Raymond, Phyllis, Jorge, and (them, they) all tried out for the school debate team.

4. Your grandmother and (him, he) graduated from the same high school sixty years ago.

5. (She, her) and (him, he) have very different opinions on whether Miriam and (me, I) should attend the anti-war rally on campus.

6. (They, them) and (us, we) always park in the same area of the arena parking lot.

7. Britanny and (her, she) don’t look like sisters.

8. Your uncle and (him, he) gave me their tickets to Thursday’s art gallery exhibition.

9. The other tourists in our group and (us, we) got on the wrong subway line and ended up in Brooklyn when we wanted to go to Manhattan.

10. Whenever you and (them, they) want to play badminton again, just let me know.
Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

The purpose of using pronouns is to replace words that would otherwise be repeated needlessly. For example, the sentence, “Joanna brought Joanna’s art portfolio with Joanna to class,” sounds odd. Therefore, we use pronouns and the sentence sounds normal: Joanna brought her art portfolio with her to class.

Since a pronoun replaces another word, it needs to agree with that word - called its antecedent - in number and gender. For example, in the previous paragraph, the pronoun “her” replaces the word Joanna and agrees with the antecedent because like Joanna, “her” is singular in number and feminine in gender.

The following rules will ensure that your pronouns agree with their antecedents.

1. **The following pronouns are grouped according to their number and gender.**

   - Singular masculine:  *he, him, his, himself*
   - Singular feminine:  *she, her, hers herself*
   - Singular neutral:  *it, its, itself*
   - Plural:  *they, them, their, theirs, themselves*
   - Plural including self:  *we, us, our, ours, ourselves*

2. **A pronoun always agrees with its antecedent - the word it replaces - in number and gender.** Number refers to singular or plural, and gender refers to masculine, feminine, or neutral. For example, in the sentence, “Marcus wasn’t satisfied with his saxophone solo,” the antecedent Marcus is singular and masculine, so the pronoun that replaces Marcus – *his* - must also be singular and masculine.

   **Examples:** (Antecedent is underlined and pronoun(s) are italicized.)

   - Sabrina brought her mother to college movie night.
   - (The singular, feminine pronoun *her* agrees with its singular, feminine antecedent “Sabrina.”)
   - Those maple trees lose their leaves early in September.
   - (The plural pronoun *their* agrees with its plural antecedent “trees.”)
The moon loses much of its luster as it descends towards the horizon.

(The neutral pronouns its and it agree with the singular, neutral antecedent “moon.”)

Vanessa and I ruined our concert tickets when we put them through the washing machine.

(The plural pronouns our and we agree with their plural antecedent “Vanessa and I,” and the plural pronoun them agrees with its plural antecedent “tickets.”)

A pronoun should agree in number and gender with its antecedent.

(The singular, neutral pronoun its agrees with its singular, neutral antecedent “pronoun.”)

3. **If an antecedent may be either singular masculine or feminine (e.g. person, student, employee), use the pronouns he or she, his or her, or himself or herself to replace it.**

Examples:

If a person believes in himself or herself, he or she can weather bad times.

A student who does his or her best has nothing to be ashamed of.

**Note:** In essay writing, when continued use of “he or she” and “himself or herself” becomes awkward, you can alternate between the masculine and feminine singular forms as is done throughout this text, or you can change singular antecedents to plural when appropriate:

“Students do their best under pressure,” instead of “A student does his or her best under pressure.”

“People should leave their umbrellas at the door” instead of “A person should leave his or her umbrella at the door.”

4. **An indefinite pronoun - one, everyone, anyone, everybody, anybody, someone, somebody, nobody - is always singular, so any pronoun that replaces it must also be singular.**

Examples:

Everyone on the girls’ volleyball team played her heart out tonight.

One of the rose bushes lost its blossoms because of the frost.

Everybody should bring his or her umbrella along on the hike.
Editing Activity 4.6

Fill in the blanks in each sentence with pronouns that agree with their antecedents. Underline the antecedent(s) in each sentence.

Examples: Audrey and I seldom see our roommates on weekends.

The mother cat hid her newborn kittens behind the washing machine.

1. One of the barns in the area lost _________ tin roof when a tornado blew through the valley.

2. New students need to have ____________ photos taken for ______________ student ID cards.

3. Regina and I bought ___________ sleeping bags with ________ when ____________ lined up at 5:00 a.m. to get tickets to the Shakira concert at the campus arena.

4. Fred treated ______________ to a double cheeseburger after ______________ survived five weeks on a meatless diet (pronouns refer back to Fred).

5. Everyone needs to park _________________ car in the south parking lot since __________ is the only lot on campus not being repaved today.

6. The weather will be mild for the rest of the week, and __________ should remain pleasant for most of the month.

7. Ralphael and Lakesha bought ________________ computer at a discount warehouse, and now that __________ is having problems, ______________ have no warranty to cover the cost of fixing ____________.

8. Amelia and Samuel don’t realize how large ________________ Newfoundland puppy will get, but ______________ will find out for__________________ in the next six months.

9. One out of every five residents living along the river had to evacuate _______________ home as the water rose from the heavy storm.

10. Azaleas will start losing ________________ blossoms if _________ don’t get enough water, but ________________ leaves will start turning yellow if ________________ get too much water.

_____________________________________________________________________________

Editing Activity 4.7

Proofread your latest draft for any errors involving pronouns and make any needed corrections. Look in particular for sentences with pronouns and antecedents to make sure that each pronoun agrees with its antecedent.
Editing Guidelines

1. **Check your sentences to make sure you haven’t run any sentences together or put a comma between sentences instead of a period.** Correct run-on sentences or comma splices by separating longer sentence with periods and combining shorter, related sentences with a joining word.

2. **Check your draft for any sentence fragments: incomplete sentences with a period after them.** To correct fragments, attach them to the sentence they belong with, or add words to make them complete.

3. **Check your present tense verbs to make sure that they agree with their subjects.** In addition, make sure that you have correctly spelled any past tense irregular verbs.

4. **Check your comma usage, making sure you have inserted commas into your sentences correctly and not in places they aren’t required.**

5. **Check to make sure that you have used the correct word with words that are commonly confused: there/their/they’re, its/it’s, advice/advise, accept/except, effect/affect, were/we’re/where, your/you’re, here/hear, then/than.**

6. **Check your spelling by running the spell check on your word processing program or by looking up the spelling of any word you are unsure of.**

7. **Check your use of colons, semi-colons, and dashes to make sure you have used them correctly.**

**Editing Activity 4.8**

Keeping the editing suggestions in mind, proofread your latest draft for errors and make any necessary corrections. Read the draft several times, focusing on a particular grammatical or punctuation element each time. Be particularly aware of the types of errors that have cropped up most frequently in your previous drafts.
Editing Activity 4.9

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two, proofread each other’s drafts for errors, and point out any that you find. Based on your classmates’ input, make any additional corrections that are needed in your draft. Then write the final, error-free draft of your essay to share with classmates and your instructor.

Timed Writings

A quick reminder. With all of your timed-writing essays, make sure to following the basic organization that you have used for your main essays: an opening that introduces the topic and presents your position (thesis statement); middle paragraphs that provide the support for your position, and a conclusion that “wraps up” the essay, reinforces your thesis, and leaves readers with a strong final impression.

Timed Writing Six

Some of the timed writing topics, such as the one for this essay, require you to think and write about a subject that you have probably given little or no thought to. This is done for a reason. Rather than writing from experience on a topic you are familiar with, these topics require you to apply what you know or have experienced to unfamiliar subjects. Important aspects of critical thinking include learning to apply what is known or experienced to new situations, to go beyond your own experience and fashion new ideas that stretch your mental parameters, and to think creatively when you can’t rely on your current knowledge or experience to solve a problem or make a decision.

A recent study indicated that a large percentage of criminals in state prisons are high school dropouts. Partly as a result of this study, several bills are being proposed in state legislatures to raise the required high school attendance age from sixteen to eighteen. Write an essay in which you try to convince your state’s legislature that raising the legal dropout age is or is not a good idea. Use your knowledge, personal experience, and reasoning skills to support your position.
A little Logic 11

True of false?

1. All men are mortal. John is a man. Therefore, John is mortal.

2. All crows are black. The bird outside is black. Therefore, the bird is a crow.

3. Eating too many sweets causes tooth decay. Mavis eats lots sweets. Therefore, Mavis has tooth decay.

4. Killer dogs have long teeth. My dog has long teeth. Therefore, my dog is a killer.

5. We don’t read that trash. People who read trash don’t appreciate great literature. Therefore, we appreciate great literature.

6. All colonels are officers. All officers are soldiers. Therefore, all colonels are soldiers.

7. Red Sox fans love to wear red shirts. I love to wear red shirts. Therefore, I am a Red Sox fan.
Take a break from your writing to read a couple of problem/solution essays, the first on “procrastination” and the second on “cyber-bullying.” Read the essays to learn more about these problems, to discuss them with classmates, and perhaps to take from them some ideas that you might apply to your next writing assignment.

Are You A Procrastinator?

By Leticia Gomez

In this essay, the author writes about a problem that most of us have from time to time – procrastinating – and provides some solutions.

Are you a procrastinator? Sure you are, just like every other human being. We all put off doing something at one time or another, whether it be making the bed, studying for a test, or paying the bills. What varies from one person to the next is the frequency with which we procrastinate, the kind of tasks we put off, and the extent that it affects our lives. Among individuals, procrastination ranges from an occasional random act to a habitual, chronic pattern. For people who fall towards the latter end of the spectrum, procrastination can be a serious problem.

Procrastination is familiar to us all. We know the car needs washing badly. We’ll do it this morning but after we read the morning paper. Then there’s something on TV to watch, so the car can wait a little longer. It’s starting to get hot outside, and the car could spot badly if it isn’t dried off quickly after rinsing. Tomorrow morning will be cooler, so it would be smarter to wash it tomorrow. Besides, there’s a 10% chance of rain tonight, which could ruin the wash job. So tomorrow morning it is.

It is not difficult to understand why people procrastinate. We prefer avoiding things we don’t particularly enjoy doing. For most of us, it is not great fun washing dishes, cleaning out the garage, beginning a research paper, or confronting someone we have a problem with. Instead of tackling the task, we put it off by substituting a more pleasurable activity: watching TV, taking a nap, or playing a video game.
Laziness is certainly a culprit in much of our procrastination. Lying around and relaxing sounds a lot better than beginning the thirty-page reading assignment for biology class. Fear of failure or rejection is another, like putting off a job interview or failing to call someone you’re attracted to. Indecisiveness can also lead to procrastination, like letting a deadline pass for a college application. Anxiety is also responsible for our putting off certain tasks, so we reschedule the dentist appointment or feign illness on the night we are to have dinner with our boyfriend’s parents. As you can see, a range of negative emotions often lie behind our procrastination, and to change the situation, we must at some point overcome them.

Is procrastination really a problem that we need to address? After all, if everyone procrastinates at one time or another, what’s the big deal? For some people, procrastination isn’t a problem. If you occasionally put off some everyday task but still get it done, your life probably isn’t the worse for it. However, if you put tasks off until the kitchen sink is stacked high with dishes or loads of dirty clothes lie around for days or you have to cram two weeks of assigned reading into one night, procrastination is controlling your life in negative ways. And like most procrastinators, you probably carry around your share of guilt.

Procrastination can also have more devastating effects. For people who put off the more important things in life, the consequences can be severe: loss of a job, flunking out of school, divorce, lost job opportunities, a negative credit rating, a knock on the door by the IRS, a court date for outstanding parking tickets. For chronic procrastinators, life can be one long series of mishaps and failures resulting from their chronic pattern of putting things off. And all too often procrastinators don’t think of the negative impact that their actions, or inactions, can have on those around them: husbands, wives, parents, friends, or co-workers. Frequently other people end up doing for the procrastinators what they should have done themselves.

There are some people for whom procrastination is but a symptom of some deeper psychological or emotional problem, and such people need professional help. However, for most of us, procrastination is simply a bad habit that we’ve allowed ourselves to fall into and done little to escape. The fact is that procrastination is a choice we make, and we always have an option. As we choose to procrastinate, we can also choose not to.

To stop procrastinating, as the Nike commercial says, Just Do It! We all know when we procrastinate, so there is seldom a problem identifying the situation. We look out the window and see weeds growing taller than the shrubs in the flower bed. We walk across the bedroom and step over clothes and shoes that we stepped out of the night before. We see the pile of bills sitting on the kitchen table. We see the gas gauge needle on the car sitting near the big E. We know the mid-term geography test is scheduled for this Friday. We notice our computer printer is printing out faint gray letters and pinkish-purple pictures. We smell an odor of urine from our toddler’s diapers. We know Mother’s Day is tomorrow and we don’t have a card or flowers.

When you see something that needs to be done and you are the person responsible to do it, jump right in. Getting started is the hardest part; if it wasn’t, we wouldn’t procrastinate. Frequently the task doesn’t take long -loading the dishwasher, taking the garbage bins to the street for pick-up, doing the bills, filling the car with gas -so getting started is more than half the battle. If it’s a bigger task, like filling out a lengthy job application, studying for a final exam, or cleaning the apartment, start with the idea of putting in at least twenty minutes before taking a break. More often than not, you will keep working longer than you planned, sometimes to the point of completing the task.

Of course, “just doing it” is easier said than done, particularly against a lifetime of “just doing it later.” There are always those more pleasurable instant-gratification options that frequently win out, and they aren’t going to go away. So try reversing the order of action. If there is something you really want to do -see a particular movie, go out with the guys or girls, watch a
particular TV program, play some basketball, continue reading your romantic page-turner, play
Wii Fitness -reward yourself by doing it after you complete what needs to be done. Give yourself
some positive reward for doing the task, something to look forward to on its completion.

There is one way almost certainly to fail in your attempt to stop procrastinating, and that is
to go to extremes. When you think about it, there is almost always something that could be
classified as “needs to be done.” You could go from room to room of your house or apartment
and find things to do all the time. You could do the same with your studies, your job, your
relationships. If you try to do too much at once, you will wear out quickly and fail utterly,
lapsing in relief to your previous pattern of procrastination. Start by taking one thing that you
previously would have put off and get it done. You will feel good about it and get a little more
done the next day.

While it’s probably impossible to end all procrastination, it is something that we can
certainly bring under control so that it doesn’t hurt our lives or those around us. We can replace
our habit of procrastination with new habits: paying the bills within the first week of the month,
keeping the bedroom picked up, getting a start on a school or work assignment the day it is
assigned. People actually do these things, and so can we. The good news is we don’t have to do
away with any of the pleasurable things in our lives. We just have to put them off for an hour or
two occasionally.

If you are a hardcore procrastinator with an absolute anathema about starting something you
don’t want to do, try this: give the task an immediate five minutes of your time. Five minutes is
nothing out of a 1440-minute day. Stop after five minutes if you want to, and try it again the next
day on a different task. Your greatest problem is not doing the work but getting started on it, and
the five-minute approach is a start.

The upside of taking control of our procrastinating ways is significant: greater feelings of
self-worth, greater chances of success, more things accomplished, improved work habits,
decreased feelings of guilt, greater feeling of accomplishment, better relationships, more
enjoyment of pleasurable activities. In short, less procrastination can change our lives for the
better, sometimes dramatically, so isn’t it worth a try? If you’re thinking, “Well, maybe I’ll
think about changing and decide tomorrow,” you know what’s in control. Try deciding today.

Questions for Discussion

1. When, according to the author, is procrastination a problem? Do you agree?
2. What are the causes of procrastination? Which causes do you identify with?
3. What are the effects of procrastination? Which affects do you identify with?
4. What solutions does the author present? Does the essay compel you to try them?
Cyber Bullying

by Anton Hout

Anton Hout is the founder of Overcomingbullying.com and has written several articles on the problem of bullying and the best ways to address it. In this essay, Mr. Hout focuses on the timely issue of cyberbullying.

Home sweet home is no longer a sanctuary into which victims of bullying can escape their tormentors. Bullies can now stalk their prey after school hours long after their targets have gone home.

Social isolation, public humiliation and malicious gossip have long been the stock in trade of bullies. With the advent of modern communications such as email, chat, text messaging and cell phones as well as the ability to publish online on websites, blogs and social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace making their message instantly available to millions, the bully’s reach and powers of social manipulation have been increased exponentially.

Parents are well advised to pay close attention to how this new threat can impact their children. We have already seen too many cases of children subjected to a cyber bullying attack who have been so traumatized that they have committed suicide as a direct result. “Bullcide” is the term that has been used to describe suicides caused by relentless bullying. “Cyberbullcide”, to coin a phrase, would describe someone driven to suicide following a cyberbullying attack.

In the book Bullcide In America: Moms Speak Out about the Bullying/Suicide Connection, compiled by Brenda High, the story of Jeffery Johnston serves as a warning about cyber bullying. Jeffrey’s mother Debbie Johnston writes,

A bully doesn’t have to be eye to eye to bully someone. Sometimes he or she gets into cyberspace, and then there’s no place to hide from their torment. With the keyboard as his weapon, the bully violated the sanctity of my home and murdered my child just as surely as if he had crawled through a broken window and choked the life from Jeff with his bare hands. It was not a death that was quick and merciful. It was carried out with lies, rumors and calculated cruelty portioned out day by day.

Cyber bullies, like any bully, want to feel power and control over their victim. They want to get under their victim’s skin. Many kids live and breathe the internet. It is essential to how they see themselves and how they socialize with their peers. The computer is as essential a social tool today as the telephone was decades ago.

This is part of why a cyberbullying attack can be so devastating. Cyber bullies cut to the core of their victim’s social life and self-image. Targets are faced with threats and intimidation in emails and instant messages, but it is not only fear that the cyber bully can instill over the web. It is not good enough anymore for bullies to simply beat up their victims. With digital video
becoming ubiquitous, beatings are now digitally recorded and uploaded so everyone can have a front row seat and the bloodlust can be enjoyed again and again.

How can cyber bullies be so heartless? Perhaps the internet lends itself to this indifference. Bullies don’t have to see their victims or answer for their actions. Like the cowards they are, they hide behind their computers - behind a veil of anonymity.

Even though the effects of cyberbullying can be every bit as dangerous as offline bullying, if not more so, parents are even less likely to hear about it happening to their child. To understand why, you have to understand how important access to the Internet is for many kids. They will remain silent about cyberbullying because they are afraid if their parents find out they will go off the deep end and cut off access to their computer, Internet and/or mobile phone. Years ago this would be the equivalent of a child who complained of bullying being grounded and losing their telephone privileges. Loss of Internet access would be deemed by many kids now to be the cruelest of punishments.

The first step in combatting cyber bullying is to stop responding to the cyber bully. Do not reply to emails, posts, IM’s or text messages. This is what the bully wants. They want you to engage with them. They want to manipulate you into responding. If you respond in any way that is emotional or lets them know that they are getting to you and are able to make you upset, it only encourages the cyber bully.

Remember, bullies often suffer from low self-esteem and they want to feel better about themselves. Instead of doing something positive or succeeding at something or making a new friend, a bully has learned to make themselves feel better by controlling, abusing and tearing down others. This gives them a sense of control and power they don’t have in their lives. Most bullies are actually quite weak and the same is true of cyber bullies. If you respond in a way that lets the bully know that you are angry, upset or afraid, they will only be happy because they have managed to control your emotional state. Even if you do feel like that, don’t give the cyber bully the satisfaction and encouragement by letting them know.

It is especially important not to respond emotionally because this could make you send a reply that you might regret later. Messages sent on the Internet are almost impossible to take back. If you lash back in anger you could find yourself the one who is being accused of being a cyber bully and the tables could be turned against you. Bullies are hoping to get you upset so you slip up and make a mistake. Don’t send flames and don’t get into flame wars.

While you should not respond to the cyber bully online (or offline), you should also not delete their messages. That’s right, do NOT delete their messages. Cyber bullies are especially cowardly and like to hide behind the anonymity that the Internet gives them. Or does it? Messages sent on the Internet are traceable. Make sure to keep all messages as the police will be able to use this information to track down the culprit. Do not delete any messages and save as much information you can about chats, IM’s, text messages, blog posts, websites, etc. This will also help show just how often the cyber bullying takes place, at what times and even from which location. Every computer, server and device connected over the (TCP/IP) network has a unique IP (Internet Protocol) address. Police along with the cyber bully’s ISP (Internet Service Provider) can use this information to trace the bully right to his or her house.

You need to let appropriate authorities know about the cyber bullying or they cannot take corrective action.

Cyberbullying is not something you want to ignore. It is your responsibility to report this behavior so the perpetrators can be dealt with. This helps not only to protect you (or your child, if you are a parent) but to intervene before the cyber bully harms even more kids. Bullies often behave in a serial fashion attacking multiple victims either at the same time or one after another. Once the high of abusing one victim is over they move to their next prey.
While bullies may have had a free ride up until now, they are more and more running into the long arm of the law. Cyber bullying needs to be brought to the attention of the police. Be sure to provide them with as much information as you can. They can then contact the cyber bully’s ISP and track them down.

If you are a parent, inform your child’s school if the cyber bully is a student. While the school administration may say they have no legal obligation as the bullying is taking place outside of school hours and off school property, many schools are adopting code of conduct type contracts with their students and parents. This allows for schools to take action in such cases where the bullying still impacts on another student while he or she is at school. Targets of cyberbullying are traumatized and often lose focus on their schoolwork as a direct result of the harassment. Even if your child’s school does not have such a policy, they still need to be made aware of the abuse so they can be alerted to potential further bullying that may be taking place while your child is at school.

If you are a parent or older sibling, pay close attention to your kids or younger siblings. Are they acting strangely? Are there unexplained pictures or odd messages on their computers or cell phones? Are they having trouble sleeping or falling behind at school? Do they seem depressed or more aggressive? Are they being evasive and don’t want you to know who they are talking to, or do they close windows on their computer screen whenever you come near? Don’t ignore what your instincts are telling you. If you think something is wrong, don’t wait until it is too late.

Cyber bullying can be every bit as dangerous as face-to-face bullying, more so in some cases. Awareness is the key. And children need to know that cyber bullying is not their fault. It is not because of something wrong with them. The fault and the problem both lie with the cyber bully.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is Hout’s depiction of a cyber bully’s make-up? Does it fit the make-up of bullies as you perceive or have encountered them?

2. What are Hout’s recommendations for dealing with cyber bullying? Are there any that you question or any that you would add?

3. What reading audience do you think Hout is primarily writing for and what is his purpose?

4. Have you had any personal experience with cyber bullying (as victim or assailant)? How did the experience affect you? How did you deal with it? How would you suggest that other victims deal with it?
Writing Assignment Eight

Your second problem/solution essay for this unit differs from your first essay in one respect. While you relied on your personal experience, knowledge, and reasoning skills to write your first essay, you add a research element to the upcoming essay, incorporating research material to help analyze a problem and consider possible solutions. You will write about a problem that you are interested in and that you can research online and in the library. Begin thinking about such problems as potential topics for your upcoming essay.

Prewriting

Your upcoming problem/solution essay is an investigative assignment. You will research a problem of interest to you to determine the seriousness of the problem, its causes, its effects, who or what is affected, and possible solutions. As you recall, you did similar research for your second persuasive essay in the previous unit and incorporated research material in your essay. That experience will prove valuable for this assignment.

In college composition courses and other courses across the curriculum, you will do similar writing: investigating topics and incorporating your findings in an essay. An important part of such an assignment is learning to analyze and evaluate your research findings to determine their validity and their relevance to your topic. You learn to figure out what is important and what isn’t, what makes the most sense and what doesn’t, what is objectively written and what is tainted with bias or prejudice. The more research investigation that you do, the more skilled you become at separating the wheat from the chaff: separating what is useful and valuable from what is worthless.

Topic Selection

As you know, topic selection is always an important part of writing an effective essay. It can mean the difference between writing with enthusiasm or indifference, either of which can affect the quality of your essay. For that reason, the main writing assignments in the text allow you to choose your own topics, which usually leads to the most interesting writing.

To select a topic for your upcoming problem/solution essay, consider these suggestions:

1. **Select a problem that is serious enough to warrant your readers’ interest.** If you consider a particular problem to be serious, many readers will no doubt feel the same.

2. **Select a problem that interests you.** Choose a problem that you would really like to know more about and that you will enjoy researching.
3. **Select a topic that is “researchable” online and in the library.** Since you will be getting much of your writing material from your research, it is vital that there is considerable information available on the topic.

4. **Select a problem that has yet to be solved.** The most challenging problems that we face have no easy, pat answers, and an important part of this assignment is to search for possible solutions to persistent problems.

5. **Consider a range of problems in different topic areas: children’s issues, educational issues, teen issues, political issues, sports’ issues, music issues, environmental issues, health issues, law enforcement issues, economic issues, etc.** The following list will give you an idea of the range of topics available. From the list, you may find a topic, or something similar, to write on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obesity among children</td>
<td>Teen pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorist attacks in the U.S.</td>
<td>High drop-out rate in high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undocumented immigration</td>
<td>Teen drug use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang violence</td>
<td>Domestic violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowded prisons</td>
<td>Mass school shootings in U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large-city pollution</td>
<td>U.S. deteriorating infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen suicide</td>
<td>Gun violence in the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change (Global warming)</td>
<td>Absentee fathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing diabetes among children</td>
<td>Voter apathy in U.S. (low turn-outs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football brain injuries</td>
<td>Sex trafficking in the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexism in videos (how women are portrayed)</td>
<td>Racial profiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity theft</td>
<td>Cybercrime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job outsourcing</td>
<td>Cost of college education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription drug addiction</td>
<td>U.S.’s deteriorating infrastructure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prewriting Activity 4.1**

Select a topic for your upcoming problem/solution essay, something that other students are not writing on. Consider topics in a number of different subject areas. Come up with two or three possible topics and determine the available research material for each.

Sample research topic: Teen smoking

**Researching Your Topic**

Since your upcoming problem/solution essay will rely heavily on your research findings, it is important that you find the best available information on your topic to give readers the most
credible, accurate picture of the problem. To research your topic most effectively, consider these suggestions.

1. **Find a number of different sources for your topic: online articles and studies, periodical and newspaper articles, and books.** Since some sources won’t be credible and others won’t contain what you are looking for, always start with more sources than you will end up using.

2. **Do a “directed search,” finding material that answers the following questions:**
   a. What exactly is the problem? Find information that explains the problem clearly.
   b. How serious is the problem? Why should readers care about it?
   c. When did the problem start and how did it get started?
   d. What are the causes of the problem? Why is it occurring?
   e. What are the effects of the problem, and who or what is affected?
   f. What solutions have been tried or are being tried? What new solutions are being considered?

3. **Use the most credible sources available to take information from.** Credible sources may include experts on the topic, reliable studies, and articles from respected newspapers, periodicals, and online sites. Be wary of information from seemingly bias sources or opinions from non-experts (e.g. online “Q and A” sites that anyone can respond to).

4. **Write down any information that you might use in your essay, keeping your sources separate, and make sure that it covers all elements of a problem/solution essay.** You might look for one element at a time: the exact nature of the problem and its serious, its causes, its affect and those affected, and possible solutions.

5. **Write down the source for each piece of information that you may use:** the author, title of article, name of newspaper, periodical, or website, title of book, title of study. You will use some of this source material to reference the research information in your essay.

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**Prewriting Activity 4.5**

Keeping the research suggestions in mind, investigate your problem/solution topic, writing down each piece of information that you may use and its source. Do a “directed search,” making sure that you cover each aspect of a problem/solution essay.
Workable Solutions

Through your research, you may have found some possible solutions to the problem you are writing about that are working. You may have found other things that have been tried and didn’t work. You may have found some possible solutions that have yet to be tried. You may also have some of your own ideas about how to solve the problem.

In deciding on what you want to include in the “solution” part of your essay, consider these suggestions.

1. **Include any solutions that are helping to solve the problem.** If there are currently solutions that have proven to be working to reduce the problem, make readers aware of them.

2. **Consider promising-sounding solutions that have yet to be tried.** Include any proposed solutions that make sense to you in reducing the problem.

3. **Consider your own ideas on the problem.** Have you thought of possible solutions that you didn’t read about, perhaps based on your own experience or knowledge?

4. **Consider how readers may play a role in a solution.** For example, if you were writing about the problem of extended droughts that are occurring more frequently, you could point out what readers – individual citizens – can do to conserve water.

5. **In summary, weigh all of the possible solutions that you have read about or thought about, and present those solutions that you feel hold the greatest promise for solving the problem.**

Prewriting Activity 4.6

Take a look at the solutions from your research that are being tried or are being considered and evaluate their effectiveness. Then consider other possible solutions that you can think of. Write down all possible solutions to evaluate, choosing the most promising ones to include in your essay.
Thesis

Once you complete your research, you should have a pretty good idea of your viewpoint on the topic. Your thesis statement should reflect that viewpoint. For a problem/solution essay, your thesis may emphasize the seriousness of the problem, the consequences if the problem continues unresolved, the danger that the problem poses for readers, or the impact that the problem has on those who are affected. The following thesis statements provide examples of those different emphases.

Problem: Summer crime

Thesis: The summer months bring a large spike in violent crimes which affect many city neighborhoods.

Problem: Global warming

Thesis: If man’s role in warming the atmosphere isn’t reduced dramatically, the effects on our planet could be devastating.

Problem: Not attending preschool

Thesis: The consequences for poorer children who don’t attend preschool can persist throughout their education and beyond.

Problem: Community college drop-out rate

Thesis: Although the high student drop-out rate in community colleges is a challenging problem, it is not without solutions.

Prewriting Activity 4.7

Generate a tentative thesis statement for your problem/solution essay that reflects your viewpoint on the topic and may motivate readers to keep reading.

Sample thesis statement:

Topic: Teen Smoking

Thesis statement: Teenage smoking continues to be a serious problem throughout the country, one which has disastrous effects on the health of millions of teens.
Organizing Research Material

Before writing the first draft of your problem/solution essay, take a good look at the research information that you have accumulated from different sources. You may have found the causes, effects, and possible solutions to the problem spread across your different sources. You may have plenty of research material to incorporate in your essay, but it may be mixed up among the sources.

To organize your research material in a fashion that will make it easy to present in an essay, consider these suggestions.

1. **Read through your research notes looking for one problem/solution element at a time:** exactly what the problem is, when and how it started, its causes, its effects, who is affected, and possible solutions. Write down everything you find for one element, and then do the same for the next. Write down the source for each piece of information to reference in your essay.

2. **Read through your research looking for one problem/solution element at a time and color-code with a highlighter the information you found for each element, which will help you to locate and present the research information for each element.** You can also decide whether any of the research material that is not color-coded is worth inclusion in the essay.

Whether you do number 1. or number 2., you will have organized your research material in a way that will make it easier to present in your essay. In addition, by organizing the information, you may have found some areas where you are lacking some information and need to do more research.
Drafting

Since this is the second problem/solution essay you have written for this unit, you have some experience organizing and presenting the different facets of the essay: the problem, its causes, its effects, possible solutions. The difference for this essay is that you will be relying more heavily on your research findings than your own experience and knowledge. For incorporating your research material in your essay effectively, the research-based persuasive essay you wrote in Unit Three provides a good model which you may want to review.

Audience and Purpose

For the particular problem that you are writing about, consider who would be the best reading audience and what your writing purpose might be. To decide whom to write for and why, consider these suggestions.

1. What readers may be most affected by this problem: teenagers? people living in high-crime areas? women? the general public?
2. What readers would have the greatest interest in the problem?
3. What readers may have a role in helping to solve the problem?
4. What is my purpose in writing to this audience? What do I hope to accomplish?

Drafting Activity 4.4

Decide on the primary reading audience for your essay and your main purpose in writing to them.

Sample audience and purpose:

Topic: Teen smoking
Audience: Teenagers who smoke or who may consider smoking
Purpose: To get teenagers who smoke to quit and those who don’t smoke not to start
Incorporating Research Material

Much of the information that you present in your draft will come from your research findings. Therefore, it is important that readers know the sources of your information and can distinguish between the research and your own thoughts and ideas.

Since you have already incorporated research in an earlier persuasive essay, here is a quick review of the basics.

1. Whenever you introduce material from a source, provide a clear reference for readers:

   In Nora Ashley’s book *Wall Street Meltdown*,
   The article “The Asthma-Pollution Connection” in *Science Today* confirmed . . .
   The British Health Department’s four-year study on obese children discovered . . .
   Renown podiatrist Dr. Patricia Fernandez recommended . . .

   Provide the source reference information that most accurately reveals the source of the material and shows its credibility.

2. When you use the same source later in an essay, refer back to the original reference:

   Ashley also contends that . . .
   The “Asthma-Pollution Connection” article goes on to suggest . . .
   The British Health Department’s study concludes . . .
   In addition, Dr. Fernandez also argues that . . .

3. Make sure that readers can always distinguish between the research findings and your own thoughts and ideas. You do this by making sure to provide a source reference for all research material. Readers will know that all ideas and information that aren’t referenced are your own.

Drafting Activity 4.5

Read the following first draft of the essay “Teen Smoking.” As you read, note in particular the following:

1. How the writer introduces her topic in the opening paragraph and presents her thesis statement.
2. How the writer introduces each piece of research material with a source reference, *paraphrases* – puts into her own words - most of the research presented, and provides quotations marks for any directly quoted material.

3. How most paragraphs begin with a *topic sentence* that presents the main idea that is developed in the paragraph.


**Teen Smoking** (first draft)

*(Thesis statement underlined, source introductions in bold print, author’s thoughts and opinions in italics, topic sentences in bold italics)*

A 2008 study by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention found that nearly one in four high school students reported smoking in the last month. The study found an increase in teen smoking compared to a 2003 study when one in five students reported smoking. More recent studies show no decline in the number of teens who smoke despite everything that is known about the health effects of smoking. Teenage smoking continues to be a serious problem throughout the country, one which has disastrous effects on the long-term health of millions of American teens.

*Teens smoke for a number of reasons.* According to the article, “Why Teens Smoke,” some teens feel insecure in social situations, and puffing on a cigarette seems to help them cope. Teens smoke because of peer pressure, wanting to fit in with their smoking friends. Teens are also more apt to smoke if their parents smoke or other older people that they admire. According to Denise Witmar in the web article “Why Do Teens Start to Smoke,” “They are drawn to the ‘forbidden’ lure of smoking that also attracts teens to drinking and marijuana use.” Some teens also smoke because they think they look “cool” with a cigarette dangling from their mouth.

*Smoking can also produce pleasurable feelings and reduce stress.* According to the web article “Nicotine,” nicotine in cigarettes activates the part of the brain brain that increases feelings of pleasure in cigarette smokers, and since the pleasurable feelings wear off within seconds of the last drag on a cigarette, smokers are quick to light up the next cigarette. Nicotine in cigarettes is also an addictive drug which can hook cigarette smokers early in their usage and make it a difficult habit for them to break.

Some teen smokers argue inaccurately that smoking for a year or two and then quitting will have no effect on their health, so why not enjoy smoking? The article “Effects of Teen Smoking” at TeenSmoking.us tells us why. Teen smoking can have serious and immediate effects on the body since there is still some physical development taking place during the teen years. Teen smoking can cause a great deal of coughing, shortness of breath, poor lung function, respiratory problems, circulatory and hearing problems, and of course, addiction.

Many teens also argue that they plan on quitting smoking after a year or two, which they can do easily. However, while most teens plan on quitting, over 60% are still smoking seven to nine years later, according to Witmar, destroying the myth that it is easy to stop smoking. Finally, many teens simply ignore the long-term health effects of smoking, not thinking about the future or worrying about what might happen years later.
The harmful effects of cigarette smoking are well known. According to the article, “The Harmful Effects of Cigarette Smoking” at QuitSmokingStop.com, one in two lifetime smokers will die from their habit, and many of these smokers begin in their teens. Tar coats the lungs of smokers and causes cancer. Men and women who smoke are ten times more likely to die from lung cancer than non-smokers. Smoking is also associated with cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, cervix, kidney, ureter, and bladder.

Cancer is not the only risk for smokers. Heart disease and strokes are also more common among smokers. According to the article “The Harmful Effects of Cigarette Smoking,” smoking causes one in five deaths from heart disease. In younger people, three out of four deaths from heart disease are caused by smoking. In addition, emphysema is a common smoker’s disease that slowly rots your lungs and eventually kills you. Cigarette smoking during pregnancy also increases the risk of low birth weight, premature birth, spontaneous abortion, and infant mortality, according to the article “Nicotine.”

Finally, smokers are not only ruining their own health, they are influencing the health of those around them. People around them inhale their smoke, which can lead to all of the problems that smokers have. Teen smokers can be harming their friends who don’t smoke, and parents who smoke are endangering the lives of their children.

Knowing all of the harmful effects of cigarette smoking is important for any teen, and this will get some smokers to quit and others not to start. However, given that this information has been around for a long time, the health message has not gotten enough teens to stop smoking or never start.

Clearly, more has to be done to stop teens from smoking. According to an online Mayo Clinic article, “Teens must be made more aware of the immediate negative effects of smoking, which may resonate more strongly than the later-life health issues they may to brush aside.” For example, according to the article “Teen Smoking: How to Help Your Teen Quit,” smoking gives you bad breath, stinky clothes and hair, yellow teeth and fingernails, a pale, unhealthy look, premature wrinkles, and a hacking cough, and saps your energy for sports and other activities.

Most teens do care about their appearance and their image, and if they understand that bad breath, stinky clothes, yellow teeth and wrinkles aren’t cool, they may think twice about smoking. They also need to have the courage to quit something that their friends are doing, which isn’t easy. Going along with the crowd is easy to do, and it takes a lot of courage not to. But any teen who is put down by his friends for quitting smoking knows they aren’t very good friends.

Finally, teens who want to quit smoking need to know that they are dealing with a highly addictive drug and that quitting will take great willpower. If it didn’t, the millions of smokers who admit that smoking is a dirty, unhealthy habit they would like to break would quit.

However, according to the article “How Can I Quit Smoking?”, there are some proven strategies that can help teens kick the smoking habit:

Put it in writing. Teens who are successful at quitting smoking often put in writing that they want to quit and why. Putting it in writing makes the goal more real and binding.

Get support. Teens who quit smoking often are supported by friends and family. If this support isn’t available, consider joining a support group either online or in person.

Throw away your cigarettes, along with ashtrays and lighters.
Wash all your clothes. Get the smoke smell out of all of your clothes and if you smoke in your car, have it cleaned out too.

Substitute something else for cigarettes. You are used to having a cigarette in your hand and mouth, so substitute other things: gum, lollipops, toothpicks, mints.

Expect some withdrawal symptoms. If you have smoked regularly, expect some nicotine withdrawal symptoms such as headaches, depression, sore throat, or the “munchies.” These symptoms will pass, so be patient.

Quit gradually. While some people have success quitting “cold turkey,” many others are successful by reducing the number of cigarettes they smoke daily until they get down to zero.

Consider trying non-smoking aids. Nicotine gum, nicotine patches, acupuncture, and anti-smoking medication such as Zyban can help smokers quit. Consult with a doctor before trying any aid.

If you slip up, don’t give up. If you slip up, it doesn’t mean you’ve failed. You are overcoming a deadly, addictive habit, and you might suffer some lapses. The key is not to give up: the one thing that everyone who kicks the habit has in common.

Smoking is a deadly, dirty, addictive habit that harms anyone who smokes. 90% of life-long smokers begin in their teens, according to the article “The Tragedy of Teen Smoking.” If you begin smoking in your teens, there is a great chance that you will die before your time from a horrible disease. The longer you smoke as a teen, the greater your addiction to nicotine and the greater the chance you will continue smoking.

Smoking isn’t a cool or adult thing to do. Most adults who smoke wish they had never started. Smoking is, in fact, a stupid thing to do, ruining your health and creating a drug addiction. It takes courage to stop smoking when your friends smoke, but if you stop smoking, you may get others to stop also.

Avoiding Plagiarism

When you write essays that include material from research sources, there can be problems with plagiarism: the uncredited use (intentional or unintentional) of somebody else's words or ideas.
Plagiarism is not acceptable in writing. It deceives readers by the writer passing off someone else’s written words or ideas as his own and is a form of cheating.

Most plagiarism among students is unintentional, and understanding what is and isn’t acceptable is the key. The following guidelines will help you avoid any plagiarism in your writing.

1. **The most blatant form of plagiarism is submitting an essay that you didn’t write as your own.** As you may know, there are online sites that sell essays to students. There are also essays available in books and periodicals. Needless to say, submitting someone else’s essay as your own is unacceptable and will undoubtedly produce an “F” grade and a reprimand by most instructors.

2. **Make sure to provide a source reference for all “borrowed” material.** As long as you introduce each piece of research material in your essay with its source, you will make it clear to readers when you are using research information and you won’t plagiarize.

3. **Paraphrase – put into your own words – most of the research information that you incorporate in your essay.** You may retain some of the key words from the source, but merely copying the information from an article or book into your essay is plagiarizing. All research material needs a source reference, and most of the material should be paraphrased.

4. **When you do use the exact words from a source, put them in quotation marks (“ ”) and provide a source introduction.** Use quoted material sparingly in your essay to highlight a particularly interesting, important, or well-worded idea, and paraphrase the rest so that the essay sounds like you rather than a compilation of other writers.

### Drafting Guidelines

Consider the following guidelines when writing your first draft.

1. **Introduce the problem in your opening paragraph and its significance, and include your thesis statement.** Make sure to explain exactly what problem is so readers will have a clear understanding as they proceed.

2. **In the middle paragraphs, incorporate material from your research findings**
to help readers understand when and how the problem started, its causes, and its effects, including who is affected. Add any additional causes or effects that may come to mind as you write.

3. Begin most of your middle paragraphs with topic sentences that present the main idea of the paragraph that you are developing. (See the topic sentences in bold italics in the “Teen Smoking” draft and how each paragraph is developed to support them.

4. Introduce all research material with a source introduction to let readers know where the information came from and to distinguish the research material from your own thoughts. Paraphrase – put into your own words - most of the research material and use quotations whenever you present the exact wording from a source.

5. Include your own thoughts and opinions as you write the draft. While the essay will rely heavily on your research, your own ideas on the topic and responses to the research findings are also important to readers and show your command of the subject matter. (See the italicized writing in the “Teen Smoking,” where the writer presents her own ideas.)

6. Change paragraphs as you move to different aspects of the problem: different causes, different effects, possible solutions.

7. Conclude your draft by presenting a possible solution(s) to the problem and making your writing purpose clear to readers. What might the solution have to do with them?

Drafting Activity 4.7
Read the following first draft of the problem/solution essay “Young Girls and Puberty.” Note in particular the following:

- the essay’s opening, including the thesis statement (underlined)
- its source introductions for all research material (in bold print)
- its topic sentences in the middle paragraphs (in bold italics)
- how the writer includes her own thoughts and responses (in italics)
- the paraphrased and quoted (“   ”) research material

Then write the first draft of your problem/solution essay.

Young Girls and Puberty

Reading audience: parents of young children

A study conducted by researchers at the Lincoln Medical Center reveals that American girls are going through puberty at earlier ages. The study found that thirty years ago the average age of the onset of puberty in girls was 13.2 years while today it is 11.8 years, a statistically
significant difference. It is also not uncommon for girls to go into puberty as early as 8 or 9 years of age, according to the article “Growing Up Too Fast: Little Girls and Puberty.” The earlier onset of puberty can cause problems for young girls, but there may be a way to reverse the trend.

Some medical experts have speculated that the earlier onset of puberty is a natural evolutionary trend, and others have cited the regular exposure to chemicals in the environment, according to the article “Growing Up Too Fast: Little Girls and Puberty.” In March of 2011, however, the journal Pediatrics revealed a study in which a significant correlation was found between rates of obesity among young girls and early puberty. Of the possible causes of early onset puberty, the link between obesity and early puberty seems the strongest. Many young girls, and much of America’s population, are overweight compared to thirty years ago. Even casual observation reveals that most young girls who have gone through early puberty are on the heavier side.

The earlier onset of puberty is a cause for concern. No doubt it can be embarrassing for a 9 or 10 year old girl to be developing breasts and having to deal with menstruation. Early puberty seems like an assault on childhood, which may have a disturbing emotional impact on young girls. In addition, according to biologist Sandra Steingraber, “The data indicates that if you get your first period before age 12, your risk of breast cancer is 50 percent higher than if you get it at age 16. For every year we could delay a girl’s first menstrual period, we could prevent thousands of breast cancers.” That in itself is enough reason to do whatever is possible to delay the onset of puberty in girls.

If obesity is the leading cause of early puberty in girls, the solution to the problem is obvious: don’t let your child become overweight. Of course some children have a greater natural tendency for being heavier, but according to child nutritionist Wendy Wang, most obesity is caused by overeating and by the high-fat, high-calorie soda, hamburger, and fries diet that too many children are raised on, and by a lack of exercise. In addition, says Steingraber, there is “an especially strong connection between obesity in younger children, ages 2 through 5, and the early onset of puberty.” That is a clear indication that parents need to establish good eating habits for their children at a very early age.

Clearly, parents need to monitor their children’s eating and exercise habits. Since obesity has been linked to early puberty, the problem can be greatly reduced by children eating more healthily and exercising more. If a child does go through puberty at a young age, parents need to do everything possible to help the child through the transition and provide the emotional support that may be needed. Whether or not she goes through puberty at a relatively early age, a child is still a child.
A little Logic 12

Come up with at least three creative uses for each of the following things beyond what it is typically used for.

A shovel
A diamond ring
An umbrella
A tennis racket
Silly putty
A tractor
A saxophone
A large box
Revision

On the subject of revision, acclaimed novelist Vladimir Nabokov said, “I have rewritten—often several times—every word I have ever published. My pencils outlast their erasers.” Detective novelist Raymond Chandler wrote rather graphically, "Throw up into your typewriter every morning. Clean up every noon,” meaning “throw up” your ideas on paper and then “clean up” the writing through revision.

What we see when we read a great novel, poem, or essay is the final published product. What we don’t see are all of the revisions the writer made in working towards the final draft. American novelist Ernest Hemingway wrote the final page of his novel A Farewell to Arms thirty-nine times to get the ending just right. Great writers revise their works just like the rest of us for one reason: to produce the best possible finished product.

When you write a draft, you don’t know exactly what we are going to say or how you are going to say it. You are constantly making decisions on what to write next and how to word the thought, and you reread sentences and paragraphs to determine what should follow. It is not surprising that everything doesn’t flow onto the paper perfectly. That is why you, like all writers, revise to try and get it right. That is how writing works.

Revision Guidelines

Consider the following suggestions as you revise your draft.

1. **From your opening, do readers clearly understand the problem you are writing about and its significance, and have you presented your thesis statement?** Make any changes that would motivate readers to read further.

2. **From your middle paragraphs, can readers clearly understand the causes of the problem? Do they see its effects and understand who is affected and how?** Did you present the causes or the effects first, and is this the most effective order for your topic? Did you begin most middle paragraphs with *topic sentences* that express the main idea of the paragraph? Might there be an additional cause or effect to add as you revise your draft?

3. **Check to make sure you have provided a source reference for each piece of research material in the essay.** Have you also presented your own ideas and opinions in the essay? Can readers always distinguish between the research material and your own thoughts?

4. **Check to make sure that you have *paraphrased* – put into your own words – most of the research information and that you have used quotation marks (" ") to set off any direct quotes.**
5. Read each sentence to see how its wording may be improved by eliminating unnecessary words, smoothing out awkward phrasing, rewording a vague sentence, or replacing questionable word choices. In addition, make sure that you have used a variety of joining words and sentence structures to express your thoughts (e.g. and, but, yet, so, for, when, while, if, as, before, after, because, since, although, unless, who, which, that). Combine any short, related sentences with joining words to create more meaningful sentences.

6. Read your draft to see whether you have included transitional wording to tie your paragraphs together (first, second, next, in addition, finally) and show relationships between ideas (therefore, consequently, however, moreover, nonetheless).

7. Read your conclusion to make sure you have presented your solution or solutions clearly. You may even think of a new or different solution to add as you revise your draft.

8. Read your draft with your readers and writing purpose in mind. Make any changes that would make the essay more interesting or informative for readers or that would help you accomplish your purpose.

Revision Activity 4.4

Read the revised essay “Young Girls and Puberty” and note each revision. With a classmate, try to determine why each revision was made – the additions, the deletions, and wording changes - and how it improved the essay.

Young Girls and Puberty

Reading audience: parents of young children

(additions in bold italics and deletions crossed out)

A study conducted by researchers at the Lincoln Medical Center reveals that American girls are going through puberty at earlier ages. The study found that thirty years ago the average age of the onset of puberty in girls was 13.2 years while today it is 11.8 years, a statistically significant difference, meaning that the findings are accurate. It is also not uncommon for girls to go into puberty as early as 8 or 9 years of age, according to the article “Growing Up Too Fast: Little Girls and Puberty.” The earlier onset of puberty can cause problems for young girls; however, there may be a way to reverse the troubling trend.

Some medical experts have speculated that the earlier onset of puberty is a natural evolutionary trend, meaning that it is natural and unavoidable. Others have cited point to the regular exposure of children to chemicals in the environment, according to the article “Growing Up Too Fast: Little Girls and Puberty.” In March of 2011, however, the journal Pediatrics revealed a study in which a significant correlation was found between rates of obesity among young girls and early puberty. Girls who were overweight went into puberty on average earlier than girls who weren’t obese. Of the possible causes of early onset puberty, the link between obesity and early puberty seems is clearly the strongest. Many young girls, and much of America’s population, are overweight compared to thirty years ago. Even casual
observation reveals **By observing today’s population, it is obvious** that most young girls who have gone through early puberty are on the heavier side.

The earlier onset of puberty is a cause for concern. It can be embarrassing for a 9 or 10 year old girl to develop breasts and have to deal with menstruation. It can also result in cruel teasing from other youngsters. Early puberty seems like an assault on childhood, which may can have a disturbing emotional impact on young girls. In addition, according to biologist Sandra Steingraber, “The data indicates that if you get your first period before age 12, your risk of breast cancer is 50 percent higher than if you get it at age 16. For every year we could delay a girl’s first menstrual period, we could prevent thousands of breast cancers.” That in itself is certainly enough a big reason to do whatever is possible we can to delay the onset of puberty in girls.

If since obesity is the leading cause of early puberty in girls, the solution to the problem is obvious: don’t let your child our children become overweight. Of course, some children have a greater natural genetic tendency for being heavier, but according to child nutritionist Wendy Wang, most obesity is caused by overeating, and by the high-fat, high-calorie soda, hamburger, and fries diet that too many children are raised on, and by a lack of exercise. In addition, says Steingraber, there is “an especially strong connection between obesity in younger children, ages 2 through 5, and the early onset of puberty.” That is a clear indication means that all parents need to establish good eating habits for their children at a very early age and be aware of their weight.

Clearly, parents need to monitor their children’s eating and exercise habits. Since obesity has been linked to early puberty, the problem can be greatly reduced by children eating more healthily and exercising more. And as we know, childhood obesity can also cause heart problems and diabetes in children, and obese children often become obese adults. Early puberty is just one of the problems that childhood obesity may cause.

Of course, some girls will go into puberty at an early age despite how they eat or exercise. If a child does go through puberty at a young age, parents need to do everything possible to help the child through the transition and provide the emotional support that may be needed. Whether or not she goes through puberty at a relatively early age, a child is still a child.

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**Revision Activity 4.5**

Applying the revision suggestions presented, revise your current draft and make any changes that you feel would improve it.

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**Revision Activity 4.6**

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and apply the revision suggestions to their drafts as you did your own. Make any suggestions that you feel would improve their essays, and based on their input, make any additional revisions to your draft that you feel are worth making. Then write the next draft of your essay, including all revisions that you have made.
**Editing**

By this time in the course, you probably have a good idea of the kinds of errors that tend to crop up in your essays, and you may have eliminated or greatly reduced most of them. The editing process has probably become easier and more efficient due to all of your practice proofreading drafts for errors and making corrections. Through all of your writing experiences, you are undoubtedly becoming a better writer in many ways, and making fewer errors is certainly one of them.

While the content of your writing is the most important aspect of any essay, writing “correctly” also rates highly with college instructors, with employers, and with practically anyone who reads your writing. Students who can write with minimal errors definitely have an advantage over those who can’t, and according to many college instructors, too many students fall into that latter category. All of the work you are putting in on improving your writing “correctness” will benefit you in college and beyond.

**Comparative and Superlative Adjectives**

Writers frequently use adjectives to describe things in their essays: hungry children, threatening clouds, a talented pianist, a difficult test. They also use adjectives to compare things: the higher humidity in Atlanta than in Chicago, the more difficult problem of global warming compared to pollution, the lower price of gas in the U.S. compared to Europe, or the tallest mountain peak in the world compared to all others.

Adjectives that compare have a number of different forms, depending on how many things are being compared and how many syllables the adjective has. Some basic grammatical rules govern the forms these adjectives take, and once you learn them, you will have little problem using the correct forms in your writing.

**Comparative Adjectives**

*Comparative* adjectives compare one thing to another. The following rules apply to comparative adjectives.

1. **Add *er*** to one-syllable adjectives.

   I am *shorter* than you are.
   
   Sam is *thinner* than Phil.
   
   Mercury lights are *brighter* than florescent lights.
2. **Add more in front of adjectives with two or more syllables.**

   I am *more* introverted than you are.
   Samantha is *more* graceful than Phyllis.
   Mercury lights are *more* effective than florescent lights.

   Exception: Add *er* to two-syllable words ending in *y* or *ow*.

   I am *lonelier* than you are.
   Margo is *sillier* than her brother.
   Mercury light is *prettier* than fluorescent light.
   The river is *shallower* along the banks than in the middle.

### Superlative Adjectives

Superlative adjectives compare three or more things. The following rules apply to superlative adjectives.

1. **Add *est* to one-syllable adjectives.**

   I am the *tallest* person in my family.
   Sam is the smartest gorilla in the zoo.
   Mercury lights are the *brightest* lights for football fields.

2. **Add *most* in front of adjectives with two or more syllables.**

   Omar is the *most* dependable person in the family.
   Judy is the *most* curious gorilla in the zoo.
   Mercury lights are the *most* expensive lights for outdoor home lighting.

   Exception: Add *est* to two-syllable words ending in *y* or *ow*.

   I am the *rowdiest* person in my family.
   Judy is the *heaviest* gorilla in the zoo.
   Mercury lights give off the *loveliest* glow on dark nights.
   The Dead Sea is the *shallowest* ocean in the world.

### Editing Activity 4.10

Each of the following sentences compares two things. Fill in the correct comparative form of each adjective in parentheses. Determine the number of syllables the adjective has, and add *er* to one-syllable adjectives and two-syllable adjectives ending in *y* or *ow*, and add *more* in front of adjectives of two syllables or more.
Examples: (quick) You are a quicker thinker than I am.

(b) The elm trees on campus are more beautiful in the spring than in the summer.

1. (interesting) The first week of school was _____________ than I imagined.

2. (friendly) The students were _______________ than I had expected.

3. (fascinating) The classes were _______________ than my middle school classes.

4. (short) The classes were also _______________ than usual since it was the first week.

5. (fast) The whole day went by _______________ than I expected.

6. (tedious) I thought the school work would be _______________ than it was.

7. (enthusiastic) Now I am _______________ than ever about school.

8. (long) However, next week’s classes will be _______________ than this week’s.

9. (difficult) The homework will get _______________ as the semester progresses.

10. (typical) The next weeks will be _______________ of the rest of the semester.

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**Editing Activity 4.11**

Each of the following sentences compares three or more things. Fill in the correct superlative form of each adjective in parentheses. Determine the number of syllables the adjective has, and add *est* to one-syllable adjectives and two-syllable adjectives ending in *y* or *ow*, and add *most* in front of adjectives with two syllables or more.

Examples: (quick) That was the quickest that Ricardo has ever completed a biology experiment.

(usually) The modern art display in the library is the most unusual display of the year.

1. (interesting) The first week of school was one of the _____________ weeks I’ve spent.

2. (unusual) I met some of the _____________ teachers I’ve had.

3. (fascinating) The class subjects were the _____________ I’ve been exposed to.

4. (long) The classes were also the _____________ I have ever attended.
5. (fast) It was the ______________________ week of school I’ve been through.
6. (tedious) I thought biology would be the __________________ class of the semester.
7. (enthusiastic) Now I am the ___________________ I’ve ever been about taking biology.
8. (hard) Although the classes are the __________________ I’ve had, I enjoy them.
9. (difficult) Although the homework is the __________________ I’ve done, I don’t mind it.
10. (typical) Students say that the fourth and fifth weeks of school are the ________________ weeks to judge school by.

Editing Activity 4.12

Fill in each of the following blanks with an appropriate comparative or superlative adjective by following the rules presented. Include both one-syllable and two-or-more syllable adjectives.

Examples: In winter the evenings grow shorter while in summer they grow longer.
That is the most expensive anthology I’ve ever seen in a bookstore.

1. The oboe is ______________________ to play than the clarinet.
2. The saxophone is the ____________________ woodwind instrument to play.
3. The alto saxophone has the __________________ sound of any woodwind.
4. The French horn is _______________ than the trumpet.
5. The tuba is the ________________ brass instrument.
6. The band director appeared the ___________ every time the woodwind section took over the melody.
7. When a woodwind squeaks, it is one of the _______________ sounds there is.
8. A French horn can produce the _________________ sound of any brass instrument.
9. Percussion instruments are often the ________________ to play.
10. The snare drum is __________________ to play than the timpani.

Editing Activity 4.13

Proofread your current draft for any errors involving comparative and superlative adjectives and make any needed corrections. Look for sentences where two or more things are being compared.
Editing Activity 4.14

For proofreading practice, correct any errors in the following paragraphs involving run-on or comma splice sentences, fragments, subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, comma usage, or frequently confused words (there/their/they’re, know/no, to/too/two, effect/affect).

Campus Construction

Our college campus seems like one large construction site, the sound of hammers power saws and building cranes fill the air from morning until dark. Their is fences of yellow tape everywhere to cordon off most construction areas and a cyclone fence has been erected around the new performing arts building. Which will be completed before the end of school.

The old library which was over seventy years old is being torn down. Because it don’t pass the state’s earthquake standards, which is very strict. Construction of a new library won’t begin until this summer, the library will be housed temporarily in an old pre-fabricated modular building. The state’s commitment to renovating older college campuses are finally being realized so us students must do his or her best to survive in a construction zone. By the end of next year we shouldn’t be effected at all.

Editing Guidelines

As you proofread your current draft, keep these suggestions in mind.

1. **Check your sentences to make sure you haven’t run any sentences together or put a comma between sentences instead of a period.** Correct run-on sentences or comma splices by separating longer sentence with periods and combining shorter, related sentences with a joining word.

2. **Check your draft for any sentence fragments: incomplete sentences with a period after them.** To correct fragments, attach them to the sentence they belong with, or add words to make them complete.

3. **Check your present tense verbs to make sure that they agree with their subjects.** In addition, make sure that you have correctly spelled any past tense irregular verbs.

4. **Check your comma usage, making sure you have inserted commas into your sentences correctly and not in places they aren’t required.** In addition, check to make sure you have used colons, semi-colons, or dashes correctly.
5. Check your use of pronouns. Make sure that you are using the correct subject pronouns with compound pronouns (Jonah and I, Clare and they) and that all pronouns agree in number and gender with their antecedent.

6. Check to make sure that you have used the correct word with words that are commonly confused: there/their/they’re, its/it’s, advice/advise, accept/except, effect/affect, were/we’re/where, your/you’re, here/hear, then/than.

7. Check your spelling by running the spell check on your word processing program or by looking up the spelling of any word you are unsure of.

Editing Activity 4.15

Keeping the editing guidelines in mind, prooread your latest draft for errors and make any needed corrections. Read your draft several times focusing on a single punctuation or grammar element at a time, and look in particular for the types of errors that have appeared most frequently in your writing.

Editing Activity 4.16

Exchange drafts with a classmate, proofread their drafts for errors, and point out any problems that you find. From your classmates’ input, make any additional corrections to your draft that are needed, and then write the final draft of your essay to share with classmates and your instructor.

Timed Writing Seven

To practice for any time-restricted writing you will do in or out of school, write an in-class essay on the following topic, using a maximum of sixty minutes. This topic may be quite challenging for you to write on. Read the prompt two or three times to make sure that you understand the topic and what you are asked to do.

Should art projects that are supported by public funding be required to meet certain acceptable standards? Some believe that the government has both a right and a responsibility to ensure that works of art produced with the help of public funds reflect society’s accepted values. Others regard government guidelines for public-funded art as a form of censorship that violates our nation’s commitment to freedom of expression. Your purpose is to write an essay in which you take a position on whether or not the government should establish guidelines limiting the kind of art that can be produced with public funding. Support your position with logical arguments and appropriate examples.
In previous units, you wrote essays that presented your own ideas on a topic, sometimes supplemented by research material. Writers also write essays to critique the writing of others: analyzing and evaluating the quality of a particular article, book, poem, or essay. A writer may critique an article or essay to let readers know whether, in his opinion, it is worth reading; to convince readers of the merits of a writer’s viewpoint on a topic and her supportive evidence; or to show readers the flaws in a writer’s arguments and reasoning so they won’t be influenced by them.

While writing a critique may be new to you, analyzing and evaluating the writing of others is not. You have evaluated essay drafts in the text, your classmates’ drafts, the articles that you read while doing research for previous essays, and the essays that you read in the “Reading Break” sections. In addition, analyzing the essays of other writers and evaluating their strengths and weaknesses will also help you evaluate and revise your own essays more effectively.

Critical Reading

Writing a critique involves two tasks: reading and analyzing the essay you are critiquing and writing the critique based on your analysis and evaluation. The first task - reading, analyzing, and evaluating the essay - is perhaps the most important since it provides you with the basic elements of your critique: the main points of the essay you are critiquing, your evaluation of those points, and your opinion of the essay based on your evaluation.

Analyzing and evaluating an essay are different reading functions. When you analyze an essay, you examine its content in detail, trying to understand both its meaning and purpose. Once you clearly understand the essay, you can evaluate its content: determine its worth and its
impact on you as a reader. In critiquing an essay or article, analysis comes before evaluation since you can’t fairly or knowledgeably evaluate something until you clearly understand it.

To read, analyze, and evaluate an essay most effectively, consider these suggestions.

1. **Read the essay several times to gain the best understanding.** Reading an essay a second and third time is the best way to get the clearest picture: what every sentence and paragraph mean, how the parts of the essay fit together, whether there is a logical progression in the presentation of ideas, and what the writer presumably is trying to accomplish.

2. **Clearly identify the topic of the essay.** Does the writer present the topic in a way that makes it understandable to readers? Are any explanations or definitions provided to help readers understand the topic?

3. **Identify the thesis of the essay:** the writer’s viewpoint on the topic. While the thesis is often stated in the opening, it may come in the conclusion or it may be implied, the essay’s content clearly revealing the writer’s viewpoint. Once you identify the thesis, you can analyze and evaluate its support.

4. **Identify and evaluate the support for the thesis.** Does the essay provide factual evidence? Does it present any opinions without evidence? Are the supporting arguments reasonable and sensible? Does it use relevant comparisons to help make its points? Does it provide source introductions for any research material?

5. **Does the essay omit things that leave questions in your mind?** Does it omit facts that don’t support its thesis? Does it ignore major arguments against its thesis? What can you infer, if anything, from what isn’t included in the essay?

6. **Does the essay reveal any writer bias on the topic?** Is it obvious in the essay that the writer is biased in favor or against the topic, not showing any objectivity or consideration for opposing viewpoints? If such bias is apparent, does it weaken the effect of the essay?

7. **As a reader, do you have a bias on the topic that could influence how you evaluate the essay?** For example, if you were strongly against gun control, could you objectively evaluate an essay supporting gun control? Make sure not to let your viewpoint on a topic affect how you evaluate the merits of an essay whose thesis you may not agree with.

8. **Is the purpose of the essay clear, and how well is it accomplished?** Do you respond to the essay as the writer would like?

9. **What is the overall impact of the essay?** How does it affect your attitude or thinking on the essay’s topic, if at all?

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**Reading Activity 5.1**

Read the following essay two or three times to make sure that you understand it well. With a classmate, apply the critical reading suggestions to analyze and evaluate the essay. Identify the
topic, the thesis statement, and the supportive arguments for the thesis. Then evaluate each supporting argument and the evidence provided, and determine how convincingly the writer makes her case. In addition, determine whether the writer presented and refuted any opposing arguments and how that affected the essay. Finally, what do you feel the writer’s purpose was and how well did she accomplish it?

Campaign Spending for County Supervisor Candidates

In the 2014 Corona County Board of Supervisor’s race, supervisor candidate Loreen Demeter spent over $500,000 on her campaign, far outspending the rest of the candidates. With the money, Demeter filled the airways and local television networks with political ads, sent out glossy campaign mailers to the majority of registered voters, and inundated the county with posters. The outcome of the election was predictable: a landslide victory for Ms. Demeter.

With the $500,000, a campaign-spending record for county supervisor candidates, Demeter was able to “buy” the election. In most county elections, where the candidates are seldom well-known by voters, the candidate who gets his or her name out to the public most frequently usually wins. $500,000 buys a tremendous amount of name recognition, far more than the other candidates could afford, and most voters cast their ballots for the name they recognized. No candidate for county supervisor should be able to “buy” an election, and the county should put a campaign spending cap on all candidates.

Based on records from the County Elections Office, in the last five supervisorial elections, the candidate who spent the most money on his or her campaign won the election. Ms. Demeter’s victory was just the latest example of how candidates who outspend their opponents can buy local elections. Money spent should not be the main criteria for a person getting elected to office. A reasonable ceiling on the amount that any candidate can spend would solve the problem.

With the current system, people who don’t have a lot of money or access to wealthy donors don’t stand a chance of being elected. Therefore, many people who may have an interest in running for supervisor stay on the sidelines. These are people who may best understand the problems and needs of the majority of County residents, who, like themselves, aren’t that well-to-do. Some of the best candidates may be the ones who never run for office. Eventually, only wealthy candidates will run for office, and the Board of Supervisors will become an oligarchy of the rich.

In addition, some of the big-spending candidates clearly have political aspirations beyond the Board of Supervisors. Of the five candidates elected to the Board over the past twelve years, only one remains on the Board, the other four moving on to higher elected positions in the state. Do we want to elect supervisors who view their election as a springboard to higher office or supervisors who truly care about the County and want to serve its residents for a period of years?

Putting a ceiling on campaign spending would put the campaign focus where it belongs: on the qualities and qualifications of the candidates. More emphasis would be placed on local newspaper interviews with each candidate and on candidates’ debates on local public radio and television stations. In addition, the hardest-working candidates who walk the precincts and put in the time would have the advantage rather than the candidates with the most money. A cap on campaign spending would provide the greatest assurance that the most qualified, capable candidates for the job would have the best chance to win.

A further problem with the wealthiest candidates winning the elections is that once in office, people tend to take care of their own. Once elected, wealthy supervisors are not going to do
anything to upset the large landowners, agri-business magnates, and developers, who are often their biggest supporters. In addition, wealthy supervisors will most often side with management, not County workers, when it comes to bargaining salaries and benefits or laying off employees in the face of budget problems. While the majority of County residents fall within the middle and lower-middle class economically, wealthy supervisors will be more concerned with keeping the upper-class residents happy, their kind of people.

Putting a ceiling of $50,000 on campaign spending for supervisorial elections would go a long ways towards leveling the playing field for all candidates. Any candidate who is really interested in the office should be able to garner enough support to raise $25,000. With today’s system, where the biggest-spending candidate usually wins, that elected candidate may be the best person for the job or the worst. There is no correlation between buying a campaign with big money and being a good supervisor. However, with all candidates spending a maximum of $50,000, the chances of electing the best candidates year in and year out are much better, with a candidate’s qualifications and qualities being more important than how much money he or she has.

Some people may argue that the amount of money candidates raise just shows how much support they have in their district. In fact, candidates like Ms. Demeter who have huge amounts of campaign money either are personally wealthy or have a few large donors who provide most of the money. Ms. Demeter’s contribution list provided to the county showed only fifty contributors. There are more than 300,000 voters in her county district. Fifty contributors out of 300,000 voters certainly doesn’t show that the candidate was widely supported in the district.

Please sign a petition to place a spending-limit initiative for supervisorial races on the next county election ballot. 50,000 signatures are required to qualify the initiative, not a difficult number to reach given the importance of electing good county supervisors and the inequity of the current system. If you believe that candidates should be judged on their qualifications and not elected based on the amount of campaign money they spend, please support the spending-limit initiative.

Logical Fallacies

In trying to persuade readers, writers sometimes write things that are simply not true, that are irrelevant, that are not reasonable or logical, or that try to appeal to the “heart” rather than the mind. **Logical fallacies** - faulty arguments that tend to obscure rather than reveal the truth - can influence readers who don’t recognize their flaws. The following logical fallacies are among the most common that you may come across in your reading.

1. **Hasty generalization:** Making a general assumption from limited experience or a small sampling of evidence.
For example, if you are bitten by a cat and make the assumption, “Cats are vicious animals,” you have made an erroneous assumption based on a single experience. If you watch one high school basketball game and conclude, “Our high school team has terrible shooters,” you have based your assumption on too small a sampling of games. The problem with hasty generalizations is that they are often wrong, leading readers to false conclusions.

2. **Slippery slope:** Claiming that a particular occurrence will ultimately produce terrible consequences when there is no evidence to support the claim.

For example, when the U.S. went into a deep recession in 2008, some prognosticators claimed that the recession would lead to the downfall of America as a great power. When the Federal government put a national health care program into law, some detractors claimed that this was the first step in the government taking over private industries and “socializing” America. Neither claim was substantiated by evidence and both have been proven wrong. In your reading, question any prediction that seems ludicrously extreme and has no basis in fact.

3. **False cause:** Assuming a cause/effect relationship that doesn’t exist.

For example, on the day that a state business tax increase went into effect, six large companies declared bankruptcy. A newspaper editorialist claimed that the tax increase caused the companies to declare bankruptcy when in reality, there was no connection, the bankruptcies resulting from the prolonged recession. In your reading, if a cause-and-effect relationship seems questionable to you or isn’t proved in any way, question its validity.

4. **Overgeneralization:** Assuming a consensus of opinion that doesn’t exist.

For example, when someone writes, “All women agree that child rearing is the hardest job there is,” or “Everyone agrees that Federal taxes are too high,” or “No one in his right mind would support the proposed college tuition increase,” she is guilty of overgeneralizing. Writers overgeneralize to make readers think that everyone supports their viewpoint, which is seldom the case.

5. **Ad hominem:** Attacking the person rather than his position on the issue.

For example, the position of a congressman who supported a cut in the military budget was attacked in a “letter to the editor” because the congressman never served in the armed forces: “Congressman Brown never served his country in the military, so it is not surprising that he wants to cut military spending.” Rather than argue against a cut in military spending, the writer attacked the person and ignored the issue.

6. **Red herring:** Getting off of the subject to mislead readers or distract them from the real issue.

For example, a writer who opposed stricter gun control laws argued that politicians were trying to cut military spending, which would weaken the country’s national defense. The introduction of cuts in military spending was a red herring, having nothing to do with the
issue of gun control. Be aware when a writer presents an argument that does not appear to address the real issue.

7. **Either-or fallacy**: Erroneously assuming only two choices are available.

For example, when someone writes, “Either we tax the wealthy at a higher rate or continue to see the national deficit increase,” she is committing the either-or fallacy because there are more than two options available, such as reducing government spending, taxing all Americans at a higher rate, or improving the economy to produce greater tax revenues. A writer commits the either-or fallacy to give readers only two options - the one favored by the writer and a less appealing one - when other may options exist.

8. **Appeal to popularity**: Assuming the “rightness” of a position on an issue because of its popularity.

For example, some proponents of the death penalty use the argument that a vast majority of Americans polled support the death penalty. Politicians who want the U.S. military to leave the Middle East argue that popular support for war is at an all-time low. That the majority of people agree on something doesn’t necessarily make it fair or right. At one point in history, for example, most Americans favored slavery. At another point, most Americans didn’t believe women should have the right to vote. Question any “popular appeal” argument, evaluating the writer’s viewpoint on the evidence presented, not the popularity of the position.

9. **Name calling**: Using emotionally charged language to influence readers.

For example, opponents of the national health care law refer to it derisively as “Obamacare.” Some Democrats label Republican conservatives as “right-wing extremists” while some Republicans label Democrats as “bleeding-heart liberals.” Such loaded language encourages an emotional response from readers rather than a rationale analysis of issues and positions.

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**Reading Activity 5.2**

The following essay contains some of the logical fallacies presented. Identify each fallacy, the writer’s probable intent in using it, and how you respond to it as a reader.

**The Cost of Textbooks**

It is obvious to every college student that the price of textbooks in the local community college bookstore is excessively high. If the prices continue to increase, they will drive a majority of students out of college. Either the college needs to lower the prices of their textbooks or an alternative off-campus bookstore needs to be established to give students a less expensive option. Even college instructors agree that the price of textbooks at the bookstore is too high, making it an indisputable fact.

The bookstore manager, who sets the price of textbooks, is paid an excellent salary, so she is not going to support reducing the prices. In addition, the price of paperback novels in the bookstore is twenty-to-thirty percent higher than at the Barnes and Noble bookstore downtown.
Given the price of textbooks at our college bookstore, it is obvious that overpriced textbooks are a problem at most colleges.

Colleges sometimes see a decrease in revenue from lower enrollment or less funding from the state, so they sell textbooks at outrageous prices to make up the revenue loss. Students are particularly frustrated because despite repeatedly voicing their concerns, they see no effort by the cowardly college administration or the lazy board of trustees members to improve the situation.

Writing Assignment Nine

For this unit, you will write an essay critiquing an essay or article of your choosing. You may find the essay or article online, in the newspaper, in a periodical, or in a collection of essays. The purpose of the assignment is to help develop your skills in reading, analyzing, and evaluating a persuasive essay and presenting an effective written critique of that essay.

Prewriting

In preparing to write a critique, your prewriting preparation will be different from what you have done in previous units. First, you will find an essay to critique. Then you will read, analyze, and evaluate the essay. Finally, you will learn how to present your evaluation of the essay in a written critique.

Topic Selection

To select an essay to critique, consider these suggestions:

1. Select an essay on a topic that interests you. The topic may be from any field - politics, the environment, education, sports, music, medicine, children’s issues, law enforcement - and on the local, state, national, or international level.

2. Select an essay on a topic on which people’s opinions differ. Make sure that there is one or more differing viewpoints on the topic from the one expressed in the essay.

3. Select an essay with a clear thesis. The main part of your critique is to evaluate the supportive evidence for the essay’s thesis, so make sure that the writer expresses (or implies) a definite viewpoint in the essay.
4. **Select an essay that would be of interest to some group of readers.** When you consider an essay, think of a reading audience that would have an interest in the topic or be affected by it in some way.

5. **Look at a variety of essays online, in newspapers (editorials) and periodicals, and consider a number of essays before deciding on the one that you want to critique.** Make sure that the essay is not so short that there is little to evaluate or so long that your critique would run to many pages.

6. **Have your instructor approve your essay to critique before proceeding.** It is important that you select an appropriate essay to critique: one that takes a clear position on an issue and that presents a number of arguments to support it. Your instructor can help you make sure that you select such an essay.

**Prewriting Activity 5.1**

Read several essays or articles on different topics and select an essay for your critique keeping in mind the suggestions presented.

Sample topic:

Essay to critique:

“Gun Control Doesn’t Work” by Christie Snyder, *Discerning the Times Digest*

**Critiquing Your Essay**

A major part of preparing to write a critique, of course, is to read, analyze, and evaluate the essay that you are critiquing. As suggested earlier, you may want to read the essay several times to understand it best and see how its different parts fit together. The better you understand the essay, the more assuredly you can critique it.

Since you already evaluated an essay earlier in the unit, you have some idea on how to proceed with your current essay. In preparing for your critique, consider the following questions:

1. **What is the topic of the essay, and what is the essay’s thesis (viewpoint)?**

2. **What are the main supportive points for the thesis, and what evidence, if any, is provided to substantiate each point?**

3. **How valid or believable is each supporting point and why?**
4. **What problems, if any, does the essay have (e.g. unsubstantiated opinions, arguments presented without support, poorly reasoned arguments, logical fallacies)?** How do they affect your evaluation of the essay?

5. **What, if anything, does the essay leave out of importance?** Are major opposing arguments ignored? Are some obvious facts not presented? Do some points need further clarification?

6. **What, if any, are the major strengths of the essay: the supportive evidence (facts, comparisons, examples, statistics, studies, etc)? the sensible main points? the strong conclusion?**

7. **Based on your evaluation, what is your overall impression of the essay: how convincingly the essay supports its thesis and influences your thinking on the topic?**

8. **What do you think the purpose of the essay is, and how well did the writer accomplish her purpose?**

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**Prewriting Activity 5.2**

Read your essay a few times, and write out or think through your responses to the seven previous questions.

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**Critique Thesis**

Like most essays, a critique usually has a thesis expressing the writer’s viewpoint on the essay being critiqued. Your thesis expresses your overall opinion of the essay: how convincingly it supported its thesis and its resulting impact on you as a reader. Your evaluation of the essay takes into account both its strengths and weaknesses, which may lead to a favorable, unfavorable, or mixed response.

To consider your thesis for the essay you are critiquing, answer these questions:

1. **Based on your evaluation, what is your overall impression of the essay you are critiquing?** How convincingly did the essay support its thesis? The thesis for your critique expresses your overall impression.

2. **What were the main aspects of the essay from which you formed this impression?** Were there some particularly strong arguments that influenced your opinion positively? Were there some weak, illogical, or poorly substantiated points that influenced your opinion negatively? Was there a strong conclusion that made a lasting impression on you?
Prewriting Activity 5.3

Based on your evaluation of the essay you are critiquing, generate a tentative thesis statement for your essay.

Sample thesis:

Essay: Gun Control Doesn’t Work

Thesis: While the article raises some questions on the effectiveness of gun control, based on the evidence presented, I’m not convinced that gun control doesn’t work.

Thesis Support

In supporting your thesis in an essay, you answer the question, “What are your reasons for believing as you do?” In other words, what was it about the essay you critiqued that led you to your concluding opinion? How well you reveal the strengths or deficiencies of the essay will largely determine the readers’ response to your critique.

To support the thesis of your essay most effectively, consider these suggestions:

1. **Present and evaluate each supporting point for the thesis of the essay you are critiquing.** Most of your critique involves presenting and responding to the major points of the essay. Evaluate each supporting point based on the evidence presented: facts, statistics, examples, comparisons, personal experience, etc. Your evaluation of the main points and evidence presented should support your thesis.

2. **Present and evaluate how well the essay responded to any opposing arguments to its thesis.** Your evaluation of the essay’s treatment of opposing arguments should support your thesis.

3. **In evaluating the essay, include both its strengths and weaknesses.** While you may have an overall favorable impression of the essay, there may be some weaknesses to point out. While you may have a less favorable impression, the may have some strengths to reveal. You can provide an honest assessment of the essay, including both its strengths and weaknesses, without compromising your thesis.
4. **Don’t “cherry pick” the material you evaluate from the essay.** Sometimes a critique writer will only present certain aspects of an essay that support his favorable or unfavorable opinion, leaving out relevant material that may not conform to his viewpoint. A fair evaluation of an essay takes into account everything within it. A critique that evaluates only selective material may leave readers with an inaccurate and slanted portrayal.

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**Prewriting Activity 5.4**

Identify and evaluate the major arguments presented in the critiqued essay to support its thesis. In addition, identify and evaluate how the essay responds to any opposing arguments to its thesis.

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**Audience and Purpose**

As with most of your essays, your critique is intended for a particular audience and written for a purpose of your choice. Your reading audience and writing purpose will influence how you write the critique.

To decide on an audience and purpose for your critique, consider the following suggestions:

1. **Who would be interested in the topic of the essay you are critiquing?** Who might be affected by it, need to learn more about it, or benefit from reading about it?

2. **What should you keep in mind about your audience as you write your critique?** How knowledgeable are they on the topic? What is their probable viewpoint? How may they be affected by the topic?

3. **What might your purpose be for writing to this particular audience?** To recommend that they read the essay? To suggest they not waste their time reading it? To show the good sense or fairness of the essay’s thesis and arguments? To expose the faulty reasoning and fallacious (erroneous or false) information in the essay? To educate readers on the topic? To get them to take action?

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**Prewriting Activity 5.5**

Decide on a tentative audience and purpose for your critique.

**Sample audience and purpose:**

**Essay to critique:** Gun Control Doesn’t Work

**Reading audience:** General public

**Purpose:** To point out the flaws in the essay’s gun-control arguments so that readers aren’t influenced by them or similar arguments they may read or hear.
Drafting

Writing a critique is different from your previous essay writing. In a critique, you present the content of the critiqued essay for readers to gain a good understanding. In supporting your thesis, you evaluate the main supportive points for its thesis. Rather than creating your own essay content, you are responding to the content of another essay.

Critique writing also has its similarities to your previous writing. You are still presenting and supporting a thesis; introducing your topic and thesis in the opening; presenting your supportive points in the middle paragraphs, and reinforcing your thesis in the conclusion.

Writing a Critique

Since you may not have written a critique before, the following basic guidelines for critique writing should be of help. To write the first draft of your critique, consider these suggestions:

1. **In your opening, introduce the topic of the critiqued essay, the essay’s thesis (position on the topic), and your own thesis: your overall impression of the essay.** From your opening, readers should know the topic of the critiqued essay, what the author believes about the topic, and how convincingly you feel the essay supported its thesis.

2. **If readers may need further explanation to understand the topic clearly, include any explanatory material after the opening.** For example, if the topic of the critiqued essay is “The Burgeoning Federal Debt,” readers may need some explanation of what comprises the “Federal Debt” and what its size is.

3. **Present and evaluate the main arguments that the critiqued essay presents to support its thesis, keeping your own thesis in mind.** In addition, point out any omissions in the essay – important facts, support for opinions, major opposing arguments – that may weaken the essay. The major content of the critiqued essay should be presented and evaluated in the middle paragraphs in a manner that supports your thesis, and any obvious omissions should be addressed.

4. **Present and evaluate how well the essay addresses any opposing arguments to its thesis.**

5. **Conclude your essay in a way that reinforces your thesis and writing purpose.** What thoughts do you most want to leave readers with regarding the critiqued essay?
6. **Don’t let “topic bias” influence your critique.** Your task is to evaluate the essay’s content objectively, basing your viewpoint on the quality of the essay rather than your own opinion on the topic.

7. **Keep in mind that your readers have probably not read the essay you are critiquing.** Whatever they learn about the essay, they learn from your critique. Present them with a clear, accurate picture.

## Drafting Activity 5.1

To gain a better understanding of critique writing, read the following sample critique and the original article that precedes it. Note the opening of the critique, its thesis statement, the presentation and evaluation of the essay’s supporting points, any omissions that concern the writer, and the conclusion the critique writer draws in the ending.

**Original essay**

Gun Control Doesn’t Work

by Christie Snyder

Anyone familiar with statistical analysis knows that statistics can be twisted to say almost anything. Take for example the number of deaths caused by medical mishaps: 1,200,000 per year in the U.S. which has approximately 700,000 physicians. That’s 15 deaths per year per doctor each year. Compare that with the number of gun owners, which is around 80,000,000, with 1,500 accidental gun deaths each year. That means that the number of accidental, gun related deaths each year per gun owner is .0000188.

Nevertheless, it would be ludicrous to say that doctors are thousands of times more dangerous than gun owners. The comparison between gun owners and physicians just makes no sense. So let’s look at some statistics that really that do make sense.

Advocates of gun control want us to believe that banning private gun ownership will reduce violent crime. In 1996, in the wake of a mass shooting, the Australian government seized more than 640,000 guns from its citizens. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in the next two years, armed robbery rose by 73%, unarmed robbery by 28%, kidnaping by 38%, assault by 17% and manslaughter by 29%.

Following the trend from down under, the government in the U.K. also imposed new gun controls after a mass shooting. Again violent crime did not decrease. According to the U.S. Justice Department Bureau of Justice Statistics, although the rates of murder and rape are higher in the U.S., England has surpassed us in its rate of robberies, assaults, burglaries and motor vehicle thefts. And the English crime rate has been rising while the U.S. rate has been falling. In 2005 the mugging rate in England was 40% higher than in the U.S.; furthermore, assault and burglary rates were nearly 100% higher in England than in the United States.

Another rate that will strike terror in the heart of every woman is the rate of hot burglaries, which are burglaries that take place when people are home. I think one of my worst nightmares would be to wake up in the dead of night to find an intruder in my room. Yet, most criminals in this country know that breaking in with people home is a good way to get shot. In fact, if someone
were to break into my home when we are home, that is exactly what will happen. The hot burglary rate in the U.S. is 13%. However, in countries with strict gun control, such as England and Canada, the hot burglary rate is closer to 50%. The criminals know that their victims, having been rendered helpless by their governments, cannot defend themselves.

If the facts show that gun control legislation does not lower crime rates, then why is there such a push to take guns away from law abiding people? What happened to our Constitutional right to bear arms? The founding fathers knew that a well-armed citizenry would not easily be taken over by a tyrannical government. Those pushing for a global government are keenly aware of this fact as well.

To control a people, first you must disarm them. U.S. Code Title 22 section 2551, which was passed as Public Law 87-297 by President Kennedy in 1961, lays out the plan to completely disarm both citizens and governments of the world. Section 2552 defines disarmament this way: "Identification, verification, inspection, limitation, control, reduction, or elimination, of armed forces and armaments of all kinds under international agreement including the necessary steps taken under such an agreement to establish an effective system of international control, or to create and strengthen international organizations for the maintenance of peace."

Every president since Kennedy has worked to implement this agenda. The United States has been systematically emasculating its military for more than a decade. The Russians and Chinese are supposed to be reducing their military in the same manner, but this is just not happening. The final outcome of this plan is that the armies of the world will be centrally controlled, becoming a global force, and that only the military will be armed. Our national sovereignty has been traitorously undermined.

Gun control finds its greatest success in keeping guns out of the hands of ordinary, law abiding citizens. The government will always be armed. And the criminal mind will always find a means of acquiring weapons. That will leave you and me stuck somewhere in the middle between criminal corruption and government tyranny. It’s getting harder and harder to tell the difference.

Critique of essay

“Gun Control Doesn’t Work” (first draft)

(audience: general public)

Kristie Snyder’s article “Gun Control Doesn’t Work” contends that banning private gun ownership not only wouldn’t lead to less violent crime in America, it would make the situation worse. While the article raises some questions as to the effectiveness of gun control, based on the evidence presented, I’m not convinced that she is right.

Snyder’s opening paragraph, the longest of the article, presents statistics comparing the relatively high rate of medical mishaps causing death per physician in the U.S. to the relative low rate of accidental gun deaths per gun owner. She concludes that the comparison obviously makes no sense, which I agree with, so why begin the article with it? Then in the next paragraphs, she proceeds to use statistics to make her case against gun control after admitting in the first paragraph that “Statistics can be twisted to say almost anything.” So she weakens her case from the start.

The article does present some statistics to consider carefully. In 1996, after a mass murder in Australia, the article says that the government “seized” more than 640,000 guns from its citizens. In the next two years, armed robbery, unarmed robbery, kidnaping, assault, and manslaughter all rose at an alarming rate. Questions, however, arise. Does 640,000 guns represent a large or small percentage of the guns that citizens owned? Is Australia a “gun-toting” country like the United
States or is gun ownership much lower, like in England? The fact is, while the United States has the highest murder rate of any industrial nation, Australia has among the lowest. Did the seizure of 640,000 guns change that in any way? The essay doesn’t say.

The article goes on to say that when England imposed stronger gun control laws, violent crime did not decrease. However, the article did admit that the rates of murder and rape are higher in the U.S. than in England, although it failed to admit that they are overwhelmingly higher. The article then contended that the mugging, assault, and burglary rates were higher in England than in the U.S. However, it provided no evidence to support that claim nor that the stronger gun control laws had anything to do with it.

Snyder next contends that the “hot” burglary rate, burglaries occurring when people are home, is higher in Canada and England than in the U.S., 13% in the U.S. compared to closer to 50% in Canada and England. 13% of what? 50% of what? Does she mean that 13% of American households are broken into while 50% of Canadian and English households are broken into during the same time period? Without knowing, the statistics remain highly suspect, and since there is no source cited for the statistics, they may have come from an NRA publication or pulled from thin air.

The article next takes a long detour into the world of anti-government conspiracy theory, which both hurts the author’s credibility and weakens the article. The real reason that the government wants to disarm its citizenry, according to the article, is so that we cannot defend ourselves against a well-armed, tyrannical government, meaning our own. Then it goes on to contradict itself and claim that the U.S. has been “systematically emasculating its military,” and that our national sovereignty has been “traitorously undermined.” There is no evidence presented to support this claim, and given that the U.S. is the strongest military power in the world, it makes little sense.

Moreover, U.S. military strength has nothing to do with the gun control issue, an obvious red herring. In addition, I know of no one who is fearful of a tyrannical American government imposing its will on an unarmed citizenry. Finally, what evidence is there that the U.S. government wants to take away people’s guns? I’ve seen no legislation to support that contention.

Would greater gun control make the U.S. a more dangerous place to live? This article doesn’t convince me. First, it leaves questions unanswered. Since the U.S. is by far the most violent country among democratic nations, and since most violent crimes are caused by hand guns, what is the author’s solution to reducing the murder rate in the country? In addition, what has happened in states like Massachusetts that have enacted stricter gun control laws? If Massachusetts has been unsuccessful, I would guess that would have been included in the article. The article also weakens its statistical arguments by citing conditions in Canada, the U.K., and Australia, three countries with much lower violent crime and gun ownership rates than the U.S. The fact is, the U.S. would gladly trade its violent crime rate with any of those countries, where hand gun ownership is rare compared to the U.S.

Finally, the article lost me when it swerved off on its anti-government tirade that has nothing to do with today’s gun control issue in the U.S. An admitted gun-toter herself, Snyder ends her article in a manner that only the most paranoid readers would agree with. I question whether the essay would influence anyone other than people whose beliefs on gun ownership were already the same as the author’s.

**Drafting Activity 5.2**

Read the following essay “Snubbing the Kyoto Protocol” by Cynthia Watts two or three times to get a good understanding of it. Then analyze the essay by evaluating each argument that the author presents in support
of her thesis. Based on that evaluation, formulate a thesis for a critique that reflects your overall viewpoint of the essay and its effectiveness. Be prepared to share your evaluation of the essay with your classmates.

“Snubbing the Kyoto Protocol”

by Cynthia Watts

The Kyoto Protocol was a world-wide agreement entered into by most countries of the world to work together to decrease man-made global warming and its negative effects. Championed by the Clinton administration through environmental spokesperson Vice-President Al Gore, it was rejected by former President Bush, whose administration refused to participate. Instead of helping to lead the world on solving the problem of global warming, the U.S. became an obstruction, an outrageous and unacceptable response to the world’s greatest environmental problem.

Scientists have agreed for years that our atmosphere is getting warmer due to man-made pollutants that form a blanket in the atmosphere and don’t allow heat to escape as it naturally would. How else could we account for the fact that the polar icecaps are melting at an unprecedented rate, that the oceans’ waters are warming and rising as a result, and that the majority of the hottest days in recorded history have occurred in the past ten years? These are indisputable facts that environmental scientists worldwide agree upon.

Should we care that our atmosphere is warming? Definitely. According to the article “The Effects of Global Warming” at Huffington Post, rising oceans can result in the displacement of millions of people whose oceanside communities and farmlands would be permanently flooded. Changes in climate can negatively affect agriculture across the world where crops depend on the natural climate of the area. Overheating the planet could destroy millions of acres of farmland.

According to oceanographer Dr. Hideo Imura, global warming is also warming the currents that run through the oceans, which is paradoxically resulting in colder temperatures in places such as Northern Europe, where the warmer currents meet the colder northern waters, resulting in increased rain and snowfall. Global warming is also being viewed as the possible culprit behind the exceptional climatological upheavals we’ve seen in recent years, such as the devastating 2003 tsunami in Japan and Hurricane Katrina, one of three powerful hurricanes that have pounded the Gulf of Mexico in the last few years.

Whether global warming is responsible for every climatological problem we are facing is beside the point. There is enough evidence of its negative impact to convince most of the nations of the world to band together to do something about it. Then why on earth did former President Bush thumb his nose at the Kyoto Protocol and send the message to other countries that the United States isn’t going to cooperate in combating global warming? Why did the Bush administration turn its back on a world-wide anti-pollution effort that the Clinton administration embraced?

According to the U.S. Geological Society, the chief cause of global warming is the millions of tons of hydrocarbons pumped into the atmosphere by the emissions of automobiles and heavy industries. Reversing global warming would require governmental regulation of the auto, coal, and oil industries that Bush wasn’t willing to commit to. He claimed that such regulation would hurt the U.S. economy, but in reality, he didn’t want to offend the industry magnates that helped put him in the White House. In addition, how can you regulate and police the very industry that you and your family are a major part of: big oil? The fox, unfortunately, was guarding the henhouse.

It is unconscionable for the Bush administration not to have supported the Kyoto Protocol and take a leadership role in combating global warming and its disastrous environmental effects. Bush’s response to critics was similar to his response to worldwide criticism of the Iraqi war: we are right and the world is wrong. When it comes to global warming, the world has it right and the Bush administration had it dead wrong.

Why Americans weren’t in an uproar over Bush’s environmental position on global warming probably lies in the fact that the very worst results of global warming lie in the future. We tend not to worry about environmental issues until the situation becomes dire, like the terrible pollution of America’s lakes and rivers in the 1980’s. But if we do nothing about global warming now, we may be leaving our children and grandchildren with an environmental catastrophe of hideous proportions.
Perhaps the crowning blow for the Bush administration was a meeting of six former heads of the Federal EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), five of whom served under Republican presidents, who unanimously stated that global warming was a serious issue and the Bush administration was not doing enough to combat it. Their purpose was obvious: to get Bush to change course dramatically on global warming. Unfortunately, he didn’t listen to environmental experts, he listened to the big polluters who wrote his campaign checks: the auto, coal, and oil industry magnates.

Since Bush left office, President Obama has entered into international agreements to curb emissions that produce global warming. However, as a result of the Bush administration’s inaction, the earth’s atmosphere is warmer than ever and reversing the trend becomes more and more difficult. In addition, too many Americans remain indifferent to the threat of global warming because it hasn’t directly affect them. Yet. And as the planet keeps getting hotter and hotter, one wonders what kind of a planet we will leave to our children and grandchildren.

Drafting Activity 5.3

Write the first draft of your critique keeping in mind the guidelines for critique writing. Since this may be your first experience writing a critique, don’t expect to become an overnight expert. Like any kind of new writing, the more critiques that you write, the more adept you will become.

A little logic 13

Complete the following analogies such as “Hat is to head as car hood is to engine.” (Both the “hat” and the “car hood” cover and protect what is under them. More than one sensible answer is possible to complete some analogies.

1. Paint is to paint brush as sewing thread is to _____________.
2. Oar is to canoe as steering wheel is to ___________.
3. Cup is to bowl as vacuum cleaner is to _____________.
4. Sheep are to sweaters as trees are to _________________.
5. A telephone is to a letter as an airplane is to a _____________.
6. Boots are to a cow as a necklace is to a _____________.
Revision

Evaluating your critique for possible revisions is similar to previous draft evaluations you have done: assessing the effectiveness of your opening, thesis support, conclusion, organization, paragraphing, and sentence wording. The new considerations for a critique draft include evaluating how accurately you have presented the critiqued essay’s content, how effectively you have responded to its main points, and whether your evaluation of the essay clearly supports your thesis.

Revision Review

In improving any draft, certain revision considerations remain constant such as improving sentence wording and evaluating your use of transitions. The following activities give you more practice revising sentences to improve their wording and adding transitions to show relationships among ideas and to tie paragraphs together.

Revision Activity 5.1

Read the following paragraphs. Revise sentences to eliminate the types of problems you may encounter in your own drafts: wordiness, faulty word choice, awkward phrasing, vague meaning. The resulting sentences should be clearer, smoother, more concise, and easier and more enjoyable to read.

Music Programs

While music programs in many elementary schools across the country have gone away as more and more class time is spent on preparing students for standardized test taking, the Slater Unified School District has kept its choir, band, and orchestra programs intact in all elementary schools in the District. Slater stresses test performance on the state’s STAR testing, and its students’ test scores are good, but many students also choose to take part in the choir, band, or orchestra, and some participate in two of the programs or more.

Musical programs are put on for parents, friends, and relatives at each elementary school in the fall and spring semesters, and district-wide choral and band competitions are also sponsored by the District, where thousands of elementary level students go in for the competition. Slater relishes itself on its students’ academic achievements, but it takes no less pride in its students’ musical achievements, and its commitment to the arts remains always the same at a time when some districts have stopped the sounds of elementary children singing and playing instruments in their schools.
Revision Activity 5.2

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences and paragraphs with appropriate transitions, using a different transition in each blank from the following list:

consequently next therefore until then then in addition however first as you can see moreover

Bond Election

The Kresnshaw Community College District has placed a $400,000,000 state bond on the June ballot. ________________, the bond, which would be paid for through local taxation, has received some public criticism.

______________, the District waited until the deadline to file the bond measure with the county election’s office. ________________, there was no time for adversarial comment to be added to the measure, a common feature of most bond measures.

______________, on the ballot measure, the District was somewhat vague about how the money would be spent, citing “building and improvements” without any specifics. Adversaries complained, ________________, that tax payers would be giving up their tax money without knowing how it would be spent. ________________, they pointed out that the District had received over $300,000,000 in a bond election just five years ago and that all of the money was yet to be spent.

______________, opponents of the bond measure had some legitimate concerns. ________________, the District felt compelled to have a spokesman write an editorial in the local newspaper justifying when the bond measure was filed and providing greater detail about how the money would be spent. ________________, it flooded local television with ads in support of the bond measure to sway public opinion.

Voters will decide the fate of the bond in two weeks. ________________, the heated public battle between supporters and opponents of the bond will continue.

Revision Activity 5.3

Insert transitions in the following paragraphs where you feel they would benefit readers and tie the writer’s thoughts and paragraphs together most effectively. Use any of the following transitions, and try to use a different transition each time.

next therefore needless to say first finally however in addition moreover nevertheless as you can see until then

My Car

My old car is in pretty bad shape. The tires have over forty thousand miles of wear, and they have lost most of their tread. I don’t have four hundred dollars for a new set, so I can’t replace them for awhile. The front window has a good-sized crack in it. A rock
hit the window when I was driving on a freeway about a year ago, and the crack has continued to grow across the width of the window.

The seats are torn in the front. The car is over twenty years old, so the seats have gotten a lot of wear. I put on cloth seat covers to cover the tears. They look very tacky. They don’t match the color of the interior or the color of the car. They are still better than sitting on the old torn covers.

The car is leaking and burning oil. It leaves oil spots on the ground wherever I park it, and I have to put in at least a quart of oil every thousand miles or so. My car has a lot of problems, and they all require money to fix. When I get enough money, I’ll replace the tires first because they are the biggest safety hazard. I’ll just keep driving as safely as possible and hope I don’t get a blowout.

**Revision Guidelines**

As you revise your draft, consider these suggestions:

1. **Reread the essay you critiqued and then your draft to make sure that the draft accurately reflects your viewpoint: the overall impression the essay made on you.** If your perspective changes in any way, revise your draft to reflect your change in viewpoint. If your viewpoint remains unchanged, make any revisions to ensure that all parts of your essay support your viewpoint (thesis).

2. **Evaluate your opening.** Do you present the topic of the essay you critiqued and its thesis? Do you present the thesis of the critique: your overall impression of the essay? Do you create reader interest by showing the importance of the topic, how it may affect readers, or why they should be concerned about it? Make any revisions that would strengthen your opening.

3. **Evaluate how accurately you present the content of the critiqued essay.** Do readers understand what the essay is about, the writer’s viewpoint in the essay (thesis), the main points that support her viewpoint, and the essay’s probable intent? What revisions might you make to help readers understand the essay better or to provide a more accurate or complete picture of it?

4. **Evaluate your assessment of each of the essay’s main supporting points.** Do readers understand how you feel about each point and why? Do your responses support your thesis? Do you respond to all of the essay’s primary arguments? Do you point out any strengths or weaknesses in the essay in ways that don’t undermine your thesis? Do you keep your own opinion on the topic from influencing your evaluation?
5. **Evaluate how well you assessed the essay’s handling of any opposing arguments to its thesis.** Make sure that your assessment is in keeping with your thesis.

6. **Did you comment on noticeable omissions, if any, in the essay, and how they influenced your viewpoint, if at all?**

7. **Evaluate your conclusion.** Does your ending reinforce your thesis in some manner? Do readers understand your purpose in critiquing this particular essay? Does it leave them with something new to think about? Make any changes that will strengthen your conclusion and its impact on readers.

8. **Evaluate your paragraphing.** Do you change paragraphs as you move to different parts of the essay: opening to middle, middle to ending? Do you present and evaluate the main points of the critiqued essay in separate paragraphs? Do you use topic sentences to introduce the main idea of most paragraphs? Are there any overly long paragraphs that need dividing or short, successive paragraphs that need combining or developing further? Make any paragraphing revisions that will help readers move through the paper with the greatest ease and understanding.

9. **Evaluate your organization.** Do you present the main points of the critiqued essay in the most effective order? Are there any paragraphs or sentences that would fit more logically or effectively in a different location? Make any changes in the draft that will improve its organization.

10. **Evaluate your sentence wording.** Revise sentences to eliminate wordiness, smooth out awkward sentences, replace questionable word choices, and create structural variety. Check your use of transitional wording (*first, second, in addition, finally, as you can see, however, therefore*) and add any transitions that will help tie paragraphs together and show relationships among ideas.

11. **Evaluate how well you accomplished your purpose.** Read each part of the draft with your audience and purpose in mind, and make any changes that will further your purpose for your particular audience.

**Revision Activity 5.4**

Read the following revisions that the writer made on the “Gun Control Doesn’t Work” critique, including improving sentence wording, adding more of her thoughts, and dividing an overly long paragraph. Then revise your draft keeping in mind the revision suggestions presented.

“Gun Control Doesn’t Work” (*Revisions of final three paragraphs*)

(deletions crossed out, additions in bold)

The article next takes a prolonged detour into the paranoid world of anti-government conspiracy theory, which both hurts the author’s credibility and weakens the article. The real reason that the government wants to disarm its citizens, according to the article, is so that we cannot
defend ourselves against a well-armed, tyrannical government, meaning our own. Then it goes on to contradict itself and claims that the U.S. has been “systematically emasculating its military,” and that our national sovereignty has been “traitorously undermined.” There is no evidence presented to support this outrageous claim, and given that the U.S. is the strongest military power in the world, it makes little sense.

Moreover, the entire anti-government tirade is an obvious red herring, having nothing to do with the gun control issue, an obvious red herring. In addition, is any rational person I know of no one in their right mind who is fearful of a tyrannical American government imposing its will on an unarmed citizenry citizens? Finally, what evidence is there that the U.S. government wants to take away people’s guns? I’ve seen no Federal legislation to support that contention. and no evidence was presented in the article.

Would greater gun control make the U.S. a more dangerous place to live? This article doesn’t convince me, and I’m just as inclined to believe that it would make it a safer place. First, the article leaves too many questions in my mind unanswered. Since the U.S. is by far the most violent country among democratic nations, and since most violent crimes are caused by handguns, what is the author’s solution to reducing the murder rate in the country? That the article fails to raise the issue of gun violence in America is a serious flaw. Second, what has happened in states like Massachusetts that have enacted stricter gun control laws? If Massachusetts has been unsuccessful, I would guess wouldn’t that have been included in the article? (start a new paragraph)

The article also weakens its statistical arguments by citing conditions in Canada, England, and Australia, three countries with much lower violent crime murder rates and gun ownership rates than the U.S. The fact is, the U.S. would gladly trade its violent crime rate with any of those countries, where hand-gun ownership is rare compared to the U.S. is much less common.

Finally, the article lost me, and I would assume many readers, when it swerved off in the end on its anti-government tirade that has nothing to do with today’s gun control issue in the U.S. An admitted gun-toter herself, Snyder ends her article in a manner that I believe only the most paranoid readers would might agree with. I question that the essay would influence anyone other than those whose beliefs on gun ownership were already the same as the author’s. The article is a prime example of the questionable, misguided thinking of many people who oppose any type of gun control in the U.S. despite our terribly high rate of violence and murder.

Revision Activity 5.5

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and evaluate each other’s drafts as you have done your own. Make any suggestions that you feel would improve their essays, and based on their input, making any additional changes in your draft that you feel are worth making.
Editing

The last step in getting your critique in “publishable” form is to proofread it for errors. Even the most experienced writers often find some inadvertent errors in their drafts. Those errors most often reveal themselves in the editing phase when you focus exclusively on identifying and correcting any mistakes that you find.

In this lesson, you are introduced to another editing consideration: the correct use of quotation marks. In your latest draft, you may have quoted from the essay that you critiqued, so you can apply what you learn when you proofread your draft.

Punctuating Quotations

You are already familiar with the basic punctuation of quotations, which you have used in previous essays. This section will focus primarily on the situations that may be less familiar to you.

To punctuate quotations correctly, follow these rules:

1. **Introduce the speaker, put a comma after the speaker introduction, put quotation marks (“ ”) around the spoken words, capitalize the first word of the quotation, and put the second quotation mark outside of the ending punctuation:**

   According to biologist Rene Wright, “Many endangered species are losing much of their natural habitats at an alarming rate.”

2. **If the speaker introduction follows the quote, put a comma at the end of the quotation and a period at the end of the sentence:**

   “Prepare yourself for a very challenging final exam,” warned Dr. Valencia, my sociology instructor.

3. **When you begin a quotation mid-sentence rather than at its beginning, don’t capitalize the first word of the quotation and don’t put a comma after the speaker introduction:**

   Defense attorney Marcus McBride argued that his client “wasn’t even in the state when the robbery was committed.”

4. **If a second quoted sentence by the same speaker follows the speaker introduction, put a period after the speaker introduction, capitalize the first word of the second quoted sentence, and put quotation marks around the sentence:**
“The margin of error in Gallup polling results is relatively insignificant,” said pollster Adam Wong. “People who dismiss such polls due to their margin of error usually don’t like the results.”

5. **If two quoted sentences follow in succession, put quotation marks only at the beginning of the first sentence and the end of the second sentence:**

   Omar exclaimed loudly, “The shower water is freezing cold. The pilot on the hot water heater must have gone out!”

6. **If the same quoted sentence continues after the speaker introduction, put a comma after the speaker introduction and quotation marks around the second half of the sentence, but don’t capitalize the first word:**

   “I don’t believe for a second,” said the college lacrosse coach, “that you never played lacrosse in your life.”

7. **Don’t use quotation marks with an indirect quotation, which refers to what the speaker said without quoting her.**

   Indirect: Child nutritionist Melanie Sinclair stated that healthy eating habits can dramatically reduce the frequency of childhood obesity in the U.S.

   Direct: Child nutritionist Melanie Sinclair stated, “Healthy eating habits can significantly reduce the rate of childhood obesity in the U.S.”

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**Editing Activity 5.1**

Punctuate quotations in the following sentences correctly, including inserting quotation marks, commas, periods, and capital letters. Don’t insert quotation marks in sentences that aren’t direct quotations.

**Example:**

Noted zoologist Amy Kang stated most traditional zoos don’t provide enough space for animals to live normally, often resulting in their depression, inactivity, and destructive behavior.

Noted zoologist Amy Kang stated, “Most traditional zoos don’t provide enough space for animals to live normally, often resulting in depression and destructive behavior.”

1. According to behavioral psychologist Alicia Juarez, the impact of color on people’s moods and behavior is significant.

2. Employees are most productive in muted-colored settings said Juarez and their moods are more genial.
3. Juarez said that bright colors can make employees more irritable and negatively affect their productivity. (Quote begins with “can.”)

4. Ralph Imu, general manager for Freitas Electric, agrees. We painted all of our walls and ceiling light blues and greens, said Imu employees seem more relaxed and attentive, and we get fewer worker complaints.

5. Schools have picked up on the correlation between color and behavior. We paint all of our classrooms pastel colors said Assistant Superintendent Beatrice Grice of the Bedford Unified Schools bright colors clearly make students more excitable and less focused on their work.

6. The University of Toronto behavioral psychology department confirmed in a recent study that the impact of color on students is significant.

7. In our experiments, students who took tests in pastel-colored rooms performed better than students who were tested in brightly colored rooms said University of Toronto department chair Alex Fertig when we questioned them, students in the brightly colored rooms were aware of their surroundings while the other students were not.

8. Many doctors and dentists have long known what the color experts now confirm. I’ve been painting my office walls light blue for twenty years said Dr. Candice Goodfellow which has a calming effect on my patients. I tried a bright blue for a while and could notice the difference in their anxiety level.

Editing Activity 5.2

Proofread your current draft to make sure that you have punctuated any quotations that you may have used correctly.

Editing Activity 5.3

Before proofreading your own draft for errors, proofread the following paragraphs and correct any errors involving run-on or comma-splice sentences, fragments, comma usage, subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, colons, semi-colons, or dashes, or frequently confused words (e.g. there/they’re/their, know/no, affect/effect, it’s/its). The more proofreading practice you get, the better you become at sniffing out and correcting the most troublesome errors.

Try to find and correct eighteen errors in the paragraphs, each omitted comma counting as one error.

Economic Gridlock

Ideas on how to “fix” the economy and create jobs in a recessionary period varies greatly. Some economists favor cutting government spending and lowering taxes. While others support increased government spending to stimulate the economy. Most Republicans believe that only the private sector can create jobs therefore it supports reducing regulations and taxes on businesses. On the other hand most Democrats believe that the government should also be involved in job creation primarily through government-funded programs to rebuild the country’s aging infrastructure.
With Democrats and Republicans at odds on the best ways to stimulate the economy gridlock in the Senate and House of Representatives occur regularly and little gets done. Creating frustration and anger among many Americans. While people remain out of work and the economy continues to contract politicians often seem more interested in maintaining there ideological positions then working together to solve the nation’s problems. A compromise solution lowering business taxes and creating infrastructure jobs seem reasonable, no one in Washington appear to look beyond their own narrow political interests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editing Guidelines</th>
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<tr>
<td>As you proofread your current draft, remember to focus on the following grammar and punctuation elements.</td>
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1. **Check your sentences to make sure you haven’t run any sentences together or put a comma between sentences instead of a period.** Correct run-on sentences or comma splices by separating longer sentence with periods and combining shorter, related sentences with a joining word.

2. **Check your draft for any sentence fragments: incomplete sentences with a period after them.** To correct fragments, attach them to the sentence they belong with, or add words to make them complete.

3. **Check your present tense verbs to make sure that they agree with their subjects.** In addition, make sure that you have correctly spelled any past tense irregular verbs.

4. **Check your comma usage, making sure you have inserted commas into your sentences correctly and not in places they aren’t required.** In addition, make sure that you have used colons, semi-colons, and dashes correctly, and if you haven’t used any, consider how you might include some effectively.

5. **Check your use of pronouns.** Make sure that you are using the correct subject pronouns with compound pronouns (Jonah and I, Clare and they) and that all pronouns agree in number and gender with their antecedent.)
6. Check your use of comparative and superlative adjectives (faster, more agreeable, most intelligent, clumsiest, more charming), making sure that you have used the correct forms for one-syllable and two-syllable adjectives.

7. Check to make sure that you have used the correct word with words that are commonly confused: there/their/they’re, its/it’s, advice/advise, accept/except, effect/affect, were/we’re/where, your/you’re, here/hear, then/than.

8. Check your spelling by running the spell check on your word processing program or by looking up the spelling of any word you are unsure of.

Editing Activity 5.4

Proofread your current draft for errors keeping the editing guidelines in mind. Read your draft several times, focusing on one particular grammar or punctuation consideration at a time: run-on sentences, fragments, subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, etc. Look in particular for the types of errors that have occurred most frequently in your previous drafts.

Editing Activity 5.5

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and proofread each other’s drafts for errors, pointing out any that you find. Based on your classmates’ input, make any additional corrections to your draft that you had overlooked. Then write the final, corrected draft of your essay to share with classmates and your instructor.

Time Writing Eight

Write an in-class essay, taking a maximum of sixty minutes, on the following topic to help prepare you for any other time-restricted writing that you may do in college or beyond.

Some people believe that kissing and hugging are not acceptable behavior in public. Others feel that kissing and hugging are a natural expression of human emotion and should not be suppressed. Write an essay in which you convince your fellow students that public displays of affection should or should not be allowed at your school.
A little logic 14

1. A detective who was mere days away from cracking an international oil smuggling ring has suddenly gone missing. While inspecting his last-known location, officers find a note: 710 57735 34 5508 51 7718. Currently there are 3 suspects: Bill, John, and Todd. Can you break the detective’s code and find the criminal’s name?

2. A murderer is condemned to death. He has to choose between three rooms: the first is full of raging fires; the second, assassins with loaded guns; and the third, lions who haven’t eaten in years. Which room is the safest?
Reading Break

Take a break from all of your writing to read a couple of essays where writers share their childhood experiences. You may find these essays interesting, they may generate some good discussion among classmates, and they may cause you reflect on your own childhood and family experiences.

Overcoming Abuse

by Shawna Platt

Where do I begin? I grew up in an environment of alcoholism. This environment was filled with physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, anxiety and most importantly…denial. We weren’t allowed to discuss what went on in our home. It was to be swept under the rug, like the dirty little secret it was.

I can’t count how many times we had to silently put the house back together while my dad slept it off on the couch. I guess it was simply easier to pretend it didn’t happen. I guess not acknowledging it meant we didn’t have to deal with it. But we did have to deal with it and not discussing it didn’t make it go away…it allowed it to continue.

I could start with the emotional issues domestic violence causes. Or the anxiety and panic attacks. The issues of trust and constantly being guarded. Always looking over your shoulder, waiting for the next bomb to drop. The effort to accept and forgive…at least enough to move on and live a normal daily life. I could start with the importance of breaking the cycle so this doesn’t move on to the next generation. Or the importance of releasing the anger and becoming a productive human being. These are all important topics that need to be addressed and I will try to include them all.

I could start with some of my own personal experiences. The constant physical fights. The yelling and screaming. The broken “things.” Being picked up by the throat while my mom stood by and did nothing. Watching my mom get shoved through a kitchen window by the hair, pulled back through, and pushed out the door onto the porch. Then being told by my dad that if we tried to let her in, he’d shoot us.
I could talk about the small travel trailer that was pulled from place to place, sometimes with no running water and illegally wired electricity. Relocating was a constant. There was no need to feel secure, because in no time at all, we’d be on the move again.

I could discuss the countless times my parents left us with people we didn’t even know, sneaking out when they thought we weren’t aware. And there were times those people made it very clear that we were not wanted there. I could never understand how I could be placed somewhere I wasn’t truly wanted. But it happened time and time again. I remember my brother and I spending some time on the porch because we weren’t allowed to enter the house while the other kids got to have their bowl of ice cream.

I remember wearing the same clothes every day and let me tell you…other kids aren’t afraid to remind you of it. I could also talk about the sexual abuse I endured from one of my dad’s drunk friends when I was five years old. I could dwell on my mom’s attitude of, “If I can’t beat him, I’ll join him” and how she spent her share of time on the bar stool beside him while we were left at home alone, probably because no one would take us for the night. And of course, there’s my mom’s denial and how, “My kids always came first.”

I started taking care of my sister when she was a baby. I was ten years old and had no idea how to care for an infant. I recall the first time I was left alone with her. I stood out at the end of the driveway, looking up the street, begging them to come back. That was the day something shifted in me.

I became hard as survival issues kicked in. When my parents would conveniently find a different sitter for the night, I always seemed to run them off. I literally had babysitters walk out on me because I made their experience with us a living hell. Who did they think they were, coming into my home and telling me what to do, thinking they could take care of my baby sister better than I could? I’ve been handling things just fine, thank you very much. I certainly didn’t need them. Over time, my mom told me since I kept running them off, I would just do it on my own. Like I hadn’t been doing that already. My sister wouldn’t respond to anyone but me anyway.

I was never shown how to change a diaper or make a bottle. I guess it was assumed I would figure it out. After all, they would only be gone “a couple of hours.” What could possibly go wrong? But those couple hours always turned into a day-long event, usually extending into the early morning hours, which would end with them coming home in a fight. Do you realize how scary it is to a ten year old child to be left at home alone, with an infant, especially when it gets dark? We rarely had a phone, so I never had any way of checking in to see when they’d be home. I was forced to learn to deal with it.

These few examples I’ve shared are only the tip of the iceberg. The emotional issues from domestic abuse could fill a book. The programming that comes from living in an abusive household is devastating to the human mind. In order to survive, the mind has to adapt and it becomes programmed to work in a certain way. It remembers everything and protects against danger in ways we still don’t understand. The human mind literally has the ability to protect itself and it does this by altering what we think, which affects the way we see things. When our programming changes the way we think, it also affects the way we feel because the mind and body are tightly connected. What affects one affects the other.

Emotional abuse is one of the hardest to overcome because of the programming done to the mind. You can reprogram the mind to think and operate in a different manner, but it takes time and a lot of hard, heavy and deep soul searching, which is hardly a walk in the park.

Anxiety and panic attacks are also experiences that come from abuse. In most cases, the attacks are chronic because the mind/body are used to working in a fight or flight mode. When the mind is trained to live this way, it will continue to do so, even when there is no reason for it. It simply doesn’t know any different. I’ve been experiencing anxiety since I was five years old
and it wasn’t until a few years ago that I finally figured it out. I still get anxious from time to time, but I’ve learned to deal with attacks.

Growing up in an abusive environment made me hard, guarded and non-trusting. You’ll never see me cry. It doesn’t mean I don’t…it just means you won’t see it. I view life differently and I respond to it differently. I don’t drink. How could I? Drinking is what caused my childhood to be the way it was. The thought of putting alcohol in my system makes me physically ill and brings on anxiety instantly.

I’ve had to overcome serious trust issues. How could I possibly believe what you tell me? You’re not really going to be there for me, so I simply won’t count on it. I’ve learned to survive and I can take care of myself. I’ve learned to accept certain things and I’ve learned to forgive. I’ve done this for ME. Not for my parents, not for the bullies I encountered, not for the other adults who treated me as less than the trash in their garbage…but for ME. For my own sanity and well-being. For my own piece of mind. I’m happy with the person I’ve become and I’ve become that person on my own.

I decided a long time ago that I would not remain a victim and I would not become a product of my environment. I decided I would forgive as much as I could. Does that mean the circumstances I encountered were justified? Not for a second! But where do I place blame? With my father, who didn’t know how to stop? With my mother, who allowed it to happen? I feel they both should be held responsible. But I’m no longer a victim of their circumstance. Their life is theirs to live as they choose. I simply choose to move in a difference direction.

I decided the cycle stops with me. It will not be passed on to the next generation that I brought into this world. Which means my kids won’t pass it on to theirs and nothing makes me happier! At least I can sleep at night knowing that.

Questions for Discussion

1. The author detailed her years of abuse as a child. What incidents stand out In your mind as the most destructive? How was the author able to survive the abuse?

2. Many abused children end up as abusers themselves as adults. How do you think the author was able to stop the “cycle” and raise her own children differently?

3. Discuss any childhood abuse that you or others you know have gone through. How has it affected your (or their) life, and how have you dealt with it?
Mama
by Jess Yim Ka-mei

What does the word “mama” mean? A lady who gives birth to babies? The one who nurtures little children into great men or women? A person who owns our flesh and blood? A soft voice, sincere face, caring eyes, gentle hands, concerned personality, someone who takes care of our meals and our clothes, who helps us with our homework, guides us through our love affairs and to our marriage… is this the description of every mom? My mom seemed to be an exception.

My mom always scolded me; even the slightest mistake would be viewed as seriously as an unforgivable crime. She never helped me study for any dictations, quizzes, tests or exams, and she sent me away whenever I asked a single question. My mom never showed appreciation for any of my achievements, from a mark of 100 in a dictation to winning a prize in an art competition. To her, nothing I did seemed to be worthy of praise. She always kept me at home, didn’t let me go to my classmates’ birthday parties, join school camps or picnics, or participate in extra curricular activities. I felt like a wild bird confined in a cage, and I envied other girls whose lives seemed so much better than mine.

My mom never waited for me outside school, comforted me when I was sad, or brought me to the doctor when I was sick. Once when I asked her to accompany me to the doctor’s, she just replied: “Kid, how old are you? Primary three already! Just tell the doctor how you feel and that’s it!” I walked to the doctor’s alone that day, and when he asked me where my mother was, I responded with silence.

More than once, I wished I could have another mom. I wished for a mom who would support me in every way, give me the courage to fight my fears and provide me with faith. I wished for a mom who could share my joy whenever I achieved something; share my sorrow whenever I failed; smile with me as well as cry with me. I wished for a mom who I could depend on for my whole life. No matter how bad the world treated me, she would be there to comfort me and say, “My child, have no fear, I’ll be with you forever.”

Only when my mom told me her story did I realize that I hadn’t understood her, and from that day forward my life changed. Her own father had been a nasty man who flirted with countless women. Her mother had been a young, innocent girl who couldn’t even manage to take care of herself. When my mother was born, she was loved by nobody; she was a burden to the people who were responsible for her. Her parents didn’t offer a blessing nor give her a glance before giving her up, their youngest daughter. Her foster family made her work all day long, beat her whenever they were angry, and treated her as a maid while calling her daughter. When she was three, she met her real mother and was told to call her “aunt.”

As she grew, she had no opportunities to attend school, spend time with friends, go to parties, enjoy childhood, or see the wonders of life. When she was eighteen, her older sister found her, but they were never to meet again. All she ever heard from her father was the message that her sister passed on: “Never approach us again.” She never tried.

Without ever knowing what a loving family was like, my mother married a poor guy and gave birth to four innocent lives. Can you blame someone who had never been loved by her family for not knowing how to express her love and affection to her children?
Then suddenly, I remembered. The box of dolls my mom bought for me when I had a high fever when I was three. Her mutterings of “put more clothes on” whenever the weather turned cold. The favorite dishes she cooked for me every birthday. The cakes she always used to bring to me whenever I studied late into the night. Her visit to the boutique that I worked in last summer. The lovely shirt that I longed for and that she bought me when she went to Japan. How could she know I loved it? How could I have missed all of the times that she tried to be a good mother and showed that she cared for me in the only ways she knew?

I’m sorry, Mom. Your daughter didn’t know you before. I wish I had always known your story.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the purpose of the opening paragraph? How does it “set the stage” for what is to follow?

2. What examples does the author use to show the relationship between her mother and herself in the third and fourth paragraph? How do those examples contrast with the examples in the next-to-last paragraph?

3. What details of her mother’s life before marriage affected you most strongly as a reader? Do you believe that how her mother was raised justifies how she treated her own daughter, and why?

4. How do you feel your mother’s (or father’s) early life may have affected how she raised you as a son or daughter? How might your upbringing affect the kind of mother or father you may be (or are)?
Writing Assignment Ten

In your first essay assignment for this unit, you wrote a critique on an essay of your choice by examining its thesis and analyzing and evaluating the thesis support. For your upcoming writing assignment, you will critique one of four essays provided in this section.

All students will be critiquing one of four essays provided. Therefore, you, your classmates, and your instructor will have the opportunity to read, evaluate, and compare student critiques of the same essays. It will be interesting to view the critiqued essays through the perspectives of different student writers, and everyone will benefit from the experience.

Prewriting

Since you have just gone through the process of writing a critique, this section will provide a concise review of what you learned. Having written one critique will undoubtedly benefit you for writing your upcoming essay, and you may produce an even better critique.

Topic Selection

Topic selection should be relatively easy since you have only four essays to choose from. Read the essays over a couple of times considering these suggestions to help make your decision.

1. **Which essay did you find the most interesting?** Writing about something that interests you makes the writing experience more enjoyable and often produces the best results.

2. **Which essay did you best understand?** Unquestionably, having an excellent understanding of an essay – its topic, thesis, supporting arguments, and purpose – is crucial to writing an insightful critique.

3. **Which essay topic do you not have a preconceived opinion on?** Although this isn’t a requirement, you can usually evaluate an essay most objectively when you have yet to form an opinion, evaluating the essay’s content solely on its merits.

Prewriting Activity 5.6

Keeping the topic selection suggestions in mind, read each of the following essays a couple of times and decide which essay you want to critique.
The End of Football

By John Kass

*John Kass is a columnist for the Chicago Tribune.*

With all that college beef on parade this week, the NFL draft is a wonder of sports marketing, a televised pageant for the multibillion-dollar American football industry. But there's something football fans should know: Football is dead in America.

Even through all the chatter and cheerleading and media hype, football as an American cultural institution lies in final spasm. It's as dead as the Marlboro Man. And if the professional game survives at all, it will be relegated to the pile of trash sports, like mixed martial arts or whatever is done in third-rate arenas with monster trucks and mud. It won't be as American as apple pie. Instead, football will become the province of people with face tattoos.

Lawyers are circling football now. For years they've had their wings locked, cruising overhead, but lately they've swooped in low, landing and hopping over to take chunks out of the great billion-dollar beast. But it's not the lawyers who are the death of football. Blaming lawyers misses the point. Like their counterparts in nature, lawyers are merely the cleanup crew. What finishes football are the parents of future football players.

The NFL desperately needs American parents. Not as fans, but as suppliers of young flesh. The NFL needs parents to send their little boys into the football feeder system. And without that supply of meat for the NFL grinder — first youth teams, then high school and college — there can be no professional football. And yet every day, more American parents decide they're finished with football. Why? Because parents can no longer avoid the fact that football scrambles the human brain. In cultural terms, parents who send their 10-year-olds to play football might as well hold up signs saying they'd like to give their children cigarettes and whiskey.

Make no mistake. I loved football. I loved it desperately. Even now, four decades later, I remember endlessly damning myself for being too small to play it at a big-time college. I ached for it, for the violence of it, for the training, the salt pills and no water on hot August fields, the helmet scabs on the forehead, but mostly the collisions. And I still love it, but I can't shake the guilt of supporting the physical ruin of great athletes. My wife and I wouldn't let our sons play. We just couldn't.

Future historians may explain all this in terms of cultural change, of more information about concussions, spinal cord injuries, paralysis and brain damage, and another football killer, taxpayer liability. Some 4,000 former NFL players have joined lawsuits against the league for allegedly hiding the dangers to the brain. This follows a rash of depression-related suicides, with some players shooting themselves in the chest so that their brains could be studied after their deaths. One of these was the great Chicago Bears safety Dave Duerson. He left a suicide note, asking that doctors examine what was in his skull after a lifetime of bashing it. College players have also filed suit. Eventually, lawsuits will overwhelm the high schools. And high school
superintendents won't be able to increase property taxes to pay for the additional cost of subsidizing the game.

"The idea that five years ago I would have forbidden my kids to play football is hard to imagine," said Joseph Siprut, a lawyer representing former Eastern Illinois University player Adrian Arrington and other athletes in federal court over the long-term effects of head injuries. "It never would have occurred to me. Now, given what I know about the concussion issue — first as a lawyer who has litigation, but also as someone who reads the papers — for me as a parent, I don't think I would ever let my kids set foot on a football field. Ever."

Football may hang on for a few years, hang on desperately like a cat dying under a backyard deck, hissing as it goes. There are billions of dollars at stake, feeding owners, players, agents, advertisers, journalists, and most importantly, bookies. The NFL is about gambling.

The game is not just a contact sport — it's a high-impact collision sport. It is about exploding into your opponent, refusing to break, while breaking others to your will and knocking them senseless. For young players on the field and old spectators remembering, there is still joy in it. But expressing that joy has become culturally taboo.

Fans have been led to pretend that the violence is merely ancillary. But to say that violence isn't at the heart of football is a lie. Remove the violence, and you remove what is great about the game, what is awe-inspiring and guilt-inspiring at the same time. All sports can be dangerous. They involve physical and spiritual risk. But football is different from other team sports. It is designed to slam body against body, and often, head slams against head. There is no way to alter this fact, no way to spin it.

So if you're wondering about the future of football during the NFL draft, try this experiment: Ask the parents of a little boy about tackle football, about concussions, and look into their eyes when they speak.

How Black is Black Enough?

By Leonard Pitts Jr.

*(Leonard Pitts Jr. is a Pulitzer Prize-winning editorialist for the Miami Herald.*

I suddenly find myself concerned about my blackness. It had never occurred to me to worry about it before. Then came the incident on ESPN's "First Take" program that initially got commentator Rob Parker suspended and then, last week, fired outright. It seems Parker, who is black, analyzed what he saw as the insufficient blackness of Robert Griffin III, rookie quarterback for the Washington, D.C., football team that is named for a racial slur.

Having returned their team to relevance for the first time since the Clinton era, RG3, as he is known, can do no wrong in the eyes of Slurs fans. But Parker, saying that the young man's fiancee is (gasp!) white and that he himself is rumored to be — cover the children's ears — a
Republican, found him lacking in the area of authentic blackness. “My question,” he said, “which is just a straight, honest question: is he a brother, or is he a cornball brother? He's not really … OK, he's black, he kind of does the thing, but he's not really down with the cause. He's not one of us. He's kind of black, but he's not really like the guy you really want to hang out with …”

That explosion you hear is the sound of my mind, blown. I'm left second-guessing my own blackness. I mean, I listen to Bruce Springsteen, for crying out loud! There's even a Dixie Chicks album on my iPod. And I read books sometimes, man — even when no one's making me do it. Some of them are thick as bricks. Some aren't even about African-American themes.

It gets worse. I have no natural rhythm, no criminal record and can correctly pronounce the word “ask.” I don't curse nearly as much as I ought to. Oh, and I went and married my baby mama. Obviously, my blackness is on life support.

Many of us have been taught that it is demeaning and delimiting when someone presumes to say who you are, how you will behave, what you think, what you like, and how intelligent you are, from the color of your skin. We have been taught that such behavior abridges the other person's individuality. But apparently, that's only when white people do it to black people. When black people do it to black people, it's called assessing your blackness, making sure you aren't some “cornball brother.”

How enlightening to learn that. It is even more enlightening to discover that we have such easy-peasy rubrics to go by. You can't be black if you are a Republican? That means Colin Powell isn't black. Neither, if published reports are to be believed, are rappers LL Cool J and 50 Cent. Who'd have thought?

Poor Frederick Douglass has a double whammy. He was a Republican and had a white wife. Who'd have thought this former slave, one of the towering heroes of African-American history, wasn't black enough?

It is this kind of bold insight and trenchant analysis ESPN loses in sacking Rob Parker. What is the network thinking? Parker, who also contributes commentary to WDIV television in Detroit, defended himself in an interview with the station that aired just before ESPN dropped the ax. He pronounced himself shocked by the fallout and suggested his comments were taken out of context.

“You can't be afraid to talk about race,” he said. He's exactly right. In discussing race, we must be fearless. We must also be thoughtful. And informed. And exact. And alive to the ramifications of what we say. Surely, Parker knows this. Or if he didn't before, he does now.

As for being black enough, he is probably a greater expert than he was before. He is, after all, a man out of work. It doesn't get much blacker than that.

**Marriage: The Way Out of Poverty**

By Jennifer A. Marshall

*(Jennifer A. Marshall is the Director of Domestic Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation.)*
For years, the slogan “Stay in School” has communicated an anti-poverty message to young people. Now it’s time for an even more important poverty-fighting theme: “Get Married.” Every student knows that dropping out of high school will hurt her chances of succeeding in life. Major media, public education campaigns and government programs have told her so.

But does she know that having a baby outside marriage will put her and her child at serious risk of living in poverty? Last year, poverty in America grew more than ever before in the 51 years that the U.S. government has tracked the poor, the Census Bureau reported Sept. 16. The total climbed by 3 million to 44 million — or one in seven Americans.

The search is on for solutions. Regrettably, too little of the conversation is turning to the principal cause of child poverty: the collapse of marriage. Waiting until marriage to have children is the second of three “golden rules” for avoiding poverty that researchers identified over the years: (1) graduate from high school; (2) marry before having children; and (3) get a job.

Actually, being married is even more significant than graduating from high school for avoiding poverty. Robert Rector, a senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation, shows this in a new paper, “Marriage: America’s No. 1 Weapon Against Child Poverty.” By contrast, typical responses to poverty call for more spending on government programs. Far from helping poor Americans escape dependency, however, massive increases in welfare spending over the past four decades have entrenched poverty across generations.

Proponents of a government solution also cite lack of quality education and decent-paying jobs. True, inner-city schools often are appallingly sub-par, but ever-increasing spending hasn’t significantly improved educational quality and opportunity for those who need it most.

And although the bad news on poverty in part reflects increased joblessness during the recession, the economy doesn’t explain the undercurrents trapping millions in persistent poverty. Three of every four Americans defined as poor — 35 million of the 44 million total — are poor during economic booms, Rector notes.

Government anti-poverty programs fail because such persistent poverty is not primarily material. It’s about relationships and behavior. Even in good times, fatherlessness and lack of work trap the underclass. Unwed childbearing has risen from 6.3 percent of all births in 1964, when President Lyndon Johnson launched the War on Poverty, to more than 40 percent today. As Rector shows, these single-parent families with children are six times more likely to be poor than are married couples with kids. Put differently, marriage lowers the probability of child poverty by 82 percent.

So why have we ignored the obvious? After all, marriage has been the standard in every human society. “Marriage is the way societies provide a map of life and norms about behavior,” researcher Kay Hymowitz says. “Role models and explicit messages create norms in society. That’s why it’s troubling to see the emergence of a ‘pattern of family non-formation’,” as scholar Heather MacDonald describes it.

Hymowitz and MacDonald, both affiliated with the Manhattan Institute, were among leaders invited by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to participate in a conference recently in Washington, by addressing the topic of “The Role of Family Structure in Perpetuating Racial and Ethnic Disparities.” In minority communities, the collapse of marriage has become especially acute. More than half of Hispanic children are born to single mothers, as are seven out of 10 black children.

Among Hispanics, families headed by unmarried parents are three times more likely to be poor. For blacks, these families are five times more likely to be poor. Meanwhile, the growing trend is “multi-partner fertility”—an antiseptic term to describe the relational mess of women having children by more than one man. The Commission on Civil Rights deserves credit for
tackling a subject too long considered off-limits. With lives at stake, America cannot afford to ignore these plain facts any longer.

How can we restore a cultural consensus on marriage and reduce child poverty? Rector suggests seven ideas. Among them: Policymakers should reduce anti-marriage penalties in welfare programs. Welfare offices and federally funded birth control clinics should provide facts about the value of marriage in fighting poverty. And, in low-income neighborhoods and schools with a high proportion of at-risk youth, public education campaigns should teach the benefits of marriage.

If we’re asking fathers not to walk away from their children, Americans must not walk away from the difficult task of restoring a culture of marriage.

Money Doesn’t Buy Happiness

By Sharon Begley

(Sharon Begley is the senior health & science correspondent at Reuters and former science editor and science columnist at Newsweek.)

All in all, it was probably a mistake to look for the answer to the eternal question—"Does money buy happiness?"—from people who practice what's called the dismal science. For when economists tackled the question, they started from the observation that when people put something up for sale they try to get as much for it as they can, and when people buy something they try to pay as little for it as they can. Both sides in the transaction, the economists noticed, are therefore behaving as if they would be more satisfied (happier, dare we say) if they wound up receiving more money (the seller) or holding on to more money (the buyer). Hence, more money must be better than less, and the only way more of something can be better than less of it is if it brings you greater contentment. The economists' conclusion: the more money you have, the happier you must be.

Depressed debutantes, suicidal CEOs, miserable magnates and other unhappy rich folks aren't the only ones giving the lie to this. "Psychologists have spent decades studying the relation between wealth and happiness," writes Harvard University psychologist Daniel Gilbert in his best-selling "Stumbling on Happiness," "and they have generally concluded that wealth increases human happiness when it lifts people out of abject poverty and into the middle class but that it does little to increase happiness thereafter."

That flies in the face of intuition, not to mention economic theory. According to standard economics, the most important commodity you can buy with additional wealth is choice. If you have $20 in your pocket, you can decide between steak and peanut butter for dinner, but if you have only $1 you'd better hope you already have a jar of jelly at home. Additional wealth also
lets you satisfy additional needs and wants, and the more of those you satisfy the happier you are supposed to be.

The trouble is, choice is not all it's cracked up to be. Studies show that people like selecting from among maybe half a dozen kinds of pasta at the grocery store but find 27 choices overwhelming, leaving them chronically on edge that they could have chosen a better one than they did. And wants, which are nice to be able to afford, have a bad habit of becoming needs (iPod, anyone?), of which an advertising-and-media-saturated culture create endless numbers. Satisfying needs brings less emotional well-being than satisfying wants.

The nonlinear nature of how much happiness money can buy—lots more happiness when it moves you out of penury and into middle-class comfort, hardly any more when it lifts you from millionaire to decamillionaire—comes through clearly in global surveys that ask people how content they feel with their lives. In a typical survey people are asked to rank their sense of well-being or happiness on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means "not at all satisfied with my life" and 7 means "completely satisfied." Of the American multimillionaires who responded, the average happiness score was 5.8. Homeless people in Calcutta came in at 2.9. But before you assume that money does buy happiness after all, consider who else rated themselves around 5.8: the Inuit of northern Greenland, who do not exactly lead a life of luxury, and the cattle-herding Masai of Kenya, whose dung huts have no electricity or running water. And proving Gilbert's point about money buying happiness only when it lifts you out of abject poverty, slum dwellers in Calcutta—one economic rung above the homeless—rate themselves at 4.6.

Studies tracking changes in a population's reported level of happiness over time have also dealt a death blow to the money-buys-happiness claim. Since World War II the gross domestic product per capita has tripled in the United States. But people's sense of well-being, as measured by surveys asking some variation of "Overall, how satisfied are you with your life?", has barely budged. Japan has had an even more meteoric rise in GDP per capita since its postwar misery, but measures of national happiness have been flat, as they have also been in Western Europe during its long postwar boom, according to social psychologist Ruut Veenhoven of Erasmus University in Rotterdam.

A 2004 analysis of more than 150 studies on wealth and happiness concluded that "economic indicators have glaring shortcomings" as approximations of well-being across nations, wrote Ed Diener of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and Martin E. P. Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania. "Although economic output has risen steeply over the past decades, there has been no rise in life satisfaction … and there has been a substantial increase in depression and distrust."

That's partly because in an expanding economy, in which former luxuries such as washing machines become necessities, the newly affluent don't feel the same joy in having a machine do the laundry that their grandparents, suddenly freed from washboards, did. They just take the Maytag for granted. "Americans who earn $50,000 per year are much happier than those who earn $10,000 per year," writes Gilbert, "but Americans who earn $5 million per year are not much happier than those who earn $100,000 per year." Another reason is that an expanding paycheck, especially in an expanding economy, produces expanding aspirations and a sense that there is always one more cool thing out there that you absolutely have to have. "Economic success falls short as a measure of well-being, in part because materialism can negatively influence well-being," Diener and Seligman conclude.

If money doesn't buy happiness, what does? Grandma was right when she told you to value health and friends, not money and stuff. Or as Diener and Seligman put it, once your basic needs are met "differences in well-being are less frequently due to income, and are more frequently due to factors such as social relationships and enjoyment at work." Other researchers add fulfillment, a sense that life has meaning, belonging to civic and other groups, and living in a democracy that
respects individual rights and the rule of law. If a nation wants to increase its population's sense of well-being, says Veenhoven, it should make "less investment in economic growth and more in policies that promote good governance, liberties, democracy, trust and public safety."

Curiously, although money doesn't buy happiness, happiness can buy money. Young people who describe themselves as happy typically earn higher incomes, years later, than those who said they were unhappy. It seems that a sense of well-being can make you more productive and more likely to show initiative and other traits that lead to a higher income. Contented people are also more likely to marry and stay married, as well as to be healthy, both of which increase happiness.

If more money doesn't buy more happiness, then the behavior of most Americans looks downright insane, as we work harder and longer, decade after decade, to fatten our W-2s. But what is insane for an individual is crucial for a national economy—that is, ever more growth and consumption. Gilbert again: "Economies can blossom and grow only if people are deluded into believing that the production of wealth will make them happy … Economies thrive when individuals strive, but because individuals will strive only for their own happiness, it is essential that they mistakenly believe that producing and consuming are routes to personal well-being." In other words, if you want to do your part for your country's economy, forget all of the above about money not buying happiness.

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**Critical Reading**

Once you have selected your essay to critique, you can give it a “critical” reading to analyze and evaluate its content in preparation for writing your essay. As you read your essay, consider these suggestions.

1. **Read the essay several times to gain the best understanding.** When you read an essay a second or third time, you always get more meaning from its content and understand better how each paragraph relates to the essay’s thesis.

2. **Clearly identify the topic of the essay.** A clear understanding of the topic is essential in evaluating the essay.

3. **Identify the thesis of the essay: the writer’s viewpoint on the topic.** While the thesis is often stated in the opening, it may come in the conclusion or it may be implied, the essay’s content clearly revealing the writer’s viewpoint. Once you identify the thesis, you can analyze and evaluate its support.
4. **Identify and evaluate the support for the thesis.** Does the essay provide factual evidence? Does it present any opinions without evidence? Are the supporting arguments reasonable and sensible? Does it use relevant comparisons to help make its points? Does it provide examples or personal experiences for support? Does it provide source introductions for any research material? Analyze and evaluate each supportive point that the essay makes.

5. **Identify and evaluate how the essay responds to any opposing arguments to its thesis.** Does the essay help make its case by refuting opposing arguments. If no opposing arguments are presented, does this weaken the essay in any way?

5. **Does the essay omit things that leave questions in your mind?** Does it omit facts that don’t support its thesis? Does it ignore major arguments against its thesis? Does it not include information or facts on the topic that you are aware of? What can you infer, if anything, from what isn’t included in the essay?

6. **Does the essay reveal any writer bias on the topic?** Is it obvious in the essay that the writer is biased in favor or against the topic, not showing any objectivity or consideration for opposing viewpoints? If such bias is apparent, how does it affect your evaluation of the essay?

7. **Is the purpose of the essay clear, and how well is it accomplished?** Does the essay make the desired impact on you as a reader?

8. **What is your overall impression of the essay?** Has the writer convinced you of the good sense, fairness, validity or “truth” of his thesis?

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**Prewriting Activity 5.7**

Keeping the “critical reading” suggestions in mind, identify, analyze, and evaluate the main elements of the essay you are critiquing. You may want to write down each supporting argument for the thesis and each opposing argument that is addressed to make sure and present them in your critique.

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**Thesis and Support**

After analyzing and evaluating the essay in detail, you are ready to decide on a thesis for your critique and how you are going to support it. To generate a thesis and support, consider these suggestions.

1. **Decide on a thesis for your critique that reflects your overall impression of the essay:** how effectively the writer supported his thesis and convinced you of its merit. Write a thesis statement that you may use in your essay.

2. **Review the supportive points in the essay that you are going to present in your critique and your response to each point.** Your responses may reveal both strengths and
weaknesses in the writer’s arguments for his thesis, but overall, they should reflect your viewpoint on the issue presented in your thesis.

3. Review any opposing arguments to the thesis addressed in the essay and your response to how effectively the arguments are handled. Your assessment of the essay’s treatment of opposing arguments provides further support for your thesis.

4. Reread the essay to consider anything important that may have been omitted. Your response to omitted information may also help support your thesis.

5. Your thesis isn’t set in stone. As you review the supporting points in the essay, you may see more or less merit in some of them than you first thought. In addition, if you have some mixed feelings about the essay, which isn’t uncommon, you may lean more heavily towards agreeing or disagreeing with the essay’s thesis as you continue to review and evaluate its content. If you opinion changes as you continue mulling over the essay, you might change your thesis.
Since you already wrote a critique earlier in the unit, you have some idea of how to proceed with your first draft. Your main purpose in writing the first draft is to get your ideas on paper to see what you have done well and what you can do better in a subsequent draft.

In your first draft, you sculpt a rough image of your finished product. As you revise, you take a fine chisel to your creation, smoothing out the rough edges and refining the critical features. What ultimately emerges is a clear, finely sculpted essay ready for public unveiling.

**Drafting Guidelines**

To write the first draft of your critique, consider these suggestions:

1. **In your opening, introduce the topic of the critiqued essay, the essay’s thesis (position on the topic), and your own thesis: your overall impression of the essay.** From your opening, readers should understand the topic of the critiqued essay, what the author believes about the topic, and how convincingly you feel the essay supported its thesis.

2. **If readers may need further explanation to understand the topic clearly, include the explanatory material after the opening.** For example, if the topic of the critiqued essay is “Off-shore tax havens and their impact on Federal revenues,” readers may need some explanation of exactly what “off-shore tax havens” are.

3. **In the middle paragraphs, present and evaluate the main arguments that the critiqued essay presents to support its thesis, keeping your own thesis in mind.** In addition, point out omissions, if any, in the essay – important facts, support for opinions, major opposing arguments – that may weaken the essay.

4. **If the essay addresses some opposing arguments to its thesis, evaluate how well the arguments are refuted.** If no opposing arguments are presented, how does that weaken the essay, if at all?

5. **Conclude your essay in a way that reinforces your thesis.** What thoughts do you most want to leave readers with regarding the critiqued essay?

6. **Don’t let “topic bias” influence your critique.** Your task is to evaluate the essay’s content objectively, basing your viewpoint on the quality of the essay rather than your own opinion on the topic.
7. **Your reading audience for this essay is your classmates and instructor.** Keep in mind that they have probably read the essay and are in the best position to evaluate your critique. Provide them with a critique that strongly supports its thesis and presents your ideas most convincingly.

**Drafting Activity 5.4**

Read the following essay and its critique to see how the writer did the following: opened her draft, analyzed and evaluated the critiqued essay, presented and **responded** to the essay’s main points, paragraphed the essay, including using **topic sentences**, and concluded the draft. Then write the first draft of your critique.

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**Sentencing Children As Adults**

*By Terence Gorski*

_Terence Gorski is an internationally recognized expert on and violence and crime._

Should children and adolescents who have not reached legal age be sentenced as adults when they commit serious crimes such as murder? It is my position that they should not. Here’s why. According to Amnesty International, a human rights watch dog organization, the United States is the only western democracy that sends youthful offenders to adult court and sentences them to adult prisons. According to amnesty international the imprisonment of youthful offenders in adult prisons violates United States international treaty obligations prohibiting cruel and inhumane treatment of children and adolescents.

Is this an unwarranted or extreme position to take? I don’t believe that it is. Most youthful offenders will be physically and/or sexually assaulted within seventy-two hours of admission to adult correctional facilities. Such abuse will continue to occur on a regular basis for the duration of their incarceration. The effects of this abuse are horrific and include suicides, suicide attempts, severe personality damage, and the development of severe and permanent psychiatric symptoms. These effects make youthful offenders sentenced as adults more dangerous, not less. Our willingness to do this to our children sends a strong message that the level of moral development of elected officials, judges, prosecutors and the general public is rapidly and dangerously declining.

We need to ask ourselves an important question: _Are we the kind of people who are capable of inflicting cruel and inhumane punishment upon our children and adolescents?_

As a nation, we answered that question decades ago with an emphatic no. At that time we recognized that most kids deserve a second chance and can turn their lives around with proper no-nonsense treatment in rehabilitation oriented juvenile correction centers. We backed up our answer up by developing a Juvenile Justice System that protects kids from cruel and inhumane punishment while providing rehabilitation, and teaching the skills necessary to become a productive member of society.
We did all this because it’s the right thing to do. We did it because to do less would have been beneath us as one of the most moral nations in the civilized world.

We built our Juvenile Justice System around three critical principles:

- It is wrong to hold children and adolescents who have not reached legal age to adult standards. They are developmentally immature and often unclear about the nature of right and wrong and without proper adult supervision can have problems with judgment and impulse control causing them to act out impulsively without forethought.
- With appropriate treatment most children who commit crimes, even the most violent crimes, can be rehabilitated and become responsible adults.
- A moral society feels obligated to give kids a second chance whenever possible by having a Juvenile Justice System designed to help kids change rather than punish them for past offenses.

Our juvenile justice system is based upon the recognition that moral societies value their children and seek to help rather than hurt, treat rather than punish, and rehabilitate rather than destroy.

Of course, not all youthful offenders can be rehabilitated. Some pose a real and present danger and need to be segregated from society. The period of confinement, however, should be designed to give youthful offenders a chance to learn, grow, and change. If long-term protective segregation is required, it should be done in adolescent correctional facilities which protect the children from harm.

It is important to remember that punishment does not work. The threat of punishment is an ineffective deterrent to crime, especially for children and adolescents. Punishment is a failed strategy for changing behavior, teaching new skills, or developing new and more positive attitudes and beliefs. The only justification for inflicting harsh punishment is to deliver vengeance in accord with the Old Testament standard of an eye-for-an-eye.

Loved ones of victims may feel justified in crying out for vengeance. The result is tragic. Vengeance does not relieve the grief and loss. It also instills a sense of inner conflict and guilt. On a deep level most human beings intuitively know that vengeance breeds more vengeance and violence breeds more violence. When people mature to higher levels of moral development they recognize the obligation to break the cycle of vengeance and retribution.

The following two children are both victims. One is a victim of lethal violence inflicted by a twelve year old playmate. The other is a victim of a legal system that is rapidly declining into Old Testament morality or retribution.

Tiffany Eunick, age 6, was the victim of violence perpetrated by an unsupervised twelve year old, Lionel Tate. Lionel thought he was playing when he emulated the moves and tactics of the professional wrestlers who were his heroes and role models. He watched professional wrestling week after week. He witnessed hundreds if not thousands of savagely brutal acts perpetrated by professionally wrestling assuming the personas of theatrical psychopaths. He watched as they savagely body slammed, knee-dropped, and kicked each other.

In his immaturity, he couldn’t see that it was all a show. He had inadequate adult supervision. There was no one to point out the dangerousness and immorality of the violent displays he was witnessing. There was no adult present to impress upon his immature mind the dangerous of using such savage tactics on others.

Lionel, an immature 12 year old, assumed he could do to other kids what these heroic wrestlers did to each other. He assumed the outcome would be the same – no one would really get hurt. Tragically, the showmanship of professional wrestlers can become lethal when inflicted by one child upon another. Thinking he was playing, Lionel body-slammed, head kicked, and
knee dropped Tiffany. It was over quickly. Lionel was shocked and traumatized to see that he killed Tiffany.

Is Lionel a hopeless psychopath who should be locked away for the rest of his life? He doesn’t appear to be. Will throwing away Lionel’s life bring back Tiffany or soothe the grief of her parents and friends? Probably not. Will Lionel be helped to become a better person as a result of his life-long imprisonment? Definitely not. He will be physically and sexually abused and psychiatrically damaged in deep and profound ways by his prison experiences. There is a strong possibility he will attempt suicide to try and escape the torturous consequences of his imprisonment.

So why are we as a nation allowing this to happen? Part of the reason is because our adolescent treatment professionals, the experts trained and educated to know better, are standing silently on the sidelines. The clinical professionals who are obligated to advocate for our youth and to protect our juvenile justice system from destruction have failed to act decisively and effectively. As a result the safety of all children is progressively going at risk.

How many children need to be tried, convicted, and imprisoned in adult facilities before it becomes wrong? How many children must be destroyed by a criminal justice system going out of control before we do something?

Critique of “Sentencing Children as Adults” (first draft)

(thesis statement underlined, topic sentences in italics, writer’s response to main points in bold)

The essay “Sentencing Children as Adults” deals with the controversial topic of juveniles being tried and sentenced for violent crimes as adults rather than minors. In most states in the U.S., teenagers younger than eighteen who commit murder can, and often are, tried as adults and sentenced to adult prisons. The author, Terence Gorski, strongly opposes the practice, and based on his article, I agree with him.

Gorski documents that the U.S. is the only Western democracy that treats juveniles as adult offenders. That in itself is a strong indicator that U.S. policy is wrong since it is out of step with other democracies. Unless we are right and the other democratic countries are all wrong, we need to reconsider trying juveniles as adults.

The essay presents all of the bad things that can happen to juveniles in adult prisons: regular physical and sexual abuse, physical damage, psychological damage, suicides, and turning juveniles into worse offenders when they become adults. While Gorski doesn’t provide a source for this information, it is easily believable based on similar things that I have read and what seems obvious: that older, hardened criminals will prey upon young, defenseless boys. None of these things would happen if these boys were placed in juvenile facilities like young teens in other countries.

The essay presents three other reasons why juveniles should not be treated as adults. Juveniles are still “developmentally immature” and often don’t have a clear-cut understanding of what is right and wrong. Second, juveniles can be rehabilitated, even the most violent ones, if put in a good rehabilitation program at a juvenile facility. Finally, the U.S. has a moral obligation to give juveniles a “second chance” if we are a nation that cares about its youth. These are strong arguments for putting young teen offenders in juvenile facilities rather than adult prisons, where they have no chance to be rehabilitated.

As I read the essay, the questions remained in my mind, “What about kids that commit horrible murders? Should they just be put in a juvenile facility until they are twenty-one and released?” Later in the essay, I got a satisfactory answer. Gorski believes that such offenders
should not be tried as adults but should be “segregated from society” and isolated in juvenile facilities as long as is necessary. In other words, they should remain in juvenile prison and then, I assume, transferred to an adult facility at age twenty-one. **There is a way of dealing with the worst, most violent juveniles that protects society without treating young teens as adults.**

Gorski addresses the emotional argument supporting the current practice that relatives of victims deserve some vengeance because of their grief and loss. However, the essay contends that such vengeance does nothing to lessen the grief or make the relatives or friends feel better. **I understand how parents could want the worst possible punishment for a teen offender who murdered their son or daughter, and I might someday feel the same. But that doesn’t seem like enough of an argument to justify putting juveniles in adult prisons.**

Gorski’s essay is weakened somewhat by one example: a young boy killing a young girl by body-slamming and head-kicking her as he’d seen many times in professional wrestling with no one getting seriously hurt. **Most people would agree that the boy shouldn’t be sent to adult prison, and he probably wasn’t, so it’s not a great example of the type of juveniles who are tried as adults and is misleading. It is the juveniles who commit murders that appear to be as horrible and intentional as adult murders that are tried. Gorski argued convincingly that even these juveniles should not be tried as adult throughout the essay, so the “professional wrestling” murder didn’t weaken my belief, based on the essay, that the trying and sentencing of any juvenile to adult prison is wrong.**
After having revised nine of your drafts in earlier units, you no doubt have learned a lot about how to improve your essays and revise your drafts with increasing confidence and effectiveness. In addition, you have probably devised a personal approach to revision that works well for you.

For example, you may be focusing on one revision consideration at a time (e.g. sentence wording, organization, content changes), covering all revision considerations at once, or grouping similar revision considerations together (e.g. sentence wording, sentence variety, transitional wording). It doesn’t matter what approach you use to revise a draft as long as you evaluate all of the writing elements – content, organization, wording, paragraphing, etc. – and make the kinds of changes needed to improve your essay.

**Revision Guidelines**

To revise the current draft of your critique, consider these suggestions.

1. **Reread the essay you critiqued and then your draft to make sure that the draft accurately reflects your viewpoint:** the overall impression the essay made on you. Note any parts of the draft that needs strengthening to lend greater support for your viewpoint (thesis).

2. **Evaluate your opening.** Do you present the topic of the essay you critiqued and its thesis? Do you present the thesis of the critique: your overall impression of the essay? Do you create reader interest by showing the importance of the topic, how it may affect readers, or why they should be concerned about it? Make any revisions that would strengthen your opening.

3. **Evaluate how accurately you present the content of the critiqued essay.** Do readers understand what the essay is about, the writer’s viewpoint in the essay, the main points that support her viewpoint, and the essay’s probable intent? What revisions might you make to help readers understand the essay better or to provide a more accurate or complete picture of it?

4. **Evaluate your assessment of each of the essay’s main supporting points.** Do readers understand how you feel about each point and why? Do your responses support your thesis? Do you point out any strengths or weaknesses in the essay in ways that don’t undermine your thesis? Do you point out any glaring omissions in the essay and how they influenced your viewpoint, if at all?
5. **Evaluate your assessment of how well the essay addressed any opposing arguments to its thesis.** Is your assessment an important part of your thesis support? Do you give this element adequate emphasis?

6. **Evaluate your conclusion.** Does your ending reinforce your thesis in some manner? Does it leave readers with something new to think about? Make any changes that will strengthen your conclusion and its impact on readers.

7. **Evaluate your paragraphing.** Do you change paragraphs as you move to different parts of the essay: opening to middle, middle to ending? Do you present and evaluate the main points of the critiqued essay in separate paragraphs? Do you use *topic sentences* to introduce the main idea of most paragraphs? Are there any overly long paragraphs that need dividing or short, successive paragraphs that need combining or developing further? Make any paragraphing revisions that will help readers move through the paper with the greatest ease and understanding.

8. **Evaluate your organization.** Do you present the main points of the critiqued essay in the most effective order? Are there any paragraphs or sentences that would fit more logically or effectively in a different location? Make any changes in the draft that will improve its organization.

9. **Evaluate your sentence wording.** Revise sentences to eliminate wordiness, smooth out awkward sentences, replace questionable word choices, and create structural variety. Check your use of transitional wording (*first, second, in addition, finally, as you can see, however, therefore*) and add any transitions that will help tie paragraphs together and show relationships among ideas.

**Revision Activity 5.6**

Read the following revised critique of “Sentencing Children as Adults,” noting the changes made to improve sentence wording and content. Then revise your own draft, keeping the revision suggestions in mind.

Critique of “Sentencing Children as Adults”

(deletions crossed out, additions in **bold** print)

The essay “Sentencing Children as Adults” deals with the controversial topic of juveniles being tried and sentenced for violent crimes as adults rather than minors. In most states in the U.S., teenagers younger than eighteen who commit murder can **be**, and often are, tried as adults and sentenced to adult prisons. The author, Terence Gorski, strongly opposes the practice, and based on his article, I tend to agree with him.

Gorski documents **The essay cites Amnesty International’s finding** that the U.S. is the only Western democracy that treats juveniles as adult offenders. That in itself is a strong indicator that U.S. policy practice is wrong since it is out of step with **contrary to** other democracies.
Unless we are right and all the other democratic countries are wrong, we need to reconsider trying juveniles as adults.

The essay presents all of the bad things that can happen to juveniles in adult prisons: regular physical and sexual abuse year after year, resulting in physical damage, psychological damage, and suicides, and turning juveniles into worse offenders when they become adults. While Gorski doesn’t provide a source for this information, it is easily believable based on similar things that I have read and what seems obvious: that older, hardened criminals will prey upon young, defenseless boys. Few of these things would happen if these boys were placed in juvenile facilities like young teens in other countries. The punishment for a juvenile committing a crime shouldn’t include being raped and beaten as long as he is in prison.

The essay presents three other reasons why juveniles should not be tried as adults. Juveniles are still “developmentally immature” and often don’t have a clear-cut understanding of what is right and wrong. Second, juveniles can be rehabilitated, even the most violent ones, if put in a good rehabilitation program at a juvenile facility. Finally, the U.S. has a moral obligation to give juveniles a “second chance” if we are a nation that cares about its youth. These are strong arguments for putting young teen offenders in juvenile facilities rather than adult prisons, where they have no chance to be rehabilitated. Society is basically throwing them away.

As I read the essay, the questions remained in my mind, “What about kids that commit horrible murders? Should they just be put in a juvenile facility until they are twenty-one and then just released?” Later in the essay, I got a satisfactory answer. Gorski believes that such offenders should not be tried as adults but should be “segregated from society” and isolated in juvenile facilities as long as is necessary. In other words, they should remain in juvenile prison and then, I assume, transferred to an adult prison at age twenty-one. There is a way of dealing with the worst, most violent juveniles that protects society without throwing young teens as adults into adult prisons.

Gorski addresses the emotional opposing argument supporting the current practice that because of their grief and loss, relatives of victims deserve some vengeance because of their grief and loss. However, the essay contends that such vengeance does nothing to lessen the grief or make the relatives or friends feel better. I understand how parents could want the worst possible punishment for a teen offender who murdered their son or daughter, and I might someday feel the same. But that doesn’t seem like isn’t enough of an argument to justify putting juveniles in adult prisons.

Gorski’s example of a young boy killing a young girl by body-slamming and head-kicking her as he’d seen professional wrestling with no one getting seriously hurt. Most people would agree that the boy had no intent to kill the girl, and shouldn’t be sent to adult prison. and he probably wasn’t, so it’s a great good example of the type of juveniles who are tried as adults and is therefore misleading. It is the juveniles who commit murders that appear to be as horrible and intentional as adults that are tried. Gorski argues convincingly throughout the essay that even the worst juveniles offenders should not be tried as adults throughout the essay, so the “professional wrestling” murder didn’t weaken my belief, based on the essay, that the trying and sentencing of any juvenile to adult prison is wrong.
Revision Activity 5.7

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two, evaluate their drafts as you did your own, and make suggestions for improvements. Based on your classmates’ input, make any additional changes to your own draft that you feel would improve it. Then rewrite your draft with all of the revisions included.
Editing

After having edited nearly twenty drafts including the “timed-writing” assignments, you are a relatively experienced proofreader, and no doubt your ability both to write correctly and to identify and correct any errors has improved greatly. To be moving towards producing error-free essays is a great accomplishment, one that will benefit you throughout your writing life.

Of course, you may not have ironed out all of your problems yet, and don’t be discouraged if some of the more persistent types of errors still appear occasionally. That you are becoming more aware of your personal error tendencies and can track them down more successfully shows tremendous progress. Getting better at writing is what all writers work at, and you are heading in the right direction.

Possessive Words

Possessive words indicate that something belongs to someone or something. Apostrophes are used in possessive words to indicate this relationship: a dog’s collar, freedom’s fragility, the newspaper’s headlines, Tamiko’s hairstyle. Like many writers, you may overlook some possessive words in your drafts and fail to insert the necessary apostrophes. However, when you proofread a draft focusing specifically on possessive words, you should have little problem identifying them and inserting apostrophes as needed.

The following simple rules will help you punctuate possessive words correctly in your writing.

1. A possessive word shows ownership - something belongs to a person or thing: cat’s instinct, rainbow’s colors, Bernadette’s wig, freedom’s power.

2. If a singular word is possessive, it ends in apostrophe “s” (’s): car’s windshield, Malcolm’s toothbrush, tomorrow’s headline.

If a plural word is possessive, it ends in “s” apostrophe (s’): several cities’ budget deficits, thirty students’ math scores, boxes’ lids.
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(Exception: If a word forms its plural without adding “s” (children, geese, men, women), its possessive form ends in apostrophe “s:” children’s books, geese’s pond, men’s clothing, women’s prerogative.)

3. **Apostrophes are not used in possessive pronouns such as his, hers, theirs, yours, ours.** However, apostrophes are used in indefinite possessive pronouns: someone’s umbrella, everybody’s business, no one’s fault, somebody’s coat.

4. **A possessive word may follow the word it possesses:** That credit card is Fran’s (Fran’s credit card). That newspaper is yesterday’s (yesterday’s newspaper). The coat I borrowed is my mother’s (mother’s coat).

5. **Make sure not to insert apostrophes in plural words that aren’t possessive.** For example, the sentence, “My sisters practice their tumbling routines in separate rooms,” “sisters,” “routines,” and “rooms” are plural but not possessive and don’t require apostrophes.

__________________________________________________

**Editing Activity 5.6**

Insert apostrophes in possessive words in the following paragraph. Insert the apostrophe before the “s” in singular possessive words and after the “s” in plural possessive words.

In 2010, an Italian cruise ship was sailing around the sun-splotched islands along the Mediterranean coast. It rammed into a reef and turned onto its side. There is reason to suspect that the captain steered too close to the port islands reef before turning into its harbor. Many of the ships lifeboats were incapacitated, so hundreds of island residents boats anchored in the harbor sailed to the sinking ship to rescue the 3,000 passengers and ships crew. It was the first major cruise ship disaster since the Mediterranean was added to many large cruise lines itineraries in the 1950’s.

__________________________________________________

**Editing Activity 5.7**

This editing review activity gives you more valuable proofreading practice. Identify and correct the errors in the following paragraphs involving run-on and comma-splice sentences, fragments, comma usage, subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, apostrophes in possessives, comparative and superlative adjectives.

**Contaminated Water**

Every year contaminants from agricultural fertilizers and dairy waste finds its way into hundreds of rural family wells. The contaminants seep into underground streams which is the water source for the wells and often makes the water unfit for drinking.

While many of the more potent fertilizers have been banned by the state. Todays
agricultural fertilizers still retain some contaminating elements if concentrated in large quantities. Many of the wells tested by the county's water department exceed the maximum level of contaminants for drinkable water, as a consequence many rural families must drink nothing but bottled water.

Recently a local rural resident filed a lawsuit against local farmers they want the farmers to pay for the purification process required to make the contaminated water drinkable. In addition they are seeking an injunction against farmers from using any fertilizer containing the contaminants found in the well water. In the past such lawsuits took years to process providing no timely relief from the problem.

Arguing that their livelihood is dependent on fertilizing their crops. Local farmers continue to use the fertilizers which exacerbates the problem further. Contaminants from older fertilizers which were potenter than today's fertilizers can remain in water sources for many years thereby mixing with the more current contaminates to produce a toxic brew. The problem of water contamination in large agricultural areas have always existed while the situation is better today than twenty years ago it is still unacceptable to anyone concerned about the quality and safety of their water.

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**Editing Guidelines**

As you proofread your current draft, remember to focus on the following grammar and punctuation elements.

1. **Check your sentences to make sure you haven’t run any sentences together or put a comma between sentences instead of a period.** Correct run-on sentences or comma splices by separating longer sentence with periods and combining shorter, related sentences with a joining word.

2. **Check your draft for any sentence fragments: incomplete sentences with a period after them.** To correct fragments, attach them to the sentence they belong with, or add words to make them complete.

3. **Check your present tense verbs to make sure that they agree with their subjects.** In addition, make sure that you have correctly spelled any past tense irregular verbs.

4. **Check your comma usage, making sure you have inserted commas into your sentences correctly and not in places they aren’t required.** In addition, make sure you are using colons, semi-colons, and dashes correctly in your writing.
5. **Check your use of pronouns.** Make sure that you are using the correct subject pronouns with compound pronouns (Jonah and I, Clare and they) and that all pronouns agree in number and gender with their antecedent.

6. Check your use of superlative and comparative adjectives, making sure you have used the correct forms for one-syllable and two-syllable adjectives (*more expensive, most desired, quickest, brighter, happiest, most useful, more helpful*).

7. Check to make sure that you have used the correct word with words that are commonly confused: there/their/they're, its/it’s, advice/advise, accept/except, effect/affect, were/we’re/where, your/you’re, here/hear, then/than.

8. **Check your use of possessive words,** making sure that you have inserted apostrophes in the correct places.

9. **Check your spelling** by running the spell check on your word processing program or by looking up the spelling of any word you are unsure of.

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**Editing Activity 5.8**

Proofread your current draft for errors keeping the editing guidelines in mind. Read your draft several times, focusing on one particular grammar or punctuation consideration at a time: run-on sentences, fragments, subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, etc. Look in particular for the types of errors that have cropped up most frequently in your previous drafts.

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**Editing Activity 5.9**

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and proofread each other’s drafts for errors, pointing out any that you find. Based on your classmates’ input, make any additional corrections to your draft that you may have overlooked. Then write the final, corrected draft of your essay to share with classmates and your instructor.
Timed Writing Nine

Write an in-class essay on the following topic. Use a process for preparing, writing, revising, and editing that has served you well for previous timed writings.

A trend that past few years that many people find alarming is the decrease in the number of males attending college in the U.S. and the increasing number of females, resulting in more women than men attending and graduating from college. Based on your experience, knowledge, and reasoning skills, analyze the problem by presenting its probable causes, possible negative (or positive) effects, and any solutions that would increase male college attendance and bring balance to the number of male/female graduates.
Comparative essays, in which writers compare and evaluate subjects, are commonly assigned in composition courses for a number of reasons. First, they further your writing development by requiring a number of mental tasks: creating a criteria – a set of standards - by which to compare the subjects; analyzing and evaluating the subjects based on the criteria; and drawing conclusions for readers on the relative value of each subject. Second, comparative essays are organized differently from previous essays, adding to your repertoire of organizational schemes. Third, comparative essays can produce some of the most informative and interesting writing, often helping both writer and readers to make important choices.

In addition, comparative writing reflects how we make choices in “real life” and helps us become better at it. For example, we compare mundane things every day to decide where to eat lunch, what to watch on T.V., what to do on a Friday night. Other decisions we make are more consequential: where to attend college, what to major in, whether to try out for the school musical, where to find a summer job. Such decisions usually involve comparing different options and making the best choice.

For example, a student may be interested in the nursing profession due to the job opportunities available after college and her desire to help people. Within the profession, there are different types of nurses such as registered nurses, nurse practitioners, licensed practical nurses, or clinical nurse specialists. In comparing and evaluating the different nursing options, the student may consider the following criteria: the years of schooling required, the average salary for each job, the type of work entailed, the job opportunities in the area, and which job would best suit her interests. Based on her comparative evaluation, she might decide which nursing job to pursue.

Comparing and evaluating similar subjects and drawing conclusions from your evaluation provide the writing emphasis for this unit. Making informed decisions based on comparing alternatives provides another challenge in your continued writing development, and you can also apply what you learn to any decision-making that you do that involves making choices.

Writing Assignment Eleven

For your upcoming essay, you will compare two-to-four similar subjects and decide which subject that you favor based on your evaluation. You might compare different laptop computers, professional football teams, community colleges, musical artists, fashion trends, or candidates running for mayor. Begin thinking about possible subjects to compare based on your interest and on what may interest a particular reading audience.
In preparing to write your comparative essay, you will decide on a topic for comparison and on the subjects to compare within that topic. Then you will select a criteria – a set of standards - by which to compare them, evaluate the subjects on those standards, and draw conclusions for readers based on your evaluation.

Comparing Subjects

Writers compare subjects for a variety of purposes: to present their similarities and differences, to evaluate their relative quality, to suggest to readers the best decision to make, or to make a decision for themselves: which car to buy, student-body-president candidate to support, cell phone to buy, or college to attend. The most effective comparative essays usually cover critical points of comparison, provide details that reveal the differences between subjects, present accurate, objective information, and draw insightful conclusions for readers based on the comparative information presented.

An important aspect of comparative writing is deciding on the criteria on which to base the comparison: the set of standards, rules, qualities, or features you use to compare and evaluate your subjects. For example, if you were comparing presidential candidates, your comparative criteria might include the candidates’ political experience, positions on key issues, integrity, and leadership qualities. If you were comparing singers, your criteria might include their quality of sound, strength of voice, performance ability, and song choice. Deciding on a criteria for your comparison is an important step in writing a comparative essay.

Comparative Criteria

When a friend recommends a particular restaurant, encourages you to see a particular counselor, or says that a particular quarterback is the “best” in college football, you would probably want to know why she believes as she does. Her response would indicate her criteria for making each judgment: the things that she feels are most important in a restaurant, counselor, or quarterback. For example, her “restaurant” criteria might include the quality of food, the range of menu choices, the atmosphere, and the quality of service. Her “counselor” criteria might include the counselor’s friendly manner, his expertise, and how much he cares about each student. Her “quarterback” criteria might include percentage of passes completed, touchdown-to-interception ratio, and the success of his team. How closely your friend’s criteria corresponds to your own could influence whether you agree with her.
To write the most convincing comparative essay, the criteria you decide on should include those elements that are most important in evaluating your subjects. To that end, consider the following suggestions:

1. **In deciding on a criteria to evaluate your subjects, ask yourself, “What are the most important considerations for comparing these subjects?”** For example, if you were comparing two different driving routes to get to a particular destination, the most important considerations may be the length of time each takes, the quality of the roads, the relative amount of traffic, and the easiest route to navigate.

2. **More comparative points are better than fewer.** You never know what comparative point may interest some readers, so it is better to be more inclusive rather than leave out a point or two that some readers may be looking for. For example, in the “driving routes” criteria, some readers may only care about how long each route takes, others may prefer the easiest route, and still others may prefer the nicest freeway route even if it takes longer. You never know what consideration may be most important to readers.

3. **When deciding on your criteria, look at your subjects from different perspectives.** For example, for some readers, the cost of a product may be most important. For others, the quality may be most important. For others, the durability may be most important: how long will it last? For others, the local availability of the product may be important.

4. **Keep your readers in mind when considering your criteria.** In making the comparison, ask yourself, “What can I include to help readers, as well as myself, make a decision on what to buy, whom to vote for, or what to believe?” Regarding your subjects, consider what you think your particular reader audience would think most important.

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### Prewriting Activity 6.1

For any three of the following comparative topics and reading audiences, decide on a criteria by which to evaluate the subjects. Include what you feel are the most important points of comparison, keeping in mind the four suggestions presented. Then share your criteria with a classmate or two, and explain why you chose each criterion (singular form of “criteria.”). Note how your criteria are similar to or different from your classmates’, and decide whether you might change (add to or delete) any criteria.

**Examples:**

- **Topic:** Comparing candidates running for a school office
- **Audience:** College students
- **Criteria:** Their position on different college issues
  - Their friendliness to other students
  - Their capability/experience for the office
The quality of their campaigns
The kind of students that are supporting them

Topic: Comparing local community colleges

Audience: High school seniors

Criteria: Size of college
Programs offered
Cost
Social activities
Facilities
Campus resources (library, computers, Internet access, tutors, etc.)

1. Topic: Comparing two teams (any sport, any level)
   Audience: High school students
   Criteria:

2. Topic: Comparing two similar stores (e.g. KMART and Target)
   Audience: High school students
   Criteria:

3. Topic: Comparing two similar cars (e.g. Honda Accord, Toyota Camry)
   Audience: General public
   Criteria:

4. Topic: Comparing three Mexican restaurants
   Audience: Anyone who likes Mexican food
   Criteria:

5. Topic: Comparing two game stations (e.g. Wii, X Box, Play Station)
   Audience: College “gamers”
   Criteria:

**Topic Selection**

In your upcoming essay, you will compare two-to-four similar subjects and evaluate them based on your criteria. To help you decide what to compare, consider these suggestions:
1. **Compare subjects that some group of readers wouldn’t already be knowledgeable about.** For example, comparing fast-food restaurants like McDonald’s, Burger King, and Wendy’s would be of little value since most people are familiar with fast-food restaurants. Compare subjects that would provide your readers with some new and useful information.

2. **Compare subjects that interest you and that you are knowledgeable about or want to learn more about.** Think of subjects that you are familiar with and have perhaps compared for yourself. If you are interested in knowing more about some subjects - e.g. different LED television brands, colleges you may transfer to, different brands of cell phones, or similar jobs, such as licensed practical nurse, registered nurse, and nurse practitioner – you might learn more and compare those subjects.

3. **Compare subjects that are substantial enough to warrant a comparison.** For example, comparing different brands of bottled water wouldn’t produce much of an essay. However, comparing three or four different sport’s energy drinks that have different ingredients, flavors, prices, and results might be of interest to people who exercise a lot.

4. **Make sure to compare similar subjects.** For example, you could compare different models of SUV’s or different models of mid-sized sedans, but don’t compare SUV’s to mid-sized sedans, an “apples to oranges” comparison. You could compare different brands of pianos or different brands of keyboards, but don’t compare pianos to keyboards, another dissimilar comparison.

5. **Consider a number of different areas where you could find comparative subjects: school, jobs, products, music, politics, sports, technology, the environment, etc.** Generate a number of possible comparisons before deciding on the best topic for your essay.

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**Prewriting Activity 6.2**

Take your time deciding on a topic you’d like to write on, and ultimately, choose a comparison that a reading audience could learn something from. Then decide on your criteria for comparing subjects: the most important features or qualities that you want to evaluate in comparing subjects.

**Example:**

**Topic:** Comparing electric cars: the Chevy Volt and Nissan Leaf

**Criteria:** Cost and savings  
How they work  
Range (driving distance between recharges)  
Size  
Looks  
Performance  
Relative “greenness” (how environmentally friendly)
Researhing Subjects

Do you need to learn more about your subjects to write a well-informed essay? If so, decide the best way to get information and proceed from there. To find out more about your subjects, consider these suggestions.

1. **Find objective information on your subjects.** For example, if you are comparing Sony, Toshiba, and Mitsubishi camcorders, pamphlets put out by Sony, Toshiba or Mitsubishi would probably provide the most favorable and least objective information. Look for sources that would provide the most objective information, like in-store experts on camcorders, consumer magazines, or on-line reviews.

2. **Use your criteria to find relevant information.** Look specifically for information that compares your subjects in the areas you have decided to evaluate them on. You might also find some new criteria based on what you learn about your subjects.

3. **Find local “experts” that may be able to provide good information.** They may be instructors, fellow students with experience with your topic, local car dealers, or store employees at a Best Buy, Home Depot, or bookstore. Find the most factual information you can from the most reliable sources.

**Prewriting Activity 6.3**

If necessary, learn more about your topic before proceeding, taking notes on any information that you may use in your essay to help compare subjects.

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**Audience and Purpose**

By now, you may have a good idea of the best reading audience for your essay: readers who would have the most interest in it. It may be people who are looking for a good used car, deciding what college to transfer to, deciding which adventure reality show to watch on television, or wondering which presidential candidate is best in an upcoming national election. Choose a reading audience that you feel would be interested in your topic, that would learn something from it, and that might benefit from reading about it.

Your writing purpose for this essay depends on your subject. If you are comparing two musical groups, your purpose may be to recommend to readers which group’s concert to attend in your city. If you are comparing three candidates for mayor, your purpose may be to encourage readers to vote for one particular candidate or to vote for none of them and instead support a
“write-in” candidate. If you are comparing different brands of HD 35-inch televisions, your purpose may be to help readers decide which brand to buy if they are shopping for a TV.

Prewriting Activity 6.4

Decide on a tentative audience for your comparative essay and your purpose in writing to them.

Example:

Topic: Comparing the Chevy Volt and Nissan Leaf electric cars

Audience: Anyone who is interested in electric cars and may consider buying one now or in the future.

Purpose: To help readers decide which electric car would be the best choice for them
As you progress through the units, each drafting experience presents some new and some familiar considerations. For your current comparative essay, the new considerations include doing a point-by-point comparison of similar subjects and drawing conclusions for readers based on your comparison. The familiar considerations include providing an interesting topic introduction, developing your main points in the middle paragraphs, providing a strong conclusion, and keeping your reading audience and purpose in mind.

Organizing a Comparative Essay

Writers organize most comparative essays in one of two basics ways. The organizational method that you decide on depends on how you feel you can present your comparisons most effectively to readers.

One way to organize your essay is to compare the subjects point-by-point throughout the essay. For example, let’s say that you are comparing organically and non-organically grown fruit, and your criteria include looks, size, taste, cost, and environmental impact. After your opening, your essay organization may look like this:

Paragraph one: Compare the looks of your two subjects.
Paragraph two: Compare their size.
Paragraph three: Compare their taste.
Paragraph four: Compare their cost.
Paragraph five: Compare their environmental impact.

(Look at the first draft of “Comparing Electric Cars” in Drafting Activity 6.3 for a point-by-point comparison.)

A second way to organize your essay is to take one subject at a time, cover all of the criteria for that subject, and then do the same for the next subject. For example, with the same fruit comparison, your organization after the opening paragraph may look like this:

Paragraph one: Present the looks and size of organically grown fruit.
Paragraph two: Present the taste and cost of organically grown fruit.
Paragraph three: Present the environmental impact of organically grown fruit.
Paragraph four: Present the looks and size of non-organically grown fruit.
Paragraph five: Present the taste and cost of non-organically grown fruit.
Paragraph six: Present the environmental impact of non-organically grown fruit.

An advantage of this organizational method is that you get all of the information on a subject at one time. A disadvantage is that you don’t get a “side-by-side” comparison of the two subjects and may have to read back and forth to see how they compare.

Most comparative essays lend themselves best to a “side-by-side” comparison of subjects on each point. However, there can be exceptions, such as comparing the health care systems in two countries or comparing two famous singing groups, which may be more effectively presented one subject at a time.

Drafting Activity 6.1

Decide on a tentative organizational plan for your comparative essay based on your topic, purpose, and reading audience.

Sample organization:

Topic: Comparing Electric Cars
Organization: Comparing subjects together point by point
Reason: Readers can get the best sense of the differences and similarities between the two cars if I compare them together on each point.

Drawing Conclusions

In the opening of your draft, you introduce your subjects for comparison. In the middle paragraphs, you compare them in a number of different areas. What remains in the ending is to draw conclusions for readers that may help them, and you, make a decision. Based on your subjects and how they compare, you might draw any of the following conclusions:
1. **Clear-cut conclusion.** With a “clear-cut” conclusion, you have one recommendation to make for all readers: vote for Dominguez, lease a car rather than buy it, take Dr. Ball for Biology II. If one subject stands out over the other(s), you can single it out for readers.

2. **Qualified conclusion.** With a “qualified” conclusion, rather than make a single recommendation, you may make recommendations based on a reader’s circumstances or preferences. For example, with the organic/non-organic fruit comparison, a writer might conclude, “If price or looks of the fruit are your most important considerations, buy non-organic fruit. If you are concerned about the environment and the effects of chemical fertilizers and pesticides used in non-organic farming, you should buy organic fruit. For another example of a “qualified” conclusion, read the ending of the upcoming “Comparing Electric Cars” draft.

3. **Flip a coin.** If after evaluating the subjects you don’t see a great difference between or among them, your conclusion should reflect that opinion. For example, if you find that the top three brands of 52” HD televisions are comparable in price, picture clarity, looks, and warranty length, you might conclude that readers can’t go wrong with any brand. There is nothing wrong with concluding that all subjects are comparable if that is what your evaluation reveals.

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**Drafting Activity 6.2**

Considering your subjects and reading audience, what type of conclusion are you most likely to draw? If you might write a qualified conclusion, think of the readers’ circumstances and preferences that could influence your recommendations.

**Sample Conclusion:**

Topic: Comparing electric cars

Conclusion: Qualified

Reason: Which electric car a reader might buy depends on different factors: what they can afford, how far they drive every day, how much seating room they need, how important looks are, and how “green” they want their car to be. I’ll make different recommendations based on people’s needs.
Drafting Guidelines
As you write the first draft of your essay, consider the following suggestions.

1. **In your opening, introduce your subjects and give readers an idea of why you are comparing them and why they may be interested in the comparison.** How might readers benefit from reading this essay?  
2. **If you need to provide some background or explanatory information about your subjects, include it after the opening.** For example, the writer of the “Comparing Electric Cars” draft explained to readers exactly what electric cars were in her second paragraph.

3. **In the middle paragraphs, present your points of comparison in the most effective order, and make sure to compare both (or three or four) subjects on each point.** In general, develop each comparative point in a separate paragraph, with its *topic sentence* indicating the point of comparison. (See the middle paragraphs of the “Comparing Electric Cars” draft.)

4. **End your draft by drawing a conclusion for readers based on your evaluation, which may help them make a decision.** Your conclusion should take in mind your reading audience and your purpose in writing to them, and should follow logically from the comparative information you have provided on the subjects.

5. **As you write, be open to including new ideas that may come to you: a new point of comparison, the explanation of a particular term, a different conclusion than you had planned on.** The drafting process is a thinking process, which can lead to new, sometimes critical discoveries. No matter how much preparation you do for a draft, new connections and insights may come to you as you write which may greatly enrich your essay.

Drafting Activity 6.3
Read the following first draft “Comparing Electric Cars,” noting the following:

- Its introduction of subjects
- Explanation of what electric cars are in the second paragraph
- Points of comparison in the middle paragraph, including comparative details provided
- *Topic sentences* to introduce points of comparison in most paragraphs
- The “qualified” conclusion that takes into account readers’ needs and preferences

Then write the first draft of your essay, keeping the drafting considerations in mind.
Sample First Draft

Comparing Electric Cars

Reading audience: Anyone interested in electric cars who may purchase one at some time

With the price of gasoline constantly rising and auto emissions contributing significantly to global warming, more Americans are seriously looking into buying electric cars. Many companies are beginning to come out with electric car models, but two models stand out at this time: the Chevy Volt and the Nissan Leaf. The Tesla Roadster is a third electric vehicle that is getting a lot of attention, but with a price tag of $110,000, it is not in a price range that most people can afford.

Unlike hybrid vehicles such as the Prius and Ford Focus, which use electric and gasoline power in combination to improve gasoline mileage, the Volt and Leaf are electricity-first cars. The Leaf is a pure electric car with no gasoline engine and has a 100 mile driving range. The Volt is an electricity-first, gasoline-second vehicle which has a 40 mile electric driving range, after which its gasoline engine kicks in and can extend the range to 400 miles. However, each time the electric engine is recharged, it powers the car for 40 miles. In other words, the gas engine is a “safety valve” for longer drives between recharges. Both the Leaf and Volt can be recharged in a few hours by simply plugging into a 120 volt wall plug in a garage.

Both the Leaf and Volt are 5-door hatchbacks, but the Leaf holds five passengers while the Volt holds four. The interior and seating space in both is similar to most compact cars, with comfortable front-seat space and a little tight sitting in the back. Both cars also have the same technological dash features of most autos today, including GPS navigation and blue tooth phone systems.

As far as performance, the Volt is smooth and quiet, it rides well, and it has good acceleration. There is little difference between the Volt’s performance and that of gas-powered compacts. The Leaf, which is not as quick as the Volt, also has a quiet, smooth, pleasant drive. As far as performance, there is little to choose between the two. Both cars handle well and possess similar safety features to gas-powered compacts.

If you are into looks, you’ll probably find the Volt more pleasing to the eye. It has a sleek, sedan-like look despite being a hatchback while the Leaf definitely looks like a hatchback with its boxy rear end. The Leaf also has a higher top, accentuating its boxiness and giving it a mini-SUV look.

When it comes to price, the Leaf definitely has the Volt beat, which may explain why it has outsold the Volt two-to-one in the last year. The Leaf’s base price is $33,000 while the Volt’s is $41,000. It’s duel-engine set-up may contribute to the higher price than the Leaf’s single electric engine. As sales and production go up in the future for both cars, their prices will undoubtedly fall nearer the price of comparable gas-powered compacts.

There is no question that both the Volt and Leaf outperform all hybrids when it comes to gas consumption and emissions. The Leaf uses no gasoline and the Volt only uses gas when it’s 40-mile electric range is exceeded, which may seldom occur during daily around-town driving.
While the price of the Volt and Leaf exceeds that of comparable gas-powered compacts, the savings in annual gas cost can be in the $2000-$4000 range. Since the cost of running a car on electricity is a small fraction of the cost of gasoline, the savings is significant when factoring in the cost of electricity.

Whether the Volt or the Leaf is the best choice depends on your situation. For a family of five, the five-seated Leaf obviously seems the best choice. For someone whose commute exceeds 100 miles, the Volt with its gas-powered engine that kicks in after 40 electrical miles makes the most sense. For looks-conscious drivers, the Volt is also the sleeker-looking car. For someone wanting the “greenest” car, the Leaf is a clear choice since it burns no gasoline and emits no carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. If cost is a big consideration, the Leaf is also about $8,000 less expensive.

Whichever car you may consider buying, the prices could come down appreciably in the future, putting them on the radar for more prospective buyers. There may also be more electric car models in production, but for now, the Volt and Leaf are the best choices on the market.

**A little logic 15**

Answer the following “Probability” questions.

1. Two coins are flipped in the air. What is the probability of two “heads” coming up?

2. A card is pulled randomly from a deck. What is the probability that the card is a queen?

3. A couple has five boys and the wife is pregnant. What is the probability of the wife having a girl?

4. Two dice are rolled. What is the probability of a “double five” coming up?
Revision

Each draft that you write has some revision considerations specific to that essay and some broader considerations that apply to most essays you write. For example, with your current comparative essay, the specific considerations include evaluating the criteria that you used for your comparison, the effectiveness of each point of comparison, and the appropriateness of your conclusion based on your comparison.

The broader revision considerations include improving your sentence wording, evaluating your paragraphing and organization, considering what you might add to strengthen the essay, checking your use of transitional wording, and determining how you might improve your opening or ending. By this time, most of these considerations are probably built into to your revision process as you become increasingly adept at revising your drafts.

Revision Guidelines

1. **Read your entire draft once to get an overall sense of its strengths and possible weaknesses.** You may notice that you have spent too much time on some areas of comparison and too little on others, buried one comparison in an overly long paragraph, or left readers unclear as to which subject was superior or the better option. Keep such concerns in mind as you begin revising your draft.

2. **Check your opening to see how effectively you introduced your topic and created interest for readers.** Make any changes that will pique readers’ interest in the topic.

3. **Check to see whether you have provided explanations for anything your readers might not understand.** For example, the writer of the “Comparing Electric Cars” draft explained what an electric car and a hybrid car were so readers would understand the difference.

4. **Check your criteria - the points of comparison you presented - to see whether you have covered the most important comparisons and ordered them effectively.** If a new point of comparison comes to mind, you may want to include it. If a point in your draft seems rather minor, you may want to delete it. In addition, evaluate the order in which you presented your criteria, and determine whether a different order may be more effective.
5. Check your use of details and examples to develop each comparison between subjects. What might you add to make a particular comparison clearer or show a sharper distinction between subjects?

6. Check the wording of each sentence. Delete unnecessary words or phrases, reword awkward or vague sentences, and replace questionable word choices. In addition, check your sentence structures and, if necessary, make any revisions that will provide greater structural variety, keeping in mind the range of joining words available.

7. Check your use of transitional wording to tie thoughts together and help readers navigate your paper. Since you are presenting a number of different comparative points, you might find use for transitions such as “first,” “next,” “another,” or “lastly,” as well as transitions that show different relationships such as “however,” “nevertheless,” “therefore,” or “consequently.

8. Check your conclusion to see whether it follows logically from the comparisons you made and takes into account your reading audience. Does your conclusion make the most sense based on your evaluation of subjects? Does it take into account possible differences in the circumstances or preferences of readers? Your comparative points lead to what may interest readers the most: the recommendations that you make in the conclusion.

Revision Activity 6.1

Read the following first draft of “Getting Glasses.” With a classmate, apply the revision guidelines to the draft and note where you would suggest changes to the writer to improve the essay, including specific ways to improve some sentences. Be prepared to share your evaluation with the class.

Getting Glasses

Audience: Anyone who wears glasses or needs them

If you have bad eyesight like I do, you have to visit your optometrist regularly and once every two or three years get a new prescription which means getting new glasses when your eyesight gets worse. There are a lot of options when getting a new pair of glasses and decisions to be made. Your optometrist will give you some good information, but you have to decide for yourself what you want to get.

There are three kinds of lenses that you can get. You can get regular clear lenses. You can get dark lenses. You can get what are called “indoor-outdoor” lenses. These lenses change from clear to dark as you go from inside to outside, the sun acting upon the lense to make it dark. In that way, you have both regular glasses and sun glasses together in one pair of glasses.

I have gotten the indoor-outdoor glasses the last two times for three reasons. First, you only need one pair of glasses for indoors and outdoors. Second, having one pair of glasses for indoors and outdoors is cheaper than buying two pair of glasses, one with clear lenses and one with dark
lenses. Third, I often misplace things, including my glasses, and having to keep track of one pair of glasses is twice as easy as having to keep track of two pairs of glasses.

One problem with the indoor-outdoor glasses, however, is that as they age, the lense doesn’t get as dark outside as at first. Therefore, they aren’t as good for sunglasses after a couple of years. You don’t have the same problem with clear glasses or regular sun glasses, which never lose their original darkness.

You also have a choice between “coated” lenses and plain lenses. Coated lenses have some kind of coating on them that makes everything you see a little sharper and clearer, not a whole lot different but somewhat of an improvement. That sounded good to me, so I tried the coated lenses the last time. The problem with the coated lenses is that you have to clean them regularly because the coating material on the lenses gets dirtier more easily, so I was always cleaning my glasses, which was a pain. In addition, because of the coating, the lenses scratch more easily. I’m kind of rough on my glasses and I don’t like to clean them a lot, so for me, the coated lenses weren’t worth the trouble.

Then there are the decisions on choosing a frame for your glasses. Here again you have choices such as frameless glasses, wire-rim glasses, and plastic-framed glasses. I’ve never tried the frameless glasses because my lense are very thick because of my eyesight and the optometrist doesn’t recommend frameless. However, frameless glasses are probably the least noticeable, with only the wire side pieces to your ears visible, so they have that advantage. I’ve tried the wire-rim glasses and have liked the way they look alright. However, they aren’t as sturdy as the plastic-framed glasses and the side pieces tend to bend out of shape or break more easily. The plastic-framed glasses are the most durable and the most noticeable on your face, but they come in many different styles and colors, so you have a great choice. They are, however, the most expensive of the three options.

Whether you get just clear-lense glasses, clear-lense glasses and dark glasses both, or indoor-outdoor glasses that work as both regular glasses and sunglasses is really up to what you want and what you can afford. The same with the coated or non-coated lenses. As for frames, again it is up to you. Try on different frames and see what you like. Of course, the price is always a consideration for most people.

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**Revision Activity 6.2**

Look at the revisions below for the “Comparing Electric Cars” draft, noting how the changes improve each paragraph. Then revise your own draft, keeping the revision suggestions in mind. For the best results, you may want to read your draft several times, covering one or two revision areas at a time.

**Revision excerpts from “Comparing Electric Cars”**

(First two paragraphs)

With the price of gasoline constantly rising and auto emissions contributing significantly to global warming, **many Americans are seriously looking into considering for the first time buying an electric car.** Many companies are beginning to come out with **introduce** electric car models, but two models stand out at this time: the Chevy Volt and the Nissan Leaf. The Tesla Roadster, is a third electric vehicle **that is getting a lot of attention, is out of most people’s price**
range at $110,000. However, the Volt and Leaf give drivers two reasonable electric car options to consider. Unlike hybrid vehicles such as the Prius and Ford Focus, which use a combination of electric and gasoline power in combination to improve gasoline mileage, the Volt and Leaf are electricity-first cars. The Leaf is a pure electric car with no gasoline engine and has a 100 mile driving range between charges. The Volt is an electricity-first car gasoline-second vehicle which has a 40 mile electric driving range between charges, after which its gasoline engine kicks in and can extend the range to 400 miles. However, each time the electric engine is recharged, it again powers the car, for 40 miles. In other words, the gas engine is being a “safety valve” for longer drives between recharges. Both the Leaf and Volt can be recharged in a few hours by simply plugging them into a 120 volt wall plug in the garage.

(Revisions were made to improve wording, add information, eliminate unnecessary words or phrases, and provide detail.)

(Revisions were made to reorganize information, presenting Volt information first and Leaf information second, to add detail, to improve wording, and to provide new information.)

Revision Activity 6.3

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two to get some reader feedback. Ask questions about anything that you don’t understand or would like more information on, and make any suggestions that you feel would improve the drafts. Then based on your classmates’ suggestions, make any additional revisions to your draft that you feel are warranted.

Editing
The final step in preparing your essay for readers is to correct any errors you may find. In each “Editing” section you are introduced to a new editing consideration, review some of the common problems presented in previous lessons, and proofread your latest draft for errors, making the corrections that will produce an error-free final essay.

**Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers**

Two common types of writing problems involve faulty sentence structures: misplaced and dangling modifiers. While they aren’t considered “errors” in the same sense as a misspelled word or a verb that doesn’t agree with its subject, they nonetheless are problems that can distract readers and weaken the essay’s impact. Although they are both sentence revision and editing concerns, misplaced and dangling modifiers are frequently identified and corrected in the final proofreading stage of the writing process.

The following guidelines will help you identify and correct any problems with misplaced or dangling modifiers in your writing:

**Misplaced Modifier**

1. **A misplaced modifier** is most typically a phrase or clause located some distance from the word it modifies. It can create an awkward sentence with ambiguous meaning:

   The woman works at the “return” counter of Home Depot in the green plaid leisure suit. (The phrase *in the green plaid leisure suit* is too far from the word it modifies: “woman”).

   I prefer sitting where I can see the facial expressions of the actors in the front row of a playhouse. (The phrase *in the front row of a playhouse* is too far from the word it modifies, “sitting,” and could mistakenly refer to the actors.)

   The chemistry instructor is no longer teaching in the evening whose class you had hoped to enroll in. (The clause *whose class you had hoped to enroll in* is too far from the word it modifies, “instructor,” creating an awkward sentence.

2. **To correct a misplaced modifier, move the modifying phrase or clause close to the word it modifies, most typically directly after it:**

   The woman in the green plaid leisure suit works at the “return” counter of Home Depot.
I prefer sitting in the front row of a playhouse where I can see the facial expressions of the actors.

The chemistry instructor whose class you had hoped to enroll in is no longer teaching in the evening.

**Dangling Modifier**

1. A *dangling modifier* is most typically an *introductory participial phrase* (beginning with an “ing” or “ed” ending participle) followed by a subject that it *doesn’t modify*. The modifier “dangles” because it doesn’t modify the subject that follows it:

*Driving* in the countryside, the orchards were clothed in pink, white, and red blossoms. (“Orchards” can’t drive. Who does the participial phrase modify?)

*Frightened by the size of the needle*, the nurse assured the young patient that he would barely feel the shot. (The nurse isn’t frightened by the needle.)

*Studying* late into the night, the formula for photosynthesis became an indecipherable mass of numbers and letters to Rhonda. (A “formula” can’t study late into the night.)

*Accustomed to falling asleep with a night light on*, the pitch darkness was unwelcome and a bit frightening. (“Darkness” doesn’t fall asleep. Who does the participial phrase modify?)

4. To correct a dangling modifier, either make the modified word the subject of the sentence or change the participial phrase to a dependent clause beginning with a subordinate conjunction, the modified word becoming the subject of the clause:

Driving in the countryside, I saw the orchards clothed in pink, white, and red blossoms. (*Driving in the countryside* correctly modifies the subject “I.”)

While I was driving in the countryside, the orchards were clothed in pink, white, and red blossoms. (“I” is the subject of the introductory dependent clause.)

Frightened by the size of the needle, the young patient was assured by the nurse that he would barely feel the shot. (*Frightened by the needle* correctly modifies the subject “the young patient.”)

Because the young patient was frightened by the size of the needle, the nurse assured him that he would barely feel the shot. (“The young patient” becomes the subject of the introductory dependent clause.)
Studying late into the night, *Rhonda* viewed the formula for photosynthesis as an indecipherable mass of numbers and letters. (*Studying late into the night* correctly modifies the subject “Rhonda.”)

As *Rhonda* studied late into the night, the formula for photosynthesis became an indecipherable mass of numbers and letters. (”Rhonda” becomes the subject of the introductory dependent clause.)

Accustomed to falling asleep with a night light on, *Hollis* found the pitch darkness unwelcome and a bit frightening. (Accustomed to falling asleep with a night light on correctly modifies the subject “Hollis.”)

Since *Hollis* was accustomed to falling asleep with a night light on, he found the pitch darkness unwelcome and a bit frightening. (“Hollis” becomes the subject of the introductory dependent clause.)

**Editing Activity 6.1**

The following paragraph contains some problems with misplaced and dangling modifiers. Move misplaced modifiers directly after the word they modify and correct dangling modifiers by either making the subject of the sentence the modified word or by creating an introductory dependent clause with the modified word its subject.

**Example:**

The owners of the strawberry field picked on the plants the remaining berries. Coming in from the north, the next night there were dark clouds gathering ominously. That morning, rain poured on the field, by late afternoon leaving it flooded.

Corrected:

The owners of the strawberry field picked the remaining berries on the plants. Coming in from the north, *dark clouds* gathered ominously the next night. That morning, rain poured on the field, leaving it flooded *by late afternoon.*

**Animal Bonding**

Remarkably, animals of very different species can bond. For example, one family had a dog and a duck which shared a backyard that they had rescued. It’s difficult to think of two animal species more different than birds and canines. However, after a few days staying at arm’s length from one another, they became fast friends. They would chase each other playfully, eat together, and sleep together from the same bowl. If the family brought the dog into the house or put the duck in a pen, the other would act forlorn and just sit around. Returning to the back yard, the play would commence immediately, each animal obviously happy to see the other. When an animal doesn’t have one of its own kind to interact with, it can form cross-specie bonds that are good for both animals of lifetime duration. Studying the interaction of different kinds of
animals, the universal desire for companionship among all species is confirmed time and again by biologists.

**Editing Activity 6.2**

Proofread each sentence of your draft for any problems involving misplaced or dangling modifiers. If you find a modifying phrase that seems awkwardly placed, move it closer to the word it modifies. If you find a dangling modifier, either make the subject the correctly modified word or change the participial phrase to a dependent clause, its subject the modified word.

**Drafting Guidelines**

Apply the following guidelines when proofreading your current draft for errors.

1. **Check your sentences to make sure you haven’t run any sentences together or put a comma between sentences instead of a period.** Correct run-on sentences or comma splices by separating longer sentence with periods and combining shorter, related sentences with a joining word.

2. **Check your draft for any sentence fragments: incomplete sentences with a period after them.** To correct fragments, attach them to the sentence they belong with, or add words to make them complete.

3. **Check your present tense verbs to make sure that they agree with their subjects.** In addition, make sure that you have correctly spelled any past tense irregular verbs.

4. **Check your comma usage, making sure you have inserted commas into your sentences correctly and not in places they aren’t required.** In addition, check to make sure that you have used colons, semi-colons, and dashes correctly.

5. **Check your use of pronouns.** Make sure that you are using the correct subject pronouns with compound pronouns (Jonah and I, Clare and they) and that all pronouns agree in number and gender with their antecedent.

6. **Check to make sure that you have used the correct word with words that are commonly confused:** there/their/they’re, its/it’s, advice/advise, accept/except, effect/affect, were/we’re/where, your/you’re, here/hear, then/than.
7. **Check your use of possessive words, making sure that you have inserted apostrophes in the correct places.**

8. **Check your spelling by running the spell check on your word processing program or by looking up the spelling of any word you are unsure of.**

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**Editing Activity 6.3**

For additional editing practice, proofread the following paragraphs for errors and make the necessary corrections by applying the editing guidelines. You will find a number of different grammatical and punctuation errors to correct.

The Swinging Educational Pendulum

The extreme emphasis on standardized testing in grade schools, appear to be swinging back to a more moderate position. States and school districts are recognizing that memory-based testing where students are tested primarily on what they remember doesn’t address important learning functions such as critical thinking, problem solving, and collaborative learning. While memory learning is certainly an important part of a child’s education. Most educators agree that it should not be emphasized at the expense of a critical educational component developing a child’s thinking and reasoning skills.

Many states are moving towards less standardized testing, they are also developing testing models that requires more from students than memory recall. The educational pendulum which often swings from one extreme to another now appear to be moving towards a moderate middle where the importance of memory learning thinking and reasoning skills and creativity are all nurtured. Many on the learning forefront classroom teachers, learning coordinators, and site principals have advocated such a change for some time in his or her school districts.

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**Editing Activity 6.4**

Proofread your latest draft for errors and make any needed corrections, focusing particularly on the types of errors you are most prone to make.

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**Editing Activity 6.5**

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two, proofread one another’s drafts for errors, and point out any problems. Then write the final, error-free draft of your comparative essay.
Time Writing Ten

Write an in-class essay on the following topic to help prepare you for any time-restricted writing that you may do for any course. Use whatever approach for preparing, writing, revising, and editing your essay that has proven most effective for other timed writings. Currently, there is much discussion on whether women in the U.S. military should be allowed to serve in war combat. Some people believe that women should not see combat duty, which is the military rule today, and others believe they should have the right to participate. Write an essay taking the position that women should be allowed in combat or the position that women should not be allowed in combat. Use any evidence that you find relevant – personal experience, factual information, examples, comparisons, logical arguments – to support your position.

A little logic 16

1. A girl was attending her mother's funeral where she met a man. She was very intrigued by the man and was interested in getting to know him. As she was making her rounds she realized she had not gotten the man's name or number. Later, when she went to find him, he had already left. A week later, she murdered her older brother to find the man. Why?

2. A wealthy man lives alone in a small cottage. Being partially handicapped, he had everything delivered to his cottage. The mailman was delivering a letter one Thursday when he noticed that the front door was ajar. Through the opening he could see the man's body lying in a pool of dried blood. When a police officer arrived he surveyed the scene. On the porch were two bottles of warm milk, Monday's newspaper, a catalog, flyers, and unopened mail. The police officer suspects it was foul play. Who does he suspect and why?
Take a break from your writing to read a couple of comparative essays for your personal interest, to discuss with classmates, and to get ideas for your own writing.

Chinese Mothers Are Superior

by Amy Chua

*In this essay, Amy Chua, writer and professor of law at Yale Law School, compares Chinese and Western child rearing practices.*

A lot of people wonder how Chinese parents raise such stereotypically successful kids. They wonder what these parents do to produce so many math whizzes and music prodigies, what it’s like inside the family, and whether they could do it too. Well, I can tell them, because I’ve done it. Here are some things my daughters, Sophia and Louisa, were never allowed to do:

• attend a sleepover
• have a playdate
• be in a school play
• complain about not being in a school play
• watch TV or play computer games
• choose their own extracurricular activities
• get any grade less than an A
• not be the No. 1 student in every subject except gym and drama
• play any instrument other than the piano or violin
not play the piano or violin.

I’m using the term “Chinese mother” loosely. I know some Korean, Indian, Jamaican, Irish and Ghanaian parents who qualify too. Conversely, I know some mothers of Chinese heritage, almost always born in the West, who are not Chinese mothers, by choice or otherwise. I’m also using the term “Western parents” loosely. Western parents come in all varieties.

All the same, even when Western parents think they’re being strict, they usually don’t come close to being Chinese mothers. For example, my Western friends who consider themselves strict make their children practice their instruments 30 minutes every day. An hour at most. For a Chinese mother, the first hour is the easy part. It’s hours two and three that get tough.

When it comes to parenting, the Chinese seem to produce children who display academic excellence, musical mastery and professional success - or so the stereotype goes. Despite our squeamishness about cultural stereotypes, there are tons of studies out there showing marked and quantifiable differences between Chinese and Westerners when it comes to parenting. In one study of 50 Western American mothers and 48 Chinese immigrant mothers, almost 70% of the Western mothers said either that “stressing academic success is not good for children” or that “parents need to foster the idea that learning is fun.” By contrast, roughly 0% of the Chinese mothers felt the same way. Instead, the vast majority of the Chinese mothers said that they believe their children can be “the best” students, that “academic achievement reflects successful parenting,” and that if children did not excel at school then there was “a problem” and parents “were not doing their job.” Other studies indicate that compared to Western parents, Chinese parents spend approximately 10 times as long every day drilling academic activities with their children. By contrast, Western kids are more likely to participate in sports teams.

What Chinese parents understand is that nothing is fun until you’re good at it. To get good at anything you have to work, and children on their own never want to work, which is why it is crucial to override their preferences. This often requires fortitude on the part of the parents because the child will resist; things are always hardest at the beginning, which is where Western parents tend to give up. But if done properly, the Chinese strategy produces a virtuous circle. Tenacious practice, practice, practice is crucial for excellence; rote repetition is underrated in America. Once a child starts to excel at something—whether it’s math, piano, pitching or ballet—he or she gets praise, admiration and satisfaction. This builds confidence and makes the once not-fun activity fun. This in turn makes it easier for the parent to get the child to work even more.

Chinese parents can get away with things that Western parents can’t. Once when I was young—maybe more than once—when I was extremely disrespectful to my mother, my father angrily called me “garbage” in our native Hokkien dialect. It worked really well. I felt terrible and deeply ashamed of what I had done. But it didn’t damage my self-esteem or anything like that. I knew exactly how highly he thought of me. I didn’t actually think I was worthless or feel like a piece of garbage.

As an adult, I once did the same thing to Sophia, calling her garbage in English when she acted extremely disrespectfully toward me. When I mentioned that I had done this at a dinner party, I was immediately ostracized. One guest named Marcy got so upset she broke down in tears and had to leave early. My friend Susan, the host, tried to rehabilitate me with the remaining guests.

The fact is that Chinese parents can do things that would seem unimaginable—even legally actionable—to Westerners. Chinese mothers can say to their daughters, “Hey fatty—lose some weight.” By contrast, Western parents have to tiptoe around the issue, talking in terms of “health” and never even mentioning the f-word, and their kids still end up in therapy for eating
disorders and negative self-image. (I also once heard a Western father toast his adult daughter by calling her “beautiful and incredibly competent.” She later told me that made her feel like garbage.)

Chinese parents can order their kids to get straight As. Western parents can only ask their kids to try their best. Chinese parents can say, “You’re lazy. All your classmates are getting ahead of you.” By contrast, Western parents have to struggle with their own conflicted feelings about achievement, and try to persuade themselves that they’re not disappointed about how their kids turned out.

I’ve thought long and hard about how Chinese parents can get away with what they do. I think there are three big differences between the Chinese and Western parental mind-sets.

First, I’ve noticed that Western parents are extremely anxious about their children’s self-esteem. They worry about how their children will feel if they fail at something, and they constantly try to reassure their children about how good they are notwithstanding a mediocre performance on a test or at a recital. In other words, Western parents are concerned about their children’s psyches. Chinese parents aren’t. They assume strength, not fragility, and as a result they behave very differently.

For example, if a child comes home with an A-minus on a test, a Western parent will most likely praise the child. The Chinese mother will gasp in horror and ask what went wrong. If the child comes home with a B on the test, some Western parents will still praise the child. Other Western parents will sit their child down and express disapproval, but they will be careful not to make their child feel inadequate or insecure, and they will not call their child “stupid,” “worthless” or “a disgrace.” Privately, the Western parents may worry that their child does not test well or have aptitude in the subject or that there is something wrong with the curriculum and possibly the whole school. If the child’s grades do not improve, they may eventually schedule a meeting with the school principal to challenge the way the subject is being taught or to call into question the teacher’s credentials.

If a Chinese child gets a B—which would never happen—their mother would first be a screaming, hair-tearing explosion. The devastated Chinese mother would then get dozens, maybe hundreds of practice tests and work through them with her child for as long as it takes to get the grade up to an A.

Chinese parents demand perfect grades because they believe that their child can get them. If their child doesn’t get them, the Chinese parent assumes it’s because the child didn’t work hard enough. That’s why the solution to substandard performance is always to excoriate, punish and shame the child. The Chinese parent believes that their child will be strong enough to take the shaming and to improve from it. (And when Chinese kids do excel, there is plenty of ego-inflating parental praise lavished in the privacy of the home.)

Second, Chinese parents believe that their kids owe them everything. The reason for this is a little unclear, but it’s probably a combination of Confucian filial piety and the fact that the parents have sacrificed and done so much for their children. (And it’s true that Chinese mothers get in the trenches, putting in long grueling hours personally tutoring, training, interrogating and spying on their kids.) Anyway, the understanding is that Chinese children must spend their lives repaying their parents by obeying them and making them proud.

By contrast, I don’t think most Westerners have the same view of children being permanently indebted to their parents. My husband, Jed, actually has the opposite view. “Children don’t choose their parents,” he once said to me. “They don’t even choose to be born.
It’s parents who foist life on their kids, so it’s the parents’ responsibility to provide for them. Kids don’t owe their parents anything. Their duty will be to their own kids.” This strikes me as a terrible deal for the Western parent.

Third, Chinese parents believe that they know what is best for their children and therefore override all of their children’s own desires and preferences. That’s why Chinese daughters can’t have boyfriends in high school and why Chinese kids can’t go to sleepaway camp. It’s also why no Chinese kid would ever dare say to their mother, “I got a part in the school play! I’m Villager Number Six. I’ll have to stay after school for rehearsal every day from 3:00 to 7:00, and I’ll also need a ride on weekends.” God help any Chinese kid who tried that one.

Don’t get me wrong: It’s not that Chinese parents don’t care about their children. Just the opposite. They would give up anything for their children. It’s just an entirely different parenting model.

Here’s a story in favor of coercion, Chinese-style. Lulu was about 7, still playing two instruments, and working on a piano piece called “The Little White Donkey” by the French composer Jacques Ibert. The piece is really cute—you can just imagine a little donkey ambling along a country road with its master—but it’s also incredibly difficult for young players because the two hands have to keep schizophrenically different rhythms. Lulu couldn’t do it. We worked on it nonstop for a week, drilling each of her hands separately, over and over. But whenever we tried putting the hands together, one always morphed into the other, and everything fell apart. Finally, the day before her lesson, Lulu announced in exasperation that she was giving up and stomped off.

“Get back to the piano now,” I ordered.

“You can’t make me.”

“Oh yes, I can.”

Back at the piano, Lulu made me pay. She punched, thrashed and kicked. She grabbed the music score and tore it to shreds. I taped the score back together and encased it in a plastic shield so that it could never be destroyed again. Then I hauled Lulu’s dollhouse to the car and told her I’d donate it to the Salvation Army piece by piece if she didn’t have “The Little White Donkey” perfect by the next day. When Lulu said, “I thought you were going to the Salvation Army, why are you still here?” I threatened her with no lunch, no dinner, no Christmas or Hanukkah presents, no birthday parties for two, three, four years. When she still kept playing it wrong, I told her she was purposely working herself into a frenzy because she was secretly afraid she couldn’t do it. I told her to stop being lazy, cowardly, self-indulgent and pathetic.

Jed took me aside. He told me to stop insulting Lulu—which I wasn’t even doing, I was just motivating her—and that he didn’t think threatening Lulu was helpful. Also, he said, maybe Lulu really just couldn’t do the technique—perhaps she didn’t have the coordination yet—had I considered that possibility?

“You just don’t believe in her,” I accused.

“That’s ridiculous,” Jed said scornfully. “Of course I do.” “Sophia could play the piece when she was this age.”

“But Lulu and Sophia are different people,” Jed pointed out.

“Oh no, not this,” I said, rolling my eyes. “Everyone is special in their special own way,” I mimicked sarcastically. “Even losers are special in their own special way. Well don’t worry, you don’t have to lift a finger. I’m willing to put in as long as it takes, and I’m happy to be the one hated. And you can be the one they adore because you make them pancakes and take them to Yankees games.”

I rolled up my sleeves and went back to Lulu. I used every weapon and tactic I could think of. We worked right through dinner into the night, and I wouldn’t let Lulu get up, not for water,
not even to go to the bathroom. The house became a war zone, and I lost my voice yelling, but still there seemed to be only negative progress, and even I began to have doubts.

Then, out of the blue, Lulu did it. Her hands suddenly came together—her right and left hands each doing their own imperturbable thing—just like that. Lulu realized it the same time I did. I held my breath. She tried it tentatively again. Then she played it more confidently and faster, and still the rhythm held. A moment later, she was beaming.

“Mommy, look—it’s easy!” After that, she wanted to play the piece over and over and wouldn’t leave the piano. That night, she came to sleep in my bed, and we snuggled and hugged, cracking each other up. When she performed “The Little White Donkey” at a recital a few weeks later, parents came up to me and said, “What a perfect piece for Lulu—it’s so spunky and so her.”

Even Jed gave me credit for that one. Western parents worry a lot about their children’s self-esteem. But as a parent, one of the worst things you can do for your child’s self-esteem is to let them give up. On the flip side, there’s nothing better for building confidence than learning you can do something you thought you couldn’t.

There are all these new books out there portraying Asian mothers as scheming, callous, overdriven people indifferent to their kids’ true interests. For their part, many Chinese secretly believe that they care more about their children and are willing to sacrifice much more for them than Westerners, who seem perfectly content to let their children turn out badly. I think it’s a misunderstanding on both sides. All decent parents want to do what’s best for their children. The Chinese just have a totally different idea of how to do that.

Western parents try to respect their children’s individuality, encouraging them to pursue their true passions, supporting their choices, and providing positive reinforcement and a nurturing environment. By contrast, the Chinese believe that the best way to protect their children is by preparing them for the future, letting them see what they’re capable of, and arming them with skills, work habits and inner confidence that no one can ever take away.

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss the differences between the Chinese and Western “mothering” in the essay. Do you find one method superior to the other? Why? What kind of a balance between the two methods might be best?

2. Chua has said that the essay is intended to be satirical, poking fun at rather than praising Chinese child rearing. Reading the essay as satire, what aspects of Chinese child rearing are being satirized and what aspects of American child rearing are being praised?

3. Discuss your own parental upbringing regarding school and achievement. How do you feel it affected (affects) your life? How would you raise your own children?
Attending Weddings: How Men and Women Differ

By Ramon Sandoval

Ramon Sandoval is a free-lance writer who shares in this essay his perspective on how men’s and women’s interest in attending weddings is markedly different.

What woman doesn’t love attending a wedding? And what man doesn’t have to be dragged by the collar, hoping the ceremony is a couple short, sweet “I do’s” followed immediately by a lot of food? Women and men attend weddings with polar opposite attitudes, offering a glimpse into some basic differences between the genders.

First, women look forward to being married from childhood on, role-playing the prince and princess wedding ceremony with a female friend since no self-respecting 8-year old boy will play the groom. Growing up, boys seldom if ever think about getting married, with more pressing concerns like running, jumping, and smashing into things. Wedding dress magazines take on greater interest as girls grow older. Ever see a tuxedo magazine on a coffee table? For women, attending a wedding is just part of a lifetime interest that men have never shared.

Next, women love to dress, and what better place than for a wedding? Getting a new dress for the wedding is a must. That requires days, perhaps months, of shopping and trying on dresses. But this is not an arduous process for most women; it's fun. After all, if the bride is going to look like a million dollars, no woman wants to look like a buck ninety-nine. And notice whose heads are turning around as soon as the wedding music begins: the women's, craning to see what everyone in the wedding party has on, especially the bride!

Men, on the other hand, couldn't care less about getting “dressed up.” They don’t shop for a new suit for the wedding. They go into the closet, find the suit they wore to the last wedding two years ago, and hope that the pants still fit. At the end of the night, they couldn't tell you what one man was wearing or what color the maid of honor’s dress was. Women love dress up. Men can’t wait to unbutton their collars and get those coats off.

Then there are all of those wonderful wedding speeches. The personal vows that brides and grooms often recite, gazing lovingly into each other’s eyes, are heartfelt and emotional. The more emotional and romantic the vows, the better that women like them. Men are squirming in their seats and wondering first, why any guy would want to write his own vows and second, whether he’s faking the tears. Women are wiping their eyes; men are more than slightly embarrassed.

Of course, later come the maid-of-honor and best-man speeches and often speeches by the fathers of the bride and groom. These tend to go on for some time, and their essential content can be found in every wedding speech ever given. Women hang onto every word like hearing them for the first time. By now, men are bored out of their gourds and ravenously hungry: “Are we ever going to eat dinner?”

Who drinks more at a wedding? That, of course, is easy to answer. Just look at the line at the bar as soon as the wedding ceremony is over. See many women? Men feel that they have earned a few drinks for sitting through yet another grueling wedding. They fortify themselves to
get through the next two or three hours. Women have been thoroughly enjoying themselves and have no interest in dulling their senses – “just a glass of white wine please” - as there is still much to look forward to: the mother-son dance, the father-daughter dance, the bride-groom dance, the cake cutting, the garter toss! In anticipation of all of those awkward traditions, men don’t stray too far from the bar or from a buddy to commiserate with.

Unquestionably, women are more romantically wired than men, and the wedding is the romantic zenith of their lives, as close to the prince-and-princess fairytale romances of childhood as they will come. Men have no such romantic grounding, favoring those funny little dwarfs over Snow White and the prince kissing. Yuck! Whether through evolution or upbringing, women are programmed to love weddings and men are programmed to give them a big yawn.

Nothing reveals the differences between women’s and men’s attitudes towards weddings more than listening to them talk at a wedding – any wedding. Women say stuff to each other like, “The bride looked absolutely radiant.” The flowers were gorgeous.” “Everything was just perfect.” “The wedding cake looked amazing.” “How cute was that flower girl!” Men say stuff to each other like, “Can we get a second piece of cake?” “Man, it’s hot in here.” “Are we still playing golf tomorrow?” “They’re watering down the drinks!” Women talk about every wedding detail in glowing terms. Men talk about anything but the wedding, other than trying, albeit unsuccessfully, to plot an early escape.

Why then, wedding after wedding, do women drag their men along, and why are men, after some griping, always willing to go? For the same reasons, perhaps, that women go to football games and demolition derbies. In most relationships, the art of compromise means that if you’ll let me drag you along to this, then you can drag me along to that. That’s the deal: the misery quid pro quo. It’s what makes relationships work. An afternoon at the stock car races, an evening at the wedding. Enough romance for everyone.

Questions for Discussion

1. According to the essay, what differences between men and women are revealed through their attitudes towards going to weddings? Do you agree?

2. The essay contends that women’s and men’s attitudes towards weddings begin in childhood experiences. Do you agree based on your own experience?

3. Do you agree with the essay’s assessment about how women and men view weddings? Do you think it applies to the majority of women and men? How do you personally feel about attending weddings?
Writing Assignment Eleven

For your second comparative essay, the last major writing assignment in the text, you compare two in-text essays on the same subject with very different viewpoints. You will analyze and evaluate the supporting evidence for the thesis of each essay and draw conclusions as to their relative quality: which essay you find the most convincing.

You already wrote critiques of individual essays in Unit Five, so you are experienced at evaluating essays. Now you are applying your critiquing experience to two essays on the same topic, comparing and contrasting their content and letting readers know which you found the most convincing. No doubt you will face similar essay assignments in other courses since reading and evaluating essays is a major component of many composition courses.

Prewriting

Preparation for writing your upcoming comparative essay begins with reading, analyzing, and evaluating the two essays you are comparing. Since you have already done such “critical reading” for the critiques that you wrote in Unit Five, you already have some valuable experience. After reading and evaluating each essay, the additional task for your comparative essay is comparing the two essays with sharply different viewpoints on an issue and determining which essay you find most convincing and why.

Critical Reading

The following review from Unit Five will help you read and evaluate each essay effectively.

1. Read the essay several times to gain the best understanding. Reading an essay a second and third time is the best way to get the clearest picture: what every sentence and paragraph mean, what the main supportive points are for the thesis, and what the writer presumably is trying to accomplish.

2. Clearly identify the topic of the essay. Does the writer present the topic in a way that makes it understandable to readers? Are any explanations or definitions provided to help readers understand the topic?
3. **Identify the thesis of the essay: the writer’s viewpoint on the topic.** While the thesis is often stated in the opening, it may come in the conclusion or it may be implied, the essay’s content clearly revealing the writer’s viewpoint. Once you identify the thesis, you can analyze and evaluate its support.

4. **Identify and evaluate the support for the thesis.** What are the main supportive points presented? Does the essay provide factual evidence? Does it present any opinions without evidence? Are the supporting arguments reasonable and sensible? Does it use relevant comparisons to help make its points? Are there any logical fallacies that weaken the essay? Does it provide source introductions for any apparent research material?

5. **Does the essay omit things that leave questions in your mind?** Does it omit facts that don’t support its thesis? Does it ignore major arguments against its thesis? What can you infer, if anything, from what isn’t included in the essay?

6. **Does the essay reveal any writer bias on the topic?** Is it obvious in the essay that the writer is biased in favor or against the topic, not showing any objectivity or consideration for opposing viewpoints? If such bias is apparent, how does it affect your evaluation?

7. **Is the purpose of the essay clear, and how well is it accomplished?** Does the essay make the desired impact on you as a reader?

8. **What is the overall impact of the essay?** What effect does it have on you and why? How convincingly does the writer make her case?

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**Prewriting Activity 6.5**

For your upcoming essay, you will be comparing the two following essays on lowering the voting age in the U.S. to sixteen. Read the essays two or three times, make note of the main supporting points for each essay’s thesis and the evidence presented, along with any opposing arguments that are addressed, and evaluate the essays by applying the “critical reading” suggestions.

Voting at Sixteen

By Jameis Akins

Several states are considering lowering the voting age for local or state elections to age sixteen. Should lowering the voting age to sixteen be considered at the national level, so that all sixteen-year-olds can vote for all governmental offices, including the president? I believe that serious consideration should be given to giving sixteen and seventeen-year-olds the right to vote.

At age sixteen you are allowed to drive a car if licensed. You have the same rights and responsibilities as a driver as any adult, including the safety of yourself, anyone in your car, and drivers in other cars. At age sixteen in most states, you can also decide for yourself whether to stay in school or drop out, a momentous decision that will affect your life. As you can see, sixteen-year-olds are given serious legal responsibilities that our country has concluded they are
old enough to make. If you can legally drive a car or decide your educational fate at age sixteen, no doubt you have the ability to cast your vote in an election.

At age sixteen, students are learning about U.S. government and politics in school. Often, these are not the most exciting topics for sixteen-year-olds. However, if students were voting at age sixteen, these subjects would take on a much greater significance, and part of the curriculum would be to prepare sixteen year olds to vote. The connection between the school subjects and “real world” application would be immediate, and students would engage in their governmental classes with greater enthusiasm. As far as the educational process, sixteen seems like an opportune time to educate students to the rights and responsibilities of being voting citizens.

Today, most sixteen-year-olds feel far removed from the political process and have little interest in who is elected to what office, according to a recent Gallup poll. However, if they were given the right to vote, their attitudes would no doubt change dramatically. They would take more interest in politics as voters who help to influence the results of elections rather than as indifferent bystanders. Casting their vote for possibly the next president of the United States would be an exciting experience. Being a part of the democratic process rather than sitting on the sidelines would help them see that they too have a stake and a role in who is elected. By giving them the right to vote, we would be ‘turning on’ many sixteen and seventeen-year-olds to politics and the importance of voting in a democracy, which can only be good for the country.

Some people believe that sixteen-year-olds are so influenced by their parents that their votes would basically be the same as mom or dad casting a second vote. I don’t agree. Many sixteen-year-olds disagree with their parents on any number of issues and show an independence of thought that would not make them merely voting clones of their parents. Others feel that sixteen-year-olds don’t yet have the maturity to vote, but how can we say that sixteen-year-olds are too immature to vote but mature enough to drive a car with all of the complex decision-making involved?

A number of countries already allow sixteen-year-olds to vote including Scotland, Austria, Argentina, Nicaragua, Serbia, and Bosnia, according to Voting Rights International. If other countries are empowering sixteen and seventeen-year-olds with the right to vote and help shape the political future of their countries, aren’t sixteen-year-olds in the U.S. equally capable of doing so? I also believe that if sixteen and seventeen-year-olds are given adult responsibilities such as the right to vote, it will help to make them more responsible in all aspects of their lives.

Finally, if the voting age were lowered to sixteen, over 6,000,000 more Americans would have the right to vote, according to statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau. The greater the size of the voting population, the greater number of people who will decide who is elected our country’s president, senators, and representatives. The greater the number of voters, the greater chance that the voting results will truly reflect the will of the people, which is what a democracy is created for.

Giving sixteen and seventeen-year-olds the right to participate in the voting process can be a benefit to our country. It can help to develop more responsible, politically engaged teenagers and create a larger voting population that will more truly represent the will of the majority of Americans in electing governmental officials. It can create an excitement among sixteen and seventeen-year-olds for politics and government that they had little interest in before. Lowering the voting age to sixteen can have definite benefits, and there are no real drawbacks. It is time to give the issue serious consideration at the national level.

Keep the Voting Age at Eighteen

By Eileen Her
Should the voting age in the United States be lowered to sixteen for local, state, and federal elections? Are sixteen-year-olds capable of making informed voting decisions based on the qualifications of candidates and their positions on issues? Should we give sixteen-year-olds the traditional adult responsibility that only legal-aged adults currently have? I see absolutely no reason to do so.

The legal adult age in the United States is eighteen. Eighteen year olds can join the military, vote in elections, marry without parental consent, work in jobs that require adults-only status, serve on jury duty, and if convicted, be sentenced to adult prisons. Sixteen-year olds have none of these adult rights and responsibilities, so it makes no sense to bestow the adult right to vote on sixteen-year-old minors.

A ten-year study of brain development by the National Institute of Mental Health showed that the parts of the brain that control high-level functions such as problem-solving are among the last to achieve full functionality, and “areas with more advanced functions – integrating information from the senses, reasoning, and other “executive” functions (prefrontal cortex) – mature last.” We all know that we didn’t always make the best decisions when we were sixteen or always consider the consequences of our actions. Our brains were still developing, and our reasoning skills were not fully functional.

This study indicates that many sixteen-year-olds do not possess the mental maturity to make the reasoned judgments that responsible voters need to make. It isn’t their fault; they just aren’t developmentally ready yet. Adults eighteen years and older have a hard enough time making voting decisions based on objective analysis of candidates rather than emotional appeals and the candidates’ pie-in-the-sky promises. Sixteen-year-olds would fare much worse on that task.

Do sixteen-year-olds have any interest in voting? It doesn’t appear so. A survey conducted by Seventeen magazine asked sixteen-year-olds to list their top ten interests. Not surprisingly, politics did not even make the list. Like most of us were at that age, sixteen-year-olds were interested in anything but politics: friends, food, fun, school, clothes, sports, music, family. The world of politics is a distant adult world for most sixteen-year-olds that they show little interest in. I have never seen or read of a movement among sixteen-year-olds to get the vote anywhere in the country. It is not on their radar, so it shouldn’t be on the country’s.

As a group, eighteen-year-olds do not exercise their right to vote in great numbers. In the 2008 and 2012 mid-term national elections, just over 40% of eligible eighteen-year-olds voted according to a national voting poll. If that is the case with eighteen-year-old adults, why would anyone think that sixteen-year-olds wouldn’t vote even less frequently? Why give a group of minors a right that they have little interest in and probably won’t exercise in large numbers? And if sixteen-year-olds don’t vote if given the legal right, it could be the early beginnings of a non-voting pattern that persists into adulthood.

There are very few countries in the world that allow sixteen-year-olds to vote, and in viewing the international voting map at chartsbin.com, the legal voting age in over 90% of all countries is eighteen. That means that the U.S. is currently in step with the rest of the world with a legal voting age of eighteen and that we would be one of the rare exceptions if we lowered the voting age. Almost every country in the world agrees that voting is an adult right and responsibility that begins at age eighteen along with all other adult rights.

Finally, some argue that if sixteen-year-olds can drive, they should be allowed to vote. However, there is a strong conviction among many that the driving age should be raised to eighteen. According to Adrian Lund, president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, in a Huffington Post article, the leading cause of death among teenagers is car accidents, and teens have the highest car-accident death rate of any age group. Advocates are convinced that raising the driving age would significantly lower the car-accident death rate for teenagers. It turns out
that because sixteen-year-olds can drive legally is not a good argument for lowering the voting age. It is obvious from the death rate that many sixteen-year olds aren’t ready to drive and that consideration should be given to raising the legal age.

Why even think about giving sixteen-year-olds the right to vote that is accorded only to adults eighteen years and older in the U.S. and in 90% of countries in the world? Why even think about giving students a right that they have shown little interest in having and that the majority would probably never exercise? American citizens have from age eighteen until the day they die to vote in every election they want. That is ample time to participate in America’s democratic electoral process. Let’s let sixteen-year-olds be sixteen-year-old and not even consider saddling them with adult rights and responsibilities. There is plenty of time for that.

Comparing Essays

In your first comparative essay for the unit, you compared similar subjects on a number of points and determined the subjects’ relative value or worth. For this essay, you compare the evidence that each of two essay presents to support its thesis and determine which essay makes its case most convincingly. In the first essay, you compared various features or qualities that each subject possessed. In this essay, you compare various ideas that the authors present to support their viewpoint.

To compare the two in-text essays, consider these suggestions.

1. **After you have read and analyzed the essays separately, compare the main points that each essay makes to support its thesis.** Does one essay have more supportive evidence than the other? Which essay has the more logical or reasonable points? Which thesis support seems to be the most valid based on your own experience? Which essay best addresses any opposing arguments? Does either essay contain logical fallacies, unsupported opinions, or an obvious writer bias?

2. **Compare the overall impact of each essay – how convincingly it makes its case – based on the information and ideas presented.** Assuming one essay made a a stronger case for its thesis than the other, note the specific content in the essay that made this impact.

3. **You may find strengths and weaknesses in both essays.** Both essays may make some good points for their thesis but also have some weaknesses: not addressing opposing concerns, not having many supporting points, not providing enough evidence. You can
point out both the strengths and weaknesses of the essays and still conclude that one makes a better overall case for its thesis.

Prewriting Activity 6.6

Compare the content of the two essays by applying the suggestions. Go back over the main supporting points in one essay and compare them with the main supporting points in the other essay, and do the same with any opposing arguments that are addressed. Determine which essay you find the most convincing based on your comparison.
Drafting

Now that you have read, analyzed, evaluated, and compared the two essays and determined their relative effectiveness in supporting their theses, you are ready to write your comparative essay. The following drafting guidelines will be useful in writing your first draft.

**Drafting Guidelines**

Consider the following suggestions when writing the first draft of your comparative essay.

1. **Introduce the topic of the two essays in the opening and the writers’ opposing viewpoints on the topic.** Draw your conclusions as to which essay was the most convincing at the end of your draft.

2. **Present the main supporting points for one essay in a few paragraphs, and then present the main supporting points for the other essay.** Include any clarifications or explanations that will help readers understand each point and what it means.

3. **Present your evaluation of the essays in your conclusion.** Evaluate the supporting points for each essay, determining which you find the most valid or logical and why. Do the same with how each writer addressed any opposing arguments. Make clear in your conclusion which essay you find the most convincing and why.

**Drafting Activity 6.7**

Read carefully the following two essays on the impact of social media on our lives: “The Fight from Conversation” and “Social Media’s Positive Influence,” noting the opposing viewpoints of the writers and the support for those viewpoints. Then read the comparative essay critiquing the two essays and note the following:

1. The introduction of the topic and the thesis of each essay in the opening paragraph.
2. The presentation of the main supportive points in “The Flight from Conversation” in the next few paragraphs.

3. The presentation of the main supportive points in “Social Media’s Positive Influence” in the next paragraphs.

4. The writer’s comparison and response to each essay, revealing which essay she found the most convincing and why.

You can use the organization of the comparative critique as a model for writing your comparative draft.

The Flight from Conversation

By Sherry Turkle

We live in a technological universe in which we are always communicating. And yet we have sacrificed conversation for mere connection.

At home, families sit together, texting and reading e-mail. At work executives text during board meetings. We text (and shop and go on Facebook) during classes and when we’re on dates. My students tell me about an important new skill: it involves maintaining eye contact with someone while you text someone else; it’s hard, but it can be done.

Over the past 15 years, I’ve studied technologies of mobile connection and talked to hundreds of people of all ages and circumstances about their plugged-in lives. I’ve learned that the little devices most of us carry around are so powerful that they change not only what we do, but also who we are.

We’ve become accustomed to a new way of being “alone together.” Technology-enabled, we are able to be with one another, and also elsewhere, connected to wherever we want to be. We want to customize our lives. We want to move in and out of where we are because the thing we value most is control over where we focus our attention. We have gotten used to the idea of being in a tribe of one, loyal to our own party.

Our colleagues want to go to that board meeting but pay attention only to what interests them. To some this seems like a good idea, but we can end up hiding from one another, even as we are constantly connected to one another.

A businessman laments that he no longer has colleagues at work. He doesn’t stop by to talk; he doesn’t call. He says that he doesn’t want to interrupt them. He says they’re “too busy on their e-mail.” But then he pauses and corrects himself. “I’m not telling the truth. I’m the one who doesn’t want to be interrupted. I think I should. But I’d rather just do things on my BlackBerry.”
A 16-year-old boy who relies on texting for almost everything says almost wistfully, “Someday, someday, but certainly not now, I’d like to learn how to have a conversation.”

In today’s workplace, young people who have grown up fearing conversation show up on the job wearing earphones. Walking through a college library or the campus of a high-tech start-up, one sees the same thing: we are together, but each of us is in our own bubble, furiously connected to keyboards and tiny touch screens. A senior partner at a Boston law firm describes a scene in his office. Young associates lay out their suite of technologies: laptops, iPods and multiple phones. And then they put their earphones on. “Big ones. Like pilots. They turn their desks into cockpits.” With the young lawyers in their cockpits, the office is quiet, a quiet that does not ask to be broken.

In the silence of connection, people are comforted by being in touch with a lot of people — carefully kept at bay. We can’t get enough of one another if we can use technology to keep one another at distances we can control: not too close, not too far, just right. I think of it as a Goldilocks effect.

Texting and e-mail and posting let us present the self we want to be. This means we can edit. And if we wish to, we can delete. Or retouch: the voice, the flesh, the face, the body. Not too much, not too little — just right.

Human relationships are rich; they’re messy and demanding. We have learned the habit of cleaning them up with technology. And the move from conversation to connection is part of this. But it’s a process in which we shortchange ourselves. Worse, it seems that over time we stop caring, we forget that there is a difference.

We are tempted to think that our little “sips” of online connection add up to a big gulp of real conversation. But they don’t. E-mail, Twitter, Facebook, all of these have their places — in politics, commerce, romance and friendship. But no matter how valuable, they do not substitute for conversation.

Connecting in sips may work for gathering discrete bits of information or for saying, “I am thinking about you.” Or even for saying, “I love you.” But connecting in sips doesn’t work as well when it comes to understanding and knowing one another. In conversation we tend to one another. (The word itself is kinetic; it’s derived from words that mean to move, together.) We can attend to tone and nuance. In conversation, we are called upon to see things from another’s point of view.

Face-to-face conversation unfolds slowly. It teaches patience. When we communicate on our digital devices, we learn different habits. As we ramp up the volume and velocity of online connections, we start to expect faster answers. To get these, we ask one another simpler questions; we dumb down our communications, even on the most important matters. It is as though we have all put ourselves on cable news. Shakespeare might have said, “We are consum’d with that which we were nourish’d by.”

And we use conversation with others to learn to converse with ourselves. So our flight from conversation can mean diminished chances to learn skills of self-reflection. These days, social media continually asks us what’s “on our mind,” but we have little motivation to say something truly self-reflective. Self-reflection in conversation requires trust. It’s hard to do anything with 3,000 Facebook friends except connect.

As we get used to being shortchanged on conversation and to getting by with less, we seem almost willing to dispense with people altogether. Serious people muse about the future of computer programs as psychiatrists. A high school sophomore confides to me that he wishes he could talk to an artificial intelligence program instead of his dad about dating; he says the A.I. would have so much more in its database. Indeed, many people tell me they hope that as Siri, the digital assistant on Apple’s iPhone, becomes more advanced, “she” will be more and more like a best friend — one who will listen when others won’t.
During the years I have spent researching people and their relationships with technology, I have often heard the sentiment “No one is listening to me.” I believe this feeling helps explain why it is so appealing to have a Facebook page or a Twitter feed — each provides so many automatic listeners. And it helps explain why — against all reason — so many of us are willing to talk to machines that seem to care about us. Researchers around the world are busy inventing sociable robots, designed to be companions to the elderly, to children, to all of us.

One of the most haunting experiences during my research came when I brought one of these robots, designed in the shape of a baby seal, to an elder-care facility, and an older woman began to talk to it about the loss of her child. The robot seemed to be looking into her eyes. It seemed to be following the conversation. The woman was comforted.

And so many people found this amazing. Like the sophomore who wants advice about dating from artificial intelligence and those who look forward to computer psychiatry, this enthusiasm speaks to how much we have confused conversation with connection and collectively seem to have embraced a new kind of delusion that accepts the simulation of compassion as sufficient unto the day. And why would we want to talk about love and loss with a machine that has no experience of the arc of human life? Have we so lost confidence that we will be there for one another?

We expect more from technology and less from one another and seem increasingly drawn to technologies that provide the illusion of companionship without the demands of relationship. Always-on/always-on-you devices provide three powerful fantasies: that we will always be heard; that we can put our attention wherever we want it to be; and that we never have to be alone. Indeed our new devices have turned being alone into a problem that can be solved.

When people are alone, even for a few moments, they fidget and reach for a device. Here connection works like a symptom, not a cure, and our constant, reflexive impulse to connect shapes a new way of being. Think of it as “I share, therefore I am.” We use technology to define ourselves by sharing our thoughts and feelings as we’re having them. We used to think, “I have a feeling; I want to make a call.” Now our impulse is, “I want to have a feeling; I need to send a text.”

So, in order to feel more, and to feel more like ourselves, we connect. But in our rush to connect, we flee from solitude, our ability to be separate and gather ourselves. Lacking the capacity for solitude, we turn to other people but don’t experience them as they are. It is as though we use them, need them as spare parts to support our increasingly fragile selves.

We think constant connection will make us feel less lonely. The opposite is true. If we are unable to be alone, we are far more likely to be lonely. If we don’t teach our children to be alone, they will know only how to be lonely.

I am a partisan for conversation. To make room for it, I see some first, deliberate steps. At home, we can create sacred spaces: the kitchen, the dining room. We can make our cars “device-free zones.” We can demonstrate the value of conversation to our children. And we can do the same thing at work. There we are so busy communicating that we often don’t have time to talk to one another about what really matters. Employees asked for casual Fridays; perhaps managers should introduce conversational Thursdays. Most of all, we need to remember — in between texts and e-mails and Facebook posts — to listen to one another, even to the boring bits, because it is often in unedited moments, moments in which we hesitate and stutter and go silent, that we reveal ourselves to one another.

I spend the summers at a cottage on Cape Cod, and for decades I walked the same dunes that Thoreau once walked. Not too long ago, people walked with their heads up, looking at the water, the sky, the sand and at one another, talking. Now they often walk with their heads down, typing. Even when they are with friends, partners, children, everyone is on their own devices.
Social Media’s Positive Influence

By Josh Rose

Two events today, although worlds apart, seem inextricably tied together. And the bond between them is as human as it is electronic.

First, on my way to go sit down and read the newspaper at my coffee shop, I got a message from my 10-year-old son, just saying good morning and letting me know he was going to a birthday party today. I don’t get to see him all the time. He’s growing up in two houses, as I did. But recently, as I handed down my old iPhone 3G to him to use basically as an iPod touch, we both installed an app called Yak, so we could communicate with each other when we’re apart.

The amount of calming satisfaction it gives me to be able to communicate with him through technology is undeniably palpable and human. It’s the other side of the “I don’t care what you ate for breakfast this morning” argument against the mundane broadcasting of social media. In this case, I absolutely care about this. I’d listen to him describe a piece of bacon, and hang on every word. Is it better than a conversation with “real words?” No. But is it better than waiting two more days, when the mundane moment that I long to hear about so much is gone? Yes. I guess one man’s TMI is another man’s treasure.

Moments later, I sat down and opened the paper. A headline immediately stood out: “In China, microblogs finding abducted kids” with the subhead, “A 6-year-old who was snatched when he was 3 is discovered with a family 800 miles away.” Apparently, the occurrence of reclaimed children through the use of China’s version of Twitter — and other online forums — has become triumphant news over there. I’m reading about the father’s tears, the boy’s own confusing set of emotions, the rapt attention of the town and country, and I’m again marveling at the human side of the Internet.

I recently asked the question to my Facebook friends: “Twitter, Facebook, Foursquare … is all this making you feel closer to people or farther away?” It sparked a lot of responses and seemed to touch one of our generation’s exposed nerves. What is the effect of the Internet and social media on our humanity?

From the outside view, digital interactions appear to be cold and inhuman. There’s no denying that. And without doubt, given the choice between hugging someone and "poking" someone, I think we can all agree which one feels better. The theme of the responses to my Facebook question seemed to be summed up by my friend Jason, who wrote: “Closer to people I’m far away from.” Then, a minute later, wrote, “but maybe farther from the people I’m close enough to.” And then added, “I just got confused.”
It is confusing. We live in this paradox now, where two seemingly conflicting realities exist side-by-side. Social media simultaneously draws us nearer and distances us. But I think very often, we lament what we miss and forget to admire what we’ve become. And it’s human nature to want to reject the machine at the moment we feel it becoming ubiquitous. We’ve seen it with the printing press, moving pictures, television, video games and just about any other advanced technology that captures our attention. What romantic rituals of relationship and social interaction will die in the process? Our hearts want to know.

In the New Yorker this week, Adam Gopnik’s article “How the Internet Gets Inside Us,” explores this cultural truism in depth. It’s a fantastic read and should be mandatory for anyone in an online industry. He breaks down a whole slew of new books on the subject and categorizes it all into three viewpoints: “the Never-Betters, the Better-Nevers, and the Ever-Wasers.” In short, those who see the current movement as good, bad or normal. I think we all know people from each camp. But ultimately, the last group is the one best equipped to handle it all.

Another observation from the coffee shop: In my immediate vicinity, four people are looking at screens and four people are reading something on paper. And I’m doing both. I see Facebook open on two screens, but I’m sure at some point, it’s been open on all of them. The dynamic in this coffee shop is quite a bit more revealing than any article or book. Think about the varied juxtapositions of physical and digital going on. People aren’t giving up long-form reading, considered thinking or social interactions. They are just filling all the space between. And even that’s not entirely true as I watch the occasional stare out the window or long glance around the room.

The way people engage with the Internet and social media isn’t like any kind of interaction we’ve ever seen before. It’s like an intertwining sine wave that touches in and out continuously. And the Internet itself is more complex and interesting than we often give it credit for. Consider peer-to-peer networking as just one example, where the tasks are distributed among the group to form a whole. It’s practically a metaphor for the human mind. Or a township. Or a government. Or a family.

The Internet doesn’t steal our humanity, it reflects it. The Internet doesn’t get inside us, it shows what’s inside us. And social media isn’t cold, it’s just complex and hard to define. I’ve always thought that you really see something’s value when you try to destroy it. As we have now laid witness to in recent news, the Internet has quickly become the atom of cultural media; intertwined with our familial and cultural bonds, and destroyed only at great risk. I think if we search our own souls and consider our own personal way of navigating, we know this is as true personally as it is globally. The machine does not control us. It is a tool. As advanced today as a sharpened stick was a couple million years ago. Looked at through this lens, perhaps we should re-frame our discussions about technology from how it is changing us to how we are using it.

Critique: “The Flight from Conversation” and “Social Media’s Positive Influence”

In Sherry Turkle’s “The Flight from Conversation” and Josh Rose’s “Social Media’s Positive Influence,” the authors present differing opinions on the value and the effects of social media and technological communication. Both recognize the tremendous impact that social media – texting, emailing, Twitter, Facebook - has on how people communicate, but Turkle views its impact as more negative while Rose sees the positive side.
Turkle feels that social media, particularly for teens and younger adults, has replaced conversation as the primary form of communication, which she finds disturbing. Face-to-face conversations where we interact and can have long, meaningful communication have been replaced by electronic bits of texting or emailing that say very little and keep other humans – those we text or email – at a distance. She believes that we are losing our ability to really connect and care deeply about other people. She cites examples of how we are moving closer to feeling more comfortable interacting with machines through artificial intelligence, e.g. Siri, and “sociable robots” than with other humans.

Turkle also believes that social media and technological devices such as earphones isolate us from one another even when we are physically together. She cites the example of workers in offices who seldom interact, always on their I-phones, I-Pods, and laptops, sometimes with earphones on, alone in their own little worlds while surrounded by office mates. As another example, there is the family all in the same room, all using their technological devices, communicating with anyone but the people around them.

Rose, on the other hand, embraces the new technology while recognizing its ambivalent nature. He loves texting with his son, whom he doesn’t see every day, to keep up with everything he is doing. Social media allows him to communicate regularly with his son, often many times a day, which he could not do otherwise. Rose cites social media’s ability to allow people to interact far more often than they would do otherwise with people both near and far.

In soliciting answers to a Facebook question of Rose’s on the effects of social media and the Internet, a friend captured the ambivalent nature of technological communication: “Closer to people I’m far away from, but maybe farther from the people I’m close enough to.” In other words, texting, Twitter, and emailing draws us closer to people farther away that we wouldn’t communicate with otherwise but, perhaps as a result, creates more distance to people closer to us, as Turkle also believes.

Rose doesn’t see social media as “good” or “bad” but as “normal” for today. It has changed profoundly how we communicate with one another, and the genie will never get back into the bottle. Technological communication is what it is, not better, not worse, just different. He noted that people are always uneasy with any new technology, whether the printing press, moving pictures, television, or video games, and now social media and the Internet represent the “new.”

Rose also doesn’t view the new technology as turning us into something different. He gives as example people at a coffee shop who are going back and forth among reading, communicating on Facebook, talking, and looking out the window, perhaps in reflection. In other words, the new technology adds to what we do but doesn’t replace things we’ve always done. The new technology is another tool for our use, not something that controls us.

There are certainly “truths” in both Turkle’s and Rose’s essays, but Rose’s positive viewpoint and support reflect my own experiences with social media. Turkle is right that social media and the Internet can tend to isolate us from one another when we are with other people, who are often doing the same. We do go into our own little worlds regularly, often shutting out those around us to communicate with those farther away or to check out the latest YouTube video on our cell phone. But when my friends and I are together but also “apart” with technology, we are also sharing things we are seeing or reading online, showing our new apps, talking, and staying connected to one another.

I agree with Rose that social media is a great way to communicate with many people frequently whom we wouldn’t communicate with otherwise. My friends and I “talk” regularly through individual texts and group chats, often talking back and forth as we would if we were together. We do carry on conversations, although not the same as face-to-face. I can’t wait until the end of college classes to see whom I have gotten texts from and respond to them. Social
media is just a huge part of many people’s lives, and most of what we do keeps us connected to other people.

Rose is right that social media and the Internet change how we do things but not for the worse. It is great to be able to “talk” to people whenever and wherever we want or to find anything we are curious about by a few clicks of a mouse. My generation grew up with social media and the Internet, so they are not new or different to us. They are just a normal part of our lives. They are great tools, as Rose believes, to communicate and to learn more about the world.

While Turkle does point out how the new technology can isolate us from others close to us, her essay goes too far in suggesting that social media and the Internet are robbing us of our humanity, making us more comfortable with machines than with people. That seems like an extreme position to take and not one that anything in my experience would support. I have good friends, we all do a lot of social media, and we use the “new” technology to stay close, not to distance ourselves. Of course, someone can escape the world by burying themselves in their technological world, and others can fritter away their days on Instagram or playing Candy Crush, but these people have always found ways to escape the world or waste their time.

Rose is right. Social media is just the latest technological advancement that has changed how we communicate, and it is here to stay. It may be good to hear a negative voice like Turkle’s to keep us aware of the value of face-to-face conversation and not to shut out those closest to us by always being connected someplace else. I believe we are always learning to use the “tools” of technological communication in better ways, those that bring us closer together rather than driving us apart. Rose’s essay shares that viewpoint.

Drafting Activity 6.8

Write the first draft of your comparative essay keeping in mind the drafting guidelines and what you learned about writing a comparative essay from reading the comparative essay on social media.
A little logic 17

Complete the bottom three words to show the same relationship as the top three words. More than one sensible answer is possible to show the correct relationship.

1. **snow**  **mountain**  **ski**
   **Water**  **lake**  __________

2. **table**  **wood**  **oak**
   **shirt**  **cloth**  __________

3. **palette**  **easel**  **brush**
   **text book**  **lesson plan**  __________

4. **carpenter**  **saw**  **nails**
   **physician**  **stethoscope**  __________

5. **bee**  **angel**  **bat**
   **Kangaroo**  **rabbit**  __________
Revision

By this time in the course, you probably have developed a process for revising drafts that works well for you and that produces the types of changes that can improve an essay: better sentence wording, added thoughts, examples, or details, improved organization, more interesting opening, stronger conclusion. You know the types of changes that you have made in previous drafts and the kinds of things to look for to improve your latest draft. The basic process that you have developed can be used for any writing that you may do in the future.

The ability to revise one’s writing effectively is a huge step in any writer’s growth. It indicates that you have a good idea of what you want your final writing product to look like and what you want it to say. It is only through revision that you can create the best writing that you are capable of. If you have learned through much experience to revise your writing effectively, you are definitely on the path to becoming the best writer that you can be.

Revision Guidelines

To revise your latest draft, consider the following suggestions.

1. **Read your draft over once or twice to get an overall sense of what you did well and what may need improving.** As you read, make note of anything that stands out as needing some revision.

2. **Read your opening to make sure that you have introduced the essays you are comparing, their subject, and the position that each writer takes on the subject.**

3. **Check to make sure that you have presented the main supporting points for each essay’s thesis so readers have a good idea of each essay’s content.** You might reread the essays you are comparing to make sure that you have presented all of their main points.

4. **Read your concluding paragraphs to make sure that you have responded to the main points of each essay, made a comparative evaluation of their validity, and let readers know which essay you found more convincing and why.** The conclusion is the most important part of the essay for readers. It presents your opinion on the essays and why you hold that opinion. Make sure that you express and support your opinion clearly in the conclusion.

5. **Check the overall organization of your essay.** In the middle paragraphs, make sure that you have presented the main supporting points for the thesis of one essay followed by the
main supporting points for the other. If you have mixed them up, readers may become confused and the distinctions between the essays may become muddled.

6. **Read each sentence to see how it might be improved.** Delete unnecessary words, smooth out awkward sentences, reword sentences whose meaning isn’t clear, move words or phrases around to their most effective locations, and replace questionable word choices. In addition, make sure that your sentences are structurally varied. Revise sentences if you are overly relying on one sentence structure and using one or two joining words exclusively, and combine short, related sentences to produce more effective ones. Keep in mind the variety of joining words at your disposal: *and, but, or, so, for, yet, while, when, as, because, before, after, since, until, if, that, who, whose, which, however, therefore, etc.*

7. **Check your use of transitions to tie paragraphs together** *(first, second, next, another, finally)* and show the relationship between sentences *(therefore, however, consequently, as you can see, moreover, nonetheless)*.

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**Revision Activity 6.4**

Read over the revisions that the author of the following comparative essay made to see how they improved her essay. Then revise your own draft keeping the revision guidelines in mind.

(Deletions crossed out, additions in bold)

Comparing “The Flight from Conversation” and “Social Media’s Positive Influence”

In Sherry Turkle’s “The Flight from Conversation” and Josh Rose’s “Social Media’s Positive Influence,” the authors present differing opinions on the value and the effects of social media and technological communication. **on all of us.** Both recognize the tremendous impact that social media – texting, emailing, Twitter, Facebook - has on how people communicate, but Turkle views its impact as more negative **takes a more negative viewpoint** while Rose sees the positive side.

Turkle feels that social media, particularly for teens and younger adults, has replaced conversation as the primary form of communication, which she finds disturbing. **Face-to-face conversations where we interact and can have long, meaningful communication have been replaced by electronic bits of texting or emailing that say very little and keep other humans – those we text or email – at a distance.** She believes that we are losing our ability to really connect and care deeply about other people. **She cites examples of how we are moving closer to beginning to feeling more comfortable interacting with machines through artificial intelligence, e.g. Siri, and “sociable robots” than with other humans.**

Turkle also believes that social media and technological devices such as earphones isolate us from one another even when we are physically together. **She cites the example of workers in offices who seldom interact, always on their I-phones, I-Pods, and laptops, sometimes with earphones on, alone in their own little worlds while surrounded by office mates. As another example, there is** – **She cites the family, all in the same room, all using on their technological devices, communicating with anyone but the people around them – others but shutting out the people around them.**
Rose, on the other hand, embraces the new technology while recognizing its ambivalent nature: its paradoxical nature: drawing us together and pulling us apart at the same time. He loves texting with his son, whom he doesn’t see every day, to keep up with everything he is doing. Social media allows him to communicate regularly with his son, often many times a day, which he could not do otherwise. Rose cites social media’s ability to allow people to interact far more often than they would do otherwise with people both near and far.

In selecting an answer to a Facebook question of Rose’s, Rose posed on the effects of social media and the Internet, a friend captured the ambivalent—its paradoxical nature of technological communication: “Closer to people I’m far away from, but maybe farther from the people I’m close enough to.” In other words, texting, Twitter, and emailing draws us closer to people farther away that we wouldn’t communicate with otherwise but, perhaps as a result, creates more distance to people closer to us, as which Turkle also believes emphasizes.

Rose doesn’t see social media as “good” or “bad” but as “normal” for today. It has changed profoundly how we communicate with one another, and the genie will never get back into the bottle. that is not going to change. Technological communication is what it is, not better, not worse, just different. He noted that people are always uneasy with any new technology, whether the printing press, moving pictures, television, or video games, and now social media and the Internet represent the “new.”

Rose also doesn’t view the new technology as turning us into something different. He gives as example people at a coffee shop who are going back and forth among reading, communicating on Facebook, talking, and looking out the window, perhaps in reflection. In other words, the new technology adds to what we do but doesn’t replace things we’ve always done. The new technology is another tool for our use, not something that controls us.

There are certainly “truths” in both Turkle’s and Rose’s essays, but Rose’s positive viewpoint and support reflect my own experiences with social media. Turkle is right that social media and the Internet can tend to isolate us from one another, and the genie will never get back into the bottle. that is not going to change. Technological communication is what it is, not better, not worse, just different. He noted that people are always uneasy with any new technology, whether the printing press, moving pictures, television, or video games, and now social media and the Internet represent the “new.”

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I agree with Rose that social media is a great way to communicate with many people frequently regularly whom we wouldn’t communicate with otherwise. My friends and I “talk” regularly frequently through individual texts and group chats, often talking back and forth as we would if we were together. We do carry on conversations, although not the same as face-to-face. I can’t wait until the end of a school day to see whom I have gotten texts from and respond to them. Social media is just a huge part of many people’s lives, and most of what we do keeps us connected to other people.

Rose is right that social media and the Internet change how we do things but not for the worse. It is great to be able to “talk” to people whenever and wherever we want or to find anything we are curious about by a few clicks of a mouse. My generation grew up with social media and the Internet, so they are not new or different to us. They are just a normal part of our lives. They are great tools, as Rose believes, to communicate and to learn more about the world.

While Turkle does point out how the new technology can isolate us from others close to us, her essay goes too far in suggesting that social media and the Internet are robbing us of our humanity, making us more comfortable with machines than with people. That seems like an extreme position, to take and not one that anything in my experience would support. I have
good friends, we all do a lot of social media, and we use the “new” technology to stay close, not to distance ourselves. Of course, someone can escape the world by burying themselves in their technological world, and others can fritter away their days on Instagram or playing Candy Crush, but people have always found ways to escape the world or waste their time.

Rose is right. Social media is just the latest technological advancement that has changed how we communicate, and it is here to stay. It may be good to hear a negative voice like Turkle’s concerned voice to keep us aware of the value of face-to-face conversation and not to shut out those closest to us by always being connected someplace else. I believe we are always still learning to use the “tools” of our technological devices communication in better the best ways, those that bring us closer together rather than driving us apart. As Rose suggests, we should embrace our new technology and make the best uses of it, not condemn it.

Revision Activity 6.5

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and by applying the revision guidelines, make any suggestions that you feel would improve their essays. Based on their input, make any additional changes to your own draft that you feel would be worthwhile. Then write the next draft of your essay with all of the changes included.
As mentioned previously, the ability to write “correctly” following the conventions of standard English grammar, punctuation, and spelling will benefit you greatly in school, in your future occupation, and in your personal life. An important part of error-free writing is your ability to proofread your drafts, identify any errors, and make the needed corrections.

Most writers don’t write “error-free” papers without doing some proofreading and making corrections. Errors can crop up with subject-verb agreement in longer, more complicated sentences, with pronoun-antecedent agreement involving indefinite pronouns like “anyone,” “someone,” or “nobody,” with run-on sentences involving short, related sentences, with frequently confused words involving “there/their/they’re,” “then/than,” “affect/effect,” “principal/principle,” etc., by omitting commas where they are required, or by misspelling difficult spelling words. (Einstein, by the way, was a terrible speller.)

Most writers always find something to correct in their drafts. *It is the ability to identify errors and make corrections that lead to error-free final essays, not some uncanny ability never to make a mistake.* If you still find mistakes to correct in a draft, don’t be distressed or feel that you can’t write “correctly.” If you are identifying and correcting the errors, you are doing what most writers must do to produce a “clean” final draft.

**Editing Activity 6.6**

For a final editing practice, proofread the following paragraphs and identify and correct any errors involving run-on or comma splice sentences, fragments, comma usage, subject-verb agreement, irregular verbs, subject pronouns, pronoun-antecedent agreement, comparative and superlative adjectives, colons, semi-colons, and dashes, quotation marks, possessives, misplaced or dangling modifiers, and frequently confused words.

You may want to read the paragraphs several times, looking for a particular type of error each time. *There are around forty errors in the essay, with each missing comma being one error.* See how many errors you can find and correct.

**From the Fields to the Classroom**

For many years my father wasn’t happy about me going to college, it took awhile to convince him to let me attend. He was afraid I’d lose my culture values and traditions. And afraid that driving to school something would happen to me. In the 1960s and 70s, girls like me didn’t have cars and most of we girls didn’t go to college. We were supposed to get married find a good farmer to work for have kids and follow the crops. Maybe finish the eighth grade. If someone didn’t take on these roles, they risked bringing shame on there family. My mother, however, backed me up all the way. “If I can get one of my six children out of the fields, I’ll be happy”, she said.

When I was 18, my father relented and let me attend college. I decided to become a missionary and while still working in the fields I enrolled at West Coast Bible College. I had to learn everything I had never got in elementary and secondary school and learn it more faster than
I thought possible. I shared a dorm with six English-speaking women and they become my friends. Living with them and listening to their conversations, English was much more easy to learn.

Sitting under a tree with my text book in one hand and a Spanish/English dictionary in the other, every word was a struggle. If I failed I believed everybody behind me would fail my four sisters and three brothers. If I had went back home and said I couldn’t do it it would be the end of trying for my siblings. My mothers strength carried me for many years. Her and me were always very close, and from her I learned not to give up and to dream bigger dreams.

I never became a missionary but instead went into education. I have had many jobs in education high school teacher, college teacher,and college administrator and am very thankful for the opportunities I’ve had. When I taught high school I also worked in the fields in the summer for three years with my parents. Working in the heat of summer in the fields were the hardest work of my life they have made me appreciate the wonderful jobs that an education open up for you.

Of all people my dad who originally didn’t want me to attend college and just work in the fields have became my greatest supporter. He is a wonderful man, and the pride that him and all of my family members takes in my success make me want to work even harder.

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**Editing Guidelines**

As you proofread your current draft, remember to focus on the following grammar and punctuation elements.

1. **Check your sentences to make sure you haven’t run any sentences together or put a comma between sentences instead of a period.** Correct run-on sentences or comma splices by separating longer sentence with periods and combining shorter, related sentences with a joining word.

2. **Check your draft for any sentence fragments: incomplete sentences with a period after them.** To correct fragments, attach them to the sentence they belong with, or add words to make them complete.

3. **Check your present tense verbs to make sure that they agree with their subjects.** In addition, make sure that you have correctly spelled any *past tense irregular verbs*.

4. **Check your comma usage, making sure you have inserted commas into your sentences correctly and not in places they aren’t required.**
5. Check your use of pronouns. Make sure that you are using the correct subject pronouns with compound pronouns (Jonah and I, Clare and they) and that all pronouns agree in number and gender with their antecedent.

6. Check to make sure that you have used the correct word with words that are commonly confused: there/their/they’re, its/it’s, advice/advise, accept/except, effect/affect, were/we’re/where, your/you’re, here/hear, then/than.

7. Check your use of any comparative or superlative pronouns, making sure that you use the correct forms (smarter, more resilient, quickest, most beautiful, hungrier).

8. Check your use of possessive words, making sure that you have inserted apostrophes in the correct places.

9. Check your sentences for any misplaced or dangling modifiers. Move misplaced modifiers directly after the word they modify and eliminate dangling modifiers by inserting the proper subject either in the modifying phrase or directly after the modifying phrase.

10. Check your spelling by running the spell check on your word processor or by looking up the spelling of any word you are unsure of.

Editing Activity 6.7

Keeping the editing guidelines in mind, proofread your latest draft for errors and make any needed corrections. Focus in particular on the types of errors that appear most frequently in your drafts. Read the draft several times, looking for different types of errors each time.

Editing Activity 6.8

Exchange drafts with a classmate or two and proofread each other’s drafts for errors. Point out any errors that you find in their drafts, and then correct any errors in your draft that your classmates may uncover. Then write the final draft of your comparative essay to share with classmates and your instructor.
This is your final in-class essay. You can take pride in the progress you have made in writing your best within the time limits imposed. At the least, you won’t be intimidated by any timed or in-class writing that you may be assigned in the future. At the most, your timed essays are of a quality that will serve you well throughout college and beyond.

Read the following essay regarding the influences on children today. Take a position either agreeing or disagreeing with the writer’s viewpoint and support your position in any way you find relevant: personal experience, factual information, examples, comparisons, and reasoned arguments.

**Growing Up Too Fast**

Kids are growing up too fast and being exposed to too many things that they shouldn’t see or hear. From television, movies, the Internet, and older youth, they are exposed to things in the adult world that they aren’t ready for.

Kids can’t spend any time on the Internet without seeing images of half-dressed women everywhere. On a homepage such as msn.com, you’ll usually find some bikini-clad actress whose image you click on to see a lot more, or a Kardashian showing off her butt and boobs for the world to see.

On T.V. youngsters are exposed to gay couples in sit-coms, couples in bathing suits making out on “The Bachelor,” sexual ads for Viagra and Cialis, transexual Bruce Jenner on every network, and murders and dead bodies 24/7 on the dozens of police and detective programs running constantly. And this is just on your major networks. Channel surf the world of cable and there’s a whole lot more out there that kids shouldn’t be seeing.

How many teens dress and behave also affects younger children. The way that some teens dress - girls in provocative outfits ala Miley Cyrus, boys with their pants pulled half down showing their underwear – doesn’t go unnoticed by younger kids. Disturbingly, children are mirroring the dress and talk of teens at earlier and earlier ages.

Ever see a young kid mouthing the foul lyrics of a rap song about women that he’s heard over and over, not even knowing what he’s saying? Ever see young kids in PG 13 or even R movies with older brothers or sisters or even their parents, viewing violent and suggestive images on the
big screen? There are older youth and adults who knowingly expose kids to all sorts of inappropriate stuff without giving it a second thought. If any parents think they are shielding their kids from all of this, they are wrong. They can’t monitor their children’s lives every minute, and there are just too many sources bombarding kids with garbage for parents to keep up with. This is today’s world as it is, and while no one knows for certain the long-term effect on children, there is no way that it can be positive or healthy. And there will be a time when some child accidentally googles onto a porn site (which isn’t that difficult to do) and asks a parent, “What are those naked people doing, daddy?” That is the world today’s children live in.

Writing Reflection

At the beginning of the text, you were asked to write about your writing experiences, your attitude towards writing, and how you would assess your writing skills. Now that you have completed the text, has your perspective on writing changed in any ways?

Write for a few minutes about your experience working through the text and the writing that you did: what you learned, what you found most useful, how your writing has improved, how you would currently assess your writing skills, and your attitude about writing.

Your thoughts on writing may be of interest to your classmates, who may compare them to their own perspectives. You and your classmates’ responses may also help your instructor figure out on the best ways for next year’s students to use the text most effectively and improve their writing.
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