The Process of Writing

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The Process of Writing

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The Process of Writing

A textbook of writing intended for fourth-year learners of English, Department of Translation, whose level is between upper intermediate and advanced, with special focus on the process rather than the product of writing.

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Preface

This textbook focuses on the process rather than the product of writing. It is divided into 8 Units. Throughout, the book offers numerous writing strategies, often illustrated with models and samples of students writing taken from various sources to guide learners through the process of composing similar tasks of their own.

Unit 1, *The Writing Process,* is designed specifically to develop and practise a process of writing. By practising a process of writing, students should soon be able to produce a desirable product. They will become aware of how to use the prewriting process, where they can generate ideas; the drafting process, where they begin to organize the material by selecting appropriate supporting evidence; the revising process, where they can refer to peers or instructors' comments; and the finishing process, where they can make sure that all the mechanics of writing are corrected and the product is ready for its intended reader. These processes are dynamic, interconnected, recursive and non-sequential.

Students need to be shown how to organize information if they are to write effectively in English. They need to recognize the elements of good writing: unity, coherence and cohesion.

Consequently, Unit 2, *Coherence and Cohesion*, presents coherent models of writing intended to help students produce well-organized essays by illustrating to them how to explore and organize their ideas in writing.

The fourth-year students at the Department of Translation are expected to tackle certain texts with a greater degree of specificity than previous college assignments. In particular, they are required to engage other writers' texts. When they refer to these sources, they will do more than simply recall what they have read; they are expected to summarize, paraphrase, and quote parts of the reading material so that it fits their own writing purposes. For this reason, Units 3 and 4 introduce students to the three basic conventions of academic writing: *summarizing, paraphrasing* and *quoting*. Throughout these units, students will be guided to use summarizing strategies to generate a short summary, paraphrasing strategies to express abstract ideas in a more concrete form and preserve the original meaning and quotations to introduce other borrowed information from source materials to support their opinions.

Students will also have to keep in mind that their professors are more interested in their opinions and evaluation of the reading text than in recounting information. Therefore, Unit 5, *Responding*, explains how students clearly respond to the reading material and

state their opinions in appropriate language. By doing this, they learn to distinguish between the author's ideas and their own thinking. They learn how to make their opinions stronger and more interesting by supporting their ideas with concrete supporting details based on research evidence and personal experience. In addition, Unit 5 suggests how to analyze and synthesize information to respond to different kinds of exam questions.

Unit 6, *The Research Essay*, takes students through the process of writing the research paper. This unit shows how research function as part of the overall writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising and editing. Students may need any or all of the writing processes discussed in Units 1 through 5. The approach to reading and summarizing in Unit 3 is crucial to library research as are paraphrasing, quoting, and responding covered in Units 4 and 5.

Unit 7, *The Problem-Solution Essay*, takes up the research skills presented in Unit 6; it explains how to use valuable information and concrete evidence collected via the "interview" and "survey" research tools to tackle a certain problem. Furthermore, the authentic students samples of Problem-Solving patterns displayed in this unit set forth a process for writing the Problem-Solution essay.

Unit 8, *Career Writing Skills*, presents 8 different forms of career writing, all reflecting actual writing situations that students may

encounter both in and out of college, kinds of discourse that they should learn to write intelligently. Among these types are writing formal/ informal letters, memos, reports and résumés. These skills are essential for any writer who needs to write and communicate with others in and beyond the local community. The process of writing is further explored in the context of these specific types of writing skills.

The book concludes with appendixes that supplement the features presented so far in this book: revising and proofreading drafts, refining sentences, ESL/EFL students writing problems, and documenting sources. Appendix 2 provides practice in refining sentences to help students write effectively.

Finally, the greatest advantage of learning to write is not pleasing your professors or advancing your study, desirable as these goals are. It is enlarging our capacity to think and feel and perceive. Writing, then, is worth learning.

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July 31, 2005

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Unit 1

The Writing Process

1. 1. Introduction

Some people seem to find writing easy. Some students can dash off a well-written paper in one draft. The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge even claimed that verse came to him in his sleep. But most people find writing difficult. Choosing a topic, gathering information, organizing ideas, and correcting grammar errors require real effort for most of us (Keene & Adams, 1996, p. 2).

You will find it easier to write if you have a **subject** that you know well and understand, a clear **purpose** for writing, and an **audience** that you have identified. Keeping these three elements in mind will help your writing stay focused (Blanchard, 1997, pp.4-7).

Subject

In order to write well, it is helpful to choose a topic that interests you and that you know and understand. If you are assigned a subject, try to find an angle of that subject that you find interesting and want to explore. You will usually have to go through a process of narrowing down the general subject until you find an appropriate topic.

Purpose

Whenever you write something, it is important to think about your purpose. To determine your purpose, you should ask yourself the question "What am I writing?" The three most common purposes for writing are **to entertain, to inform,** and **to persuade.** However, these three purposes are not always mutually exclusive. It is possible for a piece of writing to accomplish several purposes at the same time. An article, for example, may be amusing but also educational and/or persuasive.

Audience

What you write about (subject) and your reason for writing (purpose) are greatly affected by whom you expect will read the final product (audience). Because you will almost always be writing for an audience, you will communicate your ideas more effectively if you keep that audience in mind. Remember that all audiences have expectations, but those expectations vary from one audience to another.

Oshima and Hogue (1999, p. 3) add that you should also consider the tone of your writing, which depends on your subject matter and on your audience. Tone is your style or manner of expression. It is revealed by your choice of words and grammatical structures and even the length of your sentences. The tone of a piece of writing can be, for example, serious, amusing, personal, or impersonal.

After you know your audience, think about how you will appear to them. Writers play many different roles—among them, the entertaining storyteller, stern boss, helpful teacher, conscientious reporter, or committed advocate (Keene and Adams, 1996, p. 7). If you are writing for a general audience or for your teacher, you will generally take on the role of an informed researcher who presents information clearly and concisely. Your role helps you to determine what to say and how to say it. Informal language and flippancy don't belong on a job application, for example. If you're applying for a job, present yourself as a respectful and professional candidate:

Too Informal

I'd like to get that clerking job you put in the paper.

More Appropriate

I would like to apply for the clerk's position that you advertised in the *Times Picayune*.

If you're writing an article for the campus paper, you want to seem informed, helpful, and not too formal:

Too Formal

When the education year commences this September, registration will transpire at the portals of the student center.

More Appropriate

When the fall term begins in September, students will register at the student center.

As you write each assignment in this course and in other college courses, keep in mind your audience, tone, and purpose so that the message your reader will receive is the message you intend to convey.

1.2. The Writing Process

Oshima and Hogue (1999, pp. 2-15) list the following stages of the writing process:

1.2.1. Stage I: Prewriting

Writing, particularly academic writing, is not easy. It takes study and practice to develop this skill. For both native speakers and new learners of English, it is important to note that writing is a process, not a "product." This means that a piece of writing, whether it is a composition for your English class or a lab report for your chemistry class, is never complete; that is, it is always possible to review and revise, and review and revise again.

There are four main stages in the writing process: prewriting, planning, writing and revising drafts, and writing the final copy to hand in. Let us first concentrate on prewriting techniques, which are activities to help you generate ideas for your writing assignments.

1.2.1.1. Step 1: Choosing and Narrowing a Topic

If you are given a specific writing assignment (such as an essay question on an examination), then, of course, what you can write about is limited. On the other hand, when you are given a free choice of topics and can write about something you are interested in, then you must narrow the topic to a particular aspect of that general subject. Suppose you are interested in the environment. It would be impossible to cover such a big topic in a paragraph. You would have to narrow the topic to perhaps environmental pollution, if that is your interest. Environmental pollution, however, is still too broad a topic for a paragraph, so you might even further narrow the topic to a type of environmental pollution, such as pollution of the oceans. However, writing about ocean pollution is still too broad because it would include pollution by oil, chemicals, sewage, and garbage. Therefore, you might decide to write about oil as a source of ocean pollution. Finally, you might make this topic even narrower by writing only about the effects of oil spills on sea life. The point is, you must narrow the subject of your paragraph to a specific focus so that you can write about it clearly and completely.

Practice: Choosing and Narrowing a Topic

Individually, in pair work, or with your whole class, narrow each

of the following general topics to one specific aspect that could be written about in one paragraph.

School Entertainment

Television Food Sports

1.2.1.2. Step 2: Brainstorming

After you have chosen a topic and narrowed it to a specific focus, the next prewriting step is to generate ideas. This is done by a process called brainstorming. Brainstorming for ideas can get you started writing more quickly and save you time in the later stages of the writing process.

Three useful brainstorming techniques are listing, freewriting, and clustering. Learn how to do each of them and then decide which is the most productive for you.

1.2.1.2.1. Listing

Listing is a brainstorming technique in which you think about your topic and quickly make a list of whatever words or phrases come into your mind. Your purpose is to produce as many ideas as possible in a short time, and your goal is to find a specific focus for your topic.

Follow this procedure:

1. Write down the general topic at the top of your paper.
2. Then make a list of every idea that comes into your mind about that topic. Keep the ideas flowing. Try to stay on the general topic; however, if you write down information that is completely off the topic, don't worry about it because you can cross it out later.
3. Use words, phrases, or sentences, and don't worry about spelling or grammar.

Oshima & Hogue (1999, p. 5) give an example of the listing technique on the topic of the culture shock experienced by international students in the United States.

Culture Shock

communication problems	homeless people shocking sight
poor verbal skills	American students
children disrespectful	classroom environment
new language	unclear expressions
American family life	public transportation is not good
families seldom eat together	need a car
lack vocabulary	use first names with teachers
show affection in public	college professors wear jeans
Americans talk too fast	students ask questions
they are friendly	no formal dress code

people are always in a hurry
use slang and idioms
families don't spend time together on weekends and holidays
children are "kings"
lack confidence
American food is unhealthy
everyone eats fast food
no one takes time to cook good meals
professor's role
children spend more time with friends than with parents
use incomplete sentences
poor pronunciation
Americans difficult to understand
students can challenge professors

4. Now rewrite your list and group similar ideas together. Cross out items that don't belong or that are duplications.

Group A	**Group B**	**Group C**
Communication problems	~~homeless people~~	American family life
poor verbal skills	~~shocking sight~~	children are "kings"
new language	American students	families seldom eat together
lack vocabulary	classroom environment	
~~show affection in public~~	~~public transportation is not good~~	children disrespectful

Group A	Group B	Group C
Americans talk too fast	~~need a car~~	~~families~~ don't spend time together on weekends and holidays
~~they are friendly~~	use first names with teacher's	children spend more time with friends than with parents
~~people are always in a hurry~~	college professors wear jeans	~~American food is unhealthy~~
use slang and idioms	students ask questions	~~everyone eats fast food~~
lack confidence	no formal dress code	
use incomplete sentences	~~no one takes time to cook good meals~~	
poor pronunciation	professor's role	
Americans difficult to understand	students can challenge professors	
unclear expressions		

Now there are three lists, each of which has a central focus. The central focus in each new list is circled: *communication problems*,

classroom environment, and *American family life*. The writer can choose one list to be the basis for a paragraph.

Practice: Brainstorming by listing

Brainstorm by listing ideas on one of the following topics. Follow the four steps outlined above.

How to be a good student

How television is a learning tool

The characteristics of a good teacher

My favorite leisure-time activity

Tourist attractions in your country or city

1.2.1.2.2. Freewriting

Freewriting is a brainstorming activity in which you write freely about a topic because you are looking for a specific focus. While you are writing, one idea will spark another idea. As with listing, the purpose of freewriting is to generate as many ideas as possible and to write them down without worrying about appropriateness, grammar, spelling, logic, or organization. Remember, the more you freewrite, the more ideas you will have. Don't despair if your mind seems to "run dry." Just keep your pencil moving.

Follow this procedure:

1. Write the topic at the top of your paper.

2. Write as much as you can about the topic until you run out of

ideas. Include such supporting items as facts, details, and examples that come into your mind about the subject.

3. After you have run out of ideas, reread your paper and circle the main idea(s) that you would like to develop.

4. Take that main idea and freewrite again.

In the following model, the student is supposed to write a paragraph about one major problem at his college. The student doesn't have any idea of what to write about, so he starts freewriting about some of the problems that come to mind.

Model: Freewriting 1

Problems at Evergreen College

What is the biggest problem at Evergreen College? Well, I really don't know. In fact, I can't think of one particular problem although I know there are many problems. For one thing, the classrooms are usually overcrowded. At the beginning of this semester, Science Hall 211 had 45 students although there were only 31 desks. A few of the seats attached to the desks were broken, so about 20 students had to sit on the floor. Besides, the classrooms are poorly maintained. In several of my classes, there are broken chairs and litter on the floor. Students even leave their dirty cups and other garbage on the desks. So the rooms are messy. The library is too

small and always crowded with students. Not all students really study in the library. Sometimes they talk a lot and this is really quite distracting to me and other serious students who want and need a quiet place to study. So the present library should be expanded or a new library should be built. Oh yes, I think that another problem is parking near the campus. The college has a big parking lot across from the west side of campus, but it is always full. So, many times students have to park their cars in the residential areas, which could be so far away from the campus that they have to run to class to make it. Yes, parking is a big problem that many students face every day. I have a car, and many of my friends have one. We really have a problem. So, I think the biggest problem at Evergreen College is not enough parking spaces near the college campus... (Oshima & Hogue, 1999, p. 7).

After he finished freewriting, the student reread his paper and underlined the main ideas, one of which he will consider as the major problem at Evergreen College.

Let's say that the student has decided to choose parking as a major problem at Evergreen College. Now that the student knows the topic that he wants to write about, he will again brainstorm by freewriting; only this time, the specific topic will be on the parking problem only. His freewriting paper might look like this.

Model: Freewriting 2

The Parking Problem at Evergreen College

I think finding a parking space close to the campus at Evergreen College is a major problem. There are not enough parking lots for students to park their cars. Therefore, students have to come early to get a parking space, and even then, sometimes they are unlucky and can't get a good parking space. Once I couldn't find a space in the west-side parking lot, and I had to drive in the streets for a half hour before I found one. So, I was late for class. Some students are late to class almost every time the English class meets. Some even drop the class, not because they can't handle it, but because they can't find a place to park close to the campus. The teacher warns them time and time again not to be late, but they can't help it... What is the solution to the parking problem? Maybe the college should spend some funds to construct a multilevel parking lot that will accommodate three times as many cars as the present parking lot holds... (Oshima & Hogue, 1999, p.2).

The student can continue freewriting as long as he can generate ideas related to the topic. Then after completing that task, he can reread it and develop certain points, add some more ideas, or even delete others. The student can do this freewriting activity several times until he is satisfied with what he has written.

Practice: Brainstorming by Freewriting

Brainstorm by freewriting on one of the following topics. Follow the four steps outlined above.

Problems of working students

Problems of international students

Problems with learning English in your country

A topic of your own choice

1.2.1.2.3. Clustering

Clustering is another brainstorming activity that you can use to generate ideas. Here's how to use this technique: In the center of your paper, write your topic and draw a "balloon" around it. This is your center, or core, balloon. Then write whatever ideas come to you in balloons around the core. Think about each of these ideas and make more balloons around them.

For example, suppose you had to describe a person who is close to you in some way. Using the clustering technique to get ideas, you might end up with a paper such as the following.

Model: Clustering

(Oshima & Hogue, 1999, p. 7).

The largest cluster of balloons was generated from the "workaholic" balloon, so this would be a good focus for this student's paragraph about his father.

Practice 4: Brainstorming by Clustering

Use the clustering technique for ten minutes to generate ideas about a member of your family.

1.2.2. Stage II: Planning (Outlining)

Choosing an Organizational Pattern

After you have collected your information and written a preliminary thesis statement, begin organizing your ideas, a process that will continue as you write a first draft. The following list suggests some possibilities for shaping an entire paper or for developing an individual section or paragraph.

- **Chronological:** to tell a story, explain the evolution of a problem, describe the order in which something happened
- **Description:** to describe the layout of a place, the appearance of a person or product
- **Simple to complex:** to move from an overview of a situation to specific details concerning it
- **Thesis/support:** to state a general judgment and then explain it in smaller units
- **Order of importance:** to formulate an ordered list of goals to be achieved, tasks to be accomplished, or points at issue
- **Checklist:** to present items to consider, in order, before performing a certain action
- **Process:** to present the steps involved in accomplishing a certain goal
- **Comparison:** to judge between two or more alternatives
- **Cause and effect:** to consider the causes of a problem as well as its effects
- **Problem solving:** to make the decisions necessary to move from a current situation to a desired situation.
- **Pros and cons:** to review good and bad points about a proposal and then make a recommendation
- **Persuasion:** to argue for a change of belief or action

Your subject matter, purpose, role, and audience will help you to determine the best organizational patterns for your paper.

After you have finished drafting, you might decide to make a second plan or outline—to evaluate your product and determine the necessary revisions (see Keene & Adams, 1996, pp. 13-14).

In Stage 1, you chose topics and narrowed them, and you generated ideas by brainstorming. Now you are ready for Stage II in the process of writing, the planning stage. In the planning stage, you organize the ideas you generated by brainstorming into an outline.

Turn back to the model about culture shock on pages (23-25). The student had developed three different lists of ideas: communication problems, classroom environment, and American family life. She decided to write a paragraph about communication problems.

1.2.2.1. Step 1: Making Sublists

The first step toward making an outline is to divide the ideas in the "communication problems" list further into sublists and to cross out any items that don't belong or that aren't useable.

Model: Sublists

Communication Problems

(1) poor verbal skills	use incomplete sentences
lack vocabulary	(2) Americans difficult to understand
~~new language~~	unclear expressions
poor pronunciation	Americans talk too fast
~~lack confidence~~	use slang and idioms

The ideas listed under "communication problems" could be divided further into two sublists—those that describe international students and those that describe Americans. Two items, (1) *poor verbal skills* and (2) *Americans difficult to understand*, can serve as titles for the sublists. *New language* and *lack confidence* didn't fit in either sublist, so they were crossed out. The remaining items could be put under 1 or 2. When you have grouped all of the points into their appropriate sublist, you have created a preliminary outline for a paragraph.

Model: Preliminary Outline

Communication Problems

A. Poor verbal skills

- lack vocabulary
- poor pronunciation

B. Americans difficult to understand

- use incomplete sentences
- use unclear expressions
- talk too fast
- use slang and idioms

1.2.2.2. Step 2: Writing the Topic Sentence

Finally, write a topic sentence. The topic sentence is the most general sentence in a paragraph, and it expresses the central focus of the paragraph. The topic of Group A is clearly communication problems. Therefore, a possible topic sentence might be as follows.

Model: Topic Sentence

One problem that many international students face in the United States is communication with Americans.

or

International students in the United States face communication problems with Americans.

1.2.2.3. Step 3: Outlining

An outline is a formal plan for a paragraph. In an outline, you write down the main points and subpoints in the order in which you plan to write about them. The following is an example of an outline of the topic "communication problems."

Model: Outline

Communication Problems

Topic Sentence International students in the United States face communication problems with Americans.

Supporting point	A. International students have poor verbal skills.
Supporting detail	1. lack vocabulary
Supporting detail	2. have poor pronunciation
Supporting point	B. Americans are difficult to understand.
Supporting detail	1. use incomplete sentences
Supporting detail	2. use unclear expressions
Supporting detail	3. talk too fast
Supporting detail	4. use slang and idioms

With this outline in front of you, it should be relatively easy to write a paragraph about international students' communication problems with Americans. There is a topic sentence, two main supporting points, two supporting details for the first main point, and four supporting details for the second main point. You could, of course, add some examples and a concluding sentence if you wanted to, but the main planning for the paragraph has been completed.

Practice: Outlining

Develop an outline for *classroom environment*. Follow the three steps outlined above. Your outline should contain a topic sentence, one or two main supporting points, and one or two supporting details for each main supporting point.

1.2.3. Stage III: Writing and Revising Drafts

"How can I know what I think until I see what I write?" asked novelist E. M. Forster. By taking chances with this first draft and letting the writing flow, you can find out what you think and how best to say it (Keene & Adams, 1996, p. 17). Remember that no piece of writing is ever perfect the first time. Each time you write a new draft, you will refine and improve your writing.

Once you have considered your subject, audience, thesis, and organization, you will be ready to write a rough draft. In the first

draft, your goal should be to develop the main idea of the paper, to put the major points in order—and not much more. Try to write quickly, getting down lots of words and not worrying over each paragraph and sentence. You want to produce not a finished product but a draft (from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning "to draw or sketch"), a preliminary version that will be enlarged upon through revision.

1.2.3.1. Step 1: Writing the First Rough Draft

The first step in this stage is to write a rough draft from your outline. This is how to proceed:

- Write down the topic sentence and underline it. Doing this will remind you of the focus of your paragraph.
- Skip one or two lines per line of writing and leave margins of one inch on both sides of the paper. These blank spaces will allow you to add more details, information, examples, etc. in order for you to fully develop your points. Also, you can add comments such as "define ," "check spelling," "add an example," and so on in the margins for your attention later on.

Write your paragraph, following your outline as closely as possible. Try writing steadily. Don't hesitate to add ideas that aren't in your outline if you are certain they are relevant to the topic.

Don't worry about grammar, punctuation, or spelling. This first rough draft does not have to be "perfect"; in fact, it won't be because your main goal is to write down as much information as you can, following the points in your outline.

While you are writing, you may not be able to think of a word or phrase, or you may be unable to complete a thought. Don't worry—just leave a space or a line. You can fill it in later. Also, while you are writing about one major point, you might come up with an idea for another major point. Don't risk forgetting it! Write it down in the margin of your paper near where it belongs.

Above all, remember that writing is a continuous process of discovery. Therefore, as you are writing, you will think of new ideas that may not be on your brainstorming list or in your outline. You can add new ideas or delete original ones at any time in the writing process. Just be sure that any new ideas are relevant!

1.2.3.2. Step 2: Revising Content and Organization

After you write the rough draft, the next step is to revise it. When you revise, you change what you have written in order to improve it. You check it over for content and organization, including unity, coherence, and logic. You can change, rearrange, add, or delete, all for the goal of communicating your thoughts more clearly, more effectively, and in a more interesting way.

During the first revision, do not try to correct grammar, sentence structure, spelling, or punctuation; this is proofreading, which you will do later. During the first revision, be concerned mainly with content and organization.

This is how to proceed:

- Read over your paragraph carefully for a general overview. Focus on the general aspects of the paper and make notes in the margins so that you can rewrite parts that need to be improved.
- Check to see that you have achieved your stated purpose.
- Check for general logic and coherence. Your audience should be able to follow your ideas easily and understand what you have written.
- Check to make sure that your paragraph has a topic sentence and that the topic sentence has a central (main) focus.
- Check for unity. Cross out any sentence that does not support the topic sentence.
- Check to make sure that the topic sentence is developed with sufficient supporting details. Be certain that each paragraph gives the reader enough information to understand the main idea. If the main point lacks sufficient information, make notes in the margin such as "add more details" or "add an

example." Make sure that you haven't used general statements for support.

- Check your use of transition signals.
- Finally, does your paragraph have or need a concluding sentence? If you wrote a final comment, is it on the topic?

Now rewrite your paragraph, incorporating all of the necessary revisions. This is your second draft.

1.2.3.3. Step 3: Proofreading the Second Draft

The next step is to proofread your paper to check for grammar, sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation.

- Check over each sentence for correctness and completeness: no fragments and no choppy or run-on sentences.
- Check over each sentence for a subject and a verb, subject-verb agreement, correct verb tenses, etc.
- Check the mechanics: punctuation, spelling, capitalization, typing errors, etc.
- Change vocabulary words as necessary. (See Appendix 1 for revising drafts)

1.2.3.4. Step 4: Writing the Final Copy

Now you are ready to write the final copy to hand in. Your

instructor will expect it to be written neatly and legibly in ink or typed. Be sure that you make all the corrections that you noted on your second draft. After rereading the final copy, don't be surprised if you decide to make a few minor or even major changes. Remember that writing is a continuous process of writing and rewriting until you are satisfied with the final product.

Writing Practice

Choose one of the topics for which you have completed the brainstorming step, and write a paragraph ten to fifteen sentences in length.

Step 1 Brainstorming: You have already completed this step.

Prewriting

Step 2 Develop an outline, including a topic sentence.

Planning

Step 3 Write a rough draft.

Writing

Step 4 Edit you rough draft for content and organization.

Revising

Step 5 Write a second draft, and proofread it for grammar and

Rewriting mechanics.

Step 6 Write a final copy to hand in.

Unit 2

Coherence and Cohesion

2.1. Introduction

Coherence means "to stick together." An academic essay is coherent if (a) the parts of the essay are unified (i.e., they are about the same main idea) and (b) if the essay seems logical to the reader (i.e., one part "flows" into another without confusing the audience). In other words, a unified paragraph is one in which all information in the paragraph is related in support of the topic. Coherence means there are links between and among the pieces of information in the paragraph.

A well-organized essay is the basis for coherence: an essay with a carefully identified audience and purpose, a clear thesis statement, and body paragraphs that support their topic sentences. The use of these organizational writing conventions makes the essay easy to read and understand. It "sticks together" for the academic audience (Reid, 2000, p. 116).

A paragraph is like a jigsaw puzzle. To be unified, all the pieces must fit. To be coherent, the pieces must fit snugly, with no harsh lines or abrupt breaks. In a coherent paragraph, each sentence grows naturally out of the one before it, and each is logically linked to the

one that follows it. When all the sentences flow together smoothly, the paragraph is coherent (Fazio et al., 1990, pp.10-11). To make your paragraph coherent, arrange the supporting sentences in chronological order, the order in which the events or pieces of information occur.

One way to achieve coherence is to arrange your sentences in some kind of logical order. Your choice of one kind of logical order over another will, of course, depend on your topic and on your purpose. You may even combine two or more different logical orders in the same paragraph. The important point to remember is to arrange your ideas in some kind of order that is logical to a reader accustomed to the English way of writing.

Some common kinds of logical order in English are *chronological order*, *logical division* of ideas, and *comparison/contrast* (Oshima & Hogue, 1999, p. 51).

Each kind of order has its own special words and phrases to show the relationships among the ideas. For example, in a piece of writing using chronological order, you would expect to find a lot of time expressions: *first, next, after that, finally, before the last war, after 1990, since then, while working on the project, etc.* Words such as *just last week, last night,* and *a few minutes ago* signal time and provide a smooth transition to the next sentence or thought. *A*

few minutes ago clearly comes after *last night. Last night* comes after *last week.*

In a paragraph describing differences (contrast), you would find these expressions: *the most noticeable difference, larger than, unlike, on the other hand, in contrast, differ from.*

In a paragraph showing similarities (comparison), you would find these expressions: *similarity, similarly, as expensive as, just as, just like, compare with, in comparison.*

Logical division of ideas is another common method of organizing ideas to give a paragraph coherence. Ideas are put into groups, and each group is discussed one after the other. Transition words such as *first, second, third* introduce each group.

2.2. Using Transitions

Because transitions provide valuable signals to the reader about the relationships between parts of the essay, students must learn to use them appropriately. First, transitions fulfill several grammatical functions. In the examples below, the independent clauses [IC] are underlined, and the dependent clauses are *italicized*. Notice the use of commas.

Grammatical Function	
1. Introductory words	
At first, we did not understand.	[A word or phrase, followed by a comma, that introduces an independent clause]
Similarly, Shelley's hair was curly.	
2. Subordinate conjunctions	[A word or phrase at the beginning of a dependent clause: notice comma use.
We went **because** we were excited.	
The party was over **when** he arrived.	**Note:** subordinate clauses can occur **either** before **or** after an independent clause]
Even though we were late, we were still happy.	
3. Coordinate conjunctions	[A word or phrase, usually preceded by a comma, that connects two independent clauses]
Maria likes pizza, **and** Jose does too.	
They write well, **but** their friend does not.	

Hundreds of transitions are available to the academic writer. Below is a list of some of those transitions, arranged according to use

and grammatical function. Notice the use of punctuation, especially commas, and of capitalization. Table (2-1) lists categories of transitions available for student writers (Reid, 2000, pp. 116-19).

Note: Some uses of transitions include only introductory words. Other uses also include subordinate and coordinate conjunctions.

Table 2-1 Transitions

1. Chronological transitions signal relationship in time.

Introductory Words		**Subordinate Conjunctions**		
First,	Presently,	When..., [IC]*	or	[IC] when...
Second,	The next day,	Although..., [IC]	or	[IC] although...
Third,	Soon afterward	Before..., [IC]	or	[IC] before...
Next,	By that time,	During..., [IC]	or	[IC] during...
Later,	From then on,	While..., [IC]	or	[IC] while...
After that,	At that moment,	Even though..., [IC]	or	[IC] even though...
At last,	Within an hour	After..., [IC]	or	[IC] after...
At length,	Afterward,	Because..., [IC]	or	[IC] because...
earlier,	Meanwhile,	Unit l..., [IC]	or	[IC] until...

(*) [IC] = Independent Clause.

2. Spatial transitions signal relationship in space.

Introductory Words

A little farther on,	Next to X,	Beyond this point,
In the next room,	Across the street,	Just to the left,
At that altitude,	At the center of the circle,	
Between those cities,	About a foot to the right,	

3. Comparison transitions signal similarity.

Introductory Words

Likewise,	Once more,	In like manner,
Similarly,	At the same time,	In much the same way,
Once again,	Compared to X,	

4. Contrast transitions signal a contradiction or a contrast.

Introductory Words

However,	Nevertheless,	Instead,
Unlike X,	Nonetheless,	On the other hand,
Conversely,	In contrast,	On the contrary,
Even so,		

Subordinate Conjunctions		Coordinate Conjunctions
Although..., [IC]	or [IC] although....	[IC], but [IC]
Whereas..., [IC]	or [IC] whereas...	[IC], yet [IC]
Even though..., [IC]	or [IC] even though....	

5. Explanatory transitions signal explanation, an illustration, or an example.

Introductory Words

For example,	Frequently,	That is,
For instance,	Occasionally,	In order to X,
To illustrate,	Generally,	Similarly,
Specifically,	Usually,	In other words,

6. Transitions of addition signal additional or supplementary material.

Introductory Words

in fact,	Moreover,	For that matter,
Naturally,	Furthermore,	As a matter of fact,
Indeed,	Of course,	
Besides that,	In addition,	

Coordinate Conjunctions

[IC], and [IC]

7. Cause-effect transitions signal reason or a result.

Introductory Words

Therefore,	Due to X,	Accordingly,
Thus,	Consequently,	As a consequence,
Finally,	As a result,	For this reason,

Subordinate Conjunctions			**Coordinate Conjunctions**
Because..., [IC]	or	[IC] because...	[IC], so [IC]
Since..., [IC]	or	[IC] since...	[IC], and so [IC]
			[IC], and that is why [IC]

8. Counter-argument transitions signal concession or compromise.

Introductory Words			**Subordinate Conjunctions**		
Of course,	or	However,	Although..., [IC]	or	[IC] although...
Certainly,		Instead,	Even though..., [IC]	or	[IC] even though...
After all,		Conversely,	Because..., [IC]	or	[IC] because...
To be sure,		In contrast,			
As noted earlier,		Nevertheless,			
On one hand,		On the other hand,			

9. Conclusion transitions signal summation.

Introductory Words

To conclude,	To summarize,	Finally,
In short,	In conclusion,	On the whole,
In brief,	Therefore,	In summary

Think of transition signals as traffic signs that tell your reader when to go forward, turn, slow down, and stop. In other words, they tell the reader when you are giving a similar idea (similarly, *moreover, furthermore, in addition*), an opposite idea (*on the other hand, however, in contrast*), an example (*for example*), a result (*as a result*), or a conclusion (*in conclusion*).

Using transition words as a guide makes it easier for your reader to follow your ideas. Transition words give your paragraph coherence.

2.2.1. Transition Signals within a Paragraph

Compare paragraphs 1 and 2 that follow. Both paragraphs give the same information, yet one paragraph is easier to understand than the other because it contains transition signals to lead the reader from one idea to the next.

Which paragraph contains transition signals and is more coherent? Circle all of the transition signals that you can identify.

Paragraph 1

A difference among the world's seas and oceans is that the salinity varies in different climate zones. The Baltic Sea in Northern Europe is only one-fourth as Saline as the Red Sea in the Middle East. There are reasons for this. In warm climates, water evaporates rapidly. The concentration of salt is greater. The surrounding land is dry and does not contribute much fresh water to dilute the salty sea water. In cold climate zones, water evaporates slowly. The runoff created by melting snow adds a considerable amount of fresh water to dilute the saline sea water.

Paragraph 2

Another difference among the world's seas and oceans is that the salinity varies in different climate zones. For example, the Baltic Sea in Northern Europe is only one-fourth as saline as the Red Sea in the Middle East. There are two reasons for this. First of all, in warm climate zones, water evaporates rapidly; therefore, the concentration of salt is greater. Second, the surrounding land is dry and, consequently, does not contribute much fresh water to dilute the salty sea water. In cold climate zones, on the other hand, water evaporates slowly.

Furthermore, the runoff created by melting snow adds a considerable amount of fresh water to dilute the saline sea water. (Oshima & Hogue, 1999, pp. 42-43)

Paragraph 2 is more coherent because it contains transition signals. Each transition signal has a special meaning. Each shows how the following sentence relates to the preceding one.

Another tells you that this paragraph is part of a longer essay.

For example tells you that an example of the preceding idea is coming.

Two tells you to look for two different reasons.

First of all tells you that this is the first reason.

Second and *furthermore* indicate that additional ideas are coming.

Therefore and *consequently* indicate that the second statement is a result of the first statement.

On the other hand tells you that an opposite idea is coming (Oshima & Hogue, 1999, pp. 43-44).

Of course, you should not use a transition signal in front of every sentence in a paragraph. Using too many transition signals can be just as confusing as using too few. However, good writing requires that you use enough transition signals to make the relationships among your ideas clear.

2.2.2. Transition Signals between Paragraphs

Transition signals are important not only *within* paragraphs but also *between* paragraphs. If you write two or more paragraphs, you need to show the relationship between your first and second paragraph, between your second and third paragraph, and so on.

Think of transitions between paragraphs as the links of a chain. The links of a chain connect the chain; they hold it together. Similarly, a transition signal between two paragraphs links your ideas together.

Two paragraphs are linked by adding a transition signal to the topic sentence of the second paragraph. This transition signal may be a single word, a phrase, or a dependent clause that repeats or summarizes the main idea in the first paragraph.

Study the following model, and notice how the paragraphs are linked by a single word, a phrase, or a clause.

Model: Paragraph Transitions

Introductory Paragraph

Aggressive Drivers

The number of vehicles on freeways and streets is increasing at an alarming rate. This influx of motor vehicles is creating hazardous conditions. Moreover, drivers are in such a rush to get to their

destinations that many become angry or impatient with other motorists who are too slow or who are in their way. Aggressive drivers react foolishly toward others in several dangerous ways.

Transition Words

Body Paragraph 1

One way an angry driver may react is to cut off another motorist. (+ supporting sentences) _____

Transition words

Body Paragraph 2

Another way is to tailgate the other car. (+ supporting sentences)

_____

Transition Phrase

Body Paragraph 3

In addition to cutting off and tailgating other cars, aggressive drivers often use rude language or gestures to show their anger. (+ supporting sentences)

_____

Transition Clause

Body Paragraph 4

Although law enforcement authorities warn motorists against aggressive driving, the number who act out their

angry impulses has not declined. (+ supporting sentences) _____

Concluding Paragraph

To conclude, aggressive drivers are endangering everyone because they create hazardous conditions by acting and driving foolishly. They should control their anger and learn to drive safely. After all, the lives they save could be their own (Oshima & Hogue, 1999, pp. 109-110).

2.3. Cohesion

Another characteristic of a good paragraph is cohesion. When a paragraph has cohesion, all the supporting sentences "stick together" in their support of the topic sentence. The methods of connecting sentences to each other are called cohesive devices. Five important cohesive devices are linking words, personal pronouns, definite articles, demonstrative pronouns, and synonyms (Boardman & Fydenberg, 2002, pp. 36-8).

2.3.1. Linking Words

There are many ways to help give a paragraph cohesion. One way is to use **linking words.** There are many kinds of linking words: coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, prepositions, and transitions. Transitions are a very common type of linking word. They are words or phrases that help to connect

sentences to one another. They may also help the coherence of a paragraph by indicating the order of the supporting sentences as indicated above. To some extent, linking words, including transitions, are particular to the type of paragraph that you are writing.

2.3.2. Personal Pronouns

Another way to help a paragraph have good cohesion is by using personal pronouns. Pronouns usually have antecedents, or nouns that they stand for, in previous sentence parts or sentences. In other words, a pronoun usually refers back to a previous noun—its antecedent. For example:

The little boy looked at the birthday cake.

He stuck out *his* finger and took a taste of *it*.

Using the personal pronouns *he*, *his*, and *it* in the second sentence connects these two sentences. In fact, if you didn't use pronouns, you would have an awkward second sentence that might not seem related to the first one. For example:

The little boy looked at the birthday cake.

The little boy stuck out the little boy's finger and took a taste of the birthday cake.

2.3.3. The Definite Article

A third way to connect sentences is to use the definite article *the*. A noun with a definite article often relates to a previously mentioned noun. For example:

I bought an anniversary present yesterday.

The anniversary present is for my grandparents.

It's obvious that these two sentences are talking about the same anniversary present because of the use of the definite article in the second sentence. In fact, if the definite article were not used, these two sentences would not be related. Look at these two sentences:

I bought an anniversary present yesterday.

An anniversary present is for my grandparents.

2.3.4. Demonstrative Pronouns

Another way to connect sentences in a paragraph, or to give a paragraph good cohesion, is to use the demonstrative pronouns *this, that, these*, and *those*. Like previous cohesive devices, demonstrative pronouns require antecedents in order to help connect sentences to those that came before. For example:

On top of the table was a present.

This present had purple wrapping paper.

You could also use the definite article instead of the demonstrative pronoun to indicate that the two sentences go together. However, you must use one or the other. If you don't, then these two sentences aren't connected. For example:

On top of the table was a present.

A present had purple wrapping paper.

2.3.5. Synonyms

The use of **synonyms** is also a cohesive device in that the synonyms refer back to their antecedents. Like using a pronoun, using a synonym also prevents the frequent repetition of a word or words. Read the first paragraph. It is awkward because of the overrepetition of words. Then read the revised version using synonyms for the forms of *depress* and *retire*.

Retirement

The sixty-five-year-old **employee** was *depressed* at the thought of his retirement. His **boss told him** that he had to retire because he was at retirement age, but **he** didn't want to retire. Therefore, he became *depressed*. He thought that his days would be *depressing* from then on because he was retired. In fact, he was so *depressed* that his wife made him find another job with a company that didn't have a retirement age. He wasn't *depressed* after that.

Retirement (Revised Version)

The employee was *saddened* by the thought of his retirement. His boss told him that he had to stop working because he was sixty-five, but he felt that he still had a lot of good work years in him. He didn't want to quit working, so he became depressed. He thought that his days would become *boring and useless* from then on because he couldn't work. In fact, he became so *distressed* that his wife made him find a company to work for that didn't have a retirement policy. He felt great after that. (Boardman & Frydenberg, 2002, p. 38)

In the revised paragraph, the cohesive devices are useful in relating sentences in a paragraph to one another. When sentences are related, a paragraph has good cohesion.

2.3.6. Different Forms of a Word

Another cohesive device used to relate your ideas and sentences to each other is the use of different forms of a word. Consider the following example.

> Your understanding of economics will help you *decide* how to save, invest, or spend your money. *These decisions* will affect you, your family, and others around you. (Same word family: *decide*—verb, *decisions* - noun). (Cavusgil, 1998, p. 65)

2.4. Unity

An important element of good writing is unity. Every good paragraph has unity, which means that only *one* main idea is discussed. For example, if your paragraph is about the advantages of owning a compact car, discuss only that. Do not discuss the disadvantages. Sometimes it is possible to discuss two or even three aspects of the same idea in one paragraph *if they are closely related to each other*. For example, you could discuss gas economy and low maintenance costs in the same paragraph because they are closely related, but you should not discuss both gas economy and easier parking in the same paragraph because they are not closely related.

The second part of unity is that every supporting sentence must directly explain or prove the main idea that is stated in the topic sentence. Do not include any information that does not directly support the topic sentence. (Oshima & Hogue, 1999, pp. 30-31)

One definition of support is to "help prove" a point. The following outline illustrates three supporting details that help prove the topic sentence and one (marked*) that does not.

Topic Sentence: [My neighborhood] is **unsafe** because of the *crime rate.*

1. This week there were two muggings.

2. My neighbor's house has been robbed three times.

*3. Sometimes I like to walk alone at night.

4. A car was sto'en last night.

When all the sentences stay with the topic and help prove the controlling idea, the paragraph is said to have **unity**. Sentence 3 does not support the controlling idea, so it does not belong in the paragraph (Fazio, 1990, p. 8).

Damascus University

Unit 3

Summarizing

3.1. Introduction

Since many writing assignments will require you to draw on books, articles, lecture notes, and other written material, it's important that you learn how to use reading sources to their best advantage.

The ability to take information from reading sources and use it in a composition addressed to one's own audience is useful not only in academic writing but also in business and professional settings. When a writer prepares an annual report for stockholders in a large corporation, he or she may summarize hundreds of individual reports, studies, and analyses. The writer repackages information that was originally produced for accountants, managers, engineers, and other professionals so that the general public can easily understand it. For in-house business documents, writers often take information that was originally intended for one audience, for instance technical experts, and make it intelligible for another audience, say the sales staff. Much of the writing that goes on in business, government, and other professions involves reducing, processing, and translating information for a designated audience or purpose.

Writers use three basic techniques to represent information they acquire from sources. First, they summarize the information by focusing on key elements and compacting or omitting details. Whether summaries are brief or comprehensive, they are attempts to capture the overall message. Second, they paraphrase selected parts of sources by translating the entire selected piece directly into their own words. Finally, they quote directly from original sources. This unit deals with summarizing. Unit 4 will deal with paraphrasing and quoting.

3.2. Summaries

Summaries are shortened versions of a longer message. We often encounter summaries in our daily lives. For example, we may hear a 60-second news report on the radio, which gives brief information on the most important news of the day. Before a new episode of a series on TV, we may see a quick summary of what happened in the previous episodes. We may summarize a movie, magazine article, or book we'd like a friend to enjoy, or we might summarize details of our lives to tell others. We may send postcards when we travel, summarizing the highlights of our vacation. And when a classmate asks us "What happened in class today?" we quickly summarize the main points covered.

In the working world, potential employees summarize their

qualifications, such as educational and employment background, on a résumé or application form. On the job, workers may be asked to give oral or written progress reports to summarize the work that has been completed. And at many business meetings, minutes are read that summarize the business of the previous meeting (Byleen, 1998, 122-125).

The term "summary" covers a wide range of activities. For example, in answer to an essay exam question, writers summarize when they compress ideas that extend over many pages of their textbook. Also, they summarize when they write a short paper that reviews the main ideas presented in an assigned journal article. Further, in preparing research papers (see Unit 6), writers summarize when they combine ideas from a number of sources to develop a particular perspective on an issue. And, finally, they also summarize as they take notes on the main points in a class lecture.

Summaries are widely used in academic work. They are often found at the end of textbook chapters to help students review the key points. In addition, professors may give a brief summary at the end of a lecture or begin a class with a summary of what was previously covered. By reading a summary or abstract of an article you can quickly determine whether the article is a possible source in doing library research.

Students are also asked to write summaries. An effective student must be able to:

- summarize material and take notes while listening to lectures or reading texts
- summarize readings to include in reports, projects, papers, and assignments
- summarize text or lecture material to answer test questions
- summarize material and then write a reaction, analysis, or response

Summaries are shorter than the original message because they contain only the main ideas and main supporting ideas.

3.3. Elements of a Summary

1. A summary contains only the most important information

An effective summary answers the question: What are the main points of the original lecture, reading, or message? To answer this question, the summary gives the main ideas and main supporting ideas of the original message, so that the reader or listener does not have to go to the original source to understand it. The summary is complete within itself.

2. A summary is concise

Because a good summary contains only the essential information, it is considerably shorter than the original. Your job as the summary writer is to distinguish the main, essential information from the examples and detail, so you will know what to include in your summary. The length of the summary may depend on the assignment given or the length and difficulty of the original.

3. A summary respects the author's original work

A summary respects the author's original work by:

- citing the author .
- objectively stating the author's ideas without additional ideas or interpretation
- using the author's exact sentences only in the proper form of quotation

4. A summary follows an introduction/body/conclusion format

A summary is not a loosely connected list of the main ideas. Whether it consists of one paragraph or several, it is structured with an *introduction*, a *body*, and a *conclusion*. As in all good writing, the ideas and sentences are smoothly connected by a variety of techniques, such as repetition of key words, pronoun reference, and transitional words and phrases.

3.4. How to Summarize a Reading Passage

In your academic course work, you will often write summaries of a reading passage, either for your self-study, or for tests or assignments. The following six steps will help you write a good summary. The first three steps involve reading and the last three primarily involve writing. Do not hurry to start writing. Read and understand well first.

As you read, concentrate on the main ideas. Remember that you will focus on the main ideas when you write your summary.

1. **Preview.** First, quickly look at and skim parts of the reading that are likely to contain main ideas: title, introduction, the first and last sentence of each paragraph, and the conclusion. Longer readings may also include subtitles, headings, pictures, charts, graphs, and key words in **bold** or *italics*. From this limited information, you can discover the general topic and ideas.
2. **Read.** Read the entire passage. Continue to focus on main ideas. Highlight, underline, or number the main ideas.
3. **Reread.** Read it again (and again, if necessary) for greater understanding.
4. **Take notes and organize.** Look back at what you highlighted, underlined, or numbered in the reading. Begin your notes.
5. **Write.** In your first sentence, cite the author, the work, and the

main idea. For example, *According to [author} in the article "XXX,"; In the article "XXX," [author} states that... .*

In the body of the summary, use reporting verbs such as: The author believes, states, reports, says, discusses, notes, concludes. . . (See Unit 4, pp.104-6 for reporting verbs).

6. **Revise.** Check your summary for meaning, conciseness, and grammatical accuracy. Make certain it has a clear introduction, body, and conclusion and that the sentences are smoothly connected.

Three key pieces of information—the author, the work, and the main idea—are generally included in the first sentence of a summary. This information clearly identifies the source material for the summary.

3.5. Organizing a Summary

The length of a summary depends on the length of the original text, but a good summary is organized in typical academic writing style:

Introduction: Begin with the title and author of the original work. Introduce the main idea of the original text.

Body: present the ideas in the order in which they occur. Include some important supporting points.

Conclusion: Restate the author's overall idea, results, or conclusion.

3.6. Taking Notes for a Summary

A simple way to write a summary begins with note-taking.

- For each paragraph in the reading, put a number on a piece of paper.
- Read paragraph 1 and on your paper write a sentence to express the main idea of the paragraph.
- Do the same for all the paragraphs in the reading. When you finish, you should be able to put your sentences together into a summary. Follow academic writing organization.

Sometimes you may find that successive paragraphs (two or more paragraphs in *a row)* contain only one idea. In this case, you may need to write only one sentence to express the main idea of a group of paragraphs.

On the other hand, sometimes one paragraph will contain more than one important idea, so you may need to write more than one sentence about this paragraph.

Practice: Organizing a Summary

The following sentences can be put together to make a summary, but they are in the wrong order. Working with a partner, put the sentences in the correct order using the previous explanation of the characteristics of summaries. Write the appropriate number in the blank in front of each

sentence. Discuss your results with your classmates.

Positive Plus: The Practical Plan for Liking Yourself Better

By Dr. Joyce Brothers

_____ 1. Parts Three and Four of the book identify negative qualities that you might have, such as spending too much money, working too much, being too anxious, or lying.

_____ 2. In her book, Brothers, who is a well-known American psychologist, helps you decide whether change is really necessary in your life.

_____ 3. Finally, Brothers explains how you can become a better person even if you have crises in your life.

_____ 4. *Positive Plus* by Dr. Joyce Brothers is a guidebook for changing your negative qualities into positive ones.

_____ 5. In Part One, "Second Chances," she shows you how to identify the person you would like to be.

_____ 6. In Part Two, "Your Psychological Tool Kit," Brothers explains techniques you can use to change yourself.

(Felleg, 1998, pp. 21-3)

3.7. The Summarizing Process

A powerful approach to summarizing is to analyze and manipulate the source until you have reduced it to its essentials. This process may draw on a variety of summarizing strategies. (For more information, see Kennedy & Smith, 1994, pp.53-96)

3.7.1. Summarizing Strategies

1. Annotate the text, labeling or underlining important material.
2. Delete unimportant detail, examples, and redundancy.
3. Compress words in the original text into fewer words and provide general terms to cover several specific items.
4. Combine ideas in sentences and paragraphs.
5. **Locate and emphasize the thesis and topic sentences.** Invent thesis and topic sentences if none are found.
6. Identify and imitate the organizational pattern of the source.
7. Identify and incorporate the rhetorical context and the author's rhetorical purpose.

These strategies need not be applied in any particular order, and you don't have to use all seven of them for each summary you write. Simply choose the subset of strategies that is appropriate for the source you are working with. In some cases, all you need to do to generate a short summary is explain the context and indicate the author's rhetorical purpose. In other cases, you may have to use the full range of strategies.

1. **Annotate the text, labeling or underlining important material.** Your annotations provide you with a record of your initial understanding of the material. This record is extremely useful when

it comes time to write a summary. Marginal labels, underlining, and other notations may also alert you to ideas that should appear in your work. By paraphrasing those ideas, you will be well on the way to producing a summary.

The next three strategies often work together. We will describe each of them and then show you how they work.

2. **Delete unimportant detail, examples, and redundancy.** Cross out or label as nonessential any material that you think is unimportant for your summary. Also take out information that merely repeats what was said previously. Academic sources are often highly redundant because authors repeat or illustrate complex concepts in order to give the reader more than one chance to understand them.

3. **Compress words in the original text into fewer words and provide general terms to cover several specific items.** Another strategy which you can use along with deleting unimportant detail, examples, and redundancy is to compress several words or phrases into fewer words and to reduce items in the same class to a single category.

4. **Combine ideas in sentences and paragraphs.** After you delete nonessential material and/or categorize bits of information, you are often left with disjointed pieces of text. If you want your summary to flow clearly, you have to rearrange these key ideas,

make elements parallel, or add logical connectors.

Look at how we performed the operations for strategies 2, 3, and 4 in the following example:

Sentence from Source

> Schools in large cities, such as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, have been criticized for passing students from grade to grade for demonstrated effort, regular attendance, and good citizenship rather than for adequate academic performance.

Operations

Schools (in large[urban] cities,) ~~such as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia~~, have been criticized for (passing[promoting] students from grade to grade) for (demonstrated effort, regular attendance, and good citizenship rather than for adequate academic performance.[unjustified reasons])

Resulting Summary

> Urban schools have been criticized for promoting students for unjustified reasons (Janik 43).

Notice how we deleted the nonessential examples of the three cities; compressed text, for example, substituting "urban" for the phrase "in large cities"; and then combined this reconfigured material into a concise summary:

5. Locate and emphasize the thesis and topic sentences. ou are probably familiar with conventions like thesis statements and topic sentences. The thesis is the focal point of a piece, the author's main point or the objective he or she demonstrates or proves. Topic sentences contain the main ideas of paragraphs or other subdivisions of a text. In practice, a thesis or a paragraph's main idea may be expressed in more than one sentence, so do not assume that you should always search for a single sentence. Since thesis statements and topic sentences often include the author's most important ideas, you can build a summary by paraphrasing them and then weaving the paraphrases together into a coherent whole.

While topic sentences are often at the beginnings of paragraphs, this is not always the case. They can appear in the middle and at the end of paragraphs as well. Similarly, while the thesis statement is typically in the first paragraph or in some other introductory paragraph, it can also appear at the end of the piece. You will find that in some paragraphs, there is no explicit topic sentence; the main idea is implied through an accumulation of details, facts, or examples.

When you are summarizing such a paragraph, try to create a topic sentence of your own by combining ideas that will make a unified statement. Here is an example of a paragraph which does not have a distinct topic sentence.

> Buddha is said to have achieved spiritual enlightenment through meditation and fasting. Similar procedures, however, are used to prepare for divine inspiration in religions the world over. This fact has implications for how one might view the development of religion in various cultures. Indeed, this aspect of the religious experience may be a direct response to human physiological characteristics. People the world over share common experiences as a consequence of being members of the same species. It seems reasonable that they might interpret these experiences the same way. (Kennedy & Smith, 1994, p.70)

The first sentence tells how Buddha acquired spiritual enlightenment. The remaining sentences, however, suggest that Buddha is used merely as an example because they discuss a larger population—religious people throughout the world. The final sentence is a partial statement of the main idea: people everywhere have the same interpretation of certain experiences. We combine these ideas to arrive at a topic sentence:

> Human beings everywhere share certain experiences that they interpret as having religious significance.

6. Identify and imitate the organizational pattern of the source. The author's organizational plan will also help you to summarize. A good summary reflects the structural pattern of the source. We advise you to change the original order of the source when you are paraphrasing. But summarizing follows a different procedure. In fact, once you identify how the author arranges and orders the piece, you can use this pattern as the skeleton for your summary. Since organization conveys meaning, your reader should be better able to follow the train of thought.

There are nine organizational plans for academic writing: (1) time order, narration, process; (2) antecedent/consequent, cause/effect; (3) description; (4) statement/response; (5) compare/contrast; (6) example; (7) analysis/classification; (8) definition; and (9) analogy. Each plan may be used to organize an entire piece of writing or only a small segment of it, and several patterns can be used simultaneously. As you are reading the source you will summarize, make a marginal note about its organizational plan. The organizational plan can thus provide the backbone for your summary.

7. Identify and incorporate the rhetorical context and the author's rhetorical purpose. In some cases, you may want to include in your own summary the rhetorical context of the source

and the author's rhetorical purpose, particularly when you are writing a summary that will stand alone rather than one that will become a part of a longer essay. To determine the rhetorical context, ask yourself the questions below.

Questions for Determining Rhetorical Context

- What is the author's background? Is he or she an acceptable, credible authority?
- What feeling, view, incident, or phenomenon brought about the need or motivated the author to write?
- What role does the author assume in relation to the audience?
- In what type of publication does the piece appear? If the publication is a journal, magazine, or newspaper, what is the readership?
- When was the piece published? Is it current or dated?

An author's purpose focuses on how the author tries to affect or influence the audience. Sometimes the purpose is easily identified because it is a controlling feature of the piece, as is the case in an argumentative text or a highly opinionated editorial. Other times the author's purpose may not be self-evident.

When you have written a draft of your summary, check to see that you have changed the author's wording or else you will run the

risk of plagiarizing the Source. Also remember to document your summary by providing your readers with information about the author, title, place and date of publication, and pages.

3.8. The Summary Essay

In college, sometimes you are asked to write a summary for its own sake rather than incorporate it into a piece that you are writing for another rhetorical purpose. You may even be assigned a free-standing paraphrase. For instance, your English teacher might tell you to put a poem into your own words.

A more typical assignment is a free-standing summary. You can write a free-standing summary in an essay format. Typically, a summary essay of a reading source would include the following elements:

3.8.1. Elements in a Free-Standing Summary Essay

Introduction

- engages the reader with an interesting opening
- identifies the source (author, title)
- explains the topic of the source
- conveys the main perspective or thesis of the source

Body Paragraph Section

- discusses (in each paragraph) a key element of the source.
- links material together according to a clear plan, usually reflecting the organizational pattern of the source

Conclusion

. closes the essay by broadening the focus and placing the source in a larger context

Drawing on the strategies we have presented in this unit, let us outline the process of summary writing.

3.8.2. Outline of the Summary Writing Process

Prewriting: Planning and Preparatory Activities

Read the assignment and formulate your rhetorical goals.

- Why are you writing the summary, and what desired effect do you hope to have on your audience?
- How much of the source material should you include in the summary, and what form should this material take?
- Will your summary be a comprehensive account of the author's thesis and argument, or will it emphasize only the author's central points?

Consider your audience.

- Are you writing for your professor or for a broader audience?
- Is your audience within the academic community?
- Are you writing for a general audience or for specialists?
- What will your audience already know about the topic?
- Will you need to explain basic concepts or provide background for the source material to make sense?
- Will your audience be biased either for or against what the source says?
- Can you predict how your audience will react to the source?
- What is the overall impact that you want to have on your audience?
- How will your writing inform, influence, or change your audience?

Read the source for information; form, organization, and features; and rhetorical concerns.

- Reading for information
  - . What is the author's thesis or main point?
  - . What are other important points?
- Reading for form, organization, and features

. How does the author get his or her points across?

. What is the method of presentation?

. What is the pattern of organization?

- Reading for rhetorical concerns

. What is the author's purpose? How does the author intend to influence the audience?

. Who is this author? What is his or her background?

. To whom is the piece addressed?

. In what type of publication is it published?

. What is the author's relationship to the audience?

Drafting

Arrange summarized material in paragraphs.

Identify the source by title and author.

Insert transitions and logical connectors.

Supply parenthetical documentation,

Title your summary.

Create a works cited page.

Revising

If possible, have a classmate or friend read your summary and answer the questions on the following checklist. If no one is available, answer the questions yourself.

Checklist for Revision

1. Have you identified the author and title of the source?
2. Have you indicated the author's purpose and the point he or she is trying to get across (thesis)?
3. Have you referred to the rhetorical context (audience and place of publication) if it is discernible?
4. Are there clear transitions and logical connectors at the beginnings of paragraphs?
5. Are there clear transitions within paragraphs?
6. Are there places where you followed the original, word for word, instead of changing the wording?
7. Have you included more than a few, brief quotations?
8. Does the summary include too much detail, redundancy, or examples?
9. Have you adapted the summary to your audience's needs?

10. Have you provided parenthetical documentation?

11. Have you included a works cited page?

12. Do any of your sentences sound stilted or awkward?

13. Do you detect any faulty usage, punctuation, or mechanics?

14. Are there any typographical errors or misspellings?

3.9. Evaluating and Writing Summaries

Practice: Evaluating Summaries

1. Read the following excerpt from a psychology textbook, "The Concept of Self." (Cited in Fellag, 1998, pp.10-11).

> One of the basic concepts in the field of psychology is the idea of "**self**", which can be defined as your whole person, the qualities that distinguish you from everyone else. Psychologists have offered a number of different explanations about the concept of self. One well-known psychologist, Carl Rogers, believed that **self-concept**—your own view of who you are and what kind of person you are—is the most important factor in the development of your personality.
>
> According to Rogers, you slowly build an opinion of yourself as you interact with other people, beginning with your family. Benjamin B. Lahey explains in

Psychology: An Introduction: "You might learn that you are a good athlete by seeing that you run faster than most other people or by your parents telling you that you are a good athlete."

Every person has two types of self. "There is the **self**—the person I think I am—and the **ideal self**—the person I wish I were," Lahey write. "For example, I am pretty sure I can never be better than a 'c" class racquetball player (self), but I would *love* to win tournaments in the "A" class (ideal self)."

Is it possible to live with two selves inside you, the self and the ideal self? You can, but it may be difficult at times. First, you may feel very uncomfortable if there is a great difference between the person you are and the person you wish to be. "It's okay for the ideal self to be slightly out of reach—that can stimulate us to improve ourselves," Lahey explains, "but if the ideal self is so unrealistically perfect that we know it can never be reached, then we feel like failures."

Lahey reports that a recent study by Timothy Strauman (1992) at the University of Wisconsin proved Rogers' ideas. "Students in introductory psychology classes were interviewed and tested to determine if there

were discrepancies between the way they view themselves (their concept of self) and the way that they think they would like to be or ought to be (two aspects of the ideal self)." The result of the study was that the students who saw big differences between their selves and their ideal selves were sadder and more anxious than the students who did not see big differences.

2. Read the following brief summaries of the excerpt above. With your partner, discuss which is the best summary:

1. In "The Concept of Self," Benjamin Lahey writes about the ideas of Carl Rogers. Rogers believes that our self-concept affects our personality very much. We have two self-concepts: the real self and the ideal (make-believe) self. Both are important, but they can cause us psychological problems. In summary, Rogers believes that we must know all our feelings well.
2. If your parents say you are a good athlete, it makes you believe that you are. You may think that you are nice, but you want to be less selfish. It's not realistic to think that you can be perfect.
3. A recent study at the University of Wisconsin shows that if your ideas of your "real" self and your "ideal" self are very different, you may have psychological problems. Students may

be more nervous. You need to symbolize your feelings. Your parents can also affect how you think of yourself.

Practice: Write a Summary

1. Write a summary of the following passage:

Language is the main means of communication between peoples. But so many different languages have developed that language has often been a barrier rather than an aid to understanding among peoples. For many years, people have dreamed of setting up an international, universal language which all people could speak and understand. The arguments in favor of a universal language are simple and obvious. If all peoples spoke the same tongue, cultural and economic ties might be much closer, and good will might increase between countries (Kispert cited in Oshima & Hogue, 1999, p.90).

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Unit 4

Paraphrasing and Quoting

4.1. Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a powerful operation for academic writing, but often students do not use it enough. Too many beginning academic writers rely on direct quoting whenever they use information from reading sources. Quotations are necessary only when you have a clear reason for including in your paper the precise wording of the original. A drawback of quoting is that it is a passive process of mechanically copying sections of the source. Paraphrasing, however, is an active process that forces you to grapple with the author's ideas. In this way, paraphrasing promotes comprehension. It is no wonder that many professors ask students to paraphrase rather than quote source material. They know that if you can paraphrase an author's idea, then you must be able to understand it.

While a summary contains only the *most important* information from the source, a paraphrase includes *all* the information. Writers paraphrase when they want to record the total meaning of a passage. Notice the difference between the paraphrase and the summary in the following example (Kennedy & Lynch, 1994, pp.74-5).

Original sentence:

The cowbird, as well as other species of birds, lays its eggs in another bird's nest and thus avoids hatching and raising its own young.

Paraphrase:

Certain birds, including the cowbird, do not hatch and raise their own offspring but rather pass on these responsibilities by laying their eggs in other birds' nests.

Summary:

Cowbirds do not hatch or raise their own young.

When you want to include in your paper only the gist or main idea of a reading source, summarize it. Paraphrase when you want to capture the meaning of the text in its entirety. In general, relatively small sections of the original, often a sentence or two, are paraphrased, while larger chunks of information are summarized.

As with summarizing, you can sometimes paraphrase simply by rewriting the original passage for a new audience. Envision your audience and then change the original text in order to make it more suitable for your readers. Suppose that your objective is to paraphrase the following sentence for an audience of high school students with little knowledge of computers (Kennedy & Smith, 1994, p. 75).

> The creation of an overall design for a complete computer system is the responsibility of a systems analyst whereas the implementation of the design plan is often the duty of a computer programmer.

Because you do not want to talk over the students' heads, you put the sentence into simpler language.

> The systems analyst designs the entire computer system, but the computer programmer makes the system work.

You must alter the wording of the original when you paraphrase. Change both vocabulary and sentence structure, and, as a rule of thumb, never repeat more than three consecutive words from the original.

4.1.2. Paraphrasing Strategies

Paraphrasing will often require you to express abstract ideas in a more concrete form. For many assignments, however, you will need a more systematic approach to paraphrasing. When a passage includes difficult concepts or complex language, it may be hard to reword it and still preserve the original meaning. In these cases, try the following paraphrasing procedure:

- Locate individual statements or major idea units in the original.

- Change the order of major ideas, maintaining the logical connections among them.
- Substitute synonyms for words in the original, making sure the language in your paraphrase is appropriate for your audience.
- Combine or divide sentences as necessary.
- Compare the paraphrase to the original to assure that the rewording is sufficient and the meaning has been preserved.
- Weave the paraphrase into your essay in accordance with your rhetorical purpose.
- Document the paraphrase. (For more information see Kennedy & Smith, 1994, pp.76-81)

Remember that this list is not a lock-step process that always follows the same sequence. Sometimes you may use only a subset of the seven strategies, and you can always vary their order. For illustration, however, we are going to paraphrase the following sentence using all the strategies in approximately the order given above. Let's assume that we are writing for an audience of first-year college students.

> In 1968 the Kerner Commission released a report that talked of two Americas, one black, one white, separate and unequal.

Locate Individual Statements or Major Idea Units in the Original:

First, we will determine how many major ideas are presented in the passage. We find two central units of information: (I) information that identifies the report and locates it in time, and (2) information that explains the report's content.

1. In 1968 the Kerner Commission released a report.
2. that talked of two Americas, one black, one white, separate and unequal.

Change the Order of Major Ideas, Maintaining the Logical Connections Among Them:

Now we will change the order of the two units of information, placing the second before the first. To accommodate this switch, we substitute "There were" for "that talked of" so that the information about the content of the report fits at the beginning of the sentence. Then we change the latter part of the sentence by substituting "according to the" for" In" and deleting the words "the" and "released a."

1. There were two Americas, one black, one white, separate and unequal
2. according to the 1968 Kerner Commission report.

Exercise

Change the order of the ideas in each of the following sentences.

Example:

When Boris Pasternak was awarded the Nobel Prize for his novel *Doctor zhivago*, Soviet authorities pressured him to reject the prize.

Soviet authorities pressured Boris Pasternak to reject the Nobel Prize when he was awarded it for his novel *Doctor Zhivago.*

1. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, exploitation of child labor became a serious social problem.
2. Although there are currently several theories concerning the origin of the universe, the Big Bang theory is the one most widely held.
3. Despite the common belief that the brush is the primary tool of the painter, many well-known paintings were created entirely with pallet knives.
4. Even though the secretary of defense disagreed sharply with the president's foreign policy, she did not resign from office.

Substitute Synonyms for Words in the Original Making Sure the Language in Your Paraphrase is Appropriate for Your Audience:

At this stage it is important to think about the audience for the paraphrase. If the language of the original source is too formal or sophisticated, you may want to make it more accessible to your readers. In addition, you may need to provide a context for certain types of material that you excerpt from reading sources.

Whenever you replace original text with synonyms, try to come up with synonyms without consulting a dictionary or thesaurus. Many students who have trouble substituting words rush to reference books and copy synonyms without considering how they fit into the general sense of the sentence. This is usually a mistake. Paraphrases filled with synonyms taken indiscriminately from a dictionary or thesaurus are awkward and confusing. Here is a procedure for finding synonyms on your own.

Coming Up with Your Own Synonyms

1. Come up with a word or phrase from your vocabulary that comes as close as possible to the meaning of the original word.
2. Read the original sentence substituting your synonym for the original word. Reread the sentence to see if it makes sense. If the new word changes the meaning, come up with another synonym and try the substitution again.

3. Compare the dictionary definitions of the original word and your synonym. If the definitions do not correspond, come up with another synonym and try the substitution again.

When you are trying to paraphrase a passage that contains a word you don't understand, you may need strategies to supplement those listed above. Before you consult a dictionary or thesaurus, try to figure out the approximate meaning of the unfamiliar word based on its relationship to the words you already know in the sentence. We call this procedure using *contextual clues* to discover a meaning. See if you can use contextual clues to figure out a synonym for the italicized word in the sentence below:

> After meeting someone for the first time, we often retain *a gestalt* of what the person is like but cannot remember specific details such as eye color.

From the sentence you learn that a *gestalt* is something other than a memory of specific details, so you can infer that a gestalt may mean an overall impression. Check the word in a dictionary and see if the definition we have derived from context is close to the actual definition.

Contextual clues will not give you a complete definition of an unknown word, but they will help you unlock enough of the meaning to know what synonym to substitute for it. Always check a

synonym that you figure out from contextual clues by substituting it for the word it replaces in the original sentence. If you are not sure the synonym fits, you should consult a dictionary to check your understanding of the original word. Also, check your synonym against the synonyms listed in the dictionary or thesaurus.

The only strategy many students use for finding synonyms consists of searching a dictionary or thesaurus. This should be the last of a series of steps. As we mentioned before, if you copy a synonym without examining its fit in the original sentence, your paraphrase may not sound right, and it may distort the meaning of the original. As a last resort, if you use the dictionary to find a substitute for an unknown word, try the following procedure.

Locating Synonyms in a Dictionary

1. Read *all* the definitions for the word. (Do not read the synonyms.)
2. When the dictionary lists more than one definition, reread the original sentence to see which definition works best in the context.
3. Try to come up with your own synonym based on the definition.
4. Replace the original word with your synonym. Does the sentence still have its original meaning?
5. If the dictionary gives synonyms for the original word, compare them to your synonym. Do they mean the same thing?

If you are using a thesaurus, make sure that you follow steps 4 and 5 so that you do not pick inappropriate synonyms. Remember that no two words mean exactly the same thing, and a synonym listed in a thesaurus is not necessarily an appropriate substitute for the original word in all contexts. Returning to our example, by substituting "very different" for "separate," doing a little more rearranging, and providing context where necessary, we arrive at the following paraphrase:

> There were two very different and unequal Americas, a white America and a black America, according to the Kerner Commission's 1968 report (Quindlen E17).

You do not have to find a substitute for every word in the sentence you are paraphrasing. You can repeat words that are essential to the meaning or have no appropriate synonyms such as the term "unequal" in our example.

Combine or Divide Sentences as Necessary:

Since our paraphrase is well-coordinated, there is no pressing need to divide it; nevertheless, for illustration we will split it into two smaller units.

> There were two very different and unequal Americas, a white America and a black America. This was the central finding in the Kerner Commission's 1968 report (Quindlen E 17).

Compare the Paraphrase to the Original to Assure that the Rewording is Sufficient and the Meaning Has Been Preserved:

At this juncture before we incorporate the paraphrase into our essay, we will compare it to Quindlen's original sentence and make any revisions that are necessary.

Original:

> In 1968 the Kerner Commission released a report that talked of two Americas, one black, one white, separate and unequal.

Paraphrase:

> There were two very different and unequal Americas, a white America and a black America, according to the Kerner Commission's 1968 report (Quindlen EI7).

As you compare your paraphrase to the original, ask yourself the questions listed below.

Questions for Revising Paraphrases

1. Did I summarize rather than paraphrase? If so, what did I leave out of the original source?
2. Did I expand the meaning of the original by including my own interpretation or superfluous ideas?

3. Did I follow the original too closely by neglecting to rearrange main idea units?

4. Did I include too many words from the original? Did I repeat more than three words in a row?

5. Did I substitute inappropriate synonyms? Do my synonyms preserve the original meaning of the text?

6. Is my choice of words appropriate for my audience?

Exercise

Below is a sentence from a textbook along with sample student paraphrases. Compare each paraphrase to the original to see if the writer needs to make revisions. Ask yourself the Questions for Revising Paraphrases listed above.

Original Sentence:

> Somatic cells, while tiny compact worlds within themselves, nevertheless do not exist in isolation; instead, cells bond together, according to their special function, and thereby form definite units or structures called tissues (Luckman and Sorensen 138).

1. A tissue is formed by the bonding of different somatic cells according to their common functions (Luckman and Sorensen 138).

2. Tissues that are definite units or structures are formed by cells that

bond together. They bond according to the special functions they have. Somatic cells are an example of small cells that bond together to form a tissue instead of remaining separate.

3. Somatic cells, like any other cells, do not live alone. They join together with other cells depending on their specific functions and form a substance called tissue.

4. Tissues are formed when somatic cells collide outside their small worlds. In order for these cells to be bonded, they must match in a certain way.

5. Tissues are formed by the bonding together of somatic cells according to their special functions.

Weave the Paraphrase into Your Essay in Accordance with Your Rhetorical Purpose:

We are now ready to weave the paraphrase into our essay in a way that helps further our rhetorical purpose. Consider the following example.

Excerpt from Essay

> The Rodney King verdict demonstrates that despite the civil rights legislation of the past three decades, African-Americans are still at a disadvantage. In her response to the verdict, Quindlen reminds us that

> there were two very different and unequal Americas, a white America and a black America, according to the Kerner Commission's 1968 report (E17), and she suggests that this division persists today. Rodney King's treatment shows the extent to which racial injustice still exists. (Kennedy & Smith, 1994, p. 81)

We cannot be sure that a paraphrase is successful without seeing it in context. The paraphrase must not only accurately reword the author's message, but also fit smoothly in the passage of the essay for which it was intended. In order to achieve this fit in the above example, we had to identify the overall subject of Quindlen's piece. We did this by adding "In her response to the verdict." We also attributed the material to Quindlen by writing "Quindlen reminds us that."

Document the Paraphrase: Remember that failing to document a paraphrase is considered plagiarism. Always indicate the author of the source, enclose in parentheses the page numbers of the information you paraphrased, and provide an entry on the works cited page. Notice how we documented the paraphrase in the above example.

Paraphrasing Sources

You will generally use a paraphrase when you discuss ideas and facts from sources.

To summarize or paraphrase, put the author's ideas completely into your own words instead of creating some odd combination of the text's original wording and your own. Such "plagiaphrasing" should be avoided because it is a form of plagiarism. Consider the differences between the adequate and inadequate paraphrases of this direct quotation:

> the new women's social history focuses on the lives led by the majority of women in all strata of society, using material from a wide range of sources, from diaries to demographics. (Brod 266, cited in Keene & Adams, 1996, pp. 87-88).

Inadequate Paraphrase	Adequate Paraphrase
Today's new social history of women focuses on how women lived in all segments of society, using wide range of research materials (Brod 266).	In women's studies classes, the concern is not with a few famous historical or literary women but with the daily lives of all types of women, something previously given very little attention (Brod 266).

A good method of paraphrasing is to read the source material, put the book or article down, think through the information, and then write your own version of it.

Practice

Write a paraphrase of the passage which you previously summarized on page (87). Clarify the difference between a paraphrase and a summary.

4.2. Quoting

Using quotations and writing paraphrases and summaries of information from outside sources are important tools in academic writing. In some college classes, instructors ask their students to write research papers (also called term papers). To write a term paper, you must find information about your topic in books, newspapers, periodicals encyclopedias, and similar sources (see chapter 6). Then you include this information in the body of your paper.

There are two kinds of quotations: direct and indirect. In a direct quotation, another person's exact words are repeated and are enclosed in quotation marks. In an indirect quotation, the speaker's words are reported without quotation marks. You should learn to use both kinds of quotations in your writing (Oshima & Hogue, 1999, pp.83-89).

4.2.1. Direct Quotations

4.2.1.1. Verbs to Introduce Quotations and Paraphrases

Reporting verbs and phrases are used to introduce a quotation or other borrowed information (such as statistics). Some of the more

common reporting terms are as follows:

say *according to* *insist* *report* *claim* *write*
declare *mention* *state*

When using signal phrases to introduce source materials, you might choose a more specific verb than *said* to indicate the author's attitude or approach. The following verbs create different meanings that may suit your purposes more specifically.

For an Objective Observer

describes	observes	points out
explains	notes	sees

For Making Conclusions and Defending an Interpretation

analyzes	concludes	maintains
alleges	contends	predicts
assesses	insists	suggests

For Agreement

agrees	concurs	grants

For Disagreement

condemns	derides	opposes
criticizes	objects	warns

(Keene & Adams, 1996, p. 88).

Here is a list of other ways to introduce quotations (Kennedy & Smith, 1994, p. 86):

In the words of Quindlen

According to Quindlen

Quindlen...

acknowledges	concludes	identifies	remarks
addresses	considers	illustrates	reminds us
adds	critiques	inquires	replies
admits	defines	interprets	responds
affirms	delineates	investigates	reviews
answers	demonstrates	lists	shows
argues	determines	makes the case	stipulates
ascertains	discovers	measures	stresses
asks	emphasizes	notes	suggests
asserts	envisions	postulates	summarizes
assesses	evaluates	presents	surveys
believes	examines	proposes	synthesizes
brings forth	explores	proves	traces
categorizes	expounds on	questions	views
cites	finds	rationalizes	writes
comments on	furnishes	refers to	compares (contrasts)

Here are some rules for their use:

1. Reporting verbs can appear before, in the middle of, or after a quotation.

   Dr. Karsten **said**, "_____."

   "_____," the doctor stated, "_____."

   "_____," declared the president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

2. Reporting verbs can be used with or without the subordinator *as*.

   As a spokesperson for the IOC **suggested**, "_____."

   A spokesperson for the IOC **suggested**, "_____."

3. Reporting verbs may be in any tense.

   As the IOC **stated** in its report after the 1996 games in Atlanta, "_____."

   The IOC **states** in its report after the 1996 games in Atlanta, "_____."

   As the IOC **has** always **insisted**, "_____."

4. The reporting phrase *according to* can be used in place of a reporting verb. Use quotation marks if you are quoting someone's words exactly.

According to the IOC, "_____."

5. It is a good idea to include the source of the quotation in your sentence.

According to a report published by the IOC, "_____."

4.2.1.2. Punctuating Direct Quotations

The rules for punctuating direct quotations can become very complex. For general purposes, the rules are as follows:

1. Quotation marks are always used in pairs. Place a comma between the reporting phrase and the quotation. Put quotation marks before and after the actual words quoted. Normally, place commas (and periods) before the first mark and also before the second mark in a pair.

> According to *Sports Illustrated*, "The use of steroids—and other, more exotic substances such as human growth hormone (hGH)—has spread to almost every sport, from major league baseball to college basketball to high school football."

There is an important exception to this rule: When you add an in-text citation after a quotation, the period goes at the very end, after the closing parenthesis:

Prince Alexandre de Merode of Belgium stated, "I believe that as many as 10% of all Olympic athletes are regular users of performance-enhancing drugs" (qtd. in Bamberger and Yaeger 63).

2. Capitalize the first word of the quotation as well as the first word of the sentence.

Dr. Donald Catlin, director of a drug-testing lab stated, "The sophisticated athlete who wants to take drugs has switched to things we can't test for."

3. If you break a quotation into two parts, enclose both parts in quotation marks and separate the parts with commas. Capitalize only the first word of the sentence.

"The use of steroids—and other, more exotic substances such as human growth hormone (hGH)—has spread," according to *Sports Illustrated*, "to almost every sport, from major league baseball to college basketball to high school football."

4. If you omit part of a direct quotation, use an ellipsis (...).

According to *Sports Illustrated*, "The use of steroids... has spread to almost every sport, from major league baseball to college basketball to high school football."

5. If you have a good reason to add words of your own to the original, put brackets [ ] around the words that you have added.

> Commenting on the difficulty of detecting drug use among Olympic athletes, the director of drug testing for the U.S. Olympic Committee at the 1984 and 1988 games declared, "The testers know that the [drug] gurus are smarter than they are."

Practice: Direct Quotations

Add punctuation to the following direct quotations. Change the capitalization if necessary. (The sentences in this practice are about black holes, which are invisible masses in space larger than giant stars.)

1. Dr. Yixuan Ma, a well-known astrophysicist who has been studying black holes, said it is one of the most interesting phenomena we astrophysicists have ever studied.
2. As she explained in black holes the laws of nature do not seem to apply.
3. A black hole is a tiny point with the mass 25 times the mass of our sun explained Ma's associate, Chun-Yi Su. Black holes are created by the death of a very large star she stated.
4. It is an invisible vacuum cleaner in space she added with tremendous gravitational pull.

5. According to Dr. Su, if a person falls into a black hole, he will eventually be crushed due to the tremendous gravitational forces.

6. Time will slow down for him as he approaches the event horizon she said and when he reaches the event horizon, time will stand still for him.

4.2.2. Indirect Quotations

In indirect quotations, the speaker's (or writer's) words are reported indirectly. For this reason, indirect quotations are sometimes called reported speech. Indirect quotations are introduced by the same reporting verbs used for direct quotations, often with the added word *that*. Do not use quotation marks. Also, the tense of verbs in indirect quotations is affected by the tense of the reporting verb.

Changing Direct Quotations to Indirect Quotations

Good writers use both direct and indirect quotations. In certain situations, you may find it easier to use one kind or the other, and using both adds variety to your writing. In the following examples, notice what changes occur when a direct quotation is rewritten as an indirect quotation.

Direct Quotation	Indirect Quotation
He declared, "I am looking for intellectual women."	He declared that he was looking for intellectual women.
My father told me, "I want you to do your best."	My father told me that he wanted me to do my best.
The teacher told us, "You can take another test to try to improve your grades."	The teacher told us we could take another test to try to improve our grades.
The students confessed, "We didn't study."	The students confessed that they hadn't studied.

To change a direct quotation to an indirect quotation:

1. Omit the quotation marks.
2. Add the subordinator *that*. (You may omit *that* if the meaning is clear.)
3. Change the verb tense if necessary. Follow the sequence of tenses rules provided here.
4. Change pronouns as necessary.

Sequence of Tenses Rules

1. If the reporting verb is in a past tense, the verbs in an indirect quotation may change tense according to the following rules:

	Direct Quotation	**Indirect Quotation**
Simple present changes to simple past	Susan said, "The exam **is** at eight o'clock."	Susan said (that) the exam **was** at eight o'clock.
Simple past and present perfect change to past perfect	She said, "We **didn't have** time to eat breakfast." He said, "The exam **has** just **started**."	She said (that) they **hadn't had** time to eat breakfast. He said (that) the exam **had** just **started.**
Will changes to *would*, *can* to *could*, and *may* to *might*	Pedro mentioned, "Today I **will eat** Chinese food, and tomorrow **I'll eat** French food if I **can find** a good restaurant."	Pedro mentioned that today he **would eat** Chinese food and that tomorrow **he'd eat** French food if he **could find** a good restaurant.

2. When the quoted information is a fact or a general truth, the verb tense in the quotation does not change.

He said, "Water **boils** at a lower temperature in the mountains."

He said that water **boils** at a lower temperature in the mountains.

3. When the reporting verb is simple present, present perfect, or future, the verb tense in the quotation does not change.

He says, "**I can finish** it today."

He says that he **can finish** it today.

4. When the reporting phrase is *according to*, the verb tense does not change.

Gupta said, "Anyone I **meet** on the Internet **will** probably **be** professional and educated."

According to Gupta, anyone he **meets** on the Internet **will** probably **be** professional and educated.

Practice: Changing Direct Quotations to Indirect Quotations

Rewrite the following direct quotations as indirect quotations.

1. Television channel General Manager Jim Burns said, "Not everyone can attend college in the traditional way; therefore, taking courses via television will offer many more students the chance to earn a college degree."

2. Pre-med student Alma Rodriguez said, "I miss being on campus, but I have to work and take care of my family."

3. Other students said, "Last year, we spent several hours a day commuting to and from school. Now we don't have to do that."

Writing Practice: Writing with Quotations

Write a short paragraph that develops the topic you are given below. Use the quotations for support. You may use them either as direct or as indirect quotations. Include some additional supporting sentences and transition signals to connect the ideas and make your paragraph flow smoothly.

Step 1 Copy the topic sentence exactly as it is given.

Step 2 Write several supporting sentences, using the main points and quotations supplied. Add supporting details such as examples if you can. Use the techniques and rules you have learned for direct and/ or indirect quotations. Be sure to mention somewhere in your paragraph the book or article that is the source of the quotations.

Step 3 Document the source further by putting the author's name and a page number in parentheses at the end of your paragraph.

Topic sentences: The increased use of computers in business has been accompanied by a costly increase in computer crime.

Main point: Computer criminals cost business a lot of money.

Quotation:	"The financial losses to business from computer thefts will exceed $15 billion in 1998."
Main point:	Computer criminals steal not only money but also information.
Quotation:	"It is not just the money they steal; they steal data, and data is power."
Source:	A book by Meredith Bruce, *Cybercrime*, page 185.

Damascus University

Unit 5

Responding

5.1. Introduction

While a summary is objective and only includes the author's ideas, a written response includes your own ideas and reaction to the reading.

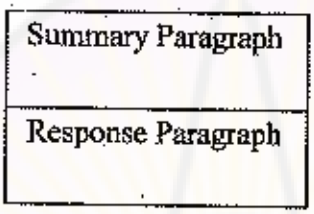
For some academic assignments, you will only be asked to write a summary. For others, you will be asked to respond to the reading. In an academic response, you will be expected to develop an informed opinion and support your ideas with examples, details, and facts, either from the reading or another source, just as you do in other kinds of writing. You cannot just give a general opinion, such as "I liked/hated this article" or "I thought this was an interesting/boring article."

There are several types of responses. Most commonly, you will be asked to *agree* or *disagree*. For example, an assignment may ask you to agree or disagree with the main idea of a reading passage, or ask you to choose some part of a reading to agree or disagree with. A second type of response may ask you to *compare* and/ or *contrast* what you have read with your own experiences or the experiences of others. For other response assignments, you may be asked to *apply* what you read to another situation, or to *evaluate* a reading.

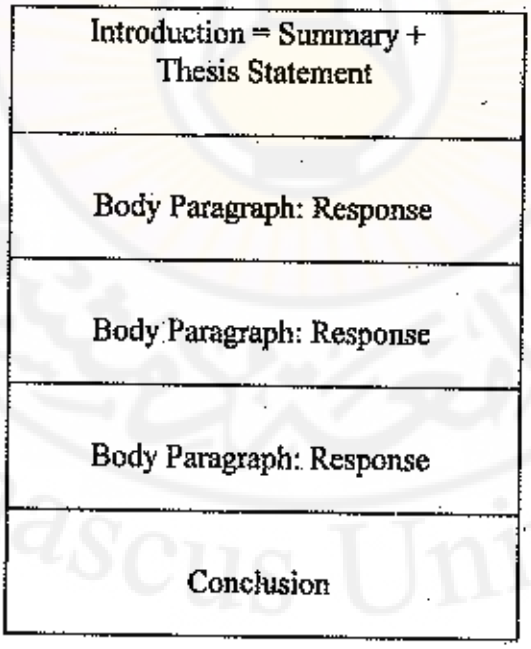
Remember that for all of these responses, you must provide adequate support for your opinion.

If you are asked to summarize and respond to an article, mark interesting parts of the article as you read. You may be able to incorporate these when you write your response.

A response paragraph may follow a summary paragraph.



A longer response may take the form of an essay.



In your response paragraphs, you need to clearly show which opinions and ideas are the author's and which are yours. To do this, you can begin your response paragraph referring directly to the author or article.

. The author states that. . .

. According to the author, . . .

. In the article, "(Title)," . . .

This lets the reader know which part of the author's work you will be responding to. After this sentence, you can begin your ideas with sentences such as:

. However, I believe that. . .

. I agree with this because. . .

. In my experience, the author's point is . . .

Then you can continue your paragraph with support for your ideas. By doing this, you clearly separate the author's ideas from yours. The majority of the paragraph will be the support for your opinion.

Activity: Analyze a Response

Read the following response paragraph and then answer the questions that follow.

The author of "Opportunity. . . tapping the power of mathematics" states that many students do not have the necessary math background to do well in the job market. However, I think that for lower level jobs, which often are jobs with little chance of advancement, workers don't need math skills. For example, grocery store clerks run the products over a scanner and the cash register figures out how much change the customer should receive. At many fast-food restaurants, the clerk can press a picture of a hamburger on the cash register instead of pushing numbered buttons for the price. Certainly, to get ahead, people need math, but I think our society has made it very easy for people to have a variety of jobs that require few or no math skills. Consequently, there is little incentive for some students to become well-educated in math. (Byleen, 1998, pp. 132-34)

1. In which sentence does the writer of this response begin to express her ideas? What words and phrases help separate the ideas of the two people?
2. What examples does the author give to support her opinion?

5.2. Stating Your Opinions in Appropriate Language

When you state your opinions, you need to consider your

audience. You need to use appropriate language and an appropriate strength to your argument so that you convince your audience without alienating them. The language you choose can help you vary the strength of your statements and avoid faulty reasoning.

Your readers will be convinced by logical, rational argument, not by emotional appeals, so you must be careful of faulty reasoning—*logical fallacies*. The following are some of the most common fallacies and should be avoided.

Hasty Generalization

Arriving at an opinion quickly without much evidence.

Examples

Two of my friends failed that class, so the professor is unfair.

Everyone I talked to thought it was a workable plan, so we should adopt it immediately. (The writer talked to only three people.)

Solution: Get enough evidence to present a convincing argument.

Stereotype

A generalization applied to people or to a particular group of people, often using words like *always, everybody, all, nothing, never, only*. When these are used, or even when they are just implied, readers will find the claim unbelievable because they can probably think of at least one case in which the generalization or stereotype isn't true.

Examples

[All] College freshmen spend more time partying than studying.

Every adopted child wants to find his or her biological parents.

It is unsafe for [all] people over the age of 70 to drive.

Either/Or

Oversimplifying the argument, so it seems that the choices between the ideas are very limited.

Examples

Motorists can either wear seatbelts or die on the highways.

You can study hard or flunk out of college.

There is only one thing to do: raise taxes.

Solution: Be sure to consider all rational outcomes before making a concluding statement.

Ad Hominem

Attacking or insulting a person instead of rationally confronting the issues.

Examples

Bill is totally uneducated and uninformed and should not be allowed to express his opinion.

Solution: confront the issue rather than the speaker. (Bylee. 1998, pp.163-64)

5.3. Support Your Opinion

One of the biggest problems in student writing is that student writers often fail to prove their points. They fail because they do not support their points with concrete details. Their papers are too often full of opinions and generalizations without the factual details needed to support them.

It is certainly acceptable to express opinions in academic writing. In fact, most professors want you to express your own ideas. However, you must support your opinions with factual details. The more specific you are, the better.

5.3.1. Writing with General Ideas and Specific Details

In English, we often begin by writing or saying something *general*. We then provide some specific details that support or prove our general statement. In this paragraph, the writer begins with a general statement. The writer then provides *specific details*. The details may become more specific as the paragraph develops. Study the development of this paragraph (Cavusgil, 1998, pp.21-22).

Discover your learning styles

general statement specific details

People are often unique in how they learn. Some students learn more easily when they can read (visual learners) and think silently about the material. Others are effective learners when they listen to the teacher talk about the material (auditory learners). Many engineering and science students like to learn with their hands (tactile learners). For example, they learn by building models, doing experiments, and taking notes. Some other students prefer to learn with their whole bodies (kinesthetic learners). For instance, athletes, dancers, and musicians improve their abilities by practicing physical movements.

Activity: Analyzing the Use of General to Specific

1. Read the following sentences, and notice the general statements and specific details.

Examples

general statement specific details

I am a visual learner. For instance, I improve my vocabulary by reading the new words several times.

general statement

Boris is a visual and an auditory learner. For example,
specific details
he reads his notes, and he repeats the ideas aloud.

2. Sometimes, a logical organizer joins (connects) the general statement and the specific details. Study the examples above to

answer these questions.

a. What words often connect general statements and specific details?

b. What punctuation is often used after these logical organizers?

Activity: Completing Sentences

The following informational sentences move from general statements to specific details. Logical organizers join many of the sentences. Complete these sentences with an appropriate answer from your own experience.

1. I am a(n) _____ learner. For example, _____

_____

2. I also use other learning styles, especially _____ and _____. I use a combination of these learning styles when I _____

3. My most important learning style is _____ For instance, _____

4. I am not a good _____ learner. For instance, _____

5. _____ is a learning style that I need to practice. For example, _____

5.3.2. Making Accurate Generalization Structures

Academic writers avoid "overgeneralizing." For example, writers avoid making statements like "Americans always use credit cards" or "All Syrians love football" because these statements are not true for everyone. In the following sentences, the writer did not overgeneralize about people and culture. Instead, the writer used various grammar structures to make the generalizations more accurate and to persuade the reader to support those generalizations. For example, the writer used opinion structures, adverbs of frequency, modal auxiliaries, and expressions of quantity. Read the following sentences, and notice the structures that make generalizations more accurate (Cavusgil, 1998, pp.37-46).

> All humans have culture. It is reflected in their customs. Culture makes us human. And each human group—a family, a tribe, or a nation—has its own culture.

expression of quantity — adverb of frequency

Most members of the same cultural group usually share similar customs and values. For example, they often speak, dress, eat, think, and act in similar ways.

adverb of frequency

expression of quantity — opinion structure

Most people think that their customs are natural, right,

opinion structure
and good. They believe their way of life is the best way.
modal auxiliary
But these customs may seem strange to others.

5.3.3. Opinion Structures

One way to persuade your readers to agree with your generalizations is to use an opinion structure. The following structures are often used to introduce opinions.

Opinion Structures	Examples
In my opinion,	*In my opinion,* most people share the same values.
I believe (that)	*They believe* their way of life is the best way.
I think (that)	*Most people think that* their customs are natural, right, and good.
I feel (that)	*Most U.S. teenagers feel that* they are not ready for marriage.

Activity: Using Opinion Structures

1. You can collect ideas by *discussing* things with your classmates. With a small group of classmates, collect ideas and opinions about the Arab culture. Read the following list of words. Use various opinion structures (*in my opinion, I believe*, etc.) to

share your opinions and move from general opinions to specific details. Examples of two students' work are provided.

beliefs	formal/ informal dressers	family
independent	interested in world issues	education

Student Model 1

general opinion

I believe **hunger describes the U.S. culture** because many
specific details
people in the downtown area are hungry and don't have a place to live.

Student Model 2

general opinion

In my opinion**, soccer does not describe the U.S. culture.** I
specific details
don't think many people in the U.S. play or like the sport.

2. Write down two or three of your most interesting opinions to share with your class. Each statement should have an opinion structure, a general opinion, and specific details (examples and/or reasons).

5.3.4. Personal Experience

Sometimes you can use *personal experience* to develop ideas in your writing. In the following paragraph, this student has used her own experience to explain her opinion about young Americans.

My experience with young Americans

In my opinion, many young Americans are disrespectful. I have a 15-year-old daughter in high school. In the evenings, she tells me about her school day. Her classmates often talk and laugh during class. Sometimes the noise is so loud that she cannot hear her teacher. Some students are frequently late to class, and often students might not complete their homework. My daughter and I feel that these actions are disrespectful.

Maria Cervantes, Mexico, cited in (Cavusgil, 1998, p. 44)

Activity: Supporting Your Opinions

You can use your opinions when you write, but you should explain them. This will make your opinions stronger and more interesting. One way to explain opinions is to use personal experience. Rewrite your three opinions from the previous activity. Then, write one to two complete sentences from your personal experience to explain each opinion. Use a different paragraph for each opinion. An example follows.

Example

opinion (general statement)

I believe most young Americans like to dress informally. For

personal experience (specific details)

example, my classmates usually wear jeans and T-shirts to school. My co-workers often dress in casual clothes, too.

Activity: Thinking about the Topic

Good support in a paragraph gives specific information that helps your reader understand your main idea. Compare these paragraphs about elementary-school teachers. Which paragraph has more specific information?

Paragraph A

Elementary-school teachers work hard. They are dedicated professionals, and they really care about all their students. They understand that their students are individuals and have different ways of learning.

Paragraph B

Elementary-school teachers work hard. This morning, Mr. Rodriguez of Prince Elementary arrived in his classroom at 7:30, an hour before his students. He set up a science display, wrote the day's work on the blackboard, and prepared a special assignment for Chris Lee, who needed some help with his multiplication tables. (Bonner, 1994, p.60)

Activity: Choosing Supporting Details

Supporting details are the activities, the things, and the people in your story. They are what people can see, feel, hear, smell, or taste. They are important because they make your story interesting and

help your reader understand your main idea.

A student wrote this opinion paragraph for a writing test. Read the paragraph and do the tasks.

a. Circle the topic sentence in the paragraph.

> Coming late to class disturbs everyone. Yesterday, a student came into my English class after the teacher started explaining an important point. As she came in, she hit the door against the wall. We all turned around to watch her as she squeezed past other students to get to her desk. When she sat down, she scraped her chair against the floor, and we could not hear the teacher. Finally, the teacher stopped talking until the student was ready. The class wasted ten minutes because of one student's lateness. (Bonner, 1994, p. 66)

b. List three details in the story that you can see, feel, or hear.

5.4. Synthesizing Information to Answer Test Questions

Throughout your education, you have synthesized information. In other words, you have selected information from several sources and combined it with your own ideas. You have gathered information from personal experience, reading, and interaction with others. This has included:

- your prior knowledge and experience
- textbook reading
- sources in the library and on the WWW
- interviews with others—informal discussions
- classroom lectures

After gathering your information, you have selected what is best for your purposes and used it to support your ideas in your written assignments. In other words, you have gathered and used information that supported your main ideas, thesis statement, or topic sentences.

For most written assignments, this writing process lasts several days or even weeks. You will have time to think about your ideas, find good supporting materials, talk to others about your topic and your writing, think, write, and revise. You may have access to a computer, dictionaries, and advice and feedback from others.

5.4.1. Synthesizing in Written Tests

For an in-class written test, you have a limited amount of time (perhaps as little as an hour) to write. You use the information that you have synthesized from your class notes, textbook reading, additional course readings, class discussions and lectures. However, for most tests, you cannot consult these sources during the test—this information must all be in your head.

You will be asked to do different things. For some test answers, you will be asked to *restate* information. This may include definitions, facts, and formulas. You do not add your own ideas; you restate them as they were in your text or notes. Other questions will ask you to use the information you've learned—to *analyze information* or to *apply the information to a particular situation.* In studying and synthesizing information for tests, you do more than simply memorize information. It is important to understand connections and relationships, since many questions ask you to use what you know in new ways.

To be successful with these different types of questions, you must know the material well before the test and work efficiently during the test. You must understand what is expected of you from the question, what to include in your answer, and how to organize that information and respond to the questions. Then you must write carefully because you most likely will not have time to revise or rewrite your answers although you should take a few minutes to check and proofread your work.

To write effective essay test answers, first you must thoroughly know and be able to use the material that you will be tested on. In addition, you must:

- understand the question (what is expected of you)

- write clear, well-organized, and concise answers
- work under time pressure

Activity: Difficult Test

Describe the most difficult test you have ever taken. Why was it difficult? What kinds of questions did it include? Did the questions ask you to restate information or analyze or apply the information? If you were going to take the test again, how would you study differently?

5.4.2. Understanding Test Questions

On a written test, you need to be able to identify and understand the focus words in the questions, such as *argue*, *contrast*, *describe*, and *explain*, which help guide your answer. Other valuable clues about the organization or grammatical structures can sometimes be gained from the question.

Sample Test Question

> Explain how the development of agriculture changed the way humans lived.

In this question, the focus words are *explain how*. The expected answer would be to describe or explain how X (agriculture) changed Y (the way humans lived). Other clues that you could gain from the question are that your answer would probably be written in

the past tense, and could follow a chronological order.

Question Words

The most common question words are *who, what, where, when, how*, and *why*. These words frequently appear in test questions. Often *who, where*, and *when* ask for a specific piece of information, such as a name, a place, or a date, so these are more frequently used in short -answer questions. The words *what, how*, and *why* are more frequently used for questions that demand a more complex answer.

Question	**Type of Answer**
What	definition, description, or explanation
How	explanation of a process or procedure
Why	analysis, cause, or effect

In addition to these words, the following list contains commonly used focus words that guide you in responding to test questions. (For more information on responding to test questions see Byleen, 1998, pp.183-207)

Focus Words in Test Questions

Analyze	Divide something into its parts, evaluate these parts, and explain them
Argue	Present the reasons for one side of a position
Comment	Give your own opinion
Compare	Look at the qualities or characteristics of things and show their similarities and differences
Contrast	Point out the differences
Define	Give the meaning of a term
Describe	Tell in detail the characteristics or qualities of something or some event
Discuss	Present the various sides of an argument and its key questions
Explain	Tell how or why
Evaluate	Give a judgment based on accepted criteria, looking at both positive and negative points
Prove	Show that something is true based on facts
Respond	Give your opinion or reaction
Summarize	Tell briefly, covering all the key points but omitting details and examples

5.4.3. The Process of Responding to Exam Questions

Preparing for Timed Written Essay Exams

There are several different types of tests. For a take-home test, students often have several days to complete their answers, and the instructor's expectations for depth of answers, length, and word processing are generally different than for in-class tests. There are two kinds of in-class tests: open-book and closed-book. Both are taken under time pressure. During an in -class open book test you can often use your textbook and notes. This can be helpful if you have already studied well and know where to locate key material in your text or notes. In-class closed-book tests are the most common. The following suggestions apply to this kind of test.

Studying Before the Test

If you have done active reading before the test, you can go back to your notes and study what you've highlighted, underlined, or numbered in your text without rereading everything. You'll be able to spend more time reviewing the main points instead of reading all the material again. One way to review is to write a list of possible essay questions and compare your list with someone else in the class. Then practice writing answers for these questions. (Just be sure that when you get to the test, you don't write the answer to the question you thought would be on the test, when it is

actually a different question.) In addition, take advantage of any review session the professor offers or any study guide. Both give strong indications of what might be on the test. Keep your eyes and ears open.

Taking the Test

1. **Assess.** Before you write any answers, read all of the questions carefully. Circle key words in the questions to help you focus on what you have to do.

Divide up the time you have for each question. For example, if you have 90 minutes for three questions, allot yourself about 25 minutes for each question so you will have some time left to review your work.

2. **Take quick notes to organize your thoughts.** After you read the questions, in the margin of the test paper make a quick list of information you will include in the answer. After you have generated your list, organize the information by grouping or numbering your items. Eliminate any irrelevant ideas.

The temptation with a timed essay test is to begin writing without taking these preliminary quick notes. However, these notes will free your mind to concentrate more on the form and style of your answers. You can concentrate more on your English.

3. Begin writing.

a. *Start with the easiest questions*. This will give you a boost of confidence and help you warm up your mind and your writing skill. In addition, you might spend less time on the easy questions so that you can devote more time to difficult questions. Be sure to write legibly and work within your time limit for the question. While you are working on these easy questions, your unconscious mind will help you prepare for the other questions you have previewed.

b. *Begin your short-answer or essay test answers with a thesis statement or topic sentence*. Due to your time limits, there will be no time for a gradual introduction. Instead, start with a direct thesis statement or topic sentence. In many cases, this can be a restatement of the test question. By restating the question in your first sentence, you will help focus your answer. Then add the necessary examples, details, and evidence to support your main idea.

c. *Write organized answers*. Connect your ideas with transition words and phrases (i.e., *next, as a result, after that, consequently*) to show the relationships between your ideas. Don't just scribble down the ideas from your notes in random order.

4. **Revise and Proofread.** Be sure you save some time to check

over your work. Your professors do not want you to recopy your answers because that would take time away from your thinking and writing. But they do expect you to reread your answers before you turn them in, and make neat corrections, such as crossing out unnecessary words, adding necessary transitions, and correcting spelling and grammar.

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Unit 6

The Research Essay

6.1. Introduction

Sometimes, particularly in advanced courses, your instructors will ask you to conduct independent research by collecting facts and concepts on a given topic and assembling them to make a point. These research-based assignments may be as short as a one-page critique of an article of your choice, involving under an hour of library research, or as long as a 30-page term paper requiring a minimum of *20* sources, involving many trips to the library over a period of weeks. Whatever the paper length or time commitment, the success of the entire project depends upon the skills of information retrieval you will learn in this unit.

Examples of Writing Tasks that May Require Research

- Reviews of books that you choose yourself
- Summaries or critiques of journal articles that you have to locate yourself
- Short reports on issues currently in the news

- Essays analyzing literature that draw on published literary criticism
- Reviews of the literature in particular topic areas
- Term papers

While you will find the techniques covered in this unit useful for any assignment that involves research, our examples will focus on a research assignment that has three specific characteristics:

1. Allows the student to choose a topic
2. Involves using a range of information sources
3. Requires sustained effort over a period of weeks

These features call for special skills, but they also require the skills you have already learned in this book. Depending upon the specific research assignment, you may need any or all of the writing processes discussed in Units 1 through 5. The approach to reading and summarizing presented in (Unit 3) is crucial to library research as are paraphrasing and quoting (Unit 4) and responding covered in (Unit 5). In addition, the ability to synthesize ideas from a variety of sources and respond to questions (Unit 5) will help you with research-based writing projects. Indeed, if you have mastered the skills in Units 1 through 5. You will be well on the way to writing good research papers.

6.2. Research and the Writing Process

Research is an intellectually complex activity that goes beyond knowing how to look things up in card catalogs, periodical indexes, and other information resources. Research involves careful thought and creativity. In this unit, we show how research functions as part of the overall writing process. (Keenedy & Smith, 1994, pp. 409-449).

Prewriting:

- Set a research paper schedule
- Pose questions and set research goals
  - Decide on a general topic
  - Consider your audience and rhetorical purpose
  - Focus research goals
- Decide how you will search for information
  - What are the specifications of the assignment?
  - Who is your audience?
  - What level of complexity or scope of coverage are you striving for?
  - What types of information sources will be most helpful?
  - What sources outside of libraries might help?

- What indexing terms (search vocabulary) will provide access to the information you want?

- Locate information sources
  - Decide which access tools to use
- Evaluate information sources
- Excerpt relevant information from sources

Drafting:

- Synthesize sources
- Argue, analyze, and evaluate
- Draft a thesis
- Derive a plan
- Create an outline

Revising:

- Use correct manuscript form
- Revise based on readers' comments

Editing

Exercise

Speculate on how you might try to make sense of your research

topic. What are the areas of confusion, ambiguity, disagreement, or uncertainty? What information might you collect that would help clarify the issues and contribute to sensemaking? Freewrite one page in response to these questions.

6.2.1. Prewriting for the Research-Based Paper

6.2.1.1. Set a Schedule

While short assignments based on research may not require any special allocation of time, assignments that ask students to locate a number of sources call for special planning. A major pitfall of research is failing to allow enough time. Even the most knowledgeable researchers can encounter hitches that require more time than they had anticipated. For example, topics that initially seem promising may prove unresearchable; the books, magazines, or newspapers that you need may be unavailable; preliminary research may show you that your initial research question is naive and must be modified; or you may have the required number of sources on the topic but find they don't fit together in a coherent argument. You must always allow for the unexpected in research assignments. Once you estimate how much time your research project will take, make a schedule.

6.2.1.2. Pose Questions and Set Research Goals

If seeking information were only a matter of looking up facts,

you would have little trouble setting your goals. You would simply list the facts that you need and proceed to the library reference desk. Research is rarely this simple. As we mentioned above, research assignments often ask you to make sense of confusing and complex material. The vast resources of a college library can be overwhelming when you are researching a perplexing, complicated issue. But you can reduce the level of frustration and confusion in the research process if you use the strategies described in this section. They will help you define research problems and set goals for research activities. The research process is not intimidating if you proceed with a clear sense of purpose.

Decide on a General Topic

As you become an experienced researcher, you will find that you need to define problems and set goals not only when you begin a research project but also throughout the research process. How you do this depends upon the specificity of your assignment. If your assignment is focused, you may be able to begin searching for materials right away.

Strategies for Generating Topics

- *Freewrite in response to the assignment:* Write nonstop for ten minutes, using any cues in the assignment to generate ideas. Then search your freewriting for useful ideas.

- *Brainstorm:* Create a list of words and phrases in response to the assignment. Then read over the list and look for similarities, patterns, and connections.
- *Use research tools:* Consult general subject headings in indexes related to your broad subject area (English language and literature, biology, music, psychology, etc.) to narrow the topic.
- *Consult your professor:* Ask your professor to suggest topics within his or her discipline.

Consider Your Audience and Rhetorical Purpose

As you narrow your topic and begin your search for information, also think about your purpose. Your purpose could be to provide the reader with a survey of perspectives on a topic or to argue a particular point of view. If you are researching a topic on which you already have definite opinions, you may have a thesis in mind before you ever consult an information source. But if you are investigating an area that is entirely new to you, write down any thoughts about purpose that occur to you as you start working with the sources.

Refine Research Goals:

The strategies below will help you refine your research goals:

- *What do* you already know about the topic? In what ways could

you expand on this knowledge by turning to sources? What uncertainties do you have about the topic that might be answered in sources?

- *What are your* personal feelings on the topic? What are your values and beliefs on this topic? How might you find sources that support or contradict your views, values, or beliefs?
- From what perspectives can you view the topic? What are common beliefs on the subject? What do experts on the topic believe? What do those most directly affected by the topic believe?
- What might your own audience need to know about the topic?

As you work to focus your topic, it may be helpful to visit the library. Reference librarians can evaluate your topic and give you specific suggestions on how you might go about narrowing it.

Changing direction

Even though you have a clear sense of direction, you may shift emphasis, narrow, or expand your topic as your research continues. Don't be so committed to your initial topic that you ignore information indicating that a different focus might be more appropriate or interesting. If you have a thesis in mind, regard it as a first attempt to make sense of the issue without the benefit of all the relevant information. As you collect information, you may find that

your preliminary thesis does not fit with all the facts and may need to be altered or entirely abandoned. Thesis statements may be subject to revision as you research and write. If you cling to your initial thesis in spite of the information you collect, you may produce a paper that is inconsistent, illogical, or confusing.

Exercise

In one page of freewriting, analyze your research goals and objectives. Do you know where to begin? To what extent have you narrowed your topic? Do you have a preliminary thesis? Have you located detailed information on your topic? Do you have to compromise your research goals? What will you need to do before you move on to the next stage?

6.2.1.3. Decide How You Will Search for Information

Once you have decided your research goals, you need a plan of attack that will guide your search for information. We call this plan your *research strategy*. Before you proceed to the library, think about the types of sources that you might consult and the kinds of sources that are most likely to meet your needs. If you consider a wide range of options, you are less likely to reach a dead end in the library, The following questions will help you to derive your research strategy:

Questions to Consider as You Derive Your Research Strategy

- What are the assignment specifications?
- Who is your audience?
- What level of complexity or scope of coverage are you striving for?
- What types of information sources will be most useful?
- What sources outside of libraries might help?
- What indexing terms (search vocabulary) will provide access to the information you want?

What Are the Assignment Specifications?

Your research strategy may be determined largely by the demands of the assignment. Research assignments sometimes specify the types of sources that should be used.

Who Is Your Audience?

Remember that your audience must be able to grasp your ideas, so you need to draw on sources that are appropriate for your readers.

What Level of Complexity or Scope of Coverage Are You Striving For?

Another part of your research strategy is to consider the variety of perspectives on your topic and decide which ones you will investigate. A major function of research is to explore the full

complexity of an issue by examining a range of different opinions.

What Types of Information Sources Will Be Most Useful?

Also consider what information formats might be most appropriate for your research goals. The following types of information sources can be found in libraries:

- Books (often referred to as "monographs" within the library)
- Pamphlets
- Periodicals (often referred to as "serials" within the library)
  - Newspapers
  - Magazines (targeted at a broad audience)

  Journals (targeted at a narrow scholarly or professional audience)
- Sound Recordings
  - Tapes (reel and cassette)
  - Plastic Discs (LPs)
  - Compact Discs
- Sheet Music
- Microforms
  - Microfilm

- Microfiche
- Microcards

- Motion Pictures and Videorecordings
- Computer data files
- Images (graphics, photos, etc.)
- Three-dimensional artifacts
- Maps

Don't assume that books and respected journals are always the best sources for academic essays. Newspapers and news services provide excellent coverage of current events. As most libraries expand their audio and video collections, researchers should also consider non-print media when appropriate. Books and standard reference works (encyclopedias, almanacs, and so forth) are less useful for current events since these sources are often years in preparation.

What Sources Outside of Libraries Might Help?

You need not restrict yourself to library sources. You can also obtain useful information outside of libraries.

Information Sources Outside of Libraries

Personal interviews, especially with experts and individuals who have first-hand experiences

- Informal research (surveys, interviews, and so forth)
- Personal observation
- Information clearinghouses (for example, a government agency or a special interest group)
- Private information services available via modern and personal computer

What Indexing Terms (Search Vocabulary) Will Provide Access to the Information You Want?

In order to gain access to card catalogs and indexes to periodicals and reference works, you will need to know subject headings. For the computerized versions of these catalogs and indexes, you will need to come up with key words or phrases. To complete your research strategy, produce a list of words or phrases associated with your topic. Anticipate the words that might be used to describe or categorize the subject. These are the terms you will look up when you use the catalogs and indexes.

Exercise

Outline a strategy for obtaining information for your research topic. Specify the types of sources (format, intended audience. etc.) you will consult and the resources you will use (libraries, professors, public agencies, etc.). Then derive a list of search terms

that you think will provide access to your topic.

6.2.1.4. Locate Information Sources

After you have decided on a strategy for collecting information on your topic, the next step is to proceed to the library for sustained research. First, make sure you know how your library is organized.

Decide Which Access Tools to Use

Access tools are the resources that help you identify and locate sources of information that will serve your particular purpose. The following access tools are frequently used:

General Reference Works

Card and on-line catalogs

Periodical indexes and abstracts

6.2.1.5. Evaluate Information Sources

As you search for source material, you are constantly judging whether or not information has direct relevance to your topic. Don't excerpt information that is only remotely related to your topic. If you collect a lot of information without exercising judgment, you may get a false sense of how well your research is proceeding. Just because you have lots of sources, this doesn't mean you have the information needed to develop the paper in the direction you intend. As you locate and work with sources, ask yourself how they fit in

with your overall goals for the research paper. To what parts o the topic do the sources pertain? Do they support your preliminary thesis? What perspectives on the topic do they represent? Try to make sense of the sources as you examine each one rather than waiting until you have completed your research.

By urging you to exercise judgment in choosing sources, we are not suggesting that you ignore ideas that conflict with your own. Remember that your thesis is preliminary and subject to change. You may shift your point of view after you read some of the arguments presented in the sources.

In addition to evaluating the sources' relevance to your topic, you should also judge their comparative quality and credibility. Too many students have complete confidence in any source they find in a library. Libraries include wildly opinionated, even bizarre sources along with those that are logical and objective. Of course, there is nothing wrong with an author expressing a strong opinion, but it is a mistake for researchers to view all opinions on a topic as equally valid. Since research is sense-making, researchers must consider what sources are most helpful in making sense of the issue.

Examining the Evidence Presented in Sources

As you begin reading the books and articles that you gather, carefully evaluate the arguments presented within them. Keene &

Adams (1996, p.71) suggest to take the following questions into consideration to become an *active, critical reader*:

- **The author:** What qualifies the author to speak on the subject? Is the author likely to have a particular bias or be neutral?
- **The source:** Is the publication reputable? Biased? Is it recent or out of date?
- **The audience:** To whom does the author seem to be writing? How does the author deal with the audience's opinions and level of knowledge?
- **The arguments:** What points is the author trying to make? Are they all clear or are some relatively hidden?
- **The evidence:** What evidence is offered in support of each point? Is the evidence sufficient?

As you analyze sources, it is always helpful to speculate on the author's rhetorical purpose. What are the author's reasons for writing? Who is the author's intended audience? How does the author want to influence this audience? The answers to these questions will help you understand the source better and figure out whether it is appropriate for your paper. For instance, if you are writing for a public health course on the impact that smoking in public places has on nonsmokers, you may be skeptical of

information from the Tobacco Institute, an organization that represents the interests of the tobacco industry. If you are writing on spending priorities for public education, you may find useful information in a teachers' union publication, but you should keep in mind the union's desire to increase teachers' salaries and benefits. If you think about writers' motives, you will be able to put their ideas in a proper perspective.

Exercise

Locate two sources that pertain to your research topic but clearly differ in perspective, authoritativeness, or credibility. Write a one-page paper that compares the usefulness of these sources for your research purposes.

6.2.1.6. Excerpt Relevant Information from Sources

The basic skills for excerpting information from library sources—summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting—are covered in Units 3 and 4 of this book. Here, we will discuss the special problems associated with the sheer number of sources you are working with for a research paper. A common problem is that a researcher loses track of the exact source for an important piece of information. Make sure each time you excerpt a passage from a source, whether you handcopy, reword, or photocopy, carefully record a complete citation to the source. You will need to record the

exact page numbers where specific pieces of text are located. When you draft your paper, you will cite the source as well as the page for each summary, paraphrase, and quotation.

Information you need to copy for your citation

Book: author(s), title, publisher, city of publication, date of publication, pages where the information you excerpted is located

Magazine: author(s), title of article, name of magazine, date (day, month, year), inclusive pages for entire article, pages where the information you excerpted is located.

Scholarly Journal: author(s), title of article, name of journal, volume number, year of publication, inclusive pages for entire article, pages where the information you excerpted is located

Newspaper: author(s), title of article, name of newspaper, date (day, month, year), inclusive pages for entire article, pages where the information you excerpted is located

There is also a danger of excerpting too much information. Some students compulsively collect every scrap of information that is remotely related to their topics, thinking that they will make sense of it all at their leisure. Don't bury yourself with paper, whether it is notecards, pages of notes or xeroxed copies of sources. Excerpt only what you think you might use. As we stressed earlier, research is a sense-making process. It is hard to make sense when you are

overwhelmed with information. In the next section we will discuss how to judge the usefulness of sources as you locate them.

Much has been written on how you should record the information that you excerpt from sources. Some textbooks strongly recommend index cards for research notes because cards can be grouped and regrouped easily. Of course, you can cut up pages from your research notebook or photocopies of sources and group these pieces just as you can notecards. Another alternative is to record your research notes on a computer and use word processing or outlining programs to organize the information. We recommend that you try various methods of recording excerpts and decide what works best for you.

In addition to notes that record specific pieces of information or individual concepts, you should keep a separate set of notes for preliminary thesis statements, organizational plans, or other important ideas that occur to you during the process of research.

6.2.2. Drafting

6.2.2.1. Synthesize Sources

The research paper is, by its very nature, a synthesis. The power of research is its ability to bring together information from various sources to understand an issue, possibly in ways that the source authors did not anticipate. While the researcher can be creative at all stages of the research process, synthesis offers special

opportunities for originality. Undergraduate student researchers often see connections among sources that have previously gone unnoticed, and they structure information in new ways. Through synthesis, researchers give shape to information. This is the ultimate goal of the research process.

6.2.2.2. Argue, Analyze, and Evaluate

It is common for long research papers to include more than one type of synthesis. Argument, analysis, and evaluation may also be important elements in a research paper.

6.2.2.3. Draft a Thesis

We mentioned earlier in this unit that you may have a working thesis in mind when you begin researching. If not, one may emerge as you collect information. The following procedure will help you generate a working thesis from your research notes:

Generating a Thesis

1. Scan your research notes quickly, noting any general trends, main concepts, or overall patterns.
2. Freewrite for ten minutes on what you think your research might tell your reader.
3. Reduce your freewriting to several sentences that explain what you want to say to your reader.

Exercise

Draft a preliminary thesis statement for your own research paper. Ask a classmate to read your thesis statement and orally paraphrase it. Did your intentions come through?

6.2.2.4. Derive a Plan

A research paper can follow one organizational plan or a combination of plans. In many cases, a plan will occur to you as you conduct research. You may see that the information you collect from various sources fits into an obvious pattern, or you may borrow a plan from one of your sources. Considering how you might use the source information to support your thesis may also suggest an organizational plan.

If no obvious pattern emerges from the information you collected, systematically examine your research notes. Try to derive one or more possible plans by categorizing the information in the notes. If you use notecards, you can sort them into piles, grouping related information together, to see what patterns appear. Try several different grouping schemes to find what works best.

6.2.2.5. Create an Outline

Detailed outlines are required for research projects. Because research writers must juggle many sources and deal with issues in depth, they need an outline which will keep them on task and

provide a framework that unifies information from various sources. A pitfall of research paper writing is becoming bogged down in the details from sources and failing to clarify the relationships among ideas. If you draft your research paper working from a detailed outline, it will be easier to write and, in the end, your train of thought will likely be more evident to your audience.

The formal outline provides a clear hierarchical structure that is useful for imposing order on a topic that is complicated and has a number of discrete subtopics. (see Unit 1, p.36 for designing an outline)

With some topics or certain collections of sources, however, you may feel constrained if you have to force the material into an outline. In these cases, free-form outlining, which allows the writer to determine his or her own structure, may come closer to reflecting your actual thinking.

Exercise

Create an outline for your research paper. Ask a classmate to read the outline and answer the following questions: (I) What is the overall plan for the paper? (2) Does each individual point in the outline relate clearly to the overall goal? Revise your outline based on your classmate's comments.

6.2.3. Revising

Checklist for Revising a Research Paper

- Is the paper written on a sufficiently narrow topic?
- Can you understand the writer's research goals?
- Does the writer present a clear thesis?
- Does the writer make sense of the information from sources?
- Can you discern the research paper's form (comparison and contrast of multiple sources, summary of multiple sources, objective synthesis, essay of response to multiple sources, synthesis with a specific purpose, argument, analysis, or evaluation)?
- Is the information from sources organized according to a clear plan?
- Does the writer use information from sources convincingly?
- Are the writer's assertions substantiated with material from sources?
- Does the writer provide transitions among sources and among pieces of information?
- Is the writer's voice appropriate for this type of essay? Why or why not?
- Is the paper opener satisfactory? Why or why not?

- Does the essay have an appropriate conclusion?
- Is the title suitable for the piece?
- Can you identify the source for each piece of information?
- Does the paper end with a list of works cited that includes all sources referred to in the text of the paper?

6.2.4. Editing

When you are satisfied with your revision, read your paper aloud. Then reread it line by line and sentence by sentence. Check for correct usage, punctuation, spelling, mechanics, manuscript form, and typos. If you are using a word processing program with a spell checker, apply the checker to your essay. If you are especially weak in editing skills, try getting a friend to read over your work. Keep in mind the following concerns:

- Are all your sentences complete?
- Have you avoided run-on sentences and comma splices?
- Do pronouns have clear antecedents, and do they agree in number, gender and case with the words for which they stand?
- Do all the subjects and verbs agree in person and number?
- Is the verb tense consistent and correct?
- Have you used modifiers (words, phrases, subordinate

clauses) correctly and placed them where they belong?

- Have you used matching elements within parallel constructions?
- Are punctuation marks used correctly?
- Are spelling, capitalization, and other mechanics (abbreviations, numbers, italics) correct?

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Unit 7

The Problem-Solution Essay

7.1. Introduction

Problem-solving is part of our everyday lives. How can we get better grades? How can we get along better with a roommate? Moreover, problem-solving assignments are frequently part of academic course work. As writers confront problems and seek solutions—how to persuade a college/university administrator to keep the campus library open longer in the evenings, for example—they demonstrate many of the writing and research skills students have practiced in this course.

The overall organization of Problem-Solution papers usually contain (a) a background paragraph that demonstrates the problem, (b) one or more paragraphs of evaluation of alternative solutions (called a "feasibility study"), (c) a persuasive proposal—of one or more paragraphs—for one solution, and (d) one or more paragraphs describing the implementation of that solution. The outline in Figure 7-1 shows the overall organization of the Problem-Solution essay, as well as the writing conventions and research skills needed to fulfill the expectations of the academic audience.

Note: Not all Problem-Solving essay assignments require all of the elements below; some academic assignments emphasize two or three of the elements and ignore others.

[Engages audience; thesis statement]	**I**	**Introduction**
[Describing, examples, observing, definition; use of external resources]	**II**	**Background paragraph demonstrating that a problem exists**
[Investigating, explaining; using comparison, contrast, process, cause (s) and effect(s)]	**III-VII**	**Body paragraphs** . explore several solutions to the problem . develop and evaluate a feasibility analysis of those solutions . present sources to use as evidence . propose one solution to the problem . persuade the audience that one solution should be adopted . present an implementation plan for the proposed solution
[Designing interviews, surveys; using books, articles, the WWW]		
[Using argument, counter-argument techniques, non-text materials]		
[Process, classification, reasons; analysis]		
[Summary, recommendation]	**VII**	**Conclusion**

Figure 7-1: *Overall Organization of a Problem-Solution Essay*

7.2. Preparing to Write the Problem-Solution Essay

Although students could write Problem-Solution essays about national or international problems (such as pollution, smoking, or adolescent violence), writing about local problems that students know about personally can make the writing process more satisfying.

Exercise

With a small group of classmates, discuss 2 or 3 local problems you have identified. Which problem interests your classmates? What experiences have your classmates had with each problem? What solutions do your classmates suggest for each of the problems?

Writing Assignment: Collecting Information

After you select a local problem, begin to gather information about that problem. Summarize what you already know about the problem and note what you need to know. Decide where you can locate information, and identify the person (or persons) you should interview.

7.2.1. Demonstrating that the Problem Exists

The Background Paragraph

Selecting a problem to be solved requires more homework than any other academic assignment topic. Not only must the writer select and thoroughly analyze the audience, but she or he must evaluate the

topic to make certain that it is a problem and that it can be solved. Otherwise the writing task can be both frustrating and embarrassing.

Remember that, in the Problem-Solution paper, the background paragraph describes the problem and its severity, using research to demonstrate the existence of the problem.

Writing Assignment: Describing the Problem (The Background Paragraph)

Write a background paragraph, using specific detail, that describes the problem you have selected. Use information from your knowledge and experiences and from the experiences of others to demonstrate the severity of the problem. Use additional information you have collected from other sources to support your ideas. Cite your in-text sources, and start your end-of-text reference page. (See Appendix 4 for documenting sources.)

Using Headings

For longer and or more complex academic writing assignments—and, in some fields of study, for all written assignments—student writers can choose to use headings to introduce each major part of the essay, and perhaps subheadings to label subtopics within the major headings. Scientific and technical papers almost always depend on headings and subheadings to remind readers of the progress of the paper. Typically, these headings include Introduction, Literature

Review, Methods and Materials, Results, Discussion, and Conclusion. Textbooks also use headings and subheadings to help the audience: the headings could include Background, Analysis of Solutions, Implementation Plan, and Conclusion.

7.3. Using Sources in Academic Research

Individual background knowledge, as well as personal observation and experience, can be engaging and strong evidence to raise the consciousness of readers. For example, Naoko Otsuki wrote about the problem of returning to her country after she completed her academic work in the U.S. In the background paragraph below, she presented her observations of the disadvantages of the Japanese respect for harmony.

Student Sample

[Thesis statement of opinion] *Harmony is prized in most facets of life in Japan, but I believe the ways that harmony is practiced, especially in the educational system and in the workplace, are not beneficial to Japanese society.*

Background Paragraph: Demonstrates that a Problem Exists

[Topic sentence] When I returned to Japan after living five years abroad, I was startled to find the

[Techniques of support: personal experience, examples]

hindrances to my freedom of expression at school as a result of the concept of harmony. First, all students are required to wear uniforms to school; while most Japanese students accept this regulation, I could not understand why we needed to wear this attire. Instead of promoting harmony, I felt that it repressed my individuality. Second, it is no exaggeration to say that Japanese students never state their opinions in class, nor do they take a definite stand; even if the professor addresses a question directly to them, Japanese students attempt to conceal their opinions. I realized that "harmony" does not describe these practices. As a musical term, "harmony" is a combination of successive sounds of various pitches that make a chord. In other words, harmony can only be created when individuals, each having their own opinions and each valued for having those opinions, come together. Otherwise, harmony is a form of repression..

[Methods of development: definition, comparison and contrast]

Maoko Otsuki, Japan, cited in (Reid, 2000, p.214-15)

Notice that following her description of her personal experiences and observations, Naoko uses a fact (a definition), comparison, and contrast to strengthen her description of how deeply the concept of harmony exists in the Japanese school system (i.e., how serious the problem is).

7.3.1. Using Interview Information in Research

For many academic writing assignments, the information that results from interviewing one or more authorities provides valuable information to use as evidence in the paper. For the Problem-Solution essay, interviewing a local authority can provide such information as the history of a problem and of solutions that have been tried previously. Further, it can establish a bond between the student writer and the authority that may be helpful in persuading the authority.

7.3.2. Designing and Administering a Survey for Research Information

Surveys are written documents that ask a group of people, called "respondents," to answer questions or respond to statements. The goal of survey designers is to collect information about a topic from people who are typical of those involved in the topic.

The group of people surveyed are called a "representative sample" (i.e., respondents who *represent* a typical group). For example, for research about a medical problem that occurs in

hospital patients, a "representative sample" of hospital patients with that problem would be surveyed. To evaluate the top brands of orange juice, the survey would be given to orange juice drinkers.

Valid—that is, authoritative, effective, strong—is an important word in survey research. At least 15-20 responses are needed to provide adequate (valid) data for a Problem-Solving essay. Because some people will not complete and/or return a written survey, at least 20-25 surveys should be distributed.

Guidelines for Survey Design

1. **Identify** the "representative **sample**" (the group of people) you will survey; e.g.,

* college/university students on one floor of a dormitory
* undergraduate international students
* students in 3 of your classes
* members in a student organization

2. Carefully **examine** the type of information you are interested in. If, for example, you are investigating jet lag, your questions or statements could include these:

1. How seriously do you suffer from jet lag?

Some A lot Terribly

2. Which of the following techniques do you use? (Circle one)

A. Stay awake until it's time for bed in the new location

B. Take a nap when I arrive

C. Eat a diet low in carbohydrates before I leave

D. Other (list):_____

3. Keep it short and simple (the **KISS** rule). Do not make a survey too difficult or too long. Usually a survey should be a single page.

4. Develop a **simple scale**. Do not ask for lengthy written answers. Instead, give a choice of possible answers:

Circle or X or check (√) one

Always *Usually* *Sometimes* *Rarely* *Never*

SA A NS D SA

[SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; NS=Not Sure; D=disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree]

5 4 3 2 1

[5= Excellent; 4=Very Good; 3= Good; 2 = Needs Improvement; 1= Poor]

5. Confine each **statement** or **question** to **one idea** only.

Do you like peanut butter? Yes No

Do you like chicken salad? Yes No

Do you like ice cream? Yes No

NOT Do you like peanut butter, chicken salad, or ice cream?

Yes *No*

6. **Arrange** the survey on the page so that it is clear, uncrowded, and appealing.

7. Give **respondents opportunities** to **comment** (in their own words) (a) after the options you have chosen and (b) at the end of the survey because

- some respondents may choose an option you have not considered.
- some respondents may prefer to comment in their own words.
- respondent comments are strong, credible support when quoted directly.

8. Make **returning** the survey **easy** by providing clear information and materials, such as enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope, instructing the respondent to return the survey directly to you (e.g., in a class you are both taking, at the main desk of the dormitory where you both live), or by offering to pick it up.

9. Ask several people to complete the draft of the survey and to **report any** problems or **suggestions** for revisions.

Developing a survey is not difficult, but unless the designer considers both purpose and audience carefully, the information collected will not be useful. Moreover, because the written survey is usually given to people who will complete it and return it later, the respondents cannot ask about survey items that confuse them. Therefore, the questions and statements on the survey must be clearly and carefully written.

Writing Conventions for the Content of a Survey

- a descriptive title
- an introduction describing the reasons for the survey
- clear directions about completing the survey
- demographic data (i.e., requested information about the respondent, but NOT his/her name)
- the questions or statements to be completed by the respondent
- a space for written comments at the end of the survey
- information about how to return the survey to the designer
- an expression of appreciation for the time spent by the respondent

Complete the student-designed survey below. Then do the exercise that follows.

Student Sample

[Title] **Baby Clothes' Colors in Different Cultures**

[Introduction: reason for the survey] Hello! We are taking a first-year composition course, and our assignment is to survey international students at the university about the colors used in their country for babies.

[Directions] Will you please help us by completing the questions below? It will take just two minutes, and your time will help us get a good grade!

[Demographic data]

Your country_____

Your class (Circle one)

Fresh Soph Junior Senior Grad Student

Your major field of study_____

1. What color(s) do very young babies in your culture wear?

   boys _____ girls_____

2. What color(s) do babies in your culture wear for celebrations (such as baptisms, welcoming parties, etc.)?

boys_____ girls_____

3. What color(s) are not usually worn by babies in your culture?

   boys_____ girls _____

4. Why?_____

[Comments] Other comments: _____

[How to return the survey] Please return to Sophie in the attached envelope. Just drop the envelope in campus mail.

[Appreciation] THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!!

Sophie Gros, France Yi wu, People's Republic of China (PRC), cited in (Reid, 2000, pp.217-18)

Exercise

1. Identify the audience and the purpose of the survey. How do you know?
2. Evaluate the student survey in terms of the **Guidelines for Survey Design** above.
3. Discuss the ways in which a survey designer could use the information from the survey as evidence in any essay assignment. Be specific!

Reporting Survey Results

Writers use survey results to support their ideas and opinions. Therefore, it is necessary to (a) introduce the use of the survey in the background paragraph of the essay, (b) include a copy of the survey in an Appendix at the end of the essay, (c) present the results in the essay, and (d) cite the survey in the text. There are several ways to report survey results.

. Refer to the survey and state whether its results agree or disagree with previous research (see Reid, 2000, pp.200-21).

> Results of a survey of 15 university students who were first-born children supported the previous research (see Appendix A for the survey).

. In the background paragraph, describe and refer the reader to the survey in the Appendix (on a separate page, at the end of the essay).

> In addition, a survey (Gros and Wu, 1998) of twenty international students at the University of Wyoming was used to determine the clothing colors of babies in different cultures (see Appendix 3 for the survey).

. Describe the survey briefly and give the general results of the survey to support an idea in a body paragraph.

The survey (Ford, 1997) asked 15 undergraduates to identify their personality characteristics. More than 75% of the respondents indicated that they fit the profile of first-borns, and more than 60% characterized themselves as independent achievers who were conscious of time and were well-organized. Table __ gives the average percentages for the group.

Introduce results, report them in a table, and interpret them for the audience.

The results of the survey confirmed my belief that a great majority of typical university students wanted to learn more about the culture of Sweden; 83% chose culture as one of their top three choices. Table __ depicts the top five other choices students made and the percentage for each.

Table—*Students' Choices for Topics in an Ethnic Study Class About Sweden*

History	**Holidays**	**Economy**	**Industry**	**Traditions**
41%	34%	34%	34%	21%

Direct quotations from survey respondents can also be powerful evidence. If the survey provides respondents with a "Comments" space, those comments can be used as direct quotations in the essay.

Although survey respondents will not provide their names, the writer can use demographic data (personal information about the respondents that will not identify the individual). Notice the use of such data in this student sample.

Student Sample

[Demographic data]

[Direct quotation from student comment]

Since more than a third of the students responding to the survey were business majors, it is not surprising that so many students wanted to learn about industry and the economy. As student number 18, a twenty-year-old male, answered question number 3, "Going on my interests listed in the previous question and my accounting major, I would be interested in how business works in Sweden."

Ann Wallskog, Sweden, cited in (Reid, 2000, p. 221)

7.4. Problem-Solving Patterns

7.4.1. Simple Problem-Solving Pattern

I Introduction

II The problem: identify and demonstrate its existence

III The solution(s)

IV Answering possible objections and problems caused by the solution

V Conclusion: recommendation and call to action

Figure 7.2: *Overall Organization: Simple Problem-Solving Pattern*

Student Sample

[Thesis statement]	I	*Due to inadequate training of English teachers, high school students in Hong Kong are weak on oral English.*
[Demonstration: problem exists]	II	Even though in all Anglo-Chinese schools in Hong Kong, English textbooks are used, most high school students are not competent in spoken English, and the use of "Chinglish" is widespread.
[Solution]	III	Better training for English teachers must be mandated by the university teacher-preparation programs.
[Answering objection]	IV	Some of the recommendations for improved teacher-preparation will certainly be expensive; however, by increasing tuition and using further government subsidies, this problem can be overcome.

[Conclusion, prediction, call to action]	V	It is clear that if the problem is not solved in the near future, Hong Kong may lose its important role as the great financial center of the world, the bridge between East and West.

Winnie Chan, Hong Kong, cited in (Reid, 2000, p. 224)

7.4.2. Alternative Problem-Solving Pattern

I Introduction

II The problem: identify and demonstrate its existence (background paragraph)

III Evaluation of alternative solution 1; why it is not feasible + evidence

IV Evaluation of alternative solution 2; why it is not feasible + evidence

V Evaluation of alternative solution 3; why it is feasible + evidence and answering possible objections .

VI Implementation plan; evidence

VII Conclusion: summary, call to action

Figure 7.3: *Overall Organization: Alternative Problem-Solving Pattern*

Student Sample

[Thesis statement of opinion, intent]	I	*Because I found my 30-minute appointment in the Writing Center insufficient, I decided to investigate the severity of the problem for other students; in this paper, I propose a solution.*
[Demonstration: problem exists]	II	According to the 1998 Writing Center Spring Semester Survey, I am not the only student who believes that Writing Center appointments for tutorial help should be longer.
Solution 1 + evaluation; not feasible]	III	One solution is to extend the 30-minute appointment to 45 minutes. However, Dr. Jane Nelson, Director of the Writing Center, opposes this solution because the extended time would not allow the Writing Center to serve as many clients.
[Solution 2 + evaluation; not feasible]	IV	Another solution might be more use of the electronic on-line tutoring from the Writing Center. However, a majority of students who responded to my survey indicated that they preferred to have their tutoring face-to-face.

[Solution 3 + evaluation; feasible; paragraph will answer objections]	V	The best solution is a sequenced approach: a client works 30 minutes with a Writing Center tutor, then 30 minutes by himself/herself, then another 30 minutes with a Writing Center tutor.
[Implementation + evidence]	VI	Based on the survey results of both the Writing Center Survey and my survey, I recommend that the Writing Center initiate a pilot program next semester to test the sequenced approach.
[Conclusion: summary, call to action]	I	In conclusion, because the Writing Center exists as a service to the students, and because many students are interested in experimenting with the sequenced approach, the pilot project is an appropriate solution.

Zeenat Chowdhury, Pakistan, cited in (Reid, 2000, p.225)

7.5. Feasibility Analysis of Alternative Solutions

One of the goals of a Problem-Solving paper is to evaluate a number of solutions and to recommend the best of them. Because most problems will inspire a variety of possible solutions, do not

quickly select the most obvious solution. Instead, consider several solutions; compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of each; decide which is the most "feasible" (i.e., possible). Strategies to discover the possible solutions to a problem include (a) studying the history of the problem, (b) listing the cause (s) of the problem, and (c) using "what if?" to brainstorm solutions.

Evaluating each solution begins with developing criteria. While some criteria will depend on the specific topic, all solutions must be evaluated by at least the following:

Feasibility: Will the solution actually solve the problem?

Logical Considerations: Cost-effectiveness, practicality, ethically, legality.

Consequences of the solution: What additional short-term and long-term problems might the solution cause?

Student Sample

Problem: The university daycare center does not enroll children under three years of age, so many married students cannot use the facility.

[Causes of the problem] Causes:

- Infants and young children require more care.

- They require more specialized care.
- It would cost too much money.

[Possible solutions] Solutions:

1. Change the policy of the center to admit infants and children under the age of three.
2. Develop another facility for infants and very young children.

Olga, Jacoby, Poland, cited in (Reid, 2000, p.228)

7.5.1. Writing Feasibility Analysis Paragraphs

Most Problem-Solution assignments require analysis of more than one solution to the problem. By presenting and then discarding one or more solutions, writers demonstrate that they have carefully considered the most important, most relevant options before they make their recommendations.

In general, a paragraph that evaluates a solution is based on the criteria developed by the writer. Like most paragraphs, the analysis begins with a topic sentence. The evaluation (a) states the criteria, (b) judges according to those criteria, and (c) supports the judgment with facts, examples, physical description, and/or personal experience. In a problem-solution paper, the solution that is

recommended by the writer is usually discussed last, with the implementation paragraph following (if such a paragraph is part of the assignment).

Student Sample: Solution Not Recommended

Evening Shuttle Services

[thesis statement of intent and opinion]

Because the university offers many evening classes, the fact that there is no public transportation service available to students is a serious problem.

[Solution #1]

One solution is to provide car-pooling. The university could set up a volunteer program that would pick students up in front of the library every half hour between 6 P.M. and 10:30 P.M. The clear advantage of this solution is its cost-effectiveness; the university would provide neither cars nor drivers. However, upon closer investigation, this solution is not feasible. First, my survey results showed that a single car would not be sufficient for the numbers of students who need transportation. Even four cars would not fulfill that need, and with the addition of each car, the process of scheduling volunteers becomes more and more complex. Next, the recruiting of volunteers would almost certainly grow more difficult with time, and as with most volunteer efforts, the reliability of even a well-run program would be problematic. Finally, according to Corrine Sheaffer, Manager of Fleet Operations, the legal problems with

[Analysis: advantages]

[Disadvantage: support from survey results, experience, facts]

[Support from interview information]

insurance would prohibit the university from participating in such a program. Therefore, this solution is not possible.

Naoko Shoji, Japan, cited in (Reid, 2000, p. 230)

7.6. Essay Plan: Problem/Solution

The guidelines below will help you remember what you need to do in each part of a problem/solution essay (Blanchard, 1997, pp. 113-14).

Introduction

1. Provide background information about the problem.
2. Describe the problem and state why it is serious.
3. Identify possible solutions.

Supporting Paragraphs

1. Discuss one solution in each supporting paragraph.
2. Explain the positive and negative aspects of each solution.
3. Provide details to explain each solution.
4. Organize the paragraphs according to order of importance.

Conclusion

1. Summarize the solutions.
2. Draw a conclusion or make a prediction based on your suggestions.

7.6.1. The Process of Writing the Problem-Solution Essay

In this activity, you will practice writing an essay that analyzes the solutions to a problem. Follow these steps:

a. Prewriting

Freewrite about a topic of your own choice for 10 minutes.

b. Planning

Use your freewriting as a basis for planning your essay. Identify several of your solutions that you think you can develop into an essay. If you have not generated enough ideas, do another, more focused freewriting. Then prepare an informal outline of your essay.

c. Drafting

On a separate piece of paper, write the first draft of your essay. Be sure to provide some background information on the problem in the introduction and include a clear thesis statement. Organize the body paragraphs according to order of importance, beginning or ending with the most important solution. End with a conclusion that summarizes the solutions, draws a conclusion, or makes a prediction.

d. Personal Revising

Be sure that all your paragraphs are unified and coherent. Also, check to make sure you have provided enough support to explain each solution fully. Write or type a revised version of your essay.

e. Peer Revising

Exchange papers with a classmate. Read your partner's essay and use the following questions to help you with the revision process:

1. What are some interesting things you learned from reading this essay?
2. Did the introduction provide enough background information to explain the problem?
3. How many solutions did the author offer in the essay? Is each solution adequately developed in a separate body paragraph?
4. Are the paragraphs arranged in a logical order? What type of order did the author use?
5. Did the author use transitions to guide you from one idea to the next? Were there any irrelevant sentences that should be eliminated?
6. Did the author include a conclusion that summarizes the solutions or makes a prediction?

Incorporate any suggestions your classmate has made that you agree with.

f. Editing

Use the checklist (Blanchard, 1997, p. 65) below to edit your essay. Correct all the grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors before you copy it over or type it.

You Be the Editor

The following paragraph contains seven mistakes. Find the mistakes and correct them. Then copy the corrected paragraph onto a separate sheet of paper.

If you are like most people, you average one to three colds per year. Even if you do not have a cold right now. The chances are three in four that within the next year, at least one cold virus will find you. then you'll spend a week or so suffering from the miseries of the common cold: fatigue, sore throat, laryngitis, sneezing, stuffy or runny nose, and coughing. According to researchers, colds are the most common medical reason for missing school and work. Once you catch a cold, what can you do. There is no known cure yet for a cold. There are, however, several thing you can do to suppress the symptom's so that you feel better while the virus runs its course. For example, make sure that you get plenty of sleep and drink lots of liquids. You may find commercially available cold remedies such as decongestants, cough suppressants, and expectorants helpful, but keep in mind that these products can cause side effects. Many people prefer home remedies such as

chicken soup, garlic, and ginger tea. In treating a cold, remember the wisdom of the ages, "if you treat a cold, it will be gone in a week; if you don't treat it, will be gone in seven days."

Source: Jane Brody's Cold and Flu Fighter, cited in Blanchard, (1997, p. 115).

On Your Own

Write a problem/solution essay on one of the following problems:

1. Living in a foreign country can be fun and exciting, but it can also be problematic. One of the most serious problems that people living in a foreign country face is culture shock. What ways can you think of to help people deal with this problem?
2. Stress at work or school can be a serious problem. A person suffering from too much stress usually finds it difficult to be productive or happy. What are some ways to reduce the amount of stress in someone's life?

Be sure your essay has an introduction that describes the problem, several body paragraphs that explain the solutions, and a conclusion that summarizes the solutions or makes a prediction.

Editing Checklist

1. Is the first sentence of each new paragraph indented? ___ yes __ not yet
2. Does the first word of each sentence begin with a capital letter? ___ yes __ not yet
3. Is the punctuation correct in all the sentences? ___ yes __ not yet
4. Are all the sentences complete sentences? That is, does each have a subject and a verb and express a complete thought? ___ yes __ not yet
5. Have you eliminated run-on sentences? ___ yes __ not yet
6. Have you used the correct verb tense throughout your draft? ___ yes _ not yet
7. Do you have agreement of subjects and verbs? ___ yes _ not yet
8. Do you have agreement of nouns and possessive pronouns? ___ yes _ not yet
9. Have you used correct word order in all your sentences? ___ yes _ not yet
10. Are all your words spelled correctly? ___ yes _ not yet

If the answer to any of the questions is "not yet," go back and try to improve your essay. Write the edited draft of your essay on a separate piece of paper.

Damascus University

Unit 8

Career Writing Skills

8.1. Formal Letters

Full Block Format

Apartado Postal 80824_____

Prados del Este

Caracas,1080, Venezuela

November 8, 1997_____

Foreign Student Advisor

Seattle Central Community College_____

1701 Broadway

Seattle, WA 98122

USA

Dear Sir or Madam: _____

I am interested in studying English at your school next summer as a full-time student. _____

Please send me an application and any other information I need to apply to your school as a foreign student.

Thank you for your help. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours, _____

Sylvia Marquez _____

Sylvia Marquez _____

Semi-Block Format

Apartado Postal 80824

Prados del Este

Caracas,1080, Venezuela

November 5, 1997

Sam Roscoe

Edutour, Inc. _____

573 Wilshire Blvd.

Santa Monica, CA 90403

USA

Dear Mr. Roscoe: _____

I am writing to ask for information about your study tours to California. _____

Please send me information about English language study tours for the months of January through April.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely yours, _____

*Sylvia Marquez*_____

Sylvia Marquez _____

1. Read the names of the parts of a formal letter and number the parts of the two example letters above. Which parts go in different places in the two letter formats?

Parts of a Formal Letter

1. Return Address 3. Inside Address 5. Body 7. Signature

2. Date 4. Salutation 6. Closing 8. Typed Name

2. Now read the rules for writing the body of a formal letter. Cross out the rule that is wrong. (Olsher, 1996, p.32)

- Tell why you are writing the letter.

(If possible, tell how you got the person's name and address.)

- Tell about your favorite childhood memory and your hobbies.

(Possibly tell about your favorite sports, music, and food.)

- Make your request simply and clearly.

(Be sure to include specific information if needed.)

- Say "thank you" or express appreciation for action requested.

(Possibly add that you are "looking forward" to a reply.)

8.1.1. Layout of a Formal Letter

Writing a formal letter is like going to a wedding: there are certain conventions that you should respect. The formal dress of a letter is the layout; you may also be expected to use certain fixed

politeness' phrases. If you do not respect these conventions, your letter will certainly be taken less seriously and will possibly offend, upset or confuse your correspondent. The letter below illustrates the standard layout.

1 Open Door School of English
2 Rua Boa Morte 2181
13400-140 Piracicaba
Est. de Sao Paulo
Brazil
3 tel. (0194) 22-3487

4 The Manager
5 Boatrace International Bookshop
37 Morse Avenue
OXFORD OX3 3DP 6 24 August 1996

7 Dear Sir or Madam

8 On 23 June I ordered 16 copies of'In at the Deep End' by Vicki Hollett, to be sent to me at the above address.

9 Two months later, these books have not yet been received.

10 I would be grateful if you could look into this matter and ensure that the books reach me as soon as possible.

11 Yours faithfully

12 *Celia Sliveira Coelho*

13 CELIA SILVEIRA COELHO

14 Director

15

8.1.2. Notes on the Layout of a Formal Letter

1. Your address, but not your name.
2. When writing by hand, make sure your address is legible. To someone who doesn't know your country or language, your address will appear to be a meaningless jumble of letters and numbers.
3. Your telephone number may be important—remember, you're trying to *communicate* with these people.
4. The name of the person you're writing to (if you know it) followed by their position. The Manager is a good all-purpose option.
5. The address of the people you're writing to.
6. The date.
7. If you don't know the name of the person you're writing to, you can use *Dear Sir, Dear Madam, Dear Sir or Madam, Dear Sir / Madam.*

   If you do know the name, use it. But make sure you spell it correctly. Then use *Dear Mr. Blair* (never *Mister*); *Dear Mrs. Peacock* (a married woman); *Dear Miss Ball* (an unmarried woman); *Dear Ms Metcalfe* (a woman who chooses not to advertise her marital status, or whose marital status you don't know); *Dear Mr. and Mrs. Bessin.* If your correspondent has a

title other than these, use it.

Dear Dr. Jekyll *Dear Professor Heger*

8. Reference. This sentence should tell your correspondent exactly what you are writing about. If you are replying to a letter, mention the date of that letter.

9. The substance of your letter.

10. How you want your correspondent to respond to your letter.

11. *Yours sincerely* if you started with a name: *Dear Mr. Smith*

    Yours faithfully if you didn't know the name: *Dear Sir or Madam*

12. Your signature, always written by hand.

13. Your name, in capitals when is written by hand. It must be legible because this is the *only* place your name is written: it appears neither at the top of the letter nor on the back of the envelope.

14. Position. Only used when writing from a business.

15. On this line you may write:

    Enc. or *Encs* (followed by a list of enclosures—documents which you are sending together with the letter.)

    P. S. (followed by information that you forgot to include in the main body of the letter—not a sign of a well-organized piece of writing!)

Exercise

Fill the gaps in these two letters with words from the list.

claims *sorry* *must* *convenience* *ordered* *response*

hearing *recover* *returning* *refund* *ensuring*

failure *replace* *receiving*

Dear Sir or Madam,

On August 2nd I bought a tin of Miracle Oven Cleaner in (1)_____ to your television advertisement, which (2) _____ that this product will clean 'all the stains that ordinary oven cleaners leave behind' and leave 'even the dirtiest oven as clean as new'.

In the light of the (3)_____ of the Miracle Oven Cleaner to clean my oven in anything resembling the manner you describe, I am (4) _____ it to you, and ask you to (5)_____ the full cost price of £2.12 plus the postage of 64p.

I look forward to (6)_____ a cheque for £2.76 from you at your earliest (7)_____

Yours faithfully,

Dear Sir,

I received today the 'Hendrix Junior' guitar that I (8) _____ from you on February 28th.

I am (9) _____ to have to tell you that when I opened the parcel I found the guitar broken. The neck was detached from the body, and the body itself was shattered.

I (10) _____ ask you, therefore, either to (11) _____ the damaged guitar (12) _____, on this occasion, its safe delivery __ or to refund the price I paid for it, £59.99. Should you wish to (13) _____ the broken guitar, I will hold it at your disposal until the end of next month.

I look forward to (14) _____ from you.

Yours faithfully,

Many of the phrases needed for a wide range of letters of complaint appear in the letters you have read so far in this unit. Here are a few more.

Beginning

I am writing to complain about. . .

Further to my letter of May 13th in connection with. . .

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with. . .

Demand

I would be grateful to receive a cheque for the outstanding sum without further delay. .

I must insist that you deliver the piano with no further delay and at no additional expense to myself.

... would be appropriate compensation for the inconvenience caused to my family.

In view of the many ways in which it did not match the claims made for it in your publicity, I expect a substantial refund.

Under the circumstances, I feel that an apology should be offered.

Threat (Optional)

I shall have no alternative but to put the matter in the hands of my solicitors should your cheque not be received by May 1st.

Unless I hear from you within ten days, I shall have to take legal advice on the matter.

If I do not hear from you before 3 May, I shall be obliged to take matters a step further.

8.2. Informal Letters

8.2.1. Layout of Informal Letters

The layout of this model is appropriate for any informal letter. It is also appropriate for any personal letter, even one that is formal in tone, such as a letter of apology to your boss.

1 36 Shaston Drive
2 Shaftesbury
3 Dorset SH2 3AB
4 tel. (0747) 5286
5 Mon. Sept. 4th.

6 Dear Arantxa,

7 Thanks very much for lending me your flat while you were away. I hope you enjoyed your holiday in Morocco as much as I enjoyed my stay in Vitoria. (I'll tell you all about it when I see you at my party on Nov. 5th—I do hope you haven't changed your mind about coming!)

If I'd arrived on the 8th as planned I don't suppose this tragedy would have happened, but the thing is, I got caught up in the strike and had to spend a couple of days at Heathrow. That's life, I suppose, but I still feel rather bad about it, both for myself (48h at Heathrow is no joke) and for the fish. Perhaps I should sell my story to the newspaper—'Innocents Suffer In Heartless Strike!', 'Holiday Chaos Hits Heathrow: Two Die!'

Now you've probably been wondering what has happened to your goldfish. (I'm sorry, I meant to leave a note about this, but I forgot.) You will have noticed that they are a bit smaller and, I think, redder than they used to be. This may have come as a bit of a surprise to you, but I expect you have guessed what happened. It's bad news, I'm afraid. The fish you've got now are a pair I bought to replace yours which, I'm sorry to say, were both dead when I arrived in your flat on Aug. 10th.

8 Anyway, thanks again for the loan of the flat. I hope I left everything in the right place, and enough money by the phone to cover the few local calls I made—I'm sure you'll tell me if there are any problems. I'm really looking forward to seeing you again, so I do hope you can make it to the party. If not, see you in Bilbao at Christmas.

9 Love,

10 Rachel

Questions

1. Why did Rachel write this letter? What are the three different subjects she covers?
2. The letter says three different things, or contains three different elements. What are they?
3. What features of informal style can you find in the letter? Consider the following: vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and sentence structure, cohesion / linking words, tone (what aspects of the writing show that Arantxa is a friend?).

8.2.2. Notes

1. Don't write your name here.
2. The house number of a British or American address is written before the name of the street, but write your own address in the

way you normally do.

3. Include your postcode and, if you like, your telephone number (not to do so can be a real and unnecessary way of losing a friend).

4. Don't write the name or address of the person you're writing to on the left. This is only done in letters that are formal and impersonal.

5. Date. These abbreviations are commonly used for the days and months: *Mon., Tues., Weds., Thurs., Fri., Sat., Sun.; Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.*

6. *Dear* is always appropriate—for family, intimate friends and even enemies. *My dear* and *Dearest* are also possible, but very affectionate.

7. Most letters start with a reference to the most recent contact you have had with the other person:

   Thanks very much for your letter, which came this morning.

   It was great to see you again last weekend—and looking so fit and slim!

   Some people's letters always begin:

   Sorry it's been so long since I last wrote, but... followed by the excuses for not having written.

8. Most letters end with a reference to the next contact with the other person:

I'm looking forward to seeing you / hearing from you.

Do Write again soon.

I hope to see you again in June, if not before.

9. *Love* is a suitable ending for an intimate friend of either sex.

More affectionate: *All my love, Love and kisses, Lots of love.*

For a friend or colleague (not intimate): *All the best, Best wishes*

For a personal letter, but not to a personal friend: *Yours, Regards*

10. Remember that this is the only place either on the letter or the envelope that your name appears. Does your correspondent know who you are? Make sure your signature is legible. You may even need to write your surname. (For further information see Cory, 1996, pp.87-103)

8.2.3. Layout of a Note

In the letter above, Rachel says 'I meant to leave a note, but I forgot'. This is the note she might have left.

1 Friday morning, Sept. 1st

2 Arantxa -

Just a quick note to say thank you. Staying in your flat has been fantastic.

I'm afraid I got here 2 days late (strike at Heathrow) & both your goldfish had died. Very sorry, but hope that you like the

new fish.

3 Don't forget my party on Nov. 5th—I'm so looking forward to seeing you & hearing all about Morocco.

I'm off now to the airport. See you soon.

4 Rachel

PS I'll leave the keys with Josune.

Questions

1. Where did Rachel leave this note?
2. Why is the note shorter than the letter?
3. How did Rachel manage to include all the important points of the letter in a short note? What did she leave out in terms of (a) information (b) grammar?

Notes

- It is often appropriate to put the time rather than the date, especially when you expect the person to read the note the same day.
- It is acceptable, but not necessary, to write *Dear*.
- It is acceptable, but not necessary, to write *Love, Best wishes, Yours, etc.* (See Cory, 1996, pp.104-5)

8.2.4. Technical Devices

A. How to Sound Informal

Your writing will sound much more informal if you:

1. remember you're writing to a friend. Imagine a real person.

- Be friendly and jokey.

  How's your diet going?

- Refer to common friends.

  Have you heard from Sybilla?

  Say hello to Edward for me.

  Give my love to the baby.

- Refer to things your friend already knows.

  I'm sure you'll remember. . .

  As you know. . .

  Just like you said. . .

2. write in 'spoken' English.

- Use personal constructions (phrases with / and you).

  I know this sounds silly, but. ..

  I hope you don't mind my saying this, but. . .

You'll never guess. . .

. . . if you know what I mean.

3. use informal vocabulary, including phrasal verbs and informal linking words such as those below.

. Expressing your opinion

To be quite honest *To tell you the truth* *As I see it*

To my mind *From my point of view* *In my experience*

Frankly *Actually* *I'd say*

. Expressing surprise

Believe it or not *Funnily enough*

To my surprise *You'll never believe this, but*

This may surprise you, but *Guess what!*

. Changing the subject

Anyway, . .. *Talking of which,* *That reminds me,...*

Incidentally, ... *By the way, ...* *Before I forget,...*

. Listing reasons

To start with *First of all* *What's more*

And another thing *And besides* *Plus*

B. Find examples of these technical devices in Rachel's letter and

note. Can you find any other techniques which Rachel uses to sound

6.3.5. Informal Punctuation

A. Exclamation Marks

Formal English is written in sentences, not in a series of exclamations. Thus exclamation marks are used almost exclusively when presenting direct speech.

'Get lost!' she shouted.

In informal writing, exclamation marks are much more widely used and are characteristic of a very chatty, conversational style:

No wonder she left him!

How awful!

B. Dashes

Dashes are highly characteristic of informal writing; they are used in two different ways.

a. A pair of dashes—as in this sentence—is used for parenthesis. In formal writing, a pair of brackets (like this) or a pair of commas, like this, are usually preferred.

b. A single dash can have the same function as the (more formal) colon, and can mean because, so, namely, etc.

Look at the examples below which show how a single dash is used. In the first sentence of each pair, the dash is followed by an exclamation or a surprising statement (hence the exclamation mark). In the second sentence no exclamation mark is required.

Don't bother to bring an overcoat—it's 40° in the shade out here!

Don't bother to bring an overcoat—I've got a spare one you can use.

Her teeth are like stars—they come out at night!

Her teeth are like stars—they are white and shiny.

After studying the examples above, punctuate the sentences below, using dashes and exclamation marks as and where appropriate.

1. I'm fed up with this stupid job my new boss is even worse than the last one
2. I'm fed up with this stupid job I want to live
3. I was amazed to see John at the party I thought he was in prison
4. I was amazed to see John at the party he's normally very unsociable
5. The wild pig didn't attack Emily it was Emily who attacked the wild pig
6. The wild pig didn't attack Emily it was just trying to escape

Practice

Punctuate this informal letter

dear mum guess what youll never believe this but im going to be famous at last my new life starts tomorrow in poland on tour with U2[1] it all happened so suddenly we were just doing a gig[2] in a small town in the north when bono walked in you should have seen the look on kemals face anyway to cut a long story short bono loved our music and it just happened that he needed a support band for U2s east european tour so were all off to poland next week by the way hows your polish can you still speak the language if so why dont you come with us im sure youd really enjoy it its not all sex drugs and rock n roll you know must dash weve got a rehearsal in half an hour and my bagpipes are out of tune your loving son edmund.

1U2: a rock band, led by Bono 2 concert

Abbreviations, Contractions and Ellipsis

Ellipsis, abbreviations and contractions are three features of informal writing. They all involve writing less.

A. Abbreviations

... the Vatican and all the other important sights.

. . . the Vatican, etc.

From Monday morning until Tuesday afternoon

Mon a.m.—Tues p.m.

Many people abbreviate their names in informal contexts:

Michael → Mike.

B. Contractions

I will; she will not; we did not	*I'll; she won't; we didn't*

C. Ellipsis

It was nice to hear from you	*Nice to hear from you*
I've just read your note	*Just read your note.*
I was glad you could come.	*Glad you could come.*
Do you remember me?	*Remember me?*

D. Examples

Find examples of abbreviations, contractions and ellipsis in the letter from Rachel to Arantxa.

E. Practice: A Covering Note

This covering note was included with a report describing what happened at an anti-racist demonstration. *Punctuate* it, and introduce abbreviations and contractions where *appropriate*. There is also one occasion where you should use *ellipsis*.

michael here is my account of what happened at the demonstration i have described everything i saw from when we set off from oxford street to the moment we arrived in trafalgar square i know you will not agree with me about everything especially the order of events i am pretty sure i saw people throwing stones before the first baton charge but the important thing is to clear jennifer of the charges against her and i think my evidence here will help a lot i hope to see you again at next months meeting of fight racism penelope (Cory, 1996, pp.107-108)

Writing

Write a letter (about 250 words) to an English-speaking friend, telling him of your recent problems and successes in your work / studies and in your private life and inviting him to go on holiday with you.

8.3. Grammar for Writing

A. Capitalization

Read Mrs. Franklin's letter to her daughter Sue. Then circle all the capital letters in the letter.

March 20, 1994

Dear Sue,

It was great to read your letter last Monday. Dad and I are very happy that you are doing so well at college.

We have Some news too. This summer we want to go to Italy for two weeks in July. We plan to visit your grandmother in Florence and then drive down to Rome.

We would like you to come with us. We know you're Planning to go to summer school, but we'd like you to see Grandma. And I really think you will enjoy the trip.

Write soon and tell us what you decide.

Love,

Mom

(Bonner, 1994, pp.4-6)

Now study the rules for capitalizing words. Match each rule with an example from Mrs. Franklin's letter. The first one is done for you.'

Rules	**Examples**
Use a capital letter for	
a. ___7___ the first word in the greeting	1 I really think you will enjoy the trip.
b. _____ the pronoun I	2 Love,
c. _____ words that begin sentences	3 last Monday
d. _____ days of the week	4 March 20, 1994
e. _____ months of the year	5 your grandmother in Florenc
f. _____ names of places	6 It was great to read your lett

g. _____ names of people 7 Dear

h. _____ the first word in the closing 8 Sue

NOTE: When a word like *Dad* or *Grandma* is used as that person's name, it is capitalized like any other name. .

Compare: I'd like you to see **Grandma.**

We plan to visit your **grandmother** in Florence.

Practice

Put the capital letters in Sue's answer. The first one is done for you.

march 30, 1994

dear mom,

you will probably notice that i'm having some problems with my computer. i hope I can get it fixed saturday because i have a lot of work to hand in on monday.

i'm really excited about your trip to italy this summer. yes, i have made plans for summer school, but i think you're right about going to see grandma. i miss her, and i would enjoy spending time with the whole family. thanks for asking me along. I'm coming home on april 13 for spring break, so we'll have some more time to talk about the trip.

love,

Sue

B. Punctuation for Dates, Greetings, and Closings

Reread the letters from Sue and her mother above. Then circle True (T) or False (F) for each of the statements.

a. In the date, the comma comes between the month and the year. T. F.

b. In the greeting, the comma comes after the name. T. F.

c. There is no punctuation in the closing. T. F.

Practice

Add punctuation to the date, greeting, and closing of Sue's letter to her grandmother. The first one is done for you.

April 15, 1994

Dear Grandma,

I got home for spring break a few days ago. Mom, Dad, and I talked last night about their trip to Italy this summer. I'm going to travel with them. We'll all be with you for two weeks in July. I'm looking forward to seeing you again.

Love,

Sue

Review. Study these rules.

Use a capital letter

- To begin sentences.
- For the pronoun I.
- For days of the week and months of the year.
- For names of people and places.
- For the first word in the greeting and closing of a note or letter.

In a note or letter, use a comma

- In the date, between the day and the year.
- After the greeting.
- After the closing.

Practice

Friendly and Formal Letters

1. Read the parts of letters below. Decide which is a friendly (informal) letter and which is a formal letter. Check the correct answer in the boxes provided.

Damascus University

June 23, 1996

Dear Ms. Clinton:

I would like to apply for the position of tour guide that was advertised in the Daily News of June 20.

I am a college senior living in Dallas, and I have worked as an assistant tour guide part time for the past year.

I have enclosed my resume for you to review. I would like to schedule an interview. I will call you early next week.

☐ Formal

☐ Informal

May 11, 1996

Dear Susie,

Hey, thanks for your letter. It was great to hear about your vacation. Wow! Sitting in a hot spring by a river and watching the sun set sounds like heaven! I'm glad to hear how much you're enjoying California.

I'm just getting ready for final exams here, and everybody is going crazy around the dorm. Some people are staying up all night in the library already!

☐ Formal

☐ Informal

(Olsher, 1996, p.31)

2. Now take a closer look at what makes the formal letter formal and the friendly letter less formal. Copy examples from the letters to complete the chart below.

	Topics	Greeting or Salutation	Special Vocabulary	"Be" Verbs and Contractions	Punctuation
Formal Letter			apply, position, enclosed, review		Dear Mrs. Clinton:

Friendly Letter	vacations, college life	Dear Susie,		I'm, don't, you're	

8.4. Memos

Guidelines for a Memorandum

A memorandum (memo) is a written message. People in companies or schools use memos to communicate with each other. Memos might ask for information, give information, announce meetings, and so on. A memo has a heading and a message. The heading has four lines. Study the following guidelines for a memo.

MEMORANDUM

TO: The person to receive the memo.

FROM: The writer of the memo.

DATE: When the memo was written.

SUBJECT: What the memo is about. This line should be short but informative. For example, "UPCOMING MEETING" for a memo can announce a meeting.

You should begin your message with a general statement that explains the purpose of your memo. The other lines should be specific details about that purpose. Because

memos are often used in formal situations, such as work, write in complete sentences and use accurate spelling and punctuation.

Memos are typed messages. You do not indent your paragraphs in a memo. Instead, leave a blank line between each paragraph. (Cavusgil, 1998, p.22)

Activity: Writing a Memo

Write a memo to your teacher. The purpose of the memo is to describe your learning styles and study techniques.

8.5. An E-mail Message

An electronic mail (e-mail) message is sent through a computer system. An e-mail message to a friend or family member is personal. Messages to co-workers can also be personal, but they are used more often to communicate messages about work situations. For example, an e-mail message might announce a future meeting or a new policy at work. Nowadays, many teachers use e-mail in the classroom. They might send homework assignments or messages to students or ask students to complete activities like journals or discussions through e-mail. In any case, you should realize that your e-mail messages can be read by other people. If your message isn't appropriate for others to read, don't send it that way.

Read this e-mail message between two co-workers.

Date: Mon, 05 May 199- 15:36:32

From: Sharon L. Cavusgil <scavusgi@mmm.edu>

To: Debra Snell <dsnell@mmm.edu>

Subject: Meeting reminder

____ Message Text ____

Debra,

Just a reminder that we'll be meeting this Friday to discuss the ESL reading classes. there are several things I want to discuss: 1) textbook selection for next term, 2) use of reading notes during exams, and 3) the final exam schedule.

Is there anything I've missed? Let me know if you can't make it. thanks.

Sharon L. Cavusgil

scavusgil@mmm.edu (Cavusgil, 1998, p. 92)

Guidelines for an E-mail Message

An e-mail message has the same parts as a personal letter, but the format is different. An e-mail message uses the format of a memorandum. Here are the four parts of an e-mail message:

1. *Heading.* Your heading includes TO, FROM, DATE, and SUBJECT lines. You should include a short but informative subject line in your message. For example, if you are telling a friend you moved, your subject line could be "New Apartment." If you are telling your co-worker about a meeting, your subject line could be "Meeting Time."

2. *Greeting.* Writers often use the reader's first name as a greeting (followed by a comma). The greeting "Dear" is usually not used.

3. *Body.* Begin your message by explaining its purpose or by writing a brief summary of the topic you are writing about This is your general statement, and it helps your reader understand the context easily. The other sentences in your message provide the specific details, or information, about your general statement. E-mail messages are similar to conversations, and writers might use phrases and incomplete sentences. In addition, there is often less attention paid to spelling, capitalization, and punctuation than in other written documents. You do not indent your paragraphs in an e-mail message. Instead, you leave a blank line between paragraphs.

4. *Closing.* A formal closing (like *Sincerely* or *Love*) is usually not used, but the writer should type her or his name at the end

of the message. The writer often includes her or his e-mail ID, too. (Cavusgil, 1998, p. 93)

8.6. Invitations, Formal and Informal

An *invitation* is a note inviting one or more people to an event. It may be formal or informal. It may be printed or handwritten.

An invitation must state:

1. The name of the sender of the invitation.
2. The event.
3. The date and time of the event.
4. The place.
5. Whether or not a reply is requested.

Formal invitations are written in third person; they are usually printed, but may be handwritten.

Dr. Philip R. Dubois

cordially invites

you and your family

to join him and his staff

to celebrate the opening

of

the new Family Medicine Center

Sunday, February 6, 1993

1:00 to 4:00 P.M.

49 Center Street

Dalesville, New York

In the given invitation, "cordially invites" could be replaced with words like "requests the pleasure of the company of" or "requests the honor of your presence at. " The wording often depends on the formality of the occasion.

Informal invitations are usually handwritten; they may be a note or a purchased invitation with blank spaces for the information.

A Note:

Dear Taylor,

I'm giving a dinner party to celebrate Jack's promotion to head teller. It will be on Friday night, October 15, at 7:00, at our home, 61 Maple Drive. Hope you can make it.

Sincerely,

Marcia Burton

RSVP 555-9690 by October 12

A Card:

A party for Jack Burton

In honor of promotion to head teller

Given by Marcia Burton

Date Friday, October 15

Time 7:00 P.M.

Place 61 Maple Drive

RSVP 555-9690 by October 12

(Cardanha, 1993, pp.142-3)

Note that the invitation to the Family Medicine Center did not have RSVP (which is French for "answer please"). The party is more of an open house, and it does not matter how many people come. However, for a dinner party, one needs to know how many people to cook for.

Some invitations end with' 'Regrets only. " That means you have to call the host or hostess only if you are *not going* to the party. The host or hostess assumes everyone is coming unless he or she hears otherwise.

8.7. Reports

8.7.1. Appraisal report

Read the following conversation, in which a hospital administrator, Gary, gives an informal, spoken report on a clerical worker. Use the information in the conversation to fill the numbered gaps in the more formal report written by his colleague Annette. Use no more than two words for each gap. The words you need do not occur in the spoken version. The first one has been done as an example.

Annette I wonder if you can help me, Gary, I've been asked to write a report on one of our new clerical workers, but I've been away for three months and I hardly know where to start. She's called Chan Kit Yu. I think she came in January.

Gary Well, first of all I'd say Kit's been fantastic, especially in the circumstances. I mean, I think you'll remember that, what with the epidemic, then the nurses' strike, there have been a lot of problems; so everyone in the hospital's been getting pretty tired and fed up, and there's been a lot of lateness and absenteeism. Anyway, Kit's been one of the few who hasn't let the pressures

affect her. She's always on time, and she's never been off sick. I've even managed to get her to work overtime once or twice, on the rare occasion when she didn't have any rehearsals to go to.

Annette I remember now. Isn't she some kind of pop singer?

Gary Something like that. She used to talk about it all the time, but I had to put a stop to it. In her first few weeks she'd spend the whole morning telling everyone about her music and her adventures—everybody loved it, of course, and nobody got any work done, so I had a word with her and now she toes the line.

Annette And her work?

Gary As I say, she's serious and hardworking. Oh yes, we did have one teething problem. At first she was pretty hopeless on the computer and she didn't seem to know any of the software. But, we sent her on a course, and now she's fine.

Appraisal Report: Chan Kit Yu

I am pleased to report that Kit has performed (0) exceptionally well in her duties as Administrative Assistant since (1) _____ us on 5 January.

The hospital has been beset with a (2) _____ of difficulties during this time and I have been particularly impressed by the manner in which Kit has not (3) _____ these to affect the quality of her work.

Kit was quick to develop a good working relationship with (4)_____ , and if at first her (5) _____ life threatened to intrude into the workplace, she soon learned where to draw the line.

So far as her administrative skills are concerned, the only question mark has been over (6) _____ of familiarity with some of our computer software. This has, (7) _____, been remedied by a recent training course.

Her (8) _____ and attendance have been excellent, and she has been (9) _____ to work overtime when the situation has required it. In sum, a most satisfactory start.

(Cory, 1996, pp.112-15)

8.7.2. Character References

When writing a character reference, whether as an employer, as a teacher or as a friend, the first thing to mention is how long you have known the person and in what capacity. After that, there are a number of areas that may be worth mentioning, depending on the job or course your employee, student or friend has applied for. This list suggests some of those areas, together with a few

adjectives and phrases describing positive qualities. In a written reference these qualities will be illustrated with concrete examples and facts.

Reliability

punctual, her timekeeping is good reliable, dependable, conscientious, responsible

Attitude to people

works well in a team

a natural leader

competitive

considerate, understanding

friendly, helpful, generous

tolerant, patient, considerate

gets on well with those around her, sociable, integrates well

Disposition / Personality

easy-going, relaxed, laid-back

self-confident, self-assured

Personal Appearance

tidy, neat, presentable

well-dressed

Attitude to work

meticulous, thorough, methodical

diligent, industrious, assiduous

ambitious, determined

adaptable, flexible

willing, keen, enthusiastic

Thinking

imaginative, creative, has a capacity for original ideas, innovative

rational, logical

intelligent, brilliant

good-humoured, good-natured	**Honesty**
self-reliant, independent	*truthful, sincere*
shows initiative	*trustworthy, honest,*
positive, enthusiastic, optimistic	*a person of great integrity*
quiet, introverted,	**Deciding and Doing**
outgoing, extroverted	*confident, decisive, dynamic*
The spoken word	*energetic, adventurous, spontaneous*
articulate, eloquent, persuasive	*competent, practical*
well-spoken	*well-organized, level-headed*
discreet, diplomatic, tactful	

Other areas that may be worth considering include **academic ability, practical skills, qualifications, interests.**

Negative aspects of a person's character must also be mentioned, whether as a matter of honesty or in order to give more credibility to an otherwise implausibly glowing reference. In either case, negative points are usually expressed in as positive a way as possible. The following phrases, all taken from character references, describe negative qualities.

Attitude to people

1. can be a little impatient with other people's weaknesses
2. although her critics see her as a bit of a troublemaker,

Disposition

3. as yet, she is lacking in self-confidence, but
4. he takes himself very seriously
5. while it is true that she is easily led,
6. he tends to keep himself to himself

Attitude to work

7. though he doesn't always show a total, commitment to his work.
8. can give the impression of carelessness when finishing a piece of work

The spoken word

9. has a very frank way of expressing himself
10. though occasionally she has trouble expressing herself clearly.
11. her regional accent and occasional use of dialect may not be immediately comprehensible to some

Thinking

12. his arguments are not always entirely coherent

13. though he has been accused of a lack of imagination.

14. rather slow at times/ not especially quick-witted

Activity: Writing

You have just completed a three-year academic course at a college in Britain. A friend of yours, John Kino, has now applied for the same course, and he has asked you to write a character reference for him. You are willing to write the reference because you think the course would be a wonderful opportunity for him and you feel that, despite his faults, he has a reasonable chance of successfully completing it.

Read the extracts (Cory, 1996, pp.116-117) from three letters: the first from John, the second from someone who took the course with you, and the third from the college, then write:

(a) your reply to Dr. Flode, a letter in which you write a (sufficiently positive) character reference for John (about 175 words).

(b) a short letter in reply to John (about 75 words).

From John

Do you think you could write a reference for me? I'm not sure exactly what they'll want to know, so I suggest you just tell them the whole truth about my magnetic personality, intellectual genius, impeccable manners, magnificent physique, endearing modesty, etc.!

Actually I'm counting on you, because I've already given them your name as a referee. The thing is, there was a deadline for the applications, and yours was the first name I thought of, since you've just finished the course and you've always been such a good friend to me. I would've asked you first but I'd lost your phone number.

From a classmate

Have you heard that John is hoping to get onto the course next year? He must be mad—I mean, it was much too hard for me, and even you found it difficult. He asked me if I'd write him a reference, but how could I? Frankly, I think he'd be a disaster in Britain. His English isn't very good so he 'd have problems with the course. And for all his intelligence, I'm sure he'd be too lazy to get through all the work. I mean, we're talking about a guy who gets out of bed around midday, but doesn't wake up until the discos open....

Anyway, I suggested he ask you to write the reference instead, firstly because you're a better liar than me, and secondly because your opinion of John has always been a lot higher than mine. I know there are a lot of things to admire about him: his voluntary work in Rwanda, his physical courage, the way he always wants to be the best, his brains, the way he can talk himself out of any

difficult situation, his ability to 'always look on the bright side', his smile, his guitar-playing, and most of all his dazzling displays on the dance floor! But for all this, I just see him as a waster: arrogant, lazy, spoilt and vain!

From the college

...We are considering Mr. John Kino for a place on the course which you have just completed so successfully. He has given us your name as a reference and I would be most grateful for your opinion of his suitability for the course.

Every year, as you yourself will be aware, a high percentage of students from abroad drop out of this course for a number of reasons: problems of adaptation to the British environment and culture; the difficulty of finding new friends and building a social life in Britain, and the consequent loneliness and homesickness; the heavy workload on the course and the frequent exams; the difficulty of studying exclusively in English. For this reason—to minimize wastage and suffering on our courses—we particularly appreciate character references that are a fair assessment of an individual's potential.

Yours sincerely,

L Flode

Dr. L. Flode

8.8. Résumés

The two things you will most likely need to get a job are a job application and a resume.

A job application could be a letter you write to an employer. It will probably be an application blank you fill in at the place of employment.

A resume is like a portrait of you—it shows who you are with respect to your educational and work experience. You want your resume to give an employer a true picture of who you are and what you can do. The common kind of resume is a chronological one—in it, you highlight the most important facts in order of when they happened, starting from the most recent and going backward.

The following suggests items to include in a résumé. Read it through, and see what parts could be used in your résumé. A resume is different for each person, but any résumé should be clear, concise, and neatly typed and copied on quality paper.

A Chronological Résumé

YOUR NAME

Permanent Address:

Street Address

City, State Zip

Phone Number

Professional Objective:

State the type of position that you are applying for and your long-term goal. In your objective, you may include indications of wanting growth and challenge. Example: An entry-level job in data processing leading to a career in systems analysis.

Education:

List professional training and/or college(s) first and then high school attended, with date of graduation along with degree and major. List the most recent program first, and work backwards, in order.

Courses: (Optional)

List no more than six; list only those that have something to do with the position for which you are applying, and tell how they apply to the position.

Special Skills: (Optional)

List skills acquired through training or through your own initiative. They can be concrete (typing, shorthand, computer operations) or abstract (organizational, public speaking, management, etc.). Show diversity.

Work Experience:

List the most recent job first and work backwards in time. Include part-time and summer work. Give brief job descriptions and dates

of employment. If your employment history includes many short-term, miscellaneous jobs, use the following rules:

1. List those relevant to the position for which you are applying.

2. List those you held for the longest periods of time.

Extracurricular Activities, Hobbies: (Optional)

List any professional or community organizations individually, along with responsibilities you held. Then list hobbies and special interests that might be pertinent to the position for which you are applying. Also list others that seem less relevant if they will indicate your diversity in a variety of areas.

Personal Data: (Optional)

You may wish to note your general good health and marital and dependent status here. (Some employers may feel that a married person is more stable, while others might feel that a single person would be more suitable for a job requiring a lot of traveling. Your statement could be just" Single, excellent health").

References: (Optional)

List at least three, or state that they are available upon request. Be sure to get permission in advance from the people you wish to list. Teachers, friends, or former employers (do not use relatives) make good references. Include names, titles, addresses, and telephone

numbers with area codes. Then ask your chosen references to send you a typed recommendation, or let the person know who might be calling them for a verbal recommendation. If you have written recommendations, make copies of them and have them ready to mail on request. You could also take them with you to an interview.

Now that you have looked over the list of suggestions, use this worksheet to make a rough draft of your résumé. (Cardanha, 1993, pp.155-158)

Résumé Worksheet

(Name) _____

(Permanent Address)_____

Professional Objective: (or Career Goal)

_____

Education:

_____ _____

(Date)

_____ _____

(Date)

Courses: (Optional)

_____

Special Skills: (Optional)

_____

Work Experience: (or Employment History)

_____ Company Name: _____

(Date) Address: _____ (If your work experience is more recent than your education, put it before "Education.")

Position: _____

Duties: _____

_____ Company Name:

Personal Data: (Optional)

References:

Have a counselor or a professional person who is familiar with résumés read over your résumé. The counselor can give you his or her reaction to the résumé (Does it present a true and favorable picture of you? Would it make the person want to hire you?) and offer any suggestions he or she may have. Keep working on the resume until it is the best you can make it.

Keep in mind that if you apply for different types of positions, you may need to have more than one résumé. The skills, training, and job experiences for one position might not be the most relevant for another position.

Remember that your résumé is often the first look at you that a prospective employer gets. Make it a good one.

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Appendix 1

Revising Drafts

Your first draft probably contains awkward or wordy sentences that reflect your initial attempt to get ideas on paper. After working with your thesis, organization, and paragraphing, you can focus on sentence structures and word choices that will make your writing more vivid and exact, more effective for the reader.

Prefer Active Voice

Generally, avoid passive structures, because they make writing wordy and confusing. Active voice allows you to make vigorous and direct statements.

Once you recognize a sentence as passive and decide to change it, you can create an active sentence by finding the do-er (or inserting one) and turning the sentence around:

Passive	Active
Houses were destroyed by the storm.	The storm destroyed houses.
The cake was eaten by me.	I ate the cake.

Avoid It... That Sentences

Some sentences wander aimlessly, taking too long to make a point and thus destroying the flow of ideas. These sentences often contain unnecessary *it . . . that* constructions:

It... That	Revised
It is true that the dorms are no longer popular with juniors and seniors	The dorms are no longer popular with juniors and seniors.

Eliminate Forms of Be and Other Weak Verbs

In first drafts, writers often choose constructions containing weak verbs, especially forms of *be* (am, is, are, was, were, been, being). But in a final draft a succession of be verbs can be vague and monotonous.

You can easily eliminate one use of *be* that wastes words and delays the action: the *there is* structure.

There Is	Revised
There is one camper who hates milk.	One camper hates milk.
There was a man lurking in the shadows.	A man lurked in the shadows.

You can eliminate other *be* verbs by making more specific choices. If you say that "the man was in the gym," your reader knows very little. Did he hang from the ceiling? slump in a chair? Think of the different impressions you can create with *strolled, ambled,* and *limped along* to describe the man walking in the gym. Many writers pick the most obvious choice in a first draft but decide on more specific verbs as they revise.

Eliminate Nominalizations

To make your sentences more concise, remove nominalizations—nouns created from verbs—because they can lead to wordiness and a plodding tone:

Nominalization	Revised
The two leaders held a discussion concerning several peace alternatives.	The two leaders discussed several peace alternatives.
The director made a recommendation that the student assistant be rehired.	The director recommended that the student assistant be rehired.

Other common nominalizations include *give encouragement, make a payment, have admiration for*, and *make a judgment of*

Use This with a Noun

You may want to use the word *this* to refer to ideas that you have mentioned in previous sentences or paragraphs. But *this* should not be used by itself; instead, it should always be followed by a noun so that the reference cannot be misunderstood. When *this* is the first word of a sentence, you may be able to incorporate the entire idea of that sentence into the preceding one (as in the second example):

Ambiguous *This*	Revised
That dealership charges high prices for repairs and doesn't stock parts for older cars. This has caused many loyal customers to consider a competitor.	That dealership charges high prices for repairs and doesn't stock parts for older cars. This poor service has caused many loyal customers to consider a competitor.
Chandra refuses to bring her boyfriend over for dinner. This has insulted her family.	Chandra's refusal to bring her boyfriend over for dinner has insulted her family.

Eliminate Empty and Wordy Phrases

You can also write more effectively by avoiding long phrases that provide little information. In the list that follows, the single words on the right replace the wordy expressions on the left:

Wordy Phrases	Revised	Wordy Phrases	Revised
along the lines of	like	in the event that	if
at all times	always	in the field (or area) of	in
at this point in time	now	in the final analysis	finally
because of the fact that	because	in the neighborhood of	about
by means of	by	in the not too distant future	soon
due to the fact that	because	in this day and age	today
for the purpose of	for	in today's modern world	today
for the reason that	because	on account of the fact that	because
have the ability to	can	similar in nature to	like
in a great many instances	often	situated in the vicinity of	near
in order to	to	until such time as	until
in spite of the fact that	although	was of the opinion that	believed

Also avoid *tautologies*—the use of two or more words that say the same thing. The unnecessary words appear in brackets:

[true] facts	blue [in color]
large [in size]	attractive [in appearance]
[basic] essentials	each [and every one]
several [in number]	weak [in strength]
rewrite [in different words]	refer [back] to

Make sure that, throughout your paper, you choose the best terms to describe your ideas. Sometimes the more exact choice can replace several words:

persons with knowledge in their field = experts

correcting errors in the final draft = proofreading

unwilling to change his mind = obstinate

speaks words unclearly = slurs

writes quickly and messily = scribbles

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Appendix 2

Refining Sentences

I. Punctuation

Objective: To use correct punctuation in sentences.

> **Punctuation** is the process of putting **punctuation marks** in a sentence.

Punctuation marks separate sentences and separate the parts of a sentence so the meaning is clear.

1. Comma

A comma is used to separate items in a series; the clauses of a compound sentence; introductory words, phrases, and clauses; parenthetical expressions; dates and addresses; some appositives; direct quotations; and direct address.

That is a long list, but many of them are placed naturally as you pause in your thoughts or reading.

Series. Put a comma after each item of a list of three or more items that is written in a sentence. (Read the following example to yourself, and notice how you pause where the commas are.)

Example

I placed an order for *pens, pencils, markers,* and *grease pencils.*

Compound sentence. Put a comma before the conjunction that joins the clauses of a compound sentence.

Example

Gavin finished his apprenticeship, and then he became a licensed electrician.

Introductory words, phrases, and clauses. Put a comma after all phrases and clauses that begin a sentence.

Example

Yes, we ordered the new fax machine. (word)

Of the three samples, I like the middle one best. (phrase)

On the plane to Chicago, she finished reading the report. (two phrases)

Hearing the buzzer, Mark knew the coffee was ready. (phrase)

When you finish checking the wiring, please call me. (clause)

As you can see, the comma comes right before the subject of the sentence (the independent clause). If you read each sentence, you will probably find that you pause naturally at each place where a comma should be. This will help you in knowing where to place a comma.

Parenthetical expressions. Put a comma before and after expressions that are not necessary to the meaning of the sentence, such as *of course, in fact,* or *for example.*

Example

Health insurance, *of course*, is offered to every employee.

A secretary could work, *for example*, for a doctor, in a bank, or in a court.

Dates and addresses. Put a comma between the day and year in a date. If the date is in the middle of a sentence, put commas before and after the year. No comma is used after just a month and day.

Example

July 4, 1776

I joined this company on December 27, 1950, when I was 18 years old.

Put a comma between city and state or before and after the state if it is in the middle of a sentence.

Example

Ames, Iowa

Luisa lived in Atlanta, Georgia, before she moved to Pittsburgh.

2. Semicolon

A semicolon is used to separate the independent clauses of a compound sentence when a conjunction is not used.

Example

Tomorrow is a holiday; you can leave early today.

3. Colon

A colon is used to indicate a list or series if there are no words like *like* or *such as*. Use an independent clause before a colon.

Example

Food-service jobs are available in many places: schools, hospitals, factories, and large office buildings.

But: You could work in a cafeteria in many places, such as a school, a hospital, or a factory.

4. Dash

Put a dash in place of a comma or semicolon when a stronger break is needed or to avoid confusion with other commas.

Example

My boss requested—in fact, he demanded—that I retype the letter.

Kelly was excited—very excited—about the job in California.

5. Parentheses

Put parentheses around material that is not necessary to the sentence.

Parentheses are used where commas might be used, but parentheses are stronger.

Example

The colors of the flag (red, white, and blue) were repeated in the table decorations.

6. Hyphen

Put a hyphen between the parts of most compound words and between the parts of a word that must be divided at the end of a line.

Example

A six-page report will probably require extra postage to mail.

There were twenty-five applicants for the job.

Practice

Insert the proper end punctuation. The first one is done for you.

1. Hurray! We won the new contract!
2. Can that paint job be finished on Friday
3. Court will come to order
4. I have to fast 14 hours so I can have a cholesterol test
5. Congratulations, you did it
6. Where did I put that disk
7. Please, hold that elevator
8. Gordon plays handball after work

Insert commas in the proper places. The first one is done for you.

9. Tiffany, Jed, and Allen work on the fourth floor.
10. No that is not what I ordered.
11. Before you turn off the computer remove the disk from the disk drive.
12. In that catalog the price was $4.94 a dozen.

13. My brother is an orderly and I am a nurse's aide.

14. That fender will have to be sanded primed and then painted.

15. Instead of dinner would you like to have lunch?

16. After I finish with the doctor I would like to make an appointment to have my teeth cleaned.

17. My car unfortunately needs a new muffler.

18. Your income taxes of course depend on how much you earn.

Insert a semicolon or a colon. The first one is done for you.

19. Many remedies are suggested for a cold: soup, juice, water, aspirin, rest, hot showers, and so on.

20. The first thing you should do is type a résumé you should then send it to as many companies as you can.

21. This job has several benefits medical insurance, profit-sharing, a pension plan, and life insurance.

22. I can't drive my car this week the engine is being overhauled.

23. Everyone needs to avoid foods high in fat bacon, butter, cream, some cheese, eggs, fried foods, and potato chips, for example.

Insert the required punctuation. The first one is done for you.

24. ***Parentheses***: We are open 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. weekdays (Monday through Friday).

25. ***Hyphen:*** He made reservations for a two week vacation.

26. ***Two dashes:*** When you are ready and I hope it's soon you can finish that typing.

27. ***Parentheses:*** All employees men and women are treated equally.

28. ***Hyphen:*** Crystal is a medical assistant in a family oriented doctor's office.

II. Dangling Participles, Misplaced Modifiers

Objective: To place participial phrases and modifiers so the meaning of the sentence is clear.

If phrases and modifiers are not near the word they modify, the meaning of the sentence can be incorrect or even silly.

A dangling participle (or participial phrase) does not modify any word in the sentence because the sentence was written incorrectly.

Example

Dangling: *Visiting the stockroom,* the tour of the factory ended.

(The *tour* was not visiting the stockroom.)

Correct: Visiting the stockroom, the applicants ended the tour of the factory. (*Applicants did the visiting.*)

Dangling: Jack broke his arm falling off the ladder.

(The *arm* did not fall off the ladder.)

Correct: Jack broke his arm when he fell off the ladder.

Or: Falling off the ladder, Jack broke his arm.

A *misplaced modifier* is a word, phrase, or clause that seems to modify the wrong word. The modifier must be moved to a place in the sentence where it is clear what word is being modified.

1. Word: Look at what the word *only* can do to this sentence.

   Only Mitchell can save three documents.

   (*Meaning:* Mitchell is the only one who can do it.)

   Mitchell can *only* save three documents.

   (*Meaning*: He can save the documents but not print them.)

   Mitchell can save *only* three documents.

   (*Meaning*: He cannot save four or five documents.)

2. **Phrase:** Changing the placement of the phrase changes the sentence.

   A woman *from my office* ordered new chairs.

   A woman ordered new chairs *from my office.*

3. **Clause:** The clause must be near the word it modifies.

Misplaced: The people in that office decided to collect money for children while they are on their break.

(The children are not on their break.)

Clear: The people in that office decided that, while they are on their break, they will collect money for children.

Always read over your written work to be sure modifiers are placed for clear and correct meaning.

Practice

Rewrite the sentence to eliminate the dangling participle or misplaced modifier. The first one is done for you.

1. In the refrigerator, Miguel saw his lunch.

   Miguel saw his lunch in the refrigerator.

2. Wanting to avoid a strike, a new union contract was drawn up by the negotiating committee.

3. The computer and the printer with its monitor cost $2,000.

4. Be sure to put that letter on your way out in the IN box.

5. Driving to work, the car had a flat tire.

6. Rosa's patient, Mrs. Amano, had X rays taken while she was at lunch.

7. After typing a letter, your boss should check it for errors.

8. Recovering from flu, the doctor told Anne to stay in bed three days.

9. Looking in the operator's manual, the start button seems to be the red one.

10. The pharmacist asked Mario to lock the drugstore every night during his vacation.

III. Appositives

Objective: To identify an appositive and to set it off correctly with commas.

An **appositive** is a noun or phrase that explains or renames the noun or pronoun immediately before it.

Example

The teller, Mr. *Forbes*, had me endorse the check again.

(The appositive is Mr. Forbes. It tells the name of the teller, but it is not information necessary to the sentence. So it is set off by commas.)

My friend Suzanne became an X ray technician.

(The appositive is *Suzanne*. It tells which friend. There is more than one friend, so *Suzanne* is necessary to the sentence. It is not set off by commas.)

My sister, Eva, is a home health care aide.

(Eva is set off by commas. It is not necessary to the sentence because you have only one sister.)

Ben works at 125 Fifth Avenue, the building with all the flags.

(The address is enough to identify the building. The rest is extra information, so a comma is used.)

The popular children's story *Dino* sells very well.

The color gray is common for computer hardware.

(No commas since *Dino* and *gray* are necessary to the sentences.)

Using an appositive can make writing more clear and concise. Using an appositive can combine two sentences into one.

Example

Two Sentences:

Two applicants are equally qualified for the job. The applicants are Tonya and Christine.

One Sentence with an Appositive:

Two applicants, Tonya and Christine, are equally qualified for the job.

Practice

Underline the appositive. The first one is done for you.

1. I have wanted this career, computer programming, since I was 12 years old.
2. Pilar's apartment, a one-room efficiency, rents for $390 a month.
3. The main speaker, Senator Jones, is held up in traffic.
4. The second edition of his book *Career Options* was published in 1990.
5. My mother, Angela McGuinness, retired last week.
6. His assistant Sherry is on vacation.
7. Today, Friday, is an important day in the company's history.
8. The salesman Sam Cooper has the highest sales this month.
9. Matthew's favorite suit, the gray pinstripe, is at the cleaner's.
10. Tyrone's brother Randy had the highest score on the entrance exam.

Insert commas around the appositive if you think the meaning of the sentence would be clear without the appositive. Explain your choice of commas or no commas. The first one is done for you.

11. Her boss, Wayne Chong, asked her if she could work overtime.

    Commas around Wayne Chong because most people only have one boss—the meaning would still be clear without Wayne Chong.

12. His friend Rob is going to be an avionics technician.

13. The head teller Ms. Nunes was promoted to manager.

14. His first book *Repairing Your Own Computer* is out of print.

15. Rita Mae has four brothers and two sisters; her sister Nicole is in the Navy.

Rewrite the two sentences as one sentence with an appositive.

16. Brian's hobby became his career. His hobby was fixing old radios.

17. The dental assistant does not work on Tuesday. The dental assistant is Shelley Rogers.

18. The last day for submitting next year's budget is tomorrow. Tomorrow is Thursday.

19. My favorite typist is leaving for another job. My favorite typist is Brandy.

20. That computer monitor is out for servicing. It is a color monitor.

Direct Address and Quotes

Objective: To recognize words used in direct address and to use the correct punctuation.

When you speak to someone, you often call him or her by name or title. In writing, the name or title is set off by commas because it is extra—it is not necessary to the meaning of the sentence. The name or title is said to be in *direct address*.

Example

Mr. Gordon, the doctor will see you now.

Your appointment, *Anne*, was last Tuesday.

I will read the last testimony for you, *your honor*.

Diana, have you finished that typing?

If the conversation is quoted as the exact words of a person, then it must also have quotation marks. The punctuation of the quotation goes inside the quotation marks.

Example

"Mr. Gordon," said the receptionist, "the doctor will see you now."

(Note that the comma and the period go *inside* the quotation marks.)

"Your appointment, Anne, was last Tuesday," Anne's mother said.

(Note that the period after *Tuesday* becomes a comma when the speaker follows it.)

The court stenographer was heard to say, "I will read the last testimony for you, your honor."

The supervisor asked, "Diana, have you finished that typing?"

(Note that the question mark goes *inside* the quotation marks.)

Practice

Insert commas and quotation marks where needed. The first one is done for you.

1. "Are you familiar with this model refrigerator, Dion?" asked Mr. Fortin.
2. Mai I need this finished by 3 o'clock.
3. When you are ready to start painting the pickup Fabin check with me about the color.
4. Mrs. Yarina said to me when the service rep shows up Carol send him to my office.
5. Bite down on the film Will and I'll take the X ray.
6. I heard the traffic reporter say Avoid the Tenth Street Bridge because of roadwork.
7. That estimate she said is much too high.
8. Ladies and gentlemen we have a new supervisor he announced.
9. Stand when the judge comes in the lawyer whispered to his client.
10. The nurse promised this won't hurt.

V. Forming Gerunds

Circle the subjects of the following sentences.

a. Finishing high school is often difficult for students who work.

b. Littering injures and kills wildlife.

These words are gerunds. You form the gerund by adding -ing to the base form of a verb.

Gerunds are used as nouns. They are useful when you want to state an opinion about an activity. Study these examples:

Activity	**Opinion**
Teaching first grade	is challenging.
Speeding in Urbstown	is expensive.
Finishing high school	is difficult for students with jobs.
Littering	injures and kills wildlife.

Spelling Notes: Gerunds

Here are some rules to help you form gerunds.

1. To form a gerund, add-ing to the base form of the verb.

   litter **littering**

   speed **speeding**

2. Drop the final-e before you add-ing to most verbs

come coming

smoke smoking

Exception: Do not drop the final-e in verbs that end in -ee.

agree agreeing

see seeing

3. Double the final consonant for verbs of one syllable that end in one vowel + one consonant

rob robbing

sit sitting

4. Double the final consonant for verbs of more than one syllable that end in one vowel + one consonant and that have the stress on the final syllable.

begin beginning occur occurring

5. Do not double the final consonant of verbs that end in one vowel + -y:

pay paying

delay delaying

Exercise

Complete the table. Use the spelling notes above to help you.

Base Form **Gerund**

a. write writing

b. watch _____

c. see _____

d. play _____

e. get _____

f. go _____

g. cook _____

h. permit _____

I. receive _____

Just for fun. Unscramble the letters to find the gerunds. Then complete the sentences.

a. ___natchWig___ television is a good way to learn English.

b. ___Gogin___ to high school is important if you want to find a job.

c. Katherine and Lena enjoyed ___palingy___ with dolls.

d. Janet's class learned a lot from ___eseing___ the fire station.

e. ___rintigiW___ in a foreign language is not easy.

f. ___nitGegt___ a lot of writing practice is important.

g. ___oogniCk___ in a microwave oven is fast and easy.

h. Isn't giving presents at Christmas more fun than ___ginievrec___ them?

i. ___timPerting___ people to smoke in restaurants is a bad idea.

(Bonner, 1994, pp. 69-70)

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Appendix 3

ESL/ EFL Problems

This Quick View (for more information see Keene & Adams, 1996, pp. 220-242) shows the most common kinds of writing problems experienced by students for whom English is a second language (ESL) or a foreign language (EFL).

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives Acting as Nouns

An adjective is a word used to modify a noun or a pronoun. But an adjective is also occasionally used as a noun. When it is, the adjective is always in singular form, even if it is naming something plural. For example, instead of writing a sentence in which *young* is used as an adjective,

The young people especially are invited to this concert.

we might write a sentence in which young is used as a noun:

The young especially are invited to this concert.

Even though *young* in the second sentence is clearly being used as a plural noun (notice that the verb, *are*, is plural), *young* does not add an *s* as you might expect it would. You can see the same thing in these examples:

Adjective + Noun: The lucky winners are going home to celebrate.

Adjective in Place of Noun (Incorrect Form): The luckies are going home to celebrate.

Adjective in Place of Noun (Revised Form): The lucky are going home to celebrate.

Adjective + Pronoun: Some citizens will not vote, but the responsible ones will.

Adjective in Place of Pronoun (Incorrect Form): Some citizens will not vote, but the responsibles will.

Adjective in Place of Pronoun (Revised Form): Some citizens will not vote, but the responsible will.

Order of Cumulative Adjectives

In English, adjectives usually *precede* the nouns they modify. And certain types of cumulative adjectives in a series precede other types in a series. Instead of modifying the noun individually, as coordinate adjectives do, cumulative adjectives build on each other, with each adjective to the left of the noun modifying the entire unit that follows it. In the sentence "Several bright floral prints hang in the living room," *bright* modifies *floral prints*, and *several* modifies the entire phrase.

Incorrect Order	Revised
Eduardo bought an old blue beautiful house for his family.	Eduardo bought a beautiful old blue house for his family.

Cumulative adjectives have a customary ordering in English. Although there are exceptions, here is how the order works generally:

- Articles and pronouns go first: *a, an, the, his, her, our, several, few, every*, and so on.
- Evaluative words go next: *beautiful, ugly, handsome, pretty, committed, tasty, appealing*, and so on.
- Words about size go next: *big, small, huge, tiny*, and so on.
- Words about length and shape go next: *short, long, square, round, oblong, triangular, wide, narrow*, and so on.
- Words about age go next: *old, young, fresh, stale*, and so on.
- Words about color go next: *red, green, blue*, and so on.
- Words about nationality go next: *Canadian, Irish, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Vietnamese*, and so on.
- Words about religion go next: *Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Buddhist*, and so on.
- Words about material makeup go next: *concrete, wooden,*

brick, stone, steel-and-glass, and so on.

- Nouns used as adjectives go next: *swim* (as in *swim team*), *rope* (as in *rope ladder*), *fish* (as in *fish market*), and so on.
- The noun being modified goes last: *teacher, student, house, books, ideas,* and so on.

Note: **Cumulative versus Coordinate Adjectives**

Cumulative adjectives, such as those listed above, build on each other and are not separated by commas. *Coordinate* adjectives, in contrast, modify the noun separately and are separated by commas, as in "Eric turned out to be a loud, messy, annoying roommate." You can identify adjectives as cumulative if you cannot insert *and* between them or change their order, as you can with coordinate adjectives:

> ***Example:*** My small red toy boat moved over the surface of the lake.
>
> ***Test for Cumulative:*** My and red and small and toy boat moved over the surface of the lake. [Since inserting *and* between the adjectives doesn't work, the adjectives are cumulative.]
>
> ***Another Test for Cumulative:*** Small red toy my boat moved over the surface of the lake. [The awkwardness of

the changed order of the adjectives suggests that, in their original ordering, they were working together, not separately. Thus they are cumulative, not coordinate.]

DEPENDENT CLAUSES

A dependent clause is a group of words that has a subject and a verb but cannot stand alone as a sentence. Dependent clauses can be used as adverbs, adjectives, or nouns. Four kinds of problems may occur with dependent clauses: problems with placement, problems with *that*, problems with repeated objects, and problems with repeated adverbs.

Placement of Adjective Clauses

When a dependent clause modifies a noun or a pronoun, it is also called an *adjective clause*. Written English regularly places adjective clauses right after the nouns they modify:

Incorrect Placement	Revised
Tzusheng returned the book to the library that he had borrowed. [The phrase *to the library* separates the noun *book* from the clause modifying it.]	Tzusheng returned the book that he had borrowed to the library.

When to Use That

Although the general rule is that dependent clauses begin with a subordinating conjunction, *that* may be omitted when there is no possibility of misreading.

> ***Missing That:*** Our boat leaked so badly had taken us safely to shore. [Without *that to* signal that "leaked so badly" is a dependent clause, the sentence is likely to be misread.]
>
> ***Revised:*** Our boat that leaked so badly had taken us safely to shore.
>
> ***Unnecessary That:*** At the Comedy Club last night, Marta showed the audience [that] she knows how to make people laugh.

Repeated Objects

When you use a dependent clause, be careful not to needlessly repeat (as the object of the dependent clause) the word the clause modifies:

Incorrect	Revised
Pedro saw the tennis racket that he wanted it. [There is no need for an it to echo *that* and	Pedro saw the tennis racket that he wanted:

function as an object of the verb *wanted*, because *that* already serves this function; this mistake is called *creating a repeated object*.]	

Repeated Adverbs

An error similar to repeated objects is repeated adverbs, or the echoing of the relative adverb (*where* or *when*) that introduces a dependent (adverbial) clause:

Incorrect	Revised
Maya found her purse where she had left it there.	Maya found her purse where she had left it.

PREPOSITIONS

English has a number of *phrasal prepositions*, including the following:

Phrasal Prepositions

according to	down from	out of
across from	in addition to	prior to
because of	in between	with the exception of

To write fluent, idiomatic English, you need to be careful not to

use the wrong combination.

Incorrect Combination	Revised
The student center is <u>across to</u> the law school.	The student center is <u>across from</u> the law school.

Several other *phrasal constructions* in English can be difficult for ESL writers. These constructions usually follow a verb and take the form of an adjective (or noun) plus a preposition:

Phrasal Constructions

ability at, with	identical to, with	preferable to
angry at, with	impatient for, with	receptive to
capable of	independent of	superior to
deserving of	inferior to	thankful for, to
free of, from, to	necessity for, of, to	worthy of, to

Because the meaning of the phrase depends partly on the preposition, you need to be careful to use the correct preposition in these constructions. If you're unsure of the correct combination, check an unabridged dictionary during the finishing stage of your writing.

VERBS

Two-Word Verbs

Many combinations of a verb and a preposition have a special (idiomatic) meaning in English. The following sentences illustrate these accepted combinations, including the ones in which the preposition can follow the object of the verb.

They were accompanied by their parents.

He was accused of a crime.

She can adapt to new situations.

The manager will never admit to his errors.

We never agree on the best vacation spot.

Do you agree with me?

Jana called off the wedding.

Or Jana called the wedding off.

How much will he charge for admission?

How does this album compare with his last one? [The two albums are in the same category.]

You are comparing apples to oranges. [The two things being compared are in different categories.]

The two buildings are connected by an underground tunnel.

I am connected with that group.

We differ on that question.

She differs from her suitemates.

Carlos dropped in on his old roommate.

He always gets up early.

Come join in the party.

Join with us in supporting Belinda for class president.

I will look into this problem.

Mother asked me to look up her old friend from Seattle.

Or I will look her up.

Sarah objects to your decision.

These seats are occupied by the dancers' families.

I have been occupied with raising children for ten years.

She didn't want to part from her grandmother.

She didn't want to part with her inheritance.

She ran across an old friend.

Are you worried about the meeting?

The clerk waits on the customer.

I will wait for a taxi.

Consult a dictionary for the correct combinations when you are not sure about which preposition to use with a verb. Most dictionaries, especially unabridged dictionaries, give examples of sentences in which such combinations are used properly.

Verbs in Conditional Sentences

Conditional sentences use two clauses to express the dependence of one action or situation on another action or situation. The clause containing the condition usually begins with *if, unless*, or *when.* Generally, a conditional sentence can be identified as one of three kinds: statements of fact, predictions and advice, or speculations.

Statements of Fact

In *factual* conditional sentences (such as those that state scientific truths or describe habitual behaviors), the present tense is used in both clauses:

If the temperature drops below 30 degrees, ice forms on this bridge.

When Mary enters her father's study, he always puts his books away.

Predictions and Advice

Some conditional statements predict the future or offer advice or opinions. In these sentences, the *if* or *unless* clause contains a present tense verb, and the main clause contains the modal *will, can, may, might,* or *should* followed by the base form of the verb:

If you marry him, you will please your parents.

Children will not rest unless you remind them to do so.

Unlikely Possibilities

If you are not making a prediction, but just speculating about an unlikely condition in the present or future, you need to use a past tense verb in the *if* clause. The main clause contains the modal *would, could,* or *might* followed by the base form of the verb:

If I won the lottery, I would retire immediately.

Tandra could make the team if she ran the mile 20 seconds faster.

Nonfactual Conditions and Wishes

Conditional sentences are also used to discuss events that are not factual, such as wishes that cannot be granted. These sentences, even though they do not concern the past, have *were* (not *was*) in the *if* clause; then the main clause contains *would, could,* or *might* followed by the base form of the verb:

If I were king for a day; I would provide health care for everyone.

If my father were still alive, he would walk me down the aisle.

Verbs Followed by Gerunds and Infinitives

The *gerund* is the *-ing* form of the verb used as a noun, as in the sentence "I like swimming." The infinitive is the base form of the verb preceded by *to*, as in "I like to swim." Either form can serve as the subject or the object of a sentence.

Walking can be great exercise.

To walk again was the accident victim's dream.

He likes eating.

He likes to eat.

As the following sections show, several different rules apply when verbs are followed by gerunds or infinitives, depending on the nature of the verb in question.

Verb + Gerund or Infinitive

Some verbs can be followed by a gerund or infinitive without any change in meaning:

begin	like

can't stand	love
continue	start
hate	

With these verbs, the meaning does not change whether you use the gerund or the infinitive; that is, "I hate driving" means the same as "I hate to drive."

For other verbs, such as *stop* and *remember*, the meaning changes depending on whether it is followed by the gerund or the infinitive form. That is, "I stopped calling my mother" means "I no longer called her," but "I stopped to call my mother" means "I interrupted what I was doing to call her."

Verb + Gerund

Some verbs may be followed by a gerund but not by an infinitive:

appreciate	enjoy	practice
avoid	finish	recall
deny	miss	resist
discuss	postpone	suggest

Incorrect	Correct
He finished to play golf by noon.	He finished playing golf by noon.
She enjoys to study for her finals.	She enjoys studying for her finals.

Verb + Infinitive

Verbs that describe something anticipated or planned may be followed by an infinitive but not by a gerund:

agree	decide	mean	promise
ask	expect	offer	wait
beg	have	plan	want
claim	hope	pretend	wish

Incorrect	Correct
He offered helping me.	He offered to help me.
We planned leaving after the ceremony.	We planned to leave after the ceremony.

Verb + Noun or Pronoun + Infinitive

With some verbs that take an infinitive, a noun or pronoun must come between the verb and the infinitive in order to name the person who is affected by the action:

advise	command	instruct	require
allow	convince	order	tell
cause	encourage	persuade	urge

Incorrect	Correct
He caused to quit my job.	He caused me to quit my job.
Treena encouraged to return to college.	Treena encouraged her mother to return to college.

A few verbs may be followed either by an infinitive or by a noun or pronoun plus an infinitive:

ask	need	would like
expect	want	

He wants Frederico to keep his class ring.

He wants to keep his class ring.

SENTENCE FRAGMENTS: QUICK VIEW

This Quick View shows how to identify and correct sentence fragments. A sentence fragment is a part of a sentence that begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, making it look like a complete sentence. But a complete sentence must meet all three of these conditions: (1) it must contain a *subject*, (2) it must contain *a complete verb*, and (3) it must not begin with *a subordinating word or words*. To revise a sentence fragment, you can turn it into a complete sentence or make it part of another sentence—often the one just before or after the fragment.

Sentence Fragment	Revised
Ranch work was not strange to Audrey. Being a native Texan. [The fragment, a participial phrase, lacks both a subject and a complete verb.]	Ranch work was not strange to Audrey, being a native Texan. [The fragment is joined to the preceding sentence.] or Being a native Texan made Audrey familiar with ranch work. [The fragment is turned into the subject of a new sentence.]
Someone else had already reported the fire. When I got to a phone. [The fragment begins with a subordinating word, *When*, "I got to a phone" would be a complete sentence, although it would not express the idea of *When*.]	Someone else had already reported the fire when I got to a phone.

Testing for Fragments: An Overview

Use the following tests (explained in detail in Keene & Adams, 1996, pp. 130-137) to check for sentence fragments in your writing.

1. **Make sure the sentence has a subject.** If the group of words

lacks a subject, it is a fragment. The *subject* of a sentence is a noun (or a substitute for a noun) that the verb of the sentence makes a statement about or asks something about.

Sentence Fragment	Revised
Serena said she was bringing her lunch. Also reminded us to bring ours. [This fragment lacks a subject.]	Serena said she was bringing her lunch and reminded us to bring ours.

2. Make sure the sentence has a complete verb. A group of words without a verb cannot be a sentence. The verb must also be *complete*: that is, it cannot be the *to + verb* form, the *-ed*, the *-ing*, or the *-en* form of the verb by itself.

Sentence Fragment	Revised
When the tanker car derailed, it released toxic chlorine gas. Requiring evacuation of residents within a five-mile radius. [The verb is in the -ing form and cannot stand alone.]	When the tanker car derailed, it released toxic chlorine gas, requiring evacuation of residents within a five-mile radius.

3. Make sure the clause is not introduced by a subordinating word. Generally, if the clause begins with a subordinating word (such

as *after, because, that, or unless*), that group of words cannot be an independent clause and thus cannot stand on its own as a sentence.

Sentence Fragment	Revised
Tomas found his ticket. After we had left for the show. [After is a subordinating word.]	Tomas found his ticket after we had left for the show.

COMMA SPLICES AND RUN-ON SENTENCES: QUICK VIEW

This Quick View shows how to correct comma splices and run-on sentences, errors that occur when two independent clauses are improperly joined. (An *independent clause* contains a subject and a complete verb and can stand on its own as a sentence.) Connect two independent clauses either with a comma plus a *coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, so, or yet)* or with a semicolon. (For more on comma splices and run-on sentences see Keen & Adams, 1996, pp. 138-146)

- *A comma splice* occurs when two or more independent clauses are connected only with a comma, which is sometimes accompanied by *a conjunctive adverb* (such as *however* or *therefore*) or a transitional phrase (such as *in other words*).
- *A run-on sentence* occurs when two or more independent clauses are connected with no conjunction or punctuation.

Comma Splice	Revised
He left the house, his wallet was still on the table. [To connect the two independent clauses, use either a comma plus a coordinating conjunction or a semicolon.]	He left the house, and his wallet was still on the table. or He left the house; his wallet was still on the table.
The tax bill was high, however, we found the money somehow.	The tax bill was high; however, we found the money somehow.

Run-On Sentence	Revised
The song was popular—its tune was heard everywhere.	The song was popular, and its tune was heard everywhere. or The song was popular; its tune was heard everywhere.

Testing for Comma Splices and Run-On Sentences

1. Check to see if the sentence contains two or more independent clauses. An independent clause contains a subject and a complete verb and can stand on its own as a sentence, such as

"The Berlin Wall fell." A dependent clause begins with a subordinating word such as *after*, *when*, or *if* and can never stand alone as a sentence—for example, "when the Berlin Wall fell."

2. Next, check the way the clauses are joined. There are two acceptable ways to connect independent clauses:

- a comma plus a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, so, and yet), or
- a semicolon or, in special circumstances, a colon.

Two independent clauses joined by any other way make a comma splice or a run-on sentence.

3. You can also check for comma splices and run-on sentences by underlining the clauses. If you are not sure whether what you have underlined is an independent clause, circle its subject and double-underline its verb; then make sure it does not begin with a subordinating word or phrase.

Run-On: The story goes from 1945 to 1990 it covers three generations of the Falcone family. [The underlined sets of words are independent clauses without a proper connection.]

Comma Splice: A small person still can compete at the very highest levels of soccer, that person has to be fast and tough.

[The two independent clauses are joined only by a comma.]

Appendix 4

Documenting Sources

While the MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation style is an important standard in the humanities, the APA (American Psychological Association) style is used widely in the social sciences. The APA style differs from MLA in many details, but both share the basic principles of including source names and page numbers (APA adds publication date) in parentheses within the text of the paper and listing complete publication information for each source in an alphabetized list at the end. Below is a point-by-point comparison of APA and MLA (Kennedy & Smith, 1994, pp. 466-69). For a complete explanation of APA style, consult the *Publication Manual at the American Psychological Association*, 4th ed. (Washington, D.C: APA, 1994).

Parenthetical Documentation

MLA	APA
1. Give the last name of the author and the page number if you are quoting a specific part of the source.	**1. Give the last name of the author, the publication date, and the page number if you are quoting a specific part of the source.**

For example:

The question has been answered before (Sagan 140-143).

Sagan has already answered the question (140-143).

2. Omit the abbreviation for *page*.

For example:

Walsh discusses this "game theory" (212—47)

3. Omit commas in parenthetical references.

For example:

The question has been answered before (Sagan 140-43)

4. Use a shortened form of the title to distinguish between different works by the same author.

For example:

The question has been answered before (Sagan, 1980, pp.140-143).

Sagan (1980) has already answered the question (pp.140-143)

2. Use the abbreviation "p." for *page* or "pp." for *pages* to show pagination.

For example:

Walsh (1979) discusses this "game theory" (pp. 212-47).

3. Use commas within parentheses.

For example:

The question has been answered before (Sagan, 1980, pp. 140-143)

4. Use publication date (plus lowercase letters, if necessary) to distinguish between different works by

For example:

Jones originally supported the single-factor theory (Investigations) but later realized that the phenomenon was more complex (Theory)

the same author.

For example:

Jones originally supported the single-factor theory *(1972)* but later realised that the phenomenon was more complex (1979).

List of Sources

MLA	APA
1. The title of the page listing the sources is Works Cited.	**1. The title of the page listing the sources is References.**
2. Indent the second and subsequent lines *five* spaces.	**2. Indent the second and subsequent lines *three* spaces.**
3. Use the author's full name.	**3. Use the author's last name, but only the initials of the author's first and middle names.**
For example:	*For example:*
Sagan, Carl.	Sagan, C
4. Use the word "and" when listing more than one author.	**4. Use an ampersand (&) when listing more than one author.**

5. When there are two or more authors, invert the first author's name, insert a comma and the word "and," and give the second author's first name and surname in the common order.	**5. When there are two or more authors, invert all the names. After the first author's name, insert a comma and an ampersand (&).**
For example:	*For example:*
Kennedy, Mary Lynch, and Hadley M. Smith.	Kennedy. M. L., & Smith, H. M.
6. Capitalize major words in the titles of books and periodicals.	**6. Capitalize only the first major word of the titles of books. Capitalize all major words in the titles of periodicals.**
For example:	*For example:*
The Beginner's Guide to Academic Writing and Reading.	The Beginner's guide to academic writing and reading.
Reading Research Quarterly.	Reading Research Quarterly.
7. List book data in the following sequence: author,	**7. List book data in the following sequence: author,**

title of book, city of publication, shortened form of the publisher's name, date f publication.

For example:

Fries, Charles C. Linguistics and Reading, New York: Holt, 1962.

8. List journal article data in the following sequence: author, title of the article, title of the journal, volume number, date of publication, inclusive pages.

For example:

Booth, Wayne C. "The Limits of Pluralism." Critical Inquiry 3 (1977): 407-23.

9. List the data for an article in an edited book in the following sequence: author of

date of publication, title of the book, place of publication, publisher.

For example:

Fries,C.C. (1962), Linguistics and reading, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

8. List journal article data in the following sequence: author, date of publication, title of the article, title of the journal, volume number, inclusive pages.

For example:

Booth, W. C. (1977). The limits of pluralism. Critical Inquiry, 3, 407-23.

9. List the data for an article in an edited book in the following sequence: author

the article, title of the article, title of the book, editor of the book, place of publication, publisher, date of publication, inclusive pages.

For example:

Donaldson, E. Talbot. "Briseis, Briseida, Criseyde, Cresseid, Cressid: Progress of a Heroine." Chaucerian Problems and Perspectives: Essays Presented to Paul E. Beichner, C.S.C. Eds. Edward Vasta and Zacharias P. Thundy. Notre Dame: Notre Dame Up, 3-12.

10. Use a shortened form of the publisher's name unless this would cause confusion.

of the article, date, title of the article, name of the editor, title of the book, inclusive pages, place of publication, and publisher.

For example:

Donaldson, E.T. (1979). Briseis, Briseida, Criseyde, Cresseid, Cressid: Progress of a Heroine. In E. Vaste & Z.P. Thundy (Eds.), Chaucerian problems and perspectives: Essays presented to Paul E. Beichner, C.S.C. (pp. 3-12). Notre Dame: Notre Dame Univ. Press.

Note: The proper names in the article-title are capitalized, as is the word following the colon.

10. Use the complete name of the publisher, but drop such words as *publishers.*

Use UP to abbreviate *University Press*, U for *University*, and P for *press*.	*Incorporated*, and *Company*.

Content

Endnotes

MLA	APA
1. Title the list of endnotes: Notes.	1. Title the list of endnotes: Footnotes.
2. Place the endnote list immediately *before* the Works Cited page.	2. Place the endnote list immediately *after* the References page.
3. Skip one space between the reference numeral and the endnote.	3. Do not skip any space between the reference numeral and the endnote.
For example:	*for example:*
[1]For more information, see Jones and Brown.	[1]For more information, see Jones (1983) and Brown (1981).

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Further Reading

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