

Language Terms	193
Understanding the Writing Process	195
Capitilization and Punctuation	200
Articles	203
Sentence Types	204
Connectors	206
Useful Words and Phrases	208
Verb Forms and Uses	210
Test-Taking Tips	211
Peer Editing Forms	213

LANGUAGE TERMS

- Adjective** An adjective describes a noun.
Lexi is a very **smart** girl.
- Adverb** An adverb describes a verb, an adjective, or another adverb.
The secretary types **quickly**. She types **very quickly**.
- Article** Articles are used with nouns. The definite article is *the*. The indefinite articles are *a* and *an*.
The teacher gave **an** assignment to **the** students.
- Clause** A clause is a group of words that has a subject-verb combination. Sentences can have one or more clauses.

s	v	
Roger attends the College of New Jersey.		
	clause	

s	v		s	v
Chris needs to study		because	he wants to pass the class.	
clause 1			clause 2	
- Complex Sentence** A complex sentence consists of an independent clause and a dependent clause. Dependent clauses include time clauses, *if* clauses, and reason clauses.

<u>We will go to lunch as soon as class is over.</u>	
ind clause	dep clause

<u>If you miss the test, you cannot take it again.</u>	
dep clause	ind clause

<u>Chris studies hard because he wants to do well.</u>	
ind clause	dep clause
- Compound Sentence** A compound sentence consists of two simple sentences that are joined by a comma and a connector such as *and*, *but*, or *so*.

<u>I love to study English, but my sister prefers math.</u>	
simple sentence 1	simple sentence 2
- Dependent Clause** A dependent clause is a group of words with a subject-verb combination that cannot be a sentence by itself. It starts with a connector such as *before*, *after*, *if*, or *because*.

I am taking a lot of science classes **because I want to go to medical school.**

Independent Clause An independent clause is a group of words with a subject-verb combination that can be a sentence by itself.

I am taking a lot of science classes because I want to go to medical school.

Noun A noun is a person, place, thing, or idea.

The **students** are reading **poems** about **friendship** and **love**.

Object An object is a word that comes after a transitive verb or a preposition. It is often a noun, noun phrase, pronoun, or gerund.

Jim bought **a new car**.

I left my jacket in **the house**.

Phrase A phrase is a small group of words that create a larger unit, such as a noun phrase or prepositional phrase.

Kimchi is **a traditional Korean dish**.

Jane forgot her phone **on the bus**.

Preposition A preposition is a word that shows location, time, or direction. Prepositions are often one word (*at, on, in*), but they can also consist of two words (*in between*) or three words (*on top of*).

The university is **in** the center of the city.

Pronoun A pronoun can replace a noun in a sentence. Using a combination of nouns and pronouns adds variety to your writing.

n **Whales** are mammals. **They** breathe air.

n Some **whales** are endangered. We need to protect **them**.

Punctuation Punctuation refers to the marks used in writing to separate sentences and parts of sentences and to clarify meaning.

The colors of the American flag are red, white, and blue, and the colors of the Mexican flag are red, white, and green.

Subject The subject of a sentence tells who or what a sentence is about. It is often a noun, noun phrase, pronoun, or gerund.

My teacher gave us a homework assignment. **It** was difficult.

UNDERSTANDING THE WRITING PROCESS

As you know, writing is a process. Most strong writers follow steps such as these when writing. Use these as your guide when you write a paragraph or an essay.

Step 1: Choose a Topic

Step 2: Brainstorm

Step 3: Outline

Step 4: Write the First Draft

Step 5: Get Feedback from a Peer

Step 6: Reread, Rethink, Rewrite

Step 7: Proofread the Final Draft

This section will show you how a student went through the steps to do complete an assignment. First, read the student's final paragraph and the teacher's comments. Then read the steps the student took to write this final paragraph.

FINAL DRAFT

Gumbo

The Newbury House Dictionary of American English defines gumbo as “a thick soup made with okra and often meat, fish, or vegetables,” but anyone who has tasted this delicious dish knows that this definition is too simple to describe gumbo accurately. It is true that gumbo is a thick soup, but it is much more than that. Gumbo, which is one of the most popular of all Louisiana dishes, can be made with many different kinds of ingredients. For example, seafood gumbo usually contains shrimp and crab. Other kinds of gumbo can include chicken, sausage, or turkey. Three other important ingredients that all gumbo recipes use are okra, onions, and green peppers. Regardless of the ingredients in gumbo, this dish from the southern part of Louisiana is one of the most delicious regional foods in the United States.

Teacher comments:

100/A Excellent paragraph! I enjoyed reading about gumbo. Your paragraph is well written. All the sentences relate to one topic. I like that you used so many connectors (e.g., however, such as).

Steps in the Writing Process

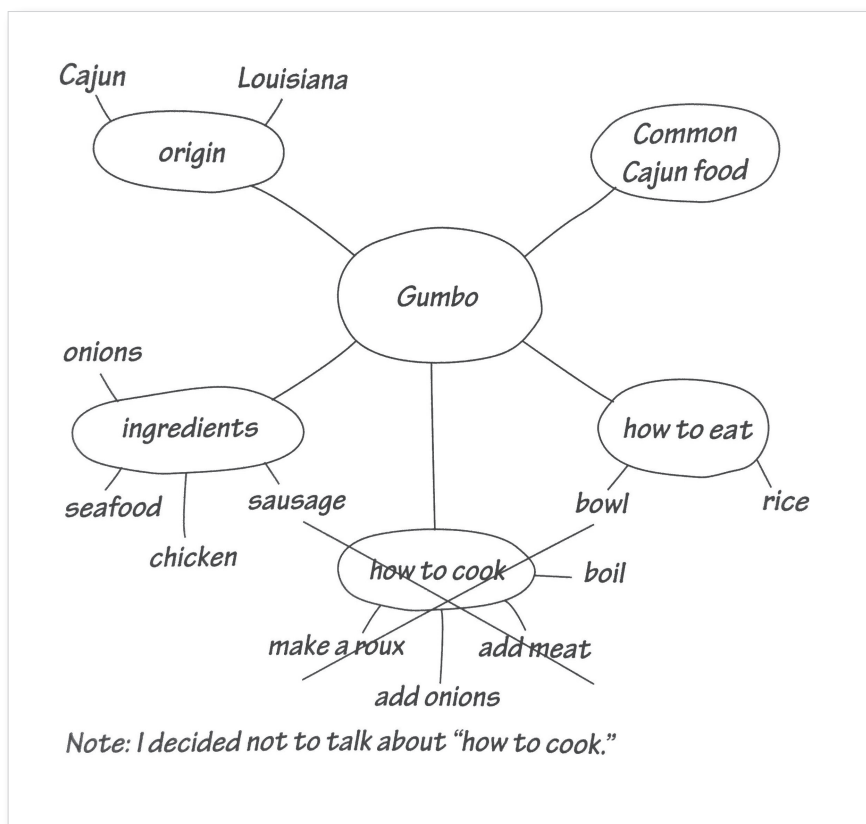
Step 1: Choose a Topic

The first step is to read and understand the assignment and choose an appropriate topic to write about. The assignment is: *Write a definition paragraph about a favorite food.* The student chose to write about a food that she loves and that reminds her of home. She chose a dish called *gumbo*, which is a popular dish in her state of Louisiana, USA.

Step 2: Brainstorm

Write every idea about your topic that comes to mind. Some of these ideas will be better than others; write them all. The main purpose of brainstorming is to write as many ideas as possible. If one idea looks promising, circle it or put a check next to it. If you write an idea that you know right away you are not going to use, cross it out.

Brainstorming methods include making lists, making charts, or diagramming ideas (as in the cluster diagram below). This diagram shows a student's brainstorm notes about the topic "gumbo."



As you can see, the student considered many aspects of the topic, but decided not to write about how to cook gumbo. Each circle on the outside might be supporting ideas and sentences.

Step 3: Outline

The next step is to make an outline. You may want to start writing after brainstorming, but creating an outline first will help you to organize your ideas.

After brainstorming, look at your notes and create a simple outline, or plan, for your writing. Here is an example of a rough outline for the paragraph *Gumbo*.

- I. Topic sentence: What is gumbo?
- II. Support (fact, example, or story): Define gumbo: what exactly is it? (a thick soup with various meat/seafood and vegetables)
- III. Support (fact, example, or story): Discuss origin of gumbo: where is it from?
- IV. Support (fact, example, or story): Discuss different types of gumbo and the ingredients.
- V. Conclusion: Summarize why gumbo is good/special

Step 4: Write the First Draft

In this step, you use information from your brainstorming notes and outline to draft the essay.

When you write your first draft, pay attention to the language you use. Use a variety of sentence types. Consider your choice of vocabulary. Include specific terminology when possible, and avoid using informal or conversational language.

The first draft may contain errors, such as misspellings, incomplete ideas, and punctuation errors. At this point, you should not worry about correcting the errors. The focus should be on putting your ideas into sentences.

As you write the first draft, you may want to add information or take some out. In some cases, your first draft may not follow your outline exactly. That is OK. Writers do not always stick with their original plan or follow the steps in the writing process in order. Sometimes they go back and forth between steps.

FIRST DRAFT

Gumbo

Do you know what gumbo is? It's a seafood soup. However, gumbo is really more than a kind of soup, it's special. Gumbo is one of the most popular of all Cajun dish. It's made with various kinds of seafood or meat. This is mixed with vegetables such as onions, green peppers. Seafood Gumbo is made with shrimp and crab. Also chicken, sausage, and turkey etc. Regardless of what is in Gumbo, it's usually served in bowl over the rice.

Step 5: Get Feedback from a Peer

Peer editing is important in the writing process. You do not always see your own mistakes or places where information is missing because you are too close to the paragraph or essay that you wrote. Ask someone to read your draft and give you feedback about your writing. Choose someone that you trust and feel comfortable with. Your teacher may also give you feedback on your first draft. As you revise, consider all comments carefully.

The following is an example of a completed peer editing form.

Sample Peer Editing Form

Reader: Jim Date: 2/14

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? gumbo (a food dish from Louisiana)

2. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence? Yes No

Write it and/or suggest another one: Do you know what gumbo is? (Maybe make this more interesting Tell us why should read about gumbo.)

3. Do all sentences in the paragraph relate to the topic sentence? Yes No

If no, which sentence(s) does not belong? _____

4. Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence? Yes No

Write it and/or suggest a better one The concluding sentence doesn't restate the topic sentence, state an opinion, or make a suggestion. Maybe suggest that people try gumbo.

5. Do all verbs agree with their subjects? Yes No

If no, write errors here or mark them on the paragraph. _____

6. What do you like best about this paragraph? I like learning about new foods, especially with ingredients I am not familiar with (e.g., okra).

7. What could the writer do to improve the paragraph? I'd like to know what flavors or spices are in gumbo. It would be good to know why it is special or why it is delicious.

Step 6: Reread, Rethink, Rewrite

This step consists of three parts:

1. Reread your essay and any comments from your peers or teacher.
2. Rethink your writing and address the comments.
3. Rewrite the essay.

A general checklist to use as you rewrite your work might look like this:

- Is there a clear topic sentence?
- Do all sentences relate to the topic sentence?
- Do the sentences flow?
- Is there a concluding sentence?
- Is there a title?

Step 7: Proofread the Final Draft

Proofreading is the final step. It means reading to check for any grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors. One good way to proofread your paper is to set it aside for several hours or a day or two. The next time you read it, your head will be clearer and you will be more likely to see any errors.

A proofreading checklist might look like this:

- Are your words capitalized correctly?
- Do you have the correct final punctuation?
- Are your words spelled correctly?
- Did you use the correct word forms?

Now go back and read the first draft and final draft of *Gumbo*. Notice the changes from the first draft to the final draft.

CAPITALIZATION AND PUNCTUATION

Capitalization

Capitalize:

- the first word in a sentence

We go to the movies every week.
Deserts are beautiful places to visit.

- the pronoun *I*

Larry and **I** are brothers

- people's formal and professional titles

Mr. and **Mrs.** Jenkins are on vacation.
Lisa saw **Dr.** Johansen at the bank yesterday.

- proper names (specific people, places, and things)

Kate met her brother **Alex** at the park.
The **Coliseum** in **Rome** is a beautiful old monument.
Nick is taking **History 101** this semester.

- names of streets.

Ruth lives on **Wilson Avenue**.

- geographical locations (cities, states, countries, continents, lakes, and rivers)

I am going to travel to **London, England**, next week.
The **Arno River** passes through **Tuscany, Italy**.

- the names of languages and nationalities

My grandmother speaks **Polish**.
Melissa is **Venezuelan**, but her husband is **Cuban**.

- most words in titles of paragraphs, essays, and books

*The **Life of Billy Barnes***
*Into the **Wild***

End Punctuation

The most common punctuation marks found at the end of English sentences are the **period**, the **question mark**, and the **exclamation point**. It is important to know how to use all three of them correctly. Of these three, the period is by far the most commonly used punctuation mark.

1. **period** (.) A period is used at the end of a declarative sentence.

This sentence is a declarative sentence.
This sentence is not a question.

2. **question mark** (?) A question mark is used at the end of a question.

Is this idea difficult?
How many questions are in this group?

3. **exclamation point** (!) An exclamation point is used at the end of an exclamation. It expresses a strong emotion. It is less common than the other two marks.

I cannot believe you think this topic is difficult!
This is the best writing book in the world!

Commas

Use a comma:

- before the connectors *and*, *but*, *so*, and *or* in a compound sentence.

Rick bought Julia a croissant, but she wanted a muffin

- between three or more items in a list.

Jen brought a towel, an umbrella, some sunscreen, and a book to the beach.

- after a dependent clause at the beginning of a complex sentence. Dependent clauses include time clauses, *if* clauses, and reason clauses.

Because it was raining outside, Alex used his umbrella.

- between the day and the date and between the date and the year.

The last day of class will be Friday, May 19th.
I was born on June 27, 1992.

- between and after (if in the middle of a sentence) city, state, and country names that appear together.

The concert was in Busan, Korea.
I lived in Phuket, Thailand, for ten years.

- after time words and phrases, prepositional phrases of time, and sequence words (except *then*) at the start of a sentence.

Every afternoon after school, I go to the library.
Finally, they decided to ask the police for help.

Apostrophes

Apostrophes have two basic uses in English. They indicate either a contraction or a possession. Note that contractions are seldom used in academic writing.

1. Contractions: Use an apostrophe in a contraction in place of the letter or letters that have been deleted. Do not use contractions in academic writing.

He's (he is or he has), they're (they are), I've (I have), we'd (we would or we had)

2. Possession: Add an apostrophe and the letter *s* after the word. If a plural word already ends in *s*, then just add an apostrophe.

yesterday's paper
the boy's books (One boy has some books.)
the boys' books (Several boys have one or more books.)

Quotation Marks

Here are three of the most common uses for quotation marks.

1. To mark the exact words that were spoken by someone. Notice that the period and comma at the end of a quote are inside the quotation marks.

The king said, "I refuse to give up my throne."
"None of the solutions is correct," said the professor.

2. To mark language that a writer has borrowed from another source.

The dictionary defines gossip as a "talk or writing about other people's actions or lives, sometimes untruthful," but I would add that it is usually mean.

3. To indicate when a word or phrase is being used in a special way.

The king believed himself to be the leader of a democracy, so he allowed the prisoner to choose his method of dying. According to the king, allowing this kind of "democracy" showed that he was indeed a good ruler.

ARTICLES

The Indefinite Articles *A* and *An*

Use *a* or *an* before a singular count noun when its meaning is general. Use *a* before a word that starts with a consonant sound. Use *an* before a word that starts with a vowel sound.

Words that begin with the letters *h* and *u* can take *a* or *an* depending on their opening sound.

• **When the *h* is pronounced, use *a*.**

a horse / **a** hat / **a** hot day / **a** huge dog

• **When the *h* is silent, use *an*.**

an hour / **an** honor / **an** honourable man / **an** herb

• **When the *u* sounds like the word *you*, use *a*.**

a university / **a** uniform / **a** useful invention / **a** unique idea

• **When the *u* sounds like *uh*, use *an*.**

an umpire / **an** umbrella / **an** ugly shirt / **an** uncomfortable chair

Definite Article *The*

Use *the*:

• **before a singular count noun, plural count noun, or non-count noun when its meaning is specific.**

I need to ask my parents to borrow **the car** today.

• **the second (and third, fourth, etc.) time you write about something.**

I bought a new coat yesterday. **The coat** is blue and gray.

• **when the noun you are referring to is unique—there is only one.**

The Sun and **the Earth** are both in **the Milky Way Galaxy**.
The Eiffel Tower is beautiful.

• **with specific time periods.**

You must be very quiet for **the next hour**.

The 1920s was a time of great change in the United States.

• **when other words in your sentence make the noun specific.**

The cat in **the picture** is very pretty.

- with geographic locations that end in the plural *-s* (such as a group of islands), or the words *united, union, kingdom, or republic*.

We are going to **the Bahamas** for our vacation.
Who is the president of **the United States**?

- with most buildings, bodies of water (except lakes), mountain chains, and deserts.

The White House is in Washington, DC.
The Amazon is a very long river in South America.

Do not use *the*:

- with the names of cities, states, countries, continents, and lakes (except as mentioned above).

Sylvie is from **Venezuela**. She lives near **Lake Maracaibo**.
Lake Baikal is a large freshwater lake in **Russia**.

- before names or when you talk about something in general

Leo Tolstoy is a famous Russian writer.
Jason is going to make a table with **wood**.

SENTENCE TYPES

English has three types of sentences: simple, compound, and complex. These labels indicate how the information in a sentence is organized, not how difficult the content is.

Simple Sentences

Simple sentences usually contain one subject and one verb.

^s ^v
Children love electronic devices.

^v ^s ^v
Does this sound like a normal routine?

Sometimes simple sentences can contain more than one subject or verb.

^s ^s ^v
Brazil and the United States are large countries.

^s ^v ^v
Brazil is in South America and has a large population.

Compound Sentences

Compound sentences are usually made up of two simple sentences (independent clauses). The two sentences are connected with a coordinating conjunction such as *and, but, or, yet, so, and for*.

A comma is often used before the coordinating conjunction.

Megan studied hard, **but** she did not pass the final test.

More and more people are shopping online, **so** many stores have been forced to close.

The administration will use the funds to purchase new computers, **or** it will use them to remodel the school cafeteria.

Complex Sentences

Complex sentences contain one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. In most complex sentences, the dependent clause is an adverb clause. (Other complex sentences have dependent adjective clauses or dependent noun clauses.)

Adverb clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions, such as *while, although, because, and if*.

Study the examples below. The adverb clauses are underlined, and the subordinating conjunctions are boldfaced. Notice that the subordinating conjunctions are part of the dependent clauses.

independent clause dependent clause
The hurricane struck **while** we were at the mall.

dependent clause independent clause
After the president gave his speech, he answered the reporters' questions.

Dependent clauses must be attached to an independent clause. They cannot stand alone as a sentence. If they are not attached to another sentence, they are called fragments, or incomplete sentences. Look at these examples:

Fragment: After the president gave his speech.

Complete Sentence: After the president gave his speech, he answered the questions.

Fragment: Although every citizen is entitled to vote.

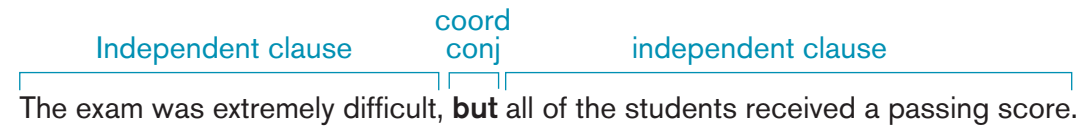
Complete Sentence: Although every citizen is entitled to vote, many do not.

CONNECTORS

Using connectors will help your ideas flow. Three types of connectors are coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, and transitions.

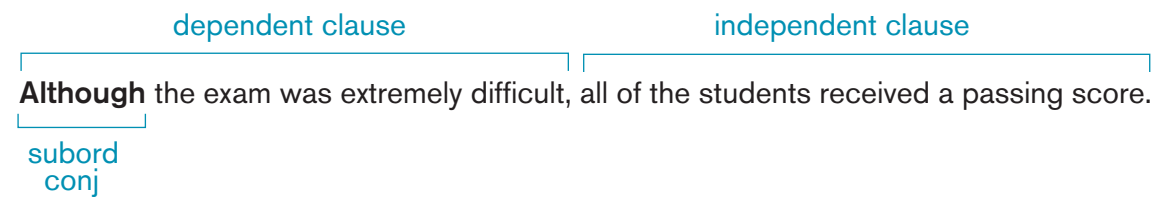
Coordinating Conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions join two independent clauses to form a compound sentence. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.

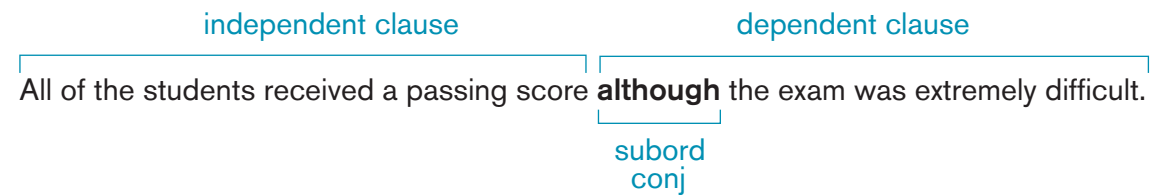


Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions introduce a dependent clause in a complex sentence. When a dependent clause begins a sentence, use a comma to separate it from the independent clause.

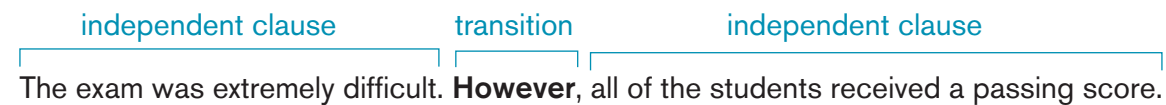


When a dependent clause comes after an independent clause, no comma is used.



Transition Words

Transition words show the relationship between ideas in sentences. A transition followed by a comma often begins a sentence.



Connector Summary Chart

PURPOSE	COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS	SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS	TRANSITION WORDS
To give an example			For example, To illustrate, Specifically, In particular
To add information	and		In addition, Moreover, Furthermore
To signal a comparison			Similarly, Likewise, In the same way
To signal a contrast	but yet	while, although	In contrast, However, On the other hand, Instead
To signal a concession	yet	although, though, even though	Nevertheless, Even so, Admittedly, Despite this
To emphasize			In fact, Actually
To clarify			In other words, In simpler words, More simply
To give a reason/cause	for	because, since	
To show a result	so	so	As a result, Therefore, Thus
To show time relationships		after, as soon as, before, when, while, until, since, whenever, as	Afterward, First, Second, Next, Then, Finally, Subsequently, Meanwhile, In the meantime
To signal a condition		if, even if, unless, provided that, when	
To signal a purpose		so that, in order that	
To signal a choice	or		
To signal a conclusion			In conclusion, To summarize, As we have seen, In brief, In closing, To sum up, Finally

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

COMPARING

Comparative Adjective	New York is larger than Rhode Island.
Comparative Adverb	A jet flies faster than a helicopter.
In comparison,	Canada has provinces. In comparison , Brazil has states.
Compared to Similar to Like	Compared to these roses, those roses last a long time.
Both ... and	Both models and real planes have similar controls.
Likewise, Similarly,	Good writers spend hours each day developing their language skills to enhance their writing. Likewise , good ballerinas spend countless hours in the gym each week increasing their accuracy and endurance.

CONTRASTING

In contrast, ...	Algeria is a very large country. In contrast , the U.A.E. is very small.
Contrasted with In contrast to	In contrast to Chicago, Miami has only two seasons: a very mild winter and a very long summer.
Although Even though Though	Though London in 1900 was quite different from London in 2000 in many ways, important similarities existed in population, technology, and transportation.
Unlike	Unlike Chicago, the problem in Miami is not the cold but rather the heat.
However,	Canada has provinces. However , Brazil has states.
On the one hand, On the other hand,	On the one hand , Maggie loved to travel. On the other hand , she hated to be away from her home.

SHOWING CAUSE AND EFFECT

Because Since	Because their races are longer, distance runners need to be mentally strong.
cause lead to result in	An earthquake can cause tidal waves which often lead to massive destruction.
As a result of Because of	Because of the economic sanctions, the unemployment rate rose.
Therefore, As a result,	Markets fell. Therefore , millions of people lost their life savings.

STATING AN OPINION

I believe / think / feel / agree / that	I believe that using electronic devices on a plane should be allowed.
In my opinion / view / experience,	In my opinion , talking on a cell phone in a movie theater is extremely rude.
For this reason,	For this reason , voters should not pass this law.
There are many benefits / advantages / disadvantages	There are many benefits to swimming every day.

ARGUING

It is important to remember that	It is important to remember that school uniforms would only be worn during school hours.
According to a recent survey,	According to a recent survey , the biggest fear of most people is public speaking.
For these reasons,	For these reasons , public schools should require uniforms.
Without a doubt,	Without a doubt , students ought to learn a foreign language.

VERB FORMS AND USES

VERB FORM	USE	EXAMPLES
Simple Present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regular activities or habits facts or things that are generally true 	He teaches three classes on Wednesdays. The moon goes around the Earth every 27.3 days.
Simple Past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recent or historical events a narrative, or story, that is real or imagined events in a person's life the result of an experiment 	The semester ended a week ago. Cinderella lost her shoe. George Washington grew up in Virginia. Some children ate the marshmallow and others did not eat it until later. The children were more successful in life if they waited to eat the marshmallow.
Present Progressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> actions that are currently in progress future actions if a future time expression is used or understood 	The sun is shining . We are meeting Friday in the library.
Future with <i>be going to</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> future plans that are already made predictions 	They are going to visit Thailand and Malaysia on their trip. The storm is going to be dangerous.
Future with <i>will</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> future plans/decisions made in the moment strong predictions promises and offers to help 	I will bring some snacks. The storm will destroy homes. She will support the rights of all people.
Present Perfect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> actions that began in the past and continue until the present an action that happened at an indefinite time in the past repeated actions at indefinite times in the past 	She has studied here for two years. They have visited the museum already. There have been several hurricanes this year.

TEST TAKING TIPS

Before Writing

- Before you begin writing, make sure that you understand the assignment. Underline key words in the writing prompt. Look back at the key words as you write to be sure you are answering the question correctly and staying on topic.
- Take five minutes to plan before you start writing. First, list out all the ideas you have about the topic. Then think about which ideas have the best supporting examples or ideas. Use this information to choose your main idea(s). Circle the supporting information you want to include. Cross out other information.
- Organize your ideas before you write. Review the list you have created. Place a number next to each idea, from most important to least important. In this way, if you do not have enough time to complete your writing, you will be sure that the most relevant information will be included in your essay.

While Writing

For Paragraphs

- Be sure that your topic sentence has a logical controlling idea. Remember that your topic sentence guides your paragraph. If the topic sentence is not clear, the reader will have difficulty following your supporting ideas.
- It is important for your writing to look like a paragraph. Be sure to indent the first sentence. Write the rest of the sentences from margin to margin. Leave an appropriate amount of space after your periods. These small details make your paragraph easier to read and understand.

For Essays

- Be sure that your thesis statement responds to the prompt and expresses your main idea. The thesis may also include your points of development. Remember that if your thesis statement is not clear, the reader will have difficulty following the supporting ideas in the body paragraphs.
- Readers will pay special attention to the last paragraph of your essay, so take two or three minutes to check it before you submit it. Make sure your concluding paragraph restates information in the introduction paragraph and offers a suggestion, gives an opinion, asks a question, or makes a prediction.

For Either Paragraphs or Essays

- Do not write more than is requested. If the assignment asks for a 150-word response, be sure that your writing response comes close to that. Students do not get extra points for writing more than what is required.
- If you are using a word processor, choose a font that is academic and clear like Times New Roman or Calibri. Choose an appropriate point size like 12. Use double space or one and a half space so that it is easier to read. Remember to indent paragraphs and leave a space between sentences.

- Once you pick a side (agree or disagree), include only the ideas that support that side. Sometimes you may have ideas for both sides. If this happens, choose the side that is easier for you to write about. If you do not have an opinion, choose the side you can write about best, even if you do not believe in it. You receive points for your writing skill, not your true personal beliefs.

Word Choice

- Avoid using words such as *always*, *never*, *all*, and *none*. You cannot give enough proof for these words. Instead, use words such as *probably*, *often*, *most*, *many*, *almost never*, and *almost none*.
- Avoid using general or vague vocabulary. Words such as *nice*, *good*, and *very* can often be changed to more specific terms, such as *friendly*, *fabulous*, and *incredibly*. Be more specific in your word choice.
- Avoid conversational or informal language in academic writing.

Development

- Avoid information that is too general. When possible, give specific examples. Good writers want to show that they have thought about the subject and provide interesting and specific information in their writing.

After Writing

- Leave time to proofread your paragraph or essay. Check for subject-verb agreement, correct use of commas and end punctuation, and for clear ideas that all relate to the topic sentence (paragraphs) or thesis statement (essay).
- Check for informal language such as contractions or slang. These do not belong in academic writing.

Managing Time

- It is common to run out of time at the end of a writing test. Once you have written your introduction and the body paragraphs, check your remaining time. Then read through what you have written to check for the clarity of your ideas. If you are running out of time, write a very brief conclusion.

PEER EDITING FORMS

Peer Editing Form 1

Reader: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? _____

2. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence? Yes No

Write it or suggest a better one. _____

3. Do all sentences in the paragraph relate to the topic sentence? Yes No

If no, write any sentence that does not belong (or mark all on the paragraph).

4. Do all verbs agree with their subjects? Yes No

If no, mark any that are incorrect in the paragraph.

5. Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence? Yes No

Write it or suggest a better one. _____

6. What do you like best about this paragraph? _____

7. What could the writer do to improve the paragraph? _____

Peer Editing Form 2

Reader: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? _____

2. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence? Yes No

Write it or suggest a better one. _____

3. Do all sentences in the paragraph relate to the topic sentence? Yes No

If no, write any sentence that does not belong (or mark all on the paragraph).

4. Do all verbs agree with their subjects? Yes No

If no, mark any that are incorrect in the paragraph.

5. Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence? Yes No

Write it or suggest a better one. _____

6. Are there any descriptive adjectives? Yes No

If no, show in the paragraph places where some could possibly be added.

7. Does the paragraph have a strong title? Yes No

Write it or suggest a better one. _____

8. What do you like best about this paragraph? _____

9. What could the writer do to improve the paragraph? _____

Peer Editing Form 3

Reader: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? _____

2. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence with a clear controlling idea? Yes No

If no, suggest a better one. _____

3. Do all sentences in the paragraph relate to the topic sentence? Yes No

If no, write any sentence that does not belong (or mark all on the paragraph).

4. Do all verbs agree with their subjects? Yes No

If no, mark any that are incorrect in the paragraph.

5. Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence? Yes No

Write it or suggest a better one. _____

6. Does the paragraph have a strong title? Yes No

Write it or suggest a better one. _____

7. What do you like best about this paragraph? _____

8. What could the writer do to improve the paragraph? _____

Peer Editing Form 4

Reader: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? _____
2. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence with a clear controlling idea? Yes No
If no, suggest a better one: _____

3. Do all sentences in the paragraph relate to the topic sentence? Yes No
If no, write any sentence that does not belong (or mark all on the paragraph).

4. Do all verbs agree with their subjects? Yes No
If no, mark any that are incorrect in the paragraph.
5. Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence that restates the topic, offers a suggestion, gives an opinion, or makes a prediction about it? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____

6. Does the paragraph have a strong title? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____
7. Do all pronouns refer to nouns correctly? Yes No
If no, circle ones that you question.
8. Are there any fragments, run-ons, or comma splices? Yes No
If yes, underline and mark them with FR, RO, or CS to indicate the error.
9. What do you like best about this paragraph? _____

10. What could the writer do to improve the paragraph? _____

Peer Editing Form 5

Reader: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? _____
2. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence with a clear controlling idea? Yes No
If no, suggest a better one: _____

3. Do all sentences in the paragraph relate to the topic sentence? Yes No
If no, write any sentence that does not belong (or mark all on the paragraph).

4. Do all verbs agree with their subjects? Yes No
If no, mark any that are incorrect in the paragraph.
5. Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence that restates the topic, offers a suggestion, gives an opinion, or makes a prediction about it? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____

6. Does the paragraph have a strong title? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____
7. Do all pronouns refer to nouns correctly? Yes No
If no, circle ones that you question.
8. Are there any fragments, run-ons, or comma splices? Yes No
If yes, underline and mark them with FR, RO, or CS to indicate the error.
9. What do you like best about this paragraph? _____

10. What could the writer do to improve the paragraph? _____

Peer Editing Form 6

Reader: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? _____
2. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence with a clear controlling idea? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____

3. Do all sentences in the paragraph relate to the topic sentence? Yes No
If no, write any sentence that does not belong (or mark all on the paragraph).

4. Do all verbs agree with their subjects? Yes No
If no, mark any that are incorrect in the paragraph.
5. Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence that restates the topic or makes a prediction about it? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____

6. Does the paragraph have a strong title? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____
7. Are quotations and other punctuation used correctly? Yes No
If no, mark any errors in the paragraph.
8. Are there a variety of sentences in the paragraph? Yes No
If no, mark places where sentences could be combined.
9. What do you like best about this paragraph? _____

10. What could the writer do to improve the paragraph? _____

Peer Editing Form 7

Reader: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? _____
2. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence with a clear controlling idea? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____

3. Do all sentences in the paragraph relate to the topic sentence? Yes No
If no, write any sentence that does not belong (or mark all on the paragraph).

4. Do all verbs agree with their subjects? Yes No
If no, mark any that are incorrect in the paragraph.
5. Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence that restates the topic, offers a suggestion, gives an opinion, or makes a prediction about it? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____

6. Does the paragraph have a strong title? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____
7. Is the sequence of the process clear? Yes No
If no, suggest words or phrases to make it clearer.
8. Is the imperative used when giving the steps of the process? Yes No
If no, circle any errors or suggest places the imperative might be used.
9. What do you like best about this paragraph? _____

10. What could the writer do to improve the paragraph? _____

Peer Editing Form 8

Reader: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? _____
2. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence that states a clear opinion? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____

3. Do all sentences in the paragraph relate to the topic sentence? Yes No
If no, write any sentence that does not belong (or mark all on the paragraph).

4. Do all verbs agree with their subjects? Yes No
If no, mark any that are incorrect in the paragraph.
5. Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence that restates the topic, offers a suggestion, gives an opinion, or makes a prediction about it? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____

6. Does the paragraph have a strong title? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____
7. Does the paragraph include facts or stories to support the opinion? Yes No
8. Are the word forms correct? Yes No
If no, mark any that are incorrect in the paragraph.
9. What do you like best about this paragraph? _____

10. What could the writer do to improve the paragraph? _____

Peer Editing Form 9

Reader: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? _____
2. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence with a clear controlling idea? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____

3. Does the paragraph tell a story, with a clear beginning, middle, and end? Yes No
If no, what could improve? _____

4. Do all verbs agree with their subjects? Yes No
If no, mark any that are incorrect in the paragraph.
5. Does the narrative have a strong ending? Yes No
If no, suggest an idea for a better one. _____

6. Does the paragraph have a strong title? Yes No
Write it or suggest a better one. _____
7. What do you like best about this paragraph? _____

8. What could the writer do to improve the paragraph? _____

Peer Editing Form 10

Reader: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the topic of the essay? _____

2. Does the essay have an introduction paragraph with a clear thesis? Yes No

If no, suggest an idea for improving it. _____

3. Does the introduction have a strong hook? Yes No

If no, suggest an idea for improving it. _____

4. Do all paragraphs support the essay? Yes No

If no, which paragraph(s)? _____

5. Do all sentences in each paragraph of the essay relate to its topic sentence? Yes No

If no, cross out unrelated sentences.

6. Does the essay have a concluding paragraph? Yes No

7. Does the essay have a strong title? Yes No

Write it or suggest a better one. _____

8. What do you like best about this essay? _____

9. What could the writer do to improve the essay? _____
