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## UNDERSTANDING THE WRITING PROCESS

Writing is a process. Writers rarely write an essay from introduction to conclusion in one sitting. Instead, they follow certain steps. Use these steps as a guideline when you write. The writing process is not always linear. You may return to earlier steps as needed.

- 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

### Steps in the Writing Process

#### Step 1: Choose a Topic

Sometimes you will be asked to write an essay on a broad topic such as *An Influential Person*. In this case, you can choose any person you want as long as you can clearly show how that person has influenced you or others. You should try to choose a topic that you are interested in.

To walk through the steps in the writing process, consider the given assignment: “Write an essay in which you discuss one aspect of being a vegetarian.” As you consider the assignment, think about what kind of essay you want to write such as:

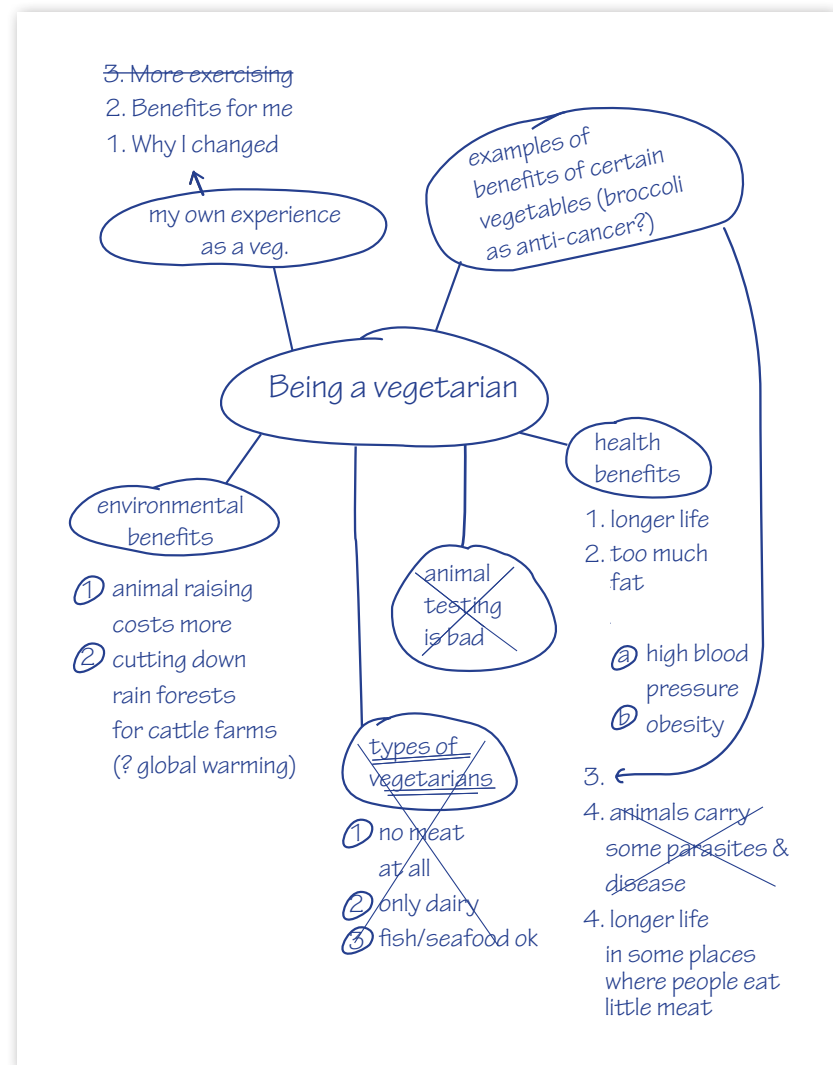
- A classification of the types of vegetarian diets
- A historical account of vegetarianism
- An argument that being a vegetarian is better than eating meat

The type of essay you write (argument, comparison, etc.) will depend on the topic you choose (or are given), and the ideas you decide to develop.

#### 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, clustering similar ideas, or diagramming. Here is an example of a student's brainstorming diagram on the topic of "being a vegetarian."



As you can see, the student considered many aspects of being a vegetarian. As she organized her ideas, she wrote "examples of benefits of certain vegetables" as one piece of supporting information. Then she realized that this point would be good in the list of health benefits, so she drew an arrow to show that she should move it there. Since one of her brainstorming ideas (types of vegetarians) lacked supporting details and was not related to her other notes, she crossed it out.

How can you get information for this brainstorming exercise?

- You might search online for an article about vegetarianism.
- You could write a short questionnaire to give to classmates asking them about their personal knowledge of vegetarian practices.
- You could interview an expert on the topic, such as a nutritionist.

Note that any information you get from an outside source needs to be credited in your essay. As you get information, keep notes on your sources. See "Avoiding Plagiarism" in this *Writer's Handbook* for more information on citing outside sources and referencing.

### Step 3: Outline

Next, you should write an outline for your essay. Here is an initial outline based on the brainstorming notes.

- I. Introduction
  - A. Hook
  - B. Connecting information
  - C. Thesis statement
- II. Environmental benefits
  - A. Rainforests
  - B. Global warming
- III. Health benefits
  - A. Too much fat from meat → obesity → diseases
  - B. High blood pressure and heart disease
  - C. Cancer-fighting properties of broccoli and cauliflower, etc.
- IV. Longer life
  - A. Bad fats → cancer
  - B. People in some countries live longer
- V. Conclusion
  - A. Restate thesis
  - B. Opinion

### Supporting Details

After you have chosen the main points for your essay, you need to develop some supporting details. You should include examples, reasons, explanations, definitions, or personal experiences.

One common technique for generating supporting details is to ask information questions about the topic: *Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?*

- SUPPORT**
- What benefits does eating vegetables have?
  - How much longer do vegetarians live?
  - Why is eating meat a problem?

## Step 4: Write the First Draft

In this step, you use information from your brainstorming 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.

This 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. The writing process is much more like a cycle than a line.

## 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. While some people feel uneasy about peer editing, the result is almost always a better essay. You can use the *Peer Editing Forms* in this *Writer's Handbook* as tools to help your peer editors. Your teacher may also give you feedback on your first draft. As you revise, consider all comments carefully.

## 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.

## Step 7: Proofread the Final Draft

Proofreading is the final step. It means reading for grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors and to see if the sentences flow smoothly. 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 problems.

On the next two pages is a first draft of the essay on being a vegetarian. It includes comments from the teacher.

## Reasons to Be a Vegetarian

- 1 Do you like burgers? Who doesn't? Eating meat, especially beef, is an important part of daily life around the world. <sup>wrong transition? word choice</sup> In addition, this <sup>word choice word choice</sup> high eating <sup>transition?</sup> of meat is a major contributing thing that makes many deaths, including deaths from heart-related problems. Vegetarianism has caught on slowly in some parts of the world. Vegetarianism is a way of life that can help improve not only the quality of lives but also people's longevity.
- 2 Because demand for meat is so high, cattle are being raised in areas where the rainforest once stood. [As rain forest land is cleared in order to make room for the cattle ranches.] <sup>frag</sup> The environmental balance is being upset. This could have serious consequences for us in both the near and long term. How much of the current global warming is due to man's disturbing the rain forest?
- 3 Meat contains a high amount of fat. Eating this fat has been connected in research with certain kinds of cancer. Furthermore, eating animal fat can lead to obesity, and obesity can cause different kinds of disease. <sup>what does 'this' refer to?</sup> This results in high blood pressure. Meat is high in cholesterol, and this adds to the health problems. With the high consumption of animal fat, it is no wonder that heart disease is a leading killer.

Be sure your thesis matches your main points. Body par 1 seems to be about environmental impact. Also, you start with burgers but never mention them again. In general, check your transitions and word choice.

You need a topic sentence with your first supporting idea: the first reason to be a vegetarian. And add a concluding sentence that restates your main idea.

Try a more specific topic sentence relating to health and your thesis.

4 On the other hand, eating a vegetarian diet can improve a person's health. And <sup>necessary?</sup> vegetables taste good. In fact, it can even save lives. Eating certain kinds of vegetables such as broccoli, brussel sprouts, and cauliflower, <sup>SVA</sup> have been shown to reduce the chance of colon cancer. Vegetables do not contain the "bad" fats that meat does. Vegetables do not contain cholesterol either. People with vegetarian diets live longer lives.

5 Although numerous studies have shown the benefits of vegetarianism for people in general, I know how my life has improved since I decided to give up meat. In 2010 I saw a show that discussed the problems connected to animals raised for food. After I saw this show, I decided to try life without meat. Although it was difficult at first, I have never regretted my decision. I feel better than before and people tell me I look good. Being a vegetarian has many benefits. Try it.

*This is a good first draft. I can see that you have thought about the topic as you give some interesting reasons for being a vegetarian. To stay focused on your key points, revisit your thesis and topic sentences to be sure they clearly state the main ideas. Make sure the topic sentences support your thesis. Also, consider making a recommendation in your conclusion.*

*Good, clear topic sentence. Look for places to combine short sentences.*

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

### Sample Peer Editing Form

Reader: Ali Date: 2/14

1. What is the purpose of the essay? The purpose is to explain why it's good to be a vegetarian.

2. Does the introduction have an effective hook?  Yes  No

Write it and/or suggest another one: Do you like burgers? This sounds a little informal to me.

3. Is the thesis statement clear?  Yes  No

If yes, what is it? Vegetarianism is a way of life that can help improve not only the quality of lives but also people's longevity.

4. Does each body paragraph have a topic sentence related to the thesis?  Yes  No

If no explain. I think the third topic sentence is good, but the first two are not clearly related to the thesis.

5. Does the essay have a logical conclusion?  Yes  No

If yes, write it here. Being a vegetarian has many benefits. Try it.

If not, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

6. What do you like best about this essay? I never thought about the environmental impact of

raising cattle for us to eat. This was interesting to me.

Now read the final essay this student turned in to her teacher.

### Reasons to Be a Vegetarian

**1** Eating meat, especially beef, is an integral part of many cultures. Studies show, however, that the consumption of large quantities of meat is a major contributing factor toward a great many deaths, including the unnecessarily high number of deaths from heart-related problems. Although it is not widely adopted in many countries, vegetarianism is a way of life that can have a positive impact on the environment and people's health.

**2** Surprising as it may sound, vegetarianism can have beneficial effects on the environment. Because demand for meat animals is so high, cattle are being raised in areas where rain forests once stood. Rain forests have been cleared to make room for cattle ranches, upsetting the environmental balance. One important impact of this kind of deforestation is increased temperatures, which contribute to global warming. If people consumed less meat, the need to clear land for cattle would decrease, helping to restore the ecological balance.

**3** More important at an individual level is the question of how eating meat affects a person's health. Meat, unlike vegetables, can contain large amounts of fat. Eating this fat has been connected—in some studies—to certain kinds of cancer. If people cut down on the amount of meat they ate, they would automatically be lowering their risk of disease. Furthermore, eating animal fat can lead to obesity, which can cause numerous health problems. For example, obesity can cause people to become physically inactive and their hearts have to work harder. This results in high blood pressure. Meat is also high in cholesterol, and this only adds to health problems. Eliminating meat from their diet and eating vegetarian food would help people reduce their risk of certain diseases.

**4** If people followed vegetarian diets, they would not only be healthier, but also live longer. Eating certain kinds of vegetables, such as broccoli, brussels sprouts, and cauliflower, has been shown to reduce the chance of contracting colon cancer later in life. Vegetables do not contain the “bad” fats that meat does. Vegetables do not contain cholesterol, either. Furthermore, native inhabitants of areas of the world where people eat more vegetables than meat, notably certain areas of Central Asia, routinely live to be over one hundred.

**5** Numerous scientific studies have shown the benefits of vegetarianism for people in general. There is a common thread for those people who switch from eating meat to consuming only vegetable products. Although the change of diet is difficult at first, most people never regret their decision to become a vegetarian. As more and more people are becoming aware of the risks associated with meat consumption, they too will make the change.

## PUNCTUATION

### Capitalization

1. Always capitalize the first word of a sentence.

Several factors contributed to the failure of the plan.

Because of the weather, all flights were delayed.

2. Always capitalize the word *I* no matter where it is in a sentence.

John brought the dessert, and I brought some drinks.

Of all the trips that I have taken, I will always remember my trip to Kenya.

3. Capitalize proper nouns—the names of specific people, places, or things. Capitalize a person's title, including *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Ms.*, and *Dr.*

The Statue of Liberty is located on Liberty Island in New York.

Simón Bolívar was born in Caracas, Venezuela, in July 1783.

4. Capitalize names of countries and other geographic areas. Capitalize the names of people from those areas. Capitalize the names of languages.

People from Brazil are called Brazilians. They speak Portuguese.

There are few differences between American and British English.

5. Capitalize titles of works, such as books, movies, and pieces of art.

*A Sea without Life*

*The Weather in Chicago and Miami*

The rules for capitalizing titles are:

- Always capitalize the first letter of a title.
- Capitalize all content words (words that have meaning).
- Do not capitalize function words, such as *a*, *an*, *and*, *the*, *in*, *with*, *on*, *for*, *to*, *above*, *an*, and *or*.

### Commas

The comma has different functions. Here are some of the most common:

1. A comma separates a list of three or more things.

She speaks French, English, and Chinese.

He speaks French and English. (No comma is needed because there are only two items.)

2. A comma separates two sentences connected by a coordinating conjunction (a combining word) such as *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*, *for*, *nor*, and *yet*.

Six people took the course, but only five of them passed the test.

Students can register for classes in person, or they can register by email.

3. A comma is used to separate an introductory word or phrase from the rest of the sentence.

In conclusion, doctors are advising people to take more vitamins.

Because of the heavy rains, many of the roads were flooded.

4. A comma is used to separate an appositive from the rest of the sentence. An appositive is a word or group of words that renames a noun.

subject (noun)                  appositive                  verb  
Washington, the first president of the United States, was a clever military leader.

5. A comma is used with non-restrictive or unnecessary adjective clauses. We use a comma when the information in the clause is unnecessary or extra.

*The History of Korea*, which is on the teacher's desk, is the main book for this class.

(The name of the book is given, so the information in the adjective clause is not necessary to help the reader identify the book.)

The book that is on the teacher's desk is the main book for this class.

(The information in the adjective clause is necessary to identify which book. In this case, do not set off the adjective clause with a comma.)

Professor Jones, who studied in Asia, teaches this class.

(The name of the person is given, so the information in the adjective clause is not necessary. Commas are used.)

A professor who studied in Asia teaches this class.

(The information in the adjective clause is necessary to identify which professor. No commas are used.)

## 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.

*Contractions:* Use an apostrophe in a contraction in place of the letter or letters that have been deleted.  
he's (he is *or* he has), they're (they are), I've (I have), we'd (we would *or* we had)

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

Ghandi's role in the history of India  
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.

- To mark the exact words that were spoken by someone:**  
The king said, "I refuse to give up my throne." (The period is inside the quotation marks.)  
"None of the solutions is correct," said the professor. (The comma is inside the quotation marks.)
- To mark language that a writer has borrowed from another source:**  
The dictionary defines *gossip* as a "trivial rumor of a personal nature," but I would add that it is usually malicious.  
This research concludes that there was "no real reason to expect this computer software program to produce good results with high school students."
- 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.

## Semicolons

The function of a semicolon is similar to that of a period. However, a semicolon suggests a stronger relationship between the sentences.

Joey loves to play tennis. He has been playing since he was ten years old.  
Joey loves to play tennis; he has been playing since he was ten years old.

Both sentence pairs are correct. Notice that *he* is not capitalized in the second example.

A semicolon is often used with transition words like *however*, *therefore*, and *in addition*.

The price of gas is increasing; **therefore**, more people are taking public transportation.

In parts of Africa, elephants are being killed for their ivory tusks; **in addition**, rhinos are being hunted for their horns.

# 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. Always try to vary the type of sentences you use in your writing.

## Simple Sentences

Simple sentences usually contain one subject and one verb.

<sup>s</sup>   <sup>v</sup>  
Children love electronic devices.

<sup>v</sup>   <sup>s</sup>   <sup>v</sup>  
Does this sound like a normal routine?

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

<sup>s</sup>                      <sup>s</sup>                      <sup>v</sup>  
Brazil and the United States are large countries.

<sup>s</sup>   <sup>v</sup>                                      <sup>v</sup>  
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 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.

Fragment:              If the election results are close.

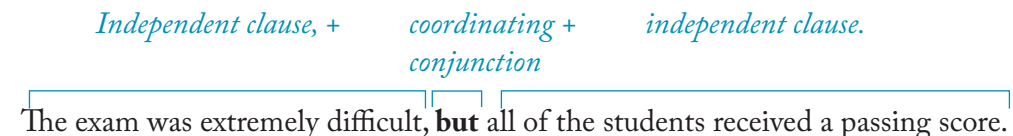
Complete Sentence:    If the election results are close, there may have to be a recount.

# CONNECTORS

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

## Coordinating Conjunctions

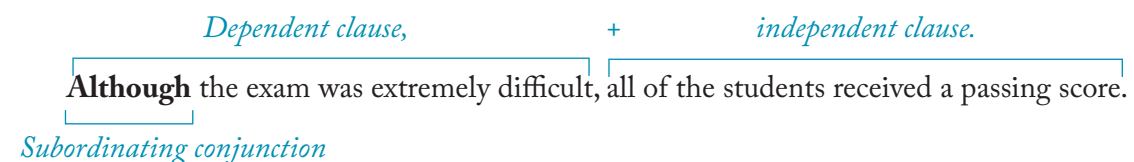
Coordinating conjunctions join two independent clauses to form a compound sentence. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.



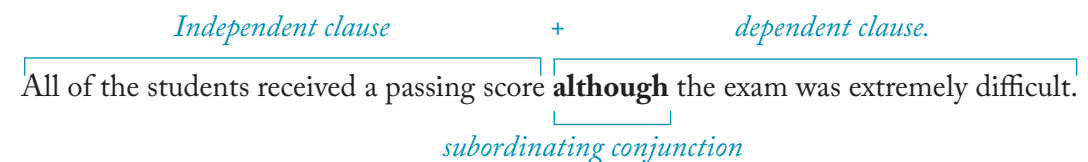
## Subordinating Conjunctions

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 can begin a sentence.



A transition word followed by a comma can also come after a semicolon. Notice that in the independent clause that follows the semicolon, the first word is not capitalized.



Here is a chart summarizing kinds of connectors and their purpose.

PURPOSE	COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS	SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS	TRANSITIONS
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, Conversely, Instead,
To signal a refutation		although even though	On the contrary, Nevertheless However, Even so,
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		As a result, As a consequence, Consequently, 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, To sum up,



# USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

## COMPARING

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

## CONTRASTING

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

## SHOWING CAUSE AND EFFECT

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

## STATING AN OPINION

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

## ARGUING

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

## GIVING A COUNTERARGUMENT

Proponents / Opponents may say	<b>Opponents</b> of uniforms <b>say</b> that students who wear uniforms cannot express their individuality. However, I argue that there are many other ways to express one's individuality.
One could argue that, but	<b>One could argue that</b> working for a small company is very exciting, <b>but</b> it can also be more stressful than a job in a large company.
Some people believe that	<b>Some people believe that</b> nuclear energy is the way of the future. We, on the other hand, believe that using nuclear energy has risks.
Although it is true that	<b>Although it is true that</b> taking online classes can be convenient, it is difficult for many students to stay on task.

# AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

When writing a paragraph or an essay, you should use your own words for the most part. Sometimes, however, you may want to use ideas that you have read in a book, in an article, on a website, or that you have heard in a speech. It can make the paragraph or essay more interesting, more factual, or more relevant to the reader. For example, if you are writing a paragraph about a recent election, you may want to use a quotation from a politician. In this case, you must indicate that the words are not your own, but that they come from someone else. Indicating that your words are not original is called **citing**. In academic writing, it is necessary to cite all sources of information that are not original.

If the information does not come from your head, it must be cited. If you do not—whether intentionally or unintentionally—give credit to the original author, you are **plagiarizing**, or stealing, someone else’s words. This is academic theft, and most institutions take it very seriously.

To avoid plagiarism, it is important to use quotes or a paraphrase, include an in-text citation, and add a reference or bibliography at the end of your writing.

## Using Quotes

Quotations are used when you want to keep the source’s exact words. A common way to introduce a quote is with the phrase *According to*. There are also several verbs that can be used to introduce someone else’s ideas.

argue	describe	insist	predict	say
claim	find	point out	report	state

Here are three different examples of quoting a sentence from a text.

- Original\*:** There is absolutely no empirical evidence—quantitative or qualitative—to support the familiar notion that monolingual dictionaries are better than bilingual dictionaries for understanding and learning L2.
- Quote 1:** According to Folse (2004), “There is absolutely no empirical evidence—quantitative or qualitative—to support the familiar notion that monolingual dictionaries are better than bilingual dictionaries for understanding and learning L2.”
- Quote 2:** And while instructors continue to push for monolingual dictionaries, “there is absolutely no empirical evidence—quantitative or qualitative—to support the familiar notion that monolingual dictionaries are better than bilingual dictionaries for understanding and learning L2.” (Folse, 2004).
- Quote 3:** As Folse points out, “There is absolutely no empirical evidence – quantitative or qualitative—to support the familiar notion that monolingual dictionaries are better than bilingual dictionaries for understanding and learning L2” (2004).

Note that brief in-text citations in the body of your work are appropriate for quotes like these. But you must also list the complete source at the end of your work.

\*Folse, Keith. *Vocabulary Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching*. University of Michigan Press, 2004.

## Paraphrasing

Sometimes you may want to paraphrase or summarize outside information. In this case, the same rules still hold true. If the ideas are not yours, they must be cited. When you paraphrase, you retain the original ideas but use your own words. Your paraphrase should not be too close to the original, or it is considered plagiarism. Notice how this is done in the examples below.

- Original\*:** Every year, the town of Vinci, Italy, receives as many as 500,000 visitors—people coming in search of its most famous son, Leonardo.
- Paraphrase:** Although a small town, Vinci is visited by many tourists because it is the birthplace of Leonardo da Vinci (Herrick, 2009).
- Original\*:** This quiet, unimposing hill town is relatively unchanged from the time of Leonardo.
- Paraphrase:** Herrick (2009) explains that even after 500 years, the town of Vinci has remained much the same.

\*Herrick, Troy. “*Vinci: A Visit to Leonardo’s Home Town*.” Offbeat Travel, Updated January 5, 2016, [www.offbeattavel.com/vinci-italy-davinci-home.html](http://www.offbeattavel.com/vinci-italy-davinci-home.html).

## Bibliography

At the end of your paragraph or essay, you must list the sources you used. There are many types of citation styles. Among the most commonly used are APA, Chicago, and MLA, with MLA being the most common in the liberal arts and humanities fields. Ask your instructor which one you should use. The bibliography, or MLA Works Cited page at the end of your work, should include complete sources for all quotes and paraphrases, but also any source that helped you develop your work. Here are some guidelines for referencing different works using MLA:

SOURCE	INFORMATION TO INCLUDE	EXAMPLE
<b>Book</b>	Last name of author, first name. <i>Title of Book</i> . Publisher, year of publication.	Folse, Keith. <i>Vocabulary Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching</i> . University of Michigan Press, 2004.
<b>Online Article</b>	Last name of author, first name (if there is one). “ <i>Title of Web Page</i> .” Title of Website, Publisher, Date published, URL.	“ <i>Becoming a Vegetarian</i> .” Harvard Health Publishing, Harvard University, October 2009, updated December 4, 2017, <a href="http://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/becoming-a-vegetarian">www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/becoming-a-vegetarian</a> (Note that you should remove <a href="http://">http://</a> and <a href="https://">https://</a> from the URL.)
<b>Website</b>	Last name of author, first name (if there is one). “ <i>Title of Web Page</i> .” Title of Website, Publisher, Date published (if given), URL.	“ <i>The Complete Guide to MLA &amp; Citations</i> .” Citation Machine, a Chegg Service, Study Break Media, <a href="http://www.citationmachine.net/mla/cite-a-website">www.citationmachine.net/mla/cite-a-website</a> .
<b>Newspaper</b>	Last name of author, first name. “ <i>Title of Article</i> .” <i>Name of Newspaper</i> , Date, page numbers.	Smith, Steven. “What To Do in Case of Emergencies.” <i>USA Today</i> , December 13, 2008, 2–3.

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## TEST TAKING TIPS

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### 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 clear and accurate 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 that you can write about most easily, even if you do not believe in it. You receive points for your writing skill, not your personal beliefs.

### Word Choice

- Avoid using words such as *always*, *never*, *all*, and *none*. You cannot give enough proof for these words. Instead, use hedging words such as *probably*, *often*, *most*, *many*, *almost never*, and *almost none*. The modals *may*, *might*, and *could* are also used for hedging.
- 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 or data. 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.

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# PEER EDITING FORMS

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## Peer Editing Form for Outlines

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the purpose of the essay?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the thesis statement?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are the main points of development?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How many paragraphs are going to be in the essay?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you have any questions about the outline?  Yes  No

If yes, write them here: \_\_\_\_\_

## Peer Editing Form 1

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the topic sentence? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does the topic sentence have a controlling idea?  Yes  No

Write it and/or suggest one. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do all the supporting sentences relate to the topic sentence and controlling idea?

Yes  No

If no, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Write it and/or suggest one. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Are all the nouns in the correct form – singular or plural?  Yes  No

7. What do you like best about this paragraph?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Is there any place where you want more information?  Yes  No

If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

## Peer Editing Form 2

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the topic sentence? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does the topic sentence have a controlling idea?  Yes  No

Write it and/or suggest one. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do all the supporting sentences relate to the topic sentence and controlling idea?  Yes  No

If no, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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

Write it and/or suggest one. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Are transitional words and phrases correctly used?  Yes  No

If no, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

7. What do you like best about this paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Is there any place where you want more information?  Yes  No

If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

## Peer Editing Form 3

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the topic sentence? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the topic sentence have an effective controlling idea?  Yes  No

If yes, write it here: \_\_\_\_\_

If no, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the purpose of the paragraph? Check one.

- a. To classify
- b. To compare
- c. to explain causes and effects
- d. to present a problem and solution

4. Do all the supporting sentences relate to the topic sentence and controlling idea?  Yes  No

If no, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

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

If yes, write it here. \_\_\_\_\_

If no, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

6. What do you like best about this paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Is there any place where you want more information?  Yes  No

If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

## Peer Editing Form 4

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the purpose of the essay?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the introduction have an effective hook?  Yes  No

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Write it and/or suggest another one. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Is the thesis statement clear?  Yes  No

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what is it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Does each body paragraph have a topic sentence related to the thesis?  Yes  No

If no, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Does the essay have a logical conclusion?  Yes  No

Write it and/or suggest one. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What do you like best about this essay? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Peer Editing Form 5

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Does the essay focus on causes or effects? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the introduction have an effective hook?  Yes  No

Write it and/or suggest one. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Is the thesis statement clear?  Yes  No

If yes, what is it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Does each body paragraph have a topic sentence related to the thesis?  Yes  No

If no, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Does the essay have a logical conclusion?  Yes  No

Write it and/or suggest one. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What do you like best about this essay? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Is there any place where you would like more information?  Yes  No

If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Peer Editing Form 6

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How is the comparison essay organized: block method  point-by-point method

2. Does the introduction have an effective hook?  Yes  No

Write it and/or suggest one. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Is the thesis statement clear?  Yes  No

If yes, what is it? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Does each body paragraph have a topic sentence related to the thesis?  Yes  No

If no, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Does the essay have a logical conclusion?  Yes  No

Write it and/or suggest one. \_\_\_\_\_

6. What do you like best about this essay? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Is there any place where you would like more information?  Yes  No

If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

## Peer Editing Form 7

Reader: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What problem does this essay discuss? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Does the writer focus on one solution or multiple solutions? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Is the thesis statement clear?  Yes  No

Write it and/or suggest one. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Does each body paragraph have a topic sentence related to the thesis?  Yes  No

If no, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Does the essay have a logical conclusion?  Yes  No

Write it and/or suggest one. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Does the essay include a variety of sentence types?  Yes  No

7. Is there any place where you would like more information?  Yes  No

If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_