

WORDSMITH A GUIDE TO PARAGRAPHS

AND SHORT ESSAYS

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PAMELA ARLOV

Wordsmith

A Guide to Paragraphs and Short Essays

Seventh Edition



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Page Makeup: iEnergizer Aptara[®], Ltd.

Cover Designer: Pentagram
Cover Illustration: Christopher DeLorenzo
Manufacturing Buyer: Roy L. Pickering, Jr.
Printer/Binder: RR Donnelley/Crawfordsville
Cover Printer: Phoenix Color/Hagerstown

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Arlov, Pamela, author.

Title: Wordsmith: a guide to paragraphs and short essays: annotated instructor's edition/Pamela Arlov, Middle Georgia State University.

Description: Seventh Edition. | [Boston]: Pearson, [2019]

Identifiers: LCCN 2017054015 | ISBN 9780134758893 (paperback: student

edition) | ISBN 0134758897 (paperback : student edition)

Subjects: LCSH: English language—Paragraphs. | English language—Rhetoric. |

Report writing.

Classification: LCC PE1439 .A69 2019 | DDC 808 / .042 — dc23 LC record available at

https://lccn.loc.gov/2017054015

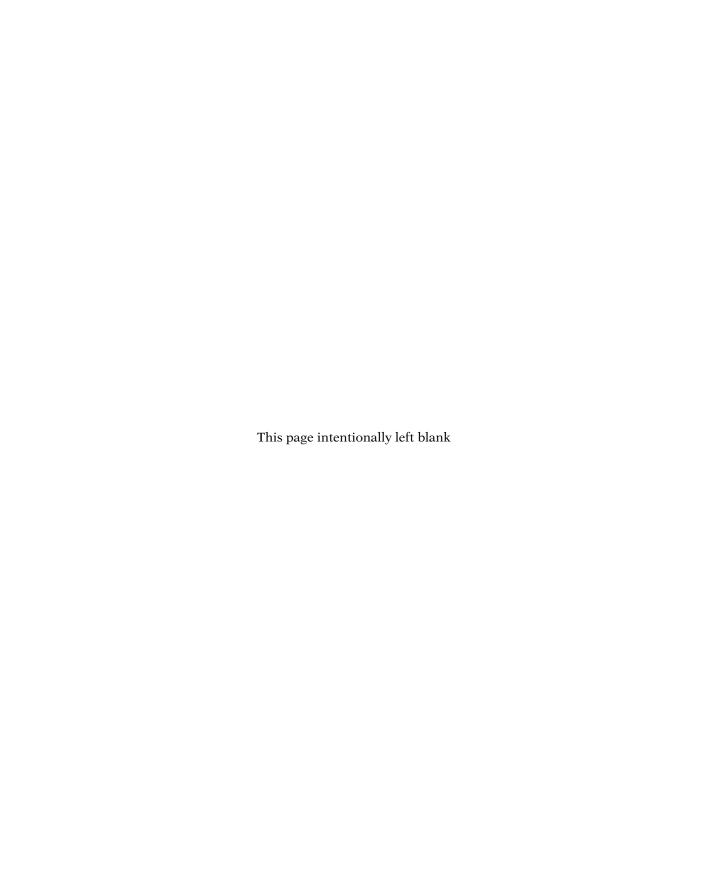
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Student Edition ISBN 10: 0-13-475889-7 Student Edition ISBN 13: 978-0-13-475889-3

Loose-Leaf Edition ISBN 10: 0-13-477152-4 Loose-Leaf Edition ISBN 13: 978-0-13-477152-6

Annotated Instructor's Edition ISBN 10: 0-13-477177-X Annotated Instructor's Edition ISBN 13: 978-0-13-477177-9 For the Friday Friends: Wendy Johnston, Sam Johnston, Ava Wilson, Paul Wilson, Susan Phillips, Glenda Wagner, and Alan Bickford.





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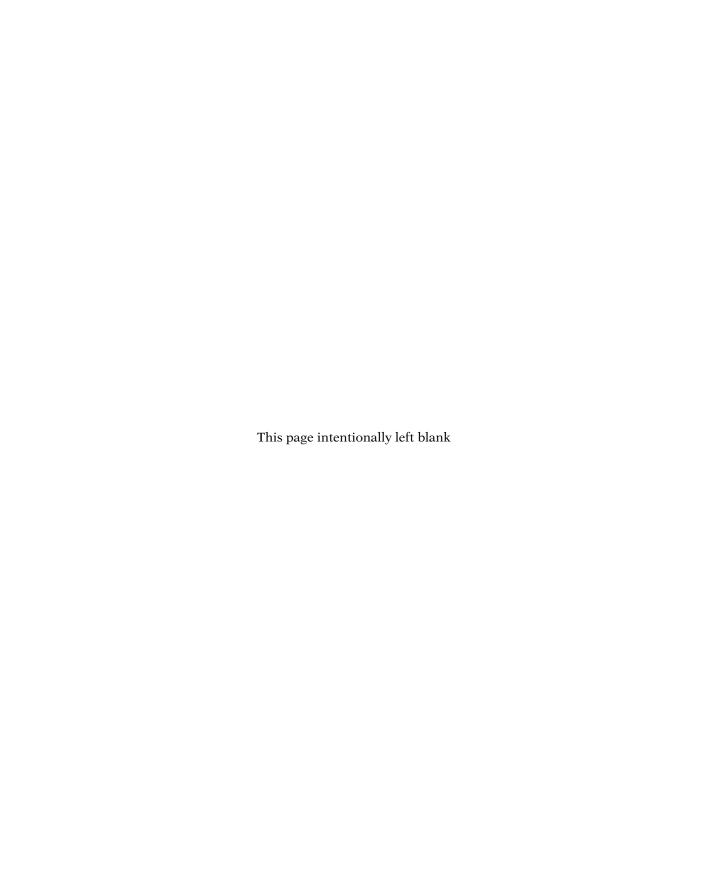
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Thank you for choosing *Wordsmith: A Guide to Paragraphs and Short Essays* as your textbook. Whether you are teaching from this text or learning from it, it is my hope that you will enjoy its simplicity. Writing itself is a remarkably complex process that incorporates the personality and experience of each writer and each reader. It also requires adherence to agreed-upon rules of grammar, punctuation, and form. Therefore, I have tried to make this book simple in its structure, straightforward in its language and presentation, and easy to use for both instructors and students.

Updates to the Seventh Edition

Many changes have been made in this seventh edition of *Wordsmith: A Guide to Paragraphs and Short Essays:*

Changes to Part 1, Composition

- You will find new exercises, images, assignments, and model paragraphs throughout the section.
- Chapter 8, Limiting and Ordering: Definition, Classification, and Process, contains a new essay, "Surrender at Appomattox" by Ulysses S. Grant.
- Chapter 11, Writing Summary Reports, has a new look. In addition to containing the latest MLA updates, it now contains a section on incorporating quotations into college essays. Because college writing focuses much more on quotations in the context of research than on quotations used with

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simple dialogue, all of the material on quotations and use of quotation marks now resides in Chapter 11.

Changes to Part 2, Grammar

- Each chapter in this section boasts something new: new questions, new exercises, new Grammar Alert! boxes, and/or new chapter openers.
- An additional paragraph-style editing exercise has been added to important areas where students are most likely to have problems and need extra work: Chapter 13, Subject-Verb Agreement, Chapter 15, Coordination and Subordination, Chapter 16, Run-on Sentences, Chapter 17, Sentence Fragments, Chapter 18, Pronoun Case, and Chapter 19, Pronoun Agreement, Reference, and Point of View.
- In many chapters, particularly Chapter 13 and Chapters 18 and 19, explanations and examples have been streamlined and simplified to enhance clarity without sacrificing coverage.

Changes to Part 3, Readings

• In addition to Ulysses Grant's "Surrender at Appomattox" in Chapter 8, four new readings have been added to the Readings section of the text. Barbara Ehrenreich's "Warning: This Is a Rights-Free Workplace" explores the world of the low-wage workplace and the ways in which it curtails workers' freedoms. In "Crossing Invisible Lines," Eugenia Vela writes of rehearsing for her green card interview and anticipating the questions that will be asked as she and her husband prove that their marriage is not just a sham so that she can get the card that allows her to remain in the United States. Mark Twain's classic "Two Ways of Seeing a River" details what is gained and what is lost as he develops expertise.

Features of Wordsmith: A Guide to Paragraphs and Short Essays

- The three-part layout allows the freedom to mix and match the writing chapters, grammar chapters, and readings.
- A structured yet flexible approach to writing encourages clarity and creativity.
- A direct, conversational, student-friendly approach is used throughout.
- Lighthearted chapter openings promote a positive and playful approach to learning.

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Part 1, Composition

Part 1, "Composition," takes the paragraph as its primary focus but provides an extensive chapter (Chapter 10) on the five-paragraph essay and a chapter (Chapter 11) on the summary report. The book begins with an overview of the writing process (Chapter 1), followed by a chapter on prewriting (Chapter 2). Planning and drafting, the next two steps in the writing process, are discussed in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. Chapter 6 deals with revising and proofreading.

Chapters 7, 8, and 9 present methods of development. I have sacrificed some flexibility by grouping the methods; let me explain why. The first reason is philosophical. I believe it is more realistic to group the modes because they are seldom used in isolation in "real-world" writing. Modes with a similar purpose are grouped together, and the optional "Mixed Methods Assignments" at the end of each chapter show how the modes can be used together in a single piece of writing. The second reason for grouping modes is more practical. I have found that no matter how hard I try, it is not possible to cover nine rhetorical modes in one term. Grouping them allows me to assign a chapter containing three modes and then deal with only one or two in depth. If all three rhetorical modes chapters are assigned, students are exposed to all nine modes even if they practice only a few.

Part 2, Grammar

Part 2, "Grammar," can be used in a variety of ways: with direct in-class instruction, in a lab setting, as a supplement, or for independent study. Part 2 also works well for instructors who want to address more difficult grammar topics in class while assigning easier material or review material for independent study.

In the grammar chapters, explanations are clear, and each topic is taken one skill at a time, with numerous practice exercises for each skill. At the end of each chapter are review exercises in increasing order of difficulty, ending with a paragraph-length editing exercise.

Part 3, Readings

Part 3, "Readings," offers essays written by professional writers. In any craft, the works of accomplished artisans can inspire the apprentice. These essays model writing at its best: entertaining, challenging, and thought provoking. Each reading is followed by a comprehension exercise that includes questions about content, questions about the writer's techniques, and related topics for discussion and writing. Diversity in authorship, subject matter, and rhetorical method is emphasized.

Instructor and Student Resources

Annotated Instructor's Edition for Wordsmith: A Guide to Paragraphs and Short Essays 7e ISBN 0-13-477177-X / 978-0-13-477177-9

Instructor's Resource Manual for Wordsmith: A Guide to Paragraphs and Short Essays 7e ISBN 0-13-477146-X / 978-0-13-477146-5

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Acknowledgments

I could not have written this book without the help, support, and collaboration of a great many people. I owe thanks to all the staff at Pearson, including Chris Hoag, VP of Portfolio Management, and Roxanne McCarley, Marketing Manager.

I thank the outstanding professionals at Ohlinger Publishing for the work they put into making this edition a reality. I am grateful to Bridget Funiciello, Lauren MacLachlan, and Corinna Dibble, program managers; to Joanne Dauksewicz, managing editor; and (for old times' sake) to Maggie Barbieri. It was also a privilege to work with Nancy Doherty Schmitt, development editor, who is not only analytical and insightful but also has the ability to keep an entire project in mind while maintaining laser focus on the smallest detail.

I was fortunate to work with copyeditor Kitty Wilson, who offered insights beyond mere punctuation and style.

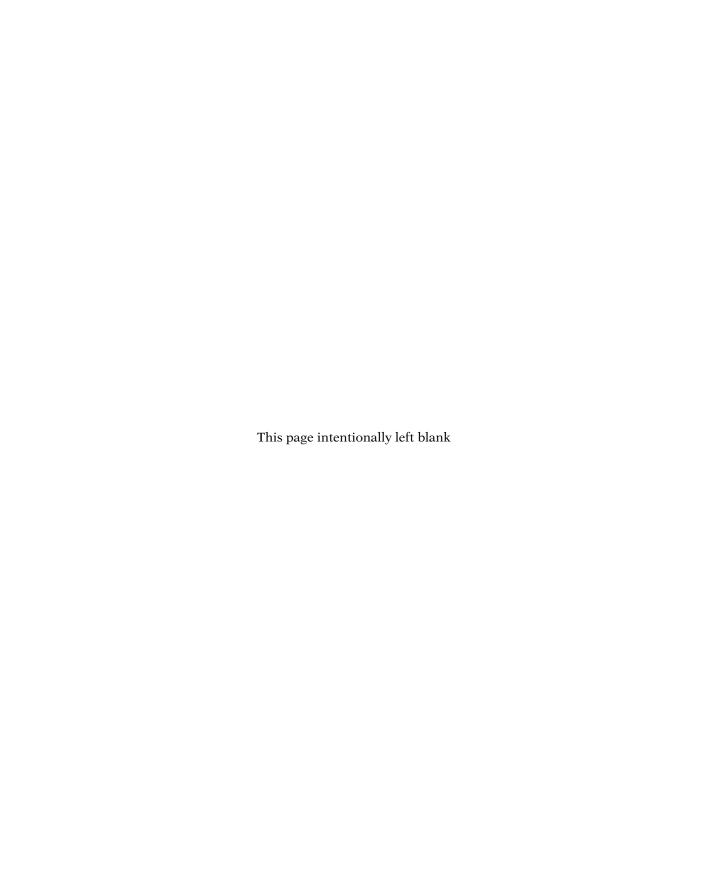
Much gratitude to Marianne Peters-Riordan of Aptara, Inc. for keeping production rolling along smoothly.

I thank the following people at Middle Georgia State University for their support of my work: Dr. Amy Berke, chair of the English Department, who runs the best and most overachieving department at Middle Georgia State University; Dr. Debra Matthews, associate dean for Undergraduate Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences; and Dr. Ron Williams, professor of chemistry and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

I also thank the reviewers, whose comments helped to shape the most recent edition. They are Joshua Mattern, Waubonsee Community College; Robin Miltimore, Columbia College of Missouri; Latasha Goodwyn, Tyler Junior College; Aaron Lelito, Erie Community College–City Campus; Diego Baez, Harry S Truman College; and Karin Burns, Los Angeles Pierce College.

Finally, I am forever grateful for the years I had with my late husband, Nick Arlov. He changed my life with his love, his support, and the sacrifices he made so that I could attend college.

Pamela Arlov Middle Georgia State College



PART 1: Composition

CHAPTER 1

The Writing Process



Learning Objectives

In this chapter, you will learn how to

- Use a five-step writing process.
- 2 Harness your creativity with less conventional strategies.

The gears turn inside your head. You write, plan, write some more. The gears may grind together, jam, and even stop. The process isn't perfect, but it works just the same. Soon, the gears mesh again. You analyze, revise, and proofread. Writing is a process.

Writing is not a single act but a **process** composed of several steps. As with most other processes—swinging a baseball bat, playing the clarinet, or surfing the Internet—it is sometimes easier to do than to analyze. When people try to analyze how they write, their descriptions of the process are uniquely their own. Yet from a sea of individual accounts, the same steps emerge.

Focus on the Writing Process: Completing the Steps



Admittedly, the "Sorry we're open" sign in the photograph is probably the product of someone's slightly warped sense of humor. But as it brings a smile to your face, it may also serve as a reminder of the need to proofread carefully.

Often, the temptation to let prewriting, revision, or proofreading slide is hard to resist. But every step contributes to the final product. Taking time to complete all the steps in the writing process can be your personal form of quality control.

Reflect on It

- **1.** Write down a process that you do that requires several steps.
- **2.** List the steps in the order in which you do them.
- **3.** Analyze the process. Is it a flexible process, like the writing process, that allows you to go back to a previous step if you need to? Or is it a more rigid process, like baking, which does not allow you to add an egg once the cake is in the oven?
- **4.** Finally, think about the importance of each step in your process. What would happen if you left out a step?

The Writing Process

1 Use a fivestep writing process.

One writer, Antonio, describes his writing process this way:

Well, first, I need time to think. If I have a while before the paper is due, I never start right away. Some people might call it procrastination, but it works for me. After the ideas have had time to percolate, I sit at the computer and just start writing. I just let my ideas flow, good or bad. If that doesn't work, sometimes I try a more organized approach, jotting down an outline. It's all a part of finding my focus. Then, once I know what I want to say, I just write. I am a slow writer because I try to get it right the first time. But I never do. If I look at it the next day, I see where the holes are—where I've left out details. I'm bad about that. So my second draft is always better than my first. When I'm finished, I check to make sure my commas are in the right place and my grammar is okay. Then I'm ready to turn it in.

Though everyone approaches writing a little differently, most people follow a process similar to Antonio's. He may not be aware of it, but he is following all of the steps in the **writing process**: prewriting, planning, drafting, revising, and proofreading.

Prewriting

"... first, I need time to think."

Prewriting covers a range of activity from casually thinking about your topic to going through a prewriting exercise to get your thoughts on paper. You will probably find yourself doing some form of prewriting throughout the writing process. When you are sitting at a traffic light and the perfect example to illustrate your point pops into your head, you are prewriting. When you realize that your paragraph isn't working the way you wanted and you stop to list ideas or figure out another approach, you are returning to the prewriting stage. Prewriting is thinking, and the more thought you put into a paper, the stronger it will be.

Planning

"It's all a part of finding my focus."

Careful and thoughtful **planning** makes a paragraph easier for you to write and easier for your readers to read. Your plan may include a topic sentence—your statement of the main idea. Because it states the main idea, the topic sentence forms the cornerstone of your paragraph. Besides a topic sentence, your planning will probably include an informal outline. An outline can be as simple as a list of the points you will develop in a paragraph. Don't be afraid that planning will waste your time. Careful planning—or lack of it—always shows in the final draft.

Drafting

"I just write."

Sometimes **drafting** is a quick process, with ideas flowing faster than you can get them down on paper. At other times, the process is slow and difficult. Your thoughts grind to a standstill, and you become frustrated, thinking you have nothing to say. If you get stuck during the drafting process, don't quit in frustration. The creative process is still at work. What is happening to you happens to all writers. Write through the problem, or, if necessary, return to the planning or prewriting stage.

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As you draft your paper, you should not worry about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Stopping to look up a comma rule will only distract you. Concentrate on ideas and save the proofreading for later.

Revising

"I see where the holes are."

In its Latin roots, the word *revising* means "seeing again." **Revising** is difficult because it is hard to see your work through the eyes of a reader. Writers often see what they *meant* to say rather than what they really said. Sometimes they take for granted background knowledge that the reader may not have. Because of these difficulties, it helps to put your draft aside for a day or so before trying to revise it. With twenty-four hours between writing and revising, you will see your paper more clearly. It is also helpful to ask someone else to look at your work—a friend, classmate, or relative. Ask the person to focus on the *content* of your paper rather than on grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Ask which ideas are clear and which ones need more explanation. Ask how well your examples illustrate your points. A reader's comments can help you see your paper in a new light.

Proofreading

"I check to make sure my commas are in the right place and my grammar is okay."

Proofreading is the final polish that you put on your paragraph. When you proofread, consider such things as grammar, spelling, and word choice. Replace vague words with specific words. Take out words that are not carrying their weight. Look at connections, making sure ideas flow smoothly from one sentence to the next. Because the stages of the writing process overlap, you have probably done some minor proofreading along the way. Before the final proofreading, set your paragraph aside for a while. Then proofread it once more to give it the luster of a finished piece.

Expect the Unexpected

If you go through the writing process expecting the steps to fall in order, like the steps involved in changing the oil in your car, you may think the process is not working. However, writing a paragraph is not a sequential process. It is a repetitive process, more like driving a car than changing its oil.

If you take a two-hundred-mile trip, the steps you follow might be described as "Turn on the ignition. Put the car in drive. Accelerate. Brake. Put the car in park. Turn off the ignition." Yet it is not that simple. During a two-hundred-mile drive, you repeat each step not once but several times, and you may even stop for rest or fuel.

Writing a paragraph works in the same way. You may list the steps as "prewrite, plan, draft, revise, proofread," but it is not that simple. You may change the order of the sentences as you write the first draft or correct a spelling mistake as you revise. Sometimes you repeat a step several times. You may even stop for rest or fuel, just as you do when you drive. Eventually, both processes will get you where you want to go.

EXERCISE 1-1

THE WRITING PROCESS

Answer the following questions to review your knowledge of the writing process.		
1.	The five steps in the writing process are,,,	
	, and	
2.	The "thinking step" in the writing process is called	
3.	The part of the writing process that involves correcting grammar and punc-	
	tuation is called	
4.	Major changes would most likely be made during the step in the	
	writing process.	
5.	True or false? The steps in the writing process often overlap	

The Writing Process: Stephanie's Paragraph

This section follows the development of one writer's paragraph from start to finish. In writing her paragraph, Stephanie went through several forms of prewriting, made two different outlines, conferred with members of her writing group and her instructor, and wrote two rough drafts. (Only the first of the two drafts is shown here because the final draft reflects all of the changes Stephanie made.) Before turning in her final draft, Stephanie also proofread the paragraph once from top to bottom and twice from bottom to top. Then she asked a member of her writing group to look over the final draft for any mistakes she might have overlooked.

The steps that Stephanie goes through are the steps that you will take as you learn the writing process. You will also share some of her frustrations. But, like Stephanie, you will find that what seems difficult at first is attainable, one step at a time.

Stephanie's Assignment

Stephanie's instructor handed out a list of three paragraph topics. Stephanie chose to write on this one: "Write about a piece of music or art that has a message for you. Don't just describe the piece of music or art; tell your reader how it affected you."

Stephanie's instructor suggested that the students prewrite, then make an outline. Earlier, the class had been divided into writing groups of four or five people who would help one another during the term. The instructor suggested that the writing groups meet to discuss each student's outline. Then students would write rough drafts and bring them to individual writing conferences with the instructor.

Stephanie's Prewriting

In class, Stephanie did a form of prewriting called *freewriting*. (For more information on freewriting and other forms of prewriting, see Chapter 2.) In this prewriting, Stephanie did not worry about grammar or spelling, but focused on gathering ideas. Stephanie's prewriting is reproduced here without correction.

I remember the day my art class went to an exhibit at the museum and I saw a piece of art—I don't know what to call it. Not a painting or a drawing, but something the artist had put together. Built. I was trailing behind the class and something just pulled me over into the corner where it was. It was just me and that piece of art, and when I lifted the curtain—Wow! I was so knocked out. I remember my art teacher used to talk about what art meant, and I never understood until that day. I felt all sorts of emotion. I think I'll go over to the Tubman this weekend and see if it's still there.

Later, Stephanie visited the museum and took the following notes:

"Beauty Standard" by Ce Scott

Black frame, masks placed at top & bottom. Each side has female figure tied at ankles, wrist, and eyes with golden cord. They have bodies like models—thin & beautiful. Masks are just blank—no real features. Frame has tiny words repeated

over and over "dark brown eyes big full lips flat wide nose." Velvet curtain—very mysterious—hangs there. Golden tassels hang down. "Mirror" embroidered on. Card says "Lift the curtain to see the image by which each of us should be judged."

Stephanie's Rough Draft

Ce Scott's artwork Beauty Standard is a piece of art with a message. It hangs in the Tubman African American Museum. It has a black frame decorated with female figures bound at the wrists, ankles, and eyes with golden cord. They have bodies like models, thin and beautiful. At the center of the frame is a black velvet curtain embroidered with the word "Mirror." On the frame, in small writing are the words "dark brown eyes big full lips flat wide nose." A card beside the work invites the viewer to lift the cloth and see "the image by which each of us should be judged." Underneath is a mirror—not the one held up by society, but one that reflects the image of whoever looked into it. The message is that the only beauty standard you need to meet is your own.

Stephanie's Writing Group Meets

Next, Stephanie met with her writing group. A transcript of the portion of the session dealing with Stephanie's prewriting and rough draft appears below.

Transcript: Writing Group Session, Monday, September 7

Eddie: Okay, who's the first victim? Tran? **Tran:** I don't want to go first. Stephanie?

Stephanie: I may as well. I think I need major help. (Stephanie passes out copies of her prewriting and rough draft,

and the group reads silently.)

Tran: I like it. You have good grammar and spelling.

Stephanie: You're just saying that because I got you off the

hook. You didn't have to go first. (Laughter.)

Kelly: I like it, too. But your prewriting is really different

from the rough draft.

Stephanie: Yeah, the prewriting doesn't have much detail. I had

to go back to the museum to look at the piece again

because I had forgotten a lot.

Eddie: Yes, but I like the prewriting. I can tell you were

really excited about the painting.

Kelly:

Stephanie: It's not a painting. I'm not sure what you'd call it.

Eddie: Whatever. But in the prewriting, I can tell it really

had an effect on you. In the rough draft, the excite-

ment disappears. It's just a description.

Kelly: Eddie is right. I mean, it's a good description, but it

needs more of you in it.

Stephanie: Yeah, I see what you mean.

> Tran: I chose the same topic, except I'm doing my para-

> > graph on music. Anyway, I remember that the assignment said to tell how the music or art affected you.

Stephanie: That's right! I do need to put more of my reaction in

there somehow. But won't that make it too long? Well, you heard what Dr. Pettis said. Plenty of

support.

Stephanie: Okay, guys. Thanks. You've been a big help. Anything

else?

Tran: Yeah. Will you help me with my grammar? (Laughter.)

Stephanie's Final Draft

Stephanie wrote a second rough draft. Then she met with her instructor for a conference before writing her final draft. Stephanie's final draft appears below.

Beauty Standard

I always thought of art as something to hang on a wall, never as something that had a message for me. Then last fall, at the Tubman African American Museum, I saw a piece of art called Beauty Standard by Ce Scott. It had a black frame decorated with female figures bound at the wrists, ankles, and eyes with golden cord. At the center of the frame hung a black velvet curtain embroidered with the word "Mirror." A card beside the work invited the viewer to lift the cloth and see "the image by which each of us should be judged." On the frame, in small writing, were the words "dark brown eyes big full lips flat wide nose." The words made me think of the sixties slogan, "Black is beautiful." It was a statement of pride and at the same time a demand to be included. At the time, society's beauty standard was a white one. Even though ideas of beauty now include different races, so many people are still left out—the old, those who are overweight, and even those who are just average. Suddenly, I felt angry and a little afraid to lift the velvet curtain.

I looked at the bound female figures and understood that society binds me, too. Hesitantly, I lifted the curtain. My own face, skeptical and a bit defiant, looked back at me. It was a mirror—not the one held up by society, but one that reflected the image of whoever looked into it. As clearly as if she were in the room, the artist was telling me, "The only beauty standard you need to meet is your own."

Stephanie's Approach to Writing—and Yours

Stephanie's final draft is the product of many hours' thought and work, and it is at least partly a result of her willingness to listen to the advice and comments of others.

Writing is a process of trial and error, and sometimes it feels like mostly error. Even experienced writers often find writing difficult, often wonder if they have anything worthwhile to say or the ability to say it. If you fear writing, even if you dislike it, you are not alone. But writing is a skill that improves with practice, and if you give it serious effort, you will amaze yourself. The following list, "Five Quick Takes on Writing," may help you put the task of writing in perspective.

Five Quick Takes on Writing

- **1.** Take it a step at a time. Writing is often a slow process, and it always requires thought.
- **2.** Take it seriously. The ability to write clearly and well will benefit you academically, professionally, and personally throughout your life.
- **3.** Take it easy. Don't expect yourself to be perfect.
- **4.** Take it to the limit. Stretch the limits of your imagination. Refuse to limit yourself by labeling yourself a poor writer.
- **5.** Take it with you. Writing is a vital part of the real world. Make it a part of your life.

Group Exercise 1-1 The Ideal Conditions for Writing



In a group of three or four, discuss the ideal conditions for writing. Think about questions such as these: What tools do you enjoy working with? Do you write best with music in the background or in absolute silence? Do you like having others around, or do you prefer to be alone? Do you need coffee or snacks when you

write? Do you need room to pace, or do you think best seated in front of a desk or computer? After each group member has contributed to the discussion, jot down the differences and similarities that exist among members of your group. Have a spokesperson report your group's findings to the rest of the class.

Writing for Right-Brained Writers

creativity with less conventional strategies.

Marness your This section is for those of you who rebel at the idea of a step-by-step approach such as the one described in this chapter and outlined in the writing assignment at the chapter's end. Although prewriting, planning, drafting, revising, and proofreading are identifiable steps in the writing process, there's no law that says everyone has to approach them in exactly the same way.

> For some people, a step-by-step approach does not come naturally. These people have a thinking style that is most often called "right-brained" or "holistic." The human brain is divided into halves, or hemispheres. According to one theory, most people are wired to rely heavily on the left hemisphere—the half that is responsible for logical, sequential, step-by-step thinking. Some people, however, rely more heavily on the right half of the brain, the part that is responsible for seeing the whole, for thinking in images, and for flashes of insight.

> The following questions may help you decide if you are a right-brained thinker.

- If you were asked to analyze how you write, would your answer be "I don't know. I just do it"?
- **2.** When you are required to turn in an outline, do you usually complete it after you have written the paper?
- If you were asked to describe your usual prewriting technique, would you say, "I never prewrite"?
- Do you often arrive at the right answer to math problems without following the steps?
- **5.** Do you have a hard time getting detail into your writing?
- **6.** Are you a "big-picture person" rather than a "detail person"?

If you answered "yes" to three or more of the questions above, you may have been seen as a rebel because you don't always follow a step-by-step, conventional approach to your work. But chances are, whatever other characteristics you possess, you are also a right-brained writer.

Right-brained people are often intuitive, seeing the big picture before others do. They have a strong creative streak. They sometimes grasp ideas easily without knowing why or understanding how. But unlike their persistent, listmaking, left-brained brothers and sisters, right-brained people often have trouble with the details. Planning isn't in their natures, and they tend not to have systems or specific steps to rely on. Whatever the task is, they "just do it."

If you are right-brained, does that mean that the methods in this text can't work for you? No. They *will* work. But you may have to work at them a bit harder. Give them a chance. Don't count them out until you have had enough experience with them to determine whether they work for you or not.

There are other strategies you can use, too. Unlike more conventional methods, the following tips were crafted with you in mind. These ideas may give you the extra boost you need to harness your creativity and let your right-brained way of thinking work for you, not against you. If your thinking style is left-brained, read on anyway. Anyone can benefit from this approach, even those for whom a logical, step-by-step approach already works well.

Tips for Right-Brained Writers

Find your most creative time and use it for writing. Some people find that they are at their best in the mornings. Others find that their creative juices begin to flow around 9:00 or 10:00 P.M. Writing will be easier if you schedule it to coincide with your natural period of creativity.

Use your rough draft as your prewriting. Since you think in terms of the whole, you may find it easier to do a rough draft than to prewrite. Consider your rough draft a form of prewriting, to be extensively revised before you turn it in.

Give your brain an assignment. When you have writing to do, delegate the task to your right brain and go on with other things. Here's how: At the beginning of the day, for instance, look over the assignment for a few minutes and think about where you might go with it. Then come back to it in the evening and reap the benefits of having worked on the topic subconsciously. Or think about your topic before you go to sleep at night, then write in the morning. This technique can work not only in prewriting but also in revising.

Realize that doing the grunt work is a necessary evil. Right-brained people are less likely to put in the time it takes to master the basics because doing so may be tedious and boring to them. They are also less likely to plan. But even the most brilliantly creative people need self-discipline. It's a hard lesson to learn, but mastering the basics is essential to creative work. Singers spend endless time on breath control and scales. Artists learn anatomy and basic drawing techniques. It is those efforts that set them free to do their best work. The payoff in mastering the basics is that once you have learned them, you can forget about them. They will be second nature. The same goes for planning. Once you have made a plan, you are free to do the creative work. Doing the grunt work now will pay off in more freedom later.

Make a commitment to writing. Many professional writers are right-brained and face the same resistance that you do. Invariably, they say that the only way they can maintain the extended effort it takes to write books, plays, or novels is to have a routine and to write every day.



WRITING ASSIGNMENT

PARAGRAPH 1 Writing and You

Write a paragraph describing your attitudes toward writing. Use the following steps.

Step 1: Prewrite. Jot down a few of the words that come to mind when you think of writing. Think of any significant experiences that have shaped your attitude toward writing. Consider your writing habits. Are you organized? Do you procrastinate?

Step 2: Plan. Look over your prewriting. Try to sum up your attitude toward writing in a single word or phrase, and then construct an opening sentence for your paragraph using that word or phrase. Use one of the following sentences, filling in the blank with your word or phrase, or construct your own sentence.

My attitude toward writing is		
When I think about writing, I feel		
My feelings about writing have always been		

Once you have constructed an opening sentence, decide how to organize your paragraph. A couple of possibilities are listed below.

- 1. Take a historical approach, describing the influences that have shaped your writing. Use chronological (time) order.
- **2.** Try a step-by-step approach, describing what you do and how you feel as you go through a writing assignment.

Complete the planning stage by making an outline that briefly lists the points you plan to make in support of your opening sentence.

Step 3: Draft. Write out a rough draft of your paragraph. Focus on expressing your ideas rather than on grammar and punctuation.

Step 4: Revise. Read over your rough draft. Have you left out anything important? Is each idea clearly expressed? Does the paragraph flow smoothly? Is the sequence of ideas logical and effective? If possible, ask a classmate to look over your rough draft with the same questions in mind. Then revise your paragraph, incorporating any necessary changes.

Step 5: Proofread. Check the flow of your paragraph and smooth out any rough spots. Make sure that each sentence is clear and logical. Check your grammar and spelling. If you use a grammar or spelling checker, don't automatically accept its suggestions; think about each choice. You are smarter than it is.

Learning Objectives Review

Use a five-step writing process.

What are the five steps in the writing process? (See pp. 2–10.)

The **five steps in the writing process** are prewriting, planning, drafting, revising, and proofreading.

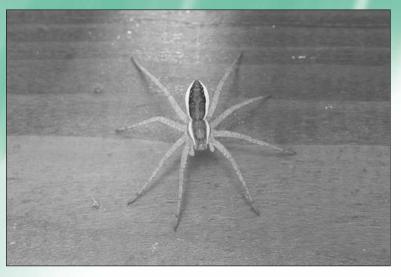
Harness your creativity with less conventional strategies.

How can I take advantage of less conventional writing strategies? (See pp. 10–12.)

Boost creativity by finding your best time to work, looking at the rough draft as a prewriting stage, giving your brain an assignment, being willing to work through the hard parts of writing, and making a commitment to writing.

CHAPTER 2

Preparing to Write



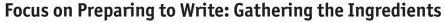
Just say NO to arachnophobia writer's block!

Learning Objectives

In this chapter, you will learn how to

- 1 Identify the advantages of prewriting.
- Use various prewriting strategies.

Many people suffer from arachnophobia—fear of spiders. Some people also develop a fear called "writer's block" when they are confronted with a blank sheet of paper or a blank computer screen. They fear that they will not be able to think of anything to say, or that if they do find something to say, it will be wrong. Writer's block happens to almost everyone at one time or another. It is not an indication of poor writing ability. In fact, writers who get writer's block are usually those who care about how they present themselves. One of the best defenses against this kind of fear is **prewriting**.





When a chef devises a new recipe, she goes through several steps. She collects the ingredients, assembles her tools, and prepares the dish, often changing—or revising—the recipe as she cooks. Although all the steps in cooking are important if the dish is to be successful, thinking it through beforehand is also essential for success.

Prewriting before an essay is much the same: You need to think about what

ideas, or "ingredients," you need to properly address the topic. Only when you have those ideas in place can you come up with just the right recipe for the essay you wish to write. So think of the prewriting stage as the stage in which you consider and write down every idea you want to cover in your essay. Of course, just like a chef preparing a dish, you can cut or add ingredients or change amounts as needed to make your essay a success.

Reflect on It

Aside from cooking, think about other things you do in life that have a "prewriting" stage. Describe those things and explain how they are similar to or different from the prewriting stage of an essay.

Prewriting

 Identify the advantages of prewriting. **Prewriting** is a playful "safety zone" that you can enter without fear. In prewriting, your purpose is to generate ideas, not to judge them, so you can't go wrong. Even if you don't have writer's block, prewriting can give your writing a jump-start.

Prewriting is the first step in the writing process. It is the act of sorting out your thoughts on a topic and finding out what you have to say about it. Depending on the assignment you are given, prewriting may also include narrowing your topic to a manageable size. Prewriting begins the moment you receive an assignment. Quietly, in the background, part of your mind begins to gather information. However, it usually takes a bit of effort to bring that information to the surface. The prewriting methods in this chapter can jump-start the writing process by helping you collect your thoughts on a topic and get them on paper.

Prewriting Methods

Use various prewriting strategies.

The aim of all **prewriting methods** is the same: to help you get ideas on paper. At this point in the writing process, it is not the quality of ideas that counts but the quantity.

When you are ready to prewrite, sit at the computer or in a comfortable spot with pen and paper. Relax your mind and body and remind yourself that prewriting is a playful exercise of the imagination and that it is okay to write down anything that comes to mind. As for the part of your mind that automatically jumps in to criticize what you think and say, give it some time off. Your purpose in prewriting is to put down every thought on your topic, no matter how ridiculous it seems. Later, you can discard what is not usable.

Some of the methods may feel awkward at first. But try them all. One will be right for you.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming, a listing technique, is one of the easiest prewriting techniques. To brainstorm, take a few minutes to list whatever comes to mind on your topic. Your purpose is not to censor or come up with the "right" items for your list but to generate ideas.

Example of Brainstorming

Here's how one writer, James, approached a brainstorming exercise on the topic "Describe a favorite holiday memory."

Last 4th of July—family reunion
Lake Sinclair
plenty of food
Aunt Jen's fried chicken
baked beans
over 100 relatives
Zachary's girlfriend!
saw Grandpa Bennett for the last time
checkered paper tablecloths
ants
kids running and screaming
fireworks over lake—color and noise
Tim stretched out in back seat asleep on the way home

When James looked at his prewriting, he was not sure he could use it all, but he knew he had captured some of the vivid images and important memories from his Fourth of July family reunion.

EXERCISE 2-1

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorm on one of the following topics; then see if you have an idea for a possible paragraph.

- **1.** The importance of money
- 4. Being an outsider

2. A holiday memory

- 5. A bad habit
- 3. An unexpected kindness

Freewriting

Freewriting is nonstop writing on a topic for a set time. The point of freewriting is that your flow of words never ceases, your pen never stops moving. If you have nothing to say, repeat your last thought again and again until a new thought replaces it. Do not worry about spelling, about clarity, or about whether your thoughts are logically connected. Just write.

Example of Freewriting

Emily did the following freewriting when her instructor asked the class to write on the topic "Discuss one of your pet peeves and why it annoys you."

Let's see. Right now I am peeved about having to write about a pet peeve. Ha! Seriously, I am an easygoing person and do not get too upset over anything. I don't like telephone salespeople. I don't like loud commercials. I don't like my ex-boyfriend. I don't like people who are late. I don't like it when a class or meeting is held up because some people are late. Yesterday, in my first-year orientation class, we had a quiz and when it was time for class to start, the instructor said, "We'll just wait a minute or two in case someone else comes in." Excuse ME, but I made it to class on time. Why should I wait for someone who is late? I can think of plenty of other examples. Is my ten minutes up yet? No. The minister at our church always starts services on time and it doesn't matter how many people come in late but when my cousin got married the ceremony was supposed to be at 7 P.M. and it did not start until 7:30. People just kept coming in, right up until about 7:25. I think spending a lot of money on a wedding is a waste—they should just buy furniture or something.

Exercise 2-2

FREEWRITING

Freewrite on one of the following topics; then see if you have a focus for a possible paragraph.

- 1. What is your pet peeve?
- 2. Would you ever get (or do you have) a tattoo?
- 3. Is your social media persona "the real you" or "the filtered you"? Why?
- 4. What is your biggest complaint about college professors?
- 5. What can you tell about a person from the way he or she dresses?

Invisible Writing: A Computer Technique

Invisible writing is a freewriting technique especially for writing on a computer. Turn on your computer, and once you have a blank document in front of you, type the words "Invisible Writing" at the top of the page. Then turn your monitor off or adjust the contrast until the words are no longer visible and your screen is completely dark.

Freewrite for five to ten minutes. It is especially important not to worry about spelling errors. With this method, you can hardly avoid them. At first, you may feel strange, even anxious, pouring your words into the dark computer screen. Soon, though, your fingers and your thoughts will start to fly.

EXERCISE 2-3

INVISIBLE WRITING

Prewrite by applying invisible writing to one of the following topics.

- **1.** Taking chances
- 2. Superstitions
- **3.** Television or radio commercials
- 4. Driving habits
- 5. Ending a friendship

Clustering

Clustering is a technique designed to boost your creativity by stimulating both hemispheres of the brain. The left hemisphere, or "left brain," is used in logical tasks that move in 1-2-3 order. When you count to ten, write a sentence, or make an outline, you use your left brain. Your right brain, on the other hand, specializes in tasks involving visual images and intuition. Since clustering involves both listing (a left-brain task) and drawing (a right-brain task), it thoretically allows you to tap both your logical side and your creative side.

To cluster, begin with a circled word—your topic. From there, map out associations. Some people branch ideas from the central word like quills on a porcupine. Others group ideas when they cluster, with smaller clusters branching out from larger ones. When this type of cluster is finished, it resembles a diagram of a molecule in a biology textbook.

What your diagram looks like does not matter. In clustering, what matters is that you get your thoughts on paper using both images and words.

Look at the following examples of clustering.

Example of Porcupine Clustering

Brandon did his "porcupine" cluster on the topic "Your chosen career."



Example of Molecule Clustering

Here is Kara's "molecule" cluster on the topic "Internet shopping."



Exercise 2-4

CLUSTERING

Draw a cluster diagram using one of the following topics.

- Credit cards
- 2. Your favorite sport
- 3. Your best or worst date
- 4. Advantages or disadvantages of public transportation
- **5.** Your eating habits

Outlining

Outlining is often the last step in the prewriting process. Once you have used one of the other prewriting methods, making an outline will take you one step further in the writing process. Forget about the formal outline with its Roman numerals, ABCs, and 123s. A short paragraph calls for a short outline. Your outline may be just a few words jotted on a page, or it may include a topic sentence and a brief listing of support.

Example of Outlining

Below is Emily's outline of her paragraph describing her pet peeve.

Topic Sentence: I am an easygoing person, but it annoys me when a meeting, class, or other event does not begin on time because some people are late.

Freshman orientation class—quiz delayed because of people who were late.

Meeting with friends in restaurant—waited fifteen minutes to order until Kylie came.

Cousin's wedding—delayed a half hour because of late arrivals.

Summary sentence: Classes, meetings, and other gatherings should not be arranged for the convenience of latecomers, but for those who care enough to arrive on time.

EXERCISE 2-5

OUTLINING

Using one of the topics on which you have done a practice prewriting, make an outline for a paragraph.

Journal Writing

Journals are "daily writings"—the word *journal* comes from *jour*, the French word for *day*. Journals are usually composed of informal writings on a variety of subjects. **Journal writing** allows you to experiment with the techniques you are learning in your writing class. In a journal, the only form of writing you should avoid is "diary mode." An "I-got-up-I-fed-the-dog-I-went-to-school" format makes for dull writing and even duller reading. Write about issues that matter to you. Tell your dreams. Describe your grandfather's toolshed. Work toward detailed writing that follows a logical pattern.

Whether or not you receive credit for it in class, make journal writing a habit. Practice is the only thing that is guaranteed to make you a better writer. Courses and texts are of limited value without time spent alone with a computer or pen and paper. If you think, "It won't matter. I'll never be a good writer," ask yourself this: How good a driver would you be if the only driving you had done was in a driver education course? You *can* be a better writer. Journal writing will start you on your way.

Exercise 2-6

KEEP A JOURNAL

Choose one of the following topics and write a journal entry on it.

- 1. What are some reasons for keeping a journal or diary?
- **2.** Write about your name. Is there a story behind it? Would you change your name if you could?
- **3.** If you were cleaning out your mental closet, what would you most want to throw away?
- 4. Who is your role model? Why?
- **5.** Is it better to have an assertive, in-your-face personality or to be laid back and slow to show anger?
- 6. Other than food, water, and sleep, what must you have every day? Why?
- 7. If every job or career paid exactly the same salary, what kind of work would you choose?
- **8.** Discuss one item that fits this description: "It plugs into the wall, and I couldn't live without it."
- 9. Do you have a phobia? How do you deal with it?
- **10.** If you had to live without your phone, how would you spend your extra time?
- 11. If you could have one talent that you do not now possess, what would it be?
- **12.** If you could bring one fictional character to life (for whatever reason—to be your friend, to benefit humanity, or to solve a problem), who would it be?

- 13. If you could travel to any place in the world, where would you go?
- **14.** Describe one effective method you use to reduce stress.
- **15.** Describe the one place that, for you, is "heaven on Earth."
- **16.** What can you tell about people from the way they carry themselves—that is, the way they stand, sit, or move?
- 17. Is it better to have a wide circle of casual friends or just a few close friends?
- 18. Describe your general style of dealing with problems. Do you meet problems head on, or do you hide your head in the sand and hope they will go away? Do you enlist the help of others, or do you try to solve your problems alone? Illustrate your journal entry with at least one example.
- **19.** Which is more important, independence or security?
- **20.** If you could invent something, what would it be?



PROGRESSIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Begin by choosing one of the topics that follow; it will serve as the basis for your first paragraph. In this chapter, you will complete prewriting for the paragraph. Throughout the next four chapters, each progressive writing assignment will take you a step further toward a paragraph. By the time you have finished the final assignment, you will have completed all the steps in the writing process and will have a complete paragraph.

Prewriting

In this chapter, your progressive writing assignment is a prewriting assignment. Choose one of the following topics—one you would like to write a paragraph about—and follow the instructions.

Topic 1: Taking Advice

Sometimes free advice is good advice, and sometimes, as the old saying goes, it's worth exactly what you paid for it. Discuss the result of taking a specific piece of advice from a friend or family member. Prewrite on the topic, using one or more of the methods outlined in this chapter. As you prewrite, consider the different types of advice you have been offered: bad advice, good advice, advice that got you in trouble, advice that cost you money. Consider the different people who have offered you advice. Taking a broad approach allows you to consider many different possibilities.

WHAT Now?

After you have completed your prewriting, you should have more material than you will be able to use. To prepare for the next step in the progressive writing assignment, choose the piece of advice that you want to focus on in your paragraph.

Topic 2: Attending College

Here you sit, in a college classroom. Prewrite on your decision to attend college, using one or more of the methods outlined in this chapter. As you prewrite, consider all the factors that surrounded your decision. What were they? Some people are motivated to attend college by the expectations of family members or friends. Some are trying to put the past behind them; others are trying to fulfill lifelong ambitions. Some people arrive certain of success; others fear failure. Consider everything surrounding your decision to attend college: your reasons, your expectations, the reaction of friends and family members, and your own hopes and fears.

WHAT Now?

After you have completed your prewriting, you should have more material than you will be able to use. To prepare for the next step in the progressive writing assignment, decide which factors you want to focus on.

Topic 3: Your Greatest Fear

No one is immune to fear; even Superman steers clear of Kryptonite. Prewrite on your greatest fear (or fears), using one or several of the methods outlined in this chapter. Consider that fears sometimes have a strong basis in reality: A person whose parents and grandparents died young may have a fear of not living long enough to see her children grow up. Just as often, though, fears seem irrational. A person with a steady job and a comfortable home may fear being homeless. Write down your fears, both rational and irrational, and try to determine what lies behind them. Consider also how you deal with your fears. Do you have a specific method for overcoming them, or do you just live with them?

WHAT Now?

After you have completed your prewriting, you should have more material than you will be able to use. To prepare for the next step in the progressive writing assignment, decide which fear you want to focus on in your paragraph.

Topic 4: You and Your Smartphone.

How do you use your smartphone? Prewrite on the topic, using one or more of the methods outlined in this chapter. Then try to place those ways in categories. For instance, playing games and listening to music might be categorized as "entertainment." Looking up weather reports or using a GPS app might be "practical." Texting while driving would be "dangerous." You will find this process of categorizing useful later, when you write your topic sentence.

WHAT Now?

After you have completed your prewriting, you should have more material than you will be able to use. To prepare for the next step in the progressive writing assignment, decide which ways of using your smartphone you want to focus on in your paragraph.

Learning Objectives Review



LO1 Identify the advantages of prewriting.

How can prewriting help you become a better writer? (See p. 15.)

Prewriting helps you become a better writer by opening your mind to the topic at hand, preventing writer's block, building confidence, sparking creativity, and helping you know when a topic is not worth pursuing.



LO2 Use various prewriting strategies.

What are some methods of prewriting? (See pp. 16–22.)

Brainstorming, freewriting, focused freewriting, invisible writing, and **clustering** are prewriting techniques. Outlining and journal writing are methods of organizing and generating ideas that are also part of the prewriting process.

CHAPTER 3

Writing Paragraphs: Direction



A Silly Riddle

How is a topic sentence like a compass?

- a. It always points to magnetic north.
- b. It's useful on a hiking expedition.
- c. It shows exactly where you are headed.

Learning Objectives

In this chapter, you will learn how to

- 1 Define "direction," one of the four characteristics of an effective paragraph.
- 2 Give a paragraph direction with topic sentences.
- Write a topic sentence that fits the paragraph.
- 4 Place a topic sentence.

The riddle above may be silly, but the comparison it makes is valid. A topic sentence *is* like a compass. It shows your reader exactly where your paragraph is headed, and it also helps to keep you on track as you write your paragraph. It gives **direction** to your paragraph.





What does the establishment shown in the photo sell? How do you know?

Retailers are not in the mystery business. The name of a store, its window display, and sometimes even the building design trumpet to all who pass exactly what is inside. Topic sentences do much the same thing. They express the main idea of the paragraph and, in doing so, let readers know what is inside.

Reflect on It

When someone writes a paragraph or an essay, one of the principal aims is clarity. Certainly, topic sentences help, but clueing the reader in to the topic starts with the title. In the Readings section of this book, look at some of the titles and quess what the readings are about. Then read far enough to see if you are right.

Characteristics of an Effective Paragraph

Define "direction," one of the four characteristics of an effective paragraph.

Direction is an essential characteristic of effective writing. Like a GPS that lays out your route before you start your journey, a topic sentence sets the course of your paragraph. Before exploring the topic sentence further, look at the four characteristics of effective writing.

- **1. Direction** means that the paragraph has a strong topic sentence that states the main idea and sets the course that the paragraph will follow.
- 2. Support means that the paragraph contains a specific and detailed discussion of the idea stated in the topic sentence.
- 3. Unity means that the paragraph makes one main point and sticks to that point.
- **4. Coherence** means that the ideas in the paragraph are logically connected and easy to follow.

Topic Sentences: Setting the Direction of a Paragraph

2 Give a paragraph direction with topic sentences. A topic sentence provides direction by stating the main idea of a paragraph and answering the reader's unspoken question, "What is your point?"

Functions of a Topic Sentence

A topic sentence does two things. First of all, it states the *general topic* of the paragraph. Second, it makes a *specific point about the topic*.

Example Topic Sentences

topic specific point about

Carrying a homemade lunch instead of eating out the topic benefits.

topic specific point about the topic

Knowing how to research using a computer is an essential skill in college.

specific point topic

✓ There are many creative ways to hide thinning hair.

EXERCISE 3-1 ANALYZING TOPIC SENTENCES

In each of the following topic sentences, underline the topic and double-underline the specific point the writer is making about the topic.

- 1. Stromboli's Italian Grill is my favorite restaurant.
- **2.** A successful letter of complaint has three essential elements.
- **3.** My brother's fondness for loud music irritates the rest of the family.
- **4.** The woman who lives next door is incurably nosy.
- 5. Poor organization can make studying difficult.

EXERCISE 3-2 ANALYZING TOPIC SENTENCES

In each of the following topic sentences, underline the topic and double-underline the specific point the writer is making about the topic.

- 1. Peer pressure can weaken even the strongest will.
- **2.** My experience working at the Burger Basket convinced me to avoid fast-food places.
- 3. Trying to find information on the Internet can be frustrating.
- 4. Gas prices vary in different parts of town.
- **5.** My vacation will give me a chance to work around the house.

EXERCISE 3-3 COMPLETING TOPIC SENTENCES

Complete the following topic sentences. Then underline the topic and double-underline the point about the topic.			
1.	Taking a Zumba class		
2.	is something no home should be without.		
3.	In the morning, helps me face the day.		
4.	gets more use than any other piece of furniture in my house.		
5.	To avoid last-minute cramming for tests,		

EXERCISE 3-4 WRITING TOPIC SENTENCES

Write five topic sentences. Underline the topic. Then double-underline your point about the topic.				
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Writing Topic Sentences That Fit

3 Write a topic sentence that fits the paragraph.

A topic sentence provides direction by precisely outlining the territory the paragraph will cover, and so it must fit the paragraph exactly. A topic sentence is *too broad* if it outlines more territory than a paragraph can comfortably cover. A topic sentence is *too narrow* if it draws the boundaries of the paragraph uncomfortably small by focusing on some fact that would make a good supporting detail but does not lend itself to development.

Example of a Topic Sentence That Is Too Broad

Computers have changed modern society.

This topic sentence is too broad. It promises more than one paragraph can deliver. Think of all the ways computers have changed modern life: They have changed the way stores keep track of inventories, the way banks work, and the way groceries are checked out. They have created new jobs and made others obsolete. They have changed the way we communicate with each other and have increased the ways that we can keep up with friends and relatives around the world. They have altered our ideas about which skills are essential and have raised new concerns about privacy and access to information. The topic "how computers have changed society" could easily be the subject of a book.

Example of a Topic Sentence That Is Too Narrow

My computer has three USB ports.

This topic is too narrow. It tells the reader that the writer will discuss a specific computer, her own, and that the focus will be the computer's USB ports. Although the sentence might work as a supporting point in a paragraph, it is too narrow to be a topic sentence. A topic sentence that is too narrow is a dead-end statement, a fact that does not invite exploration. A good topic sentence opens a door to discussion.

Example of an Effective Topic Sentence

✓ A computer can link a disabled or homebound person to the outside world.

This topic sentence is neither too broad nor too narrow. Within this paragraph, the writer can discuss how a computer helps a disabled person to bank or shop online. She can tell how a computer links a homebound person to people and information sources around the world. The sentence opens a door to an area of discussion and exploration that is neither too narrow nor too broad to develop in one paragraph.

Exercise 3-5

ANALYZING TOPIC SENTENCES

Each set of sentences below contains one topic sentence that is too broad, one that is too narrow, and one that would make a good topic sentence for a paragraph. In the blank to the left of each sentence, label it TB (too broad), TN (too narrow), or TS (topic sentence).

Set 1 a. The functions of a bank are many and varied. b. Bank fees seem to target lower-income customers. c. My checking account is with First National Bank.

Set 2		
	a.	My brother Simon often stays awake until 2:00 or 3:00 A.M.
	b.	My brother Simon is a night owl.
	c.	My brother Simon has different levels of energy at different times of the day, week, month, and year.
Set 3		
	a.	Ordering merchandise online has several advantages.
	b.	I received a promotional email from Land's End today.
	c.	American businesses thrive in the digital age by maintaining a strong presence online and in social media.
Set 4		
	a.	Coping with my father's illness has been difficult for my family.
	b.	Life has its ups and downs.
	c.	During a recent hospital stay, my father's room number was 233.
Set 5		
	a.	The commercials for Mercedes project a classy image of the car.
	b.	CNN and MSNBC are news channels.
	c.	Television exerts a positive influence on American society.

EXERCISE 3-6 ANALYZING TOPIC SENTENCES

Each set of sentences below contains one topic sentence that is too broad, one that is too narrow, and one that would make a good topic sentence for a paragraph. In the blank to the left of each sentence, label it TB (too broad), TN (too narrow), or TS (topic sentence).

or TS (topic sentence).			c sentence).
	Set 1		
		a.	My cat has a marking on her back that looks like the number three.
	1	b.	Training a dog to sit on command is a simple process.
		c.	Pets are wonderful.
	Set 2		
		a.	Housing costs vary widely across the United States.
	1	b.	A one-bedroom apartment in the Aspen Forest apartment complex costs \$750 per month.

	c.	A first-time homebuyer should consider several factors when searching for a home.
Set 3		
	a.	Gasoline stations have been a part of the American landscape for almost a century.
	b.	In my grandfather's time, gasoline cost fifty cents per gallon.
	c.	Gasoline stations of my grandfather's time offered services that are unheard of today.
Set 4		
	a.	Requiring fingerprints of citizens who obtain driver's licenses is a bad idea.
	b.	Many laws are unjust and should be repealed.
	c.	In some states, a driver's license must bear the driver's fingerprint.
Set 5		
	a.	Fish are fascinating creatures.
	b.	My sister's angelfish is named Gabriel.
	c.	An aquarium is like a small entertainment center for the home.

Group Exercise 3-1 Writing a Topic Sentence



Have you had enough test *taking*? Form a test-*making* team with two or three of your classmates and write an exercise similar to Exercise 3-6. Choose three to five of the following topics, and for each topic, write a topic sentence that is too broad, one that is too narrow, and one that would fit a paragraph. Then trade tests with another group and see how your group's performance—as test makers and as test takers—stacks up against theirs.

Topics

- 1. Sunscreen
- 2. Eggs
- 3. Parking tickets
- 4. Vending machines
- 5. Schools

- 6. Furniture
- 7. Flowers
- 8. Your grandmother
- 9. Fitness trackers
- 10. Sloths

Where Should a Topic Sentence Go?

4 Place a topic sentence.

If you look carefully at the paragraphs in textbooks, essays, and news stories, you will see that a topic sentence may appear anywhere in a paragraph. However, the most common position for a topic sentence is at or near the beginning of a paragraph. Placing the topic sentence at the beginning of a paragraph lets your reader know exactly where the paragraph is going and gives the impression that you have thought about the organization of your paragraph. And you *will* have thought about it. The very act of constructing a topic sentence places your focus on the main idea of your paragraph and helps keep you on track in supporting that idea.

Topic Sentence First

Placing the topic sentence first is often your best choice. A topic sentence conveys your main idea and provides a strong, clear opening for your paragraph.

Example of a Paragraph with the Topic Sentence First

Since I began carrying a homemade lunch to my parttime job at the mall, I have discovered the benefits of **brown-bagging.** The most obvious benefit is that bringing a lunch from home saves money. At the mall's food court, the price of a sandwich and chips or a slice of pizza and a soft drink can easily exceed five dollars. But for less than ten dollars, I can buy a loaf of bread and enough pimento cheese and peanut butter to make lunches for a week or more. Another benefit of brown-bagging—an unexpected one—is that I feel less rushed. Before I started bringing my lunch, my thirty-minute lunch break was consumed by a mad dash to the food court to stand in line, find a table, gulp down my food, and rush back to work. Now, I take a leisurely lunch in the employee break room, reading a magazine as I eat. Usually, I have an extra fifteen minutes to read and relax or take a stroll around the mall's upper level. I also benefit from the improved nutrition of my homemade lunches. Turkey on whole wheat bread or even a peanut butter and jelly sandwich from home is lower in fat and calories than a hamburger or a slice of pizza from the food court. For me, brown-bagging means that a healthier wallet, a more relaxed lunch break, and improved nutrition are "in the bag."

Topic Sentence after an Introductory Sentence

Sometimes, you may wish to include background material before you state the main point of your paragraph. In these instances, condense the background material to one introductory sentence. After your introductory sentence, state the topic sentence.

Example of a Paragraph with the Topic Sentence after an Introductory Sentence

Baldness runs in my family, and at thirty-five, I have come to accept my hair loss. However, as my hairline receded over the years, I discovered several creative ways to hide thinning hair. My first solution to baldness was to wear a hat. Baseball caps in summer and knit caps in winter were only the beginning. During an "arty" phase in my mid-twenties, I wore a beret, and in the back of a closet somewhere, I still have a dashing Indiana Jones-style hat. Another method I used to hide my thinning hair was the "comb-over"—combing hair over a bald spot. In the earliest stages of baldness, the method worked well for me. But as my hairline receded further, I stopped using the comb-over. I had seen too many men who looked ridiculous with just a few strands of foot-long hair covering a completely bald dome. The best method I have found to hide thinning hair is the one I use now. I have shaved my head completely. Now, no one can tell whether I am bald by nature or by choice. Shaving my head has helped me to get over my embarrassment at being bald. I have finally come to realize that bald is beautiful.

Exercise 3-7

FINDING TOPIC SENTENCES

One of the following paragraphs begins with an introductory sentence, while the other starts with the topic sentence. Underline the topic sentence in each paragraph.

Paragraph A

It has been said that fashion models are essentially walking, strutting, sashaying coat hangers to showcase designer fashions and that thin models show off clothing best. But as models went from thin to emaciated, public outcry arose against showcasing designer fashions on models who barely have any flesh on their prominent bones. Some of the outcry followed the anorexia-related deaths of models, including the

2010 death of French model Isabelle Caro, who was featured on several anti-anorexia billboards. Many who protest the presence of rail-thin models on the catwalk cite the influence on preteen and teenage girls, who may try to mimic an unrealistic and unhealthy body image. Health experts worry about the damage that compulsive dieting can wreak on still-developing bodies. The controversy has spilled into the fashion industry, which has responded with a greater awareness of the issue, with some designers, model agencies, and fashion shows refusing to use models whose body mass index (BMI) falls below a certain level. Plus size models (who generally wear between a size 8 and a size 12) are appearing more frequently in magazines, a hopeful sign. In February 2017, *Vogue* featured a plus size model, Ashley Graham, on its cover, a move that further suggests that the fashion industry is taking public opinion seriously.

Paragraph B

My brothers, Eric and Michael, are very different in their attitudes about money. Eric and his wife, Alexis, believe in living for today. They have a new house on the north side of town, a new sport utility vehicle, and a two-year-old Volvo. Their clothes are always designer labels in the latest fashions, and their home is a showplace of fine furniture. But they seldom have time to enjoy these things because they both work two jobs to pay off the massive debt they have accumulated. It is as though their possessions own them. My brother Michael goes a bit too far in the opposite direction. He puts every spare penny away for the future. Though he has a good job, he drives a thirteen-year-old car that rattles as if only habit is holding it together. He argues constantly with his wife, who simply wants decent clothes for herself and their children. Worse yet, he insists on buying nothing but practical gifts. I thought Kim would divorce him when he gave her a handheld vacuum for her birthday so that she could vacuum the inside of her car at home instead of taking it to the car wash. My two brothers agree on politics, football, and religion, but they will never agree about money.



PROGRESSIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

If your instructor has assigned the progressive writing assignment, you have already completed your prewriting for one of the topics below. Throughout the next three chapters, each progressive writing assignment will take you a step further toward a paragraph. By the time you have finished the final assignment, you