

BUILDING ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS



Lin Cui
Harper College

Building-Academic-Writing-Skills-
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Licensing

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Introduction to the Book

1

Welcome to “Building Academic Writing Skills”!

Shaped by learners’ needs and goals for accurate and fluent expressions in their academic study, this book provides carefully targeted and sequenced instructions in academic writing and editing for intermediate level English as a Second Language (ESL) students. It prepares them for the advanced level ESL and college level courses.

I. Organization of the Book

The book consists of four parts, with a total of twenty units and five appendices.

- **Part I, Unit 1 through 3**

Academic writing basics, with a focus on the nature of academic writing, misconceptions about writing, the writing process, and the characteristics of paragraphs

- **Part II, Unit 4 through 6**

Paragraph writing skills and essay introduction, with a focus on enumerative paragraphs, narrative paragraphs, and five – paragraph essays

- **Part III, Unit 7 through 20**

Editing / grammar skills, with a focus on sentence structures with punctuation, verbs, nouns, pronouns, word forms, and word orders

- **Part IV, Appendix A through F**

Information on the Non-Stop Non-Translation (NSNT) approach, weekly writing prompts, punctuation, capitalization, irregular verbs, and answer key. (The answer key is available to instructors.)

II. Features of the Book and Ways to Use them

Consistent organization

All units begin with learning objectives and a warm-up activity or pretest. All units end with unit review practice and a summary. Within each unit, scaffolding is provided, starting with basic concepts and strategies as well as examples followed by exercises and applications. Challenging words and their parts of speech are explained in context. Where appropriate, I have also included brief reviews of previously learned concepts as well as links to the related units within the book.

Flexibility in content “mix-and-match”

This book is designed as an intermediate level ESL writing textbook, with minimum additional supplements needed. It closely aligns with the intermediate level writing (Writing III) curriculum requirements in the ESL & Linguistics Department at Harper College. However, other programs and institutions can easily adapt the contents to meet their needs. The writing-focused units (Part I and II) and the editing / grammar focused units (Part III), though linked with many cross-references, are separate to allow for the maximum flexibility in “mixing and matching” the order of information to be presented. Some units can also be used for students’ self study. A sample schedule is provided below for reference.

Contextualized language use in high interest subjects

I have made efforts to present meaningful, contextualized language models whenever possible, especially in Unit 7 through 19. There are engaging themes and authentic materials relevant to students’ lives, such as study in the U.S., winter fun in Chicago, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), New Food Plate Guidelines, social media, citizen science, customs around the world, and many more. In units where a unifying theme is not feasible, I have explored contextualized language use within segments of each unit.

Training in thinking in English with additional weekly writing prompts

My Non-Stop Non-Translate (NSNT) free writing approach is introduced in Appendix A. It is a tried-and-true method I have used for many years to help my students overcome their first language interference while cultivating their habit of thinking and writing in English. Besides multiple writing topics in each unit, I have included in Appendix A eight to ten prompts in each week of the semester and links to more prompts, with the hope that students will continue this endeavor beyond this course in their efforts to attain proficiency in writing. I recommend that Appendix A be explained in the beginning of the semester and applied throughout the course. A writing practice in NSNT is given at the end of each unit.

Ample writing samples

The book contains numerous original, quality paragraph and essay samples, many of which were written by my former Writing III students. Integrating rhetorical patterns with sound language use, these samples not only serve as a platform for their voices and stories but also demonstrate to all students that good writing is an achievable goal.

A solid editing / grammar foundation

Improvement in sentence structure and grammar takes much longer to attain than that of rhetorical modes in writing. Therefore, I have devoted 13 units (Unit 7 through 19) to the instructions and practice in the former. By contextualizing the explanations and exercises through themes, I have endeavored not to reduce English to sets of mere grammatical rules. There are also many paragraph – level editing exercises that model meaningful, focused writing with varied grammatical structures. Unit 20 resembles an editing exercise bank that culminates all of the editing / grammar topics addressed in this book. All of these units are designed to equip students with tools for accurate and effective written communication.

Vocabulary building

I have purposefully added ten to twenty useful but challenging words in each unit to help students build better vocabulary skills. Students can learn these words from the context by hovering their computer cursor over the words. At the end of each unit, they can review each word by studying its part of speech and meaning in two ways: with the footnotes and with an interactive flashcard activity.

Interactive contents

Interactive contents, created in an open-source platform called H5P, are built into some explanations and many exercises to offer a higher degree of student engagement as well as immediate feedback on their practice. These exercises add enjoyment to activities in class and reviews at home.

Harper resources

Many Harper resources have been featured in the exercises and writing samples, including Harper history, ESL scholarship, student clubs, Fast Track programs, Early Childhood Laboratory School, and others. Faculty outside of Harper can easily modify the information to reflect the resources of their program or institution.

Available formats

While this book is best used in its web-book format on the computer, other formats such as EPUB and Digital PDF are also provided and downloadable from the cover page of the book. Students who prefer a hard copy are able to print the book in the PDF print format. However, due to technological limitations, the interactive contents cannot always be reflected in those formats though weblinks are given.

III. Sample Course Schedule

A sample course schedule for your reference (based on a 16-week semester):

Weeks	Part I and II Writing Focused Units	Part III Editing / Grammar Focused Units	Part IV Appendices
1	Unit 1 Introduction to Academic Writing	Unit 7 Sentence Essentials	Appendix A NSNT Approach and Additional Weekly Prompts for Writing
2	Unit 2 Writing Process	Unit 7 Sentence Essentials (continued)	Appendix B Capitalization; NSNT Writing Practice
3	Unit 3 Parts and Characteristics of a Good Paragraph	Unit 8 Three Common Errors in Sentence Structure and Punctuation	NSNT Writing Practice
4	Unit 3 Parts and Characteristics of a Good Paragraph (continued)	Unit 8 Three Common Errors in Sentence Structure and Punctuation (continued)	Appendix C Punctuation; NSNT Writing Practice
5	Review Unit 1, 2, and 3	Unit 9 Verb Basics in Academic Writing	NSNT Writing Practice
6	Unit 4 Enumerative Paragraphs	Unit 10 Subject-Verb Agreement	NSNT Writing Practice
7	Unit 4 Enumerative Paragraphs (continued)	Unit 11 Verb Tenses – Present	NSNT Writing Practice
8	Unit 4 Enumerative Paragraphs (continued)	Unit 12 Verb Tenses – Past	NSNT Writing Practice; Midterm Follow-up
9	Unit 5 Narrative Paragraphs	Unit 13 Verb Tenses – Future	Appendix D Irregular Verbs; NSNT Writing Practice
10	Unit 5 Narrative Paragraphs (continued)	Unit 14 Verb Tenses – Mixed	NSNT Writing Practice
11	Unit 5 Narrative Paragraphs (continued)	Unit 15 Modals	NSNT Writing Practice
12	Review Unit 4 and Unit 5	Unit 16 Nouns	NSNT Writing Practice
13	Unit 8 Essay Introduction	Unit 17 Pronouns	NSNT Writing Practice
14	Unit 8 Essay Introduction (continued)	Unit 18 Word Forms	NSNT Writing Practice
15	Unit 8 Essay Introduction (continued)	Unit 19 Word Order	NSNT Writing Practice

16	 Review Unit 8	 Unit 20 Editing Review	NSNT Writing Practice; Final Reflections
17 <i>Finals Week</i>	Final Review and Assessment 		

IV. About the Author

I am a professor in the English as a Second Language & Linguistics Department at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, where I have been teaching since 1999. This book has been almost two years in the making. It is truly a labor of love.

I am looking forward to receiving comments and suggestions from colleagues and students. I can be reached at lcui@harpercollege.edu.

V. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Harper College for granting me a sabbatical leave in Fall 2021 to focus on this book project.

My gratitude also goes to Chris Dobson, Instructional Multimedia Developer at Harper College, for his technical expertise and support.

I am indebted to my students, whose perseverance in attaining an American education has inspired me to pursue this undertaking. In particular, my appreciation goes to many students who have generously allowed me to share their writing samples.

Finally, I could never adequately thank my family, whose steadfast support has made my professional pursuits so much more enjoyable.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Part One Academic Writing Essentials

1.1: Unit 1 Introduction to Academic Writing

1.2: Unit 2 The Writing Process

1.3: Unit 3 Parts and Characteristics of a Good Paragraph

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1.1: Unit 1 Introduction to Academic Writing

Learning Objectives

- To understand what academic writing is
- To learn the characteristics of academic writing and ways to achieve them
- To address some common misconceptions about writing

I. Warm – Up



computer keyboard, notebook, ear buds, and coffee

Discuss in groups:

1. Do you like writing in your native language? What do you usually write about?
2. How do you like writing in English? When do you write in English?
3. What makes good writing in your native language? In English?
4. What is your most unforgettable writing experience in either language?
5. What are the purposes of writing?
6. What areas of English writing are easy for you? What areas are challenging?
7. What expectations do you have for this course?
8. What do you think academic writing is?

II. Definition of Academic Writing

What is writing for? As you have just discussed, the simplest answer is to communicate meaning.

People write for different purposes. For example,

- Some of them write to inform, as in news stories and technical manuals^[1].
- Some write to entertain^[2], as in fictions and movie scripts.
- In daily life, people may scribble^[3] a short reminder note, compose a festive party invitation, or craft a well-versed^[4] love letter.
- In work, meeting memos^[5] and business reports are very common.
- In colleges and universities, students write paragraphs, essays, research papers, lab reports, and many others. These forms of writing are called academic writing – a formal, nonfictional written piece of work for learning, teaching, and researching.

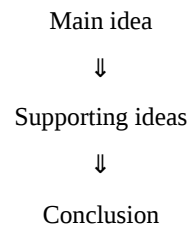
It is the last type – academic writing – that this course is introducing and focusing on. At this intermediate level, you will be learning the basic styles and uses as well as practicing editing skills associated with academic writing to be ready for higher-level compositions^[6] in colleges and universities.

III. Characteristics of Academic Writing

All types of writing share many aspects in common. However, each type has its own characteristics. Academic writing is characterized by the following:

1. Logical and direct

Academic writing in English uses a very linear organizational style. This means that the writers explain their information in a straightforward way, like a vertical line – the main idea first, followed by supporting ideas to explain the main idea, and a conclusion that signals the completion of the explanation.



Unlike the approaches^[7] in some other countries, the American style requires the students to state their focus early in their writing, without “hiding” the points or “circulating” hints till the end of writing.

2. Formal

Formal, standard English is expected. This requires a good understanding of formal grammar and usage. Colloquial^[8] and spoken English should not be used.

3. Clear

Writing clearly is extremely important as the purpose of writing is not only to clarify your own thoughts but also to communicate them for others to understand. To achieve this, you should not translate from your native language and should always proofread^[9] your writing for accuracy.

4. Concise

Being concise means not repeating the same words and ideas unnecessarily. Sometimes, repetition is important to emphasize a point, but most often needless duplications^[10] of the same ideas may make your writing redundant^[11] and inefficient.

Writing is a process. Almost no one can produce perfect writing on the first try; in fact, there is no such thing as perfect writing. Good writing takes time and repeated revisions^[12]. Most importantly, it takes patience and continuous efforts to achieve the characteristics explained above.

IV. Ten Most Common Misconceptions about Writing



wrong way traffic sign

The following ten misconceptions^[13] are very common among ESL students of all levels. Read each statement first and think/discuss whether you feel the same way. Then click to read explanations and suggestions.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=57#h5p-67>

V. Unit Review Practice

Exercise: Discuss the following topics in groups. Then choose one of them to write a paragraph.

1. What is academic writing? What are the characteristics of academic writing?
2. What has been your best writing experience? The most challenging writing experience?

3. The ten common misconceptions are explained in this unit. What are the ones that apply to you? What advice will be the most helpful to you?

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

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NSNT Practice



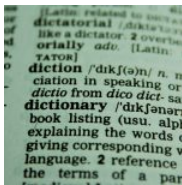
a pen writing in a notebook

Study **Appendix A NSNT Free Writing Approach** ([Open Appendix A here.](#)). Then choose two topics from the Week 1 additional prompts^[14] and practice NSNT free writing. Remember not to translate from your native language and not to stop writing once you start.

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<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=57#h5p-20>

Vocabulary Review



a page in a dictionary

The words here have appeared in this unit. The best way to learn them is to guess the meaning of each word from the context. Then hover your computer mouse over the number beside each word to check its meaning and part of speech. These words are also listed in the footnote area at the end of each unit.

Here, you can use the flashcards below to review these words.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=57#h5p-196>

Summary

1. Academic writing is what students write for their classes in colleges and universities.
2. Academic writing is logical, direct, formal, clear, and concise.
3. To improve writing skills, it is important to:
 - Try not to translate from your native language.
 - Do not rely on the information on the Internet.
 - Explore your topic by brainstorming and then organize your ideas by outlining.
 - Narrow down a general topic to a more specific one.
 - Get help from your professor and ESL tutors.
 - Be proactive in contacting your professor regarding errors in your writing.
 - Do not rely too much on the help of your family and friends.
 - Study grammar.
 - Read as much as you can.

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1. manual: noun, a small book of instructions ↵
 2. entertain: verb, provide music, stories, etc. for people to enjoy ↵
 3. scribble: verb, write quickly and informally ↵
 4. well-versed: adjective, with beautiful language use ↵
 5. memo: noun, a short message or report ↵
 6. composition: noun, a piece of writing such as an essay for a college course ↵
 7. approach: noun, a way of thinking about things and doing things ↵
 8. colloquial: adjective, informal ↵
 9. proofread: verb, read and check for mistakes ↵
 10. duplication: noun, a copy, a repetition ↵
 11. redundant: adjective, wordy, repetitive unnecessarily ↵
 12. revision: noun, a new copy showing improvement ↵
 13. misconception: noun, a wrong idea ↵
 14. prompt: noun, a topic for writing ↵
-

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1.2: Unit 2 The Writing Process

Learning Objectives

- To understand what the writing process is and why it is important
- To learn all the steps in the writing process by studying an assignment from beginning to completion
- To practice the steps in the writing process through exercises

I. Warm-Up



two hands kneading dough

Discuss in groups:

1. Have you ever cooked or baked anything? How do you enjoy cooking or baking?
2. When you see the above image (two hands kneading dough^[1]), what comes to your mind?
3. What is essential^[2] in baking the perfect bread?
4. Why is following steps so important?
5. Should writing also follow proper^[3] steps?
6. What steps do you usually follow when you have a writing assignment?
7. What do you think the writing process is?

II. Importance of the Writing Process

As you learned in Unit 1, academic writing should be well organized, focused, and accurate. How do you start?

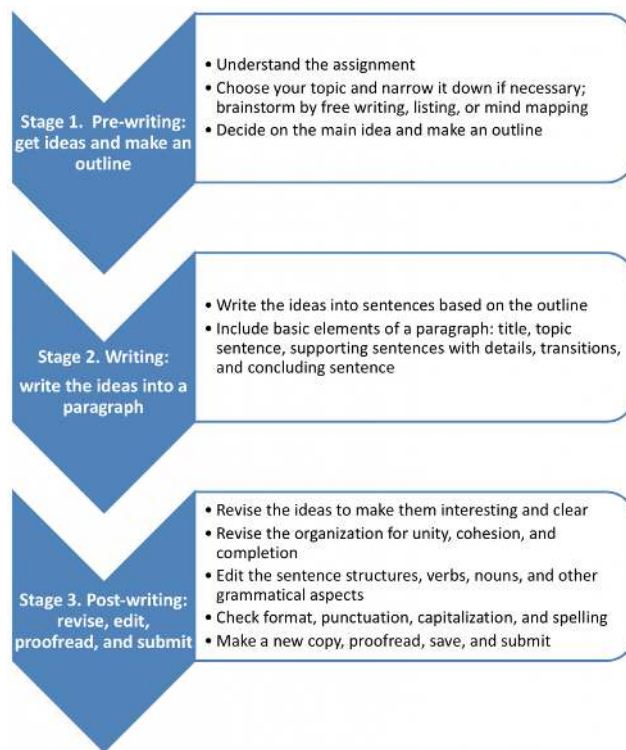
Imagine baking a loaf of bread. You need to get the ingredients ready, mix them one at a time in the right order to make dough, knead it, let it rise, put it in a container, and bake it for a length of time. Miss or reverse^[4] one step, and you may not be able to enjoy the fresh and crusty^[5] bread as anticipated. Of course, the bread machine may make the work less laborious^[6] for you, but the general process from flour to bread remains the same.

It is the same with writing. It follows a step-by-step order called **the writing process**. Using the right steps will ensure^[7] a good piece of writing that you are proud of.

III. Stages and Steps in the Writing Process

There are three major stages in the writing process. Each major stage includes a few smaller steps.

The writing Process



The Writing Process

Here is an example assignment to show you how every step works. The process is shown in the boxes below.

A Paragraph Writing Assignment

Purpose: This assignment is to show your understanding of planning and writing a paragraph. Use the writing process to help you.

Topic: What has been your most interesting experience in learning English? Explain three reasons why you think so.

Paragraph: Your paragraph should have a title, 3 supporting ideas with details, and a concluding sentence. Use some transitions to connect the supporting sentences.

Format: Type your paragraph, double spaced, font size 12, with 1-inch margins on four sides of the page. Type your name, class, and date on the upper right-hand corner of the page. The first line of your paragraph should be indented. Save your paragraph in a Word file.

Self Checklist: When you finish writing, use the Self Checklist below. Put a checkmark beside each item if you think you did a good job in that area. Otherwise, improve your paragraph until you can check off the item. Save your work again.

Submission: Submit your paragraph on the Blackboard. Go to your Blackboard course site and follow the instructions there to submit your work. Due by 11:59 pm on Monday, January 30.

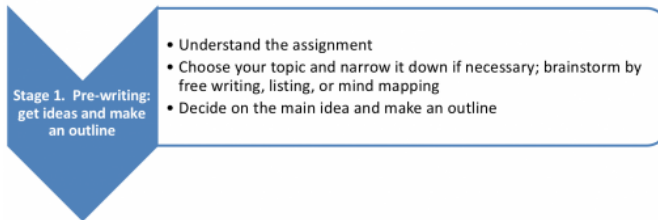
Self Checklist

Questions	Paragraph Revising and Editing Self Checklist	√
1	Is my paragraph clear to understand?	
2	Is my paragraph interesting to read?	
3	Did I include a topic sentence with a clear topic and a controlling idea?	
4	Did I include 3 supporting ideas with details and connect them with transitions?	
5	Did I include a concluding sentence?	
6	Did I try my best to use correct sentence structure, verbs, and other grammar aspects?	
7	Did I try my best to have correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization?	
8	Did I follow the proper paragraph format?	

The Self Checklist will include more specific items as you learn more about writing and editing in the course.

Follow the three stages below to see how this assignment is completed step by step.

IV. Stage 1 Pre-writing: Get Ideas and Make an Outline



Stage 1 Writing Process

1. Understand the assignment.

Each assignment may come with different instructions. Understanding the requirements is crucial^[8] in making sure that you start out right. Here is a list of questions you ask yourself to check your understanding of the assignment:

Example: Understand the assignment

Questions	Answers to show your understanding
Purpose?	To show understanding of planning and writing a paragraph
How?	Use the writing process
Who reads?	My professor and probably some of my classmates
Final product?	A paragraph with a title, 3 supporting sentences with details, a concluding sentences, transitions
Format?	indent, double space, size 12, 1-inch on 4 sides, name/semester/date
Due?	by 11:59 pm, Monday, Jan. 30
Where?	Course Blackboard, follow instructions there.

2. Choose your topic and narrow it down if necessary; brainstorm by free writing, listing, or mind mapping.

While choosing your topic and narrowing it down,

✓ Do:

Write from your heart; consider your own interests and/or knowledge.

Reflect your unique thoughts or experiences.

Ask yourself:

- Am I interested in this topic? How much do I know about it?
- Do I have an interesting experience or perspective that most of my classmates might not have?
- Would my readers get to know the topic or me better through my writing?

X Do not:

- Pick a seemingly^[9] “easy” topic that you do not know much about or do not have a personal, meaningful experience with.
- Google search and choose your topic based on how much information you can find on the web.

For the disadvantages of relying too much on the Internet information, please refer to “Ten Most Common Misconceptions about Writing” in Unit 1 Introduction to Academic Writing. (Open Unit 1 here.)

Brainstorming means that you write down your ideas as quickly as you can for about two to ten minutes, like a storm sweeping through your mind! Do not worry about accuracy in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Do not be overly concerned whether an idea is good or not. Rather, keep the flow of your thoughts going. You may be surprised to discover many new, hidden ideas.

Brainstorming comes in different ways: free writing, making a list, mind mapping, and some others. They may look different, but your thinking process is the same. Here are the three common brainstorming examples to show you how to get ideas for the above writing assignment on your English learning experience.

Brainstorming example 1: free writing

This is my first writing assignment in class. I want to write about my interesting English study. English, English everyday, important, tired. What aspect? Pronunciation? reading? writing? grammar? listening? Language Lab? my grades? I don't know... well, maybe something about writing. Right now I'm trying not to translate from my native language. This is stressful, but keep trying. What about writing? yes! no translation! My teacher just taught us NSNT, interesting, I'll try, maybe this topic? different way but I hope it'll help me. I tried two times already, tried not to stop writing, holding my pen tight, keep writing. Possible not to translate if I keep doing it. The teacher isn't checking my mistakes, so I'm more relaxed this way. Also fun because focus on my ideas and learn to express in total English. My teacher said, this skill will help me succeed in ESL and college classes. I want to learn. I know it's important. teacher said translation no good, agree, my language and English very different, think in English, habit, try every day, confidence.

Brainstorming example 2: making a list

English learning experience: Reading, writing, listening, speaking, language lab, international students club

- a. reading: interesting stories, new words, dictionary, too many words, hard, useful, in context, guessing first??
- b. writing: academic writing, paragraphs, topic sentence, punctuation, NSNT, new, interesting, hard, feel strange, how not to translate? worry my grade
- c. listening: news, recordings, hard, too fast, when driving, language lab, good materials, open, helpful staff, lots of resources, what to choose
- d. speaking: international students club, games, prizes, snacks!! new friends, some native speaks, every week, fun, nervous

Brainstorming example 3: creating a mind map



a mind map on English learning experience

3. Decide on the main idea and make an outline

You take a second look at your brainstorming and consider which area to focus on (main idea) and what information to keep or throw out. At this point, you decide to write about NSNT and the reasons why you like it.



a pen writing in a notebook

For information about the NSNT approach, please refer to Appendix A NSNT Approach. (Open Appendix A here.)

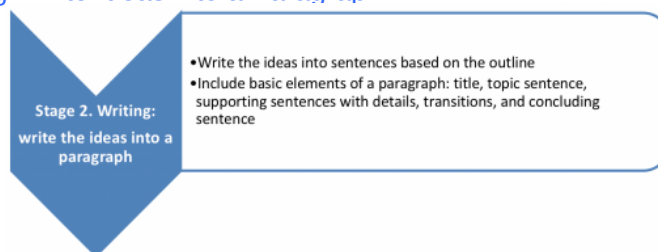
Then you organize your ideas into a simple plan called **an outline**. It may take five to ten minutes to make an outline.

- Write the topic sentence in a complete sentence on top of the page.
- Write your supporting ideas and their details in words and phrases, or even some symbols like # for number and \$ for money. Do not write complete sentences and do not write a draft of the paragraph. When you write your ideas in words and phrases in the outline, you can spot the problem more easily if an idea does not support the topic sentence.
- When you write your paragraph later, you may have an additional idea. Do not include it in your paragraph directly. Put it in your outline to make sure it helps explain the main idea. You may ask yourself:
 - Does this idea support my topic sentence?
 - Which part of the outline should I put it in?
 - Is there already a similar idea in the outline?

An outline example:

Parts of a paragraph	Paragraph outline
Title	The Reasons Why I like NSNT (It is common to write the title after you finish the outline or the paragraph draft.)
Topic sentence	The Non-Stop-Non-Translation (NSNT) approach is one of my most interesting experiences in learning English. (Write a complete sentence)
Background info if necessary	what is NSNT in 1-2 sentences
Support 1	translation habit, different languages, others don't understand well, a good habit of thinking in English
Details 1	no subject in Spanish sentence, wrong in English
Support 2	think faster and more naturally in English
Details 2	better flow, less time in communication, not two languages in my mind
Support 3	not too hard, more relaxed, want to write more, motivation
Details 3	try every day, with music, not graded, from 5 to 15 minutes now, topics like current events, memories
Concluding sentence	summarize 3 ideas and give opinion

V. Stage 2 Writing: Write Ideas into a Paragraph



Stage 2 Writing Process

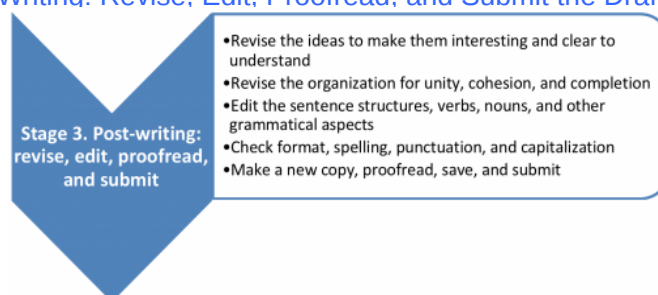
This is the stage where you create the first copy of a complete paragraph based on the outline. This copy is called **a draft**. It usually takes a longer time to write than the pre-writing activities, but once you have completed the previous steps, you have made this stage of writing much easier to accomplish.

Example: Paragraph draft

The Non-Stop-Non-Translation approach has been one of my most interesting experiences in learning English. My teacher introduce it in the beginning of the semester. Students writes on a topic nonstop for at least 5 minute, and they should not translate their ideas from their native languages to English. First, the strategy helps me learn to express my self correctly with english. i been in the U.S. for only one year, and I always translate my ideas from Spanish to English. However; people often do not understand me, or they say I am wrong. i am learning to think faster and more natural with the help in NSNT. My teacher instruct us not to let the tip of our pen to leave the surface of the paper, so we have to keep writing, even writing days of the week and months of the year until our brains forces out some ideas in English. Though, I felt very uncomfortable in the beginning now after two months of training, I starting to feel that my ideas flow more easy in English. The discussions we have in reading classes also help me think in English because my classmates cannot wait for me to translate from Spanish. Lastly, the daily practice is not as stressful as I thought so I enjoy it. I turn on my favorite music, and write from 5 minutes to 10 minutes daily. I feel I can write more and more. Because my teacher do not grade my work based on accuracy. Can let my thoughts flow freely on paper without worrying about my grade.

You have tried to write a good paragraph though it still has mistakes. Do not worry! No one can write perfectly on the first try. The instructions in Stage 3 below will guide you step by step in making your paragraph better.

VI. Stage 3 Post-Writing: Revise, Edit, Proofread, and Submit the Draft



Stage 3 Writing Process

1. Revise the ideas and organization – comments in (parentheses) and marked in pink

(No title)

The Non-Stop-Non-Translation approach is one of my most interesting experiences in learning english. My teacher introduce it in the beginning of the semester. Students writes on a topic nonstop for at least 5 minute, and they should not translate their ideas from their native languages to english. First, the strategy helps me learn to express my self correctly with english. i been in the U.S. for only one year, and I always translate from Spanish to english (when?). However; people often do not understand me, or they say I am wrong. (example?) (transition?) i am learning to think faster and more natural with the help in NSNT. My teacher instruct us not to let the tip of our pen leave the surface of the paper, so we have to keep writing, even writing days of the week and months of the year until our brains forces out some ideas in English. Though, I felt very uncomfortable in the beginning now after two months of training, I starting to feel that my ideas flow more easy in English. The discussions we have in reading classes also help me think in English because my classmates cannot wait for me to translate from Spanish. (irrelevant and should be deleted) Lastly, the daily practice is not as stressful as I thought so I enjoy it. I turn on my favorite music and write from 5 minutes to 10 minutes daily. (examples of what I write about) I feel I can write more and more. Because my teacher do not grade my work based on accuracy. I can let my thoughts flow freely on paper without worrying about my grade. (no concluding sentence)

Make a new copy to show improvement in ideas and organization.

The reasons why I like NSNT

The Non-Stop-Non-Translation approach is one of my most interesting experiences in learning english. My teacher introduce it in the beginning of the semester. Students writes on a topic nonstop for at least 5 minute, and they should not translate their ideas from their native languages to english. First, the strategy helps me learn to express my self correctly with english. i been in the U.S. for only one year, and I always translate my ideas from my native language Spanish to english when communicate. However; people often do not understand me, or they say I am wrong. For example, it is correct to write “Es un dia bonito” in Spanish. When I translate it into english. My sentence becomes “Is a day beautiful.” Second, I am learning to think faster and more natural with the help in NSNT. My teacher instruct us not to let the tip of our pen leave the surface of the paper, so we have to keep writing, even writing days of the week and months of the year until our brains forces out some ideas in English. Though, I felt very uncomfortable in the beginning now after two months of training, I starting to feel that my ideas flow more easy in English. Lastly, the daily practice is not as stressful as I thought so I enjoy it. I turn on my favorite music and write from 5 minutes to 10 minutes daily, and sometimes even longer. I have written about childhood memories, current events, and school activities. I feel more comfortable and confident in expressing my thoughts. I no longer need to fill time with “Monday, Tuesday...” as in the beginning. Besides, my teacher do not grade my work based on accuracy. Can let my thoughts flow on paper without worrying about my grade. The NSNT is one of the best approach in helping me think and use English. I will definitely keep practicing this strategy.

2. Edit grammar and sentence structure

3. Check format, spelling, punctuation, capitalization

It is common to combine these two steps, but it is better to do Step 2 before Step 3. The mistakes in grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and format are highlighted in grey and corrections are highlighted in purple below.

Name? Jane Doe

Class? Writing III

Date? January 25, 2022

The reasons Reasons why I like Like NSNT

The Non-Stop-Non-Translation approach is one of my most interesting experiences in learning english English. My teacher introduce introduced it in the beginning of the semester. Students writes write on a topic nonstop for at least 5 minute minutes, and they should not translate their ideas from their native languages to English. First, the strategy helps me learn to express my self myself correctly with english English. I been I have been in the U.S. for only one year, and I always translate my ideas from my native language spanish to english. When communicate. ... and I always translate my ideas from y native language Spanish to English when I communicate. However; , people often do not understand me, or they say I am wrong. For example, it is correct to write “Es un dia bonito” in Spanish. When I translate it into english. My sentence becomes “Is a day beautiful.” When I translate it into English, my sentence becomes “Is a day beautiful.” Second, I I am learning to think faster and more natural naturally with the help in NSNT. My teacher instruct instructs us not to let the tip of our pen leave the surface of the paper, so we have to keep writing, even writing days of the week and months of the year until our brains forces force out some ideas in English. Though, I felt very uncomfortable in the beginning Though I felt very uncomfortable in the beginning, now after two months of training, I starting have started to feel that my ideas flow more easy easily in English. Lastly, the daily practice is not as stressfull stressful as I thought so I enjoy it. ... I thought, so I enjoy it. I turn on my favorite music and write from 5 minutes to 10 minutes daily. About childhood memories, current events, and school activities. ... 10 minutes daily about childhood memories, ... I feel I can write more and more. Because my teacher do not grade my work based on accuracy. Can let my thoughts flow on paper without worrying about my grade. Ifeel I can write more and more because my teacher does not grade my work based on accuracy. The NSNT is one of the best approach approaches in helping me think and use English. I will definitely keep practicing this strategy.

Fix the mistakes and make a new copy:

Jane Doe

Writing III

January 25, 2022

The Reasons Why I Like NSNT

The Non-Stop-Non-Translation approach is one of my most interesting experiences in learning English. My teacher introduced it in the beginning of the semester. Students should write on a topic nonstop for at least 5 minutes, and they should not translate their ideas from their native languages to English. First, the strategy helps me learn to express myself correctly with English. I have been in the U.S. for only one year, and I always translate from Spanish to English when I communicate. However, people often do not understand me, or they say I am wrong. For example, it is correct to write “Es un dia bonito” in Spanish. When I translate it into English, my sentence becomes “Is a day beautiful.” Second, I am learning to think faster and more naturally with the help in NSNT. My teacher instructs us not to let the tip of our pen leave the surface of the paper, so we have to keep writing, even writing days of the week and months of the year until our brains force out some ideas in English.

Though I felt very uncomfortable in the beginning, now after two months of training, I am starting to feel that my ideas flow more easily in English. Lastly, the daily practice is not as stressful as I thought, so I enjoy it and write from 5 minutes to 10 minutes daily. I have written about childhood memories, current events, and school activities. I feel I can write more and more. Because my teacher does not grade my work based on accuracy, I can let my thoughts flow freely on paper without worrying about my grade. The NSNT is one of the best approaches in helping me think and use English. I will definitely keep practicing this strategy.

4. Use the Self Checklist to make sure that you have tried your best to revise and edit the paragraph. Put a checkmark in the box on the right if you have done your best in that area.

Self Checklist

Questions	Paragraph Revising and Editing Self Checklist	✓
1	Is my paragraph clear to understand?	✓
2	Is my paragraph interesting to read?	✓
3	Did I include a topic sentence with a clear topic and a controlling idea?	✓
4	Did I include 2-4 supporting ideas with details and connect them with transitions?	✓
5	Did I include a concluding sentence?	✓
6	Did I try my best to use correct sentence structure, verbs, and other grammar aspects?	✓
7	Did I try my best to have correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization?	✓
8	Did I follow the proper paragraph format?	✓

The Self Checklist will include more specific items as you learn more about writing and editing in the course.

Proofread means that you read the paragraph from beginning to end at least one more time to catch the errors you missed and to make sure that your writing is as good as it can be.

Now you can save your work and submit it. Job well done!



a person dancing on a rock with sunset on horizon

Going through the steps takes time, but you can be sure that your paragraph will be the best you can write it. Some of you may feel that following the process is too much trouble and that it is a waste of time, but remember that you may need longer time redoing the assignment later if you do not properly follow the writing process. Think of this as establishing^[10] a good habit of thinking and writing. Over time, you may be able to combine some of the steps and save some time. However, you will be writing much longer, much more complicated compositions in your future classes, and the habit of following the writing process will definitely help you succeed.

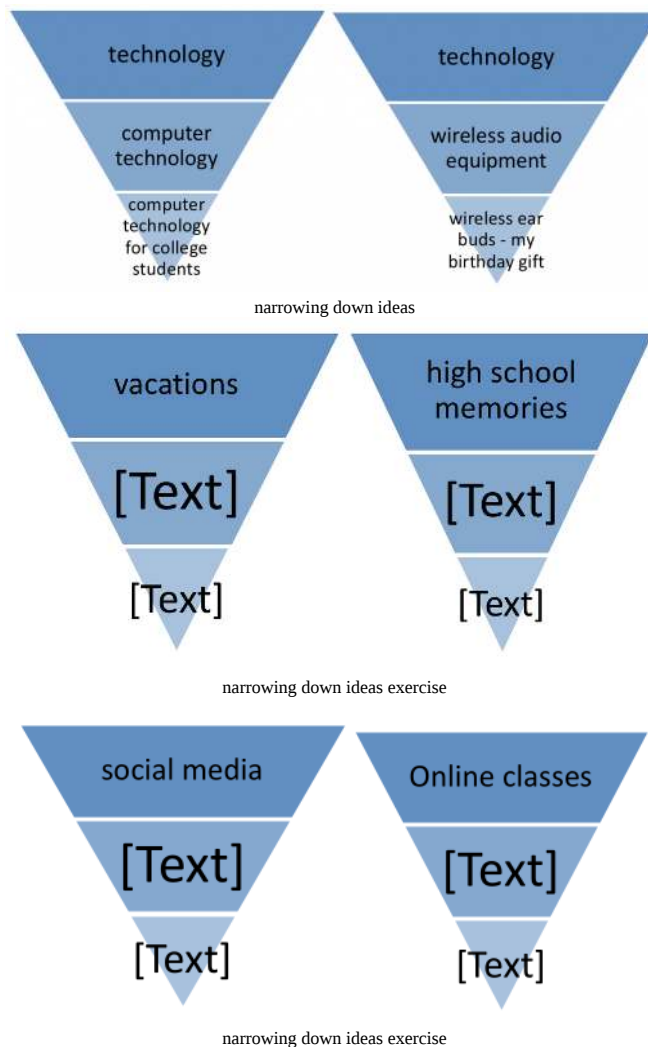
VII. Unit Review Practice

Exercise 1. Discuss the following questions about the writing process.

1. What is the writing process? Why is it important?
2. What are the three stages in the process? What are the steps in each stage?
3. Have you tried the writing process or a similar process before? Share your experiences.

Exercise 2. Narrowing down a broad subject will help you focus better on the main idea of your paragraph. Practice narrowing down the topics. The first two are examples. You see that the same broad topic can be narrowed down to two different focuses depending on your experiences and preferences. Compare and discuss your answers with your partner.

Examples:



Exercise 3. Look at the following ideas from brainstorming. Add some of your own to the list. Then put the ideas into the categories. The categories will be used as supporting ideas when you write the paragraph. If an idea does not fit the main idea, cross it out. An example is provided in each category.

Main idea: Jerry's Burgers is my favorite lunch place.

fast service, nice decorations, fresh ingredients, clean washrooms, beautiful paintings on walls, Asian and Middle Eastern flavors, meeting room, noisy, not many salad choices, expensive, smiling owner, no place for kids to play, free soda, no parking, tasty soup bowls, kids' menu, low fat menu, vegetarian choices, background music too loud, gluten-free options, polite wait staff, no delivery...

Example:

Food	Services	Facilities
fresh ingredients	fast service	meeting room

Exercise 4. Use three of the following topics to try free writing, listing, mind mapping. Narrow down the topic if necessary. Then write an outline for each topic. Lastly, choose one of the three outlines to write a paragraph.

1. driving in the U.S.
2. my first class in the U.S. college
3. the neighborhood where I grew up
4. the person I admire the most
5. a childhood memory
6. a disappointing holiday
7. advantages or disadvantages of cell phones
8. characteristics of a good shopping mall

NSNT Practice



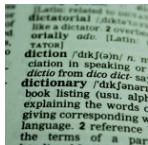
a pen writing in a notebook

Go to **The NSNT Free Writing Approach and Additional Weekly Prompts for Writing** in Appendix A. ([Open Appendix A here.](#)) Choose two topics to practice the steps in the writing process. You may do the NSNT free writing approach while brainstorming. Remember not to translate from your native language and not to stop writing once you start.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=171#h5p-20>

Vocabulary Review



a page in a dictionary

The words here have appeared in this unit. The best way to learn them is to guess the meaning of each word from the context. Then hover your computer mouse over the number beside each word to check its meaning and part of speech. These words are also listed in the footnote area at the end of each unit.

Here, you can use the flashcards below to review these words.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=171#h5p-197>

Summary

1. There are three major stages in the writing process:

- **pre-writing:** get ideas and make an outline
 - understand the assignment
 - choose topic, narrow down if needed
 - brainstorm – free writing, make a list, create a mind map
- **writing:** write a draft of the paragraph
 - write a paragraph based on the outline
 - include basic elements of a paragraph
- **post-writing:** revise and edit, proofread, and submit
 - revise ideas to make them clear and interesting
 - revise organization for unity, cohesion, and completion
 - edit sentence structure and grammatical aspects
 - check format, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
 - make a new copy, proofread, save, submit

2. The stages and steps ensure the good quality of your paragraph.

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-
1. dough: noun, a mix of flour, water, and other ingredients to make into bread, cake, etc. ↵
 2. essential: adjective, extremely important, cannot live without ↵
 3. proper: adjective, suitable, appropriate, right ↵
 4. reverse: verb, follow the opposite order ↵
 5. crusty: adjective, crisp, describing the outer layer of freshly-baked bread ↵

- 6. laborious: adjective, with lots of work ↵
- 7. ensure: verb, make sure, to be certain ↵
- 8. crucial: adjective, very important ↵
- 9. seemingly: adverb, in appearance but may not be true ↵
- 10. establish: verb, build, set up ↵

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1.3: Unit 3 Parts and Characteristics of a Good Paragraph

Learning Objectives

1. To identify the parts of a paragraph: title, topic sentence, supporting sentences with details, concluding sentence, and transitions
2. To understand how each part relates to one another within a paragraph through multiple examples
3. To learn the key characteristics of a paragraph: format, unity, cohesion, and completion through multiple examples
4. To practice writing each part of a paragraph with key characteristics through a variety of exercises

I. Warm-Up



a group of children laughing and running outdoors

Read the paragraph “Missing My Childhood Days” below and do the activities that follow.

Missing My Childhood Days

Thanks to two people and one place, my childhood was filled with fun. The first special person was my cousin Hector. I was the only child to my mom, and he was the only child to his mom. We were not lonely because we played and enjoyed family trips together. I loved playing hide and seek with him the most. The running, anticipating^[1], shouting, and laughing will always be in my memories. Secondly, I really miss my best friend Lisandra from my elementary school. Our moms were best friends, so it was easier for us to do many things together. For example, we used to explore the resorts and hotels near our homes. We imagined how we could decorate our own houses as elegantly as the hotels. Additionally, Lisandra had a little sister called Lolanda, and we loved to play with her and care for her as if she were our own baby. We fed her and sang songs to her. Even though I lost contact with Lisandra after she switched to a different school, our time together was very precious to me. Lastly, I really miss my childhood home. It was a big house with a patio decorated with pots of beautiful flowers. The house was large enough for me to ride my bike inside. There was also a pool. We had many family parties there. Playing riddles^[2] by the poolside was one of the most popular games among us. Nowadays I do not have Hector and Lisandra in my life, and my childhood house has long been sold. However, I am grateful for having them all in my past because they have left me with priceless^[3] memories.

By K. P. Checo (student), *ESL Writing III*, Harper College. Used with permission.

Discuss in groups:

1. What are your most unforgettable childhood memories? Why are they unforgettable?
2. What three areas of childhood does the author miss the most?
3. What is the main idea of the above paragraph? Where do you find it in the paragraph?
4. Where is the title?
5. How does the author begin the paragraph?
6. What is the spacing between one line to the next?
7. Does each new sentence start a new line?
8. What do you think a paragraph is?
9. What do you like about this paragraph?
10. How would you improve the paragraph?
11. If you could ask the writer a question, what would you ask?

II. Definition of a Paragraph

A **paragraph** is a group of sentences about one main idea. The goal of a paragraph is to communicate to the readers what you think of a topic (your main idea) and why you believe this way (your supporting ideas). A paragraph also follows a certain format. Paragraph writing is the foundation^[4] for all types of academic writing assignments such as essays and research papers.

II. Paragraph Format

You can see the format of a paragraph from “Missing My Childhood Days”:

1. Center the title in the middle of the top line.
2. Start the paragraph with indentation (a few open spaces in the beginning).
3. Type or write double spaced.
4. Each sentence follows the one before it without starting a new line.
5. Use font size 12 if you type. (The font size may be hard for you to determine in this web-book.)

III. Parts of a Paragraph

Understanding each part of a paragraph is an important step to good writing. One way to do this is to identify and color code each part.

Title – **pink** Topic sentence – **red** Supporting sentences – **green**

Supporting details – **blue** Concluding sentence – **red** Transitions – **yellow**

When you color code the parts, you know that

1. you understand the paragraph organization.
2. you are not missing any important components.
3. all the parts are in the right order.
4. the supporting details (**blue**) should be the longest and the most detailed.

Missing My Childhood Days

Thanks to two people and one place, my childhood was filled with fun. The **first** special person was my cousin Hector. I was the only child to my mom, and he was the only child to his mom. We were not lonely because we played and enjoyed family trips together. I loved playing hide and seek with him the most. The running, anticipating, shouting, and laughing will always be in my memories. **Secondly**, I really miss my best friend Lisandra from the elementary school. Our moms were best friends, so it was easier for us to do many things together. For example, we used to explore the resorts and hotels near our homes. We imagined how we could decorate our own houses as elegantly as the hotels. Additionally, Lisandra had a little sister called Lolanda, and we loved to play with her and care for her as if she were our own baby. We fed her and sang songs to her. Even though I lost contact with Lisandra after she switched to a different school, our time together was very precious to me. **Lastly**, I really miss my childhood home. It was a big house with a patio decorated with pots of beautiful flowers. The house was large enough for me to ride my bike inside. There was also a pool. We had many family parties there. Playing riddles by the poolside was one of the most popular games among us. Nowadays I do not have Hector and Lisandra in my life, and my childhood house has long been sold. However, I am grateful for having them all in my past because they have left me with priceless memories.

By K. P. Checo (student), ESL Writing III, Harper College. Used with permission.

Exercise 1. Use Paragraph “Missing My Childhood Days” as an example. Read Paragraph “Difficulties in English Writing” and identify the parts with the following colors:

pink Title	–	Topic
red sentence	–	Concluding sentence
green sentences	–	Supporting sentences
blue Supporting details	–	Transitions
yellow Transitions	–	Supporting details

Difficulties in English Writing

For me, writing is one of the most difficult skills to learn in English. First, with writing comes spelling. Many words are pronounced the same but spelt completely differently, like flower and flour, blue and blew. I need extra efforts to learn and remember how to spell and write them correctly. Another challenge I face in English is sentence structure. There are many

types of sentences in English such as simple, compound, and complex. Each type has its own punctuation rules. It takes a lot of hard work to understand how to build sentences effectively. Finally, grammar is challenging. My professors emphasize the importance of grammar because it plays a significant role in writing. Unfortunately, it is also one of the difficulties for me because it has many, many rules and exceptions. For example, in count and noncount nouns unit, there are many confusing words like police and family. At first, I thought the word “police” was singular, but in fact it is plural. In contrast, I thought the word “family” was plural, but it is singular in many situations! Mistakes in singular and plural nouns lead to errors in verbs. Despite all these difficulties in spelling, sentence structure, and grammar, writing remains to be one of my favorite aspects of learning.

By A. Alsalman (student), ESL Writing III, Harper College. Used with permission.

Read the above two paragraphs again, and you can see that a good paragraph consists of:

1. **A title** – to show the topic and catch the readers’ interest **pink**
2. **A beginning called the topic sentence** – to show the main idea **red**
3. **A middle called the supporting sentences and details** – supporting sentences to explain the main idea **green** ; details to explain the supporting sentences **blue**
4. **Transitions or connecting words** – to connect the ideas and guide the readers **yellow**
5. **An ending called the concluding sentence(s)** – to finish the paragraph **red**



a hamburger

Paragraph Organization – the Hamburger Way

To make a tasty hamburger, you need to take time to get the ingredients ready and stack^[5] them up carefully. Planning and organizing your ideas for a good paragraph can be very similar to making a hamburger.



parts of a hamburger between two hands

1. The sesame seeds on the top piece of bread is what you see as you unwrap a hamburger. It is like the **title** of a paragraph.
2. The top piece of the bread is the first part of the hamburger. It is like **the topic sentence**.
3. The middle part is what makes the hamburger delicious. The more ingredients you add, the tastier the hamburger is. This part is like **the supporting sentences with details**. More details for the paragraph will make it more interesting to read.
4. You also add condiments like mustard, ketchup, and mayonnaise to not only make the hamburger juicier but also help the other ingredients like tomato slices and beef patties stick together. Those condiments are like **transitions**.
5. The last piece of the bread makes the hamburger complete. The bread is made with the same ingredients as the top piece but with a different shape. This is like **the concluding sentence**. It restates the topic sentence but in a different way.

Below, you are going to learn how to write each part.

IV. Title of a Paragraph

A title gives the readers information about what you write in the paragraph. It usually states or implies^[6] the topic of your writing.

1. **A good title is often very short. Sometimes it is only one word or one phrase. It is usually not a complete sentence.**

The Best Invention

The Reasons for My Mediterranean Diet

The Characteristics of a Good Boss

2. **A good title catches the readers' interest. It tells the readers about the main topic, but it does not tell everything.**

Why Not Studying Hard?

A Long-Kept Secret

To Mask or Not to Mask

3. **A good title follows capitalization and punctuation rules.**

- The first letter of the first word is always capitalized.
- Do not capitalize a short preposition, an article, or a coordinating conjunction unless it is the first word.
- Never capitalize the entire title.
- Do not put a period at the end.
- Do not put quotation marks around the title.
- Do not underline the title.

Discuss each pair of the titles below and notice how the errors are corrected.

the day I arrived in Chicago X



lots of books showing titles on shelves

The Day I Arrived in Chicago ✓

THE MAKING OF A DOCTOR X

The Making of a Doctor ✓

A Very Frustrating Experience. X

A Very Frustrating Experience ✓

“Advice from My Mother” X

Advice from My Mother ✓

The Mysterious Noise X

The Mysterious Noise ✓

For more explanations and examples in capitalization, please refer to Appendix B Capitalization. (Open Appendix B here.)

Exercise 2. Here are the titles of some paragraphs. Do they follow the rules? Write the correct title in the box. After you finish all the titles, you can check your answers by clicking the “Check” button. You may retry the exercise or see all the answers.

Example:

From my home to school

Correction: From My Home to School

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=208#h5p-72>

V. Topic Sentence

A **topic sentence** is a sentence that contains the main idea of a paragraph. It is usually put in the beginning of a paragraph. A good topic sentence has two essential parts and one optional part:

1. the topic of your paragraph

2. the controlling idea – your attitude/opinion about the topic
3. (optional but preferred) predictors – the points you are going to explain in the body of the paragraph

In each pair of topic sentences below, one contains the topic and controlling idea. The other has the topic, controlling idea, and predictors. Identify each part and discuss which topic sentence you like better. Explain your reasons.

- My writing class is important in helping me prepare for college study.
- My writing class is important in helping me prepare for college study because I learn how to plan, write, and edit my own writing.
- I enjoy three aspects of my writing class.
- I enjoy three aspects of my writing class: my professor, my classmates, and the course materials.
- Many students feel stressed out in the writing class for three reasons.
- Because of long class periods, daily homework assignments, and lots of tests, many students feel stressed out in the writing class.,
- Writing in English is very different from writing in my native language.
- Writing in English differs from writing in my nature language in style, sentence structure, and punctuation.

Rules for a good topic sentence:

1. It must be a complete sentence that contains a subject and a verb.



a light bulb surrounded by six circles

- My interesting writing class (not a complete sentence) X
- How to improve writing skills (not a complete sentence) X
- My writing class is interesting for three reasons. (a complete sentence) ✓
- In my writing class, I am learning how to improve writing skills in three ways. (a complete sentence) ✓

2. It can be a positive or negative statement, not a question. If you ask a question in the beginning of the paragraph, you should answer it in the next sentence. That second sentence is the topic sentence.

- Why is learning English important? (a question) X
- What is the best way to improve writing skills? (a question) X
- Why is learning English important? It is so because good English skills benefit people in their study, work, and daily life. (The second part is the topic sentence.) ✓
- What is the best way to improve writing skills? I have three suggestions for ESL students to improve writing skills. (The second part is the topic sentence.) ✓

3. Narrow down your topic. General topics are difficult to focus on and write.

- Year 2020 was a difficult year for me. (too broad) X
- The COVID pandemic in Year 2020 made it difficult for me to study. (more specific) ✓
- The COVID pandemic in Year 2020 made it difficult for me to study for three reasons: my classes went totally online in March, I could no longer use the college library and the Language Lab, and the poor Internet connection at home often interrupted my study on the course Blackboard site. (more specific) ✓

4. Do not make an announcement.

- In this paragraph, I am going to talk about the disadvantages to online learning. (an announcement) X
- Let me explain the disadvantages to online learning. (an announcement) X

- This paragraph is about the disadvantages to online learning. (an announcement) X
- There are three disadvantages to online learning. (not an announcement) ✓
- There are three disadvantages to online learning: no immediate feedback from the professors, no interactions with the classmates, and unstable Internet connection at home. (not an announcement) ✓

5. Do not write a fact because your opinion (the controlling idea) is missing.

- Harper College is a community college. (a fact) X
- My classmates come from twelve different countries. (a fact) X
- Harper College offers the best ESL programs in Illinois in three aspects: experienced professors, free tutoring, and the Language Lab. (Controlling idea “best” is added.) ✓
- Representing twelve countries, my classmates are great resources for learning different cultures. (Controlling idea “great resources for learning different cultures” is added.) ✓

Exercise 3. Read the following topic sentences. Identify the topic, controlling idea, and predictors. Type your answers in the boxes. When you complete the entire exercise, you can click “Check” for feedback. You may retry or see all the answers.

Example:

I miss my high school life for three reasons: friends, sports, and time for myself.

topic: my high school life

controlling idea: miss for three reasons

predictors: friends, sports, time for myself

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Exercise 4. Are the following good topic sentences? If not, why not? How do you improve them? Click “True” for good topic sentences and “False” for the wrong ones. You will receive instant feedback after blue each sentence. If a topic sentence is wrong, you will see the correction and explanation in .

Example:

Electric cars

This is not a good topic sentence because it is not a complete sentence and the controlling idea is missing.

Correction: I like electric cars more than gas-powered cars.

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VI. Supporting Ideas and Paragraph Unity



a man sitting on a bridge over a river

Supporting means “holding up”, just as the bridge is “holding up” the man in the image on the left. **Supporting sentences** are crucial in “holding up” the main idea while making your paragraphs interesting and convincing^[7]. They must support or explain the main idea in the topic sentence.

A good strategy for logical supporting sentences is to predict the question the readers may ask about your topic sentence. The result of this planning is actually the paragraph outline you learned in Unit 2 The Writing Process.[\(Open Unit 2 here.\)](#)

Parts in a Paragraph	Outline Ideas
Topic sentence	Young people should not live in their parents’ house after graduating from college.
Question:	Why not?
Supporting Sentence 1	practice independence in daily life
Details 1	cooking, cleaning, money, my struggles to be mature
Supporting Sentence 2	experience real meaning of life
Details 2	make decisions, take risks, manage time, my involvement in community service
Supporting Sentence 3	learn to appreciate parents
Details 3	their teaching, their love, give them time to rest, joy in visiting my parents

Paragraph Unity

Unity comes from the verb “unite” and means “hold tight, together”. In a paragraph, it means that all the supporting sentences work together to serve the same purpose: explaining the main idea.

Imagine two bouquets of flowers. Both look beautiful and in perfect harmony within themselves. However, if one sunflower is inserted in the middle of the roses, it will look out of place because it breaks the unity of the rose bouquet.



a rose bouquet



a sunflower bouquet

Then how do you tell if your paragraph has unity? There are two easy ways:

1. Ask yourself, “Does each supporting sentence explain the controlling idea in the topic sentence?” If yes, your paragraph has unity. If not, you need to delete or change the supporting sentence. It is helpful to circle or underline your controlling idea in the topic sentence for easier checking.
2. Always make an outline of the paragraph before you write. If you come up with a new idea while drafting the paragraph, put it in your outline first and ask yourself the first question.

Does the following paragraph outline show unity?

Parts of a Paragraph	Outline Ideas
Topic sentence	Taking online classes helps college students in three significant ways.
Question:	What are these three ways?
Supporting Sentence 1	provide convenience
Details 1	no driving, flexible study time, no transportation issue, hard to focus because of noisy children in the same house
Supporting Sentence 2	practice time management skills
Details 2	set study time and follow it, learn to deal with distractions
Supporting Sentence 3	not get professor’s in-person help
Details 3	difficult materials, questions not answered right away

No, it does not show unity. It contains irrelevant^[8] ideas because they do not support the main idea “help college students”. Here are ways to improve the outline:

- Cross out the irrelevant ideas.
- Add relevant information to support the main idea.
- In the second support, a personal example is also added to make the paragraph more interesting.
- In the third support, the new idea “manage time better” is a repetition of the second support “practice time management skills”. Therefore, it should be deleted. It is important not to repeat the same information that is already explained in other parts of the support.

~~hard to focus because of noisy children in the same house,~~ **childcare easier, enjoy time together** ~~not get professor’s in-person help~~ **learn to study independently** ~~difficult materials, questions not answered right away~~ **solve problems, rely on oneself, YouTube, Khan Academy, other resources, manage time better**

Parts of a Paragraph	Outline Ideas
Topic sentence	Taking online classes helps college students in three significant ways.
Question:	What are these three ways?
Supporting Sentence 1	provide convenience
Details 1	no driving, flexible study time, no transportation issue,
Supporting Sentence 2	practice time management skills
Details 2	set study time and follow it, learn to deal with distractions, my example of learning from procrastination mistakes
Supporting Sentence 3	
Details 3	

Exercise 5. Use the above as an example. Read the outlines below. Cross out the supporting ideas/details that are irrelevant. Revise each outline so that all the supporting ideas explain the main idea in the topic sentence.

#1

Parts of a Paragraph	Outline Ideas
Topic sentence	Social distancing is important in preventing the spread of coronavirus.
Question:	Why is social distancing important in prevention?
Supporting Sentence 1	lower chance of passing the virus
Details 1	talking, sneezing, coughing, passing one person to the next
Supporting Sentence 2	the virus highly contagious
Details 2	through physical contact, Delta variant 60% more transmissible than the one before
Supporting Sentence 3	hospitals with good medical equipment
Details 3	ICU, respirators, oxygen tanks, N95 masks
Supporting Sentence 3	some people catch virus easily
Details 4	sick people, older people, children

#2

Parts of a Paragraph	Outline Ideas
Topic sentence	I suffered from severe mental stress during the Covid 19 lockdown in April 2020.
Question:	Why did you suffer from stress?
Supporting Sentence 1	worry about my health the health of my family
Details 1	brother essential worker, baby at home
Supporting Sentence 2	worry about money
Details 2	lost restaurant job, pay bills, good unemployment benefits
Supporting Sentence 3	online classes very hard
Details 3	convenient time, hard to learn Blackboard, no face-to-face practice, missed deadline of first assignment

Parts of a Paragraph	Outline Ideas
Topic sentence	My cousin did not want to get the Covid-19 vaccine for three reasons.
Question:	What were the reasons?
Supporting Sentence 1	vaccine safety not sure
Details 1	Vaccine developed in a short time, worry about reactions and long-term side effects, reports about blood clots after vaccine
Supporting Sentence 2	He's healthy
Details 2	strong, seldom sick, good immunity
Supporting Sentence 3	stayed home all the time
Details 3	not contact other people, study online, get bored, want to have parties with friends

Exercise 6. Use the topic sentences below to build relevant supporting ideas. Check to make sure that all the ideas support the main idea in the topic sentence. Share your outline with your partner and discuss each other's ideas.

Example:

Parts of a Paragraph	Outline Ideas
Topic sentence	Owning a car is a necessity for community college students.
Question:	Why is a car necessary?
Supporting Sentence 1	need it for study
Details 1	on time to class, stay late in lab and library, not relying on friends or family, in control of time, my example of schedule
Supporting Sentence 2	need it for extra curricula activities and community service
Details 2	student clubs, volunteer work, my example of community service in the homeless shelter
Supporting Sentence 3	need it for fun
Details 3	party and movie with friends, regardless of time

1. Topic sentence: Men can often be better care givers than women.
2. Topic sentence: People 18 years and older should serve two years in the military.
3. Topic sentence: Chicago is the most romantic city in the U.S.
4. Topic sentence: Chicago is the best place for children to visit on the weekend.

Exercise 7. The following paragraph about a special place does not have unity. There are four additional sentences to be deleted (not including the example). Type the numbers of the irrelevant sentences in the boxes below. When you complete the entire exercise, you can click "Check" for answers. You may also retry or see all the answers. Sentence #4 is an example.



a balcony with a table, two chairs, and some plants

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Types of Supporting Sentences

Good supporting sentences not only explain the main idea but also include interesting details such as

facts – numbers, general truths, scientific truths...

reasons – logical explanations...

experts' opinions – research findings, quotes by experts in the field...

examples – stories of well-known people, personal experiences, personal quotes...

Read Paragraph “Good Roommates” below and discuss how the writer uses the types of details. Color supporting ideas in **green** and the details in **blue**.

Good Roommates

Having good roommates makes lives more enjoyable. First, **good roommates understand each other's need for peace and quiet after a day's study.** ¹**They do not make unnecessary noises. For example, my roommate Abia and I have different class schedules. She spends the day at school, and I attend night classes. When I come back to the apartment very tired at 10 pm, she always turns down her music or speaks very softly on the phone with her friends.** Moreover, **good roommates share useful information.** ²**Writer Barbara Dana once said, “A good roommate may be the single most important thing to have when one is away at school.” It is true because Abia's and my families are far away. I have taken more courses at college, so I give Abia advice about classes, student clubs, and scholarships. She helps me in a different way. While I was looking for a part-time job last year, she told me about the job openings in her workplace. Finally, good roommates respect each other's differences.** ³**As the U.S. is a land of immigrants, it becomes the land of opportunities to learn different cultures and religions. I have learned about the significance of Ramadan for Abia, and she has understood the importance of Easter for me. Together, we have developed a good understanding of each other's beliefs.** In brief, good roommates help each other become more caring, supportive, and tolerant^[9]. They make living easier in this complicated world.

In the first supporting details (first **blue** block marked with 1): personal examples of Abia and me

In the second supporting details (second **blue** block marked with 2): a quote by an expert, personal examples of Abia and me

In the third supporting details (third **blue** block marked with 3): general truth, logic, personal examples of Abia and me

Exercise 8. Use Paragraph “Good Roommates” as an example, read Paragraph “No Capital Punishment” and discuss what types of interesting details the writer uses. Color the supporting ideas in **green** and the details in **blue**.

No Capital Punishment^[10]

Capital punishment should be banned^[11] because the result cannot be changed, it is killing a life, and it does not stop the crime. First of all, the result of capital punishment is irreversible^[12]; therefore, it is important to be absolutely certain of a person's guilt. Nevertheless, in some cases, this is simply impossible to prove a person's guilt with 100% certainty. What if a person is wrongly charged? The death penalty will affect that person and his or her family forever. Next, capital punishment is killing. Killing people for any reason is wrong. Life is sacred, and humans do not have the right to decide the lives of others. Some

people believe that capital punishment will stop criminals from committing crimes as they will be afraid to die. However, this is not the reality. Violent cases still occur daily. For instance, on the weekend of July 4th, 2021, Chicago Sun times reported that over 100 people were shot in Chicago and 19 of them died. That weekend was considered the deadliest and most violent in the city that year. This shows that putting criminals to death will not reduce the crime. For these reasons, death penalty should not be supported. The people and the government must find a better solution^[13] to punishing the law breakers.

data from

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/crime/2021/7/3/22561910/chicago-weekend-shootings-july-2-5-homicide-gun-violence>.
accessed on July 10, 2021.

Last

VII. Transitions and Paragraph Cohesion

Cohesion focuses on the link between ideas so that they flow naturally from one to the next. When a paragraph has cohesion, ideas progress smoothly to create a connected whole.



waterfall in Yellowstone National Park

Imagine cohesion as a waterfall cascading^[14] smoothly and continuously.

There are different ways to achieve cohesion. One of them is by using transitions.

Transitions are also called **connecting words**. They help the writer organize thoughts and guide the readers in understanding the order of ideas clearly. Transitions are often needed not only between supporting sentences but also within them.

Compare the two paragraphs “Applying for the John & Melanie Frieburg ESL Student Scholarship” below. Which one is better? Why is it better? Underline the transitions in Paragraph 2 that you do not see in Paragraph 1.

Paragraph 1

Applying for the John & Melanie Frieburg ESL Student Scholarship

Applying for the John & Melanie Frieburg ESL Student Scholarship online is not hard if you follow these steps. Go to the scholarship page on the Harper College website and search for this specific scholarship. Read all the information related to it: the requirements, the deadline, and the amount of the award. Fill out the application form online completely and accurately. There are twelve supplemental^[15] questions including your grades and financial situation. Do you have an average grade of C? A paragraph about your educational aspiration is required. Get two recommendation letters from two people who know you well. Be sure to ask them first and give them enough time to write the letters. Proofread your application and submit before the deadline. You can always ask help from the Scholarship Office, the ESL Department, or the One Stop Center. The process is easy to follow and well worth your efforts for this special honor.



Frieburg ESL Student Scholarship winners 2015/2016

Paragraph 2

Applying for the John & Melanie Frieburg ESL Student Scholarship

Applying for the John & Melanie Frieburg ESL Student Scholarship online is not hard if you follow these steps. First, go to the scholarship page on the Harper College website and search for this specific scholarship. Read all the information related to it, such as the requirements, the deadline, and the amount of the award. When you are ready, fill out the application form online completely and accurately. There are twelve supplemental questions including your grades and financial situation. For example, do you have an average grade of C? A paragraph about your educational aspiration is also required. Another step is to get two recommendation letters from two people who know you well. Be sure to ask them and give them enough time to write the letters. Finally, proofread your application and submit before the deadline. At any stage of your application, you can always ask for help in the Scholarship Office, the ESL Department, or the One Stop Center. As you can see, the process is easy to follow and well worth your efforts for this special honor.

With connecting expressions like “First”, “such as”, “When you are ready”, and other underlined transitions, Paragraph 2 explains the steps much more clearly.

How are the transitions used?

1. The transition for the first supporting idea is often optional.
2. “Finally” is usually used to show the last supporting idea in the body of the paragraph. It is not used right before the conclusion.
3. The transition before the concluding sentence is optional. It is actually more common without it.
4. After most transitions, there is usually a comma, but this is not always true. There are different types of transitions with different punctuation rules. You will learn them step by step throughout the course.
5. Do not overuse transitions; otherwise, the paragraph will read very unnatural. As you read and write more, you will gradually develop a sense of when a transition is or is not necessary.

Here are some common transitions:

Meaning	Transitions
Addition	first, second, then, next, in addition, also, furthermore, moreover, last, finally ...
Contrast	but, yet, on the other hand, on the contrary, however, nevertheless, though, even though, although ...
Time	first, second, then, next, at ____ (clock time), in the morning (afternoon, etc.), after that, soon, in the beginning, at the same time, meanwhile, at first, at last, before, after, later, when, while, as soon as, until ...
Reason	for, due to, because of, because, since, as ...
Result	so, therefore, thus, consequently, as a result ...
Location	near, beside, next to, in front, behind, around, on the top, on the bottom, on the right/left, to the right/left, under, opposite, above, below ...
Conclusion	in conclusion, in summary, to sum up, in brief, for those reasons ...
Example	like, such as, including, for example, for instance ...

Study Paragraph “Good Roommates” again. Notice how the three transitions (**first, moreover, finally**) connect the supporting ideas and the transition (**in brief**) is used before the concluding sentences.

Study Paragraph “No Capital Punishment” again. Notice how the transitions (**first of all, therefore, nevertheless, next, however, for instance**) are used to connect ideas between supporting ideas and within them. The transition (**for these reasons**) is placed before the concluding sentence.

Exercise 9. Choose the appropriate transitions below and type them in the boxes. first, second, next, in to finish the paragraph about a daughter. There may be more than one correct addition, also, answer, but type just one. Not all listed transitions are needed. When you furthermore, complete the entire exercise, you can click “Check” for feedback. You may retry or moreover, last, see all the answers. The first one is an example. finally, for example, to sum up

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Exercise 10. Choose the appropriate transitions below and type them in the boxes. however, on the first to finish the paragraph about a life lesson. There may be more than Saturday, then, after crying one correct answer, but type just one. Not all listed transitions are needed. for an hour, while I was When you complete the entire exercise, you can click “Check” for feedback. eating breakfast, now, at You may retry or see all the answers. The first one is an example. night, finally, after that, after I arrived

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VIII. Concluding Sentence(s)

A **concluding sentence** signals the end of a paragraph.

You can also write two or three sentences in this part with one or



words “THE END” on wooden pieces

more of the following methods:

1. Restates^[16] the main idea but in different words or sentence structure.
2. Summarize the main points in the body of the paragraph.
3. Express an opinion, make a prediction, put forth a recommendation, or ask a question related to the topic.

A conclusion must not bring up a new topic.

× For those three reasons, I enjoy swimming the most. I will also start playing basketball next week.

Topic sentence	Different ways to write a concluding sentence or concluding sentences
Swimming is my favorite hobby.	Restate the main idea: For those three reasons, I enjoy swimming the most.
	Restate the main idea + summarize the supporting points in the body: For the benefits of physical health, mental wellbeing, and social life, I enjoy swimming the most.
	Restate the main idea + express an opinion For those three reasons, I enjoy swimming the most. It is the activity that has kept me healthy in the last ten years.
	Restate the main idea + make a prediction: For those three reasons, I enjoy swimming the most. If everyone can do this activity regularly, this will be a very healthy country.
	Restate the main idea + put forth a recommendation For those three reasons, I enjoy swimming the most and recommend this healthy activity to everyone.
	Restate the main idea + ask a question For those three reasons, I enjoy swimming the most. Shouldn't everyone start this hobby, too?

Exercise 11. Compare the pairs of topic sentences and concluding sentences from the paragraphs you have studied in this unit. Then discuss in groups what method the concluding sentences use and how they relate to the topic sentences.

Example:

Paragraph "Missing My Childhood Days"

Topic sentence: Thanks to two people and one place, my childhood was filled with fun.

Concluding sentences: Nowadays I do not have Hector and Lisandra in my life, and my childhood house has long been sold. However, I am grateful for having them all in my past because they have left me with priceless memories.

The conclusion restates the main idea (they have left me with priceless memories), summarizes the three supporting points in the body (I do not have Hector and Lisandra in my life, and my childhood house has long been sold), and expresses an opinion (I am grateful for having them all in my past). The conclusion relates to the topic sentence and explains the controlling idea very well.

1. Paragraph "Difficulties in English Writing"
2. Paragraph "My Special Place"
3. Paragraph "Good Roommates"
4. Paragraph "No Capital Punishment"
5. Paragraph "Applying for the John & Melanie Frieburg ESL Student Scholarship"
6. Paragraph "My Daughter"
7. Paragraph "My Valuable Life Lesson"

IX. Paragraph Completion

Each paragraph explains a complete idea and needs to have a clear ending. There are several ways to check if the paragraph is complete:



a checklist and a yellow pencil

1. Does the paragraph have a title?
2. Is the topic sentence there?
3. If you have predictors in the topic sentence, are all of them explained in the body of the paragraph?
4. If the supporting sentences are present, are there details to further explain the ideas in them?
5. Do you have a concluding sentence at the end?
6. Are there proper transitions to connect ideas?

If any one part is missing, the paragraph is incomplete.

Read the following paragraph. Is it complete? If not, discuss what is missing and how you can improve the paragraph.

Jogging is beneficial physically, mentally, and socially. First, jogging makes people physically fit. It not only strengthens the muscles and immune system but also helps to reduce weight. Thirty minutes of jogging will burn about 250 calories. Extra weight causes all kinds of health problems, and a daily run will help shed^[17] the extra pounds. Besides, jogging keeps people mentally healthy by reducing their stress. Modern life is full of anxieties. Workers have project deadlines, students take tests, parents deal with family financial challenges, and all people run into relationship issues from time to time. According to many doctors, jogging can act as a stress reliever^[18], boost^[19] the feel-good hormone, and distract people from daily worries. Jogging is a simple act of activity that helps people become healthier in many ways.

What is missing?

1. There is no title. Add a title, such as “The Best Exercise” or “The Benefits of Jogging”.
2. The third support is missing. From the topic sentence, the readers expect to see support in three areas: physical, mental, and social. However, the writer did not discuss the “social” aspect of jogging. Therefore, the paragraph is incomplete. The writer should add some information about the social benefits of jogging. Ideas could include joining a jogging club and meeting new friends.

Exercise 12. Use the above paragraph as an example. Is the following new one complete? If not, discuss what is missing and how you can improve the paragraph.

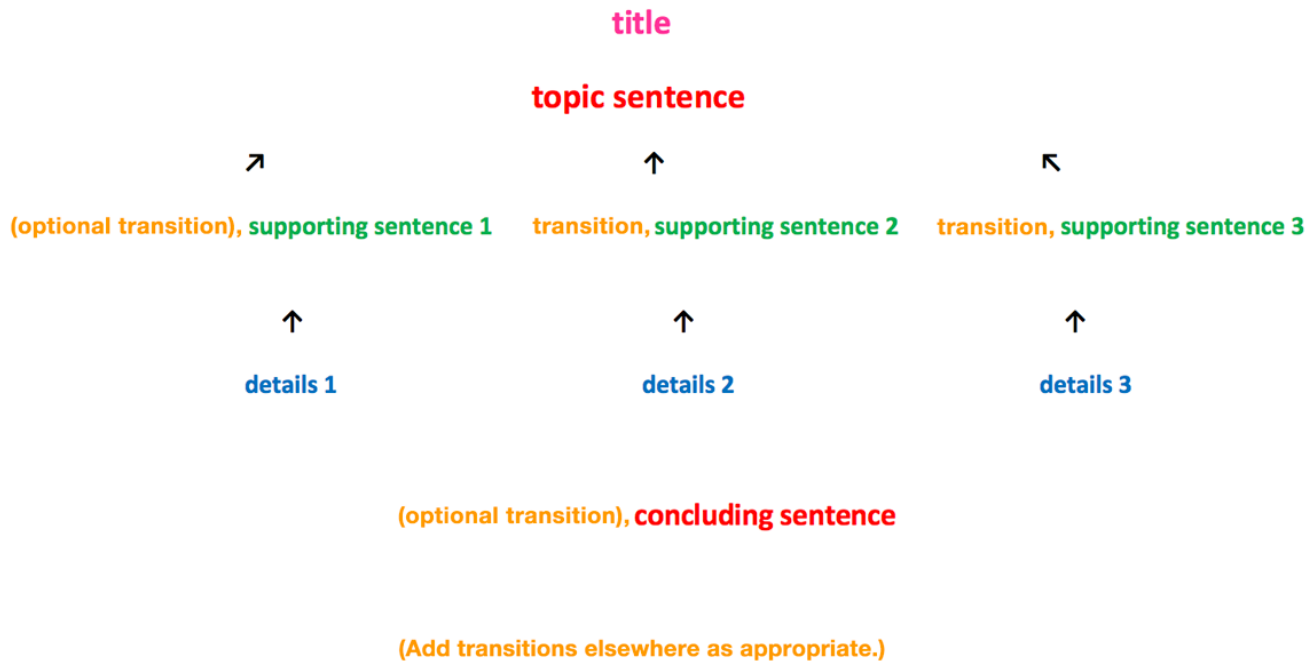


unleashed dogs on beach

Unleashed dogs are dangerous to the environment, other living beings, and even to themselves. First of all, dogs do not have minds like humans; therefore, they often do not know what proper behavior is in public. When they are not restricted by a leash, they can run and step on flowers and plants in the parks. They may also leave their waste there if their owners are unaware of it. What's more, dogs can frighten the pedestrians on the street. Some of them are afraid of dogs and may

experience intense fear when a dog jumps at them. Dogs may also scare drivers. What if they lose control of their vehicles? Other animals like ducks and geese will also find the running and barking “strangers” threatening. Lastly, unleashed dogs are a danger to themselves. There are many hidden holes on the roads and in the parks, and dogs can easily fall into them and hurt themselves. Because dogs can also cause traffic accidents, they may be injured as well. If there is construction nearby with heavy machinery and harmful chemicals, the consequences will be deadly to the dogs.

Now you can understand better all the parts of a paragraph and how they relate to each other. The following template is not the only way to write a paragraph, but it is a good way to start.



a paragraph structure

X. Unit Review Practice

Exercise 13. Color code the following paragraph about online learning. It is based on an outline example you studied earlier in this unit. As you read, do the following:	pink Title – red Topic sentence – red Supporting sentences – green	Supporting details – blue transitions – yellow conclusions – red Concluding sentence(s) –	Discuss: • Have you taken an online class? If so, have you had similar experiences as described in this paragraph? • What types of supporting ideas and details are used to explain the main idea? • Does the paragraph have unity? • What types of conclusion are used? • Is the paragraph complete? • Is the title centered on the top line? Is the first sentence indented? • What do you like about this paragraph? • How do you improve the paragraph?
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a MacBook, a notebook, etc. on a desk

Three Benefits of Online Classes for College Students

Taking online classes helps college students in three significant ways. First of all, online classes provide many conveniences. Many college students have a job, and some also need to take care of their family. When the courses are online, the students often do not have a fixed class time. As a result, they can pick any shift available at work, and they can also schedule activities with their loved ones like going to the park or even going on a vacation. For those with small children, childcare is no longer a huge issue. In addition, some college students do not own a car, but their education will not be affected because they can take classes remotely. Secondly, college students improve their time management skills. I have learned to use my time more wisely. For example, during my first semester of online class, I spent a lot of time video chatting with my friends in the beginning. My professor set all the test deadlines by midnight each Sunday, so I postponed my study till Saturday. However, there was too much reading and practicing then, and I simply could not complete the required study to get a good grade. In the second half of the semester, I forced myself to make a schedule for daily study time and to be more disciplined^[20] in following it. I was able to finish all the materials before the test, and my grade improved. The most important skill through online learning is independent learning. Even though professors are available through office hours, emails, and live sessions, students must learn to solve problems on their own most of the times. They can do so by reading, checking dictionaries, and finding additional online learning resources from YouTube videos or the Khan Academy website. The type of “self help” foster skills in independent learning, which is essential in college study and future profession. Taking online classes is challenging, but these benefits make their experiences worthwhile.

NSNT Practice

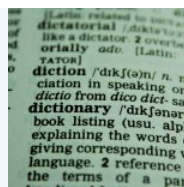


a pen writing in a notebook

Go to **The NSNT Free Writing Approach and Additional Weekly Prompts for Writing** in Appendix A. ([Open Appendix A here.](#)) Choose two topics to practice the steps in the writing process, including writing a paragraph for each. You may start with the NSNT approach and then rewrite the paragraphs. Check to see that the paragraphs have all the necessary parts and that they follow the rules for format, unity, cohesion, and completion.

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Vocabulary Review



a page in a dictionary

The words here have appeared in this unit. The best way to learn them is to guess the meaning of each word from the context. Then hover your computer mouse over the number beside each word to check its meaning and part of speech. These words are also listed in the footnote area at the end of each unit.

Here, you can use the flashcards below to review these words.

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Summary

1. A paragraph is a group of sentences with one main idea.
2. A paragraph must follow a proper format, with the title in the center of the top line and an indent in the beginning of the paragraph. All the sentences should be written/typed double spaced and follow one another without starting a new line.
3. A paragraph consists of a title, a topic sentence, several supporting ideas with details, 1-2 concluding sentences, and transitions.
4. Each paragraph should have all the above necessary components. If one of them is missing, the paragraph is not complete.
5. A title explain the topic of the paragraph or gets the readers interested in the topic. It is centered on the first line and should follow the capitalization rules.
6. A topic sentence contains the main idea of a paragraph and is usually put in the beginning. It must have a topic and a controlling idea. It must be a complete sentence and should not be a fact or an announcement.
7. Supporting sentences should be detailed and should help explain the topic sentence. If anything is irrelevant to the main idea, the paragraph will not have unity.
8. A concluding sentence restates the main idea and signals the end of the paragraph. It can include an opinion, a suggestion, a recommendation, or a question that is related to the topic.
9. Transitions are important in guiding the readers in understanding the information in the paragraph and providing a smooth connection between ideas. Transitions help maintain the cohesion of a paragraph.

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- a light bulb surrounded by six circles © Pixabay
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1. anticipate: verb, wait for something to happen ↵
2. riddle: noun, a game of guessing the answers ↵
3. priceless: adjective, very valuable, cannot be measured by a price ↵
4. foundation: noun, basis, groundwork of something more complicated ↵
5. stack: verb, to pile or put one on top of another ↵
6. imply: verb, say indirectly ↵
7. convincing: adjective, make people believe ↵
8. irrelevant: adjective, not related, having nothing to do with the main idea ↵
9. tolerant: adjective, accepting differences ↵
10. capital punishment, noun phrase, a type of punishment to kill a criminal ↵
11. ban: verb, stop, not allowed to happen ↵
12. irreversible: adjective, cannot go back to the original situation ↵
13. solution: noun, the answer to a problem ↵
14. cascade: verb, flow from high to low smoothly ↵
15. supplemental: adjective, extra, additional ↵
16. restate: verb, write again, repeat ↵
17. shed: verb, get rid of ↵
18. stress reliever: noun phrase, something to reduce or take away stress ↵
19. boost: verb, raise, improve ↵
20. disciplined: adjective, self-controlled, strict with oneself ↵

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Part Three Editing / Grammar Skills

[2.1: Unit 4 Enumerative Paragraphs](#)

[2.2: Unit 5 Narrative Paragraphs](#)

[2.3: Unit 6 Essay Introduction](#)

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2.1: Unit 4 Enumerative Paragraphs

Learning Objectives

- To understand what an enumerative paragraph focuses on
- To learn to write topic sentences, supporting sentences with details, conclusion, and transitions in enumerative paragraphs through multiple examples
- To apply the writing process to plan and write enumerative paragraphs

I. Warm-up



washing machines and dryers in a laundromat

Read Paragraph “Public Laundromats in the U.S.A.” and do the activities that follow.

Public Laundromats in the U.S.A.

When I moved to Chicago, I was shocked because I had to use a public laundromat. Most people living in the apartments do not have their own washer and dryer, but I think this situation creates some problems for them. The transportation of dirty linen and clothes is the first problem. People need to collect everything and go down to the apartment basement where the machines are. Sometimes, they have to drive to the nearest laundromat if all washing machines are occupied by their neighbors. They may wait even half a day for a free washer or dryer. The second problem is having the exact change. Each washing costs ~~2.75~~^{2.50}3.50. People need to frequently collect quarters or change money in the bank. The problems do not end here. The biggest problem of using public laundromats is hygiene. No one knows what kind of things people have washed in the same machines: underwear, linen, cloth diapers, even shoes. One day, while waiting for an available washer, I decided to take out a neighbor's laundry from the washing machine because the laundry had been there for a long time. When I did this, I felt sorry and angry. I found different things which could not be washed together because it was not hygienic to do so. Of course, for eight months in America, I had to use the public laundromat more than a few times because I did not have another choice. Imagine my happiness and relief^[1] when I finally bought my own first washing machine!

By E. Yugay (student), ESL Writing III, Harper College. Used with permission.

1. Color code the paragraph:

Title – **pink** Topic sentence – **red** Supporting sentences – **green**
 Supporting details – **blue** Transitions – **yellow** Concluding sentence(s) – **red**

2. Discuss:

- Have you had similar experiences or witnessed similar situations as described in this paragraph?
- Does the writer focus on telling a story, arguing for a controversial^[2] issue, or listing points to explain an idea?
- What types of supporting ideas and details are used to explain the main idea?
- Does the paragraph have unity?
- What information is included in the conclusion?
- Is the paragraph complete?
- Is the title centered on the topic line? Is the first sentence indented?
- What do you like about this paragraph?
- How would you improve the paragraph?
- If you could ask the writer a question, what would you ask?

II. Focus of Enumerative Paragraphs

To enumerate is to list or to count. It focuses on explaining some points to support a main idea. You have actually studied many enumerative paragraphs in Unit 2 and Unit 3, in addition to Paragraph “Public Laundromats in the U.S.A.” above.

- Unit 2 The Benefits of NSNT for Me
- Unit 3 Missing My Childhood Days
- Unit 3 Difficulties in English Writing
- Unit 3 My Special Place
- Unit 3 Good Roommates
- Unit 3 The Best Exercise
- Unit 3 Unleashed Dogs
- Unit 3 Three Benefits of Online Classes for College Students

Review those paragraphs for ideas, organization, language use, and format. In this unit, you are going to learn from more examples and to write your own enumerative paragraphs. Here are some more topics typical^[3] of enumerative paragraphs:

- Communication barriers^[4] among family members
- Characteristics of a good boss
- Benefits of owning a dog
- Reasons for coming to the U.S.
- Advice to new international students

III. Topic Sentence in Enumerative Paragraphs

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For detailed explanations and examples of topic sentences, open Unit 3 here.

The same topic can produce many different topic sentences if the controlling idea is changed. Of course, the paragraph will be different as a result. This shows that you have the flexibility to decide on your focus based on your interests. **Write from your heart!**

Study the following topic sentences and discuss how writers focus on different areas of the same topic. You will notice that some topic sentences are more formal/academic in nature and some are more personal.

Topics	Topic sentences with different controlling ideas
communication barriers among family members	• Three subjects often cause disagreement between teenagers and their parents. • I have learned to improve communication with my siblings in three areas: timing, topic, and tone.
characteristics of a good boss	• A good boss usually displays the following characteristics: understanding, flexibility^[5], and humility^[6]. • I love my former boss for his encouragement, fairness, and generosity^[7].
benefits of owning a dog	• There are three benefits to owning a dog. • My neighbor's puppy Skippy has brought much joy to my family.
Reasons for coming to the U.S.	• Pursuing freedom in religion, speech, and political affiliation is the main reason why many people choose to immigrate to the U.S. • My family came to the U.S. because we wished for good economic prospects^[8], equal educational opportunities, and a multicultural environment.

Exercise 1. Try different controlling ideas and write at least two different topic sentences with each of the following topics.

Example:

Advice to new international students

Topic sentence 1: New international students will adapt to a new environment better if they prepare themselves well before leaving their native country.

Topic sentence 2: Finding a caring host family, working closely with professors and counsellors, and joining student clubs are the best ways for new international students to succeed.

1. Ways to improve grades in this writing class
2. Advantages of technology for elderly people
3. Disadvantages of technology for young children
4. The best kitchen appliance for you
5. Your least favorite store

IV. Supporting Ideas in Enumerative Paragraphs

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For detailed explanations and examples of supporting sentences, open Unit 3 here.

In an enumerative paragraph, the supporting ideas follow a logical order. The most important point is usually listed last. Study the paragraph below and discuss how the writer uses different types of details – explanations, examples, and a quote – to support the topic sentence.

The Joy of Having My Three Children

It is a blessing that I have three children, aged 15, 11, and 6. First, they are not lonely anymore. When I had two children, they complained to me many times. My son wanted a younger brother, and my daughter wanted a baby sister. They also fought for toys. After my third child was born, their life changed a lot. Most times, they played with her and even taught her how to use chopsticks. Now all three children are very happy together. As a result, I am delighted. However, with three children, I feel really old sometimes, but they make me feel young. Each of my children has many activities, and I am very involved in their lives. Last month, when my second child participated in a cross-country competition^[9] organized by the school district, I ran next to her and cheered her on. I felt young and energetic as if I were 16 years old again. The part I love the most is that they help me become a better person. Each child has a different personality. Sometimes, I cannot understand why they act in a certain way, but I find out that they are trying to imitate^[10] my husband and me. “Children are mirrors of their parents”. This saying is so true. I can see my own problem through them because their action reflects my behavior. Now I am more careful when they are around. I do not yell, I do not judge other people, and I always say “Thank you”. I want to set a good example for them. Even though I am often physically tired, I love them because love makes miracles happen. My children are the joy of my life.

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Exercise 2. Use two of the topic sentences you have developed from Exercise 1 to make a paragraph outline for each. Check to see that the ideas support the topic sentence.

Example:

Parts of a Paragraph	Outline Ideas
Topic sentence	Three subjects often cause disagreement between teenagers and their parents.
Question:	What are the three subjects?
Supporting Sentence 1	about friends
Details 1	Teenagers: appearance, popularity; Parents: good students, good behavior
Supporting Sentence 2	about free time
Details 2	Teenagers: games, movies, relaxing; Parents: reading, exercising, housework
Supporting Sentence 3	about school work
Details 3	Teenagers: study not the only thing, favorite subjects; Parents: study, grades, college majors

#1

Parts of a Paragraph	Outline Ideas
Topic sentence	
Question:	
Supporting Sentence 1	
Details 1	
Supporting Sentence 2	
Details 2	
Supporting Sentence 3	
Details 3	

#2

Parts of a Paragraph	Outline Ideas
Topic sentence	
Question:	
Supporting Sentence 1	
Details 1	
Supporting Sentence 2	
Details 2	
Supporting Sentence 3	
Details 3	

Exercise 3. Use Paragraph “The Joy of Having My Three Children” as an example. Add relevant information to make Paragraph “Ways to Reduce Stress” more interesting.

Ways to Reduce Stress



a red pencil writing the word “stress”

Modern life creates a lot of anxieties in people, but there are different ways to control stress. Physical exercises are a common solution. [\(Add some details here about how physical exercises help reduce stress .\)](#) Another idea is talking to a friend or family member. Someone says that sharing feelings and experiences with others is like releasing at least half the burdens. [\(Add some details here about talking helps reduce stress.\)](#) Besides working out and sharing, doing some chores will help relieve stress for some people. Many people do not like housework, but they do not know that household work may bring a sense of calm and normalcy. [\(Add some details here about how doing chores helps reduce stress.\)](#) Stress has become an integral part of modern life. Isn't it time for each person to find a way to handle it?

V. Conclusion in Enumerative Paragraphs

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For detailed explanations and examples of concluding sentences, open [Unit 3 here](#).

Discuss what types of conclusion (reinstatement, summary, opinion, prediction, recommendation, and/or question) are used in the two paragraphs you have read in this unit.

- Public Laundromat in the U.S.A.:

Of course, for eight months in America, I had to use the public laundromat more than a few times because I did not have another choice. Imagine my happiness and relief when I finally bought my own first washing machine!

- The Joy of Having My Three Children:

Even though I am often physically tired, I love them because love makes miracles happen. My children are the joy of my life.

Exercise 4. Read the following paragraph. Fill in the missing information as instructed.



a man waiting at a bus stop

Transportation in the Suburbs

(Start the paragraph with a topic sentence here.) To begin with, the buses run very infrequently^[11]. Some buses come once an hour, even during the rush hours. If people miss the bus, they will have to wait for an hour for the next one. In that case, they will be late for their work or school. Additionally, it is not healthy to wait for a long time in winter. Winters can be very harsh, with heavy snow and biting winds. People can easily catch cold. The worst part is that the buses do not cover all the areas. (Add some details here about some inconveniences when buses do not cover all the areas.) (Add a conclusion here to complete the paragraph.)

VI. More Enumerative Paragraph Examples

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Read each of the paragraph examples below and do the following activities:

1. Color code the paragraph:

Title – **pink** Topic sentence – **red** Supporting sentences – **green**
Supporting details – **blue** Transitions – **yellow** Concluding sentence(s) – **red**

2. Discuss:

- Have you had similar experiences or witnessed similar situations as described in this paragraph?
- Does the writer focus on telling a story, arguing for a controversial issue, or listing points to explain an idea?
- What types of supporting ideas and details are used to explain the main idea?
- Does the paragraph have unity?
- What information is included in the conclusion?
- Is the paragraph complete?
- Is the title centered on the topic line? Is the first sentence indented?
- What do you like about this paragraph?
- How do you improve the paragraph?
- If the writer were here, what question would you ask him/her about the paragraph?

Click for each paragraph:

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Exercise 5. Read the following paragraph. Is there a topic sentence? If not, add one. Is the paragraph unified? If not, cross out the irrelevant information. Can you add more interesting supporting details?



athletic shoes, weights, jumping rope

Winter Fun at Home

Winters in some areas of America are very cold. Many people have to stay indoors. The first interesting thing they can do is make home a fun zone. For example, they can set up a simple but comfortable home theatre with just a TV and a couch. A bag of popcorn and a cup of hot chocolate can add to a feeling of warmth and relaxation no matter how heavily it is snowing outside. A home theater like this is also fun in other seasons, so they can enjoy it year round. Second, they can make household chores into a competition, with prizes. For instance, they have a cleaning game every week. The older child will vacuum the carpet, the younger child will dust the furniture, and the parents will mow the lawn. They can rotate being the judge and deciding on the prizes. Children are usually happier to do housework when it is fun. Lastly, they can continue with physical activities at home. Gyms can be expensive, and people have to drive there. If they have a treadmill or stationary bike at home, that will be great. However, it is still fine without them. On the Internet, there are many training videos with no equipment needed, so everyone can choose what he or she likes to do including aerobics and tai chi. Winters can be long, but they do not have to be boring.

VII. Transitions in Enumerative Paragraphs

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For detailed explanations and examples of transitions, open Unit 3 here.

You already know very well how to use transitions like “first, second, next, in addition, finally”. They are very useful expressions but not the only ones. Take a look at a variety of transitions used in the paragraphs in this unit. Notice the punctuation as well.

Enumerative paragraphs in this unit	Transitions between the supporting sentences and before the conclusion
Public Laundromats in the USA	• ... is the first problem. • The second problem is ... • The problems do not end here. The biggest problem is ... • (It is OK not to have a transition before conclusion.)
The Joy of Having My Three Children	• First, • However, I feel really old sometimes, but they make me feel young. • The part I love the most is that ... • (It is OK not to have a transition before conclusion.)
To Communicate or Not to Communicate?	• To begin with, • The second topic the adolescents and their parents often fight about is ... • The most frequent fight happens when ... • To sum up, (before conclusion)
My Favorite Hobby	• (It is OK to not to have a transition before the first supporting idea.) • Besides helping me learn English, • Third, • For these reasons,
Writing Diary	• First, • Secondly, • Finally, • (It is OK not to have a transition before conclusion.)
Unforgettable High School Years	• First of all, • Besides the PE class, • The last good memory comes from ... • (It is OK not to have a transition before conclusion.)
Homesick for Spain	• (It is OK not to have a transition before the first supporting idea.) • One of the reasons I miss my parents is their food. (to connect with missing parents in the first support.) • Finally, • (It is OK not to have a transition before conclusion.)
The Inconveniences of Overseas Travels	• The first trouble is to ... • Once their visa is ready and they are all excited to leave, they must ... • When the travelers are lucky to pass the security, they must face ... • In addition, • The inconveniences do not end here. • (It is OK not to have a transition before conclusion.)

Exercise 6. The following paragraph is adapted from one in Unit 3. The transition before each supporting sentence is missing. Add an appropriate transition. The three supporting sentences are underlined, and you can combine each supporting idea with the a transition. Try at least two transitions for each blank. Be careful with punctuation. The first one is an example.

Example:



a balcony with a table, two chairs, and some plants

_____ (transition) The balcony has a beautiful lake view.

First, the balcony has a beautiful lake view.

The first reason I like the balcony is that it has a lake view.

My Special Place

Most people have their own special place in the house, and mine is my balcony. It is a wooden structure about 2 meters wide and 8 meters long. _____ (transition) The balcony has a beautiful lake view. The balcony faces a small lake, and sometimes I see ducks swimming there. In the evening, the fountain in the middle of the lake lights up with soft music in the background. I always feel serene and mysterious with the night sky enveloping around me. _____ (transition) The balcony is a place where I rest after a day of hard study. No one bothers me there, and the noise from the house feels far away. My three young children often play in the living room, but they make an effort to play quietly when they see me in the balcony. They know it is “mommy time”. _____ (transition) It is a place where I reflect on my life. There are 2 pots of geranium flowers and 2 pots of cacti, a perfect harmony of pink and green, round and thorny, soft and spiky – just like life itself, I think about my life experiences while admiring the plants. I love my balcony!

VIII. Unit Review Practice: Writing Assignments

Now you are ready to write your own enumerative paragraph! As you have learned in Unit 2 The Writing Process ([Open Unit 2 here](#)), the best way to plan a paragraph is to follow the proper steps.

Enumerative Paragraph Writing Assignments

You will be writing two at-home enumerative paragraphs. The second one will start after the first one is complete. For both assignments, follow the instructions below.

Purpose: To show your understanding of planning and writing an enumerative paragraph. Use the writing process to help you.

Topic: Choose from the list below.

Brainstorm and Outline: Brainstorm for ideas. Then organize the ideas by using one of the outline templates below. Your outline is due on _____. Bring it to class.

Paragraph: Your paragraph should have a title, a topic sentence, three supporting ideas with details, and a conclusion. Use proper transitions to connect ideas.

Format: Type your paragraph, double spaced, font size 12, with 1-inch margins on four sides of the page. Type your name, class, and date on the upper right-hand corner of the page. The first line of your paragraph should be indented. Save your paragraph in a Word file.

Self Checklist: When you finish writing, use the Self Checklist below. Put a checkmark beside each item if you think you did a good job in that area. Otherwise, improve your paragraph until you can check off the item. Save your work again.

Submission: Submit your paragraph on the Blackboard. Go to your Blackboard course site and follow the instructions there. Due by _____.

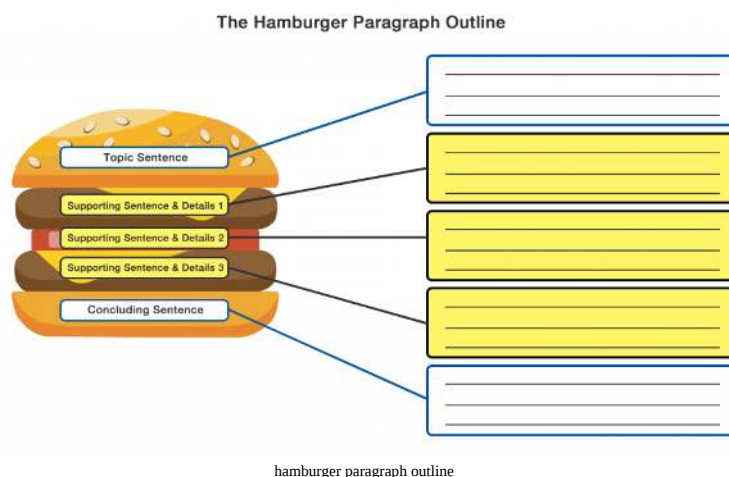
Choose one of the following topics. If you wish to write about a topic of your own, discuss with your professor first.

1. What is the most significant change you have experienced in your life since you turned sixteen? Explain three reasons why it is so important. (not three changes)
2. What are three reasons some students like to sit with their friends in the class?
3. What are the three reasons some people hold prejudices against some other people?
4. What are the three difficulties ESL students (or you) have in reading?
5. What are three good qualities of _____ (a leader)? (Name a specific leader)
6. What are the three words to describe your personality?
7. What is an American custom you like very much? Explain three reasons why you like it. (Just one custom, not three)
8. What is an American custom you do not like? Explain three reasons why you do not like it. (Just one custom, not three)

Enumerative Paragraph Outline Template #1

Parts of a Paragraph	Outline Ideas
Topic sentence	
Question:	
Supporting Sentence 1	
Details 1	
Supporting Sentence 2	
Details 2	
Supporting Sentence 3	
Details 3	

Enumerative Paragraph Outline Template #2



Enumerative Paragraph Self Checklist

Questions	Paragraph Revising and Editing Self Checklist	✓
1	Is my paragraph on topic and clear to understand?	
2	Is my paragraph interesting to read?	
3	Did I include a topic sentence with a clear controlling idea?	
4	Did I include 3 supporting ideas and connect them with transitions?	
5	Did I include a concluding sentence?	
6	Is my paragraph unified and complete?	
7	Did all my verbs agree with their subjects (subject-verb agreement)? Did I use proper verb tenses (verb tense shift)?	
8	Did I try my best to use correct sentence structure (simple, compound, complex)?	
9	Did I try my best to use correct grammar such as nouns, pronouns, and others?	
10	Did I try my best to have correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization?	
11	Did I follow the proper paragraph format?	

Note: #7 – #10 may include more specific aspects of grammar depending on how many editing units you have already studied.

NSNT Practice



a pen writing in a notebook

Go to **The NSNT Free Writing Approach and Additional Weekly Prompts for Writing** in Appendix A. ([Open Appendix A here.](#)) Choose two topics to write a paragraph each. You may start with the NSNT approach and then revise and edit the paragraphs using the Self Checklist above. You are encouraged to share your writing with your partner and help each other improve.

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Vocabulary Review



a page in a dictionary

The words here have appeared in this unit. The best way to learn them is to guess the meaning of each word from the context. Then hover your computer mouse over the number beside each word to check its meaning and part of speech. These words are also listed in the footnote area at the end of each unit.

Here, you can use the flashcards below to review these words.

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Summary

1. An enumerative paragraph focuses on explaining a few points (reasons, ways, approaches, aspects, etc.) to support a main idea.
2. An enumerative paragraph should have a title, a topic sentence, 2-4 supporting ideas with details, a conclusion, and transitions.
3. Following the writing process (pre-writing, writing, and post-writing) can ensure a well – organized and well – supported paragraph.

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1. relief: noun, a feeling when the worry disappeared ↵
2. controversial: adjective, causing argument because of different opinions ↵

- 3. typical: adjective, common, showing the nature of something ↵
- 4. barrier: noun, a challenge or a difficulty that stops people from doing something ↵
- 5. flexibility: noun, the quality of being willing to change ↵
- 6. humility: noun, the quality of being humble, not proud ↵
- 7. generosity: noun, the quality of being willing to give things to others or sharing things with others ↵
- 8. prospect: noun, something about future ↵
- 9. cross-country competition: noun phrase, a sport of running long and different paths ↵
- 10. imitate: verb, follow or copy someone else's behavior ↵
- 11. infrequently: adverb, not often ↵

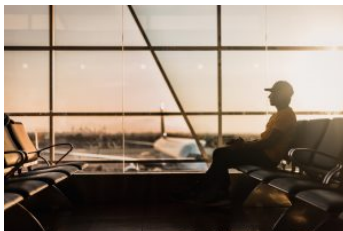
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2.2: Unit 5 Narrative Paragraphs

Learning Objectives

1. To learn what a narrative paragraph focuses on
2. To understand and practice narrative paragraphs with a focus on the use of time transitions, past tenses, descriptive vocabulary, and specific supporting details
3. To study narrative paragraphs through analyzing multiple models
4. To apply the writing process to plan and write narrative paragraphs

I. Warm – Up



a man sitting on a chair at an airport

Read Paragraph “My Worst Trip” and do the activities that follow.

My Worst Trip

My experiences at Miami Airport and during the flight to Chicago on September 29, 2007 were terrible because I could not understand English. I came from Mexico, and that was my first connecting trip out of my own country. After a long flight from my native country, I arrived at Miami Airport. I had been so excited walking in an American airport until a uniformed officer asked me something in English. I felt nervous because I did not speak English and did not know how to answer her questions. I just shook my head. I was not walking excitedly anymore because I realized that I did not speak the language. I already began to miss my own country! Suddenly, I looked at my watch, and it said 12:30 pm. I was so hungry that I needed to eat something. I had not eaten much on my first flight. I went to a small restaurant in the airport, looked at the pictures of the menu on the screen, and decided to have a coke and a sandwich. I could not see clearly or read what kind of sandwich that was, but it looked scrumptious^[1]. I was just going to point to the picture and tell the waiter what I wanted. He came and spoke fast. Because I did not understand, I felt I had to say “Ok”. Well, he gave me a different meal, and it cost me almost \$20! This situation was awful^[2]. I ate the meal in sad silence. I could not tell what it tasted like because I was tired and upset. Finally, I got on my flight to Chicago in the evening. On the plane, I wanted to drink water, but I did not know how to ask for it. I just stayed in my seat quietly and felt despondent^[3]. In the end, I met my family at the airport in Chicago at 11:30 pm. On our way home, I told them about my nightmare. They comforted me, “Don’t worry. All will be fine.” However, I could not shake off the feeling that I had just had a rocky start^[4] on my life in this new country. On that day, I made a promise to myself that I would have to study English really hard.

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1. Color code the paragraph:

Title – **pink** Background information – **purple**
 Topic sentence – **red** Beginning of the story – **green**
 Middle of the story – **blue** End of the story – **green**
 Transitions – **yellow** Concluding sentence(s) – **red**

2. Discuss:

- What was your experience on your trip to the U.S.? Did you have a similar experience as the writer?
- Does the writer focus on telling a story, arguing for a controversial issue, or listing points to explain an idea?
- How is this paragraph similar to the ones you have studied in Unit 4 Enumerative Paragraphs?
- How is this paragraph different from the ones in Unit 4?
- What types of supporting ideas and details are used to explain the main idea?
- What do you like about this paragraph?
- How would you improve the paragraph?
- If you could ask the writer a question, what would you ask?

II. Focus of Narrative Paragraphs

Narration is a description of an experience, an event, a story, or a situation to show a point of view. You have already studied a narrative paragraph in Unit 3: My Valuable Life Lesson.

Narrative paragraphs have:



an opened book with a leaf

- a beginning: How did the story start?
- a middle: How did it progress?

- an ending: How did it end?

As you are telling a story in this type of paragraph, it is important to:

1. provide the background information about the story: what, who, when, where. If applicable, include the information on why and how. The information is usually given in the beginning.
2. use past tenses as you narrate a past experience or event.
3. guide the readers in understanding the event by using appropriate time expressions and arrange the information in **chronological order**, meaning time order.
4. use appropriate descriptive words and details to help the readers feel as if they were experiencing the event in person.

Exercise 1. Read the following paragraph titles. Which ones can be appropriate titles for narrative paragraphs? What will the paragraphs be about? Click "True" for appropriate narrative titles and "False" for non-narrative titles. You will get instant feedback after each sentence. The explanation is blue given in

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III. Topic Sentence in Narration

Read Paragraph "My Worst Trip" again. How does the writer start the paragraph? The beginning contains the topic sentence and background information.

Parts for the Beginning of the Paragraph	Ideas
What (topic)	my experiences at Miami Airport and during the flight to Chicago
Controlling Idea	terrible
Who	I
When	September 29, 2007, after a long flight from my native country
Where	Miami Airport and on the plane to Chicago
Why (if applicable)	I could not understand English.
How (if applicable)	—
Ways to Write the Beginning	• My experiences at Miami Airport and during the flight to Chicago on September 29, 2007 were terrible because I could not understand English. I came from Mexico, and that was my first connecting trip out of my own country. After a long flight from my native country, I arrived at Miami Airport. (3 sentences)

Study one more example:

Parts for the Beginning of the Paragraph	Ideas
What (topic)	a shopping trip
Controlling Idea	exhausting
Who	my sister and I
When	Black Friday, 2019
Where	Woodfield Mall
Why (if applicable)	to get good deals on Christmas gifts for family and friends
How (if applicable)	—
Ways to Write the Beginning	• My sister and I had an exhausting^[5] shopping trip in the Woodfield Mall. It was Black Friday, 2019. We wanted to get good deals on Christmas gifts for our family and friends. (3 sentences) • On Black Friday in 2019, my sister and I had an exhausting shopping trip in the Woodfield Mall. We wanted to get good deals on Christmas gifts for our family and friends. (2 sentences) • To get good deals on Christmas gifts for our family and friends, my sister and I had an exhausting shopping in the Woodfield Mall on Black Friday in 2019. (1 sentence)

Exercise 2. Use the above examples as models. Fill in the information for the next three topics. In #3, you think of a topic of your own. Try writing your topic sentence with background information in one, two, or three sentences.

#1

Parts for the Beginning of the Paragraph	Ideas
What (topic)	My first visit to Harper College
Controlling Idea	
Who	
When	
Where	
Why (if applicable)	
How (if applicable)	
Ways to Write the Beginning	

#2

Parts for the Beginning of the Paragraph	Ideas
What (topic)	My family's most important day
Controlling Idea	
Who	
When	
Where	
Why (if applicable)	
How (if applicable)	
Ways to Write the Beginning	

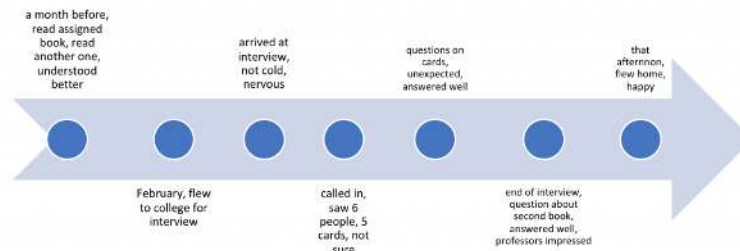
#3

Parts for the Beginning of the Paragraph	Ideas
What (topic)	
Controlling Idea	
Who	
When	
Where	
Why (if applicable)	
How (if applicable)	
Ways to Write the Beginning	

IV. Supporting Ideas in Chronological Order and with Time Transitions

Chronological Order

The information in the middle of the paragraph is going to be the main part of the story. All the events are arranged chronologically. What happened first is written first, what happened next is explained next, and so on. One way to make sure of the correct order is to draw a timeline. This could be used as a brief outline for a paragraph. Below is a timeline for an interview experience:



an interview timeline

Time Transitions

Another important aspect of narration is to use appropriate time expressions. They are transitions to guide the readers through the narration. You have already learned different transitions in Unit 3 Parts and Characteristics of a Good Paragraph and Unit 4 Enumerative Paragraphs. (For reviews, [open Unit 3 here](#) and [Unit 4 here](#).)

Here are some time transitions. As you study them, pay attention to their punctuation.

Adverbs (in the beginning of a sentence – comma after them)	Other adverbs and adverbial phrases (in the beginning of a sentence – comma after them) (at the end of a sentence – no comma)	Prepositional phrases (in the beginning of a sentence – comma after them) (at the end of a sentence – no comma)
First, Second, Next, Meanwhile, Then (usually no comma after it) Finally, Lastly, ...	Right away, Immediately, Suddenly, Quickly, Soon, Moments later, A short while later, Initially, Subsequently, That morning, The following day, ...	At first, At last, At the end, After that, After a while, In the meantime, In an instant, Before dinner, At 10 am, At noon, In the morning, Until the end of the class, ...

Dependent clauses (before independent clauses – comma after them) (after independent clauses – no comma)	Complete sentences (period after them)
When I woke up, While I was driving, Until it was midnight, Since he started the semester, As it was happening, As soon as they arrived home, Before he left for work, After the test was over, ...	Time went by quickly. This was not the end of the ordeal. Surprises continued. Misfortune goes hand in hand ^[6] . More good news followed. Two hours passed. I was not prepared for the next event ten minutes later. My work finally ended at 5 pm. ...

Review Paragraph “My Worst Trip” in the beginning of this unit and discuss how the writer uses a variety of time transitions.

Read the new paragraph “My Memorable Interview” below. It is developed based on the timeline above. The time transitions are underlined. Discuss:

1. How does the writer begin the paragraph? What is the topic sentence? What is the controlling idea? What is the background information (what, who, when, where)?
2. Does the paragraph follow chronological order?
3. How are different types of time transitions used with different punctuations? (underlined)

My Memorable Interview

In my last year of high school in Japan, I learned an important lesson from a memorable interview. I had applied to the Social Welfare Department of the college that I wanted to enter. To be accepted, I had to pass an interview and answer questions about a book the college professors had assigned. The book, *What is the True Wealth*, was a very famous book among the people studying social welfare in Japan. One month before the interview, I read the book but understood the topic only superficially^[7]. To help myself understand the topic better, I then bought another book that described the current social situation in Japan. After reading it many times, I was able to understand the topic of social welfare more clearly. In the middle of February, I flew to the college for the interview. It was not a cold day, but I had chills because of tension. I had never visited the prefecture where the college was located, so I felt the strain I had never felt before. The interview day arrived. The applicants were called in one by one from the waiting room. As soon as my name was called, I took a deep breath before entering with a smile. The interview room was small, with six professors sitting across the table. It appeared to be a normal interview situation, but when five cards were put side by side on the table, I realized that it was not! I could not understand what the cards were for. My nervousness grew. One professor instructed, “Please choose one card on the desk. You will see our first question there about the assigned book.” It was like a card game! Fortunately, I answered the question calmly and clearly. During the interview, I expressed my opinions with confidence, thanks to the two books which I had read. At the end of the interview, one professor asked me, “Have you read another book besides our assigned one?” At that time, I thought, “Good for me!” I spoke about my additional book and explained why I had chosen it, what I had learned from it, and how it had helped me with the interview. The professors looked impressed. I was so glad that I almost jumped for joy. They nodded to me and to each other. That afternoon, I flew back home, feeling happy. From this experience, I have learned a lesson essential to my success. It is important to prepare elaborately^[8] before an important event. Hard work in advance would give me confidence and help me in unexpected situations.

Exercise 3. Read Paragraph "The Day My Daughter Was Born" and discuss:

1. How does the writer begin the paragraph? What is the topic sentence? What is the controlling idea? What is the background information (what, who, when, where, why)?
2. Does the paragraph follow chronological order?
3. Underline the time transitions. How are different types of time transitions used with different punctuations?

The Day My Daughter Was Born

The day I met my daughter Ela has been the most significant day in my life. When I was in my 38th week of pregnancy, my husband and I went to the hospital for a routine pre-natal exam. While the doctor was checking me, she said, "We have to take the baby." We were so shocked. If I had not had a problem, she would not have said such a thing. Right away, she started to explain my problem. My daughter could not move herself because there was not enough water in my womb. Upon hearing this, I wanted to go back to my house to bring the baby stuff, but she did not allow me. My husband was little panicked, for he did not know what to do. Actually, I was so scared and also excited at the same time. My daughter was coming to my life! Our family had been waiting for her arrival for a long time, and we could not wait to take her into our arms. In the next ten minutes, the doctor did some tests on me and took me to the surgery room. I was not aware how many minutes or hours had passed. When I opened my eyes, everything had already finished. My first question was if she was OK. My doctor reassured me, "Don't worry. She is OK". After that, the medical staff took me to my room. All my family members were waiting eagerly there. I asked my husband if he had seen our daughter. He said no. We could not wait to see her, and we were so happy, for she was born without any problem. Everybody in the room was happy and asking how I was feeling. I had totally forgotten myself! Soon, the doctor brought her to the room, and I will never forget the moment when I laid my eyes on her for the first time. I cried so much from happiness. There was my little baby Ela, so tiny and soft, and most important all, so beautiful! Her "baby smell" was the most heart-warming scent. My husband's face was full of joyful pride. Everyone wanted to hold Ela for a second but stopped as she was sleeping soundly. At that moment, I understood that my life would change forever because of this precious new life. I promised myself and her that I would always be by her side.

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V. Past Tenses in Narration

In most narrative paragraphs, you are describing past events, so you need to use mostly past tenses even though present and future tenses are also possible in some parts of the paragraph. Past tenses include simple past, past progressive, past perfect, and past perfect progressive, and future past. However, the most common one is the simple past.

There are detailed explanations and practice in verb tenses from Unit 11 through Unit 14 in this book. (Open Unit 11 Present Tenses, Unit 12 Past Tenses, Unit 13 Future Tenses, Unit 14 Mixed Tenses here.)

Review paragraphs "My Worst Trip", "My Memorable Interview", and "The Day My Daughter Was Born". Underline all the past tense verbs and discuss how these verbs are used.

Read another new paragraph "A Significant Meeting" below and discuss:

1. What is the topic sentence? What is the controlling idea?
2. What is the background information (what, who, when, where)?
3. Does the writer explain the event in chronological order?
4. How are different types of time transitions used?
5. Underline all the verbs in past tenses. Why are some verbs in past perfect (bold-faced), one in past progressive (bold-faced), and one in simple future (bold-faced)?

A Significant Meeting



a hand holding pink and blue heart-shaped lollipop candy

My first meeting with my future husband in real life on March 18, 2017 was so significant that it changed my life. This was my first visit to the U.S.A when I met Sergey. We **had communicated** and seen each other only through the Internet before that. Our meeting happened in beautiful New York City. The smell of early spring, with blooming trees, sunny weather, and breathtaking views of this city, reinforced my romantic mood. I woke up very early to prepare for the meeting that was supposed to happen at breakfast. I arrived at the restaurant before 10 am. 10 am was not a perfect time for a romantic date, but we **had planned** to spend the whole day together and visit sights. Just then, Sergey called to apologize that he **had overslept** on his flight to New York and would not arrive until 11 pm. I became very angry and disappointed. I could not believe how a person could approach^[9] such an important event so irresponsibly^[10]. As a result, I assumed^[11] that he would not be my destiny and my second half. When I arrived back at the hotel, I suddenly noticed a man standing with flowers and staring at me with a guilty look. He **was wearing** a formal gray suite with a matching tie. After a couple of seconds, I realized this man was Sergey! He **had gotten** a few transfers to arrive earlier than expected. I was so surprised to see him at that moment. I did not know whether to be joyful or angry, but I instantly forgot about the morning case. Of course, I gave him one star for diligence^[12]. During our live communication, all invisible borders were erased. We quickly connected and understood each other. His surprises did not end at our lunch. He gave me a helicopter flight over the city! I was in heaven with happiness and beauty around me. In addition, Sergey had another surprise at dinner. He produced two tickets, for the most anticipated fight show of the year by my favorite boxer Gennady Golovkin in the famous Madison Square. I could not believe that another dream would come true that day. At the end of that fantastic day, I came to realize that my future husband was very attentive^[13]. He **had remembered** everything that I loved and dreamed about. He fulfilled my one desire after another. Sergey was like a genie^[14], and I possessed his lamp. By the end of our first day together, I **had decided** to give him all stars and pluses. Our meeting transformed^[15] my whole life, and these first happy moments **will remain** forever in my memories.

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Exercise 4. Read Paragraph "Meeting My Best Friends" and fill in each blank with the correct verb tense. When you finish this exercise, you can click "Check" to see how you did. You can retry or see all the answers. The first one is an example.

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VI. Descriptive Vocabulary and Details in Narration

Words are your tools in writing. Choosing **specific, descriptive words** will help your readers “see” or “picture” the event you are describing. Read the pairs of sentences below and discuss which sentence is better in each pair.

- They have a large house.
- They have a 2-story, red brick house.
- An old man walked on the street.
- An eighty-seven-year-old man stumbled^[16] along Algonquin Road.
- Mrs. Kim is the best teacher I have ever had.
- Mrs. Kim is the most humorous and hardworking teacher I have ever had.

In each pair, the second sentence helps the reader “see” the house, the man, and Mrs. Kim more vividly^[17]. Using descriptive words will make your writing more interesting and effective.

Words like “big, good, nice, great, bad” are very general and can be replaced by other better, more interesting ones. Many of the words below are “sensory” words that describe sight, sound, smell, flavor, and feeling.

General Vocabulary	Descriptive Vocabulary
Afraid	fearful, frightened, petrified, scared, terrified ...
Ask/Say/Tell	beg, command, instruct, murmur, order, plead, whisper, wonder ...
Bad	damaging, detrimental, disadvantageous, harmful, negative ...
Big	bulky, colossal, enormous, gigantic, huge, immense, massive, vast...
Delicious	appetizing, flavorful, rich, mouth-watering, savory, scrumptious, succulent ...
Happy	cheerful, content, delighted, ecstatic, elated, exhilarated, joyful ...
Important	critical, crucial, essential, life-changing, momentous, significant, vital, weighty ...
Look	gaze, glance, glare, glimpse, inspect, marvel, peep, stare ...
Nervous	anxious, concerned, fretful, uneasy, unsettled, worried ...
Walk	hop, ramble, scamper, scuttle, stride, stroll, strut, stumble, tiptoe ...

Before you use any new vocabulary, make sure you check an English-English dictionary to see its exact meaning and use it only when appropriate. Try using two or three new descriptive words in each paragraph you write.

Details are the key to interesting paragraphs. In a narrative paragraph, details in the middle of the narration – how the story progresses – are even more critical^[18].

As you learned in the earlier units, color-coding is a helpful strategy to make sure:

- The paragraph has all the essential parts.
- All the parts are in the right order.
- Some parts need to be longer and more detailed.

Here is the color-coded paragraph “The Worst Trip” you read in the beginning of this unit. Discuss:

1. Which color covers the most information?
2. How does the part in blue help you “see” or “experience” what the writer was going through?
3. Underline some descriptive or specific vocabulary . In what way does it make the paragraph more interesting?

My Worst Trip

My experiences at Miami Airport and during the flight to Chicago on September 29, 2007 were terrible because I could not understand English. I came from Mexico, and that was my first connecting trip out of my own country. After a long flight from my native country, I arrived at Miami Airport. I had been so excited walking in an American airport until a uniformed officer asked me something in English. I felt nervous because I did not speak English and did not know how to answer her questions. I just shook my head. I was not walking excitedly anymore because I realized that I did not speak the language. I already began to miss my own country! Suddenly, I looked at my watch, and it said 12:30 pm. I was so hungry that I needed to eat something. I had not eaten much on my first flight. I went to a small restaurant in the airport, looked at the pictures of the menu on the screen, and decided to have a coke and a sandwich. I could not see clearly or read what kind of sandwich that was, but it looked scrumptious. I was just going to point to the picture and tell the waiter what I wanted. He came and spoke fast. Because I did not understand, I felt I had to say “Ok”. Well, he gave me a different meal, and it cost me almost \$20! This situation was awful. I ate the meal in sad silence. I could not tell what it tasted like because I was tired and upset. Finally, I got on my flight to Chicago in the evening. On the plane, I wanted to drink water, but I did not know how to ask for it. I just stayed in my seat quietly and felt despondent. In the end, I met my family at the airport in Chicago at 11:30 pm. On our way home, I told them about my nightmare. They comforted me, “Don’t worry. All will be fine.” However, I could not shake off the feeling that I had just had a rocky start on my life in this new country. On that day, I made a promise to myself that I would have to study English really hard.

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Exercise 5. Try to write a new sentence with descriptive vocabulary by replacing the words underlined.

Example:

The family carried the big mattress into the small apartment.

Improved: The family carried the bulky mattress into the one-bedroom apartment.



a cruise ship

1. The big cruise ship has 18 decks and is 1188 feet long.
2. My upcoming interview is going to be important to my career.
3. The family made a big decision to immigrate to the U.S. one year ago.
4. The mother walked into the baby's room quietly.
5. The graduates walked proudly onto the stage to receive their diploma.
6. Some parents have a bad influence on their children.
7. In darkness, I was very afraid when I heard a strange noise behind me.
8. I love looking at the stars in the night sky.
9. The mom said no, but the boy still asked for more ice cream.
10. The students are nervous about their grades.

Exercise 6. Use Paragraph "My Worst Trip" you just discussed as an example. Color code Paragraph "My Memorable Interview" as follows and discuss the questions below.

1. Color code the paragraph:

Title – **pink** Background information – **purple**

Topic sentence – **red** beginning of the story – **green**

Middle of the story – **blue** End of the story – **green**

Transitions – **yellow** Concluding sentence(s) – **red**

2. Discuss:

- Which color covers the most information?
- How does the part in blue help you "see" or "experience" what the writer was going through?
- Underline the descriptive or specific vocabulary. In what way does it make the paragraph more interesting?

VII. More Narrative Paragraph Examples

As you read more narrative paragraphs below, you may color code them as you have done for the earlier paragraphs.

Discuss:

1. How does the writer start the paragraph? How many sentences does the writer have for the topic sentence and background information? What is the controlling idea?
2. Does the background information include what, who, when, and where?
3. Are the events arranged in chronological order?
4. What different types of time transitions are used?
5. Does all the information in the story support the main idea?
6. Is the middle of the story the longest in the paragraph?
7. Underline some specific descriptions. How do they help make the story more interesting?
8. Does the writer use past tenses to narrate the story? Are present and future tenses used? If so, why is the past tense changed to a present or future one?
9. What do you like about the paragraph? How would you like to improve it?
10. If you could ask the writer one question, what question would it be?

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Exercise 7. Read the following two paragraphs. You may color code them as you have done for the earlier paragraphs. Discuss the following questions in your group.

1. What is the topic sentence? Is there a controlling idea in the topic sentence? If not, write one.
2. Does the background information include what, who, when, and where? If something is missing, add it.
3. Are the events arranged in chronological order? If not, correct the order.
4. Does all the information in the story support the main idea? If anything is irrelevant, cross it out.
5. Are the transitions used appropriately? If a transition is wrong, correct it. If a transition is missing, add it.
6. Are there enough descriptive details in the middle of the story? What more ideas can you add?
7. Does the writer use correct past tenses to narrate the story?
8. Are there any present and future tenses? If so, why is there a shift in verb tenses?
9. What do you like about the paragraph?
10. If you could ask the writer one question, what question would you ask?

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VIII. Unit Review Practice: Writing Assignments

Now you are ready to write your own narrative paragraph! As you have learned in Unit 2 The Writing Process, ([Open Unit 2 here.](#)) the best way to plan a paragraph is to follow the proper steps.

Narrative Paragraph Writing Assignments

You will be writing two at-home narrative paragraphs. The second one will start after the first one is complete. For both assignments, follow the instructions below.

Purpose: To show your understanding of planning and writing a narrative paragraph. Use the writing process to help you.

Topic: Choose from the list below.

Brainstorm and Outline: Brainstorm for ideas. Then use one of the templates below to make an outline. Your outline is due on _____. Bring it to class.

Paragraph: Your paragraph should have a title, a topic sentence, background information, beginning of the story, middle of the story with details, the end of the story, a conclusion, and appropriate time transitions. Include at least 5 descriptive vocabulary from Section VI in this unit (Descriptive Vocabulary and Details in Narration).

Format: Type your paragraph, double spaced, font size 12, with 1-inch margins on four sides of the page. Type your name, class, and date on the upper right-hand corner of the page. The first line of your paragraph should be indented. Save your paragraph in a Word file.

Self Checklist: When you finish writing, use the Self Checklist below. Put a checkmark beside each item if you think you did a good job in that area. Otherwise, improve your paragraph until you can check off the item. Save your work again.

Submission: Submit your paragraph on the Blackboard. Go to your Blackboard course site and follow the instructions there. Due by _____.

Choose one of the following topics. If you wish to write about a topic of your own, discuss with your professor first.

1. Your first class (reading, writing, grammar, communication skills, or another class) experience at Harper College
2. A time when you helped someone in need
3. Your proudest moment
4. Your most embarrassing experience
5. A disappointing shopping trip
6. An experience where you got to know yourself better
7. An experience where you got to know another person better
8. An experience that changed your opinion of an event
9. An interview you had (any kind of interview)
10. The day when you got your first cell phone

Narrative Paragraph Outline Template #1

Topic: _____

Controlling idea: _____

Background information:

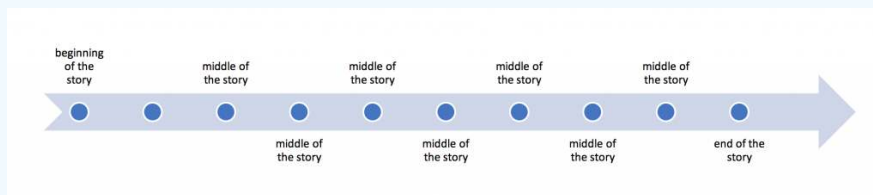
What: _____

When: _____

Where: _____

Who: _____

Topic + controlling idea + background information (1 – 3 complete sentences):



a narrative timeline

Narrative Paragraph Outline Template #2

Topic: _____

Controlling idea: _____

Background information:

What: _____

When: _____

Where: _____

Who: _____

Topic + controlling idea + background information (1 – 3 complete sentences):

Beginning of the story:

Middle of the story:

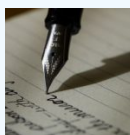
End of the story:

Narrative Paragraph Self Checklist

Questions	Paragraph Revising and Editing Self Checklist	✓
1	Is my paragraph on topic and clear to understand?	
2	Did I include a topic sentence with a clear controlling idea?	
3	Did I include background information on what, who, when, and where in the beginning?	
4	Did I include interesting, descriptive details that support the main idea?	
5	Did I have a beginning, a middle (the longest), and an ending?	
6	Did I narrate the story in chronological order? Did I use proper time expressions?	
7	Did all my verbs agree with their subjects (subject-verb agreement)? Did I use proper past tenses and other tenses?	
8	Did I try my best to use correct sentence structure (simple, compound, complex)?	
9	Did I try my best to use correct grammar such as nouns, pronouns, word form, word order, and others?	
10	Did I try my best to have correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization?	
11	Did I follow the proper paragraph format?	
12	Did I include at least 5 vocabulary words from Section VI?	

Note: #7 – #10 may include more specific aspects of grammar depending on how many editing units you have already studied.

NSNT Practice



a pen writing in a notebook

Go to **The NSNT Free Writing Approach and Additional Weekly Prompts for Writing** in Appendix A. ([Open Appendix A here.](#)) Choose two topics to write a paragraph each. You may start with the NSNT approach and then revise and edit the paragraphs using the Self Checklist above. You are encouraged to share your writing with your partner and help each other improve.

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Vocabulary Review



a page in a dictionary

The words here have appeared in this unit. The best way to learn them is to guess the meaning of each word from the context. Then hover your computer mouse over the number beside each word to check its meaning and part of speech. These words are also listed in the footnote area at the end of each unit.

Here, you can use the flashcards below to review these words.

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Summary

1. A narrative paragraph focuses on describing an event, an experience, or a story.
2. A narrative paragraph should have a title, a beginning with a topic sentence and background information, a middle with details, and an ending.
3. Descriptive vocabulary and details will make the paragraph interesting.
4. The story should be narrated in the chronological order and should use proper time transitions.
5. Past tenses are used primarily, but other tenses are often needed, too.
6. Following the writing process (pre-writing, writing, and post-writing) can ensure a well-organized and well-supported paragraph.

- a man sitting on a chair at an airport © Photo by Marco López on Unsplash
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 - [a page in a dictionary](#) © Pixabay
-

1. scrumptious: adjective, delicious ↵
 2. awful: adjective, terrible ↵
 3. despondent: adjective, feeling sad and hopeless ↵
 4. a rocky start: noun phrase, not a smooth beginning ↵
 5. exhausting: adjective, very tiring ↵
 6. Misfortune goes hand in hand: a saying, bad things happen one after another. ↵
 7. superficially: adverb, on the surface, not deeply ↵
 8. elaborately: adverb, with great care and effort ↵
 9. approach: verb, handle, deal with ↵
 10. irresponsibly: adverb, not responsibly, carelessly ↵
 11. assume: verb, guess or think based on what has happened ↵
 12. diligence: noun, good efforts ↵
 13. attentive: adjective, giving careful attention ↵
 14. genie: noun, a spirit that makes wishes come true for people ↵
 15. transform: verb, change in significant ways ↵
 16. stumble: verb, walk unsteadily, as if going to fall ↵
 17. vividly: adverb, lively and brightly ↵
 18. critical: adjective, extremely important ↵
-

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2.3: Unit 6 Essay Introduction

Learning Objectives

1. To learn what an essay is
2. To understand the similarities and differences between a paragraph and an essay
3. To learn through writing samples how to transition from writing a paragraph to writing an essay
4. To understand how the components of an essay relate to each other: hook, thesis statement, introductory paragraph, supporting paragraphs, and concluding paragraph
5. To practice writing a five-paragraph essay

I. Warm-up



people pressing hands together

Read the following paragraph and essay. Discuss the questions that follow.

Paragraph

Places in Making American Friends

There are three places to make friends in the United States. The first place is in the neighborhood. When I visited the U.S. as a child ten years ago, I met an American girl whose house was near mine. We were shy in the beginning but soon started riding our bikes in the neighborhood. We chased^[1] each other and had a good time. A few months later, her family moved to another state. I have fond^[2] memories of her and think that we will be able to reconnect and renew our friendship if we meet again. Secondly, going to an American school provides an opportunity to make friends. I attended an American elementary school for about six months. I was very nervous about being the only one who looked different. However, some classmates and teachers were kind enough to approach me. They were very understanding even though I did not always understand them. Some of them even helped me with school work and in the gym class. As a young girl in a foreign country, I was very grateful for their friendship. Now I am in America again. I need and value friendship as much as when I was a child. I go to a church once a week and attend a Bible study class where I meet many young adults. There, I have made some friends with whom I talk about not only God but also different cultures. For example, some of them are interested in Japanese music and Anime, so I share some of my favorite music and Anime with them. Sometimes I teach Japanese to them, and they teach English to me. Exchanging information with each other is a good way of establishing and strengthening^[3] the relationship. I have learned from my experiences in the neighborhood, school, and church in America over the years that with an open and sincere heart, I am able to find good friends.

By M. Ohbayashi (student), ESL Writing III, Harper College. Used with permission.

Essay

Places in Making American Friends

When I was a child, I had an opportunity to come to the United States a few times to visit my grandmother, uncle, and aunt, who were living in the U.S. Many years later, in January 2020, my mother and I were able to immigrate here. Since I was not an outgoing type of person, I had just a few friends in Japan. However, I have met a lot of Americans and have been able to make friends with some of them. The three places to make friends in the U.S. for me are my neighborhood, school, and church.

The first place is in the neighborhood. When I visited the U.S. as a child ten years ago, I met an American girl whose house was near mine. We were shy in the beginning but soon started riding our bikes in the neighborhood. We chased each other and had a good time. I also went to the pool with my grandmother and her family in summer. Although the pool was deep and I was scared, she and her family helped me enjoy swimming without fear. Besides riding bikes and swimming, we both loved dogs. We each had one. Even the dogs became friends as we played with them with balls. A few months later, her family moved to another state. I have fond memories of her and think that we will be able to reconnect and renew our friendship if we meet again.

Secondly, going to an American school provides an opportunity to make friends. I attended an American elementary school for about six months. I was very nervous about being the only one who looked different. I also did not know how to behave differently in an American school. However, some classmates and teachers were kind enough to approach me. They spoke slowly and patiently with simple English words. They were very understanding even though I did not always understand them. Some of them even helped me with school work and in the gym class. As a young girl in a foreign country, I was very grateful for their friendship. Thanks to them, school became wonderful to me.

Now I am in America again. I need and value friendship as much as when I was a child. I go to a church once a week. One day I met a girl who was studying Japanese. We began to talk with each other. She invited me to a Bible study class, and there I met many young adults. In the beginning, I felt nervous and shy just like the time when I attended the American elementary school for the first time many years before. However, as time went by, I started to like the Bible study class and made some friends with whom I talk about not only God but also different cultures. For example, some of them are interested in Japanese music and Anime, so I share some of my favorite music and Anime with them. Sometimes I teach Japanese to them, and they teach English to me. Exchanging information with each other is a good way of establishing and strengthening the relationship.

Fortunately, I have met many kind Americans who have become my good friends. Though my shyness sometimes stands in the way, I have been trying hard to overcome it by initiating conversations with as many people as possible. I have learned that with an open and sincere heart, I am able to find good friends.

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Discussion Questions:

1. How do you make American friends? Do you share some of the experiences the writer has described?
2. What is the main idea in the paragraph? What is the main idea in the essay?
3. How many paragraphs does the essay have?
4. What are the three places of making American friends in the paragraph? Are the same three places explained in the essay?
5. What does the essay have that the paragraph does not? Do the extra details make the essay better supported and more interesting?
6. From the above two pieces of writing, what have you discovered about the similarities and differences between a paragraph and an essay?
7. If you could ask the writer one question, what would you ask?

You have learned and practiced how to write well-organized, well-developed paragraphs. Now it is time to expand your writing expertise^[4] to essays!

II. Similarities and Differences Between a Paragraph and an Essay

In Unit 3 Parts and Characteristics of a Good Paragraph, you learned that **a paragraph is a group of sentences about one main idea**. ([Open Unit 3 here.](#))

In this unit, you will learn that **an essay is a group of paragraphs about one main idea**. An essay can be as short as three paragraphs but as long as many paragraphs that span^[5] multiple pages.

Here is a summary of similarities and differences between a paragraph and an essay:

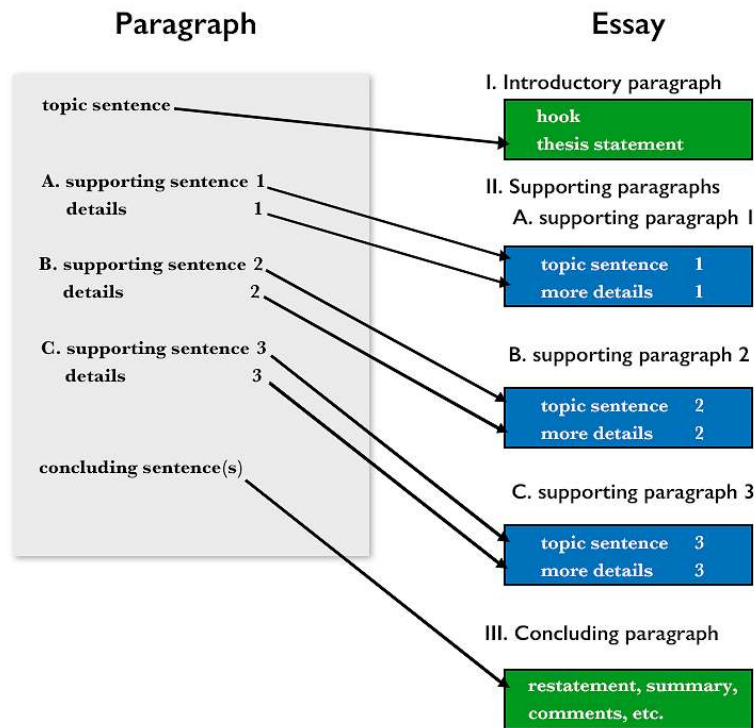
Similarities	Paragraph	Essay
• Focus on one topic and one main idea	✓	✓
• Contain academic writing characteristics: logical, direct, formal, clear, and concise	✓	✓
• Follow a clear organizational pattern, with a title, a beginning, a body, and a conclusion	✓	✓
• Need interesting and detailed supporting ideas that explain the main idea	✓	✓
• Use transitions to connect ideas and guide readers	✓	✓
• Use good sentence structures, grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and format	✓	✓

Differences	Paragraph	Essay
• Name and position of main idea	topic sentence, usually in the beginning	thesis statement, usually at end of introduction
• Supporting details	some details	more details
• Length	one paragraph	three or more paragraphs (In this course, we are studying five-paragraph essays.)
• Planning and writing time	shorter time	longer time

III. Essay Organization

Essay assignments are very common in college courses. In this course, you are going to learn only the basic concepts and organization of essays that contain five paragraphs. There are other ways of writing built on this basic model, and you will learn them in future semesters.

As you already have much experience writing paragraphs, a good start with essays is to expand^[6] an existing paragraph, as you have seen in the beginning of this unit. Below is a structural comparison between a paragraph and an essay.



comparing paragraph and essay structures

Read the following paragraph and then the essay. Compare the two by answering the questions that follow.

Paragraph

My Joy in Baking



5 cupcakes with sprinkles

Baking is my favorite hobby. When I was a child, I liked sweets a lot, especially pastry. Since my mom could not bake, I always went to my friend Natalia's house to learn baking because her mom was excellent in it. Though the learning process was not that easy, I enjoyed it. I tried and ruined^[7] a lot of ingredients, but I did not lose hope. Then I started to get better and better. I tried cupcakes and cookies. It gave me confidence and excitement to think that I could bake for myself. Now I am an adult with a family of my own, and this hobby has not changed. It relaxes me to bake. When I have an exhausting day or feel stressed out, the idea of creating something sweet and fresh makes me feel relaxed. I also like to share the fruit^[8] of my hobby with my family and friends. Baking for them gives me joy. To have a happy moment together on any occasion^[9] with sweet treats makes my relationship with them stronger. These are all the reasons why baking is my favorite hobby. I would recommend it to anyone who loves sweets and is looking for ways to bring happiness to other people.

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Essay

My Joy in Baking

A hobby is a regular activity performed for enjoyment during spare time. People can choose any hobbies that are right for them: music, sports, cooking, sewing, gardening, and so on. As a child, I liked sweets lot, especially pastry. This is why baking became and has always been my favorite hobby.

Though the learning process was not easy, I enjoyed it. Since my mom could not bake, I always went to my friend Natalia's house to learn baking because her mom was excellent in it. I tried and ruined a lot of ingredients, but I did not lose hope. After a few months, I started to get better and better. On Natalia's 10th birthday, I made pretty cupcakes, even with yellow and pink icings on them. Her mom was very impressed. It gave me confidence and excitement to think that I could bake by myself and bring more happiness to an already joyful event.

Now I am an adult with a family of my own, and this hobby has not changed. It relaxes me to bake. When I have an exhausting day or I am stressed out, the idea of creating something sweet and fresh makes me feel relaxed. Being a mom and a student, my schedule is full. However, nothing else relieves my stress more than baking after a difficult examination at the college: the aroma of butter and sugar, the slowly forming cookies in the oven, and the pleasant and crunching sound as I bite into my creations – all eases the tension of my whole being.

Most importantly, sharing my baking has strengthened my relationship with my family and friends. Enjoying a happy moment together on any occasion with sweet treats gives me joy. Once a friend of mine was sick, but she immediately got much better when I brought her a home-baked, mouth-watering apple pie. I have learned that helping others does not have to be a huge endeavor^[10]. Small acts of kindness are just as valuable and meaningful.

A hobby takes time to perfect but brings joy in the process. I am so glad that I have found my pleasure in baking, and I intend to enjoy it for many more years to come. I would recommend it to anyone who loves sweets and is looking for ways to bring happiness to other people.

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Discuss:

Questions	Paragraph	Essay
• What is the sentence that contains the main idea?		
• Where is the main idea located?		
• How many paragraphs are there?		
• What are the three supporting ideas?		
• What are the details?		
• What are the transitions connecting supporting ideas?		
• What does the conclusion include?		
• What is the format like?		

IV. Hook, Thesis Statement, Introductory Paragraph

Hook

The word “hook” may remind you of a piece of plastic or metal on the wall on which you can hang your coat. The hook holds the coat and prevents it from falling to the floor. In the same way, a hook in the beginning of an essay aims to hold the readers' attention so that they keep reading. The main purpose of a hook is to introduce the topic and to get the readers interested.

There are different ways to write a hook. The most common ones are introducing the background or discussing some general information related to the topic.

Discuss the hook in the essays “Places in Making American Friends” and “My Joy in Baking”. Does it introduce the topic and get you interested in reading the essay?

Thesis Statement

The thesis statement is a sentence that contains the main idea of the entire essay.

- A topic sentence shows the main idea of a paragraph. It is usually put in the beginning of a paragraph.
- A thesis statement shows the main idea of an essay. It is usually placed as the last sentence in the introductory paragraph.

The rules for the topic sentence also apply to the thesis statement.

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<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=456#h5p-129>

Exercise 1. Use the expressions below to develop thesis statements.

Example:

surprises / U.S.

Thesis statement: I encountered some surprises in my first few weeks of living in the U.S.

1. children / parents' influence
2. marriage / fights
3. dream job / hard work
4. self-discipline / success
5. bilingual / benefits
6. money / problems
7. government / assisting college students
8. personality / happiness

Exercise 2. Study the introductory paragraph in "Places in Making American Friends" and "My Joy in Baking". Then choose two of the thesis statements from Exercise 1 to write two introductory paragraphs.

- 1.
- 2.

V. Transitions, Supporting paragraphs, and Concluding Paragraph

The principles for the transitions, supporting ideas, and conclusion in a paragraph also apply to an essay. In an essay, there are more supporting details than in a paragraph.

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Study and discuss the following outline developed from the example thesis statement in Exercise 1.

Parts of an Essay	Outline ideas
Introductory Paragraph	
Hook	my background of coming to the U.S. and love travelling
Thesis Statement	I encountered some surprises in my first few weeks of living in the U.S.
Supporting Paragraphs	
Topic sentence 1	surprise about nature
Details 1	from airport to house, saw trees, flowers, squirrels, geese, cardinal, not in my country
Topic sentence 2	surprise about customs
Details 2	no air dry laundry outside, dandelions not ok, clean lawn
Topic sentence 3	surprise about friendly people
Details 3	friendly to strangers, parks, stores, smile, not in my country, afraid of getting hurt, teach children
Concluding Paragraph	three good surprises about nature, customs, people. Like US, second home.

Exercise 3. Use the above outline as an example. From the two topics you worked on in Exercise 1 and Exercise 2, write an essay outline for each.

#1

Parts of an Essay	Outline ideas
Introductory Paragraph	
Hook	
Thesis Statement	
Supporting Paragraphs	
Topic sentence 1	
Details 1	
Topic sentence 2	
Details 2	
Topic sentence 3	
Details 3	
Concluding Paragraph	

#2

Parts of an Essay	Outline ideas
Introductory Paragraph	
Hook	
Thesis Statement	
Supporting Paragraphs	
Topic sentence 1	
Details 1	
Topic sentence 2	
Details 2	
Topic sentence 3	
Details 3	
Concluding Paragraph	

VI. More Essay examples

Read the two essays below. The first one is developed from an earlier outline. As you read, discuss the questions:

Discuss:

1. What is the hook? Is it interesting?
2. What is the thesis statement? Where is it located?
3. In each body paragraph, what is the topic sentence? What are the details?
4. What transition does the writer use in the beginning of each body paragraph?
5. Is the paragraph mainly enumerative or narrative in organization? How do you know?
In what order are the supporting paragraphs organized (order of importance or chronological order)?
6. Does all the information in the body paragraphs support the thesis statement?
7. What types of information does the writer use in the conclusion?
8. What do you like about this essay?
9. How would you improve the essay?
10. If you could ask the writer one question, what would you ask?

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VII. Unit Review Practice: An Essay Writing Assignment

Now you are ready to write your own essay! As you have learned in Unit 2 The Writing Process ([Open Unit 2 here](#)), the best way to plan a paragraph is to follow the proper steps.

An Essay Writing Assignment

Purpose: To show your understanding of planning and writing an essay. Use the writing process to help you.

Topic: You have three choices from below.

Brainstorm and Outline: Brainstorm for ideas. Then organize the ideas by using the outline template below to make an outline. Your outline is due on _____. Bring it to class.

Essay: Your essay should have a title, an introductory paragraph with a hook and a thesis statement, 3 supporting paragraphs each starting with a topic sentence followed by lots of details, and a concluding paragraph. Use appropriate transitions to connect the supporting paragraphs. There should be a total of 5 paragraphs in the essay.

Format: Type your essay, double spaced, font size 12, with 1-inch margins on four sides of the page. Type your name, class, and date on the upper right-hand corner of the page. The first line of each paragraph should be indented. Save your essay in a Word file.

Self Checklist: When you finish writing, use the Self Checklist below. Put a checkmark beside each item if you think you did a good job in that area. Otherwise, improve your essay until you can check off the item. Save your work again.

Submission: Submit your essay on the Blackboard. Go to your Blackboard course site and follow the instructions there. Due by _____.

You have three choices for your topic.

Choice 1:

Choose one of the paragraphs you have written in this course and expand it into an essay.

Choice 2:

Choose one of the thesis statements, introductory paragraphs, and outlines in Exercise 1, 2, and 3 in this unit. Then write an essay based on your outline.

Choose 3:

Choose one of the following new topics. If you plan to have a different one, please talk with your professor first.

- What are the three things that you want to change about Harper College?
- What are the three things (or events, or people) you wish to forget?
- What are the three most important ways people in your country express love?
- What has been the most memorable day in your life?
- How did you overcome a challenge in your life?

Essay Outline Template

Parts of an Essay	Outline ideas
Introductory Paragraph	
Hook	
Thesis Statement	
Supporting Paragraphs	
Topic sentence 1	
Details 1	
Topic sentence 2	
Details 2	
Topic sentence 3	
Details 3	
Concluding Paragraph	

Essay Self Checklist

Questions	Essay Revising and Editing Self Checklist	✓
1	Is my essay clear to understand?	
2	Do I have an interesting hook and a clear thesis statement? Is the thesis statement located at the end of the introductory paragraph?	
3	Did I begin each supporting paragraph with a topic sentence? Did I include lots of details in each paragraph?	
4	Did I connect the supporting paragraphs with appropriate transitions?	
5	Did I include a concluding paragraph?	
6	Did I try my best to use correct sentence structure (simple, compound, complex)?	
7	Did I try my best to use correct grammar such as nouns, pronouns, word form, word order, and others?	
8	Did I try my best to have correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization?	
9	Did I follow the proper paragraph format?	

Note: #6 – #8 may include more specific aspects of grammar depending on how many editing units you have already studied.

NSNT Practice



a pen writing in a notebook

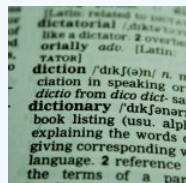
Go to **The NSNT Free Writing Approach and Additional Weekly Prompts for Writing** in Appendix A. ([Open Appendix A here.](#)) Choose two topics that you have not written about. You may start with the NSNT approach. Then revise and edit at least

one of them into an essay. You are encouraged to share your writing with your partner and help each other improve.

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Vocabulary Review



a page in a dictionary

The words here have appeared in this unit. The best way to learn them is to guess the meaning of each word from the context. Then hover your computer mouse over the number beside each word to check its meaning and part of speech. These words are also listed in the footnote area at the end of each unit.

Here, you can use the flashcards below to review these words.

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Summary

1. An essay is a group of paragraphs about one main idea. It consists of a title, an introductory paragraph with a hook and a thesis statement, a few supporting paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.
2. A hook consists of a few sentences to introduce the topic and to get readers interested in the essay.
3. A thesis statement is a sentence containing the main idea of the entire essay. It is usually placed at the end of the introductory paragraph.
4. Transitions are used to provide connections between supporting paragraphs.
5. Paragraphs and essays share some common features. They both focus on one central idea which is explained and developed through supporting ideas and details.

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-
1. chase: verb, run in order to catch someone ↵
 2. fond: adjective, good, loving ↵
 3. strengthen: verb, make or become strong ↵
 4. expertise: noun, expert knowledge and skills ↵
 5. span: verb, cover, extend to ↵
 6. expand: verb, make bigger or longer ↵
 7. ruin: verb, destroy, waste ↵
 8. fruit: noun, products, results ↵
 9. occasion: noun, situation ↵
 10. endeavor: noun, many efforts, hard work ↵
-

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Part Two Paragraph Writing Skills and Essay Introduction

- 3.1: Unit 7 Sentence Essentials
- 3.2: Unit 8 Three Common Errors in Sentence Structure and Punctuation
- 3.3: Unit 9 Verb Basics in Academic Writing
- 3.4: Unit 10 Subject-Verb Agreement
- 3.5: Unit 11 Expressing Meaning in Present Tenses
- 3.6: Unit 12 Expressing Meaning in Past Tenses
- 3.7: Unit 13 Expressing Meaning in Future Tenses
- 3.8: Unit 14 Expressing Meaning in Mixed Tenses
- 3.9: Unit 15 Modals
- 3.10: Unit 16 Nouns
- 3.11: Unit 17 Pronouns
- 3.12: Unit 18 Word Forms
- 3.13: Unit 19 Word Orders
- 3.14: Unit 20 Editing / Grammar Review

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3.1: Unit 7 Sentence Essentials

Learning Objectives

1. To distinguish between a phrase and a sentence
2. To identify the four basic parts of a sentence: subject, verbs, object, subject complement
3. To understand the five basic sentence patterns
4. To learn how to expand a basic sentence by adding adjectives, adverbs, phrases, and clauses
5. To learn and practice three sentence structure types – simple, compound, and complex – with appropriate punctuation through multiple examples and exercises

From this unit on, you will be focusing on editing / grammar skills to enable to you to express your ideas accurately and effectively in paragraphs and essays.

I. Pretest



frame at entrance of Early Childhood Lab School at Harper College

The following ten parts are about the Early Childhood Laboratory School at Harper College. Identify the structure by choosing one of the choices. After you finish one sentence, you will get instant feedback on your answer before the next sentence. If you make mistakes, you can retry all the questions or see all the answers at the end of the pre-test.

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Adapted from <https://www.harpercollege.edu/labschool/index.php>. Last retrieved on August 1, 2021.

II. Differences Between a Phrase and a Sentence

A **phrase** is two or more words used together to represent part of an idea but not a complete idea. There is not a “subject + verb” structure in the phrase. The following are examples of some common types of phrases:

- Noun phrases: boys and girls, an excellent school, picture books...
- Verb phrases: play together, read a story, learn shapes and colors...
- Prepositional phrases: in the classroom, on the wall, from home to school...

A **sentence** may contain different phrases. It has the following features:

- It must have a “subject + verb” structure.
- The first letter of the first word is always capitalized.
- It must end with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation mark.
- It must express a complete idea.

Read the three sentences below. All of them show these features.

1. The boys and girls play together in the Early Childhood Laboratory School.
2. Are they learning shapes and colors in the classroom?
3. What a beautiful painting it is on the wall!

A sentence is usually longer than a phrase but not always. Do not judge by how long it is; instead, look for the “subject + verb” structure.

- Phrase: after a long nap on a beautiful mat in the corner of the nap room (no “subject + verb” structure)
- Sentence: He woke up. (“subject + verb” structure)

For explanations and examples with periods, question marks, exclamation marks, commas, semi colons, colons, apostrophes, and quotations marks, please refer to Appendix C Punctuation. (Open Appendix C here.)

Exercise 1. Identify whether the following are phrases or sentences. Type in the box “phrase” or “sentence”. The first one is an example. When you complete the entire exercise, you can click “Check” for feedback. You may retry or see all the answers.



Building D at Harper College

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III. Basic Sentence Parts and Sentence Patterns

Four Basic Parts of a Sentence

1. Subject: It shows who/what does the action. It can also show who/what the sentence is about. It usually comes first in the sentence.

- The writing class is important.
- The students work hard in this class.

2. Verb: It usually comes after the subject and shows the action or explains the ideas in a sentence.

- The teacher meets the students in Room D-144 every week.
- The homework assignments seem interesting.

3. Object: It is usually the receiver of the action and is placed after the verb.

- All the students have finished homework on time.
- They have received good grades.

4. Subject complement: It usually follows a linking verb and shows what the subject is about. It can be a noun or an adjective.

- This is a writing class. (noun)
- The students grow confident in writing. (adjective)

Linking Verbs are verbs that can be immediately followed by an adjective. They include

- all “Be” verbs
- some “Do” action verbs: become, turn, get, grow (all of them with the same meaning as “become”)...
- some “Do” non-action verbs: look, seem, appear, smell, sound, taste, feel...

For more detailed explanations and examples of types of verbs, please refer to Unit 9 Verb Basics in Academic Writing. (Open Unit 9 here.)

Five Basic Sentence Patterns

1. Subject + verb

- The semester has started.
- Professors teach in colleges.

2. Subject + linking verb + subject complement (noun or adjective)

- This is a writing class. (noun)
- The weather turns cold as the semester goes on. (adjective)

3. Subject + verb + direct object

- We are taking a writing class.
- I like my classmates.

4. Subject + verb + indirect object + direct object

- The professor gives the students homework assignments.
- The students left the professor a note yesterday.

5. There + a form of “be” verb

- There are twenty students in this class.
- There was a quiz last week.

With these basic patterns, you can expand the sentences by adding descriptive information with adjectives, adverbs, phrases, clauses, etc. The underlined parts are added to make the above sentences more interesting.

- This is an interesting writing class.
- All the students work really hard in this important class in order to improve their writing skills.
- The weekly homework assignments seem very interesting because students write on different topics.
- The students gradually grow more confident in writing as the semester goes on.
- There are twenty young and energetic^[1] students from different countries in this writing class.

Exercise 2. Here is more information about the Early Childhood Laboratory School at Harper College. Arrange the words and phrases, or clauses. Capitalize and punctuate where necessary, into sentences. When you complete each sentence, you can click Underline the added parts. You can do this second part in your “Check” for feedback. You may retry or see the answer. notebook. Compare your expanded sentences with your partner’s.

Example:

provides to many families/a childcare option/The Early Childhood Laboratory School

Sentence: The Early Childhood Laboratory School provides a childcare option to many families.

Expand the sentence: The Early Childhood Laboratory School at Harper College provides an excellent child care option to many busy families in the community.

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IV. Sentence Structure #1: Simple Sentences

A **simple sentence** has only one “subject + verb” group from the beginning of the sentence (with a capitalized letter) to the end (with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation mark).

1. Students take classes.
2. Learning is important.
3. Maria and Sung have three classes.
4. Maria and Sung study and work every day.
5. They are taking classes and working part time.
6. Ana goes to only one class.
7. Ana does not have a job.
8. Are Maria, Sung, and Anna busy?
9. Ana is not busy.
10. Maria and Sung have been working too hard!

All the above sentences have only one “subject + verb” group, so they are all simple sentences.

Read #3 and #8 again. You see a compound subject in each.

Compound subject: two or more subjects share the same verb.

3. Maria and Sung have three classes.

8. Are Maria, Sung, and Anna busy?

Read #5 again. You see a compound verb in it.

Compound verb: the same subject performs two or more actions.

5. They are taking classes and working part time.

Read #4 again. You see a compound subject and a compound verb in each. Here, multiple subjects perform the same multiple actions.

4. Maria and Sung study and work every day.



a single person smiling and holding a skateboard

The above sentences are all simple sentences, with one subject-verb group in each.

Each sentence is also called **an independent clause** because it explains a complete, independent idea.

You can understand a simple sentence as an unmarried adult like the single person in the image on the right. He lives an independent life.

Exercise 3. Read the following paragraph about Harper College. Separate each complete, simple sentence with a capital letter in the beginning and a period in the end. Identify the subject and the verb in each sentence. Capitalize the first letter after a period. The first one is an example. (Commas have already been added.)



William Rainey Harper statue on Harper Campus

Example:

in September 1967, Harper College formally opened in Palatine, Illinois

With corrections: In September 1967, Harper College formally opened in Palatine, Illinois.

Subject: Harper College

Verb: opened

Some Information about Harper College

in September 1967, Harper College formally opened in Palatine, Illinois it uses the name William Rainey Harper to honor the pioneer in the community college movement in the United States Dr. William Rainey Harper was the first president of the University of Chicago Harper College is now one of the nation's premier^[2] and largest community colleges every year, it serves more than 35,000 students in Chicago's northwest suburbs its academic programs have been preparing students for their future study and their careers students can choose to become full time or part time students Harper offers scholarships and financial aids to help students financially. Students should check the college website or call 947-925-6000 for information a registration specialist will provide step-by-step guidance

Adapted from <https://www.harpercollege.edu/about/index.php>. Last accessed on August 1, 2021.

V. Sentence structure #2: Compound Sentences

Too many simple sentences will make your writing sound choppy^[3]. Therefore, you can combine the ideas to form compound sentences.

- Students take classes, and Anna is no exception. (compound)
- Learning is important, so Maria and Sung are taking three classes. (compound)
- Maria and Sung study every day; besides, they also work part time. (compound)
- Maria and Sung are very busy; however, they feel accomplished^[4]. (compound)

A **compound sentence** has two subject-verb groups and uses words such as “and, so, besides, however” to connect the two parts.



a couple with a heart in between

While a simple sentence is like an independent, unmarried person, a compound sentence is similar to a married couple, each independent but connected by love. That connection (love) is called a **conjunction**.

There are different types of compound sentences. In this course, you are going to learn the two below:

- with one of the coordinating conjunctions FANBOYS
- with an adverbial conjunction

Coordinating Conjunctions: FANBOYS

Coordinating Conjunctions: FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)

for:	to explain a reason	or:	to give a choice
and:	to add a point	yet:	to show an opposite point (stronger)
nor:	to add a negative point	so:	to explain a result
but:	to show an opposite point		

Compound sentences with FANBOYS should follow the sentence pattern below:

Independent Clause	Comma + FANBOYS	Another Independent Clause
Subject + verb	, for , and , nor (notes below) , but , or , yet , so	subject + verb

1. We have taken three writing classes, for writing is a very important skill.
2. We have a writing class, and we like it.
3. We do not have a test this week, nor are we going to have one next week.
4. I try to be on time for my writing class, but it's hard to get up in the morning.
5. Next semester, I may take another writing class, or I may choose a grammar class.
6. One of my classmates has failed most tests, yet he does not care.
7. Writing is challenging, so I am studying very hard.

Nor: The conjunction “nor” requires a slightly different word order: the helping verb comes before the subject. “Nor” already indicates negative, so do not add another “no” or “not”.

1. I do not like hot dogs, nor do I like hamburgers.
2. He is not going to the library after class, nor is he going home.
3. I did not have a good winter break last year, nor did I have a fun spring break.

For explanations and practice in helping verbs, please refer to Unit 9 Verb Basics in Academic Writing. (Open Unit 9 here.)

Not all the sentences with FANBOYS are compound sentences. They must follow the above format to be called compound sentences.

- We are taking this writing course for three reasons. (simple)
- We are taking this writing course, for writing is important. (compound)
- Last week, we had an editing quiz, a vocabulary quiz, and an oral presentation. (simple)
- Last week, we had two quizzes, and we did well in both. (compound)

Exercise 4. The following paragraph is about differences between a university and a community college. Decide whether each sentence is a simple or a compound sentence. Type “S” in the blank if it is a simple sentence and “C” if it is a compound sentence. Explain to your partner why you think so. The first sentence is an example.



University Center at Harper College

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Adverbial Conjunctions

They are also called transitions, as in the earlier units. This type of compound sentences is more formal.

Adverbial Conjunctions (Transitions)			
also, besides, furthermore, in addition, moreover... :	to add a point	for example, for instance... :	to give an example
as a result, consequently, therefore, thus... :	to show a result	however, nevertheless... :	to show an opposite point

Compound sentences with adverbial conjunctions should follow the sentence pattern below:

Independent Clause	Semi Colon + Adverbial Conjunction + Comma	Another Independent Clause
Subject + verb	; also, ; besides, ; furthermore, ; in addition, ; moreover, ; as a result, ; consequently, ; therefore, ; thus, ; however, ; nevertheless, ; for example, ; for instance,	subject + verb

1. The teachers give us lots of materials in class; also, they require us to study in the Language Lab once a week.
2. I am taking two courses at Harper College; in addition, I have a full-time job.
3. They have finished all the ESL courses; as a result, they are registering for English 101.
4. They had studied very hard; therefore, they passed the test with an A.
5. He liked to go on a vacation; however, he was too busy with her classes.
6. Many students want to take day classes; nevertheless, they have a job during the day.
7. We have many tests this semester; for example, we have one editing quiz in the writing class and one unit exam in the reading class every week.

It is common to break one compound sentence into two simple sentences, with the same adverbial conjunction in the beginning of the second simple sentence. This happens more often when the sentences are long. Put a period after the first independent clause and capitalize the first letter of the adverbial conjunction. Everything else remains the same. There is always a comma after the conjunction.

Independent Clause	Period + Adverbial Conjunction + Comma	Another Independent Clause
Subject + verb	. Also, . Besides, . Furthermore, . In addition, . Moreover, . As a result, . Consequently, . Therefore, . Thus, . However, . Nevertheless, . For example, . For instance,	subject + verb

1. I am taking 2 courses at Harper College. In addition, I have a full time job.
2. They had studied very hard. Therefore, they passed the test with an A.
3. He liked to go on a vacation. However, he was too busy with her classes.
4. We have many tests this semester. For example, we have one editing quiz in the writing class and one unit exam in the reading class every week.

Exercise 5. Use the given adverbial conjunctions to combine the simple sentences into compound sentences. Then use the same conjunctions to write two simple sentences.

Example:

Studying a second language is difficult. It is very useful in finding a job. (however)

Compound sentence: Studying a second language is difficult; however, it is very useful in finding a job.

Two simple sentences: Studying a second language is difficult. However, it is very useful in finding a job.

1. Almost all the jobs require good speaking skills. They need good writing skills. (moreover)
2. Many people from other countries have good technical skills. They need time to perfect their communication skills. (however)
3. They are highly motivated to learn. They work very hard. (furthermore)
4. They try different ways to improve. Some of them take classes. (for instance)
5. They are able to do well at work. Hard work pays off. (therefore)

VI. Sentence Structure #3: Complex Sentences

A complex sentence has at least two subject-verb groups. They are connected with subordinating conjunctions such as "because, as soon as, if". There are different types of complex sentences. You are focusing on adverbial clauses in this course.

Subordinating Conjunctions			
as soon as, before, since, until, when, while...	to express a time	although, though, even though...	to show a contrast
as, because, since...	to give a reason	if, unless...	to state condition

As you recall, a simple sentence is like an unmarried person living an independent life. A compound sentence resembles^[5] a couple living together as two independent adults but connected by love.



a parent pushing a baby in a stroller

A complex sentence is like a parent with a baby. Life is certainly more complex with a baby! The parent is independent, representing the independent clause. The baby is dependent on the parent for food, shelter, love, etc., so the baby resembles the dependent clause.

baby : parent = dependent : independent

A baby cannot live by himself or herself. In the same way, a dependent clause cannot exist by itself. It must be connected with an independent clause.

Dependent Clause: Subordinating Conjunction + subject + verb + Comma	Independent Clause
As soon as Before After Since Until When While As subject + verb, Because Although Even though Though If Unless ...	subject + verb

1. When I got home , my sister was watching TV.
2. Because I wanted to finish my homework , I did not go to bed till 12 am this morning.
3. Although English is a difficult language , I am trying my best to learn it.

The same complex sentences can also be written as follows. Notice that there is no comma in the middle of the sentence.

Independent Clause	Dependent Clause: Subordinating Conjunction + subject + verb
Subject + verb	as soon as before after since until when while as subject + verb because although even though though if unless ...

1. My sister was watching TV when I got home.
2. I didn't go to bed till 12 am this morning because I wanted to finish my homework.
3. I am trying my best to learn English although it is a difficult language.

Exercise 6. The following sentences are about my classmates. Join two simple sentences into a complex one with the subordinating conjunctions given. Use commas where necessary.

Example:

At 9 am yesterday, Jose was listening to the radio. He was driving to Harper. (while)

Complex: At 9 am yesterday, Jose was listening to the radio while he was driving to Harper.

1. Priti has decided to travel to Aruba during the semester break. She has always been interested in its culture. (because)
2. This is Amy's first year in the U.S. She speaks English fluently. (although)
3. Lilly did not wake up early on time yesterday. She missed the first part of the class. (as)
4. Yuri started an ESL class. He arrived in this city. (as soon as)
5. Max had never used a computer. He liked his first online class. (even though)
6. Misako ran into her former classmate. She was looking for her new textbook in the bookstore. (while)
7. At the end of last semester, Kang Sun returned to Korea to visit her family. She had saved enough money for a plane ticket. (after)
8. The next semester starts two months later. Every student needs to decide what classes to take. (before)

VII. Sentence Variety

Just like a balanced diet that keeps the body healthy, a good piece of writing also uses a variety of sentences including simple, compound, and complex structures. Here are some strategies to help you achieve that.

1. Try not to repeat the same conjunctions. It is common to overuse^[6] words like "and", "because". Try a different expression. For example, you may replace "and" with "in addition" and replace "because" with "since". Change the sentence structure and punctuation accordingly^[7].
2. When you finish writing, count how many simple, compound, and complex sentences you have included. Ideally, the number of each should be comparable^[8]. For example, if there are ten simple sentences and only two complex ones, you may combine some of the simple ones to form one or two more complex sentences. On the other hand, too many compound and complex sentences may be hard to read, and you can improve your writing by changing some of them to simple sentences.

Read the following two paragraphs. Count the number of different sentence types in each paragraph. Discuss which paragraph is better and why.

#1



Fast Track information session announcement on College website

Fast Track Programs

Harper College has special programs called “Fast Track”. Some students want to finish their study fast. They can choose this option. There are different fast track certificate programs. Each is five to eight weeks long. The certificates include business management, human resources management, web design and interactive media, and others. Each program has a limited number of students, so they can get more personalized^[9] interaction with professors. Classes are usually from 6 pm to 10 pm. Students can still work during the day. Besides the certificate programs, there are also fast track degree programs in AAS Degree (Associate in Applied Science) in Business Administration and AAS Degree in Supply Chain Management. Students do not always need to start from the beginning because they can get credit from their previous college or work experience. The fast track programs are convenient and beneficial for many students. It may not suit everyone. The best way to start is to attend an information meeting.

Adapted from <https://www.harpercollege.edu/fasttrack/index.php>. Last retrieved on November 4, 2021.

In this above paragraph, there are 12 simple sentences, 1 compound sentence, and 1 complex sentence.

#2

Fast Track Programs

Harper College has special programs called “Fast Track”. If some students want to finish their study fast, they can choose this option. There are different fast track certificate programs, and each is five to eight weeks long. The certificates include business management, human resources management, web design and interactive media, and others. Each program has limited number of students, so they can get more personalized interaction with professors. Since classes are usually from 6 pm to 10 pm, students can still work during the day. Besides the certificate programs, there are also fast track degree programs in Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degree in Business Administration and AAS Degree in Supply Chain Management. Students do not always need to start from the beginning because they can get credit from their previous college or work experience. The fast track programs are convenient and beneficial for many students; however, it may not suit everyone. The best way to start is to attend an information meeting.

Adapted from <https://www.harpercollege.edu/fasttrack/index.php>. Last retrieved on November 4, 2021.

In the #2 improved version, there are 4 simple sentences, 3 compound sentence, and 3 complex sentences. Work with your partner to identify each type of sentences. Discuss why #2 is better.

Exercise 7. Choose a paragraph you have written this semester and try the following:

1. Count how many simple, compound, and complex sentences are in it.
2. In what ways can you edit some of them so that the whole piece has a better balance of different structures?

VIII. Unit Review Practice

Exercise 8. Read the following paragraph about the student clubs at Harper College. Identify the types of structures of the underlined sentences. In the boxes, type “simple” for a simple sentence, “compound” for a compound sentence, and “complex” for a complex sentence. The first one is an example. You will get instant feedback on your answers. When you finish the entire exercise, you can retry or see all the answers.



International Students Club doing community service at Feed My Starving Children

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Exercise 9. Read the following paragraph about different ways people learn. Identify the types of structures of the underlined sentences. In the boxes, type “simple” for a simple sentence, “compound” for a compound sentence, and “complex” for a complex sentence. The first one is an example. You will get instant feedback on your answers. When you finish the entire exercise, you can retry or see all the answers.

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Exercise 10. Read the paragraph below about the writer’s learning and working experiences. It has too many simple sentences. Combine the underlined simple sentences into compound or complex sentences with the conjunctions given.

Example:

I came to the United States. I had never touched a computer (before).

Before I came to the United States, I had never touched a computer.

Learning and Hoping

Learning and hoping keep me going. Two years ago, I got a job at a company called TechInnova. Now I use the computer at work every day. I came to the United States. I had never touched a computer (before). It did not take me very long to learn basic computer skills. I had already taken a course in typing (for). I left my country four years ago. I had finished secretarial school (by the time). I was looking for a job here. I took a course in information technology. (while). Soon I found the job at TechInnova. I have continued to learn new things since then. For example, now I am learning web design through the Fast Track program at Harper College. My company is paying half the tuition for me. I am grateful for that (and). The program is very intensive. I am very busy. (therefore). The new skills have boosted my self-confidence and made me feel more hopeful for my future.

Exercise 11. Choose and highlight the most appropriate conjunction for each blank in the paragraph below about learning to play the piano. Look carefully at the punctuation before you decide. The first one is an example. When you complete the entire exercise, you can click "Check" for feedback. You may retry or see all the answers.



black and white keys on a piano

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Exercise 12. Read the following paragraph about my uncle and me. There are five more mistakes in the use of commas (not including the example). Find them and correct them. The first one is an example.

My Uncle and I

My uncle has had a very positive influence on me in several ways. He came from Pakistan to the U.S. in the 1990s and has made a life for himself and his extended family. **First he (First, he...)** sponsored me to come to the U.S. a year ago. He made it possible for me to have a chance for a better life. For instance, I am now living in a much cleaner, and safer environment. Second his accomplishments^[10] have reminded me to work hard for my own life and for the life of my family. My uncle had worked as a waiter, a construction worker, and a newspaper delivery man before he enrolled at Harper College with a major in business ten years ago. He is now working as regional manager for a food company. He loves his job. Thanks to my uncle, I started a new life, as soon as I arrived here. I have followed his footsteps and have been working very hard since last year. My dream is to work in a finance field so I have been taking math and English as a Second Language courses to prepare for my major. Meanwhile, I have not abandoned^[11] my hobby – swimming. I swim a few times a week in the college swimming pool. My uncle always says, that a good future needs good health. I am thankful to my uncle for the inspirations^[12] and opportunities.

Exercise 13. Use the suggested conjunctions to expand the following simple sentences by adding one more clause to make new and meaningful compound or complex sentences. Use proper punctuation in each sentence. Share your sentences with your partner.

Example:

I love my community college. (for, as a result, because)

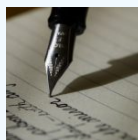
My sentence: I love my community college, for there are many interesting classes like piano and drawing.

My sentence: I love my community college; as a result, I am enjoying my study there.

My sentence: I love my community college because it is close to my home.

1. Many people come to the community college. (since, in addition, because)
2. Some young people prefer four-year universities. (so, consequently, although)
3. Nothing is perfect in all areas. (however, nor, since)
4. It all depends on which option works better for each student. (therefore, and, when)

NSNT Practice



a pen writing in a notebook

Go to **The NSNT Free Writing Approach and Additional Weekly Prompts for Writing** in Appendix A. ([Open Appendix A here.](#)) Choose two topics that you have not written about. You may start with the NSNT approach. Then revise and edit at least your paragraphs. Include some compound and complex structures. Pay attention to punctuation. You are encouraged to share your writing with your partner and help each other improve.

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Vocabulary Review



a page in a dictionary

The words here have appeared in this unit. The best way to learn them is to guess the meaning of each word from the context. Then hover your computer mouse over the number beside each word to check its meaning and part of speech. These words are also listed in the footnote area at the end of each unit.

Here, you can use the flashcards below to review these words.

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Summary

1. A phrase is two or more words used together to form part of meaning but not complete meaning. It does not have a “subject + verb” structure.
2. Every sentence must explain a complete idea and have a subject and a verb.
3. The most basic sentence parts are subject, verb, object, and subject complement.
4. The most basic sentence patterns are
 - Subject + verb
 - Subject + verb + object
 - Subject + linking verb + subject complement (noun or adjective)
 - Subject + verb + indirect object + direct object
 - There + a form of “be”
5. A simple sentence is an independent clause with one subject-verb group.
6. A compound sentence has two independent clauses with two subject-verb groups. They are connected by a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS) or an adverbial conjunction such as “moreover” or “however”.
7. A complex sentence has one dependent clause (a subordinating conjunction + subject + verb) and one independent clause (subject + verb).
8. It is important to include a variety of sentence types in writing.

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- a page in a dictionary © Pixabay

-
1. energetic: adjective, active, full of energy ↩
 2. premier: adjective, first in rank, leading ↩
 3. choppy: adjective, broken, not connected ↩
 4. accomplished: adjective, successful in doing something ↩
 5. resemble: verb, is similar to ↩
 6. overuse: verb, use too many times ↩
 7. accordingly: adverb, as a result, therefore ↩
 8. comparable: adjective, similar ↩
 9. personalized: adjective, customized, according to the needs of each person ↩
 10. accomplishment: noun, success, achievement ↩
 11. abandon: verb, give up ↩
 12. inspiration: noun, good influence, example ↩
-

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3.2: Unit 8 Three Common Errors in Sentence Structure and Punctuation

Learning Objectives

1. To review the three sentence structure types: simple, compound, and complex
2. To identify the three common errors: fragments, run-ons, and comma splices
3. To learn correct punctuation in sentences containing “for example, for instance, such as, like, including”
4. To practice fixing fragments, run-ons, and comma splices through multiple examples and exercises

I. Pretest



a child holding a magnifying glass over a plant

In the following ten sentences about science, some have the correct sentence structure and punctuation, but some do not. If the sentence is correct, choose “correct”. If not, choose the other answer. After you finish one sentence, you will get instant feedback on your answer before the next sentence. If you make mistakes, you can retry all the questions or see all the answers at the end of the pre-test.

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II. Three Common Errors in Sentence Structure and Punctuation

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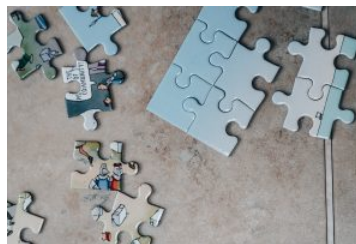
<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=518#h5p-127>

For detailed explanations and practice in sentence structure and punctuation, open Unit 7 here.

The above sentence types are essential in writing. They will help you avoid and correct the three types of common errors:

- Sentence fragment
- Run-on sentence
- Comma splice sentence

III. Sentence Fragments



pieces of a puzzle

A fragment means “a part”, “not a whole”. All the large and small pieces in the image on the right are fragments because they are only parts of a complete puzzle.

A **sentence fragment** refers to an incomplete sentence, just like the puzzle pieces. While some fragments are acceptable in spoken English, they are serious mistakes in formal writing.

Read the following conversation:

Student A: Do you like science?

Student B: No.

Student A: Why not?

Student B: Because it's hard for me.

In a conversation, it is very common and perfectly fine to have the above incomplete sentences. However, in formal situations, each sentence must express a complete thought and must contain a subject and a verb. Therefore, the conversation would become:

Student A: Do you like science?

Student B: No, I don't.

Student A: Why don't you like science?

Student B: I don't like it because it's hard for me.

Sentence Fragments in Two Common Situations

1. Missing subject, missing verb, or missing both subject and verb

- Is an important class. (no subject)
- I afraid of science. I not good at it. (no verbs)
- Too hard. (no subject, no verb)
- I admire scientists. For their contributions^[1]. (second part, no subject, no verb)

2. A period between dependent and independent clauses in complex sentences

- Science is very important for all human societies. Because it brings new discoveries and innovations^[2].
- When students graduate. They apply the scientific knowledge to their work.

Ways to Fix Sentence Fragments

1. Always check for both the subject and the verb in a sentence. If one is missing or both are missing, add the subject, the verb, or both. Sometimes, you can attach the fragment to the complete sentence before or after it. In the following sentences, the subjects are underlined, and the verbs are **bold-faced**.

- Science **is** an important class.
- I **am** afraid of science. I **am** not good at it.
- Science **is** too hard.
- I **admire** scientists for their contributions.

2. If you see a subordinating conjunction such as “when” and “if”, check to see that there is not a period between the dependent and independent clauses. If the dependent clause is before the independent clause, a comma is needed in between. If the order is reversed^[3], do not add a comma.

- Science is very important for all human societies because it brings new discoveries and innovations.
- Because science brings new discoveries and innovations, it is very important for all human societies.
- When students start working, they apply the scientific knowledge to their work.
- Students apply the scientific knowledge to their work when they start working.

Exercise 1. The following sentences are about citizen scientists. Some of them are complete sentences, but some are fragments. Choose “True” for a complete sentence and “False” for a fragment. You will get blue instant feedback. If a sentence is a fragment, you will also see the correction in

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Exercise 2. The following paragraph explains a citizen science project. There are four additional sentence fragments (not including the example). Find them and correct them. Be careful with punctuation and capitalization. The first one is an example.

Example:

If so. A citizen science project called NeMo-Net might be for you.

Correction: If so, a citizen science project called NeMo-Net might be for you.

Playing While Contributing

Do you like playing computer games? *If so. A citizen science project called NeMo-Net might be for you.* One of the tasks is playing an iPad game to help the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) classify coral reefs by painting 3D and 2D images of coral. In this project help rebuild underwater environments and create maps. These maps “can be used to better understand and protect coral reefs globally”. This citizen science project covers many subject areas such as animals, biology, climate and weather, computers and technology, geography, nature, and many others. The project started on April 22, 2020 and is still actively recruiting^[4] volunteers. After the volunteers are accepted. They will be involved in “annotation, data analysis, data entry...measurement, observation, problem solving, sample analysis”. For more information. Please check <https://www.citizenscience.gov/catalog/519/#>. You should apply as soon as possible. If you are interested.

adapted from <https://www.citizenscience.gov/catalog/519/#>. Last accessed on June 1, 2020.

IV. Run-On Sentences



some sports cars with one on top of another

The expression “run-on” gives the image of two cars, the second one trying to run on top of the first one – a huge traffic violation^[5] causing damage to the cars as well as harm^[6] to the people inside.

Writing follows the same principle. Just as cars must maintain^[7] a safe distance from each other, sentences need to be separated by a proper punctuation and/or a conjunction.

A **run-on sentence** occurs when two complete sentences are written one after another without anything to separate them.

Examples of Run-On Sentences

1. We have just learned about citizen science have you heard of citizen journalism?
2. It is a new expression it simply means that ordinary people can publish news stories and photos online.
3. You have posted messages and photos on Facebook you are a citizen journalist.
4. You can change your posts you can also delete them.

In #1 – #4 above, there are actually two complete sentences with two complete ideas in each. The second sentence seems super aggressive^[8] and is running on top of the first one.

Ways to Fix Run-Ons

1. Separate the two sentences with a period and capitalize the first letter of the second sentence.
 - We have just learned about citizen science. Have you heard of citizen journalism?
 - It is a new expression. It simply means that ordinary people can publish news stories and photos online.
2. Combine the two sentences into a compound sentence by adding a proper coordinating or adverbial conjunction. Add appropriate punctuation.
 - You can change your posts, or you can delete them.
 - You have posted messages and photos on Facebook, so you are a citizen journalist.
 - You have posted messages and photos on Facebook; therefore, you are a citizen journalist.
3. Combine the two sentences into a complex sentence by adding a proper subordinating conjunction. Add a comma if needed.
 - If you have posted messages and photos on Facebook, you are a citizen journalist.
4. Combine the two sentences into one simple sentence.
 - You can change or delete your posts.

Exercise 3. The following sentences are about citizen journalism. Each is a run-on sentence. Use one of the strategies above to correct each error. Be careful with punctuation and capitalization.

Example:

People receive news in different ways now it is easier than ever.



a person video taping an event with a smart phone

Correction: People receive news in different ways. Not it is easier than ever.

1. In the past, people relied on newspapers, radios, and TV for news now they check news on their cell phone app or computer.
2. It is much more convenient to use a digital device it is fast.
3. Digital technology has made it possible to spread news more quickly people can find out what is going on in the world right away.
4. They do not need to wait for professional journalists to report news they can read or watch news instantaneously^[9] while it is happening.
5. Anyone with a smart phone can take photos and videos he/she shares them on the social media .
6. People usually learn about world events within seconds events are happening in the other parts of the globe.
7. News is not only fast it is free.
8. People used to pay for newspapers and cable subscriptions news from their smart phone costs no money.
9. Citizen journalism is changing the way the news is shared is this good?
10. It depends it can bring both positive and negative results.

Exercise 4. The following paragraph about citizen journalism has five more run-on sentences (not including the example). Correct the errors. Be careful with punctuation and capitalization. The first one is an example.

Example:

On the one hand, it provides news quickly at no cost it may also have more interesting photos, videos, and comments.

Correction: On the one hand, it provides news quickly at no cost. In addition, it may have more interesting photos, videos, and comments.

A Mixed Blessing

Citizen journalism is a mixed blessing. *On the one hand, it provides news quickly at no cost it may also have more interesting photos, videos, and comments.* Sometimes, such news can bring important changes to the world. Most importantly, it is a very powerful tool ordinary citizens can be actively involved in changing the world. On the other hand, the news may not be reliable the citizen journalists are not trained professionally. It is possible that their news is biased^[10] it is also possible that the stories are inaccurate^[11]. Therefore, readers may be confused or misled^[12]. Besides, inappropriate images and reports may affect other people's privacy or damage their reputation. Another effect is on the traditional media industry and professional journalists. Readers are not buying as many newspapers as before they are not reading news from the authoritative^[13] sources. Some newspaper offices have to close down and find new ways to survive. Before the digital technology, people had never thought of sharing and receiving news through citizen journalism it is hard to imagine what news reporting would be like in twenty years.

V. Comma Splice Sentences



a fender bender crash

While a run-on sentence resembles one car on top of another, a comma splice is similar to two vehicles too close to each other causing a fender bender accident^[14].

Sometimes, students try to correct a run-on sentence by placing a comma in between. They actually have created a new type of mistake called **comma splice**. When two complete sentences are separated by just a comma, it becomes a comma splice issue. It is a tricky and common issue because it is not considered a mistake in some other languages.

Examples of Common Splices

1. One of the largest news events in 2012 was the 3rd Annual iReport Awards, the event was sponsored by the Cable News Network (CNN).
2. The goal was to show the best citizen journalism work in stories, photos, and videos, many people were interested.
3. People from different countries sent more than 100,000 stories to a special CNN website, thirty-six pieces of work were finally nominated^[15] for the awards in 2012.
4. The event showed the power and popularity of citizen journalism, CNN stopped the iReport project in 2015.
5. The project ended, there had been different issues.

Adapted from <https://www.cnn.com/2013/04/03/opinion/ireport-awards-hawkins-gaar/index.html>, last retrieved on June 14, 2021, and <https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/IReport>, last retrieved on June 14, 2021.

Ways to Fix Comma Splices

1. Separate the two sentences with a period and capitalize the first letter of the second sentence.
 - People from different countries sent more than 100,000 stories to a special CNN website. Thirty-six pieces of work were finally nominated for the awards in 2012.
2. Combine the two sentences into a compound sentence by adding a proper coordinating or adverbial conjunction with appropriate punctuation.
 - The goal was to show the best citizen journalism work in stories, photos, and videos; therefore, many people were interested.
 - The event showed the power and popularity of citizen journalism, but CNN stopped the iReport project in 2015.
3. Combine the two sentences into a complex sentence by adding a proper subordinating conjunction. Add a comma if needed.
 - The project ended because there had been different issues.
 - Because there had been different issues, the project ended.
4. Combine the two sentences into one simple sentence.
 - One of the largest news events in 2012 was the 3rd Annual iReport Awards sponsored by Cable News Network (CNN).

Exercise 5. The following sentences tell a real experience in sharing information in the social media. Some sentences contain comma splice errors, and some contain run-on mistakes. Identify which type of error it is in each and correct it. Be careful with punctuation and capitalization.

Example:

People do not check facts some terrible mistakes may occur in the social media.

This is a run-on sentence.

Correction: When people do not check facts, some terrible mistakes may occur in the social media.

1. This is a true story, it happened a few years ago.
2. I was in a social media chat group with forty-five former classmates we had attended the same junior high school class many years before.
3. One day, one of the classmates posted a message, it said that Mr. Wu, one of our teachers, had just passed away.
4. We were very sad we shared our old memories of that teacher in the chat.
5. Two days later, a message popped up it was from Mr. Wu!
6. Some classmates had invited him to join the chat group a while back. He seldom spoke we forgot that he was in the group.
7. Mr. Wu protested nicely that he was still alive, he even posted his recent photo to prove that.
8. We were relieved we started to greet him.
9. The student who had posted the wrong news was embarrassed, we did not blame him.
10. This incident shows the importance of checking the facts we were pleased that the fact was a happy one in our case.

Exercise 6. The following paragraph about OhmyNews contains six more run-on and comma splice sentences (not including the example). Find the errors and correct them. Be careful with punctuation and capitalization. The first one is an example.

Example:

One of the largest and best known is OhmyNews, it is a news website from South Korea.

Correction: One of the largest and best known is OhmyNews from South Korea.

OhmyNews

There are many citizen journalism news websites. *One of the largest and best known is OhmyNews, it is a news website from South Korea.* It was established by Oh Yeon Ho in 2000 it is the first in Korea for readers to publish news. Oh Yeon Ho was born in 1964 he majored in literature, journalism, and mass communication in his studies. He believes that every citizen is a reporter. The reporters of OhmyNews come from all areas of the society – doctors, office workers, farmers, students, and many others they provide reports on politics, economy, education, culture, and other topics from around the world. OhmyNews is popular the reporters are people in the local communities. It is also powerful, for instance, many people believe that OhmyNews played an important role in the 2002 South Korean presidential election. After the election, President Roh Moo-hyun gave his first interview to OhmyNews, this shows that citizen journalism can be influential in a country's politics.

Adapted for editing purpose from <https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/OhmyNews> and <http://www.ohmynews.com/>. Last retrieved on June 14, 2021.

VI. Sentences with “for Example, for Instance, Like, Such as, Including”

In Exercise 6, you noticed the expression “for instance”. It is very common to have “for example, for instance, like, such as, including” when you give examples. This also means that the mistakes associated with them are also common.

Errors in Giving Examples

- Fragment: There are many citizen journalism sites. For example, Global News Voices and Highway Ukraine Citizen Journalism Online.
- Run-on: There are many citizen journalism sites for example, Global News Voices and Highway Ukraine Citizen Journalism Online are two of them.
- Comma splice: There are many citizen journalism sites, for example, Global News Voices and Highway Ukraine Citizen Journalism Online are two of them.

When you correct the errors, you need to consider:

1. Are these expressions followed by a word, a phrase, or a complete sentence?
2. How do the punctuation and capitalization change as a result?

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For detailed explanations and practice in sentence structure and punctuation, open Unit 7 here.

There are different ways to include examples, and the following can be a good starting point.

Common Ways to Write Examples

Writing Examples with “for Example” or “for Instance”

complete sentence . For example, complete sentence

- There are many citizen journalism sites. For example, Global News Voices and Highway Ukraine Citizen Journalism Online are two of them.

complete sentence; for example, complete sentence

- There are many citizen journalism sites; for example, Global News Voices and Highway Ukraine Citizen Journalism Online are two of them.

complete sentence, for example, words or phrases

- There are many citizen journalism sites, for example, Global News Voices and Highway Ukraine Citizen Journalism Online

- “For instance” is used exactly the same ways as “for example”.
- There is a comma after “for example” and “for instance”.
- Capitalize the letter “F” in “For” only after a period, not after a comma or semi colon.

Writing Examples with “Such as”, “Like”, or “Including”

complete sentence + such as + words or phrases

- There are many citizen journalism sites such as Global News Voices and Highway Ukraine Citizen Journalism Online.

complete sentence, + such as + words or phrases

- There are many citizen journalism sites, such as Global News Voices and Highway Ukraine Citizen Journalism Online.
 - “Like” and “including” are used exactly the same as “such as”.
 - They are not followed by a complete sentence.
 - The comma before them is optional.
 - There is no comma after them.

For more explanations and examples with periods, question marks, exclamation marks, commas, semi colons, colons, apostrophes, and quotations marks, please refer to Appendix C Punctuation. Open Appendix C here.

Exercise 7. The writer of the following sentences wants to give specific examples. You can help by filling in the information on the lines. Pay attention to the punctuation and the structure (word, phrase, sentence).

Example:

There are many sources for people to obtain news from. For example, they can read newspapers and magazines.

1. They can also learn about news from the social media such as _____.
2. In my native country, older people prefer TV news programs, such as _____.
3. However, most young people receive news from the social media; for instance, _____.
4. For me, besides the social media, I also get news from people around me including _____.
5. Some news websites like _____ are very popular among the older people.

VII. Unit Review Practice

Exercise 8. The following sentences are about citizen science in some parts of the world. Each sentence contains a fragment, run-on, or comma splice error. Identify each error and correct it. Be careful with punctuation and capitalization.

Example:

Citizen science is going on in different parts of the world. Including Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America.

The second part is a fragment.

Correction: Citizen science is going on in different parts of the world, including Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America.



Webpage of European Citizen Science Association

1. If you are interested in a project from Asia. Check its website: <https://www.facebook.com/CitSciAsia/>.
2. Australia has very active citizen science programs, one of the interesting programs in August 2021 was to match caterpillars to moths. For more information, you can check <https://citizenscience.org.au/>.
3. Europe is another huge area for citizen science. The headquarters of the organization is in the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin there are also offices in Brussels and Leiden. For projects and events, you can check <https://ecsa.citizen-science.net/>.
4. In the U.S., many different organizations support and fund^[16] citizen science. Including the U.S. government agencies as well as nonprofit organizations^[17]. The following websites give you more information: <https://www.citizenscience.gov/#>; <https://scistarter.org/citizen-science>

Exercise 9. The following paragraph tells a brief history of citizen science. It has one error in fragment, one error in run-on, and one error in comma splice (not including the example). Find the errors and correct them. Be careful with punctuation and capitalization. The first one is an example.

Example:

Scientific development has always relied on people in the local communities. Such as school children and retired professionals.

Correction: Scientific development has always relied on people in the local communities, such as school children and retired professionals.

The Beginning of Citizen Science

Scientific development has always relied on people in the local communities. Such as school children and retired professionals. Even though many people have heard about the term “citizen science” only recently. The practice of community involvement started as early as 1800s. According to the National Geographic, Wells Cooke was probably one of the first people, he started a program about bird migration^[18]. The U.S. government and volunteers started to get involved in collecting information about bird migration patterns. They recorded the information on cards their efforts helped advance^[19] scientific research and understanding of birds.

Adapted from <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/citizen-science/>. Last retrieved on June 16, 2021.

Exercise 10. The following paragraph about a citizen science project has one error in fragment, one error in run-on, and one error in comma splice (not including the example). Find the errors and correct them. Be careful with punctuation and capitalization. The first one is an example.

Example:

“What’s Your Water Level?” is another citizen science project it is very interesting.

Correction: “What’s Your Water Level?” is another very interesting citizen science project.

An Interesting Project

It is a global project, it is sponsored by a U.S. government agency called the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The project started on February 2, 2017, and it is still seeking more volunteers. They will be taking photographs and recording data of water levels the information will be used to analyze how the changing water levels affect the roads, homes, and businesses. Of course, a camera is necessary, but like all the citizen science projects, curiosity in science and willingness to participate will be the key^[20]. If you are interested. You can check the website

<http://noaa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=8e4a278576964f47b4fc050e51f344ca>.

Exercise 11. Choose one topic from #1-3 and one more from #4-6 to write two paragraphs. In each paragraph, include at least two times total of “for example”, “for instance”, “such as”, “like”, or “including”. Check for fragments, run-ons, and comma splices in your paragraphs. Be careful with punctuation and capitalization.

1. What are the benefits of citizen science for the science, community, and volunteers? For more ideas, you may watch the TEDx video on YouTube “Citizen Science: Everyone Counts”, by Caren Cooper. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7cQHSqfSzI&t=17s>
2. What would be the potential disadvantages of citizen science? Why do you think so?
3. Have you ever participated in a citizen science project? If so, describe your project and what you have learned from it. If not, would you be interested in one and why?
4. Click on the link and read the short report “Citizen Journalism Provided Glimpses of Mumbai Attacks” from New York Times on November 30, 2008. According to the report, how are ordinary citizens transforming the traditional news media? <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/30/world/asia/30twitter.html> .
5. Do you consider yourself a citizen journalist? If yes, in what way have you been involved in citizen journalism? If not, why not?
6. Besides citizen science and citizen journalism, what are other ways for ordinary people to contribute to the global, national, or local communities?

NSNT Practice



a pen writing in a notebook

Go to **The NSNT Free Writing Approach and Additional Weekly Prompts for Writing** in Appendix A. ([Open Appendix A here.](#)) Choose two topics that you have not written about. You may start with the NSNT approach. Then revise and edit your paragraphs. Check for errors in fragments, run-ons, and comma splices. You are encouraged to share your writing with your partner and help each other improve.

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Vocabulary Review



a page in a dictionary

The words here have appeared in this unit. The best way to learn them is to guess the meaning of each word from the context. Then hover your computer mouse over the number beside each word to check its meaning and part of speech. These words are also listed in the footnote area at the end of each unit.

Here, you can use the flashcards below to review these words.

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Summary

1. Three common errors in sentence structure and punctuation are fragments, run-ons, and comma splices.
 2. A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence. It could be missing the subject, verb, or both. It also occurs when a period is put in between the dependent and independent clauses in a complex sentence.
 3. A run-on sentence is two complete sentences written without anything to separate them.
 4. A comma splice sentence is two complete sentences written with just a comma in between.
 5. There are different ways to fix a sentence fragment:
 - Add a subject, a verb, or both.
 - Delete the period between the dependent and independence clauses in a complex sentence. Add a comma if the dependent clause starts the sentence.
 6. There are different ways to fix a run-on and a comma splice:
 - Separate the two complete sentences with a period.
 - Combine the two parts into a compound sentence.
 - Combine the two parts into a complex sentence.
 - Rewrite the two parts into a simple sentence.
 7. “For example, for instance, like, such as, including” are often used as follows:
 - complete sentence. For example, complete sentence
 - complete sentence. For instance, complete sentence
 - complete sentence; for example, complete sentence
 - complete sentence; for instance, complete sentence
 - complete sentence, for example, words or phrases
 - complete sentence, for instance, words or phrases
 - complete sentence, like words and phrases (The comma is optional.)
 - complete sentence, such as words and phrases (The comma is optional.)
 - complete sentence, including words and phrases (The comma is optional.)
-
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 - [pieces of a puzzle](#) © Photo by Jonny Gios on Unsplash
 - some sports cars with one on top of another © Photo by Abed Ismail on Unsplash
 - [a person video taping an event with a smart phone](#) © Photo by Kym Ellis on Unsplash
 - a fender bender crash © Jeremy F. is licensed under a [CC BY-NC-SA \(Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike\)](#) license
 - Webpage of European Citizen Science Association
 - [a pen writing in a notebook](#) © Photo by Aaron Burden on Unsplash
 - a page in a dictionary © Pixabay

-
1. contribution: noun, give money, time, knowledge, etc. for a good purpose ↵
 2. innovation: noun, new creation or discovery ↵
 3. reversed: adjective, going the opposite direction ↵
 4. recruit: verb, look for new members for a group, an organization, etc. ↵

- 5. violation: noun, an action that breaks the rule or law ↵
- 6. harm: noun, injury ↵
- 7. maintain: verb, keep, remain ↵
- 8. aggressive: adjective, violent and attacking ↵
- 9. instantaneously: adverb, right away, at the same time ↵
- 10. biased: adjective, with prejudice ↵
- 11. inaccurate: adjective, not correct, with mistakes ↵
- 12. mislead: verb, cause misunderstanding ↵
- 13. authoritative: adjective, as an expert ↵
- 14. fender bender accident: noun phrase, a car accident with minor damage to the cars ↵
- 15. nominate: verb, name, propose ↵
- 16. fund: verb, give money to ↵
- 17. non-profit organization: noun phrase, an organization whose purpose is not to make money ↵
- 18. migration: noun, move to live in another place ↵
- 19. advance: verb, move forward ↵
- 20. key: noun, the most important part ↵

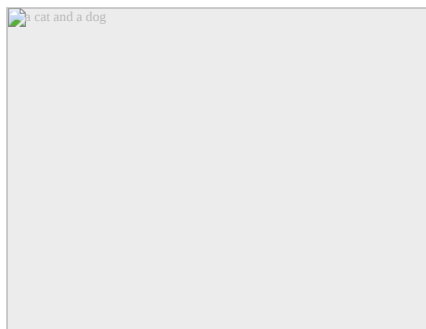
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3.3: Unit 9 Verb Basics in Academic Writing

Learning Objectives

1. To understand what a verb is and why it is important
2. To differentiate between “Be” verbs and “Do” verbs, action verbs and non-action verbs, helping verbs and main verbs, with their various uses though multiple examples and exercises
3. To be aware of the twelve verb tenses and five basic verb forms

I. Pretest



a cat and a dog

The following ten sentences are about pets. Some verbs are bold-faced. Identify what type of verb each one is by selecting one of the two choices. After you finish one sentence, you will get instant feedback on your answer before the next sentence. If you make mistakes, you can retry all the questions or see all the answers at the end of the pretest.

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II. Definition of a Verb and Its Importance

Each sentence in English must have a verb. A **verb** expresses an action or shows a state of existence^[1].

Why are verbs important? There are two reasons:

1. They appear in every sentence in English.
2. Errors in verbs cause serious misunderstanding^[2].

In order to express ideas clearly and accurately, you need to make sure:

1. You have a basic understanding of different types of verbs. This is the purpose of this unit.
2. A subject and its verb must match each other. For detailed information and practice, please refer to Unit 10 Subject-Verb Agreement. ([Open Unit 10 here.](#))
3. A verb tense and its verb form must match each other. There are detailed explanations and practice in verb tenses and forms from Unit 11 through Unit 14 in this book. ([Open Unit 11 Present Tenses](#), [Unit 12 Past Tenses](#), [Unit 13 Future Tenses](#), [Unit 14 Mixed Tenses](#) [here.](#))

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[For detailed explanations and practice in sentence structure and punctuation, open Unit 7 here.](#)

Exercise 1. Highlight the verbs in the following short paragraph about pet dogs. (To highlight, you position your computer cursor on the verbs and right click.)

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III. “Be” Verbs and “Do” Verbs

“Be” verbs: They look different depending on the subjects and the verb tenses. The most common ones are “am, is, are, was, were”. A “Be” verb is often followed by a noun, a pronoun, an adjective, a prepositional phrase, or an expression of age.

1. My neighbor’s pet is a rabbit. Her name is Bonny. (followed by nouns)

2. Bonny is not mine. (a pronoun)
3. Bonny's tail is short and cute. (adjectives)
4. Bonny is in a cage when my neighbor is at work. (prepositional phrases)
5. Bonny was two months old when I first met her. (an age)

“Do” verbs: There are many “Do” verbs: study, get, sleep, wear, have, like, think...

Their forms also change based on the subjects and the verb tenses.

1. Bonny stays indoors most days.
2. My neighbor prepares special food for her.
3. Sometimes I see Bonnie in my neighbor's backyard.
4. I played with her yesterday.
5. I hope that I can play with her again soon.

A “Be” verb is NEVER followed by the base form of a “Do” verb.

1. Bonny is stay indoors most days. X
2. Bonny stays indoors most days. ✓
3. Most rabbits are stay in a cage. X
4. Most rabbits stay in a cage. ✓
5. I was meet my neighbor's pet rabbit for the first time last week. X
6. I met my neighbor's pet rabbit for the first time last week. ✓

IV. Action and Non-Action Verbs

Action verbs: They show the action of the subject. All action verbs are “Do” verbs.

1. In the U.S., many pet owners treat their pets as part of the family.
2. Those pets get special food and even regular medical checkups.
3. Some of them sleep in their owner's bed.
4. They receive toys and often wear festive^[3] outfits^[4] during holidays.
5. Most pets enjoy their good lives.

Non-action verbs: They do not show actions; instead, they show emotional or mental states, five senses, possessions, and others. Non-action verbs are also called stative verbs or non-progressive verbs. “Be” verbs are non-action verbs in most cases.

1. Pets love their owners.
2. Pets understand how much they are loved.
3. Some pets can weigh over fifty pounds.
4. Most pets have animal doctors called vets.
5. Pets are our good friends.

Common Non-Action Verbs
Emotional/mental state:
• appreciate, believe, detest, dislike, fear, forget, hate, imagine, know, like, love, mean, mind, miss, need, prefer, remember, respect, understand, want ...
Five senses:
• appear, feel, hear, look, see, seem, smell, taste ...
Possessions:
• belong, contain, have, own, possess ...
Others:
• cost, find...

Sometimes, the same verb can be both an action verb and a non-action verb, with different meanings and grammatical structures. Discuss the difference between the underlined verbs below.

1. What do you think of my kitten? It seems that she is always thinking about playing hide and seek with me. (non-action, action)
2. Feel the fur of my kitten. It feels so soft. (action, non-action)
3. My kitten measures twelve inches in length^[5]. I measure her every month to see how much she has grown. (non-action, action)
4. I see some red pots on the kitten's skin. I am taking her to her vet. We are seeing the vet at 3 pm this afternoon. (non-action, action)

Non-action verbs can be used in different verb tenses except progressive tenses, but action verbs can be used in all tenses.

1. The kitten has been napping for a long time. He looks (
2. **is looking**) content^[6] in his sleep.
3. Samantha likes (
4. **is liking**) kittens. She has (**is having**) two. Right now she is preparing their favorite snacks.

Exercise 2.^[1] The following sentences are about color-blindness of dogs. Some verbs are bold-faced. Highlight if each bold-faced verb is an action verb or a non-action verb. The first one is an example. When you finish the exercise, you can retry or see all the answers. (To highlight, you position your computer cursor on the verbs and right click.)



a black dog with a yellow tennis ball in mouth

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V. Helping Verbs and Main Verbs

Helping verbs: They are also called *auxiliary verbs*. These verbs “help” the **main verbs** to

- show verb tense
- make a negative sentence
- ask a question
- change the meaning or tone
- change the voice (from active to passive or passive to active, not addressed in this course)

Helping verbs must work with main verbs to form complete verbs. Common helping verbs include “do, does, did, have, had, had, will”.

helping verb + main verb = complete verb

1. Mohamad has always wanted to get his driver’s license. (helping verb “has” + main verb “wanted”)
2. He has prepared for this driver’s test for several months. (helping verb “has” + main verb “prepared”)
3. He does not want to carpool with his friend every day. (helping verb “does” + main verb “want”)
4. He hopes that he will pass the road test. (helping verb “will” + main verb “pass”)
5. Should he celebrate if he passes? (helping verb “should” + main verb “celebrate”)



two people in a car

Modals: Modals are a special type of helping verbs. They mainly show ability, possibility, obligation, advice, and many others. They are followed by the base form of the main verb.

1. Every driver in the U.S. must have a driver’s license. (modal/helping verb “must” + main verb “have”)
2. Should he or she buy car insurance, too? (modal/helping verb “should” + main verb “buy”)
3. Maintaining a car can be expensive. (modal/helping verb “can” + main verb “be”)
4. Life could become difficult without a car. (modal/helping verb “could” + main verb “become”)

For detailed explanations and examples of modals, please refer to Unit 15 Modals. (Open Unit 15 here.)

Exercise 3. The following is a brief account of Jose and his car. Type the helping verb in each sentence in the appropriate box. The first sentence is an example. When you finish the entire exercise, you can retry or see all the answers.

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VI. Twelve Verb Tenses

While verbs show actions or states of being, verb tenses indicate the **time** of those actions or states of being:

- in the past, in the present, in the future, or from past to present
- happened just once, happened repeatedly, or is still happening.

There are twelve tenses in English:

	PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
SIMPLE	I studied. You studied. He studied. They studied.	I study. You study. He studies. They study.	I will study. I am going to study. You will study. You are going to study. He will study. He is going to study. They will study. They are going to study.
PROGRESSIVE	I was studying. You were studying. He was studying. They were studying.	I am studying. You are studying. He is studying. They are studying.	I will be studying. I am going to be studying. You will study. You are going to study. He will be studying. He is going to be studying. They will be studying. They are going to be studying.
PERFECT	I had studied. You had studied. He had studied. They had studied.	I have studied. You have studied. He has studied. They have studied.	I will have studied. You will have studied. He will have studied. They will have studied.

PERFECT PROGRESSIVE	I had been studying. You had been studying. He had been studying. They had been studying.	I have been studying. You have been studying. He has been studying. They have been studying.	I will have been studying. You will have been studying. He will have been studying. They will have been studying.
----------------------------	--	---	--

In this course, you will be focusing on using eight of the above tenses in writing: simple present, present progressive, present perfect, present perfect progressive, simple past, past progressive, past perfect, and simple future tenses. You will learn the rest of the tenses in future courses.

VII. Five Basic Verb Forms

In the above chart, the verb “study” appears in different forms – study, studies, am studying, had been studying, will be studying, and some others. These are called verb forms. Verbs have five basic forms:

BASE	PRESENT	PRESENT PARTICIPLE	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
Be	am, is, are	being	was, were	been
Do	do, does	doing	did	done
Have	have, has	having	had	had
Study	study, studies	studying	studied	studied
Move	move, moves	moving	moved	moved
Speak	speak, speaks	speaking	spoke	spoken

Always remember that a verb tense and its verb forms must match each other. There are detailed explanations and practice in verb tenses and forms from Unit 11 through Unit 14 in this book. ([Open Unit 11 Present Tenses](#), [Unit 12 Past Tenses](#), [Unit 13 Future Tenses](#), [Unit 14 Mixed Tenses](#) [here](#).)

VIII. Unit Review Practice

Exercise 4. The following paragraph about leashing the dog is from a previous unit. Highlight “Be” for “Be verbs” and “Do” for “Do verbs”. The first one is an example. When you finish the exercise, you can retry or see all the answers. (To highlight, you position your computer cursor on the verbs and right click.)



two dogs on leash

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Exercise 5. The following is a story about two puppies in love. Some verbs are bold-faced. Select what the type of verb each one is. You will get instant feedback after each sentence. If you make a mistake, you may also retry or see the answer.



a dog swimming

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Exercise 6. Take a paragraph you have written in this course. Exchange it with your partner's.

In your partner's paragraph,

1. single underline all the "Be" verbs.
2. double underline all the helping verbs.
3. circle all the non-action verbs.

When you finish, return the paragraph to your partner. Discuss if you agree with each other on all the verbs.

NSNT Practice



a pen writing in a notebook

Go to **The NSNT Free Writing Approach and Additional Weekly Prompts for Writing** in Appendix A. ([Open Appendix A here.](#)) Choose two topics to write a paragraph each. You may start with the NSNT approach and then rewrite it. Pay attention to the use of verbs. Be mindful of the verbs you are using: Are they main verbs or helping verbs? Action verbs or non-action verbs? "Be" verbs or "do" verbs? You are encouraged to share your writing with your partner and help each other improve.

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Vocabulary Review



a page in a dictionary

The words here have appeared in this unit. The best way to learn them is to guess the meaning of each word from the context. Then hover your computer mouse over the number beside each word to check its meaning and part of speech. These words are also listed in the footnote area at the end of each unit.

Here, you can use the flashcards below to review these words.

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Summary

1. A verb shows an action or a state of being and usually comes after the subject in a sentence.
2. "Be" verbs include "am, is, are, was, were" and some others.
3. There are many "Do" verbs such as "swim, study, eat, drive".
4. A "Be" verb is NEVER followed by the base form of a "Do" verb.
5. An action verb shows the action of the subject.
6. A non-action verb shows the state, condition, or possession of the subject. A non-action verb cannot be used in a progressive verb tense.
7. Some verbs can be both action and non-action verbs, with a different meaning.
8. A helping verb must be accompanied by a main verb in a sentence.
9. There are twelve verb tenses and five basic verb forms. Each verb tense has its own verb forms. Verb tenses and verb forms must match each other in sentences.

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- a dog swimming © Photo by Marcia Soligo on Unsplash
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-
1. existence: noun, being there, being this way ↵
 2. misunderstanding: noun, understand something in the wrong way ↵
 3. festive: adjective, joyful, about holidays or festivals ↵
 4. outfit: noun, clothing ↵
 5. length: noun, the noun form of the adjective "long" ↵
 6. content: adjective, happy and satisfied ↵
 7. color-blindness: noun, not able to see the differences in colors ↵
-

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3.4: Unit 10 Subject-Verb Agreement

Learning Objectives

1. To understand what subject-verb agreement means
2. To learn the strategies and ten rules in correctly using subject-verb agreement
3. To apply the strategies and rules of subject-verb agreement through multiple examples and exercises

I. Pretest



snow-covered trees and houses

In the following ten sentences are about snow days, some verbs are bold-faced. If the bold-faced part in the sentence is correct, choose "correct". If not, choose the other answer. After you finish one sentence, you will get instant feedback on your answer before the next sentence. If you make mistakes, you can retry all the questions or see all the answers at the end of the pre-test.

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II. Meaning of Subject-Verb Agreement

In English, a subject and its verb must match each other. When the subject is singular, a singular form of the verb is used. When the subject is plural, a plural form of the verb is used.

The subjects are **boldfaced**, and the verbs are underlined below.

1. **Most students** love snow days.
2. When **the weather** is too severe due to snow and ice, **schools** are canceled.
3. When **that** happens, **students** have a snow day.

III. Strategies for Subject-Verb Agreement

1. The best way to decide on the correct verb is to look back at the subject. Highlight the subject if necessary, as shown in the above examples.

2. When a subject looks complicated or unclear to you, turn it into a pronoun to see its singular/plural nature. That will help you decide on the verb.

- In Chicago, there are usually **a few snow days** in most winters.
a few snow days → they (plural)
- Though **everyone** has a day off, **some teachers** assign extra homework.
everyone → he or she (singular) some teachers → they (plural)
- **The extra homework**, like small projects, keeps the students busy and safe at home.
the extra homework → it (singular)

3. The ten common rules you will be learning in this unit will help you choose the correct verbs in most situations. Some rules may be different from how people speak in informal situations, but here you are focusing on formal, standard English usage.

- **None** of my classmates enjoy driving in snow. (informal)
- **None** of my classmates enjoys driving in snow. (formal)

4. Practice, practice, and practice while enjoying your journey of learning. Be conscious of the verbs you are using. It is fun to learn a different language, and it is empowering^[1] to have the assurance^[2] that you are using the language correctly in academic writing.

IV. Ten Common Rules of Subject-verb Agreement

Rule One. In general, a subject of singular nature takes the singular form of the verb. A subject of plural nature takes the plural form of the verb.

1. **We** like outdoors, and **our puppy** loves outdoors, too.
2. **The cold weather** always keeps us all indoors.

Rule Two. If a compound subject is used, understand it as “they” and use the plural form of the verb.

1. **A wool scarf and a pair of earmuffs** protect us from the biting cold.
2. Besides a warm coat, **gloves and boots** are also essential.
3. **Both a jumper cable^[3] and a blanket** are necessary to keep in the car.

Rule Three. When “or”, “either...or...”, or “neither...nor...” is in the subject, look at the part after “or” or “nor” to decide on the verb.

1. The GPS navigation or **a detailed map** is very helpful if we are driving to a new location.
2. The GPS navigation or **printed directions** are very helpful if we are driving to a new location.
3. Either a blanket or **warm clothes** keep us warm during long-distance driving on a wintery day.
4. Either warm clothes or **a blanket** keeps us warm during long-distance driving on a wintery day.
5. Sometimes neither loud music nor **talkative passengers** are able to keep the tired driver awake.
6. Sometimes, neither talkative passengers nor **loud music** is able to keep the tired driver awake.

Exercise 1. The following paragraph is about winter fun in the McCormick Tribune Plaza in Chicago. Choose and highlight the correct verb in each sentence. Look at the subject carefully before you decide on the verb. If necessary, turn the subject into a pronoun to help you. The first one is an example. When you finish the entire exercise, you can retry or see all the answers. (To highlight, you position your computer cursor on the verbs and right click.)



person wearing ice skate

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Rule Four. Many indefinite pronouns are singular. When such a pronoun is the subject, use the singular form of the verb.

Common indefinite pronouns include “everybody, everyone, everything, somebody, someone, something, nobody, no one, nothing, either of, neither of, one of, each of, none of”.

1. **Anyone** in Chicago understands how difficult it is to arrive on campus on time on snowy days.
2. **One** of my closest friends often comes fifteen minutes late because he is a new driver. “Better safe than sorry!” He always says.
3. **Each** of our professors allows a few extra minutes for students to arrive at the classroom.
4. **Neither** of my two courses counts attendance as part of the grade.
5. One time **everyone** was late except the professor!
6. Last week, **none** of the students was late. The whole class cheered as the professor started the lesson.

Rule Five. When “some”, “any”, “all”, or “most” is in the subject, the subject can be singular or plural. If the noun after these words is singular, use the singular form of the verb. If the noun is plural, use the plural form of the verb.

1. **Some of the students** do not have classes early in the morning, so they can sleep in.
2. There are no accidents on the road today as **some of the snow** has melted.
3. **All of the drivers** were safe at their destination this morning.
4. **All of the snow** was gone early this morning.
5. **Most of the professors** encourage extra home study when the classes are canceled due to severe weather.
6. **Most of the extra work** is optional for students.

Exercise 2. The following paragraph is about taking photos of the Bean in the Millennium Park in Chicago. Choose and highlight the correct verb in each sentence. Look at the subject carefully before you decide on the verb. If necessary, turn the subject into a pronoun to help you. The first sentence is an example. When you finish the entire exercise, you can retry or see all the answers. (To highlight, you position your computer cursor on the verbs and right click.)



a woman taking photo of the Bean

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Rule Six. When a collective noun is used as the subject and is understood as acting together as one unit in the context, it becomes “it” and is followed by a singular form of the verb. If that collective noun focuses on its individual parts, it becomes “they” and is followed by a plural form of the verb.

Examples of collective nouns include “family”, “class”, “team”, “crowd”, “committee^[4]”, “jury^[5]”, “choir^[6]”, “audience^[7]”, etc.

1. **The family** is very quiet. The school is announcing a snow day on the radio.
2. **The family** are excited to be able to spend some time with each other at home.
3. **Our team** always works hard.
4. When the game was canceled due to snow, **the team** were not disappointed. They were excited to be able to visit each other’s homes.

If you are not sure, you can add a word like “members”.

Our team members always work hard. However, when the game was canceled due to snow, **they** were not disappointed. **They** were excited to be able to visit each other’s homes.

Rule Seven. When a gerund or an infinitive is used as a subject, use the singular form of the verb.

A gerund: verb + ing (It is not the same as the “verb + ing” in progressive tenses.)

An infinitive: to + base verb

1. **Reading** is my main activity on a snow day.

2. **Postponing** my homework till next week and **dreaming** of another snow day make me feel guilty but happy. (compound subject)
3. **Finding** a parking spot close to my classroom building is almost impossible as many spaces are covered by snow and become “unparkable”.
4. **To secure** a good parking space on campus around 10 am has been my struggle this semester.

Rule Eight. In a “There + a form of be” sentence, the verb depends on the noun after “be”.

1. There are **many parking spaces** on campus, but the snow blowers usually “park” some of the snow in those spaces.
2. Some students have no choice but park their cars in the employee parking areas. This happens more frequently when there is **an important exam** starting within ten minutes.
3. There have been **times** when I am late for an exam just because it takes too long to find parking.

Exercise 3. The following sentences are about winter fun in the Lincoln Park Zoo near Chicago. Choose and type the correct verb in each blank. Look at the subject carefully before you decide on the verb. If necessary, turn the subject into a pronoun to help you. You will get instant feedback on your answer. When you finish the entire exercise, you may retry or see all the answers.



Webpage of Lincoln Park ZooLights

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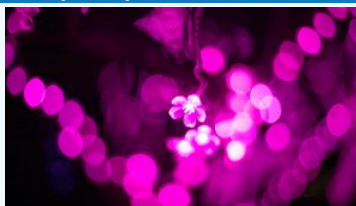
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Rule Nine. Some nouns are always singular even though they end with an “s”, and some other nouns are always plural. Use verbs according to the nouns.

Always Singular	Always Plural
non-count nouns: air, knowledge, milk, news, politics ...	apparels: clothes, jeans, pajamas, pants, shorts ...
school subjects: linguistics, mathematics, physics ...	groups: people, police ...
countries: the Netherlands, the Philippines, the United States ...	tools: glasses, pliers, scissors ...

1. **Cold air** is fresh and crisp on a winter morning.
2. **The United States** is a country where I am spending the coldest winter in my life.
3. **Young people** like to venture out and enjoy skiing.
4. **Scissors** are indispensable^[8] for a snow-day art project. (**A pair** of scissors is indispensable. – Refer to Rule Ten below.)

Exercise 4. The following sentences are about winter fun in the Chicago Botanic Garden. Choose and type the correct verb in each blank. Look at the subject carefully before you decide on the verb. If necessary, turn the subject into a pronoun to help you. You will get instant feedback on your answer. When you finish the entire exercise, you may retry or see all the answers.



Lights in Chicago Botanic Garden

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Rule Ten. A subject and a verb may not always be side by side. When there is a prepositional phrase between them, cross out that the prepositional phrase.

A prepositional phrase is a phrase consisting of a preposition plus a noun, pronoun, etc.

examples: in the room, from him ...

The prepositional phrases are crossed out below to help you locate the subjects more easily. You can see that the subjects and verbs do not change.

1. **Many international students** often find Chicago winter intolerably long and cold.
2. **Many international students**
3. ~~from warm countries~~ often find Chicago winter extremely long and cold.
4. **A reliable car** is essential on snowy days.
5. **A reliable car**
6. ~~with good tires~~ is essential on snowy days.
7. **A car dealership** installs snow tires for customers.
8. **A car dealership**
9. ~~on Golf Road near Harper campus~~ installs snow tires for customers.

Exercise 5. The following sentences are about winter fun in the Chicago Theatre District. Highlight the correct verb in each sentence. Look at the subject carefully before you decide on the verb. If necessary, turn the subject into a pronoun to help you. The first sentence is an example. When you finish the entire exercise, you can retry or see all the answers. (To highlight, you position your computer cursor on the verbs and right click.)



rows of red chairs in a theater

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V. Unit Review Practice

Exercise 6. The following paragraph is about museums in Chicago. There are seven more errors in the use of subject-verb agreement (not including the example). Remember to locate the subject first in each sentence. Then identify the verb error and correct it. The first one is an example.

Visiting Chicago Museums in Winter



dinosaur fossil display at Field Museum

Museums in Chicago ~~is~~ **(are)** famous. There is more than sixty of them! They provide numerous educational and recreational indoor activities, especially in winter. There are always something for everyone. People of all ages like to go there and have fun. For example, the Field Museum have displays from ancient cultures to the most modern scientific discoveries. One of the most popular exhibits is the largest Tyrannosaurus rex skeleton Sue. The Museum of Science and Industry is another well-known place. Every winter, it have a special exhibit called Christmas around the World and Holidays of Light. This event started in 1942 with one single tree but have expanded into an annual holiday tradition since then. Visitors see a four-story Grand Tree with forty smaller trees around it. The trees represents celebrations from cultures around the world. No doubt, museums in Chicago keep people warm, safe, and entertained during harsh winters.

Exercise 7. The following paragraph about winter fun at home is adapted from a paragraph in an earlier unit. There are six more errors in the use of subject-verb agreement (not including the example). Remember to locate the subjects first. Then identify the verb errors and correct them. The first one is an example.



Zootopia movie in a home theater

Winter Fun at Home

Winters in some areas of America ~~is~~ **(are)** very cold. Many people have to stay home, but they do not need to miss fun. The first interesting thing they can do is to make home a fun zone. For instance, they can set up a simple but comfortable home theatre with just a TV and a couch. A bag of popcorn and a cup of hot chocolate adds to a feeling of warmth and relaxation no matter how heavily it is snowing outside. Second, they can make household chores into a competition. Every week, they have a cleaning game. The older child vacuum the carpet, the younger child dust the furniture, and the parents clean the kitchen appliances. They can rotate being the judge and deciding on the prizes. Children are usually happier to do housework when it is fun. Lastly, they can continue with physical activities at home. If they have a treadmill or stationary bike at home, that will be great. However, it is still fine without it. On the Internet, there is many fitness programs with no required equipment, so everyone can choose what he or she like to do. One person can choose aerobics, and another can do tai chi. Winters can be long, but they do not have to be boring. It depend on the people to find fun things to do at home.

Exercise 8. In the following paragraph about winter dining in Chicago, there are ten more errors in the use of subject-verb agreement (not including the example). Remember to locate the subjects first. Then identify the verb errors and correct them. The first one is an example.

Winter Dining in Chicago



two igloos

As cold as Chicago winters are, there ~~is~~ **(are)** always many fun things to do both indoors and outdoors for everyone. Everyone are able to find activities to his or her liking. Young people loves ice-skating in the McCormick Tribune Plaza and photo shooting in the Millennium Park. Children delight^[9] in light gazing in the Lincoln Park Zoo and the Chicago Botanic Garden.

Many people like to stay indoors. Watching a play in the Chicago Theater District or visiting Sue in the Field Museum guarantee a warm and safe outing. There are also many restaurants in Chicago. Believe it or not, there are outdoor dining in the deep cold. “From heated^[10] igloos^[11] to enclosed patios to rooftop bars, there are tons of outdoor dining.” One of the restaurants are Beatrix Fulton Market. It offer covered^[12] igloos and heated greenhouses. Each greenhouse hold two to four customers and have a dinning time limit of one and a half hours. The igloo dining booking fee costs \$150. Neither the food nor the drinks is included in this fee. Eating there is expensive, but the dining experience will be unforgettable. If anyone are interested, it is important to check for updates at <https://www.choosechicago.com/blog/dining/open-patio-rooftops-dining-chicago/>.

The information about indoor dining, along with the quote, was adapted from the above website. Last accessed on January 15, 2021.

Exercise 9. Choose two of the topics to write a paragraph each. Pay attention to the subject-verb agreement.

1. What are different ways you have fun in winter?
2. What are popular places in your native country where people like to spend the winter?
3. What safe winter driving tips would you like to share?
4. What are different ways children enjoy snow days?
5. Have you had a snow day? If so, what did you do?

NSNT Practice



a pen writing in a notebook

Go to **The NSNT Free Writing Approach and Additional Weekly Prompts for Writing** in Appendix A. ([Open Appendix A here.](#)) Choose two topics to write a paragraph each. You may start with the NSNT approach. Then revise and edit your paragraphs. Pay attention to the subject-verb agreement in each sentence. You are encouraged to share your writing with your partner and help each other improve.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=558#h5p-20>

Vocabulary Review



a page in a dictionary

The words here have appeared in this unit. The best way to learn them is to guess the meaning of each word from the context. Then hover your computer mouse over the number beside each word to check its meaning and part of speech. These words are also listed in the footnote area at the end of each unit.

Here, you can use the flashcards below to review these words.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
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Summary

1. A subject and its verb must match each other.
 2. The following strategies will help you use subject-verb agreement correctly:
 - Identify the subject first.
 - Turn a complicated subject into a pronoun to see its singular/plural nature before deciding on the verb.
 - Understand the rules.
 - Keep practicing.
 3. The following are ten common rules in subject-verb agreement:
 - In general, a subject of singular nature takes the singular form of the verb. A subject of plural nature takes the plural form of the verb.
 - If a compound subject is used, understand it as “they” and use the plural form of the verb.
 - When “or”, “either...or...”, or “neither...nor...” is in the subject, look at the word after “or” or “nor” to decide on the verb.
 - When an indefinite pronoun is the subject, use singular form of the verb.
 - In sentences with “some”, “any”, “all”, or “most” as the subject, if the noun after these words is singular, use the singular form of the verb. If the noun is plural, use the plural form of the verb.
 - When a collective noun is used as the subject and is understood as acting together as one unit in the context, it becomes “it” and is followed by a singular form of the verb. If that collective noun focuses on its individual parts, it becomes “they” and is followed by a plural form of the verb.
 - When a gerund or an infinitive is used as a subject, use the singular form of the verb.
 - In “There + a form of be” sentences, the verb depends on the noun after “be”.
 - Some nouns are always singular, and some are always plural. Use verbs according to the singular or plural nature of the nouns.
 - When there is a prepositional phrase between the subject and the verb, cross out that the prepositional phrase when you look for the subject.
-
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 - [person wearing ice skate](#) © Photo by Kelli McClintock on Unsplash
 - a woman taking photo of the Bean © Photo by Laura Blanshard on Unsplash
 - [Webpage of Lincoln Park ZooLights](#)
 - Lights in Chicago Botanic Garden © Photo by Steven Aguilar on Unsplash
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-
1. empowering: adjective, feeling powerful ↵
 2. assurance: noun, the feeling of being sure ↵
 3. a jumper cable: noun phrase, a wire to jump start a car when the car battery is not working ↵
 4. committee: noun, a group of people selected to work on a special task ↵
 5. jury: noun, a group of people in the court to decide whether a person is guilty of a crime ↵
 6. choir: noun, an organized group of singers ↵
 7. audience: noun, a group of people watching or listening, such as in a movie theater or sport game ↵
 8. indispensable: adjective, absolutely necessary, essential ↵
 9. delight: verb, enjoy ↵
 10. heated: adjective, warm, with heating on ↵
 11. igloo: noun, a "house" made of ice and snow ↵
 12. covered: adjective, having a roof or lid ↵

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3.5: Unit 11 Expressing Meaning in Present Tenses

Learning Objectives

1. To learn the principles in using appropriate verb tenses
2. To understand the meanings and verb forms of four present tenses – simple present, present progressive, present perfect, and present perfect progressive – through multiple examples
3. To practice using the appropriate present tenses in a variety of writing situations

I. Pretest



currencies from different countries

The following ten sentences are related to the topic of money. Some of the verbs are bold-faced. If the bold-faced verb is correct, choose “correct”. If not, choose one of the other two answers. After you finish one sentence, you will get instant feedback on your answer before the next sentence. If you make mistakes, you can retry all the questions or see all the answers at the end of the pre-test.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=580#h5p-161>

II. Principles in Using Verb Tenses

1. Always start with meaning. The purpose of communication is to convey^[1] meaning. Therefore, it is important to start with the question: What ideas am I trying to express to others?
2. Use the appropriate verb tense and verb form as tools to express your meaning. Each verb tense uses a different verb form. The verb form shows which verb tense is being used. These two concepts are connected and must be understood as an inseparable^[2] “pair”. For example, if you want to write about current activities, you should use a present tense and should not use a past verb form with an “ed” ending.
3. Time words are extremely important. They are like traffic signs to guide you and your readers. Your time words, verb tenses, and verb forms should all match each other in order to express your meaning clearly. For example, If you are describing an event in progress at the moment of speaking, you should not use a time word such as “yesterday”.

III. Expressing Meaning in Simple Present

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=580#h5p-162>

For detailed explanations and practice in verbs, open Unit 9 here.

Verb Forms in Simple Present

1. When “am”, “is”, or “are” is the main verb, do not use a “do” verb. In the same way, when the main verb is a “do” verb, do not use “am”, “is”, or “are”.

- Money is important.
- Money

- **is** plays an important role in our lives.
2. If “he”, “she”, or “it” is the subject of a sentence and a “do” verb is the main verb, add an “s” to the end of the main verb.
- Many people save money because it gives them a sense of security^[3].
3. If “he”, “she”, or “it” is the subject in a question or negative sentence, leave off the “s” at the end of the main verb since you already have the helping verb “does” or “doesn’t”.
- Does money guarantee^[4] happiness? No, it does not.

Meaning, Common Expressions, and Examples in Simple Present

Meaning #1: facts and truths

Common time expressions and frequency adverbs: always, constantly, frequently, usually, often, generally, sometimes, seldom, rarely, hardly ever, never ...

Examples: Facts and truths about money



the front and back sides of a U.S. one-dollar coin

1. President George Washington’s image is on one side of the one-dollar bill.
2. One-dollar coins are not very common.
3. The Department of Treasury^[5] manages the currency in the U.S.
4. Does each state government decide how much tax money to collect?
5. How do the states collect tax money from the residents?

Meaning #2: current habits, routines, repeated activities

Common time expressions and frequency adverbs: every day, each night, once a week, twice a day, on Tuesdays ...

Examples: Routine activities and facts

1. My sister and I usually go shopping on the weekends.
2. The stores are always crowded then.
3. My sister tries to save money on many things, but she does not save money on shoes.
4. How much does she spend on shoes each year? Only she knows.
5. She always says, “I have only 2 feet, but I have only 365 days a year to keep my feet happy!”

Exercise 1. Read the following paragraph about allowance. Find ten additional errors and correct them (not including the example). The first one is an example.

Allowance – Beneficial or Not?

Many children in the U.S. **receiving** (**receive**) some money from their parents once a week or every other week. This type of money is called the allowance. People have different opinions about the allowance. Some children getting it in exchange for doing household chores like washing the dishes and taking care of a younger sibling^[6]. However, should helping the family be part of the child’s education about responsibilities? Besides, most children does not need to “work” for money. They receive it “for free”! The amount of money start from a few dollars a week and increase as the children grow. According to some experts,

the dollar amount can be based on the child's age. For instance, if a child be five years old, the allowance is five dollars a week. The following year, the child will receive six dollars. Many parents are believe that the allowance is help the children learn the value of money. They also learn to manage their money from an early age. However, other parents does not agree. They question, "Why my children need money? I buy everything for them." These parents worry that the allowance will make their kids materialistic. They also do not want their children to use the money for unhealthy snacks or addictive^[7] computer games. It is hard to say which group of parents are right.

IV. Express Meaning in Present Progressive (No Non-Action Verbs)

The present progressive tense usually expresses actions that are going on at the moment of speaking. It is also used to indicate future planned activities. In this unit, you are focusing on the current actions only. For the future planned activities, please refer to Unit 13 Expressing Meaning in Future Tenses. ([Open Unit 13 here.](#))

Verb Forms in Present Progressive: am/is/are + verb-ing

Meaning, Common Time Expressions, and Examples in Present Progressive

Meaning #1: actions or situations happening at the moment of speaking

Common time expressions: now, right now, at the moment, at the current moment, at present ...

Examples: about activities going on in the classroom right now

1. The professor is checking our homework now.
2. Is Eva sitting next to Maria?
3. My two friends and I are not sitting together.
4. What are the students discussing?

Meaning #2: Actions or situations happening during the present period of time or over an extended period of time

Common time expressions: currently, today, these days, nowadays, this semester ...

Examples: about the current ongoing situation in extended period of time

1. More students are working out in the new fitness center these days.
2. With more exercises, everyone is becoming healthier.
3. More and more students are paying attention to their health.
4. This is good news even though no one is getting younger!

For more information about non-action verbs, please refer to Unit 9 Verb Basics in Academic Writing. ([Open Unit 9 here.](#))

Exercise 2. The following paragraph is about finding a parking space on campus. The writer is looking for a spot right now. There are five more errors in the use of simple present and present progressive verbs (not including the example). Find the errors and correct them. The first one is an example.

Seeking a Parking Space

It is 9:45 am Monday morning. The parking lots at my college are looking (look) full. Many students are try to find a parking spot close to their classroom building. I circling around and around from one parting lot to another. I am seeing an empty space right there! Oh no, another car taking it. I am needing to park my car right away because my class starts at 10 am. There, a car is backing out of a space! I am so glad! It is only steps away from the building entrance. Lucky me! I will not be late today! It is getting harder and harder to find a parking space these days.

V. Express Meaning in Present Perfect

Most people will agree that the present perfect tense is the most challenging of all tenses because it can refer to the past, present, and even future situations. The good news is that your English skills have progressed far enough to be able to understand it. Once you have learned it, the other tenses will look a lot easier!

Have you noticed the three underlined present perfect verbs?

Verb Forms in Present Perfect: have/has + past participle

For a list of verbs with irregular past tense and past participle spelling, please refer to Appendix D Irregular Verbs. (Open Appendix D [here](#).)

Meaning, Common Time Expressions, and Examples in Present Perfect

Meaning #1: an action or a situation that started in the past, continues till present, and may go on into the future

Common time words and other expressions: since, for, recently, lately, so far, to date, till now, in the past/last two weeks, today, these days, this week, all life ...

Examples: about Jiali's stamp-collecting hobby



1.

two stamps indicating the Year of Rabbit

Jiali has loved stamps since she was a child.

2. Has her collection grown a lot in the last two months?
3. Yes, it has. Her friends have sent her their stamps lately.
4. How many years has she accumulated^[8] stamps?

Meaning #2: an action or a situation that completed at an unspecified time in the past

Common time words and other expressions: already, before, just, never, yet ... (sometimes no time words)

Examples: about Jiali's stamp-collecting hobby

1. Jiali has just joined a stamp-collecting club at her college.
2. Has Jiali ever received stamp-related gifts?
3. Yes, She has. For her birthday next week, her family has already ordered illuminated magnifiers^[9] and stamp tongs.
4. The gifts have not arrived yet.

Meaning #3: an action or a situation that was repeated in an unspecified past time or since a past time and may occur again in the future

Common time words and other expressions: once, two times, a few times, many times ...

Examples: about Jiali's stamp-collecting hobby

1. How many international stamps has Jiali accumulated?
2. So far, she has gathered over five hundred stamps from different countries.
3. She has attended the club meeting three times since the beginning of the semester.
4. She has traded^[footnote]trade: verb, exchange^[footnote] eight stamps with her club friends this month.

Exercise 3. Read the following paragraph about another hobby "toy Voyaging". Fill in the blanks with appropriate simple present or present perfect tense. The first one is an example. When you complete the entire exercise, you can click "Check" for feedback. You may retry or see all the answers.



three monkey plastic toys holding hands and traveling

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=580#h5p-163>

Adapted from <https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/ToyVoyagers>. Last accessed on August 5, 2021.

VI. Expressing Meaning in Present Perfect Progressive (No Non-Action Verbs)

The present perfect progressive tense and the present perfect tense are similar in some ways but different in others.

Verb Forms in Present Perfect Progressive: have/has + been + verb-ing

Meaning, Common Time Expressions, and Examples in Present Perfect Progressive

Meaning#1: an action or a situation that started in the past, continues till present, and may go on into the future (same as Meaning #1 in present perfect but with more emphasis)

Common time words and other expressions: since, for, recently, lately, so far, to date, till now, in the past/last 2 weeks, today, these days, this week, all life ...

Examples: about Jiali's stamp-collecting hobby



stamps from different countries

1. Jiali has been collecting stamps since she was ten years old.
2. Has her collection been growing a lot in the last two months?
3. Yes, it has. Her friends have been sending her their stamps lately.
4. She has been accumulating stamps for over ten years.

Meaning #2: an action or a situation that is still going on without a time expression

Common time words and other expressions: not needed

Examples: about Jiali's stamp-collecting hobby

1. With the help of her friends, Jiali's collection has been growing fast.
2. The stamp club has been expanding.
3. Many friends have been showing interest in Jiali's stamps.
4. Jiali's best friend has been planning to join the stamp club.

Exercise 4. Read the following paragraph about Antoni's hobby. Underline the verbs in each sentence. Then with your partner discuss the use of the verb tense and the meaning of each sentence.

Antoni's Hobby



a person doing a home improvement project

Doing home improvement projects is Antoni's hobby. He has been fixing things for his own family and friends' families for ten years. He has fixed things for his own family and friends' families for ten years. He did this with his brother Jakub for two years, but then Jakub got married and moved out of the state three years ago. However, Antoni's interest in home improvement has not changed all these years. He has cleared sewage blockage^[10], replaced roof tiles, and installed new floors for his friends. So far, he has resolved "house problems" for at least twenty families. These few weeks, he has been sealing some of the window cracks in his own house. His wife jokes, "Now you are working for me!"

VII. Unit Review Practice

Exercise 5. The following paragraph about a favorite hobby is from a previous unit. Fill in the appropriate verb tenses. The first one is an example. When you complete the entire exercise, you can click "Check" for feedback. You may retry or see all the answers.



a person opening a diary

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

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Exercise 6. Choose one of the following topics to write a letter. Use appropriate tenses.

1. What is your favorite hobby? How long have you been pursuing it? Why do you like it? Do you enjoy it alone or with other people?
2. What do you think are some of the reasons why some people do not have a hobby? Can people remain happy without a hobby? Why or why not?

NSNT Practice



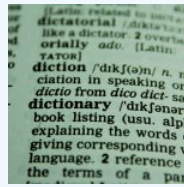
a pen writing in a notebook

Go to **The NSNT Free Writing Approach and Additional Weekly Prompts for Writing** in Appendix A. ([Open Appendix A here.](#)) Choose two topics. You may start with the NSNT approach. Then revise and edit your paragraphs. Pay attention to the use of present verbs. You are encouraged to share your writing with your partner and help each other improve.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=580#h5p-20>

Vocabulary Review



a page in a dictionary

The words here have appeared in this unit. The best way to learn them is to guess the meaning of each word from the context. Then hover your computer mouse over the number beside each word to check its meaning and part of speech. These words are also listed in the footnote area at the end of each unit.

Here, you can use the flashcards below to review these words.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

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Summary

1. Always focus on your meaning/ideas when you choose verb tenses.
 2. Time words, verb forms, and verb tenses must match one another.
 3. A “be” verb (am, is, are) can NEVER be followed by the base form of a “do” verb.
 4. Non-action verbs cannot be used in progressive tenses.
 5. The simple present tense is used in expressing
 - facts and truths
 - current routines
 6. The present progressive tense is used in expressing
 - actions or situations at the moment of speaking
 - actions or situations at the present period of time
 7. The present perfect tense is used in expressing
 - actions or situations that started in the past, continue till now, and may go on into the future
 - actions or situations that completed in an unspecified time in the past
 - actions and situations that repeated a certain number of times in the past and may happen again in the future
 8. The present perfect progressive tense is used in expressing
 - actions or situations that started in the past, continue till now, and may go on into the future (with emphasis)
 - actions or situations that are ongoing
-
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- a page in a dictionary © Pixabay

-
1. convey: verb, express, show ↩
 2. inseparable: adjective, cannot be separated ↩
 3. security: noun, safety ↩
 4. guarantee: verb, promise, ensure ↩
 5. Department of Treasury: noun phrase, a U.S. government agency to manage the financial system in the country ↩
 6. sibling: noun, a brother or sister ↩
 7. addictive: adjective, becoming a habit, cannot stop ↩
 8. accumulate: verb, gather, collect ↩
 9. illuminated magnifier: noun phrase, a tool that can light up and that is made of glass to make things look bigger ↩
 10. sewage blockage: noun phrase, a problem where water cannot follow through the pipe because of something stuck in there ↩

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3.6: Unit 12 Expressing Meaning in Past Tenses

Learning Objectives

1. To understand the verb forms and meanings of three past tenses – simple past, past progressive, and past perfect– through multiple examples
2. To practice using the appropriate past tenses in a variety of writing situations

I. Pretest



Great Fire of London

In the following account about the Great Fire of London in 1666, the verbs are bold-faced. If the bold-faced verbs are correct, choose “correct”. If not, choose one of the other two answers. You will get instant feedback on your choice. If you make mistakes, you can retry all the questions or see all the answers at the end of the pre-test.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=593#h5p-173>

Adapted from https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Fire_of_London. Last accessed on September 21, 2021.

II. Expressing Meaning in Simple Past

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=593#h5p-174>

For explanations and examples of “Be” verbs and “Do” verbs, open Unit 9 here.

Verb Forms in Simple Past

1. When “was” or “were” is the main verb, do not use a “do” verb. In the same way, when the main verb is a “do” verb, do not use “was” or “were”.

- The Great Fire of London was a serious disaster. It
-
-

~~was~~ occurred in 1666.

2. Add an “ed” to the end of a regular “do” verb.

- It destroyed a big part of London

3. After “did” in a question and negative sentence, use the base form (without -ed) since you already have a helping verb “did”.

- How long did it last? It lasted almost five days.
- Did it kill many people? No, it did not kill too many people. According to some reports, it killed six people.

4. “Used to + base verb” is common for past regular activities.

- People in London used to talk about this fire in great terror^[1].

For a list of verbs with irregular past tense and past participle spelling, please refer to Appendix D Irregular Verbs. Open Appendix D [here](#).

Meaning, Common Expressions, and Examples in Simple Past

Meaning #1: activities or situations that started and completed at a specific time in the past

Common Time Words: yesterday, last night, two days ago, in 2000 ...

Examples: about the Great Chicago Fire



Great Chicago Fire

1.

The Great Chicago Fire occurred on October 8th through October 10th in 1871.

2. It killed approximately 300 people and destroyed about 3.3 square miles of the city.
3. It damaged 17,500 buildings and left more than 100,000 residents homeless.
4. The fire spread quickly because the firefighters received the wrong information and did not come to the right place to rescue^[2].
5. It was the biggest fire in the history of Chicago.

Adapted from https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Chicago_Fire. Last accessed on June 1, 2021.

Meaning #2: past routines, past habits, past situations.

Common Time Words and Frequency Adverbs: always, constantly, frequently, usually, often, generally, sometimes, seldom, rarely, hardly ever, never, every day, each night, once a week, on Tuesdays ...

Examples: about a family's past fire prevention routines

1. When I was a child, my family tried different ways to prevent house fires.
2. My mother used to make sure that the stove was off before she went to bed every night.
3. My father used to make sure that all the electronic wires were in good working order.
4. Sometimes, we had to use candles.
5. Why did we have to use candles? In those years, power outage^[3] happened very often.
6. My parents did not allow my younger sister to be near the flame, but they let me because I was old enough.

Exercise 1

An account of the Great Chicago Fire continues below. Fill in the blanks with the correct simple past verbs. The first one is an example. When you complete the entire exercise, you can click "Check" for feedback. You may retry or see all the answers.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://harpercollege.pressbooks.pub/academic-writing-skills/?p=593#h5p-175>

Adapted from https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Chicago_Fire. Last accessed on June 1, 2021.

III. Express Meaning in Past Progressive (No Non-Action Verbs)

Verb Forms in Past Progressive: was/were + verb-ing

Meaning, Common Expressions, and Examples in Past Progressive

Meaning #1: An action was in progress at a specific time in the past.

Common Time Expressions: at this time yesterday, at 9 am this morning, at 4 pm last Tuesday, at that moment, at that time ...

Examples: about encountering^[4] a car accident while driving

1. At 9 am on a Monday last December, I was driving to college.
2. My friend Angela was sitting in the passenger seat at that time.
3. At the same time, we were listening to the news on the radio. We were not talking to each other.
4. It was snowing at that moment.

Meaning #2: A long action was in progress when a short action happened.

Common Time Expressions: when, while (“when” with simple past for shorter action; “while” with past progressive for longer action)

Examples: about encountering a car accident while driving



traffic sign slippery road

1. I was driving to our college when we heard on the radio that there was an accident just ahead of us.
2. When we heard the news, Angela was drinking her morning coffee in the car.
3. While I was driving, we heard on the radio that there was an accident just ahead of us.
4. We heard the news while Angela was drinking her morning coffee in the car.

Meaning #3: Two past actions were both in progress at the same time in the past.

Common Time Expressions: while

Examples: about encountering a car accident while driving

1. I was driving while Angela was drinking coffee.
2. While we were waiting in the car for the accident to be cleared, many other drivers were also waiting patiently in their cars.
3. While Angela and I were chatting in the car, our classmates were getting ready for the morning class at college.

When you include “when” or “while” in your sentence, you are writing a complex sentence.

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For detailed explanations and examples of complex sentences, open Unit 7 here.

Exercise 2

Below is a story about a man and his donkeys. Fill in the blanks with the correct simple past and past progressive verbs. The first one is an example. When you complete the entire exercise, you can click “Check” for feedback. You may retry or see all the answers.



three donkeys

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IV. Expressing Meaning in Past Perfect

Good news – The past perfect tense is much easier than most people think!

Verb form in past perfect: had + past participle



gloved hands holding a globe with a face mask

For a list of verbs with irregular past tense and past participle spelling, please refer to Appendix D Irregular Verbs. Open Appendix D here.

Meaning, Common Expressions, and Examples in Past Perfect

Meaning: an action or a situation that had completed or repeated before another past action or situation

Common Time Expressions: by then, by that time, by + a specific past time, by + a past time clause, when, until, as soon as, before, after ...

Examples: About online learning experiences

1. When the semester started in January 2021, many college students had already taken online classes for at least one semester.
2. It was hard for new students because many of them had never had an online course before.
3. Had all the professors taught virtually before the Covid lockdown in March 2020? No, most of them had not.
4. What remote class had you tried before coming to the U.S?

Exercise 3.Example:

Write answers to the following questions with past perfect. Discuss the meaning of the questions and answers with your partner.

What were three of the things you had done by the time you came to class today?

Answer: I had eaten my breakfast, driven to Harper, and visited the college library.

1. When you began this semester, how many English classes had you taken?
2. Before you arrived in the United States, had you ever spoken on the phone in English?
3. Before you came to the United States, what food had you never tasted?
4. Before you left for the United States, how many times had you been to the consulate in order to get your visa?

V. Unit Review Practice

Exercise 4

In the following paragraph about learning English, some verbs are underlined. In these underlined verbs, find and correct ten more errors in the use of verbs (not including the example). The first one is an example.

A Positive Attitude

I have a positive attitude toward English grammar. When I first came to America, things **are (were)** different. I have never studied English before, so I am very confused about different verb forms and tenses. As time goes by, my feeling toward the language began to change. I force myself to practice even though it was hard. I write a lot, and I become more confident each time I used the language. Now, although I am more confident about grammar, I still have many problems to overcome. I find that learning a new language takes a great deal of time and that I had to be patient and disciplined in order to be good at it. Sometimes, I was frustrated and impatient. For example, when I try very hard to include wonderful details in my paragraph, my professor and classmates may not understand some of my sentences because of many grammar mistakes. However, most times I think positively about my learning experience. I know that mistakes helped me learn. I been practicing writing with correct grammar since the beginning of this semester. I am sure that with my hard work, my skills in English will get better and better.

Exercise 5

The following paragraph is about a quiz and a joke. Some sentences are correct, but others have verb tense errors. Find ten more errors and correct them (not including the example). The first one is an example.

A Quiz and a Joke

In the reading class last week, we **have (had)** a vocabulary quiz. There are 20 questions about idioms. While we were taking the quiz, one of the students start to laugh loudly. We all stop to see what was going on. That student still laughed. He had forgotten that he was taking a quiz and was supposed to be quiet. Fortunately, he stopped laughing after the teacher signaled to him. After class, we all gather around him to ask why. He told us that the quiz is so easy that it reminds him of something funny:



a piece of cake on a plate

Question: Why did the students eat their test?

Answer: They ate it because their professor had told them it was a piece of cake^[5]!

At the time of our quiz, he wished that the quiz would transform itself into a piece of cake because the quiz was easy for him. Upon hearing this, we were all laughing. A week had passed. I still laughed whenever I remember this incident.

Exercise 6

There are fourteen more errors in the use of verb tenses in the following paragraph (not including the example). Find the errors and correct them. The first one is an example.

Childhood Memories

I **am having (have)** so many wonderful memories of my childhood. When I was five years old, my family move to Florida. My parents told me that we live in Chicago before we moved. For the first two years in Florida, we lived in a small apartment. Then, when it is time for my brother and me to start school, my parents were buying our first house. For the first time, I had my own room and did not had to share with my brother. I was loving that room! My mother was liking to sew, and she made

beautiful quilts and matching curtains for each room. Sunday was my favorite day because we went to the beach. We use to pack a big lunch from the food that Mom buy the day before. On the beach, we kids ran, laugh, and play games. Our parents sometimes ran with us, but other times they sitting in the lawn chairs and watching us. We often did not left the beach until dark. I will always member those fun years.

Exercise 7. Choose one of the following topics to write a paragraph. Use appropriate verbs.

1. Write a paragraph about your teenage years. What were you like? What did you like to do then? Was there anything that you had experienced in your early childhood to cause you to think or behave the way you did as a teenager?
2. Write a letter to your spouse, child(ren), or parent(s) and reminisce^[6] about your life together.
3. Write about a celebrity^[7]. What do you know about his or her life and career? If you can, include a photo of this person.

NSNT Practice



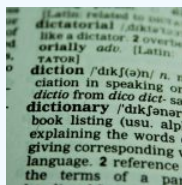
a pen writing in a notebook

Go to **The NSNT Free Writing Approach and Additional Weekly Prompts for Writing** in Appendix A. ([Open Appendix A here.](#)) Choose two topics that use past tenses. You may start with the NSNT approach and then rewrite your paragraphs. Pay attention to the use of past verbs. You are encouraged to share your paragraphs with your partners and help each other improve.

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Vocabulary Review



a page in a dictionary

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Here, you can use the flashcards below to review these words.

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Summary

1. Always focus on your meaning/ideas while choosing verb tenses.
2. Time words, verb forms, and verb tenses must match one another.
3. “Was” or “were” and the base form of a “do” verb cannot be used side by side.
4. Non-action verbs cannot be used in the past progressive tenses.
5. The simple past tense is used in expressing
 - An activity or situation started and completed at a specific time in the past.

- past routines, past habits, past situations.

6. The past progressive tense is used in expressing

- An action was in progress at a specific time in the past.
- A long action was in progress when a short action occurred.
- Two past actions were both in progress at the same time in the past.

7. The past perfect tense is used in expressing

- an action or a situation that had completed or repeated before another past action or situation.

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-
1. terror: noun, intense fear ↩
 2. rescue: verb, save, put out the fire ↩
 3. power outage: noun phrase, lost power, no electricity ↩
 4. encounter: verb, meet, see ↩
 5. a piece of cake: noun phrase, something very easy ↩
 6. reminisce: verb, remember past experiences or events ↩
 7. celebrity: noun, a famous person ↩
-

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3.7: Unit 13 Expressing Meaning in Future Tenses

Learning Objectives

1. To understand ways to express meaning in the future – with simple future, simple present, and present progressive tenses – through multiple examples
2. To learn future time clauses
3. To practice using the appropriate future tenses in a variety of writing situations

I. Pretest



a robot holding a computer

^[1]In the following ten sentences about artificial intelligence, some bold-faced verbs are correct in expressing future meaning, but some do not. If the bold-faced part in the sentence is correct, choose “correct”. If not, choose one of the other two answers. After you finish one sentence, you will get instant feedback on your answer before the next sentence. If you make mistakes, you can retry all the questions or see all the answers at the end of the pre-test.

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II. Expressing Meaning in Simple Future

Simple Future Tense verb forms:

- “Be” verbs: will be, am/is/are going to be
- “Do” verbs: will + base “Do” verb, am/is/are going to + base “Do” verb

For explanations and examples of “Be” verbs and “Do” verbs, open Unit 9 here.

Meaning: activities or situations that will happen in the future

Common time expressions: later today, tomorrow, next week, in 2035, soon, in the future, in the near future ...

Examples: about future medical care

1. There will be an increased need for doctors in the remote^[2] areas of the world.
2. Medical advances are going to help terminally ill patients^[3].
3. Will there be a cure for the common cold in the near future?
4. When will medical care become free for everyone?
5. Scientists and doctors are going to discover more effective cures for cancers in the next few years.
6. More patients will enjoy personalized medical care ten years from now.
7. The governments in many countries will provide free medical care to all citizens soon.

“Am/Is/Are Going to + Base Verb” vs “Will + Base Verb”

Meaning	am/is/are going to + base verb	will + base verb
Future prediction^[4] (same)	There is going to be an increased need for doctors in the remote areas of the world.	There will be an increased need for doctors in the remote areas of the world.
Future schedule (same)	The new doctors are going to begin their medical practice next week.	The new doctors will begin their medical practice next week.
Prior plan	The hospital is going to purchase ^[5] some new equipment with the donated money.	X
A future action based on strong evidence at present	The patient is eating! He is going to recover!	X
Promise, desire, determination	X	No matter how long the surgery will be, this patient will endure ^[6] it.
Decision made at the moment of speaking	X	A: The patient is in pain. Who will get the doctor? B. I will!
Invitation	X	Will you join us in the new hospital opening ceremony tomorrow?

III. Expressing Meaning in Simple Present

For verb forms in simple present please refer to Unit 11 Expressing Meaning in Present Tenses. Open Unit 11 here.

Simple present is often used for actions or events that are part of a fixed or an official schedule, such as plane, movie, and semester schedules. Common verbs with this use include “start, begin, end, finish, open, close, arrive, leave, land, take off...”

1. The new Children’s Hospital opens next month.
2. Its affiliated Urgent Care Center starts two months later.

IV. Expressing Meaning in Present Progressive (No Non-Action Verbs)

For verb forms in present progressive, please refer to Unit 11 Expressing Meaning in Present Tenses. Open Unit 11 here.

Present progressive is often used for actions that have already been planned for the future. They can include personal plans. Add a future time expression in the sentence. Common verbs with this use include “go, come, move, see, fly, move, play, meet, buy...”

1. Dr. Marcus is flying in from New York this afternoon to perform the heart surgery.
2. She is meeting the patient’s family afterwards.

Exercise 1. Correct the future verb forms in the following sentences about future houses. The first one is an example.

Example:

What are homes going look like in one hundred years?

Correction: What are homes going to look like in one hundred years?



1.

possible future houses with multicolored roofs

- Some houses going to be in the outer space.
- 2. Some houses going to float^[7] in mid-air.
- 3. Are some of them going to existing under the water?
- 4. Most houses will still going to be on the ground.
- 5. What will happens to the existing homes?
- 6. A lecture about future homes starting at 9 am tomorrow.
- 7. Many students are go to that lecture.

Exercise 2. Choose a topic below and write a paragraph about the future. Use appropriate future verbs.

- 1. Will there be a cure for all types of cancer in thirty years? Why do you think so?
- 2. What will elderly care be like in year 2060?

V. Future Time Clauses

A future time clause is a type of dependent clause. It must be used with an independent clause to make a complete complex sentence.

For detailed explanations and examples of complex sentences, please refer to Unit 7 Sentence Essentials. Open Unit 7 here.

A future time clause:

when/while/before/after/until/as soon as ... + subject + main verb in simple present or present progressive tense

In a time clause, simple present or present progressive is used to mean future. Keep the future tense in the independent clause. In other words, when you look at a future time clause, you see a simple present or present progressive verb there, but it means future.



a Santa Claus and a child in mall

Therefore, the look of the verb and its real time reference are different. Try to understand this difference as if you were looking at a Santa Claus. When children sit with him for photos in the mall, he looks like a Santa Claus. However, when he takes off the costume, the real person could be a neighbor or a friend, not a Santa Claus!

- 1. When AI replaces more and more human jobs in the future, many people will lose their job.
- 2. One of my friends will need to find another job before AI takes over her work in three months.
- 3. She will be meeting some business friends while she is traveling next month.

Exercise 3. Combine the following sentences to form complex sentences with the conjunctions given. Each new sentence will contain a future time clause.

Example:

People will retire. They will enjoy more leisure time. (when)



a robot pet toy

When people retire, they will enjoy more leisure time.

1. They will save enough money. They will work hard. (after)
2. They will retire. They will not be lonely. (when)
3. They will enjoy many conveniences in daily retirement living. There will be more inventions. (when)
4. For example, robot pets will keep them company. Robot pets will be available. (as soon as)
5. Those pets will make the seniors^[8] happy. They will “adopt” the robot pets. (when)
6. The robot pets will even be by their bedside. The seniors will be sleeping. (while)

VI. Unit Review Practice

Exercise 4. “Will” and “am/is/are going to” can both be used to make predictions about future. Make predictions about the following statements. Explain why you feel that way. Mark your choices with “yes” or “no” and then share your thoughts with your partner..

Fifteen years later,

1. There will be no more war in the world.



Grey and Black Tunnel Overlooking White Cloudy and Blue Sky

2. There is going to be a cure for the common cold.
3. Every country is going to have free elections.
4. Everyone in the U.S. is going to have affordable health insurance.
5. The number of homeless people in Chicago is going to be reduced in half.
6. Harper College will have on-campus housing.
7. College tuition is going to be free for everyone.
8. I will enjoy whatever hobby I do not have time for right now.
9. I am going to have the kind of family I have always wanted (personality of my spouse, number of my children ...)
10. I will run into my professor in another country.

Exercise 5. The following paragraph is about the AI technology in the future. Fill in the appropriate tenses with the given verbs. The first one is an example. When you finish the entire exercise, you can retry or see all the answers.

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Adapted from https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Applications_of_artificial_intelligence#Education. Last accessed on September 22, 2021.

Exercise 6. Correct the six more verb errors in the following paragraph about future online learning (not including the example). The first one is an example.

Online Learning: A Growing Trend

Online learning ~~will be become~~ (**will become**) more popular in colleges in the next few years. In-person classes will still be dominant on college campuses, but there are going be more and more virtual learning opportunities. While many students probably did not experience this mode of education in the past, they will be grow increasingly accustomed^[9] to remote learning. It is possible that every student will has the experience of remote learning. When this will happen, more students will able to complete their study more easily. It is estimated that in five years all college students going to take at least one course online.

Exercise 7. Choose two of the following topics to write a paragraph for each. Use appropriate tenses. Include at least two future time clauses in each paragraph.

What will _____ become in ten years?

- education
- job search
- family
- health care
- traveling
- social media ...

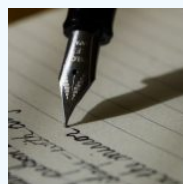
What will your life be like in ten years? What will you do to achieve these accomplishments?

- What will you do for a living?
- What kind of family life will you have?
- What hobbies will you enjoy?
- What will your dream trip be like in the future?
- What will you do to help your community? ...

How will the artificial intelligence (or another technology) help the humanity in 2035?

- Will it do all the housework chores for families?
- Will it do all the homework assignments for students?
- Will it replace the employees in companies?
- Will it send people to the outer space?
- Will it eliminate diseases?
- Will it better preserve the environment?
- Will it promote world peace?
- Will it improve international cooperation? ...

NSNT Practice



a pen writing in a notebook

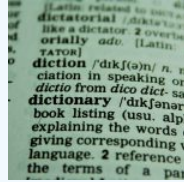
Go to **The NSNT Free Writing Approach and Additional Weekly Prompts for Writing** in Appendix A. ([Open Appendix A here.](#)) Choose two topics that use future tenses. You may start with the NSNT approach and then rewrite your paragraphs. Pay

attention to the use of future verbs. You are encouraged to share your paragraphs with your partners and help each other improve.

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Vocabulary Review



a page in a dictionary

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Summary

1. Always focus on the meaning/ideas while choosing verb tenses.
2. Time words, verb forms, and verb tenses must match one another.
3. The verbs in the simple future tense appear as “will be”, “am/is/are going to be”, “will + base verb”, and “am/is/are going to + base verb”.
4. The simple future tense is used in expressing activities or situations that will happen in the future.
5. The simple present tense is used for actions or events with a fixed or an official schedule.
6. The present progressive tense is used for actions or events that have already been planned for the future. They can include personal plans.
7. In a future time clause, simple present or present progressive is used, and a future tense is used in the independent clause.

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-
1. artificial intelligence: noun phrase, a technology to make machines act like humans ↵
 2. remote: adjective, far away ↵
 3. terminally ill patient: noun phrase, a person who is very sick and has no chance of recovery ↵
 4. prediction: noun, a guess ↵
 5. purchase: verb, buy ↵
 6. endure: verb, go through something difficult ↵
 7. float: verb, stay on the surface of water without sinking ↵
 8. senior: noun, an old person ↵
 9. accustomed: adjective, adapted ↵
-

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3.8: Unit 14 Expressing Meaning in Mixed Tenses

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4.2: Appendix B Capitalization

4.3: Appendix C Punctuation

4.4: Appendix D Irregular Verbs

4.5: Appendix E Answer Key to Some Non-Interactive Exercises

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