

Winter Quarter 2012

English 99 Packet Table of Contents J. Roth

English 99 Syllabus	Pages 3-7
Course Calendar	Page 7A-7B
Leonardo Da Vinci Make-up Certificate	Page 8
The Journal Assignment	Pages 9-10
Clauses and Sentences Made Easy	Pages 11-15
The Lists	Page 16
<i>Clauses and Sentences Made Easy Practice</i>	Page 17-18
Run-on Errors and Comma Splice Errors Help	Pages 19-20
Paragraphs Made Easy	Pages 21-23
Practice Paragraph Shells	Pages 24-25
Essays Made Easy	Pages 26-34
The <i>Milkshake Essay</i>	Pages 35-37
Essay Planning Sheet	Pages 38-39
Writing the Introductory Paragraph	Page 40
Editing and Revising--Find-and-Fix	Pages 41-43
Essay Grading Sheet	Pages 44-45
Julie's Homonyms Help	Pages 46-52
Extra Help on <i>Affect/Effect</i> and <i>Principle/Principal</i>	Pages 53-55
<i>Words Commonly Confused Practice</i>	Page 56
Commonly Used Prepositions	Page 57
<i>Find-the-Prepositional-Phrases Practice</i>	Page 58
Irregular Verb Forms	Pages 59-61
Maintaining Subject-Verb Agreement	Pages 62-65
<i>Maintaining Subject-Verb Agreement Practice</i>	Pages 66-69
Pronoun Agreement	Pages 70-71
<i>Pronoun Agreement Practice Exercises</i>	Pages 72-76
Commas Made Easy	Pages 77-81

<i>Commas Made Easy</i> Practice Exercises	Pages 82-84
Making Words Possessive	Page 85
<i>Making Words Possessive</i> Practice Exercises	Pages 86-88
Cause-Effect Essay Structure and Advice	Pages 89-91
Comparison/Contrast Essay Structure Advice	Pages 92-95
Comparison/Contrast Essay Writing Worksheets	Pages 96-99
Persuasion/Argumentation Essay Structure Advice	Pages 100-101
Working with Words from a Source	Pages 102-106
Rhetorical Structures Overview	Pages 107-109

Sample Student Essays

<i>Frustrations of the College Student</i> --Exemplification	Pages 110-111
<i>You Might Be a Redneck</i> --Definition	Pages 112-113
Cause-Effect <i>Sample Student Essay #1</i>	Pages 114-115
Cause-Effect <i>Sample Student Essay #2</i>	Pages 116-117
Summary-and-Response Essay <i>Example #1</i>	Pages 118-120
Summary-and-Response Essay <i>Example #2</i>	Pages 121-123
<i>Taking Shots: The Debate on Gun Control</i>	Pages 124-127

J. Roth--English 99 Syllabus

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REQUIRED MATERIALS

- **The Course Packet sold in the SCC Book Store**
- **An inexpensive USB Thumb Drive**
- **A journal-style notebook**
- **A portfolio folder**

MANDATORY PREREQUISITES

⇒ **Please note:** You must meet all three of the prerequisites below or you will be asked to drop the course.

- Attendance during the first three days of the course.
- An acceptable writing assessment score and/or successful completion of English 97 and or 98 (**Please see the next prerequisite**).
- A competent diagnostic writing sample the first or second day of the course. **If in the SCC English Department's judgment your writing sample does not meet English 99 minimum course-entry guidelines, you will be asked to drop this course regardless of any placement test scores you've received or earlier writing courses you've completed. If this becomes the case, the Department will make an effort to find you an alternative course that better meets your present writing needs.**

WHAT THE COURSE IS AND WHO IT IS FOR

Improvement of Writing 99 is a basic course designed to make you a better writer. It is an excellent course for the following students:

- Students who want to be more successful in English 101.
- Students who plan to enroll in vocational/technical programs.
- Students who did not get much writing practice in high school.

- Students who have been out of school for some time and want a review.
- Students whose native language is not English.

ACTIVITIES

- We will write a great deal. This will include keeping a journal as well as writing sentences, paragraphs, and essays. Please bring your book and writing materials to every class.
- We will work through many grammar and usage exercises.
- We will discuss problems and progress often.

THE WEB SITE

Please visit my school web site often. On it you can check your grade, find announcements, assignments, due dates, calendar updates, handouts, and additional resources. Just go to <http://ol.scc.spokane.edu/jroth>. If you need help getting to this site, please stop by my office for a demonstration.

COMPUTER LAB TIME

I have reserved a computer lab for our class. We will do an introduction shortly.

FIRST THREE DAYS ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

In order to be eligible to receive a course grade of .7 or higher, a student must have attended regularly the first three days of the quarter or have make arrangements with the instructor in advance.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I do not take attendance because I believe that at the college level, attendance is the student's responsibility. Unlike earlier, required school participation, enrolling in college is a choice you freely make; in addition, it is a privilege, not a requirement. Therefore, it is up to you whether you will take advantage of it or not. However, a student who misses too many classes may become ineligible to pass the course because excessive absence brings into question whether the student attempted the course at all.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT and BEHAVIOR

No student has the right to interfere with another student's opportunity to learn. **To this end, I expect all of my students to act like responsible, socially skilled adults or they will be asked to leave the class and/or drop the course.** Please silence cell phones and the like. Since attendance is voluntary, if you wish to text message others, please do so outside of class. Please see the S.C.C. Student Code of Conduct for more information.

PROPER ENGLISH IN COURSE COMMUNICATION

Whether we like it or not, others judge us by how well we use the language. In addition, the use of Standard Written English demonstrates respect for ourselves, our language, our readers, and our message. Because of these facts, part of your grade this quarter will be determined by the quality of English you use in e-mails to me as well as in postings and Writing Group comments to your peers. Please be aware that **I will not read or grade** any paragraphs or essays written in substandard English. In addition, I will **not read or nor will I respond to e-mails written in *Textlish*** (“texting English”). Finally, **I will not read or nor will I respond to e-mails that are impolite or discourteous.**

GRADING OF YOUR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

As we cover each skill, I will expect you to apply the new knowledge to all new writing assignments. In addition, I expect that each of the writing assignments you submit to me will be the product of multiple drafts, reflecting thorough editing and revision. If I find I have to spend an excessive amount of time correcting writing errors we have already covered and/or editing and revising your work for you, the grade on the assignment will drop accordingly.

MAKING UP LATE ASSIGNMENTS

There are no make-ups unless you make arrangements in advance. However, to allow for the unexpected, you may make up one assignment without penalty as long as you make it up within one calendar week of its due date. **These make-up guidelines do NOT apply to the Comprehensive Final, to discretionary points awards, or to pop quizzes.**

- You must attach your *da Vinci* Late Assignment Submission Form to your late assignment in order for it to be accepted. Please remember that once you have used this one late assignment option, I will accept no more late assignments from you no matter the reason unless you made earlier, prior arrangements to submit the assignment late. No excuses and no exceptions, so please don't ask.

PORTFOLIO FOLDER

Please keep all returned assignments in your portfolio folder. Being able to produce a returned, graded assignment is the **ONLY WAY** to verify that you have completed the assignment if my records indicate otherwise.

ZERO-TOLERANCE MATERIAL

Zero-Tolerance Material is material over which you must get **100% correct** to pass. That's right—zero-tolerance means zero-tolerance: even **one** error disqualifies the quiz, and you must take it again. As of now, I have one Zero-Tolerance Unit: *Words Commonly Confused*. A second-- *Subject-Verb-Pronoun Agreement*--may be added depending upon our skill level as a class.

By the end of the quarter, you must have achieved 100% on a quiz over any Zero-Tolerance Unit to be eligible for a grade above 1.9. No matter what your course average is, if you do not achieve 100%, you cannot receive a grade higher than 1.9. The reason is simple: until you can handle Zero-Tolerance Material with confidence and ease, you are not ready to move on to English 101 or write successfully on the job. You will have lots of opportunities throughout the quarter to study for, take, and retake these tests.

THE COMPREHENSIVE FINAL

English 99 is a preparatory course: a grade of 2.0 or better certifies that you are a competent writer and are ready for English 101. Therefore, to receive a grade of 2.0 or better in this course, *your writing must meet or exceed the minimum level* of competency required for English 101 entry.

I will be evaluating your work throughout the quarter in terms of your competency to be successful in English 101. In addition, toward the end of the quarter I will give you a comprehensive final evaluation to assess your readiness. **If, in my judgment, your writing competency does not meet this minimum level, the highest grade possible regardless of your class average will be a 1.9. Again, a 1.9 is not a failing grade**—it is a low ‘C’ and simply means you cannot enroll in English 101 until you raise it to a 2.0

Please remember that I am here to help you write better and meet or exceed this minimum level of competency. Please see me for additional help whenever you feel that you need it. In addition, tutors are available in the SCC Tutoring Center.

YOUR FINAL GRADE

Each regular assignment, test, or quiz will be worth a certain number of points. The comprehensive final given at the end of the quarter will come in two parts: an objective test and an in-class essay. If you complete **all** of the assigned essays and pass both parts of the comprehensive final (70% or higher), your course grade will be determined by the percentage of the total points you've earned converted to a decimal using the percent-to-decimal scale below. **If you do not complete all assigned essays and/or fail to complete either part of the comprehensive final satisfactorily (70% or higher), the highest course grade you can receive is 1.9 REGARDLESS OF YOUR COURSE AVERAGE. A 1.9 is not a failing grade**—it is a low ‘C’ and simply means you cannot enroll in English 101 until you raise it to a 2.0.

COURSE POINT VALUES

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| • Paragraph Assignments | Max 5-10 per paragraph (30-45 points total) |
| • Essay Assignments | Max 100 points per essay (300-500 points total) |
| • Journal Completion | 45 entries times 3 points per entry = 135 points |
| • Discretionary Points | 75-125 points total |
| • Zero-Tolerance Material | Mandatory Pass |
| • Comprehensive Final | 400 points total |

S.C.C. uses the decimal grading system. I will first convert your grade to percentage by dividing you total points by the total points possible. I will then convert your percentage grade to a decimal grade using the following chart. The decimal value will appear on your grade sheet and transcript.

Grade Scale—J. Roth
All Courses

% to Decimal	Letter	% to Decimal	Letter	% to Decimal	Letter	% to Decimal	Letter
100--4.0	A	89--3.4	B+	79--2.9	C+	69--1.9	D+
99--4.0	A	88--3.4	B+	78--2.8	C+	68--1.8	D+
98--4.0	A	87--3.3	B+	77--2.7	C	67--1.7	D
97--4.0	A	86--3.3	B	76--2.6	C	66--1.6	D
96--3.9	A	85--3.2	B	75--2.5	C	65--1.5	D
95--3.8	A	84--3.2	B	74--2.4	C	64--1.4	D
94--3.7	A	83--3.1	B	73--2.3	C	63--1.3	D
93--3.7	A-	82--3.1	B	72--2.2	C	62--1.2	D
92--3.6	A-	81--3.0	B-	71--2.1	C-	61--1.1	D-
91--3.6	A-	80--3.0	B-	70--2.0	C-	60--1.0	D-
90--3.5	A-					0.7--less	F

ONE-FREE-MAKE-UP FORM—Winter Quarter 2012 J. Roth

NAME: _____ CLASS: English 99—11:30

ASSIGNMENT: _____ DATE: _____



GUIDELINES:

This form can be used **only** for assignments eligible for make-up. **Some assignments cannot be made up. Please read our course syllabus carefully.**

You must submit this form with your make-up quiz or assignment.

You need not use this form to make up a quiz or assignment if you made arrangements with me **in advance** of the due date or quiz date. (The day before is best.)

Any other missed quiz or assignment, **no matter what or how good the reason**, requires this form to be made up.

One *one-free-make-up* form per person—no exceptions, so please do not ask. Once this form is used (or lost), you have **no** make-up option left **no matter what or how good the reason** (unless you have made arrangements in advance), so keep it safe and ***keep it for emergencies***.

JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

To write better, one must write often--*there is no other way*. Therefore, dedicating yourself to this assignment can do more to help your writing than anything I or any book can do. With this in mind, let us embrace the following assignment:

First, the journal assignment requires a special time set aside to write original sentences and paragraphs.

The goal is to write as many sentences and paragraphs as possible within the time limit (though I encourage everyone to spend even more time at this pursuit).

Simply writing lots of words, sentences, and paragraphs can lead to great improvement in your writing. The more words, the better.

And those words don't have to be read by anyone else to help your writing skill grow. To understand how this works, compare writing in a journal to practicing the piano between piano lessons:

The piano teacher does not have to listen to each practice session in order for the student to improve; in the same way, someone else (an instructor) does not have to read the words written in the journal for the writer to improve. **But in each case the student will improve in proportion to the practice time that he or she invests.**

When you write in your journal, write about anything you want--but let the words flow quickly. Write about your day, what makes you angry, happy, write about your most embarrassing moments. Start a novel, write pretend letters to people in your life--the possibilities are endless.

Also, do not be too concerned about checking spelling and punctuation during your journal writing time. Better to keep going with an idea and wring the truth from it than to pause and check the dictionary.

Remember that I will not collect nor read in detail any of your entries, so you can be absolutely honest with yourself. You need not worry about correcting spelling/readability/sentencing errors nor be concerned that someone else will read what you have written. (After you have finished an entry, you can always go over it and clean it up for your own instruction, but that is up to you.)

As a side note, not only will journal writing improve one's written English, but it can also improve one's mood and emotional health. Studies have shown that regularly "venting" in a journal is **as effective as taking antidepressants**.

That's right—regular journal writing works every bit as well as popping Prozac.

SPECIFICS

- A minimum of fifteen minutes minimum per day—at least five days a week—beginning the second week of the course. A minimum of 45 separate entries by the end of the quarter.
- Please be sure to accurately number and date each journal entry.
- Keep all pages together in a notebook or on a USB thumb drive—I will ask you to show me your journal in progress at various times throughout the quarter.
- Please bring journal writing materials with you to each class. Often we'll write a journal entry together.
- **Note:** Your journal must demonstrate that you have made an honest attempt to meet the requirements of this assignment. Journals that appear "fabricated" at the last minute will not be accepted.
- Write without too much concern for spelling or punctuation; the goal is to produce a large quantity of words. Stopping often to check spelling and punctuation blocks the flow of ideas onto the page.
- Write about anything you want. Write about events, ideas, people who are important to you. Write about that which really affects you emotionally.
- At first, expect to sit with pen in hand waiting for the ideas to come. If you are patient, in time your mind will begin to generate content that your pen can record. A fifteen-minute writing session can yield from half a page to several pages of writing depending upon your mood and perseverance.
- Stuck for an idea? Please visit the [Scrapjazz](#) website for lots of journal writing ideas and activities. (Scroll down to find the prompts.)
- **No one but you will read the actual sentences you write—only the quantity you write will be checked.**
- Above all, be kind to yourself, be positive, and be patient.

CLAUSES and SENTENCING MADE EASY

Writing sentences you can trust isn't that difficult if you master a few basics:

- You need to be able to identify two types of clauses.
- You need to know at all times which of these two clauses you are writing.
- You need to learn three basic sentence patterns.
- You need to know how to use three groups of words.

CLAUSES:

A clause is a group of words that has both a verb and a subject.

The verb is usually an action word like *run*, *jump*, and *write*, but words such as **am**, **is**, **are**, **was**, and **were** are also verbs.

The subject is whoever or whatever does the verb (controls the verb) of the sentence.

Something simple such as *Birds fly* is a clause because it meets these two requirements. Check it out: Is there a verb in *Birds fly*? Yes--*fly*. Is there a subject (a word that does or controls the verb)? Yes, again--*Birds*. So *Birds fly* is a clause. One final note on subjects: words such as **I**, **you**, **he**, **she**, **it**, **we**, and **they** are often subjects. Don't overlook them.

An **independent clause** can be a complete, wonderful, correct sentence if you choose to punctuate it that way. This kind of clause is called **independent** because it is "independent" of needing any other words or clauses to make it complete. In other words, all by itself it works fine as a sentence. For example, *Birds fly* is an independent clause because it has a subject (**Birds**), a verb (**fly**), and it states a fact (it doesn't leave any huge thought gap, hole, or condition for the reader to wonder about). You can punctuate this to be a sentence by capitalizing the "**B**" in *birds* and putting a period after *fly*.

Rather than being complete by itself, a **dependent clause** is a piece of a larger thought. If you punctuate a dependent clause as a complete sentence, you will have written a **sentence fragment**, a writing error to be avoided, at least at first. When you begin a clause with words from the **Dependent Word List**, you automatically create a dependent clause. Be careful--if you put a period at the end of this clause, you will create a fragment.

Consider *Because birds fly*. See what the word **Because** does? It makes what was a complete idea incomplete by creating a thought gap, hole, or condition that isn't fulfilled before the period. If I write *Because birds fly* with a capital "**B**" on *because* and a period after *fly*, I have written a **sentence fragment**. In other words, I punctuated a piece or *fragment* of a sentence as if it were a *complete* sentence. That's a no-no.

We can fix this sentence fragment by adding the information that is missing.

Consider *Because birds fly, Dirk always wears a hat*.


Notice that we added an independent clause, *Dirk always wears a hat*, to fill the thought gap that the word *because* created. We end up with a sentence made of both kinds of clauses, one dependent and one independent.

Below is a partial list of **Dependent** words such as *because*.

Because	If	Since	Even though
Although	As	Before	After
When	Whenever	While	Even if

There are more members of this list, but these are the most common. (Check out the complete list of **Dependent Words** on *The Lists Attachment to this handout*.) Remember, when you begin a clause with one of these dependent words, you will write a **sentence fragment** if you put a period at the end of the clause.

Try writing a few sentence fragments by completing the clauses below:

 **Example:** *Because Ralph went home early.*

Even though Bob _____.

If Sylvia _____.

Although cats and dogs _____.


Now correct and complete each of the above sentence fragments by adding an independent clause.


 **Example:** *Because Ralph went home early, he could watch the ballgame.*

Even though Bob _____, _____.

If Sylvia _____, _____.

Although cats and dogs _____, _____.

 Remember—there are two kinds of clauses—**independent and dependent**. The **independent clause** can be a correct sentence by itself. The **dependent clause**, if left by itself, becomes a sentence fragment.

 Finally, remember that at all times while you are writing, you must know which of the two kinds of clauses you are creating.

Let's move on for now and look at our three sentence patterns.

- **Pattern #1: SIMPLE SENTENCE.** A sentence made from only **one independent clause** is called a **Simple Sentence**.

Consider *I walked Zelda home every day after school.*

I have a verb *walked* and a subject *I*, so I have a clause. Since I did **not** begin with a dependent word, I can be fairly sure I have an independent clause and, therefore, a legal sentence. The rest of the words in the sentence add information, but the core of the sentence is *I walked*.

(Note: The words *Zelda home every day after school* add information, but they contain no more pairs of subjects and verbs; therefore, they do not contain another clause.

- **Pattern #2: COMPLEX SENTENCE.** A sentence made from **both kinds of clauses** is called a **Complex Sentence**.

Consider *After Dirk shot the moose, the warden shot Dirk.*

Note that *after* begins the dependent clause and *the warden* begins the independent clause. You can reverse the order of these clauses and still have a complex sentence:

Here it is: *The warden shot Dirk after Dirk shot the moose.*

- ↔ **Punctuation Note:** If you begin a complex sentence with the **independent** clause, you do not need a comma to mark where the dependent clause begins.

Try to understand these formulas:


Complex Sentences:

Independent Clause plus **Dependent Clause** I.C. + D.C.

Dependent Clause plus a **comma** plus an **Independent Clause** D.C. , + I.C.

Both are complex sentences.


Try this: First, write two complex sentences with the independent clause first.

 Example: *The car skidded to a stop before it hit the truck.*

1. _____

2. _____

Now try this: Write two complex sentences with the dependent clause **first**.

 Example: *Even though English was difficult before, I find it easier now.*

1. _____

2.

- **Pattern #3: COMPOUND SENTENCE.** Two independent clauses joined properly make a **Compound Sentence**.

Consider *I asked Zelda to marry me, but she said no.*

Here we have two independent clauses hooked together with a comma and the word **but**. The word **but** is a member of a group of words called **fanboys**. The other members of this group are **for, and, nor, or, yet, and so**

These seven words (the **fanboys**) become *coordinating* conjunctions when they join two independent clauses. (Note: these seven words are *coordinating* conjunctions **only** when they are used to join two independent clauses. At other times they are simple conjunctions and follow other rules.) In other words, to be **coordinating** conjunctions, *they must have an independent clause on each side*.

So what's a **comma splice error**? A **comma splice error** is two independent clauses joined with *only a comma*.

Consider *I asked Zelda to marry me, she said no.*

This is **INCORRECT**. A *coordinating conjunction* or **fanboys** is needed after the comma to create a legal joint between the independent clauses. Study the following formulas:

 **Incorrect:**

Independent clause + comma + independent clause = **COMMA SPLICE ERROR**


 *We were tired, we went home.*

 **Correct:**

Independent clause + comma + coordinating conjunction (**for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so**) + independent clause = **CORRECT SENTENCE**

 *We were tired, so we went home.*

Want some more info on compound sentences?

 You can use a **semicolon** to join the independent clauses that create the compound sentence.

That's right—a semicolon ;. Simply put the semicolon in place of the comma and fanboys.

What are the rules for semicolon use? A semicolon joins **independent** clauses and the ideas in those clauses have to relate.

Consider *I asked Zelda to marry me, but she said no.*

Just like before: two independent clauses joined with a **comma and a fanboys**.

Now consider *I asked Zelda to marry me; she said no.*

Note that the semicolon has replaced the “, *but*.”

Either is correct; both are compound sentences.

If the semicolon by itself is just too plain for your tastes, you can always add a transitional word after it to spice things up a bit.

How about this: *Zelda refused to marry me; therefore, I signed up for the mars mission.*

The *therefore* **is not necessary** for the semicolon to legally join the two independent clauses; however, the word *thereforer* does lead nicely into the next independent clause.

For a list of these **optional** transitional words, check out the *The Lists* attachment.

Some final practice:

First, write two compound sentences using *a comma and fanboys* to join the independent clauses.



Example: *I love walking, and I love running even more.*

1. _____

2. _____

Now how about two compound sentences using a semicolon to join the independent clauses:



Example: *Jammie loves tacos; she eats at Taco Loco every afternoon.*

1. _____

2. _____

That’s all there is to clauses and sentencing. **The key is PRACTICE**—as you read and write, study sentence structure. Become a student of it. Try to spot and then identify clauses whenever you work with language. This effort creates a sensitivity to structure that will quickly spill into your writing.

THE LISTS

DEPENDENT WORDS

after	if, even if	when, whenever
although, though	in order that	where, wherever
as	since	whether
because	that, so that	which, whichever
before	unless	while
even though	until	who, whoever
how	what, whatever	whose

FANBOYS

for	and	nor	but	or	yet	so
-----	------------	-----	------------	----	------------	-----------

TRANSITIONAL WORDS

however	nevertheless	on the other hand
instead	meanwhile	otherwise
indeed	in addition	also
moreover	furthermore	then
thus	consequently	therefore

Name: _____

Clauses and Sentences Made Easy Practice

Simple Sentence Pattern: one independent clause

Example: Mary arrives late every morning.

Please write three original simple sentences:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Complex Sentence Pattern: one independent clause and one dependent clause, either order. If the dependent clause comes first, put a comma where it ends and the independent clause begins.

Examples:

Bob lost his mind after Estelle left him.

After Estelle left Bob, he lost his mind.

Please write two complex sentences with the **dependent clause first**:

- 4.
- 5.

Please write two complex sentences with the **independent clause first**:

- 6.
- 7.

Compound Sentence Pattern: two independent clauses joined by either a comma and a “fanboys” or a semicolon.

Examples:

We wanted to go swimming, but Martha closed the pool.

The study skills class was full; I took aerobics instead.

Please write two compound sentences using a comma and a “fanboys” to join the independent clauses:

8.

9.

Please write two compound sentences using a semicolon to join the independent clauses:

10.

11.

Without looking at the chapter, list six dependent words that would make a clause dependent:

List four of the seven “fanboys.”

Without looking at the chapter, list four transitional words or phrases that could begin an independent clause:

Please answer the following:

What is the difference between a dependent clause and an independent clause?

Run-on Errors and Comma Splice Errors Help

To be successful in English 101, a student has to master sentencng. One huge step toward this mastery is to learn how to identify and correct run-on sentence errors and comma-splice sentence errors.

Run-on sentences and comma-splice sentences are both results of the same sentencng error.

The error is we are trying to connect two sentences together without proper punctuation.

Here's a run-on error:

Mitch loves coffee he goes to Starbuck's every morning.

Note the two sentences join between the words "coffee" and "he," yet only a blank space joins them—thus, we run right through to the next sentence which creates a run-on sentence error.

The comma splice error is much more common.

Here's a comma splice error:

Mitch loves coffee, he goes to Starbuck's every morning.

Again note the two sentences join between the words "coffee" and "he," yet now we have only a comma to join them.

The rule to remember is simple: a comma by itself is NOT enough punctuation to join two sentences.

You can correct run-on and comma splice errors by using any of the following three methods:

1. Make two sentences:

Mitch loves coffee. He goes to Starbuck's every morning.

2. Use a semicolon:

Mitch loves coffee; he goes to Starbuck's every morning.

3. Use a comma and one of the "FANBOYS." (The FANBOYS are "for," "and," "nor," "but," "or," "yet," and "so").

The most useful of these are "and," "but," "yet," and "so."

Here's the correction:

Mitch loves coffee, so he goes to Starbuck's every morning.

PARAGRAPHS MADE EASY

A paragraph is a collection of sentences that presents and supports one and only one idea or opinion. Typically, one of the sentences in the collection states our main idea or opinion (this is called the *topic sentence*) and the rest of the sentences support, give examples, offer proof—whatever it takes to get our idea across to the reader.

To be acceptable, a paragraph requires three elements--*unity*, *coherence*, and *completeness*—and we can test our paragraphs for these three requirements even before readers read them.

Unity means connection to one idea; in other words every sentence in the paragraph needs to be about that one--and only that one--idea presented in the topic sentence. Checking for *unity* is easy. Once we have the rough paragraph written, we get our topic sentence's idea clearly in mind, and then we read each supporting sentence to see if it supports that idea. When we find a sentence that does not offer support, we either rewrite it or throw it out.

Once each of our support sentences does, in fact, pass the unity test—supports the idea in the topic sentence--we can be assured that our paragraph has the unity our readers will need and expect.

Once our rough paragraph has unity, we turn to the second element--*coherence*. *Coherence* means *order*—in this case, the order of our paragraph's support sentences. When we check for coherence, we first determine the best or most convincing order for our support sentences, and then we check to see if our support sentences are, in fact, in the most effective order.

Two types of *coherence* or order are used widely in paragraphs: *chronological order* and *emphatic order*.

Chronological order is time order. In this case, we begin with the topic sentence and then put our support sentences in the order in which they occurred in time.

Here's an example of *chronological order*: Let's say the idea or opinion we want to get across to our reader is that beginning a college career is frustrating. Our *topic sentence* might be "Beginning a college degree is a frustrating experience." Now we need to support it. One way we could do this is to spend the rest of the paragraph giving our reader a chronology of those frustrations.

For example, we could begin by describing the frustration of trying to decide which program or courses to take. Our second point of support might be relating the frustration of securing funds to pay for the courses. We could then follow with tackling a very frustrating registration process. Next might be the long lines at the book store and the frustration of rounding up all the necessary supplies. We could end our paragraph with the last event in time—the frustration of actually

beginning the classes--sorting out the syllabi, finding the classrooms, meeting with the instructors, and so on.

The other type of *coherence* commonly use is called *emphatic order* or order of importance. When we use *emphatic order*, we make sure that we end our paragraph with our best or most significant point of support. Think of it this way: whatever the reader reads last, the reader will remember best.

Try this example: Let's say we are applying for a job. The application asks us to write a paragraph briefly describing our qualifications. Let's also say that we have three relevant qualifications: we can read blueprints, we can survey land, and we can understand and use a computer drafting program. Additionally, let's say we also know that this particular company is most interested in someone with blueprint reading experience.

Our topic sentence for this paragraph might be: "I believe I have excellent qualifications for this position."

Now we would apply *emphatic order* (order of importance) to the supporting details:

We could begin our support by detailing our *land surveying* experience. Next we could move to our *computer-assisted drafting* experience. Toward the end of this paragraph, the most emphatic location, we present the qualification most valued by this company—our blueprint reading experience. To accomplish this, we would include a sentence like "*But most importantly, I have a wealth of experience reading blueprints,*" and then follow it with the specifics.

Emphatic and effective, and we just might get the job.

Completeness is the final requirement of a healthy paragraph. In this case we have to get into our reader's mind and anticipate how much development, explanation, support he or she will need to understand and agree with us.

This brings us to the nearly ageless question of "How many sentences does a paragraph need?" The answer is as many as our readers need to fully understand our point.

A writer's biggest error concerning completeness is to assume the readers know more about the topic than they really do. When this happens, the writer skimps on support which will likely leave the readers unconvinced and confused.

A good general rule on *completeness* is this: assume our readers are intelligent *non-specialists* in whatever topic we are presenting. Because of this, we need to add *more* support than we think the idea needs.

To see sample paragraphs in action you might turn to the *Milkshake Essay* on pp.

Look specifically at paragraphs two, three, and four. Note the placement of the topic sentences (at the beginning of the paragraph is usually best). Please also note the development—the sentences that follow to explain or convince the reader of the points we presented in the topic sentences. See if all three paragraphs pass the tests of *unity*, *coherence*, and *completeness*.

Practice Paragraph Shells

The *Neighborhood* Practice Paragraph Shell

Likes	Dislikes

(1) I really(like/don't like) my neighborhood. (2) The first reason is
_____. (3) _____.
(detail/development sentence)

(4) Another reason is _____. (5) _____
(detail/development sentence)

_____. (6) The most important reason is
_____. (7) _____.
(detail/development sentence)

(8) I hope I (never have to move/ can move soon).

The SCC Practice Paragraph Shell

Likes	Dislikes

(1) I really have (enjoyed/not enjoyed) my S.C.C. experience. (2) The first reason is _____ . (3) _____
(detail/development sentence)
_____ . (4) Another reason is _____ .

(5) _____ . (6) The most important
(detail/development sentence)
reason is _____ . (7) _____
(detail/development sentence)
_____ . (8) I hope I can (finish my degree here/ transfer soon).

Essays Made Easy--Building an Essay

Overview

An essay is a group of paragraphs clustered together to present and develop an idea for the reader. The structure of an essay in many ways is like the structure of a paragraph, which has a topic sentence stating the main idea and then several support sentences. The difference is that an essay presents a *larger* idea than a paragraph and develops it with support *paragraphs* rather than support sentences.

So just as sentences are the building blocks of the paragraph, paragraphs are the building blocks of essays. And just as a paragraph's main idea is called a topic and is stated in the *topic sentence*, an essay's main idea is called a *thesis*, and is stated in the *thesis sentence*, which is usually the final sentence of the first paragraph (the introductory paragraph) or ends the introduction of a longer essay.

One last thing to keep in mind is that writing an essay is not as difficult as we might think if we build our essay *one paragraph at a time* rather than try to write the whole essay at once.

Let's work with an example. Let's pretend we are writers for a gourmet foods magazine and that we are responsible for the monthly dessert article (an *article* is really an essay). One day as we are planning the next month's article, our editor walks by and advises us not to write yet another article about one of the typical gourmet desserts such as chocolate mousse, crepes suzette, or baked Alaska. Rather, we are to write an article that introduces a new gourmet dessert.

As we struggle to come up with a new dessert, one of us, noticing another of us sipping on a McDonald's milkshake, suggests that we might elevate the common milkshake to gourmet standards. We agree and begin the writing process.

Step #1—Brainstorm the idea

Thought process → Gourmet foods → Gourmet desserts → not the usual → hmmm → common milkshake → elevate the common milkshake to gourmet food status.

Essay idea 😊 All Milkshakes are made with milk, ice cream, and some sort of flavoring syrup. So let's upgrade these ingredients to gourmet status by using ***Dryer's ice cream, goat's milk, flavoring syrups from Brazil.***

Next we brainstorm the supporting details, paragraph by paragraph ⇨

Brainstorming results are listed in the boxes below ↓

☛ Why Goat's milk *brainstorming*

Freshness date important—no preservatives	
Pleasant aroma	
Layers or levels of flavor	
Has richness and texture	

☛ Why Brazilian flavoring syrups *brainstorming*

Not "extracts" like those in U.S.	
U.S. crystals don't all absorb	
No residue when mixed	
More expensive but worth it	

☛ **Why Dryer’s ice cream *brainstorming***

Go with Dryer’s Satiny Vanilla for first try	
Satin-smooth	
Carries message	
Blendable but taste doesn’t disappear	

Next, we reorganize the details in the above lists to put them in the most effective order ↓

Step #2—Reorganize supporting details for best effect, paragraph by paragraph

Reorganized paragraph details ⇨

Note that each detail below has been assigned the location (number) where it will be presented in the paragraph. We will rough out each paragraph using this new order of details.

WHY GOAT’S MILK PARAGRAPH

Details ↓	Location ↓
Freshness date important—no preservatives	This will be the final detail
Aroma	This detail will be second
Layers or levels of flavor	This detail will go third
Texture	This detail will go first

WHY BRAZILIAN FLAVORING SYRUPS PARAGRAPH

Details ↓	Location ↓
Not “extracts” like those in U.S.	This detail will go first
U.S. crystals don’t all absorb	This detail will be second
No residue when mixed	This detail will go

	third
More expensive but worth it	This will be the <i>final</i> detail

WHY DRYER'S ICE CREAM PARAGRAPH

Details ↓	Location ↓
Go with Dryer's Satiny Vanilla for first try	This will be the <i>final</i> detail
Satin-smooth	This detail will be <i>second</i>
Carries message	This detail will go <i>first</i>
Blendable but taste doesn't disappear	This detail will go <i>third</i>

☛ Now we decide on the best order for these support paragraphs, and we are ready to fill out the Essay Planning Sheet ↓

Step #3—Fill out the Essay Planning Sheet

ESSAY PLANNING SHEET

First list your support paragraph topic names in the order you decided on in Step #2.

Let's try this order ↓

Dryer's Ice Cream
Goat's Milk
Brazilian Flavorings

Note: The ¶ symbol is the symbol for a paragraph.

¶¹—The thesis sentence is a one-sentence statement of your essay's point. It is usually a good idea to place it at the end of the introductory paragraph (Paragraph #1). This

paragraph is also referred to as the *thesis paragraph* and consists of lead-in sentences followed by the thesis sentence.


Now let's write our thesis sentence only. (We'll add the introductory sentences later.)

Two types of Thesis Sentences:

Choice #1 is what's called an **Analytical Thesis Sentence** because it lists the names of the support paragraph topics.

Here's our essay's thesis stated in the *analytical thesis sentence* format




 The perfect gourmet milkshake requires Dryer's ice cream, goat's milk, and Brazilian Syrups.

OR

Choice #2 is what's called an **Inferential Thesis Sentence** because it does not list the names of the support paragraph topics. (The support is *inferred, hence the name inferential*.)

Here's our essay's thesis stated in the *inferential thesis sentence* format



 The perfect gourmet milkshake requires special ingredients.

 Next we draft the support paragraphs using our topic sentences and the reorganized list of details



¶2—Supporting Point #1 with the details listed in order. (This is labeled ¶2 (Paragraph #2) because ¶1 (Paragraph #1) is our introductory or thesis paragraph.)

Topic Sentence ↓

The first ingredient is ice cream.

List of Supporting Details ↓

DRYER'S ICE CREAM PARAGRAPH

Carries message
Satin-smooth
Blendable but taste doesn't disappear
Go with Dryer's Satiny Vanilla for first try

¶3—Supporting Point #2 with the details listed in order

Topic Sentence ↓

The second ingredient is goat's milk.

List of Supporting Details ↓

GOAT'S MILK PARAGRAPH

Texture
Aroma
Layers of flavor
Freshness date important—no preservatives

4—Supporting Point #3 with the details listed in order

Topic Sentence ↓

The final ingredient is the flavoring syrup.

List of Supporting Details ↓

BRAZILIAN FLAVORINGS PARAGRAPH

Not "extracts" like those in U.S.
U.S. crystals don't all absorb
No residue when mixed
More expensive but worth it

Step #4—Use the completed Essay Planning Sheet to write your body paragraphs (please see essay)

Step #5—Write your introduction

What about the sentences before the thesis sentence (the introductory sentences)?

The first three or four sentences are introductory sentences leading to your thesis sentence, which ends the paragraph. *Generally these sentences should create interest in your idea or establish its importance so the reader will want to continue reading. As weird as it sounds, write these introductory sentences **AFTER** you have completed the rough draft of the essay's body paragraphs.*

One way of creating an introduction is to write a sentence for each narrowing of the topic

Narrowing sequence from brainstorming →

Gourmet foods→
Gourmet desserts→
not the usual→
hmmmm→
an ordinary milkshake→
elevate the lowly milkshake to gourmet food status.

Broad



Narrow

Sample Introduction

Do you ever wonder how to complete that perfect gourmet meal? Many gourmet food fanciers can create delicious appetizers followed by mouth-watering main courses, only to disappoint their dinner guests by serving one of the overused gourmet desserts such as Baked Alaska, Chocolate Mousse, or Crepes Suzette. The next time you prepare a gourmet meal for your friends and family, why not try something different? Surprise your guests with a common dessert elevated to gourmet stature--the milkshake. **The perfect gourmet milkshake requires Dryer's ice cream, goat's milk, and Brazilian Syrups.**

(Analytical thesis sentence)

Step #6—Write your conclusion

When writing the conclusion assume that you have convinced your readers—that they now agree with your thesis; in other words, they now accept your position. So write a few closing sentences to recommend action and/or do a bit of cheerleading.

How's this? ↓

Sample Conclusion

So the next time you spend countless hours planning and preparing that perfect gourmet meal for your guests, do not disappoint them by serving one of the "expected" desserts; instead, serve something different--the gourmet milkshake. Your guests will not be disappointed.

COMPLETED ESSAY

(Note: I've given you two examples of thesis sentences and underlined each body paragraph's topic sentence)

"The Milkshake" Essay

Do you ever wonder how to complete that perfect gourmet meal? Many gourmet food fanciers can create delicious appetizers followed by mouth-watering main courses, only to disappoint their dinner guests by serving one of the overused gourmet desserts such as Baked Alaska, Chocolate Mousse, or Crepes Suzette. The next time you prepare a gourmet meal for your friends and family, why not try something different? Surprise your guests with a common dessert elevated to gourmet stature--the milkshake. **The perfect gourmet milkshake requires Dryer's ice cream, goat's milk, and Brazilian Syrups.**

(Analytical thesis sentence) **OR The perfect gourmet milkshake requires special ingredients.** *(Inferential thesis sentence)*

The first ingredient is ice cream, but not just any ice cream will do. More than any other ingredient, the ice cream carries the milkshake's "message" to your dinner guests. Therefore, gourmet milkshake ice cream must have a satin-smooth flush to it. It must be creamy, yet not too heavy or rich. It must easily

blend with the other ingredients, but not lose its personality. It must have a hint of impertinence without being overpowering. Fortunately Dryer's ice cream admirably fulfills these requirements. If this will be your first gourmet milkshake creation, use Dryer's Satiny Vanilla. Later you can experiment with other Dryer's flavors to more finely tune your creations.

The second ingredient is goat's milk. Most over-the-counter milkshakes, even those made at finer creameries, are loaded with cow's milk. Though cow's milk provides a good thinning agent for a common milkshake, only goat's milk has the richness and texture to elevate a milkshake to gourmet status. Goat's milk has an elegant aroma that captivates the senses. In addition, goat's milk settles into layers of creaminess, making each new taste different from the last. Thus, as your guests are enjoying this dessert, it will radiate unique levels of flavor. Fortunately, goat's milk is readily available at finer markets. Be sure to check the freshness label since goat's milk will not have the preservatives that pasteurized cow's milk has.

The final ingredient is the flavoring syrup. Though many American specialty food companies make flavorings suitable for common milkshakes, these domestic syrups fall far short of providing the quality a gourmet

milkshake deserves. Most domestic syrups are produced through an “extract” process with the flavoring typically in concentrated form. As this concentrate mixes with the base, not all flavor crystals are absorbed. This unabsorbed residue can destroy the syrup’s flavor consistency, rendering most domestic flavoring syrups unreliable. Brazilian syrups, however, are made with whole flavorings rather than extracts. Once these whole flavorings are blended with their respective bases, they do not separate. This ensures the continuity of taste a gourmet milkshake deserves. Though Brazilian flavorings are more expensive and not as readily available as are their American counterparts, they are well worth the extra expense and effort.

So the next time you spend countless hours planning and preparing that perfect gourmet meal for your guests, do not disappoint them by serving one of the “expected” desserts; instead, serve something different--the gourmet milkshake. Your guests will not be disappointed.

ESSAY PLANNING SHEET

1—Thesis Paragraph

List of Support Paragraph **topic names** (Be sure to decide the order of these):

Write Your Thesis Sentence: (*Hints: Be sure your thesis sentence reflects your paragraph topics above. Make your thesis sentence the last sentence of Paragraph #1. Study the thesis sentence in the Milkshake Essay Example.*)

What about the sentences before the thesis sentence (the introductory sentences)?

The first three or four sentences are introductory sentences leading to your thesis sentence, which ends the paragraph. *Generally these sentences should create interest in your idea or establish its importance so the reader will want to continue reading. As weird as it sounds, write these introductory sentences **AFTER** you have completed the rough draft of the essay's body paragraphs.*

2—Supporting Point #1

Topic Sentence:

List of Supporting Details:

(You may not need
all of these lines for
your list of details.)

(Be sure to decide the order
before beginning to write
the paragraph)

Tests successfully completed (please check after each): unity coherence completeness

3—Supporting Point #2

Topic Sentence:

List of Supporting Details:

(You may not need
all of these lines for
your list of details.)

(Be sure to decide the order
before beginning to write
the paragraph)

Tests successfully completed (please check after each): unity coherence completeness

4—Supporting Point #3

Topic Sentence:

List of Supporting Details:

(You may not need
all of these lines for
your list of details.)

(Be sure to decide the order
before beginning to write
the paragraph)

Tests successfully completed (please check after each): unity coherence completeness

5--Conclusion

Finally, assume that your reader now agrees with your thesis—accepts your position. Write a few closing sentences to recommend action and/or do a bit of cheerleading.

***Writing the introductory paragraph
to an essay about something you have read***

GENERAL ADVICE: Remember to do this in your opening paragraph:

- name the author
- name the work
- add a brief summary
- build a bridge to your thesis (a transition)
- state your thesis at the end of the paragraph

Example #1

Let's assume that we read the essay "Car-Buying Hints for Beginners" by Felecia Wadsworth. Wadsworth's essay presented several recommendations for first-time car buyers to avoid being stuck with a lemon or spending more than the car is worth. Let's assume that we, too, have been victims of poor car-buying decisions in the past. Because of our experience, we strongly endorse three of her suggestions and want to share them with our reader. Here is a sample thesis paragraph, ending with our thesis sentence

Sample opening paragraph—

In her essay "Car-Buying Hints for Beginners," Felecia Wadsworth presents several recommendations for first-time car buyers. Her hope is to help her readers avoid buying a problem car or paying far more than the car is worth. I, too, was a first-time car buyer once and strongly endorse three of Wadsworth's recommendations.

(The body paragraphs discussing the recommendations would follow.)

Example #2

Let's assume that we read an essay "Aliens Among Us" by Natalie Williams. The essay presented several "proofs" that beings from another planet were already on Earth. Let's assume that we found fault with three of her proofs:

Sample opening paragraph—

In her essay "Aliens Among Us," Natalie Williams argues that evidence exists to support the conclusion that aliens from other planets are living among us. She cites as evidence crop circles, UFO reports, and Kurlean auras. Though Williams' evidence seems based on scientific principles, it falls far short of rigorous scientific inquiry. Each of the examples Williams cites is inappropriately interpreted by her and, therefore, flawed.

(The body paragraphs discussing the flaws in her proofs would follow.)

EDITING: "Find-and Fix"

1. Seasoned writers do not use the words "you" and "your" without reason because doing so can inadvertently identify their readers with the situation discussed in the their essay.

For example, let's say I write the following for the college newspaper:

*"Hard economic times can drive **an instructor** to risk harassment by begging in front of the Lair. This is unfair because it is really the economy that's to blame. If **you** feel that **you** are being harassed, **you** should notify **your**"*

Noticed how the above switches from **third person** (**an instructor**) to **second person** (**you, your**)? In switching to **second person** (**you, your**), I have inadvertently called all of my readers "begging instructors." This error is called "unnecessary shift in person," and it is nagging how easy it is to do without noticing.

If you're a little rusty on what "person" means, please double-read the following:

Most languages including English have three "persons" or points of view, and we often identify these "persons" through pronouns.

In the *first person*, the speaker or "voice" is ***I, me, my, mine, we, us, our, ours***

The *second person* is the use of ***you, your, yours***

And the *third person* members are ***he, him, his, she, her, hers, it, its, they, them, their***

☞ **The rule to remember** is *unless the meaning of a sentence clearly requires a change, stay in the same "person" throughout the sentence and the paragraph.*

So let's fix it:

*"Hard economic times can drive **an instructor** to risk harassment by begging in front of the*

*Lair. This is unfair because it is really the economy that's to blame. An instructor who feels that **he or she** is being harassed should notify the supervisor. . . ."*

Now there is no "unnecessary shift in person" because all of the words (*instructor, he, and she*) are members of the "third person."

2. Let's take a look at another common problem. See if you can discover what's wrong now (Hint: check for agreement of singulars and plurals):

*"Hard economic times can drive **an instructor** to risk harassment by begging in front of the Lair. This is unfair because it is really the economy that's to blame. If an instructor feels like **they** are being harassed, **they** should convince **themselves** to notify **their** supervisor so that **they** can find a solution to **their** problem"*

That's right: The problem now is an error called "shift in number" because words and their replacements need to agree in "number"—in other words, singular words need to be replaced with singular pronouns and plural words need to be replaced with plural pronouns. So when we begin with a third person *singular* subject such as **an instructor** and replace it with *plurals* such as **they, their, themselves** and **them**, we commit this error because plurals (**they, their, themselves, and them**) do not *agree in number*, and therefore, cannot replace or stand in for singular words such as **instructor**.

I've tossed and turned many sleepless nights trying to figure out why writers do this, and all I've come up with is that they probably switch from singular to plural to avoid the "he or she" or "him or her" mess. For an example of this mess, please see the following which actually agrees in person and number:

*"Hard economic times can drive an instructor to risk harassment by begging in front of the Lair. This is unfair because it is really the economy that's to blame. If an instructor feels like **he or she** is being harassed, **he or she** should convince **himself or herself** to notify **his or her** supervisor so that **he or she** can find a solution to **his or her** problem"*

Clumsy and awkward, is it not? So here's what to do:

Whenever possible, begin with a third person plural subject so that you can use **they, their, themselves, and them** as replacements. In other words, **try to avoid beginning sentences and paragraphs with singular words such as an instructor, a student, a parent;** instead, begin with their plural counterparts-- **instructors, students, parents**. This change solves the problem, as in

*"Hard economic times can drive instructors to risk harassment by begging in front of the Lair. This is unfair because it is really the economy that's to blame. If instructors feel like they are being harassed, they should convince **themselves** to notify their supervisor so that **they** can find a solution to **their** problem"*

Now not only are the words all in the same *person* but also the same *number*.

3. One last problem to solve—the dreaded *sweeping generalization*.

Here's what it looks like:

“It is unfortunate that instructors hate criticism. If they would just listen to their colleagues and their students, they would not only become better instructors but”

No problem with person or number here; now we have a sloppy thinking problem affectionately known as a *sweeping generalization*. Here's why: by not qualifying the word *instructors*, the writer is claiming that **all** instructors hate criticism. You might argue that the writer really didn't mean “all” instructors; nevertheless a good critical reader assumes that if the writer wrote “all,” the writer meant “all”; and if there exists even one instructor who doesn't hate criticism, this claim is untrue.

Here's how to fix it: unless you **absolutely mean it**, avoid using unqualified plurals such as *instructors*, *students*, *parents*. To go along with this, also avoid *zero* and *one-hundred-percent* words such as *all*, *none*, *everyone*, *no one*, *always*, *never*. Remember, unqualified plurals mean **everyone** in the group.

The good news is that we can easily fix a *sweeping generalization* by qualifying the plural with mid-range words such as *many*, *some*, *most*, *few*, *often*, *seldom*. Let's apply this:

“It is unfortunate that *many* (or *some* or *a few*) **instructors** hate criticism. If these instructors would just listen to their colleagues and their students, they would not only become better instructors but”

Here's what to do now:

Take the rough draft of your essays--and all of your writing from now on--through a special revision where you . . .

Find and fix *unnecessary shifts in person*, particularly sentences that switch to **you**;

Find and fix sentences that begin with singular words and, instead, begin them with plurals so that you can avoid the “he or she,” “him or her” mess; and

Find and replace *zero* and *one-hundred-percent* words such as *all*, *none*, and *everyone* with mid-range qualifiers *such as many* and *some*.

Name: _____

ESSAY GRADING SHEET

Essay # _____

STRUCTURE	YES	NO
Does the essay conform to the assignment?		
Does the essay attempt to make a point?		
Is the thesis sentence easy to locate? (Hopefully, it's the final sentence of paragraph #1.)		
Is the thesis sentence written properly? (announcement?)		
Does each body paragraph contain a clear topic sentence?		
Are the body paragraphs logically related and sequenced?		
Are there structural problems with any of the body paragraphs? Unity? (details that don't belong) Coherence? (details out of order) Faulty logic? (fallacies and sophistries) Are there transitions and are they effective?		

CONTENT	YES	NO
Do the body paragraphs fully develop the essay's thesis? (overall completeness)		
Is each body paragraph sufficiently developed? (paragraph completeness) (Does each body paragraph provide adequate quality and quantity of details?) If not, which ones need more attention?		
Is the thought in the essay easy to follow? (Does the essay use effective transitions to move from point to point?)		
Is the introductory paragraph engaging? Would it make a reader want to read on?		
Does the final paragraph contain a comfortable and appropriate conclusion?		

DELIVERY	YES	NO
Does the essay reflect thorough revision and editing?		
Does the essay conform to MLA/APA guidelines for margins, line-spacing, citations, etc?		
As the reader, do you feel comfortable in the essay writer's care?		
<p>Are there distracting mechanical errors?</p> <p>If so, which?</p> <p>Sentence fragments?</p> <p>Comma splices?</p> <p>Run-on sentences?</p> <p>Words commonly confused (Homonyms) errors?</p> <p>Subject-verb agreement errors? Singular/plural errors?</p> <p>Pronoun confusion (unclear antecedent?)</p> <p>Shift in person ("it" or "they" to "you")</p> <p>Diction (Wording) problems?</p> <p>Wordiness?</p> <p>Clichés?</p> <p>Punctuation?</p> <p>Spelling?</p> <p>Other?</p>		
If the essay contains other people's property—their words, ideas, illustrations, and the like), are documentation (MLA or APA) guidelines correctly followed?		
If applicable, does the essay have a Works Cited (MLA) or References (APA) page(s)?		

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Julie's Homonyms Help

Homonyms: Have the same sound but different meaning & spelling.

all ready - completely prepared

(We were all ready to start the play, but the audience was still being seated.)

already - previously; before

(I had already called the police.)

*IF "READY" SOUNDS GOOD USE "ALL READY."

brake - stop; the stopping device in a vehicle

("I hit the brakes too hard and skidded to the side of the road.")

break - come apart

("I am going to break up with Bill if he keeps seeing other women," said Rita.)

coarse - rough, texture or also could describe a "coarse joke"

(I used coarse sandpaper to start my wood project.)

course- part of a meal; a school subject; direction; "of course"

(Of course you can use the car.)

complement--to complete

("The color of her sweater really complemented her pants.")

compliment—to praise

("The mother complimented her child on his good behavior.")

hear - perceive with the ear (remove the h for ear)

(The salespeople act as though they don't see or hear me.)

here - in this place

(I have been standing here for fifteen minutes.)

hole - an empty spot

(I dug a hole in the back yard.)

whole - entire

(I can't believe I ate the whole pizza.)

its - belonging to it

(The car blew its transmission. *The transmission belongs to it, the car*)

it's - shortened form of it is or it has

(It's *(it has)* been raining all week and it's *(it is)* raining now.)

knew - past form of know (kn=knowledge)

(I knew there was some reason the place looked better.)

new - not old

(I had new wallpaper put up yesterday.)

know - to understand

(I don't know what his dog's name is.)

no - a negative

(There is no one thing the people have in common.)

pair - set of two

(What a great pair of shoes.)

pear - fruit

(The pear was ripe and delicious.)

passed - went by; succeeded in; handed to; direction

(Someone passed him a wine bottle.)

past - time before the present; beyond

(We worked past closing time." "I drove past Safeway.")

peace - calm

(Nations often risk world peace by fighting over a piece of land.)

piece - part

(Can I have a piece of pie?)

plain - simple; flat area

(The plain dress was a pretty color. The Great Plains stretch on for miles.)

plane – aircraft

(The plane will depart from the airport in ten minutes.)

principal – the main or most important; a person in charge of a school

(The principal reason I am attending S.C.C. is to transfer to a four-year school. The principal of the school met with the parents.)

principle - law, standard, or rule

(What principles do you live by?)

**the e in principle is also in rule - the meaning of principle.*

* Use "Most Important" as a replacement word, if it works use PRINCIPAL

right - correct; opposite of left

(She got the answer right on the quiz.)

write - what you might do in English

(Please write a letter to your mother.)

than - used in comparisons

(Jane has a prettier dress than Lynn has.)

then - at that time; refers to time

(The bell rang and then the kids raced for the door.)

their - belonging to them; possession

(These are their books.)

there - at that place; neutral word used with verbs like is, are, was, were, have, and had.

(There were three people sitting there yesterday.)

they're - shortened form of they are

(They're really confused by this math problem.)

Two people own that van over there (*at that place*). They're (*they are*) going to move out of their apartment (*the apartment belongs to them*) and into the van in order to save money.

threw - past form of throw

through - from one side to the other; finished, action of throwing

(The fans threw so much litter onto the field that the teams could not go through with the game.)

to - verb part, as in *to* smile; toward, as in "I'm going to heaven."

too - overly, intensify, to emphasize "The pizza was too hot." "The coffee was too cold.

too - replacement for "also." "I want to go, too (also)."

two - number 2

Tony drove to the park to be alone with Lola. (*The first "to" means towards; the second "to" is a verb part that goes with be.*)

Tony's shirt is too tight; his pants are tight, too. (*The first too means overly, the second too means also.*)

You need two hands to handle a Whopper.

* Pronounce **TO** as "Tuh"-- if it works us **TO**; if not use **TOO**.

wear - to have on

where - in what place; location

Fred wanted to wear his light pants because it was so hot, but he didn't know where he had put them.

weather - atmospheric conditions

whether - if it happens that; in case; if

Some people go on vacations whether or not the weather is good.

whose - belonging to whom

who's - shortened form of who is and who has

Who's the instructor whose students are complaining?

your - belonging to you

you're - shortened form of you are

You're (meaning, "you are") not going to the fair unless your brother (*the brother belonging to you*) goes with you.

a - Generally you should use **a** before words starting with a consonant sound (a Coke, a brain, a cheat, a television, a gambler)

an - Generally you should use **an** before words starting with a vowel or vowel sound.

(a, e, i, o, u) (an ache, an experiment, an elephant, an idiot, an ox, an hour, an historical era, an honor, an honor, an honorable decision)

If the beginning "U" makes a sound like in the "U" in University, Union, or Unique use the "A" before the word.

If the beginning "U" makes a sound like the "U" sound in umbrella and ugly use "AN" before the word.

accept - receive; agree to

except - exclude; but *Think EXIT (OUT); to exclude

"I will accept your loan," said the bartender, "except I'm not ready to pay 25 percent interest."

advice - noun meaning "an opinion"

advise - verb meaning, "to counsel, to give advice"

I advise you to take the advice of your friends and stop working so hard.

*Pronounce out loud—"advise has a "Z" sound in it.

affect - verb meaning "to influence"

effect - verb meaning to "to bring about something"; or a noun meaning "results" or "outcome(s)"

The full effects of marijuana and alcohol on the body are only partly known; however, both drugs clearly affect the brain in various ways.

*IF "ED" ENDING IS NEEDED USE AFFECTED.

*IF "IVE" ENDING IS NEEDED USE EFFECT(IVE)

*Use EFFECT in the phrase "into effect"

Use RESULT or OUTCOME as replacement word for EFFECT.

among - implies three or more

between - implies only two

We had to choose from among 125 shades of paint but between only 2 fabrics.

beside - along the side of; position

I was lucky I wasn't standing beside the car when it was hit.

besides - in addition to

Besides being unattractive, these uniforms are impractical.

desert - stretch of dry land; to abandon one's post or duty

dessert - last part of a meal.

Sweltering in the desert, I was tormented by the thought of an icy dessert.

* Two SS's for FOOD.

fewer - used with things that can be counted (remember fingers for things you can count.)

There were fewer than seven people in all my classes today.

less - refers to amounts, value, or degree, (measure = less)

I seem to feel less tired when I exercise.

loose - not fastened; not tight-fitting

lose - misplace; fail to win

Phil's belt is so loose that he always looks ready to lose his pants.

quiet - peaceful

quite - entirely; really; rather; not quite done

After a busy day, the children are quiet, and their parents are quite tired.

though - despite the fact that

thought - past form of think.

Even though she worked, she thought she would have time to go to school.

Practice Time ↓ Write a few sentences using any of the above pairs, particularly the ones that are difficult for you. In each case, refer to the explanation to check that you've made the correct choice.

Extra Help on *Affect/Effect* and *Principle/Principal*

Confused about the difference between *Affect* and *Effect*?

First, read the sentence with either the word “result” or “outcome” in the *affect/effect* location. If either “result” or “outcome” reads well and sounds correct, use *effect*. If “result” or “outcome” does not make sense in that location, use *affect*.

☛ If “**result**” or “**outcome**” would fit in that location, use **EFFECT**.

Try it here in the sample sentences that follow:

I am not sure what the (affect, effect) will be.

Test with “result” or “outcome” and you get . . .

*I am not sure what the (result) will be or I am not sure what the (outcome) will be. At least one of these substitute words makes a sensible sentence, right? So choose *effect*.*

*I am not sure what the **effect** will be.*

Now try this sentence:

His attitude will (affect, effect) the whole group. Test with “result” or “outcome” and you get . . .

His attitude will (result) the whole group or His attitude will (outcome) the whole group.

Neither “result” or “outcome” works well, so choose *affect*.

*His attitude will **affect** the whole group.*

Here is more help:

☛ If the effect/affect will **end in “-ed,”** use **affected**.

☛ If the effect/affect will **end in “-ive,”** use **effective**.

(Grammar explanation: Remember that “**affect(ed)**” is most often a **verb**—it is the action of the subject—as in “The weather *affected* my mood.” However, “**effect**” is most often a **noun** and has “the” or “an” somewhere in front of it. “My words had **a** wonderful **effect** on Bruce” or “I wonder what will be **the effect** on us?”)

Confused about the difference between *principle* and *principal*?

- ☛ Use **principle** if you mean **rule, law, concept**.

Try these sentences:

*I am taking **Principles** of Economics.* (“Concepts” of Economics makes sense).

Or

That decision violates my *principles* (my “rules” makes sense).

- ☛ Use **principal** if you mean **“main” or “most important.”**

Test with this one first. Does “most important” or “main” read well in the sentence location?

Try this practice sentence:

The (principle, principal) reason I am attending SCC is to better myself.

Now use the substitute test words:

The (most important) reason I am attending SCC is to better myself

Or

The (main) reason I am attending SCC is to better myself.

Either substitute word makes sense, so use *principal*.

- ☛ Use **principal** if you mean **the head of a school**.

I talked with the principal of the school.

Confused about the difference between *to* and *too*?

- ☛ Use “too” when you mean “very” or “so” something (when you can replace the location with the word “very” or “so” and it makes sense).

- ☛ Use “too” rather than “to” when you mean “also.”

I want to go, too (also)

We were (to/too) tired.

How tired? We were *very* tired or *so* tired, so it's **too** tired to go to school.

We were (to/too) hungry.

How hungry? I was *very* hungry or *so* hungry, so it's **too** hungry.

This is (to/too much) for me to handle.

How much? *Very* much or *so* much, so it is **too** much for me to handle.

Practice Time ↓ Write a few sentences using *affect/effect*, *principle/principal*, and *to/too* properly. In each case, refer to the information you just read to verify that you've chosen the correct word. After some practice, you'll have the rules in mind and making the correct choices will become more automatic.

Words Commonly Confused Practice

Directions: Please use each of the following words properly in a sentence.

Effect

Affect

Principal

Principle

To

Too

They're

Their

There

Its

It's

Than

Then

The Truth about Prepositions

- A preposition is seldom alone in a sentence; it is most often followed by an object(s). From the preposition to the object is the **prepositional phrase**. Try it: I am going to the store (*to* is the preposition and *store* is its object); Let's meet before my class (*before* is the preposition and *class* is its object); This secret is between you and me (*between* is the preposition and *you* and *me* are its objects).

Commonly Used Prepositions

about	at	by	like	through
above	before	during	near	throughout
across	behind	except	of	to
after	below	for	off	toward
against	beneath	from	on	under
among	beside	in	onto	until
around	between	inside	over	with
as	beyond	into	since	without

- Practice Time** ↓ Create a few prepositional phrases to get the feel of the preposition followed by its object. Then read each aloud a few times and listen for the rhythm that prepositional phrases share.

Directions: Please circle or underline the prepositional phrases in the sentences below. To get credit the whole phrase but only the phrase must be circled. Some sentences may not have prepositional phrases.

1. Under my pillow I found a dollar left by the tooth fairy.
2. One of the stop signs by my house was stolen.
3. During the snowstorm I sat in my house by the fire.
5. The leaves of the beautiful tree turned bright red under the autumn sun.
6. I left my car on the other side of the hill by the store.
7. I love hearing about great fishing spots.
8. Between you and me, I think my English teacher came from the asylum.
9. Over the bushes and through the woods we walked to Grandma's house.
10. One of the students left her book in the classroom.

Directions: Please circle or underline the prepositional phrases in the sentences below. Then, using what remains, choose the proper verb.

1. The packages in the shopping bag (was, were) left on the counter.
2. My writing class of twenty students (is, are) making good progress.
3. The serious look in my teacher's eyes (is, are) a good indication of his mood.
4. My friend's favorite dinner of potatoes, gravy, and biscuits (is, are) now being offered at Denny's.
5. The onions in that spaghetti sauce (makes, make) me see double.
6. The leaves of the tree (falls, fall) so silently.
7. One of the many students (is, are) angry about the grading system.
8. The book with several torn pages (was, were) not usable anymore.
9. The tires of the suspicious car (was, were) misplaced.
10. The owner of several important businesses (was, were) planning a sale.

Irregular English Verb Forms

“I _____ now.”

“I _____ yesterday.”

“I have _____ already.”

awake	awoke	awoken
be	was, were	been
beat	beat	beat
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
bite	bit	bitten
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
burn	burned/burnt	burned/burnt
burst	burst	burst
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
cut	cut	cut
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
drive	drove	driven
drink	drank	drunk
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
feel	felt	felt
fight	fought	fought
forget	forgot	forgotten
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	gotten
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown

hear	heard	heard
hide	hid	hidden
hit	hit	hit
hold	held	held
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
kneel	knelt	knelt
know	knew	know
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
leave	left	left
lie	lay	lain
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
pay	paid	paid
read	read	read
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
sell	sold	sold
shake	shook	shaken
sing	sang	sung
sit	sat	sat
sleep	slept	slept
smite	smote	smitten
sow	sowed	sowed/sown
speak	spoke	spoken
spend	spent	spent
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
stick	stuck	stuck

sweep	swept	swept
swim	swam	swum
swing	swung	swung
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
understand	understood	understood
wear	wore	worn
write	wrote	written

Maintaining Subject-Verb Agreement

Prepositions and prepositional phrases

A *preposition* is seldom alone in a sentence—it is most often followed by an object. From the preposition to its object is called a *prepositional phrase*. This is important to subject-verb agreement because words in prepositional phrases can seldom be considered subjects, so they most often cannot choose the verb form (singular and plural).

The box below contains common prepositions. It's a good idea to memorize these.

Commonly Used Prepositions

about	at	by	like	through
above	before	during	near	throughout
across	behind	except	of	to
after	below	for	off	toward
against	beneath	from	on	under
among	beside	in	onto	until
around	between	inside	over	with
as	beyond	into	since	without

Here are examples of prepositional phrases:

The cars *on the freeway* are heading *into the tunnel*.

In the room the women come and go.

I found the box *below the stairs*.

Again, please remember that, with few exceptions, no word in a prepositional phrase can ever choose which verb form (singular or plural) to use.

Pretend that the italicized prepositional phrases in the sentences below are invisible. With this in mind, choose the correct verb.

The flakes *in the cereal* (is, **are**) soggy.

The growth *of the trees* (**is**, are) exceptional.

The people *in the room by the door* (is, **are**) getting anxious.

Since no word in the prepositional phrases above can choose which verb form

(singular or plural) to use, the subjects that can choose the verb are flakes, growth, and people.

So when checking your subject-verb agreement, it's best to cross out the prepositional phrases, make the verb choice without them, and then place them back into the sentence.

Words that end in –one, -body, or -thing

--one, --body, and –thing subjects are ALWAYS singular. Thus

No one	Nobody	Nothing
Someone	Somebody	Something
Anyone	Anybody	Anything
Everyone	Everybody	Everything

are ALWAYS singular and require an *s* verb in the present tense.

These words are also considered singular when used alone:

Neither **Either** **Every** **Each**

- Neither of the girls (**is**, are) the winner.
- Either of the contestants (**is**, are) qualified.
- Every student (**was**, were) in attendance.
- Each teacher (**has**, have) a special way of relating.

A few exceptions to the prepositional phrase rule:

Some, *Any*, *All*, *None*, and *Most* do not ignore their prepositional phrases. In fact, the words in the prepositional phrases following them determine whether we consider them singular or plural.

- None of the pie **is** missing. (singular)
- None of the people **are** here. (plural)
- All of the sugar **is** in the cupboard. (singular)

All of the pets **are** housebroken. (plural)

There and Here

There and *Here* can NEVER be subjects so they cannot choose the verbs that follow them. In sentences beginning with *There* and *Here* look after the verbs that follow them for the subjects.

There (is, are) an elephant in the room.

There (is, are) elephants in the room.

Here (is, are) your cookie

Here (is, are) your cookies

The rule still applies even when contracting *there* or *here* with the “being” verbs (*is, are, was, were*):

(**There’s** There’re) an elephant in the room.

(There’s **There’re**) four elephants in the room

(**Here’s**, Here’re) your cookie.

(Here’s, **Here’re**) your cookies.

Either and Neither

Either and *Neither* are considered singular no matter how goofy it sounds.

So it’s

Either of the boys (**is**, are) a good choice.

Neither of the girls (**was**, were) the winner.

Either ___ or and Neither ___ nor

Either ___ *or* and *Neither* ___ *nor* sentences use *the subject closest to the verb* to choose the verb.

Double Subjects

Watch for double subjects. If the subject contains the word “and,” it is usually plural

The boys and Jan (is, **are**) coming to the movie. (plural because of the “and”)

Dan and Bill (was, **were**) in attendance. (plural because of the “and”)

Common Expressions that we consider invisible

Phrases beginning with the prepositions *as well as*, *in addition to*, *accompanied by*, *together with*, and *along with* do NOT make a singular subject plural.

So it's

Bob, as well as most of the choir, (**is**, are) singing off-key.

Naomi, together with Ruth and Ester, (**is**, are) here for the lecture.

Godzilla, along with Mothdra, (**has**, have) terrorized Japan for years.

Subject-Verb Agreement Practice Exercises

-ONE, -BODY,-THING-, NEITHER, EITHER, EVERY, EACH

1. Almost everybody (has / have) some difficulty with writing.
2. Neither of you (jump / jumps) to conclusions.
3. Neither of us (has / have) to pay the fine.
4. Nobody (believe / believes) your alibi.
5. Neither of them (dance / dances) to disco music.
6. Each (serve / serves) a different purpose.
7. Neither of the boys (has / have) to shave.
8. Each of you (has, have) an equal chance to make good grades.
9. One of my greatest worries in college (was, were) that I would study hard and still flunk important tests.
10. Everybody who signed up for the ski trip (was, were) taking lessons.
11. Either answer (is, are) acceptable.
12. Every one of those books (is, are) fiction.
13. Every person in the theater (was, were) enjoying the film.
14. Nobody (know, knows) the trouble I've seen.
15. Some of our luggage (was, were) lost.

16. None of his advice (make, makes) sense.
17. One of my sisters (is, are) going on a trip to France.

THERE and HERE

18. There (was / were) only two choices on the menu.
19. There (is, are) both men and women at the meeting.
20. (There's, There're) a lot of people attending today.
21. There (was, were) fifteen candies in that bag. Now there (is, are) only one left!
22. Here (is, are) the documents you requested.

NEITHER... NOR, EITHER... OR

23. Neither the chipmunk nor the squirrels (is / are) bothering us.
24. Either the workers or the manager (is, are) coming to the conference.
25. Either my mother or my father (is, are) coming to the meeting.
26. Either my shoes or your coat (is, are) always on the floor.
27. Either the photographer or her companions (was, were) the first to see the gorilla.
28. Not only the students, but also the teacher (has, have) been unhappy.
29. Both of us (is / are) voting in the next election.

30. Milo, Phoebe, and I (was / were) offering our help.

31. Some say the Indians (has / have) been treated unfairly.

32. He (is / are) my boss and friend.

33. Sunbathing (is / are) my favorite form of exercise.

COMMON EXPRESSIONS THAT WE CONSIDER INVISIBLE

34. The hammer, as well as the saw, (make / makes) work easier.

35. My son, along with two friends, (is, are) coming for the weekend.

36. Rudy, as well as his cat, (like / likes) milk.

37. The Prime Minister, together with his wife, (greet, greets) the press cordially.

38. The movie, along with all the previews, (take, takes) about two hours to watch.

39. The players, as well as the captain, (want, wants) to win.

40. All of the CDs, even the scratched one, (is, are) in this case.

41. Jacques (was / were) working for his uncle last year.

42. Our team (play / plays) hard every night.

DOUBLE SUBJECTS ("and")

43. Jill's natural ability and her desire to help others (has, have) led to a career in the ministry.

44. The twins and their parents (travel / travels) together.

45. America and China (is / are) the most powerful nations.
46. “Safe” and “out” (is / are) two calls in baseball.
47. A notebook and a pen (is, are) lying on the desk in the library.
48. A ship and a plane (has, have) recently disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle.
49. The lions and the photographer (was, were) face to face.
50. During the trip macaroni and cheese (was, were) the favorite meal for the two drivers.
51. The trunk of the elephant and the belly of the hippo (make, makes) me laugh.

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES BETWEEN THE SUBJECT AND VERB

52. The students in my class (has, have) very poor work habits.
53. Sitting on the sofa (was, were) two students from Thailand.
54. Knowledge gained after long study (disappear, disappears) rapidly from our minds.
55. One out of every three sunsets (was, were) covered with clouds.
56. The teeth in a crocodile’s mouth (is, are) sharp.
57. The leaders of the expedition (was, were) looking for a campsite.
58. A group of students (was, were) blocking the road.
59. The samples on the tray in the lab (need, needs) testing.
60. The board of trustees (meet, meets) in Denver on the first Tuesday of each month.
61. The board of trustees (has, have) many important jobs in their own towns.
62. The man with all the birds (live, lives) on my street.

Pronoun Agreement

Pronoun Agreement—a **pronoun** must agree with its **antecedent** in **gender** (male/female/neuter) and **number** (singular/plural).

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS (Always Singular)

Anyone	Someone	Everyone	No one	Each
Anything	Something	Everything	Nothing	Either
Anybody	Somebody	Everybody	Nobody	Neither

Pronoun Reference—it must be clear to what word a pronoun refers—every pronoun must have a clear antecedent.

***SUBJECT* Pronouns**

I
She
He
We
They
Who
Whoever

***OBJECT* Pronouns**

Me
Her
Him
Us
Them
Whom
Whomever

Note: “It” and “You” belong to both groups

USE SUBJECT PRONOUNS in the following cases:

- ✓ In compound subjects (“Ted and *I* (rather than *me*) are going to attend.”)
- ✓ Before and **AFTER** the forms of the verb TO BE (*am, is, are, was, were, has been, have been*).
- ✓ **After the words *than* and *as***

USE OBJECT PRONOUNS in the following cases:

- ✓ As objects of verbs
- ✓ After prepositions (object of the preposition)
(I gave the book to Ted and *him* (rather than *he*)

This is between you and *me* (*me* rather than *I* because *between* is a preposition and *you* and *me* are its objects)

Commonly Used Prepositions

about	at	by	like	through
above	before	during	near	throughout
across	behind	except	of	to
after	below	for	off	toward
against	beneath	from	on	under
among	beside	in	onto	until
around	between	inside	over	with
as	beyond	into	since	without

Practice with the words *than* and *as*

Bob likes Sally better than me.

Bob likes Sally better than I.

Ruth is taller than (I, me).

No one can run as fast as (he, him).

Oh, yeah, well, at least I'm smarter than (they, them)!

You know better than (they, them) who is responsible.

Erin had a better score than (he, him).

You know as well as (I, me) that Jim is very strange.

Pronoun Agreement Exercises

SUBJECT Pronouns

I
She
He
We
They
Who
Whoever

OBJECT Pronouns

Me
Her
Him
Us
Them
Whom
Whomever

Note: “It” and “You” belong to both groups

Directions: Please circle or underline the correct answer

Set #1

1. Alex and (he, him) are going to the game.
2. The instructor expected (us, we) students to study.
3. Bob came with Lynn and (he, him).
4. This is strictly between you and (I, me).
5. We gave Clara and (he, him) a big-screen TV for Christmas.
6. (He, Him) and (I, Me) are going skiing this weekend.
7. My mom said goodbye to my brother and (I, me).
8. (We, Us) students had seldom thought of studying.
9. The host asked Randy and (she, her) to dance.
10. Alex and (she, her) were the winners.
11. She asked Beth and (I, me) to pay five dollars.
12. The decision is between you and (she, her).
13. The coach left it to Harry and (I, me) to arrange the party.
14. The women expect (we, us) men to do the cooking.

15. The noise was blamed on Dennis and (I, me).
16. The bus pulled away, leaving Dan and (they, them) standing on the corner.
17. I gave the tickets to (she, her) and (they, them) yesterday.
18. The elephants trampled Ralph and (they, them).
19. It was a good thing that (we, us) students had studied.
20. This supper is for Sue, Pat, and (they, them).

Set #2

1. We gave Clara and (he, him) several Christmas presents.
2. My mom waved good-bye to my brother and (I, me).
3. This message is for Sue, Pat, and (she, her).
4. The elephant stepped on Ralph and (he, him).
5. I gave the tickets to (she, her) yesterday.
6. The bus pulled off, leaving Dan and (I, me) standing on the corner.
7. The priest prayed over (we, us) convicts.
8. The women expected (we, us) to do the cooking.
9. She asked Bob and (he, him) to pay five dollars.
10. (We, Us) students told Jim to quit with the jokes.
11. (He, Him) and (I, me) would love to take this class again.
12. Between you and (I, me), I think he is crazy.
13. The man with the mysterious story was (he, him).
14. It was (he, him) who ate the cereal.
15. Ralph is faster than (I, me) ____, but I am taller than (he, him)_____.

16. Sell this car to (whoever, whomever) has the most money.
17. Give this to the one (who, whom) will do the best job.
18. To (who, whom) should I give the tickets?
19. I want you to ask (whoever, whomever) you want.
20. (Who, Whom) should I call?

Set #3

Directions: Please circle or underline the correct answer

1. Phil is smarter than (I, me), but I am stronger than (he, him) is.
2. It was (she, her) who screamed.
3. The man in the mask was (he, him).
4. Between you and (I, me), I think this instructor is strange.
5. (We, Us) are faster than (they, them), so (we, us) should win the race.
6. I am just as deserving as (he, him).
7. Sue is the student (who, whom) passed the test twice.
8. I wonder (who, whom) will do the best job?
9. I don't know (who, whom) will build the road.
10. I am not sure (who, whom) I should choose?
11. (Who, Whom) should I invite to the party?
12. Please select (whoever, whomever) will do the best job.
13. Give the rest to (whoever, whomever) wants it.
14. You may give this award to (whoever, whomever) you want.
15. (Whoever, Whomever) borrowed the book should return it.

Pronoun Agreement—linking verbs, understood verbs, who/whom/whoever/whomever

1. The man with the mysterious story was (he, him).
2. It was (he, him) who ate the cereal.
3. Ralph is faster than (I, me) ____, but I am taller than (he, him)____.
4. Sell this car to (whoever, whomever) has the most money.
5. Give this to the one (who, whom) will do the best job.
6. To (who, whom) should I give the tickets?
7. I want you to ask (whoever, whomever) you want.
8. (Who, Whom) should I call?
9. Phil is smarter than (I, me), but I am stronger than (he, him) is.
10. It was (she, her) who screamed.
11. The man in the mask was (he, him).
12. (We, Us) are faster than (they, them), so (we, us) should win the race.
13. I am just as deserving as (he, him).
14. Sue is the student (who, whom) passed the test twice.
15. I wonder (who, whom) will do the best job?
16. I don't know (who, whom) will build the road.
17. I am not sure (who, whom) I should choose?
18. (Who, Whom) should I invite to the party?
19. Please select (whoever, whomever) will do the best job.
20. Give the rest to (whoever, whomever) wants it.
21. You may give this award to (whoever, whomever) you want.
22. (Whoever, Whomever) borrowed the book should return it.

23. Bob likes Sally better than me.
24. Bob likes Sally better than I.
25. Ruth is taller than (I, me).
26. No one can run as fast as (he, him).
27. Oh, yeah, well, at least I'm smarter than (they, them)!
28. You know better than (they, them) who is responsible.
29. Erin had a better score than (he, him).
30. You know as well as (I, me) that Jim is very strange.

COMMAS MADE EASY

The COMMA is the most used and misused punctuation mark in English, and all sorts of odd rules have been created by writers to survive. One you may have heard is, “Use a comma where you would pause or take a breath.” Unfortunately, this one will let you down. Here’s an example:

Raoul, dripping with emotion, says to Estelle:

Oh, Estelle, I, love, you, so, much, that, my, socks, get, tight, on, my, ankles.

Raoul might pause and breathe deeply after each word, but, in fact, only the commas after *Oh* and *Estelle* are needed.

Another problem with using commas is that some of the present rules are "soft": in other words, it's up to you, the writer, whether or not to use a comma or not. Here's an example:

Rule: *Use a comma after a long introduction:*

After the Halloween dance, Estelle walked Raoul home.

OR

After the Halloween dance Estelle walked Raoul home.

Either version is correct since “long introduction” has never been defined. Is "long" three words, four, five, six or more? No one will tell.

The best general rule is this:

Try your best to learn a few important rules, and *when in doubt, leave the comma out.*

That's right; writers more often use too many commas than too few.

THE FEW IMPORTANT RULES

1.) When you join two independent clauses (two complete sentences) with a **fanboys** (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*), put a comma before the **fanboys**.

EXAMPLE: *Bob cried when Sue left him, but he realized later he was better off without her.*

1A.) You don't need a comma if the independent clauses are joined by *because, when, if, until, or any other dependent word*. Don't confuse these words with *fanboys*.

Fanboys connect; these other words create dependence. .

EXAMPLE: *Sue left Bob after their date because she realized he was too young.*

- 2.) Use a comma to mark where the main clause begins after a long introductory word group.

EXAMPLE: *When Greg fell into the vat of fertilizer, he realized he had taken a wrong turn.*

(The main clause is *he realized he had taken a wrong turn*. *When Greg fell into the vat of fertilizer* looks important, but it just tells when the main action occurred.)

- 3.) Use a comma between items in a series to show their equality.

EXAMPLES

Wilma bought eggs for the party, milk for her cat, cookie dough for her children, and a bone for her dog.

We invited Ted, Larry, Erica, and Danny.

- 4.) Use a comma between coordinate adjectives not joined by *and*.

Don't panic--coordinate adjectives are easy to understand. An adjective usually describes a noun or name word and coordinate means the describing words are equal so you can switch their positions and the sentence still sounds O.K.

EXAMPLE: *Debbie was an independent, confident, talented woman.*

Note I can also write

Debbie was a confident, independent, talented woman.

OR

Debbie was a talented, confident, independent woman.

No matter the order, the sentence still sounds O.K., so I use commas.

- 5.) Use a comma on both sides of a common word or word group that interrupts the sentence.

EXAMPLES: *The unicorn, however, is a very strange animal.*

Jim, it seems to me, is a little off.

Your car, by the way, is in the driveway.

Note that a common word or word group (*however, it seems to me, by the way*) can fit into most any sentence. That's how to test it to see if it gets commas.

Another way to remember to put a comma on both sides of a common word or word group is to imagine the sentence is held together by a strong spring. When you pry the sentence apart to insert the common word or word group, a comma on both sides keeps the spring from snapping the sentence together and crushing what you've inserted.

6.) Use commas to set off non-restrictive word groups, but don't use commas to set off restrictive word groups. Sounds confusing? It isn't--read on.

A non-restrictive word group contains extra information about something or someone already identified. A restrictive word group contains essential information needed to identify something or someone.

EXAMPLE:

NON-restrictive: *My friend Vinny, who is wearing the tuxedo, is getting married today.*

Note that we do not need the underlined word group to identify (or restrict) who is getting married today since we are told at the beginning of the sentence that it is Vinny. Therefore, the underlined information is extra or non-restrictive information.

RESTRICTIVE:

The man who is wearing the tuxedo is getting married today.

Note that we do need the underlined word group to identify which man is getting married. Therefore, it's essential or restrictive. In other words, the reader needs the information to restrict all possible men to one--the one wearing the green coat.

So in this sense, the commas surround extra, less important information. In the old days this kind of information was called parenthetical because a writer typically would put it inside of parentheses. Today we use commas for this.

7.) Appositives--weird word, huh? But the meaning is simple: An appositive is a second name for something. If it's nonrestrictive, use commas; if it's restrictive, don't.

Try these:

EXAMPLE: *Tom Gribble's first class, 8:30 Intro to Literature, meets in the library.*

See why it's non-restrictive? Do I need it to identify which of Tom's classes I'm writing about?

But how about this:

EXAMPLE: *U2's song Vertigo is one of the best they've written.*

See why the appositive *Vertigo* is restrictive? Take it out of the sentence and see what happens.

8.) Nouns in Direct Address

Check this one out. If we're talking to or addressing someone in a sentence, their name is (you guessed it!) a noun in direct address:

EXAMPLES:

We'd like to thank you, Jim, for teaching us commas.

Note that we're talking to Jim (addressing him).

But if we write, "We'd like to thank Jim for teaching us commas," no commas are needed because we're now talking about Jim, not to him.

If we forget the commas, sometimes misunderstandings arise:

Wrong: *I said I would leave after I eat Bob.* (Cannibals may find this a correct sentence.)

Better: *I said I would leave after I eat, Bob.*

9.) Direct Quotations

When you lead into a direct quotation with an expression such as *Ralph said* or *Johnson replied*, use a comma:

EXAMPLES

Ralph said, *You really did eat Bob!*

Johnson replied, *Why, yes, I'm cannibal and he was quite tasty.*

10.) Dates, Addresses, Titles, Numbers

EXAMPLES:

My birthday was June 12, 1985, according to my mother.

Zack Smith was born in Spokane, Washington, in 1970.

See the man at 508 East Courtland, Mead, Washington 99207.

→ If the title follows the person's name, use commas. If the title comes before the person's name, don't.

EXAMPLES:

Bob Marcus, my new plumber, smokes pipes.

My new plumber Bob Marcus smokes pipes.

→ Punctuate numbers this way:

EXAMPLES:

3,100 or 3100

23,500

101,232

1,334,444

32,000,009,998

11.) Use commas to prevent confusion:

After washing the women ate lunch. (Needs a comma after washing)

When he entered the door blew shut. (Needs a comma after entered)

What we feared might happen happened. (Put one after *happen*)

If you can walk to the sink and get the sponge. (One after *can*)

AND THAT'S ABOUT IT--REMEMBER, WHEN IN DOUBT, LEAVE IT OUT!

COMMAS MADE EASY PRACTICE

1. When the Pizza Hut guy entered the room Jim jumped out of his chair.
2. If my car is not fixed I won't be able to get to the dance.
3. Whenever you want to bake cookies you can call me on my cell.
4. After the plumber fixed the leak we had hot water again.
5. After Sue finished her homework she left the computer lab.
6. Not too far in the distance I saw the elephant stampede.
7. For what it's worth Jim is a little strange.
8. Denay did not want to work but she had to take the job to pay her bills
9. Raoul was not the brightest bulb on the tree yet he was able to pass calculus.
10. Denay did not want to work but had to take the job to pay her bills.
11. Estelle refused Bert's offer so he asked Marlene instead
12. The team was not prepared but they won the game anyway.
13. The team was not prepared but won the game anyway.
14. Bob could not pass the test because he stayed out all night with his friends.
15. Jim jumped out of his chair when the Pizza Hut guy entered the room.
16. I won't be able to get to the dance if my car is not fixed.
17. I could not find my favorite socks my favorite shoes or my Wilson tennis racket.
18. When Estelle agreed to the date Igor jumped for joy sold his beachfront property and called his mom.
19. Please bring a main course a salad or a dessert.
20. Doug could not take notes and listen at the same time.
21. I saw Michelle Bill and Hillary at the White House.
22. The comet was a brilliant loud unusual sight.

23. Steve was a bright attentive polite person.
24. Spokane is known for its warm dry summers.
25. His task was to lift an extremely large weight.
26. David not Sammy is the winner.
27. The Oscar however will go to *Avatar*.
28. You could've called me by the way and told me about the free tickets.
29. Betty it seems to me protests a bit too much.
30. The walrus in the other tank is a remarkable sight.
31. The student who got the highest score will be very pleased.
32. Jeremy who got the highest score will be very pleased.
33. My father who wearing the pink tuxedo has a strange sense of fashion.
34. Women who wish to serve in the armed forces are more than welcome.
35. My dog who is presently barking wants her dinner.
36. The president's most recent speech the one about the economy was well received.
37. If you car can't stop Judy you'll have to get your brakes fixed.
38. We called Linda but you weren't home.
39. The San Francisco earthquake one of the city's most disastrous events caused severe damage.
40. My boss Emily Norton will speak at the luncheon.
41. Jim Roth my English teacher can be somewhat strange.
42. When John entered the room got quiet.
43. When John entered the room the crowd stood and applauded.
44. Emily Norton my boss will speak at the luncheon.
45. The actor Sean Penn said "I miss everything about my hometown."
46. "I'm not sure where she went" the waitress replied.

47. "If you decide to go" Bill yelled "please let me know."
48. SCC's address is 1810 N. Greene Street Spokane Washington 99216.
49. Seattle has a population of over 1300000 citizens.
50. February 14 2007 was the day Ruth agreed to join.

Making Words Possessive

To make a non-possessive word possessive, look at its last letter of the original word (don't add any letters yet for the 'S' sound).

☛ If the last letter of the word that you want to make possessive is **not** an 's,' add apostrophe and 'S' to its end to make it possessive.

Here are examples:

The coat belonging to the boy becomes the **boy's coat**.

The headlights belonging to the car becomes the **car's headlights**.

The wife of the accountant becomes the **accountant's wife**.

☛ If the last letter of the word that you want to make possessive already ends in an 'S,' (before you've added the 'S' to show possession), make it possessive by adding only an apostrophe after the 'S' that's already there.

Some examples:

The chairs of the teachers becomes the **teachers' chairs**.

The colors belonging to the leaves becomes the **leaves' colors**.

The lens belonging to the glasses becomes the **glasses' lens**.

Please keep in mind that if the owner comes after what it owns, no new punctuation is necessary.

The cries of the children were heard.

The results of the election were announced.

Practice Time ↓ Using the two completed examples below as guides, create possessives out of the phrases that follow. Remember that the phrases as they are now are correct and need no punctuation to show ownership. But when the owner comes before what is owned, possession must be shown by the proper use of the apostrophe and 'S' or by the apostrophe itself.

The lights belonging to the river the river's lights

The puzzle belonging to the boys the boys' puzzle

The voters belonging to the county _____

The traffic belonging to the city _____

The colors belonging to the painting _____

The music belonging to the symphony _____

The aroma belonging to the coffee _____

The bottle belonging to the baby _____

The bottles belonging to the babies _____

The car belonging to James _____

The house belonging to Jones _____

The children belonging to the Joneses _____

The coat belonging to the woman _____

The coats belonging to the women _____

The message belonging to the letter _____

The siding belonging to the house _____

More Apostrophe Practice

- Ex. The gun belonging to the robber the robber's gun
1. The banks belonging to the country _____
2. The car belonging to Michael _____
3. The fears belonging to the women _____
4. The fears belonging to the woman _____
5. The lights belonging to the city _____

Edit the following to correct errors in the use of the apostrophe. I have added the “s” where needed. Some sentences may be correct as written.

1. A students success depends upon effort.
2. Its simple to use the Net with practice.
3. Each area has its own conference room.
4. In a democracy, anyones vote counts as much as anyone elses vote.
5. The nurse responded to the babys cry.
6. So far, its been a wonderful quarter.
7. Washingtons unemployment is still quite low, but its tourist industry is suffering.
8. I bought two car's last year.
9. Three cities budgets for snow removal were lower this year than last.
10. Its too bad English is so confusing. My teacher even get's confused at times.

Yet Even More Apostrophe Practice

J. Roth 99/101/102

Directions: Provide apostrophes wherever they are needed.

Today's world isn't the same world as my mom and dad grew up in. Our world has lots of inventions that were not a part of my mom and dad's. My parents' world was much different because it didn't include all the microchip-run electronics. The microchips' use didn't really come into its own until the 1900s when computer manufacturers were able to double a microchip's speed every 18 months. I remember using my dad's telephone back then. His phone didn't even have a memory card to keep track of the names and addresses of his friends. Also back then my dad wasn't sure if he even liked the fancy computers and new phones. For a while he kept to his old technology.

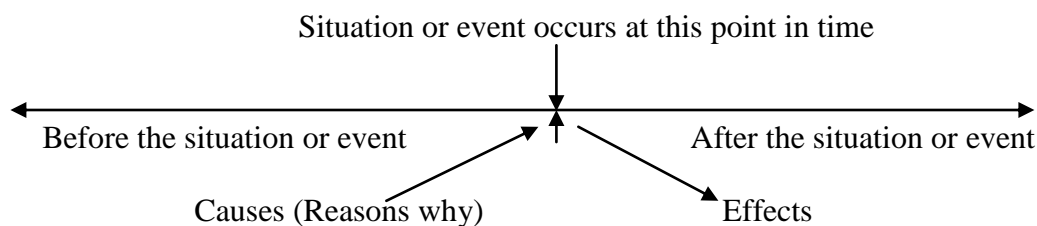
Today, however, my dad says that if he's able to afford one, he wants to buy a new I-phone. He thinks Apple's inventions have revolutionized life. He's right: their industry's inventions have made life in the cities and towns much easier, as well as making rural life more fun. I know I couldn't do without my smart phone and don't want to go anywhere or wouldn't want to be long without having it handy. As you can see, technology's impact on us is huge, and our country's inventors really know what they're doing when it comes to new, cool products.

Cause/Effect (Causal Analysis) Thought and Essay Writing

Cause/effect, sometimes called **causal analysis**, analyzes the causes and/or the effects of a situation or event.

The situation or event in question can be in the past, present, or future.

First, consider this timeline:



Note that the situation or event is the *effect* of previous causes and the *cause* of later effects.

When writing a short cause-effect essay, it is often best to concentrate on causes **OR** effects rather than both.

Here's an example of a cause **OR** effect outline

- ⇒ Paragraph #1: Introduces and explains the situation or event in detail. The thesis sentence then specifies that the essay will analyze **either** causes **OR** effects.
- ⇒ Paragraph #2: Cause **or** Effect #1
- ⇒ Paragraph #3: Cause **or** Effect #2
- ⇒ Paragraph #4: Cause **or** Effect #3
- ⇒ Paragraph #5: Conclusion

PROBLEMS TO AVOID

Avoid Confusing Process Analysis with Cause/Effect Analysis

A longer cause-effect essay can analyze both causes and effects, but this structure needs to avoid the common error of confusing **process** thinking with **cause-effect** thinking.

Process thinking is concerned with **HOW** something happens (the sequence of events) while **cause-effect thinking** is concerned with **WHY** something happens (the causes or reasons for the event).

Here's an example:

Let's say you serve a loaf of delicious homemade bread to your neighbor.

If your neighbor asks **HOW** the bread came to taste so good (how the bread was made), you would explain the **process** from the first step of mixing the ingredients to the final step of baking the loaf. Your neighbor could then make his/her own loaf by following the steps of your process.

If, however, your neighbor asks **WHY** the bread tastes so good, you might credit the rapid-rise yeast, the use of 100% organic flour, and the proper baking temperature. Your neighbor would then understand what caused the bread's excellent taste (why) but would not be able to bake a loaf from your response.

When we include both causes and effects in a single essay, it is easy to unknowingly write a process essay instead.—an essay telling **how** things occurred (the sequence of events or process) rather than an essay telling **why** things occurred (causes or the reasons). This is because even though we are working with causes and effects, we present the causes and effects in the sequence in which they occurred. Doing this can make the essay sound more like a story (how things happened) rather than a cause/effect essay telling why things happened. So be careful if you include both causes and effects to not simply tell the sequence of events (a process).

Avoid the Post Hoc Error

Another error to avoid when thinking cause-effect is to assume that simply because two events happen about the same time, they are somehow causally related. This error is called the *post hoc* error (post hoc means “after the event”); it reasons that because Event A happened before Event B, Event A caused Event B to happen.

A silly example of the *post hoc* error is to assume that since the sun rises each day after your alarm clock goes off, the sun rises each day **BECAUSE** your alarm clock goes off.

To avoid the *post hoc* error, it is safer to assume that the events in question happened together only by coincidence until a causal relationship can be established. The goal of your development is then to establish and prove a causal relationship between the events.

Avoid Overestimating the Strength of a Cause

A final error to avoid is confusing the *relative strength* of causes. We tend to think of causes as equal in power, yet three gradations exist.

Contributory Cause (the least powerful)

A **Contributory Cause** is a circumstance that **might** be present for the event to take place (it's likely that it is present), but cannot by itself cause the event to occur.

Example: Being in good physical shape can contribute to winning a boxing match (it likely is present), but in order to win, other causes are needed as well (having boxing skill, knowing the rules, etc.). In addition, being in shape need not be present to win the match. (One could bribe the official, drug the opponent, etc.)

Necessary Cause (more powerful)

A **Necessary Cause** is a circumstance that **must** be present for the event to take place, but cannot by itself cause the event to occur.

Example: adequate water is necessary to grow a tasty tomato, but cannot, by itself, produce this effect. A tasty tomato also needs heat, sunlight, soil, nutrients, etc. So adequate water must be present (it's necessary) but is not powerful enough to produce the effect by itself.

Sufficient Cause (most powerful)

A **Sufficient Cause** is a circumstance that can produce the effect all by itself. A sufficient cause requires no other circumstances—it is *sufficient* by itself to cause the event to occur.

Example: your car could be tuned perfectly and have plenty of gas but it will not start (the event you want) if the battery is dead (a sufficient cause).

Accurately accessing a cause's strength is important to rational living. It can help us distorted feelings and statements such as

If a certain event happens, we “will just die!” (Likely not)

If we get an ‘F’ on a test, we will have to drop out of college and all is lost. (Lots of alternatives exist)

If we don't get this/him/her, we can never be happy. (This confuses a contributory cause to happiness (the it, him, or her) with a necessary or sufficient cause (I have to have it/him/her or I will be sad forever).

Comparison and/or Contrast Thought and Essay Writing

Advice

Successful comparison-contrast requires two subjects and a set of points used to examine these subjects.

Example:

Let's pretend we write for a wildlife magazine and have been studying **hippos** and **rhinos** in Africa. Our editor asks us to write a short comparison and/or contrast article about these two animals. Our first step is to make a list of **shared points** we will use to study these animals.

Our list of points: *physical appearance, habitat, predators, eating habits, young-raising, mating habits.*

We study both animals in terms of these shared points. **Our findings:**

Subject A: <u>Hippos</u>	<i>Shared Points</i>	Subject B: <u>Rhinos</u>
A similarity	<i>physical appearance</i>	
A difference	<i>habitat</i>	
A difference	<i>predators</i>	
A similarity	<i>eating habits</i>	
A similarity	<i>young-raising</i>	
A difference	<i>mating habits</i>	

Since we will not be able to present all of the similarities and differences in the space we have, we will need to choose the best ones according to our purpose and the outline we choose.

Three outlines are available when writing a comparison/contrast paper. Regardless of which outline you choose, the thesis paragraph's introductory sentences are the same, up to the thesis sentence.

Choice #1: A Contrast Paper Outline:

Narrow to two differences:

Let's pick **habitat** and **predators** as our two **differences**.

Paragraph #1 Thesis Paragraph—introduction plus thesis sentence

- *Thesis Sentence pattern:* **Subject A** and **Subject B** differ in **Point of Difference #1** and **Point of Difference #2**.
- *Filled in thesis sentence:* Hippos (**Subject A**) and rhinos (**Subject B**) differ in habitat (**Point Of Difference #1**) and predators (**Point of Difference #2**).

Point-by Point or Alternating Option

Paragraph #2: **Hippos—habitat** (Subject A—Difference #1)

Paragraph #3: **Rhinos—habitat** (Subject B— Difference #1)

Paragraph #4: **Hippos—predators** (Subject A— Difference #2)

Paragraph #5: **Rhinos—predators** (Subject B— Difference #2)

Paragraph—Conclusion

Subject or Block Option

Paragraph #2: **Hippos—habitat** (Subject A—Difference #1)

Paragraph #3: **Hippos—predators** (Subject A— Difference #2)

Paragraph #4: **Rhinos—habitat** (Subject B— Difference #1)

Paragraph #5: **Rhinos—predators** (Subject B— Difference #2)

Paragraph—Conclusion

Choice #2: A Comparison Paper Outline:

Narrow to three similarities:

Let's pick **physical appearance**, **eating habits**, and **young-raising** as our three **similarities**.

Paragraph #1 Thesis Paragraph—introduction plus thesis sentence

- *Thesis Sentence pattern:* **Subject A** and **Subject B** are similar in **Point Of Similarity #1**, **Point Of Similarity #2**, and **Point Of Similarity #3**.
- *Filled in thesis sentence:* Hippos (Subject A) and rhinos (Subject B) are similar in physical appearance (Point Of Similarity #1), eating habits (Point Of Similarity #2), and young-raising (Point Of Similarity #3).

Paragraph #2: **Hippos and Rhinos—phys. appear.** (Subjects A and B—

Similarity #1)

Paragraph #3: **Hippos and Rhinos—eating habits** (Subjects A and B— Similarity #2)

Paragraph #4: **Hippos and Rhinos—young-raising** (Subjects A and B— Similarity #3)

Paragraph—Conclusion

Choice #3: A Comparison-Contrast Paper Outline:

⇒ Note: Begin with the similarities unless you have a good reason not to.

Narrow to one or two differences and one or two similarities.

Let's pick two **similarities**—**physical appearance** and **eating habits**, and one **difference**—**habitat** as our mix of **similarities and differences**.

Paragraph #1 Thesis Paragraph—introduction plus thesis sentence

- *Thesis Sentence pattern:* **Subject A** and **Subject B** are **similar** in **Point of Similarity #1** and **Point of Similarity #2**, but **differ** in and **Point of Difference #1**.
- *Filled in thesis sentence:* Hippos (**Subject A**) and rhinos (**Subject B**) are similar in physical appearance (**Point Of Similarity #1**) and eating habits (**Point Of Similarity #2**), but differ in habitat (**Point Of Difference #1**).

Paragraph #2: **Hippos and Rhinos—physical appearance** (Subjects A and B--Similarity #1)

Paragraph #3: **Hippos and Rhinos—eating habits** (Subjects A and B--Similarity #2)

Paragraph #4: **Hippos—habitat** (Subject A—Difference #1)

Paragraph #5: **Rhinos—habitat** (Subject B—Difference #1)

Paragraph—Conclusion

Comparison and/or Contrast Essay Writing Worksheets

Practice

Let's practice:

First, pick two likely subjects and fill in the shared points:

Subject A:	<i>Shared Points</i>	Subject B:

Next, decide if each point is a similarity or a difference. Note which one it is in the shaded blanks to the left.

Now, create the following outlines with the information in your chart:

A Blank Contrast Paper Outline:

Subject A: _____ Subject B: _____

Narrow to two differences:

The two differences you want to present: _____ (Difference #1) and
_____ (Difference #2)

- *Thesis Sentence pattern: Subject A and Subject B differ in Point of Difference #1 and Point of Difference #2.*

Next, create your thesis sentence:

_____ (Subject A) and _____ (Subject B) differ in _____
(Point Of Difference #1) and _____ (Point of Difference #2).

(⇒ Note: Paragraph #1 will be your introduction ending with your thesis sentence.)

Finally, fill in the following outline for the Point-by-Point or Alternating Option

Paragraph #2: _____ (Subject A) ---- _____ (Difference #1)

Paragraph #3: _____ (Subject B) ---- _____ (Difference #1)

Paragraph #4: _____ (Subject A) ---- _____ (Difference #2)

Paragraph #5: _____ (Subject B) ---- _____ (Difference #2)

Paragraph—Conclusion

OR fill in the following outline for the Subject or Block Option

Paragraph #2: _____ (Subject A) ---- _____ (Difference #1)

Paragraph #3: _____ (Subject A) ---- _____ (Difference #2)

Paragraph #4: _____ (Subject B) ---- _____ (Difference #1)

Paragraph #5: _____ (Subject B) ---- _____ (Difference #2)

Paragraph—Conclusion

😊 You are now ready to write your rough draft.

A Blank Comparison Paper Outline:

Subject A: _____ Subject B: _____

Narrow to three similarities:

The three similarities you want to present:

Similarity #1 _____, Similarity #1 _____, Similarity
#3 _____

- *Thesis Sentence pattern: Subject A and Subject B are similar in Point Of Similarity #1, Point Of Similarity #2, and Point Of Similarity #3.*

Next, create your thesis sentence:

_____ (Subject A) and _____ (Subject B) are similar in _____
(Similarity #1), _____ (Similarity #2), and _____ (Similarity #3).

Finally, fill in the following outline:

Paragraph #1 will be your introduction ending with your thesis sentence.

Paragraph #2: _____ (Subjects A and B) — _____ (Similarity #1)

Paragraph #3: _____ (Subjects A and B) — _____ (Similarity #2)

Paragraph #4: _____ (Subjects A and B) — _____ (Similarity #3)

Paragraph—Conclusion

😊 You are now ready to write your rough draft.

A Blank Comparison-Contrast Paper Outline: (Begin with the similarities unless you have a good reason not to.)

Subject A: _____ Subject B: _____

Narrow to one or two differences and one or two similarities

Pick two **similarities**—_____ and _____

and one **difference**—_____

➤ *Thesis Sentence pattern:* **Subject A** and **Subject B** are **similar** in **Point of Similarity #1** and **Point of Similarity #2**, but **differ** in and **Point of Difference #1**.

➤ *Filled in thesis sentence:* _____ (**Subject A**) and _____ (**Subject B**) are similar in _____ (**Similarity #1**) and _____ (**Similarity #2**), but differ in _____ (**Difference #1**).

Paragraph #1 will be your introduction ending with your thesis sentence.

Paragraph #2: _____ (Subjects A and B) —_____ (Similarity #1)

Paragraph #3: _____ (Subjects A and B) —_____ (Similarity #2)

Paragraph #4: _____ (Subject A—Difference #1)


Paragraph #5: _____ (Subject B—Difference #1)

Paragraph—Conclusion

😊 You are now ready to write your rough draft.

Persuasion/Argumentation Essay Structure and Advice

To write an effective persuasion/argumentation essay, select one of the following patterns below to organize your essay.

 First, a note on how to order your body paragraphs in a persuasion-argumentation essay:

Typically, what readers read last, they will remember best. This means that your final point of support will have the greatest impact on your readers.

In addition, your first point of support should emphasize the seriousness of your position so that your readers keep reading.

To use this information to your advantage, order your body paragraphs this way:

- ✓ Body Paragraph 1: Second strongest point of support.
- ✓ Body Paragraph 2: Third strongest point of support.
- ✓ Body Paragraph 3: Your strongest point of support.

Pattern One: Developmental (present points of support and evidence for your opinion on the issue.)

⇒ Introductory Persuasion/Argumentation Paragraph:

- Introduce the issue--give its history and/or generally explain the controversy.
- Create interest and importance in the issue—why should your reader care?
- Finish the introductory paragraph with your thesis sentence which is your position on the issue.

⇒ Body paragraph 1: present your second strongest point of support and its supporting evidence.

⇒ Body paragraph 2: present your third strongest point of support and its supporting evidence.

⇒ Body paragraph 3: present your strongest point of support and its supporting evidence.

⇒ Concluding paragraph: Recommend action to be taken.

Pattern Two: Refutation (show why your opponent's reasons are weak)

⇒ Introductory Persuasion/Argumentation Paragraph:

- Introduce the issue--give its history and/or generally explain the controversy.
- Create interest and importance in the issue—why should your reader care?
- Finish the introductory paragraph with your thesis sentence which is your position on the issue.

⇒ Body paragraph 1: present one of your opponent's points of support and show why it is weak.

⇒ Body paragraph 2: present a second of your opponent's points of support and show why it is weak.

⇒ Body paragraph 3: present a third of your opponent's points of support and show why it is weak.

⇒ Concluding paragraph: Recommend action to be taken.

Pattern Three: Developmental and Refutation (A mixture of Patterns A and B)

⇒ Introductory Persuasion/Argumentation Paragraph:

- Introduce the issue--give its history and/or generally explain the controversy.
- Create interest and importance in the issue—why should your reader care?
- Finish the introductory paragraph with your thesis sentence which is your position on the issue.

⇒ Body paragraph 1: present one of your opponent's points of support and show why it is weak.

⇒ Body paragraph 2: present a second of your opponent's points of support and show why it is weak.

⇒ Body paragraph 3: present your second strongest point of support and its supporting evidence.

⇒ Body paragraph 4: present your strongest point of support and its supporting evidence.

⇒ Concluding paragraph: Recommend action to be taken.

Working with Words from a Source

To begin, always keep in mind that other writers' words are **their property**, so it is critical to learn how to use these borrowed words accurately and legally in your writing.

When should you use another writer's words?

- When *something is aptly said*. (The writer really "nailed it.")
- OR
- When *your ideas need authoritative support*. You sense that your reader might need corroboration.

Otherwise, use your own words and ideas in your essays.

Please note ☛ Always try to keep quotations as short as possible. We'll work on ways to shorten long quotations later.

The Basics (MLA style)

Let's assume we want to work with the following article:

The article's title is "Diplomacy in the 21st Century," written by Susan Barrett.

Let's also assume that we found this essay in the September 27, 2010 issue of the magazine Modern Diplomacy and that Barrett's article appeared on pages 40 through 46 of the magazine.

The first thing to do is to create a proper MLA works cited entry so we can include this source on the Works Cited page at the end of our essay.

According to MLA guidelines, the proper MLA works cited page entry would be

Barrett, Susan. "Diplomacy in the 21st Century." Modern Diplomacy. 23 Apr. 2010: 40-46.

Please note ☛ *Works Cited page entries are double-spaced and, if longer than one line of type, the second and subsequent lines are indented five spaces.*

Now let's assume that we want to include the following sentence written by Barrett in our essay. Let's also assume this sentence appeared on page 43 of the magazine.

Here's the sentence:

"In order for diplomacy to be successful, it will have to follow very different rules from the past."

The best way to blend these words with our own is to write a **lead-in**. The reason we need one is if we place the other writer's words directly into our essay with no introduction or lead-in, our reader may wonder why words in quotation marks have suddenly appeared. Please note that I have written a three or four word lead-in for each example:

Example#1:

I will use the words "According to one expert" as a lead-in:

According to one expert, "in order for diplomacy to be successful, it will have to follow very different rules from the past" (Barrett 43).

Please note that in Example #1 above, I must include both the author's last name and page number in the parentheses so that my reader will know which source to look for on my Works Cited page.

Also please note that MLA format does **NOT** use 'p' or 'pp' to denote page numbers, just the number by itself. Also, if you need to give the author's last name along with the page number (example #1), only a space separates the author's name and the page number.

Example#2

Now my lead-in will be "Barrett claims that."

Barrett claims that "in order for diplomacy to be successful, it will have to follow very different rules from the past" (43).

Example#3

Next I will add the lead-in at the end. My words are "writes Susan Barrett, a noted expert in the field."

"In order for diplomacy to be successful, it will have to follow very different rules from the past," writes Susan Barrett, a noted expert in the

field (43).

Please note in examples 2 and 3, I needed to include only the page number because it was clear to my readers who the owner of those words was.

Example#4

I can also put the lead-in within the quotation: In the example below, my words are "according to Barrett."

"In order for diplomacy to be successful," according to Barrett, "it will have to follow very different rules from the past" (43).

Example #5

I can write a half-and-half sentence using a quotation. In the sentence below, the words "Successful diplomacy must" are mine:

Successful diplomacy must "follow very different rules from the past" (Barrett 43).

Review: If it is clear to your reader who the author of the information is, you need include only the new page number in parentheses.

Important: After giving your reader the author's full name, subsequent references to the author should be last name only. This may seem rude, but it is the convention we use.

Important: MLA format does NOT use 'p' or 'pp' when giving page numbers. Further, only a single space separates the author's last name and page number.

Correct: (Barrett 42) INCORRECT: (Barrett, p. 42) or
(Barrett, 42).

Punctuation Note: The period and comma are always placed before the closing quotation mark.

Correct: "I really thought the soap was food." Bob said, "please find my zebra," and then he left."

Using an ellipsis

Knowing how to use an ellipsis is very useful (and very cool). First, an ellipsis, also called an "ellipsis mark," is a series of three spaced periods: . . . To create one, hit the period key, then the spacebar, then the period key again, then the spacebar again, and then the period key one last time. If you use an ellipsis at the end of a sentence, all you need to do is add another space and period to end the sentence

Before we see how an ellipsis is used, let's refer again to the first **"Please note."**

Please note Always try to keep quotations as short as possible.

That's right: an ellipsis is most often used to shorten quotations, and I can shorten any quotation as long as the words I leave out do not change the quotation's meaning.

As an example, let's assume we want to work a bit more with Barrett's words. On page 43 of the magazine, we read . . .

"In order for diplomacy to be successful, it will have to follow very different rules from the past. We can no longer rely on our traditional friends and historical enemies to lend us diplomatic structure. The world today is fluid, not fixed as it was from the end of World War I to the fall of communism, so our diplomatic strategies must be far more responsive than before. Because of this new paradigm, we will need to create diplomatic structures that are elastic so they can be adjusted quickly when needed."

This quotation is way too long to plop into my essay, so here's how to shorten it. Notice I have spliced together words from the first sentence and the last sentence:

"In order for diplomacy to be successful . . . we will need to create diplomatic structures that are elastic so they can be adjusted quickly when needed" (Barrett 43).

In this next example, I omit the center of one of Barrett's sentences to make it leaner:

Barrett advises that "the world today is fluid . . . so our diplomatic strategies must be far more responsive than before" (43).

I can also end a sentence with an ellipsis:

"The world today is fluid, not fixed as it was from the end of World War I to the fall of communism . . . " (Barrett 43).

And, yes, I can begin a sentence with an ellipsis:

Barrett claims that ". . . we will need to create diplomatic structures that are elastic so they can be adjusted quickly when needed" (43).

The use of [sic]

- "Sic" means "thus." Use it when a grammatical/spelling mistake exists in the source's words you want to quote. (That's right—since the source's words are someone else's property, you do not have the right to correct even spelling!)

Let's assume we read the following in a book or periodical:

"Was it not obvious then that it ws the nature of the earth to be flat and the sky to be curved?"

(Note that the word "was" is missing the letter "a.") Here is how we would be obligated to quote it:

"Was it not obvious then that it ws [sic] the nature of the earth to be flat and the sky to be curved?"

Let's now assume that the incorrect word "than" was used in place of the correct word "then" in this sentence. Here is how our quote would look:

"Was it not obvious than [sic] that it was the nature of the earth to be flat and the sky to be curved?" (Allen 47).

The use of [Brackets]—not parentheses

Brackets are used to add clarity to a quotation. Here's an example. Let's say that President Obama and President Bush are having a discussion.

Attending is a reporter who writes, "He then made a very strong case for overhauling the economics system."

The problem is if you use this quotation in your essay, your reader will not know to whom the "he" refers. This is where you can use brackets to add clarity:

Attending is a reporter who writes, "He [Obama] then made a very strong case for overhauling the economics system."

Please remember that what is enclosed in brackets within a quotation is yours. Also, remember to use brackets, because if your reader sees parentheses with in a quotation, the assumption is that the parentheses were a part of the original quotation.

AN OVERVIEW OF RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

A *rhetorical strategy* is simply a way of organizing your essay. Remember that the thesis sentence sets the essay's overall structure, but once the thesis is established, writers use a blend of the following strategies to develop the essay. For example, a writer might *contrast* two jobs by *narrating* an on-the-job experience for each, or *persuade* the reader to adopt a position on a controversial issue by first *defining* key terms.

TYPES OF STRATEGIES

NARRATION

Types:	Entertainment, Instructive
General Purpose:	To tell a story
Organization:	Chronological
Paragraphing Advice:	Change paragraphs when event, location, time, speaker changes.
General Hints:	Use dialog sparingly; spend words on the key event in the sequence; use past tense.

DESCRIPTION

Types:	Objective, Subjective
General Purpose:	To paint a word picture for the reader.
Organization:	Spatial
Paragraphing Advice:	Change paragraphs when location, part, or position changes.
General Hints:	Spatial logic includes left to right, right to left, top to bottom, bottom to top, etc.

DEFINITION

Types:	Various
General Purpose:	To explain the meaning(s) of a term.
Organization:	Usually emphatic—most important last
Paragraphing Advice:	Change paragraphs when quality/attribute changes or when switching from description of quality/attribute to example.
General Hints:	Remember: First classify the term. Next determine what makes it unique from other members of its class (the differentiation). Then focus the essay on the term's unique qualities (its differentiation).

CLASSIFICATION/DIVISION

Types:	Individual members into sub-groups (classification); a
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	single unit into component parts (division).
General Purpose:	To show diversity of large group; to show by inference similarities and differences among sub-groups; to show how component parts relate to each other to form the whole object.
Organization:	Inclusivity, Exclusivity,
Paragraphing Advice:	Change paragraphs when sub-groups or parts change.
General Hints:	Be sure to apply both logic tests (inclusivity and exclusivity) to your outline before beginning the draft.

PROCESS ANALYSIS

Types:	Informational, Directional
General Purpose:	To tell how something happens or works; To give step-by-step directions to the reader.
Organization:	Chronological
Paragraphing Advice:	Change paragraphs when steps in the process change.
General Hints:	The tendency is to assume the reader knows more about the process you're describing than he/she really does.

COMPARISON/CONTRAST

Types:	Comparison, contrast, combination of the two.
General Purpose:	To clearly show specific similarities and/or differences between subjects.
Organization:	Divided by subject (“block”), Alternating (point-by-point)
Paragraphing Advice:	Change paragraphs when subject or point of C/C changes. A similarity between subjects often can be covered in a single paragraph or section.
General Hints:	If subjects are basically alike, work with differences. If subjects are basically different, work with likenesses. Limit your outline to two or three points of comparison/contrast.

CAUSE-EFFECT or CAUSAL (not casual) ANALYSIS

Types:	Causes or effects of an event, casual chain.
General Purpose:	To tell what caused an event or situation to occur (causes). To present possible outcomes of an event or situation (effects). To show a progression of events (a causal chain—like dominos).
Organization:	Most often emphatic
Paragraphing Advice:	Change paragraphs when events change.
General Hints:	DO NOT confuse this with process. Process tells <i>HOW</i> ; Cause-Effect tells <i>WHY</i> . If you feel you might write a process essay by mistake, do not present your causes/effects in chronological order.
	The three types of causes are CONTRIBUTORY, NECESSARY, and SUFFICIENT. Avoid assigning too much importance to a particular cause by confusing these.
	Avoid the <i>POST HOC</i> error.

PERSUASION (ARGUMENTATION)

Types:	Develop your reasons; Refute your opponent's.
General Purpose:	To lead the reader to adopt your position on a controversial issue.
Organization:	Emphatic; refute then develop.
Paragraphing Advice:	Change paragraphs when points of evidence or argument change.
General Hints:	<i>Argumentation</i> often is considered more formal and less emotional, relying more heavily on research, statistics, and expert corroboration. Persuasion tends to be less formal and more emotional, relying on common sense reasoning.

- ☛ I have italicized the thesis sentence and underlined each body paragraph's topic sentence)

Frustrations of a College Student

By R. B. Campbell

(Source unknown)

Life is never simple. For the businessman, the housewife, the factory worker, and even (or perhaps especially) the young child, each day is filled with its share of frustrations and disappointments. *The college student is not exempt from these incidents; in fact, attending college exposes a person to a unique set of such experiences. (An Inferential thesis sentence)*

Registration is an occasion which often gives rise to frustrating circumstances. Classes which are closed because they are filled, or due to lack of registrants, can destroy the most carefully planned schedule. Even if the desired classes are available, clerical errors can wreak havoc. A computer mix-up at Miami University during one recent quarter sent an estimated 5,000 of the school's 11,000 students to the drop/add line on the first day of classes. To view such a line from near the end, as I did, can indeed be a frustrating experience.

Even if the desired class is obtained, the instructor can make it seem as if it would have been more profitable to take some other course. College professors are often chosen for their ability to do research rather than their ability to teach. Every student can tell of at least one professor who, although more than competent in his or

her field, could not effectively communicate knowledge to the class. Also, the more able professors are in their disciplines, the greater the demands on their time. My cousin, a student at a small, private college, once took a non-required psychology course specifically because a well-known doctor was listed as the professor. The doctor, however, was rarely seen. Most of the classes were given by a graduate assistant, who also marked the papers and made up the tests. The much-hailed doctor was too busy to actually teach.

Perhaps the most frustrating experience for college students is the realization that they have been following a course of study for which they are not suited.

During my first five quarters of college, I was a chemistry major. It was not until after I had received failing grades in that subject from three different institutions that I finally came to the conclusion that it would perhaps be better if I studied a different subject. A friend of mine, an education major at Kent State, also found herself in this situation. It was not until she completed her student teaching experience, fifteen hours short of graduation, that she found she had no desire to teach. She will graduate at the end of the present quarter with a highly specialized degree in a field she has no desire to pursue.

College can be and should be a highly adventurous, rewarding period in the student's life. But like all other situations in life, it can often be fraught with frustration.

You Might be a Redneck...

Do you enjoy outdoor sports such as hunting, fishing, and camping? Love of the taste of barbeque and ice cold beer after a hard day's work? Pride yourself in being family oriented and patriotic? Then, by golly, yer a Redneck!

Rednecks, frequently referred to as Hillbillies, pride themselves in working hard and playing harder. In fact, the word redneck originated from agricultural workers whose necks became red and sun burned from working long hours in the fields. They enjoy the outdoors and can be found drinkin' cheap beer, huntin', fishin', campin', mud rallies, collecting junky cars, and attending NASCAR races. About half of the people you come across in your local Wal-Mart can be considered Rednecks as well. I once saw a Redneck at Wal-Mart wearing an over-sized camouflage coat, beanie hat, flannel pajama pants, and work boots. Sadly, he was my friend.

The classic Redneck prefers the mullet hair style and generally wears an old, dirty t-shirt, mud drenched pants, and a trucker hat. His truck, which is often more expensive than his trailer house, is old, beat up, lifted several inches high and has a gun rack visible in the rear window. And his don't-mess-with-me attitude will assure you that he isn't afraid to use it. In the back of his truck bed, you can find his "old lady" and several of their children rocking out to their Country and Southern Rock music. Your typical Trailer-Trash Redneck is exceptionally tasteless and tactless. Take my friend, Ryan for example. He and his "old lady" were shopping at the local

Wal-Mart Super Center, shopping for wedding rings. When they found the perfect one, Ryan dropped down to one knee, right there in the jewelry aisle. His now fiancée was astonished and considered his actions to be adorable.

Southern comedian Jeff Foxworthy describes Rednecks as “The glorious absence of sophistication.” Truth be told, most of these country folk are uneducated. However, the term “Redneck” is often misunderstood. A true Redneck is proud and never concerned with how others view him. He is a loyal American citizen and will defend and honor his country. He is very fond of his family and close friends. Insults about his family or their traditions will not be tolerated.

If it takes more than half your weeks’ pay to fill up your trucks gas tank, if you ever enter a burping contest, or notice your Christmas tree is still up in February, you're not alone. There's a little Redneck in all of us.

Sample Student Essay #1—CAUSE-EFFECT (CAUSAL ANALYSIS)

Failure—the Unforeseen Blessing

The “F” word in our culture has a negative meaning. Of course the “F” word used here is failure. Failure has long been perceived as the epitome of humiliation, solid proof that a person is not good enough. Yet many people, including myself, who have been trained by failure, know what a blessing it truly is. The famous Michael Jordan once stated, “I’ve failed over and over again in my life, that is why I succeed”. The true secret is discovering that by having the proper perspective on failure, it can actually be your best teacher. This process of discovery is called emotional intelligence and entails three aspects: failure creates opportunity and gives choices, failure shows us who we really are and failure gives us influence with other people.

Every time we fail, we are given a choice. What am I going to do with this? I can wallow in my own self pity or I can choose to move forward. I remember just last week taking a simple math test and missing four problems. I was crushed! The perfectionist in me was screaming, you will never pass math. Well, I came home that day and asked my children to help me. Now, I am doing better. By taking that test and subsequently humbling myself, I now have two children that are enjoying the role reversal of teaching their mom.

If you really want to know who somebody really is don’t look at them when they succeed, look at them when they fail! Do they succumb to the emotions? Do they get angry and use that anger in a positive way? Do they try to hide their

failure or shout it from the rooftops? In my own life I tend to have an over-active internal judge. I can be harder on myself than anyone else would ever be. Yet I have learned to take those times of teaching and cherish them. I learn more about myself from those times than in any other. I learn who I really am.

Failure is a given learning experience that a person can use to help make other people more comfortable around you. It also gives you influence to be able to reach them. We live in a plastic society, plastic cards and plastic people. Everything is all about appearances. I've noticed this is especially true in the church environment. If you ask "how are you?" they will answer "I'm fine, I'm great" when in all actuality they are not! Having the privilege to be able to lead a few groups I've learned that people will listen to you when you are real and will tell them about your failures. The words I've failed many times as a parent can become sweet music to someone who is feeling like they are failing in this realm. The words I've struggled in my marriage can help a married couple feel like they are not alone. By being honest and open to our failures we not only learn from our mistakes but are also able to use them to help others.

The famous Robert F Kennedy once said, "Only those who dare to fail greatly can achieve greatly". By using emotional intelligence and having the proper perspective on failure we will be utilizing our best teacher. We will learn more about ourselves, more about others and be given the opportunity to teach others what we have learned.

Sample Student Essay #2—CAUSE-EFFECT (CAUSAL ANALYSIS)

The Benefits of Failure

People often ask me how I learned to cook. I could tell them I come by it naturally; my grandmother and mother were both wonderful cooks. I could say it's a talent, a gift from the universe to make my loved ones happy. Maybe it's a little of both, but the truth is much more than that. I've learned through failure. I've heard an African phrase describing a good cook as "she who has broken many pots." If you've spent enough time in the kitchen to have broken a lot of pots, or plates in my case, you probably know a fair amount about cooking. Spend much time with a group of chefs, and you will see them comparing knife wounds and burn scars. They know how much credibility their failures gave them. Still, most people would consider success and failure as opposites, but they are actually both products of the same process.

Woody Allen once said, "If you're not failing every now and again, it's a sign you're not doing anything very innovative." Success is boring. Success is proving that you can do something that you already know you can do, or doing something correctly the first time, which can often be a problematic victory. First-time success is usually a fluke. First-time failure, by contrast, is expected; it is the natural order of things. When learning to cook, I made many mistakes. Dishes were burned, eyebrows raised, and take-out was ordered. In the process, though, I learned what not to do, how to rescue a meal, and what flavors will work each other. I'm still learning, and I still make mistakes, but I have the confidence that comes from failure.

Oprah Winfrey wrote, "Think like a queen. A queen is not afraid to fail. Failure is another steppingstone to greatness." By learning to embrace our failures, we become better people, capable of greater things. There are many stories of people who failed again and again, only to find success in the end. Oprah Winfrey is one of the most famous examples. After being fired from her first television job

for being “unfit for TV,” she pressed on, never giving up. Her public failures with weight loss and her school for girls in South Africa have further emboldened her to press on. And all this from a woman whose own book is entitled, I Don't Believe in Failure. She used her failure as momentum to press her on to greatness, and while we all can't be Oprah, we can learn from both her successes and her failures.

As my hero, Julia Child, puts it, “The only real stumbling block is fear of failure. In cooking you've got to have a what-the-hell attitude.” As a whole, our society seems terrified to fail. It shows how human we are, how very imperfect. What is so fascinating is, without failure we would never really succeed. They are two sides of the same coin. We cannot learn without being taught, and failure is our greatest teacher. Whether it's cooking, writing, or even being a student, we will make many mistakes. The more we accept them, laugh, and learn what we can, the more we will succeed at whatever we put our mind to

Sample Student Essay—Summary-and-Response Example #1

A summary of, followed by a response to, Cliff Schneider’s essay “I’m Still Learning from My Mother.”

In his Newsweek essay “Still Learning from My Mother,” Cliff Schneider talks about life lessons he still learns from his 79 year old mother. Schneider vividly describes his mother in her youth as being very gracious but also very competitive and great at sports. As the years go by his mom grows old and slowly realizes that she is not as physically young as she once was. Still determined to be at the top of her game, his mother aims for a seemingly unfeasible goal: to score 200 points in a game of bowling. Schneider never thought his mom’s goal would be accomplished, yet one night he received a call from his excited mother who exclaimed that she had exceeded her goal. Schneider, a retired freshwater biologist, learned a couple of important lessons-- that you can never be too old to set goals for yourself, and that you should be open to everyone because you never know what someone might teach you.

Schneider’s essay was very descriptive and tells his story with the underlying moral lesson at the end. Like Schneider, I am surprised sometimes at the lessons I learn from unexpected people. I have encountered several unexpected people in my job as a restaurant server. These people have taught me that it is important to dream big and accomplish the goals you set for yourself and share your accomplishments with someone you love.

The other day at work, I served this elderly couple who was celebrating an accomplishment. The wife had recently graduated with a Doctorate in

Sociology. She had been a junior high teacher for many years, and she spoke of her early ambitions of getting her Doctorate, a goal she had set for herself back when she first started teaching. Listening to all the bumps she encountered on her way to a Doctorate, I was surprised at her ambitious journey to her Doctorate, thinking to myself that she is too old to be able to do anything with it. But then I recalled Schneider writing that, to encourage his mother's determination to bowl a 200-game, he just "smiled and nodded in agreement," the many times his mother mentioned this goal (6). So I smiled, too, particularly when I glanced at the woman's husband who sat there looking at his wife lovingly, with a warm smile on his face, proud as can be. After they had left, I was happy for her but didn't really think much more about it.

Later that night, after going home from work, I began to seriously think about this lady's impressive accomplishment. She had set a goal for herself and was able to carry out her dream because of her determination. Her age had nothing to do with her goal, and I suddenly felt bad for thinking that because she was older there was no point in getting a Doctorate. This lady was beaming and much like Schneider's mother because her "... achievement [had] lifted her spirits and made her feel young again" (6). She had a dream and she wasn't too old to achieve it. Her age was not the issue; here it was a matter of completing the goal she had set for herself. Her story was inspiring and when I got home from my job, I was overwhelmed with the lessons I could take from this simple encounter.

As Schneider said about his mother, "Vince Lombardi would be proud"

(4), as so obviously was my customer's husband. As he sat next to her in the booth, it was obvious that he loved her and supported her through her journey. He didn't need to say a word for someone to see how proud he was. In life, it is important to surround yourself with people that love and encourage you to go after the things you want for yourself. To share an accomplishment with someone you love, who has been there for you, is better than to do it alone. This couple set forth a perfect example of a loving and supportive relationship.

It is so important to dream big and set goals for yourself. Through determination anything is possible and you can accomplish your goals. Having the support and encouragement of someone you love is also important. As Schneider says so eloquently "...you are never too old to dream and never too old to realize those dreams" (6).

Works Cited

Schneider, Cliff. "I'm still learning from my mother." Newsweek 20 Mar. 2000:

13.

Sample Student Essay—Summary-and-Response—Example #2

A summary of, followed by a response to, Robert Heilbroner's essay "[Don't Let Stereotypes Warp Your Judgments.](#)"

In his essay "Don't Let Stereotypes Warp Your Judgments" Robert Heilbroner discusses the many faces of stereotyping. Heilbroner reminds us that stereotyping affects many areas of our lives from how we view the world as a whole to how we view each individual we meet. According to Heilbroner there is nothing positive about stereotyping. He states that it makes us lazy thinkers and that it harms both the people we are stereotyping and ourselves. Heilbroner gives us three ways we can eliminate stereotyping behavior from our lives.

The first suggestion Heilbroner gives to eliminate stereotyping is to "become aware of the standardized pictures in our heads, in other people's heads, in the world around us" (36). My father believes that all French people are stupid, rude "Frogs." I don't know why he believes this; he doesn't even know that many French people. I have never heard my father say anything positive about a French person. He must have had a negative experience with one French person and so now judges all French people by the same yardstick. This judgment on my father's part is very unfair. He has not met *every* French person in the world, so he cannot say that *all* French people are stupid and rude. He could say that one Frenchman he met was that way, but as Heilbroner suggests should not judge all men by one man.

Heilbroner's second suggestion to eliminate stereotyping people is that "we can become suspicious of all judgments that we allow exceptions to prove" (36). He describes a situation where an older person says that all teenagers are wild, and when he meets a teenager who is responsible he says that this one particular teenager is an exception to the rule. When I was in high school we did a lot of studying on Nazi Germany, and I specialized my essay writing on the extermination of the Jews. It would have been so easy for me to fall for the idea that all Germans were monsters, but because I took German as a second language from an amazing older German man, I did not believe this stereotype. I could have looked at him as an exception to the rule, but chose instead to believe that there were many wonderful people in Germany during this time that were trapped in a terrible situation they could do nothing about.

The third suggestion is that "we can be wary of generalizations about people" (Heilbroner 36). How true this is. I am Canadian and while working in the tourist industry in Canada, many people I worked with looked at Americans as being very rude and opinionated. It was true that some of the tourists we met from America were rude and opinionated, but just as many were not. We cannot make generalizations that include a whole nation of people. If we were to do this, we could say that all Muslims are terrorists, that all Asians are afraid of snakes, (that one was from my neighbor just last week!!) that all Canadians say "eh" and that all Americans are rude and opinionated. These are excellent examples of generalizations to be wary of.

There is never an all or nothing situation with people. “People” breaks down into an individual person, and each person is unique and original. Each person is as individual as their DNA or their fingerprints. Not even identical twins have the same fingerprint. And the “fingerprint” we each leave on this world is an individual thing, and cannot be lumped into a stereotype of any sort. Heilbroner’s essay is a good reminder that we were all created equal . . . but very, very different.

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Sample Student Essay—PERSUASION (Opposing Viewpoints Assignment)

Taking Shots: The Debate on Gun Control

Many of us have encountered a bumper sticker stating, “Better Gun Control Means Using Both Hands.” If only gun control could be realistically summed up in such a simple statement. The question of whether or not the United States needs stronger gun control laws has been a heated issue for years as criminals use guns to carry out crimes, and children kill each other both purposely and accidentally. Gun violence is not an issue to be taken lightly, as innocent people are dying. While both sides to this debate agree that something must be done to eliminate gun-related deaths, they have very different ideas on how we should go about it. Most proposed laws will do nothing to keep guns out of reach of criminals and children, and will increase the confidence of criminals; therefore, stronger gun control laws are not the answer.

Some supporters of heftier gun control laws support the creation of a new gun-regulating government agency. They believe this agency should have the power to ban “certain” firearms deemed unnecessary for protection and any firearm that would be a danger to the public. This would give them the power to declare virtually all firearms unnecessary and dangerous. After all, it could be reasonably argued that any gun is a possible danger to the public, and a pitchfork is all that one needs for self defense. By creating a new government agency we would, once again, be expanding an already overgrown government. This agency would decide for us what we have the right to do and what we don’t. We may continue having the right to bear arms, but making gun ownership extremely difficult erodes away the very purpose of that right. This would be one step of many in a crusade to disarm the American public.

As if a new government agency isn't enough, some supporters of stringent gun laws propose an increased retail sales tax on firearms and ammunition. They argue that there are "...external costs imposed on society by gun availability" (Hemenway). This includes medical treatment costs resulting from gun-related injuries, and licensing costs. Paying for gun-related injuries after the fact will not reduce gun crime or deaths. We need preventative action, not additional revenue directed toward the government. Besides, firearm licensing is already paid for by gun dealers and citizens who purchase permits from the federal government and/or state government. Finally, if we only increase the sales tax on guns and ammunition, we are leaving out knives, automobiles and matches, which have all proven deadly in the hands of both criminals and children. An additional sales tax is just another way to punish U.S. citizens for possessing firearms.

Access to other deadly weapons aside, proposed gun control laws will not keep firearms out of the hands of criminals and children. Criminals are criminals because they break laws, and more gun control laws won't force them into compliance. They will obtain guns if they are determined. The war on drugs has been unable to thwart the trafficking of dangerous drugs and guns would be no different. Don B. Kates, criminologist, lawyer and professor, sums it up saying, "...criminals will neither obey gun bans nor refrain from [sic] turning other deadly instruments to their nefarious purposes." Also, children will continue their fascination with firearms as long as they are exposed to violent movies and video games. Mentally disturbed and bullied youths will search for ways to release their frustration, as long as we turn our backs on them. We have to ask ourselves, "Why are school shootings so popular only recently, when

guns have been available for well over 100 years?” These problems are complex and simple “Band-Aid[®]” laws would be ineffective at best.

Another important matter to consider is that restricting firearm possession among citizens through tougher gun control laws increases the confidence of criminals. By restricting gun ownership, criminals recognize that their victims are less likely to possess the means to fight back. These crooks are more inclined to commit crimes, because there is less personal risk to themselves. Law-abiding citizens’ hands are gradually being roped tighter. For example, in today’s society burglars are breaking into homes and suing homeowners when they get injured. What’s repulsive is the fact that they are winning these cases. Our legal system is giving criminals the green light and then patting them on the back for a job well done. Law-abiding civilians must have greater rights than criminals in order to prevail. College professor, Steve Pudlo, states, “If he [the criminal] perceives that any target has an equal likelihood to oppose, resist or even damage him, then he would be far more likely to abandon that method of livelihood.” To illustrate, one study asked convicted felons what they feared the most while they were committing a crime, and the number one response was their fear of a victim producing a firearm. When we chip away the rights of lawfully-armed citizens, we give criminals the confidence to perpetrate their profession.

Given that many proposed gun control laws are riddled with wording designed to progressively pry guns from the hands of U.S. citizens, we should not impose stronger gun control laws. If we want to lessen gun crime, we can start by giving violent criminals a permanent address at the penitentiary. If we want our children to remain safer in society, we must take their developmental and emotional needs more

seriously. Our culture is ultimately responsible for the escalation in violence – we are repeatedly reaping what we have sown.

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