



# Writing

*(Descriptive & Creative)*

الفرقة: الأولى

الكلية: تربية عام (لائحة جديدة)

القسم: اللغة الإنجليزية

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2024 / 2023 م

# بيانات أساسية

الكلية: التربية

الفرقة: الأولى تعليم عام (لائحة جديدة)

القسم: اللغة الإنجليزية

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# CHAPTER 1

## Seeing the Big Picture: Paragraphs, Purpose, and Audience

Before you read this chapter, it's a good idea to test your understanding of paragraphs, purpose, and audience. You may know more than you think.

For each question, select all the answers that apply.

### OVERVIEW OF THIS CHAPTER

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### WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

1. Short paragraphs in newspapers, magazines, and Web sites allow you to read quickly. These are “popular” paragraphs. On the other hand, “academic” paragraphs are much longer. The purpose of academic paragraphs is:
  - to pack a lot of information in the space provided.
  - to show that the writer is an intellectual.
  - to encourage the reader to slow down and think carefully.
2. Every time you write, you write for someone. In academic writing, the person for whom you are writing is called:
  - the editor.
  - the author.
  - the audience.
  - the writer.
3. If you are writing an e-mail to your boss explaining why you deserve a raise, what type of audience are you addressing?
  - personal
  - professional
  - academic
4. Every time you write, you write for a reason or purpose. What are some of the common purposes for writing in college?
  - to inform
  - to educate
  - to inspire
  - to persuade
5. If you are writing a composition for a college class, which of the following describes the type of language you will need to use?
  - Correct grammar is appreciated.
  - Correct grammar is optional.
  - Correct grammar is required.

# Understanding Paragraphs

Let's begin with an obvious question: What is a paragraph? Many people will be able to provide only a general or unclear definition. Related questions include:

- What should an ideal paragraph look like?
- How long should it be?
- Are there rules for constructing a paragraph?
- Why do so many paragraphs look so different from one another?

Knowing the answers to these questions will give you a more confident vision for your writing projects.

## ACADEMIC AND POPULAR PARAGRAPHS

**scholarly journal:** a publication — similar to a magazine, but often without advertising — in which scholars, professors, and specialists publish their research and their ideas

In your reading experiences, you may have noticed that paragraphs come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

Some paragraphs are quite long, with many sentences. In general, they have a main idea and plenty of supporting examples and details. For convenience, we will call these **academic** paragraphs. They are commonly found in textbooks, college essays, and scholarly journals. Academic paragraphs encourage readers to slow down and reflect on the ideas being discussed.

Other paragraphs are quite short, with only a few sentences. These paragraphs may or may not contain a main idea, and they may or may not have supporting examples and details. We will call these **popular** paragraphs. They are commonly found in newspapers, magazines, Web sites, and personal communication, such as e-mails. Popular paragraphs allow readers to move quickly, grabbing key pieces of information as they go.

The following writing samples illustrate the difference between popular and academic paragraphs. Although the articles are about the same length, the one on the left contains only three (academic) paragraphs, while the one on the right contains fourteen (popular) paragraphs. Take a look, and then complete the activities that follow.

Low-income students who graduate from high school with at least minimal qualifications for four-year institutions enroll at half the rate of their high-income peers. Only 78 percent of students from low-income families who rank as top achievers on tests of college readiness actually attend college. In contrast, nearly the same share of students from high-income families who rank at the bottom of such tests do so. The conventional view is that students from low-income families don't enroll or complete college because they are not academically qualified. But the New Century evidence paints a different and more hopeful picture. Despite the considerable obstacles they encounter as they grow up, many high school students from

Secondhand smoke kills more than 600,000 people worldwide every year, according to a new study.

In the first look at the global impact of secondhand smoking, researchers analyzed data from 2004 for 192 countries. They found 40 percent of children and more than 30 percent of nonsmoking men and women regularly breathe in secondhand smoke.

Scientists then estimated that passive smoking causes about 379,000 deaths from heart disease, 165,000 deaths from lower respiratory disease, 36,900 deaths from asthma, and 21,400 deaths from lung cancer a year.

Altogether, those account for about 1 percent of the world's deaths. The study was paid for by

low-income, disadvantaged households are qualified but are choosing not to attend college or to attend colleges that are less selective than their qualifications justify.

What can be done to help such students get the ticket to college? Clearly, more generous financial aid is part of the answer. The financial barriers to college enrollment among students from low-income families are great—and growing. Since the early 1970s, the value of federal aid packages for low-income students has fallen precipitously as a percentage of college costs. In the same period, college costs as a portion of family income have remained unchanged for the top 40 percent of the family income distribution while increasing substantially for low-income families. Without a big increase in federal and state support for means-tested student aid programs, a growing number of qualified students from low-income households will find the door to higher education and upward mobility closed for them and their children.

The nation's colleges and universities should also do more to help children from low-income families. They should mount more aggressive efforts to identify and recruit students from low-income families with strong academic potential early in their high-school careers, providing them with better information about the course requirements and procedures for college admission. Colleges should also expand their financial aid programs for low-income students. Currently, more four-year colleges offer financial aid to athletes and students with "special nonacademic talents" than to disadvantaged students. Finally, more colleges should follow the lead of the Universities of California, Florida, and Washington and design admissions programs that evaluate the academic accomplishments of applicants in light of such obstacles as family income, parental education, and social environment. Doesn't an SAT total score of 1200 combined with an A average mean something different for an applicant raised in a low-income household and educated in a run-down public school than for an applicant from a high-income home who was educated in an outstanding private school?

Laura D'Andrea Tyson  
"Needed: Affirmative Action for the Poor"

the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare and Bloomberg Philanthropies. It was published Friday in the British medical journal *Lancet*.

"This helps us understand the real toll of tobacco," said Armando Peruga, a program manager at the World Health Organization's Tobacco-Free Initiative who led the study. He said the approximately 603,000 deaths from secondhand smoking should be added to the 5.1 million deaths that smoking itself causes every year.

Peruga said WHO was particularly concerned about the 165,000 children who die of smoke-related respiratory infections, mostly in Southeast Asia and Africa.

"The mix of infectious diseases and secondhand smoke is a deadly combination," Peruga said. Children whose parents smoke have a higher risk of sudden infant death syndrome, ear infections, pneumonia, bronchitis, and asthma. Their lungs may also grow more slowly than kids whose parents don't smoke.

Peruga and colleagues found the highest numbers of people exposed to secondhand smoke are in Europe and Asia. The lowest rates of exposure were in the Americas, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Africa.

Secondhand smoke had its biggest impact on women, killing about 281,000. In many parts of the world, women are at least 50 percent more likely to be exposed to secondhand smoke than men.

While many Western countries have introduced smoking bans in public places, experts said it would be difficult to legislate further.

"I don't think it is likely we will see strong regulations reaching into homes," said Heather Wipfli of the Institute for Global Health at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, who was not connected to the study. She said more public smoking bans and education might persuade people to quit smoking at home.

In the U.K., the British Lung Foundation is petitioning the government to outlaw smoking in cars.

Helena Shovelton, the foundation's chief executive, said smoking parents frequently underestimate the danger their habit is doing to their children.

"It's almost as if people are in denial," she said. "They absolutely would not do something dangerous like leaving their child in the middle of the road, but somehow, smoking in front of them is fine."

Maria Cheng, Associated Press  
"More Than 600,000 Killed by Secondhand Smoke"

**ACTIVITY 1**

In each writing sample on pages 4–5, count the number of sentences in each paragraph. Then, read one or more paragraphs to get an idea what kind of information the author includes. Finally, in the space provided, write your own definition or description of a popular or academic paragraph.

1. “Needed: Affirmative Action for the Poor,” by Laura D’Andrea Tyson

Paragraph 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 3: \_\_\_\_\_

An *academic* paragraph is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. “More Than 600,000 Killed by Secondhand Smoke,” by Maria Cheng

Paragraph 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph 5: \_\_\_\_\_

A *popular* paragraph is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**ACTIVITY 2: Teamwork**

For each of the following writing samples, identify whether the author is using popular or academic paragraphs. Then, in the space provided, explain why the paragraphs are popular or academic.

**EXAMPLE:**

Tolls on state turnpikes will be raised by as much as fifty cents by early 2012 if a state legislative committee’s plan is approved.

“We can’t maintain our roadways at the current level of funding,” said state senator Rick Bartley, chair of the State Transportation Committee and a chief architect of the plan. “Unless we raise tolls — or take funds from other projects — desperately needed road and bridge repairs will not be possible.”



In response, Rita Mendos, Ways and Means Committee chair, commented, “That’s a lot of nonsense. We shouldn’t be looking at fifty-cent toll hikes until we have exhausted all other possibilities.”

**Type of paragraphs:** popular

**Explanation:** The paragraphs have only one to three sentences. The author wants the readers to move quickly, grabbing key pieces of information as they go.

1. A Middleton teen is in critical condition after crashing her sport utility vehicle into the Myers Road overpass on Route 87 Tuesday evening, state police reported.

Seventeen-year-old Lexie Peters, a senior at Catholic Memorial High School, was taken to Mercy Hospital in Rogersville after the crash. Witnesses reported that her vehicle, which was traveling south on Route 87 at around 11 p.m., swerved a few times before the crash. No other vehicles were involved.

Police are investigating the cause of the accident.

**Type of paragraphs:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Binge drinking, consuming a large volume of alcohol in a brief period, is a common and serious problem at many colleges (Comer, 2007). Disturbing findings from several studies have led some experts to call binge drinking “the No. 1 public health hazard” for full-time college students (Wechsler et al., 1995). Researchers have found that 43.4 percent of college students binge drink at least once annually, with around 50 percent of students engaging in this behavior six or more times a month (Sharma, 2005; Wechsler et al., 2004, 2000, 1997, 1994). Disturbingly, alcohol is a factor in nearly 40 percent of academic problems and in 28 percent of all drop-out cases (Anderson, 1994). Additionally, binge drinking has been linked to car accidents, bodily injury, date rape and other aggressive behavior, and psychological problems (Wechsler & Wuethrich, 2002). As a result, the problem affects not only the drinker but also his or her friends and acquaintances, and even strangers. Even students who are well-behaved and nonaggressive when sober can act out in disturbing, even violent, ways when they have had too much to drink. In the mid-1990s, a survey of U.S. college students found that those most likely to binge drink tended to center their social lives on parties, to engage in other high-risk behaviors, and to live in fraternity or sorority houses (Wechsler et al., 1995). Many universities are targeting these at-risk populations by offering counseling and alternatives to drinking-centered social activities, among other responses. Additionally, some universities are declaring certain dorms “substance-free.”

**Type of paragraph:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. Hip-hop music speaks to me like no other music. First of all, I just love the sound of it. Great rappers like Mos Def and Nelly have an energetic vocal style that gets me to my feet, and they get a solid rhythm down even if there's no drumming or other music in the background. When there is music, whether from instruments or sampling, the sound can be even richer. Drum tracks, guitar riffs, and even horns add to the energy and style. Second, I love the poetry and storytelling of hip-hop music. The poetry comes partly from rhyming, but it's more than that; the words of these artists (like Kanye West talking about giving "salty looks") can create vivid pictures in the listeners' minds. Also, whether they are singing about their own lives or things that are going on in the streets or in the larger world, talented rappers know how to "tell it like it is"; they tell stories that their listeners can relate to. Finally, I love the tradition of inventiveness in hip-hop music. For example, artists sample tracks of other musicians to create new songs. Also, hip-hop has inspired invention in the worlds of fashion and dance. Artists are always coming up with new clothing styles and dance moves that fans want to imitate. For all these reasons, I love hip-hop, and it will always keep me moving and thinking.

**Type of paragraph:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. Detective Banes could tell by the way Phillips walked into the interrogation room that he had something to hide. Phillips shuffled in, pale and slouched, and he was wearing sunglasses, of all things, on this dark and rainy day.
- "Take those off," Banes said, pointing to the glasses, "and sit down."
- Phillips hesitated, then removed his glasses, revealing bloodshot eyes. Without the glasses he looked more like the kid he was than the murderer he might be. Phillips sat down and leaned so far back in the chair his head rested on the back.
- "Let's talk about what you were doing on the night of the thirteenth," Banes began.
- "That's easy," Phillips laughed. "I had Chinese takeout and went to bed at ten."
- "All right," Banes replied, smiling in spite of himself. "But let's talk about what happened between the fortune cookie and lights out."

Type of paragraphs: \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. I am pleased to report on the excellent performance of shipping manager Dave Nuñez for the year ending December 31, 2011. Dave is hard-working, highly competent, and admired by his employees.

Dave is one of our most skilled workers. In 2011, he took steps to improve his performance even more, including attending educational seminars and the special managers' course. Also, he created and implemented our new shipping efficiency program this year, and this program has increased the productivity of our shipping operation by 25 percent since it began in March.

Additionally, Dave's shipping crew is the most efficient in the company's history, and this year he introduced a bonus program to reward top employees in the shipping department. This incentive program has increased productivity even further. Dave's employees appreciate his efforts and take pride in their work.

Type of paragraphs: \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Understanding Your Purpose

Now, let us turn to the issue of *why* you write. Every time you write, you write for a reason, or **purpose**. To illustrate this simple point, complete the following activity.

### ACTIVITY 3: Teamwork

Discuss with your classmates the reason, or purpose, for each of the following writing projects. Then, fill in the blank below with the author's likely purpose.

**EXAMPLE:** a customer's complaint about poor service

**Her purpose:** to have the store improve its customer service

CONTINUED >

1. a supervisor's one-year review of your job performance  
**Her purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  2. an e-mail in which you give a friend directions to your apartment  
**Your purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  3. a movie critic's review of a new action film  
**His purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  4. a scary new novel from Stephen King  
**His purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  5. a medical researcher's article about the discovery of a new AIDS drug  
**His purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 

## **WRITE TO INFORM, ENTERTAIN, OR PERSUADE**

As a college writer, you should have a clear sense of purpose for each composition that you write. Knowing your purpose will help you make effective choices about the information you include and how to present this information.

In the broadest sense, the purpose of all writing is to communicate information and ideas. However, there are three key purposes for much of the writing that you will do in this class and in college. These purposes are: to inform, to entertain, and to persuade.

### ***To Inform***

For many of your college writing assignments, you will be asked to provide information on specific issues or topics. In order to increase your reader's knowledge and understanding of the issue or topic, you should provide clear and accurate information. For the following topics, your purpose would be to inform the reader:

- Discuss how to study effectively for a test in college.
- Identify the causes of the Boston Tea Party.

- Explain how to prepare for a job interview.
- Write a detailed description of the *Mona Lisa*.

**Mona Lisa:** A famous portrait done by the Italian painter Leonardo da Vinci in the sixteenth century

### To Entertain

When you write to entertain, you go beyond mere facts and information. Instead, you want to stimulate your reader's imagination and emotions. In order to do this successfully, make your ideas as creative and vivid as possible. For the following topics, your purpose would be to entertain the reader. (*Note:* Entertainment includes ideas that are humorous, dramatic, tragic, or inspirational.)

- Discuss the human suffering in the battle of Gettysburg.
- Describe what it feels like to fall in love.
- Write a portrait of an "evil" or "heroic" person you know.
- Tell the story of the proudest moment of your life.

### To Persuade

For other college writing assignments, you will be asked to challenge (and hopefully change) your reader's opinion on specific issues or topics. In order to do this successfully, you will have to show clear thinking and provide good evidence for your position. For the following topics, your purpose would be to persuade the reader:

- Convince your college to reduce tuition fees.
- Argue *for* or *against* steroid use in professional sports.
- Persuade one of your professors to give less homework.
- Argue whether animal shelters should euthanize stray dogs and cats.

Here is a chart that will help you recognize and understand some key purposes for your writing:

PURPOSE	DESIRED EFFECT	REQUIREMENTS	RELATED TERMS
<b>To inform</b>	Increase your reader's knowledge and understanding.	Provide clear and accurate information.	to educate to enlighten
<b>To entertain</b>	Captivate your reader's imagination and emotions.	Use creative and vivid ideas.	to amuse to captivate to inspire
<b>To persuade</b>	Change your reader's mind about something.	Show clear thinking and provide evidence for your position.	to influence to convince to motivate

**Power Tip**

Some writing assignments may have multiple purposes. However, you should identify which of these purposes is your *primary purpose*. Keep that in mind as you develop your ideas.

**ACTIVITY 4**

For each of the following writing assignments, decide whether the purpose is to inform, to entertain, or to persuade. Then, in the spaces provided, write down the purpose, the desired effect, and the requirements for the writing.

**EXAMPLE:** Write a humorous blog on the different types of baseball fans.

**Purpose:** to entertain

**Desired effect:** captivate your reader's imagination and emotions

**Requirements:** use creative and vivid ideas

1. As a nursing student, write a report describing your patient's condition.

**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Desired effect:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Requirements:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. Write a letter to your younger brother or sister, encouraging him or her to enroll in college.

**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Desired effect:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Requirements:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. Write about a struggle that you and your family went through and survived.

**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Desired effect:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Requirements:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. Write a letter to your credit card company, asking them to excuse a penalty for a late payment.

**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Desired effect:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Requirements:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. For your world history class, write a paper explaining the causes of the fall of the Roman Empire.

**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Desired effect:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Requirements:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ACTIVITY 5: Teamwork**

Read each of the following passages. Discuss the purpose of each one with your classmates, and then write the purpose in the space provided. Also, write a brief explanation of why you think the passage is written with that purpose in mind, giving examples from the passage.

**EXAMPLE:**

My daughter, who just got engaged, asked me what it means to have a good marriage. I had to think about her question, but then I came up with an answer that satisfies me, and I hope it satisfied her. To me, a good marriage is being with someone you look forward to seeing at the end of the day, even after years of togetherness. The two of you will have your disagreements, but you will always come back to wanting to share the stories, fun times, and difficulties of your lives. A good marriage is one in which you find balance, not only in responsibilities but also between together time and alone time; you give each other space and room to grow. Perhaps most important, a good marriage is one in which each person truly respects the other, for when respect isn't there, nothing positive can happen. Last, but certainly not least, a good marriage requires laughter. I'm not kidding when I tell people that I married my husband because he makes me laugh more than anyone else. Then, I realized that he was smart and good-looking, too!

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paragraph is to inform.

**Explanation:** The author provides clear and accurate information to explain what makes a good marriage. One good example of this is "a good marriage is one in which you find balance, not only in responsibilities but also between together time and alone time."

1. Spending days at my grandparents' farm in the country taught me to appreciate where food comes from. Every morning, my grandfather would wake me up in the dark, around 4 A.M., to go out to the barn and milk the cows. I would be sleepy but excited. We'd open the creaky wooden door, and I'd smell cows and hay. At first, Grandpa just had me watch him while he set up the stool next to the cow and placed the bucket under the udder. Then I got to help him milk. One of the cows, Broodie, mooed and licked my face. Her tongue was like a giant sponge. After that, Grandpa and I walked to the chicken coop where we'd reach under the chickens to get the fresh eggs. Some of the chickens squawked at us and beat their wings. The eggs were still warm and Grandpa let me hold a couple as we finished our morning chores. Back at the house, Grandma made a huge breakfast for us, using the eggs and milk that we had collected. The food was made more delicious because we were hungry from our chores. I felt proud of our work.

**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Students at my college should avoid eating at campus food facilities because of unsanitary conditions. In a two-week investigation of our campus restaurants, my friends and I discovered a lack of reasonable cleanliness. In fact, some of the practices were so disgusting that we vowed to take our cause to the college's administration. At the first restaurant (Burgs), we discovered some employees who did not wash their hands after handling raw meat, and others who served food after it had been dropped on the floor. At the second restaurant (the cafeteria), old grease was dripping from the stove fans, and food scraps had been swept into the corners but not removed. At the third restaurant (Salad-n-Slice), we accompanied a city health inspector, who found rodent droppings in a food storage area and behind the stove. He also noticed that vegetables were being cut on a surface that had recently held raw beef. From these examples, it is clear that the college administration should act soon and decisively to improve sanitation in these facilities. Otherwise, students might be missing more class due to illness such as food poisoning.

**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. It's not necessarily true that the longer you study, the greater your chances of scoring well on a test. Time alone won't guarantee your success. You must study *effectively*, making the best use of your time. First, before an exam, consult with your instructor. Instead of asking, "What's on the test?" you can request guidelines about what topics will be covered and how you can best prepare. This information will provide a purpose for your study. Next, find a place to study where you will remain awake and undistracted: a desk in a library is better than a bed near a television. Then, with your purpose in mind, reread your lecture notes, textbook sections, and other materials. Underline key information and mark points that you do not understand. When you have finished this review, go back to these points and try to answer them. Use any chapter summaries or review materials that are available. Finally, if the instructor has provided sample test questions — or if review questions are available in the textbook — try to answer them. They will help you do a final check of your readiness for the exam.



**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Understanding Your Audience

Whenever you write, you always write for *someone*. If you are writing in a diary or journal, you will probably be writing for yourself. However, with most writing projects, you will be writing for *someone else* — your **audience**, or readers.

As a college writer, you should be aware of three general types of audience: personal, professional, and academic.

In your personal writing, you communicate with family, friends, and acquaintances. These people can be considered your **personal audience**. Today, much of our personal writing is done electronically through e-mail, text messaging, and social networking sites.

Professional writing is used for business, journalism, and most forms of public communication. When you write for a **professional audience** (employers, employees, customers, clients, newspaper readers, and so on), your goal is to communicate public — not personal or private — information.

Finally, when you write assignments for your college classes, you will be writing for an **academic audience**. In this situation, your main academic audience will be your instructors or professors. The larger academic audience also includes students, faculty, scholars, and researchers. Your goal is to provide ideas and information that readers can trust. Academic writing includes college essays, textbooks, and scholarly journals and books.

### ACTIVITY 6

For each of the following pieces of writing, decide who the specific audience is. Then, write the type of audience (personal, professional, or academic) in the space provided.

**EXAMPLE:** An in-class essay exam for your literature class.

**Type of audience:** academic

1. A first-year evaluation of your performance as a dental assistant.

**Type of audience:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. A letter to your bank requesting further information on the rejection of your loan application.

**Type of audience:** \_\_\_\_\_

- A report for your psychology class on the services offered by the college's Mental Health Center.

**Type of audience:** \_\_\_\_\_

- A letter to your cousin serving in the U.S. Army in Afghanistan.

**Type of audience:** \_\_\_\_\_

- A chapter in your world history book on the Trojan War.

**Type of audience:** \_\_\_\_\_

Knowing the audience for your writing can help you make important decisions about how to communicate effectively. Specifically, you should:

- Use language that is appropriate for your audience.
- Provide information that is appropriate for your audience.

## USE LANGUAGE THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

If you are writing an e-mail or text message to a friend, you can use abbreviations (like *CU* for *see you* or *UR* for *you are*) that make your writing fast and fun. You will probably use some slang, and you may break grammar rules. On the other hand, if you are writing a letter to your manager at work, you will want to avoid abbreviations, slang, and any profanity that could offend or confuse your manager. Although you will want your writing to be clear and easy to understand, your grammar will probably be “relaxed” — correct enough for clear communication but not perfect.

Finally, if you are writing an essay on cloning for your biology class, your instructor will expect you to use more formal language and grammar. Also, you may need to use some technical language related to the topic of cloning. Because your audience (the instructor) will be knowledgeable about the topic, such language will be acceptable, even expected. You will also need to follow grammar rules carefully and to write complete, correct sentences.

The following chart summarizes the expectations of a few common audiences for whom you will write.

**slang:** informal language often used between friends or within other social groups. *Dis* for *disrespect* is an example of slang.

### Different Audience Expectations for Writing

AUDIENCE TYPE	EXAMPLES	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY
<b>Personal</b>	family, friends, Facebook users, etc.	Correct grammar is optional.	Informal English: slang and abbreviations are accepted
<b>Professional</b>	boss, credit card company, newspaper readers, etc.	Correct grammar is appreciated or expected.	Standard English
<b>Academic</b>	instructors, professors, other students, scholars, etc.	Correct grammar is required.	Standard English, sometimes with technical or specialized vocabulary

### ACTIVITY 7: Teamwork

With your classmates, discuss what type of language would be appropriate for each of the following pieces of writing. Then, describe the language, referring to the three features shown in the previous chart.

**EXAMPLE:** a memo to employees about changes to health benefits

**Appropriate language:** Standard English and correct grammar

1. a paper on exploration of the American West for a history class

**Appropriate language:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. a letter to the principal of your child's elementary school

**Appropriate language:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. an online party invitation (to friends)

**Appropriate language:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. an in-class essay exam for your literature class

**Appropriate language:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. an e-mail to your supervisor asking for a meeting about a project you are working on

**Appropriate language:** \_\_\_\_\_

## INCLUDE INFORMATION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

If your audience has little knowledge about your topic, you will need to include the most **basic** information possible. For example, if you are giving car maintenance advice to someone who knows little about cars, you will need to provide very basic advice, such as the need to change the oil regularly.

If your audience has a lot of knowledge or experience, you may skip very basic information and move directly to more **advanced** information. A car expert would already know about the need for regular oil changes but might want to hear about the latest technology for increasing engine efficiency.

If your audience is somewhere in between, you will need to provide an **intermediate** level of information — not too simple, and not too advanced. If the information you provide is too simple for your audience, you may lose their interest; if the information is too advanced for your audience, they may not understand your writing.

### Power Tip

For some writing assignments, you may be required to cover a *range* of information, from basic to advanced. For example, even though your college instructors will usually know a lot about the topics they assign, they might want you to include some basic information so that they know you understand the topic fully. Whenever you are in doubt about the type of information that is appropriate for a writing assignment, ask your instructor.

To decide what kind of information is appropriate for your audience, always answer this question: *How much experience or knowledge does my audience have regarding the topic?*

Whether the information you provide is basic, intermediate, or advanced, be sure that it is as precise and accurate as possible.

### ACTIVITY 8

Write down the type of information (basic, intermediate, or advanced) that would be appropriate for the following audiences.

**EXAMPLE:** a description of the making of stained-glass windows for second graders

**Appropriate information:** basic

1. an essay on jazz for your modern dance instructor

**Appropriate information:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. a paragraph on campfire safety for first-year Girl Scouts

**Appropriate information:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. a description of how wine is made for a group of wine drinkers

**Appropriate information:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. an explanation of how to use PowerPoint for your mother or father

**Appropriate information:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. a list of safety reminders for hikers climbing Mount Everest for the second time

**Appropriate information:** \_\_\_\_\_

### BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: Seeing the Big Picture

In this chapter, you have learned about paragraphs, purposes, and audiences for your writing. Confirm your knowledge by filling in the blank spaces in the following sentences. If you need help, review the pages listed after each sentence.

- ✓ There are two general types of paragraphs. Longer paragraphs that encourage readers to slow down and reflect deeply are called \_\_\_\_\_ paragraphs. Shorter paragraphs that allow readers to move quickly, grabbing key pieces of information as they go, are called \_\_\_\_\_ paragraphs. (page 4)

- ✓ There are three general purposes for most of the writing that you do. If your goal is to increase your reader's knowledge and understanding, the purpose is to \_\_\_\_\_. If your goal is to captivate your reader's imagination and emotions, the purpose is to \_\_\_\_\_. Finally, if your goal is to change your reader's mind about something, the purpose is to \_\_\_\_\_. (pages 10–11)
- ✓ There are three general types of audience to keep in mind when you write. These audiences are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. (page 15)
- ✓ When you write a college assignment, you must use \_\_\_\_\_ grammar and \_\_\_\_\_ English. In addition, some \_\_\_\_\_ vocabulary may be required. (page 16)
- ✓ When you write a college assignment, be careful to include information that is appropriate for your audience. Depending on what your instructor requires, this information may be \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_ (or a combination of these). (page 17)

## CHAPTER 2

# Developing a Topic

Before you read this chapter, it's a good idea to test your understanding of developing a topic for college writing. You may know more than you think.

For each question, select all the answers that apply.

### WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

- 1. Which of the following topics is the narrowest in scope?**
  - Write about a big mistake that you regret making.
  - Write about common mistakes made by new college students.
  - Write about the ways in which human beings learn from their mistakes.
- 2. Here is a sample writing topic: *Write about money.* What type of topic is this?**
  - a broad topic
  - a limited topic
  - a narrow topic
- 3. The process for gathering more ideas for your topic is called:**
  - outlining.
  - brainstorming.
  - proofreading.
  - editing.
- 4. There are four popular writing methods for getting your ideas down on paper. Which of the following is NOT one of these methods?**
  - clustering
  - revising
  - listing
  - freewriting
- 5. When you choose a writing topic, you can ask a number of questions to help you decide what to write about. Which of the following questions will NOT help you make good choices?**
  - Do I know a lot about the topic?
  - Am I interested in sharing my ideas about this topic?
  - Which topic will be the easiest?
  - What would I like to learn about this topic?

### OVERVIEW OF THIS CHAPTER

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Narrowing a Topic 22

Selecting a Topic That Works for You 24

Gathering Ideas for Your Narrowed Topic 26

Bringing It All Together 37

# Understanding Broad, Limited, and Narrow Topics

In Chapter 1 you learned about the features of different types of paragraphs, purposes, and audiences. As you now know, in college you will typically write academic paragraphs in response to specific assignments.

Some assignment topics are very broad or general, giving students a lot of choice in what to write about. Other topics are more carefully defined, giving students a limited choice in what to write about. In other cases, a topic may be very narrow, giving students very little choice in what to write about.

As a college student, you should be able to recognize the type of topic you have been assigned. To work effectively with a topic, you should know how much choice you have and how much further narrowing, if any, you will have to do.

Now, let's look at some sample writing assignments for a cultural geography class. The instructor might make the writing assignment broad, limited, or narrow:

**BROAD**      Discuss modern China.

For this assignment, you would have a great deal of choice in what to write about. For example, you could write about Chinese politics, economy, education, art, or other aspects of contemporary China. Now, let's look at a more limited topic:

**LIMITED**      Discuss China's population problems.

For this assignment, you would have a limited choice in what to write about because the instructor has narrowed the topic to "population problems." Now, let's look at an even more limited topic:

**NARROW**      Discuss the success of China's one-child policy.

For this assignment, you have very little choice in what to write about because the instructor has narrowed the topic from "population problems" to a specific policy: China's one-child policy. The professor has even noted that you must focus on the success of this policy.

## ACTIVITY 1: Teamwork

Examine each of the following groups of topics. Then, decide which topic offers the most choice in what to write about, which one offers a limited choice, and which one offers little choice. Label each topic broad, limited, or narrow.

<b>EXAMPLE:</b> Discuss your favorite professional soccer player.	<u>narrow</u>
Discuss professional soccer.	<u>broad</u>
Discuss last year's World Cup.	<u>limited</u>

CONTINUED >

1. Discuss college education. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Discuss an enjoyable aspect of your college experience. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Discuss the benefits of going to college. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Discuss your favorite *Harry Potter* book or movie. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Discuss whether *Harry Potter* is children’s literature. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Discuss the popularity of *Harry Potter*. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Discuss a favorite feature of Facebook. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Discuss social networking on the Internet. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Discuss the differences between Facebook and Twitter. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Discuss the symptoms of depression. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Discuss a time when you felt depressed. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Discuss psychological disorders. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Discuss the importance of grades in college. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Discuss your GPA (Grade Point Average). \_\_\_\_\_  
 Discuss whether your teachers grade too hard. \_\_\_\_\_

## Narrowing a Topic

If you are assigned a broad or limited topic, you will need to narrow it to a more specific topic. The scope of your topic should fit the required length of the composition. Your instructor will usually require a certain length for your writing assignment. Here are some common lengths for college writing assignments (typed and double-spaced):

- an academic paragraph (one page or less)
- a short essay (one to three pages)
- a standard essay (three to five pages)
- a long essay or research paper (more than five pages)

Suppose that you have been assigned the following topic:

**BROAD TOPIC**      Discuss your college experiences.

Clearly, this topic is too broad for a paragraph or a short essay. There are so many experiences that you could discuss — and so many examples to



provide — that you would never complete the assignment successfully in the space of a paragraph or a short essay. Here is how the topic could be narrowed for a standard essay.

**LIMITED TOPIC** I will discuss my struggles in college.

In a standard essay (three to five pages), you could effectively describe a number of struggles that you've had in college, such as keeping up with homework, communicating with instructors, selecting classes, and paying for tuition and books. You would have plenty of room to provide specific examples and details to illustrate each of these struggles. For a paragraph or short essay, you would need to narrow the topic more tightly.

**NARROWED TOPIC** I will discuss a difficult class I've had.

In the space of a short essay or paragraph, you would be able to provide a few good examples to illustrate the difficulties that you have had in just one class.

## ACTIVITY 2

Change each of the following broad topics to a limited topic. Then, change the limited topic to a narrow topic.

**EXAMPLE: Broad:** Discuss something that you are good at or something that you know a lot about.

**Limited:** I am good at sports.

**Narrow:** As a running back, I have contributed to the success of my college football team.

- 1. Broad:** Discuss something that you are good at or something that you know a lot about. (*Hint:* For the limited topic, identify your ability or knowledge. For the narrow topic, identify a situation in which you have used that ability or knowledge.)

**Limited:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrow:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Broad:** Discuss a decision that you made that was good or bad for you. (*Hint:* For the limited topic, identify the decision. For the narrow topic, state why it was good or bad for you.)

**Limited:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrow:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Broad:** Discuss a person who has played an important role in your life. (*Hint:* For the limited topic, identify the person. For the narrow topic, identify the important role that the person played in your life.)

**Limited:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrow:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. **Broad:** Discuss a powerful memory from your childhood. (*Hint:* For the limited topic, identify the memory. For the narrow topic, state why the memory is so powerful.)

**Limited:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrow:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. **Broad:** Discuss something important that you feel is missing from your life. (*Hint:* For the limited topic, identify the thing that is missing from your life. For the narrow topic, state why this thing is important to you.)

**Limited:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrow:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

---

## Selecting a Topic That Works for You

When you have a choice of topics, be sure to consider which topic will work best for you. In other words, decide which topic will *motivate* you to write and give you the *best results*. Here is a list of criteria that you can use to evaluate topics:

- Does the topic appeal to you immediately? Does it seem interesting, exciting, or fun? (A topic that grabs your interest will motivate you.)
- What can you learn from this topic about yourself or the world you live in? Would you like to explore this topic and learn more? (Intellectual curiosity — the desire to learn more — will also motivate you.)
- Do you know a lot about this topic? Do you have a lot to say about it? (Having a lot to say about a topic will motivate you.)
- Is this a topic that you would like to discuss with other people? Would you like to show your finished composition to others? (The desire to share your ideas with other people will motivate you.)

### ACTIVITY 3

For this activity, write your narrowed topics from Activity 2 in the line that says “Narrowed Topic.” Score each topic according to the four criteria listed, using the following key: **3** = definitely **2** = somewhat **1** = not really. Finally, add the four scores together for the total score.

1. Narrowed Topic \_\_\_\_\_
 

The topic seems exciting or fun.	3 2 1
I would like to learn something from this topic.	3 2 1
I know a lot about this topic.	3 2 1
I would like to share my ideas about this topic with others.	3 2 1
Total score: _____	
  
2. Narrowed Topic \_\_\_\_\_
 

The topic seems exciting or fun.	3 2 1
I would like to learn something from this topic.	3 2 1
I know a lot about this topic.	3 2 1
I would like to share my ideas about this topic with others.	3 2 1
Total score: _____	
  
3. Narrowed Topic \_\_\_\_\_
 

The topic seems exciting or fun.	3 2 1
I would like to learn something from this topic.	3 2 1
I know a lot about this topic.	3 2 1
I would like to share my ideas about this topic with others.	3 2 1
Total score: _____	
  
4. Narrowed Topic \_\_\_\_\_
 

The topic seems exciting or fun.	3 2 1
I would like to learn something from this topic.	3 2 1
I know a lot about this topic.	3 2 1
I would like to share my ideas about this topic with others.	3 2 1
Total score: _____	
  
5. Narrowed Topic \_\_\_\_\_
 

The topic seems exciting or fun.	3 2 1
I would like to learn something from this topic.	3 2 1
I know a lot about this topic.	3 2 1
I would like to share my ideas about this topic with others.	3 2 1
Total score: _____	

### ACTIVITY 4: Teamwork

With a few of your classmates, identify which of your topics in Activity 3 scored the highest, and explain why you believe these topics would (or would not) motivate you to write and help you get the best results in your composition.

## Gathering Ideas for Your Narrowed Topic



Once you have selected a narrowed topic for your composition, it is time to go deeper — into your brain, memory, imagination, and emotions — to discover everything you know, think, or feel about the topic. The more ideas and support you gather, the more you will have to say in your paragraph or essay.

This process of gathering ideas and support is generally known as **brainstorming**. Ideally, your brain will be a “storm” of creative energy and ideas.

### CLUSTERING AND LISTING

As you brainstorm, you will want to write down your ideas as quickly and clearly as possible. Two popular methods for putting your ideas on paper are **clustering** and **listing**. With clustering, you use a series of bubbles (or circles) and connecting lines to record your ideas. With listing, you group your ideas in a series of short lists on the page. Clustering and listing will often reveal more layers to your topic.

Start by writing down your **narrowed topic** at the top of the page (for listing) or in a bubble in the center of the page (for clustering). Several obvious or **big ideas** related to your topic will usually pop into your head right away. Then, as you focus on each of these big ideas individually, some **related examples** should come to mind to support those ideas. Finally, if you focus on each of these examples one at a time, you may recall **specific details** to illustrate and support the examples.

The graphic below provides a guide to the brainstorming process. The color codes demonstrate the layers of your topic that get revealed in the process.

NARROWED TOPIC

BIG IDEAS

RELATED EXAMPLES

SPECIFIC DETAILS

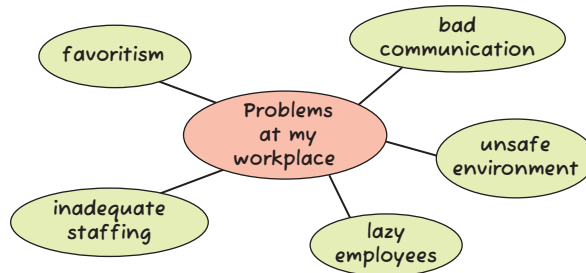
#### Power Tip

**Clustering** is especially useful for students who are strong visual learners. **Listing** is often popular with verbal or mathematical learners.

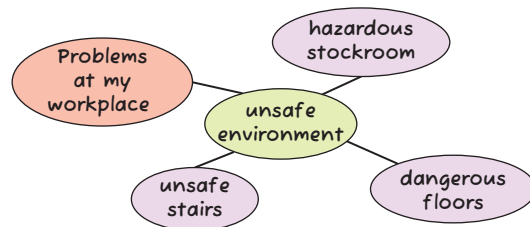
## Clustering

Clustering involves using a series of bubbles (circles) and connecting lines to record your thoughts. Clustering is especially helpful for students who have trouble organizing their ideas; the bubbles and lines help group related items together.

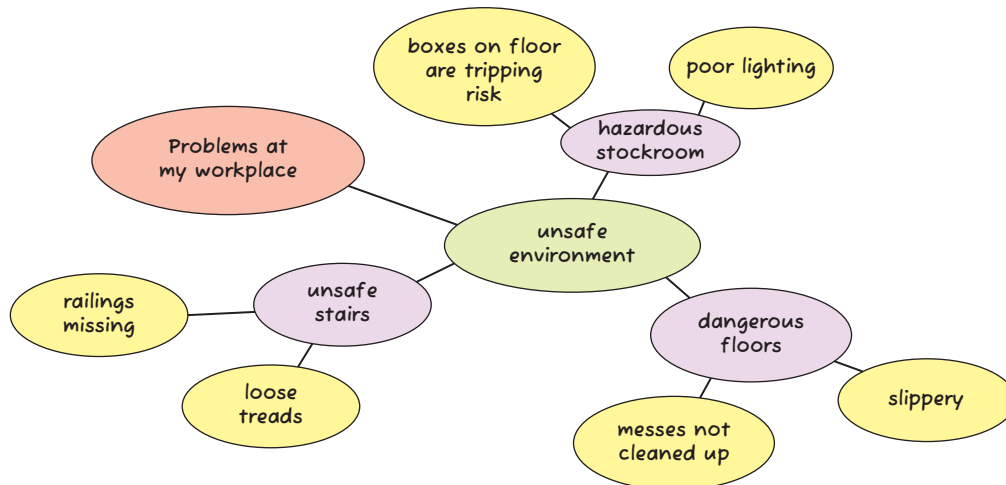
Here is an example of clustering using the color coding above. Notice that the narrowed topic, *Problems at my workplace*, is placed in a bubble in the center of the page, and the big ideas are connected to it. You will get more practice with clustering in Chapter 3. For now, take a look.



Next, focus on one big idea at a time and provide related examples for each:



Finally, focus on one example at a time, adding specific details to illustrate each example. When you reach this final level of support, remember to look back at your topic to stay focused.



### ACTIVITY 5

Answer the following questions about the cluster immediately preceding this activity.

1. What are the three related examples of an unsafe environment?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What are causes of hazards in the stockroom?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What specific details are related to the floors?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How many specific details about the stairs are named?

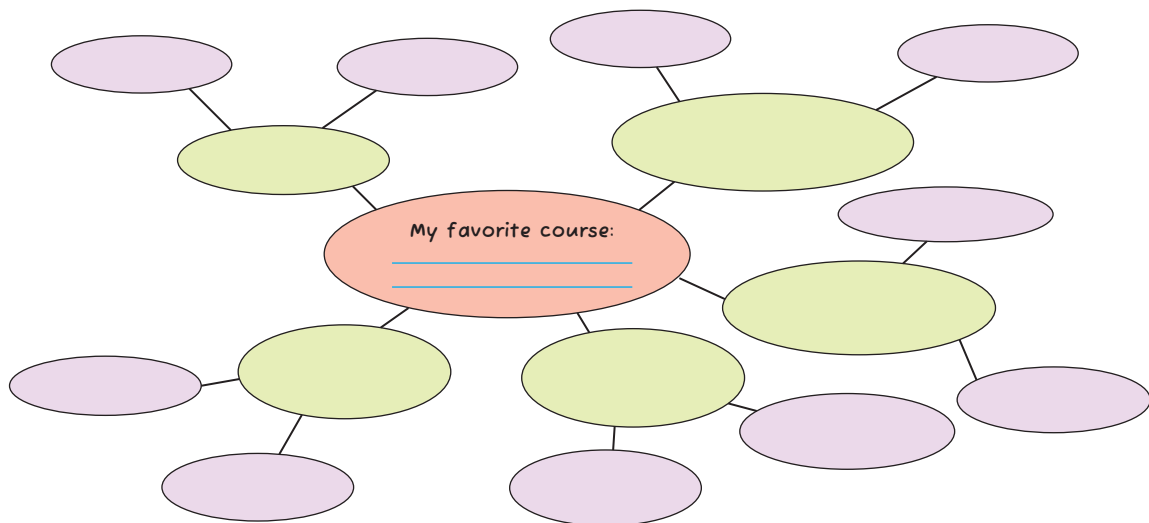
\_\_\_\_\_

### ACTIVITY 6

Complete the cluster below. Follow these steps:

1. Write the name of your favorite college course in the center bubble.
2. Fill in the *green* bubbles with big ideas about why this is your favorite course.
3. Fill in the *purple* bubbles with examples to support your big ideas.

**NOTE:** You may leave some bubbles empty or add extra bubbles if necessary.



**ACTIVITY 7: Teamwork**

With classmates, compare what you wrote in the bubbles for Activity 6. See if your classmates found good examples that you might be able to use in your cluster as well. Then, discuss whether you could add some yellow bubbles (specific details) to some of the purple bubbles.

**Listing**

Some students do not like using bubbles and lines to record and connect their ideas. Instead, they prefer to list ideas on paper or a computer screen. If you use this method, it is helpful to think of your list as *a series of short lists*. This will help you group related ideas together.

Here is an example of listing using color coding. Notice that the narrowed topic, *Problems at my workplace*, is placed at the top of the page, and the big ideas are listed below, with space between each one.

Problems at My Workplace

Unsafe environment

Bad communication

Lazy employees

Inadequate staffing

Favoritism

From this point, you can build your list by working on one big idea at a time. For each big idea, give yourself at least five minutes to list related examples and specific details.

#### Problems at My Workplace

##### Unsafe environment

hazardous stockroom—boxes on floor are a tripping risk, poor lighting

dangerous floors—slippery, messes not cleaned up

unsafe stairs—railings missing, loose treads

##### Bad communication

### ACTIVITY 8

Use the listing technique to brainstorm ideas for one of the following topics.

- **Topic 1:** a perfect vacation
- **Topic 2:** responsibilities that you had as a child
- **Topic 3:** the most important person in your life right now
- **Topic 4:** stress factors in your life
- **Topic 5:** ways to relax

Clustering and listing are not always as neat as the previous examples suggest (see the examples on pp. 31–32). Because you will be writing quickly, expect to have to squeeze in ideas and bubbles where you don't have enough space. Also, don't expect your cluster or list to be perfectly organized.

When you use clustering or listing, keep the following points in mind:

- Although these methods can help you keep related ideas grouped together, **do not worry about organizing your thoughts** at this point.
- Ideas are likely to pop into your head rapidly and randomly. Just **let your thoughts flow**, write them down, and keep moving.
- **Do not worry if you repeat some ideas.** Repetition during brainstorming can help you identify ideas that are especially important for your topic.
- Try to fill up your page with thoughts, and **do not stop working** too soon. It is often during the last minutes of your brainstorming that you discover your most powerful ideas.

Now, take a look at some examples of clustering and listing from real students:



Clustering



Listing

Rock climbing photo 6	
Drive	
test of manhood	weather change
Strenuous vacation	dark, winds, drizzling
China, Australia, Brazil	
group of close friends	could not believe
falling down	midlife crisis
250-to-300-foot walk	they would look down
money at stake	lucky hat
extreme sports	he was respected and
Fathers all age ages	he was the one that was
at-home dads	scared to do things
<u>Emotions</u>	<u>Senses</u>
scared	* Smell = mist fresh air
fired up	** sig sights = th friend the other end

nauseous	* Sound = deer, wind, animals,
<del>evil</del>	music, MP3
focus	* Taste = the last meal, vomit
sweating	touch = rope, ruff shirt wet, sweat
live or dead	6th sense = visualize himself
upset, how did I get into this?	somewhere else
<u>lesson</u>	
no limits	
challenge	
better confidence	
inspirational	

### ACTIVITY 9

From Activity 3, select one of your narrowed topics, perhaps one that received a high score in your own evaluation. On a blank sheet of paper, brainstorm on your topic using either clustering or listing.



### QUESTIONING

Another brainstorming method is **questioning**. With this method, you use the five *Ws* of critical thinking: *Who? Where? When? What? Why?* These questions can help you get below the surface of your topic and look at it from different viewpoints.

- **Who** are the important people involved in my topic?
- **Where** did the events connected to my topic take place?
- **When** did the experiences in my topic occur?
- **What** important things happened in relation to my topic?
- **Why** did these things happen, and **why** did people act the way they did?

### ACTIVITY 10: Teamwork

With classmates, form *W* questions for the following topics. (It is not necessary to answer the questions.) If one *W* does not fit a topic, just write “does not fit” in the space provided.

**EXAMPLE:** Discuss a powerful dream you've had.

Who? were the people in my dream

Where? did the events in my dream take place

When? did the events in my dream happen

What? happened in my dream

Why? did these things happen

1. Discuss a powerful memory from your childhood.

Who? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

What? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Write about your “fantasy” job: the job you would have if anything were possible.

Who? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

What? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Like clustering and listing, questioning can reveal layers of ideas in your topic. Here is an example. Notice that the *W* words serve as the big ideas:

**NARROWED TOPIC** Problems at my workplace

1. **BIG IDEA** *Who?*
  - RELATED EXAMPLE** Maggie, shift leader
  - SPECIFIC DETAILS** Lies, plays favorites
  - RELATED EXAMPLE** Dan and Becky, co-workers
  - SPECIFIC DETAILS** Arrive late and leave early, lazy, call in sick
  - RELATED EXAMPLE** Tom, manager
  - SPECIFIC DETAILS** Bad communication, won't listen
  
2. **BIG IDEA** *Where?*
  - RELATED EXAMPLE** In the stockroom and break room
  - SPECIFIC DETAILS** Employees leave messes, smoke, gossip, hide out

	<b>RELATED EXAMPLE</b>	On the sales floor
	<b>SPECIFIC DETAILS</b>	Employees don't work together, not enough help, shift leader won't pitch in
3.	<b>BIG IDEA</b>	<i>When?</i>
	<b>RELATED EXAMPLE</b>	During evening shifts
	<b>SPECIFIC DETAILS</b>	Tom goes home, Maggie is in charge, only two salespeople
	<b>RELATED EXAMPLE</b>	Started two months ago
	<b>SPECIFIC DETAILS</b>	Since Maggie became shift leader
4.	<b>BIG IDEA</b>	<i>What?</i>
	<b>RELATED EXAMPLE</b>	Bad leadership
	<b>SPECIFIC DETAILS</b>	Shift leaders play favorites, manager is bad communicator
	<b>RELATED EXAMPLE</b>	Not enough help
	<b>SPECIFIC DETAILS</b>	Only four workers on weekends, only one cashier, too many workers call in sick
5.	<b>BIG IDEA</b>	<i>Why?</i>
	<b>RELATED EXAMPLE</b>	The manager is not accountable
	<b>SPECIFIC DETAILS</b>	He has no supervisor, he never admits he is wrong
	<b>RELATED EXAMPLE</b>	Owners don't care
	<b>SPECIFIC DETAILS</b>	They live in another state, they own other businesses
	<b>RELATED EXAMPLE</b>	Employees don't care
	<b>SPECIFIC DETAILS</b>	Only a part-time job, they are young and immature

If you use this method for brainstorming, keep the following points in mind:

- You may use the five *Ws* in any order you like, but try to **start with one that is easy for you**. Many students find it easy to begin with *who*, *where*, or *when*.
- **Sometimes, two *Ws* will produce similar answers or ideas.** This is fine. Repetition can be useful because it can help you identify ideas that might be especially important for your topic.
- **Not all the questions work for every topic.** Generally, you should be able to use three or four of the *Ws* for a given topic. If one *W* does not make sense for your topic, move on to the next *W*.
- **The five *Ws* should jump-start your brainstorming,** but they should not restrict the free movement of your thinking. Once your brain warms up, you may decide to start clustering or listing instead.

## ACTIVITY 11

Select one of your narrowed topics from Activity 3. (If your instructor agrees, you may continue working with the same narrowed topic that you used for Activity 9.) On a blank sheet of paper, go deeper into your narrowed topic using the **questioning** method illustrated on pages 33–34.

## FREEWRTING

Another method of generating ideas is called **freewriting**. With freewriting, you simply write down your thoughts as you would in a diary or personal journal without worrying about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Write down whatever comes to mind, even if it seems silly or disconnected at first. This process gives your mind time to warm up and may help you uncover more ideas than you thought you had on a topic.

Here is an example of freewriting on the narrowed topic, *Problems at my workplace*.

I can't believe how much I hate my job! On Saturday I came home from work dead tired, it was soooooo busy and we only had four workers on the sales floor. Of course, Maggie won't lift a finger to serve a customer because she has to "supervise" (which basically means talking on the phone to her boyfriend). At one point I slipped on some spilled liquid on the floor and twisted my ankle. And where were my wonderful co-workers? Off smoking in the stockroom which is not allowed anyway and it wasn't their break time. And Tom makes me so mad—he won't listen to anything I have to say, he never admits that he's wrong and his parents think that he's perfect. I am surprised that this business stays open but the owners (Tom's parents of course!) use it as a tax shelter or something funny like that. The whole thing is a big mess and I don't know if I can survive another weekend. . . . HELP!

**tax shelter:** a financial setup that reduces or eliminates taxes

The next step in freewriting is to read what you have written and circle two or three big ideas that you would like to explore further. Remember to select ideas that are closely connected to your topic (in this case, *Problems at my workplace*). Here is what this student circled in her original freewriting:

I can't believe how much I hate my job! On Saturday I came home from work dead tired, it was soooooo busy and we only had four workers on the sales floor. Of course, Maggie won't lift a finger to serve a customer because she has to "supervise" (which basically means talking on the phone to her boyfriend). At one point I slipped on some spilled liquid on the floor and twisted my ankle. And where were my loyal co-workers? Off smoking in the stockroom which is not allowed anyway and it wasn't their break time. And Tom makes me so mad—he won't listen to anything I have to say, he never admits that he's wrong and his parents think that he's perfect. I am surprised that this business stays open but the owners (Tom's parents of course!) use it as a tax shelter or something funny like that. The whole thing is a big mess and I don't know if I can survive another weekend. . . . HELP!

This student's next step is to select one of these ideas and freewrite about it for five minutes. Once again, the idea is to *just keep writing* until the time is up, even if the ideas go off the topic somewhat. Here is what the student wrote:

Maggie is such a pain! When Tom made her a shift leader she got a BIG ATTITUDE she also flirts with Tom and gets away with murder. Like I said, she spends more time on the phone with her boyfriend than she does helping us or assisting customers. She also lets Dan and Becky take longer breaks and come in late just because they are friends of hers. Of course, when I complained about this she told me to mind my own business which is soooooo unprofessional—not like she cares anyway. This is just a part-time job for her and she is only 18 years old. A shift leader is hardly president of the united states, but the power goes to her head. She never ASKS me to do anything she ORDERS me. She needs a reality check. . . .

Next, read what you have written and circle one or two of the most powerful ideas. Then, select one idea from *either* your first or second freewriting and freewrite about that idea for five minutes.

Continue this process of freewriting, reading, circling, and freewriting again until you have explored all your ideas about the topic or until you run out of time.

## ACTIVITY 12

Using freewriting, discuss *someone you admire*. Follow these steps:

1. Freewrite for ten minutes on the topic.
2. Read what you wrote and circle two or three big ideas that you would like to develop.
3. Select ONE of those ideas and freewrite on it for five minutes.
4. Read what you wrote and circle one or two big ideas that you would like to develop.
5. Select ONE idea from *either* your first or second freewriting. Then, freewrite on this idea for five minutes.
6. If you wish, continue this exercise until you have fully explored your ideas on the topic.

If you use this method to brainstorm your topic, keep the following points in mind:

- **Freewriting generally requires more time** than the other methods, so it may not be ideal for timed writing assignments in class. Make sure you practice one of the other methods as a backup for timed writing assignments.

- **Freewriting does not count as a draft of your composition.** After you complete your freewriting activity, you will still need to write an outline for your composition and *then* write your first draft.
- **You might start with freewriting to warm up your brain,** then switch to clustering or listing when the ideas start to come faster.

### ACTIVITY 13

Select one of your narrowed topics from Activity 3. (Do not select a topic that you have already used in a previous exercise.) On a blank sheet of paper, generate more ideas for your narrowed topic using the **freewriting** method illustrated above.

### BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: Developing a Topic

In this chapter, you have learned about developing college writing topics — how to recognize them, narrow them, and select ones that will work well for you. Confirm your knowledge by filling in the blank spaces in the following sentences. If you need help, review the pages listed after each sentence.

✓ Topics that give students a lot of choice in what to write about are called \_\_\_\_\_ topics. Topics that give students very little choice in what to write about are called \_\_\_\_\_ topics. Topics that give students a moderate amount of choice — not a lot or a little — are called \_\_\_\_\_ topics. (page 21)

✓ When narrowing a topic for a writing assignment, you should consider the required length of the assignment. Four common length requirements for college writing are: 1) \_\_\_\_\_, 2) \_\_\_\_\_, 3) \_\_\_\_\_, and 4) \_\_\_\_\_. (page 22)

✓ When selecting a writing topic, you should select one that will motivate you to write and help you get the best results. To determine which topic will work well for you, you can ask four questions. These questions are: 1) \_\_\_\_\_, 2) \_\_\_\_\_, 3) \_\_\_\_\_, and 4) \_\_\_\_\_. (page 24)

CONTINUED >

- ✓ When gathering more ideas for a narrowed topic, you can use any of four methods for getting your ideas down on paper. These methods are: 1) \_\_\_\_\_, 2) \_\_\_\_\_, 3) \_\_\_\_\_, and 4) \_\_\_\_\_. (pages 26, 32, and 35)
- ✓ Brainstorming often reveals more layers to your topic. These layers are: 1) \_\_\_\_\_, 2) \_\_\_\_\_, 3) \_\_\_\_\_, and 4) \_\_\_\_\_. (page 26)
- ✓ When going deeper into a narrowed topic, you may repeat ideas from time to time. Repetition during brainstorming is not bad. Instead, it can help you \_\_\_\_\_. (page 30)
- ✓ During brainstorming, your most powerful ideas may come forth in \_\_\_\_\_. For this reason, it is important to take your time and be patient with the brainstorming process. (page 30)
- ✓ If you use freewriting as your preferred brainstorming method, it is important to remember that your freewriting is NOT a \_\_\_\_\_ for your essay. (page 37)



## CHAPTER 3

# Organizing Your Ideas

Before you read this chapter, it's a good idea to test your understanding of strategies for organizing your ideas. You may know more than you think.

For each question, select all the answers that apply.

### WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

1. Which of the following words expresses a *big idea*?  
(Hint: The other words are *related examples*.)
  - ostrich
  - pigeon
  - birds
  - canary
2. When you are arranging a list of items, which ones will generally come first?
  - big ideas
  - related examples
3. Which one of the following strategies requires you to recognize an item that does *not* fit with other items in a group?
  - grouping
  - eliminating
  - ordering
4. Which of the following sentences are *related examples*?  
(Hint: The other item is a *big idea*.)
  - My counselor gave me a checklist of required courses.
  - My counselor recommended several excellent instructors.
  - My counselor helped me prepare for academic success.
  - My counselor showed me how to organize my schedule.
5. Which of the following items does not fit with the group below?
  - applying for financial aid
  - meeting with an academic counselor
  - buying a bus pass
  - purchasing textbooks

### OVERVIEW OF THIS CHAPTER

Organizing Basics 40

Bringing It All Together 65

## Organizing Basics

In Chapter 2, you learned how to brainstorm for a topic. Now, you'll learn how to organize ideas in preparation for developing an effective outline. Organizing involves several strategies, the most common of which are

- **ordering:** arranging your ideas in a logical way
- **grouping:** putting related ideas together
- **eliminating:** removing ideas that are not related to your topic

Often, doing these activities is like solving a puzzle, and it can be a lot of fun. The more you practice them, the more your organizing skills will improve.

### ORDERING

The first skill to practice is **ordering**. To order your ideas effectively, you will need to be able to recognize the difference between **big ideas** and **related examples**. Big ideas usually come first, and they are followed by related examples. Look at the following list:

**jobs**  
clerk  
engineer  
cook

The word *jobs* expresses a big idea because there are many types of jobs. The words *clerk*, *engineer*, and *cook* are examples of jobs.

### Ordering Single-Word Items

As shown in the previous example, a *single word* can express either a big idea or a related example. Now, take a look at the following lists and decide which one is ordered correctly:

<b>carrots</b>	<b>vegetables</b>
broccoli	tomatoes
vegetables	carrots
tomatoes	broccoli

The second list is correct: The word *vegetables* expresses a big idea because there are many types of vegetables. The words *broccoli*, *tomatoes*, and *carrots* are examples of vegetables.

## ACTIVITY 1

Rewrite each of the following lists, putting the *big idea* first. If a list is correct as is, write "OK" on the first line.

**EXAMPLE:** peanuts                          nuts                           
 cashews                          peanuts                           
 nuts                          cashews                           
 almonds                          almonds                         

- |                                            |                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1. hamster <u>                        </u> | 4. wires <u>                        </u>          |
| cat <u>                        </u>        | electrical <u>                        </u>        |
| pet <u>                        </u>        | plug <u>                        </u>              |
| dog <u>                        </u>        | fuse <u>                        </u>              |
| 2. shirt <u>                        </u>   | 5. transportation <u>                        </u> |
| clothes <u>                        </u>    | bicycle <u>                        </u>           |
| socks <u>                        </u>      | helicopter <u>                        </u>        |
| tie <u>                        </u>        | automobile <u>                        </u>        |
| 3. rain <u>                        </u>    | 6. church <u>                        </u>         |
| snow <u>                        </u>       | apartment <u>                        </u>         |
| weather <u>                        </u>    | house <u>                        </u>             |
| thunder <u>                        </u>    | building <u>                        </u>          |

**Power Tip**

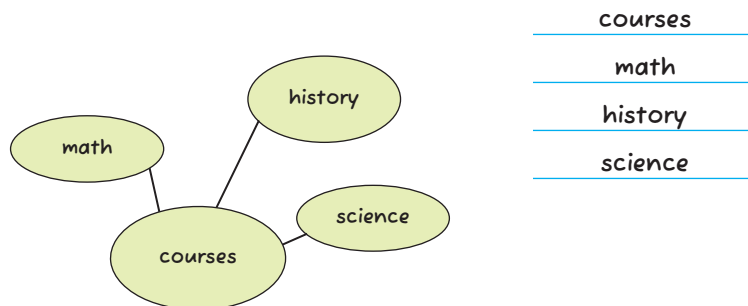
While working through the activities in this chapter, use a dictionary to look up the meaning of any words you do not recognize. Doing so will help you complete the activities successfully and build your vocabulary at the same time.

If you used clustering—putting related ideas in bubbles—to generate ideas, you will need to order your ideas in the same way. The following activity will give you practice with moving items from clusters to lists. (For more on clustering, see Chapter 2.)

## ACTIVITY 2

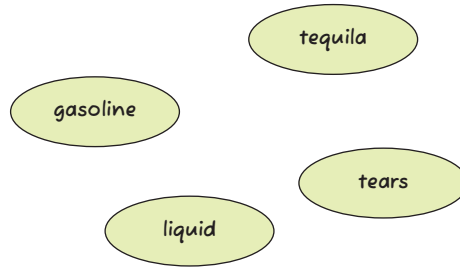
Study the clusters below, and then draw lines from the *big idea* to the related examples. Next, move the items to a list, putting the big idea first.

**EXAMPLE:**



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1.




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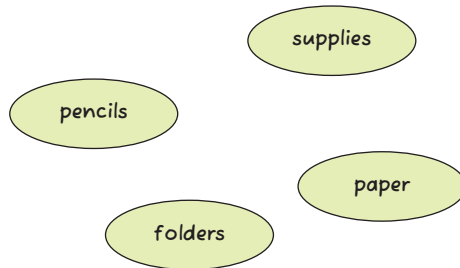


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2.




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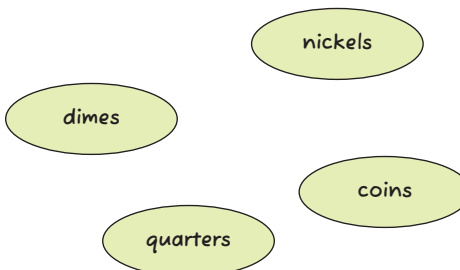


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3.




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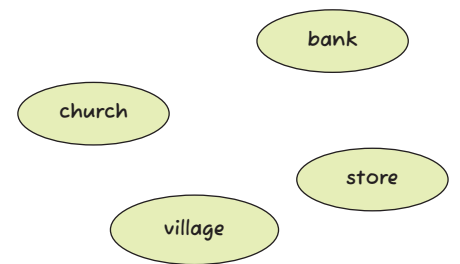


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4.




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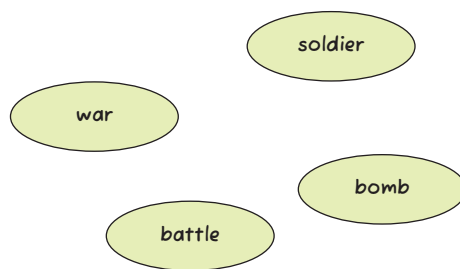


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5.




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### Ordering Phrases

Usually, we express our ideas with more than one word. A **phrase** is a group of words that can express either a *big idea* or a *related example*. For example, the phrase *healthy food* expresses a big idea because there are many types of

healthy food. The phrases *organic fruits and vegetables*, *whole-grain breads and cereals*, and *low-fat milk and cheese* are each an example of healthy food.

**ACTIVITY 3**

Rewrite each of the following lists, putting the *big idea* first. If a list is correct as is, write “OK” on the first line.

**EXAMPLE:** look in the want ads  
write a résumé  
look for a job  
prepare for interviews

look for a job  
look in the want ads  
write a résumé  
prepare for interviews

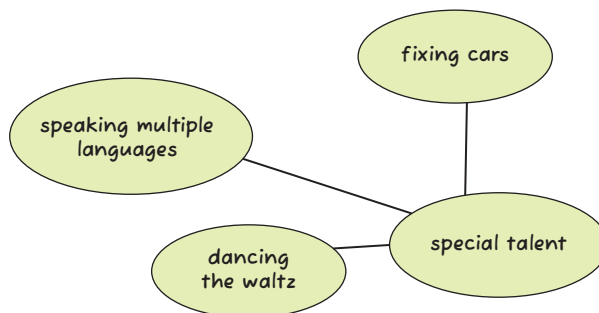
- 1. ice cream sundae \_\_\_\_\_  
cherry snow cone \_\_\_\_\_  
cold desserts \_\_\_\_\_  
frozen banana \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. build a sand castle \_\_\_\_\_  
lie in the sun \_\_\_\_\_  
put on lotion \_\_\_\_\_  
day at the beach \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. dust furniture \_\_\_\_\_  
vacuum carpets \_\_\_\_\_  
wash the floor \_\_\_\_\_  
household chores \_\_\_\_\_

- 4. my dream wedding \_\_\_\_\_  
three-layer cake \_\_\_\_\_  
lots of friends and family \_\_\_\_\_  
great music \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. learning procedures \_\_\_\_\_  
meeting co-workers \_\_\_\_\_  
starting a new job \_\_\_\_\_  
filling out forms \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. reread chapters \_\_\_\_\_  
review material with classmates \_\_\_\_\_  
review notes \_\_\_\_\_  
study for a test \_\_\_\_\_

**ACTIVITY 4**

In clustering, we often write *phrases* in cluster bubbles. In the following exercise, study the clusters, and then draw lines from the *big idea* phrases to the related examples. Next, move the phrases from the bubbles to a list, putting the big idea first.

**EXAMPLE:**



special talent  
fixing cars  
dancing the waltz  
speaking multiple languages

1.



**extreme sport:** a potentially dangerous sport that can involve high speeds, extreme heights, and other risks

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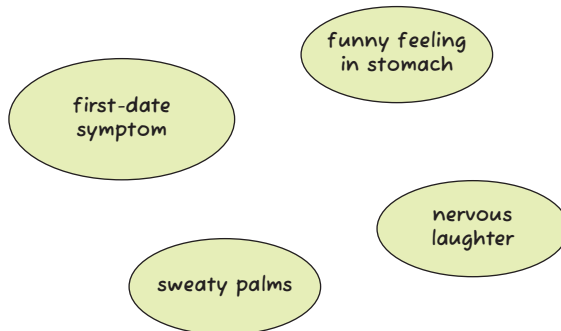


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2.




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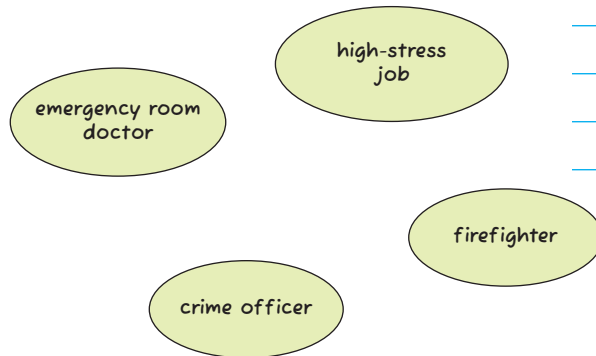


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3.




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### Ordering Sentences

#### Power Tip

Notice that a complete sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period. It also has a subject and a verb, and expresses a complete thought. You will learn more about these important sentence parts in Chapter 10.

Sometimes, when we brainstorm, we use a **complete sentence** to express our ideas. A complete sentence can express either a *big idea* or a *related example*. Consider the following sentence:

Making Halloween costumes allows children to be creative.

When we use a complete sentence to express a big idea, there will usually be *two or more key words* that define the idea. For example, in the previous sentence, the words *making*, *costumes*, *children*, and *creative* define the big idea. Get in the habit of marking the key words in any sentence that expresses a big idea; this will help you decide what types of examples you can use.

Now, here are some related examples of how *making costumes* allows *children* to be *creative*:

Children can be any character they want to be.  
They can use any materials they want to: scrap paper, glue, paint.  
They can enter imaginary worlds while wearing their costumes.

Each sentence expresses an example of creativity related to making costumes. Notice also that each sentence contains *two or more key words* that define the example (such as *be any character they want to be . . . use any materials they want to . . . enter imaginary worlds*). So, whether a sentence expresses a big idea or a related example, there will always be two or more key words that define the meaning of the sentence.

### ACTIVITY 5: Teamwork

Working with one or two classmates, identify and underline the *key words* that define the *big idea* in each sentence. Each sentence will have at least two key words.

**EXAMPLE:** It's possible to have a fun yet inexpensive vacation.

1. College can be a rewarding experience.
2. Camping has become an expensive form of recreation.
3. Good communication skills can be learned.
4. Learning geometry requires a lot of memorization.
5. Artificial sweeteners often have a bitter taste.

### ACTIVITY 6

Rewrite each of the following sets of sentences, putting the *big idea* first. The *related examples* can be in any order. Begin with your favorite example and end with your least favorite; or, begin with your least favorite example and end with your favorite.

**EXAMPLE:** It can save money.

Cooking is a good skill to have.

It can help you eat nutritiously.

It can help you eat nutritiously.

Cooking is a good skill to have.

It can save money.

It's satisfying for yourself and others.

It's satisfying for yourself and others.

#### Power Tip

If you have trouble identifying the big idea, remember to mark the *key words* in each sentence. See page 44 for more on key words.

1. I was afraid my parachute would not open.

Stepping out of the plane took my breath away.

Skydiving was a frightening experience.

Free-falling made my heart stop.

2. The pay and benefits were poor.

My old job was not a good one.

My hours changed every week.

I wasn't learning many new skills.

3. College offers social and work connections.

Education improves one's self-esteem.

Degree holders earn better salaries.

Getting a college degree is beneficial.

4. College students run up credit card debt paying for books and fees.

College students experience financial difficulties due to the high cost of education.

College students often borrow money from friends and family.

College students get big government loans that are hard to pay back.

5. Responsible dating requires both partners to share expenses.

Responsible dating requires honest communication.

Responsible dating offers a more mature approach to dating.

Responsible dating takes into consideration both persons' tastes and interests.

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## GROUPING

The second skill that is useful for organizing your ideas is **grouping**. To group ideas effectively, you will need to be able to recognize items that are *related to one another*. Often, when we brainstorm, our ideas come to us in random order. When we organize these ideas, we need to sort through them and put them in distinct groups.

### Grouping Single-Word Items

Let's begin with lists of single-word items that need to be put in separate groups. Let's see how one group of items could be sorted into two groups.

**Items to be grouped:** piano / rock / jazz / drums / hip-hop / guitar

**Group 1:** musical instruments

piano

drums

guitar

**Group 2:** types of music

rock

jazz

hip-hop

Notice that as you group items, you begin to develop a sense of the *big idea* that connects the items to one another. For example, the big idea that connects the items in group 1 is *musical instruments*; the big idea that connects the items in group 2 is *types of music*.

## ACTIVITY 7

Rearrange each of the following sets of items into separate groups, following these steps:

- At first, leave the first lines after “Big Idea” blank.
- Fill in the other lines with the items that should go in each group, making sure to keep related items together.
- Think of a big idea that connects the items in each group and write it on the first line, following the example above.

1. wine / cola / tea / beer / champagne / coffee

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CONTINUED >

2. pen / notebook / diary / highlighter / crayon / calendar

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3. brunette / redhead / eyebrows / mustache / blonde / sideburns

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4. accountant / landscaper / banker / ranger / secretary / lifeguard

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. rabbit / snake / chipmunk / lizard / frog / squirrel

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

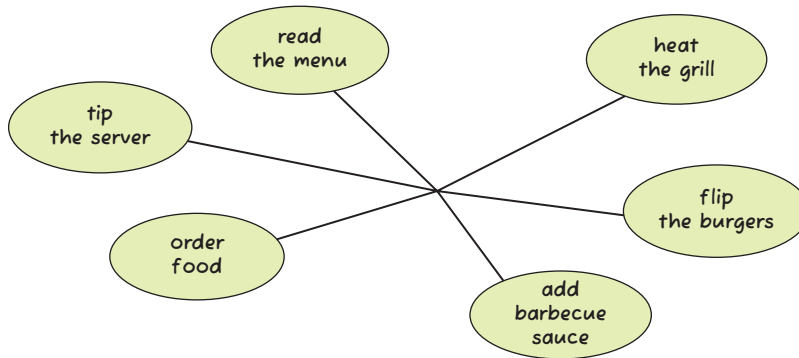
### ACTIVITY 8: Teamwork

Exchange your answers to Activity 7 with a classmate. Did you sort any of the items differently? How do your big ideas for each group compare? Can you find any ways to refine or improve your big ideas?

### Grouping Phrases

As you learned in Chapter 2, clustering is a method that helps us group related ideas. The bubbles and lines are a visual reminder to keep related ideas in separate groups or *clusters*. Often, clusters express ideas in

*phrases*. Here is an example of a small clustering that keeps related phrases in separate groups:



**Group 1:** eating in a restaurant  
 read the menu  
 order food  
 tip the server

**Group 2:** grilling burgers  
 heat the grill  
 flip the burgers  
 add barbecue sauce

Lists can also be used to group phrases, as shown in the example below the cluster. Notice that a *big idea* connects the items in each group.

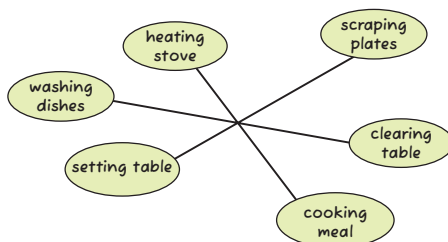
Keep in mind that clusters are rarely this simple and neat. As we move from a cluster to a list (and to an outline), we have to be on the lookout for items that are incorrectly grouped together.

## ACTIVITY 9

Move the items from each of the following clusters into separate groups, *being careful of items that are clustered incorrectly*. Follow these steps:

- At first, leave the line after “Group 1” and “Group 2” blank.
- Fill in the other lines with the items that should go in each group, making sure to keep related items together.
- Think of a *big idea* that connects the items in each group and write it on the first line.

### EXAMPLE:



#### Group 1:

**Big Idea:** before-dinner tasks

**Examples:**

setting table

heating stove

cooking meal

#### Group 2:

**Big Idea:** after-dinner tasks

**Examples:**

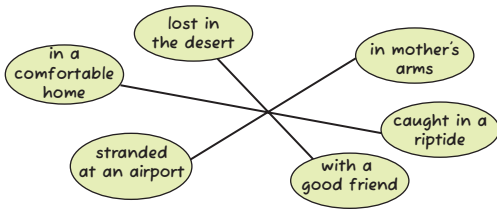
clearing table

scraping plates

washing dishes

CONTINUED >

1.



Group 1:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Examples:

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

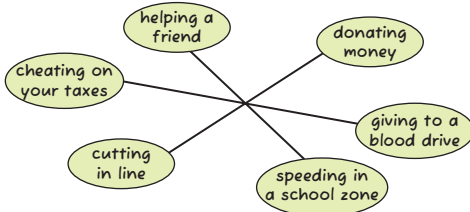
Group 2:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Examples:

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

2.



Group 1:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Examples:

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

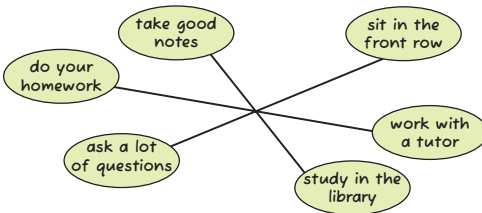
Group 2:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Examples:

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

3.



Group 1:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Examples:

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

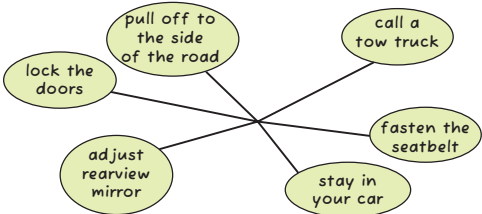
Group 2:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Examples:

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

4.



Group 1:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Examples:

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

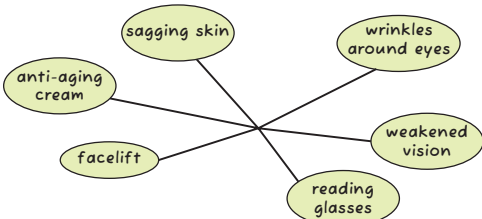
Group 2:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Examples:

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

5.



Group 1:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Examples:

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

Group 2:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Examples:

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

**ACTIVITY 10: Teamwork**

Exchange your answers to Activity 9 with a classmate. Did you sort any of the items differently? How do your big ideas for each group compare? Can you find any ways to refine or improve your big ideas?

**Grouping Sentences**

Like words and phrases, sentences can also be grouped together by topic. To come up with a *big idea* to connect sentence groups, it's a good idea to circle the key words in the sentences and ask yourself how these words are related. (For more on key words, see page 44.)

**ACTIVITY 11: Teamwork**

Move the sentences from each of the following lists into separate groups, following these steps:

- At first, leave the lines after “Big Idea” blank.
- Fill in the other lines with the sentences that should go in each group, making sure to keep related sentences together.
- Think of a *big idea* that connects the items in each group and write it on the first line, using a complete sentence. (To get this idea, you might want to circle key words in the sentences and ask yourself how these words are related.)

**EXAMPLE:** Roberta planted flowers in front of the house.

Del cleaned out the gutters.

Manuel painted the living room.

Tamsin cut the grass and swept the porch.

Pat polished the floors until they sparkled.

Doug dusted and cleaned the bathrooms.

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** Everyone helped with outside chores  
to make the house look great.

**Examples:**

Roberta planted flowers in front of the house.

Del cleaned out the gutters.

Tamsin cut the grass and swept the porch.

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** Everyone helped with inside chores  
to make the house look great.

**Examples:**

Manuel painted the living room.

Pat polished the floors until they sparkled.

Doug dusted and cleaned the bathrooms.

1. Medical professionals often work long hours with few breaks.  
Nurses, medical assistants, and other health professionals are in high demand.  
Medical work can be physically and emotionally tiring.

Health professionals get the satisfaction of helping others.  
 Health workers are under pressure to care for many patients.  
 Starting salaries for nurses can approach \$40,000.

**Group 1:**

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:**

**Examples:**

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

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

2. Many parents allow their children to eat sweetened cereals.  
 Schools often serve items like french fries and corn dogs for lunch.  
 More daycare centers are serving fresh fruit for snacks.  
 Saturday morning commercials advertise mostly junk foods.  
 Media campaigns are promoting healthy food choices.  
 The local high school has removed the soda vending machines.

**Group 1:**

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:**

**Examples:**

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

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

3. Rachel sits slumped in class.  
 When meeting strangers, Sarah looks them directly in the eye.  
 Juan usually crosses his arms when he talks to others.  
 Michael leans forward toward the person who is talking.

At school, Jessica sits up straight and tall at her desk.

Robert lowers his eyes when girls approach him.

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ELIMINATING

One of the most important skills you will need for organizing your ideas is **eliminating**. When we brainstorm, we write down all the ideas that come to mind, without judging their individual value. However, as you move from brainstorming to outlining, you will need to select your best ideas (those that are most appropriate for the topic) and eliminate those that are weak (ideas that do not fit the topic especially well). Generally, you will want to look for groups of related items that clearly support the topic and eliminate isolated items that do not fit. With practice, your ability to recognize and eliminate these items will improve.

### *Eliminating Single-Word Items*

Again, let's start with single-word items. You can see that most of the following words are related; however, one of the words is not. Can you find the unrelated item?

forgiveness  
 understanding  
 impatience  
 humor

Forgiveness, understanding, and humor are all *positive* qualities, ones that most of us would like a friend or partner to have. Impatience, a *negative* quality, doesn't fit, so we could eliminate it.

### ACTIVITY 12

For each group of words below, do the following:

- Cross out the item that does not fit.
- For the remaining items, think of a *big idea* that connects them and write it on the first line of the new list.
- Add the remaining items to the list, using an order of your choice.

**EXAMPLE: Big Idea:** categories of movies  
 comedy comedy  
 action action  
 horror horror  
 theaters

- |                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>1. Big Idea:</b> _____<br/>           tornado _____<br/>           hurricane _____<br/>           flood _____<br/>           damage _____</p>       | <p><b>4. Big Idea:</b> _____<br/>           organs _____<br/>           mind _____<br/>           muscles _____<br/>           bones _____</p>          |
| <p><b>2. Big Idea:</b> _____<br/>           diamond _____<br/>           necklace _____<br/>           earring _____<br/>           bracelet _____</p>    | <p><b>5. Big Idea:</b> _____<br/>           treadmill _____<br/>           weights _____<br/>           aerobics _____<br/>           bicycle _____</p> |
| <p><b>3. Big Idea:</b> _____<br/>           teaching _____<br/>           firefighting _____<br/>           farming _____<br/>           danger _____</p> | <p><b>6. Big Idea:</b> _____<br/>           picture _____<br/>           print _____<br/>           painting _____<br/>           frame _____</p>       |

### ACTIVITY 13: Teamwork

Exchange your answers to Activity 12 with a classmate. Did your choices about what items to eliminate vary in any cases? If so, see if you can determine which answer is correct and why. Can you find any ways to refine or improve your big ideas?



### Eliminating Phrases

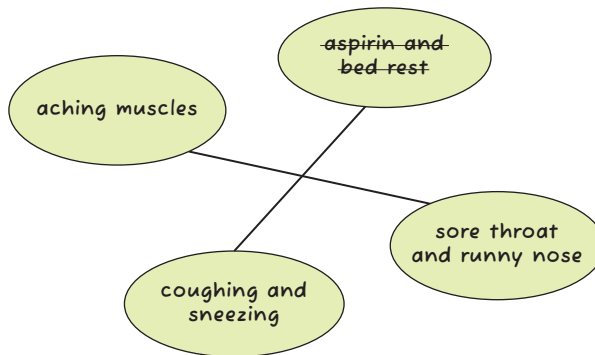
Just as you need to eliminate words from your brainstorming that do not fit your topic, you must eliminate unrelated phrases. The following activity will give you practice with this skill.

#### ACTIVITY 14

For each cluster, do the following:

- Cross out the item that does not fit.
- For the remaining items, think of a *big idea* that connects them and write it on the first line.
- Add the remaining items to the list, using an order of your choice.

EXAMPLE:

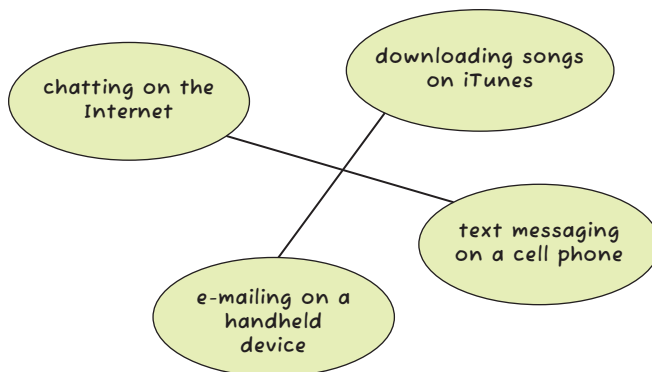


Big Idea: cold symptoms

aching muscles

coughing and sneezing  
sore throat and runny nose

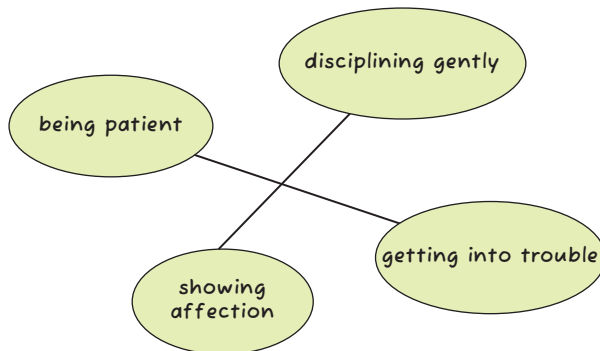
1.



Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

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

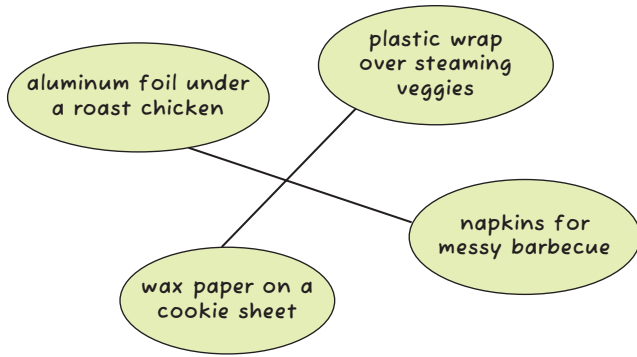
2.



Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

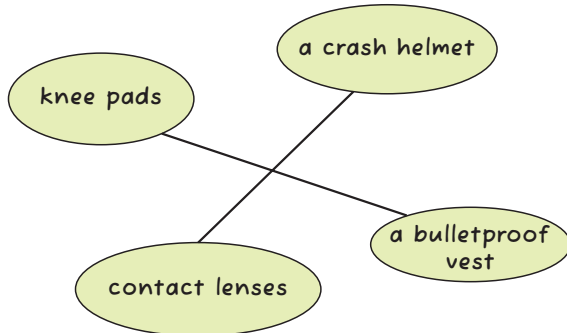
\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3.



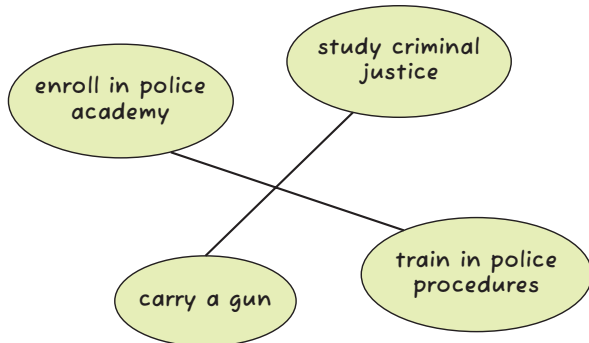
Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4.



Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5.



Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### Eliminating Sentences

Like words and phrases that do not fit your topic, irrelevant sentences should also be eliminated. To come up with a *big idea* to connect the remaining sentences, it's a good practice to circle the key words in the sentences and ask yourself how these words are related. (For more on key words, see page 44.)

### ACTIVITY 15

For each list, do the following:

- Cross out the sentence that does not fit.
- For the remaining sentences, think of a *big idea* that connects them and write it on the first line of the new list. Try to state this idea as a complete sentence.
- Add the remaining sentences to the list, using an order of your choice.

**EXAMPLE:** Kids of every age need support. **Big Idea:** Parenting can be  
~~Grandparents may babysit.~~ challenging.  
 Teens test parents' limits. Babies are totally dependent.  
 Babies are totally dependent. Teens test parents' limits.  
Kids of every age need support.

1. My mom hasn't had the flu in two years.

I drink gallons of water and sweat out the virus.

My dad takes large doses of vitamin C.

My sister goes straight to bed and rests.

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Ask for a lower credit-card interest rate.

Shop only during sales.

Put all debt on the lowest-interest credit card.

Make more than the minimum payment each month.

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**interest:** a charge for borrowing money that is typically a percentage of the amount borrowed

3. Oil from roads contaminates water supplies.

Emissions from cars and factories trap heat and harm air quality.

Garbage landfills leak harmful chemicals.

Recycling has only limited benefits.

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Open-air stadiums give concerts a free, natural feeling.

The lighting at a concert can set a certain mood.

The ticket price of a concert is important.

A good sound system involves listeners in the music.

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Make a list of your accomplishments at work.

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

Know what raise is reasonable based on your accomplishments.

File your federal tax return on time.

Set up a meeting to speak to your employer.

## COMBINING STRATEGIES

In most writing situations, you will need to use all the organizing strategies (ordering, grouping, and eliminating) at the same time. In the following activities, you will be required to

1. **group** related items into separate groups
2. **order** the items in each group by putting the big idea first and the related examples in an order of your choice
3. **eliminate** any items that do not fit in either group

### ACTIVITY 16

For each list that follows, you will be given *one* of the big ideas. For each list, do the following:

- Determine the other big idea.
- For each group, write the big idea on the first line.
- Add the examples under the appropriate big idea, eliminating any items that do not fit.

**EXAMPLE:** Web sites / camping / cruise / maps / resort / travel agent / vacations / binoculars

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** vacations

**Examples:** resort

cruise

camping

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** tools for planning

**Examples:** travel agent

web sites

maps

**Eliminate one item:** binoculars

1. toothpaste / deodorant / razor / grooming tool / teeth / toothbrush / shampoo / comb

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** grooming tool

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Eliminate one item:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. lunch / restaurant / appetizer / dessert / breakfast / dinner / courses / main course

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** courses

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Eliminate one item:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. rent / salary / income / gift certificate / food / lottery winnings / bank / utilities

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** income

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Eliminate one item:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. blood pressure / heart attack / ambulance / stroke / pulse / medical technician / seizure / breathing rate / vital signs (signs of life) / body temperature / concussion

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** vital signs (signs of life)

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Eliminate two items:** \_\_\_\_\_

CONTINUED >

5. infancy / friendship / childhood / parent / life stages / family history / lover / adulthood / friend / adolescence / spouse

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** life stages

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

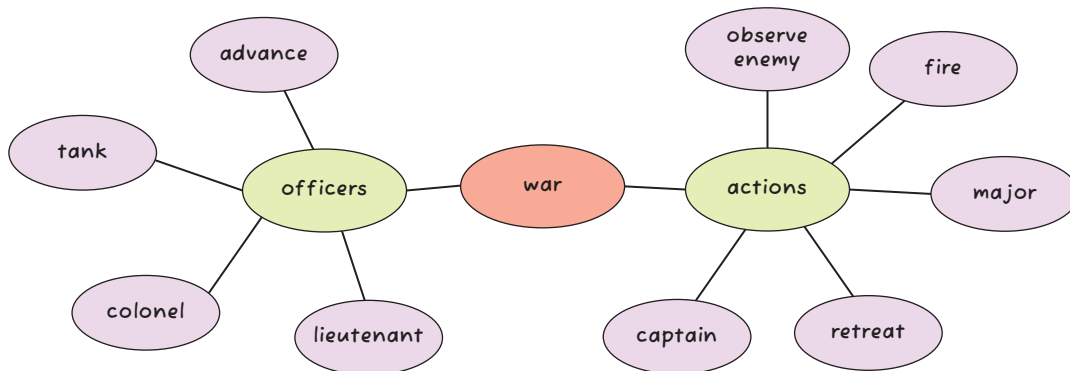
**Eliminate two items:** \_\_\_\_\_

### ACTIVITY 17: Teamwork

Each of the following items consists of two joined clusters. In each cluster, the *big idea* appears in a central (green) bubble. Work with one or two classmates to do the following:

- For each group, write the big idea on the first line.
- Add the related examples under each big idea, eliminating any items that do not fit.
- Watch out for items that are clustered incorrectly.

**EXAMPLE:**



**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** officers

**Examples:** colonel

lieutenant

captain

major

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** actions

**Examples:** observe enemy

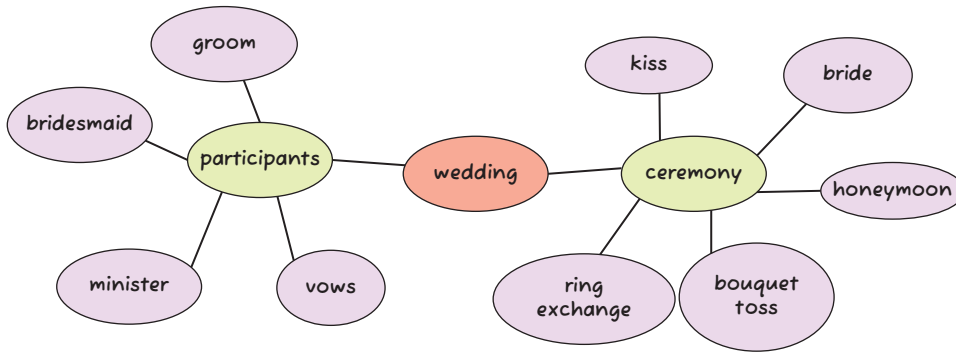
advance

fire

retreat

**Eliminate one item:** tank

1.



Group 1:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Group 2:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_

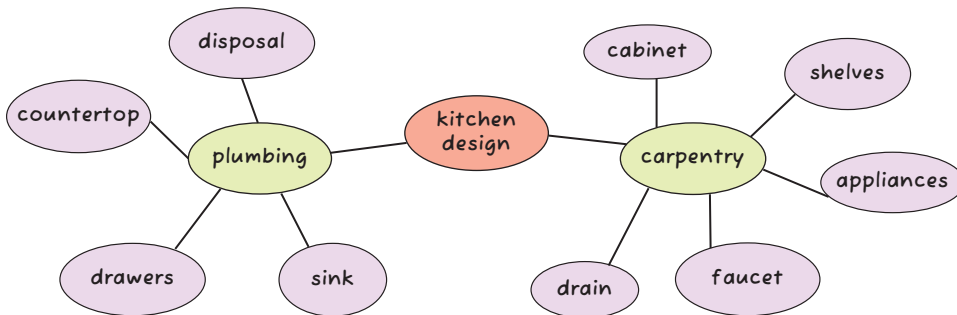
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Eliminate one item: \_\_\_\_\_

2.



Group 1:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Group 2:

Big Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

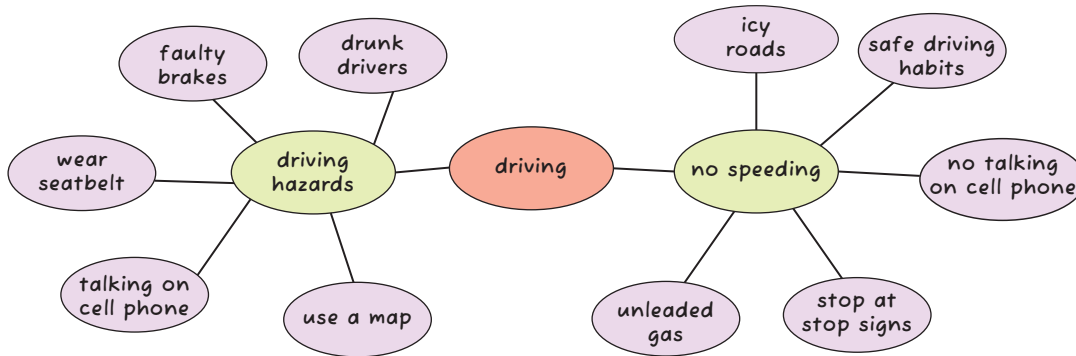
Eliminate one item: \_\_\_\_\_

**ACTIVITY 18: Mastery Test**

Although *big ideas* should appear in the green bubbles, we sometimes put them in the wrong place by accident. The following clusters are trickier because more items are incorrectly clustered, including some of the big ideas. For each item, do the following:

- For each group, write the big idea on the first line.
- Add the related examples under each big idea, eliminating any items that do not fit.

**EXAMPLE:**



**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** driving hazards

**Examples:** drunk drivers

faulty brakes

talking on cell phone

icy roads

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** safe driving habits

**Examples:** wear seatbelt

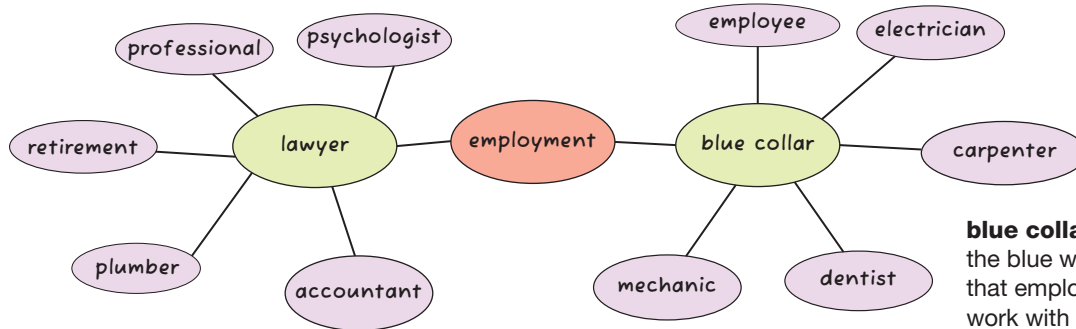
no speeding

no talking on cell phone

stop at stop signs

**Eliminate two items:** use a map, unleaded gas

**1.**



**blue collar:** refers to the blue work clothes that employees who work with their hands often wear.

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

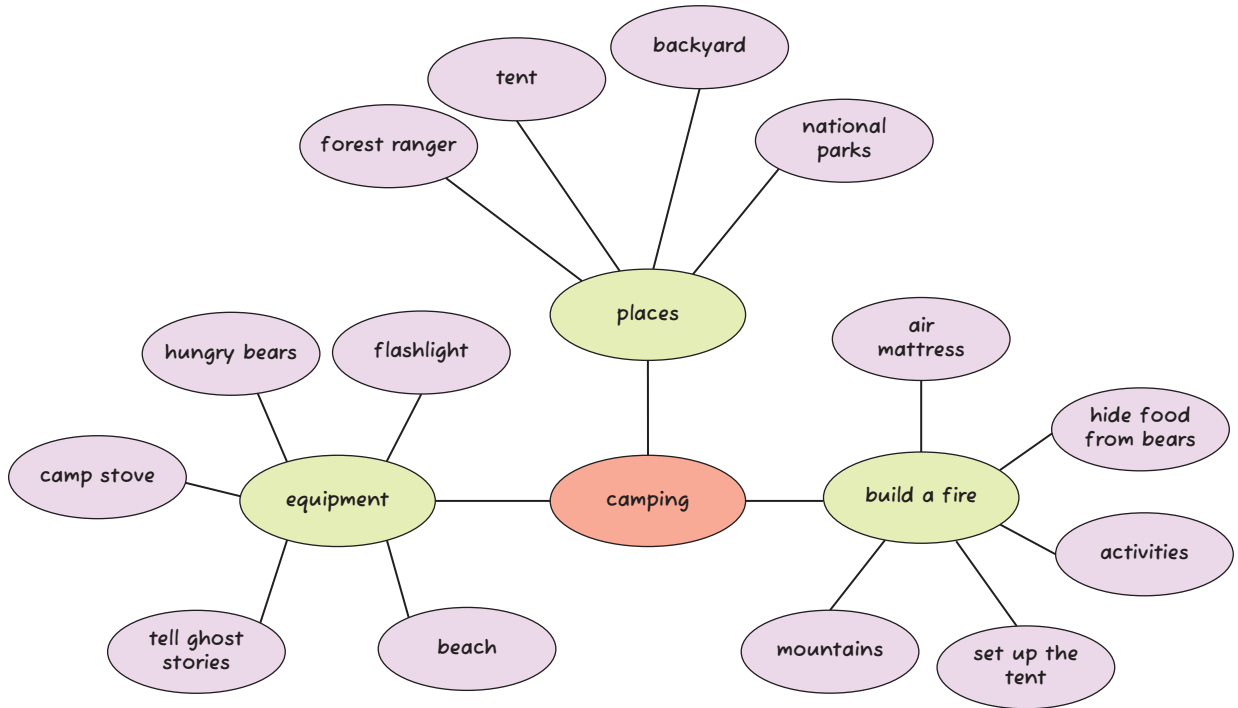
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Eliminate two items:** \_\_\_\_\_



2.



**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Group 3:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Eliminate two items:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ACTIVITY 19: Mastery Test**

In this activity, you will need to form three ordered lists from three scrambled lists. Each list should begin with a *big idea*. You will be given *two* of the big ideas. For each set of lists, do the following:

- Determine the third big idea.
- For each group, write the big idea on the first line.
- Add the related examples under each big idea, eliminating any items that do not fit.

**EXAMPLE:** **Assigned Topic:** Discuss how you learn important skills.

- |                            |                         |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| go to the movies           | study for driver's test | drive with experienced person |
| attend job training        | practice writing        | read about the job            |
| take driver's education    | learning a job          | learning to write better      |
| read good writing          | watch other workers     | get comments on your writing  |
| ask questions about tasks  | take a writing class    |                               |
| read driver's ed materials | volunteer regularly     |                               |

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** learning a job

**Examples:**

- read about the job
- attend job training
- watch other workers
- ask questions about tasks

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** learning to write better

**Examples:**

- take a writing class
- practice writing
- get comments on your writing
- read good writing

**Group 3:**

**Big Idea:** learning to drive

**Examples:**

- take driver's education
- read driver's ed materials
- study for driver's test
- drive with experienced person

**Eliminate two items:** go to the movies, volunteer regularly

**1. Assigned Topic: Write about how to live alone successfully.**

- don't be alone too often
- don't play loud music
- save emergency funds
- wash dishes regularly
- don't argue loudly
- clean house responsibly

- pay your bills on time
- don't overspend on credit
- respect your neighbors
- keep up with your laundry
- throw out spoiled food

- balance your checkbook
- look for a roommate
- end parties at a decent hour
- disinfect the bathroom
- walk softly if you live above someone

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** clean house responsibly

**Examples:**

---

---

---

---

---

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** respect your neighbors

**Examples:**

---

---

---

---

---

**Group 3:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:**

---

---

---

---

---

**Eliminate two items:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Assigned Topic: Discuss the benefits of managing your life online.**

- e-mail friends
- visit celebrity Web sites
- download songs
- socializing online
- e-mail your teachers
- try Internet dating

- improve your virus protection
- find movie schedules
- research your papers
- exchange personal photos
- register for classes
- finding entertainment options online

- find your grades
- get free Web access
- join live chat rooms
- play video games

**Group 1:**

**Big Idea:** socializing online

**Examples:**

---

---

**Group 2:**

**Big Idea:** finding entertainment options online

**Examples:**

---

---

**Group 3:**

**Big Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Examples:**

---

---

Eliminate two items: \_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITY 20

Go back to one of the clusters or lists that you generated for Chapter 2 and do the following:

- Make sure that the ideas are *grouped* in a way that makes sense. (You can write your changes on the cluster or list, or transfer your work to a fresh piece of paper.)
- Make sure that there is a *big idea* that connects the items in each group.
- Make sure that the ideas are *ordered* in a way that makes sense, especially if you are working with a list.
- *Eliminate* any items that do not fit your topic.

### BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: Organizing Your Ideas

In this chapter, you have studied several strategies for organizing your ideas. Confirm your knowledge by filling in the blank spaces in the following sentences. If you need help, review the pages listed after each sentence.

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_ Organizing your ideas involves three strategies. These strategies are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. (page 40)
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_ The strategy that requires you to distinguish big ideas from related examples is \_\_\_\_\_. When arranging a list of items, the \_\_\_\_\_ usually comes first. (page 40)
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_ The strategy that requires you to identify related items is called \_\_\_\_\_. Once you have identified related items, you sometimes have to develop a \_\_\_\_\_ to show how these items are related. (page 47)
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_ The strategy that requires you to identify items that do not fit is called \_\_\_\_\_. In brainstorming, you may write down quite a few items that will not fit when you move to your outline; therefore, these items should be \_\_\_\_\_. (page 53)

## CHAPTER 4

# Outlining Your Paragraph

Before you read this chapter, it's a good idea to test your understanding of outlining paragraphs. You may know more than you think.

For each question, select all the answers that apply.

### WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

- 1. Which one of the following best expresses the function of an outline?**
  - to indent and space sentences
  - to order, group, and eliminate ideas
  - to edit and proofread text
- 2. When finalizing your *main idea* for a paragraph, what strategy is helpful?**
  - using colorful details
  - expressing your idea as a complete sentence
  - adding a transitional expression
- 3. Including transitional expressions in your outline can help with which of the following?**
  - finalizing your main idea
  - moving from one support point to another in your drafts
  - making the outline look bigger
  - remembering to include the expressions in your final paragraph
- 4. Which of the following items are key features of an outline?**
  - main idea
  - support points
  - related examples
  - freewriting
- 5. Which of the following items is considered a problem in an outline?**
  - an item (idea, example, or detail) that does not fit
  - an item that repeats another item
  - an item that is missing
  - an item that is unclear

### OVERVIEW OF THIS CHAPTER

Outlining Basics 67

Bringing It All Together 87

# Outlining Basics

In the previous chapter, you learned how to organize your ideas. In this chapter, you will learn about outlining, an important process for planning paragraphs and other writing assignments. All outlines have the same basic functions, which are already familiar to you from Chapter 3:

- They **order** ideas, starting with big ideas (which become *support points*) and moving to related examples and specific details.
- They **group** items that are related to one another.
- They **eliminate** any items that do not fit together.

Take a look at the following outline, in which key features are noted. (It is based on a cluster from Chapter 2; see page 27.)

**ASSIGNED TOPIC**     *Write about your workplace*

**MAIN IDEA**

Three serious problems make my workplace an unpleasant environment.

The **main idea** responds to your assigned topic. It connects all the support points and examples that follow.

**SUPPORT POINT 1**

The leadership is poor.  
– shift leader plays favorites  
– manager is a bad communicator  
– ~~I should be a manager~~  
– shift leader and manager don't help with customers

**SUPPORT POINT 2**

The staffing is inadequate.  
– only four workers on weekends  
– only one cashier  
– too many workers call in sick

The **support points** are based on the *big ideas* from clusters or lists, and they back up the main idea.

**SUPPORT POINT 3**

There are serious personality problems.  
– manager is insensitive  
– older and younger employees argue  
– guys harass the girls  
– ~~they should hire better people~~

**Related examples** are grouped under each support point.

**Unrelated ideas** are eliminated.

## ACTIVITY 1

For the following activity, refer to Chapter 3, Activity 19, question 2 (Managing Your Life Online, pages 64–65). Move the items from question 2 in Activity 19 to the outline form that follows. Use the outline above as a model. To get you started, the main idea has been filled in for you. You will need to:

- turn each *big idea* from Activity 19 into a *support point*. (The first support point has been provided for you.)
- write each support point as a complete sentence.
- write three related examples below each support point. These examples can be left as short phrases.

CONTINUED >

## MAIN IDEA

Going online can be beneficial. (BECAUSE...)

## SUPPORT POINT 1

It can help you with school.

## SUPPORT POINT 3

## SUPPORT POINT 2

**A note about outline formats:** In your college career, you will use many different outline formats. In this book, we show a simple format, with a main idea followed by support points (usually three) and blanks for related examples. Once you understand this, you will be able to transition to other outline formats with greater confidence.

Sometimes, you may have only two support points. At other times, you may have more than three support points. In these cases, ask your instructor for suggestions. Often, you may be allowed to leave the third point blank, or, if you have extra support points, you may be able to write them on the back of the outline.

## UNDERSTANDING KEY FEATURES OF OUTLINES

The following sections give more details on the three key features of outlines: the main idea, the support points, and the related examples.

### Feature 1: The Main Idea

In college, each paragraph that you write must contain a *main idea* that responds directly to an assigned topic. Consider the following assignment:

Discuss the career you would choose if anything were possible.

In writing a main idea for this topic, you should do all of the following:

- Identify a career of your choice.
- Use *key words* from the assigned topic (*career, if anything were possible*).
- Express your idea as *a complete sentence*.

Here are three students' main ideas that respond to this assigned topic:

*If anything were possible, I would be a pilot for my career.*

*I would like to be an elementary school teacher if any career were possible.*

*The career I would pick if anything were possible is president of the United States.*

Notice that each main idea identifies a specific career. Also, each one uses key words from the assigned topic (*if anything were possible, career*). Finally, each main idea is expressed as a complete sentence.

### Power Tip

You may think that making outlines is a waste of time, but organizing your ideas before you write can actually save time, especially if you are writing under a deadline.

## ACTIVITY 2

For each of the following assigned topics and main ideas, do the following:

- In the main idea, underline any words repeated from the assigned topic.
- In the main idea, circle the key phrase that responds to the assigned topic.
- To ensure that the main idea is expressed as a complete sentence, put a check mark over the capital letter at the beginning of the sentence and over the period at the end of the sentence.

### EXAMPLE:

**Assigned Topic:** Identify an activity at which you would like to excel.

**Main Idea:** I would like to excel at repairing bicycles.

1. **Assigned Topic:** Discuss how you manage your money.

**Main Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. **Assigned Topic:** Discuss what qualities make you a good or bad friend.

**Main Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Assigned Topic:** Describe something that scares you.

**Main Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Assigned Topic:** Explain how successful you are at time management.

**Main Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. **Assigned Topic:** Discuss your attitude toward cheating in school.

**Main Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Power Tip

Whenever you have trouble coming up with a main idea, look back at ideas that you've brainstormed in response to an assigned topic. You might circle words in your brainstorming that directly respond to the assigned topic. Then, use these words in your main idea. In Chapter 6, you will learn how to turn main ideas into a *topic sentence*, an important feature of effective paragraphs.

## Feature 2: The Support Points

In an outline, you'll need to include *support points* that back up your main idea. Often, these are drawn from the *big ideas* in your clusters and lists. Make sure to state the support points as complete sentences.

Compare the following (partial) outline with the cluster on page 70. Notice that the first support point is based on the big idea "bad leadership" in the cluster.

Here is the start of an outline that turns the big ideas into support points:

#### MAIN IDEA

Three serious problems make my workplace an unpleasant environment.

#### SUPPORT POINT 1

The leadership is poor.

- shift leader plays favorites
- manager is a bad communicator
- shift leader and manager don't help with customers



Often, adding the word *because* to the end of your main idea will help you develop support points that make sense. For example, suppose your main idea is

**Good communication between parents and teenagers is important (*because . . .*)**

Now, you will have to complete this thought with a support point that makes sense. Here are several examples of how you might complete this idea:

**It builds trust.**  
**It avoids misunderstandings.**  
**It shows care and concern.**

Notice that each support point is expressed as *a complete sentence* and connects clearly with the main idea. You should always verify that each support point makes sense by reading it in conjunction with the main idea. For example:

**Good communication between parents and teenagers is important *because* it builds trust.**

This idea makes clear sense. However, suppose you tried to express your support point as a single word (like *trust*) or as a short phrase (like *builds trust*). When you connect a single word or short phrase to your main idea, it will not make sense:

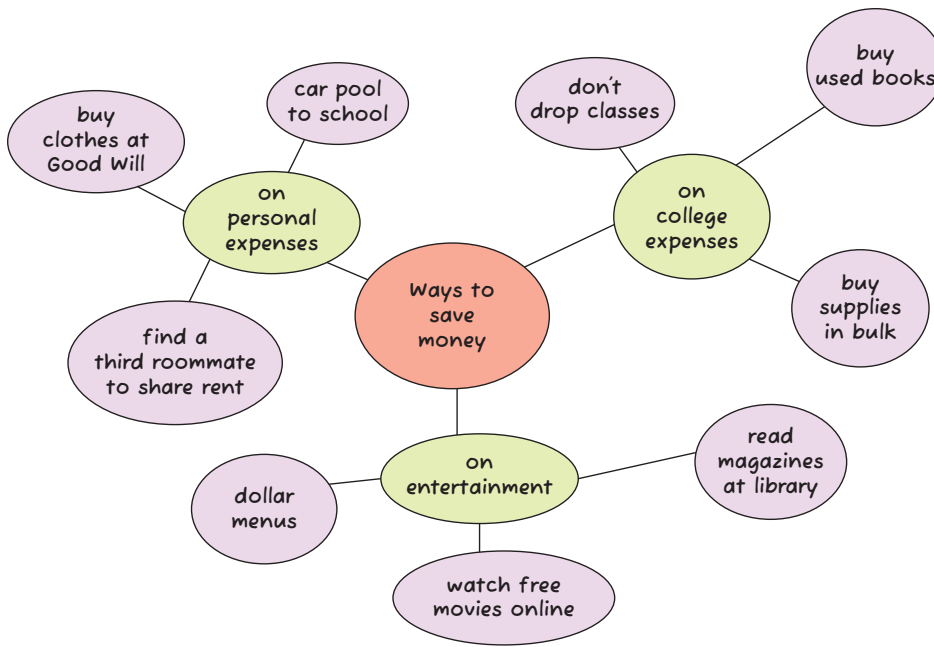
**Good communication between parents and teenagers is important *because* trust.**

**Good communication between parents and teenagers is important *because* builds trust.**

### ACTIVITY 3

Using the items from this cluster, fill in the outline form that follows. Remember to write the main idea and the support points as *complete sentences*.





**MAIN IDEA**

---

**SUPPORT POINT 1**

---

---

---

---

**SUPPORT POINT 3**

---

---

---

---

**SUPPORT POINT 2**

---

---

---

---

**Feature 3: The Related Examples**

For each support point in your outline, you will need to provide *related examples* to illustrate your point. For example, if you say,

**The stockroom at my workplace is unsafe.**

your readers will expect you to name some *related examples* of how the stockroom is unsafe. For example:

- slippery floors**
- boxes falling from shelves**
- old electrical wiring**

In an outline, your examples may be expressed as *short phrases* or even as *single words*. Be sure that your examples fit with the point you are trying to

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prove. If you are not sure what kind of example fits, circle the key words in the support point to help you focus. For example:

The **employees** at my job have **bad attitudes**.

For this support point, you should provide examples of individual employees and their bad attitudes. For example:

**Jessica thinks she's above criticism.**

**Robbie is a diva.**

**Jake hates the customers.**

#### ACTIVITY 4

Circle the key word or words in the following support points. Then, provide two or three *related examples* for each point.

##### MAIN IDEA

I like spending time with friends (because...)

##### SUPPORT POINT 1

I can be myself around them.

##### SUPPORT POINT 3

We have a lot of fun together.

---



---



---



---



---



---

##### SUPPORT POINT 2

They help me in different ways.

---



---



---

## FILLING IN OUTLINES

Again, to write an outline, you must move the items from your brainstorming to an outline form. As shown on page 67, outlining requires the same strategies that you practiced in the previous chapter: ordering, grouping, and eliminating. Moving items from your list or cluster requires patience and careful thinking.

#### ACTIVITY 5

For each of the topics in this activity, you are presented with scrambled ideas in both list and cluster form. For each assigned topic, do the following:

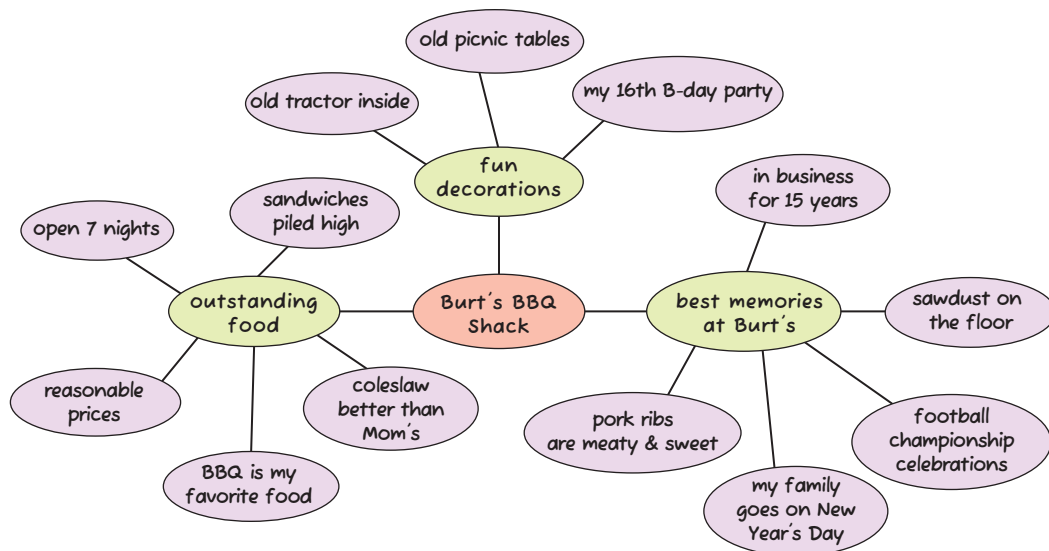
- Print a blank outline form from this book's Web site, at [bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones](http://bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones) (see Useful Forms), or create your own. If listing is your preferred brainstorming method, refer to the list; if clustering is your preferred brainstorming method, refer to the cluster.
- Move the items from the list or cluster to the outline form. Start by filling in the *main idea* and the *support points*, putting the support points in an order that makes sense to you. Both the main idea and support points should be stated as complete sentences, and the main idea should include some key words from the assigned topic.
- Go back and fill in the related examples for each support point, eliminating items that do not fit.

**Assigned Topic 1:** Discuss your favorite restaurant.

**Burt's BBQ Shack**

there's an old tractor inside  
 I love the fun decorations  
 BBQ is my favorite food  
 some of my best memories are at Burt's  
 it's open seven nights a week  
 the shredded beef sandwich is piled high  
 the pork ribs are meaty and sweet  
 all the food is outstanding

football championship celebrations  
 you sit at old picnic tables  
 my sixteenth birthday party  
 my family goes on New Year's Day  
 Burt's been in business for 15 years  
 the coleslaw is better than my mom's  
 sawdust on the floor  
 the prices are very reasonable



**Assigned Topic 2:** Discuss whether or not music has an important role in your life.

**Music – not important to me**

audio books in my car  
 country music irritates me  
 rap music makes me angry  
 bad reactions to music  
 jazz and hip-hop  
 my girlfriend loves music  
 live basketball broadcasts  
 distracts me from important activities  
 learning my football plays  
 downloading songs

prefer listening to other things  
 studying for school  
 heavy metal gives me a headache  
 one day I may like music  
 iPod and iTunes  
 news radio  
 classical music relaxes some people  
 staying focused at work  
 2Pac and Mos Def  
 Internet options



### ACTIVITY 6

Go back to at least one of the clusters or lists that you generated in Chapter 2 and do the following:

- Print a blank outline form from this book's Web site, at [bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones](http://bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones) (see Useful Forms), or create your own.
- Move the items from the list or cluster to the outline form. Start by filling in the *main idea* and the *support points*, putting the support points in an order that makes sense to you. Both the main idea and support points should be stated as complete sentences.
- Go back and fill in the related examples for each support point, eliminating items that do not fit.

### ACTIVITY 7

The next page contains scrambled information for two outlines. For each one, do the following:

- Identify the main idea and write it in the outline as a complete sentence.
- Identify the support points and write them in an order that makes sense to you, using complete sentences.
- Fill in the three related examples for each support point.

**Assigned Topic 1:** Discuss something you don't like doing.

cleanings hurt my gums

**MAIN IDEA**

---

I paid over \$100 for a filling

**SUPPORT POINT 1**

---

he always finds more cavities

---

he says I'm grinding my teeth down

---

Novocaine injections sting

---

he said I may be developing gum disease

**SUPPORT POINT 2**

---

treatments are expensive

---

the dentist always gives me bad news

---

a crown or bridge would bankrupt me

---

drilling leaves my jaw sore

**SUPPORT POINT 3**

---

I don't like going to the dentist

---

check-ups cost \$85

---

treatments are always painful

---

**Assigned Topic 2:** Discuss the best or worst teacher you ever had.

he came to my family's celebrations

**MAIN IDEA**

---

he had a fun class Web site

**SUPPORT POINT 1**

---

helped us get involved in extracurricular activities

---

he had a good sense of humor

---

he brought in interesting guest speakers

**SUPPORT POINT 2**

---

started every class with a joke

---

he related to us outside the classroom

---

we played learning games in teams

---

listened to our personal problems

---

he could laugh at himself when he made a mistake

**SUPPORT POINT 3**

---

he used creative teaching methods

---

Coach Hendricks was my best teacher

---

he appreciated the students' humor

---

---

## USING TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS IN OUTLINES

Moving from one support point to another requires a **transitional word or phrase**. These transitional cues help your reader follow the development of your thoughts.

Before you write a paragraph, remember this simple but tremendously important step: *On your outline, write transitional words or phrases for each of your support points.* If the transitional expressions are not on your outline, you may forget to include them in your paragraph, making it difficult for your reader to understand the flow of your ideas.

The following example shows how you can add transitions to each part of an outline for a paragraph.

### Major Transitional Expressions



#### Group 1

First,  
In the first place,  
For starters,  
To begin with,

#### MAIN IDEA

To begin with,

#### SUPPORT POINT 1

#### Group 2

Second,  
In the second place,  
More important,  
In addition,  
Next,

Second,

#### SUPPORT POINT 2

#### Group 3

Third,  
Finally,  
Most important,  
Last,

Finally,

#### SUPPORT POINT 3

### ACTIVITY 8

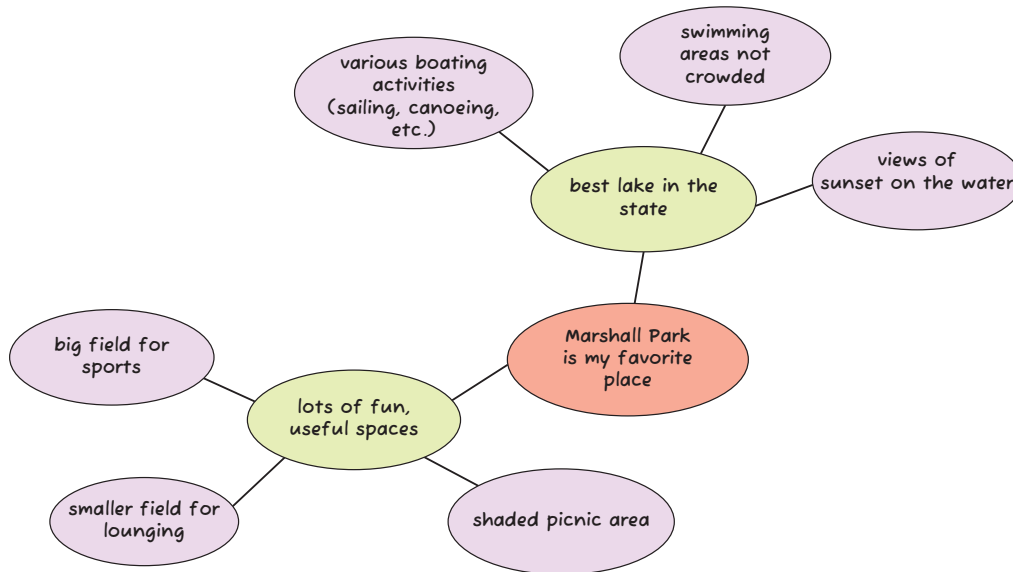
Go back to at least two of the earlier outlining activities (1, 3, 4, 5, or 7) and fill in transitional words or phrases in them. Then, for the remainder of this chapter, add transitional expressions to each outline that you work on.

## SOLVING PROBLEMS IN OUTLINES

After completing your outline — and before you begin writing your paragraph — it is a good idea to double-check the outline to make sure that it is free of the common problems discussed in the following sections.

### A Missing Item

When filling in an outline based on brainstormed ideas, you may find that you are *missing support points or examples*. Therefore, outlining is a great way to identify weaknesses in your ideas even before the paragraph-drafting stage. The result will be a much stronger, fully developed paragraph. Let's look at the following cluster:



Now, let's see how a student might build an outline based on this cluster, assuming that her instructor requires three support points and three examples for each support point.

- MAIN IDEA** Marshall Park is my favorite place.
- SUPPORT POINT 1** It has the best lake in the state.
- various boating activities
  - swimming areas not crowded
  - views of sunset on the water
- SUPPORT POINT 2** It has lots of fun, useful spaces.
- big field for sports
  - smaller field for lounging
  - shaded picnic areas

As you can see, the writer is missing a third support point with examples. Therefore, she would need to add another support point (such as *It has a huge botanical garden with many varieties of flowers*) and related examples. In some cases, you might have enough examples but be missing a support point. In other cases, you might have a support point but not enough examples.

## ACTIVITY 9

Add the missing support points and examples to the following outlines. You will have to make up the missing information, but make sure that the support points are appropriate for the examples and vice versa.

## 1. MAIN IDEA

I definitely want to have  
children.

## SUPPORT POINT 1

Children can be loving.  
cuddle with you  
look up to you and admire  
you

## SUPPORT POINT 2

make you laugh  
fun to play with  
never boring

## SUPPORT POINT 3

Children can give you a  
sense of pride.  
great to see them  
growing up smart and  
strong  
nice to see them doing  
well in school

## 2. MAIN IDEA

There's no way that I  
want to have children.

## SUPPORT POINT 1

A young child would depend  
on me from morning to  
night.

have to watch his/her  
every move  
have to get him/her to  
bed at night

## SUPPORT POINT 2

I would never be as free  
as before.  
wouldn't be able to see  
friends that often  
wouldn't be able to relax

## SUPPORT POINT 3

clothes and shoes cost  
a lot  
expensive grocery bills



3. **MAIN IDEA** I would never get a tattoo.

**SUPPORT POINT 1**

parents would be angry  
minister would be offended

**SUPPORT POINT 2** I am afraid of the pain.

healing process can hurt  
infection could cause pain

**SUPPORT POINT 3**

artist might mess it up  
might not like the design  
after a year or two  
might look bad as my skin  
ages

4. **MAIN IDEA** I would get another tattoo.

**SUPPORT POINT 1**

Tattoos represent who I am.  
zodiac symbol for my  
birth month  
anchor for marines

**SUPPORT POINT 2**

girlfriend has a swan on  
her back  
father has marines symbol

**SUPPORT POINT 3**

body is pierced in six  
different places  
hair is dyed purple and  
spiked  
I wear a spiked collar

### **An Item That Does Not Fit**

One problem that can occur with your outline is including *an item that does not fit*. An item does not fit when it is not clearly connected to a main idea or support point. Take a look at this outline, in which just the first support point has been developed with examples. Can you see a problem with one of the examples?

**MAIN IDEA**

I have excellent people skills.

**SUPPORT POINT 1**

My friends often turn to me for advice.  
– My friend Malika asks my opinion on relationship problems.  
– My friend Tari asks me for job advice.  
– My best friend, Emile, has the most problems of all.

For more practice with outlining, visit [bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones](http://bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones).

**SUPPORT POINT 2**

I am good at resolving conflicts in my personal life and at work.

**SUPPORT POINT 3**

I work well with others.

You might have noticed that the third example (*My best friend, Emile, has the most problems of all*) doesn't fit with the main idea (*I have excellent people skills*) or with the support point it's under (*My friends often turn to me for advice*). A better example would show how the writer's friend Emile turns to him for advice. For instance, a good example might be *My best friend, Emile, asks me for parenting advice*.

When you have finished an outline, first read each support point together with the main idea to make sure the point fits the main idea. Then, check the related examples under each support point to make sure they belong. If they do not, change them so that they fit better.

**ACTIVITY 10: Teamwork**

In the following outlines, cross out any item that does not fit. Then, use your imagination and write in a new item that does fit.

**1. MAIN IDEA**

The Olive Grove is my favorite restaurant.

**SUPPORT POINT 1**

It has a romantic atmosphere.  
soft music  
candles on the table  
intimate tables for two

**SUPPORT POINT 2**

The food is delicious.  
chewy, cheesy pizza  
cheap prices  
best New York  
cheesecake

**SUPPORT POINT 3**

Everyone has a favorite restaurant.  
parking valets are fast  
waitresses are attentive and helpful  
managers yell at the staff

**2. MAIN IDEA**

Music is important in my life.

**SUPPORT POINT 1**

It helps me work better.  
cleaning the house  
stocking the shelves at my job  
wearing earplugs

**SUPPORT POINT 2**

It calms me down.  
I'm nervous a lot  
after a fight with my parents  
when I'm stuck in traffic

**SUPPORT POINT 3**

It motivates me.  
helps me get up in the morning  
motivates my girlfriend  
gets me going at the gym

3. **MAIN IDEA** Physical exercise is not an important part of my life.
- SUPPORT POINT 1** I grew up in a home where exercise was not important.  
parents never exercised  
I stayed inside, watching TV or playing video games  
my dad likes professional football
- SUPPORT POINT 2** I am just too lazy to exercise.  
none of my friends exercise  
I'd rather take a nap than exercise  
my muscles refuse to work
- SUPPORT POINT 3** I am too busy doing other things.  
studying  
a lot of friends  
working a part-time job
4. **MAIN IDEA** There are good reasons why I don't own a car.
- SUPPORT POINT 1** I like using public transportation.  
it's less expensive  
meet new people  
I can study on the bus
- SUPPORT POINT 2** Owning a car is too expensive.  
a motorcycle is cheaper  
insurance  
mechanical repairs
- SUPPORT POINT 3** I have a bad driving record.  
one DUI  
don't trust police  
two speeding tickets

### **An Item That Repeats Another Item**

Another problem that can occur with outlines is *an item that repeats another item*. Sometimes, we express the same idea more than once, but we do not recognize this repetition because we have changed the words. Take a look at this example:

- MAIN IDEA** I like buying secondhand clothing.
- SUPPORT POINT 1** It is less expensive than new clothing.
- SUPPORT POINT 2** It doesn't cost as much as new clothes.
- SUPPORT POINT 3** It is cheaper than new clothing.

Even though each support point uses different words, each one repeats the same idea (about used clothing being less expensive than new clothing). However, repetitions are not always this easy to spot, so you have to be very

careful about the ideas and words that you use. Now, here is an example of three *distinct* support points:

- MAIN IDEA** I like buying secondhand clothing.
- SUPPORT POINT 1** It is less expensive than new clothing.
- SUPPORT POINT 2** Many items are in “like new” condition.
- SUPPORT POINT 3** Some older clothes are better made than new items.

### ACTIVITY 11

In the following outlines, cross out any item that repeats another item. Then, use your imagination and write in a new item that is *distinct* from the others.

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>1. MAIN IDEA</b> My dream career is nursing.</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b> Nurses help other people.<br/>give patients dignity and hope<br/>provide a high standard of medical care<br/>treat patients with tenderness and concern</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 2</b> Nurses have good compensation and good job security.<br/>nurses are always in high demand<br/>salaries are very competitive<br/>nurses are always able to find work</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 3</b> Nurses are admired.<br/>shown as competent and helpful in TV dramas<br/>seen as role models<br/>media show positive images of nurses</p> | <p><b>2. MAIN IDEA</b> Mario’s Gym is the best place to work out.</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b> The equipment is high-quality.<br/>state-of-the-art workout machines<br/>good equipment<br/>brand-new free weights</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 2</b> The location is convenient.<br/>near my home, school, and work<br/>close to a highway exit<br/>close to me</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 3</b> It’s a good deal.<br/>regular monthly fee is \$30<br/>you get a discount if a friend signs up<br/>fees rarely go up</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>3. <b>MAIN IDEA</b> My mother is the person I admire most.</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b> She raised a family without help from others.<br/>my father disappeared<br/>never accepted welfare or food stamps<br/>she was a single parent</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 2</b> She got a college education while raising us.<br/>went to school in the evenings<br/>studied late at night instead of sleeping<br/>graduated with a 3.8 grade point average</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 3</b> She takes care of her health and appearance.<br/>never overeats<br/>stays physically active<br/>watches her weight</p> | <p>4. <b>MAIN IDEA</b> In two semesters of college, I have improved my study habits.</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b> I am more active in class.<br/>take careful lecture notes<br/>ask the professor questions<br/>share my ideas in discussion groups</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 2</b> I make studying a priority in my schedule.<br/>I study during the week and on weekends<br/>three hours every weekday evening<br/>Sunday is an all-day homework day</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 3</b> I go to my professors when I need help.<br/>for reading a draft of my paper<br/>when I don't understand the material<br/>if I am confused about the lesson</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### An Item That Is Unclear

The last major problem that can occur in outlines is the use of *an item that is unclear*. Often, items are unclear because they express an idea that is not specific enough. Be especially careful about single-word items in your outline; it is common for single-word items to be general too.

An unclear item in your outline can lead to a serious breakdown of organization in your paragraph. Always try to correct any unclear items *before* you attempt to write your paragraph. In the examples below, compare the unclear words (in bold) with the specific examples in the revision. Can you see the difference?

<b>UNCLEAR</b>	The first-aid training was <b>good</b> . I learned a lot of <b>cool stuff</b> .
<b>SPECIFIC</b>	The first-aid training was practical and complete. I learned how to clean and dress a wound, administer CPR, treat a patient for shock, and summon emergency assistance.

<b>UNCLEAR</b>	Tyndall College should do more for struggling students. Tyndall College should <b>help</b> struggling students.
<b>SPECIFIC</b>	Tyndall College should provide more tutors for struggling students.

For unclear (imprecise) words to look out for, see Chapter 7, pages 140–41.

## ACTIVITY 12: Teamwork

In the following outlines, cross out and replace any unclear items. You can work with another student or on your own.

- MAIN IDEA** Volunteering benefits both the volunteers and their communities.

**SUPPORT POINT 1** Volunteering helps people in need.  
fund-raising helps serve disaster victims  
donating food benefits the hungry  
building a playground is nice

**SUPPORT POINT 2** Volunteer work teaches volunteers new skills.  
how to work with others  
how to manage money  
how to do it

**SUPPORT POINT 3** Volunteer work makes volunteers feel connected to their communities.  
meet their neighbors during projects  
a sense of satisfaction  
get to know local government officials
- MAIN IDEA** Three key qualities are essential in a president of the United States.

**SUPPORT POINT 1** A president should be honest.  
not lie to American citizens or other members of government  
not ignore the law to carry out policies  
be good

**SUPPORT POINT 2** A president should work tirelessly to help Americans.  
pursue affordable health care  
be there for the military  
provide greater funding for schools and teachers

**SUPPORT POINT 3** A president should do good stuff in international relations.  
meet regularly with world leaders to avoid conflicts

- promote nuclear disarmament
  - provide humanitarian aid to poor nations
  - 3. **MAIN IDEA** I definitely want to have children.
    - SUPPORT POINT 1** Children keep you young.
      - playing games
      - reading children's stories
      - active
    - SUPPORT POINT 2** Children can make you proud.
      - doing well in school
      - being polite and respectful to others
      - being children
    - SUPPORT POINT 3** Children make you happy when you're older.
      - give you grandchildren
      - won't let you down
      - visit on holidays
  - 4. **MAIN IDEA** I am a loyal fan of fast food.
    - SUPPORT POINT 1** It is cheap.
      - dollar menus
      - don't pay much
      - don't have to leave a tip
    - SUPPORT POINT 2** It is convenient.
      - fast food is no hassle
      - a fast-food restaurant on every block
      - many have drive-through
    - SUPPORT POINT 3** It tastes good.
      - lots of salt and grease
      - delicious dipping sauces
      - flavorful
- 

### **Combined Problems**

Often, an outline will have more than one problem. The following activity will give you practice in identifying and fixing multiple problems in an outline.

**ACTIVITY 13: Mastery Test or Teamwork**

In each outline below, do the following:

- Label any item that 1) does not fit, 2) repeats another item, or 3) is unclear.
- Note where items are missing. (Assume that each main idea should have three support points and each support point should have three examples.)

1. **MAIN IDEA** Rita Cervino is the best manager I have worked with.

**SUPPORT POINT 1** She is competent and experienced.

She has been a manager for ten years.

She studied business management in college.

She knows what she is doing.

**SUPPORT POINT 2** She listens to her employees.

She holds weekly meetings to hear employee concerns.

When a worker raises a concern, she addresses it.

Stuff she does lets you know she hears you.

**SUPPORT POINT 3** She works as hard as her employees do.

If her workers stay late for a deadline, she does too.

She is fair in distributing work.

No employee works harder than she does.

2. **MAIN IDEA** To prevent the spread of germs, follow this procedure for hand washing.

**SUPPORT POINT 1** Use soap and water properly.

Wet your hands with warm water.

Use a generous amount of soap.

Apply the soap.

**SUPPORT POINT 2** Do it right.

Rub your hands together until suds form.

Wash all parts of your hands, including under the nails.

Don't rush.

**SUPPORT POINT 3** Rinse properly.

Many people rinse too quickly.

Hold your hands under warm water.

Rub them together for at least ten seconds.



## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: Outlining Your Paragraph

In this chapter, you have learned about the basic features of an academic outline and how to avoid common errors in your outlines. Confirm your knowledge by filling in the blank spaces in the following sentences. If you need help, review the pages listed after each sentence.

- ✓ All outlines have three basic functions. Their functions are to \_\_\_\_\_ ideas, \_\_\_\_\_ them, and \_\_\_\_\_ any ideas that do not fit. (page 67)
- ✓ The main features of an outline for an academic paragraph are:  
1) \_\_\_\_\_, 2) \_\_\_\_\_, and 3) \_\_\_\_\_. Also, it is good to write \_\_\_\_\_ directly on your outline so that you do not forget them in your paragraph. (pages 68, 69, 71, and 76)
- ✓ There are four common errors that occur in outlines. These errors are:  
1) \_\_\_\_\_, 2) \_\_\_\_\_, 3) \_\_\_\_\_, and 4) \_\_\_\_\_. (pages 77, 79, 81, and 83)
- ✓ An item on your outline may be unclear if it is not \_\_\_\_\_ enough. You should be especially careful about \_\_\_\_\_ items, as it is common for them to be unclear. (page 83)

## CHAPTER 5

# Composing the Paragraph

Before you read this chapter, it's a good idea to test your understanding about how to compose an academic paragraph. You may know more than you think.

For each question, select all the answers that apply.

### OVERVIEW OF THIS CHAPTER

Moving from Outline to Paragraph: An Opening Example 89

Writing an Effective Topic Sentence 89

Avoiding Problems in Topic Sentences 91

Writing the First Support Point 96

Writing the Related Examples 102

Completing the Paragraph 108

Bringing It All Together 112

### WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

- 1. The topic sentence for an academic paragraph should accomplish two things. What are they?**
  - ask a general question
  - respond clearly to the assigned topic
  - state the name of the assignment
  - express your original point about the assigned topic
- 2. What must you be careful to *avoid* when you move from your outline to your paragraph?**
  - changing key words
  - adding all your support points
  - leaving out transitional expressions
  - adding unrelated information
- 3. What will happen if you write your topic sentence as a fragment?**
  - You will make a major grammatical error.
  - Your topic sentence will sound incomplete.
  - Your original point may not be clear.
  - Nothing will happen.
- 4. How do you develop strong examples for your paragraph?**
  - Make sure the examples fit with your main idea.
  - Repeat the same examples a few times.
  - Use extra words to fill space.
  - Express each example in at least one separate, complete sentence.
- 5. What should a concluding sentence do?**
  - Use as many transitional expressions as possible.
  - Introduce a new idea.
  - Restate the main idea of your paragraph in a fresh way.
  - Make the paragraph look longer.

# Moving from Outline to Paragraph: An Opening Example

Take a look at how one student went from an outline to a successful paragraph:

Mrs. Nevis, my eleventh-grade geography teacher, was the worst teacher I've ever had. To begin with, she always picked on students and seemed to enjoy it. For example, my friend Jerry had a hard time memorizing the names of countries, so she called him a "brainless wonder." Also, she laughed at students when they made a mistake or answered incorrectly. I could never pronounce the word "Antarctic," so she always made me say it just so she could laugh at me. Her favorite way to pick on students, however, was to make us stay after school for no reason at all. Once, when I sneezed three times in a row, she assigned me one hour of detention. Next, she had very poor teaching skills. For instance, she could never explain a problem or an idea clearly. One time, when we asked her the difference between a glacier and an ice floe, she got so confused that she told us to look it up on the Internet. When she graded our essays, she never gave us useful comments. She once gave me a grade of "C" on a paper, and her only comment was "Try harder." Finally, she had distracting personal habits. She actually liked to eat food during class and even talked with her mouth full! Also, her clothes looked like she had slept in them or cleaned out her garage in them. If there were an award for worst teacher in history, Mrs. Nevis would get my vote.

We will now look at how each part of a paragraph is developed.

## Writing an Effective Topic Sentence

The **topic sentence** expresses the main idea of a paragraph, and it often appears first in the paragraph. To write a topic sentence, transfer the main idea from your outline, making sure that it is written as a complete sentence. (For more on complete sentences, see Chapter 10, page 221.) Once you have done this, check that the topic sentence does two things: 1) responds clearly to the assigned topic and 2) expresses your original point or opinion about the topic.

In many cases, you might also add other words to make the topic sentence more personal and original. However, the words you add should not change the meaning of the main idea. Here is an example:

**ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Write about your best or worst teacher.*

**MAIN IDEA** Mrs. Nevis was my worst teacher.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** Mrs. Nevis, my eleventh-grade geography teacher, was the worst teacher I've ever had.

### MAIN IDEA

Mrs. Nevis was my worst teacher.

### TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION

To begin with,

### SUPPORT POINT 1

she picked on students.

- used rude nicknames
- laughed at us
- made us stay after school

### TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION

Next,

### SUPPORT POINT 2

she had poor teaching skills.

- did not explain ideas clearly
- put no comments on essays

### TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION

Finally,

### SUPPORT POINT 3

she had distracting personal habits.

- ate food while teaching
- wore dirty, wrinkled clothes

**Power Tip**

A subject is the *main actor* in a sentence, or *who* or *what* the sentence is about.

A verb expresses an *action* or a *state of being*. A sentence needs both a subject and a verb to create a complete thought.

In each of the following topic sentences, the assigned topic has been underlined once, and the original point or opinion has been underlined twice. In each case, notice that the new words added to the topic sentence do not change the meaning of the main idea.

**ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Write about your favorite restaurant.*

**MAIN IDEA** Tango is my favorite restaurant.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** Since I went to Tango for my sixteenth birthday, it has been my favorite restaurant.

**ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Write about music in your life.*

**MAIN IDEA** Music helps me survive.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** Music has always helped me survive difficult times in my life.

**ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Write about one thing that you couldn't live without.*

**MAIN IDEA** One thing I couldn't live without is my car.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** My 1996 Honda Civic is one thing that I couldn't live without.

**ACTIVITY 1**

In each of the following topic sentences, underline the assigned topic once. Then underline the student's original point or opinion about the topic twice.

**EXAMPLE:**

**ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Write about your friends.*

**MAIN IDEA** My best friends are more important to me than my family.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** Since I moved away from home two years ago, my best friends have become more important to me than my family.

1. **ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Write about a hobby you enjoy.*

**MAIN IDEA** My favorite hobby is customizing motorcycles.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** My favorite hobby is customizing motorcycles.

2. **ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Write about social networking.*

**MAIN IDEA** Social networking helped me reconnect with old friends.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** Thanks to social networking, I have reconnected with friends from my past.

3. **ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Write about a powerful memory.*

**MAIN IDEA** The first time I saw the ocean is a powerful memory.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** Certain memories have a powerful impact on me, like the first time I saw the Pacific Ocean.

- 4. ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Write about an experience that taught you something important.*

**MAIN IDEA** I learned important things about children when I worked at a nursery school.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** While working at a nursery school for six months, I learned important things about children's behavior.

- 5. ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Write about how a parent or relative influenced your behavior.*

**MAIN IDEA** My Aunt Isabelle taught me to respect women.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** I am grateful to my Aunt Isabelle, who was a single mother, for teaching me to respect women.

## ACTIVITY 2

Choose one of your completed outlines from Chapter 4. On a separate sheet of paper (or on a computer), write the topic sentence for this outline.

## Avoiding Problems in Topic Sentences

The most important function of a topic sentence is to state your main idea *clearly*. In order to do this, you will need to avoid four common errors:

1. accidentally changing the meaning of your main idea
2. asking a question
3. making an announcement
4. writing a sentence fragment

### ACCIDENTALLY CHANGING THE MEANING OF YOUR MAIN IDEA

When you move from outline to paragraph and turn your main idea into a topic sentence, you might change the word order or add new words to make your idea more personal or original. That's okay. However, *be careful not to change the meaning of your main idea accidentally*. Students sometimes do this by:

- leaving out key words
- changing key words, or
- adding new information that is not clearly connected to the topic.

In each of the following topic sentences, the student's main idea is not clear because key words have been left out or changed, or new information has been added.

**ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Discuss your favorite restaurant.*

**MAIN IDEA** Tango is my favorite restaurant.

For more help with topic sentences, go to [bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones](http://bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones), and click on Six Ways to Form a Topic Sentence.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** I have liked Tango since my sixteenth birthday when I first ate there.

**PROBLEM** In the topic sentence, the student has left out the key words, *favorite restaurant*. This changes the meaning of the main idea.

**ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Discuss the role of music in your life.*

**MAIN IDEA** Music helps me survive.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** Music helps many people survive.

**PROBLEM** In the topic sentence, the student has changed the key word *me* to *many people*. This changes the meaning of the main idea.

**ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Discuss something you could not live without.*

**MAIN IDEA** One thing I couldn't live without is my car.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** My car causes me a lot of problems, but I couldn't live without it.

**PROBLEM** In the topic sentence, the student has added the new information *causes me a lot of problems*. This changes the meaning of the main idea.

### ACTIVITY 3

For each of the following items, decide if the topic sentence changes the meaning of the main idea. If it does, write one of the following phrases in the blank space: *key words left out*, *key words changed*, or *new information added*.

If the topic sentence does NOT change the meaning of the main idea, write *OK*.

#### EXAMPLE:

**ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Discuss why you enrolled in college.*

**MAIN IDEA** I decided to enroll in college because I wanted a better life for myself and my daughter.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** I decided to enroll in college, and this has changed my life forever.

key words left out

**1. ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Discuss a challenging experience you've had.*

**MAIN IDEA** Being a single mom is the most challenging experience of my life.

**TOPIC SENTENCE** Being a single mom is the most challenging experience of my life and it has taken a toll on my health.

**2. ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Discuss a costly mistake you have made.***MAIN IDEA**

Waiting two years to visit my college's financial aid office was a costly mistake.

**TOPIC SENTENCE**

Waiting two years to visit the financial aid office was a stupid thing to do.

---

**3. ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Discuss a celebrity whose behavior has disappointed you.***MAIN IDEA**

For me, Tiger Woods will always be a fallen hero.

**TOPIC SENTENCE**

For me, Tiger Woods will always be a hero.

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**4. ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Discuss your choice of a major in college.***MAIN IDEA**

Foreign Languages was my major in college, but I changed it because there are few job opportunities.

**TOPIC SENTENCE**

There are few job opportunities in Foreign Languages.

---

**5. ASSIGNED TOPIC** *Write about what it's like to attend college for the first time or to return to college.***MAIN IDEA**

Returning to college after serving in the Iraq war has changed my attitude about academic success.

**TOPIC SENTENCE**

Returning to college after serving in the Iraq war has changed my attitude about relationships, money, and academic success.

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## ASKING A QUESTION IN YOUR TOPIC SENTENCE

If you write your topic sentence as a question, your original point or opinion about the topic may not be clear. This is the case in the following sample topic sentences. Take a look:

**MAIN IDEA**

Tango is my favorite restaurant.

**TOPIC SENTENCE**

What is my favorite restaurant?

**PROBLEM**

This question does not express an original point or opinion about the topic. It merely asks a question.

**REVISED TOPIC SENTENCE**

Although my city has many great restaurants, Tango is my favorite.

Here is another example:

<b>MAIN IDEA</b>	Music helps me survive.
<b>TOPIC SENTENCE</b>	Does music help me survive?
<b>PROBLEM</b>	This question does not express an original point or opinion about the topic. It merely asks a question.
<b>REVISED TOPIC SENTENCE</b>	During the most difficult times in my life, music has helped me survive.

#### ACTIVITY 4: Teamwork

Rewrite each question as a topic sentence that clearly states an original point or opinion about the topic. The first part of the sentence has been done for you.

**EXAMPLE:** Should girls ask guys out on dates?

*Girls should ask guys out on dates to show that girls have equal power.*

- How can you impress your instructor?  
*You can impress your instructor by*
- When should you consider dropping a class?  
*You should consider dropping a class when*
- What would happen if I won the lottery?  
*If I won the lottery, I would*
- How can I improve my relationship with my parents?  
*To improve my relationship with my parents, I can*
- Where is a good place to study?  
*A good place to study is*

## MAKING AN ANNOUNCEMENT IN YOUR TOPIC SENTENCE

If you write a topic sentence as though you are making a general announcement, you are likely to leave out your original point or opinion about the topic. This is the case in the following topic sentences. Take a look:

### Topic sentences that make general announcements

*In this essay, I will discuss my favorite restaurant.*

*The topic of my paragraph is music.*

*I am going to write about my car.*

**PROBLEM** In each topic sentence, the student forgets to express an original point about the topic. Instead, the sentences make general announcements.



**REVISED TOPIC SENTENCES**

Since I first ate at Tango, it has been my favorite restaurant.

Music has changed my life in several ways, all of them good.

My car is important to my career, my family life, and my well-being.

**ACTIVITY 5: Teamwork**

Rewrite each general announcement as a topic sentence that clearly states an original point about the topic.

**EXAMPLE:** In this paragraph, I will discuss the benefits of sleeping well.

Sleeping well helps me function more effectively during the day.

1. I would like to talk about my boyfriend's smoking habit.

---

2. My topic today is falling in love.

---

3. I have been asked to write about communication in my family.

---

4. In this essay, I am going to discuss my greatest fear.

---

5. The main idea for my paragraph is airport security.

---

**WRITING THE TOPIC SENTENCE AS A FRAGMENT**

In order to be grammatically correct, a topic sentence needs to have both a subject and a verb, and it must express a complete thought. If any of these elements is missing, your topic sentence will be a **fragment**. (For more information on fragments, see Chapter 10, pages 246–53.) If you write a fragment for your topic sentence, you may also unintentionally leave out your original point about the topic. Consider these examples:

**Topic sentences as fragments**

My favorite restaurant.

The importance of music in my life.

Living without my car.

**PROBLEM** Each topic sentence is missing either a main verb or a main subject, which makes the sentence a fragment. This is a serious grammatical error. The student's specific point about the topic is also missing in each sentence.

**Power Tip**

Notice that when the topic sentence is written as a fragment, it sounds more like a *title* than an opening sentence with a complete thought.

For more practice with fragments, go to [bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones](http://bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones).

**ACTIVITY 6: Teamwork**

Rewrite each fragment as a topic sentence that clearly states a specific idea about the topic in a complete, correct sentence.

**EXAMPLE:** My first semester in college.

During my first semester in college, I made a few serious mistakes.

1. Taking my lunch to school.

---

2. Lazy study habits.

---

3. Looking for a job.

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4. Winter, my favorite season.

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5. Tips for online dating.

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**ACTIVITY 7**

Return to the topic sentence that you wrote in Activity 2 on page 91 and check that it is free of errors.

## Writing the First Support Point

After you have written an error-free topic sentence, it is time to develop your first support point. Follow these steps:

- Copy the transitional expression that introduces your first support point from your outline. If your outline doesn't include a transitional expression, add one. Put a comma after this expression. (For more on transitional expressions, see Chapter 4, page 76, and page 98 of this chapter.)
- Follow the transitional expression with the first support point from your outline, making sure that it is a complete sentence with a subject and a verb. Take a look:

<p><b>MAIN IDEA</b></p> <p>Mrs. Nevis was my worst teacher.</p> <p><b>TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION</b></p> <p>To begin with,</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b></p> <p>she picked on students.</p>	<p><u>Mrs. Nevis, my eleventh-grade geography teacher, was the worst teacher I've ever had. To begin with, she picked on students frequently and unfairly.</u></p>
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As with the topic sentence, you may change the word order or add words, but be careful not to change the meaning of the support point. Follow the same guidelines that you learned for the topic sentence:

- Do not leave out any important key words from the support point.
- Do not change any essential key words from the support point. (However, you may use words with similar meanings in some cases.)
- Do not add inappropriate new information to the support point. (However, as in the previous example, you may add descriptive language and other information that won't change the essential meaning of the support point.)

### ACTIVITY 8: Teamwork

Following are main ideas from different outlines, followed by the first support point and three versions of a sentence based on this support point. Working with two or three classmates, do the following for each sentence:

- If a sentence changes—or confuses—the meaning of the support point, underline the parts of the sentence that cause the problem.
- Explain how the sentence changes or confuses the meaning of the support point.
- If a sentence does not significantly change the meaning of the support point, write “OK” next to it.

**EXAMPLE: Main idea:** Babbo's Pizza is my favorite restaurant.

**Support point:** To begin with, the service is excellent.

**Sentence:** To begin with, the staff makes you feel welcome.

A welcoming staff is only one part of good service.

**Sentence:** To begin with, I can count on professional service.

OK

**Sentence:** To begin with, the whole experience is excellent.

The “whole experience” is broader than just the service.

- 1. Main idea:** My cousin's community service was a life-changing experience.

**Support point:** In the first place, he learned that other people's problems are worse than his own.

**Sentence:** In the first place, he learned that everyone has problems.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence:** In the first place, he learned that his own problems are not so bad.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence:** In the first place, he realized that his own problems are not as bad as other people's problems. \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Main idea:** My habit of waiting until the last minute creates problems in my life.

**Support point:** First, I never get projects done on time.

**Sentence:** First, I never turn papers in on time. \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence:** First, I never get projects done on time, and I'm always late for work. \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence:** First, I'm always late turning in projects. \_\_\_\_\_

When you first learn to write support points, you will need to avoid three main problems:

1. forgetting transitional expressions
2. writing support points as fragments
3. accidentally combining the support point with the first example

These problems usually occur when you are working quickly and not following your outline carefully. Remember, the outline is your navigation system: you should refer to it closely throughout the writing process. If you ignore any important information in your outline, you may get lost while writing the paragraph or cause your reader to become lost.

## REMEMBER TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS

As you learned in Chapter 4, transitional expressions are essential for good academic writing; they help the reader follow your ideas, especially in a long paragraph. If you forget transitional expressions, your reader may have difficulty following your thoughts. If you are worried about this, *use a highlighter* to mark transitional expressions on your outline.

Here is a chart of major transitional expressions that help introduce support points:

SUPPORT POINT 1	SUPPORT POINT 2	SUPPORT POINT 3
First,	Second,	Third,
In the first place,	In the second place,	Last,
For starters,	More important,	Most important,
To begin with,	To follow,	Finally,
One reason is . . .	Another reason is . . .	A final reason is . . .

For more on transitional expressions, see Chapter 4, page 76, and page 105 of this chapter.

### ACTIVITY 9: Teamwork

Take out your outline and highlight the transitions in it. If it is missing transitions, add them now. Then, exchange your outline with a peer and mark possible transitions in each other's work. If it is helpful, refer back to Chapter 4—and the chart on page 98.

## DO NOT WRITE SUPPORT POINTS AS FRAGMENTS

When students begin a sentence with a transitional expression, they sometimes forget to include both a subject and a verb in the sentence. (Again, the subject is the *main actor* in a sentence; it is *who* or *what* the sentence is about. A verb expresses an *action* or a *state of being*.) Consider the following examples:

<p><b>MAIN IDEA</b></p> <p>Tango is my favorite restaurant.</p> <p><b>TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION</b></p> <p>To begin with,</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b></p> <p>the food is delicious.</p>	<p><u>Although I have eaten at many good restaurants, Tango stands out as my favorite. To begin with, delicious food.</u></p>
<p><b>MAIN IDEA</b></p> <p>Music is important in my life.</p> <p><b>TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION</b></p> <p>First,</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b></p> <p>it helps me relax.</p>	<p><u>Even though I don't get to listen to music as often as I would like, it is important in my life because it helps me relax, work, and party. First, helping me relax.</u></p>
<p><b>MAIN IDEA</b></p> <p>I could not live without my car.</p> <p><b>TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION</b></p> <p>In the first place,</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b></p> <p>I need it for work.</p>	<p><u>I could not live without my car because I need it for work, to help my family, and to escape. In the first place, for work.</u></p>

Now, let's look at these three support sentences from the previous examples:

To begin with, delicious food.  
 First, helping me relax.  
 In the first place, for work.

When you begin a sentence with a transitional expression, remember that what *follows the comma* must be a complete sentence with a subject and a verb. Do not let the presence of the transitional expression cause you to write a fragment. Now, let's revise the examples to make them complete, correct sentences:

**SUBJECT** **VERB**

To begin with, the food is delicious.

**SUBJECT** **VERB**

First, music helps me relax.

**SUBJECT** **VERB**

In the first place, I need my car for work.

If it is helpful, cover up the transitional expression with a finger and look at the word group that follows. If the word group is a fragment, revise it. (For more on avoiding fragments, see Chapters 10 and 12.)

## AVOID COMBINING THE SUPPORT POINT WITH THE FIRST EXAMPLE

When you move from the outline to the paragraph, you might accidentally combine two items that should be expressed in separate sentences. This can cause confusion for your reader. When you write a support point, be sure not to mention the first example in the same sentence. Take a look at the following examples of this error:

<p><b>MAIN IDEA</b></p> <p>Tango is my favorite restaurant.</p> <p><b>TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION</b></p> <p>To begin with,</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b></p> <p>the food is delicious.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– spicy appetizers</li> <li>– tender, juicy beef</li> <li>– decadent desserts</li> </ul>	<p><u>Although I have eaten at many good restaurants, Tango stands out as my favorite. To begin with, the spicy appetizers are delicious.</u></p>
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Here, the writer has combined the first support point (*the food is delicious*) with the first related example (*spicy appetizers*). This error will cause significant confusion for readers because they will assume that the point here is about the appetizers instead of the food in general.

<p><b>MAIN IDEA</b></p> <p>Music is important in my life.</p> <p><b>TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION</b></p> <p>First,</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b></p> <p>it helps me relax.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– before a big test</li> <li>– getting to sleep</li> <li>– after a fight with my girlfriend</li> </ul>	<p><u>Even though I don't get to listen to music as often as I would like, it is important in my life because it helps me relax, work, and party.</u></p> <p><u>First, music helps me relax before a big test.</u></p>
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Here, the writer has combined the first support point (*music helps me relax*) with the first related example (*before a big test*). Readers will assume that the point here is all about using music to relax before a test instead of using music to relax in a variety of ways.

### ACTIVITY 10: Teamwork

With two or three classmates, read each main idea, its first support point, and the examples for the support point. Then, read the sentences that come after them and do the following:

- If the first related example has been combined with the support point, underline the words in the sentence that show the presence of the first related example. Then, write “Combined” next to the sentence.
- If the sentence is fine as is, write “OK” next to it.

**EXAMPLE: Main idea:** Kaleidoscopes are my passion.

**Support point:** First, I love the images.

- the bright colors
- the fluid movement
- the endless arrangements

**Sentence:** First, I get excited by the beautiful images. OK

**Sentence:** First, the images delight my imagination. OK

**Sentence:** First, I love the images with their rainbow colors.

Combined

1. **Main idea:** The police in my community work hard to have good communication with the residents.

**Support point:** In the first place, they ride bikes so they can stop and chat with people.

- people who have questions
- children
- business owners

**Sentence:** In the first place, they ride bikes so they can stop and answer people's questions. \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence:** In the first place, they ride bikes because it's easier to slow down and talk to people. \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence:** In the first place, they ride bikes because it's easier to provide information to people who need it. \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Main idea:** As long as I am in college, living at home with my parents makes good sense.

**Support point:** To begin with, I don't have to struggle financially.

- paying rent
- paying for food
- paying for books and tuition

**Sentence:** To begin with, as long as I am living at home with my parents, I won't have financial struggles, like paying my own rent. \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence:** To begin with, I don't have to pay for my own apartment and struggle with money. \_\_\_\_\_

**Sentence:** Living at home with my parents means that I am more financially secure. \_\_\_\_\_

### ACTIVITY 11

Return to the draft of your paragraph that you began in Activity 2 and write your first support point. Place it immediately following the topic sentence. Remember to use a transitional expression and write your support point as a complete sentence (not a fragment).

## Writing the Related Examples

After writing the first support point, it is time to develop your related examples. Follow these guidelines:

- Discuss the examples *one at a time*.
- Write at least one complete sentence for each example.
- Add some specific details to each example.
- Use *minor* transitional expressions to move from example to example.

### DISCUSS THE EXAMPLES ONE AT A TIME

As you learned in Chapter 1, academic paragraphs typically contain more than five sentences, and sometimes they have as many as ten or fifteen sentences. To achieve this level of development in your paragraph, you will need



to discuss the examples one at a time, writing at least one complete sentence for each example. If you rush and combine all your examples into only one or two sentences, you will not meet the minimum requirement for the paragraph. More important, your paragraph may appear poorly developed and superficial.

Below, the examples have been squeezed into one sentence:

<p><b>MAIN IDEA</b></p> <p>Music is important in my life.</p> <p><b>TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION</b></p> <p>First,</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b></p> <p>it helps me relax.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– before a big test</li> <li>– getting to sleep</li> <li>– after a fight with my girlfriend</li> </ul>	<p><u>Even though I don't get to listen to music as often as I would like, it is important in my life because it helps me relax, work, and party.</u> <u>First, nothing calms me down and relaxes me like music.</u> For instance, it settles my nerves when I have a big test coming up, when I can't get to sleep, and after I've had an argument with my girlfriend. I argue with my girlfriend a lot.</p>
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In this example, the writer has merged all the examples into one sentence. As a result, the paragraph feels rushed, and the last sentence (*I argue with my girlfriend a lot.*) seems like a weak afterthought instead of a careful development of the examples. Students who find themselves in this situation often feel stuck and do not know how to move ahead. To avoid this problem, discuss the examples one at a time, giving each its own sentence.

Now, let's see a revision of the previous paragraph, with each example discussed in a separate, complete sentence:

<p><b>MAIN IDEA</b></p> <p>Music is important in my life.</p> <p><b>TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION</b></p> <p>First,</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b></p> <p>it helps me relax.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– before a big test</li> <li>– getting to sleep</li> <li>– after a fight with my girlfriend</li> </ul>	<p><u>Even though I don't get to listen to music as often as I would like, it is important in my life because it helps me relax, work, and party.</u> <u>First, nothing calms me down and relaxes me like music.</u> For instance, I tend to get nervous before a big test, so I listen to soft music on my iPod to calm down. If I have trouble getting to sleep, gentle classical music works better for me than a sleeping pill. Also, fighting with my girlfriend is a high-anxiety event for me; fortunately, I can relax and remember how much I love her by listening to our favorite singer, Norah Jones.</p>
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### Power Tip

Be aware that some graders of standardized tests and exit tests will actually assign a lower score to even well-written paragraphs if they are very brief.

Here, the student has written one complete, thoughtful sentence for each related example. Not only does this method allow him to illustrate each example more effectively, it also ensures that he will have a fully developed paragraph. Of course, it is also perfectly acceptable to write *more than one* sentence for each related example.

## ADD SOME SPECIFIC DETAILS TO THE EXAMPLES

In your outline, you generally write related examples as short phrases. However, as you present examples in your paragraph, try to develop them with specific details that *bring the examples to life* and *give them personality*.

Here, the writer has *not* added specific details to the examples:

<p><b>MAIN IDEA</b></p> <p>I could not live without my car.</p> <p><b>TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION</b></p> <p>In the first place,</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b></p> <p>I need it for work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– to make deliveries</li> <li>– to drive clients</li> <li>– for business travel</li> </ul>	<p><u>I could not live without my car because I need it for work, to help my family, and to escape. In the first place, my car is essential for my job.</u> For example, I use it to make deliveries. Sometimes, I drive clients in my car. I also use it for business travel.</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Here, the writer has discussed the related examples one at a time and written a separate, complete sentence for each example. However, the writer has not added any specific details to bring the examples to life. As a result, the examples seem bland and unconvincing. It feels like the writer doesn't really care about the ideas in the paragraph.

Now, consider this example in which the writer has added specific details to the related examples:

<p><b>MAIN IDEA</b></p> <p>I could not live without my car.</p> <p><b>TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION</b></p> <p>In the first place,</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b></p> <p>I need it for work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– to make deliveries</li> <li>– to drive clients</li> <li>– for business travel</li> </ul>	<p><u>I could not live without my car because I need it for work, to help my family, and to escape. In the first place, my car is essential for my job.</u> Because I work for an interior designer, I am on the road five days a week delivering fabric and wallpaper samples, catalogs, and small decorative pieces, such as lamps and vases. Often, my boss wants clients to visit showrooms</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

and design centers and depends on me to take them in my car. Also, at least once a month, I am expected to attend a regional design conference. Without my car, all of these tasks would be impossible.

**Power Tip**

You do not necessarily have to develop details for every example, especially if you are writing under time pressure. However, it's always a good idea to look back at all of your examples and ask which ones could be made more vivid through added details.

Here, we get a vivid and convincing picture of why the writer needs a car for his job. The specific details bring the examples to life and give the writing personality. In Chapter 7, you will learn some fun and effective strategies for developing details in your writing.

## USE MINOR TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS TO MOVE FROM EXAMPLE TO EXAMPLE

In addition to the major transitional expressions that you use to introduce your support points, you will need a variety of *minor* transitional expressions to help you move smoothly from example to example. Remember, writing a paragraph is a process of constant movement or *transition* from one idea to another. Without transitional expressions, some of your ideas may seem “stuck together” rather than well developed.

Here is a chart of useful minor transitional expressions:

MINOR TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS	
For example,	For instance,
As an example,	Then,
Another example,	In fact,
In particular,	Once,
Specifically,	One time,
To illustrate,	Another time,
Another illustration	Sometimes,
In addition,	Also,
Next,	Plus,
Furthermore,	Moreover,

On the following page, notice how three minor transitional expressions (underscored in gray) help the writer introduce an example, move smoothly from one example to another, and move from example to detail:

<p><b>MAIN IDEA</b></p> <p>Mrs. Nevis was my worst teacher.</p> <p><b>TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION</b></p> <p>To begin with,</p> <p><b>SUPPORT POINT 1</b></p> <p>she picked on students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– used rude nicknames</li> <li>– laughed at students</li> <li>– made us stay after school</li> </ul>	<p><u>Mrs. Nevis, my eleventh-grade geography teacher, was the worst teacher I've ever had.</u> <u>To begin with, she always picked on students and seemed to enjoy it.</u> <u>For example, my friend Jerry had a hard time memorizing the names of countries, so she called him a “brainless wonder.”</u> <u>Also, she laughed at students when they made mistakes. I could never pronounce the word “Antarctic,” so she always made me say it just so she could laugh at me.</u> Her favorite way to pick on students, however, was to make us stay after school for no reason at all. <u>Once, when I sneezed three times in a row, she assigned me one hour of detention.</u></p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

### ACTIVITY 12

Return to the draft of your paragraph, and add examples to your first support point. Remember the guidelines for writing examples:

- Discuss the examples *one at a time*.
- Write at least one complete sentence for each example.
- Add some specific details to the examples. (See Chapter 7 for suggestions.)
- Use *minor* transitional expressions to introduce examples, to move from one example to another, and to introduce details.

### ACTIVITY 13

The following paragraphs have topic sentences, support points, and concluding sentences, but they are missing examples and specific details. For each paragraph, do the following:

- Add examples and details, being as creative as you can.
- Be sure to use minor transitional expressions to introduce examples and details. Refer to the chart on page 105 if you need to.

#### EXAMPLE:

All kinds of pets can improve our lives in many ways. First, dogs can comfort us by being excellent companions and guardians. For example, Labradors and English sheepdogs are great playmates for children. They are gentle yet fun-loving and have a lot of patience. Other dogs, like German shepherds and collies, are excellent guard dogs, yet they can also be gentle friends to humans. In addition, cats, though not always as friendly as dogs, can also be excellent companions.

*For instance, many cats like to curl up on their owners' laps and purr happily, reducing stress for both human and animal. Also, cats love to play with string, rubber balls, and other toys, and it's fun for owners to both watch and participate. Finally, even cold-blooded creatures like fish and lizards can make enjoyable pets. For example, the various colors of fish can be both soothing and stimulating. Lizards also can be fascinating to watch. For instance, some species change colors to match their surroundings. Whether warm and furry or cool and scaly, pets truly can bring joy into our day-to-day lives.*

1. Spending time by any body of water can be fun, restful, and good for the soul. First, ponds and lakes have calm water that you can swim or boat in or just admire from the shore. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Second, whether fast and churning or slow and lazy, rivers are fun to watch and, of course, to fish in. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Last, but perhaps most impressive, are oceans, which blend the qualities of ponds, lakes, and rivers. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Just about any body of water has the power to soothe, entertain, and enrich us.

2. Although the most obvious reason to get a college education is to get a job, some other benefits can be just as important. One reason to go to college is to learn about different fields and to find out what we like and don't like. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Another reason to get a college education is to meet people who can offer emotional, educational, and career support. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

A final reason to go to college is to become exposed to exciting new ideas, even those not directly related to getting a job. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

For all these reasons, a college education can be so much more than a gateway to the job market.

## Completing the Paragraph

Now, you have only three things to do to complete your paragraph:

- Write the second support point with the related examples.
- Write the third support point with the related examples.
- Write the concluding sentence.

### WRITE THE SECOND AND THIRD SUPPORT POINTS WITH THE RELATED EXAMPLES

Once you have written your first support point with its related examples (and any details about the examples), you will probably be warmed up and writing a bit faster. While you have this momentum and focus, make good use of it by moving immediately to your second support point. If you take a break now and come back to your paragraph later, you may lose valuable energy and focus.

First, introduce the second support point with a major transitional expression. Then, write the second support point and its examples, using the same instructions that you used for the first support point. When you have finished writing your second support point and the examples that go with it, write your third support point and its examples, following the same process.

#### ACTIVITY 14

Return to your paragraph and add your second and third support points and their related examples. Remember to introduce your support points with *major* transitional expressions. Use these guidelines for adding examples:

- Discuss the examples *one at a time*.
- Write at least one complete sentence for each example.
- Add some specific details to the examples.
- Use *minor* transitional expressions to introduce your examples, to move from one example to another, and to introduce details.

#### Power Tip

Some writers begin concluding sentences with expressions like “For these reasons,” “In conclusion,” or “To sum up.” Although these are acceptable transitions, make sure that what follows them is not a mechanical restatement of your main idea; try to think of creative ways to end your paragraphs.

### WRITE THE CONCLUDING SENTENCE

The last sentence of a paragraph should restate or summarize your main idea in a fresh, thoughtful manner. An unimaginative or missing concluding sentence can indicate your lack of commitment and may leave the reader unsatisfied or confused. Instead, restate your main idea in a way that expresses your sincerity and enthusiasm about the ideas discussed in the paragraph.

Follow these guidelines for writing the concluding sentence:

- Do not repeat the topic sentence in an overly simple or mechanical way.
- Do not introduce new information or go off topic.

- Find creative, persuasive ways to restate the main idea.
- Never omit the concluding sentence, even if your paragraph has met any length requirement provided by your instructor.

Now, let's look at some concluding sentences that don't work and some that do. Here is the original topic sentences:

*Although I have eaten at many good restaurants, Tango stands out as my favorite.*

1. Here is a concluding sentence that repeats the idea in a simple or mechanical way:

*In conclusion, I like to eat at Tango, and it is my favorite restaurant.*

2. Here is a concluding sentence that goes off topic:

*That's why Tango is my favorite restaurant, but eating at home makes sense if you are on a budget.*

3. Here is an effective concluding sentence that is creative and persuasive:

*While other restaurants may tempt me from time to time, my heart (and stomach) belong to Tango.*

## ACTIVITY 15

Read each topic sentence. Then, read the three concluding sentences, evaluating each one for possible problems. Finally, in each blank space, write one of the following: *simple and mechanical*, *off topic*, or *creative and persuasive*.

**EXAMPLE: Topic sentence:** Mrs. Nevis, my eleventh-grade geography teacher, was the worst teacher I've ever had.

**Concluding sentences:**

To conclude, it is worth repeating that Mrs. Nevis was the worst teacher I have ever had. simple and mechanical

Mrs. Nevis will stand out in my mind as a bad teacher who took pleasure in humiliating her students. creative and persuasive

Mrs. Nevis was the worst teacher I ever had, and Mr. Brown, who I currently have for statistics, is pretty bad too.  
off topic

1. **Topic sentence:** Music is so important in my life that I probably would not have survived college without it.

CONTINUED >

**Concluding sentences:**

I listen to music for all these reasons, and it's important in my life.

---

Music is important in my life, but it was more important when I was a child than it is now. \_\_\_\_\_

Music is more than just a form of entertainment for me; instead, it is a powerful force that helps me succeed in life.

---

- 2. Topic sentence:** College students are facing greater and greater financial challenges.

**Concluding sentences:**

Clearly, the financial burden of attending college is making students reconsider their decisions. \_\_\_\_\_

College is expensive, and I am on academic probation because my grades have been so low. \_\_\_\_\_

College students have lots of money problems. \_\_\_\_\_

- 3. Topic sentence:** Since I live, work, and go to school in different parts of the city, I could never survive without my car.

**Concluding sentences:**

I could not live without my car, and it is really important to me.

---

Although my life is very busy, I believe that I am on the road to success, and it is my car that keeps me going. \_\_\_\_\_

I could not live without my car, but I would like to trade it in for a new Hyundai that gets better gas mileage. \_\_\_\_\_

**ACTIVITY 16: Teamwork****Power Tip**

Notice that the rewritten concluding sentence for the Activity 16 example makes a recommendation. This is another way to end on a strong note; however, make sure that any recommendation is closely related to the main idea and support points that you have provided.

Following are several topic sentences followed by ineffective concluding sentences. With two or three classmates, discuss the problems with the concluding sentences. Then, rewrite the sentences to make them more creative and persuasive.

**EXAMPLE: Topic sentence:** Barden Hall, the oldest building on our campus, is falling apart to the point of becoming dangerous.

**Concluding sentence:** To sum up, Barden Hall is a mess.

**Rewrite:** Given the dangers that I have described, Barden Hall needs to be renovated soon, or someone could be seriously injured.



1. **Topic sentence:** Because nurses are in high demand, command good salaries, and get the satisfaction of helping others, nursing can be a great career.

**Concluding sentence:** Nursing is an excellent career to pursue.

**Rewrite:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. **Topic sentence:** A lot of people look down on television, but even “silly” shows can teach us about human behavior, the workings of institutions, and more.

**Concluding sentence:** To restate my earlier point, television has a lot to teach us.

**Rewrite:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. **Topic sentence:** It’s been hard to return to college after twenty years, but age brings wisdom, patience, and a strong desire to make the most of my educational experience.

**Concluding sentence:** In conclusion, going back to college has been hard but worthwhile.

**Rewrite:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ACTIVITY 17

Return to the draft of your paragraph and write the concluding sentence. You may have to experiment with various ideas and revise a few times to find a sentence that concludes your paragraph with enthusiasm and conviction. In other words, avoid a simple and mechanical ending, and be sure to stay on topic.

**A final word:** After you complete your paragraph, you’ll want to reread it to make sure that you have provided all of the support that you need and that every support point and example is relevant to the main idea expressed in the topic sentence. Chapter 6 will give you specific strategies for revising your paragraph.

**BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER:  
Composing the Paragraph**

In this chapter, you have learned how to compose an academic paragraph with a clear topic sentence, strong examples and details, and an effective concluding sentence. Confirm your knowledge by filling in the blank spaces in the following sentences. If you need help, review the pages listed after each sentence.

✓ To be complete, a topic sentence must do two things: 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. (page 89)

✓ There are four common errors that occur when writing a topic sentence. These errors are: 1) \_\_\_\_\_,  
2) \_\_\_\_\_, 3) \_\_\_\_\_, and  
4) \_\_\_\_\_. (page 91)

✓ When writing the support points in a paragraph, it is important to do three things: 1) \_\_\_\_\_, 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, and 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. (page 98)

✓ When writing the examples and details in a paragraph, it is important to do four things: 1) \_\_\_\_\_, 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, 3) \_\_\_\_\_,  
and 4) \_\_\_\_\_.  
(page 102)

✓ There are two common errors that occur when writing a concluding sentence. They are: \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_. (page 108)

✓ To write an effective concluding sentence for a paragraph, it is important to find \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ ways to restate the main idea. (pages 108–9)

# CHAPTER 6

## Revising

Before you read this chapter, it's a good idea to test your understanding of revising and proofreading an academic paragraph. You may know more than you think.

For each question, select all answers that apply.

### WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

- 1. Which of the following are essential ingredients in an academic paragraph?**
  - a topic sentence
  - unity (all the ideas fit)
  - support (enough examples and details)
  - dialogue
- 2. What does it mean to revise your writing?**
  - to start all over again
  - to give your work a quick glance to see if you still like it
  - to identify and fix any problems
  - to estimate what grade you might get
- 3. When doing peer review with a classmate, which of the following are good strategies?**
  - Offer suggestions and ask questions.
  - Let your partner do all the talking.
  - Make yourself do all the talking.
  - Don't offer any opinions if your partner is sensitive or shy.
- 4. What are the dangers of using electronic spelling and grammar checkers?**
  - They can suggest wrong words to replace your misspelled word (for example, *revel* instead of *reveal*).
  - They won't identify words that are misused but spelled correctly (for example, *there* instead of *their*).
  - They sometimes flag a sentence that has no errors.
  - They sometimes cause plagiarism.
- 5. What are some useful strategies for proofreading your work?**
  - Double-space your paragraph so that it's easier to read.
  - Proofread on a printed page.
  - Read backwards.
  - Use a combination of pen, pencil, and highlighter to mark your errors.

### OVERVIEW OF THIS CHAPTER

Understanding the Revision Process: An Overview 114

Revising for Unity 114

Proofreading for Grammar, Mechanics, and Word Choice 123

Bringing It All Together 134

## Understanding the Revision Process: An Overview

The chapters preceding this one showed you how to organize and compose an academic paragraph.

**Chapter 4** helped you to develop a careful outline for your paragraph.

**Chapter 5** showed you how to follow this outline step-by-step to compose your paragraph.

When you have gained some mastery over these parts of the writing process, you will be able to produce **unified** paragraphs: paragraphs that stay on track and include only information that supports the main idea. However, the act of writing is not always orderly and predictable, and even experienced writers can get off track. Sometimes, you may become so closely involved with your ideas that you skip a key piece of your outline or get lost in your specific details. Also, you might make grammar mistakes and other errors. For these reasons, dedicated writers recognize that the final step of the writing process—**revision**—is just as important as the earlier steps.

Revision (“re” + “vision”) means looking over your paragraphs with a fresh eye to identify and fix any problems with unity. You will also want to check carefully for problems with grammar, mechanics (spelling, punctuation, formatting), and word choice.

The best way to make sure that you’ve fixed these problems is to perform your revision as carefully as you have performed the other steps in the writing process. Many students rush their revision or skip it altogether, which can seriously harm the quality of their writing.

## Revising for Unity

Again, **unity** means that a paragraph stays on track and includes only information that supports the main idea. Because unity is so important to effective writing, it’s a good idea to check for it before you look for errors in individual words and sentences.

### FOUR MAJOR PROBLEMS WITH UNITY

As you learned in Chapters 4 and 5, there are several ways that you can get off track when outlining and writing a paragraph. These include:

- changing your main idea when you write the topic sentence
- changing a support point, combining it with an example, or forgetting it altogether
- forgetting a transitional expression
- including information that does not fit

To see each of these problems in action, let's look at one college student's work. We'll begin by looking at her outline, which is complete and problem-free.

**ASSIGNED TOPIC**

*Discuss a place that makes you happy.*

**MAIN IDEA**

SeaWorld is a place where I feel especially happy.

**TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION**

In the first place,

**SUPPORT POINT 1**

it has a relaxing atmosphere.

- coastal location
- people don't rush
- relieves my headaches

**TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION**

In the second place,

**SUPPORT POINT 2**

it has my favorite sea animals.

- killer whales
- penguins
- manatees

**TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION**

Finally,

**SUPPORT POINT 3**

it is not crowded like other theme parks.

- no long lines
- uncrowded walkways
- no waiting for tables

After writing her paragraph, the student compared it very carefully with her outline. In this revision activity, she identified four problems with her unity. The problems are numbered and underlined below, and they are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

SeaWorld in San Diego has the best entertainment of any California theme park. In the first place, I like to immerse myself in its relaxing atmosphere. Located on a seacoast, SeaWorld is full of warm sunlight and is surrounded by sparkling water. I just dive into this world of happiness, and my smile doesn't leave my face the whole day. I like its pace because people there don't rush anywhere. Life is so calm at SeaWorld that any problem seems too small to be troublesome. The magic of this place is so strong that even the headaches that I sometimes get disappear without a trace as soon as I step out of my car and breathe in the ocean air. In the second place, SeaWorld has an incredible killer-whale show. These whales are huge and potentially dangerous, but you would never guess it because in the arena they behave like house pets, listening and doing whatever their instructors tell them. And what always amazes me is how these gigantic creatures can swim as fast as a rocket. Also, I like observing penguins in an open aquarium. They have such a funny walk when they waddle slowly to the water. In addition, I like to watch how huge manatees (sea cows) consume their salad leaves from the surface of their pool. I appreciate that SeaWorld is not as crowded as other amusement

1

2

3

4

parks, such as Disneyland. I have never had to wait forty minutes in a long line to see a show that lasts only five minutes. Because there are four great show stadiums, there is always plenty of space for everyone. Also, the park is constructed in a smart way. All the attractions are within easy walking distance from the main entrance. You never bump into someone traveling in the opposite direction because all the walkways are wide and spacious. It is equally important that the park has several convenient cafeterias where I can relax and enjoy a peaceful meal. SeaWorld has the best hamburgers of any theme park, and the prices won't bankrupt you. One time at Knott's Berry Farm, I spent \$68 for hamburgers, fries, and sodas for my husband, myself, and our two boys. Paying this amount of money for fast food ruined my whole day. When I want to enjoy a blissful experience, I just follow the tide to SeaWorld.

### **Problem 1: A Flawed Topic Sentence**

When the student began composing her paragraph, she was excited and confident about her ideas. As a result, she wrote a bold topic sentence, praising SeaWorld:

SeaWorld in San Diego has the best entertainment of any California theme park.

While this is a powerful claim, it misrepresents the main idea for her paragraph. According to this topic sentence, the entire paragraph should focus on the *entertainment* provided by SeaWorld. In fact, the paragraph discusses *all* the reasons why the writer has positive feelings about the park, including the relaxing atmosphere and lack of crowds. With this topic sentence, the reader will be confused by examples that are not connected to the entertainment at SeaWorld. The flawed topic sentence disrupts the unity of the entire paragraph.

Remember, the topic sentence is an especially important feature of your paragraph. If you misstate your main idea in the topic sentence, the rest of the paragraph may not make sense to your reader. Always double-check your topic sentence during the revision process.

**Fix this problem** by rewriting the topic sentence so that it clearly expresses your main idea for the paragraph. (For a detailed review of problems with topic sentences and how to fix them, see Chapter 5, page 91.)

### **Problem 2: An Unstated or Unclear Support Point**

In rereading her paragraph on SeaWorld, the student noticed that something was missing: she forgot to state her second support point, skipping directly to her first example:

In the second place, SeaWorld has an incredible killer-whale show.

This error will be quite confusing for readers, who will expect that all the examples following this sentence will relate to the killer-whale show. However, when the writer discusses the penguins and manatees, the unity will be disrupted.

Remember, each support point is a major feature of your paragraph. If you forget or misstate a support point, it can damage the unity of your writing. Always double-check your support points during the revision process.

**Fix this problem** by rewriting the support point so that it clearly expresses your idea and accurately sets up the examples that follow it. Often, you will need to separate the support point from the first example and rewrite them as separate sentences. (For more information on common problems with support points, see Chapter 5, page 98.)

### **Problem 3: A Missing Transitional Expression**

The author of the SeaWorld paragraph noticed that at one point in her writing, the ideas seemed jumbled; they did not flow as smoothly as she wanted. Then, she realized that she had forgotten her third major transitional expression (introducing the third support point):

I appreciate that SeaWorld is not as crowded as other amusement parks, such as Disneyland.

For the reader, the missing transitional expression is a large gap in the unity: the abrupt shift from the description of the manatees to the third support point (that SeaWorld is not as crowded as other parks) will be confusing.

Remember, the reader cannot anticipate when you will shift to a new support point or to a new example. You must include transitional expressions to make this shift smooth and logical for your reader. Always double-check your transitional expressions during the revision process.

**Fix this problem** by adding the missing transitional expression. (For more information on adding transitional expressions, see Chapter 5, page 105.)

### **Problem 4: Details That Do Not Fit**

As the writer was describing the convenient (uncrowded) cafeterias at SeaWorld, she included an unrelated detail about the excellent hamburgers. This detail caused her to remember a time at Knott's Berry Farm when she paid too much for food:

SeaWorld has the best hamburgers of any theme park, and the prices won't bankrupt you. One time at Knott's Berry Farm, I spent \$68 for hamburgers, fries, and sodas for my husband, myself, and our two boys. Paying this amount of money for fast food ruined my whole day.

This is such a powerful memory for the student that it takes control of her writing. These details about the high price of food at Knott's Berry Farm do not fit with her support point, that SeaWorld is *not as crowded* as other theme parks.

Remember, details that do not fit can be especially confusing for your reader. When composing your paragraph, keep a close eye on your outline and don't let unrelated details get you off track. During the revision process, always double-check for details that do not fit.

**Fix this problem** by eliminating unrelated details. If taking out these details leaves your paragraph underdeveloped, add new details that fit your support point.

## The Revised Paragraph

In her revision, the writer corrected each of the problems with unity. Take a look:

Topic sentence  
rewritten

Missing support point  
(with major transition)  
added

Transitional expres-  
sion added

Detail rewritten to  
focus on the avail-  
ability of tables in the  
cafeteria

The place where I forget about all my problems and feel especially happy is SeaWorld in San Diego. In the first place, I like to immerse myself in its relaxing atmosphere. Located on a seacoast, SeaWorld is full of warm sunlight and is surrounded by sparkling water. I just dive into this world of happiness, and my smile doesn't leave my face the whole day. I like its pace because people there don't rush anywhere. Life is so calm at SeaWorld that any problem looks too small to be troublesome. The magic of this place is so strong that even the headaches that I sometimes get disappear without a trace as soon as I step out of my car and breathe in the ocean air. In the second place, SeaWorld showcases some of my favorite sea animals. For example, it has an incredible killer-whale show. Killer whales are huge and potentially dangerous, but you would never guess it because in the arena they behave like house pets, listening and doing whatever their instructors tell them. And what always amazes me is how these gigantic creatures can swim as fast as a rocket. Also, I like observing penguins in the open aquarium. They have such a funny tread when they walk slowly to the water. In addition, I like to watch how huge manatees (sea cows) consume their salad leaves from the surface of their pool. Finally, I appreciate that SeaWorld is not as crowded as other amusement parks, such as Disneyland. I have never had to wait forty minutes in a long line to see a show that lasts only five minutes. Because there are four great show stadiums, there is always plenty of space for everyone. Also, the park is constructed in a smart way. All the attractions are within easy walking distance from the main entrance. You never bump into someone traveling in the opposite direction because all the walkways are wide and spacious. It is equally important that the park has several convenient cafeterias where I can relax and enjoy a peaceful meal. I've never had to scramble for a free table or eat elbow-to-elbow with a hungry mob. When I want to enjoy a blissful experience, I just follow the tide to SeaWorld.

**Caution!** A paragraph without unity can be a hazardous reading experience: the large gaps, abrupt shifts, and unexpected digressions can cause your reader to stumble and fall. To protect your reader from such hazards, always take the revision stage of the writing process seriously.

### ACTIVITY 1

Page 119 shows an outline and a paragraph. Do the following:

- Review the outline.
- Read the paragraph, comparing it carefully with the outline.



Caution: Unrevised Paragraph



- Underline or highlight any problems with unity.
- In the spaces between the lines or in the margins, write in a revision to correct each problem.

The paragraph has four problems with unity.

**MAIN IDEA**

I try to be the best parent that I can be.

**TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION**

For starters,

**SUPPORT POINT 1**

I try to be a good provider.

- work two jobs
- spend money on my kids rather than on myself
- set up college fund

**TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION**

Second,

**SUPPORT POINT 2**

I spend a lot of time with my children.

- dinnertime
- study and fun time after dinner
- weekends

**TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION**

Third,

**SUPPORT POINT 3**

I try to listen to and help my children.

- tell them they can talk to me (and they do)
- sometimes give advice
- make sure they know they can count on me

It's tough being a good parent. For starters, I work two jobs.

I have jobs both as a full-time administrative assistant and as a part-time salesclerk at a gift store. The hours are long, especially now that I'm in school. However, the jobs allow me to pay my expenses and those of my children, with some money to spare every month. Also, I try not to spend too much money on myself; I put my children's needs for clothing, school supplies, and occasional gifts over my own needs. Additionally, I am putting my savings into college funds for my daughter and son. I have only recently been able to afford college myself, and I don't want my kids to have to struggle for their education the same way I did. Second, I spend a lot of time with my children.

CONTINUED >

For more practice with unity and other topics covered in this chapter, visit [bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones](http://bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones).

Even though we all have busy schedules, I insist that we try to have dinner together every night so that we can talk about our days over a healthy meal. After dinner, I help my kids with their homework while I'm doing my own, and sometimes we'll watch a movie or a TV show together before bed. Our favorite shows are comedies, and we like to laugh together. Some shows are really annoying, though; I hope the reality-TV show trend dies soon! On weekends, my kids usually want to spend time with their friends, but we try to plan a special event together at least once a month, like going to the zoo or a museum. I try to listen to my children and help them with their problems as much as I can. I have told my kids that they can talk to me whenever they want, and they often come into my room before bedtime to discuss issues that are bothering them, like disagreements with friends. I give advice, but I try not to be a know-it-all. Also, I make sure they know that they can always count on me. I know I haven't always been an ideal parent, but my kids deserve my best, and I try to give that to them every day.

## ACTIVITY 2

Reread one or more of the paragraphs that you developed in Chapter 5, marking any places where the unity has been disrupted. Then, fix the problems with unity, using the strategies discussed so far in this chapter.

## SOME HELPFUL REVISION STRATEGIES

If you could examine your papers magnified to three times their normal size, you would probably notice every comma, every missing letter or word, and so on. You would have to move slowly across the page as well, taking in each detail as it passed before the powerful lens of your eye. With this ability, you might *really see* your writing like never before.

The following strategies are especially helpful early in the revision process, when you'll typically want to check for unity.

### Revise with Fresh Eyes

If you try to revise your paragraph immediately after writing it, you may be too close to the ideas or too tired to see any problems. To see your work with fresh eyes, take a break before revising it. During this break, do something to relax your mind and take it off your writing: have a meal, get some exercise, take a nap, do some chores. If possible, wait until the next day to do your revision. Having fresh eyes will make it much easier for you to spot any mistakes in your paragraph.

During a timed, in-class writing assignment, you probably won't be able to take a break before revising your work. You can, however, pause to stretch, close your eyes, and breathe deeply for a minute or two. This brief moment of relaxation can clear your mind and boost your mental energy for the revision.

### Use Your Outline

Suppose you are driving to an unfamiliar location and are relying mostly on a global positioning system (GPS) to get there. If you turn off the navigation system several miles before reaching your destination, what will happen? You might remember some of the directions, but you will probably have to guess the rest. Chances are, you will get lost.

Many students put aside their outline after composing the paragraph. This is like turning off the navigation system before reaching your final destination. In academic writing, you have not reached your final destination until you have completed the revision, using the outline to achieve unity in your paragraph.

Keep your outline beside your paragraph to check for unity during revision. Cross-check each part of the paragraph with the corresponding items in the outline. Watch for missing, misplaced, or accidentally changed features.

### Get Peer Review

One of the best strategies for revising your paragraph is to exchange papers with a **peer**, a classmate or fellow student who is at the same level of English as you, to comment on each other's work. This process is known as *peer review*. Sometimes, your instructor may pair you with another student during class for peer review. If you are not given this opportunity, you can arrange to meet with another student outside of class and conduct your own peer review.

Start by inviting a fellow student who is mature and dedicated to the work. Meet in a quiet place, like the library or an empty classroom. Plan to spend at least half an hour for the peer review. You should bring your paragraph, your outline, and the peer review form on the next page. Then, follow this process:

1. Exchange paragraphs, outlines, and peer review forms with your peer.
2. Carefully examine each other's paragraphs and outlines, completing the review form as you go.
3. Exchange and discuss the review forms and the paragraphs.

**A word about attitude and intellectual honesty:** Remember that many people are sensitive to criticism, so try to be polite and constructive in your comments about any paper. For example, it's better to say "I think there may



be a problem here” than “You messed up.” Also, specific remarks are always more helpful than general ones; for example:

<b>GENERAL</b>	I’m confused.
<b>SPECIFIC</b>	I don’t understand what you mean by “important reason.” Can you provide more of a description?

However, remember that your job is to provide *suggestions*; it is the writer’s job to make decisions and corrections. Do not try to force your opinion or act like a know-it-all. On the other hand, don’t be shy or lazy about identifying potential problems. If you are overly concerned about hurting the other person’s feelings, or if you aren’t serious about the work, your peer review may be ineffective.

When it’s your turn to get comments on your work, pay attention to what the reviewer says and try not to be defensive. If you don’t understand something, ask questions. Remember, the review process is a great opportunity to improve your work, so take full advantage of it.

### PEER REVIEW FORM

1. Identify the topic sentence. How well does it express the main idea of this paragraph? If the topic sentence does not clearly express the main idea, what specific problems do you see?
2. Where might transitional expressions be added to the paragraph? Should any existing transitions be revised? If so, how?
3. List the support points. Is each one clearly stated in its own sentence? If not, describe the problem(s).
4. How well do the support points back up the main idea (topic sentence)? Does any support seem to be missing? If so, what type of additional support might be helpful?
5. Does the paragraph have any digressive details (details that do not fit)? If it does, identify them.
6. Did you find anything confusing? If so, what specifically?
7. What do you like best about this paragraph?
8. Do you have other recommendations for improving this paragraph?

#### Power Tip

For a list of transitional expressions, see pages 98 and 105.

#### Power Tip

If a peer believes that your main idea is inadequately supported, you might try some of the strategies discussed in Chapter 7 to generate more details for your topic.

#### Power Tip

Feel free to add your own questions to the peer review form, especially if you have concerns that are specific to a certain piece of writing (for example, “Did you laugh or groan at my description of my uncle’s suit?”).

**ACTIVITY 3: Teamwork**

Choose a paragraph that you wrote recently, perhaps in response to one of the activities in this book. (It should be a paragraph that you haven't yet shown to an instructor.) Then, follow these steps:

- Pair up with another student who has also chosen a paragraph.
- Trade papers and evaluate each other's writing, using the peer review form on page 122.
- Next, return the evaluations and paragraphs and ask each other any questions about the evaluations. (For example, if something isn't clear, you might say, "I'm not sure what you mean by \_\_\_\_\_. Could you please explain or give me an example?")
- Revise your paragraphs, based on the feedback.

## Proofreading for Grammar, Mechanics, and Word Choice

You may recognize this scenario: An hour before class, you begin to write a paper in response to an assignment. Surprisingly, you find the topic interesting and hammer out some original ideas. With seconds left on the clock, you print your work and dash off to class. A week later, when it's time to get your paper back from your instructor, you are hopeful that the grade will reflect your original thinking. Imagine your shock when you see the paper covered in red ink, with a *C+* at the top. The instructor's comment says it all: "Great ideas, but too many errors."

What went wrong? The answer is simple: you did not proofread. That is, you did not read your writing slowly and carefully (word by word), as if with an imaginary magnifying glass, to identify mistakes. If you had reserved ten or fifteen minutes to review your composition for errors, your grade might have been significantly better.

This experience is all too common in college. Because we are busy or because we see proofreading as optional, we may skip this important final step of the revision process. However, not taking the time for this step is often the number one cause of grammar, mechanical, and wording errors in student writing. Proofreading is not difficult; with even a modest effort, most writers can identify and fix many errors in their writing. More difficult is the task of training ourselves to proofread *every time we write*.

### PROOFREADING FOR GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS

Grammar problems are discussed in detail in Part Three of this book, so we will not address them in depth here. However, the chart on the next page previews important errors to be aware of.

When proofreading for grammar, look at the words between periods to make sure that they are, in fact, complete, correct sentences. Also, pay



PROBLEM (and where it is covered in this book)	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Fragments (Chapter 10, page 246; Chapter 12, page 320; Chapter 13, page 343; Quick Guide, page R-3)	a word group that is missing a subject or a verb or that does not express a complete thought	The fastest runner. [ <i>The fastest runner</i> could be the subject of a sentence, but there is no verb expressing an action.] <b>Corrected:</b> The fastest runner won.
Run-ons (Chapter 11, page 283; Quick Guide, page R-4)	joining sentences together with no punctuation or joining words	The movie ended we left. <b>Corrected:</b> The movie ended. We left. OR The movie ended, so we left. The movie ended; we left.
Comma splices (Chapter 11, page 283; Quick Guide, page R-4)	joining sentences together with just a comma	The movie ended, we left. <b>Corrected:</b> The movie ended. We left. OR The movie ended, so we left. The movie ended; we left.
Mistakes in verb usage (Chapter 15; Quick Guide, page R-6)	These include a wide variety of errors, such as using the wrong tense (time) of a verb, the wrong form of a verb, or a verb that does not agree with (match) a subject in number.	Yesterday, I go to the movies. [The sentence is in the past tense, but <i>go</i> is a present tense verb.] <b>Corrected:</b> Yesterday, I went to the movies.

close attention to verbs to make sure that they are in the correct tense and properly formed.

Mechanics issues include spelling, punctuation, and formatting (such as using double-spacing when required). Spelling is discussed on pages 130–32. For a review of punctuation, see Appendix A.

## PROOFREADING FOR WORD CHOICE (AND MISSING WORDS)

When proofreading for word choice, look at every word in your writing to make sure that it exactly expresses the meaning that you intended. (When you are unsure of a word's meaning, check the definition in a dictionary.) As discussed in previous chapters, you should also make sure that your words are

- appropriate for your audience. (See Chapter 1, page 15.)
- as precise as possible. (See Chapter 7.)
- as original as possible; in other words, avoid overused expressions, or clichés. (See Chapter 7, pages 166–67.)

Also, look out for words that are often confused because they sound alike. The following chart lists words that are commonly confused. Pay special attention to these words in your writing, and check their definitions and uses against the charts on pages 125–27.

### The Most Commonly Confused Words

WORDS/Common Definitions	EXAMPLES
<b>its:</b> a possessive (showing ownership) form of <i>it</i> <b>it's:</b> a combination (contraction) of <i>it is</i> or <i>it has</i>	The company lost <u>its</u> lawsuit against the town. <u>It's</u> clear that couples therapy has improved my marriage.
<b>loose:</b> not tight; not fully attached <b>lose:</b> to misplace; to be defeated	The <u>loose</u> shingle flapped in the wind. I <u>lose</u> a cell phone every year.
<b>than:</b> a word used in comparisons <b>then:</b> at another time (not now); next	Doug is funnier <u>than</u> Kyle. They were not as wealthy <u>then</u> . Peel the apples. <u>Then</u> , cut them into thin slices.
<b>their:</b> belonging to them <b>there:</b> at a certain location; not here <b>they're:</b> a combination (contraction) of <i>they are</i>	<u>Their</u> car broke down twice this month. Please sit <u>there</u> . <u>They're</u> still in shock about winning the lottery.
<b>your:</b> belonging to you <b>you're:</b> a combination (contraction) of <i>you are</i>	<u>Your</u> phone is ringing. <u>You're</u> my best friend.

Get regular practice with the most commonly confused words so that you can use them correctly every time. Take one or two quizzes a day and every day, if possible. Such quizzes are available at [bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones](http://bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones). Also, take the time to get familiar with other words that are commonly confused by studying the additional chart that follows.

### More Commonly Confused Words

WORDS/Common Definitions	EXAMPLES
<b>accept:</b> to take; to agree to <b>except:</b> excluding	I <u>accept</u> responsibility for the accident. Mara likes all vegetables <u>except</u> broccoli.
<b>advice:</b> a recommendation; words intended to be helpful <b>advise:</b> to give advice	We took your financial <u>advice</u> . You <u>advise</u> us to save more money.
<b>affect:</b> to have an impact on <b>effect:</b> an outcome or result	The storm did not <u>affect</u> our travel plans. The drugs had little <u>effect</u> on the patient.

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Use the online quizzes at [bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones](http://bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones) to practice your awareness of the most commonly confused words.

WORDS/COMMON DEFINITIONS	EXAMPLES
<p><b>brake:</b> to stop or slow; a device used for this purpose</p> <p><b>break:</b> to smash or cause something to stop working; a period of rest or an interruption in an activity</p>	<p>I <u>brake</u> my car before sharp turns.</p> <p>Be careful not to <u>break</u> the crystal vase.</p> <p>The factory workers took a <u>break</u>.</p>
<p><b>breath:</b> air inhaled (taken in) and exhaled (pushed out)</p> <p><b>breathe:</b> the act of inhaling and exhaling</p>	<p>I am always out of <u>breath</u> after the 5K race.</p> <p>It was hard to <u>breathe</u> in the hot, crowded room.</p>
<p><b>buy:</b> to purchase</p> <p><b>by:</b> next to</p>	<p>We <u>buy</u> a gallon of milk every week.</p> <p>Martino always sits <u>by</u> the door.</p>
<p><b>hear:</b> to detect with the ears</p> <p><b>here:</b> present; at this location</p>	<p>I <u>hear</u> our neighbor's car stereo every morning.</p> <p>Is Jeremy <u>here</u>, or did he already leave for work?</p>
<p><b>knew:</b> past tense of <i>know</i> (see below)</p> <p><b>new:</b> recently introduced or created</p>	<p>Even as a child, I <u>knew</u> my parents were not perfect.</p> <p>The <u>new</u> convertible gleamed in the sunlight.</p>
<p><b>know:</b> to understand or comprehend; to be acquainted with</p> <p><b>no:</b> a negative expression (the opposite of <i>yes</i>)</p>	<p>I <u>know</u> how to swim.</p> <p>You <u>know</u> Jim.</p> <p><u>No</u>, I can't go to the game with you.</p>
<p><b>lie:</b> to recline</p> <p><b>lay:</b> to put something down</p>	<p>Don't <u>lie</u> in the sun too long.</p> <p><u>Lay</u> the clothes on the bed, not on the floor.</p>
<p><b>mind:</b> the part of a person that thinks and perceives</p> <p><b>mine:</b> belonging to <i>me</i></p>	<p>I couldn't get my <u>mind</u> around those math formulas.</p> <p>Those gloves on the chair are <u>mine</u>.</p>
<p><b>passed:</b> went by (past tense of <i>pass</i>)</p> <p><b>past:</b> the time before now</p>	<p>We <u>passed</u> the house twice before we realized it was Josie's.</p> <p>In the <u>past</u>, I drove to work every day.</p>
<p><b>peace:</b> lack of conflict or war; a state of calm</p> <p><b>piece:</b> a part of something</p>	<p>We must work for <u>peace</u> in a violent world.</p> <p>Have a <u>piece</u> of this delicious pie.</p>
<p><b>principal:</b> the leader of a school or other organization; main or major</p> <p><b>principle:</b> a law or standard</p>	<p>The <u>principal</u> addressed the school assembly.</p> <p>Our <u>principal</u> complaint is that we waited two hours for service.</p> <p>Professor Bates lectured on economic <u>principles</u>.</p>
<p><b>quiet:</b> soundless or low in sound</p> <p><b>quite:</b> very; fully</p> <p><b>quit:</b> to stop</p>	<p>The room was <u>quiet</u> because the children were sleeping.</p> <p>We are <u>quite</u> happy with the decision.</p> <p>We are not <u>quite</u> there yet.</p> <p>Joe <u>quit</u> smoking a year ago.</p>



WORDS/Common Definitions	EXAMPLES
<p><b>right:</b> correct; opposite of <i>left</i></p> <p><b>write:</b> to put words down in a form that can be read (on paper or on a computer screen)</p>	<p>Margo is <u>right</u> that our seats are on the <u>right</u> side of the concert hall.</p> <p>The soldier's daughter promised to <u>write</u> him an e-mail every day.</p>
<p><b>set:</b> to put something somewhere</p> <p><b>sit:</b> to be seated</p>	<p>I <u>set</u> the glasses on the counter.</p> <p>Please <u>sit</u> down.</p>
<p><b>threw:</b> past tense of <i>throw</i></p> <p><b>through:</b> finished; going in one side and out the other</p>	<p>Shontelle <u>threw</u> the ball to Dave.</p> <p>We are <u>through</u> with exams.</p> <p>The Cartullos drove <u>through</u> the snowstorm.</p>
<p><b>to:</b> in the direction of; toward</p> <p><b>too:</b> also</p> <p><b>two:</b> the number between one and three</p>	<p>Christina ran <u>to</u> the lake and back.</p> <p>My daughter wants to go to the movies <u>too</u>.</p> <p><u>Two</u> swans glided on the pond.</p>
<p><b>use:</b> to put into service or employ</p> <p><b>used:</b> past tense of <i>use</i>; accustomed</p>	<p>I <u>use</u> a rubber glove to open jars that are stuck.</p> <p>Bill <u>used</u> butter in his cooking before his cholesterol got too high.</p> <p>Kent is <u>used</u> to getting up early.</p>
<p><b>weather:</b> climate (pertaining to the absence or presence of sun, wind, rain, and so on)</p> <p><b>whether:</b> a word used to present alternatives</p>	<p>The <u>weather</u> was beautiful during our vacation.</p> <p>I can't decide <u>whether</u> or not to go to the party.</p>
<p><b>whose:</b> the possessive form of <i>who</i></p> <p><b>who's:</b> a combination (contraction) of <i>who is</i> or <i>who has</i></p>	<p>I don't know <u>whose</u> car is parked in front of our house.</p> <p><u>Who's</u> the actor <u>who's</u> just divorced his fifth wife?</p>

#### ACTIVITY 4

For each sentence, decide which words in parentheses are correct. Then, circle your choices.

**EXAMPLE:** (Weather / Whether) or not tomorrow's (weather / whether) is nice, we will go on the picnic.

1. You will (loose / lose) the bracelet if the clasp on it is (loose / lose).
2. In the (passed / past), I (passed / past) your house on my daily walks.
3. If (your / you're) car isn't repaired by the weekend, (your / you're) welcome to use mine on Saturday.
4. A summer-long drought will (affect / effect) the community in many ways; the worst (affect / effect) will be limits on water usage.

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5. I can't (accept / except) that every child in the neighborhood (accept / except) Martina has been invited to the party.
6. (Its / It's) likely that the citizen group will present (its / it's) petition to the city council on Wednesday.
7. After the children (quiet / quite / quit) yelling, the playground was (quiet / quite / quit) (quiet / quite / quit).
8. (Whose / Who's) the man (whose / who's) voice booms "In a world . . ." at the start of every movie preview?
9. Take my (advice / advise) and let Dan (advice / advise) you about your home renovation.
10. (Lie / Lay) your coat over the chair and (lie / lay) down for a while.

### Power Tip

So that you do not overlook errors, consider proofreading for only one issue at a time. For example, you might proofread for grammar first, then for mechanics, then for word choice, then for missing words.

**A final note:** It is very common for writers to leave out words, especially when they are working quickly. After you have checked all of your word choices in a paragraph, read through your writing to make sure that no words are missing.

The author of the following paragraph found a number of errors through proofreading and peer review. Grammar errors are underlined, word choice or spelling problems are in bold, and places where words are missing are highlighted in yellow.

With **it's** signs of rebirth and all **it's** festivities, spring is my favorite season of the year. For one thing, spring is about celebration. My birthday is in spring. Birthdays **special** to me because my family and friends treat me **a** queen. They take me to my favorite restaurant, Café Sole, and buy me elegant **like** **earings** or lingerie. On the first day of May, I look forward to the party at my daughter's school. All the kids dress up and dance around the May pole. Coming from a Persian family. I also celebrate the Persian New Year. We welcome the summer solstice—the longest day of the year—on June 20th with a big family barbecue. Equally important, spring is time for cleaning. I get rid of my old clothes and household items that I no longer use. Sometimes, I have a yard sale with my next-door neighbor, and purge my closets of unwanted junk. Spring is the time to dig out the weeds and plant new flowers I love getting my hands in the soil and clearing the ground for my new flowerbed. I also like to change my eating habits in the spring, knowing that bathing **suite** season is just around the corner. I clean out the refrigerator and the cabinets, getting rid of chips, candy, and old Pop-Tarts. Most important of all, I get physically active in the spring. I start doing things that I could not do in cold **whether**. For example, I renew my monthly gym membership and take spinning classes. If I cannot make it to the gym, I go for a fast-paced **with** my husband when he gets home from work. With all this exercising, my energy level goes up and **feel** good about myself. As a result, my husband and I get more romantic. It's no surprise that both of my children were **concieved** in the month of May and born **January**. And if that doesn't convince you that spring is my favorite season, probably nothing will.

Through proofreading, the writer quickly discovered the two grammar errors: a fragment (the first underlined error) and a run-on (the second underlined error). She fixed these problems and was ready to hand in her work. At the last minute, she asked a peer to read her paragraph. Fortunately, her classmate spotted several places where words seemed to be missing, and she thought that a few words might be misspelled or misused. The writer decided to take action, using special strategies to strengthen her proofreading:

- She used her computer's spell checker and grammar checker to help identify errors.
- She printed her paragraph and proofread it on paper.
- She proofread her paragraph backwards.
- She used a grammar guide.
- She reviewed her spelling log to identify words that she had misspelled in the past.

As a result, the writer identified six missing words and six word choice and spelling errors!

Why did she have so much trouble seeing these twelve errors? First, missing words are often difficult to spot because we *hear* the words in our head as we read silently, even if they aren't on the page. Just as this student did, you may need to adopt special proofreading strategies to detect missing words in your writing. Also, misspelled words can be hard to identify because we get in the habit of misspelling the same words over and over again. For this reason, dedicated writers keep a spelling log in which they record these words and their correct spellings.

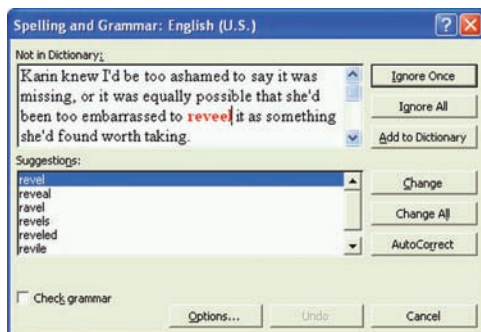
## SOME HELPFUL PROOFREADING STRATEGIES

Next, we'll take a closer look at the proofreading strategies just discussed (and a few others). These strategies have helped thousands of students to produce better writing.

### *Identify Your Style of Proofreading*

To a certain degree, the way you proofread is a matter of personal style and choice. Some writers proofread *as they write*: sentence by sentence, they check their grammar, spelling, punctuation, and so on. As a result, their final, overall proofreading requires less time. Other writers prefer to get their ideas down quickly, *without stopping* to proofread each sentence. For these writers, the final, overall proofreading will be a more demanding job, and they must reserve extra time for it.

Identifying your style of proofreading can help you focus your energy and manage your time during the writing process. Whatever your preference, remember that a final, overall proofreading is essential for a polished composition.



### Use Spelling and Grammar Checkers – but Cautiously

Many students who compose on a computer rely on spelling and grammar checkers to eliminate errors. However, it is important to use them with caution. For example, spell checkers may not always make the right choice, as in the example on the left, in which the correct replacement should be *reveal*, not *revel*.

Do not automatically select the first word on the replacement list. Instead, examine each word until you have found the best match. If you are still unsure about the right choice, ask your instructor or a peer for advice, or check a dictionary.

Also, spell checkers will not identify words that are spelled correctly but misused, as often happens with the commonly confused words listed on pages 125–27.

Grammar checkers highlight possible grammar errors in your writing—for instance, with a green line. Often, this highlighting indicates major grammar errors, such as fragments, run-ons, comma splices, or subject-verb agreement problems. The checker also may prompt you with suggestions for fixing these errors. Once again, you should develop the habit of examining each proposed correction method. Not only will this help you make the right choice, it will build your grammar skills for those times when you do not have access to a grammar checker.

Finally, keep in mind that grammar checkers are not 100 percent accurate; they sometimes underline a sentence that is perfectly correct. Do not automatically assume that the grammar checker is right and your sentence is flawed. As your grammar awareness grows, you should begin to rely on your own judgment as much as you rely on the electronic correction tools.

### Power Tip

Dictionaries are great tools for improving your spelling and for checking the definitions and proper usages of words. Invest in a portable dictionary or refer to online tools like **dictionary.com**. With **dictionary.com**, if you know the first few letters of a word but are unsure of the rest of the spelling, enter an asterisk (\*) after the letters (for example, *acc\** for *accidentally*). You'll get a list of words that begin with these letters, and their spellings.

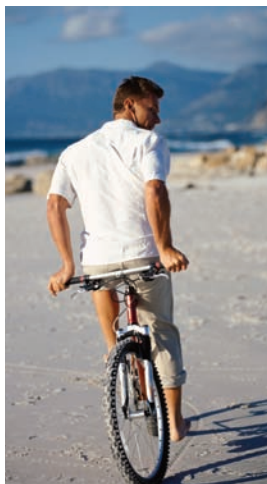
### Proofread in Two Views

Whenever possible, proofread your writing in *two views*: on the computer monitor and on the printed page. Each of these visual media will help you notice different details in your writing. If you proofread only on the screen, your eyes may miss quite a few errors.

After writing your composition and reading it on-screen, always print a draft and proofread *on the page*. It's a good idea to double-space your writing before you print it so that it's easier to read. Then, use a combination of pen, pencil, and/or highlighter to mark your errors. For example, you might highlight words whose spelling you need to look up in the dictionary, put a colored star by items you want to ask your instructor about, and use pencil to add missing words or make other edits. Next, go back to the computer and make any necessary corrections, consulting your instructor or other resources as needed.

### Proofread Backwards

Most people would not think of riding a bicycle backwards down the street. However, it would certainly raise your awareness about your own body, the parts of your bicycle, and your surroundings. To advance safely and



successfully, you would need to go slowly and pay careful attention to every part of the experience.

Similarly, most students would not think of proofreading their writing backwards. However, writers who use this strategy find that it raises their awareness about their grammar, word choice and word order, spelling, and punctuation. Proofreading one sentence at a time—starting with the *last* sentence of your composition—will force you to go slowly and pay careful attention to each sentence.

When we proofread a composition in the customary way—from top to bottom—we get caught up in the flow of our ideas. This momentum—just like the momentum of riding a bicycle forward—makes it difficult for us to slow down and pay careful attention to the fine points of our writing. When we proofread backwards, we interrupt the flow of our ideas, allowing us to focus more effectively on our sentence construction.

### Use a Grammar Guide

In proofreading your writing, have you ever *suspected* a grammar error but not felt sure? If so, you are not alone. Many college students lack confidence in identifying their grammar mistakes. For this reason, it is helpful to keep a grammar guide beside you when proofreading. This guide can be a brief list of reminders, like the one on page 124. It can also be a separate grammar handbook. If you use a handbook, you should flag or paper-clip pages that cover how to recognize and fix common and serious errors, such as fragments, run-ons, comma splices, and verb errors. Refer to these same pages every time you proofread.

### Keep Logs for Spelling, Grammar, and Vocabulary

If you frequently misspell words, keeping a spelling log is a quick and easy strategy to improve your writing. Here's how to do it: when you discover that you have misspelled a word, take a few seconds to write down *both* your incorrect spelling and the correct spelling in your log, which might be set up like the one on the next page. You should also *re-log* a word each time you misspell it; this repetition will help you master the correct spelling more quickly.

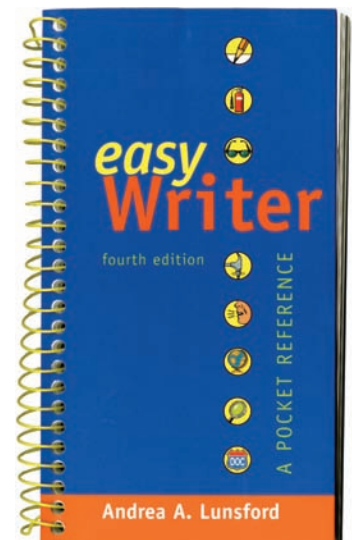
You might also keep a log of your grammar errors. Each time your instructor marks a grammar error in your writing, copy the entire incorrect sentence in the log. Then, rewrite the sentence, correcting the error. If you like, you can organize your log according to types of errors (fragments, run-ons, verb errors, and so on).

Additionally, to help build your vocabulary—an important strategy for college success—consider keeping a vocabulary log. Each time you read an unfamiliar word, look up its meaning in the dictionary. Then, write the word and its definition in your vocabulary log. You might also want to write down the sentence in which you first discovered the word.

If you've never kept a log before, start with just one, selecting the issue (spelling, grammar, or vocabulary) that is the most important for your writing.

### Power Tip

As you practice proofreading backwards, try reading your sentences *out loud*. Pronouncing each word will force you to read more slowly and carefully, helping you to spot errors with greater ease.



Log of Spelling Errors			
Student _____		Course _____	
Paper Title _____		Paper Title _____	
Date _____		Date _____	
Incorrect Spelling	Correct Spelling	Incorrect Spelling	Correct Spelling
1.		1.	
2.		2.	
3.		3.	
4.		4.	
5.		5.	
6.		6.	
7.		7.	
8.		8.	
9.		9.	
10.		10.	

### ACTIVITY 5: Mastery Test or Teamwork

For each paragraph below, do the following:

- Proofread backwards, starting with the last sentence and examining one sentence at a time. Edit errors that you find. (You might want to consult the brief grammar chart on page 124 or some other grammar guide.)
- Start a spelling, grammar, or vocabulary log and record the errors there.

In this paragraph, look for one fragment, one run-on, one comma splice, two verb errors, three missing words, and five misspelled or misused words.

1. Although I do not make a lot of money, I have developed habits that will ensure my financial security. First of all, I carefully monetor how much I spend. I have figured out how much extra money I have every month after necessary expenses (rent, food, utilities, and so on), and I never spend more than that, in fact, make sure that I have extra money in my bank account in case emergency expense, like a

car repair bill, arises. Second, I avoids luxuries unless it is a special occasion. For example, I do not eat out unless it is my birthday, a friend's birthday, or some other special event. Also, I rented movies instead of going to the theater and spending a lot on tickets, popcorn, and soda. In addition, I do not by expensive cosmetics and face creams I make my own moisturizers with natural ingredients. Like olive oil and beeswax. Most important, I contribute regularly to my savings. I have joined company's 401(k) plan, and money for this comes directly out of my pay so that I am not tempted to spend it. Also, I try to contribute money to my savings account whenever I can. I may never be rich, but because I have excepted personal responsibility for my finances, I am confedent that I will never have to worry about money.

In this paragraph, look for two fragments, two comma splices, one run-on, three verb errors, two missing words, and three misspelled or misused words.

2. My grandfather influenced me more than any other person in my life. In the first place, he was the role model for my life. My father die when I was four, before I could really get to know him, but my grandfather stepped write into the role of father. Teaching me Italian (my grandfather's native language), piano, and soccer, in fact, he influenced me musically that I work as a musician today, giving piano lessons and performing with musicians who come into town. In the second place, Grandpa taught me what it means to be a gentleman, he had fine manners, always listning politely to others and asking them questions about themselves. Also, he held doors open ladies, gave up his seat on the bus for pregnant women, and helping elderly neighbors in his apartment building carry groceries upstairs even when he was quiet old himself! To grandfather, dressing well was also

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For more practice with finding and fixing spelling errors, visit [bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones](http://bedfordstmartins.com/steppingstones).

a form of good manners. He never went to any public place, even the grocery store, without wearing a suit and fedora hat. Because of him, I always tries to be polite to others and to dress my best. Whenever I am performing or going to any important place. Finally, Grandpa taught me the value of humor he was a quiet and dignified, but if he thought that a person was acting prejudiced or “like a big shot,” he would wink at me and say to the person, “You’ll have to excuse me, but I’m hard of hearing.” Of course, his hearing was perfect. Although he passed away last year at ninety-two, I will always love and treasure him, and I hope that I am as good a role model to my children as he was to me.

### ACTIVITY 6

Refer to the paragraph(s) you worked on for Activity 2 or to any paragraph that you developed in Chapter 5. Then, proofread your writing backwards, fixing any errors that you find. Consider recording errors in a spelling, grammar, or vocabulary log.

### BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: Revising

In this chapter, you have learned about revising and proofreading strategies that will help you improve your writing. Confirm your knowledge by filling in the blank spaces in the following sentences. If you need help, review the pages listed after each sentence.

- ✓ Paragraphs that stay on track and include only information that supports the main idea are called \_\_\_\_\_ paragraphs. (page 114)
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_ means looking over your writing with a fresh eye to identify and fix any problems. (page 114)
- ✓ The \_\_\_\_\_ of your paragraph can be disrupted when there is a flawed topic sentence, an unstated or unclear support point, a missing transitional expression, or details that do not fit. (page 114)



✓ Some helpful revision strategies include revising with \_\_\_\_\_ eyes, using your \_\_\_\_\_ to check for unity, and getting comments from a \_\_\_\_\_. (pages 120–21)

✓ Helpful proofreading strategies include using \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ cautiously and proofreading \_\_\_\_\_.

You can also use a \_\_\_\_\_ guide and keep \_\_\_\_\_ to help you improve your spelling, grammar, and vocabulary. (pages 130–31)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ [ story title ]

**H**erb Fern is a very rich man. He has \$600,000,000.47 in the bank. He doesn't like to spend a lot of money on his clothes or his car. He likes to buy bread that is a few days old. He always reads the newspaper at the library so he doesn't have to buy his own copy.

Something was about to happen that would change Herb's life forever! He was in the bank, checking on his money, when the manager of the bank walked up and... [ finish the story ]

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

[ story title ]

**N**ick Muldoon is very happy. He is on a two-week vacation and he is driving to Pelican Beach. He needs this vacation because he works at the Ace Dynamite Factory. He has to make sure that all of the dynamite is safely packed into boxes before it's loaded onto trucks to be shipped. He needs a lot of peace and quiet. Pelican Beach is usually a very quiet place. He always goes there on his vacation because there are no noisy crowds, no loud noises, no loud music, and, especially, no fireworks. Even the seagulls are quiet.

As he arrived at the Pelican Beach Hotel and began to take his suitcase out of his car, he thought he heard... [ finish the story ]

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

[ story title ]

**D**uffy Ziltch was looking at the clock. "Oh great," he said, "it's almost 5:00 and I can't wait to go home!" Duffy runs the Lost and Found Department at the Bovine City Bus Station. It was packed with all the items people leave behind on buses. He had suitcases, eyeglasses, bowling balls, false teeth, birdcages, and even a piano. Just as Duffy was about to turn off the lights, Nelson Noodle, the bus driver who usually drives the bus to Walrus Falls, came through the door.

"Duffy, don't close up yet! I have something here that someone left behind on my bus." Duffy couldn't see what Nelson was holding because he backed into the room. Nelson suddenly turned around, and there in his arms was a very large chimpanzee.

"Hey!" Duffy shouted, "You can't bring a monkey in here!"

[ finish the story ]

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ [ story title ] \_\_\_\_\_

Sally Sneed is a scientist. She studies the plants that grow in cold climates. A month ago, Sally received a letter from Dr. Lester Lumpit, a world-famous scientist. The letter said:

“Dear Sally, I have discovered something very strange in the mountains of Antarctica. Would you be interested in coming to Antarctica? I need your help with a new discovery. Sincerely, Dr. Lester Lumpit  
P.S.: Please hurry!”

Sally made plans to go right away. After traveling by jet, she finally reached Antarctica. Dr. Lumpit met her at the airport. They decided to travel to the mountains the next morning to see the new discovery.

As they rode to the mountains on snowmobiles, Dr. Lumpit said, “I am so glad you are here, Sally. I’ve never seen anything like this in all the years I have worked here. I never thought I would see a giant...”

[ finish the story ]

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