

# Academic Writing Guide

Cedar Springs HS  
2014-2015 School Year



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## How to Raise My Scores and Meet My Goals

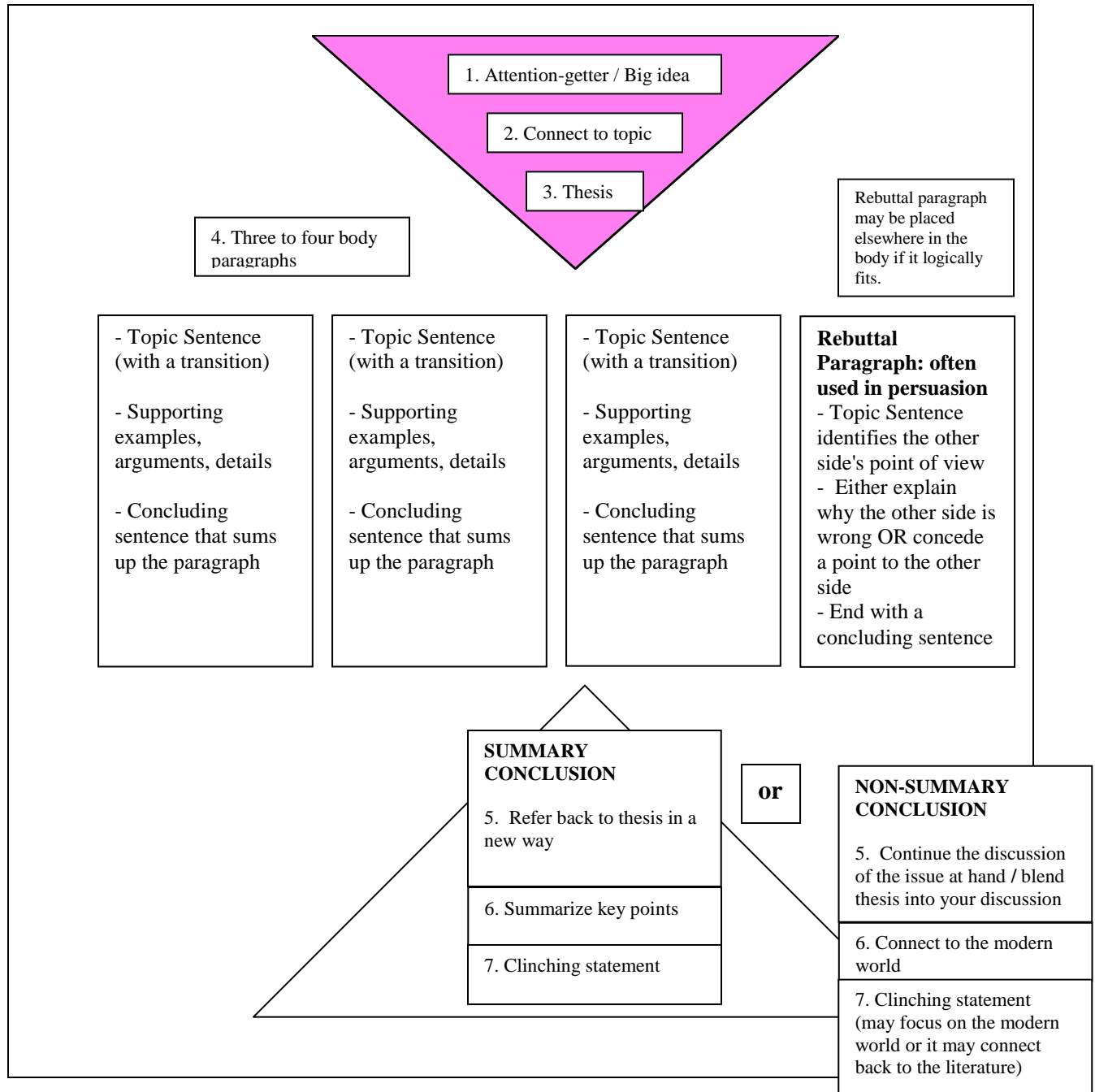
SRI - Lexile	ACT Writing	ACT English	ACT Reading or English
<p>- Always be reading a novel or a longer work of nonfiction. Get in the habit of reading before you go to bed.</p> <p>- The simplest way to expand your vocabulary is to read voraciously. The more you read, the more vocabulary you acquire.</p> <p>- If you choose books that are appropriately challenging, your SRI score will grow faster.</p> <p>- Look up words you don't know.</p> <p>- Study your academic and conceptual vocabulary (in the back of this binder).</p> <p>- Play vocabulary games online. Use some of these links:</p> <p><a href="http://www.number2.com">www.number2.com</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.vocabulary.com">www.vocabulary.com</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.freerice.com">www.freerice.com</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.vocabtest.com/high_school/">www.vocabtest.com/high_school/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.dictionary.com">www.dictionary.com</a></p> <p>- Play word dynamo</p> <p><a href="http://www.sheppardsoftware.com">www.sheppardsoftware.com</a></p>	<p>- Get into the habit of reading each sentence you write back to yourself. Revise and edit as you write, paying close attention to detail.</p> <p>- Use the models your teacher provides to help you understand some of the key "moves" you must make in Academic Writing.</p> <p>- Always reread any piece of writing that you construct. If you're not sure about the spelling of a word, LOOK IT UP!</p> <p>- Use the resources provided in the Academic Writing Guide, especially the pages that list effective transitions and the writing templates.</p> <p>- Find friends and family members who will sit down with you and will carefully help you edit your writing. DON'T JUST SIT THERE AND LET YOUR EDITOR CORRECT YOUR ERRORS. Discuss what you did wrong and how you can fix it!</p>	<p>- Be a meticulous editor.</p> <p>- Pay attention when your teacher is explaining different grammatical concepts during mini-lessons.</p> <p>- Read through and review the punctuation and grammar sections of this writing handbook.</p> <p>- Use the following links to master basic editing skills:</p> <p><a href="http://www.number2.com">www.number2.com</a></p> <p><a href="http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quiz_list.htm">http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quiz_list.htm</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.dictionary.com">www.dictionary.com</a></p> <p><a href="http://dynamo.dictionary.com/high-school-grammar-games">http://dynamo.dictionary.com/high-school-grammar-games</a></p> <p><a href="http://classroom.jc-schools.net/basic/la-grammar.html">http://classroom.jc-schools.net/basic/la-grammar.html</a></p> <p>google: oxford practice grammar  <a href="http://elt.oup.com/student/practicegrammar/?jsessionid=F7E178770D619F496C28FAE4FD840407?cc=us&amp;selLanguage=en">http://elt.oup.com/student/practicegrammar/?jsessionid=F7E178770D619F496C28FAE4FD840407?cc=us&amp;selLanguage=en</a></p>	<p>- All of the suggestions for raising your SRI score apply here as well.</p> <p>IN ADDITION, you can...</p> <p>- Read news articles and editorials regularly. A fantastic website to use is <b>www.realclearpolitics.com</b>.</p> <p>This website isn't just about politics, it has sections on sports, science, world, technology, energy, religion, etc. Basically, the website gathers up the best articles on the web and organizes them for you on a daily basis.</p> <p>- Take practice ACT tests using these links:</p> <p><a href="http://www.number2.com">www.number2.com</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.actstudent.org/sampletest/">http://www.actstudent.org/sampletest/</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.princetonreview.com/college/free-act-practice-test.aspx">http://www.princetonreview.com/college/free-act-practice-test.aspx</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.test-guide.com/free-act-practice-tests.html">http://www.test-guide.com/free-act-practice-tests.html</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.4tests.com/exams/examdetail.asp?eid=13">http://www.4tests.com/exams/examdetail.asp?eid=13</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.petersons.com/college-search/free-act-practice-test.aspx">http://www.petersons.com/college-search/free-act-practice-test.aspx</a></p>

### Average Composite ACT Scores for Different Universities

University of Michigan	29	Grand Valley State	21
Michigan State	23	Central Michigan	22
Calvin College	23	Harvard	33

# Standard Essay Structure

The graphic organizer below represents the structure of a standard academic essay. Most of the essays that we write will be either five or six paragraphs in length. A five-paragraph essay consists of an opening paragraph, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. A six-paragraph essay includes a rebuttal paragraph which makes sure to directly address an argument made by the other side.



# Thesis Statements

The thesis statement is a one or two sentence statement of the essay's central idea. A good thesis should be clear, focused, and limited to fit the assignment.

GUIDELINES	SAMPLES
<p>1. A good thesis states the writer's <i>clearly defined</i> opinion or analysis of some subject.</p> <p>2. Do not use <i>personal expressions</i> such as: I think, I believe, in this paper, etc.</p> <p>3. A good thesis asserts <i>one</i> main idea.</p> <p>4. A good thesis is <i>limited</i> to fit the assignment.</p> <p>5. A good thesis is located at the <i>end of the first paragraph</i> in a short essay.</p>	<p><b>Good Thesis Statement</b></p> <p>Although cloning may have scientific benefits, it should be banned because it is immoral, dangerous, and destructive.</p>
	<p><b>Bad Thesis Statement</b></p> <p>I think cloning should be banned, but in some cases it might be all right.</p>
	<p><b>Good Thesis Statement</b></p> <p>Shakespeare's examination of youthful impulsivity is as relevant now as it ever has been. *</p> <p>*(A thesis without listing the three points is appropriate for 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> &amp; 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in advanced literature courses.)</p>
	<p><b>Bad Thesis Statement</b></p> <p>Shakespeare's examination of youth is kind of relevant to today most of the time, and he also shows how deceptions have unintended consequences.</p>
	<p><b>Good Thesis Statement</b></p> <p>Parents should limit the amount of television a child watches in order to improve the child's mental, physical, and emotional health.</p>
	<p><b>Bad Thesis Statement</b></p> <p>Parents should limit the amount of television that their children watch and should teach them to be polite.</p>
	<p><b>Good Thesis Statement</b></p> <p>Schools should offer more extra-curricular activities to meet the interests of students, to improve academic performance, and to promote healthy attitudes.</p>
	<p><b>Bad Thesis Statement</b></p> <p>I believe that schools should do more things for all kids.</p>

# Opening Paragraphs

An opening paragraph should pull the reader into the paper using some sort of attention-getting device. It should then smoothly transition into the topic of the essay. Finally, it should conclude with a clear and logical thesis statement. Below are a few different types of openings you might use.

## Persuasive Essays - Sample Openings

### **ANECDOTE (brief narrative story, usually involving someone famous)**

At the beginning of the 1960's, a young senator campaigned vigorously for tax cuts to help spur the American economy. He persuasively argued that if people get to keep more of their own money, the economy would grow in response. This young senator was not a "radical right wing conservative." He was, in fact, a man many of today's liberals admire greatly: John F. Kennedy. Kennedy knew then what President Bush knows now: **tax cuts will help increase economic growth, promote upward mobility, and increase government revenues.**

### **GENERAL BACKGROUND**

The argument that swirls around today's proposed tax cuts is no different than the many arguments that have been made about this topic in the past. Opponents of tax cuts have always insisted that they starve the government of needed funds for programs. Proponents of tax cuts claim that they free up capital and create economic growth. The truth lies somewhere in between these two claims. Tax cuts are sometimes needed and sometimes reckless. In today's times, however, spiraling deficits and increasing military costs hang like a noose around the federal government's neck. In fact, it has become increasingly obvious that President Bush's proposed tax cuts are both dangerous and reckless. **Congress should reject President Bush's proposed tax cuts because they will increase the deficit, starve the government of needed revenue, and will promote income inequality.**

### **QUOTATION (from a credible source; should defend your position)**

President Kennedy once said, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." Most people profess to believe in this statement. However, when it comes time to pay taxes, many citizens, especially conservatives, seem to think that the country should operate on credit; these people just don't want to pay the bill for democracy. This attitude seems to influence President Bush's current push for tax cuts. The U.S. Congress needs to stop this selfish push for tax cuts by rejecting the President's current proposal. **President Bush's proposed tax cuts will increase the deficit, starve the government of needed revenue, and will promote income inequality.**

### **CHALLENGE AN ASSUMPTION**

Many people assume that a "tax cut" will always save them money. This line of thinking is shortsighted and inaccurate. In reality, tax cuts often have unintended consequences such as increases in service fees and interests rates and decreases in government services. President Bush's tax cut plan will very likely have these effects. **In fact, President Bush's proposed tax cuts will increase the deficit, starve the government of needed revenue, and will promote income inequality. For these reasons, the U.S. Congress should oppose the President's tax cut proposal.**

## Literary Analysis Essays - Sample Openings

### DISCUSS A LARGER THEME

Our modern world is full of tales of violence and atrocity. On a daily basis, countless individuals attempt to flee countries stunted by war, poverty, and civil unrest to embrace life without fear. In 2001, 3,600 Sudanese boys sought asylum in the United States, leaving behind gruesome memories of their families' massacres, of animal attacks, and of pursuing soldiers in order to adopt lives filled with study, sports, US pop culture, and fluent English. **In the same way, the characters in Chris Cleave's novel *Little Bee* must come to terms with the violence they have experienced, acknowledge the current atrocities surrounding them, and aspire to build a better future for themselves and others.**

### USE A BRIEF, SHOWING STORY THAT CONNECTS TO YOUR THEME

Cuddled amongst five laughing cousins, Becky sits on the couch, waiting for one more picture to be taken. Soon her family will open the mound of Christmas presents nestled under the tree. Smiling faces circle the large living room and extend into the pictures on the mantel, capturing the progression of time, the growth of a family. This is Grandma's house: a secure place of love and generosity, a place to meet and remember, an island oasis in the undulating sea of family life. **Like a grandmother's home, the garden in Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* serves as a symbol of Meg's security, connection, and growth.**

### PARAPHRASE A SCENE FROM THE WORK OF LITERATURE

Another Friday night and all of Odessa has assumed their seats in the stadium stands. Boobie Miles, the ultimate athlete, is geared up and glowing in his suit of invincible glory, as college recruiters and his fans await him. Boobie and the Odessa Panthers are up against Palo Duro, yet Boobie is starved for more. His hunger fuels him to work the field as he pushes through and goes for fifteen yards. He reaches the fifteen yard line but strives for more. He sees an opening and plants his left leg to stiff arm an oncoming tackler. His leg gets caught in the pristine artificial turf, and as another tackler slams into his knee, the entire stadium goes silent. Boobie attempts to bounce back only to find that he can barely put any pressure on his knee at all. Boobie's overzealous desire to win big at the expense of his physical well-being, even in a scrimmage game, is the kind of misplaced priority H.G. Bissinger often depicts in *Friday Night Lights: A Town, A Team, and A Dream*.

# Body Paragraphs / Topic Sentences

A standard essay should include at least three body paragraphs that support the ideas expressed in the thesis statement. Each body paragraph should express one argument, and this argument should be clearly stated in a topic sentence at the beginning of the paragraph. The body of the essay is where all of the "meat" is. In other words, this is where writers should use vivid examples, relevant analogies, and logical arguments to back up their arguments.

A body paragraph should begin with a clear topic sentence which is "thematically and grammatically parallel to the thesis statement" (TPA Style Guide 9-10). Some teachers may require that topic sentences be strictly grammatically parallel such that the subject and verb of the thesis are repeated as the subject and verb of each topic sentence. While this is encouraged early in the writing process, it should be discouraged in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.

## Sample Topic Sentences

**SAMPLE THESIS (Persuasive Essay):** Cloning should be banned because it is dangerous, immoral, and destructive.

**GOOD TOPIC SENTENCE:** First of all, cloning human beings is a dangerous proposition.

**BAD TOPIC SENTENCE:** First of all, nobody should be cloning because it could cause major problems.

**SAMPLE THESIS (Literary Analysis):** The river for Huckleberry, in Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, serves as a symbol of refuge, a world that provides an escape from the cruelties of everyday life, a place where hope and love prosper.

**GOOD TOPIC SENTENCE:** Symbolically, the river acts as a safe haven for Huckleberry.

**BAD TOPIC SENTENCE:** The river is a refuge for Huckleberry, and it provides an escape from everyday life.

**SAMPLE THESIS (Literary Analysis):** Chaucer reveals three main areas of corruption in the Medieval church: a focus on worldly pleasures, a violation of basic Christian theology, and an exploitation of parishioners. These criticisms alert the reader to the human faults of the clergy; like their parishioners, they, too, are people who sin and make mistakes.

**GOOD TOPIC SENTENCE:** Chaucer emphasizes the corruption of the Medieval church by revealing the clergy's focus on worldly pleasures.

**BAD TOPIC SENTENCE:** The church that Chaucer presents is really corrupt. A lot of the clergy just want pleasure, like when some of the monks seek out sex from poor widows.



## Sample Body Paragraphs

### SAMPLE BODY PARAGRAPH (Persuasive)

**All students should engage in some extracurricular activity because from extracurricular work they learn a great many valuable things that they won't learn in a classroom.** School is not just a matter of learning the difference between *lie* and *lay*, or what caused the War Between the States; it is learning to live and work with others. Students learn to work and play with others harmoniously, to give and take, and to win and lose. When, as members of a club, a young people are given a job to do, they learn to assume responsibility and to work unselfishly for the good of the group. In a radio club or a photography club, students get additional knowledge which may be more valuable in the long run than the knowledge they receive from doing homework or attending classes. Furthermore, if students work hard in dramatics or in musical organizations, they will develop talents which will be satisfying throughout life, talents which might never have been discovered had those teens thought of school as confined to the hours of the daily schedule. Clearly, young people learn many vital things in the classroom; however, they can't learn it all. That's where extra-curricular activities come in.

### SAMPLE BODY PARAGRAPH (Literary Analysis)

**Throughout the story, Eugenia Collier uses the actions and words of young Lizabeth to highlight the painful confusion and mystery of adolescence.** Lizabeth's bewilderment is first revealed when the young children decide to pester Miss Lottie. Lizabeth is reluctant to "gather pebbles from the dusty ground," but Joey's taunting convinces her to put aside her newfound maturity and to descend into childishness (Collier 111). Collier is showing the reader how the young often respond to confusion by acting out. Lizabeth doesn't know what to do, so she acts immaturely. In addition, Collier reveals adolescence to be mysterious. After the taunting incident, Lizabeth becomes moody and is caught between two worlds. The childish side of her personality "sulks," but the adult side "flinch[es] at the thought of the malicious attack that [she] had led" (Collier 113). Obviously, this time of transition leaves Lizabeth mystified and guilty. Collier conveys the message that youth is a time of unknowns - for Lizabeth, her guilt springs from her ignorance. Finally, the pain of adolescence drives Lizabeth to destroy Miss Lottie's marigolds. After hearing a frightening conversation between her parents, Lizabeth rushes out in the middle of the night and tears up the flowers. When confronted by Miss Lottie, Lizabeth "gaze[s] up at that immobile face with the sad, weary eyes, [and sees] a kind of reality that is hidden to childhood" (Collier 116). For Lizabeth, the pain and mystery of adolescence has been replaced with a newfound sense of compassion. This compassion is the reward that comes at the end of a painful rite of passage, one that is both puzzling and difficult.

### SAMPLE BODY PARAGRAPH (Persuasive)

**Along with deterring crime, the death penalty also prevents repeat offenses by criminals.** It may seem simple, but the fact remains that a dead criminal cannot be a repeat offender. The chances of a murderer getting another chance to rejoin society via parole or escape are completely eliminated. For example, let's look at the case of 12 year-old Polly Klaas. As long as Mark Allen Davis, the man who tortured, raped and murdered Polly, is alive, the Klaas family has to worry about the possibility that he could someday be paroled or that he could, unlikely as it may seem, escape. With the death penalty, this fear is eliminated. Not only are the family's fears assuaged, but the death penalty sends a clear message to the public that murderers will not be allowed back on the city streets. Only the death penalty can give us this solid guarantee: murderers will never have a second chance to kill.

# Argumentative Strategies

The most important part of any essay is the development of ideas. It's not enough to simply state an opinion repetitively; the writer must be able to support his arguments with intelligent, logical examples and details.

Below are six specific argumentative strategies that a writer can use to develop ideas and to support a thesis. These strategies can be used in any type of essay.

## **Argument based on Generalization**

Generalization is a very common form of reasoning. It assumes that what is true of a sample of people is likely to hold for a larger group or population, or that certain things consistent with the sample can be inferred of the group/population.

### **Sample Argument by Generalization:**

*Virtually every teenager recognizes the importance of extra-curricular activities. For instance, sophomore Joe Smith has developed a strong work ethic thanks to his training for cross country.*

## **Argument based on Analogy**

Argument by analogy involves looking at similarities between one situation or event and applying the lessons learned to a similar situation or event. When using an analogy, it's important to make sure the comparison being made is relevant and accurate.

### **Sample Argument by Analogy:**

*When students participate in athletics, they are judged based on performance, not on appearance. No coach is going to make young Johnny the starting pitcher simply because he has nicer cleats and a more orderly exterior than his fellow players. Unfortunately, this is not true in academics. In many cases, teachers tend to be subconsciously biased in favor of students who wear nicer clothes. However, if a school adopts a uniform policy, students, like athletes, will be judged based on their behaviors and work ethic, not on their looks.*

## **Argument via Sign/Clue**

Argument via sign or clue holds that certain types of evidence are symptomatic of some wider principle or outcome. For example, smoke is often considered a sign for fire. Some people think high SAT scores are a sign a person is smart and will do well in college.

### **Sample Argument via Sign/Clue:**

*The number of shootings taking place on school campuses demonstrates the dangers of our vicious media culture. Young people numbed by gory video games are less likely to feel empathy for other human beings and are more likely to act out sadistic fantasies generated by watching hundreds, maybe even thousands, of hours of violent television.*

## **Causal Argument**

Causal argument occurs when the writer argues that a given occurrence or event is the result of, or is effected by, a specific factor. Causal reasoning is the most complex of the different forms of argument. It can be difficult to pull off because it is very easy to confuse causation with correlation.

### **Correct Use of Causal Argument:**

*If police departments are allowed to use video cameras in public parks, criminals will know they are being watched. As a result, pedophiles or potential kidnappers will be far less likely to try anything.*

### **Incorrect Use of Causal Argument**

*The high school has a 16% drop out rate. The middle school, on the other hand, has a 0% drop out rate. Clearly, the middle school teachers are doing a much better job than the high school teachers.*

## **Argument from Authority**

An argument from authority uses a quote or other information from an "authoritative" source. This means that the person or group in question is well-respected and should have some special insight into the matter.

### **Sample Argument from Authority:**

*Federal Judge Joseph Smith understands the dangers of mandatory minimums: "I can tell you that there have been countless times when I have known that the punishment for a given crime was much too severe. However, because of mandatory sentencing guidelines, I was forced to send people to jail for much longer than necessary."*

## **Argument from Principle**

The writer locates a principle that is widely regarded as valid and shows that a situation exists in which this principle applies. It is important to pick a principle that is widely accepted and respected.

### **Sample Argument from Principle:**

*When crafting laws, legislators need to remember the principles of simplicity and clarity. People need to be able to clearly understand the law if they are to be expected to follow it. Confusion breeds disorder, and complex laws usually create confusion.*

\* Argumentative strategies adapted from the Toulmin Model of Argumentation, San Diego State University

# Rebuttal Paragraph

In order to write an effective essay, the writer should always **address the arguments of the other side** in his/her paper. A rebuttal paragraph may be included as a “fourth body paragraph,” or it may be placed elsewhere in the body if it logically fits. The methods listed below help explain how a writer can effectively address the arguments of the other side:

## METHODS USED TO ADDRESS THE OTHER SIDE

1. Identify an argument made by the other side and **shoot the argument down**. In other words, either specifically explain why the argument is weak or illogical or explain why the opponent's argument is irrelevant or unimportant.
2. **Strategic Concession**: If you **concede** that the opposition has a point about something, this can help you strengthen your argument. You may acknowledge that your opponent is right about one particular point. However, if you concede a point to the opposition, you must make sure that you explain why the opposition is **STILL WRONG** on the overall thrust of the argument.

### SHOOT THE OTHER SIDE'S ARGUMENT(S) DOWN

Some of those who oppose the War in Iraq claim that the United States has only created more terrorists by invading a country in the heart of the Middle East. However, intercepted communications from al Qaeda members suggest that a different explanation is far more likely. The U.S. has not created "new" terrorists but instead drawn those who were already involved in terrorist activity into Iraq where they now confront the mightiest military force on the planet. In addition, al Qaeda's reputation has certainly not been enhanced by the War in Iraq. Other Arabs now have the chance to witness al-Qaeda members slaughtering *Muslim* women and children; this reality has actually reduced support for al-Qaeda in many parts of the Middle East. The idea that the Iraq War has created more terrorism is both misleading and factually inaccurate.

(adapted from "Looking Back at Iraq..." by Victor Davis Hanson)

### CONCEDE A POINT TO THE OTHER SIDE

Opponents of the Iraq War have repeatedly emphasized that no weapons of mass destruction have been found; they have a point. U.S. forces have not been able to locate any functional chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons. However, this does not mean that Saddam Hussein's regime did not pose any threat to the United States. Weapons inspections and Iraqi government documents have revealed, in fact, that Hussein clearly intended to restart his weapons program as soon as he could get inspectors out and sanctions lifted. We also have evidence that Hussein's Iraqi government had given asylum to known terrorists; in fact, it's quite possible that a working relationship with al-Qaeda could have developed had Hussein been left in power. Clearly, Hussein's Iraq was an enemy of the United States, an enemy who had to be confronted.

# Conclusions

We will be studying two different types of conclusions: the summary conclusion and the non-summary conclusion.

A **summary conclusion** is simple. Basically, a summary conclusion reviews the key points made in the paper and brings the paper to a logical conclusion. The writer rewords the thesis statement, reviews key points, and ends with a clincher.

A **clincher** is a sentence that brings an essay to a close. There are many different ways to create a strong clincher.

## TYPES OF CLINCHERS

1. Emphasize the importance of the topic.
2. Relate the topic to the future.
3. End on a universal note (relates to everybody).
4. End with a strong quotation that emphasizes the point of your paper.

## SAMPLE SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS WITH DIFFERENT CLINCHERS

<p>All in all, the death penalty is a valuable tool in the fight against crime. Capital punishment deters murder, prevents repeat offenses, and delivers justice. <b>It is absolutely essential that the United States uses this tool to forcefully show would-be murderers that their actions will be dealt with severely.</b></p>	<p>All in all, the death penalty is a valuable tool in the fight against crime. Capital punishment deters murder, prevents repeat offenses, and delivers justice. <b>If Americans want to ensure a future with less crime and less murder, they need to continue to support the fair and timely use of the death penalty.</b></p>
<p>All in all, the death penalty is a valuable tool in the fight against crime. Capital punishment deters murder, prevents repeat offenses, and delivers justice. <b>Every American must understand the necessity of dealing with murderers forcefully. Only the death penalty will fairly provide safer streets for all of us.</b></p>	<p>All in all, the death penalty is a valuable tool in the fight against crime. Capital punishment deters murder, prevents repeat offenses, and delivers justice to the sickest and most depraved individuals living amongst us. <b>In the words of Comedian Dennis Miller, "Sometimes you just have to thin the herd."</b></p>

A **non-summary conclusion** is more sophisticated. Instead of simply summarizing arguments, the writer continues the discussion, makes a connection to a larger theme, and blends the thesis into a discussion of this larger theme. For a clincher, the writer might refer back to the attention-grabber for the introduction, or the writer might even make a reference to a major detail from the body of the essay.

### **SAMPLE NON-SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS**

#### **Sample Non-summary Conclusion: Persuasive**

The controversy surrounding the death penalty may be infuriating to some, but it is also very encouraging. The fact that citizens of America are able to argue about the moral, legal, and ethical implications of capital punishment demonstrates the civilized nature of American democracy. Truly, there is nothing uncivilized about citizens in a democracy making the conscious choice to protect themselves from depraved, immoral, evil killers. Using the death penalty is not barbaric. Failing to fully protect the innocent citizens of America from psychopaths is.

#### **Sample Non-summary Conclusion: Literary Analysis**

Bissinger uses stories of the people of Odessa to demonstrate how misplaced priorities affect the present and hinder the future. The people of Odessa in *Friday Night Lights: A Town, A Team, and A Dream* are so blinded by their need to have a winning season that they are unable to see past football and victory. The adult citizens of the town are handcuffing the children to the present football obsession and holding the future of these children hostage. The athletes devote much of their time to football and not enough time to anything else. Football is perceived as the only ticket out for the Odessa players, and when their plans fail, they are left with broken dreams and lost paths. The desire to attain a goal can create an obsession that colors the present and darkens the future.

#### **Sample Non-summary Conclusion: Literary Analysis**

In Meg's ever-changing world, the garden remains a constant place in time, alternating with the seasons just as Meg must do. She leaves from it and returns to it, but in order to be a true garden, it must be seeded, bear fruit, and return to earth. The garden must change. While traveling through tesseract and fighting the power of the all-controlling IT, Meg must give up her fear and her self-reliance in order to save her family. Just like struggling students must at some point realize that their future success depends on discipline and determination, Meg must change in order to grow and succeed

# Guidelines for Literary Analysis

Responding to or analyzing a work of literature is at the heart of academic writing. When discussing a work or works of literature, the writer generally wants to use a formal, professional tone. This type of writing also involves using a great deal of textual evidence (quotes, paraphrases) to support a thesis.

1. Your analysis should always be written in <b>present tense</b> . ("Knowles <i>uses</i> biblical allusions..." not "Knowles <i>used</i> biblical allusions...")
2. When you first refer to the author, refer to him/her by his/her full name. After that first reference, always refer to the <b>author by last name only</b> .
3. Use a <b>third person point of view (he, she, it, they)</b> . Avoid first or second person (I, me, my, you, your, we*, our*). *Sometimes, it is acceptable to use the universal "we" or "our" – (based on instructor preference).
4. <b>Do not refer to the "quote" or the "reader."</b> In other words, avoid saying, "In this quote, Steinbeck shows that..." or "Steinbeck shows the reader that..."
5. Explain things in a persuasive manner. <b>Do not give vague statements</b> about the text.  (Incorrect) Imagery is important.  (Correct) Thomas uses sea imagery effectively to help the reader smell, taste, and see an ocean beach on a hot summer day.
6. <b>Always cite the page number (or line number in a poem) of every quote in parentheses</b> . Notice that the period is moved to the end of the parentheses.  (Correct) Using alliteration, Thomas provides us with a humorous image of Mr. Prothero "smacking at the smoke with a slipper" (2).
7. <b>Always use the author's exact words when including a quote</b> . BE ACCURATE!!!!
8. Generally, students should <b>use the active voice</b> (i.e., "Elizabeth reads Darcy's letter...") rather than the passive voice ("Darcy's letter is read by Elizabeth") in their writing. The passive voice is preferable in some cases, but students should be cautious to avoid overusing it. The best strategy to avoid unnecessary use of passive voice is for students to consciously use action verbs and not forms of the verb "to be" whenever possible.*
9. Always <b>LEAD INTO, BLEND, AND EXPLAIN</b> quotations from the text.

\* Example 8 is adapted from the Tempe Preparatory Academy Style Guide.

# Blending Quotations

The learner should know how to effectively **blend quotations** from a source into a paper.

## METHODS FOR BLENDING QUOTATIONS

1. Use a **comma** to introduce a quotation after explanatory words (he says, she says, she explains, etc.).

\*When a quotation is introduced with a phrase such as "*He says,*" "*She asks,*" and the like, the first letter of the quotation must be capitalized.

Jerry reveals that he is becoming more adventurous when he says, "I'd like to go and have at a look at those rocks down there" (Lessing 93).

Mary Bennet claims, "A person may be proud without being vain" (Austen 47).

2. Use a **colon** to introduce a longer quote (one complete sentence or more) that follows a complete stop.

Jerry now longs to challenge himself at the rocky beach and sees the sandy beach as being a place of immaturity: "It was a torment to him to waste a day of his careful self-training, but he stayed with her on that other beach, which now seemed a place for small children, a place where his mother might lie safe in the sun" (Lessing 98).

3. Simply **embed quoted material** into your sentence.

\*When embedding quoted material, either a complete sentence or fragment, into a longer sentence, if the first letter is capitalized in the original material, it is entered as a bracketed lower-case letter in the citation:

Mary Bennet shares her opinion that "[a] person may be proud without being vain" (Austen 47).

Jerry now views the sandy beach as a "place for small children" (Lessing 98). He says that it is "not his beach" (Lessing 98).

4. Use an **ellipsis** to omit unnecessary words or to demonstrate that the quote is only part of a compound sentence.

Jerry now longs to challenge himself at the rocky beach and sees the sandy beach as being a place of immaturity: "It was a torment to him ... but he stayed with her on that other beach ... a place for small children ... where his mother might lie safe in the sun" (Lessing 98).

5. Use **brackets** when you alter part of a quote to fit smoothly into your paper.

Jerry feels a need to push himself, "but he [stays] with her on that other beach, which now [seems] a place for small children" (Lessing 98).

\* Examples are adapted from the Tempe Preparatory Academy Style Guide.



# Leading into, Blending, and Explaining Quotations

Whenever you're using textual support in a paper, it is important to always lead into, blend, and explain each quotation. Take a look at the sample paragraph below. Notice how the writer always follows these three steps:

1. **Lead into the quotation.** In other words, make sure to set the scene or prepare for the coming quotation.
2. **Blend the quotation smoothly** using one of the approved methods. Generally, it is suggested that you try to embed a piece or fragment of a quote with your own words.
3. **Explain the significance of the quotation.** (What does this quotation reveal? How does it add to the author's message or theme? How might it connect to the modern world? What impact does it have upon the reader? What mood or tone is created?)

## SAMPLE PARAGRAPH - Analyzing the Use of Metaphors

In Langston Hughes' poem "Dreams," two key metaphors are used to create a message about the importance and power of human aspirations. The first stanza introduces this theme, focusing on the need to hold on to dreams. Hughes compares a life without dreams to a "broken-winged bird / That cannot fly" (3-4). This vivid metaphor suggests the damage that a lack of hope can do to a person. A man or woman without a goal or dream is stuck on the ground just like that injured bird. Hughes intends to remind us of how painful it can be for the impoverished, hopeless human beings who feel trapped in their own bodies, unable to soar. In the second stanza, Hughes explores this theme again. Instead of dreams dying, they "go," leaving behind a life without meaning. Hughes says that without dreams, "Life is a barren field / Frozen with snow" (7-8). The image of the cold, lifeless field suggests a world without meaning or beauty. It seems that Hughes is suggesting that a hopeless person is not only trapped like a "broken-winged bird," but they are also left behind in a sterile, heartless world. Clearly, Hughes is saying that all people need ambitions and hope for the future in order to have a life with meaning.

# Introducing and Explaining Quotations: Sentence Templates

## Introducing a Quotation

X states, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).  
As the prominent philosopher X puts it, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).  
According to X, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).  
X himself writes, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).  
In her book, \_\_\_\_\_, X maintains that " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).  
Writing in the magazine \_\_\_\_\_, X complains that " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).  
In X's view, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).  
X agrees when she writes, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).  
X disagrees when he writes, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).  
X complicates matters further when he writes, \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).

## Explaining a Quotation

Basically, X is saying \_\_\_\_\_.  
In other words, X believes \_\_\_\_\_.  
In making this comment, X urges us to \_\_\_\_\_.  
X is corroborating the age-old adage that \_\_\_\_\_.  
X's point is that \_\_\_\_\_.  
The essence of X's argument is that \_\_\_\_\_.

\* Adapted from *They Say, I Say* by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein.

## A Note on Plagiarism

***Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of another person's words, ideas, images, artwork, or other original creative material without proper citation, i.e. plagiarism is the theft of intellectual property.***

The Cedar Springs High School English Department believes that plagiarism and cheating are very serious offenses. Thus, the penalty for academic misconduct will be severe.

We do NOT believe that "copying" or "web pasting" are just silly mistakes.

We do NOT accept excuses for cheating and plagiarism. In other words, don't tell your teacher, "Oh, I got that off the Internet. I just don't remember where." That is called plagiarism, also known as the theft of intellectual property.

WE DO BELIEVE that the students at Cedar Springs High School are honorable and decent young adults.

WE DO BELIEVE that we can rely on our students to make the following pledge:

*I will not lie, cheat, steal, or plagiarize in any of my academic endeavors.*

*In the case of all essays and research papers, I will carefully cite all external sources. I will not represent someone else's work as my own. I will do my very best to learn from my teachers the clear distinctions between appropriate research and plagiarism.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\* Parts of this page were adapted from the Tempe Preparatory Academy Style Guide

## Citing Sources

Many students are confused when it comes to citing others' work in their papers. Anytime an idea is not your own, you should reference it as a source.

Whether set off from your writing or blended into it, quoted material is usually preceded by a colon if the quotation is formally introduced and by a comma or no punctuation if the quotation is an integral part of the sentence structure.

### **Sample Quotes**

Shelley held a bold view: "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World" (794).

Shelley thought poets "the unacknowledged legislators of the World" (794).

"Poets," according to Shelley, "are the unacknowledged legislators of the World" (794).

Parenthetical citations are also used for a paraphrase or a summary. A paraphrase is generally the rewording of a sentence or two from a source into your own writing, and a summary usually condenses material. For example, you may summarize a paragraph or two from a source into one sentence of your own. With paraphrases and summaries, there will not be a direct quotation or quotation marks, but the idea still needs to be credited.

### **Example Summary**

Roland Fryer Jr., a Harvard economist conducted a randomized study in four cities to find out.

He used mostly privately-donated money to pay 18,000 students a total of \$23 million dollars and brought in a team of researchers to analyze the results (Ripley).

Another misconception is that direct quotations can only be dialogue or something someone said. This is not true. A direct quotation can be any group of words that you have directly lifted from another piece. These direct quotations always require quotation marks.

### **Example Dialogue—Direct Quotation**

Roland Fryer Jr., a Harvard economist, challenges, "One thing we cannot do is, we cannot restrict ourselves to a set of solutions that make adults comfortable" (Ripley).

### **Example Informational—Source without Dialogue—Direct Quotation**

Roland Fryer Jr., a Harvard economist, is convinced that the answer for education is a "combination of reforms" more than any one change in "isolation" (Ripley).

## **Direct Quotations**

Effective direct quotations are used selectively and are to be as brief as possible. It is preferred that quotations are blended with your sentences/writing.

### **Example Original Text**

Kids may respond better to rewards for specific actions because there is less risk of failure. They can control their attendance; they cannot necessarily control their test scores. The key, then, may be to teach kids to control more overall--to encourage them to act as if they can indeed control everything, and reward that effort above and beyond the actual outcome (Ripley).

### **Example from Research Paper with Direct Quotations**

Interestingly, the emphasis needs to be on “specific actions” that students can control such as reading, attendance, and turning in homework, where there is “less risk of failure” (Ripley).

### **Ellipsis (Three or four periods typed with a space before and after)**

Whenever you omit a word, phrase, a sentence, or more from a quoted passage, you need to make sure you are being fair to the author you are quoting, and you want to match the grammatical format of your writing. Note also, that if you only quote two or three words, you do not need to use ellipsis, as it is obvious that you omitted part of the original.

### **Example Original Text**

Chyna is an eighth-grader at the Takoma Education Campus in Washington . . . . When I ask her how she did it, she says, "I tried my hardest." She adds, "I tried to wear my uniform, because I knew I wanted some money because my birthday is next week." She has saved her past four paychecks for this reason. The money, she says, gives her just enough incentive to hold her tongue.

"For the most part, I'm still Chyna," she says. "But once in a while I just snatch it back, 'cause I know that paycheck is coming" (Ripley).

### **Two or Three Word Quotation—No Ellipsis Required**

Chyna, an eighth-grader at Takoma Education Campus in Washington, D.C., responded that she wore her uniform because she wanted to earn money for her birthday, and when she was tempted to saying something inappropriate, she would “snatch it back” in order not to jeopardized her paycheck (Ripley).

### **Part of a Sentence Removed—Middle of Quotation**

Chyna, an eighth-grader at Takoma Education Campus in Washington, D.C., responded, “I tried my hardest . . . because I knew I wanted some money because my birthday is next week” (Ripley).

#### **Part of a Sentence Removed—End of Quotation**

Chyna, an eighth-grader at Takoma Education Campus in Washington, D.C., responded, “I tried my hardest . . . because I knew I wanted some money . . .” (Ripley).

#### **One or More Sentences Removed from Original—Note Four Ellipses**

Chyna, an eighth-grader at Takoma Education Campus in Washington, D.C., responded, “I tried my hardest . . . ‘cause I know that paycheck is coming” (Ripley).

#### **Alterations of Direct Quotations**

Anytime you change a direct quotation from its original form, you must use square brackets to indicate the change. Sometimes this is done because a statement is unclear, and sometimes it is done to grammatically fit your writing.

#### **Example with Unclear Statement**

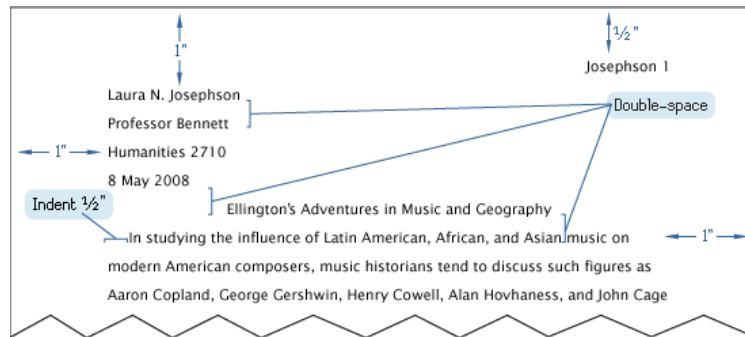
When asked how she earned the money, she responded, “I tried my hardest . . . [b]ut once in a while I just snatch it [her language] back, ‘cause I know that [my] paycheck is coming” (Ripley).

#### **Example with Changes to Match Writing**

Fryer explains, “The typical reform helps girls more that it helps boys. [This] is the opposite . . . [A]ll the results are being driven by the boys. That’s fascinating” (Ripley).

## **Text Formatting: MLA**

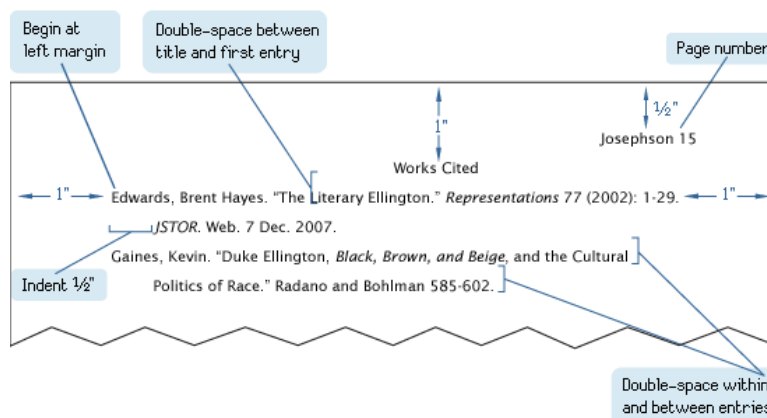
Use a readable font, such as Times New Roman or Arial, size 12. Set your margins at 1” on the top, bottom, and left and right sides. Set your spacing at double spacing throughout the paper. In the header at the right margin, type your last name and the page number. Make sure the page number changes with each page. The heading is as follows: your first and last name, your teacher’s name, the class name, and the date. The date is formatted as day, month, year—no abbreviations or commas. The title is double-spaced from the heading and is centered—no underlining, bolding, etc. Each paragraph thereafter should begin with a ½” tab or indentation.



## Works Cited Page

This is the last page of your paper and includes only sources you have cited in your paper; therefore, it is entitled Works Cited, without any quotation marks, underlining, or bolding. It is centered at the top of the page.

You acknowledge these sources by keying brief parenthetical citations in your text, so the first word of your source on your Works Cited page should be the word in your parenthesis in your text. The entries on this page are also double-spaced and placed in alphabetical order by the first word, and the first line of each entry starts at the margin, and subsequent lines are indented ½” or a tab.



# Parenthetical Citations

**A parenthetical citation** is a method used to give credit to a source within a paper. Parenthetical citations are placed after ANY information that is taken from an outside source (quotation, summary, or paraphrase). Failure to include parenthetical citations equals plagiarism.

**An attribution tag** is a phrase used to credit the speaker of a quote or the source of a piece of information. It will often come at the beginning of a sentence.

EXAMPLE: According to Educational Researcher Thomas Smith, ...

If you are citing a print source, put the author's last name and the page number in parentheses. If you are citing a web-only source, put only the author's last name. If the source has no author, use the first word or two of the article title.

**ONE AUTHOR / Print source**

In fact, "Research shows that after the school began to use uniforms, disciplinary referrals dropped by 56%" (Smith 3).

**ONE AUTHOR / AUTHOR'S NAME ALREADY MENTIONED / Print Source**

According to Educational Researcher Thomas Smith, "Research shows that after the school began to use uniforms, disciplinary referrals dropped by 56%" (3).

**NO AUTHOR / PARAPHRASE / Web-Only Source** - Use the first word of the article title. Put it in quotes.

The King County School Board unanimously approved extension of the school uniform policy in 1996 ("Uniforms").

**MORE THAN ONE AUTHOR / PARAPHRASE / Web-Only Source**

The overall movement toward school uniforms seems to have slowed since its heyday in the 1990's (Barrett and Sanchez).

**SPEAKER of QUOTE and AUTHOR are NOT THE SAME**

According to University of Minnesota Professor Joe Pickering, "Uniforms appear to have a noticeable effect on student behavior" (Smith 4).

**INFORMATION SOURCE for PARAPHRASE and AUTHOR are DIFFERENT**

Researchers at the University of Minnesota found that over 78% of students who attended the Beecher school actually preferred wearing uniforms (Smith 3).

## Works Cited Entries



**Print Publications** (such as magazines and newspapers) must include the following and in this order: author's name (last name first), title of article (in quotation marks), name of periodical (italicized), date of publication (day, month, and year if available), inclusive page numbers, medium of publication (Print), and any other supplementary information.

#### **General Example for Magazines / Newspapers**

Last name, First name. "Article Title." *Title of Publication* Day Month Year: Pgs. Print.

#### **Example Magazine Article**

Smith, MaryLou. "Paying Students." *Business Week* 6 May 2011:93-94. Print.

#### **Example Newspaper Article (with two authors)**

Wood, Robert, and Mary Wilson. "Cash for Grades: Paying Students." *Wall Street Journal*  
4 Dec 2011:C1+. Print.

#### **Example Anonymous Article (no author)**

"Students Working for Prizes." *Economist* 22 Mar. 2012:89, 95. Print.

#### **Example Book**

MacLugh, Tyler. *Incentives for Students*. New York: Levine-Scholastic, 2010. 103-119. Print.

#### **Example Work in an Anthology**

Burns, Robert. "A Red, Red Rose." *England in Literature*. Ed. John Pfordresher, Gladys V. Veidemanis, and Helen McDonnell. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foreman, and Company, 1991. 441. Print.

#### **Example Editors' Writing in an Anthology**

Pfordresher, John, Gladys V. Veidemanis, and Helen McDonnell, ed. "Biography: Robert Burns." *England in Literature*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foreman, and Company, 1991. 438. Print.

### **Web Publications**

Just by the fluid nature of web-exclusive publications, citing them can prove more challenging. Remember, the intention of citing a work both in-text with parenthesis and in your Works Cited page is to allow your reader to verify and further explore your sources, so the goal of any citation is for it to be easily traceable.

This is the usual sequence for a **Web-only citation**: name of author or compiler/editor, title of the work (italicized), title of overall Web site (italicized), version or edition used, publisher or sponsor of site (if not available use *N.p.*), date of publication (day, month, year, as available—if not available, *n.d.*), medium of publication (Web), and the date of access (day, month, year).

The URL is not required unless the reader cannot locate your source without it. If you supply the URL, it immediately follows the date of access, a period, and a space. Enclose the URL with in angle brackets and conclude with a period. If the URL must be divided between two lines, break it only after a single or double slash.

#### **General Example of Web Article**

Last name, First name. "Article Title." *Title of Print Publication*. Title of Online Publication,  
Day Month Year. Web. Date of Access.

#### **Example Web Magazine Article**

Green, Joshua. "The Working Student." *Newsweek*. Newsweek, 16 Sept. 2010. Web.  
18 May 2011.

#### **Example Web Newspaper Article (no author)**

"The Scientists Speak." Editorial. *New York Times*. New York Times, 20 Nov. 2010. Web.  
22 April 2011.

#### **Example Online Encyclopedia Entry**

"Tobacco Industry." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2011. Web.  
15 June 2011.

#### **Example University Home page (with an editor and no date)**

Liu, Alan, ed. Home page. *Voice of the Shuttle*. Dept. of English, U of California, Santa  
Barbara, n.d. Web. 15 May 2011.

#### **Web-Cited Publications with Print Publication Data**

This is when the web publication you are using also has a print publication. This can be when a

web magazine or newspaper has previous or concurrent publication in print. It could also pertain to a book scanned for access in a database. Cite inclusive page numbers from the print publication. If they are not available, use *N. pag.*

### **Example Database Entries**

Berger, Joseph. "Cash for Graduates: Should Students--and Adults--Get Paid Just to Do the Right Thing? New York City Is Giving the Idea a Try." *New York Times Upfront* 14 Jan. 2008: 22+. *General OneFile*. Web. 5 Nov. 2010.

Kelly, David. "Overview of 'A Red, Red Rose.'" *Poetry for Students*. Ed. Mary K. Ruby and Ira Mark Milne. Vol. 8. Detroit: Gale Group, 2000. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 26 Apr. 2011.

Maxwell, Lesli A. "D.C. Program to Pay Students for Attendance, Performance." *Education Week* 28.01 (2008):4. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 5 Nov. 2010.

"Robert Burns (1759-1796)." *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800*. Ed. Jelena O. Krstovic. Vol. 40. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 94-95. *Literature Criticism Online*. Gale. Grand Valley State University. 26 April 2011.

### **Example Magazine in Print and on Web (no author)**

"Black Swans." *The Week* 8 April 2011:13. *The Week*. Web. 26 April 2011.

### **Example Newspaper in Print and on Web**

Thoms, Sue. "West Michigan Doctors Join Effort to Save 'Miracle Cures.'" *The Grand Rapids Press* 20 April 2011:A1-2. *MLive.com*. Michigan Live LLC. Web. 26 April 2011.

\**MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers: Seventh Edition* was the source for this handout.

## **Showing Detail**

Great writers use concrete images (images of real things that can be captured by the five senses) to create a mental picture for the reader. Showing details may come from personal experience, observation, or the imagination. The most important rules for providing showing detail are...

**"Show, don't tell."**

**"Always be specific!! Avoid boring, general statements."**

### **PERSONAL NARRATIVE PARAGRAPH WITH SPECIFIC, SHOWING DETAILS**

Most of my knowledge and love of fishing came from that same man who told me to "Go ahead and jump." Since I can remember, I have always fished. My father probably taught me to fish before I could walk. At first he taught me the basics: tying a swivel to a line, threading the line through the pole, removing hooks from any part of the body that they may enter, how to get a lure out of a tree, why to check the inside of hip boots that have been sitting in the garage all year before putting them on, if the sign says "No Fishing - Violators Will Be Prosecuted," it probably means it, and, probably most importantly, what to do if you have to go to the bathroom while on the boat. Occasionally, he also revealed a hot tip while fishing, such as, "See this lure, son? This one is going to catch the big one. It's only legal in two states, and this isn't one of them."

\* adapted from *Creating Writers* by Vicki Spandel

### **LITERARY ANALYSIS USING SPECIFIC, SHOWING DETAILS**

#### **Weak example - lacks showing detail**

When Gregor does not leave for work, his father becomes angry, but Gregor's commitment to his family does not waver.

#### **Strong example - contains showing detail**

From the moment he wakes up as an insect, Gregor is determined to go to work. Years of working in a job he hates have not lessened his determination to "catch the train" (Kafka 786). While his family is concerned when he does not appear on time, his father's impatience quickly becomes anger. Still seeking to fulfill his obligations, Gregor is "not in the least thinking of deserting his family" (Kafka 789). Even after his father pelts him with apples, Gregor's love does not waver.

## **Specific Language**

Effective writers use **precise, specific language**. This means avoiding vague, general statements at all costs. Vague statements are not specific and tend to be very abstract. In other words, this means that it is very hard to picture what the writer is describing.

**VAGUE STATEMENT**

I felt terrible.

**SPECIFIC STATEMENT**

Chills rattled my body all day, and my throat was tender and scratchy.

**VAGUE STATEMENT**

Television is bad for your mind.

**SPECIFIC SHOWING STATEMENT**

When a teenager watches hours of television, his mind is held hostage in a world of flashing images – images of shiny cars, beautiful women, magical shaving cream fairies, and, of course, the occasional ad for Pepto-Bismol or some other gastro-intestinal product. These images crowd out the young man’s imagination, leaving behind a cluttered mind, less capable of creating on its own.

**VAGUE STATEMENT**

Extra-curricular activities help students learn social skills.

**SPECIFIC SHOWING STATEMENT**

Extra-curricular activities help students learn many social skills: how to work with someone they may not like, how to take criticism from an angry coach, how to pick up a teammate who’s having a bad night, and how to get back up off the turf and fight back after being knocked down.

## Transitional Words and Phrases

A good writer will use **transitional words or phrases** to connect related ideas. These signal phrases help your writing flow smoothly from point to point. It is not necessary to use a

transition at the start of every sentence. However, it's a good idea to work a variety of transitions into your writing.

<b>TRANSITIONS TO USE WHEN ADDING IDEAS:</b>				
<i>also</i>	<i>another</i>	<i>in fact</i>	<i>equally important</i>	<i>moreover</i>
<i>furthermore</i>	<i>additionally</i>	<i>indeed</i>	<i>in addition</i>	
<b>TRANSITIONS TO USE WHEN YOU MAKE A CONTRAST:</b>				
<i>however</i>	<i>nevertheless</i>	<i>although</i>	<i>conversely</i>	
<i>on the contrary</i>	<i>notwithstanding</i>	<i>even though</i>	<i>all the same</i>	
<i>on the other hand</i>	<i>by contrast</i>	<i>nonetheless</i>		
<b>TRANSITIONS TO USE WHEN YOU COMPARE:</b>				
<i>likewise</i>	<i>equally</i>	<i>along the same lines</i>		
<i>similarly</i>	<i>in comparison</i>	<i>in the same way</i>		
<b>TRANSITIONS TO USE WHEN YOU CITE AN EXAMPLE:</b>				
<i>for example</i>	<i>in other words</i>	<i>in fact</i>		
<i>for instance</i>	<i>specifically</i>	<i>after all</i>		
<i>as an illustration</i>	<i>consider</i>			
<b>TRANSITIONS TO USE WHEN YOU SHOW RESULTS:</b>				
<i>accordingly</i>	<i>hence</i>	<i>consequently</i>		
<i>as a result</i>	<i>thus</i>	<i>therefore</i>		
<b>TRANSITIONS TO USE WHEN YOU REINFORCE AN IDEA:</b>				
<i>especially important</i>	<i>above all</i>	<i>most noteworthy</i>		
<i>especially relevant</i>	<i>a significant factor</i>	<i>most of all</i>		
<b>TRANSITIONS TO USE WHEN YOU ELABORATE (expand upon a point):</b>				
<i>actually</i>	<i>by extension</i>	<i>to put it another way</i>		
<i>to put it bluntly</i>	<i>in short</i>	<i>to put it succinctly</i>		
<i>in other words</i>	<i>ultimately</i>			
<b>TRANSITIONS TO USE WHEN CONCEDING A POINT:</b>				
<i>admittedly</i>	<i>of course</i>	<i>although it is true that</i>		
<i>naturally</i>	<i>granted</i>	<i>to be sure</i>		
<b>TRANSITIONS TO USE WHEN YOU CONCLUDE:</b>				
<i>clearly</i>	<i>hence</i>	<i>consequently</i>		
<i>obviously</i>	<i>therefore</i>	<i>thus</i>		
<i>in short</i>	<i>all in all</i>			

# Sentence Templates: Academic Writing

## Introducing What "They Say"

- A number of \_\_\_\_\_ have recently suggested that \_\_\_\_\_.
- It has become common today to dismiss \_\_\_\_\_.
- In their recent work, Y and Z have offered harsh critiques of \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Introducing "Standard Views"**

- Americans today tend to believe that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Conventional wisdom has it that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Common sense seems to dictate that \_\_\_\_\_.
- The standard way of thinking about topic X has it that \_\_\_\_\_.
- It is often said that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Many people assume that \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Introducing Something Implied or Assumed**

- One implication of X's treatment of \_\_\_\_\_ is that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Although X does not say so directly, she apparently assumes that \_\_\_\_\_.
- While they rarely admit as much, \_\_\_\_\_ often take for granted that \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Introducing an Ongoing Debate**

- In discussions of X, one controversial issue has been \_\_\_\_\_. On one hand, \_\_\_\_\_ argues \_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, \_\_\_\_\_ contends \_\_\_\_\_. Others even maintain \_\_\_\_\_. My own view is \_\_\_\_\_.
- When it comes to the topic of \_\_\_\_\_, most of us will readily agree that \_\_\_\_\_. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of \_\_\_\_\_. Whereas some are convinced that \_\_\_\_\_, others maintain that \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Capturing the Author's Thoughts or Actions**

- X acknowledges that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X agrees that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X argues that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X believes that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X denies that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X does not deny that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X claims that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X complains that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X concedes that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X demonstrates that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X deplores the tendency to \_\_\_\_\_.
- X celebrates the fact that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X emphasizes that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X insists that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X observes that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X questions whether \_\_\_\_\_.
- X refutes the claim that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X reminds us that \_\_\_\_\_.

- X reports that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X suggests that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X urges us to \_\_\_\_\_.

### Introducing a Quotation

- X states, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).
- As the prominent philosopher X puts it, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).
- According to X, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).
- X himself writes, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).
- In her book, \_\_\_\_\_, X maintains that " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).
- Writing in the magazine \_\_\_\_\_, X complains that " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).
- In X's view, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).
- X agrees when she writes, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).
- X disagrees when he writes, " \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).
- X complicates matters further when he writes, \_\_\_\_\_ " ( ).

### Explaining a Quotation

- Basically, X is saying \_\_\_\_\_.
- In other words, X believes \_\_\_\_\_.
- In making this comment, X urges us to \_\_\_\_\_.
- X is corroborating the age-old adage that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X's point is that \_\_\_\_\_.
- The essence of X's argument is that \_\_\_\_\_.

### Naming Your Naysayers or Opponents

- Here many *feminists* would probably object that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Of course, *social Darwinists* would certainly take issue with the argument that \_\_\_\_\_.
- *Biologists*, of course, may want to question whether \_\_\_\_\_.
- Nevertheless, *critics of Malcolm X* will probably argue that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Although not all *Christians* think alike, some of them will probably dispute my claim that \_\_\_\_\_.

### Making Concessions While Still Standing Your Ground

- Proponents of X are right to argue that \_\_\_\_\_. But they are exaggerating when they claim that \_\_\_\_\_.



- While it is true that \_\_\_\_\_, it does not necessarily follow that \_\_\_\_\_.
- On the one hand, X is right to say \_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, it is still true that \_\_\_\_\_.

### Disagreeing, with Reasons

- X is mistaken because she overlooks \_\_\_\_\_.
- X's claim that \_\_\_\_\_ rests upon the questionable assumption that \_\_\_\_\_.
- X can't have it both ways. One the one hand, she argues \_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, she also says \_\_\_\_\_.
- By focusing on \_\_\_\_\_, X overlooks the deeper problem of \_\_\_\_\_.

### Establishing Why Your Claims Matter

- X matters because \_\_\_\_\_.
- Although X may seem trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of today's concern over \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ultimately, what is at stake here is \_\_\_\_\_.
- These findings have important consequences for the broader domain of \_\_\_\_\_.
- Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of \_\_\_\_\_, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about \_\_\_\_\_.

\* Adapted from *They Say, I Say* by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein.

## Using Similes and Metaphors

One way to spice up academic writing is to include vivid similes and metaphors.

1. **Simile:** a comparison between two unlike things using like or as

“[T]hose days are ill-defined in my memory, running together and combining like a fresh water-color painting left out in the rain” (Collier 109).

2. **Metaphor:** a direct comparison between two unlike things

“Poverty was the cage in which we were all trapped ... ” (Collier 108).

### Qualities of Effective Similes / Metaphors

1. Compares two things that are not obviously alike
2. Original and clever: not a cliché
3. Vivid, descriptive detail
4. Creates a mental picture for the reader

#### **BAD SIMILE**

She felt used like a used car.

#### **GOOD SIMILE**

She felt used and unwanted, like the two halves of an Oreo cookie after someone has already licked the cream out of them.

#### **BAD SIMILE**

Her date was as nice as a friendly pedestrian.

#### **GOOD SIMILE**

Her date was pleasant enough, but she knew that if her life was like a movie, this guy would be buried in the credits as something like “Second Tall Man.”

#### **BAD SIMILE**

The criminal fell twelve stories, hitting the pavement like a sack of potatoes.

#### **GOOD SIMILE**

The criminal fell twelve stories, hitting the pavement like a Hefty bag filled with vegetable soup.

\* adapted from *Creating Writers* by Vicki Spandel

# Avoiding Wordiness and Redundancy

**Avoid wordiness and redundancy** by taking out unnecessary words or phrases or by taking out any words or phrases that repeat themselves. Try to write with clarity and precision.

WORDY: We've been married for six and a half years or so, give or take a few weeks.

REDUCED SENTENCE: We've been married for about six and a half years.

WORDY: There are three streets that end near my school.

REDUCED SENTENCE: Three streets end near my school.

WORDY: We three girls went skating on the pond, and we all had a wonderful time.

REDUCED SENTENCE: We three girls went skating on the pond and had a wonderful time.

WORDY: We played basketball, and then we played soccer, and then we played baseball.

REDUCED SENTENCE: We played basketball, soccer, and baseball.

REDUNDANT: Joe is going to fix the broken heater, which is not working.

CORRECT: Joe is going to fix the broken heater.

REDUNDANT: My mother she doesn't like brussel sprouts.

CORRECT: My mother doesn't like brussel sprouts.

REDUNDANT: We saw the play *Our Town*. When it was on television, we enjoyed watching it.

CORRECT: We enjoyed watching the play *Our Town* on television.

# Using Active Voice

Generally, a writer should **USE ACTIVE VOICE** instead of passive voice. The writer should also avoid shifting from active to passive voice (or vice versa).

ACTIVE VOICE = the subject is doing something

PASSIVE VOICE = something is being done to the subject

## USING ACTIVE VOICE TO AVOID AN AWKWARD CONSTRUCTION

PASSIVE VOICE = awkward

- The new hit was sung by Beyonce.

(In the above example, the “new hit” is the subject; unfortunately, the “new hit” isn’t doing anything.)

ACTIVE VOICE - Much more direct:

- **Beyonce sang** the new hit.

(In the above example, Beyonce is the subject. She is doing something – singing.)

PASSIVE VOICE = awkward

- Darcy's letter is read by Elizabeth.

ACTIVE VOICE = direct

- **Elizabeth reads** Darcy's letter.

The best strategy to avoid unnecessary use of passive voice is for students to consciously use action verbs and not forms of the verb “to be” whenever possible.\*

## INCORRECTLY SHIFTING VOICE

INCORRECT: Joe fractured his toe; therefore, the race was lost by him.  
(switches from active voice to passive voice)

CORRECT: **Joe fractured** his toe; therefore, **he lost** the race.

INCORRECT: Screams of joy could be heard (*passive*) as the rescue boat approached (*active*).

CORRECT: The **survivors screamed** joyfully (*active*) as the rescue **boat approached** (*active*).

\* adapted from the *Tempe Preparatory Academy Style Guide*

# Avoiding Sexist Language

To avoid the appearance of gender preference in writing, many academic institutions have adopted guidelines regarding sexist language. At CSHS, teachers have the prerogative to establish such guidelines for their classes. However, CSHS endorses the following general principles:

- The use of “he,” “his,” etc. to refer to people in general (masculine and feminine) is acceptable.
- Similarly the use of “man” or “mankind” to refer to humanity as a whole is likewise acceptable.
- Students may use “she,” “her,” etc. if they wish, in place of the masculine.
- Students may also choose to use “he/she,” “his/her,” etc., although this is discouraged in order to avoid awkward writing.
- Whichever format students choose, it should be followed consistently within an assignment.
- The “epicene they” (i.e. “If a person wishes to avoid sexist language, **they** should follow the above directions.”) is **never** acceptable in CSHS assignments as it is grammatically incorrect.
- Some teachers may choose to require students to use the plural form throughout the essay (i.e. If *people* wish to avoid sexist language, *they* should follow the above directions.”)

\* adapted from the Tempe Preparatory Style guide

## Essential Knowledge:

# Punctuation and Sentence Structures

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Subject</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">the subject performs an action</p> <p><i>S</i> Joe purchased a new car.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Verb</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">a word used to show an action or to indicate a state of being</p> <p><i>V</i> Joe <b>purchased</b> a new car.</p> <p><i>V</i> The car <b>is</b> red.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Linking Verbs</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">verbs that indicate a state of being</p> <p>am    is    are    was    were</p> <p>be    been</p> <p><i>V</i> The window <b>is</b> open.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Helping Verbs</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">a verb that works with a main verb to create a verb phrase</p> <p>am    be    have    do    can    may    will</p> <p>is    been    has    does    could    must    shall</p> <p>are    being    had    did    should    might</p> <p>was    would</p> <p>were</p> <p><i>HV    HV    MV</i> Gary <b>should have went</b> to the party.</p> <p>VERB PHRASE = should have went</p>

**Identify the subjects and verbs / verb phrases in the following sentences:**

1. Joe plays the piano.
2. The waitress had cleaned off the table.
3. There were two stuffed animals on the bed.
4. Juan was quite athletic.
5. The girl skipped rope, and she went in for lunch.
6. The custodian was shampooing the carpet, so we could not schedule the room.
7. There had been a table in the corner; however, Jim moved it.
8. While the waitress had cleaned off the table, she had not wiped off the salt shaker, nor had she swept under the booth.

An **independent clause** is a clause containing a subject, a verb, and a complete thought. An independent clause can stand alone as a sentence.

**INDEPENDENT CLAUSE by itself:** *Steve excels in the classroom.*

**INDEPENDENT CLAUSE as part of a sentence:**

Because he studies regularly, *Steve excels in the classroom.*

**TWO INDEPENDENT CLAUSES joined in a compound sentence:**

*Steve is not a great athlete, but he excels in the classroom.*

A **dependent clause** contains a subject and a verb but does not express a complete thought. It cannot stand alone as a sentence.

**DEPENDENT CLAUSE** as part of a sentence:

*Because he studies regularly, Steve excels in the classroom.*

Steve excels in the classroom *because he studies regularly.*

**AAAWWUBBIS** is an acronym to help you remember the basic subordinating conjunctions. An AAWWUBBIS turns a sentence/independent clause into a dependent clause.

After Although As When/Whenever While Until/Unless Because Before If Since

**SENTENCE:** I studied for the test.

**DEPENDENT CLAUSE / FRAGMENT:** Although I studied for the test.

**CORRECT:** Although I studied for the test, I still did poorly.

A **phrase** is a group of words that does not contain its own subject or verb. It cannot stand alone as a sentence.

**PHRASE ALONE / FRAGMENT:** *Hoping that his mother would soon arrive.*

**CORRECT:** *Hoping that his mother would soon arrive,* Steve paced impatiently.

**FANBOYS** is an acronym representing the seven coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so). You can use a comma + one of the FANBOYS to join two sentences together.

- I'd love to go to the dance with you, *but* I'm going to be in Colorado.
- Joe will be on time tomorrow, *or* he will be fired.

A **semicolon** can also be used to join two sentences. You can use the semicolon by itself, or you can use the semicolon with a transition.

- "Every day was a happy day, **and** every night was peaceful." —E.B. White, *Charlotte's Web*
- "Celia says you're in shock, **but** I think you're just lazy." —Nancy Farmer, *The House of the Scorpion*

- Her hair, **brown and flowing**, was held back with a headband.
- Mr. Talk, **our English teacher**, says we're intelligent.

**es in a Series**

- I love to eat **apples, bananas, and grapefruits.**
- **ks** back the chair, **pulls** out his shirt tails, and **adopts** the of a Mississippi Delta evangelist.

**Words**

Explanatory words like *he said* or *she exclaimed*.

”

- If he is becoming more adventurous when he says, "I'd have a look at those rocks down there."

# Sentence Structures

## Two-word Sentence

verb •  
 Gary winced.  
 She nodded.

sentence

Sentence

For  
 And  
 Nor  
 But  
 Or  
 Yet  
 So

## Stop after a Complete Stop

,

er: the house with the sloping roof, the evergreens leaning  
 odpile on the front porch.” –Patricia Reilly Giff, *Pictures of*

## AAAAWWUBBIS Opener

If a sentence starts with an AAAWWUBBIS, it will create a dependent clause or a phrase. A phrase not stand alone but can be used as an “opener.”

## tion after a Complete Stop

”

about Samuel Johnson: “I never knew any man who

rules of this institution are clear. A student is not to have  
 of matter wheter or not that weapon is a toy or a machine

civilization

## ation or Summary

•

June 5: a day shimmering with light, the smell of lilacs  
 d the house where Alyssa was hiding.” –Susan Shreve,

son who didn’t watch his brother.

## ires

sentence •

Sent

interrupter

ence

Sente

n

c

e

Explanatory  
 Words  
 Ex.) He said

Quotation

closer •

lone as a sentence. However, you can use a phrase as a closer.

“Mark slipped away, leaving his empty cereal  
 bowl on the table.” –Nancy Osa, *Cuba 15*

## rase Opener

bedroom window, a weeping willow tree tossed and switched its branches  
 angles on windy nights.” –Wally Lamb, *She’s Come Undone*

he middle of a darkening forest, Laura desperately searched for



# Sentence Structures

## Semicolon Structures

Semicolon used to connect two closely related sentences

Sentence ; sentence •

Sharon writes the newsletter; we distribute it.  
The judge entered the courtroom; everyone rose.

separ

## Colon Structures

Sentence (Drum roll and stop!)

*ti*

s

t

Semicolon and Transitional Word or Phrase used to connect two closely related sentences

Sentence ; sentence •

**Transitional Words**  
therefore  
however  
nevertheless  
hence  
thus  
consequently  
accordingly  
unfortunately  
otherwise  
similarly  
finally

The point of his comment was clear; **however**, he wouldn't admit that it was intended as an insult.  
The evidence was overwhelming; **consequently**, the jury returned a verdict of guilty.

YS.

Sentence (Drum roll and stop!)

*Quotation*

Sentence (Drum roll and stop!)

*explanation or summary*

1. Use a comma after an **opener** (introductory word, phrase, or clause). An opener is a single word or fragment that is located at the start of a sentence and is followed by a comma.

- Furthermore, I find the wording of your proposal to be offensive.
- Broken and bruised, Diaz was ready to call it a day.
- Because she had a sore throat, Janna was unable to sing her solo.

2. Use a comma to set off an **interrupter** (a nonessential phrase or clause) - a word or phrase that interrupts the flow of a sentence. You can tell if something is an interrupter by checking to see whether or not it is essential to the sentence. If you can take it out, and the meaning of the sentence doesn't really change, the interrupter is **nonessential**, and should be set off with commas.

- William, in fact, made the all-state hockey team.
- Timmy, the smallest of the boys, was teasing my sister.

3. Use a comma to set off a **closer** - a fragment that is added to an independent clause (could be a complete sentence) and is preceded by a comma.

- "He was waiting at the bus stop with his arms full of bread when a rocket randomly landed on that spot, *instantly turning both of my uncle's wives into widows and all his children into orphans.*" - Farah Ahmedi

4. Use commas to separate items in a **series**.

- Getting to school on time, doing all my assignments, and behaving well are all things I can do to ensure my success in school.

5. Use a **comma + one of the FANBOYS** to make a compound sentence.

- "God knows you're entitled to your money and plenty of it, but these are poor people."  
- Farah Ahmedi, *The Other Side of the Sky*

6. Use a comma to introduce a **quotation** after explanatory words like *he said* or *she exclaimed*.

- "Wait," demanded Stevie, "you can't leave yet."
- Jerry says, "I want some swimming goggles" (97).

7. Use a comma in **dates** and **addresses**.

- On September 11, 2001, the United States was attacked.
- I lived at 13768 Fruit Ridge Avenue, Kent City, Michigan, for thirteen years.

#### When NOT to use a COMMA...

1. Don't use a comma if the dependent clause (AAAWWUBBIS) comes second.

INCORRECT: The boy knocked on the door, while I was eating.

CORRECT: The boy knocked on the door while I was eating.

2. Don't automatically use a comma just because you see one of the FANBOYS.

INCORRECT: We sat down at the table, and began to talk.

CORRECT: We sat down at the table and began to talk.

3. Don't use a comma to set off an **ESSENTIAL** phrase or clause. Ask yourself this question: if you were to take the phrase or clause out of the sentence, would the basic meaning of the sentence change? If the answer is yes, then the phrase or clause is essential. Do NOT use commas to set off an essential phrase or clause.

INCORRECT: I recognized many of the students, who stood with me, in front of the school.

CORRECT: I recognized many of the students who stood with me in front of the school.

## Semicolons ;

## Colons :

A semicolon is stronger than a comma but weaker than a period. It is used to **link two sentences** with similar ideas, or it can be used to avoid confusion when there are already **too many commas** in a sentence.

A colon indicates a **stop** and then **introduces** something. The colon acts like a drum roll, announcing what will follow.

WHEN TO USE A SEMICOLON	WHEN TO USE A COLON
<p>1. Use a <b>semicolon to join two sentences</b>, creating a compound sentence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with jobs lose focus on their school work; their grades begin to slip and their futures dim.</li> </ul> <p>2. Use a <b>semicolon and a transition</b> (conjunctive adverb) <b>to join two sentences</b>, creating a compound sentence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with jobs lose focus on their school work; <u>hence</u>, their grades begin to slip and their futures dim.</li> </ul> <p>3. Use a semicolon to <b>separate items in a series that contain commas</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My cousin has lived in Detroit, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio; and Las Vegas, Nevada.</li> <li>• Bobby hired Joe, the carpenter; Larry, the mason; and Steve, the electrician.</li> <li>• On this plan, I can eat whole-grain breads, pastas, and tortilla chips; citrus fruits, green vegetables, and some ruffage; and lean meats, such as turkey or fish.</li> </ul>	<p>1. Use a colon after a stop to introduce a <b>list</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our guide told us to bring the following items: a lantern, a sleeping bag, and a tent.</li> </ul> <p>2. Use a colon after a stop to introduce a <b>quotation</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The President's attitude was cold and detached: "We must not let emotion interfere with our mission."</li> </ul> <p>3. Use a colon after a stop to <b>introduce another sentence or a summary</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's obvious why you're tired: you're staying up too late.</li> </ul>

# Apostrophes '

An apostrophe shows **possession** or **contraction**. Make sure you understand how to use apostrophes properly in your writing.

WHEN TO USE AN APOSTROPHE		
<p>1. To show <b>possession</b>, use an 's after any singular noun or any plural word that does not end in s.</p>		
Jimmy's car	the school's furnace	the children's toys

the clock's hands      Arianna's bike      Ross's house

2. To show possession, use an **s'** if a **plural word** ends in s.

- All of the teachers' desks were moved out into the hall. (teachers is plural)
- Some of the drivers' cars were damaged. (drivers is plural)

3. Use an apostrophe in **contractions**.

- she's = she is    hasn't = has not    they're = they are    won't = will not    it's = it is
- We'll succeed.
- They're going to be late.

4. Avoid an apostrophe when using a **possessive pronoun**.

**POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS** (don't need apostrophes)

<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
my	our
your	your
his   her   its	their

1. The car had lost its wheel.
2. Jenna left her book in her locker.
3. The team members left their equipment behind.
4. Whose file is this?

## Common Word Errors

The following are all common word errors that often appear in student writing. Make sure to avoid these errors in your writing.

<b>then</b> = indicates the passage of time <b>than</b> = indicates comparison	First, prime the walls. <b>Then</b> , paint. I'd rather watch <b>than</b> participate.
---	---

<p><b>could've</b> = the contraction form of could have</p> <p>"<b>Could of</b>" is not an expression. It should <b>NEVER</b> be used</p>	<p><b>INCORRECT:</b> Joe could of been a college athlete.</p> <p><b>CORRECT:</b> Joe <b>could've</b> been a college athlete.</p>
<p><b>effect</b> = a result</p> <p><b>affect</b> = to influence or change</p>	<p>The <b>effect</b> of higher gas prices was felt by all.</p> <p>Jesus' teachings have <b>affected</b> Joe's life.</p>
<p><b>your</b> = possessive pronoun</p> <p><b>you're</b> = you are</p>	<p><b>Your</b> car is damaged.</p> <p><b>You're</b> going to be late.</p>
<p><b>its</b> = possessive pronoun</p> <p><b>it's</b> = contraction for it is</p>	<p>The car lost <b>its</b> wheel.</p> <p><b>It's</b> time to go.</p>
<p><b>their</b> = belonging to them</p> <p><b>there</b> = tells a place</p> <p><b>they're</b> = contraction form of they are</p>	<p><b>Their</b> boat is over there.</p> <p><b>There</b> is the man for whom we were looking.</p> <p><b>They're</b> very nice people.</p>
<p><b>weather</b> = climate conditions</p> <p><b>whether</b> = if</p>	<p>The <b>weather</b> is frightful.</p> <p>I don't know <b>whether</b> or not I like him.</p>
<p><b>who's</b> = contraction of who is</p> <p><b>whose</b> = belonging to whom</p>	<p><b>Who's</b> waiting outside?</p> <p><b>Whose</b> signature is this?</p>
<p><b>who</b> = used as a subject (does something)</p> <p><b>whom</b> = used as an object (receives something)</p>	<p><b>Who</b> ordered this pizza?</p> <p>To <b>whom</b> should I deliver this pizza?</p>
<p><b>loose</b> = free or untied</p> <p><b>lose</b> = to fail to win or to misplace</p>	<p>Joe did not want to <b>lose</b> the <b>loose</b> tooth.</p> <p>Did your team win or <b>lose</b>?</p>

<p><b>Who</b> should always be used to refer to people.</p> <p>Don't use that or which to refer to a person. That or which refer to objects / animals.</p>	<p><b>CORRECT:</b> The person <b>who</b> stole the saddle off the ostrich is a criminal.</p> <p><b>INCORRECT:</b> The person <b>that</b> stole the saddle off the ostrich is a criminal.</p>
<p><b>That</b> begins a restrictive and necessary clause. <b>Which</b> begins a nonessential or unrestrictive clause.</p>	<p><b>CORRECT:</b> Michigan is a state that has a budget problem.</p> <p><b>CORRECT:</b> Michigan, which has a budget problem, faces many challenges.</p>
<p>Never use more than one <b>would</b> in a sentence.</p>	<p><b>INCORRECT:</b> If you would have put the banana in your ear, you would not have heard me.</p> <p><b>CORRECT:</b> If you had put the banana in your ear, you would not have heard me.</p>
<p><b>A lot</b> is two words.</p>	<p><b>CORRECT:</b> I have a lot of friends.</p>

\* The last four entries were adapted from the *Tempe Preparatory Style Guide*.

# Avoiding Sentence Fragments

A **sentence fragment** is a group of words that is not a complete sentence. Sometimes, writers will intentionally use fragments in a piece of literature. However, in most formal compositions, we want to avoid unintended sentence fragments.

## COMMON CAUSES OF A SENTENCE FRAGMENT

### 1. Missing subject or verb

FRAGMENT: The quarterback near the ten-yard line.

- What is the quarterback *doing*? (no verb)

FRAGMENT: Shifted into lower gear.

- *Who* shifted into lower gear? (no subject)

### 2. Dependent clause (AAAWWUBBIS) left alone

FRAGMENT: Because I really enjoy football.

CORRECT: Because I really enjoy football, I'm going to purchase Lions' season tickets.

### 3. PHRASE left alone

FRAGMENT: Stranded in the middle of a darkening forest. Laura desperately searched for civilization.

CORRECT: Stranded in the middle of a darkening forest, Laura desperately searched for civilization.

FRAGMENT: Hoping that his mother would soon arrive.

CORRECT: Hoping that his mother would soon arrive, Steve fiddled and paced impatiently.

FRAGMENT: Mark slipped away. Leaving his empty cereal bowl on the table.

CORRECT: Mark slipped away, leaving his empty cereal bowl on the table.

**4.** Generally, try to avoid beginning a sentence with “**And, Which, But, Or, Such as...**” unless you're doing it KNOWINGLY and with a PURPOSE.

FRAGMENT: Steve graciously stopped and waited for Leeann. *Which impressed her mother greatly.*

CORRECT: Steve graciously stopped and waited for Leeann, *which impressed her mother greatly.*

FRAGMENT: Many problems infest our cities. *Such as crime, a crumbling infrastructure, home foreclosures, and poor public services.*

CORRECT: Many problems infest our cities, *such as crime, a crumbling infrastructure, home foreclosures, and poor public services.*

# Avoiding Run-on Sentences

A **run-on** occurs when two sentences are improperly connected together. A common misconception is that a run-on is a really long sentence. That's not necessarily true. A sentence can be really long as long as it is properly punctuated.

Most run-ons actually occur because writers either forget end punctuation or try to use a comma to join two complete sentences.

## HOW YOU GET A RUN-ON

### 1. **Lack of punctuation**

RUN-ON: The contestant hesitated the buzzer sounded.

### 2. **Comma splice** (using a comma improperly to connect two sentences)

RUN-ON: The judge entered the courtroom, everyone rose.

## HOW YOU FIX A RUN-ON

RUN-ON: The judge entered the courtroom, everyone rose.

### 1. **Use a period.**

The judge entered the courtroom. Everyone rose.

### 2. **Comma + FANBOYS**

The judge entered the courtroom, so everyone rose.

### 3. **Semicolon**

The judge entered the courtroom; everyone rose.

### 4. **Semicolon + transition** (conjunctive adverb)

The judge entered the courtroom; thus, everyone rose.

### 5. **Use an AAWWUBBIS.**

When the judge entered the courtroom, everyone rose.



# Parallelism

When we talk about items in a sentence being **parallel**, we mean that each of the items is presented in the same form as the others. It is important to maintain parallelism when listing or comparing things.

INCORRECT: Even before he meets the ghost, Hamlet is sad, restless, and feels that something is wrong.

PARALLEL: Even before he meets the ghost, Hamlet is sad, restless, and suspicious.

INCORRECT: Most kids would rather eat a hot dog, chips, and cookies.

PARALLEL: Most kids would rather eat hot dogs, chips, and cookies.

INCORRECT: We saw her pride in herself and how jealous she was of others.

PARALLEL: We saw her pride in herself and her jealousy of others.

INCORRECT: She likes taking hikes better than to play tennis.

PARALLEL: She likes taking hikes better than playing tennis.

## EXAMPLE USING CLAUSES:

The main results of the university's curriculum reform were that class sizes decreased, more multicultural courses were offered, and students were allowed to choose a pass/fail option.

*\* The three reforms listed are all in parallel form. Each follows a simple subject / verb construction.*

# Subject-Verb Agreement

In any sentence, the subject and verb must agree. This simply means that the correct verb form must be used depending upon whether the subject is singular or plural.

Usually, we don't even have to think about **subject-verb agreement**. If it's wrong, it sounds really wrong. For example, if someone says, "Joe and I is going to the store," that just flat out sounds terrible.

However, there are some circumstances in which subject-verb agreement errors are trickier to notice.

<p><b>A subject and a verb that are separated must agree.</b></p>	<p>The audience of teenagers is about to explode.</p> <p>The mob of people is overtaking the streets.</p> <p>The herd of cows (sleep / sleeps ) in the barn.</p>
<p><b>In either / or situations,</b> the verb must agree with the subject nearest to the verb.</p>	<p>Neither Lisa nor Betty is attending.</p> <p>Either Joe or Gary brings a recorder to every meeting.</p> <p>Neither the owner nor the manager ( help / helps) with inventory.</p> <p>Neither Jan nor his friends (eat / eats) sushi.</p>
<p>If the subject of the sentence is a <b>singular indefinite pronoun</b>, use a singular verb form.</p> <p><b>SINGULAR INDEFINITE PRONOUNS:</b></p> <p>each                    one  no one                anybody  every  everybody  everyone            nobody  someone            either  anyone              neither  somebody</p>	<p>Nobody here knows the answer.</p> <p>Everyone is here.</p> <p>The men are bringing shovels.                    (<i>men is plural</i>)</p> <p>Each of the men is bringing a shovel.            (<i>each is singular</i>)</p> <p>The workers ( is / are ) attending the meeting.</p> <p>Every one of the workers ( is / are ) attending the meeting.</p>

# Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

A **pronoun must agree with its antecedent** in number and gender. The antecedent is the word that the pronoun has replaced.

<p>You have to figure out if the sentence is talking <b>about each person individually or about more than one person.</b></p> <p>Then, you have to use the appropriate pronoun.</p> <p><b>Singular Personal Pronouns</b> he, she, it, his, her, its</p> <p><b>Plural Personal Pronouns</b> they, we, their, our</p>	<p>The student left his bag in Mr. Stark's classroom.</p> <p>When students participate in community service, they learn to be more responsible.</p> <p>An athlete must be in command of _____ body.</p> <p>Athletes must be in command of _____ bodies.</p> <p><b>WRITING TIP:</b> <i>Because his/her sounds awkward, it is recommended that you generally use the plural construction in your writing.</i></p>
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<p><b>Singular indefinite pronouns can cause confusion.</b> That's because all of these pronouns are singular, but we often mistakenly think of them as referring to multiple people.</p> <p><b>SINGULAR INDEFINITE PRONOUNS:</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>each</td> <td>one</td> </tr> <tr> <td>no one</td> <td>anybody</td> </tr> <tr> <td>every</td> <td>everybody</td> </tr> <tr> <td>everyone</td> <td>nobody</td> </tr> <tr> <td>someone</td> <td>either</td> </tr> <tr> <td>anyone</td> <td>neither</td> </tr> <tr> <td>somebody</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	each	one	no one	anybody	every	everybody	everyone	nobody	someone	either	anyone	neither	somebody		<p>All of the members gave _____ opinions on the matter.</p> <p>Each member of the committee gave _____ opinion on the matter.</p> <p>The team members have an obligation to give _____ best.</p> <p>Everybody has an obligation to give _____ best effort.</p> <p>Justin and Ben brought _____ guitars.</p> <p>Neither Justin nor Ben brought _____ guitar.</p> <p>Joe left _____ book in Mr. Stark's room.</p> <p>Somebody left _____ book in Mr. Stark's room.</p>
each	one														
no one	anybody														
every	everybody														
everyone	nobody														
someone	either														
anyone	neither														
somebody															

<p>For simplicity's sake, it is recommended that you try to <b>consistently use the plural form</b> when you're writing a paper. This makes it much easier to avoid errors in subject-verb agreement.</p>	<p><b>CORRECT</b> When students participate in extra-curricular activities, they tend to earn better grades.</p> <p><b>CORRECT, but awkward</b> When a student participates in an extra-curricular activity, he/she tends to earn better grades.</p> <p><b>INCORRECT</b> When a student participates in an extra-curricular activity, they tend to earn better grades.</p>
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# Common Usage Errors

The following usage errors are fairly common in writing. Be careful to avoid them.

<p><b>Avoid Double Negatives.</b></p> <p>A double negative occurs when you use two negative words in the same sentence.</p> <p>NEGATIVE WORDS</p> <p><i>not</i>                <i>nor</i>                <i>neither</i>  <i>never</i>              <i>nobody</i>           <i>nothing</i>  <i>nowhere</i>          <i>wouldn't</i>       <i>didn't</i>  <i>can't</i>               <i>won't</i></p>	<p>INCORRECT: The Michigan defense couldn't do nothing to stop the Michigan State offense.</p> <p>CORRECT: The Michigan defense did nothing to stop the Michigan offense.</p> <p>CORRECT: The Michigan defense couldn't do anything to stop the Michigan State offense.</p>
<p><b>Adjective vs. Adverb</b></p> <p>An adjective modifies a noun or pronoun. An adverb usually modifies a verb.</p> <p>ADJECTIVES                ADVERBS</p> <p>good                        well  bad                            badly  real                            really  sure                            surely</p>	<p>INCORRECT: She doesn't sing so <i>good</i>. He wants that job <i>bad</i>.</p> <p>CORRECT: She doesn't sing so <i>well</i>. He wants that job <i>badly</i>.</p> <p>INCORRECT: This was a <i>real</i> good clambake. He <i>sure</i> doesn't look happy.</p> <p>CORRECT: This was a <i>really</i> good clambake. He <i>surely</i> doesn't look happy.</p>
<p><b>Incorrect Use of a Preposition</b></p> <p>Make sure you're using the correct preposition.</p>	<p>INCORRECT: We had waited for years to make this trip <i>among</i> California.</p> <p>CORRECT: We had waited for years to make this trip <i>through</i> California.</p>

# Awkward or Unclear Constructions

Fix awkward or unclear constructions by

1. rearranging the sentence in active voice so that there's a clear subject and a clear verb,
2. placing any descriptive word or phrase next to the thing it's modifying,
3. and making sure that it's CLEAR to what you are referring.

<p>Make sure that your sentence has a <b>clear subject and verb</b>.</p>	<p>CONFUSED: The security expert discussing the stress of long distance travel with the passenger, pointing to a metal detector.</p> <p><i>Who was pointing? Rearrange the sentence so that there's a clear subject and verb.</i></p> <p>CLEAR: Discussing the stress of long distance travel with the passenger, the security expert pointed to a metal detector.</p>
<p>Make sure to place any <b>descriptive word or phrase NEXT to the word it is modifying</b>. If not, you get a misplaced modifier.</p>	<p>CONFUSED: He packed all of his books and documents into a van, which he was donating to the library.</p> <p>CLEAR: He packed all of his books and documents, which he was donating to the library, into the van.</p> <p>CONFUSED: Having run out of gas, John was late for dinner.</p> <p>CLEAR: Because the car ran out of gas, John was late for dinner.</p> <p>CONFUSED: Last week during the storm, I nearly lost all of my plants.</p> <p>CLEAR: Last week during the storm, I lost nearly all of my plants.</p>
<p>Make sure that the reader can tell <b>to whom or what you are referring</b>.</p>	<p>CONFUSED: To skate like a champion, practice is essential.</p> <p><i>(Practice is essential for whom? It never identifies who would need to practice in order to become a champion.)</i></p> <p>CLEAR: To skate like a champion, an athlete must practice.</p> <p>CONFUSED: During my studies of World War II, I had seen other Japanese soldier's pictures.</p> <p><i>(What does this mean? Are you saying that you've seen a picture of Japanese soldiers or photos that belong to a Japanese soldier?)</i></p> <p>CLEAR: During my studies of World War II, I had seen pictures of other Japanese soldiers.</p>

# Avoiding Illogical Constructions

When constructing sentences, it is extremely important to make sure that your sentences are **logical**. This means that you need to use transitions or conjunctions correctly. You also need to make sure to make logical comparisons and to logically link your subject and verb.

<p>Don't use one of the <b>FANBOYS</b> to make an illogical connection.</p>	<p><b>ILLOGICAL:</b> The real power in the company lies with Mr. Costanza, and he currently owns 55 percent of the stock.</p> <p><b>LOGICAL:</b> The real power in the company lies with Mr. Costanza <b>because</b> he currently owns 55 percent of the stock.</p>
<p>Use a <b>logical transitional word or AAAWWUBBIS</b>.</p>	<p><b>INCORRECT:</b> Because in order to fix the television, we need to hire a repairman.</p> <p><b>CORRECT:</b> In order to fix the television, we need to hire a repairman.</p> <p><b>INCORRECT:</b> Bobby's Automotive Service was the only car repair place in town; however, he did great business.</p> <p><b>CORRECT:</b> Bobby's Automotive Service was the only car repair place in town; therefore, he did great business.</p> <p><b>INCORRECT:</b> These new technologies provide a student with the chance to access a huge amount of information. For example, they also present a student with many distractions.</p> <p><b>CORRECT:</b> These new technologies provide a student with the chance to access a huge amount of information. _____, they also present a student with many distractions.</p> <p><b>INCORRECT:</b> These types of reading experiences are helpful although they help students develop comprehension strategies.</p> <p><b>CORRECT:</b> These types of reading experiences are helpful _____ they help students develop comprehension strategies.</p>

<p>When comparing two things, make sure that the two things are equal. <b>Compare apples to apples.</b></p>	<p>INCORRECT: Her salary was lower than a teacher.</p> <p>CORRECT: Her salary was lower than a teacher's.</p> <p>INCORRECT: The museums in New York are as impressive as any other large city.</p> <p>CORRECT: The museums in New York are as impressive as those in any other large city.</p>
<p>Make sure that your <b>subject and verb fit together logically.</b></p>	<p>INCORRECT: According to one source, the ages of fifteen to twenty are subject to the most peer pressure.</p> <p>(The "ages" are not subject to the most peer pressure, the people of those ages are.)</p> <p>CORRECT: According to one source, people of ages fifteen to twenty are subject to the most peer pressure.</p> <p>INCORRECT: The sheer simplicity of frozen food may soon replace home-cooked meals.</p> <p>("Simplicity" will not replace the meals; frozen food will.)</p> <p>CORRECT: Due to simplicity of preparation, frozen food may soon replace home-cooked meals.</p>

## Terms to Describe Language

(different from tone, language describes the force or quality of the diction, images, details, etc.)

academic	flat	particular
allusive	folksy	pedantic
antiquated	formal	picturesque
archaic	grotesque	plain
artificial	hackneyed	poetic
bombastic	homely	pompous
bookish	homespun	practical
casual	idiomatic	precise
charming	imprecise	pretentious
clear	incisive	provincial
coarse	incongruous	quaint
colloquial	inflated	reasoned
commonplace	informal	refined
concrete	informative	relaxed
connotative	insipid	righteous
conventional	intellectual	rustic
conversational	ironic	satiric
convoluted	jargon	scholarly
crude	learned	sensuous
cultivated	literal	showy
cultured	lyrical	simple
deflated	manipulative	slang
denotative	mature	sophisticated
detached	melodious	specific
dialect	metaphorical	straightforward
didactic	moralistic	subjective
educated	mundane	suggestive
emotional	narrow	symbolic
erudite	objective	tasteless
esoteric	obscure	transparent
euphemistic	obtuse	trite
exact	orderly	unpolished
factual	ordinary	unsophisticated
fanciful	ostentatious	vague
fantastic	overblown	vernacular
figurative	overused	vulgar



# tone = speaker's attitude

## POSITIVE TONE WORDS

admiring	hilarious
adoring	hopeful
affectionate	humorous
appreciative	interested
approving	introspective
bemused	joyful
benevolent	joyful
blithe	laudatory
calm	light
casual	lively
celebratory	mirthful
cheerful	modest
comforting	nostalgic
comic	optimistic
compassionate	passionate
complimentary	placid
conciliatory	playful
confident	poignant
contented	proud
delightful	reassuring
earnest	reflective
ebullient	relaxed
ecstatic	respectful
effusive	reverent
elated	romantic
empathetic	sanguine
encouraging	scholarly
euphoric	self-assured
excited	sentimental
exhilarated	serene
expectant	silly
facetious	sprightly
fervent	straightforward
flippant	sympathetic
forthright	tender
friendly	tranquil
funny	whimsical
gleeful	wistful
gushy	worshipful
happy	zealous

## NEUTRAL (+, -, or neutral)

commanding  
direct  
impartial  
indirect  
meditative  
objective  
questioning  
speculative  
unambiguous  
unconcerned  
understated

## NEGATIVE TONE WORDS

abhorring	hostile
acerbic	impatient
ambiguous	incredulous
ambivalent	indifferent
angry	indignant
annoyed	inflammatory
antagonistic	insecure
anxious	insolent
apathetic	irreverent
apprehensive	lethargic
belligerent	melancholy
bewildered	mischievous
biting	miserable
bitter	mocking
blunt	mournful
bossy	nervous
cold	ominous
conceited	outraged
condescending	paranoid
confused	pathetic
contemptuous	patronizing
curt	pedantic
cynical	pensive
demanding	pessimistic
depressed	pretentious
derisive	psychotic
derogatory	resigned
desolate	reticent
despairing	sarcastic
desperate	sardonic
detached	scornful
diabolic	self-deprecating
disappointed	selfish
disliking	serious
disrespectful	severe
doubtful	sinister
embarrassed	skeptical
enraged	sly
evasive	solemn
fatalistic	somber
fearful	stern
forceful	stolid
foreboding	stressful
frantic	strident
frightened	suspicious
frustrated	tense
furious	threatening
gloomy	tragic
grave	uncertain
greedy	uneasy
grim	unfriendly
harsh	unsympathetic
haughty	upset
holier-than-thou	violent
hopeless	wry

# mood = emotional effect that the text creates for the audience

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## POSITIVE MOOD WORDS

amused	jubilant
awed	liberating
bouncy	light-hearted
calm	loving
cheerful	mellow
chipper	nostalgic
confident	optimistic
contemplative	passionate
content	peaceful
determined	playful
dignified	pleased
dreamy	refreshed
ecstatic	rejuvenated
empowered	relaxed
energetic	relieved
enlightened	satiated
enthralled	satisfied
excited	sentimental
exhilarated	silly
flirty	surprised
giddy	sympathetic
grateful	thankful
harmonious	thoughtful
hopeful	touched
hyper	trustful
idyllic	vivacious
joyous	warm
	welcoming

## NEGATIVE MOOD WORDS

aggravated	insidious
annoyed	intimidated
anxious	irate
apathetic	irritated
apprehensive	jealous
barren	lethargic
brooding	lonely
cold	melancholic
confining	merciless
confused	moody
cranky	morose
crushed	nauseated
cynical	nervous
depressed	nightmarish
desolate	numb
disappointed	overwhelmed
discontented	painful
distressed	pensive
drained	pessimistic
dreary	predatory
embarrassed	rejected
enraged	restless
envious	scared
exhausted	serious
fatalistic	sick
foreboding	somber
frustrated	stressed
futile	suspenseful
gloomy	tense
grumpy	terrifying
haunting	threatening
heartbroken	uncomfortable
hopeless	vengeful
hostile	violent
indifferent	worried
infuriated	

# SOURCES USED WHEN PREPARING THIS ACADEMIC WRITING GUIDE

*Ideas included in this writing guide were inspired by the works cited below.*

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