# Narrative Writing

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1.1 Writing to Discover Your World

Key Information

A personal journal is a place to try out your writing ideas without risk: to explore new ideas, sort out feelings, and follow your thoughts wherever they lead. Try to write on a regular basis, and be sure to date each journal entry.

Journal Writing

Choose one of the following topics and write anything you want about it, just as you would in your journal. Write a paragraph, fragments, poetry, a dialogue, part of an essay, or anything at all.

Today I thought of something I hadn’t thought about for a long time.
Something happened today that really bothered me.
One thing I’d really like to change in my life . . .
I wonder what I’ll be doing five years from now.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
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__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Key Information

A learning log is a kind of journal that helps you get actively involved in your school work. In a learning log you can summarize main ideas, identify difficult concepts, discuss controversial ideas, and evaluate your progress.

Writing to Learn

Select one of the following topics, or choose another topic from a class you may be taking. Then choose one of the techniques for writing to learn (summarizing, starting with a topic and freewriting, continuing to ask questions, setting down your point of view and then arguing against it, or using a graphic organizer), and begin writing about your topic. Continue the process until you feel confident that you fully understand what you are writing about.

- causes of the Civil War
- endangered birds
- mathematics in everyday situations
- the internal combustion engine
- a favorite poem
- how to look at abstract paintings
1.3 Keeping a Commonplace Book

Key Information

A **commonplace book** is a collection of items that have special significance for you: quotations, song lyrics, jokes, photos—anything you find interesting or thought-provoking. Your commonplace book can be a source for writing ideas.

Writing in a Commonplace Book

Think back over phrases or snatches of conversation you have heard, books you have read, movies or television shows you’ve seen, or songs you remember. Write down one or two entries that you would consider putting in a commonplace book. Write at least three annotations on your entries and a sentence telling why you think you remembered that particular item.

---

[Entries and annotations can be written here.]

*Example:* 
- Entry 1: 
- Annotation 1: 
- Annotation 2: 
- Annotation 3: 
- Sentence: "This entry reminded me of a similar situation I experienced."
**A Letter to the Author**

Choose a novel, short story, poem, or play you have read and still remember. Write two paragraphs, as you might in a reader-response journal, addressed to the author. You can ask the author anything you would like to know about the events, the setting, or one of the characters. Alternatively, you can tell the author what you think about some aspect of the work.
WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

1.5 Responding to a Short Story

Key Information

Short stories can strike sympathetic chords in our thinking. A good way to explore your own feelings about a piece of literature is to write a personal response in your reader-response journal. Examine and respond to your thoughts and feelings about a story’s character, setting, plot, and theme in creative ways.

Responding to Plot Elements

We remember and respond to short stories for different reasons. Identify a short story that you have read and liked for each of the following story elements. Explain in a sentence or two why you think you remember the particular element of each story you choose.

Element: character
Story/author ____________________________

______________________________

______________________________

Element: setting
Story/author ____________________________

______________________________

______________________________

Element: plot
Story/author ____________________________

______________________________

______________________________

Element: theme
Story/author ____________________________

______________________________

______________________________
1 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

Personal writing is useful for trying out your writing ideas without risk, for exploring new ideas, sorting out feelings, and following your thoughts wherever they lead.

Confronting Danger

A loud, sulphurous blast of thunder rattled the little truck, then another, and one more. Never had I seen lightning or heard thunder in a snowstorm.

William Least Heat-Moon, *Blue Highways: A Journey into America*

While traveling on Utah 14, William Least Heat-Moon found himself in a dangerous situation. Write about a dangerous situation you have been in. Use prewriting activities to help clarify how you thought and felt at the time, how you handled the situation, and what you learned about yourself. Next, draft your personal narrative and revise it. Edit your story for correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Finally, present your work to your class, to a friend, or to your teacher.
2.1 Stages of the Writing Process

Key Information

During **prewriting** examine your thoughts to discover a topic and a purpose for writing about it. During **drafting** write down your ideas in related sentences and paragraphs to explore your topic and discover a focus. During **revising** rework and clarify the ideas in your draft to make sure they fit your focus. During **editing/proofreading** correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakes. In **publishing/presenting** share your work with the intended audience.

A. Prewriting

Choose one of the following topics:

- I would rather live in the country than in the city.
- I would rather live in the city than in the country.

Jot down several ideas to support your choice.

B. Drafting

Write three related sentences from the ideas you wrote down. Don’t worry about the format or how the sentences sound.

C. Revising

Reread your three sentences above. Revise your sentences to clarify your ideas and make sure the sentences are related, flow smoothly, and fit your focus. Change any words that sound out of place. Use a colored pencil and revise right on your sentences in Part B.

D. Editing/Proofreading

Examine your revised sentences carefully to correct any spelling, grammar, and punctuation mistakes you find. Use a colored pencil for these corrections.

E. Publishing/Presenting

Copy your finished edited sentences in paragraph form below. On the last line, list two places where you could present a piece of writing on this topic. Use a separate sheet of paper if you need additional space.
2.2 Prewriting: Finding a Writing Topic

**Key Information**

In **freewriting** write nonstop for a short time, letting the thoughts spill out of your mind onto the paper. In **brainstorming** work in a group to come up with ideas, accepting all ideas without judging or evaluating them. In **clustering** circle a word or phrase and surround it with ideas that relate to the circled word or phrase.

**A. Freewriting**

Read the following sentence, which was written by Mark Twain.

One of the most striking differences between a cat and a lie is that a cat has only nine lives.

On the lines below, freewrite for a few minutes in response to the sentence, setting down whatever thoughts come into your mind. Then read your freewriting and come up with a topic for a two-page essay. Write your topic on the last line.

---

---

---

---

---

**B. Clustering**

Read the following sentence, which was written by Kahlil Gibran.

You give little when you give of your possessions.

In the space below, create an idea map by clustering. Start with a key word of your choice based on the quotation. On the line at the bottom, write a topic for a two-page essay that comes out of your clustering.
2.3 Prewriting: Identifying Purpose and Audience

**Key Information**

Before you write, you must decide what your **purpose** is. You may want to inform, persuade, narrate, amuse, or describe. You must also determine the **audience** for your writing: What do your readers already know about your topic? What kind of information will interest them?

**A. Identifying Your Purpose**

Choose one of the following topics for an essay:

- A newly proposed state law to require everyone in a car to wear a safety belt
- The most embarrassing moment in your life

Write two possible purposes for writing about the topic you have chosen.

1. _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

**B. Describing the Audience**

For each purpose, describe a possible audience. How much do the readers know about the topic? What information will interest your audience?

1. _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

**C. Writing a First Sentence**

Considering the purpose and audience you have in mind, write the first sentence for each essay.

1. _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
A. Asking Questions

Read the following statement.

During the lifetime of today’s high school students, human beings may very well live in outer space or on other planets.

List three questions for exploring this topic: one factual, one creative, and one personal.

---

B. Researching and Collecting

List four outside sources you could consult in researching a paper on the possibility of humans living in outer space.

---

C. Examining the Parts

Below is the start of an idea tree on the topic Living in Space. The first two branches have been filled in with two main categories of information. Extend the idea tree at least two levels by writing related ideas in several of the boxes branching from the main categories.
A. Preparing for the Interview

Think of someone—living or dead, real or fictional—you’d like to interview. Decide what your purpose is for the interview. Think about how you would prepare for the interview. What would you read, listen to, or watch? What equipment would you need to take to the interview?

Person ____________________________________________________________________________

Purpose ___________________________________________________________________________

Background information desired _______________________________________________________

Research sources ____________________________________________________________________

Other preparation ____________________________________________________________________

B. Asking Questions

List five interview questions you would prepare in advance.

1. _________________________________________________________________________________

2. _________________________________________________________________________________

3. _________________________________________________________________________________

4. _________________________________________________________________________________

5. _________________________________________________________________________________
2.6  Drafting: Writing a Paragraph

Key Information

A paragraph is a group of related sentences about a single main idea. All the details in the paragraph must support and clarify the main idea, which may be stated in a topic sentence. Details in a paragraph can be concrete details, examples, incidents, facts or statistics, or reasons.

Writing a Paragraph

Choose two of the following topic sentences for paragraphs. First spend a few minutes prewriting about each topic. Then write one paragraph containing each topic sentence you have chosen. Support your topic sentences with at least two kinds of supporting details.

- Why have horror movies always been popular?
- Variety in plant and animal life as well as in human use distinguishes America’s national parks.
- Getting ready for school in the morning at my house requires nerves of steel.
- High school students should have after-school jobs.

Paragraph 1


Paragraph 2


2.7 Drafting: Organizing a Paragraph

**Key Information**

The details in a paragraph can be organized to support the idea in the topic sentence in different ways. **Spatial order** arranges details according to their physical relationships. **Chronological order** places events in time order. **Order of importance** gives details from least important to most important. **Cause-and-effect order** explains how an event causes or results from other events. **Compare-and-contrast order** shows similarities and differences between items. Different **transition words** and phrases link the ideas depending on the choice of organizational pattern.

**A. Kinds of Order**

Here are five topic sentences for paragraphs. Match each one with the kind of order—spatial (S), chronological (C), importance (I), cause and effect (CE), and compare and contrast (CC)—that would be most appropriate for organizing the paragraph that the topic sentence introduces.

1. Some people like to watch football, while others prefer basketball.
2. Robin's jaw dropped when she looked around the luxurious room.
3. Fellow students, here are the main reasons that you should elect me class president.
4. I still can't believe that the dog was finally able to open the refrigerator door!
5. Because of the rugged geography of the Cumberland Plateau, the people of eastern Kentucky have maintained many old traditions.

**B. Organizing Your Paragraph**

Choose one of the topic sentences in Part A and write a paragraph using this sentence as the topic sentence. Make up a variety of supporting details. Organize your paragraph using the type of order you suggested in Part A. Use appropriate transition words and phrases to link the sentences in your paragraph.
2.8 Revising: Checking Unity and Coherence

Key Information
Revising your writing begins with evaluating your first draft and asking yourself how to improve its unity and coherence. Are all the sentences related to the topic sentence? Is the paragraph organized appropriately?

A. Evaluating a Draft
Here is a draft of a paragraph from an essay. Make any revisions you think are needed right on the draft, addressing such issues as the following: Does the topic sentence say what the author wants it to say? Do all the sentences support the topic sentence appropriately? Are the sentences in a logical order? Do transitions link the ideas?

Immigrants needed warm bedding. Women learned quilting. Women had time during long frontier evenings to piece together scraps of carefully chosen wool, linen, and cotton. Synthetics such as nylon and rayon had not been invented. Traditional patterns such as the Ohio Star, Baby Blocks, and Log Cabin were popular. The quilt was a way for women to express their artistic feelings as well as create a valuable and useful item for the home. Quilting is joining pieces of fabric together in different patterns with layers of material between. Quilting came to North America with the European settlers. Crazy quilts had no pattern at all, just odd shapes pieced together at the quilter’s whim. We can all admire the skill and imagination of these frontier women as we enjoy their handiwork today in museums.

B. Rewriting the Revised Paragraph
Rewrite the revised paragraph below, incorporating all your changes.
A. Correcting Sentence Errors

Edit the following paragraph right on this page, correcting all six sentence errors.

Henry Ford’s famous Model T, the first automobile to be manufactured on a factory assembly line. Before the Model T, all cars was made by hand, this made them extremely expensive, as well as time-consuming, to produce. Ford’s methods of mass production cut the time and the cost and the expense of manufacturing an automobile. Them new production techniques made owning a car financially possible for many Americans. Even though they could afford a car, you still couldn’t choose a color. “They can have it in any color they want,” said Henry Ford, “as long as it’s black!”

B. Proofreading

Proofread the following paragraph. Use the proofreading symbols to correct all ten errors in spelling and mechanics.

One of the worlds most romantic and beatiful buildings must be the Taj Mahal in Agra, India. The name means “crown of buildings” in urdu It was built by Shah Jahan, who lived from 1628 to 1658 as a tomb for his beloved wife. The huge, marble, building sits on the riverbank, forever a monument to Jahans love for his wife. The Taj Mahal is a magnet for tourist’s form all over the world.
A. Places to Publish

Here are several ideas for essays, stories, reports, and other writings. For each one, identify an appropriate audience and suggest one or more places for sharing the writing with the targeted audience.

1. a review of a student-written play
   ____________________________________________________________

2. an original short story
   ____________________________________________________________

3. a description of some new software programs
   ____________________________________________________________

4. an editorial about the student dress code
   ____________________________________________________________

5. an essay on world politics from a student’s perspective
   ____________________________________________________________

B. Writing for an Audience

Choose one of the above topics and prewrite about it. When you are satisfied with the ideas you have generated, write a first paragraph, keeping in mind the audience and the place where you decided to publish it.

Topic: ____________________ Audience: _________________ Medium: ______________________
Understanding Point of View

In this first-person excerpt, the narrator has murdered his landlord and buried him under the floorboards. The police are investigating. Rewrite the excerpt from another point of view. You may present the scene from the third-person limited or third-person omniscient point of view. Or you may take the first-person perspective of one of the police officers. Use as many of the same details as possible.

Key Information

Point of view in literature is defined by the role of the narrator. In first-person point of view, the narrator is one of the characters, and the reader knows only what that character knows. Third-person limited places the narrator in the role of observer, but lets the reader in on only one character’s thoughts and feelings. In third-person omniscient the story is told by an observer who sees all the action and knows the thoughts and feelings of all the characters.

Understanding Point of View

In this first-person excerpt, the narrator has murdered his landlord and buried him under the floorboards. The police are investigating. Rewrite the excerpt from another point of view. You may present the scene from the third-person limited or third-person omniscient point of view. Or you may take the first-person perspective of one of the police officers. Use as many of the same details as possible.

Literature Model

. . . the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder—louder—louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty, God!—no, no! They heard!—they suspected!—they knew!—they were making a mockery of my horror! . . . But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die!—and now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder!

“Villains!” I shrieked, “dissemble no more! I admit the deed!—tear up the planks! here, here!—it is the beating of his hideous heart!”

Edgar Allan Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart”
Key Information

When you write about a person who is part of your personal history, you want to create a clear picture of that person in your reader’s mind. You can do this by including details of appearance, personality, activities, and family role. These details should work together to support a thesis statement or topic sentence about the person.

A. Prewriting

Alex Haley describes older members of his extended family so vividly that we feel we know them. Your assignment to write about a part of your personal history will probably bring you into contact, either personally or by letter, with older members of your own extended family. Choose one such person—a grandparent, an aunt or uncle, or an older cousin. Do some prewriting in the space provided to generate details about this relative.

Relationship: _______________________________________________________________________
Appearance: _______________________________________________________________________
Personality: _______________________________________________________________________
Activities: _________________________________________________________________________
Family role: _______________________________________________________________________

B. Drafting a Character Sketch

Use the details you generated in Part A to draft a one-paragraph character sketch on a separate sheet of paper.

C. Revising and Editing

Revise your character sketch for unity and coherence. Then edit the sentences to correct any spelling, grammar, or punctuation mistakes. You may want to include the sketch in a piece of writing about your personal history.
A. Focusing on Organization

The following are possible topic sentences for descriptive paragraphs. Indicate whether the
details used to develop each sentence would be better organized by spatial order (S) or
according to order of importance (I).

1. The young candidate was a fascinating person.
2. The guide began the tour of the historical house.
3. So this is where I’ll be spending three hours a day for the next two years, I thought.
4. Richard thought back over the mysterious events of the day.

B. Writing a Descriptive Paragraph

Now choose one of the topic sentences from Part A and write a descriptive paragraph using the
type of organization you considered more appropriate. Be sure to include vivid language and
transitions to help the reader follow the organization. Remember that the position of your
topic sentence depends upon the effect you want your description to make.
3.2 Observing and Taking Notes

Key Information

Sensory details help re-create a scene in words. The best way to generate these descriptive details is through direct observation and note taking.

A. Taking Notes

Choose one of the following scenes or another that you especially enjoy: a circus or carnival, a beach or swimming pool, a bakery or delicatessen, a forest or mountain area. Revisit the location in person or through memory. Take notes describing what you see, hear, smell, feel, and taste.

Sight
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Sound
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Smell
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Touch
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Taste
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

B. Using Your Notes to Write a Description

Now use your notes to write a description of the scene. Organize the sensory details into a paragraph that evokes a strong sense of place. Share your writing with a friend who may not be familiar with the location and ask if he or she can describe the mood of the place.

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
3.3 Using Energetic Verbs

Key Information

Using exact, vivid, action-packed verbs instead of dull, less descriptive ones is one way to energize your writing. Energetic verbs call up vivid word pictures in your reader’s mind. If you need help, you can use a thesaurus to find synonyms for verbs.

A. Replacing Dull Verbs

Read the following paragraph. Above each underlined verb, write a vivid action verb that describes the activity more precisely and creates a stronger mental image in the reader’s mind.

As soon as we got off the bus, we were met by at least a dozen people, pushing and shoving to get near us. The bazaar was the most colorful place I’d ever seen. Thousands of stalls filled the narrow street, and the merchants sold their wares. As we went through the narrow rows, we were struck by the incredible sights, sounds, and smells of Bombay. My friend Roshan and I stopped at a stall where birds sang gaily and small, strange animals in cages made noise constantly. The old man in the stall looked at us, smiled, and laughed.

B. Using Vivid Action Verbs

Write a descriptive paragraph that builds on the piece above. You may choose to describe further the scene at the old man’s stall. Or you may want to describe where Roshan and the narrator wander after leaving the man’s stall. In any case use specific, action-packed verbs to create a vivid word picture of the scene.
3.4 Describing from Vantage Points

**Key Information**

A writer always observes and describes a scene from a particular location, or **vantage point**. An author writing from a **stationary vantage point** views a scene from a fixed focus and usually organizes the description spatially. An author writing from a **moving vantage point** describes the scenery as it unfolds and usually organizes the description chronologically.

- **A. Writing a Description from a Stationary Vantage Point**

Almost everyone has fed a dog, cat, bird, fish, or other animal. But have you ever wondered what this action looks like to the animal? Write a paragraph describing what being fed looks like from the animal’s stationary vantage point.

- **B. Writing a Description from a Moving Vantage Point**

Imagine you have been asked to describe your route to school each morning. A new student living on your block will use your description to walk to school. In a paragraph describe what you see as you travel along the route. Use vivid and precise details that will help the student identify the houses, buildings, and streets on the route and find her way to school.
A. Identifying Images in Poetry

Read the lines below from “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” a famous poem by English poet William Wordsworth. Then note the specific images that Wordsworth uses to create word pictures. Make notes in the space provided.

B. Responding to Images in Poetry

Now respond to an image in this poem. You may use one of the following techniques to express your feelings, thoughts, and insights, but feel free to use another, if you wish: freewriting, writing a poem based on a particular image, or drawing a picture.
A. Understanding Setting

Read each of the following excerpts. Then determine whether the author has used setting to create mood, affect action, or develop character.

I entered, therefore, and found myself in a pretty large room, well lighted with wax candles. The strangest lady I have ever seen was dressed in rich materials—satin, and lace, and silks. I saw that everything within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its luster, and was faded and yellow. A clock in the room had stopped at twenty minutes to nine.

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

If you walk along the main street on an August afternoon, there is nothing whatsoever to do. The largest building, in the very center of town, is boarded up completely and leans so far to the right that it seems bound to collapse at any minute. The house is very old. There is about it a curious, cracked look that is very puzzling. The building is completely deserted.

Carson McCullers, *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe*

The low, undulating Danish landscape was silent and serene, mysteriously wide-awake in the hour before sunrise. There was not a cloud in the pale sky, not a shadow along the dim, pearly fields, hills and woods. The mist was lifting from the valleys and hollows, the air was cool, the grass and the foliage dripping wet with morning-dew. A human race had lived on this land for a thousand years, had been formed by its soil and weather, and had marked it with its thoughts, so that now no one could tell where the existence of the one ceased and the other began.

Isak Dinesen, *Sorrow-Acre*

B. Analyzing Setting

Now choose one of the excerpts above and analyze the author’s use of setting. Begin your paragraph by stating what role setting plays in the excerpt, and then cite specific evidence to support your point.
3 Writing Process in Action

**Key Information**

When you describe a place, you try to make your readers see and experience it. In *The Solace of Open Spaces* Gretel Ehrlich uses at least three kinds of details to describe Wyoming: facts and statistics, mixed imagery—metaphors, similes, and images—and anecdotes. These details help convey Wyoming’s sense of place.

**Describing a Favorite Place**

Now think about your favorite place: a particular room, a park, a vacation spot, or your own community. Then write a letter describing the place to a friend who has never been there. Use the steps in the writing process to convey the location’s sense of place.
4.1 Narrating a Personal Experience

Key Information

In writing a narrative of a personal experience, you relate a real-life story in a way that allows readers to share your memory of the experience. Use prewriting to organize your thoughts, enliven your narrative with specific facts and details, and use vivid language to communicate your feelings. Tell in a conclusion what your experience means to you.

A. Recalling Your Experience

Select a memory of an experience you have had and list as many related events as you can think of. If necessary, refer to the personal map you prepared as a journal activity on page 171 in your textbook.

B. Ordering the Events

Number in chronological order the events you listed in Part A.

C. Describing the Events

Beside each event named in Part A, list specific verbs, concrete nouns, and vivid, precise adjectives and adverbs that tell exactly what happened, how things looked, how people acted, and what you saw, heard, or did.

D. Describing Your Experience

Write a sentence or two expressing your thoughts and feelings about the experience and why you remember it as you do. Tell what the experience means to you.
Finding Ideas for Stories

The following activities will help you find ideas for your own stories. For each set of answers, arrive at a one-sentence story idea.

1. Describe an interesting complication. _________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

2. Describe some characters to face the complication. ______________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

3. Describe a setting. __________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

4. Choose a point of view. __________________________________________________________________
   Story idea: ______________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

5. Describe a main character. __________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

6. Confront the character with a problem. _______________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

7. Tell how the character will react to the problem. _______________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

8. Tell how the character will resolve the problem. _________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________
   Story idea: ______________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

Key Information

Fictional narratives, or stories, answer the question, what happened? The events form the plot, which centers around a complication and a resolution. The events happen to characters in a particular time and place, the setting. The story is told from a point of view.
A. Outlining a Story

Outline an original short story by filling in the following chart.

1. Introduce a main character.
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. Introduce a problem (complication, or conflict).
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

3. List three actions or events in chronological order.
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

4. Tell the climax.
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

5. Tell the final outcome.
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

B. Writing Your Opening

Using your outline, write the opening paragraph of the short story. Try to make it as appealing and interesting to the reader as you can.

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
4.4 Writing Dialogue

Key Information

Dialogue, a series of direct quotations, allows characters in a story to speak for themselves. The purpose of dialogue can be to reveal character, to foreshadow future events, or to help move the narrative forward in some way. Effective dialogue sounds like real conversation, is appropriate for each character, and uses clear tag lines.

Writing an Original Dialogue

Imagine that you and your best friend are attending a basketball game in a rival school’s gymnasium. Seated behind you in the bleachers is an enthusiastic fan of the opposing team. During the break at halftime, the three of you begin a conversation. Create a dialogue that includes or reveals each of the following:

A. one or more characters’ personalities
B. warning of some trouble or complication coming
C. progress in moving the plot along

Your dialogue should sound like real conversation. Be sure to include clear tag lines so your readers will be able to follow the conversation easily. Label the part of your dialogue that fulfill each purpose.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Write your dialogue here:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Label the part of your dialogue that fulfill each purpose:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

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4.5 Theme and Anecdote

Key Information

A **theme**, or main idea, is a general insight about life or people that is often stated in nonfiction and implied in fiction. An **anecdote** is a brief story that makes a point.

A. Recognizing Themes

Some, but not all, of the following items make statements about people or about life in general. For each item that states such a general insight that might be the theme of a work of fiction or nonfiction, write **theme** in the blank.

1. People working together can overcome difficult problems.
2. No matter how hard you try, you can’t control everything.
3. It was the most exciting day of my life.
4. Going through difficulties can make a person stronger.
5. A school can begin a recycling program for the community.
6. Unfair things people do can often come back to haunt them.

B. Freewriting and Anecdotes

Choose one of the statements you identified as a theme above. Freewrite on how you could communicate this theme in an anecdote from your own life.

Name ..............................................................................................................

Class ..............................................................................................

Date ................................................

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Writing a Summary

Write a summary of the following short story excerpt. Include as many elements of a full plot summary as you can discover from the available information.

Key Information

A plot summary is a shortened version of the action of a story or novel. A full plot summary usually includes information about the main characters, setting, point of view, and the main character's problem, as well as the main events, climax, and conclusion. Sometimes you may want to write a summary of only a portion of a work. In such a case, your summary may include as many of the elements of a full plot summary as the excerpt reveals.

Writing a Summary

Write a summary of the following short story excerpt. Include as many elements of a full plot summary as you can discover from the available information.

Literature Model

Their house alone would not have made you think there was anything so awfully wrong with Mr. Dorset or his old-maid sister. But certain things about the way both of them dressed had, for a long time, annoyed and disturbed everyone. We used to see them together at the grocery store, for instance, or even in one of the big department stores downtown, wearing their bedroom slippers. Looking more closely, we would sometimes see the cuff of a pajama top or the hem of a hitched-up nightgown showing from underneath their ordinary daytime clothes. Such slovenliness in one's neighbors is so unpleasant that even husbands and wives in West Vesey Place, which was the street where the Dorsets lived, had got so they didn't like to joke about it with each other . . .

Peter Taylor, “Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time”
4.7 Analyzing Conflict

Key Information

Conflict in a story is a struggle between opposing forces. The conflict can be between people, or between people and nature, society, or things, or it can be internal. Conflict can create suspense, motivate characters, and teach a lesson at the conclusion.

Preparing a Conflict Analysis

Think of a short story you have recently read and enjoyed. Then fill in the following conflict questionnaire.

Story ____________________________

Author ____________________________

1. What are the opposing forces in the conflict?

_______________________________________________________________________________

2. Is the conflict external, internal, or both?

_______________________________________________________________________________

3. How does the writer create and maintain interest in the conflict?

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

4. How is the conflict resolved?

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

5. What new understanding do the characters reach as a result of the conflict and its resolution? What new understanding do the readers discover?

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

6. How does the conflict help the author develop the story’s theme?

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________
Grand Openings

Imagine that you are an English teacher preparing a writing assignment for your students. The assignment involves having the students write snappy, attention-getting introductions to stories that will be continued in a later lesson. Develop a lead paragraph to serve as an example for the lesson.

Begin by choosing a personal memory or some other topic or incident you feel is interesting and could be developed into a longer piece of writing. Establish the characters, the setting, the problem or complication, and the source of conflict. Use this information in an opening paragraph that introduces your characters, the setting, and at least one other element. Since the story is to be continued later, you don’t have to reveal all the details right away. Decide which of these three methods you want to use for your grand opening:

1. Tell an anecdote
2. Start from the beginning
3. Start with the problem

Your opening should set the mood and give your readers a hint of something to come. Write your sample lead paragraph in the space below. You may wish to do some prewriting on a separate sheet of paper.

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5.1 Writing to Inform and Explain

Key Information

Expository writing, often in the form of an essay, informs or explains. It usually consists of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Six kinds of expository writing are process explanation, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, definition, classification, and problem and solution.

A. Six Kinds of Expository Writing

For the six topics listed below, decide which kind of expository writing would be most appropriate. In the blank write PE for process explanation, CE for cause and effect, CC for comparison and contrast, D for definition, C for classification, and PS for problem and solution.

____ 1. The many different languages of southern Africa
____ 2. Differences between acting on stage and in movies
____ 3. What is slavery?
____ 4. How can your school cut down on littering?
____ 5. How is a book printed?
____ 6. The effects of burning fossil fuels on global warming

B. Writing a Thesis Sentence

Choose two of the above essay topics. For each one, write a thesis statement that summarizes the purpose of an essay on the topic.

Topic: __________________________________________________________
Thesis statement: __________________________________________________

Topic: __________________________________________________________
Thesis statement: __________________________________________________


A. Identifying Your Audience

Imagine that you are planning to write an essay on one of the topics listed here. Identify the interest level, background knowledge, and type of vocabulary appropriate for presenting the topic to each audience named on the chart below.

- What my friends and I talk about at parties
- What I learned when I dissected an earthworm
- Popular video games
- The newly-elected student council president
- How my favorite singer compares to a popular 1960s singer
- My career plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Interest Level</th>
<th>Background Knowledge</th>
<th>Type of Vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your best friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your grandfather</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers of the school newsletter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A new student from Argentina, Ethiopia, or Thailand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your science teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your four-year-old cousin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Reaching Your Audience

Prewrite about how you would write an essay on this topic for two different audiences. Choose any two of the audiences identified on the chart in Part A. In your prewriting, include the kinds of examples, facts and statistics, comparisons, or quotations you might use.

Audience: __________________________________________________________

Audience: __________________________________________________________
5.3 Writing About a Process

Key Information
There are six steps to explaining a process. To investigate, watch someone perform the process, do it yourself, ask questions about it, or read about it. To observe, identify the main parts of the process. To arrange, put the steps of the process in chronological order. To elaborate, decide what background information, examples, and definitions your audience will need. To polish, add appropriate transitions. To review, check that your explanation is complete, clear, and accurate. You may want to revise your explanation, keeping your audience in mind.

Writing a Rough Draft About a Process
Write a rough draft of a paragraph describing one of the processes listed below. Assume that your reader has some knowledge but has never seen the actual process. First, mentally review each of the six steps of explaining your process. Then begin your rough draft.

- ironing a shirt
- making your favorite triple-decker sandwich
5.4 Writing About Cause and Effect

**Key Information**

A **cause-and-effect** explanation is expository writing that explains how an event causes or is caused by other events. You can organize cause-and-effect writing by either explaining the cause and proceeding to the effects or by examining the effects and then explaining what caused them. Remember that one cause can have several effects, and one effect can result from several causes.

**A. Exploring Cause-and-Effect Relationships**

Your principal has just announced that Woodson High—your high school—has too many students. Half the students will be sent to another, much smaller school in the district—Bates High School. Put yourself in the position of a student at either one of the schools. List several effects you think may result from going to a much smaller high school or from having enrollment at your small school increase drastically. Will programs be cut? Added? Will you meet fewer people? More people? Will you have a better chance to play on the basketball team or in the orchestra?

I am a student at _____________________ High School.

**B. Writing a Cause-and-Effect Paragraph**

Now write a paragraph discussing some of the effects from Part A. Examine the effects first and then explain what you think caused them. Include how effects are related.
A. Using Graphic Organizers for Prewriting

Use a Venn diagram or comparison frame to organize graphically a comparison and contrast of one of the following topics.

- two of my best friends
- dogs and cats
- skills needed for studying mathematics and skills needed for studying art
- the last year of junior high or middle school and the first year of high school

B. Comparing and Contrasting

Using the information from your graphic organizer, write a paragraph comparing and contrasting your two subjects.
5.6 Writing Effective Definitions

Key Information

A formal definition places a word or subject in a general category and examines how it differs from other words in its category. Personal definitions add to the formal definition what the term means to the writer personally. Readers find out how the term makes the writer feel, what associations it recalls, and how the writer's meaning may differ from other meanings.

A. Creating a Word Map

Create a word map for one of the following words or terms. Refer to page 241 of your textbook for a sample word map.

- water
- baseball glove
- prairie
- sleet
- apartment

B. Writing a Definition

Use your word map to help you write a paragraph that defines your word or term. Include your personal definition if appropriate.

____________________________________________________________________
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5.7 Using Graphs in Exposition

Key Information

When presenting statistics in expository writing, use graphs to help your readers visualize the information. Three types of graphs, each suited for showing different kinds of information, are the **line graph**, the **bar graph**, and the **pie graph**.

A. Picking the Right Graph

For each of the three kinds of information below, tell which kind of graph would illustrate it most effectively. In the blank, write **line**, **bar**, or **pie** to identify your choice of the most effective graph.

_____ 1. The hair color (red, brown, blond, or black) of all the people in your English class
_____ 2. The number of wins of your favorite sports team during the last five seasons
_____ 3. The five favorite movies of the people in your school compared to the five favorites of their parents

B. Using Graphs in Exposition

Choose one kind of information from Part A, make up some statistics, and illustrate them on an effective graph. Give your graph an appropriate title to tell what information you are presenting. Then on a separate sheet of paper write an expository paragraph that helps your readers interpret the statistical information. The graph and the text should match.
5.8 Writing a News Article

Key Information

The primary purpose of a news article is to inform. Most of the details are facts, not opinions. The goal of a news article is to answer the six basic questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? The lead of a news article summarizes the article; the details appear later in the body of the article.

A. Answering the Six Basic Questions

Choose an event that took place at your home on one of the following occasions: the Fourth of July, New Year’s Eve, Halloween, Thanksgiving, or your last birthday. (If you prefer you may make up an event.) Fill out the five Ws and an H questionnaire for your choice.

1. Who was there? Who caused the action? Who else was affected?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

2. What happened? What was the action? What were the reactions?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

3. When did it take place?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

4. Where did it happen? What was the scene like?

_______________________________________________________________________________

5. Why did it happen? Why was it significant?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

6. How did it happen? How did it affect people?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

B. Writing a News Article

Use your answers to the questionnaire above to write the first two paragraphs of a human interest article on the event for your community newspaper. Answer as many of the six basic questions in your lead as you can. For additional space, use another sheet of paper.

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

The primary purpose of a news article is to inform. Most of the details are facts, not opinions. The goal of a news article is to answer the six basic questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? The lead of a news article summarizes the article; the details appear later in the body of the article.
A. Focusing on Key Words

Underline the key word in each of the following essay items and explain the strategy you would use to write your response.

1. Define the term *desktop publishing*.

2. Discuss the importance of software selection.

3. Compare desktop publishing with traditional publishing methods.

4. Analyze the most significant graphics capability of most desktop publishing systems.

5. Describe the software features necessary to produce a 100-page book with one color besides black.

6. Summarize the advantages of desktop publishing.

B. Budgeting Your Time

Pretend that the six questions in Part A make up an essay test that you are taking. The first two questions are worth ten points each. All the others are worth twenty points each. After previewing your test, you have fifty minutes of class time. Explain how you would use the time from 1:10 to 2:00.
A literary analysis can compare and contrast theme, style, tone, setting, plot, and characters. From these features identify a limited number of points on which to examine the literary works. State your main idea in an introductory paragraph. Shape your writing with information from your reading. Use quotations but only when they can effectively illustrate a point. Sum up your main idea in a concluding sentence or two.

A. Identifying Similarities and Differences

Compare and contrast two works of literature you have read this year. Select as your focus whatever elements of literature are important in these works. List several differences and similarities of the works based on the focus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements Considered</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work A:</td>
<td>Work B:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Writing an Introductory Paragraph

Write an introductory paragraph of a comparison-contrast essay, based on the similarities and differences you listed in Part A. State your focus and main idea in this paragraph.

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________
Writing an Expository Essay

Write a two- or three-paragraph expository essay for a new student on how to get lunch in the school cafeteria. Be sure to include a thesis statement. Think of the way Sue Hubbell includes anecdotes and humor in her essay on bees. Include your own anecdotes, humorous tales, and anything else you think will make your essay lively and interesting, as well as useful to your reader. Remember to use the following five steps: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing/proof-reading, and publishing/presenting. Use additional paper as necessary.
Taking Sides

Listed below are several topics. Choose one, decide how you feel about the issue, and write two persuasive paragraphs. Try to persuade your readers to adopt your opinion. In the first paragraph, appeal to reason; in the other, appeal to emotion. Assume that your classmates are your audience.

1. Students should be allowed to leave campus during the day.
2. Skateboarding is too dangerous to be allowed in public places.
3. The government should place higher taxes on gasoline to limit consumption and save energy.

Reason

Emotion
### 6.2 Evidence in Persuasive Writing

#### Key Information

Persuasive writing needs **evidence**—facts and informed opinions—for support. Your argument, the position you take and the evidence you provide, will usually be a mixture of facts (observations, examples that can be proved true) and opinions (expert opinions and personal opinions).

#### A. Listing Facts and Opinions

Take a stand, for or against, this issue: All eighteen-year-old men and women should be required to spend two years in the military or in a national public service program. List two facts you feel support your position. Then list two opinions you could use to persuade readers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts</th>
<th>Opinions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ___________________________________________</td>
<td>1. ___________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ___________________________________________</td>
<td>2. ___________________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### B. Writing Persuasively

Write a paragraph to support your view on the issue above. In your paragraph use the facts and opinions you listed in Part A. Remember to include a topic sentence in your paragraph.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Examining Your Audience

You have been asked to write an article either for or against the following statement: Students should not be asked to do peer editing because the advice of another inexperienced person will not help a student improve his or her writing. Choose an audience for your article (parents, teachers, classmates, local artists, politicians, church leaders, or national leaders); then complete the following audience profile.

Audience __________________________________________________________________________

1. What is the current attitude of my audience? Are they likely to agree or disagree with my stand on the issue?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

2. What do they already know about the issue? Do I need to provide background?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

3. What types of evidence will have the strongest impact on the audience? Facts? Opinions?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

4. Do I want my audience to change their thinking, take some action, or just recognize the validity of my viewpoint?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________
6.4 Writing a Product Evaluation

**Key Information**

Writers use techniques of persuasive writing to prepare product evaluations about many products and services. Product evaluations can judge the quality of a particular brand; compare different brands; or judge the usefulness of the item itself, based on price, features, quality, and design. When writing a product evaluation, introduce the product or service, state your main idea, explain your methods, state your findings, and make a recommendation.

■ Evaluating a Product or Service

Write a product evaluation for an item or service you know and use. Evaluate its price, features, quality, and design. Be sure to include all the parts of a product evaluation: introduction, main idea, methods, findings, and recommendation. Use your own experience or survey other users to complete the sections on methods and findings.

Product or service

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Creating an Ad

Write an advertisement for an upcoming school function, such as a dance, an athletic event, or a particular club or organization meeting. Your audience is your fellow students. Use AIDA, tailor your ad to the audience, choose your words carefully, and be aware of words’ connotations.
6.6 Writing a Letter of Complaint

**Key Information**

A letter of complaint can use the techniques of persuasive writing to state a case and calmly ask for action. Open your letter with a clear statement of the problem, tell how the problem happened, include any relevant evidence, and then end by reasonably explaining what you want done. Avoid sarcasm, insults, and threats, and use proper letter form.

**A Letter of Complaint**

A friend is very angry and has written this letter of complaint. She has asked you to revise and edit it before she sends it. Mark your proofreading/editing changes right on the letter.

Dear Quality (Out of) Control Manager:

I recently bought a pair of your jeans to wear to the most important party of the year. When I took them out of the bag and put them on, I noticed that one leg was at least three inches shorter than the other. I mean, don’t you guys know that jean legs are supposed to be the same length? It was too late to get to the store and exchange the pair (and whose to say I wouldn’t have gotten another crumby pair anyway!) so I had to wear an old pair of jeans to the party, was I ever embarrassed. Every other kid there had the coolest, newest clothes. I was stuck with old jeans because of you’re dumb company that can’t even make the legs the right size!

It’s too late for that party, but I’m sending the jeans back to you, I want you to send me a good pair right away. Oh, by the way, make sure the legs are the same length!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Crowley

Jennifer Crowley
### Reviewing a Nonfiction Book

**Key Information**

A **book review** is a type of product evaluation. In writing a book review, **give your opinion**, beginning with a thesis statement or topic sentence; **support your opinion with evidence**, including quotations; and **make your recommendation** about whether the book is worth buying or reading. Consider your audience when writing a book review.

#### A. Asking Questions

Choose a nonfiction book that you have read recently. Answer the following questions.

**Book title**

1. What is the book about, and why did the author write it?

2. Was the purpose worthy or important?

3. How well did the author achieve the purpose?

4. Who would benefit from reading the book?

5. What was memorable about the book?

6. Would I recommend this book or others by this author?

#### B. Writing a Book Review

Use the above information to write a review of five to eight sentences. First identify a specific audience. Begin with a thesis statement or topic sentence that sums up the author’s purpose. Be sure to tell whether or not you recommend the book. Continue on another sheet of paper.
Writing Process in Action

**Key Information**

**Persuasive writing** expresses a writer’s opinion and tries to make readers agree with it, to change their own opinion, and sometimes to take action. Persuasive writing can appeal to reason, to emotion, or to both. Good persuasive writing also anticipates opposing viewpoints and tries to rebut them.

**Anticipating Opposing Viewpoints**

In his essay on tennis, Mark Mathabane anticipates opposing viewpoints and writes specifically to rebut them. Write a persuasive essay for or against this statement: People under eighteen should have a curfew of 11:00 P.M. First state your position on the statement. Then list three arguments that people opposing your viewpoint might make. Finally, write a paragraph defusing or rebutting their objections. If necessary, continue on another sheet of paper.

My position: _____________________________________________________________

Objection 1: ____________________________________________________________

Objection 2: ____________________________________________________________

Objection 3: ____________________________________________________________

Rebuttal: ________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________