



# College Writing Skills

with Readings

ninth edition

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LEARNING

# College Writing Skills

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# College Writing Skills

NINTH EDITION

John Langan

*Atlantic Cape Community College*





COLLEGE WRITING SKILLS WITH READINGS, NINTH EDITION

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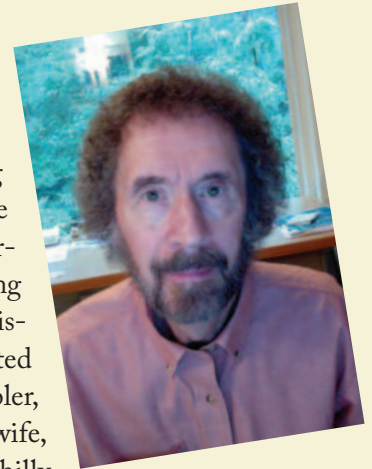
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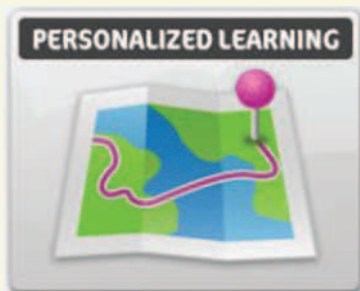
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# Preface



 **connect**<sup>™</sup>

## Personalized Learning

*College Writing Skills 9/e* emphasizes personalized learning. Powered by *Connect Writing Plus 2.0*, students gain access to our groundbreaking personal learning plan, which helps students become aware of what they already know and what they need to practice. A self-study tool, its cutting-edge, continually adaptive technology, and exclusive time-management features make students more productive, keep them on track, and give them the writing skills needed for all their college courses.

With a baseline adaptive diagnostic that assesses student proficiencies in five core areas of grammar and mechanics, students can generate a unique learning plan tailored to address their specific needs and help them determine what they want to study. Students receive a personalized program of lessons, videos, animations, and interactive exercises to improve their skills, as well as immediate feedback on their work. With an engine that incorporates metacognitive learning theory and provides ongoing diagnosis for each learning objective, the personal learning plan continually adapts with each student interaction, while built-in time management tools ensure that students work on pace to master all required learning objectives by the end of the course. This personalized, constantly adapting online environment increases student readiness, motivation, and confidence and allows classroom instruction to focus on thoughtful and critical writing processes.

Personalized learning icons, like the one above, are integrated throughout the chapters. The detailed Table of Contents also contains a *Connect Writing Plus 2.0* Personal Learning Plan Correlation Guide. It lists related individual learning topics in the *Connect* personal learning plan.

## Personal, Academic, and Workplace Writing

*College Writing Skills 9/e* is flexible. Students are exposed to examples of writing that reflect the three key realms of their lives—personal, academic, and workplace. They will find models, activities, and examples for any writing situation. This variety provides great flexibility in the kinds of assignments you prefer to give. Icons identifying personal, academic, and workplace writing are integrated throughout the chapters.



## Mastering the Four Bases: Unity, Support, Coherence, Sentence Skills

*College Writing Skills 9/e* emphasizes writing skills and process. By referring to a set of four skills for effective writing, *College Writing Skills 9/e* encourages new writers to see writing as a skill that can be learned and a process that must be explored. The four skills, or bases, for effective writing are as follows:

- **Unity:** Discover a clearly stated point, or topic sentence, and make sure that all other information in the paragraph or essay supports that point.
- **Support:** Support the points with specific evidence, and plenty of it.
- **Coherence:** Organize and connect supporting evidence so that paragraphs and essays transition smoothly from one bit of supporting information to the next.
- **Sentence skills:** Revise and edit so that sentences are error-free for clearer and more effective communication.

The four bases are essential to effective writing, whether it be a narrative paragraph, a cover letter for a job application, or an essay assignment.

### UNITY

Discover a clearly stated point, or topic sentence, and make sure that all other information in the paragraph or essay supports that point.

### SUPPORT

Support the points with specific evidence, and plenty of it.

### COHERENCE

Organize and connect supporting evidence so that paragraphs and essays transition smoothly from one bit of supporting information to the next.

### SENTENCE SKILLS

Revise and edit so that sentences are error-free for clearer and more effective communication.

# CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER CHANGES

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In addition to incorporating the personal learning plan, maintaining the four bases framework, and continuing to build in many familiar personal writing examples, *College Writing Skills 9/e* includes the following chapter-by-chapter changes:

## Part 1: Essay Writing

- New sample paragraphs that reflect academic and workplace writing
- Revised writing samples to eliminate use of second-person
- Revised presentation of the term “essay,” including fuller explanation of “thesis” and coverage of essays with more than three supporting paragraphs
- Greater emphasis on the role of mixed modes in essay writing
- Revised full-length essay with focus on adding details
- Revised treatment of the use of questions in essay structuring
- Inclusion of multiple across-chapter cross-references to related topics

## Part 2: Patterns of Essay Development

- New sample paragraphs and Writing Assignments that reflect academic and workplace writing
- Updated personal writing examples
- New explanation about limited use of second-person in writing
- Revised writing samples to eliminate use of second-person
- Greater coverage of essays with more than three supporting paragraphs
- Inclusion of multiple across-chapter cross-references to related topics
- Revised introductory text for each pattern with explanation of how multiple modes function together in one essay

### Part 3: Special Skills

- Updated formatting for sample student paper to better represent academic expectations
- Revised exposition to reflect updated MLA standards
- Revised exposition to reflect updated Internet and library skills

### Part 4: Handbook of Sentence Skills

- Grammar activities and exercises rewritten to incorporate academic and workplace-related themes
- Review Tests reworked to incorporate academic and workplace-related themes
- Revised material frequently focused on one issue so that it reads as a unified passage rather than a set of disconnected statements
- Improved coverage of certain key grammar topics, such as subordinating words and verb forms
- Inclusion of multiple across-chapter cross-references to related topics

# RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOUR TEACHING


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## Book-Specific Supplements for Instructors

The **Annotated Instructor's Edition** consists of the student text, complete with answers to all activities and tests.

The **Online Learning Center** ([www.mhhe.com/langan](http://www.mhhe.com/langan)) offers a number of instructional materials including an instructor's manual, test bank, and PowerPoint® slides that may be tailored to course needs.

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## Connect Learning Management System Integration

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# Essay Writing

# PART 1

*Have yourself a merry little Christmas  
It may be your last  
Next year we may all be living in the past  
Have yourself a merry little Christmas  
Pop the champagne cork  
Next year we may all be living in New York.  
No good times like the olden days,  
Happy golden days of yore,  
Faithful friends who were dear to us  
Will be near to us no more.  
But at least we all will be together  
If the Lord allows.  
From now on we'll have to muddle through somehow.  
So have yourself a merry little Christmas now.*

*Have yourself a merry little Christmas,  
Let your heart be light  
From now on, our troubles will be out of sight  
Have yourself a merry little Christmas  
Make your yuletide gay  
From now on our troubles will be miles away.  
Here we are as in olden days,  
Happy golden days of yore.  
Faithful friends who were dear to us  
Gather near to us once more.  
Through the years we all will be together  
If the fates allow.  
Until then, we'll have to muddle through somehow  
So have yourself a merry little Christmas now.*

## PREVIEW

- 1 An Introduction to Writing
- 2 The Writing Process
- 3 The First and Second Steps in Essay Writing
- 4 The Third Step in Essay Writing
- 5 The Fourth Step in Essay Writing
- 6 Four Bases for Revising Essays

Even songwriters often have to write several drafts of lyrics before producing an effective song. Compare this excerpted draft of “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” by Hugh Martin with its final version; what has changed? Choose one revision and explain why and how it makes the lyrics more effective.

# An Introduction to Writing

**This chapter will explain and illustrate**

- the importance of supporting a point in writing
- the structure of the traditional essay
- the benefits of writing the traditional essay

**This chapter also**

- presents writing as both a skill and a process of discovery
- suggests keeping a journal



*What is your ideal job? Write two or more paragraphs about what your ideal job would be and what your daily activities on the job would entail. Be sure to include your reasons for wanting such a job.*

The experience I had writing my first college essay helped shape this book. I received a C– for the essay. Scrawled beside the grade was the comment “Not badly written, but ill-conceived.” I remember going to the instructor after class, asking about his comment as well as the word *Log* that he had added in the margin at various spots. “What are all these logs you put in my paper?” I asked, trying to make a joke of it. He looked at me a little wonderingly. “Logic, Mr. Langan,” he answered, “logic.” He went on to explain that I had not thought out my paper clearly. There were actually two ideas rather than one in my thesis, one supporting paragraph had nothing to do with either idea, another paragraph lacked a topic sentence, and so on. I’ve never forgotten his last words: “If you don’t think clearly,” he said, “you won’t write clearly.”

I was speechless, and I felt confused and angry. I didn’t like being told that I didn’t know how to think. I went back to my room and read over my paper several times. Eventually, I decided that my instructor was right. “No more logs,” I said to myself. “I’m going to get these logs out of my papers.”

My instructor’s advice was invaluable. I learned that clear, disciplined thinking is the key to effective writing. *College Writing Skills with Readings* develops this idea by breaking down the writing process into a series of four logical, easily followed steps. These steps, combined with practical advice about prewriting and revision, will help you write strong papers.

Here are the four steps in a nutshell:

1. Discover a clearly stated point, or thesis.
2. Provide logical, detailed support for your thesis.
3. Organize and connect your supporting material.
4. Revise and edit so that your sentences are effective and error-free.

Part 1 of this book explains each of these steps in detail and provides many practice materials to help you master them.

## Point and Support

### An Important Difference between Writing and Talking

In everyday conversation, you make all kinds of points or assertions. You say, for example, “My boss is a hard person to work for,” “It’s not safe to walk in our neighborhood after dark,” or “Poor study habits keep getting me into trouble.” The points that you make concern personal matters as well as, at times, outside issues:

“That trade will be a disaster for the team,” “Lots of TV commercials are degrading to women,” “Students are better off working for a year before attending college.”

The people you are talking with do not always challenge you to give reasons for your statements. They may know why you feel as you do, or they may already agree with you, or they simply may not want to put you on the spot; and so they do not always ask why. But the people who read what you write may not know you, agree with you, or feel in any way obliged to you. If you want to communicate effectively with readers, you must provide solid evidence for any point you make. An important difference, then, between writing and talking is this: *In writing, any idea that you advance must be supported with specific reasons or details.*

Think of your readers as reasonable people. They will not take your views on faith, but they are willing to accept what you say as long as you support it. Therefore, remember to support with specific evidence any point that you make.

## Point and Support in a Paragraph

In conversation, you might say to a friend who has suggested a movie, “No, thanks. Going to the movies is just too much of a hassle. Parking, people, everything.” From shared past experiences, your friend may know what you are talking about so that you will not have to explain your statement. But in writing, your point would have to be backed up with specific reasons and details.

Below is a paragraph, written by a student named Diane Woods, on why moviegoing is a nuisance. A *paragraph* is a short paper of around 150 to 200 words. It usually consists of an opening point, called a *topic sentence*, followed by a series of sentences that support that point.

### The Hazards of Moviegoing

Personal

Although I love movies, I've found that there are drawbacks to moviegoing. One problem is just the inconvenience of it all. To get to the theater, I have to drive for at least fifteen minutes, or more if traffic is bad. It can take forever to find a parking spot, and then I have to walk across a huge parking lot to the theater. There I encounter long lines, sold-out shows, and ever-increasing prices. And I hate sitting with my feet sticking to the floor because of other people's spilled snacks. Another problem is my lack of self-control at the theater. I often stuff myself with unhealthy calorie-laden snacks. My choices might include a bucket of popcorn, a box of Milk Duds, a giant soda, or all three. The worst problem is some of the other moviegoers. Kids run up and down the aisle. Teenagers laugh and shout at the screen. People of all ages drop soda cups and popcorn tubs, cough and burp, and talk to one another. All in all, I would rather stay home and watch a DVD in the comfort of my own living room.

Notice what the supporting evidence does here. It provides you, the reader, with a basis for understanding *why* the writer makes the point that is made. Through this specific evidence, the writer has explained and successfully communicated the idea that moviegoing can be a nuisance.

The evidence that supports the point in a paper often consists of a series of reasons followed by examples and details that support the reasons. That is true of the paragraph above: three reasons are provided, with examples and details that back up those reasons. Supporting evidence in a paper can also consist of anecdotes, personal experiences, facts, studies, statistics, and the opinions of experts.

The paragraph on moviegoing, like almost any piece of effective writing, has two essential parts: (1) a point is advanced, and (2) that point is then supported. Taking a minute to outline “The Hazards of Moviegoing” will help you understand these basic parts. Write in the following space the point that has been advanced in the paragraph. Then add the words needed to complete the paragraph’s outline.

- 
1. \_\_\_\_\_
    - a. Fifteen-minute drive to theater
    - b. \_\_\_\_\_
    - c. Long lines, sold-out shows, and increasing prices
    - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Lack of self-control
    - a. Often stuff myself with unhealthy snacks
    - b. Might have popcorn, candy, soda, or all three
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
    - a. \_\_\_\_\_
    - b. \_\_\_\_\_
    - c. People of all ages make noise.

## ACTIVITY 1

### Point Support

## Point and Support in an Essay

An excellent way to learn how to write clearly and logically is to practice composing the traditional college *essay*—a paper of about five hundred words that typically consists of an introductory paragraph, three or more supporting paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph. The central idea, or point, developed in any essay is called a *thesis statement* (rather than, as in a paragraph, a *topic sentence*). The thesis appears in the introductory paragraph, and the specific support for the thesis appears in the paragraphs that follow. The supporting paragraphs allow for a fuller

treatment of the evidence that backs up the central point than would be possible in a single-paragraph paper. Unlike paragraphs that are usually developed using one mode of writing, like description, essays are usually developed using several modes of writing to support the single point.

## Structure of the Traditional Essay

### A Model Essay

The following model will help you understand the form of an essay. Diane Woods, the writer of the paragraph on moviegoing, later decided to develop her subject more fully. Here is the essay that resulted.



Introductory  
paragraph

First  
supporting  
paragraph

Second  
supporting  
paragraph

#### The Hazards of Moviegoing

I am a movie fanatic. My friends count on me to know movie trivia (who was the pigtailed little girl in *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*? Drew Barrymore) and to remember every big Oscar awarded since I was in grade school (Best Picture, 1994? *Forrest Gump*). My friends, though, have stopped asking me if I want to go out to the movies. While I love movies as much as ever, the inconvenience of going out, the temptations of the concession stand, and the behavior of some patrons are reasons for me to wait and rent the DVD.

To begin with, I just don't enjoy the general hassle of the evening. Since small local movie theaters are a thing of the past, I have to drive for fifteen minutes to get to the nearest multiplex. The parking lot is shared with several restaurants and a supermarket, so it's always jammed. I have to drive around at a snail's pace until I spot another driver backing out. Then it's time to stand in an endless line, with the constant threat that tickets for the show I want will sell out. If we do get tickets, the theater will be so crowded that I won't be able to sit with my friends, or we'll have to sit in a front row gaping up at a giant screen. I have to shell out a ridiculous amount of money—up to \$11—for a ticket. That entitles me to sit while my shoes seal themselves to a sticky floor coated with spilled soda, bubble gum, and crushed Raisinets.

Second, the theater offers tempting snacks that I really don't need. Like most of us, I have to battle an expanding waistline. At home I do pretty well by simply not buying stuff that is bad for me. I can make do with snacks like celery and carrot sticks because there is no ice cream in the freezer. Going to the theater, however, is like spending my evening in a 7-Eleven that's been equipped with a movie screen and comfortable seats. As I try to persuade myself to just have a Diet Coke, the smell of fresh popcorn dripping with butter soon overcomes me. Chocolate bars the size of small automobiles seem to jump into my hands. I risk pulling out my fillings as I chew enormous

*continued*

mouthfuls of Milk Duds. By the time I leave the theater, I feel disgusted with myself.

Many of the other patrons are even more of a problem than the concession stand. Little kids race up and down the aisles, usually in giggling packs. Teenagers try to impress their friends by talking back to the screen, whistling, and making what they consider to be hilarious noises. Adults act as if they were at home in their own living room. They comment loudly on the ages of the stars and reveal plot twists that are supposed to be a secret until the film's end. And people of all ages create distractions. They crinkle candy wrappers, stick gum on their seats, and drop popcorn tubs or cups of crushed ice and soda on the floor. They also cough and burp, squirm endlessly in their seats, file out for repeated trips to the restrooms or concession stands, and elbow me out of the armrest on either side of my seat.

After arriving home from the movies one night, I decided that I was not going to be a moviegoer anymore. I was tired of the problems involved in getting to the theater, resisting unhealthy snacks, and dealing with the patrons. The next day, I arranged to have premium movie channels added to my cable TV service, and I also got a Netflix membership. I may now see movies a bit later than other people, but I'll be more relaxed watching box office hits in the comfort of my own living room.

Third  
supporting  
paragraph

Concluding  
paragraph

## Parts of an Essay

“The Hazards of Moviegoing” is a good example of the standard short essay you will write in college English. It is a composition of over five hundred words that consists of a one-paragraph introduction, a three-paragraph body, and a one-paragraph conclusion. The roles of these paragraphs are described and illustrated below.

### *Introductory Paragraph*

The introductory paragraph of an essay should start with several sentences that attract the reader's interest. It should then advance the central idea, or *thesis*, that will be developed in the essay. The thesis often includes a *plan of development*—a “preview” of the major points that will support the thesis. These supporting points should be listed in the order in which they will appear in the essay. Such a thesis might assert, “Winter is my favorite season because I like the weather, the holidays, and the sports,” leading to an essay that has a paragraph about weather, followed by a paragraph about winter holidays, and so on. In some cases, however, the plan of development is omitted. For example, a thesis that claims, “Education can be a key to socioeconomic security,” doesn't state how the essay will be developed, but still advances a central idea.



**ACTIVITY 2**

1. In “The Hazards of Moviegoing,” which sentence or sentences are used to attract the reader’s interest?
  - a. First sentence
  - b. First two sentences
  - c. First three sentences
2. In which sentence is the thesis of the essay presented?
  - a. Third sentence
  - b. Fourth sentence
3. Does the thesis include a plan of development?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
4. Write the words in the thesis that announce the three major supporting points in the essay:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_

*Body: Supporting Paragraphs*

Many essays have three supporting points, developed at length over three separate paragraphs. However, more developed essays require four or more body paragraphs to support the thesis. This is very common in essays with thesis statements that omit a plan of development. Each of the supporting paragraphs should begin with a *topic sentence* that states the point to be detailed in that paragraph. Just as a thesis provides a focus for the entire essay, the topic sentence provides a focus for a supporting paragraph.

**ACTIVITY 3**

1. What is the topic sentence for the first supporting paragraph of the model essay?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The first topic sentence is then supported by the following details (fill in the missing details):
  - a. Have to drive fifteen minutes
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Endless ticket line

- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Sticky floor
3. What is the topic sentence for the second supporting paragraph of the essay?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
4. The second topic sentence is then supported by the following details:
- a. At home, only snacks are celery and carrot sticks.
- b. Theater is like a 7-Eleven with seats.
- (1) Fresh popcorn
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the topic sentence for the third supporting paragraph of the essay?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
6. The third topic sentence is then supported by the following details:
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Adults talk loudly and reveal plot twists.
- d. People of all ages create distractions.

### *Concluding Paragraph*

The concluding paragraph often summarizes the essay by briefly restating the thesis and, at times, the main supporting points. In addition, the writer often presents a concluding thought about the subject of the paper.

1. Which two sentences in the concluding paragraph restate the thesis and supporting points of the essay?
- a. First and second
- b. Second and third
- c. Third and fourth