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College Writing Skills

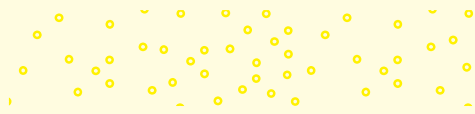
with Readings

ELEVENTH EDITION

ZOÉ L. ALBRIGHT
JOHN LANGAN

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College Writing Skills with Readings

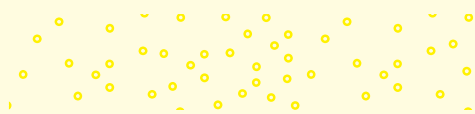
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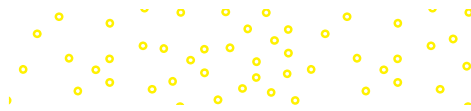
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COLLEGE WRITING SKILLS WITH READINGS

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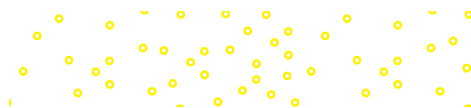
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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Zoé L. Albright has been involved in diverse aspects of education for twenty-five years. For the last twenty-one years, she has been a faculty member at Metropolitan Community College–Longview, teaching developmental writing, composition, and literature. She has created and implemented traditional and online curricula for high school and college English and composition courses and for a variety of literature courses. She continues to research new educational theory and practices. In addition to this extensive teaching experience, Zoé served as co-author of the previous edition of *College Writing Skills with Readings* and has most recently served as co-author of *English Skills with Readings*, tenth edition, and *Exploring Writing*, fourth edition. She has also been a contributing author to other John Langan texts, including earlier editions of the *Exploring Writing* books and *College Writing Skills with Readings*. She received her M.A. from Goldsmiths, University of London; B.S. and B.A. from the University of Idaho; and A.A. from Cottey College. She holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Kansas, where her focus was on developmental writers and their identities. Zoé currently resides near Kansas City, Missouri, with her family.

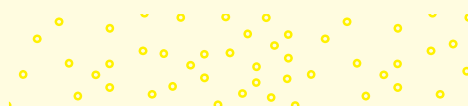


Zoé L. Albright
Courtesy of
Zoé L. Albright

John Langan has taught reading and writing at Atlantic Cape Community College near Atlantic City, New Jersey, for more than twenty-five years. The author of a popular series of college textbooks on both writing and reading, John enjoys the challenge of developing materials that teach skills in an especially clear and lively way. Before teaching, he earned advanced degrees in writing at Rutgers University and in reading at Rowan University. He also spent a year writing fiction that, he says, “is now at the back of a drawer waiting to be discovered and acclaimed posthumously.” While in school, he supported himself by working as a truck driver, a machinist, a battery assembler, a hospital attendant, and an apple packer. John now lives with his wife, Judith Nadell, near Philadelphia. In addition to his wife and Philly sports teams, his passions include reading and turning on nonreaders to the pleasure and power of books. Through Townsend Press, his educational publishing company, he has developed the nonprofit “Townsend Library”—a collection of more than one hundred new and classic stories that appeal to readers of any age.



John Langan
Courtesy of
John Langan



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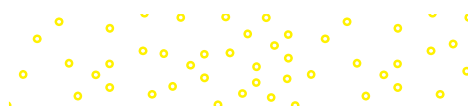
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READINGS LISTED BY RHETORICAL MODE

Note: Some selections are cross-listed because they illustrate more than one rhetorical method of development.

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Lou's Place *Beth Johnson*
The Teacher Who Changed My Life *Nicholas Gage*
Stepping into the Light *Tanya Savory*
The Certainty of Fear *Audra Kendall*
Moving Beyond Pain *bell hooks*

NARRATION

Lou's Place *Beth Johnson*
The Teacher Who Changed My Life *Nicholas Gage*
Shame *Dick Gregory*
Chief Seattle's Speech of 1854 *Chief Seattle*
My Library *A. A. Milne*
Essay on the Importance of Teaching Failure *Edward Burger*
I Became Her Target *Roger Wilkins*
Is Google Making Us Stupid? *Nicholas Carr*
The Quiet Struggle of College Students with Kids *Gillian B. White*
A Memoir on What Happens to the 'Fairest' of Them All *Hope Wabuke*

EXEMPLIFICATION

Dad *Andrew H. Malcolm*
How to Do Well on a Job Interview *Glenda Davis*
Propaganda Techniques in Today's Advertising *Ann McClintock*
My Library *A. A. Milne*
100 Years of *The Secret Garden* *Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina*
Colleges Must Confront Structural Racism *Kevin V. Collymore*

The Quiet Struggle of College Students with Kids *Gillian B. White*
What Academics Misunderstand about ‘Public Writing’ *Irina Dumitrescu*
The Professor Is a Dropout *Beth Johnson*
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Moving Beyond Pain *bell hooks*
When a Classmate Is a Former Inmate *Juleyka Lantigua-Williams*
A Memoir on What Happens to the ‘Fairest’ of Them All *Hope Wabuke*

PROCESS

How to Do Well on a Job Interview *Glenda Davis*
from *Self-Reliance* *Ralph Waldo Emerson*
Colleges Must Confront Structural Racism *Kevin V. Collymore*
How to Make It in College, Now That You’re Here *Brian O’Keeney*
What Academics Misunderstand about ‘Public Writing’ *Irina Dumitrescu*

CAUSE AND/OR EFFECT

The Teacher Who Changed My Life *Nicholas Gage*
How to Do Well on a Job Interview *Glenda Davis*
Propaganda Techniques in Today’s Advertising *Ann McClintock*
Essay on the Importance of Teaching Failure *Edward Burger*
Shame *Dick Gregory*
Stepping into the Light *Tanya Savory*
100 Years of *The Secret Garden* *Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina*
Brainology *Carol S. Dweck*
Is Google Making Us Stupid? *Nicholas Carr*
The Professor Is a Dropout *Beth Johnson*
A Memoir on What Happens to the ‘Fairest’ of Them All *Hope Wabuke*

COMPARISON AND/OR CONTRAST

Chief Seattle’s Speech of 1854 *Chief Seattle*
Essay on the Importance of Teaching Failure *Edward Burger*

Brainology *Carol S. Dweck*

Is Google Making Us Stupid? *Nicholas Carr*

What Academics Misunderstand about ‘Public Writing’ *Irina Dumitrescu*

A Memoir on What Happens to the ‘Fairest’ of Them All *Hope Wabuke*

DEFINITION

Shame *Dick Gregory*

Propaganda Techniques in Today’s Advertising *Ann McClintock*

Brainology *Carol S. Dweck*

Purposefully Mispronouncing Kamala Harris’s Name Is Racist, Plain and Simple *Duaa Israr*

Memes and the Art of Nonsense *Serena G. Pellegrino*

Moving Beyond Pain *bell hooks*

DIVISION-CLASSIFICATION

Propaganda Techniques in Today’s Advertising *Ann McClintock*

My Library *A. A. Milne*

What Academics Misunderstand About ‘Public Writing’ *Irina Dumitrescu*

ARGUMENT

Chief Seattle’s Speech of 1854 *Chief Seattle*

Essay on the Importance of Teaching Failure *Edward Burger*

from *Self-Reliance* *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Colleges Must Confront Structural Racism *Kevin V. Collymore*

How to Make It in College, Now That You’re Here *Brian O’Keeney*

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Moving Beyond Pain *bell hooks*

A WORD FROM ZOÉ L. ALBRIGHT

The skills of writing and thinking critically about one's world are not only important to a successful college career, they are also important to success in life. Especially now, as misinformation and disinformation run rampant, the ability to critically evaluate what we are reading and writing about is more essential than ever. It is because of these shifting needs that I have worked hard to increase the critical thinking lessons throughout this text while still emphasizing the strong pedagogy surrounding good writing. Students are introduced to topics that will challenge their perceptions and beliefs, including a new research essay titled "Environmental Health" that examines food waste. Many of the new readings are from marginalized voices. For some students, these readings will serve as an introduction to unfamiliar points of view, and for other students, these readings may echo their own lived experiences. These new essays and readings should encourage lively discussions in the classroom.

As an educator who has been in the classroom for almost three decades, I have seen my students' and colleagues' needs change. Strong grammar foundations have been shaken by social media use and texting. Search engines and databases have affected the art of research and the incorporation of research into writing. The constant bombardment of new information has had a negative impact on the ability to think through a topic slowly. This new edition of *College Writing Skills with Readings* was developed with the goal of addressing these changes. Its lessons are designed to help students gain the strong foundational skills that they need to navigate what it means to be not only a college student in the twenty-first century but also an active and responsible citizen of the world.

Preface

College Writing Skills with Readings is designed to help students gain the strong foundational skills that they need to succeed in college and in their lives beyond college. It does this by focusing on the four bases of unity, support, coherence, and sentence skills; emphasizing writing for personal, academic, and workplace settings; focusing on information literacy and research writing; and demonstrating for students how the stages of the writing process work together.

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

College Writing Skills with Readings, eleventh edition, emphasizes writing skills and process. By referring to a set of four skills for effective writing, *College Writing Skills with Readings*, eleventh edition, 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.

Twenty-seven professional readings support the development of the four bases by modeling effective writing, as well as inspiring lively class discussion and providing a continuing source of high-interest material for a wide range of writing assignments. Reflecting the diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and identities of the college writing classroom and students' broader communities, 50 percent of the readings are written by authors of historically marginalized groups. For some students, these readings will serve as an introduction to unfamiliar points of view, and for other students, their own lived experiences may be echoed by these readings.

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 evidence to the next.

SENTENCE SKILLS

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

Personal, Academic, and Workplace Writing

College Writing Skills with Readings, eleventh edition, is flexible and emphasizes personal learning, academic learning, and workplace preparation. Students are exposed to examples of writing that reflect these three key realms of their lives to help them understand the critical way in which writing will have an impact on the many facets of their lives.

To help students learn the different characteristics of each type of writing, icons identifying specific writing pieces, examples, and assignments are integrated throughout the chapters.

Writings that employ first-person point of view, narrative, and/or an informal tone are marked “Personal.” Writings that employ a third-person point of view, a formal tone, and focus on academic topics are identified as “Academic.” Writings that employ a third-person point of view, a formal tone, and focus on employment-related topics are marked “Work.”

In addition to these abundant examples, there are writing assignments and activities emphasizing each of these categories throughout the chapters and readings anthology, so students can gain practice writing for a variety of audiences and situations. This variety provides flexibility in the kinds of assignments you may wish to give.



Emphasis on Information Literacy and Research Writing

College Writing Skills with Readings, eleventh edition, continues to focus strongly on information literacy, research, and source-based essay writing. Students are introduced to using and locating online sources effectively and efficiently and employing critical thinking skills to determine the reliability and validity of sources found. Resources available at most college libraries—including the expertise of resource librarians and how to make best use of that expertise—are discussed in detail. In addition to learning how to choose sources, students are exposed to a new, more detailed look at the skills of paraphrasing and summarizing. As well, students are given an in-depth experience devoted to source-based essay writing and research, including how to create a plan to meet deadlines set by instructors; how to take good notes; how to incorporate sources to avoid plagiarism; and how to use proper MLA format. Along with a full-length sample research paper, students are also given the opportunity to read several source-based literary analyses throughout the textbook.

The Writing Process in Action

College Writing Skills with Readings, eleventh edition, provides strong writing pedagogy. To help students see the whole picture and walk actively through the steps of the entire writing process, Chapter 7 provides an extended example of one student's complete writing process, demonstrating the student's prewriting, organizing, drafting, revision, editing, and resulting (but still evolving) final draft. This chapter culminates Part 1, in which the six preceding chapters offer in-depth instruction about different facets and steps of the writing process from prewriting through revision. Chapter 1 explains why writing is important in all aspects of life. Chapter 2 offers an overview of the writing process. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 break down the steps of the writing process, providing explanations and extensive activities to help students practice, and Chapter 6 helps students understand and apply the Four Bases for revising.

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER CHANGES

The eleventh edition of *College Writing Skills with Readings* includes the following chapter-by-chapter changes:

Part 1: Essay Writing

- Revised and updated section on using technology to write and study efficiently
- Revised and updated coverage of MLA guidelines, including such key areas as inclusive language and formatting in research writing
- Reorganized and augmented coverage of purpose and audience
- Enhanced discussion of peer and personal review
- More clearly identified steps and stages in Chapter 7's full length student essay, which demonstrates the writing process from prewriting through peer review, self-evaluation, and revising

Part 2: Patterns of Essay Development

- All student essays and Writing Assignments thoroughly examined and revised as needed for sensitivity to culture, gender, and differences in ability
- Several Model Essays repositioned to better fit within a particular pattern, each incorporating new pedagogy
- Continued emphasis on essays with more than three supporting paragraphs
- More clearly called-out and identified examples of Literary Analysis
- All Four Bases Checklists thoroughly examined and revised as necessary, to insure focus on the specific needs of the targeted mode

Part 3: Researching, Writing, and Documenting

- Full and updated coverage of students' use of the Internet, technology, and the library in the digital age
- Revised, newly focused, and enhanced treatment of paraphrasing
- Expanded coverage of note-taking that fully illustrates and explains two different methods
- New discussion of misinformation and disinformation

- New full length student research paper that illustrates key research skills including the essential steps in writing a good research paper
- Revised and updated examples of correct source citation per recent MLA guidelines
- Updated and increased coverage of identifying and avoiding plagiarism
- More clearly called-out and identified examples of Rhetorical Analysis and Literary Analysis
- Text explanations and discussions formatted to make them more accessible to students

Part 4: Handbook of Sentence Skills

- All grammar activities, exercises, and Review Tests thoroughly updated for currency
- Pronoun instruction and examples reworked and updated to reflect gender-neutral usage
- Grammar activities, exercises, and Review Tests continue to incorporate personal, academic, and workplace-related themes
- Many tests and activities focused on single issue so that each reads as a unified passage

Part 5: Readings for Writers

- Readings updated to include selections by diverse voices
- New readings with accompanying questions and assignments include:
 - “Colleges Must Confront Structural Racism” by Kevin V. Collymore
 - “What Academics Misunderstand about ‘Public Writing’” by Irina Dumitrescu
 - “Purposefully Mispronouncing Kamala Harris’s Name is Racist, Plain and Simple” by Duaa Israr
 - “Memes and the Art of Nonsense” by Serena G. Pellegrino
 - “A Memoir Reflects on What Happens to the ‘Fairest’ of Them All” by Hope Wabuke

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOUR TEACHING

Connect Writing for College Writing Skills with Readings

Connect is a highly reliable, easy-to-use homework and learning management solution that embeds learning science and award-winning adaptive tools to improve student results. Connect Writing offers comprehensive, reliable writing and research content that is designed to actively engage students and help prepare them to be successful writers. This is done through Connect components such as Adaptive Learning Assignment, Power of Process, the College Writing Skills with Readings eBook, and Writing Assignment Plus.

Adaptive Learning Assignment

Adaptive Learning Assignment provides each student a personalized path to learning concepts instructors assign in their course. The assignments continually adapt to the individual, identifying knowledge gaps and focusing on areas where remediation is needed. All adaptive content—including questions and integrated concept resources—is specifically targeted to, and directly aligned with, the individual learning objectives being assessed in the course.

The screenshot displays the Connect Writing interface. At the top, a navigation bar includes the 'Connect Writing' logo and an 'Exit Assignment' button. The main content area is titled 'Hi, let's get started!' and 'Adaptive Assignment | Writing Process'. It features two circular progress indicators: 'Duration' showing '2h 48m Estimated' and 'Content' showing '93 Concepts'. Below these are two buttons: 'View Resources' and 'Start Questions'. A progress indicator shows '0 of 93 Concepts completed'. A 'Multiple Select Question' is displayed, asking about Fabien's health professor's advice. Below the question, there are four checkboxes: 'questioning', 'outlining', 'charting', and 'freewriting'. A 'Concept Resource' window is open, showing a page titled 'Using Questioning to Generate Ideas'. The page includes a brief explanation of questioning and a table with 'Sample List of Questions and Answers'.

Questions	Answers
What was the most important reason I decided to go to college?	Probably my dad.
How did he influence me?	He's a role model for me. He encouraged me by saying that this is the only way to reach up and get a great job.
What else caused me to go to college?	My friends, I think, were another reason.
How did they influence me?	They were good examples of what to do, each with their own motivations. They set an example by getting applications in on time, and we supported one another as we waited to hear back from the schools we applied to.
What else influenced me to go to college?	My own desire to learn more and meet new people also influenced me.

Power of Process

One overarching goal is at the heart of Power of Process: for students to become self-regulating, strategic readers and writers. Power of Process facilitates engaged reading and writing processes using research-based best practices suggested by major professional reading and writing organizations. Instructors can choose from a bank of carefully chosen readings within Power of Process, readings from *College Writing Skills with Readings*, or upload their own readings. As with the professional readings in the text, 50 percent of the forty-six additional readings in Power of Process are written by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) authors.

Build Your Own: Select Strategies



The circular diagram is divided into 12 segments, each representing a strategy. The segments are color-coded: blue for 'AFTER READING', orange for 'BEFORE READING', and green for 'DURING READING'. The strategies are:

- BEFORE READING:** Preview and predict the text, Identify your purpose for reading and writing, Recognize prior knowledge, Ask questions about the text.
- DURING READING:** Answer questions about the text, Identify the author's purpose.
- AFTER READING:** Reflect on the text, Develop a thesis statement, Support a thesis statement.

BEFORE READING DURING READING AFTER READING

Click the title or inquiry prompt to edit the text of any process strategy.

Note: If you have a student with visual or motor skills accessibility needs, do not use strategies that require annotation.

[Add](#)

- Preview and predict the text**
When you look at the title, author, headings, paragraphs, vocabulary, and any other clues, what do you learn about the text?
[Learn More](#) [Text](#)
- Identify your purpose for reading and writing**
Why are you reading this text? When you read the text, will you be informed, entertained, or persuaded?
[Learn More](#) [Text](#)
- Recognize prior knowledge**
What do you already know about the text's topic?
[Learn More](#) [Text](#)

College Writing Skills with Readings eBook

The entire *College Writing Skills with Readings* text can be accessed through Connect or as a stand-alone ebook. At McGraw Hill Higher Education, our mission is to accelerate learning through intuitive, engaging, efficient, and effective experiences, grounded in research. Assignments in Connect are WCAG compliant, and updates to the ebook of the eleventh edition of *College Writing Skills* go beyond WCAG compliance to create an improved reading experience for all learners. These enhancements include improved functionality for viewing annotated readings and editing marks. We are committed to creating universally accessible products that unlock the full potential of each learner, including individuals with disabilities.

Writing Assignment Plus

McGraw Hill's new Writing Assignment Plus tool delivers a learning experience that improves students' written communication skills and conceptual understanding with every assignment. Assign, monitor, and provide feedback on writing more efficiently and grade assignments within

McGraw Hill Connect[®]. Writing Assignment Plus gives you time-saving tools with just-in-time basic writing and originality checker.

Writing Assignment

1 2

Draft 1 Final submission ⓘ

Draft 1 Due: 09/29/21 11:59 PM EDT Status: Draft 1 in progress

Prompt: Are you as good a writer as you want to be? Write an essay analyzing the reasons you have become a good writer or explaining why you are not as good as you'd like to be. Begin by considering some factors that may have influenced your writing ability.

View more

Your family background: Did you see people writing at home? Did your parents respect and value the ability to write?

View Rubric

Add or View Attachments Saved ⓘ 50000/50000 characters remaining

Edit Insert Format Table

Paragraph Times N... 12pt B I U Text Color Background Color Bulleted List Numbered List Indent Outdent Link Unlink Insert

Words: 0

Save and Exit Submit

Tools

- Writing Feedback ⓘ
- Grammar and Writing ⓘ
- Originality ⓘ

Text-Specific Resources for Instructors

The Annotated Instructor's Edition consists of the student text, including answers to all activities and tests, as well as a complete Instructor's Guide.

Available within Connect are a number of instructional materials, including the instructor's manual, chapter quizzes, a variety of handouts, and PowerPoint[®] slides that may be tailored to course needs.

Learning Management System Integration Services

Connect Writing integrates with your local Learning Management System (Blackboard, Canvas, and others).

McGraw Hill provides a one-stop teaching and learning experience to users of any learning management system. This complimentary integration allows faculty and students to enjoy single sign-on (SSO) access to all McGraw Hill Higher Education materials and synchronized gradebooks with our award-winning McGraw Hill Connect platform. For more information on learning management system integration, please visit our website at www.mhcampus.com or contact your local McGraw Hill representative to find out more about installations on your campus.

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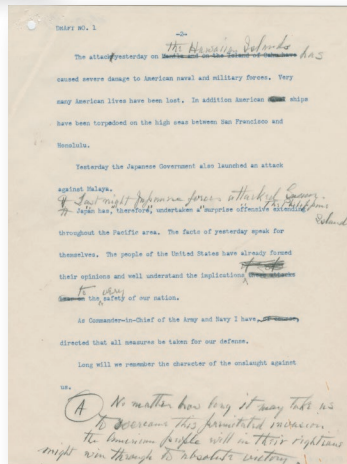
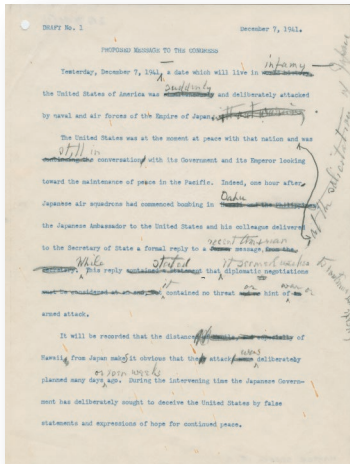
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John Langan

Essay Writing

PART 1



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
- 7 Developing an Essay

Even accomplished political leaders like Franklin D. Roosevelt have to write several drafts of speeches before creating the final product. Study this excerpted draft of FDR's address to Congress asking for a declaration of war after Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese during World War II. Choose one aspect of this revision and explain why and how it makes the speech more effective.

Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Hyde Park, New York

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.

Erickson Stock/Alamy Stock Photo

Observations from co-author John Langan: 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," "Many advertisements 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 simply accept your views, 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, or supported, with specific reasons and details.

Below is a paragraph, written by a student named Finley 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

A red circular icon with the word "Personal" written in white.

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 stream a movie 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. Finley Woods, the writer of the paragraph on moviegoing, later decided to develop her subject more fully. Here is the essay that resulted.


 Personal

**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, 2020? *Parasite*). 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 stream the film.

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, waiting to have our tickets scanned, so we can enter. Once we do get in, we often find our reserved seats are occupied. We then have to find an employee to help us access our seats. 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

continued

comfortable seats. As I try to persuade myself to just have a sparkling water, 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 mouthfuls of Milk Duds. By the time I leave the theater, I feel bloated and full.

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. Additionally, people of all ages create disgusting messes and rude distractions. They leave tacky remnants of candy on the hand rests, 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 subscribed to Disney+, Netflix, and Hulu. 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 disgusting messes and rude 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

2. Which sentence in the concluding paragraph contains the final thought of the essay?
 - a. Second
 - b. Third
 - c. Fourth

Diagram of an Essay

The following diagram shows you at a glance the different parts of a standard college essay, also known as a *one-three-one essay*. This diagram will serve as a helpful guide when you are writing or evaluating essays.

TITLE OF THE ESSAY

