

II

writeShop®

**5th
Edition**

Student Workbook



an incremental writing program

Kim Kautzer and Debra Oldar

WriteShop

An Incremental Writing Program

WriteShop II Student Workbook

Kim Kautzer and Debra Oldar

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This book is dedicated to our sons, Ben and Brian. Thank you for blazing this trail with us. You guys are troopers.

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Introduction and Reference Pages

Introducing WriteShop

Welcome to WriteShop II! Now that you feel comfortable writing descriptive, informative, and narrative compositions, you're ready to put your new skills to work. Many compositions in WriteShop II will ask you to combine these three writing styles to produce interesting, lively narratives.

Why are so many of us intimidated by writing? Because we were never given the right tools and techniques to do it well. Like learning to play a musical instrument, developing writing skills takes time and practice. With guidance, encouragement, and proper tools, you too can become an excellent and confident writer. That's what WriteShop is all about!

But WriteShop is also for you who enjoy writing. Maybe you like to express yourself creatively, choosing interesting words and colorful phrases to spice up your compositions. You may prefer descriptive writing, which appeals to the five senses. Or perhaps you feel more comfortable with narrative writing, composing stories about yourself or others. Some students love to prove an argument or engage in a debate, which helps develop logical and critical thinking skills. Such students often enjoy giving their opinions in writing. Others prefer researching and writing a report.

Whichever student you are, WriteShop's incremental approach takes the guesswork out of how to write. If you enjoy writing, you will learn more sophisticated ways of expressing yourself by practicing with various types of compositions (descriptive, narrative, informative, and persuasive).

If writing overwhelms or discourages you, you will find that this program's step-by-step approach gives you the necessary tools to develop not just acceptable but excellent writing skills. Just as you learned how to do math equations or play a musical instrument, so too you can learn to write. As you learn, practice, and build on each concept or step, you will be able to express yourself more and more easily. Soon, you may even find yourself enjoying the writing process!

Note about the Teacher's Manual: Your parent or teacher will need to use the accompanying Teacher's Manual. This student book is not intended for you to work through completely on your own. First, it does not contain any answer keys to lesson activities or Skill Builders. Second, it does not provide complete instructions for the teacher. Finally, it does not have the tools your teacher needs to edit and evaluate your work.

The Writing Process: Easy As 1-2-3-4-5

1. **Brainstorm.**

- ☐ Never skip this important step. It gets your ideas flowing so you can write!
- ☐ There are many ways to brainstorm, such as lists, mind-maps, charts, Venn diagrams, word banks, writing clusters, outlines, etc. All of your *WriteShop* assignments include brainstorming suggestions.

2. **Write a "sloppy copy."**

- ☐ It does not have to be neat—just make sure it's readable!
- ☐ Skip lines as you write or double-space if typing.
- ☐ Check your "sloppy copy" against the "Content" and "Style" sections of your Writing Skills Checklist, making necessary corrections.

3. **Write your first revision.**

- ☐ This copy should be neatly written or typed.
- ☐ Continue to skip lines or double-space.
- ☐ When finished, check your newly revised copy against the "Mechanics" section of your Writing Skills Checklist, making necessary corrections.
- ☐ **Recheck** your paper for content and style and make corrections.
- ☐ Staple or paperclip everything together in proper order.
 - Brainstorming sheet or worksheet on the bottom
 - "Sloppy copy" on top of that
 - First revision on top of "sloppy copy"
 - Student Writing Skills Checklist on top of first revision

4. **Give your composition to your parent/teacher for editing and comments.**

- ☐ Your teacher will staple the Teacher Writing Skills Checklist on top.

5. **Write your final draft.**

- ☐ Make corrections using teacher suggestions from the Teacher Writing Skills Checklist or your paper.
- ☐ Type or neatly rewrite your final draft. Pay close attention to details.
- ☐ **Double-check** your paper against your Writing Skills Checklist to make sure style and mechanics are still okay, especially if you added sentences or made other major changes.
- ☐ Keep all papers together in their original order, attaching your final draft to the top
- ☐ Hand in your finished composition.

Sample Page Models

Page Model for Compositions Handwritten on Notebook Paper

- 1. All work written on notebook paper must use the headings shown in the following sample. Remember: *a/ways* indent the first line of every paragraph.
- 2. Get into the habit of writing on every other line. This leaves space for editing your work. (It is not necessary to skip lines for Skill Builders or other daily work.)
- 3. **Do not write on the back of the page.** Instead, continue on a second sheet of paper. Staple multiple copies together in the upper left corner.

●	First and Last Name Date Draft (sloppy copy, etc.) Title
	(skip this line)
	Indent the first line of a paragraph.
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
●	
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
●	

Page Model for Typed Compositions

1. All typed work must use the headings as in the following sample. Indent the first line of every paragraph about a half-inch (about 5 letters).
2. **Double-space** the body of the paragraph. This leaves room for editing your work. Type your name and date, single-spaced, in the upper right-hand corner. Then **triple-space** before typing the title, which should be centered. **Double-space** after the title to begin the body.
3. Use a **standard font** like Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri, preferably in 12-pt. font. Do not use bold print or excessively large or fancy fonts.
4. Do not print on the back of the page. Instead, continue on a second sheet of paper. Staple multiple copies together in the upper left corner.

(Leave a 1- to 1½-inch margin all around your paper.)

First and Last Name
 Date
 Draft (1st Revision, etc.)

(Triple-space after heading)

Title
(Double-space after title)

Indent ½" (about 5 letters) for each new paragraph.

Double-space the body of the composition. Double-spacing leaves plenty of room for editing.

If the composition requires a second or third paragraph, *do not* increase the spacing *between paragraphs*.

The spacing *between* each paragraph should be the same as the spacing of the body.

Ingredients for a Tasty Paragraph

Think of your paragraph as a cookie jar. The most important part of the jar is what's inside . . . it doesn't matter how decorative the jar is; it's what's inside that counts.

A paragraph contains several sentences that discuss and develop one thought. It is held together by one main idea. Without that common thread, you have just a group of separate sentences, not a paragraph.

Suppose someone gives you a gift. If you open it and find a jar marked "COOKIES," what do you expect to find in the jar? Cookies, right? Imagine finding a carrot in there, too! Wouldn't that be strange? All the sentences in a paragraph need to be **about the same subject**, or the paragraph will be just as surprising. Consider reading a paragraph about surfing and finding in it a sentence about shopping along the pier. That would be like the jar of cookies with a carrot in it!¹

Next, think about taking the jar out of the box and finding no lid on it. Would that work? A jar without a lid would let the cookies spill out. It certainly would not be a complete cookie jar. A paragraph must also have a kind of lid, or it feels incomplete. The "lid" of a paragraph is a good, interesting **beginning sentence** that gets a paragraph off to a good start.

Finally, imagine that your jar of cookies arrived with the bottom broken out. What would you expect to happen? A jar without a bottom would not be a complete jar. Its contents would fall out. An **ending sentence** that makes the paragraph feel closed is the "bottom" of a paragraph. Without it, the paragraph does not feel finished.

So, remember the three "ingredients" for a strong paragraph:

1. **One main idea.**
2. **An interesting topic sentence to introduce the reader to your subject.**
3. **An ending, or closing, sentence to sum up your paragraph.**

¹Credit for the "carrot in a cookie jar" idea goes to Susan Bradrick, *Understanding Writing* (Port Orchard, Wash.: Bradrick Family Enterprises, 1991).

Choosing a Topic and Closing Sentence

TOPIC SENTENCES

A topic sentence introduces the reader to your paragraph. It should be general enough to cover all that you will write about and interesting enough to catch your reader's attention.

Let's say you decide to write about apples. You observe an apple carefully and discover whether it is *sweet* or *tart*, *juicy* or *mushy*, *red* or *green*, *smooth* or *waxy*. Here are some possible TOPIC SENTENCES. Read each sentence and discover why each would be a good or poor choice to introduce your paragraph.

- ☐ I love to snack on fruit.

This is *not* a good topic sentence because it is too general. Your paragraph is not about fruit; it is about apples.

- ☐ Apples are sweet and juicy.
- ☐ Apples are crisp and tart.
- ☐ Apples are red and round.

These are *not* good topic sentences either; they are too specific. You are not writing your entire paragraph about how sweet and juicy your apple is—only a sentence or two. The same goes for the other two examples. The paragraph is about your apple, inside and out. Don't be too specific with your topic sentence.

- ☐ Apples make terrific snacks.
- ☐ I enjoy nothing better than a tasty apple.
- ☐ My mouth waters at the thought of a delicious apple.

These are *good* topic sentences! They tell the reader what the paragraph will be about—apples. They let you save the details about color, flavor, and texture for the body of the paragraph.

NOTE: These examples of topic sentences are *simplistic*. As you progress in your writing skills, your topic sentences will become more complex.

CLOSING SENTENCES

Follow the same rule when choosing a closing sentence. You want your closing sentence to *sum up* what you have said in the body of the paragraph:

I can't wait to devour my Jonathan apple. Its bright red color and smooth skin appeal to my sense of sight. I know that when I bite into it my taste buds will welcome that fresh burst of flavor. This apple could prove to be the crunchiest, crispest, most mouth-watering piece of fruit I've ever enjoyed. **Nothing is more satisfying than a fresh autumn apple.**

Glossary of Writing Terms

"Carrot in a cookie jar": A phrase or sentence that is either unrelated to the topic of the paragraph OR detracts from the paragraph's unity of thought.

Concise, conciseness: Using the fewest words possible to convey clear meaning. It is helpful to avoid slang, as well as vague, weak, and repeated words. Choose a few concrete words, rather than many unclear words, to communicate concisely.

Concrete, concreteness: Using colorful, descriptive, precise nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs to appeal to the reader's five senses.

Content: The purpose of a composition is to convey meaningful ideas to others. This is first accomplished through its *content*, which includes the subject matter, the title, and the purpose of the written piece (typically to describe, inform, narrate, or persuade, but also to encourage, amuse, instruct, or comfort).

Descriptive writing: Describing objects, scenery, experiences, etc., through vivid, well-chosen, sensory words to paint a word picture in the reader's mind.

Graciousness: The content and word choice should be appropriate for the intended audience. Gracious writing treats the reader with respect.

Informative writing: Informative writing, also called expository writing, is designed to explain. Factual details are presented in a sensible and organized manner. As with descriptive writing, specific, vivid words must be used to develop the subject matter clearly and logically.

Mechanics: Writing mechanics include the skills of spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Narrative writing: Often thought of as a *story*, narrative writing combines elements of description and explanation to recount an experience, event, or occurrence.

Paragraph: A division of a piece of writing typically formed by a group of three or more sentences. A true paragraph forms a unit of thought. Its first word is always indented. Generally, a paragraph has an introduction (topic sentence), some form of development (body), and a conclusion (closing sentence).

Parallelism: A pattern of repeated, similarly constructed phrases or sentences that use the same part of speech.

Example A: Susan is *loyal*, *kind*, and *truthful* (each of these is an adjective).

Example B: Exercising regularly helps teens *gain* strength, *develop* coordination, and *feel* more energetic (each is a verb).

Persuasive writing: Persuasive writing, also known as argumentation, presents facts and supporting details in a logical order to prove or disprove a point, to influence the reader's thinking or behavior, or to change someone's mind about an issue.

Sentence: A group of words that expresses a complete thought in the form of a statement, command, exclamation, or question. It contains at least a verb and a noun, begins with a capital letter, and ends with a punctuation mark.

Style: Style generally refers to writing technique. In order to express themselves meaningfully, writers select specific words and organize them in a specific way.

Wordy, wordiness (also known as **verbose** or **flowery**): The use of more words than are needed to express an idea; emphasizing style at the expense of thought.

Glossary of Sentence Variations

Using a variety of sentence types in one's writing creates a more interesting composition. The following parts of speech make effective sentence starters.

NOTE: For further discussion, explanation, or examples, rely on a good English handbook. Also, *Easy Writing* by Wanda Phillips (ISHA Enterprises) gives extensive practice with many of these sentence variations.

Adverb/adverbial phrase: Modifies a verb. Tells how, when, where, and to what extent (how much or how long). Many times an adverb will end in -ly.

Gratefully, Scott accepted the gift from his aunt.

Yesterday a sudden storm interrupted our barbecue.

Appositive: A specific kind of explanatory word or phrase that identifies or renames a noun or a pronoun. It is placed by the word it explains and is set off by commas. The exception is something that is essential to the meaning of the sentence. In the last example below, *Jackie* is essential if there is more than one older sister. This is why the appositive is *not* set off by commas.

- Marty, who lives next door, drives an old truck.
- The women in navy suits, flight attendants for Worldwide Airlines, boarded the plane.
- My older sister Jackie lives in Florida.

Infinitive: The simplest form of a verb, written as "to + verb" (to run, to shout, to eat). It takes practice to use an infinitive sentence starter yet avoid using a "to be" word.

- To play the piano with skill **is** difficult. (not recommended; uses a "to be" word)
- To play the piano with skill **requires** hours of diligent practice. (better; uses a concrete verb)

Metaphor: A word picture comparing things that are basically unlike but have striking similarities. A form of "to be" sometimes expresses the comparison.

Puffy white clouds were marshmallows in the morning sky.

Lucinda was a bitter woman whose heart was made of stone.

Soldiers at attention, the row of trees guarded the old mansion. (Note: Comparison between trees and soldiers is made without the use of a "to be" word.)

Paired adjectives: A pair of related adjectives used to begin a sentence. As with participles, the subject must agree with the adjectives.

Incorrect: Serene and peaceful, the cradle held the sleeping infant. (The crib is not serene and peaceful.)

Correct: Serene and peaceful, the sleeping infant lay in her cradle. (The sleeping infant is serene and peaceful.)

Paired adjectives may be opposites, often useful in showing conflict of emotions or to demonstrate "in spite of" or "nonetheless." Notice the use of *but* or *yet*.

Scared but willing, Mark crept to the edge of the high dive.

Elderly yet fun-loving, Grandpa joined us for a round of miniature golf.

Participle/participial phrase: A participle is a verb form. Adding "ing" to a verb forms a *present* participle. To form a *past* participle, add "ed" or "en."

Looking at the moon, the dog began to howl. (present participle)

Stunned by the fall, the cowboy rested before remounting his horse. (past participle)

The subject of the sentence must closely follow the participle. The participle and the subject must agree with one another, thus avoiding a **misplaced modifier**.

Incorrect: Trembling with fear, the stream was difficult for Casey to cross. (The stream did not tremble with fear.)

Correct: Trembling with fear, Casey crossed the stream with difficulty. (Casey trembled with fear.)

Prepositional phrase: Prepositions are relational words that usually tell *where* (*near*, *beside*) or *when* (*before*, *since*). A prepositional *phrase* begins with a preposition and ends with its object (*near the boat*, *beside a quiet stream*, *waters*, *before school*, *since early this morning*). Here are sentences that begin with a prepositional phrase:

Between lunch and dinner, the children played contentedly on the beach.

Under the bridge, a homeless drifter huddled in his thin blanket.

Note: Beware of mistaking a subordinate conjunction for a preposition. A subordinate conjunction becomes a preposition only if it has an object:

Incorrect: After the boys escaped from the burning building, they dashed to safety. (*The boys escaped* is an independent clause. In this case, *boys* is a subject, not an object. Therefore, *after* is a subordinate conjunction, not a preposition.)

Correct: After escaping from the burning building, the boys dashed to safety. (*Escaping* is a special verbal called a gerund, which functions as a noun. In this sentence, it serves as the object of the preposition.)

Correct: After dark, the boys escaped to safety. (The word *dark* is the object of the preposition.)

Simile: The difference between a metaphor and a simile is the use of the word "like" or "as" to make the comparison.

Puffy white clouds floated like marshmallows in the morning sky.

Laurie thought Daddy's beard felt as rough as sandpaper.

Like soldiers at attention, the row of trees guarded the old mansion.

Subject-verb: The subject appears at or near the beginning of the sentence; the verb follows. This is the most common (and most overused) sentence type.

Susie wandered along the path.

Five birds sat on Mr. Spreckel's picket fence.

Subordinate conjunction: This expresses relationship between the main clause and the subordinate clause. It may begin a sentence or appear within a sentence. We encourage students to begin at least one sentence with a subordinate conjunction for yet another alternative to the subject-verb opener. Here is a partial list:

after	although	as	because	before	even though	if
since	though	unless	until	when	whether	while

Incorrect: Before sunrise, John's neighbors arrived to help build the new barn.
("Sunrise" is the object, making "before" a preposition.)

Correct: Before the sun came up, John's neighbors arrived to help build the new barn. (Don't make the mistake of assuming that "before the sun" is a prepositional phrase. "The sun came up" is a clause, making "before" a subordinate conjunction.)

Transition words (also called coordinate conjunctions): These words often connect thoughts between sentences and paragraphs. Some are useful as conclusions. They are usually followed by a comma. Here are some possible transition words:

accordingly	also	additionally	besides	consequently	furthermore
however	instead	likewise	meanwhile	nevertheless	therefore

Furthermore, a well-trained dog will not chew or dig.

Therefore, young children should be taught to speak a second language.

WriteShop I at a Glance: Scope and Sequence

Lesson #	Lesson Title	Lesson Focus	Skill Builder Focus
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Unit 1: Descriptive Writing

1	Describing an Object	Concrete Writing	Concrete Writing
2	Describing a Pet	Conciseness	Using a Thesaurus
3	Describing a Person	Learning to Edit	Paired Adjectives
4	Describing a Circus Performer	Concrete Writing	Topic Sentences
5	Describing a Food	Sensory Description	Choosing Appropriate Titles; Its vs. It's
6	Describing a Season	Limiting Narration	Choosing Concrete Season Words; Using Similes
7	Describing a Place	Limiting Narration	Present Participles

Unit 2: Informative Writing

8	Explaining a Process	Informative Writing	Arranging in Time Sequence Order
9	Writing a Factual Paragraph	Informative Report; Avoiding Plagiarism	Introductory Participial Phrases; Participles as Similes
10	Writing a Concise Biography	Conciseness	Appositives; "-ly" Adverbs
11	Introducing Journalism	News Article	Five Ws; Writing a Lead Paragraph

Unit 3: Narrative Writing

12	Writing a Narrative of an Emotional Event	Narratives	Prepositional Phrases
13	Writing a Narrative of Another Person's Experience	Conducting an Interview	(no Skill Builder)
14	First-Person Point of View	Point of View; Personification	Using Personification
15	First-Person Point of View	Limited Omniscience	Tense Agreement
16	Third-Person Point of View	Omniscience	Past Participles

WriteShop II at a Glance: Scope and Sequence

Lesson #	Lesson Title	Lesson Focus	Skill Builder Focus
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Unit 4: Review of WriteShop I

17	Describing an Object	Reviewing Concreteness	Reviewing Paired Adjectives, Similes, Present Participles
18	Describing a Place	Reviewing Sensory Description	Reviewing Prepositional Phrases, Adverbs, Appositives
19	Writing a Short Report	Outlining	Reviewing Personification; Using Past Participles as Adjectives

Unit 5: Advanced Descriptive Narration

20	Exaggeration	Descriptive/Informative Descriptive/Persuasive	Communicating Clearly; Incorrect Word Usage; Overly Descriptive Writing
21	First-Person Point of View, Part 1	Limited Omniscience; Descriptive Narration	Writing Descriptive Narration
22	First-Person Point of View, Part 2	Limited Omniscience; Changing Points of View	Descriptive Narration
23	Narrative Voice	First- and Third-Person Narration	(no Skill Builder)

Unit 6: Persuasive Writing and Essays

24	Writing an Ad	Persuasive Writing	(no Skill Builder)
25	Opinion Essay	Developing Points through Outlining	Using Parallelism
26	Letter to the Editor	Developing Points through Outlining	(no Skill Builder)
27	Compare or Contrast Essay	Organizing Information	(no Skill Builder)
28	Compare or Contrast Essay	Organizing Information	(no Skill Builder)
29	Essays That Describe or Define	Developing Points through Outlining	(no Skill Builder)
30	Timed Essays	Writing within a Time Limit	(no Skill Builder)

Choosing a Schedule

Two-Week Lesson Plan (Standard)

Recommended for most students, this track takes them through one book in one year.

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
Student Focus	Pre-writing Activities Day One Skill Builder	With teacher, brainstorm & write Practice Paragraph Day Two Skill Builder	Brainstorm for the Sloppy Copy Day Three Skill Builder	Write Sloppy Copy	Off
Teacher/Parent Focus	Intro new concepts and terms	Guide the Practice Paragraph session			
Copying/Dictation	Copying		Dictation		

	Day Six	Day Seven	Day Eight	Day Nine	Day Ten
Student Focus	Edit Sloppy Copy Write First Revision		Polish Final Draft Turn in for evaluation		Off
Teacher/Parent Focus		Edit student's First Revision		Grade student's Final Draft	
Copying & Dictation	Copying		Dictation		

One-Week Lesson Plan (Accelerated)

The fast track covers both levels—WriteShop I and II—in one academic year.

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
Student Focus	Pre-Writing Activities With teacher, brainstorm & write Practice Paragraph Day One Skill Builder	Brainstorm for and write Sloppy Copy Day Two Skill Builder	Edit Sloppy Copy and write First Revision Day Three Skill Builder		Polish Final Draft Turn in for evaluation
Teacher/ Parent Focus	Introduce new concepts Guide the Practice Paragraph session			Edit student's First Revision	Grade student's Final Draft
Copying & Dictation	Copying		Dictation		

Common Proofreading Terms and Symbols

Note to Student	Margin Note	Mark the Text	After Correction
capitalize	cap	the <u>american</u> flag	the American flag
use lower case	lc	my G randma	my grandma
insert word or phrase		adj. her [^] hair	her long, golden hair
delete word or phrase		the old, cracked , chipped vase	the old, chipped vase
close space		Answer  the phone  .	Answer the phone.
increase space		Mrs.  Smith arrived early.	Mrs. Smith arrived early.
indent (or increase indent)		→ Soon after, the . . .	Soon after, the . . .
spelling error	sp	^{sp} benifit	benefit
insert period		Read your book 	Read your book.
insert comma		Tom, Elise  and Mark	Tom, Elise, and Mark
begin a new paragraph		Fido followed me home.  The next day we ran an ad in . . .	Fido followed me home. The next day we ran . . .
sentence fragment (incomplete)	frag (or inc)	^{frag} Before the movie began.	Before the movie began, Dad bought popcorn.
run-on sentence	ro	^{ro} The water felt like ice we jumped out right away.	The water felt like ice. We jumped out right away.
misplaced modifier	mm	^{mm} Crisp and buttery, Mary makes delicious cookies.	Crisp and buttery, Mary's cookies taste delicious.
awkward	awk	^{awk} Blooming with delicate pink roses describes my garden.	My garden blooms with delicate pink roses.

Common Problems of Mechanics

The following pages illustrate some of the most common errors of grammar and punctuation. In order to watch for these in your writing, you must be sure to have a clear understanding of these common problems of mechanics. This is not intended to give complete instruction but to simply offer examples. Please refer to your English handbook for further clarification. If you see repeated problems, address them with a grammar curriculum.

CONFUSION BETWEEN PLURAL AND POSSESSIVE

Many students have trouble with this. PLEASE REVIEW THIS CONCEPT! Common examples include:

□ ***it's* instead of *its***

1. An apostrophe shows ownership when used with a noun. For example: *This necklace is Mom's, the gentleman's book, or that dog's rawhide bone*
2. Possessive pronouns DO NOT use apostrophes, as in *This necklace is hers, his book, and "its bone.*
3. *It's* is a contraction for *it is*.
4. **Tip:** If you are tempted to write *it's* substitute *it is* to see if the sentence makes sense. If not, use *its*.

□ **Making plural nouns possessive.** Remember—*more than one of a noun is plural*. But if a noun shows ownership, it is possessive. Here are some examples:

Incorrect: My **shell's** have a hollow cavity containing **grain's** of sand.
(This example shows plurals incorrectly written as possessives.)

Correct: My **shells** have a hollow cavity containing **grains** of sand.
(Add /s/ to the end of most nouns to make a plural—no apostrophe!)

Also correct: My **shells'** hollow cavities contain grains of sand.
(This example shows ownership—*more than one* shell.)

My **shell's** hollow cavity contains grains of sand.
(This example shows ownership—*only one* shell.)

HOMONYM CONFUSION

□ **Beware of homonym confusion.** Students often misuse words like *are* and *our*.

1. *Are* (pronounced "ahr") is a "be" word (is, am, **are**, was, etc.). *Our* is a possessive pronoun meaning *belonging to us*. If you start to spell the word A-R-E, you should

ask yourself if you meant to use a "to be" word. If not, then you should use the O-U-R spelling.

2. *There/their/they're* and *your/you're* are also commonly confused homonyms.

Incorrect: I hope **your** having a wonderful vacation. ("your" = possessive/ownership)

Correct: I hope **you're** having a wonderful vacation. ("you're" = you + are)

INCOMPLETE SENTENCES (FRAGMENTS)

❑ **A sentence must have a subject and a verb.**

Incorrect: My birthday, the most exciting day of the year. (no verb)

Correct: My birthday, the most exciting day of the year, **falls** on July 4th.
(verb) ^

Incorrect: And next visited the amazing Mt. Rushmore. (missing subject; begins with "and")

Correct: Next **we** visited the amazing Mt. Rushmore.
(subject) ^

RUN-ON SENTENCES

❑ **Comma splice** (two sentences separated by a comma)

Incorrect: I fan the pages, the musty smell of the book blows on my face.
^

Correct 1: I fan the pages. The musty smell of the book blows on my face.

Correct 2: I fan the pages; the musty smell of the book blows on my face.

Correct 3: I fan the pages, and the musty smell of the book blows on my face.

Correct 4: As I fan the pages, the musty smell of the book blows on my face.

Incorrect: The rosebush is in full bloom, it bears showy pink blossoms.
^

Correct 1: The rosebush is in full bloom. It bears showy pink blossoms.

Correct 2: The rosebush, in full bloom, bears showy pink blossoms.

Correct 3: When in full bloom, the rosebush bears showy pink blossoms.

Correct 4: When the rosebush is in full bloom, it bears showy pink blossoms.

□ **Two complete sentences that run together**

Incorrect: This rock is angular and sharp it has a smooth, glassy surface.
^

Correct 1: This rock is angular and sharp. It has a smooth, glassy surface.

Correct 2: This rock is angular and sharp; it has a smooth, glassy surface.

Even better:

Correct 3: This rock is angular and sharp with a smooth, glassy surface.

Correct 4: This sharp, angular rock feels smooth and glassy.

Correct 5: Angular and sharp, this rock has a smooth, glassy surface.

Correct 6: Although angular and sharp, this rock has a smooth, glassy surface.

□ **Rambling sentences** (leave the reader feeling "breathless")

Incorrect: This enormous tree is growing dark green, loose, thin, soft leaves which hang down from the branches that chatter in the wind reminding me of camping in Dogwood.
(Sentence is too long; too many adjectives.)

Correct 1: This enormous tree grows soft, thin leaves that hang loosely from the branches. Chattering in the wind, they remind me of camping in Dogwood.

Correct 2: The tree's thin, dark green leaves loosely hang from the branches. When they chatter in the wind, I think of camping in Dogwood.

Incorrect: Interesting and odd, like a dog, the Arctic wolf looks solemn and kind yet at times when it hunts it may look mean and ferocious which makes it seem not pleasant at all.
(Sentence is wordy and rambling; too much information; incorrect word choices.)

Correct 1: Although the Arctic wolf can seem as gentle as a pet dog, it becomes mean and ferocious when it hunts.

Correct 2: Deceptively friendly in appearance, the Arctic wolf becomes mean and ferocious when it hunts.

INCORRECT USE OF COMMAS

❑ Breaking up a sentence with a comma

Incorrect: Square dancing at Riley's Farm, always makes my feet tired.

^

Correct: Square dancing at Riley's Farm always makes my feet tired.

❑ Comma suggestions

3. Commas tend to be overused. When in doubt, leave it out.
4. DO use a comma at the end of a phrase, like:
 Suddenly lurching, the train jumped the tracks.
 Gazing up at the stars, I marvel at the universe.
5. DO use a comma to set off an appositive:
 Senator Smith, the man in the blue coat, spoke at the rally.
 That shaggy dog, a pure-bred collie, needs grooming.
6. DO NOT use a comma to separate two complete sentences.
7. DO NOT use a comma where there is no natural pause. It helps if you read the sentence aloud and pause dramatically at the comma. Does the comma fit? Does the sentence flow well? Does it sound better without the comma?
8. DO double-check usage in a grammar handbook when you are unsure.

MISPLACED MODIFIERS

❑ Subject agreement

When writing a participial phrase, paired adjective phrase, or adverbial phrase, the subject of that phrase must appear **next to** or **near** the participial phrase.
 (Note: these types of phrases are usually set off by commas.)

1. Participial Phrase

Incorrect: Chasing their tails, **the crowd of children** laughed at the silly dogs.

Correct: Chasing their tails, **the silly dogs** amused the crowd of children.

When writing a participial phrase, ask yourself questions such as “Did the crowd of children chase their tails, or did the silly dogs chase their tails?” This will help you decide if your sentence makes sense.

Notice that in the correct sentence, the subject of the sentence (*the dogs*) appears right after the participial phrase (*chasing their tails*).

2. Adverbial Phrase

Incorrect: Noisily squealing, **Dad** took the car to the brake shop for repairs.

Correct: Noisily squealing, **the car** needed to have its brakes repaired.

Again, ask yourself the same questions. “Did Dad squeal noisily, or did the car squeal noisily?” In the correct sentence, the car, which is obviously the right answer, appears immediately after the participial phrase that modifies it.

3. Paired Adjective Phrase

Incorrect: Crisp and brown, I **ate** my toast with butter and jam.

Correct: Crisp and brown, **my toast** tasted delicious with butter and jam.

Who or what is crisp and brown? This is the subject that should closely follow the comma. In this case, toast is the correct subject.

Unit 4:

Reviewing the Basics

Lesson 17: Describing an Object

This assignment requires some detective skills, calling on you to use your keen powers of observation (your five senses). If this is your first descriptive writing assignment as a WriteShop student, here are the main rules.

- *Do* describe how the object looks, sounds, smells, and feels.
- *Do* use concrete, specific words to describe your object.
- *Do not* tell how the object is used.
- *Do not* tell a story.

Here is an example of how to describe an object.

The Wedding Gown

My sister's wedding dress hangs from a hook in her room. Sheer and filmy, snow-white organza covers the satin lining in a soft mist. Floral appliques, as fresh as daisies, adorn the V-necked bodice and cap sleeves. The detailing is delicate and lovely. Draping to the ground, a flowing train makes the gown seem ten feet tall. Three satin roses on the back hide the hooks Karah will use to bustle her train. She will make a radiant bride in her graceful gown.

Guidelines and Tips

1. Pick an object to describe. Look for something with several interesting aspects, such as a car or bike, child's toy, electronic gadget, action figure, sporting equipment, element from nature, jewelry or clothing item, musical instrument, or piece of furniture.
2. Do choose an object you can observe and handle.
3. Do not describe a food, a person, or a live animal.
4. As you study your object, use "Observing an Object Worksheet" (p. 17-3). Instead of writing directly on the worksheet, use lined paper to make your notes.
5. A good topic sentence should never say, "I am going to describe a _____," or "Let me tell you about my _____." Think creatively!
6. Do not try to describe every detail you observed.
7. Avoid the phrases "it looks," "it feels," "it sounds," etc.
8. Telling how the object reminds you of something else is a good descriptive technique. Instead of writing, "Its smell (or its texture) reminds me of _____," try saying, "Its musty odor reminds me of _____," or "When I touch its scratchy surface, I think of _____."

Write the Paragraph

For your first assignment, write one descriptive paragraph that's **6-9 sentences long**—no more, no fewer. Use this checklist as a guide.

- ☐ BEFORE YOU BEGIN WRITING: Complete all three Skill Builders to learn or review how to use some interesting sentence variations. (Skill Builders begin on p. 17-5).
- ☐ If you have not used WriteShop I before, use only the following three sentence variations:
 - **Paired adjectives** (See the Word Lists at the back of this workbook for possible word choices, especially pp. 18-22.)
 - **Present participial phrase**
 - **Simile**
- ☐ If you are a continuing WriteShop student, also add these sentence variations.
 - **Adverb or adverbial phrase**
 - **Prepositional phrase**
 - **Appositive**
- ☐ Don't use more than one "to be" word in your paragraph (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, or been*).
- ☐ Include one sentence of six or fewer words.
- ☐ Include at least one subject-verb sentence.
- ☐ To help you choose vivid, concrete words, use the Word Lists from the back of your WriteShop II Student Workbook. Start here:
 - Sound Words (pp. 18-19)
 - Taste and Smell Words (p. 20)
 - Texture Words (p. 21)
 - Visual Words (p. 22)
- ☐ Use your thesaurus or *Synonym Finder* to replace boring or vague words with stronger, more concrete ones.
- ☐ Avoid weak, overused words, such as the ones on p. 17 of your Word Lists.
- ☐ End with a closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending.

Lesson 17: Observing an Object Worksheet

Look closely at your object. Hunt for unusual, intricate, or interesting details. Use these questions as a guide to help you carefully describe your object. ***Take notes on lined paper and/or make a mind-map.***

Appearance: Use the "Visual Words" list (p. 22) and "Color Words" list (p. 8) at the back of this workbook for ideas.

- ☐ What color(s) is it?
- ☐ How is it shaped or formed?
- ☐ What are its features?
- ☐ What is its surface like?
- ☐ What does its appearance remind you of?
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____

Texture: Use the "Texture Words" list at the back of this workbook.

- ☐ What does it feel like? Is it smooth or rough, soft or hard, furry or scaly, or . . . ?
- ☐ What does its texture remind you of?
- ☐ Other _____

Smell: Use the "Taste and Smell Words" list at the back of this workbook. *Not every object will have a smell. Keep your audience in mind—avoid being crude or gross.*

- ☐ What does it smell like?
- ☐ How does the smell make you feel or react?
- ☐ What does its smell remind you of?
- ☐ Other _____

Sound: Use the "Sound Words" lists at the back of this workbook.

- ☐ Does it make a noise or a sound?
- ☐ What do its sounds remind you of?
- ☐ Other _____

Perhaps you can come up with your own interesting questions as you investigate your object. Add them to the blank "Other" space under each category above.

Lesson 17: Skill Builder

Sentence Variation Review, Part 1

DAY ONE *Paired Adjectives*

Writing can become tired and boring if sentence structure is not varied. **Paired Adjectives** can begin sentences in a more interesting way, using words that relate together to describe the subject of the sentence.

A child can be **bright and expressive** or **tearful and confused**.

A wolf could be **vicious and fearsome** or **exhausted and hungry**.

Opposite pairs are also effective:

Fearful yet determined could describe a jittery athlete.

Excited but nervous might describe Liam as he gets ready to ride a roller coaster for the first time.

Alliteration (using words that start with the same sound) also adds interest:

wounded and weary

timid and tense

Be sure to place a comma after the paired adjectives. The paired adjectives must describe the subject **immediately following the comma**.

Example: The clown was humorous and jovial as he entertained the audience.

Correct: Humorous and jovial, **the clown** entertained the audience.

Incorrect: Humorous and jovial, **the audience** watched the entertaining clown.

Directions

A. Rewrite the following sentences to begin with paired adjectives.

1. The orphans were confused and hungry as they huddled together in the dark alley.

2. Jamie was tired yet exuberant when he won the drag race.

3. The rolling ripples of the lake were gentle and peaceful as they lapped the shore.

B. Combine the following sentences, beginning each with paired adjectives. When appropriate, use *yet* or *but*.

1. I surprised myself when I hit the home run. I was shocked.

2. Dad was enthusiastic when he told me tales about his childhood. He was animated as he described his adventures.

3. My huge St. Bernard likes to play fetch. He is gentle when we play.

4. The hurricane victims were cut and bruised. They emerged wearily from their shelter.

C. Sometimes it's fun to vary your use of a now-common sentence variation like paired adjectives. For instance, try developing more advanced paired adjective phrases.

Example

strong as an ox; mighty in spirit (subject: Paul Bunyan)

Strong as an ox and mighty in spirit, Paul Bunyan pushed down the pine trees and stopped the flood!

1. kind to animals; gentle-natured (subject: Jeremy)

2. enthusiastic pilot; avid fisherman (subject: Uncle Bob)

3. sweet as honey; golden brown (subject: Mom's muffins)

DAY TWO *Similes*

A **simile** is a figure of speech comparing two things that are basically unlike but have striking similarities. The words like and as help make the comparison. When writing a simile, ask yourself how the subject of your sentence behaves like or looks like something else with that you are familiar. For instance, how is a field like an ocean? How is a fierce storm like a hammer? How is a horse like a train? How is the sun like a great furnace?

Notice how the word *like* is generally used to compare a verb (action) and a noun (person, place, or thing).

- Each star twinkles **like** a jewel. (compares the verb "twinkled" with the noun "jewel")
- The rain thundered on the roof **like** a herd of wild ponies. (compares the verb "thundered" with the noun "ponies")

On the other hand, the word *as* usually compares two nouns that have similarities.

- The boy ran **as swiftly as** an eagle. (compares a swift boy with a swift eagle)
- Fluffy **as** cotton candy, the clouds drifted across the sky. (compares fluffy clouds with fluffy cotton candy)

Directions

A. Using similes, fill in the blanks. Be descriptive! Use several words in each blank. Stay away from tired, overused similes, such as "black as coal" or "black as night."

Acceptable: as high as a kite

Better: as high as a soaring kite

1. as black as _____
2. as crunchy as _____
3. sparkling like _____
4. as refreshing as _____
5. twirling like _____

A. Using similes, finish these sentence starters. Compare with "like" or "as."

1. My ice-cold glass of lemonade _____
2. The winter snow _____
3. The fire popped and crackled _____
4. The fog _____
5. From the rooftop, the city lights _____

DAY THREE *Present Participles*

A **present participle** is a verb ending in -ing. **Present-participial phrases** begin with an -ing verb. A sentence can begin with a single participle (one word) or with a participial phrase (two or more words).

Infinitive Verb Form	Present Participle
to argue	arguing
to fish	fishing
to hug	hugging

Directions

A. Write a present participle for the following verbs, and then add a word or group of words to make a participial phrase. *Hint:* A participle followed by a *prepositional* phrase creates an interesting *participial* phrase. You might also follow your participle with an adverb or noun.

Example: to sleep sleeping on the worn sofa (participle + prepositional phrase)
to sing singing softly (participle + adverb)
to eat eating barbecued burgers (participle + noun phrase)

1. to laugh: _____
2. to stroll: _____
3. to comfort: _____
4. to throw: _____
5. to explore: _____

B. Place an appropriate participle (or participial phrase) in the following sentences:

1. _____, the football player ran onto the field.
2. _____, two trapeze artists met in midair.
3. _____, a stranded surfer called for help.
4. _____, Maria counted her money.
5. _____, Jacob's team took the lead.

When you place a participial phrase at the beginning of a sentence, you must add a comma and then follow with the subject (who or what the sentence is about). The remaining information comes after the subject.

Example 1: Barking loudly, Max woke the entire family.

(participial phrase) (subject)

A sentence can also begin with the subject, followed by a comma and a participial phrase. The remainder of the sentence then follows the participial phrase.

Example 2: Max, barking loudly, woke the entire family.

(subject) (participial phrase)

C. Combine and rewrite the following sentences. On line “a,” begin with the participial phrase. On line “b,” begin with the subject followed by the participial phrase.

Example: The dog was sniffing the floor. The dog searched for food.

a. Sniffing the floor, the dog searched for food.

b. The dog, sniffing the floor, searched for food.

1. The girl was running down the hall. The girl dropped her books.

a. _____

b. _____

2. His dad was watching a movie. His dad ate pretzels.

a. _____

b. _____

3. Mom is expecting guests. Mom is baking a chocolate cake.

a. _____

b. _____

4. The ballerina floated like a butterfly. She danced gracefully.

a. _____

b. _____

Lesson 17: Student Writing Skills Checklist

After you write your "sloppy copy," go over it carefully with this checklist.

1. If you can answer "yes" to a question, place a check in the box.
2. If you answer "no," leave the box blank.
3. If the checklist asks you to do so, make marks or corrections on your "sloppy copy."
4. Use the checklist to help you edit your work before you revise it.
5. Once you have made changes and written your first revision, double-check your new draft again.

CONTENT (*Check all drafts against this list.*)

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I describe the features of my object without telling a story or explaining its purpose?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does the title capture the essence of my composition?

STYLE (*Check all drafts against this list.*)

- ☐ Did I write a strong topic sentence that introduces my composition?
- ☐ Did I use no more than one "to be" word (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)? **Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague/weak words in green and find synonyms for them.
- ☐ Have I correctly used these sentence variations in my composition?
If you did not use WriteShop I, only include these: If you are a continuing WriteShop student, also use these:
 ___ began a sentence with paired adjectives ___ began a sentence with an -ly adverb
 ___ began a sentence with a present participle ___ began a sentence with a prepositional phrase
 ___ included a simile ___ included an appositive
 ___ included a subject-verb sentence
- ☐ Have I included a sentence of six words or fewer?
- ☐ Did I write concisely by **crossing out** unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

MECHANICS (*Check all drafts against this list.*)

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I follow proper format on pp. ii-iii (correct placement/size of title; correct spacing, font size, etc.)?
- ☐ Does my paragraph have 6-9 sentences? How many? ____
- ☐ Did I indent the first sentence of the paragraph and leave margins around the text?
- ☐ Did I skip every other line? (If not, before rewriting, draw a light **X** on each line I need to skip.)
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes.
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I **correctly** use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed? This includes making corrections before I write my revision.
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in order: Brainstorming worksheet on the bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neat revision next, and this Writing Checklist on top?

Lesson 17: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described the features of the object without telling a story or explaining its purpose |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence introduces the composition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than one "to be" word (<i>is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words (specific, vivid, and sensory) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used each of the following sentence variations (check each one) |
- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>If student did not use WriteShop I, only include these:</i> | <i>Add these for a continuing WriteShop student:</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> began with paired adjectives | <input type="checkbox"/> began with an -ly adverb phrase |
| <input type="checkbox"/> began with a present participle | <input type="checkbox"/> began with a prepositional phrase |
| <input type="checkbox"/> included a simile | <input type="checkbox"/> included an appositive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> included a subject-verb sentence | |
- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included a sentence of six words or fewer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence |

MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 6-9 sentences long |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used Writing Skills Checklist, including using colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed. Made corrections before revising. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Describing an Object

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a template for handwriting practice or general note-taking. The margins are consistent on all sides.

Name _____

Subject of Composition _____

Title _____

COMPOSITION EVALUATION

Content 15 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Mechanics 10 points

10 _____

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____

_____ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

Additional Comments and Feedback

Lesson 18: Describing a Place

Descriptive writing brings ordinary objects and events to life. It's an important skill to practice and develop.

You don't have to be there in person to write about a location or a setting. By drawing on your memory and creativity, you can still make the description colorful, concrete, and interesting for your reader. Using your senses to write a descriptive composition will make your readers feel like they're right there! Don't focus too sharply on any one object, animal, or scenic spot. Instead, give a **broad picture** of the entire place.

Think about how to describe a scenic painting to a friend. You wouldn't tell him only about the clouds or maple trees. You'd explain the entire setting, from sky to earth. To make it even more vivid, you might also describe the sound of the rushing river, the hoot of the owl, and the scent of wildflowers. Keep these thoughts in mind as you begin to write.

Don't confuse this assignment with narrative writing, which describes the sequence of events during an activity, like a birthday party, a hike to a waterfall, or a field trip to a museum. (We discuss narrative writing in later lessons.) This is still a *descriptive writing assignment*. Stay on target by following directions carefully. Write only about what you would experience with your senses. Here's an example.

A Walk in the Woods

by Hunter, age 16

Trekking through a dense forest, I breathe deeply to catch the refreshing fragrance of pine. A mountain breeze rustles the evergreen branches and sends dry needles scattering to the ground. Steep granite cliffs rise from the forest floor. Like giant sentinels, they keep silent watch over the woodland. Below me, a swollen brook follows the narrow trail. Sparkling and clear, the gurgling water splashes and dances over the smooth stones.

Along the bank, a mule deer and her spotted fawn drink from a quiet pool. A twig snaps. Nervously, the pair sprint into the dense thicket, disturbing a raucous blue jay. It fluffs its sapphire feathers, scolding and chattering as I round the bend. The forest, a haven for wildlife, hums and buzzes with the drone of mosquitoes and lazy yellow bees. As the day draws to a close, slanted shafts of sunlight filter across my path. I turn toward home and whisper goodbye to this sylvan paradise.

Directions

1. On the "Sensory Worksheet for Describing a Place" (p. 18-3), write one of the participial phrase sentence starters in the space provided. Place a comma after the last word and follow the comma with your subject, such as "I," "my cousin and I," or "Daniel and I." Finish the sentence by adding your own ending. This is your opening sentence.
2. Make a mind-map. Label each bubble with one of the five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, texture). Fill in sensory details that describe your setting.
3. National park and *National Geographic* websites are good sources of ideas. You may find it helpful to have a photo in front of you before you begin brainstorming.
4. Using at least three of your senses, write your "sloppy copy" as **two** paragraphs. **Each** paragraph must be 5-7 sentences long.
 - Paragraph 1: Focus on scenery, such as landforms, plant life, and weather.
 - Paragraph 2: Focus mostly on wildlife, such as animals, birds, and insects.
5. Write in either present tense or past tense. Remain consistent by using the **same tense** throughout your composition. Whether you're writing in present or past tense, present participle sentence starters work with both.
6. Use a transition word from your "Transitions and Conjunctions" list (pp. 14-15) when you begin the second paragraph. (Even if it's not on your list, a prepositional phrase can sometimes make a good transition.) To better understand when to start a new paragraph, see below.
7. When making revisions, check that you've used all the sentence variations listed on your Student Writing Skills Checklist.
8. FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS
 - *Do not* focus on *your* activity; the composition isn't about what *YOU* are doing. Your hike, walk, or trek is just a means to describe what your senses experience.
 - *Do* describe what you see, hear, smell, feel, or taste; the paragraph *is* about what's happening *all around you*.
 - Some narration will be necessary. Just be careful not to turn this into a story.

TRANSITIONS: When to Change Paragraphs

1. When you shift to a different idea about the subject
2. When you change the scene
3. When you move ahead in time

Lesson 18: Sensory Worksheet for Describing a Place

Write your composition in first person, describing the account as if it has happened to you. *Any of these starters* may be modified to include just you, or they may include you and another person. Look at the example paragraph on p. 18-5 to see how to do this. If you add a character, don't build a story or create interaction between you and them.

Keep your attention on the scene.

Choose one of the following sentence starters:

- Trekking through a dense forest
- Crossing over the wooden bridge
- Meandering along the sandy shore
- Hiking through the Amazon jungle
- Discovering a walled garden
- Exploring the island's ancient ruins
- Stepping onto the surface of the alien planet
- Passing through the portal into a fantasy world

Examples: a) Trekking through a dense forest, my brother James and I scatter fallen oak leaves that litter our path. (*present tense*)

b) Crossing over the wooden bridge, I caught the music of the gurgling stream that flowed over the rocks below. (*past tense*)

Write your opening sentence. Begin with one of the sentence starters above. Follow the sentence starter with a comma. Write "I" (or "name and I") and finish the sentence.

Write several sensory words on each line. What might you see? Hear? Feel? Smell?

Sights: _____

Sounds: _____

Textures: _____

Smells: _____

Lesson 18: Practicing with Two Paragraphs

Directions

1. Read the paragraph below. Notice that it focuses on the scenery.
2. Write a closing sentence to end the first paragraph.
3. Use a transition word to begin a new paragraph.
4. Write your second paragraph. Continue on page 18-6 if you need more space.

Hiking down a desert trail, my brother and I kick clouds of dust behind us. Although we try to walk quietly, our feet crunch along the gravelly path. The sun, lowering in the afternoon sky, bakes us with its intensity. Heat waves rise from the ground like shimmering ribbons, distorting the scenery. Even the twisted old Joshua trees seem to quiver in the blistering air.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Lesson 18: Skill Builder

Sentence Variation Review, Part 2

DAY ONE *Prepositional Phrases*

A **preposition** is a relational word that usually tells "where" or "when." (Find a list of prepositions on p. 12 of the "Word Lists" section.) By itself, a preposition is useless in a sentence. To be a true preposition, and to make sense in the sentence, a preposition must be used in a **prepositional phrase**.

A prepositional phrase **always begins with a preposition** and **always ends with a noun or a pronoun**. Because a preposition is a relational word, it must relate to—or meet—an object.

DURING is a preposition. Let's look at two sentences that include the word *during*.

1. **Instead of arriving at the beginning of the game, Lucas showed up *during*.**

Because this sentence doesn't end in a noun or pronoun, *during* won't work as a preposition in this example. It doesn't state "during what." This means the sentence is written incorrectly.

2. **Lucas showed up *during the fifth inning*.**

Better! *During the fifth inning* is a complete prepositional phrase because the preposition (during) meets an object (inning).

Look at these:

Preposition

under

since

through

Object

her Grandma's ***bed***

Tuesday

the steep-walled ***canyon***

A. Using your list of prepositions (see Word Lists, p. 12), write three sentences beginning with prepositional phrases. Then, **circle** the prepositional phrase in ORANGE pencil.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

B. Look through a book you're currently reading or studying. Find three sentences that begin with prepositional phrases and write them on the lines below. Then, **circle** the prepositional phrases with an ORANGE colored pencil.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

DAY TWO *Adverbs*

Adverbs tell how, when, where, and to what extent (how much or how long). To make a verb, adjective, or another adverb even more concrete, try adding an adverb.

Examples

Adverb added to a **verb**: Mia **shouted** to her brother. How did Mia shout?
 Mia **shouted loudly** to her brother.

Adverb added to an **adjective**: Friday was a **clear** day. To what extent was Friday clear?
 Friday was a **delightfully clear** day.

Adverb added to another **adverb**: Mateo **caught the ball easily**. How easily?
 Mateo caught the ball **fairly easily**.

Because adverbs can often be moved around within the sentence, you can vary the structure of a sentence by beginning with an adverb or adverbial phrase, that is an adverb followed by one or more words and a comma.

- Examples**
1. The dog barked **viciously**.
 2. The dog **viciously** barked.
 3. Barking **viciously**, the dog woke the neighbors.
 4. **Viciously**, the dog barked, waking the neighbors.
 5. **Viciously** barking, the dog woke the neighbors.

All these ideas can add appeal to your writing. However, pay special attention to Numbers 4 and 5. See how beginning the sentence with a single adverb ("viciously") or an adverbial phrase ("viciously barking") make it even more interesting and effective?

Directions

- A. On the lines below, write three sentences of your own (or find examples in a book) that begin with a single adverb, as in Number 4 on the previous page: **"Viciously**, the dog _____. " Look at your "Adverbs (-ly)" word lists on p. 2 for ideas.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Now circle each single adverb in PINK (or light red) colored pencil.

- B. On the lines below, write three sentences of your own (or find examples in a book) that begin with adverbial phrases, as in Number 5 on the previous page: ("**Viciously barking**, the dog _____. "

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Now circle each adverbial phrase in PINK (or light red) colored pencil.

DAY THREE *Appositives*

An **appositive** is a group of words that explains something in a sentence. It is always placed by the word it explains. You will set off your appositive with commas (unless it is a one-word name).

Appositives also serve the important function of helping eliminate "be" verbs from your writing. Note the bolded appositives in the following examples.

Shelby's aunt, **the woman in the green dress**, arrived from New York City.

His goal, **to hit twenty home runs**, seemed impossible to some.

My cousin **Amelia** wears pigtails in hot weather. (no comma for one-word names)

Shane, **our team leader**, carried a canvas pack.

Directions

Place a brown "x" on the "be" word in each of the following sentences. Then combine the sentence pairs. Use an appositive in each and eliminate the "be" word.

1. Margaret Smith is the museum curator. She supervises the dinosaur exhibit.

2. Mr. Elway's mailbox is a red airplane. It attracts attention in our neighborhood.

3. I delivered flowers to Mrs. Monroe. Mrs. Monroe is my piano teacher.

4. My uncle is a policeman. My uncle visited Parker School to talk about neighborhood crime.

5. We camped in Yosemite. Yosemite is a majestic national park.

6. Please take this note to Senator Smith. Senator Smith is the man in the striped shirt.

7. Joy's desire was to visit Mexico. Her desire became a reality last March.

Now take a BROWN colored pencil and circle the appositive in sentences 1-7.

Lesson 18: Student Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Does the first paragraph mainly describe the **scenery** (landforms, plant life, weather)?
- ☐ Does the second paragraph mainly describe the **wildlife** (animals, birds, insects)?
- ☐ Did I use *at least three* of the five senses to describe this scene?
- ☐ Did I focus on my surroundings *without* focusing on my actions or feelings?
- ☐ Do all sentences support the topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does my content flow smoothly? Did I organize the details in a way that makes sense to the reader?
- ☐ Does the title capture the essence of my composition?

STYLE

- ☐ Did I write a strong topic sentence that begins with one of the required sentence starters?
- ☐ Did I use no more than **one** form of "to be" *in each paragraph*? (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)
Circle to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague/weak words in green.
- ☐ Did I use a transition word or phrase to connect my paragraphs? Write it here _____
- ☐ Did I consistently use the same tense throughout the composition?
- ☐ Have I correctly used *all of these* throughout my composition?
 - ___ began with paired adjectives ___ began with a present participle
 - ___ began with an -ly adverb ___ included an appositive
 - ___ began with a prepositional phrase ___ included a simile (one only)
- ☐ Have I included several subject-verb sentences?
- ☐ Have I included a sentence of six or fewer words?
- ☐ Did I write concisely by crossing out unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is each paragraph 5-7 sentences long? How many sentences? 1st _____ 2nd _____
- ☐ Did I indent the first sentence of each paragraph and leave margins around the text?
- ☐ Did I skip every other line? If not, before rewriting, draw a light **X** on each line I need to skip.
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes.
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I make a mind-map during brainstorming and attach it with my drafts?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Worksheet on bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Checklist on top?

Lesson 18: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | First paragraph mainly describes the scenery (landforms, plant life, weather) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Second paragraph mainly describes the wildlife (animals, birds, insects) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used at least three of the five senses to describe the scene |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Focused on surroundings <i>without</i> focusing on personal actions or feelings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized in a way that makes sense to the reader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the composition |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence that begins with one of the required sentence starters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than one "to be" word per paragraph (<i>is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words (specific, vivid, and sensory) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used a transition word or phrase to connect paragraphs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Consistently used the same tense throughout the composition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used each of the following sentence variations (check off each one) |
| | | ___began with paired adjectives ___began with a present participle |
| | | ___began with an -ly adverb ___included an appositive |
| | | ___began with a prepositional phrase ___included a simile (one only) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included several subject-verb sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included a sentence of six words or fewer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Each paragraph is 5-7 sentences long |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and used colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Describing a Place

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name _____

Subject of Composition _____

Title _____

COMPOSITION EVALUATION

Content 15 points

	Points Possible	Points Earned
Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Mechanics 10 points

	<u>10</u> _____	_____
Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)		
Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization		
Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)		
Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)		

General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____

_____ (over)

100% = A+ 87-89% = B+ 77-79% = C+

94-99% = A 84-86% = B 74-76% = C

90-93% = A- 80-83% = B- 70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

Additional Comments and Feedback

Lesson 19: Writing a Short Report

In the past, you've probably written a factual report about an animal or famous person. Today's lesson teaches you how to expand a single paragraph into a three-paragraph **animal report** or **biography**.

Gather Your Resources

To present facts about your subject, always begin with research. Gather TWO of the following: a short book, book chapter, or Internet article *either* about one animal or a famous person. Make sure these combined resources give you enough information.

Plan your report using the appropriate "Fact-Gathering Worksheet" on p. 19-7 or p. 19-9.

Research Your Topic

Don't Plagiarize. Any time you collect information from outside sources, avoid plagiarism above all else. Plagiarism (copying another person's written work to write your own story or report) is *stealing*. What's stolen is an author's unique way of putting thoughts in their own words.

Always guard against the temptation to copy another's work and call it your own. How do you gather facts without copying? The key is to jot down words or phrases (never whole sentences!) that give you the basic information. Later, you will write sentences that express those ideas in your own distinctive words and voice.

Here's an example of facts about the icy Arctic waters.

"Icy water contains more oxygen and carbon dioxide than warm water, which makes it rich in marine life. Plankton is up to twenty times more abundant in the Arctic and Antarctic than it is in the warm waters of the tropics" (*Wildlife Fact File, Blue Whale*).

- ☐ To take notes, write down the facts you found in the above paragraph. Use only enough main words to jog your memory. Substitute synonyms whenever possible.

ARCTIC AND ANTARCTIC WATERS

- more O₂, CO₂ in frigid water
- more marine life
- 20 times more plankton than tropical water

- ☐ When it's time to write *your* sentence, combine the facts into your *own* words, like this:

Because frigid waters contain more carbon dioxide and oxygen than warm tropical oceans, up to twenty times more plankton and other marine life flourish in the Arctic and Antarctic.

See how the same facts are written using different words? Use this technique to write your factual paragraph. You will find it useful whenever you write future reports!

Understand Outlining

Preparing an outline may be a new skill for you. This basic information helps you better understand the purpose of outlining.

☐ What is an outline?

An outline is a **summary** of the main topics or ideas of your report. It is a:

1. Method of putting your composition in order by doing some **preliminary thinking**.
2. Useful tool for organizing **your thoughts about a subject**.
3. **List of topics to discuss** and the **order** in which you'll introduce them.
4. Way to arrange your research notes to **plan the content and organization of your report**.

☐ What does an outline do?

1. **Organizes ideas and information** you want to include in your research paper.
2. Gives a clear understanding of how **your report will be structured**.
3. Helps you decide exactly **what you want to say**.
4. **Keeps you from losing direction** and becoming sidetracked.
5. Helps you **express your thoughts** freely and smoothly.
6. Ensures you have **included everything you want to include**, and helps you put this information in a **logical order**.

☐ How is an outline structured?

Whether it is short and simple or long and complicated, the steps to making an outline are the same.

1. List the **important points** about the subject.
2. Classify your **supporting facts and ideas** into meaningful groups that make sense.
3. Decide on the **best way to present the material** clearly and effectively. For example:
 - Time sequence (when writing about a person or a historical event or time period)
 - Order of importance (for reports that explain "why" or "how")
 - General to specific (when writing about scientific topics)
4. Like the finished report, your outline needs a *beginning*, *middle*, and *end*.

Create Your Outline

As you take notes about your animal or famous person, you will see that the information falls nicely into two or three main categories:

Animal

- I. Animal's physical characteristics
- II. Animal's habitat
- III. Animal's living habits and behavior

Person

- I. Early years
- II. Adulthood
- III. Main Accomplishments

When you prepare your outline, each of these categories will become a main point that you will support with details, examples, and illustrations. If you write about an animal, your finished outline will look something like this:

Striped Skunk

- I. Physical characteristics
 - A. Size: About the size of a cat
 - B. Covering and coloring
 - 1. Fur coat
 - 2. Shiny black with a white stripe
 - C. Special or interesting body parts
 - 1. Plume-like tail
 - 2. Short stubby legs
 - 3. Defensive spray called musk
 - a. Foul-smelling liquid sprayed when frightened or in danger
 - b. Comes from glands beneath tail
 - c. Can spray as far as 12 feet
- II. Habitat
 - A. Location: United States, Canada, and northern Mexico
 - B. Habitat: Woodland forests
 - C. Home
 - 1. Hollow log or cavity under a rock
 - 2. Deserted burrow or denlined with dry leaves
 - 3. Hole in ground

III. Habits and behavior

A. Eating

1. Feeds on grubs, berries, grain, eggs of ground-building birds, insects (especially grasshoppers), mice and rats
2. Fasts in winter, lives off stored body fat

B. Sleeping: Nocturnal (sleeps during day)

C. Moving

1. Slow-moving
2. Gentle, non-aggressive

D. Other behaviors

1. Respected by other animals, few natural enemies
2. Gives warning before spraying by stamping feet, hissing, growling
3. Gives birth to four or five young at one time

You probably noticed that every main point is supported by at least two sub-points. For every A, there must be a B. For every 1, there must be a 2, and so on. If it can't be supported by two subpoints, the information should be contained within the single main point.

Write Your Report

Write a three-paragraph report. Again, put the facts into your own words.

1. Begin your first paragraph with an interesting, eye-catching sentence that grabs the reader's attention and introduces your subject. This can be anything fascinating, unusual, or noteworthy you've learned about the subject.
2. Devote the rest of the paragraph to **Main Point I**.
3. The second paragraph discusses **Main Point II**. Use a transition word to connect the two paragraphs.
4. The third paragraph covers **Main Point III**. Begin this paragraph with a transition word as well. End with a strong closing sentence that wraps up your report.

You can sequence your three main points in any order—as long as you don't jump back and forth within the report. In other words, don't describe the animal's fur, then its eating habits, followed by its habitat, followed by a description of its facial features.

The same holds true for a biography---keep similar ideas together, making sure the information flows smoothly. It helps to write a biography chronologically (following a time sequence).

5. Also, **you don't have to use every fact** you collect. Use only the ones that make sense in your composition.
6. Refer to your Student Checklist to be sure you use required sentence variations. Use each sentence variation (except for the simile) **at least once** (twice if you can). Don't overuse any one type of sentence variation, and don't begin two sentences in a row with the same sentence starter.
7. When you write your short report, be sure your nouns and pronouns agree. If you refer to your animal or biographical character in singular terms, your pronouns must agree by being singular as well. Likewise, if you use plural words for your animal or person, use plural pronouns.
8. Choose an appropriate ending sentence to wrap up your informative report. If you are writing an animal report, don't end with a sentence like this:

This is why I like the skunk.

These are the reasons why skunks are interesting.

I think skunks would make neat pets.

Reminders

- ☐ Each paragraph must be 5-8 sentences long.
- ☐ Your closing sentence must give your composition a feeling of ending.
- ☐ **Do not** give an opinion (such as "I think").
- ☐ **Do** use a general thought, such as:

The gentle skunk is a fascinating mammal.

Gentle and shy, skunks live peacefully among the animals of the forest.

Persistent and determined, Amelia Earhart paved the way for women in the field of aviation.

- ☐ **Print out or make a photocopy of** each source. Attach it to your composition before turning it in.

Lesson 19: Animal Fact-Gathering Worksheet

Directions: Using your selected material, gather the following facts about your animal. The more information you collect, the more you will be able to draw from when you begin to write. Write down more information than you think you will use.

Using this worksheet, jot down notes about your animal. *Do not* copy sentences.

Name of your animal _____

I. Animal's Body

- A. **Size** (*avoid uninteresting details such as exact measurements. Maybe you could make a comparison to something familiar, like "about the size of a house cat" or "weighs as much as a car."*)

- B. **Color and type of covering**

- C. **Special or interesting body parts**

II. Animal's Habitat

A. **Location** (states, countries, or continents) _____

B. **Type of habitat** (do not confuse with "habits") _____

C. **Type of home** (cave, den, burrow) _____

III. Other Behaviors

A. **Eating** _____

B. **Sleeping** _____

C. **Moving** _____

D. **Other** _____

Synonyms for Your Animal

Hint: In your article, look for words like predator, hunter, fish, beast, herbivore, etc.

Lesson 19: Biography Fact-Gathering Worksheet

Directions: Using your selected material, gather the following facts about your famous person. The more information you collect, the more you'll be able to draw from when you begin to write. Write down more information than you think you will use.

Using this worksheet, jot down notes about your person. *Do not* copy sentences.

Name of your person _____

This person is a/an (check one)

☐ explorer ☐ inventor ☐ scientist ☐ humanitarian ☐ athlete ☐ entrepreneur

☐ business leader ☐ political figure ☐ musician or artist ☐ other _____

Synonyms for Your Subject

I. Early Years

A. Education _____

B. People or events that influenced this person _____

II. Adulthood

A. Two interesting facts about this person _____

B. Obstacles this person overcame _____

C. Four to six positive character qualities this person possesses

See "Characteristics/Expressions/Behaviors" word list (pp. 3-7) for ideas.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

III. Main Accomplishments or Achievements

A. This person is best known for (main accomplishment) _____

B. Other contributions or accomplishments _____

Lesson 19: Skill Builder

Sentence Variation Review, Part 3

DAY ONE Personification

- **Personification** is a figure of speech that gives human traits to something as if it were human.
- Personification is different from a **simile**. A simile says, "This is *like* this," but personification says, "This *behaves* like a person."

Simile **Like** fingers, the branches of the tree reached toward the hiker.

Personification The **branches' fingers reached** out toward the hiker.

- Human characteristics can be given to objects and, sometimes, to animals.
 1. The wispy clouds **skated** gracefully across the sky. (*Skating* is a human trait.)
 2. Bright pansies **lift** their bobbing **heads**. (*Lifting* heads is a human trait.)
 3. Night **crept** silently over the countryside. (*Creeping* is a human trait.)
 4. Twinkling stars **danced** in dark. (*Dancing* is a human trait.)

Directions

- A. In green, **circle** the "thing" that is being compared to a person. In red, **underline** the human traits, characteristics, or actions that were given to that thing.
1. **(Example)** The snowflakes **danced** and **twirled** through the air.
 2. The front porch groaned under Betsy's feet.
 3. From a high branch, a fussy squirrel bossed our dog.
 4. Frank's restored Chevy proudly boasted a new coat of paint.
 5. Sighing loudly, the wind blew through the willow branches.
 6. A gathering of crows mocked me from the telephone wires.
- B. Poetry is filled with examples of personification. Below, circle the "thing" that's being compared to a person. Underline the human traits, characteristics, or actions that were given to that thing. Use the same colors as above.
1. The rain has silver sandals / For dancing in the spring . . . – *May Justus*, "The Rain Has Silver Sandals"
 2. The Moon comes every night to peep / Through the window where I lie . . . – *James Stephens*, "The White Window"
 3. How they will tell the shipwreck / When winter shakes the door . . . – *Emily Dickinson*, "Rouge Gagne"
 4. How glorious to wake each morn by a gentle sun kiss / puckered through one's window blinds. – *Robert Louis Stevenson*, "Summer Sun"

DAY TWO *Using Past Participles as Adjectives*

Of course you remember that a **present participle** (or "-ing" verb) is written as *running*, *speaking*, or *galloping*. A **past participle**, on the other hand, usually ends with "-ed" or "-en," as in *chosen*, *erased*, and *gathered*. (**Irregular** past participles include *taught*, *worn*, and *flown*.)

Both the present and past participle forms of a verb can be used as adjectives. Frequently, these are placed in front of the noun or pronoun they describe. For example, a child can have a ***pleased*** look. Mom can set aside a bowl of ***beaten*** eggs. Josh can put on his ***running*** shoes. A book can display a ***worn*** cover.

This exercise gives practice developing sentences that **begin** with a *past participial phrase*. In the word bank below you will find subjects preceded by past participles that function as adjectives. (Remember that a verb functioning as another part of speech is called a **verbal**.)

baked cookies	beaten eggs	dented fender
terrified child	saddened grandfather	broken toy
washed clothes	embarrassed performer	sweetened tea
stuffed turkey	parked Cadillac	hidden treasure

Directions

1. On p. 19-13, write five sentences that begin with a past participial phrase. You may choose from the word bank above or come up with your own ideas.
2. Follow each phrase with a comma.
3. The subject must closely follow the comma.
4. Add supporting details to expand and finish the sentence.
5. Do not use any "to be" words!

For example, if you choose the phrase "**crammed backpack**," you might write this sentence:

Crammed with books, Caden's ***backpack*** weighed thirty pounds.

Example phrase: chopped wood

Chopped into logs, the ***firewood*** lay in a pile by the barn.

Chopped and stacked by the barn, the ***pile*** of firewood will surely last all winter.

1. Phrase: _____

2. Phrase: _____

3. Phrase: _____

4. Phrase: _____

5. Phrase: _____

DAY THREE

Directions

Follow the instructions for the Day Two activity, writing five more sentences in the spaces below. Choose your phrases from the word bank on Day Two.

1. Phrase: _____

2. Phrase: _____

3. Phrase: _____

4. Phrase: _____

5. Phrase: _____

Lesson 19: Student Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I stay on topic and avoid "carrots in my cookie jar"?
- ☐ Does the first paragraph discuss Main Point 1?
- ☐ Does the second paragraph discuss Main Point 2?
- ☐ Does the third paragraph discuss Main Point 3?
- ☐ Did I put the facts into my own words?
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Are details organized and easy to follow?
- ☐ Did I write an interesting title for my report?

STYLE

- ☐ Did I write a strong or attention-grabbing topic sentence that introduces my subject?
- ☐ Did I use no more than **one** form of "to be" *in each paragraph?* (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)
Circle (to be) words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague/weak words in green.
- ☐ Do all my tenses agree? (I wrote in: ___present tense ___past tense)
- ☐ Have I correctly used *all of these* at least once (twice if possible) throughout the report?
 - ___began with paired adjectives
 - ___began with a present participle
 - ___began with an -ly adverb
 - ___used an appositive
 - ___began with a prepositional phrase
 - ___began with a past participle
 - ___included a simile (one only)
 - ___began with a subordinate conjunction (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- ☐ Have I included several subject-verb sentences?
- ☐ In **each** paragraph, did I include one sentence of six words or fewer?
- ☐ Did I write concisely by crossing out unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that summarizes the report?

MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is each paragraph 5-8 sentences long? How many? 1st____ 2nd____ 3rd____
- ☐ Did I indent the first sentence of each paragraph and leave margins around the text?
- ☐ Did I skip lines and use good spacing between words and sentences?
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Brainstorming on the bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Checklist on top?
- ☐ Have I also attached copies of my **two resources**?

Lesson 19: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Stayed on topic (no "carrots in the cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | First paragraph discusses Main Point 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Second paragraph discusses Main Point 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Third paragraph discusses Main Point 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Put facts into own words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized in a way that makes sense to the reader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Interesting title |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong or attention-grabbing topic sentence that introduces the subject |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than one "to be" word per paragraph (<i>is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words (specific, vivid, and sensory) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Consistently used the same tense throughout the composition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used each of the following sentence variations (check off each one) |
| | | ___began with paired adjectives ___began with a present participle |
| | | ___began with an -ly adverb ___used an appositive |
| | | ___began with a prepositional phrase ___began with a past participle |
| | | ___included a simile (one only) |
| | | ___began with a subordinate conjunction (<i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included several subject-verb sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included a sentence of six words or fewer in each paragraph |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that summarizes the report |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote three paragraphs of 5-8 sentences each |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Short Report

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name _____

Subject of Composition _____

Title _____

COMPOSITION EVALUATION

Content 15 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Mechanics 10 points

10 _____

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____

_____ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

Additional Comments and Feedback

Unit 5:

Expanding Your Skills

Lesson 20: Exaggeration

Television commercials, online advertisements, and other sales materials successfully influence today's buyers. They do this through clever writing that praises the product's excellent qualities. Below (or on a separate sheet of paper), make a list naming different types of advertising that come into your home or that you see around town. Include a variety of sources.

- ☐ (example) Flyers _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Advertisers use vivid description to impress (and thereby influence) customers. At times, they even exaggerate their claims about a product to make it sound *almost* too good to be true. Do these look familiar to you?

- Diet fads that assure instant weight loss
- Kitchen gadgets promising you will cook like a gourmet chef
- Exercise machines that "guarantee" bulging biceps in 30 days
- Beauty products claiming to reverse sun damage or eliminate wrinkles

Writing a Travel Advertisement

Have you ever traveled with your family to a place that sounded sensational in the ads, only to arrive and wonder what the fuss was all about? You may remember from history books how people were lured to America from England, or convinced to travel west, based on what they saw in the newspaper. Using descriptive, colorful words, skilled writers stretched the truth to make those places sound appealing.

This assignment, using a similar approach, gives you a fresh understanding of the power of words.

As you've been learning, descriptive writing brings ordinary objects and events to life. In this lesson, you'll get to try something new with descriptive writing as you write an exaggerated travel advertisement for a resort that's fallen on hard times. Drawing from your skills as a descriptive writer, you'll paint a glowing picture of a travel destination that hopes to draw tourists to improve its dying economy.

This location is not all it is cracked up to be! Perhaps a fire, flood, or other natural disaster has caused damage to the area. Maybe the place has become run-down or weather beaten and is in need of repair. Maybe it is the "off" season, when the weather is either too hot, too cold, or too humid. In any case, tourism is down, and the resort owners have hired *you* to persuade travelers to bring their families for a stay.

The purpose of this assignment is not to teach you to deceive, but to make you aware of the power of words to influence and entice. This exercise helps you stretch your creativity as well as increase your awareness of persuasive advertising techniques.

Understanding Exaggeration

Webster's *New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* defines **exaggerate** as "to represent (something) as greater than it is." In your first paragraph you'll portray this location as it appears. Then, in the second paragraph, you'll use **exaggeration** to describe the resort's accommodations and scenery in an idealistic way.

For example, the dried-up remains of a pond might be represented as a "refreshing lake." A beach strewn with litter from a storm could instead be a "driftwood-decorated shoreline." Encouraging visitors to "enjoy a glorious afternoon on horseback" would fail to mention that the resort only has two old swayback mares.

☐ **Read for Ideas**

Gather a few of the following materials from online sources, a travel agency, the library, or your own bookshelves.

- Travel blogs
- "Bucket list travel" websites
- "All-inclusive family resorts" websites
- Destinations
- Travel magazines, brochures, or Auto Club publications
- *National Geographic* magazine or website

To see how writers describe scenic resorts, browse through several ads or articles. Look for key words that appeal to the senses or emotions, like *paradise*, *romantic*, *hideaway*, *famous for*, etc. Below (or on a separate page) make a list of words you find.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Overview of Your Composition

1. **Discuss the instructions** with your parent or teacher to make sure you understand the assignment.

2. **Choose the Setting**

- Run-down dude ranch
- Beach resort after a hurricane
- Desert hotel with a "pool" and/or "mineral hot springs" nearby
- Mountain resort with individual family cabins
- Ancient castle in Scotland, England, Germany, or France
- Tropical island during monsoon or hurricane season
- Golf resort during a drought
- Frigid location during the winter (think *freezing!*)
- Lakeside boating resort
- Your own idea _____

3. **Begin with brainstorming.**

Tip: Try this as an activity around the dinner table. Sometimes it's fun to involve the whole family in the brainstorming process!

- In the first column of the "Exaggeration Worksheet (p. 20-7)," write about what the place *actually looks like*. In the second column, jot down ways you could exaggerate those same accommodations to sound appealing. Remember to come up with more information than you'll need in your composition. This gives you a larger pool of details to draw from when writing your "sloppy copy."
 - **Facilities.** Discuss the comforts and conveniences that appeal to vacationers (lodging, pools, restaurants and food, shopping, nearby attractions, entertainment, etc.). Then brainstorm specifically about the things that would draw people *to your resort*.
 - **Scenic Environment.** Talk about the kinds of scenery that attract sightseers (autumn leaves, forests, beaches, mineral hot springs, tropical vegetation, snow, natural wonders, bodies of water, historic buildings or monuments, etc.). Then brainstorm about the scenery that would entice visitors *to your resort*.
4. **Activities.** Next, talk about the kinds of activities that might lure a tourist (biking or hiking; camping, fishing, or horseback riding; sightseeing tours; winter sports; water sports and boating; nature activities; amusement or water parks; etc.). Then brainstorm in detail about the activities that would draw visitors *to your resort*.

5. **Write two paragraphs.**

- Paragraph 1: Accurately describe the resort with facts—*run-down, drafty, and isolated*, for instance. This paragraph should not sound like an ad.
- Paragraph 2: This is the advertisement, where you'll exaggerate and stretch the truth—*provincial, airy, and private*.

6. **Write each paragraph on a SEPARATE page.** Each must be 7-9 sentences.

7. **Give your resort a realistic name.**

8. **Set the stage with a strong topic sentence.**

9. **Hide the imperfections of the resort with colorful, flowery words.** Just be sure the wording fits the locale. In your second paragraph, describe the resort as if it were in perfect condition. Help the reader see the place through "rose-colored glasses." Overstate, pad, stretch the truth—but within reason. For example, if your resort has a small spa with cracked tile and algae stains, you might exaggerate by calling it a sparkling swimming pool, but you can't call it a lake.

10. **Overemphasize the true, positive elements.** A miserably humid tropical location might still have a magnificent sunset. Blooming weeds can be called "flowers." "Run-down" becomes "rustic." A scorching desert sun sounds more appealing as "warm rays of the sun." Greasy burgers from a roadside diner become "juicy" or "finger-licking." Readers never know that the "lake stocked with fish" has not been stocked in ten years!

11. **Use rich imagery and the most descriptive, vivid words.** Your Word Lists and thesaurus are required tools. Use synonyms accurately. Know their definitions. The right words can make a cheap motel sound like a luxurious hotel or make a thatched, weedy hillside sound breathtakingly beautiful. Give the impression the place is up to date and well maintained, perfect for a visiting couple or family.

12. **Use vocabulary that appeals to the senses and emotions.** Refer to the previous page for some of the terms you found in magazines. Words like *exotic* and *private* have irresistible drawing power!

13. **Don't describe every single detail** when writing. Pick several and go from there. Use the practice paragraph as a guide.

14. **Make an emotional appeal in your closing sentence.** How do you want the reader to respond? Use words like *imagine, picture yourself, trip of a lifetime, visit, plan, discover, reserve, sign up, book your, don't miss, or package deal*.

Lesson 20: Practicing with Exaggeration

Directions

1. Read the following paragraph. Then write a second paragraph exaggerating the claims of Paradise Palms Resort.
2. Begin by brainstorming. Use the "Exaggeration Worksheet (Practice Paragraph)" on p. 20-6.
3. Fill in the first column of the worksheet with facts you read about in the paragraph about Paradise Palms Resort.
4. Fill in the second column with ways you could exaggerate those same features to make them sound appealing.

Paradise Palms Resort

Looking abandoned along the deserted highway, the Paradise Palms Resort sits back from the road in a sparse grove of shaggy palm trees. Weathered and peeling, its chipped salmon-colored paint begs for a fresh coat. A sagging porch, overgrown with bougainvilleas, offers little shelter from the sweltering tropical heat. Aging canvas umbrellas and beach chairs droop wearily around a yellowed pool. Mosquitoes drone over the filmy surface. A sliver of ocean in the distance promises relief from the soaring temperatures, but a weedy trail seems to be the only path. Next to the dilapidated motel, a simple thatched hut displays local fruits and cheap trinkets for sale, and an easygoing native in a ragged straw hat pushes jeeps and bicycles for rent. His selection, however, appears as rusty and tired as the old resort itself. Paradise Palms, so it seems, is a long way from paradise.

Lesson 20: Exaggeration Worksheet (Practice Paragraph)

Brainstorming ideas for (name of resort) Paradise Palms Resort

The Resort's Actual Features	The Resort's Features (Ideal Condition)
❖ Facilities ❖	❖ Facilities ❖
chipped paint	
sagging porch	

❖ Scenic Environment ❖	❖ Scenic Environment ❖
deserted highway	
sparse grove of shaggy palm trees	

❖ Resort Activities ❖	❖ Resort Activities ❖
rusty old jeeps and bikes for rent	

Lesson 20: Exaggeration Worksheet

Brainstorming ideas for (name of resort) _____

The Resort's Actual Features	The Resort's Features (Ideal Condition)
❖ Facilities ❖	❖ Facilities ❖

❖ Scenic Environment ❖	❖ Scenic Environment ❖

❖ Resort Activities ❖	❖ Resort Activities ❖

Lesson 20: Skill Builder

Word Usage

How does an author find balance between writing in a concrete, sensory, descriptive manner and writing in an imposing, pretentious way? In WriteShop, we encourage you to try out new words, have fun with your thesaurus, and use vivid language as you write. We also want to teach you to use new vocabulary with care and humility.

When you include a lot of new or strange words, readers get the feeling you're trying too hard to make an impression. Too many flowery, unfamiliar words can make you sound like a know-it-all.

Instead, work to find a healthy balance between simple and "stuffy" vocabulary. Wise writers choose their words carefully so their writing is descriptive yet concise.

Tips to Remember

- ☐ Try not to use too many long words.
- ☐ Make sure the vocabulary is appropriate for your reader.
- ☐ Instead of stringing together a long list of adjectives to describe a weak noun, a single well-chosen noun often does the trick. For instance, "skyscraper" is much cleaner than "tall, thirty-story glass-covered building," yet it's still descriptive.
- ☐ Choose synonyms carefully. When using your thesaurus, always look up unfamiliar synonyms so you say exactly what you mean. Before finding a synonym for the word *party*, understand what kind of party you're writing about. Though synonyms include *soirée*, *fete*, *bash*, or *coalition*, they can't be used interchangeably. That's because each word describes something very different.
 - *Soirée*: A dressy evening affair
 - *Fete*: An outdoor party
 - *Bash*: An occasion of joy or celebration
 - *Coalition*: A political alliance.

Which one did you mean? Can you see why it's important to choose synonyms carefully?

- ☐ When replacing a word, choose a synonym that's the same part of speech. Depending how they're used in a sentence, *dance*, *bear*, and *spy* can function as nouns or verbs. Synonyms for these words may not be interchangeable.
- ☐ Avoid words that are informal, slang, or archaic (so old it is not in use anymore). Again, look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary. This extra step can save you from embarrassment later!

DAY ONE *Communicating Clearly*

Directions

1. Use a dictionary to define these terms. Think about how they might relate to your writing.
2. If there is more than one definition, choose the one that would apply to writing.

concise _____

effective _____

flowery _____

grandiose _____

pompous _____

pretentious _____

verbose _____

DAY TWO *Incorrect Word Usage*

The following sentences contain incorrectly used words. As you've been learning, words can have subtle differences in meaning. For instance, a *mansion*, *cabin*, or *shack* may be called a *house*, but not all houses are mansions. Neither is every house a cabin or shack.

Make sure the synonym you choose fits the context of the sentence. Incorrect word usage is characterized by long, uncommon words, **incorrectly used synonyms**, and words that **aren't relevant to the topic**.

Directions

Using your thesaurus or dictionary, find an appropriate word to replace the **bold words** below.

1. The ancient log **chateau** was nearly swallowed by the dense forest. **Arboreal formations** crowded in on every side.

chateau _____

arboreal formations _____

2. The dense foliage **obfuscated** the narrow path leading to the **infinitesimal** cabin and threatened to smother it.

obfuscated _____

infinitesimal _____

3. Towering trees cast their **adumbrations** over the **nugatory** shack.

adumbrations _____

nugatory _____

DAY THREE *Overly Descriptive Writing*

The sentences on the next page include words or phrases that are overly descriptive. This can mean any of the following:

- Sentences are **too wordy or too long**.
- The writer confuses the reader by using **too many adjectives and adverbs**.
- **Repetition** or **flowery description** cloud the writing.
- **Pretentious, puffed-up language** and **too many figures of speech** (metaphors, similes, and personification) make the writing ineffective or hard to follow.

Fancy language has its place, especially when describing spectacular events or smug, stuck-up people. It's easy for beginning writers to become wordy or overly descriptive when writing about simple, ordinary things. Flowery writing may be appropriate to describe an elaborate costume ball, but it probably wouldn't work if you're writing about a visit to a dude ranch.

A bit of pretentious writing will probably work well in this week’s assignment as you look for ways to exaggerate and embellish the claims of a rundown resort. Just remember: no matter what you’re writing about, keep both your topic and audience in mind when choosing words.

Directions

- ☐ Rewrite each sentence in a concise yet descriptive way.
- ☐ Break down long phrases and ask yourself, "What is this trying to say? How could I write it more simply?"
- ☐ Use a dictionary or thesaurus to look up unfamiliar words. If you don't know what they mean, you won't be able to simplify them!
- ☐ Eliminate repeated words and words that contradict other thoughts in the sentence.

1. Before the noisy, creaking, overloaded wagons, filled with tools, provisions, and food, arrived at the majestic mansion, they stopped and paused to rest in front of a dilapidated, weather-beaten, shabby shanty.

2. The stacked orbs of snow, magnificently embellished with fragments of coal and carrots and wrapped in a long, fringed plaid scarf, commenced to slump and grow slushy and turn into a puddle precisely at the location where Dad parks his automobile.

3. Sam's extremely furry, shaggy canine dog, alabaster with raven streaks, poses enthusiastically on the porch in front of the family domicile, with his tail solemnly between his legs. He lingers until Sam reappears from the park where he has been recreating in the baseball game at which his team triumphed.

Lesson 20: Student Writing Skills Checklist

After you write your "sloppy copy," go over it carefully with this checklist. Use COLUMN 1 to check your realistic paragraph and use COLUMN 2 to check your *exaggerated* paragraph.

CONTENT

1 2

- ☐ ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ ☒ Does the first paragraph accurately and realistically describe the run-down resort?
- ☒ ☐ Does the second paragraph overstate, exaggerate, and overemphasize the features of the resort?
- ☐ ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence? (No "carrots in my cookie jar")
- ☐ ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Are the details organized and easy to follow?
- ☐ ☐ Does each title capture the essence of its related composition?

STYLE

1 2

- ☐ ☐ Did I set the stage for each paragraph with a strong topic sentence?
- ☐ ☐ In **each** paragraph, did I use no more than **one** "to be" word? **Circle** (to be) words in **red**.
- ☐ ☐ Did I choose appropriate synonyms that fit the context of the sentence? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ ☐ Did I appeal to the senses and emotions with vivid, concrete words? **Underline** weak words in green.
- ☐ ☐ Did I use the same tense throughout each paragraph?
- ☐ ☐ Have I correctly used these sentence variations once in **each** paragraph?
 - ___ began with paired adjectives
 - ___ began with a past or present participle
 - ___ began with an -ly adverb
 - ___ included an appositive
 - ___ began with a prepositional phrase
 - ___ included a simile (one only)
 - ___ began with a subordinate conjunction (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- ☐ ☐ In **each** paragraph, have I included at least one subject-verb sentence?
- ☐ ☐ In **each** paragraph, have I included one sentence of six words or fewer?
- ☐ ☐ Did I write concisely by removing unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence in Paragraph 1? Did I make an emotional appeal in Paragraph 2?

MECHANICS

1 2

- ☐ ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ ☐ Is **each** paragraph 7-9 sentences long? How many? 1st ____ 2nd ____
- ☐ ☐ Did I indent, leave margins, and skip every other line?
- ☐ ☐ Did I use good spacing between words and sentences?
- ☐ ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes
- ☐ ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Brainstorming on the bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Checklist on top?

Name _____

Subject Exaggeration (Realistic)

Lesson 20(1): Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph accurately and realistically describes the run-down resort |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized and easy to follow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence that introduces the composition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than one "to be" word |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose context-appropriate synonyms for repeated main words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Appealed to the senses and emotions with concrete, vivid vocabulary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Removed or replaced weak words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Consistently used the same tense throughout the composition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used the following sentence variations once each |
| | | ___began with paired adjectives ___began with a past or present participle |
| | | ___began with an -ly adverb ___used an appositive |
| | | ___began with a prepositional phrase ___included a simile (one only) |
| | | ___began with a subordinate conjunction (<i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included one or more subject-verb sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included a sentence of six words or fewer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that wraps up the composition |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 7-9 sentences long |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Exaggeration (Realistic)

Additional Comments and Feedback

Lesson 20(2): Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph overemphasizes the positive features of the resort and sounds like an ad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Overstatement and exaggeration make sense for the context |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized and easy to follow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the exaggerated paragraph |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence sets an inviting stage for the resort |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than one "to be" word |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose context-appropriate synonyms for repeated main words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Appealed to the senses and emotions with rich, vivid imagery and flowery words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Removed or replaced weak words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Consistently used the same tense throughout the composition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used the following sentence variations once each |
| | | __began with paired adjectives __began with a past or present participle |
| | | __began with an -ly adverb __used an appositive |
| | | __began with a prepositional phrase __included a simile (one only) |
| | | __began with a subordinate conjunction (<i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included one or more subject-verb sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included a sentence of six words or fewer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that makes an emotional appeal or gives a call to action |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 7-9 sentences long |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Exaggeration (Ideal)

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name _____

Subject of Composition _____

Title _____

COMPOSITION EVALUATION

Content 15 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Mechanics 10 points

10 _____

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____

_____ (over)

100% = A+ 87-89% = B+ 77-79% = C+

94-99% = A 84-86% = B 74-76% = C

90-93% = A- 80-83% = B- 70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

Additional Comments and Feedback

Name _____

Subject of Composition _____

Title _____

COMPOSITION EVALUATION

Content 15 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Mechanics 10 points

10 _____

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

TOTAL: _____ /50 = _____ % = _____

Comments: _____

_____ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

Additional Comments and Feedback

Lesson 21: First-Person Point of View, Part 1

You can influence your reader's feelings through your writing. Your words have the power to guide the reader's emotions by the way you describe objects and situations. This is called **point of view**.

Everything you write or read has a point of view; it is not something you *choose* to include or not include. Point of view is the telling of a story, experience, or event through the eyes of one character. When characters are part of the situation, they usually tell a story using the **first-person** narrative voice. In other words, they include themselves in the story and writes from an "I" perspective. An author writing in first person can't know what everything or everyone else in the story is thinking. This is called **limited omniscience**.

The author's personal perspective influences the reader's emotions. The writer can make the reader feel suspicious, sympathetic, or angry toward different characters. He also has the power to make an amusement park ride seem thrilling and exciting or terrifying and upsetting. A good writer can make readers cry—or laugh out loud.

This assignment in **descriptive narration** covers two lessons in which you describe a situation twice, each time from a different point of view. The first assignment, Lesson 21, asks you to write from the point of view of a parent spending an afternoon with his or her child at a picnic. Since you'll write as if you're a mom or dad, you won't be able to know what anyone else is thinking. Describe the scene and the situation just the way you *see* it. (The next assignment, Lesson 22, teaches you how to change perspective.)

As you describe this lunchtime picnic scene, invite your reader to enjoy a variety of things the parent sees, hears, and smells. Set a mood with vivid descriptions.

Write in first person ("I") and in present tense (as if it is happening now). Your task is to influence the reader's feelings about this picnic and to create a highly sensory and descriptive scene. We start you off with a topic sentence.

Directions

1. **Decide on a setting for your picnic.** Picnic ground at: ___a beach ___a lake ___a park ___a campground ___other _____
2. **Look over the lists** on the next page to consider what the parent might see, hear, and smell. (This is not a complete list; you certainly may think of other things.)
3. **Brainstorm** by making columns or by making a mind-map. Brainstorm thoroughly so you have many sensory descriptions from which to choose. Here are some ideas.

What the parent sees:

- Bright colors of clothing
- Cheerful, smiling faces
- Playground equipment, benches, tables, umbrellas, blankets, ice chests
- Lake, ocean, beach, or pool; trees, flowers, sand, rocks, or grass
- Fast movement of excited kids running, splashing, swinging
- Eating (and throwing away) picnic foods and dessert, such as dripping ice cream, thick sandwiches, or juicy red watermelon

What the parent *hears*:

- Loud laughter/talking/playing
- Distant sounds (airplane droning, dog barking, siren wailing, horn honking)
- Soda cans, ice, the rustle and pop of paper bags, the crunching of apples or chips
- Banging, crashing, splashing; the squeaking of swings or other play equipment
- Noise of speedboats on the lake, waves crashing, birds, sprinklers, bells on ice cream trucks or bicycles
- Fireworks or a parade going by; roller skates or skateboard wheels on a sidewalk; the thump of a bouncing basketball; the crack of a baseball bat

What the parent *smells*:

- freshly mown grass, roses
- sea breeze, suntan lotion, campfires or barbecues
- broiling hotdogs, steaks, chicken, or burgers
- baked beans, popcorn, pickles and mustard, or other picnic foods

4. Begin with this topic sentence:

(Adj.) colors and (adj.) sounds radiate from **the picnic area** where my children play.

You can individualize this sentence, but keep it similar, maybe adding an adjective:

- *the **seaside** picnic area . . .*
- *the **sheltered** picnic area . . .*

5. You have limited omniscience. You're the parent at the picnic, so put yourself in their place and write **as if you are that person**. Include your emotions as well as your observations. If your character didn't observe the action, *he or she can't write about it firsthand*. Write only what your character knows.

6. Do not describe *everything* the parent experiences!

7. Do not focus on describing the *activities*; focus on the experiential and sensory.

8. **Do not** use the phrases *I smell, I see, I hear*. Try:
 - *Broiling hot dogs (do what) instead of I smell hot dogs as they broil . . .*
 - *Red and white sailboats (do what) instead of I see white and red sailboats*
 - *The shouts of children (doing what) or laughing children (doing what) instead of I hear children shouting (or laughing)*
9. **Use different kinds of sentence starters** and sentence variations. Use each of these *at least once*:
 - sentence beginning with a **present** and a **past participle**
 - sentence beginning with a **prepositional phrase**
 - sentence beginning with an **adverb or adverbial phrase**
 - sentence beginning with **paired adjectives**
 - sentence using a **simile**
 - sentence using an **appositive**
 - **subordinate conjunction**
 - a **short sentence** (six words or fewer)
10. **Write two paragraphs** of 5-7 sentences each.
11. **Practice writing concisely.** Eliminate all unnecessary sentences, words, or phrases. Keep your descriptions crisp yet simple. Write for clarity.
12. **Use concrete, specific, descriptive words** (see your various Word Lists for help). Describe activities sparingly, more as a vehicle for sensory description. Here are some suggestions for making your writing specific, vivid, and sensory. Notice the use of different sentence variations.
 - *Squabbling over stale crusts, a raucous crowd of gulls flaps around our blanket.*
 - *A radiant orange sunset paints the sky with a wash of lavender and rose.*
 - *Softly, a cool afternoon breeze whispers through the lofty branches of the white pines.* ("-ly" adverb)
 - *Like young otters, playmates romp and splash wildly in the foamy surf.* (simile)
 - *Spreading Grandma's patchwork quilt beneath an ancient oak, we marvel at the blaze of autumn golds and reds surrounding us.* (participial phrase)
 - *Box kites and paper dragons fill the azure sky, whipping their tails in the wind.*
13. **Be sure your tenses agree.** You must write in present tense.
14. **Use a transition word or phrase** to connect the two paragraphs.

Lesson 21: Identifying Descriptive Narration

Directions

Read the following narrative and complete the activities below.

Our Park Picnic

by Ben, age 13

Vivid colors and lively sounds radiate from the picnic area where my children play. Filling the patchy sky, kites of red, navy, and orange whip their tails in the wind. Animated and delighted, my son Jeff yanks at his taut string, searching for his kite among the others. His face beams with pride at the victory of his first flight. Across the field, a soccer game begins with an ear-splitting whistle.

Suddenly smelling smoke, I turn to my hamburgers and give them a final flip. On the wooden table, bowls of baked beans and pasta salads lift their pungent aromas into the gentle breeze. Setting the platter of cooked meat on the red checkered cloth, I yell for Jeff. Upon reeling in his airplane kite, my hungry little boy rushes to our spot. Settled down to our feast, we talk over the exciting events of the day.

- ☐ In *red*, underline words or phrases that describe **feelings and emotions**.
- ☐ In *blue*, underline words or phrases that describe the *child(ren)*'s **behavior/actions**.
- ☐ Use a *purple* pencil to circle **sound** words or phrases.
- ☐ Use a *green* pencil to circle **color** words or phrases.
- ☐ Circle **smell** words or phrases in *orange*.

Lesson 21: Skill Builder

Writing Descriptive Narration, Part 1

When learning to write narratives, it's easy to focus on the action and forget to add important descriptive details. This exercise will help you see the difference between *simple* narration and *descriptive* narration. WriteShop encourages you to write descriptively so you can tell your readers exactly what you want them to know.

Suppose you read this sentence: *Tyson ran across the field*. What picture jumps into your mind? How did Tyson run? What was the field like? What feeling should this stir up in you?

Now look at these expanded sentences. Each one tells you that Tyson ran across the field, but each also gives you a different picture of the event and/or circumstances.

Example A: Panting heavily, Tyson ran desperately across the littered field toward safety.

Example B: Relaxed and free, Tyson eagerly ran across the sunny field of daisies.

Example C: With visions of victory in his head, Tyson ran deftly across the soccer field toward the goal.

Directions

1. The narrative sentences on the following pages lack important descriptive detail. Rewrite each sentence to give the reader the specific picture you have in your mind.
2. Use synonyms to replace some of the words.
3. Also add interesting details to expand the sentence.
4. Use a DIFFERENT sentence variation in each sentence (paired adjectives, past or present participial phrase, prepositional or adverbial phrase, subordinate conjunction, appositives).
5. Avoid "to be" words.

DAY ONE

1. The airplane dove toward the water.

2. The Boy Scouts pitched their tents in the woods.

3. Snoopy dug a hole under the fence.

4. John drove his truck to town.

DAY TWO

1. The basketball player dribbled the ball.

2. Two sharks swam near the shore.

3. We waited in line for our turn.

4. Carla dropped a vase.

DAY THREE

1. The child's balloon floated away.

2. Jerry bumped into Sharon. .

3. The artist painted a picture.

4. Susan listened to music.

Lesson 21: Student Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I write from limited omniscience (only what the narrator knows)?
- ☐ Did I include the parent's emotions and observations?
- ☐ Do all sentences support the topic sentence? (No "carrots in my cookie jar")
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Are details organized and easy to follow?
- ☐ Does the title capture the heart of my composition?

STYLE

- ☐ Does the topic sentence draw in the reader with descriptive wording?
- ☐ In **each** paragraph, did I use no more than **one** "to be" word? **Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose appropriate synonyms that fit the context of the sentence? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I appeal to the senses and emotions with vivid, concrete words? **Underline** weak words in green.
- ☐ Did I use a transition word/phrase to connect my paragraphs? Write it here: _____
- ☐ Did I consistently use present tense throughout the composition?
- ☐ Have I correctly used *each of these at least once* throughout my composition?
 - ___ began with paired adjectives
 - ___ began with both a past and present participle
 - ___ began with an -ly adverb
 - ___ included an appositive
 - ___ began with a prepositional phrase
 - ___ included a simile
 - ___ began with a subordinate conjunction (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- ☐ In **each** paragraph, have I included at least one subject-verb sentence?
- ☐ Have I included at least one short sentence of 6 words or fewer?
- ☐ Did I write concisely by removing unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I write two paragraphs? Is each paragraph 5-7 sentences long? How many? 1st _____ 2nd _____
- ☐ Did I indent, leave margins, and skip every other line?
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes.
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Brainstorming on the bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Checklist on top?

Lesson 21: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote from limited omniscience (only what the narrator knows) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included the parent's emotions and observations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support the topic (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized and easy to follow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the heart of the composition |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic sentence draws the reader in with descriptive wording |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than one "to be" word <i>per paragraph</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose context-appropriate synonyms for repeated main words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Vividly described the sensory experience (what the parent sees, hears, and smells) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Removed or replaced weak words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Consistently used present tense throughout |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used a transition word or phrase to connect paragraphs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used the following sentence variations at least once |
| | | ___began with paired adjectives ___began with both a past and present participle |
| | | ___began with an -ly adverb ___used an appositive |
| | | ___began with a prepositional phrase ___included a simile |
| | | ___began with a subordinate conjunction (<i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included one or more subject-verb sentences per paragraph |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included at least one short sentence of six words or fewer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote clearly and concisely, removing unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote two paragraphs of 5-7 sentences each |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject 1st Person Point of View, Part 1

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. The paper itself is a clean, off-white color.

Name _____

Subject of Composition _____

Title _____

COMPOSITION EVALUATION

Content 15 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Mechanics 10 points

10 _____

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____

_____ (over)

100% = A+ 87-89% = B+ 77-79% = C+

94-99% = A 84-86% = B 74-76% = C

90-93% = A- 80-83% = B- 70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

Additional Comments and Feedback

Lesson 22: First-Person Point of View, Part 2

Last time, you wrote a descriptive composition about a picnic scene from a parent's point of view. For this lesson, write another composition about *the same scene*, but from the perspective of a different character.

Point of view is the telling of a story, an experience, or a situation through the eyes of one character. Remember: **limited omniscience** means you can't know what everything or everyone else in the story is thinking.

Even though it's the same picnic, tell the story from a different point of view. Look at the composition you wrote for Lesson 21. Now try to observe the scene as if you're one of the following:

- An **older grandparent-type** taking in the scene from a nearby bench
- The **custodian or groundskeeper** who must clean up afterward
- An **animal** at or near the picnic, such as a squirrel, dog, seagull, raccoon, or ant

Write a two-paragraph composition from the perspective of this new character. Write in first person ("I"), choosing *either* present or past tense. Your job is to influence the reader's feelings about this picnic—to make your reader feel the emotions of this second character. This character *also observes the parent* who voiced the previous narrative for Lesson 21.

Here is an example of a composition written about the same picnic as last time, but from a new point of view.

The Janitor's Big Day

by Ben, age 13

These Saturday picnics give me a headache—just look at the commotion. Screaming kids, recklessly running, trample my newly planted marigolds in pursuit of a runaway kite. Among the brightly colored kites, I spot a green camouflage airplane. A small boy struggles to control it. Called to lunch, the beaming child reels in his plane and speeds towards his waiting dad. Smoky yet fragrant, the aroma of their barbecued hamburgers floats across the soccer field. Unfortunately, my lunch sack contains only a crusty peanut butter sandwich and a squashed banana.

Eventually the crowds disappear, leaving behind overloaded trash cans and garbage strewn about the lawn. In the picnic area, remains of beans and salads litter the ground. What a mess! Crows, daring scavengers, help me clean up the leftovers. Pecking eagerly, the black birds finish off the breadcrumbs. Suddenly, the park lights switch on, signaling that my workday is complete. At home a Tylenol awaits.

Directions

1. **Decide what the observer might see, hear, and smell.**
2. **Brainstorm** on a sheet of blank paper, either by making columns or a mind-map. Be thorough, filling your brainstorming worksheet with many possibilities. As you make notes, refer to Lesson 21's composition to keep a sense of connection between the two narratives.
3. **Begin with one of the following topic sentences.**

If you are an older person:

Soaking up all the noise and activity, I take (or took) notice of one young family.

If you are the custodian or grounds keeper:

These Saturday picnics give me a headache—just look at the commotion! OR

Saturday's picnic gave me a headache—the day was filled with commotion!

If you are an animal:

Waiting patiently in my _____, I survey(ed) the busy scene (around me, below, in the park, etc.).

4. **You have limited omniscience.** You're an observer at the picnic. Put yourself in this new character's place and write as if you are that character. Include your emotions and sensory experiences. *If the character didn't observe the action, you can't write about it. Write only what your character knows and feels.*
5. **Do not** describe everything the person observes!
6. **Do not** use the phrases *I smell, I see, I hear*. Try:
 - *Salty sea air (does what) or A whiff of fresh sea breeze (does what) instead of I smell the ocean.*
 - *Barefoot children instead of I see children with bare feet.*

7. *The laughter of children (doing what) or Laughing loudly, barefoot children (do what) instead of I hear children laughing.*
8. **Choose concrete, specific, descriptive words** (see your Word Lists for help).
9. **Write two paragraphs** that are each 5-7 sentences long.
10. **Use no more than one “to be” word** in each paragraph.
11. **Use different kinds of sentence starters** and sentence variations. Use each once or twice in your composition, and use at least five different ones in each paragraph:
 - sentence beginning with paired adjectives
 - sentence beginning with a present participial phrase
 - sentence beginning with a past participial phrase (**Note:** Look for past participle ideas in the "Characteristics/Expressions/ Behaviors" or "Emotions" word lists.)
 - sentence beginning with an -ly adverb or adverb phrase
 - sentence beginning with a prepositional phrase
 - sentence beginning with a subordinate conjunction
 - sentence using an appositive
 - sentence using a simile
12. **Use a transition word or phrase** to connect paragraphs.
13. **Use different sentence lengths.** Include some shorter five- or six-word sentences along with your longer ones.
14. **Practice writing concisely.** Remove unnecessary sentences, words, or phrases. Keep your descriptions crisp yet simple. Write for clarity.
15. **Use concrete, specific, descriptive words** (see Word Lists for help). Write about the activities in a vivid and sensory descriptive manner. These examples demonstrate ways to write more concretely:
 - *Wearily, I rest my feet and watch dozens of eager children clamber onto the swings, tubes, and tunnels at the playground.*
 - *As the family munched their fried chicken and juicy watermelon, they suddenly noticed a fat brown squirrel scampering onto a rock.*
 - *Carelessly, the children toss chicken bones and watermelon rinds into the sand.*

- *Energetic and brave, gleeful youngsters in bright swimwear splash fearlessly in the icy lake.*
- *Laying a worn and faded patchwork quilt in the shade of an oak tree, the smiling parents watch their active toddlers toss fallen leaves into the air.*
- *Wearing a determined look, a sandy-haired lad wrestled with his kite string.*
- *Creaking and clanging, the noisy old swings remind me to repair them on Monday.*
- *A little blond boy, the one flying a battered silver kite, left trails of popcorn and wrappers all over the grass.*
- *Thankfully, the pounding surf of high tide washed away the evidence.*
- *Squawking at the children, I swoop toward the leftovers scattered across the sand.*

16. **Be sure your tenses agree.** You can write in either present or past tense as long as you're consistent.

Lesson 22: Skill Builder

Writing Descriptive Narration, Part 2

DAY ONE, TWO, and THREE

Directions

1. Rewrite the following paragraph over the next three days. Read the story carefully before beginning to write.
2. Apply what you learned in Lesson 21 about expanding weak narration by adding important details and description.
3. Expand the vague narrative into a paragraph that clearly expresses what you want your reader to learn about the situation.
4. Replace weak nouns and verbs with specific ones. Add colorful adverbs and adjectives.
5. Use a variety of sentence types.

He ran through the city, dodging people and cars. He was being followed, and it seemed hopeless. Then he saw a tunnel, and the man slipped into the darkness. As he crept into the tunnel, the sirens and other noises seemed to disappear. He found himself in front of a door. He opened the door. It creaked. Inside sat a table, a couple of chairs, and a box. Setting himself on a chair, he caught his breath. Josh Cameron had outwitted his enemy once again.

Lesson 22: Student Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I write from limited omniscience (only what the narrator knows)?
- ☐ Did I include the narrator's emotions and observations?
- ☐ Do all sentences support the topic? (No "carrots in my cookie jar")
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Are details organized and easy to follow?
- ☐ Does the title capture the heart of my composition?

STYLE

- ☐ Did I use an appropriate topic sentence from the lesson instructions on p. 22-2, #3?
- ☐ In **each** paragraph, did I use no more than **one** "to be" word? **Circle** (to be) words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose appropriate synonyms that fit the context of each sentence? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague/weak words in green.
- ☐ Did I use a transition word/phrase to connect my paragraphs? Write it here: _____
- ☐ Do all my tenses agree? (I wrote in: ___present tense ___past tense)
- ☐ Have I correctly used *each of these* throughout my composition?
 - ___began with paired adjectives ___began with both a past and present participle
 - ___began with an -ly adverb ___included an appositive
 - ___began with a prepositional phrase ___included a simile (one only)
 - ___began with a subordinate conjunction (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- ☐ In **each** paragraph, have I included at least one subject-verb sentence?
- ☐ Have I included several 5- or 6-word sentences?
- ☐ Did I write concisely by removing unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I write two paragraphs? Is each paragraph 5-7 sentences long? How many? 1st _____ 2nd _____
- ☐ Did I indent, leave margins, and skip every other line?
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes.
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Brainstorming on the bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Checklist on top?

Lesson 22: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote from limited omniscience (only what the narrator knows) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included the narrator's emotions and observations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support the topic (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized and easy to follow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the heart of the composition |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used an appropriate topic sentence from the lesson instructions (see p. 22-2, #3) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than one "to be" word <i>per paragraph</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose context-appropriate synonyms for repeated main words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Vividly described the sensory experience (what the observer sees, hears, and smells) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Removed or replaced weak words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Consistent use of tense throughout: ___wrote in present tense ___wrote in past tense |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used a transition word or phrase to connect paragraphs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used the following sentence variations at least once |
| | | ___began with paired adjectives ___began with both a past and present participle |
| | | ___began with an -ly adverb ___used an appositive |
| | | ___began with a prepositional phrase ___included a simile |
| | | ___began with a subordinate conjunction (<i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included one or more subject-verb sentences per paragraph |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included several short sentences of 5-6 words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote clearly and concisely, removing unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote two paragraphs of 5-7 sentences each |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject 1st Person Point of View, Part 2

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name _____

Subject of Composition _____

Title _____

COMPOSITION EVALUATION

Content 15 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Mechanics 10 points

10 _____

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____

_____ (over)

100% = A+ 87-89% = B+ 77-79% = C+

94-99% = A 84-86% = B 74-76% = C

90-93% = A- 80-83% = B- 70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

Additional Comments and Feedback

Lesson 23: Narrative Voice

When you wrote about the picnic in the park, you described the same event twice, each time through the eyes of a different person: a *participant* (the parent) and an *observer* (an elderly person, janitor, or animal). The **point of view** was determined by each character's opinions, frame of mind, and experiences. In this lesson, you once again experiment with point of view and **narrative voice**.

Point of View

Point of view, the angle from which a story is told, depends on who is telling the story.

- **First-person point of view** means one of the characters is telling the story and writes from an "I" perspective. *An author writing in first person can't know what everything or everyone else in the story is thinking.* The person telling the story is the **narrator**. In the book *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell, Black Beauty tells his own story. In this example, the narrator is a horse.
- **Third-person point of view** means someone outside of the story is telling it and writes from a "he/she/they" perspective. *This puts the narrator in a special position of knowing what the characters think and feel—like a mind reader.*

When the narrator knows what *one* character thinks and feels, it's called **limited omniscience**. Although narrators can only know what one character thinks and feels, they can still observe the actions of other characters in the story.

When narrators know what *all* the characters think and feel, it's called **unlimited omniscience**. They can see the whole picture. For example, they can describe the panic of two people in a single-engine plane during a severe thunderstorm. Then they can switch to the airport and describe the emotions and actions of the worried ground crew as they prepare for the plane's emergency landing.

It's easy to write a first-person account when the events in the story happened to you personally. But as you've discovered, it's a lot more challenging to put yourself in someone else's shoes and describe an experience from *their* perspective.

First-Person Narrative Voice

To experiment with first-person narrative voice in this lesson, put on your creativity hat and pretend to be an animal. Document your activity in diary format, as if you were writing a journal entry. To keep things simple, choose one activity rather than several. For example, if you're a black bear, you might tell how you caught a fish in a stream, retrieved honey from an old log, or taught your cub to climb a tree. But don't write about all three of these in one paragraph.

Third-Person Narrative Voice

Your third-person narrative voice paragraph focuses on the same animal. But this time you're not part of the story. Instead, you're the narrator who tells about the animal's activity or behavior and describes it from your perspective as an observer who is outside the story.

Read the following sample paragraphs.

In the first one, the author writes in past tense using first-person voice. The second paragraph, a third-person narrative, uses present tense. You can choose either voice for your compositions.

Though both paragraphs deal with the mink's eating and hunting habits, the first paragraph actually focuses on the mink as prey rather than as predator. The two paragraphs are, indeed, about two completely different events.

Mink's Narrow Escape

In the early evening, as I prepared to pounce on a tempting crayfish, a gray shadow briefly crossed my path. Looking up in alarm, I spied an enormous owl circling above me. Swiftly and silently, the great bird plunged from its height, its massive wings outstretched. As the prick of a knifelike talon pierced my back, I dove into the dark stream to escape my predator. I was safe! The cool water momentarily soothed the sharp pain. Warily, I emerged from the creek and hurried to the safety of my burrow, where I nursed my tender wound and dreamed of the tasty crayfish that should have been my dinner.

Icy Escapade

As winter overtakes the woodland, the small brook begins to freeze in the shallower places. Searching for a wayward rodent on this bone-chilling afternoon, a sleek mink darts gracefully onto the ice. As he approaches the opposite shore, he startles suddenly. A loud c-r-a-c-k! shatters the silence. In an instant, the slender mammal slips through the broken surface into the frigid water. The mink, an excellent swimmer, soon pops up downstream, his alert black eyes taking in his surroundings. Like a small torpedo, he glides deftly through the chilly creek, his webbed feet serving as paddles. Exiting onto the snowy bank, the watchful animal suddenly spies a mouse scurrying across a clearing. Crafty and swift, the cunning mink surprises its prey and enjoys a winter feast.

Lesson 23: Backward Brainstorming

Directions

After reading the paragraphs on p. 23-2, follow your parent's or teacher's instructions for this exercise (as found in the Teacher's Manual) to learn how to fill in the charts.

"Mink's Narrow Escape"

Mink	Owl
Behavior/Experience	Behavior
	Description

Mink	Owl
Behavior/Experience	Behavior
	Description

"Icy Escapade"

Mink	Rodent	Surroundings
Behavior/Experience	Description	Season/Time
	Behavior	Habitat
Appearance		

Lesson 23: Writing a Narrative in First and Third Person

Directions

1. **Choose an animal.** Woodland mammals certainly make interesting subject matter, but you can also choose a jungle animal, farm animal, or other creature.
2. **Briefly read up on your animal.** Browse through a book about animals or animal behavior or look online for information. This assignment shouldn't require a trip to the library.
3. **Focus on a different activity or situation for each paragraph.** Consider the following, or come up with your own ideas:
 - Grooming habits
 - Foraging or hunting for food
 - Caring for or teaching their young
 - Building a home
 - Escaping from a dangerous or threatening situation
 - Interesting trait or behavior
4. **Go back to your reading material** to better understand the specific behaviors you plan to write about.
5. **Brainstorm** thoroughly so you have plenty of information to choose from when it's time to write. Start by making a chart with two columns on a sheet of blank paper.

Column 1: Character (Animal)

- Behavior and activity
- Appearance

Column 2: Setting

- Season (time of year)
- Habitat or surroundings. Include plenty of sensory descriptions. In addition to describing the animal's activity, your paragraph needs to give a detailed word picture of the habitat.
- Setting may include other creatures that interact with the main character.

6. **Write each narrative on its own page.** Paragraphs must be 7-9 sentences long.

7. **Write the first paragraph in first person.** The animal is the narrator.
 - Keep the focus on one activity or situation.
 - **Do not** begin your narrative by saying "I am a wolverine" or "Let me tell you about my life as a weasel."
8. **Write the second paragraph in third person.** A narrator outside of the story describes the action.
 - Write about the same animal but choose a DIFFERENT activity.
 - You can refer to your animal as *he*, *she*, or *it*—as long as you maintain pronoun consistency throughout the paragraph.
9. Be sure **tenses agree within each paragraph**. You may write both paragraphs in the same tense, or you may write one paragraph in present tense and one in past tense.
10. **Write descriptively.** See the paragraphs on p. 23-2 for examples of how to use emotion words and detailed description to make your narrative vibrant and engaging.
11. **Use sentence variations.** *Specific* sentence variations won't be assigned for this lesson, but your final grade will reflect your wise use of different sentence types. Choose from among these:
 - Paired adjective sentence starters (Find excellent ideas for paired adjectives in your "Sound Words," "Texture Words," and "Visual Words" lists.)
 - Present or past participle sentence starters (You'll find many past participles in the "Characteristics/Expressions/ Behaviors" or "Emotions" word lists.)
 - -ly adverb (or adverbial phrase) sentence starters
 - Prepositional phrase sentence starters
 - Appositives (especially appropriate in your second paragraph)
 - Similes
 - Subordinate conjunctions
 - Subject-verb sentences
12. **Use sentences of different lengths.**
 - Long sentences work well in peaceful settings where there's not much action.
 - Short sentences (6 words or fewer) are especially effective during tense or exciting parts of a narrative.
13. **Write titles that capture the emotion of each narrative.** Include the animal's name in the title of your first-person paragraph, since that paragraph may not mention what kind of animal it is. Your third-person paragraph title does not need an animal name.

Lesson 23: Student Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I write a first-person narrative that focuses on a single activity or situation?
- ☐ Did I use emotion words and detailed description?
- ☐ Do all sentences support the topic?
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Are details organized and easy to follow?
- ☐ Does the title capture the emotion of my narrative?

STYLE

- ☐ Did I hook my reader with an interesting opening sentence?
- ☐ Did I use no more than **one** "to be" word? **Circle** (to be) words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose appropriate synonyms that fit the context of each sentence? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I vividly describe what the animal sees, hears, and feels? **Underline** vague/weak words in green.
- ☐ Do tenses agree throughout the narrative? ___wrote in present tense ___wrote in past tense
- ☐ Have I correctly used *a variety of these* in my composition?
 - ___began with paired adjectives
 - ___began with a past and/or present participle
 - ___began with an -ly adverb
 - ___included an appositive
 - ___began with a prepositional phrase
 - ___included a simile (one only)
 - ___began with a subordinate conjunction (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- ☐ Have I included at least one subject-verb sentence?
- ☐ Have I written both long and short sentences?
- ☐ Did I write concisely by removing unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I indent, leave margins, and skip every other line?
- ☐ Is my paragraph 7-9 sentences long? How many sentences? ____
- ☐ Did I **look up** words whose spelling I'm not sure about? Have I made corrections as needed?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Make sure I have stapled all my papers together in proper order.

Lesson 23: Student Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I write a third-person narrative that observes an animal in a single activity or situation?
- ☐ Did I use emotion words and detailed description?
- ☐ Do all sentences support the topic?
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Are details organized and easy to follow?
- ☐ Does the title capture the emotion of my narrative?

STYLE

- ☐ Did I hook my reader with an interesting opening sentence?
- ☐ Did I use no more than **one** "to be" word? **Circle** (to be) words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose appropriate synonyms that fit the context of each sentence? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I vividly describe what the animal sees, hears, or feels? **Underline** vague/weak words in green.
- ☐ Did I use the same pronoun throughout the paragraph? (*he, she, OR it*)
- ☐ Do tenses agree throughout the narrative? ___wrote in present tense ___wrote in past tense
- ☐ Have I correctly used *a variety of these* in my composition?
 - ___began with paired adjectives
 - ___began with a past and/or present participle
 - ___began with an -ly adverb
 - ___included an appositive
 - ___began with a prepositional phrase
 - ___included a simile (one only)
 - ___began with a subordinate conjunction (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- ☐ Have I included at least one subject-verb sentence?
- ☐ Have I written both long and short sentences?
- ☐ Did I write concisely by removing unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I indent, leave margins, and skip every other line?
- ☐ Did I write one paragraph? Is it 7-9 sentences long? How many sentences? ____
- ☐ Did I **look up** words whose spelling I'm not sure about? Have I made corrections as needed?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Make sure I have stapled all my papers together in proper order.

Lesson 23: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote a first-person narrative that focuses on a single activity or situation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used emotion words and detailed description |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support the topic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized and easy to follow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the emotion of the narrative |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hooked the reader with an interesting opening sentence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than one "to be" word |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose context-appropriate synonyms for repeated main words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Vividly described the sensory experience (what the animal sees, hears, and feels) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Removed or replaced weak words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Consistent tense agreement: ___wrote in present tense ___wrote in past tense |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used <i>a variety</i> of the following:
___began with paired adjectives ___began with a past and/or present participle
___began with an -ly adverb ___used an appositive
___began with a prepositional phrase ___included a simile
___began with a subordinate conjunction (<i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included one or more subject-verb sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote both long and short sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote clearly and concisely, removing unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote one paragraphs of 7-9 sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Narrative Voice (1st Person) _____

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Lesson 23: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote a third-person narrative that observes an animal in a single activity or situation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used emotion words and detailed description |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support the topic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized and easy to follow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the emotion of the narrative |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hooked the reader with an interesting opening sentence. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than one "to be" word |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose context-appropriate synonyms for repeated main words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Vividly described the sensory experience (what the animal sees, hears, or feels) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Removed or replaced weak words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used the same pronoun throughout the paragraph (<i>he, she</i> , OR <i>it</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Consistent tense agreement: ___wrote in present tense ___wrote in past tense |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used <i>a variety</i> of the following:
___began with paired adjectives ___began with a past and/or present participle
___began with an -ly adverb ___used an appositive
___began with a prepositional phrase ___included a simile
___began with a subordinate conjunction (<i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included one or more subject-verb sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote both long and short sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote clearly and concisely, removing unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote one paragraph of 7-9 sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Narrative Voice (3rd Person)

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name _____

Subject of Composition _____

Title _____

COMPOSITION EVALUATION

Content 15 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Mechanics 10 points

10 _____

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____

_____ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

Additional Comments and Feedback

Name _____

Subject of Composition _____

Title _____

COMPOSITION EVALUATION

Content 15 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Mechanics 10 points

10 _____

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____

_____ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

Additional Comments and Feedback

Unit 6:
Persuasive Writing
& Essays

Lesson 24: Persuasive Writing (Writing an Ad)

So far, you've learned three basic writing forms: *descriptive*, *informative*, and *narrative*.

- Descriptive writing appeals to the senses through vivid, colorful details.
- Informative writing instructs, enlightens, educates, or helps the reader.
- Narrative writing focuses on a storyline and the related action taking place. It generally includes characters, setting, plot, and the passage of time.

Another useful writing tool is called persuasion. **Persuasive writing** tries to convince the reader to accept a certain belief or follow a course of action. Instead of appealing largely to the senses, persuasive writing depends mainly on reasoning and clear logic and appeals to human emotions.

Persuasion is key to effective advertising. Companies spend a great deal of money each year on radio, magazine, and TV ads to promote their products. They hope to convince buyers that Brand X will give them the shiniest floor, the healthiest hair, or the whitest. People also use persuasion to convince others to vote for them, shop at their stores, follow their religious beliefs, or accept their points of view.

Combine elements of writing to produce the most effective composition. For example, when you wrote an informative biography, you also included narrative writing. When you wrote a narrative, it was important to add vivid description. Similarly, when you write to persuade, you may also **inform** or **describe** to help make your point.

- Suppose you believe Sonya Ramos is the best candidate for mayor. If you want to convince others to vote for her, first you have to tell them about her impressive qualifications, her integrity, and her community involvement.
- Perhaps you plan to sell popcorn to raise money for your organization. It will be important to describe each variety and flavor in an attempt to appeal to your potential customers.
- Maybe your youth choir is traveling to London for a competition. To help raise funds, you might write a letter to a family from your community describing your trip and letting them know about your need for financial support. Your persuasive letter could convince this family to help in some way.

Each of these situations offers a chance to persuade someone to take action. As you write an advertisement this week, you will try to convince someone to take action, too.

Lesson 24: Identifying Elements of a Persuasive Ad

Companies spend millions of dollars every year hiring special writers to do one job: Create ads that persuade consumers to buy their products. This week you try your hand at advertising, creating an ad for a toy. It's your job to make this toy sound so appealing that no parent or child could imagine life without it! Draw on your writing experience to plan a descriptive ad that appeals either to **logic or emotion**.

Directions

Read this enticing ad and answer the questions that follow. Note the informal writing style.

Know why kids splash through puddles, jump into leaves, and hate to come in for dinner? Because kids and nature were made for each other! And that's why NatureFriends created the colorful, durable Young Explorer's Hiking Set. When kids buckle on our hiker's belt, they're outfitted for treks through the backyard or park. What creepy crawlies live in your yard? The powerful magnifying glass will give your junior naturalist a close-up view. Battery-operated flashlight, real canteen, whistle, and 20-page field guide will entertain him for hours. There's even a working compass to outfit the budding outdoorsman. Our Young Explorer's Hiking Set opens the door to fascinating adventures for the curious child.

- ☐ Who is the consumer? _____
- ☐ What features describe this toy's safety? _____

- ☐ What features describe this toy's educational appeal? _____

- ☐ What tells you that the child will enjoy this toy? _____

- ☐ What need was created? _____
- ☐ How will this toy meet that need? _____

- ☐ What claims does this manufacturer make about the toy? _____

☐ Does this ad appeal to **emotion** or to **logic**? _____

☐ List the toy's qualities. _____

☐ What vivid adjectives describe the toy's components? _____

☐ In the ad on page 24-3, find an example of each of the following. Write the phrase or sentence on the line.

Use of first person _____

Use of second person _____

Sentence fragment _____

Use of a contraction _____

Use of questions _____

Short sentence _____

Sentence beginning with *and*, *but*, *because*, or *so* _____

Can you see how all these factors work together to persuade?

Lesson 24: Persuasive Ad Brainstorming Worksheet

Find a photo of a toy and invent new features for it. Alternatively, choose a favorite toy you own now or one you enjoyed when you were younger.

Before beginning, glance through some magazines or online product descriptions, reading different kinds of ads. This will help you get an idea of how an ad should look or sound.

Describe the Toy (Brainstorm answers to the following)

1. Name of toy _____
2. Type of toy _____
3. Appealing characteristics of the toy _____

4. Why do **you** (or *why did you*) like to play with it? (emotion/feeling words) _____

5. What qualities might entice other children to play with this toy? _____

6. What would parents like about the toy? _____

7. Think of colorful, concrete words to describe your toy (unbreakable, educational, colorful, imaginative, cuddly, safe, etc.). _____

Develop the Ad

1. Will you use an *emotional* appeal or a *logical* appeal? _____
2. With a colored pencil, underline the descriptive words you wrote for Step 7 above that would satisfy this appeal.
3. What kind of need will you create? _____
4. Who will be the consumer? (check one)
☐ Parent (why would a parent purchase this product?) _____
☐ Child (to what age would this toy appeal?) _____
5. What claims do you want to make about your toy? _____

6. List some additional phrases and ideas that would add to the appeal of your ad.

Write the Ad

1. Write a 6- to 10-sentence advertisement for your toy.
2. **Create a need** for this toy—and then tell how the toy will meet that need.
3. Apart from a subordinate conjunction, the sample paragraph about the Young Explorer's Hiking Set doesn't use sentence variations. That's because the ad relies on other methods instead (see Step 6 below). So while sentence variations are optional, you may still find a way to use a few.
4. If you make guaranteed claims, be sure they are truthful and realistic.
5. Ads are often written in a combination of *first* and *second* person. The ad reminds the consumer, "*We* have a product and *you* need it!"
6. Again, notice in the example that ads sometimes use other features not normally acceptable in "regular" writing, such as:
 - Friendly, casual writing style
 - Use of questions
 - Sentence fragments
 - Phrases or short sentences
 - Contractions (there's, it's, you've, etc.)
 - Sentences beginning with *and*, *but*, *because*, or *so*
7. Your ad does not need a title.

Lesson 24: Student Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Does the name of my toy have appeal to both children and parents?
- ☐ Who is my audience? ___parents ___children
- ☐ What advertising appeal did I use? ___emotion ___logic
- ☐ Did I create a need for the toy?
- ☐ Did I explain how this toy will meet that need?
- ☐ Does my ad sound realistic?
- ☐ Does my ad sound persuasive?
- ☐ Do all sentences support the topic of the advertisement?

STYLE

- ☐ Did I write a strong opening line that grabs the consumer's attention?
- ☐ Did I use no more than **two** "to be" words, *including contractions*? **Circle** (to be) words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I replace repeated main words with specific, vivid, concrete words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I remove or replace weak words? **Underline** vague/weak words in green.
- ☐ Did I write in **second person**?
- ☐ Have I varied my sentences by correctly using these in my ad?
 - ___incomplete sentences (phrases) ___short sentences or phrases
 - ___sentence variations ___contractions
 - ___a phrase or two that start with *and, but, because, or so*
- ☐ Have I included one short sentence (six words or fewer)?
- ☐ Did I write a convincing closing sentence to wrap up my ad?

MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I write one paragraph? Is it 6-10 sentences long? How many sentences? ____
- ☐ Did I indent, leave margins, and skip every other line?
- ☐ Did I **look up** words whose spelling I'm not sure about? Have I made corrections as needed?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ Did I check for misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Make sure I have stapled all my papers together in proper order.

Lesson 24: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name of toy appeals to both children and parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Audience is __parents __children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ad mainly appeals to __emotions __logic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Created a need for the toy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Explained how the toy would meet that need |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ad sounds realistic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ad sounds persuasive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support the topic |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong opening line grabs the consumer's attention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than <i>two</i> "to be" words, including contractions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Replaced repeated main words with specific, vivid, concrete words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Removed or replaced weak words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote in second person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used an informal writing style |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Consistent tense agreement: __wrote in present tense __wrote in past tense |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used each of the following:
__incomplete sentences (phrases) __short sentences or phrases
__sentence variations __contractions
__a phrase or two that start with <i>and</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>because</i> , or <i>so</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included one short sentence (six words or fewer) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote a convincing closing sentence to wrap up the ad |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote one paragraph of 6-10 sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Writing an Ad

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. The background is a clean, solid white color.

Name _____

Subject of Composition _____

Title _____

COMPOSITION EVALUATION

Content 15 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

Mechanics 10 points

10 _____

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____

_____ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

Additional Comments and Feedback

Lesson 25: Writing an Opinion Essay

Introduction to Essay Writing: Essays vs. Reports

Throughout your school years, you'll find yourself in situations that will require you to write an essay. Have you ever wondered how an essay is different from a report? A **report** is usually an organized collection of facts. In a biography, this might include birthplace; childhood; major events in the subject's life; and major contributions to science, literature, or society. You won't usually express opinions when writing a factual report, and you might include diagrams or charts to illustrate your points.

An **essay**, on the other hand, requires you to interact with the material and not just list a bunch of facts. Webster's *New World Student Writing Handbook* defines an essay as "any short piece of writing that analyzes or interprets something in a personal way." Essays require critical thinking as you compare or contrast; analyze; draw conclusions; give opinions, reasons, and explanations; and use logic.

Typical Kinds of Essays

- ☐ Test questions
- ☐ Job, college, or scholarship applications
- ☐ Short compositions for various subjects (literature, history, science, music, etc.) that develop a topic in one of the following ways:
 - Literary analysis (responding to a piece of literature)
 - Cause and effect
 - Compare or contrast
 - Definition or description
 - Opinion (argumentation)
 - Persuasion
- ☐ Timed essays (e.g., in-class essays or written portions of college-entrance exams)

To Write a Successful Essay

- ☐ Keep your audience in mind.
- ☐ Stay focused on the question or topic.
- ☐ Use transitions like *for instance*, *in other words*, *consequently*, or *in fact* to connect ideas and paragraphs and make your writing flow better.
- ☐ Use a more formal (but not stuffy or unnatural) structure, vocabulary, and style.

- ☐ Show that you have a clear understanding of your subject.
- ☐ Use a well-organized plan (an outline).
- ☐ Give specific examples to support your topic.

Although you'll meet all types of essays in your high school years, this unit focuses on helping you write effective multi-paragraph essays that answer a particular question. These essays will often appear on subject tests like history or English and on some proficiency exams. They may be timed or untimed.

A well-written essay tells the reader whether or not you know your topic by *how clearly you write* and *how well you explain your points*.

The three steps to producing an effective essay include **planning**, **writing**, and **revising**. Lesson 25 will explain and illustrate each of these as you learn to write an opinion essay.

What Is an Opinion Essay?

This lesson's opinion essay requires you to *express an opinion on a certain topic*. An essay that expresses and supports an opinion often serves two purposes:

- To share ideas and cause readers to think about them.
- To persuade readers to accept the writer's position or to change their mind about a topic.

The opinion paper states the writer's point of view and supports it with details and reasons. Writers can give their opinion without trying to change the readers' mind. But if they do attempt to convince the readers to accept their point of view, the paper will also be *persuasive*.

Tips for Writing Your Opinion Essay

- Write about a subject that is controversial or difficult to prove.
- Express an opinion that will probably cause opposition.
- Support your opinion with facts, logic, causes or effects, comparisons, definitions, descriptions, details, examples, illustrations, and statistics.
- Don't say *I believe*, *I think*, or *in my opinion* because these phrases state the obvious. Your paper, by definition, will tell the reader what you believe or think.

Lesson 25: Writing an Opinion Essay

Choose a Topic

Write about something you have an opinion about. You could express your views on just about anything. What current events might invite people to form strong opinions? What are your personal tastes? See Lesson 30 for a list of possible essay topics. Choose one that fits the criteria for an opinion essay. This will be the basis for your **thesis statement**.

Example opinion: The driving age should be raised to eighteen.

Think about your subject. How does it affect readers' lifestyle, health, eating habits, family, job, pocketbook, recreation, or hobbies? Choose details that matter to readers. Remember your audience. Are they congressmen? Parents? Peers? Businesswomen? Clergy? A board of directors? Teachers? You get the idea.

My audience: A state senator

Brainstorm for Ideas

When making a list of possible supporting details, it often helps to think "because."

Veganism is a healthy lifestyle *because* ____

Cursive handwriting should be taught to students *because* ____

The FDA should ban energy drinks *because* ____

(Don't actually use the word *because* when brainstorming or listing supporting details.)

Below is an example of a brainstorming session on the topic:

The driving age should be raised to eighteen (because younger teenagers):

- lack skill
- cause injury or death from reckless driving
- are easily distracted
- can be cocky or can show-off
- lack respect for rules and authority
- lack maturity
- yield to peer pressure
- cause majority of accidents
- are less responsible
- take risks
- are more likely to use drugs or alcohol
- drive poorly maintained cars
- get distracted by their loud music
- like to joyride
- tend not to use seatbelts when parents are not around
- are distracted by fellow passengers
- tend to overcrowd their cars
- play dangerous games with their cars
- lack experience
- drive too fast
- text while driving
- are often in a hurry, impatient

Decide on Your Main Points

Choose three main points (topics) that you can further develop with details. Select general points, saving more specific facts and reasons to support each topic.)

Here are three possible main points chosen from the brainstorming list:

1. *Lack maturity*
2. *Yield to peer pressure*
3. *They can be easily distracted*

► **Something in this list makes it structurally incorrect.** *Can you find it? If not, look up “parallelism” online or in an English handbook and decide what should be changed.*

Make an Outline

Organize the details in outline form. *Outlines must maintain a parallel structure.* List your **three main points** by the Roman numerals. Then, under each main point list **subpoints** next to the capital letters. Fill in at least two subpoints for each main point. Later, you will further develop these subpoints

You will notice that the order of the outline below has been changed from the order of the original three points listed above. This student wanted to attract the readers’ attention right off the bat. She also wanted to end with the point that was, in her opinion, the most important. Sometimes order of main points does not matter. When it does, take advantage by arranging your points in such a way as to make the best attempt to persuade.

Example Outline:

- I. Yield to peer pressure
 - A. Show off
 - B. Take risks to impress friends
 - C. May use drugs and alcohol
- II. Are easily distracted
 - A. By loud music
 - B. By unruly fellow passengers
- III. Lack maturity
 - A. Lack respect for rules and authority
 - B. Lack skill and experience
 - C. Lack patience

Lesson 25: Identifying Main Points and Transitions

Directions

There are different ways to format a 5-paragraph essay. Three options follow.

1. In each, underline in colored pencil the **three main points** every time they appear.
2. Find several examples of parallelism and circle the words/phrases in another color.
3. Insert transitions words where needed and circle them in yet another color.
4. Use the paragraph symbol (¶) to mark the places where a new paragraph should begin. (Hint: Each main point should be a new paragraph.)
5. Underline **main points in each conclusion**.

OPTION 1: State your thesis *and introduce your three main points in the first sentence*. Then develop each point, one at a time, in its own paragraph.

Because vegetable gardening contributes to a healthier diet, physical and mental wellbeing, and closer relationships, families and communities should garden together. Eating right contributes to feeling right. Gardening encourages people to eat better by growing wholesome food. Just-picked fruits and vegetables inspire home gardeners to preserve their harvest, so by canning and freezing, everyone can enjoy tomato sauce, pickles, and luscious jams year-round. Working outdoors nourishes body, soul, and mind. Benefitting from exercise, sunlight, and fresh air, those who garden feel more energized. Instead of watching TV or playing video games, they are burning calories and strengthening muscles. Furthermore, mildly strenuous exercise, such as digging or weeding, reduces stress and improves attitudes. Because outdoor activities encourage social interaction, sharing a vegetable patch brings people together. Families, for example, build relationships as they cultivate their backyard plots. In cities, gardening co-ops help neighbors turn empty lots or bare patio spaces into inviting green spaces. Most importantly, gardens encourage neighbors to get outside and interact as they work side by side, grow organic food, and share the bounty. Everyone should consider starting a garden project. Not only will participants enjoy vine-ripened fruits and vegetables, they will also reap the benefits of physical exercise and healthy relationships. Whether in a backyard, vacant lot, or apartment courtyard, gardening makes a productive and meaningful social activity.

OPTION 2: State your thesis in the first sentence. **Introduce your three main points in the second sentence.** Then develop each point, one at a time, in its own paragraph.

Follow the directions on, p. 25-5.

Families and communities should garden together. Growing their own food helps people eat healthier, experience physical and mental wellbeing, and nurture relationships. Eating right contributes to feeling right. Gardening encourages people to eat healthfully by planting wholesome fruits and vegetables and harvesting them at the peak of freshness. Just-picked tomatoes, peppers, or berries inspire home gardeners to preserve their harvest, so by canning and freezing, everyone can enjoy tomato sauce, pickles, and luscious jams year-round. Gardening benefits body, soul, and mind. Rather than spend time glued to an electronic device or TV, family members can dig, prune, mulch, pull weeds, and push a wheelbarrow. Invigorating and mildly strenuous, yardwork burns calories, strengthens muscles, reduces stress, and clears away mental cobwebs. Because exercise, sunlight, and fresh air are nature's energizers, these activities often feel stimulating and uplifting. Gardening encourages social interaction. Whether families spend time on their rural or suburban backyard plot, or members of a gardening co-op transform a vacant lot into a thriving oasis, cultivating a vegetable patch brings together people of all ages. As neighbors and friends share tasks in their communal garden—such as planting and watering—they grow not only food, but lasting relationships. Everyone should consider starting a garden project. Participants share in the bounty of vine-ripened produce, but more importantly, they reap the benefits of physical activity through a common, engaging experience.

OPTION 3: State your thesis in the first or second sentence. **Then introduce and develop your three main points one at a time**, each in its own paragraph.

Follow the directions on p. 25-5.

Families and communities should spend time planting and tending a vegetable garden together. Growing and preserving their own food encourages people to eat more healthfully. Nutrient-dense strawberries, peppers, and other fruits and vegetables explode with flavor when picked at the peak of maturity and eaten right away. However, a glut of zucchini or peaches often inspires home gardeners to preserve their bounty. Canning and freezing, two popular methods, ensure that everyone can enjoy wholesome veggies, tomato sauce, or frozen fruit year-round. Working in the garden benefits body, soul, and mind. Mildly strenuous, it burns calories, strengthens muscles, and relieves stress. Rather than spend time glued to an electronic device or TV, family members can head outdoors to break up ground, hoe flower beds, pull weeds, and push a wheelbarrow. Exercise, sunlight, and fresh air are nature's energizers, so activities like these contribute to physical and mental wholeness. Gardening nurtures relationships. Whether families spend time growing food in their backyard plot, or community members transform a vacant lot into an abundant vegetable patch, cultivating a garden brings together people of all ages. A bountiful harvest is the obvious perk. But more importantly, shared tasks in a communal space—such as planting and watering—encourage social interaction and foster healthy friendships. The gardening experience yields more than nutritious, vine-ripened produce: it contributes to an overall sense of wellbeing and promotes positive relationships. Friends, neighbors, and families alike would benefit from starting a garden project.

Lesson 25: Writing the Opinion Essay

1. Follow your plan. **If you wrote a clear outline, writing your essay will be simple.**
2. Write a 5-paragraph (10- to 20-sentence) essay.
 - **Paragraph 1** is the introduction. State your opinion in the first or second sentence of this paragraph. This is your *thesis statement*.
 - **Paragraphs 2, 3, and 4** make up the body of the essay. Discuss one main point in each of these paragraphs, supporting that point with appropriate details such as facts, examples, logic, illustrations, or comparisons. Consider leftover ideas from your brainstorming list. A news source can help when writing about a current event.
 - **Paragraph 5** is your conclusion. Restate or summarize the thesis in different words.
3. Refer back to p. 25-2 for opinion-essay writing tips. Follow these additional guidelines:
 - Don't use the word the word "you" in your essay.
 - If your subject matter could trigger antagonism or controversy, begin with details least likely to offend or turn away the reader.
 - Include **transitions** to help the reader follow your thoughts and see the relationship between ideas and paragraphs. "Using Transition Words to Make or Introduce Your Points" (Word List p. 16) will help.

This sample essay is based on the outline on p. 25-4.

Raising the Driving Age

Evidence confirms that teenage drivers cause the majority of accidents. Because young drivers yield to peer pressure, are easily distracted, and lack maturity, the driving age should be raised to eighteen.

To begin with, teens tend to take more risks in order to impress their companions. Overconfident and cocky, they might show off by speeding, joyriding, or playing dangerous road games. While partying with friends, some young people foolishly use drugs or alcohol before getting behind the wheel. Because of their recklessness, these teenagers place themselves, their passengers, and other vehicles in danger.

In addition, easily distracted young motorists may fail to concentrate on their driving. Their loud, booming music can drown out honking horns and sirens or cause the drivers' minds to wander. Texting while at the wheel, another risky practice, increases likelihood of accidents. Likewise, unruly or

rowdy passengers can prevent teenage drivers from paying attention to the road.

Most importantly, immature drivers lack skill and experience. They may fail to heed road signs and traffic regulations or misjudge timing or distance. Reacting to dangerous situations requires an automatic response that comes with maturity and practice. Furthermore, impatience to arrive quickly at a destination can cause high-school-age drivers to irresponsibly ignore speed limits, stoplights, or crosswalks.

Clearly, a higher incidence of injury or even loss of life results from having impressionable, inattentive, and immature drivers at the wheel. Therefore, the driving age must be increased to eighteen.

Repeated Words

You may notice a number of repeated words in the essay. **Sometimes there's no choice.** For example, there aren't many synonyms for "driver" (motorist is the only appropriate one). But you can interchange words like *young people*, *teenagers*, or *teens*.

Another hard-to-replace word is *drive* (or *driving*). In this essay, the thesaurus didn't help. The writer had to think of creative alternatives, choosing words like "recklessness" to replace "reckless driving" or "speeding" in place of "driving too fast." As long as main words are **repeated sparingly**, you may use them in your essay.

"To Be" Verbs

Up to now, WriteShop has been training you to eliminate "to be" words from your paragraphs. Too many of them result in *passive* writing. It's better to write *actively*, using strong, specific verbs to describe action or behavior.

As you enter into this next phase of writing and begin to focus on essays, expect to devote more mental energy to organizing your material and thinking critically about your subject. While you still need to use interesting sentence variations, it's more important to work on developing your topic in an organized manner. With this in mind, you have permission to include up to **five** "to be" words in this essay.

WriteShop has taught you to become more aware of "to be" words—and to avoid them when possible. But counting "to be" words takes time! So when you start to write long essays and reports, it's no longer realistic to count them.

"To be" words are still an important part of the English language; however, **they no longer have control over you.** As your writing matures, you'll grow more skilled at spotting and replacing some of these passive verbs. Use them as you need but rely on your sentence variations to keep your writing interesting!

Lesson 25: Opinion Essay Practice Worksheet

As needed, refer back to the instructions on pp. 25-3 to 25-4.

Who is your **audience**? _____

Write your **thesis statement**: _____

_____ (*because . . .*)

Brainstorm below. Your list should contain 10-20 words or short phrases. Do not move on to the next step **until you have brainstormed thoroughly.**

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
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- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Choose your main points. Go back to the brainstorming list on p. 25-11. Check off any ideas you could easily expand with supporting details. Select the three you wish to develop, and list them here.

- I. _____
- II. _____
- III. _____

Write your outline. Remembering *parallelism*, list the three main points from above on lines I, II, and III. On lines A, B, and C list facts or examples to support each main point. You should find many supporting details on your brainstorming sheet.

- I. _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
- II. _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
- III. _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

Lesson 25: Opinion Essay Worksheet

As needed, refer back to the instructions on pp. 25-3 to 25-4.

Who is your **audience**? _____

Write your **thesis statement**: _____

_____ (***because . . .***)

Brainstorm below. Your list should contain 10-20 words or short phrases. Do not move on to the next step **until you have brainstormed thoroughly.**

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
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- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Choose your main points. Go back to the brainstorming list on p. 25-11. Check off any ideas you could easily expand with supporting details. Select the three you wish to develop, and list them here.

I. _____

II. _____

III. _____

Write your outline. Keeping your points parallel, list the three main points from above on lines I, II, and III. On lines A, B, and C, list facts or examples to support each main point. You should find appropriate supporting details on your brainstorming sheet.

I. _____

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

II. _____

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

III. _____

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Write Your Opinion Essay

Refer to your **Student Writing Skills Checklist** to review requirements for sentence variations and other elements of style and mechanics.

Lesson 25: Reorganizing Your Essay

Directions

1. Use this section to write a more organized essay.
2. These tips will be especially helpful if you did not
 - Use transition words (or enough of them) in your essay.
 - Know when to begin a new paragraph.
 - Establish and develop three main points.
 - Summarize your three main points in an effective conclusion.
3. You may find it useful to review the pre-writing activity essays "Identifying Main Points and Transitions" (pp. 25-5 to 25-7).

Fix-Your-Essay Checklist

- ☐ Did you FOLLOW the DIRECTIONS? Make sure your essay answers the question and addresses all points in the topic.
- ☐ Don't play "guessing games" in formal essays. Did you tell your reader right away who or what is the subject of your essay?
- ☐ You may need to rewrite your thesis statement (topic sentence). If necessary, decide how you will develop it:
 - Introduce your three main points in the first or second sentence. Then develop each point, one at a time.
 - Or, state your thesis. Then, introduce and develop your three main points one at a time.
- ☐ In the body of your essay, review and fix your first main point. If needed:
 - If your thesis statement is only one sentence long, don't begin a new paragraph yet. Otherwise, introduce your first main point in a new paragraph.
 - **Begin with a transition** like *First*, or *To begin with*.
 - **Develop this point with supporting details** and concrete examples. Don't keep repeating yourself with vague thoughts. Support points with specific illustrations.
- ☐ Next, review and fix your second main point. If needed:
 - Remember to begin a **new paragraph** and to indent.
 - **Use a transition** like *In addition*, *Second*, or *Next*.
 - Again, use **supporting details** to develop and expand this point. Give two or three specific examples.

- ☐ Finally, review and fix your third main point. If needed:
 - Begin another **new paragraph** and indent.
 - Use a transition like *Furthermore*, *Finally*, or *Above all*.
 - Again, **be specific**. Don't ramble, repeat yourself, or use vague vocabulary. If your reader will wonder, "What did she say?" or "He hasn't convinced me," you'll need to add concrete examples and persuasive facts.
- ☐ When finished, write or revise your conclusion. If needed:
 - Begin another **new paragraph** and indent.
 - If you wish, you may use a transition phrase like *Clearly* or *In conclusion*.
 - **Restate your three main points.** Restate means *to change the wording while keeping the original meaning*. It's too late to introduce any *new* points.

To Keep in Mind

- ☐ By now you should know to use colorful, descriptive vocabulary and avoid weak and overly repeated words.
 - Replace at least two overused or dull nouns and verbs with concrete synonyms.
 - Find places to insert at least two strong, interesting adjectives or adverbs.

- ☐ Do not support your main point by *repeating* your main point. Instead, think of convincing details or other additional information to help *support* your main idea.

- **Poor example:** "Sam Emerson influenced my education through his outstanding teaching skills. He knew how to teach his subjects well. Because of this, I learned a great deal from him."

*Here, there's no new or supporting information; every sentence repeats the main point using different words. The reader wants to know, "**How** did he influence you? **What kinds** of teaching skills did he demonstrate? **How** did he teach well? **What** did you learn from him?"*

- **Good example:** "Sam Emerson influenced my education through his outstanding teaching skills. Not only did he present material in a clear and understandable way, he also made each subject interesting and entertaining. He accomplished this through his use of drama, costumes, lively group discussions, and meaningful object lessons. Because of his inspiring example, I have decided to become a teacher as well."

Here, the writer supports the main point with facts and examples.

Lesson 25: Skill Builder

Using Parallelism

Example 1

Suppose you were asked to list three qualities found in a friend. You could choose:

1. Loyalty
2. Kind
3. Speaks truthfully

Expressed in a sentence, these qualities might look like this:

Aiden, my best friend, exhibits loyalty, is kind, and he always speaks truthfully.

Even though you think this sentence sounds awkward, you might not be able to pinpoint the reason, which makes it hard to fix the problem. So why *does* this sentence seem disjointed? The writer didn't follow the rules of **parallelism**, a pattern of repeated, similarly constructed phrases or sentences. Understanding parallelism helps you write clearly, eliminate confusion, and avoid awkwardness.

The phrases "exhibits loyalty," "is kind," and "he always speaks truthfully" are not parallel because each is constructed using different parts of speech: *loyalty* is a noun, *kind* is an adjective, and *truthfully* is an adverb. To make sense, use parallel construction.

- ☐ A series of nouns:

Aiden demonstrates **loyalty, kindness, and truthfulness**.

- ☐ A series of adjectives:

Loyal, kind, and truthful, Aiden has earned his employer's respect.

- ☐ A series containing parallel adjectives + prepositional phrases

Aiden is **loyal to his friends, kind to animals, and truthful to his parents**.

- ☐ A series containing parallel verbs + adverbs

Aiden **behaves loyally, acts kindly, and speaks truthfully**.

Example 2

This time list the benefits of exercise for teenagers.

1. To gain strength
2. Develop coordination
3. Energy

Notice how a sentence written from this list creates shifted construction (no parallelism).

Exercising regularly helps teens gain strength, develop coordination, and energy.

The sentence can be rewritten to make it parallel and improve its flow.

- ☐ A series of parallel verbs + nouns

*Exercising regularly helps teens **gain strength, develop coordination, and feel energetic.*** (Notice the agreement: *helps* gain, *helps* develop, *helps* feel.)

- ☐ A series of parallel adjectives

*Exercising regularly helps teens grow **strong, coordinated, and energetic.***

DAY ONE

Directions: Rewrite each sentence using parallel construction.

1. Laura danced with grace, elegance, and was charming.

2. The stunt plane dipped dangerously, spun crazily, and it landed smoothly.

3. A fierce bull charged wildly across the meadow, over the footbridge, and trampled the neighbor's pansies.

4. I admire President Lincoln for his courage, how he persevered, and being honest.

5. Reading worthwhile literature stretches the imagination, will improve your vocabulary, and it increases knowledge.

6. Drinking untreated water, unwashed hands, and to eat improperly cooked food can promote deadly diseases such as salmonella.

DAY TWO**Directions**

1. Rewrite each sentence using parallel construction.
2. List the type of parallel construction you used in your sentence, choosing from the word bank below. Sometimes you will be using a combination of two. If so, write "adjective + prepositional phrase" or "verb + noun," for example.

adjectives	verbs
adverbs	prepositional phrases
nouns	

1. To camp, going fishing, and hiking make ideal vacation activities.

Parallel construction: _____

2. Microwave ovens are convenient, they are inexpensive to purchase, and easily operated.

Parallel construction: _____

3. As a child, my favorite blanket kept me warm, gave me security, and I was comforted by it.

Parallel construction: _____

4. Yosemite National Park provides sanctuary for wildlife, backpackers can use hiking trails, and visitors enjoy the breathtaking scenery.

Parallel construction: _____

5. Restricting children's television time encourages them to develop their imaginations through play, they interact with family members during the evening, and enjoying outdoor activities on weekends.

Parallel construction: _____

6. When holding a baby, handle him gently, carefully, and with love.

Parallel construction: _____

DAY THREE

Directions

- ☐ Write parallel sentences.
- ☐ If you use the following sets of words to form the sentence, you may end up with shifted construction. Rephrase them so each sentence conforms to the rules of parallelism.
- ☐ Some of these sets may already be parallel and will not need rewording. Try to avoid using the word "because" in your sentences.

1. **Topic:** Tell how your dad or mom has inspired, affected, and/or impressed you.
(leads by example, supports the activities I am involved in, I get disciplined with love)

2. **Topic:** Tell why it is important to attend college.

(exposes you to new ideas, you become a more well-rounded person, door is opened to greater career opportunities)

3. **Topic:** How can young people learn the importance of money management?

(budgeting wisely, avoiding credit card debt, saving for college)

4. **Topic:** What do you look for in a good book?

(the plot is exciting, fascinating characters, it has a positive moral message)

5. **Topic:** Explain why people should not smoke.

(habit forming, causes emphysema and lung cancer, non-smokers are offended by it)

Lesson 25: Student Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ *Paragraph 1*: Does the introduction feature a clear opinion/thesis in the first or second sentence?
- ☐ *Paragraph 2*: Is Main Point 1 supported with facts, illustrations, examples, and other details?
- ☐ *Paragraph 3*: Is Main Point 2 supported with facts, illustrations, examples, and other details?
- ☐ *Paragraph 4*: Is Main Point 3 supported with facts, illustrations, examples, and other details?
- ☐ *Paragraph 5*: Does the conclusion rephrase my three main points and sum up the essay?
- ☐ Did I stick to the topic?
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Are details organized and easy to follow?
- ☐ Does the title give a clue about the content of my essay?

STYLE

- ☐ Did I use no more than **five** "to be" words? **Circle** (to be) words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I replace repeated main words when possible? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words and remove or replace weak words? **Underline** vague/weak words in green.
- ☐ Did I organize the essay by developing the three main points in order?
- ☐ Did I follow the rules of parallelism in both my outline and composition?
- ☐ Did I use transitions between paragraphs and when shifting from one point to another?
- ☐ Have I correctly used a variety of the following?
 - ___ began with paired adjectives ___ began with a past and/or present participle
 - ___ began with an -ly adverb ___ included an appositive
 - ___ began with a prepositional phrase ___ included a simile
 - ___ began with a subordinate conjunction (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- ☐ Have I included subject-verb sentences?
- ☐ Did I use both long and short sentences?
- ☐ Did I avoid writing in second person (*you*)?
- ☐ Did I write concisely? Did I avoid repeating ideas unnecessarily?

MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I write five paragraphs for a **total** of 10-20 sentences? How many sentences in all? ____
- ☐ Did I indent, leave margins, and skip every other line??
- ☐ Did I **look up** words whose spelling I'm not sure about? Have I made corrections as needed?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK**: Make sure I have stapled all my papers together in proper order.

Lesson 25: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>Paragraph 1</u> : Introduction features a clear opinion/thesis in first or second sentence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>Paragraph 2</u> : Main Point 1 (supported with facts, illustrations, examples, and other details) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>Paragraph 3</u> : Main Point 2 (supported with facts, illustrations, examples, and other details) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>Paragraph 4</u> : Main Point 3 (supported with facts, illustrations, examples, and other details) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>Paragraph 5</u> : Conclusion rephrases the three main points and sums up the essay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sticks to the topic (no "carrots in the cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized and easy to follow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title gives a clue to the contents of the essay |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than five "to be" words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Replaced repeated main words when possible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete nouns and verbs; removed or replaced weak words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Organized essay by developing the three main points in order |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed the rules of parallelism in both the outline and essay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used transitions between paragraphs and when shifting from one point to another |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used a <i>variety</i> of the following:
___ began with paired adjectives ___ began with a past and/or present participle
___ began with an -ly adverb ___ used an appositive
___ began with a prepositional phrase ___ included a simile
___ began with a subordinate conjunction (<i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included subject-verb sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used both long and short sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided writing in second person (<i>you</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding unnecessary repetition of ideas |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote five paragraphs for a total of 10-20 sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Opinion Essay

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name _____

Subject/Title of Essay _____

ESSAY EVALUATION

Content 20 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Introduction (clear thesis statement; introduces subject; grabs reader's attention)

3 _____

Content (answers the question/s by stating main points and/or persuades the reader)

5 _____

Development (supports main points with specific details, facts, examples; uses sound reasoning; comprehensive)

6 _____

Topicality (sticks to the topic; avoids rabbit trails or tangents)

3 _____

Conclusion (restates main points, sums up essay, does not leave reader hanging)

3 _____

Style 25 points

Organization (logical order; sequence makes sense; main points developed in order; correct use of paragraphs)

5 _____

Fluency (avoids awkwardness; communicates clearly; information makes sense to reader)

5 _____

Style (interesting to read; active vs. passive; limits "to be" words, sentence complexity; use of sentence variations)

4 _____

Parallelism (points are parallel; items in a series are parallel)

2 _____

Vocabulary (grade-appropriate; concrete; avoids repeated words)

3 _____

Conciseness (avoids wordiness and needless repetition of ideas)

3 _____

Transitions (uses effective transitions between topics, main points, and paragraphs)

3 _____

Mechanics 5 points

5 _____

Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)

Spelling/capitalization/punctuation/grammar

Wrote in first or third person (avoided use of you/your)

Structure (sentences complete; no run-ons, no misplaced modifiers)

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____
_____ (over)

100% = A+

87-89% = B+

77-79% = C+

94-99% = A

84-86% = B

74-76% = C

90-93% = A-

80-83% = B-

70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite essay

Additional Comments and Feedback

Lesson 26: Letter to the Editor

Introduction to Editorial Letters

If you skim through a daily newspaper or online news site, you might find a section in which people write to express their opinions about current issues. This section may be called something like "Opinion" or "Letters to the Editor." These letters, while expressing opinions, may also try to convince readers, inform the public, express appreciation to a good Samaritan, or pose moral or ethical questions. When people write to the editor, they share about issues that are important to them.

A typical letter to the editor gives an opinion about local, state, national, or international matters. Writers comment on education choices, religious principles, neighborhood eyesores, issues of morality or social injustice, or pressing needs within their own communities. Following a child's tragic death, a writer may urge his city to build fences along railroad tracks. Another might complain about the high price of gasoline or ballpark tickets. During elections, letters to the editor often remark about candidates, propositions, or taxes. Occasionally, a reader will respond to someone else's letter, whether it sparks outrage or agreement.

When writing a letter to the editor, keep the following in mind.

- ☐ Discuss a subject of current interest to the public that's also of interest to you.
- ☐ Keep it brief (under 300 words).
- ☐ Express your opinion clearly in the first or second sentence.
- ☐ Support your opinion with details, showing you understand the issue.
- ☐ When possible, suggest a solution to the problem.
- ☐ Write in an organized manner.
- ☐ Don't say *I think*, *I believe*, or *In my opinion*, since an editorial letter is already understood to be your opinion.
- ☐ Be especially gracious and polite. Don't name call, accuse unfairly, or make broad assumptions (e.g., *all _____ behave in this way*, or *believe this idea*, etc.).
- ☐ Write in a slightly more formal tone, but try not to sound stuffy.
- ☐ Include your name, email address, and phone number. Most newspapers will not print anonymous editorials.

Lesson 26: Writing an Editorial Letter

This assignment is similar to the opinion essay. Again, you will write an opinion on a topic you feel strongly about. For ideas, see the list below, read through the "Opinion" section of a newspaper, or ask your teacher or parent if you can choose a suitable essay topic from the list in the Teacher's Manual Appendix B.

- ☐ Comment on a letter-to-the-editor, either to take an opposing viewpoint or to agree with the writer.
- ☐ Comment on a current event you find in the news.
- ☐ Give your opinion on an issue of morality (abortion, mercy killing, censorship on the Internet).
- ☐ Express your thoughts on a political or educational issue.
- ☐ Comment on a public eyesore in your community (a particular vacant lot, an unkempt home or business, a rundown park or public building, etc.), offering solutions if possible.
- ☐ Express your opinion on a topic of interest to teens (video games, drugs, vaping, volunteering, feeding the homeless).

Follow these steps. Use the "Letter to the Editor Worksheet" (p. 26-9 and 26-10).

- ☐ Jot down the subject matter you wish to discuss in the essay.
- ☐ Write a thesis statement. This is your statement of purpose and generally includes your opinion on the subject.
- ☐ Brainstorm by making a list of reasons that validate, clarify, or support your statement.
- ☐ From this list, select the top three reasons. Rearrange their order if necessary.
- ☐ Develop a three-point outline, supporting each main point with at least two facts, examples, or reasons.
- ☐ Write your letter, offering solutions whenever possible.
- ☐ Your letter must be five paragraphs and 12-16 sentences long.

A word of caution: You will probably notice when reading people's opinions and comments that not all letters to the editor are gracious, well-organized, or grammatically correct. This does not mean *your* editorial may be rude, difficult to follow, and full of mistakes! You are learning proper writing skills so you can communicate your thoughts on even the most sensitive topics in a respectful way.

A Sample Letter to the Editor

An important bill sits on the desk of California's governor. You read a brief article about it in the newspaper or online, like the idea of the bill, and decide to comment.

1. Jot down the **subject matter** you wish to discuss:

People would be able to apologize for causing injury to another party without their apology counting against them in court.

2. Give your opinion in the form of a **thesis statement**:

I urge the governor to sign this bill into law.

3. **Brainstorm** by making a list of possible supporting reasons on your worksheet (p. 26-9). Remember from Lesson 25 that sometimes it helps to think *because*: "Citizens should vote 'no' on Measure X *because* ____." "Teenagers should volunteer in nursing homes *because* ____." "I urge the governor to sign this bill *because* ____."

4. Write your **three main points** on the Brainstorming worksheet, such as:

1. This plan works in other states.
2. This plan would reduce chances of a lawsuit.
3. This plan would not allow the apology to be used as evidence.

5. Prepare an **outline** on the back of the worksheet (p. 26-10). For example:

I. This plan works in other states

A. Massachusetts and Texas

B. Its success has generated support in CA

II. This plan would reduce chances of lawsuits

A. People less likely to sue if they get an apology

B. A heartfelt response can soften anger

III. This plan would not allow the apology to be used as evidence

A. A confession of wrongdoing would still be admissible

B. Consequences would still apply if found guilty

C. The freedom to apologize would speed healing in both parties

*Can you point out the **parallelism** in this outline?*

6. **Write the letter.** Write a 5-paragraph essay supporting your opinion about a current topic of interest. Support your three main points in the body of the letter with facts and examples. Develop this letter in the same way you developed your Opinion Essay.

Essay Structure

- ☐ **Greeting:** Begin with the salutation: *Dear Editor*.
- ☐ **Introduction:** Jump in with an effective introduction. State your opinion in the topic sentence, which may be the first or second sentence. This is Paragraph #1.
- ☐ **Body**
 - **Paragraph #2:** Develop your first main idea using details and reasons.
 - **Paragraph #3:** Support your second main idea with additional details and reasons. Use an effective transition word to introduce **each new main idea**.
 - **Paragraph #4:** Support the third main idea, also using details and reasons.
- ☐ **Conclusion:** Wrap up your thoughts. As part of the conclusion, suggest a solution to the problem or a possible course of action. This is Paragraph #5.
- ☐ **Closing and Signature:** Conclude with *Yours truly* or *Sincerely* and sign your name.

General Guidelines

The following tips will help keep your writing on track.

- ☐ If your subject matter could create antagonism, begin with details least likely to offend or turn away the reader. Write courteously and graciously.
- ☐ Do not call names or generalize unfavorably.
- ☐ Do not write in second person. The word *you* must not appear in your letter.
- ☐ Do not state *In my opinion* or *I think*.
- ☐ Don't get carried away by your emotions.
- ☐ **Include transitions** to help the reader follow your thoughts and see the relationships between ideas. For help, refer to the Word List on pp. 16-17, "Using Transition Words to Make or Introduce Your Points."
- ☐ Stick to the point and write concisely, avoiding wordiness and rambling.

Sample Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

A bill on the governor's desk has the potential to reduce the number of injury lawsuits in California. I urge him to sign it into law.

First, this sensible bill would make an apology "legal." It would allow people involved in lawsuits over injury accidents to say they were sorry without affecting their legal case. This bill would work for three reasons. First, it has succeeded in other states. Massachusetts and Texas have passed similar laws, resulting in wide support for the California bill.

Furthermore, studies show that people are less likely to sue if they receive an apology. Supporting the argument that a heartfelt response can soften anger, words of remorse could diffuse the injured party's wrath and maybe cause a change of heart.

Finally, although this measure would amend the California Evidence Code so apologies could not be used as evidence in a trial, confessions of responsibility or wrongdoing would remain admissible in court. By law, a person who caused injury or death to someone else would still face the consequences of his or her actions. However, the freedom to voice a heartfelt apology, a normal human reaction, can free that person from some of the heartache or guilt.

Effective, ethical, and humane, the principles of this bill challenge the governor to sign it before another apology goes unspoken.

Sincerely,

Lucy Ann McDaniel

Lesson 26: Letter to the Editor Practice Worksheet

Jot down the **subject matter** you wish to discuss: _____

Write your **thesis statement**: _____

_____ (because _____)

Brainstorm below, writing as many ideas as you can think of to explain your position.

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

Choose your main points from the brainstorming list:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Expand and give reasons. With your thesis statement and supporting reasons in front of you, think about examples, situations, illustrations, descriptions, or comparisons that will help you explain your viewpoint. Below, list these possibilities:

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Write your outline. (This does not include the Introduction or Conclusion.)

- I. _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
- II. _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
- III. _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

Lesson 26: Letter to the Editor Worksheet

Jot down the **subject matter** you wish to discuss: _____

Write your **thesis statement**: _____

_____ (because _____)

Brainstorm below, writing as many ideas as you can think of to explain your position.

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

Choose your main points from the brainstorming list:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Expand and give reasons. With your thesis statement and supporting reasons in front of you, think about examples, situations, illustrations, descriptions, or comparisons that will help you explain your viewpoint. Below, list these possibilities:

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Write your outline. (This does not include the Introduction or Conclusion.)

- I. _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
- II. _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
- III. _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

Lesson 26: Student Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I begin with "Dear Editor" and close with "Yours truly" or "Sincerely"?
- ☐ *Paragraph 1*: Does the introduction feature a clear opinion/thesis in the first or second sentence?
- ☐ *Paragraph 2*: Is Main Point 1 supported with facts, examples, or reasons?
- ☐ *Paragraph 3*: Is Main Point 2 supported with facts, examples, or reasons?
- ☐ *Paragraph 4*: Is Main Point 3 supported with facts, examples, or reasons?
- ☐ *Paragraph 5*: Does the conclusion suggest a solution or possible course of action?
- ☐ Have I used sound reasoning instead of emotional appeal?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly and stick to the point?
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Are details organized and easy to follow?

STYLE

- ☐ Did I use no more than **four** "to be" words? **Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose appropriate synonyms that fit the context of each sentence? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words and avoid weak words? **Underline** vague/weak words in green.
- ☐ Did I follow the rules of parallelism in both my outline and composition?
- ☐ Did I use transitions when shifting from one point to another and when introducing a new point of view?
- ☐ Have I correctly used a variety of the following?
 - ___ began with paired adjectives
 - ___ began with a past and/or present participle
 - ___ began with an -ly adverb
 - ___ included an appositive
 - ___ began with a prepositional phrase
 - ___ included a simile (one only)
 - ___ began with a subordinate conjunction (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- ☐ Have I included several subject-verb sentences?
- ☐ Have I used both long and short sentences?
- ☐ Did I avoid writing in second person (*you/your*)?
- ☐ Did I write concisely, unnecessary repetition of ideas?

MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I write five paragraphs for a **total** of 12-16 sentences? How many sentences in all? ____
- ☐ Did I indent, leave margins, and skip every other line?
- ☐ Did I **look up** words whose spelling I'm not sure about? Have I made corrections as needed?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK**: Make sure I have stapled all my papers together in proper order.

Lesson 26: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Begins with "Dear Editor" and closes with "Yours truly" or "Sincerely" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Paragraph 1:</i> Introduction features a clear opinion/thesis in first or second sentence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Paragraph 2:</i> Main Point 1 (supported with facts, examples, or reasons) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Paragraph 3:</i> Main Point 2 (supported with facts, examples, or reasons) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Paragraph 4:</i> Main Point 3 (supported with facts, examples, or reasons) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Paragraph 5:</i> Conclusion suggests a solution or possible course of action |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Uses sound reasoning instead of emotional appeal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sticks to the point (no "carrots in the cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized and easy to follow |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than four "to be" words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Replaced repeated main words when possible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete nouns and verbs; removed or replaced weak words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Organized essay by developing the three main points in order |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed the rules of parallelism in both the outline and essay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used transitions between paragraphs and when shifting from one point to another |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used a <i>variety</i> of the following:
___ began with paired adjectives ___ began with a past and/or present participle
___ began with an -ly adverb ___ used an appositive
___ began with a prepositional phrase ___ included a simile
___ began with a subordinate conjunction (<i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included several subject-verb sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used both long and short sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided writing in second person (<i>you</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding unnecessary repetition of ideas |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote five paragraphs for a total of 12-16 sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Letter to the Editor

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name _____

Subject/Title of Essay _____

ESSAY EVALUATION

Content 20 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Introduction (clear thesis statement; introduces subject; grabs reader's attention)

3 _____

Content (answers the question/s by stating main points and/or persuades the reader)

5 _____

Development (supports main points with specific details, facts, examples; uses sound reasoning; comprehensive)

6 _____

Topicality (sticks to the topic; avoids rabbit trails or tangents)

3 _____

Conclusion (restates main points, sums up essay, does not leave reader hanging)

3 _____

Style 25 points

Organization (logical order; sequence makes sense; main points developed in order; correct use of paragraphs)

5 _____

Fluency (avoids awkwardness; communicates clearly; information makes sense to reader)

5 _____

Style (interesting to read; active vs. passive; limits "to be" words, sentence complexity; use of sentence variations)

4 _____

Parallelism (points are parallel; items in a series are parallel)

2 _____

Vocabulary (grade-appropriate; concrete; avoids repeated words)

3 _____

Conciseness (avoids wordiness and needless repetition of ideas)

3 _____

Transitions (uses effective transitions between topics, main points, and paragraphs)

3 _____

Mechanics 5 points

5 _____

Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)

Spelling/capitalization/punctuation/grammar

Wrote in first or third person (avoided use of you/your)

Structure (sentences complete; no run-ons, no misplaced modifiers)

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____
_____ (over)

100% = A+

87-89% = B+

77-79% = C+

94-99% = A

84-86% = B

74-76% = C

90-93% = A-

80-83% = B-

70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite essay

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Lesson 27: Compare or Contrast Essay, Part 1

Another type of **informative writing** is called **compare and contrast**. To **compare** means to write about the *similarities* between two events, people, or ideas. On the other hand, to **contrast** means to discuss the *differences* between them. Sometimes you'll be asked to write a comparison paper, looking only at the ways two things are alike. Sometimes you'll write a contrast paper, discussing only their differences. At other times, you must look at both sides, comparing and contrasting in the same essay.

Usually, you'll organize your essay by order of importance, with most important elements given last. Choose facts and details that identify key similarities or differences, picking at least two or three important points for each paragraph.

Choose either a "whole-by-whole" or a "part-by-part" pattern of organization.

Whole-by-whole: Present all arguments for *one whole side or issue* before presenting arguments for the other side. For example, if contrasting the North and the South during the Civil War, first discuss Union leaders, Union soldiers, and key Union victories. Then discuss the Confederate leaders, soldiers, and victories.

Part-by-part: Present both sides of *each part or subtopic* before moving on to a new one. For instance, first contrast Union and Confederate leaders. Then, contrast Union and Confederate soldiers. Finally, contrast key Union and Confederate victories.

Example of a **whole-by-whole** outline:

Main Point 1: Shopping Online

Topic A: Shopping convenience

Topic B: Product availability

Topic C: Customer service

Main Point 2: Shopping in Physical Stores

Topic A: Shopping convenience

Topic B: Product availability

Topic C: Customer service

Example of a **part-by-part** outline:

Main Point 1: Shopping convenience

Topic A: Online

Topic B: In stores

Main Point 2: Product availability

Topic A: Online

Topic B: In stores

Main Point 3: Customer service

Topic A: Online

Topic B: In stores

The ability to make comparisons and contrasts is important in many ways. In high school and college, you'll need to write about the similarities and differences among people, places, and ideas you've read about.

You may be asked to compare two generals, like Napoleon Bonaparte and Alexander the Great. You might contrast two monuments, such as the Eiffel Tower and the Statue of Liberty. Or perhaps you'll be required to compare and contrast two major battles, two historical documents, or two ideals, such as socialism and capitalism.

In this lesson, you **compare OR contrast**, writing about the similarities or differences between two ideas, events, people, or places. Think about your topics. Are they alike in many ways, or are they completely different? Sometimes it's hard to tell whether they're more similar or more dissimilar. A **Venn diagram** (p. 27-5) uses overlapping circles to show similarities and differences. This type of graphic organizer can help you sort your ideas as you begin to plan your essay.

Compare/Contrast Essays

- ☐ Are usually organized by order of importance, with key elements given **last**.
- ☐ Contain facts and details that identify important similarities or differences (selecting at least three important points for **each paragraph**---which means you need to discuss *six details* about your chosen subject).
- ☐ Use special vocabulary to signal the reader about whether the author is paralleling similarities or contrasting differences. See p. 27-4 for a list of signal words.

Choose a Topic

- ☐ You will be comparing OR contrasting in a **two- or three-paragraph** composition.
- ☐ Pick a topic. Your teacher has a list of essay topics to choose from. (See "Essays That Compare and Contrast," Teacher's Manual Appendix B, pp. B-20 and B-21.)
 - If possible, pick a topic that makes you think critically about important issues.
 - For information-gathering, use your literature, history, or science textbook, a newspaper or magazine, or an online resource.
 - Depending on your topic, you may also draw from personal experience.

The essay on p. 27-3 **contrasts** main characters from two short stories, "Neighbour Rosicky" by Willa Cather and "The Revolt of 'Mother'" by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman. The writer has chosen to use the whole-by-whole organizational style.

In the first paragraph, he discusses the men's **different personalities**. In the second, he looks at their **different priorities**.

For a different whole-by-whole approach, he could write about Adoniram Penn in the first paragraph and Anton Rosicky in the second.

Selfish and Selfless: A Tale of Two Men

Contrast Essay by Ben, age 14

Adoniram Penn and Anton Rosicky, diligent, hardworking farmers, have vastly different personalities. To begin with, Adoniram appears insensitive, cold and selfish. Though he loves his family, he has a hard time expressing himself. He also does not realize his family's needs and concentrates only on his own. For example, when his wife wants a new house, he ignores her and builds a barn instead. While Penn is unexpectedly called away, his determined wife moves into the barn and claims it as her home. Her husband finally acknowledges the error of his ways and sees what a new house would mean to her. On the other hand, Mr. Rosicky expresses himself quite well and looks for ways to serve his family. When his doctor tells him he cannot farm anymore because of his poor heart, instead of lying around feeling sorry for himself, Anton unselfishly asks his wife if he can do some carpentry work for her.

Furthermore, both men have different priorities. While Penn appears to esteem himself and his livestock more than he values his family, Rosicky shows gentleness and understanding toward others and never imposes himself on people. He is always looking out for those around him. For instance, when his daughter-in-law plans on going out, he washes dishes for her so she can get ready. Above all, when it comes to providing for their families, these two men have opposite ideas about what is important. Mr. Rosicky provides a warm, loving atmosphere for his wife and sons and meets their emotional needs. Conversely, while Penn supplies his family with food, clothing, and shelter, he has a hard time giving emotional support. Clearly, Anton Rosicky is kinder and more thoughtful by nature. He successfully applies the principle of treating others the way he would want to be treated. Sadly, Adoniram Penn still has much to learn.

Lesson 27: Writing a Compare or Contrast Essay

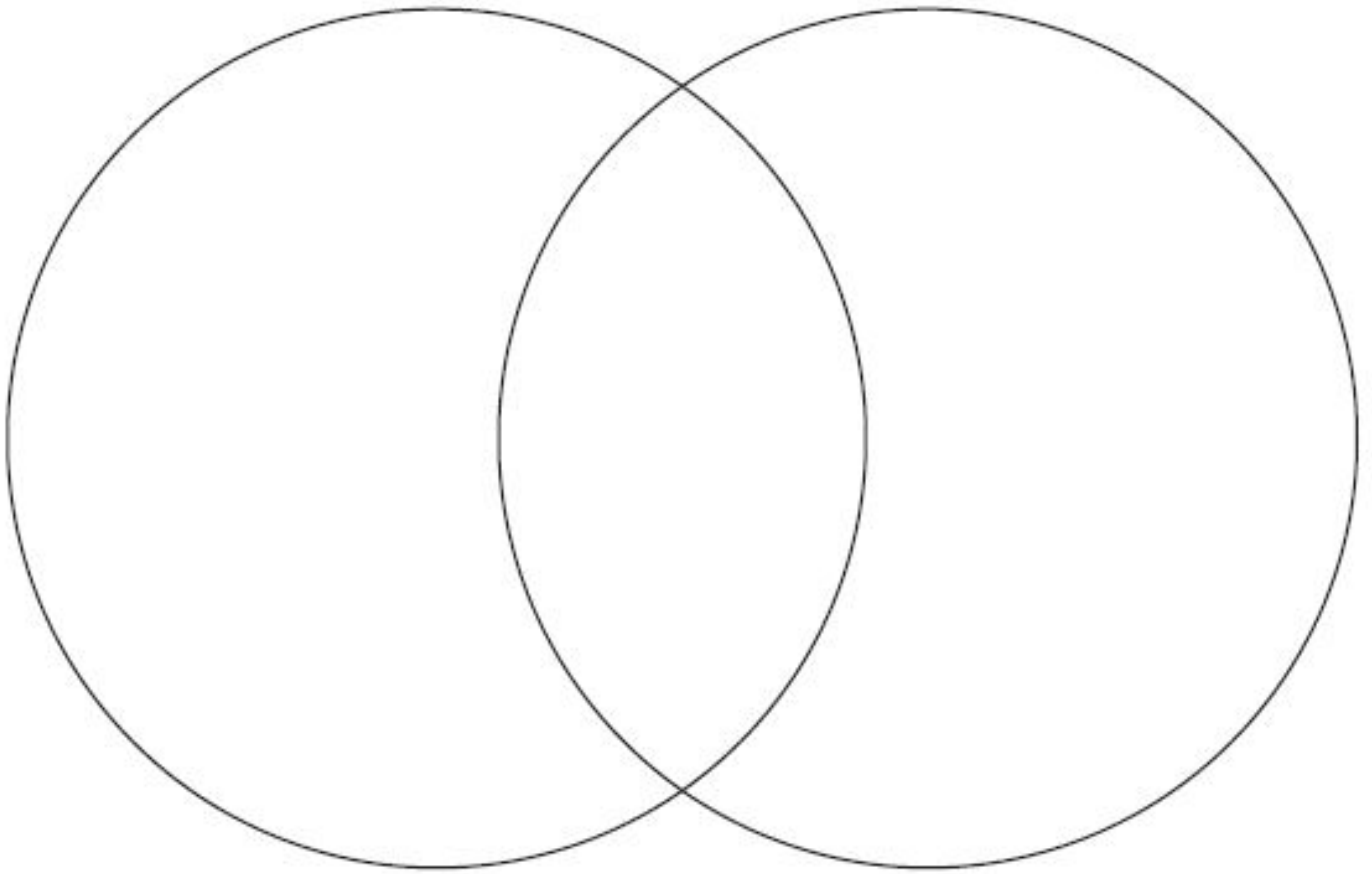
Directions

1. Read about each of your topics to help you understand them better. Discuss difficult or controversial issues with an adult to gain perspective.
2. Make a Venn diagram on p. 27-5. It will help you spot differences or similarities and decide whether your topics will be easier to compare or to contrast.
3. Transfer the Venn diagram information to the worksheet on p. 27-9.
 - List details from the overlapping area under "ways they are alike "
 - Or list details from the nonoverlapping areas under "ways they are different," writing the information from Circle A in the first column and the information from Circle B in the second.
4. Decide whether you will organize your essay using a whole-by-whole or a part-by-part approach, and plan accordingly.
 - **Whole-by-whole:** Write two paragraphs in which you *either* compare or contrast your two main points. Write 7-10 sentences per paragraph.
 - **Part-by-part:** Write three paragraphs in which you *either* compare or contrast your three main points. Write 5-7 sentences per paragraph.
5. Support the main point of each paragraph with two or three examples.
6. Use appropriate signal words that make sense for the sentence.
 - When **comparing**, use **comparison words** such as *again, alike, also, as, besides, both, comparatively, furthermore, in addition, indeed, in fact, in the same way, like, likewise, moreover, resemble, and similar*.
 - When **contrasting**, choose **contrast words** such as *although, but, conversely, different, dissimilar, diverse, either, however, in contrast, neither, nevertheless, on the other hand, rather, still, though, whereas, while, and yet*.
7. Use a transition between paragraphs (see Word List "Using Transition Words to Make or Introduce Your Points," p. 16). **A transition word may be one of your signal words.**
8. Avoid saying "X is different from Y because" or "This is how X and Y are the same."
9. Use sentence variations for interest and use your thesaurus to find synonyms.
10. Use no more than **four** "to be" words.

Lesson 27: Making a Venn Diagram

A

B



Lesson 27: Compare/Contrast Practice Worksheet

Choose one:

I will compare__ contrast__ _____ with _____.

I will organize according to the "whole-by-whole"__ or "part-by-part"__ method.

List at least six ways they are **alike** (for a *compare* paper).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

OR, list at least six ways they are **different** (for a *contrast* paper).

Venn Circle A _____

Venn Circle B _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Lesson 27: Compare/Contrast Brainstorming Worksheet

Choose one:

I will compare__ contrast__ _____ with _____.

I will organize according to the "whole-by-whole"__ or "part-by-part"__ method.

List at least six ways they are **alike** (for a *compare* paper).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

OR, list at least six ways they are **different** (for a *contrast* paper).

Venn Circle A _____

Venn Circle B _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Lesson 27: Student Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ I compared (mostly similar) _____ I contrasted (mostly different) _____
- ☐ I used the "whole-by-whole" method _____ I used the "part-by-part" method _____
- ☐ Did I develop each paragraph with facts, illustrations, examples, and other details?
- ☐ Do my sentences support each main point? (No "carrots in my cookie jar")
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Are details organized and easy to follow?
- ☐ Did I write an interesting title? (preferably not "A vs. B" or "A and B")

STYLE

- ☐ Did I introduce my subject with a "hook" that grabs the reader's attention?
- ☐ Did I use no more than **four** "to be" words? **Circle** (to be) words in red.)
- ☐ Did I choose appropriate synonyms that fit the context of each sentence? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words and remove or replace weak words? **Underline** vague/weak words in green.
- ☐ Did I follow the rules of parallelism in the essay?
- ☐ Did I use transitions to connect paragraphs?
- ☐ Did I use appropriate signal words such as *also*, *as*, and *on the other hand*?
- ☐ Have I correctly used a variety of the following?
 - ___ began with paired adjectives ___ began with a past and/or present participle
 - ___ began with an -ly adverb ___ included an appositive
 - ___ began with a prepositional phrase ___ included a simile (one only)
 - ___ began with a subordinate conjunction (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- ☐ Have I included a number of subject-verb sentences?
- ☐ Have I included one sentence of six words or fewer?
- ☐ Did I write concisely, avoiding wordiness?
- ☐ Did I write an effective concluding sentence?

MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ **If whole-by-whole:** Did I write two paragraphs? Is each paragraph 7-10 sentences long?
If part-by-part: Did I write three paragraphs? Is each paragraph 5-7 sentences long?
- ☐ Did I indent, leave margins, and skip every other line?
- ☐ Did I look up words whose spelling I'm not sure about? Have I made corrections as needed?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Make sure I have stapled all my papers together in proper order.

Lesson 27: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Essay compares (mostly similar) _____ Essay contrasts (mostly different) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used the "whole-by-whole" method _____ Used the "part-by-part" method _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Developed each paragraph with facts, illustrations, examples, and other details |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sentences support each main point (No "carrots in the cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized and easy to follow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote an interesting title (preferably not "A vs. B" or "A and B") |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Introduced the subject with a "hook" that grabs the reader's attention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than four "to be" words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose appropriate synonyms that fit the context of each sentence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words; removed or replaced weak words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed the rules of parallelism in both the outline and essay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used transitions between paragraphs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used appropriate signal words such as <i>also</i> , <i>as</i> , and <i>on the other hand</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used a <i>variety</i> of the following:
___ began with paired adjectives ___ began with a past and/or present participle
___ began with an -ly adverb ___ used an appositive
___ began with a prepositional phrase ___ included a simile
___ began with a subordinate conjunction (<i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included several subject-verb sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used both long and short sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding unnecessary repetition of ideas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote an effective concluding sentence |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>If whole-by-whole:</i> Wrote <u>two</u> paragraphs (7-10 sentences per paragraph)
<i>If part-by-part:</i> Wrote <u>three</u> paragraphs (5-7 sentences per paragraph) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included Venn diagram, brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this essay, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Compare or Contrast Essay

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name _____

Subject/Title of Essay _____

ESSAY EVALUATION

Content 20 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Introduction (clear thesis statement; introduces subject; grabs reader's attention)

3 _____

Content (answers the question/s by stating main points and/or persuades the reader)

5 _____

Development (supports main points with specific details, facts, examples; uses sound reasoning; comprehensive)

6 _____

Topicality (sticks to the topic; avoids rabbit trails or tangents)

3 _____

Conclusion (restates main points, sums up essay, does not leave reader hanging)

3 _____

Style 25 points

Organization (logical order; sequence makes sense; main points developed in order; correct use of paragraphs)

5 _____

Fluency (avoids awkwardness; communicates clearly; information makes sense to reader)

5 _____

Style (interesting to read; active vs. passive; limits "to be" words, sentence complexity; use of sentence variations)

4 _____

Parallelism (points are parallel; items in a series are parallel)

2 _____

Vocabulary (grade-appropriate; concrete; avoids repeated words)

3 _____

Conciseness (avoids wordiness and needless repetition of ideas)

3 _____

Transitions (uses effective transitions between topics, main points, and paragraphs)

3 _____

Mechanics 5 points

5 _____

Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)

Spelling/capitalization/punctuation/grammar

Wrote in first or third person (avoided use of you/your)

Structure (sentences complete; no run-ons, no misplaced modifiers)

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____
_____ (over)

100% = A+

87-89% = B+

77-79% = C+

94-99% = A

84-86% = B

74-76% = C

90-93% = A-

80-83% = B-

70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite essay

Additional Comments and Feedback

Lesson 28: Compare or Contrast Essay, Part 2

Follow instructions for the assignment in Lesson 27 (see p. 27-4) to write another compare or contrast essay. If you "compared" in your last essay, then you must "contrast" in this one. Likewise, if you "contrasted" in your previous composition, you "compare" this week.

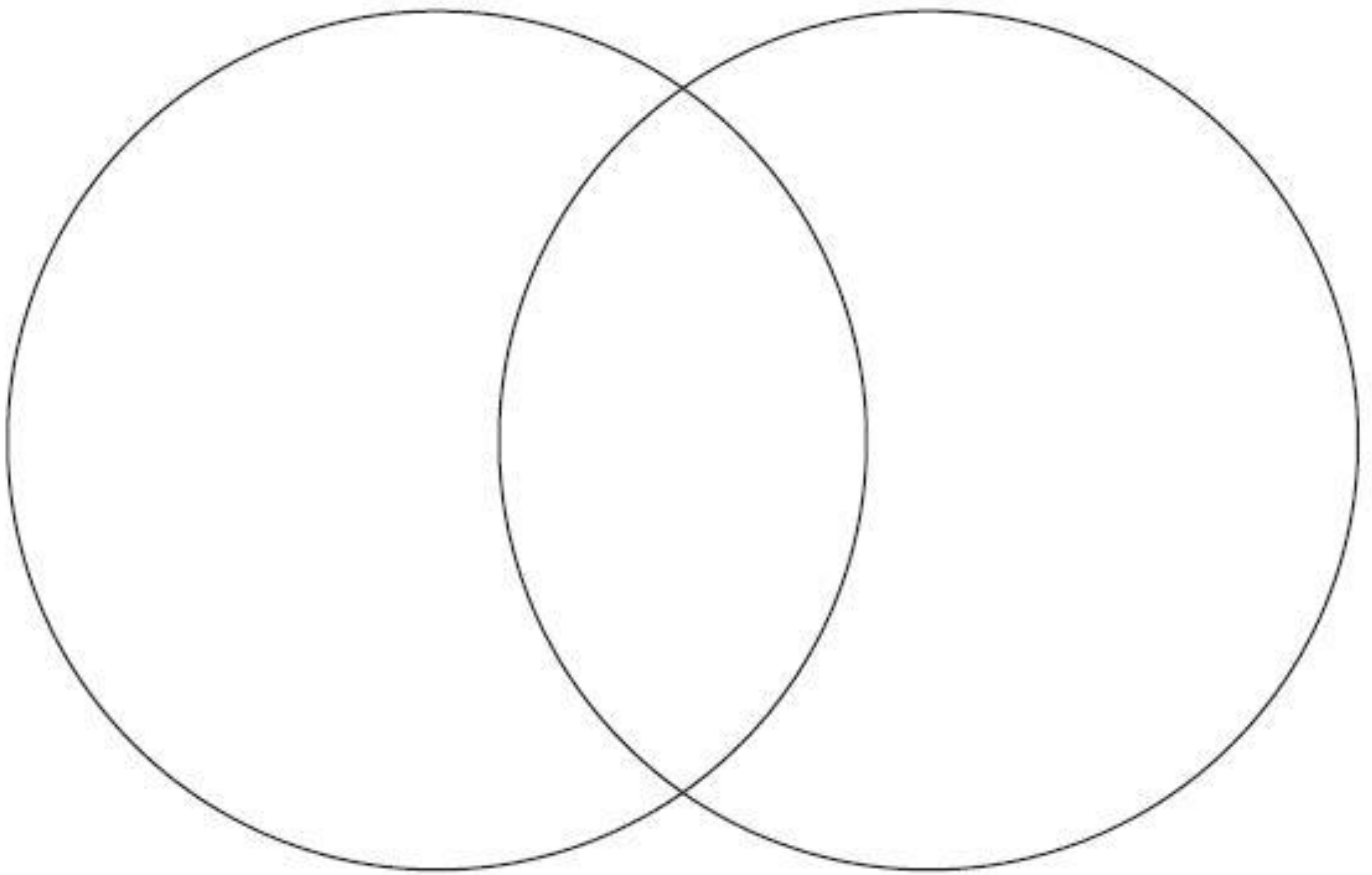
In addition, you must organize your material differently. If you organized according to the "whole-by-whole pattern" then switch to "part-by-part," or vice versa.

A new practice worksheet (p. 28-5) has been provided for the pre-writing activity you do with your teacher. You will also find a second worksheet (p. 28-7) for your lesson assignment.

Lesson 28: Making a Venn Diagram

A

B



Lesson 28: Compare/Contrast Practice Worksheet

Choose one:

I will compare__ contrast__ _____ with _____.

I will organize according to the "whole-by-whole"__ or "part-by-part"__ method.

List at least six ways they are **alike** (for a *compare* paper).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

OR, list at least six ways they are **different** (for a *contrast* paper).

Venn Circle A _____

Venn Circle B _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Lesson 28: Compare/Contrast Worksheet

Choose one:

I will compare__ contrast__ _____ with _____.

I will organize according to the "whole-by-whole"__ or "part-by-part"__ method.

List at least six ways they are **alike** (for a *compare* paper).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

OR, list at least six ways they are **different** (for a *contrast* paper).

Venn Circle A _____

Venn Circle B _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Lesson 28: Student Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ I compared (mostly similar) _____ I contrasted (mostly different) _____
- ☐ I used the "whole-by-whole" method _____ I used the "part-by-part" method _____
- ☐ Did I develop each paragraph with facts, illustrations, examples, and other details?
- ☐ Do my sentences support each main point? (No "carrots in my cookie jar")
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Are details organized and easy to follow?
- ☐ Did I write an interesting title? (preferably not "A vs. B" or "A and B")

STYLE

- ☐ Did I introduce my subject with a "hook" that grabs the reader's attention?
- ☐ Did I use no more than **four** "to be" words? **Circle** (to be) words in red.)
- ☐ Did I choose appropriate synonyms that fit the context of each sentence? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words and remove or replace weak words? **Underline** vague/weak words in green.
- ☐ Did I follow the rules of parallelism in the essay?
- ☐ Did I use transitions to connect paragraphs?
- ☐ Did I use appropriate signal words such as *also*, *as*, and *on the other hand*?
- ☐ Have I correctly used a variety of the following?
 - ___ began with paired adjectives ___ began with a past and/or present participle
 - ___ began with an -ly adverb ___ included an appositive
 - ___ began with a prepositional phrase ___ included a simile (one only)
 - ___ began with a subordinate conjunction (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- ☐ Have I included a number of subject-verb sentences?
- ☐ Have I included one sentence of six words or fewer?
- ☐ Did I write concisely, avoiding wordiness?
- ☐ Did I write an effective concluding sentence?

MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ **If whole-by-whole:** Did I write two paragraphs? Is each paragraph 7-10 sentences long?
If part-by-part: Did I write three paragraphs? Is each paragraph 5-7 sentences long?
- ☐ Did I indent, leave margins, and skip every other line?
- ☐ Did I look up words whose spelling I'm not sure about? Have I made corrections as needed?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Make sure I have stapled all my papers together in proper order.

Lesson 28: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Essay compares (mostly similar) _____ Essay contrasts (mostly different) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used the "whole-by-whole" method _____ Used the "part-by-part" method _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Developed each paragraph with facts, illustrations, examples, and other details |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sentences support each main point (No "carrots in the cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized and easy to follow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote an interesting title (preferably not "A vs. B" or "A and B") |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Introduced the subject with a "hook" that grabs the reader's attention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than four "to be" words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose appropriate synonyms that fit the context of each sentence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words; removed or replaced weak words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed the rules of parallelism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used transitions between paragraphs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used appropriate signal words such as <i>also</i> , <i>as</i> , and <i>on the other hand</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used a <i>variety</i> of the following:
___ began with paired adjectives ___ began with a past and/or present participle
___ began with an -ly adverb ___ used an appositive
___ began with a prepositional phrase ___ included a simile
___ began with a subordinate conjunction (<i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included several subject-verb sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used both long and short sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding unnecessary repetition of ideas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote an effective concluding sentence |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>If whole-by-whole:</i> Essay is <u>two</u> paragraphs (7-10 sentences per paragraph)
<i>If part-by-part:</i> Essay is <u>three</u> paragraphs (5-7 sentences per paragraph) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included Venn diagram, brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this essay, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Compare or Contrast Essay

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name _____

Subject/Title of Essay _____

ESSAY EVALUATION

Content 20 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Introduction (clear thesis statement; introduces subject; grabs reader's attention)

3 _____

Content (answers the question/s by stating main points and/or persuades the reader)

5 _____

Development (supports main points with specific details, facts, examples; uses sound reasoning; comprehensive)

6 _____

Topicality (sticks to the topic; avoids rabbit trails or tangents)

3 _____

Conclusion (restates main points, sums up essay, does not leave reader hanging)

3 _____

Style 25 points

Organization (logical order; sequence makes sense; main points developed in order; correct use of paragraphs)

5 _____

Fluency (avoids awkwardness; communicates clearly; information makes sense to reader)

5 _____

Style (interesting to read; active vs. passive; limits "to be" words, sentence complexity; use of sentence variations)

4 _____

Parallelism (points are parallel; items in a series are parallel)

2 _____

Vocabulary (grade-appropriate; concrete; avoids repeated words)

3 _____

Conciseness (avoids wordiness and needless repetition of ideas)

3 _____

Transitions (uses effective transitions between topics, main points, and paragraphs)

3 _____

Mechanics 5 points

5 _____

Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)

Spelling/capitalization/punctuation/grammar

Wrote in first or third person (avoided use of you/your)

Structure (sentences complete; no run-ons, no misplaced modifiers)

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____
_____ (over)

100% = A+

87-89% = B+

77-79% = C+

94-99% = A

84-86% = B

74-76% = C

90-93% = A-

80-83% = B-

70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite essay

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Lesson 29: Essays That Describe or Define

Since Lesson 25, you've practiced writing different kinds of essays, including opinion, letter to the editor, compare, and contrast. You prepared each one in a slightly different way, though they all required some structured form of organization. This essay, although different in content, still requires planning and preparation. Develop your thesis statement with three main points and support those main points with details, facts, examples, and illustrations. When possible, give personal examples that make your essay come alive.

You're almost to the end of WriteShop. You now have tools you'll use throughout your life to write with style. This lesson won't be filled with detailed instructions. Instead, you'll find a simple worksheet for brainstorming and preparation. Choose a subject from "Essay Topics" in the Teacher's Manual Appendix beginning on p. B-18 (Essays that Describe or Define).

Draw on all your skills to write an interesting, colorful, descriptive essay. Limit yourself to no more than five "to be" words. **Your 5-paragraph essay should be 15-20 sentences** (enough to thoroughly develop each point) and use a variety of sentence types. Refer often to your thesaurus to select the right words.

Here's an example of an essay that describes. While adequate, it's a bit boring and underdeveloped. After you read it, compare it with the essay on p. 29-2 to see how personal stories and examples not only expand the essay but **also add human interest** to the content.

A True Friend

Some of the qualities I like in a friend include kindness, honesty, and loyalty. First of all, a kind friend can be counted on to encourage and support me in an understanding manner. Standing by me when I am discouraged or down in the dumps, this compassionate person also rejoices when life is going my way. Second, a friend who is honest will speak truthfully to me when I make poor choices and need gentle correction. Bold yet loving, he will not hesitate to speak frankly, even at the risk of losing my friendship. Finally, a loyal companion stays with me through thick and thin. Without a doubt, a true buddy demonstrates warm-heartedness, truthfulness, and faithfulness in every situation.

Unlike this short essay, the essay on the next page starts off with an **introductory paragraph laying out three main points** that define different aspects of friendship.

Three separate paragraphs make up the body of the essay. In each paragraph, the main point is developed both with facts and an illustration from the writer's personal experience. Without these illustrations, the essay would simply be a nice commentary on friendship. By telling specific stories, however, the writer makes his subject seem real to the reader. Consequently, the essay becomes more interesting too!

Finally, the **concluding paragraph** recaps the three main points by stating them in a new way. The writer then closes with a final thought.

Keep the above steps in mind when you write. They'll help you stay organized and on track so your readers understand your points and easily follow your train of thought.

A True Friend

The qualities I like in a friend include kindness, honesty, and loyalty. Mark and I have been best friends since fifth grade. Over the years he has demonstrated these three important attributes.

First of all, as a kind friend, Mark can be counted on to encourage and support me in an understanding manner. Standing by me when I am discouraged or down in the dumps, my compassionate buddy also rejoices when life is going my way. For example, when I took first place in the science fair last year, Mark seemed genuinely excited for me, even though he did not even receive an honorable mention.

Second, because he is honest, Mark speaks truthfully to me when I make poor choices and need gentle correction. Bold yet loving, he will not hesitate to speak frankly, even at the risk of losing my friendship. I remember a time when I acted mean-spirited and made fun of a girl who wore a brace on her leg. Mark confronted me about the way I talked about her and reminded me that I didn't need to put her down in order to feel important or popular. Not only was he honest with me, he showed me yet another example of his kindheartedness.

Finally, Mark, a loyal companion, stays with me through thick and thin. He proved this to me in January when I asked him to come to my championship hockey game. Right after he had said "yes," his cousin invited him to a rock concert. Mark stayed faithful to his promise and came to my game instead.

Without a doubt, a true buddy demonstrates warm-heartedness, truthfulness, and faithfulness in every situation. I feel privileged to have a friend like that in Mark.

Lesson 29: Essays That Describe and Define Worksheet

If needed, refer back to the Opinion Essay instructions on pp. 25-3 and 25-4.

Who is your **audience**? _____

Write your **thesis statement**: _____

_____ (*because . . .*)

Brainstorm below. Your list should contain 10-20 words or short phrases. Do not move on to the next step **until you have brainstormed thoroughly**.

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Choose your main points. Go back to the brainstorming list on p. 29-3. Check off any ideas you could easily expand with supporting details. Select the three you wish to develop, and list them here.

- I. _____
- II. _____
- III. _____

Write your outline. Remembering *parallelism*, list the three main points from above on lines I, II, and III. On lines A, B, and C list facts or examples to support each main point. You should find many supporting details on your brainstorming sheet.

- I. _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - Illustration: _____
- II. _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - Illustration: _____
- III. _____
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - Illustration: _____

Write Your Essay

Refer to Lesson 29: Student Writing Skills Checklist to review requirements for sentence variations and other elements of style and mechanics.

Lesson 29: Student Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ *Paragraph 1*: Does the introduction start with a clear thesis statement in the first or second sentence?
- ☐ *Paragraph 2*: Is Main Point 1 supported with facts or examples? Have I included an illustration?
- ☐ *Paragraph 3*: Is Main Point 2 supported with facts or examples? Have I included an illustration?
- ☐ *Paragraph 4*: Is Main Point 3 supported with facts or examples? Have I included an illustration?
- ☐ *Paragraph 5*: Does the conclusion rephrase my three main points and close with a final thought?
- ☐ Did I stick to the topic?
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Are details organized and easy to follow?
- ☐ Does the title give a clue about the content of my essay?

STYLE

- ☐ Did I use no more than **five** "to be" words? **Circle** (to be) words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I replace repeated main words when possible? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words and remove or replace weak words? **Underline** vague/weak words in green.
- ☐ Did I organize the essay by developing the three main points in order?
- ☐ Did I follow the rules of parallelism in both my outline and composition?
- ☐ Did I use transitions between paragraphs and when shifting from one point to another?
- ☐ Have I correctly used a variety of the following?
 - ___ began with paired adjectives
 - ___ began with a past and/or present participle
 - ___ began with an -ly adverb
 - ___ included an appositive
 - ___ began with a prepositional phrase
 - ___ included a simile
 - ___ began with a subordinate conjunction (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- ☐ Have I included subject-verb sentences?
- ☐ Did I use both long and short sentences?
- ☐ Did I avoid writing in second person (*you*)?
- ☐ Did I write concisely? Did I avoid repeating ideas unnecessarily?

MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I write five paragraphs for a **total** of 15-20 sentences? How many sentences in all? _____
- ☐ Did I indent, leave margins, and skip every other line?
- ☐ Did I **look up** words whose spelling I'm not sure about? Have I made corrections as needed?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? Have I corrected any errors??
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK**: Make sure I have stapled all my papers together in proper order.

Lesson 29: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Paragraph 1</i> : Introduction starts with a clear thesis statement in the first or second sentence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Paragraph 2</i> : Main Point 1 (supported with facts and examples AND included an illustration) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Paragraph 3</i> : Main Point 2 (supported with facts and examples AND included an illustration) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Paragraph 4</i> : Main Point 3 (supported with facts and examples AND included an illustration) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Paragraph 5</i> : Conclusion rephrases the three main points and closes with a final thought |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sticks to the topic (no "carrots in the cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized and easy to follow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title gives a clue to the contents of the essay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than five "to be" words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Replaced repeated main words when possible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete nouns and verbs; removed or replaced weak words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Organized essay by developing the three main points in order |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed the rules of parallelism in both the outline and essay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used transitions between paragraphs and when shifting from one point to another |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used <i>a variety</i> of the following:
___began with paired adjectives ___began with a past and/or present participle
___began with an -ly adverb ___used an appositive
___began with a prepositional phrase ___included a simile
___began with a subordinate conjunction (<i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included subject-verb sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used both long and short sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided writing in second person (<i>you</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding unnecessary repetition of ideas |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote five paragraphs for a total of 15-20 sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Description or Definition Essay

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name _____

Subject/Title of Essay _____

ESSAY EVALUATION

Content 20 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Introduction (clear thesis statement; introduces subject; grabs reader's attention)

3 _____

Content (answers the question/s by stating main points and/or persuades the reader)

5 _____

Development (supports main points with specific details, facts, examples; uses sound reasoning; comprehensive)

6 _____

Topicality (sticks to the topic; avoids rabbit trails or tangents)

3 _____

Conclusion (restates main points, sums up essay, does not leave reader hanging)

3 _____

Style 25 points

Organization (logical order; sequence makes sense; main points developed in order; correct use of paragraphs)

5 _____

Fluency (avoids awkwardness; communicates clearly; information makes sense to reader)

5 _____

Style (interesting to read; active vs. passive; limits "to be" words, sentence complexity; use of sentence variations)

4 _____

Parallelism (points are parallel; items in a series are parallel)

2 _____

Vocabulary (grade-appropriate; concrete; avoids repeated words)

3 _____

Conciseness (avoids wordiness and needless repetition of ideas)

3 _____

Transitions (uses effective transitions between topics, main points, and paragraphs)

3 _____

Mechanics 5 points

5 _____

Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)

Spelling/capitalization/punctuation/grammar

Wrote in first or third person (avoided use of you/your)

Structure (sentences complete; no run-ons, no misplaced modifiers)

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____
_____ (over)

100% = A+

87-89% = B+

77-79% = C+

94-99% = A

84-86% = B

74-76% = C

90-93% = A-

80-83% = B-

70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite essay

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Lesson 30: Timed Essays

Now that you know how to write a well-developed essay, it's time to practice writing timed essays. You'll face many timed essays throughout high school and college. Knowing how to write a well-planned, organized essay is clearly a valuable asset. Challenging topics won't intimidate you once you've gained confidence in the skill of essay writing.

Sometimes a test will contain essay questions. These allow teachers and professors to find out how well you really understand a subject. They'll be able to tell whether or not you know your topic by **how clearly you write** and **how well you explain your points**.

The best preparation for such essay tests is practice. You would do well to write a 20- or 30-minute timed essay once a week to keep your "mental muscles" fit. It's not any harder to write a timed essay than an untimed one. With practice you'll learn to work within your time limit.

As with untimed essays, timed essays require plenty of time for planning, writing, and revising. If you spend enough time planning, the remaining steps will flow smoothly and effortlessly. In other words, if you know your material, it will be obvious to you during outlining. If you can't think of a thing to say when you're planning, don't expect a sudden flash of inspiration when it's time to write.

Some timed essays won't require prior knowledge of a subject; they'll be based on personal experience. Others, like essay questions on a test, will assume you've studied and prepared, because you'll have to be familiar with the subject matter. But be careful: Even if you understand the subject matter well, a poorly organized essay can bring your grade down. Don't underestimate the importance of effective organization.

There is **no Student Writing Checklist** for Lesson 30. First, there's no time to use a checklist when you're writing against the clock. Second, checklists aren't allowed during timed essays. Your parent or WriteShop teacher will make an exception for your first few timed essays by letting you use the "20-Minute (or 30-Minute) Timed Essay Checklist." Timed-essay editing time should focus on proofreading. You won't be asked to limit "to be" words; however, it's always good practice to avoid them if possible.

After your teacher reviews your essay with a Teacher Writing Skills Checklist, you'll be asked to rewrite it. Even though you won't have the opportunity to revise timed essays in the "real world," this remains an important step in the learning process. It will help you get better at 1) organization, 2) developing your thesis statement, and 3) budgeting your time. Errors in mechanics count against you in a timed essay. This revising step will make you aware of mistakes you make most often.

Lesson 30: Writing a Timed Essay

The four steps to an effective essay include timing, planning, writing, and revising. Timing may vary slightly. Your aim is to stay within the time frame your teacher specifies, say 20 or 30 minutes. **Single-space** when writing timed essays. Do not skip lines.

Timing

1. Depending on the length of time you have for writing, **divide writing tasks into manageable chunks of time**. Of course, the majority of your time should be spent writing the actual essay. However, if you spend important minutes planning and organizing, you won't need as much time to write as you might think.
2. **For a 20-minute essay of 2-3 paragraphs**, here is a good guideline: Planning: 6 minutes; Writing: 11 minutes; Revising: 3 minutes.
3. **For a 30-minute essay of 3-5 paragraphs**, try this timeline: Planning: 9 minutes; Writing: 16 minutes; Revising: 5 minutes.

Planning

1. **Read the question carefully.** Look for a key word that tells what the teacher wants.
2. **Write your thesis statement.** Write your thesis statement or topic sentence.
3. **Brainstorm.** Write down the key word or phrase you found in the question. Next, make a **list** or a **mind-map** of other words and phrases that relate to the topic. *Do not skip this important step.* Once the words begin to flow, you'll lose the fear that you have nothing to say about the topic.
4. **Choose your viewpoint.** When an essay prompt asks you to give your opinion, compare, contrast, or persuade, you must choose your position.
5. **Outline.** Choose main points and list supportive details to develop your position.

Writing

1. **Follow your plan carefully.** Stick to the point, avoiding rambling or "rabbit trails."
 - ☐ Write your topic sentence or thesis statement. It may contain your three main points, but if not, define and develop your three points as the essay progresses.
 - ☐ Present the main ideas from your outline, in order. Support each idea with details.
 - ☐ End with your conclusion, summing up your thesis statement.
2. **Give specific information.** Use names, dates, places, examples, and details---concrete evidence that supports your topic.

3. **Watch your time.** If you use up too much time in one area, you might neglect another. You will lose points for incomplete answers.

Revising

1. **Do quick revisions and proofreading** at the same time. Check for spelling; accuracy of names, dates, and details; omitted or repeated words; grammar and punctuation errors.
2. If possible, change a couple of sentences to **include interesting variations**.
3. **Look over your vocabulary.** Did you choose concrete words? Replace vague or boring words with colorful, interesting synonyms.
4. **Combine** two short, choppy sentences into one; **shorten** a rambling or run-on sentence into two concise ones.
5. Your teacher knows you don't have time to recopy. Still, try to **make corrections neatly**.
6. **Reread your essay quickly**, giving yourself one last opportunity to hear your words again. Make sure any changes you made didn't harm the flow of your text.

A word to the wise: Believe it or not, teachers were once students! They know the tricks young people use when they don't know the answer or when they don't know how to develop their topic. So be careful! The four most common "tricks" are:

- **Large handwriting** – hoping to fool the teacher into thinking you have much to say because you took up lots of space on the paper
- **Pompous, fancy, or multisyllabic vocabulary** – hoping to fool the teacher into thinking you're so smart for knowing such big words that she won't notice you didn't have anything concrete to say about the subject
- **Redundancy** – repeating the same argument or stating the same point over again, using different words, hoping to fool the teacher into thinking you know more about the subject than you really do
- **Padding with unrelated details** – also hoping to fool the teacher into thinking you know more than you do

It's easy to avoid these traps. Whenever possible, **know your material ahead of time**. For an essay question on a history test, for example, prepare beforehand by reading and studying the chapter and any class notes.

Sometimes it's just not possible to prepare in advance. You may not have any idea what the question will be. However, careful organization before beginning to write will be the real "trick" to preparing a winning essay!

Lesson 30: 20-Minute Timed Essay Checklist

Planning (6 minutes)

- ☐ Read question and look for KEY WORD or PHRASE - 1 minute
- ☐ Choose your position and write your thesis statement - 1 minute
- ☐ Brainstorm (MIND-MAP) - 2 minutes

Write down as many words as possible that relate to the subject.

☐ OUTLINE - 4 minutes

- Choose three points from your brainstorming that (1) explain your position, and (2) can be expanded with details. Write them in outline form.

I. Introduction

II. Body

A. Main point 1

B. Main point 2

C. Main point 3

III. Conclusion

- As you write your essay, list details to develop your position. You will not have time to write a fully developed outline. But you'll know exactly where you're going!

☐ Revise your THESIS STATEMENT, if necessary.

Sometimes it helps to include the three points you plan to develop in your essay.

Writing (11 minutes)

- ☐ Use your thesis statement as a topic sentence.
- ☐ Write main points in the order they appear in your thesis statement.
- ☐ Support each point with details or examples from your list. Stick to the topic.
- ☐ Conclusion: Write a restatement of your topic sentence.
- ☐ Watch the time! Don't skip lines! Write two to three paragraphs (about 12-15 sentences).

Revising (3 minutes)

- ☐ Read your essay.
- ☐ Revise and proofread, checking spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- ☐ Add 1-2 interesting sentence variations. Replace a "to be" word, if possible.
- ☐ Vocabulary: Find synonyms for 2-3 vague or repeated words; add 2-3 colorful, descriptive adjectives or adverbs.
- ☐ Combine short sentences and shorten wordy ones.

Lesson 30: 30-Minute Timed Essay Checklist

Planning (9 minutes)

- ☐ Read question and look for KEY WORD or PHRASE - 1 minute
- ☐ Choose your position and write your thesis statement - 1 minute
- ☐ Brainstorm (MIND-MAP) - 3 minutes

Write down as many words as possible that relate to the subject.

☐ OUTLINE - 4 minutes

- Choose three points from your brainstorming that (1) explain your position, and (2) can be expanded with details. Write them in outline form.

I. Introduction

II. Body

A. Main point 1

B. Main point 2

C. Main point 3

III. Conclusion

- As you write your essay, list details to develop your position. You will not have time to write a fully developed outline. But you'll know exactly where you're going!

☐ Revise your THESIS STATEMENT, if necessary.

Sometimes it helps to include the three points you plan to develop in your essay.

Writing (16 minutes)

- ☐ Use your thesis statement as a topic sentence.
- ☐ Write main points in the order they appear in your thesis statement.
- ☐ Support each point with details or examples from your list. Stick to the topic.
- ☐ **Conclusion:** Write a restatement of your topic sentence.
- ☐ Watch the time! Don't skip lines! Write two to three paragraphs (about 12-15 sentences).

Revising (5 minutes)

- ☐ Read your essay.
- ☐ Revise and proofread, checking spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- ☐ Add 1-2 interesting sentence variations. Replace a "to be" word, if possible.
- ☐ **Vocabulary:** Find synonyms for 2-3 vague or repeated words; add 2-3 colorful, descriptive adjectives or adverbs.
- ☐ Combine short sentences and shorten wordy ones.

Lesson 30: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Introduction: Used thesis statement as topic sentence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Body: Supported main points with facts, examples, and illustrations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Conclusion: Rephrased the thesis statement or summarizes main points |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support opinion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Details are organized and easy to follow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience |

STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided too many "to be" words (no need to count unless obviously overused) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Replaced repeated main words when possible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete nouns and verbs; avoided using weak words |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Organized essay by developing main points in the order they appear in the thesis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed the rules of parallelism in both the outline and essay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used transitions between paragraphs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used some interesting sentence variations (not as important in timed essays) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely and avoided padding with unrelated details |

MECHANICS

OK needs improvement

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (indentation, margins, skipped lines, good spacing) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>20-minute essay</i> : 2-3 paragraphs for a total of 12-15 sentences |
| | | <i>30-minute essay</i> : 3-5 paragraphs for a total of 15-20 sentences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling, capitalization, punctuation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences. Avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers stapled together in proper order |

Comments _____

Name _____
Subject Essay (Timed)

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Name _____

Subject/Title of Essay _____

ESSAY EVALUATION

Content 20 points

Points Possible Points Earned

Introduction (clear thesis statement; introduces subject; grabs reader's attention)

3 _____

Content (answers the question/s by stating main points and/or persuades the reader)

5 _____

Development (supports main points with specific details, facts, examples; uses sound reasoning; comprehensive)

6 _____

Topicality (sticks to the topic; avoids rabbit trails or tangents)

3 _____

Conclusion (restates main points, sums up essay, does not leave reader hanging)

3 _____

Style 25 points

Organization (logical order; sequence makes sense; main points developed in order; correct use of paragraphs)

5 _____

Fluency (avoids awkwardness; communicates clearly; information makes sense to reader)

5 _____

Style (interesting to read; active vs. passive; limits "to be" words, sentence complexity; use of sentence variations)

4 _____

Parallelism (points are parallel; items in a series are parallel)

2 _____

Vocabulary (grade-appropriate; concrete; avoids repeated words)

3 _____

Conciseness (avoids wordiness and needless repetition of ideas)

3 _____

Transitions (uses effective transitions between topics, main points, and paragraphs)

3 _____

Mechanics 5 points

5 _____

Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)

Spelling/capitalization/punctuation/grammar

Wrote in first or third person (avoided use of you/your)

Structure (sentences complete; no run-ons, no misplaced modifiers)

TOTAL: _____/50 = _____% = _____

Comments: _____
_____ (over)

100% = A+

87-89% = B+

77-79% = C+

94-99% = A

84-86% = B

74-76% = C

90-93% = A-

80-83% = B-

70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite essay

Additional Comments and Feedback

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Word Lists

Adverbs

"HOW" ADVERBS

angrily
briskly
busily
carefully
courageously
courteously
dangerously
eagerly
gently
heavily
honestly
hungrily
intensely
noisily
proudly
rapidly
silently
slowly
smoothly
softly
stubbornly
suddenly
swiftly
tenderly
tiredly
uncomfortably
wearily

"WHEN" ADVERBS

afterwards
always
before
daily
early
ever
forever
hourly
late
later
monthly
never
nightly
now
soon
sooner
then
today
tonight
weekly
when
whenever
yearly
yesterday
yet

"WHERE" ADVERBS

around** (as in "Let's walk around.")
down** (as in "Set it down.")
downward
everywhere
far
here
in** (as in "He fell in.")
inside** (as in "Go inside.")
nearby
nowhere
out** (as in "Put the dog out.")
outside* (as in "She's outside.")
someplace
somewhere
there
underfoot
underground
up** (as in "Take it up with him.")
upstream
where

** These are adverbs when used as in the examples. However, when followed by nouns, they become prepositions, as in "Take it up the stairs." or "He fell in a hole."

Adverbs ("-ly")

- "-ly" adverbs are useful as transition words when connecting thoughts between sentences or paragraphs.
- They are also helpful when concluding a paragraph or a thought.
- Many "-ly" adverbs make excellent sentence starters.
- For variety, adverbs may be moved around within a sentence when describing verbs.

absolutely	entirely	positively	strictly
accordingly	essentially	possibly	substantially
amazingly	eventually	predictably	suddenly
apparently	evidently	presumably	surely
assuredly	fearlessly	previously	tentatively
boldly	finally	primarily	thankfully
carefully	fortunately	probably	typically
cautiously	frequently	progressively	ultimately
certainly	fundamentally	rapidly	unbelievably
clearly	gradually	regretfully	undeniably
completely	hopefully	regularly	undoubtedly
confidently	increasingly	relatively	unfortunately
consequently	indisputably	remarkably	unquestionably
constantly	initially	repeatedly	usually
continuously	normally	sadly	utterly
conveniently	notably	seemingly	virtually
courageously	obviously	seriously	willingly
distinctly	occasionally	significantly	_____
easily	ordinarily	simply	_____
effectively	originally	slowly	_____
encouragingly	plainly	steadily	_____

Characteristics, Expressions, and Behaviors

Enthusiastic

adventuresome
amiable
animated
beaming
bright
bubbling
chatty
crazy
demonstrative
dynamic
eager
effervescent
energetic
excitable
excited, exciting
fabulous
fervent
festive
fired up
friendly
frisky
fun
fun-loving
gleeful
gregarious
hearty
lighthearted
lively
noisy

obsessed
outgoing
passionate
peppy
playful
rambunctious
rowdy
sociable
spirited
thrilled
vigorous
vivacious
wholehearted
zealous
zestful

Smart/Wise

adept
alert
bright
brilliant
clever
creative
cunning
curious
gifted
imaginative
ingenious
intelligent
inventive
keen
knowledgeable
logical
observant
prudent
questioning
sensible
sharp
sharp-witted
talented
teachable
wise

Funny/Silly/Delighted

amused, amusing
animated
beaming
bubbling
cheerful
comical
congenial
delighted, delightful
droll
foolish
frivolous
giggly
glad
gleeful
happy
humorous
jolly
jovial
joyful
joyous
laughing
merry
mirthful
silly
surprised
whimsical
witty
zany

Hardworking

dedicated

devoted

diligent

disciplined

educated

exhausted

helpful

industrious

occupied

orderly

organized

powerful

responsible

strong

sturdy

successful

tenacious

tough

useful

vigorous

Honest

believable

candid

congenial

conscientious

decisive

dependable

fair

forthright

frank

genuine

honest

honorable

just

objective

open

real

realistic

reliable

sincere

straightforward

trustworthy

truthful

upright

Warm/Kind

appreciative

calm

caring

charming

comfortable

comforting

compassionate

concerned

cuddly

encouraged

encouraging

generous

gracious

grateful

hospitable

kindhearted

lovable

loving

loyal

pleasant

pleased

safe

sensitive

sympathetic

tender

thankful

understanding

Cool

aloof

casual

cautious

cheerless

cold

detached

disinterested

distant

indifferent

introverted

remote

removed

reserved

shy

unapproachable

withdrawn

Uncertain/Afraid

afraid	submissive
anxious	suspicious
ashamed	tearful
bashful	tense
bewildered	timid
cautious	touchy
careful	troubled
confused	uncomfortable
discreet	unpredictable
discouraged	unstable
distracted	unsure
embarrassed	vague
fearful	vulnerable
flustered	wary
frantic	weak
frightened	weepy
indecisive	wishful
insecure	wistful
isolated	yearning
lonely	_____
nervous	_____
perplexed	_____
puzzled	_____
queasy	
questioning	
quivering	
rattled	
scared	
self-conscious	
sensitive	
serious	
shy	

Secure/Bold

adventuresome
adventurous
aggressive
assertive
bold
brave
certain
confident
courageous
daring
decisive
fearless
firm
heroic
influential
poised
popular
positive
reliable
responsible
solid
sound
stable
successful
sure
tenacious
unafraid
undaunted
unwavering
valiant
venturous
well-liked

Amazing/Amazed

astonished
astonishing
astounded
astounding
awestruck
breathhtaking
dumbfounded
fabulous
glorious
incredible
legendary
magical
majestic
sensational
staggering
surprised
terrific
tremendous
unbelievable
wonderful
wondrous

Active

agile
alert
animated
athletic
brisk
busy
chipper
dynamic
energetic
fast
frisky
hurried
lively
occupied
quick
ready
snappy
sprightly
spry
strenuous
vigorous
wiggly
wiry

Tired/Quiet

calm
docile
easy
easygoing
exhausted
idle
inactive
lazy
passive
peaceful
preoccupied
quiet
reflective
relaxed
rested
silent
sleepy
still
subdued
tame
thoughtful
tired
untroubled

weak
weary
withdrawn

Proud

arrogant
boastful
conceited
disdainful
extravagant
forward
haughty
impertinent
impudent
insolent
nervy
obnoxious
pompous
proud
sassy
saucy
scornful
self-centered
slick
snobbish
sophisticated
stuffy
superior

Unique

different
dignified
distinct
distinguished
eminent
exceptional
extraordinary
famous
great
honored
incomparable
lone
matchless
new
obvious
original
particular
peculiar
rare
remarkable
special
specific
strange
uncommon
unequaled
unique
unmistakable
unusual

Neat	Attractive	Stature(Appearance)	Misc. (Negative)
clean	adorable	aged	condemning
dainty	alluring	ashen	cruel
delicate	beautiful	big	difficult
exact	breathtaking	brawny	disgusted
fastidious	bright	burly	disobedient
finicky	brilliant	chunky	dreadful
fussy	charming	elderly	ferocious
meticulous	chic	enormous	fickle
orderly	darling	feeble	fierce
organized	dashing	frail	forceful
particular	distinguished	great	furious
picky	elegant	healthy	horrible
prim	enchanted	heavy	hysterical
simple	fair	husky	jealous
tidy	fashionable	muscular	judgmental
trim	flattering	pale	mean
uncluttered	glamorous	pallid	mischievous
well groomed	glorious	petite	naughty
_____	glowing	plain	negative
_____	gorgeous	portly	pathetic
_____	handsome	reedy	pessimistic
_____	irresistible	slender	pitiful
_____	lovely	slight	raging
	magnificent	slim	shocking
	pretty	stocky	sorry
	smart	stout	temperamental
	stunning	thickset	terrible
	stylish	thin	ugly
	_____	tiny	unruly
	_____	wan	vicious
	_____	wholesome	_____
	_____	wiry	_____
	_____	young	_____
		youthful	_____

Colors

■ Red	■ Yellow	■ Green	■ Brown	■ White	■ Black
brick	amber	*apple-green	auburn (hair)	blanched	*coal-black
cardinal	banana	aqua	bronze	bleached	ebony
cherry	blond/blonde	aquamarine	brunette (hair)	chalky	inky/inky black
crimson	butter/buttery	celery	chestnut (hair)	cottony	*jet-black
maroon	buttercup	emerald	chocolate	*dove-white	onyx
ruby	canary	evergreen	cinnamon	*milk-white	*pitch-black
ruddy (skin)	dandelion	forest	cocoa	milky	*pitch-dark
scarlet	flaxen	*kelly-green	coffee	pale	raven
strawberry	golden	lime	copper	pasty	sable
tomato	goldenrod	mint	mocha	pearl/pearly	sooty
■ Pink	lemon/lemony	moss	mousy-brown	*pearl-white	■ Gray
blush	ochre	olive	*nut-brown	powdery	charcoal
carnation	straw	*pea-green	*reddish-brown	*snow-white	cloudy
flamingo	sunflower	pear	rust	snowy	*dove-gray
flesh	sunny	*sea-green	sepia	whitened	dusky
flushed	■ Blue	*spring-green	walnut	whitewashed	granite
fuchsia	azure	teal	■ Tan	■ Off-white	gunmetal
magenta	blueberry	*yellow-green	camel	beige	*lead-gray
rose, rosy	Delft	■ Purple	fawn	buff	*pearl-gray
salmon	denim	burgundy	ginger	cream	silver/silvery
■ Orange	indigo	grape	*golden-brown	*creamy-white	slate
apricot	navy	lavender	honey	dusty beige	smoke
*burnt-orange	periwinkle	lilac	nutmeg	ecru	smoky
butterscotch	*powder-blue	mauve	sandy	eggshell	smudged
melon	*royal-blue	orchid	taffy	ivory	steel
peach	sapphire	plum	tan	oatmeal	*steel-gray
pumpkin	sky blue	violet	toffee	unbleached	
tangerine	turquoise	wine	topaz	vanilla	

COLOR WORD CAUTIONS

- **Use color words wisely.** For example, you may describe *hair* as *blonde* or *mousy*, but choose more appetizing words for foods, such as *creamy* or *golden-brown*.
- **Look up synonyms:** Use the dictionary to make sure you're using a synonym correctly.
- **Know when to hyphenate* color words:** Hyphenate* between two adjectives when they come before a noun and act as a SINGLE WORD (e.g., *milk-white skin*; *melon-colored sweater*; *denim-dyed overalls*). Don't hyphenate when the adjectives follow a noun (e.g., *eyes of steel gray*; *toasted to a golden brown*).
- **Use color words creatively:** For a more "poetic" way to express an object's color, consider saying *the color of fresh cream*; *the color of ripe pears*; *as dark as rich coffee*, etc.

Emotions

Happy

amused
beaming
bright
cheerful
content
delighted
elated
excited
exhilarated
exuberant
festive
genial
glad
gratified
joyful
jubilant
laughing
lightheaded
lighthearted
lively
merry
playful
pleasant
pleased
radiant
satisfied
spirited
sunny
thrilled
victorious

Sad

confused
dark
dejected
depressed
desolate
despondent
dismal
downhearted
dreary
droopy
embarrassed
empty
gloomy
glum
grave
grief-stricken
grim
hurt
melancholy
miserable
morbid
morose
mournful
pained
pathetic
pensive
serious
solemn
somber
sorrowful
sullen

tearful
tired
troubled
vacant
weary
wistful
woeful
wounded

Brave

audacious
bold
courageous
daring
dauntless
determined
encouraging
fearless
gallant
hardy
heroic
intrepid
persistent
plucky
resolute
spunky
stalwart
stouthearted
unafraid
valiant
valorous

Angry

affronted

agitated

annoyed

bitter

boiling

bristling

burning

cross

cruel

displeased

disturbed

enraged

fretful

fuming

furious

grouchy

hateful

huffy

incensed

indignant

inflamed

infuriated

irked

irritated

livid

mean

mean-spirited

miffed

nettled

offended

peevd

piqued

rabid

raging

riled

seething

simmering

sizzling

smoldering

sore

stormy

surly

vengeful

vexed

wrathful

Fearful

afraid

alarmed

anxious

apprehensive

ashamed

awed

bashful

cowardly

cowed

cringing

disconcerted

eerie

frightened

guilty

jumpy

nervous

palpitating

panicky

paralyzed

petrified

quaking

quivering

scared

shaking

shivering

shrinking

shy

skittish

staggered

stunned

stupefied

suspicious

terrified

timid

trembling

uncertain

uneasy

wary

wincing

Personification

Possible word choices when giving human traits to an object or animal

ache	giggle	prowl	throw
agree	glance	pursue	tickle
argue	grasp	push	tiptoe
believe	grin	reach	toss
blow	groan	reside	tremble
boast	guide	rest	trip
bow	hear	run	trust
breathe	hiss	scowl	tumble
browse	hug	search	twirl
chase	inhale	see	understand
claw	insult	serve	walk
complain	jump	shake	waltz
comprehend	kick	shove	watch
cough	lament	sigh	wave
crawl	laugh	sing	weep
creep	leap	sleep	welcome
cry	listen	smile	whisper
dance	live	sneeze	whistle
doze	moan	snore	wrestle
eat	mope	sob	wriggle
enjoy	mumble	soothe	yawn
escape	nibble	spy	yield
feel	notice	stare	_____
frolic	observe	step	_____
frown	oversee	stretch	_____
fumble	perceive	stroke	_____
fuss	play	stumble	_____
gape	pout	supervise	
gaze	preside (over)	think	

Prepositions

aboard	but (meaning	outside
about	<i>except</i>)	over
above	by	past
across	concerning	regarding
after	despite	since
against	down	through
along	during	throughout
amid	except	till
among	for	to
around	from	toward
at	in	under
atop	inside	underneath
before	into	unlike
behind	like	until
below	near	up
beneath	of	upon
beside	off	with
between	on	within
beyond	onto	without
	out	

Said Synonyms

added	defended	mumbled	snapped
advised	demanded	murmured	snarled
announced	disclosed	muttered	snickered
answered	exclaimed	noticed	snorted
argued	explained	observed	sobbed
asked	exploded	ordered	squawked
asserted	fussed	pleaded	squeaked
barked	giggled	pointed out	squealed
begged	gripped	pouted	stammered
bellowed	grouched	predicted	stated
blurted out	growled	proposed	suggested
boasted	guessed	queried	told
bragged	hinted	recited	uttered
breathed	hissed	remarked	wailed
called, called out	implied	repeated	warned
cautioned	implored	replied	wept
challenged	indicated	requested	wheezed
chimed in	inquired	responded	whimpered
chuckled	insinuated	retorted	whined
claimed	insisted	returned	whispered
commanded	interjected	revealed	yelled
commented	interrupted	roared	_____
complained	lamented	sang	_____
confided	laughed	scolded	_____
contended	maintained	screamed	_____
cried, cried out	mentioned	shouted	_____
croaked	moaned	shrieked	_____
declared	mouthed	sighed	_____

Transitions and Conjunctions

Location Words

above
across
alongside
around
behind
below
beside
beyond
in back
in front
next to
over
to the left
to the right
at the _____
from the _____
through the _____

Time/Sequence

a few minutes later
after
after a while
afterwards
at last
before
beforehand
by the time
by (by May, by dinnertime)
during
earlier
eventually
finally
finally
first
former

furthermore
immediately
initially
later
later on
latter
meanwhile
next
not long after
not until
now
often
on (on my birthday, on Friday)
once
originally
previously
progressively
second
since
soon
suddenly
then
third
to begin with
today
tomorrow
ultimately
until
until this time
when
yesterday

Words to Connect Ideas

additionally
again
also
besides
furthermore
in brief
in fact
in addition
in short
in conclusion
in summary
indeed
likewise
moreover
similarly

Words to Connect Opposing Ideas

in contrast
nevertheless
on the one hand
on the other hand
on the contrary
rather
still

Coordinate Conjunctions

and
but
for
nor
or
so
yet
accordingly
also
anyhow
besides
consequently
furthermore
hence
however
indeed
instead
likewise
meanwhile
moreover
namely
otherwise
still
then
therefore
thus
both ___ and ___ (both A and B)
either ___ or ___ (either A or B)
neither ___ nor ___ (neither A nor B)
not only ___, but also ___ (not only A, but also B)
whether ___ or ___ (whether A or B)

Subordinate Conjunctions

after
although
as
as if
as long as
as much as
as soon as
as though
because
before
even if
even though
if
provided
since
though
unless
until
when
whenever
where
wherever
whether
while

Using Transition Words to Make or Introduce Your Points

Introducing your first point

- first/first of all
- to begin with

Transitioning to your second point

- additionally/in addition
- besides
- furthermore
- in contrast (when presenting an opposing point of view)
- likewise
- moreover
- next
- on the contrary (when presenting an opposing point of view)
- on the other hand (when presenting an opposing point of view)
- second
- similarly

Transitioning to your third point

- above all
- additionally/in addition
- also
- finally
- furthermore
- moreover
- most importantly
- third

Beginning your concluding statement or paragraph (optional)

- considering/after considering ("Considering the evidence, one must conclude ____")
- in brief
- in summary
- in conclusion
- in short

Connecting similar thoughts (useful when expanding a point with illustrations or examples)

- consequently
- consider ("Consider the number of young people who ____")
- for instance
- for example
- however

Transitioning from fact to opinion (or from one fact to another)

- although
- even though
- nevertheless
- since
- still
- therefore
- while

Weak Words

When editing your "sloppy copy," underline in green any of these words you find. Sometimes you will be able to replace them with more concrete words using your thesaurus or Synonym Finder. Write the new word above the weak one.

Vague Words

a lot, lots
awfully
big
come, came
cute
do, does, done, did
eat
fine
fun
get, got, gotten
go, went
good
kind of
like (OK when used as a simile)
look
make/made
move
nice
pretty
put
say, said
see
sorta, sort of
stuff, stuff like that
take/took
thing

Slang Words

awesome (as in: *His skateboard is awesome.*)

amazing

cool (as in: *Seth drove a cool car.*)

plus other currently used slang terms

Overused Words/Phrases

get/got/gotten

good

great (OK if used as a size word)

has, have, had (OK if used as a helping verb)

It has ____, It is ____

just

then (OK if not overused)

Unnecessary Words

really

so

very

The end.

This story is about ____.

This is what happened when ____.

What I want to tell you is ____.

Sound Words (Adjectives and Verbs)

- Many of these words can either be adjectives or verbs, depending how you use them in a sentence.

Adjective: I heard a banging noise in the kitchen. (*Banging* tells what kind of noise.)

Verb: I hear mom banging pots in the kitchen. (*Banging* is the action word.)

Participle sentence starter: Banging pots in the kitchen, Mom hurriedly made dinner.

- To see a list of sound words used as *nouns*, see the "Sound Words (Nouns)" word list.

audible	croaking	loud	rustling	swelling
banging	crying	meowing	scraping	swooping
barking	deafening	moaning	scratching	tearing
bawling	droning	mooing	screaming	thudding
baying	drumming	muffled	screeching	thumping
bellowing	dull	murmuring	shattering	thundering
blaring	ear-splitting	musical	shocking	thunderous
blasting	echoing	muted	shouting	ticking
boisterous	explosive	muttering	shrieking	tolling
booming	fizzing, fizzy	noisy	shrill	tomblike
breaking	fuming	panting	sighing	tonal
bubbling, bubbly	fussing	peaceful	silent	twangy
bursting	gagging	pealing	sizzling	vibrating
buzzing	gasping	piercing	slamming	vocal
cheering	gossiping	pinging	sloshing	wailing
chiming	groaning	popping	snapping	wheezing
choking	grousing	pounding	sobbing	whimpering
clacking	gurgling	quiet	soft	whining, whiny
clamorous	gushing	rackety	soundless	whistling
clanging	harmonious	rasping, raspy	spoken	whooping
clangorous	hissing	raucous	squawking	wordless
clattering	hoarse	reverberating	squeaky	wrenching
cracking	howling	ringing	stifled	_____
crackling	humming	ripping	still	_____
crashing	hushed	roaring	strident	_____
creaking, creaky	knelling	rumbling	sucking	_____

Sound Words (Nouns)

- ▶ To see a list of sound words used as adjectives, see p. 18.
- ▶ The Sound Words (Adjectives and Verbs) page also helps you use sound words as participles.
- ▶ Try combining sound words:
 1. the **deafening roar** of a waterfall
 adj. *noun*
 2. her new kitten's **squeaky meow**
 adj. *noun*

bang	clunk	howl	rumble	tinkle
bark	crack	hubbub	rustle	tintinnabulation
bawl	crackle	hum	scrape	tone
bay	crash	hush	scratch	tumult
bellow	creak	jangle	scream	twang
blast	croak	jingle	screech	uproar
bleat	cry	meow	shout	vibration
boom	detonation	moan	shriek	voice
bubble	din	moo	sigh	wail
burst	echo	murmur	silence	wheeze
buzz	explosion	music	snap	whimper
call	fizz	neigh	sob	whine
cheer	fuss	noise	sound	whinny
chime	gasp	pandemonium	squawk	whisper
chink	gossip	pant	squeak	whistle
choke	groan	peace	strain	whoop
clack	growl	peal	thud	word
clamor	gurgle	ping	thump	yell
clang	gush	pop	thunder	_____
clatter	hiss	racket	thunder crack	_____
clink	holler	roar	tick	_____

Taste and Smell Words

Taste Words

acidic	juicy
appetizing	luscious
baked	mild
biting	moldy
bitter	nasty
bland	palatable
boiled	peppery
bubbly	pleasant
candied	rich
coagulated	roasted
cold	rotten
congealed	salty
creamy	savory
curried	scrumptious
delectable	seasoned
delicious	sharp
dried	sizzling
effervescent	smoked
flat	sour
flavorful	spicy
foul	spoiled
fresh	stale
fried	stewed
frosty	succulent
gamy	sugary
honeyed	sweet
horrid	sweet and sour
hot	syrupy
iced, icy	tainted

Smell Words

acrid
aromatic
balmy
caustic
fermented
fetid
foul
fragrant
fresh
fruity
malodorous
mildewed
musty
odorous
peppery
perfumed
piquant
pungent
rancid
rank
redolent
scented
smoky
spoiled
stinking, stinky
strong
sweet-smelling

Texture Words

abrasive	fibrous	matted	sharp	unyielding
angular	firm	metallic	silken	upholstered
blunt	flabby	moist	silky	velvety
bony	fleecy	moldable	sleek	warm
braided	flexible	mushy	slippery	waxy
bristly	flimsy	nappy	smooth	wet
brittle	fluffy	nubby	soaked	whiskered
bumpy	fragile	peaked	sodden	wiry
calloused	furry	pebbly	soft	woolly
chewy	fuzzy	pliant	solid	woven
coarse	glossy	plush	spiny	wrinkled
cold	gnarled	pointed	spongy	wrinkly
concrete	grainy	porous	springy	yielding
cool	gravelly	prickly	squishy	_____
cottony	greasy	puffy	starched	_____
creamy	gritty	raised	stark	_____
crinkly	hairy	resilient	sticky	_____
crisp	hard	rigid	stiff	_____
crusty	humped	rocky	stony	
delicate	jagged	rough	stretchy	
dense	knobby	rugged	stringy	
doughy	knotty	rusty	stubbly	
downy	leathery	sandy	supple	
dry	level	satiny	textured	
dull	light	saturated	thorny	
elastic	limber	scaly	tough	
embossed	lumpy	scratchy	unbendable	
feathery	malleable	shaggy	uniform	

Visual Words

Bright	Pale	Dull	Big	Attractive
blinking	ashen	bare	beefy	appealing
bright	bland	barren	burly	beautiful
brilliant	colorless	blank	colossal	charming
cheerful	dim	bleak	enormous	delightful
clear	flat	cheerless	gigantic	elegant
colorful	insipid	cloudy	grand	engaging
dazzling	lifeless	dark	great	exquisite
flashing	pallid	desolate	hefty	fabulous
gleaming	sallow	dim	huge	fantastic
glimmering	wan	dismal	husky	glorious
glinting	washed out	drab	immense	gorgeous
glistening	watery	dreary	imposing	grand
glossy	waxy	dusky	jumbo	lovely
glowing		dusty	large	luxurious
luminous	Small	empty	major	magnificent
lustrous	dainty	foggy	mammoth	marvelous
polished	itsy-bitsy	gloomy	mighty	picturesque
radiant	itty-bitty	hazy	monstrous	pleasing
shimmering	little	heavy	monumental	pretty
shining	microscopic	misty	overgrown	splendid
shiny	miniature	murky	tall	stately
sleek	minute	pasty	towering	stunning
sparkling	petite	solemn	tremendous	superb
translucent	pint-sized	somber	vast	wonderful
transparent	pocket-sized	smoky	_____	_____
twinkling	teensy, teeny	vacant	_____	_____
winking	teeny-weeny	vaporous	_____	_____
_____	tiny	_____	_____	_____
_____	wee	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____