



**BASICS MADE EASY:  
WRITING REVIEW**

(Revised June 2009)

**Authors: Brian Freel, Dr. Frank J. Pintozzi, Maria Struder**

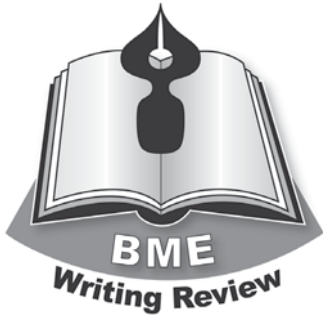
**Editor: Mallory Grantham**

**Project Coordinator: Zuzana Urbanek**

---

**American Book Company  
PO Box 2638  
Woodstock, GA 30188-1383  
Toll Free: 1 (888) 264-5877 Phone: (770) 928-2834  
Fax: (770) 928-7483 Toll Free Fax: 1 (866) 827-3240  
[www.americanbookcompany.com](http://www.americanbookcompany.com)**

# Basics Made Easy



## Table of Contents

<b>Preface</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Diagnostic Writing Test</b>	<b>1</b>
Writing Evaluation Chart .....	5
<b>Chapter 1 Writing Paragraphs</b>	<b>7</b>
Paragraph Structure .....	7
Writing a Topic Sentence .....	11
Improving a Topic Sentence .....	12
Supporting Details .....	16
Developing Supporting Details .....	19
Organizing Paragraphs .....	20
Time Order .....	21
Spatial Order .....	21
Order of Importance .....	22
Contrasting Ideas .....	23
Writing a Concluding Sentence .....	24
Chapter 1 Summary .....	27
Chapter 1 Review: Writing Paragraphs .....	27
Additional Activities: Writing Paragraphs .....	31
<b>Chapter 2 Diction</b>	<b>33</b>
Author's Purpose .....	33
Audience .....	36
Language .....	40
Tone .....	42
Chapter 2 Summary .....	47
Chapter 2 Review: Diction .....	47
Additional Activities: Diction .....	50
<b>Chapter 3 Planning the Essay</b>	<b>51</b>
Basic Structure of an Essay .....	51
The Writing Process .....	52
Read the Writing Prompt Carefully .....	53
Generating Ideas .....	54

Brainstorming.....	54
Freewriting .....	55
Focusing Ideas .....	56
Clustering .....	56
Thesis.....	57
Making a Plan .....	59
Outline.....	59
Outline Shortcut .....	60
Chapter 3 Summary .....	61
Chapter 3 Review: Planning the Essay .....	61
Additional Activities: Planning the Essay .....	66

**Chapter 4 Drafting the Essay 67**

Improving Word Choice .....	67
Select Specific Words, Not General Words .....	68
Use a Dictionary or Thesaurus .....	70
Be Aware of Connotations and Denotations .....	70
Avoid Clichés and Sweeping Generalizations .....	71
Writing Introductions.....	72
How to Write an Introduction .....	72
Lead.....	73
Tie-In.....	73
Thesis .....	73
Different Types of Introductions.....	74
Writing Conclusions .....	78
Summarize, but Don't Restate Your Thesis.....	78
Conclusion as Introduction in Reverse.....	79
Give the Audience a Question to Ponder .....	79
Using Transitional Words.....	80
Time Order .....	80
Order of Importance .....	81
Cause and Effect.....	82
Comparison .....	83
Contrast .....	84
Developing Coherence.....	87
Planning an Order.....	87
Using Transitions .....	87
Repeating Key Words and Phrases .....	87
Writing the Draft.....	89
Chapter 4 Summary .....	92
Chapter 4 Review: Drafting the Essay.....	93
Additional Activities: Drafting The Essay.....	93

**Chapter 5 Revising the Essay 95**

How to Revise.....	95
Adding Clarifying Information .....	98
Deleting Unrelated Sentences.....	99
Eliminating Unnecessary Words .....	101
Correcting Shifts in Tense or Person .....	103

Shifts in Tense .....	103
Shifts in Person .....	104
Checking for Parallel Sentence Structure.....	106
Developing Sentence Variety .....	108
Combining Simple Sentences .....	108
Starting a Sentence with Different Beginnings.....	109
Using a Question or Exclamation .....	109
Chapter 5 Summary.....	112
Chapter 5 Review: Revising the Essay.....	112
Additional Activities: Revising the Essay.....	114

**Chapter 6 Proofreading the Essay 117**

Proofreading Notation .....	117
Capitalization .....	118
Internal Punctuation .....	119
Commas .....	120
Colons, Semi Colons, and Apostrophes .....	121
Quotation Marks .....	123
Grammar and Usage.....	124
Nouns and Articles.....	124
Pronouns .....	127
Adjectives, Adverbs, and Negative Words.....	128
Verbs.....	130
Subject-Verb Agreement .....	134
Subject-Verb Agreement with Collective Nouns .....	135
Spelling.....	136
Homonyms.....	136
Incorrect Spelling.....	138
Sentence Formation.....	140
End Punctuation.....	140
Sentence Fragments and Run-Ons.....	141
Phrases and Clauses .....	143
Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers .....	144
Publishing.....	146
Chapter 6 Summary.....	147
Chapter 6 Review: Proofreading the Essay.....	147
Additional Activities: Proofreading the Essay.....	150

**Chapter 7 Persuasive Writing 151**

Purpose and Audience.....	151
Purpose .....	151
Audience.....	152
Using Persuasive Language.....	152
Building an Argument.....	154
Make a Claim.....	155
Support the Claim .....	156
Answer Objections.....	159
Ethical Arguments.....	161
Appealing to Emotions.....	163

Chapter 7 Summary .....	165
Chapter 7 Review: Persuasive Writing .....	165
Additional Activities: Persuasive Writing .....	170
<b>Chapter 8 Expository Writing</b> .....	<b>171</b>
Basic Expository Essay .....	172
Emmi’s Outline .....	173
Emmi’s Rough Draft .....	173
Emmi’s Revision .....	175
Process Essay .....	177
Cause-Effect Essays .....	181
Problem-Solution .....	181
Brainstorming Causes and Effects .....	182
Sample Student “Effects” Essay .....	184
A Comparison/Contrast Essay .....	185
Brainstorming to Compare and Contrast .....	186
Writing a Final Draft .....	188
Use of Transitional Words .....	189
Chapter 8 Summary .....	192
Chapter 8 Review: Expository Writing .....	192
<b>Chapter 9 Descriptive Writing</b> .....	<b>195</b>
Sight Words .....	196
Size .....	196
Shape Words .....	196
Color .....	197
Surface Appearance .....	197
Action .....	198
Touch Words .....	199
Texture .....	199
Temperature .....	199
Weight .....	200
Density .....	200
Sound Words .....	201
Volume .....	201
Pitch .....	202
Sound Quality or Character .....	202
Smell Words .....	203
Taste Words .....	203
Chapter 9 Summary .....	204
Chapter 9 Review: Descriptive Writing .....	205
<b>Chapter 10 Narrative Writing</b> .....	<b>207</b>
Writing a Narrative .....	207
Key Steps for Writing A Narrative .....	208
Step 1: Analyze the Writing Topic .....	208
Identify Your Audience .....	208
Develop Ideas for the Topic .....	209
Establish a Point of View .....	209

First Person Point of View .....	210
Third Person Point of View .....	210
Step 2: Organize Your Narrative .....	211
Step 3: Write a Rough Draft of Your Narrative.....	212
Step 4: Edit and Proofread Your Narrative’s Draft .....	216
Analysis of Language and Writing Conventions .....	216
Step 5: Write a Final Copy of the Narrative .....	218
Chapter 10 Summary.....	222
Chapter 10 Review: Narrative Writing .....	223
<b>Chapter 11 Writing about Literature</b>	<b>229</b>
Sample Topics .....	229
Forms of Literature.....	230
Writing an Essay about a Poem.....	230
Writing an Essay about a Story .....	232
Sample Essay Response to a Literary Selection .....	234
Chapter 11 Summary.....	237
Chapter 11 Review: Writing about Literature .....	237
<b>Chapter 12 Writing Technical Texts</b>	<b>239</b>
Business Letters.....	239
Guidelines for Writing the Body of a Business Letter.....	242
Editing the Business Letter .....	244
Resumes and Job Applications.....	245
Organizing Information on a Resume.....	245
Creating Your Resume.....	248
Writing the Cover Letter.....	249
Filling Out the Job Application .....	250
Chapter 12 Summary.....	254
Chapter 12 Review: Writing Technical Texts .....	255
<b>Chapter 13 Writing Research Reports</b>	<b>257</b>
Writing the Research Report .....	257
Choosing a Topic .....	258
Establishing a Thesis .....	259
Finding and Evaluating Research Sources .....	259
Validation: Checking Sources .....	261
Safety .....	261
Thesis .....	262
Testing the Thesis .....	262
Supporting the Thesis .....	262
Drafting the Research Report .....	264
Integrating Research Sources .....	267
MLA Style Basics.....	268
Bibliographies .....	271
Revising the Research Report .....	272
Chapter 13 Summary.....	278
Chapter 13 Review: Writing Research Reports .....	279

<b>Chapter 14 Scoring the Essay</b>	<b>281</b>
Scoring Overview .....	282
Recommendations .....	282
Traits.....	283
Holistic Grading.....	284
Ideas.....	286
Assigned Task .....	286
Central Theme or Story Line .....	286
Relevant Supporting Ideas .....	287
Sense of Completeness.....	287
Organization.....	288
Sequencing .....	289
Logical Transitions and Progression of Ideas .....	289
Voice.....	290
Varied Sentence Structure.....	291
Tone and Language .....	291
Sense of Audience.....	291
Sense of Writer.....	291
Writing Conventions.....	293
Chapter 14 Summary .....	295
Chapter 14 Review: Scoring the Essay.....	295
<b>Practice Writing Test 1</b>	<b>303</b>
<b>Practice Writing Test 2</b>	<b>307</b>
<b>Appendix A: Additional Writing Prompts</b>	<b>311</b>
<b>Appendix B: Writing Resources</b>	<b>326</b>
<b>Appendix C: Student Essays Progress Chart</b>	<b>331</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>333</b>

## Diagnostic Writing Test

This diagnostic writing exam will allow you to demonstrate your writing capability.

There are five prompts, each of which reflects a different writing mode. Your teacher will tell you how many essays to write as a practice for the test. Successful responses to the prompts focus on the topic, reflect a discernible organizational structure, use appropriate language conventions, and contain pertinent supporting material such as ideas, examples, and/or commentary.

When you take an actual writing test in your state, you may be asked to write in a slightly different mode. However, practicing writing in the four modes mentioned will help you develop most of the skills you will need for any type of writing.

## Diagnostic Writing Test

Following are five **writing prompts** that give you instructions about writing an essay. Read each prompt carefully so you understand the topic and the purpose of each essay. Then, use the **Checklist for Your Writing** to make sure you write an effective and interesting essay based on each writing prompt.

Use your own paper for your planning, drafting, and final copy. Your instructor will tell you when to begin and when to stop writing. Do your best, and remember, this is just your first attempt. As you study the chapters in this book, you will have more time for improvement.

### Writing Prompt 1

In the past, schools hired their own cafeteria staff to provide nutritious, home-cooked lunches at a low price. Today, private food service companies are claiming that they can provide better school lunches at lower prices. Your local school board is considering a proposal which would allow several food service companies to set up operation in the school cafeteria. Some parents are concerned that students will eat nothing but “fast food.” Decide what you think about private companies providing school lunches.

### Writing Prompt 2

One of your friends has just told you a story about his or her experience playing a sport which you found very interesting. After getting your friend’s permission, you agree to write down your friend’s experience and publish it on the school Web site. Write down your friend’s story as carefully as possible.

## DEVELOPING SUPPORTING DETAILS

A good way to develop a list of details to support your main idea is to consider what questions a reader might ask about your topic sentence. Here is an example:

**Topic Sentence:** Florida is the ideal place to go for winter vacation.

**Reader May Ask:** Where in Florida?  
How do you know it's ideal?  
What makes it ideal?  
What kinds of things can you do there?  
What if I like to go snow skiing?

By answering these questions, you can develop a list of supporting ideas for your topic.

**Possible Answers:** Panama City  
went last year for annual vacation  
good seafood, great night life, beautiful beaches  
swimming, snorkeling  
water skiing

From this list, you can develop a paragraph like the following:

Florida is the ideal place to go for a winter vacation. Last year, our family spent its annual vacation on the white beaches of Panama City. During the day, we snorkeled, swam, and water skied in the clear, warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. In the evenings, we enjoyed fresh seafood at the small local restaurants. At night, we joined other vacationers from around the world in various festivities sponsored by our hotel. Every year we travel to a new vacation spot, but the beauty and excitement of Florida will bring us back next year.



**St. Augustine, Florida**

Supporting details provide answers to questions the reader may have about a topic sentence.

*Acme, Inc  
10 Main Street  
Bedford, NY 10506*

Mrs. Barbara Jones  
15 Oak Lane  
New York City, NY 10020

March 27, 2009

Dear Mrs. Jones,

Please accept our apology for the inconvenience you suffered because of our Helpline. In general, we try to respond to customers within 45 seconds of their call. At times, the volume of calls we receive prevents us from doing that. I am sending this letter to let you know that I have asked one of our representatives to call you this afternoon. If you do have not received this call by the time you receive this letter, please use the number below to reach me directly, and we will solve your problem immediately. Thank you for working with Acme, Inc., and we look forward to serving you in the future.

Sincerely,

*Zhong Li*

Zhong Li  
Customer Service Director (1-800-IAM-SORI)

The authors of both letters use formal language to express their ideas. However, the tone which each author uses is very different.

In Example 1, the author is clearly frustrated about being left on hold. She states directly that she is “displeased with the service” she has received. She adds a slightly sarcastic twist in the second sentence by calling the company’s service “disservice.” The author states her problem and uses stronger sarcasm in the sentence which begins “You may find it hard to believe . . .” The last sentence is called an ultimatum, that is, a challenge for someone to do something or else suffer certain consequences. This shows that the author is ready to take serious action. Therefore, the author’s tone could be described as angry, sarcastic, or serious. However, frustrated is the most accurate description of the author’s tone.

## MAKING A PLAN

Your thesis is like the destination you have chosen for a journey. The ideas you have gathered in your clustering diagram are the stops you want to make along the way. You still need to decide how you will get to your destination, putting your stops in the proper order. An **outline** helps you plan your journey.



## OUTLINE

An **outline** lays out the plan for your essay in a very structured way. It is the road map you will follow in writing your draft. You will get to your destination more easily if your road map looks like the following:

- I. Introduction: General discussion including thesis statement
- II. Body
  - A. Paragraph 1: Topic 1 (from thesis statement) and supporting details
  - B. Paragraph 2: Topic 2 (from thesis statement) and supporting details
  - C. Paragraph 3: Topic 3 (from thesis statement) and supporting details
- III. Conclusion: Summary of discussion

An outline for the essay about the effects of television on young children might look like this:

- I. Introduction: Television affects young children negatively because they can watch programs that are not meant for their age, see commercials for products they don't need, and miss out on playtime they do need.
- II. Body
  - A. Television exposes children to adult programs.
    - 1. Theft
    - 2. Murder
    - 3. Sex
  - B. Commercials increase children's wishes for needless products.
    - 1. Children find it difficult to tell reality from pretend
    - 2. Products bring happiness
  - C. Television takes away from children's playtime.
    - 1. Lack of play with others
    - 2. No fresh air and movement
- III. Conclusion: Young children should watch less television.

## CONCLUSION AS INTRODUCTION IN REVERSE

One effective way to write a concluding paragraph for an essay is to write an introduction in reverse. In other words,

1. briefly remind the readers of your topic sentence,
2. tie in the thesis to your final “good-bye,” and
3. instead of a lead, use a “good-bye” statement.

The following conclusion uses this model.

Panama City gives me everything I want in a vacation spot, and more: exhilarating water sports, fresh seafood, and moonlit beach walks. Year after year, my family escapes the cold northern climate by traveling south, but we never tire of the fun, the food, and the relaxation that this great vacation spot provides. However, in case you still have questions about where to go for your next winter vacation, just consider your packing list: bathing suit, towel, sun screen. Sounds good to me!

## GIVE THE AUDIENCE A QUESTION TO PONDER

In the conclusion, you want to summarize the information and reasons that you have already provided. Though you don’t want readers to have questions about your position or choice, you may want to leave readers with a question that invites them to ponder their own positions. The following conclusion is an example.

Citizens of the United States fiercely protect their right to individual freedom. Independent-minded people formed this country telling Great Britain to leave them alone and to stop interfering in their lives. This rich tradition of liberty should be protected, but not at the expense of our children. Sensible gun laws place reasonable limitations on the purchase of firearms. These laws do not abolish the “right to bear arms.” They simply protect our children. How many more children must die before we make reasonable laws to protect them?

In your conclusion, summarize your main points and say “good-bye” to the readers.

### Practice 8: Writing Conclusions

Using your ideas from Practice 7 on page 77, write conclusions to match the introductions you wrote. Experiment with different types of conclusions. (Save your work for Practice 13.)

## STARTING A SENTENCE WITH DIFFERENT BEGINNINGS

Most sentences begin with a subject, continue with a verb, and end with an object. Adjectives and adverbs may appear along the way. This pattern works well, but your writing could get repetitive and boring. Therefore, from time to time, start a sentence with something other than the subject. Look at the following examples.

**Begin with an adverb:**

**Replace** “I found myself suddenly in a bad situation.” with “Suddenly, I found myself in a bad situation.”

**Begin with a prepositional phrase:**

**Replace** “We stopped at the ice cream stand on the way home.” with “On the way home, we stopped at the ice cream stand.”

**Begin with a participial phrase:**

**Replace** “The children ran into the candy store, screaming with joy.” with “Screaming with joy, the children ran into the candy store.”

The examples above show different ways of forming sentences. They also show how a modifier is best understood when it is placed near the noun or verb it is modifying.

## USING A QUESTION OR EXCLAMATION

Finally, using a question or exclamation occasionally can provide a welcome change of pace for the reader. Compare the following two examples:

**Example 3:** I didn’t like it when my best friend told me he was going out with my ex-girlfriend. It was the worst feeling I’ve ever experienced.

**Example 4:** How would you like it if your best friend told you he was going out with your ex-girlfriend? Well, I know. It’s the worst feeling I’ve ever experienced!

Examples 3 and 4 show how to use a question or exclamation to add variety to your writing. Example 4 also shows how a shift in person can be used effectively.

Vary your sentences by combining simple sentences into longer ones, starting a sentence with something other than the subject, and using a question or exclamation occasionally.


her Cream Puff. She and her name lasted until the puff from her engine became a bluish-black oily cloud of smoke.

## COLONS, SEMICOLONS, AND APOSTROPHES

The **colon** signals that there is a bit of information that the sentence needs. It most often sets off a list, a quotation, an appositive (which renames), an explanation, or an example. Colons are also used in number phrases like time notations or Biblical references. Two major rules about colons are as follows:

**Rule 1.** Never place it right after a verb (between the verb and its object).

**Rule 2.** Never use it to separate two independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction between them.

 You may use a **semi colon** to separate two independent clauses which are closely related to one idea. (For more emphasis, you may also use a colon in this case, especially to emphasize the second clause.) Another common use of the semi colon is to separate items in a list when the item names contain commas.



**Apostrophes** do not separate words; they signal either possession or missing letters in contractions.

To improve your proofreading skill, consider the guidelines above, and consider how you normally use these punctuation marks. Then, complete the following exercise.



### Practice 3: Colons, Semicolons, and Apostrophes

**First, carefully read the story for content. Next, insert the missing punctuation marks and circle them.**

**Hint:** There are twenty-four colons, semicolons, and apostrophes missing in the passage.

#### Rot a Good Book

An old warehouse in Detroit is the final resting place for tons of unused school supplies. Here's a partial list of the things piled in the warehouses mounds of filth toppled pallets of texts still wrapped in plastic, unopened chemicals for science class, cases of art supplies, calculators, scissors, rulers, globes, footballs, bookshelves, and desks. Fires sometimes spring up in the warehouse since nobody cares to put them out, they devour books until rain leaks through the roof to extinguish them.

Read the following two passages about weight loss, and decide whether the arguments are strong or weak.

### Rapidly Burn Off Pounds and Inches with SUPER DIET PILL!

You can lose 10, 20, 50, even 100 pounds!

This is it! This is the diet pill researchers around the world have hailed for its powerful, quick-working ingredients that help people shed stubborn fat—fast!



This super diet pill satisfies the need for fast action without strenuous dieting.

So fast-working, you can see a dramatic difference in just two days, without complicated calorie-counting or suffering from biting hunger pains. Even people with long-time weight problems find they can burn off up to a pound of fat and fluid every five hours.

Fifty percent fat loss in 14 to 21 days.

The longer you use the super diet pill, the more weight you lose. You don't have to stop until you reach the weight that *you* want. Without making major sacrifices or drastic changes, you can shed as much as 50 percent of your fat in just two or three weeks.

### Increased Metabolism Means Weight Loss

One-half of the women and one-fourth of the men in the United States are trying to lose weight and become fit. The sad truth is that most of us will regain our original weight in a year or less. What's the real secret for losing weight and keeping it off?

The answer is developing and maintaining a healthy metabolism. Metabolism refers to how the body burns energy. A person with a high metabolism burns more calories than a person with a low metabolism. Consequently, the person who burns more calories has an easier time losing weight. Here are some tips for improving your metabolism and melting away that extra fat:

1. **Drink plenty of water.** Filling up on water decreases the appetite.
2. **Don't skip meals, especially breakfast.** Eat small meals every two to three hours. In this way, carbohydrates and protein will not be converted into fat.
3. **Eat fat-burning foods.** Raw vegetables, whole grains, fruits, and legumes are your best choices. Consume fruits between meals for extra energy. This healthy snack won't be converted to fat.
4. **Exercise regularly.** Aerobic exercises like swimming, running, and walking are best. Also try lifting weights—a good muscle builder and fat burner. Exercise before you eat. It will decrease your appetite and increase your metabolism.

## PROCESS ESSAY

Have you ever followed a recipe while preparing a meal or a dessert? Or perhaps you have taken lessons to learn the steps for a new dance. You may even have taught someone else a game or how to administer first aid. For each of these activities, you followed a process, a step-by-step procedure. These steps also occur in a time sequence.



The purpose of a **process essay** is to explain how to do something or how to make something. A process essay can also include an explanation of how something works, such as how the heart pumps blood through the body or how a tiny computer chip processes many bits of information.

Like the basic expository essay, a process essay consists of an introduction, body, and conclusion. It includes a thesis in the introduction and two to three body paragraphs. Sentence variety is also important.

In addition, a process essay contains the following key features:

- focused step-by-step instruction
- a clear and logical sequence
- frequent transitional words that lead the reader from one step to the next step

Now, let's begin by looking at a simple paragraph example that explains how to cut grocery bills.

You can follow several easy steps to cut the cost of groceries. First, purchase generic or store brands of groceries instead of the popular brands advertised on television. Cereal, peanut butter, and canned vegetables with store-brand labels are usually of the same quality as widely advertised national brands. Next, clip money-saving coupons from newspapers and magazines to save on your grocery bill. Thirdly, buy groceries in bulk sizes to cut per-item expenses. Furthermore, shop for fresh fruits and vegetables when they are in season to reduce your grocery bill. Finally, bring a shopping list with you to the supermarket, and stick to it. In this way, you will avoid buying something on impulse, which can raise your grocery bill.



Taste Words					
light	dry	warm	salty	juicy	tender
flaky	crisp	syrupey	tangy	refreshing	robust
acidic	spicy	sour	crunchy	metallic	rich
heavy	flavorful	tasty	delicious	succulent	scrumptious
hot	tart	spoiled	overripe	inedible	mild
sharp	zesty	appetizing	bitter	chocolatey	mouth-watering

### Practice 5: Taste Words

- A. As a homework assignment, eat your favorite food. As you eat it, close your eyes, and pay attention to the flavors you taste. Remember that texture, temperature, and smell play an important role in your sense of taste. Take notes on the tastes you experience. Then, write a paragraph that describes the flavors of your favorite food and why you enjoy them. Use specific words so that the reader will want to run out and try your favorite food.
- B. You have already described four sensory aspects of your favorite place. The last one is taste. Think of some way you experience taste in your favorite place. Maybe you eat your favorite food there. In this case, your paragraph is already written. Otherwise, write a paragraph that describes your experience of taste in your favorite place.

## CHAPTER 9 SUMMARY

**Descriptive writing** is important to use when you are writing a narrative (telling a story) or writing a description.

When you describe a person, place, thing, or event, try to use words that will appeal to the reader's five **senses**: **sight**, **sound**, **touch**, **smell**, and **taste**.

- You can use sight words to describe **size**, **shape**, **color**, **surface appearance**, or **action**.
- Through the sense of touch you can learn the following about an object: **texture**, **temperature**, **shape**, **weight**, and **density**.
- You can also describe sounds by **volume**, **pitch**, or **quality**.
- The average nose can recognize over two thousand different odors, but often we have trouble choosing a word to describe a particular **smell**.
- Unlike the nose, the tongue can detect only four tastes—**sweet**, **sour**, **salty**, and **bitter**—but there are many ways to describe them.

Transitional Words and Phrases		
after	before	as
then	second	third
finally	at that moment	during
meanwhile	eventually	when
next	now	soon
while	early	in a short time
last	later	first

Working with Mrs. Connor, Ben found out that he needs to strengthen his choice of words. Specific and concrete words are more effective than general or vague words. For example, Ben changed the phrase, “I chose a horse” to “I chose a lively brown mare.” Instead of the general phrase “loud mountain lion,” he used the more vivid expression “snarling mountain lion.” Ben should start adding more vivid and specific adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and verbs wherever possible.

Mrs. Connor also pointed out that Ben’s sentences needed more variety. His rough draft contains mostly simple sentences, so she suggested that he review the section on “Developing Sentence Variety” in chapter 5 of this book (pages 108–109). Ben began to combine his simple sentences. He also worked on starting his sentences with something other than a subject.



For example, in his rough draft, Ben wrote the following three simple sentences in a row: “we arrived at the horse stables, I noticed a bald eagle flaping overhead, his screeches sounded an alarm throughout the valley.” To vary his sentences and words in this example, Ben combined these three simple sentences, introducing them with a dependent clause. Notice how Ben’s revision of these sentences creates a smoother flow of ideas and spurs the reader’s interest in the events to come: “Before we arrived at the horse stables, I noticed a majestic bald eagle overhead, his screeches sounding an alarm throughout the valley.”

As he rewrote the final draft of his story, Ben continued combining his sentences and varying the pace of his narrative.

After reviewing errors in writing conventions with Mrs. Connor and with his peer partners, Ben also found that he needed to improve his capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and grammar in the narrative. For example, in the second paragraph, he misspelled *flaping*, *screaches*, and *reeched*. In addition, each paragraph contains punctuation errors that result in either fragments and/or run-on sentences, missing commas, or other types of punctuation errors.

For example, in the third paragraph, Ben saw these two run-on sentences: “we would be able to reach the top of the mountain we could view the entire valley and the surrounding mountains.” He corrected them by adding and capitalizing the transitional word eventually

**Sample Writing Task**

In the folk story “The Crane’s Reward,” the author is conveying a life lesson or theme through the actions of the crafty lion and the greedy crane.

Write an essay in which you discuss how the author communicates this theme. Include examples of the author’s use of plot, character, and personification to convey this theme. Explain how the writer’s use of literary devices adds meaning to the story and illustrates the lesson or theme.

**SAMPLE ESSAY RESPONSE**

In the folktale, “The Crane’s Reward,” the author is able to convey a lesson or theme on how personal vices such as greed can be used against a greedy person. Those who are wise learn how to use these vices to their advantage. The author uses two animals of Africa, the lion and the crane, to illustrate this life lesson. The characters of the folktale seem all the more relatable through the author’s use of actions, character development, and personification.

The lion is described in the story as king of Kisii. He is the most powerful animal in the area, and all other animals are afraid of him. The lion even intimidates the mighty elephant. However, the lion soon finds himself in a vulnerable position when he gets a bone stuck in his throat. He is choking, and none of his family can get the bone out. The lion calls out to the animals to help, but they are too afraid of being eaten—all except the crane.

The crane in this story is the only animal who has a beak long enough to pull the bone out of the lion’s throat. He is also frightened about being eaten by the lion, but when the lion promises him a reward, he cannot resist. After taking out the bone, the crane immediately demands, “I’ll have my reward now,” exposing his true reason for helping the lion. The lion’s crafty response about giving the lion orders, entering his mouth, and living to tell about it as a reward stumps the crane, and he flies away without the reward he was expecting.

This folktale draws on the personification of animals to make the characters’ personalities more exaggerated. People keenly understand the power of the lion and the wisdom the lion possesses. The crane, on the other hand, is always flying around looking for an opportunity to score a quick meal. The storyteller draws on this personal knowledge to portray the lion as smart and the crane as greedy. At the same time, the folktale is an allegory describing a lesson for all humanity—a lesson of the folly of greed.

When you first start out, your resume will be brief (a page or less) because you may not have a great deal of job experience that you can list. In the beginning, you will list every type of experience that demonstrates your skills and responsibility, whether or not someone actually paid you to do it. Later, some of the earlier examples will be replaced by new jobs you have had. Think about doctors and lawyers, and imagine how long their resumes get! They would no longer list the babysitting jobs or summer camp counseling they did in high school...but you might!

### CREATING YOUR RESUME

In order for your resume to be complete, you might need to spend some time thinking about what you can include. If you have held several jobs already, you may also need to go through old pay stubs, calendars, or journals to recall when you worked at what company and the details of your job duties.

You may feel uncomfortable at first trying to make positive statements about things you have done. But remember that you need to talk about your skills and accomplishments so that the people reading your resume can tell whether or not you may be qualified for the opening they have. Keep in mind also that it helps to get an outside perspective. Work on your resume with a parent, friend, or your guidance counselor at school.



#### Practice 4: Creating Your Resume

**After reviewing the section about resumes, write one for yourself. Be thorough; your ideal job may depend on it! Begin by making lists in the following categories:**

- header information
- profile or objective (optional)
- work experience
- education
- skills
- community involvement (optional)

**Some categories may have quite a bit of information, while others will contain very little. You may want to eliminate sections that have little or nothing in them and focus on the others. Include only the relevant information, such as things that an employer would value if he or she were considering hiring you.**

**Now, create an appealing format for your resume and organize your information in it. Then, share it with your teacher and perhaps fellow students for feedback.**

## VALIDATION: CHECKING SOURCES

Why should you bother with validating sources? After all, if you can find material on a Web site it must be OK, right? No, not always. Many Web sites are created by students and other citizens, who may believe what they have posted is true but are mistaken. Researchers protect their work by screening the material they find for quality and accuracy.

- Find two or more sources that agree with the information that you wish to use.
- Read material carefully, watching for any bias or particularly strong opinion expressed in it.
- Look at the URL for the source of the material. It should name an organization or individual. If the organization is an educational (.edu), government (.gov), or professional (.org) sources, the material is probably valid.
- Look for links within the text of a Web site; these are an indication of a serious, validated work (they're like footnotes in a book). Go to some of the linked sites to check the accuracy of the source as well as to find additional material.
- Look at the homepage of the source for other related works by the author of the site. The more the author has published on a topic, the more trustworthy the material.
- Check the date on the material. Obviously if your topic is on a current event, the more recent the date, the better the information. Recent data and theories are valuable for any topic.
- If you are using informal sources, such as chat rooms, for clustering or sharing ideas, again, the information needs to be confirmed by two or more other sources before it is validated.



The name of the author or organization and the date when the site was updated (modified) can usually be found at the bottom of the main page. Look at this example:

OHIO HISTORY STORE // CALENDAR // PLACES // RESOURCES // ABOUT // SEARCH //  
 <<http://www.ohiohistory.org/about/index.html>> Last modified Tuesday, 19-Jun-2007 11:19:22 EST  
**Ohio Historical Society** - 1982 Velma Ave. - Columbus, OH 43211© 1996-2009 All Rights Reserved.

## SAFETY

The use of the Internet, without special safe servers, is basically unregulated and unguarded. This situation brings up concerns about credibility, safety, and privacy issues. The following is an informal listing of ways to make your Internet use as safe and as positive as possible.

## SEQUENCING

Your paper should follow a definite **sequence** or pattern of organization. There are many ways to arrange ideas in an essay. Whatever type of sequence is used, there should be an inviting introduction and a well-thought-out conclusion. Types of sequences are found in chapter 1 of this book, discussing four methods, including spatial order, time order, order of importance, and contrasting ideas. You may use any one of these for each essay, but the order you choose should be clear to your readers.

## LOGICAL TRANSITIONS AND PROGRESSION OF IDEAS

Your paper should have smooth transitions both between paragraphs and within paragraphs. If the scorer doesn't know how you got from one idea to another, you are missing a transition. You want to lead the reader through the essay with one idea naturally flowing to the next. Your ideas should progress through the paper, moving the reader smoothly through the essay.

### Practice 2: Scoring Organization

**Read the following two essays. Using only the guidelines for *organization*, assign each essay a score based on a six-point scale (pages 285–286). Then explain why you gave each essay that score.**

**Students wrote the following two essays based on this writing prompt:**

What characteristics must a student possess to be successful in college?

1. When students decide to go to college, they have many responsibilities to obtain their college degree. After they have been accepted into college, they must remember some points on how to be successful. Students could be successful because they have good attendance, and they have good study habits.



First of all, students must have a good attendance record. They have to be in their classes each class period, so that they do not miss important information. You must maintain passing grades. These grades have to be at least an A, B, or a C to pass any college class. You must attend learning labs. You have to participate in these labs to help you understand your class better. These labs also help students to comprehend their class information.

Last of all, students must have good study habits. They have to learn to dedicate themselves to their course of study. They must manage their time. Students have to be involved in their class. They must attend lectures. All of these things help students to complete their course of study. When students have graduated from college, they could give themselves credit for all the hard work. They know how to be successful in college. So what, college was difficult. Students would have learned that college was worthwhile.

## Practice Writing Test 1

After you write each essay, you or your teacher should complete the **Writing Evaluation Chart** on page 6. An additional progress chart can be found in Appendix C. It will help you identify your areas of strength and areas for improvement in writing essays. You can also use the **six-point scale** in chapter 14 to help you evaluate your essay.

### Test 1: Writing Application

Below are five **writing prompts** that give you instructions about writing an essay. Read each prompt carefully and write an essay based on one of these prompts. Then, use the **Checklist for Your Writing** to help you write an effective and interesting essay.

Use your own paper or an answer document provided by your instructor for your planning, drafting, and final copy. Your instructor will tell you when to begin and when to stop writing. Do your best, and remember, the purpose of this practice is to improve your writing proficiency.

#### Writing Prompt 1

Surviving in strange or hostile places is a popular topic on television these days. Many people enjoy the challenge of surviving in these environments. Imagine that you are stranded on a tropical island for two weeks. Besides three days of food and clothing, you can take only three other personal items. Write an essay in which you list these items and tell why you would take them. Include details and examples to support your discussion.

#### Writing Prompt 2

Across cultures, people often find that meals are events which they can describe with great detail. In your own words, describe as fully as possible the most memorable meal you have ever had.

#### Writing Prompt 3

Should the personal life of the President of the United States reflect the high moral standards on which this nation was founded? Or is the personal life of the President of the United States irrelevant to his or her public contribution? Take a position on this issue and argue for your point of view.

#### Writing Prompt 4

Choose one of your favorite stories or books. What is the theme? In 350–400 words, explain the theme and justify why you think it the main message. Be sure to tell what you get out of this message personally.

## Practice Writing Test 2

After you write each essay, you or your teacher should complete the **Writing Evaluation Chart** on page 6. An additional progress chart can be found in Appendix C. It will help you identify your areas of strength and areas for improvement in writing essays. You can also use the **six-point scale** in chapter 14 to help you evaluate your essay.

### Test 2: Writing Application

Below are five **writing prompts** that give you instructions about writing an essay. Read each prompt carefully and write an essay based on one of these prompts. Then, use the **Checklist for Your Writing** to help you write effective and interesting essays.

Use your own paper or an answer document provided by your instructor for your planning, drafting, and final copy. Your instructor will tell you when to begin and when to stop writing. Do your best, and remember, the purpose of this practice is to help you improve your writing proficiency.

#### Writing Prompt 1

Field trips become an important way to experience new ideas, inventions, works of art, and cultures. In a narrative essay, tell about one field trip you were on, what happened, and what you learned.

#### Writing Prompt 2

An old saying states there is “beauty in simplicity.” Discuss important steps you can take to simplify your life.

#### Writing Prompt 3

We find out about many issues and topics through newspapers, television, and the Internet. What recent issue or event in the news has affected you the most? Give reasons for your opinion.

#### Writing Prompt 4

Which book, story, or play do you think everyone in your class should read? What does it offer that makes it so special? Describe this literature briefly, and then tell why you think it is a good idea from everyone to read it.

#### Writing Prompt 5

The mayor is looking for suggestions to get people involved in the community. Consider ways in which people could get involved and make a difference. Write a letter to the mayor explaining your suggestion.

# Basics Made Easy



## APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL WRITING PROMPTS

### Persuasive Essay Prompts

1. Recently, the newspaper reported that a student shot and injured several students in your school district. The school board is proposing that students in all schools be required to carry clear plastic book bags and purses for easy inspection. In addition, an armed security guard will be hired to carefully check items with a metal detector as students enter and leave the building. This policy has caused mixed reactions in your community. Express your opinion about this proposal in a letter to the editor of the local newspaper.
2. You are entering a contest in which you must write an essay on the following topic: If you were granted one wish to change the world, what would you change, and how would you change it? The writer with the best entry will win \$10,000. Write a convincing essay for the judges. Include reasons and evidence in your proposal.
3. Persuade your classmates that television's impact on people is mostly positive. Cite examples and reasons for your choice.
4. Persuade your classmates that television's impact on people is mostly negative. Cite examples and reasons for your choice.
5. Are parents or their children more responsible for school success? Explain your viewpoint clearly.
6. Confucius once said: "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life." Agree or disagree with this statement. Provide reasons for your point of view.
7. People sometimes say "Where there's a will, there's a way." What is your opinion about this statement? Explain your response.

Then practice writing a brief summary of each source that could be used for a five page research report. Then develop the research report as a class assignment.

## APPENDIX B: WRITING RESOURCES

### Web Sites for Writing and Grammar

These Web sites include a variety of information with links to still more sites designed as supplemental aids for students. We visited these sites and devised a rating system for them.

Ratings: Excellent 

Good 

Fair 

Poor 

#### **Annenberg / CPB: Learner.org: Theme**

A very well-presented site. It contains valuable information about the five major topics for reading and writing analysis: theme, plot, point of view, setting, and characters.


Web address: <http://www.learner.org/exhibits/literature/read/theme1.html>

**Rating -** 

#### **Ask Miss Grammar**

For this site, first, you must ignore the silly, stereotypical cartoon lady. Then, and only then, does this Web site have a lot going for it. There is an option to look through “archives,” where you select an item you wish to learn more about, bring up facts and games, or you could choose the option to e-mail a specific question to the site. The site states that it cannot answer all e-mails, but it tries to answer many of them.

Web address: <http://www.protrainco.com/grammar.htm>

**Rating -** 

#### **Awesome Library**

This comprehensive Web site offers resources and lessons on most school subjects. The section on reading and writing contains numerous links and activities designed to improve the writing of sentences, paragraphs, and essays as well as vocabulary, grammar, and spelling. In addition to English, many explanations and lessons are also available in other languages including Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and Arabic.

Web address: <http://awesomelibrary.org>

**Rating -** 

## APPENDIX C: STUDENT ESSAYS PROGRESS CHART

Use the writing prompts in Appendix A of *Basics Made Easy Writing Review* for writing practice. Keep all of your essays in one folder. As you practice writing essays, you can use the Writing Progress Chart below to help you assess your progress.

For each essay, work with your teacher or tutor to assign a grade in each category listed. If you have an excellent grasp of the skill, write **E** for **Excellent**. If you use the skill well enough to pass, write **P** for **Passing**. If you need to practice a skill more in order to master it, write **NP** for **Needs Practice**. The number listed next to each skill indicates the chapter which discusses that skill. Your teacher may also use the six-point scale from chapter 14, Scoring the Essay. Review the chapters you need to improve each concept and skill.

There is a copy of this progress chart in the back of the answer key also. Teachers/tutors may copy the chart from the **Answer Key** as needed.

### Writing Progress Chart

Writing Skills	Chapter Number	Student Name:					
		Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	Essay 5	Essay 6
Writing Paragraphs	1						
Diction	2						
Planning the Essay	3						
Drafting the Essay	4						
Revising the Essay	5						
Proofreading the Essay	6						
Persuasive Writing	7						
Expository Writing	8						
Descriptive Writing	9						
Narrative Writing	10						
Writing About Literature	11						
Writing Technical Texts	12						
Writing Research Reports	13						
Scoring the Essay	14						