

# 2

## The Writing Process



*This chapter explains and illustrates*

- the sequence of steps in writing an effective essay
- prewriting
- revising
- editing

Chapter 1 introduced you to the essay form and to some basics of writing. This chapter explains and illustrates the sequence of steps in writing an effective essay. In particular, the chapter focuses on prewriting and revising—strategies that can help with every paper you write.

For many people, writing is a process that involves the following steps:

- 1 Discovering a thesis—often through prewriting.
- 2 Developing solid support for the thesis—often through more prewriting.
- 3 Organizing the thesis and supporting material and writing it out in a first draft.
- 4 Revising and then editing carefully to ensure an effective, error-free paper.

Learning this sequence will help give you confidence when the time comes to write. You'll know that you can use prewriting as a way to think on paper and to gradually discover just what ideas you want to develop. You'll understand that there are four clear-cut goals—unity, support, organization, and error-free sentences—to aim for in your writing. You'll realize that you can use revision to rework a paper until it is a strong and effective piece of writing. And you'll be able to edit a paper so that your sentences are clear and error-free.

# Prewriting



1.1a

If you are like many people, you may have trouble getting started with writing. A mental block may develop when you sit down before a blank sheet of paper. You may not be able to think of an interesting topic or thesis. Or you may have trouble coming up with relevant details to support a possible thesis. And even after starting a paper, you may hit snags—moments when you wonder “What else can I say?” or “Where do I go next?”

The following pages describe five prewriting techniques that will help you think about and develop a topic and get words on paper: (1) freewriting, (2) questioning, (3) making a list, (4) diagramming, and (5) preparing a scratch outline. These techniques help you think about and create material, and they are a central part of the writing process.

## Technique 1: Freewriting



2.3b

*Freewriting* means jotting down in rough sentences or phrases everything that comes to mind about a possible topic. See if you can write nonstop for ten minutes or more. Do not worry about spelling or punctuating correctly, about erasing mistakes, about organizing material, or about finding exact words. Instead, explore an idea by putting down whatever pops into your head. If you get stuck for words, repeat yourself until more words come. There is no need to feel inhibited, since mistakes *do not count* and you do not have to hand in your freewriting.

Freewriting will limber up your writing muscles and make you familiar with the act of writing. It is a way to break through mental blocks about writing. Since you do not have to worry about mistakes, you can focus on discovering what you want to say about a subject. Your initial ideas and impressions will often become clearer after you have gotten them down on paper, and they may lead to other impressions and ideas. Through continued practice in freewriting, you will develop the habit of thinking as you write. And you will learn a technique that is a helpful way to get started on almost any paper.



## Freewriting: A Student Model

Diane Woods’s essay “The Hazards of Moviegoing” on pages 7–8 was developed in response to an assignment to write about some annoyance in everyday life. Diane began by doing some general freewriting and thinking about things that annoy her. Here is her freewriting:

There are lots of things I get annoyed by. One of them that comes to mind is politishans, in fact I am so annoyed by them that I don't want to say anything about them the last thing I want is to write about them. Another thing that bothers me are people who keep complaining about everything. If you're having trouble, do something about it just don't keep complaining and just talking. I am really annoyed by traffic. There are too many cars in our block and its not surprising. Everyone has a car, the parents have cars and the parents are just too indulgent and the kids have cars, and theyre all coming and going all the time and often driving too fast. Speeding up and down the street. We need a speed limit sign but here I am back with politiks again. I am really bothered when I have to drive to the movies all the congestion along the way plus there are just so many cars there at the mall. No space even though the parking lot is huge it just fills up with cars. Movies are a bother anyway because the people can be annoying who are sitting there in the theater with you, talking and dropping popcorn cups and acting like they're at home when they're not.

At this point, Diane read over her notes and, as she later commented, "I realized that I had several potential topics. I said to myself, 'What point can I make that I can cover in an essay? What do I have the most information about?'" I decided that maybe I could narrow my topic down to the annoyances involved in going to the movies. I figured I would have more details for that topic." Diane then did more focused freewriting to accumulate details for a paper on problems with moviegoing:

I really find it annoying to go see movies anymore. Even though I love films. Traffic to Cinema Six is awful. I hate looking for a parking place, the lot isn't big enough for the theaters and other stores. You just keep driving to find a parking space and hoping someone will pull out and no one else will pull in ahead of you. Then you don't want there to be a long line and to wind up in one of the first rows with this huge screen right in front of you. Then I'm in the theater with the smell of popcorn all around. Sitting there smelling it trying to ignore it and just wanting to pour a whole bucket of popcorn with melted butter down my throat. I can't stop thinking about the chocolate bars either. I love the stuff but I don't need it. The people who are there sometimes drive me nuts. Talking and laughing, kids running around, packs of teens hollaring, who can listen to the movie? And I might run into my old boyfriend—the last thing I need. Also sitting thru all the previews and commercials. If I arrive late enough to miss that junk the movie may be sold out.

## Comment

Notice that there are errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation in Diane's freewriting. Diane is not worried about such matters, nor should she be. At this

stage, she just wants to do some thinking on paper and get some material down on the page. She knows that this is a good first step, a good way of getting started, and that she will then be able to go on and shape the material.

You should take the same approach when freewriting: explore your topic without worrying at all about being “correct.” Figuring out what you want to say and getting raw material down on the page should have all of your attention at this early stage of the writing process.

### ACTIVITY

To get a sense of the freewriting process, take a sheet of paper and freewrite about some of the everyday annoyances in your life. See how much material you can accumulate in ten minutes. And remember not to worry about “mistakes”; you’re just thinking on paper.

## Technique 2: Questioning

In *questioning*, you generate ideas and details by asking questions about your subject. Such questions include *Why? When? Where? Who?* and *How?* Ask as many questions as you can think of.

Here are some questions that Diane Woods might have asked while developing her paper.

### Questioning: A Student Model

#### Questions

Why don't I like to go to a movie?

When is going to the movies a problem?

Where are problems with moviegoing?

Who creates the problems?

How can I deal with the problem?

#### Answers

Just too many problems involved.

Could be any time—when a movie is popular, the theater is too crowded; when traffic is bad, the trip is a drag.

On the highway, in the parking lot, at the concession stand, in the theater itself.

I do by wanting to eat too much. The patrons do by creating disturbances. The theater owners do by not having enough parking space and showing too many commercials.

I can stay home and watch movies on video or cable TV.



## Comment

Asking questions can be an effective way of getting yourself to think about a topic from a number of different angles. The questions can really help you generate details about a topic.

### ACTIVITY

To get a sense of the questioning process, use a sheet of paper to ask yourself a series of questions about a good or bad experience that you have had recently. See how many details you can accumulate in ten minutes. And remember again not to be concerned about “mistakes,” because you are just thinking on paper.

## Technique 3: Making a List



In *making a list*, also known as *brainstorming*, you collect ideas and details that relate to your subject. Pile these items up, one after another, without trying to sort out major details from minor ones or trying to put the details in any special order. Your goal is just to make a list of everything about your subject that occurs to you.

After Diane did her freewriting about moviegoing, she made up the following list of details.

### Making a List: A Student Model

Traffic is bad between my house and theater  
Noisy patrons  
Don't want to run into Jeremy  
Hard to be on a diet  
Kids running in aisles  
I'm crowded into seats between strangers who push me off armrests  
Not enough parking  
Parking lot needs to be expanded  
Too many previews  
Can't pause or fast-forward as you can with a VCR  
Long lines

*Continued*

High ticket prices  
 Too many temptatons at snack stand  
 Commercials for food on the screen  
 Can prepare healthy snacks for myself at home  
 Tubs of popcorn with butter  
 Huge choclote bars  
 Candy has always been my downfall  
 Movie may be sold out  
 People who've seen movie before talk along with actors and give away plot twists  
 People coughing and sneezing  
 Icky stuff on floor  
 Teenagers yelling and showing off



One detail led to another as Diane expanded her list. Slowly but surely, more details emerged, some of which she could use in developing her paper. By the time she was done with her list, she was ready to plan an outline of her paragraph and then to write her first draft.

### ACTIVITY

To get a sense of list-making, list on a sheet of paper a series of realistic goals, major or minor, that you would like to accomplish between today and one year from today. Your goals can be personal, academic, and/or career-related.

## Technique 4: Clustering



*Clustering*, also known as *diagramming* or *mapping*, is another strategy that can be used to generate material for a paper. This method is helpful for people who like to do their thinking in a visual way. In clustering, you use lines, boxes, arrows, and circles to show relationships among the ideas and details that occur to you.

Begin by stating your subject in a few words in the center of a blank sheet of paper. Then, as ideas and details come to you, put them in boxes or circles around the subject and draw lines to connect them to each other and to the subject. Put minor ideas or details in smaller boxes or circles, and use connecting lines to show how they relate as well.

Keep in mind that there is no right or wrong way of clustering or diagramming. It is a way to think on paper about how various ideas and details relate to one another. Below is an example of what Diane might have done to develop her ideas.

### Clustering: A Student Model



### Comment

In addition to helping generate material, clustering can give you an early sense of how ideas and details relate to one another. For example, the cluster for Diane's essay suggests that different kinds of noisy people could be the focus of one paragraph and that different kinds of temptations could be the focus of another paragraph.

### ACTIVITY

Use clustering (diagramming) to organize the list of year-ahead goals that you created for the previous activity (page 27).

## Technique 5: Preparing a Scratch Outline



A *scratch outline* is an excellent sequel to the first four prewriting techniques. A scratch outline often follows freewriting, questioning, list-making, or diagramming; or it may gradually emerge in the midst of these strategies. In fact, trying to make a scratch outline is a good way to see if you need to do more prewriting. If you cannot come up with a solid outline, then you know you need to do more prewriting to clarify your main point or its several kinds of support.

In a scratch outline, you think carefully about the point you are making, the supporting items for that point, and the order in which you will arrange those items. The scratch outline is a plan or blueprint to help you achieve a unified, supported, well-organized composition.



When you are planning a traditional essay consisting of an introduction, three supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion, a scratch outline is especially important. It may be only a few words, but it will be the framework on which your whole essay will be built.

### Scratch Outline: A Student Model

As Diane was working on her list of details, she suddenly realized what the plan of her essay could be. She could organize many of her details into one of three supporting groups: (1) annoyances in going out; (2) too many tempting snacks; and (3) other people. She then went back to the list, crossed out items that she now saw did not fit, and numbered the items according to the group where they fit. Here is what Diane did with her list:

- 1 Traffic is bad between my house and the theater
- 3 Noisy patrons
- ~~Don't want to run into Jeremy~~
- 2 Hard to be on a diet
- 3 Kids running in aisles
- 3 I'm crowded into seats between strangers who push me off armrests
- 1 Not enough parking
- 1 Parking lot needs to be expanded
- 1 Too many previews
- ~~Can't pause or fast forward as you can with a VCR~~
- 1 Long lines

*Continued*



- 1 High ticket prices
- 2 Too many temptatons at snack stand
- ~~Commercials for food on the screen~~
- 2 Can prepare healthy snacks for myself at home
- 2 Tubs of popcorn with butter
- 2 Huge choclote bars
- ~~Candy has always been my downfall~~
- 1 Movie may be sold out
- 3 People who've seen movie before talk along with actors and give away plot twists
- 3 People coughing and sneezing
- 1 Icky stuff on floor
- 3 Teenagers yelling and showing off

Under the list, Diane was now able to prepare her scratch outline:

Going to the movies offers some real problems.

1. Inconvenience of going out
2. Tempting snacks
3. Other moviegoers

## Comment

After all her prewriting, Diane was pleased. She knew that she had a promising paper—one with a clear point and solid support. She saw that she could organize the material into a traditional essay consisting of an introduction, several supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. She was now ready to write the first draft of her paper, using her outline as a guide. Chances are that if you do enough prewriting and thinking on paper, you will eventually discover the point and support of your essay.



## ACTIVITY

Create a scratch outline that could serve as a guide if you were to write an essay about your year-ahead goals.

# Writing a First Draft

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When you write a first draft, be prepared to put in additional thoughts and details that did not emerge during prewriting. And don't worry if you hit a snag. Just leave a blank space or add a comment such as "Do later" and press on to finish the paper. Also, don't worry yet about grammar, punctuation, or spelling. You don't want to take time correcting words or sentences that you may decide to remove later. Instead, make it your goal to state your thesis clearly and develop the content of your paper with plenty of specific details.

## Writing a First Draft: A Student Model

Here is Diane's first draft:

Even though I love movies, my friends have stopped asking me to go. There are just too many problems involved in going to the movies.

There are no small theaters anymore, I have to drive fifteen minutes to a big multiplex. Because of a supermarket and restarants, the parking lot is filled. I have to keep driving around to find a space. Then I have to stand in a long line. Hoping that they do not run out of tickets. Finally, I have to pay too much money for a ticket. Putting out that much money, I should not have to deal with a floor that is sticky seems coated with rubber cement. By the end of a movie, my shoes are often sealed to a mix of spilled soda, bubble gum, and other stuff.

The theater offers temptatons in the form of snacks I really don't need. Like most of us I have to worry about weight gain. At home I do pretty well by simply watching what I keep in the house and not buying stuff that is bad for me. I can make do with healthy snacks because there is nothing in the house. Going to the theater is like spending my evening in a market Seven-Eleven that's been equiped with a movie screen and there are seats which are comfortable. I try to persuade myself to just have a diet soda. The smell of popcorn soon overcomes me. My friends are as bad as I am. Choclote bars seem to jump into your hands, I am eating enormous mouthfuls of milk duds. By the time I leave the theater I feel sick and tired of myself.

Some of the other moviegoers are the worst problem. There are teenagers who try to impress their friends in one way or another. Little kids

race up and down the aisles, giggling and laughing. Adults act as if they're watching the movie at home. They talk loudly about the ages of the stars and give away the plot. Other people are dropping popcorn tubs or cups of ~~soda~~ crushed ice and soda on the floor. Also coughing a lot and doing other stuff—bs!

I decided one night that I was not going to be a moviegoer anymore. I joined a local video store, and I'll watch movies comfortable in my own living room.

## Comment

After Diane finished the first draft, she was able to put it aside until the next day. You will benefit as well if you can allow some time between finishing a draft and starting to revise. See if you can fill in the missing words in the following explanation of Diane's first draft.

### ACTIVITY

1. Diane has a very brief introduction—no more than an opening sentence and a second sentence that states the \_\_\_\_\_. She knows she can develop the introduction more fully in a later draft.
2. Of Diane's three supporting paragraphs, only the \_\_\_\_\_ paragraph lacks a topic sentence. She realizes that this is something to work on in the next draft.
3. There are some misspellings—for example, \_\_\_\_\_. Diane doesn't worry about spelling at this point. She just wants to get down as much of the substance of her paper as possible.
4. There are various punctuation errors, such as the run-ons in the \_\_\_\_\_ paragraphs. Again, Diane is focusing on content; she knows she can attend to punctuation and grammar later.
5. At several points in the essay, Diane revises on the spot to make images more \_\_\_\_\_: she changes "is sticky" to "seems coated with rubber cement," "market" to "Seven-Eleven," and "cups of soda" to "cups of crushed ice and soda."
6. Near the end of her essay, Diane can't think of added details to insert so she simply puts the letters "\_\_\_\_\_" at that point to remind herself to "be specific" in the next draft. She then goes on to finish her first draft.
7. Her \_\_\_\_\_ is as brief as her introduction. Diane knows she can round off her essay more fully during revision.

# Revising



4.3

Revising is as much a stage in the writing process as prewriting, outlining, and doing the first draft. *Revising* means rewriting a paper, building on what has already been done, in order to make it stronger. One writer has said about revision, “It’s like cleaning house—getting rid of all the junk and putting things in the right order.” But it is not just “straightening up”; instead, you must be ready to roll up your sleeves and do whatever is needed to create an effective paper. Too many students think that the first draft *is* the paper. They start to become writers when they realize that revising a rough draft three or four times is often at the heart of the writing process.

Here are some quick hints that can help make revision easier. First, set your first draft aside for a while. A few hours will do, but a day or two would be better. You can then come back to the draft with a fresh, more objective point of view. Second, work from typed or printed text. You’ll be able to see the paper more impartially in this way than if you were just looking at your own familiar handwriting. Next, read your draft aloud. Hearing how your writing sounds will help you pick up problems with meaning as well as with style. Finally, as you do all these things, add your thoughts and changes above the lines or in the margins of your paper. Your written comments can serve as a guide when you work on the next draft.

There are three stages to the revising process:

- Revising content
- Revising sentences
- Editing

## Revising Content

To revise the content of your essay, ask these questions:

- 1** Is my paper **unified**?
  - Do I have a thesis that is clearly stated or implied in the introductory paragraph of my essay?
  - Do all my supporting paragraphs truly support and back up my thesis?
- 2** Is my paper **supported**?
  - Are there three separate supporting points for the thesis?
  - Do I have *specific* evidence for each of the three supporting points?
  - Is there *plenty of* specific evidence for each supporting point?

**3** Is my paper **organized**?

- Do I have an interesting introduction, a solid conclusion, and an accurate title?
- Do I have a clear method of organizing my paper?
- Do I use transitions and other connecting words?

Chapters 3 and 4 will give you practice in achieving **unity**, **support**, and **organization** in your writing.

## Revising Sentences

To revise sentences in your essay, ask yourself:

- 1** Do I use parallelism to balance my words and ideas?
- 2** Do I have a consistent point of view?
- 3** Do I use specific words?
- 4** Do I use active verbs?
- 5** Do I use words effectively by avoiding slang, clichés, pretentious language, and wordiness?
- 6** Do I vary my sentences?

Chapter 5 will give you practice in revising sentences.

## Editing

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After you have revised your paper for content and style, you are ready to *edit*—check for and correct—errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Students often find it hard to edit a paper carefully. They have put so much, or so little, work into their writing that it’s almost painful for them to look at the paper one more time. You may simply have to *will* yourself to perform this important closing step in the writing process. Remember that eliminating sentence-skills mistakes will improve an average paper and help ensure a strong grade on a good paper. Further, as you get into the habit of checking your papers, you will also get into the habit of using the sentence skills consistently. They are an integral part of clear and effective writing.

Chapter 5 and Part Four of this book will serve as a guide while you are editing your paper for mistakes in **sentence skills**.

# An Illustration of the Revising and Editing Processes

## Revising with a Second Draft: A Student Model

Since Diane Woods was using a word-processing program on a computer, she was able to print out a double-spaced version of her essay about movies, leaving her plenty of room for revisions. Here is one of her revised paragraphs:

Second, <sup>tempting</sup> The theater offers temptations in the form of snacks I really don't need. Like most of us I have to <sup>battle an expanding waistline.</sup> worry about weight gain. At home I do pretty well by simply ~~watching what I keep in the house and~~ not buying stuff that is bad for me. I can make do with <sup>like celery and carrot sticks</sup> healthy snacks because there is <sup>no ice cream</sup> nothing in the freezer. Going to the theater <sup>however</sup> is like spending my evening in a Seven-Eleven that's been equipped with a movie screen and <sup>comfortable</sup> there are seats which <sup>As</sup> are comfortable. I try to persuade myself to just have a diet soda, <sup>dripping with butter</sup> The smell of fresh popcorn soon overcomes me. <sup>My friends are as bad as I am.</sup> Chocolate bars seem to jump into <sup>my</sup> your hands. I <sup>risk pulling out my fillings as I chew</sup> am eating enormous mouthfuls of milk duds. By the time I leave the theater I feel <sup>disgusted</sup> out of sorts with myself.

## Comment

Diane made her changes in longhand as she worked on the second draft. As you will see when you complete the activity below, her revision serves to make the paragraph more unified, better supported, and better organized.

### ACTIVITY

Fill in the missing words.

- To achieve better organization, Diane adds at the beginning of the paragraph the transitional phrase “\_\_\_\_\_” making it very clear that her second supporting idea is tempting snacks.

2. Diane also adds the transition “\_\_\_\_\_” to show clearly the difference between being at home and being in the theater.
3. In the interest of (*unity, support, organization*) \_\_\_\_\_, Diane crosses out the sentence “\_\_\_\_\_.” She realizes this sentence is not a relevant detail but really another topic.
4. To add more (*unity, support, organization*) \_\_\_\_\_, Diane changes “healthy snacks” to “\_\_\_\_\_”; she changes “nothing in the freezer” to “\_\_\_\_\_”; she adds “\_\_\_\_\_” after “popcorn”; and she changes “am eating” to “\_\_\_\_\_.”
5. In the interest of eliminating wordiness, she removes the words “\_\_\_\_\_” from the third sentence.
6. In the interest of parallelism, Diane changes “and there are seats which are comfortable” to “\_\_\_\_\_.”
7. For greater sentence variety, Diane combines two short sentences, beginning the first sentence with the subordinating word “\_\_\_\_\_.”
8. To create a consistent point of view, Diane changes “jump into your hands” to “\_\_\_\_\_.”
9. Finally, Diane replaces the vague “out of sorts” with the more precise “\_\_\_\_\_.”

## Editing: A Student Model

After typing into her word-processing file all the changes in her second draft, Diane printed out another clean draft of the paper. The paragraph on tempting snacks required almost no more revision, so Diane turned her attention mostly to editing changes, illustrated below with her work on the second supporting paragraph:

Second, the theater offers tempting snacks I really don't need. Like most of us, I have to battle an expanding waistline. At home I do pretty well by simply not buying stuff that is bad for me. I can make do with snacks like celery and carrot sticks because there is no ice cream in the freezer. Going

to the theater, however, is like spending my evening in a Seven-Eleven that's been <sup>equipped</sup> ~~equipped~~ with a movie screen and comfortable seats. As I try to persuade myself to just have a diet <sup>Coke</sup> ~~soda~~, the smell of fresh popcorn dripping with butter soon overcomes me. <sup>Chocolate</sup> ~~Chocolate~~ bars seem to jump into my hands. I risk pulling out my fillings as I chew enormous mouthfuls of <sup>M D</sup> ~~milk~~ duds. By the time I leave the theater, I feel disgusted with myself.

## Comment

Once again, Diane makes her changes in longhand right on the printout of her paper. To note these changes, complete the activity below.

### ACTIVITY

Fill in the missing words.

1. As part of her editing, Diane checked and corrected the \_\_\_\_\_ of two words, *equipped* and *chocolate*.
2. She added \_\_\_\_\_ to set off two introductory phrases (“Like most of us” in the second sentence and “By the time I leave the theater” in the final sentence) and also to set off the interrupting word *however* in the fifth sentence.
3. She realized that “milk duds” is a brand name and added \_\_\_\_\_ to make it “Milk Duds.”
4. And since revision can occur at any stage of the writing process, including editing, she makes one of her details more vivid by adding the descriptive words “\_\_\_\_\_.”

## Review Activities



You now have a good overview of the writing process, from prewriting to first draft to revising to editing. The remaining chapters in Part One will deepen your sense of the four goals of effective writing: unity, support, organization or coherence, and sentence skills.



To reinforce the information about the writing process that you have learned in this chapter, you can now work through the following activities:

- 1 Taking a writing inventory
- 2 Prewriting
- 3 Outlining
- 4 Revising

## 1 Taking a Writing Inventory

### ACTIVITY

Answer the questions below to evaluate your approach to the writing process. This activity is not a test, so try to be as honest as possible. Becoming aware of your writing habits will help you realize changes that may be helpful.

1. When you start work on a paper, do you typically do any prewriting?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes      \_\_\_\_\_ No
2. If so, which prewriting techniques do you use?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Freewriting      \_\_\_\_\_ Diagramming  
\_\_\_\_\_ Questioning      \_\_\_\_\_ Scratch outline  
\_\_\_\_\_ List-making      \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please describe)
3. Which prewriting technique or techniques work best for you, or which do you think will work best for you?
4. Many students say they find it helpful to handwrite a first draft and then type that draft on a computer. They then print the draft out and revise it by hand. Describe the way you proceed in drafting and revising a paper.
5. After you write the first draft of a paper, do you have time to set it aside for a while so that you can come back to it with a fresh eye?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No

6. How many drafts do you typically write when doing a paper? \_\_\_\_\_
7. When you revise, are you aware that you should be working toward a paper that is unified, solidly supported, and clearly organized? Has this chapter given you a better sense that unity, support, and organization are goals to aim for?
8. Do you revise a paper for the effectiveness of its sentences as well as for its content?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No
9. Do you typically do any editing of the almost-final draft of a paper, or do you tend to “hope for the best” and hand it in without careful checking?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Edit                      \_\_\_\_\_ Hope for the best
10. What (if any) information has this chapter given you about *prewriting* that you will try to apply in your writing?
11. What (if any) information has this chapter given you about *revising* that you will try to apply in your writing?
12. What (if any) information has this chapter given you about *editing* that you will try to apply in your writing?

## 2 Prewriting

### ACTIVITY

On the following pages are examples of how the five prewriting techniques could be used to develop the topic “Problems of Combining Work and College.” Identify each technique by writing F (for freewriting), Q (for questioning), L (for list-making), C (for clustering), or SO (for the scratch outline) in the answer space.

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Never enough time

Miss campus parties

Had to study (only two free hours a night)

Give up activities with friends

No time to rewrite papers

Can't stay at school to play video games or talk to friends

Friends don't call me to go out anymore

Sunday no longer relaxed day—have to study

Missing sleep I should be getting

Grades aren't as good as they could be

Can't watch favorite TV shows

Really need the extra money

Tired when I sit down to study at nine o'clock

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What are some of the problems of combining work and school?

Schoolwork suffers because I don't have time to study or rewrite papers. I've had to give up things I enjoy, like sleep and touch football. I can't get into the social life at college, because I have to work right after class.

How have these problems changed my life?

My grades aren't as good as they were when I didn't work. Some of my friends have stopped calling me. My relationship with a girl I liked fell apart because I couldn't spend much time with her. I miss TV.

What do I do in a typical day?

I get up at 7 to make an 8 A.M. class. I have classes till 1:30, and then I drive to the supermarket where I work. I work till 7 P.M., and then I drive home and eat dinner. After I take a shower and relax for a half hour, it's about 9. This gives me only a couple of hours to study—read textbooks, do math exercises, write essays. My eyes start to close well before I go to bed at 11.

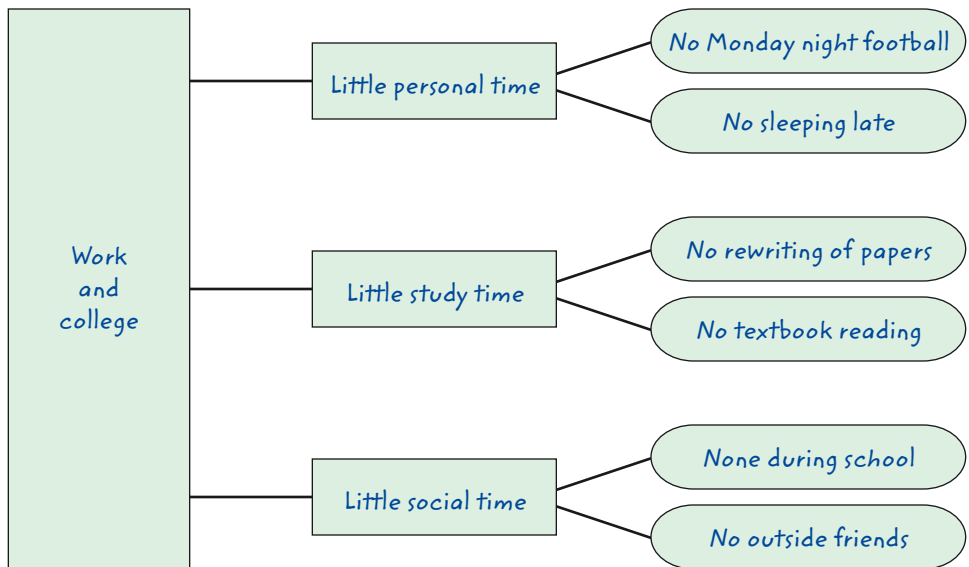
Why do I keep up this schedule?

I can't afford to go to school without working, and I need a degree to get the accounting job I want. If I invest my time now, I'll have a better future.

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Juggling a job and college has created major difficulties in my life.

1. Little time for studying
  - a. Not reading textbooks
  - b. No rewriting papers
  - c. Little studying for tests
2. Little time for enjoying social side of college
  - a. During school
  - b. After school
3. No time for personal pleasures
  - a. Favorite TV shows
  - b. Sunday football games
  - c. Sleeping late




---

It's hard working and going to school at the same time. I never realized how much I'd have to give up. I won't be quitting my job because I need the money. And the people are friendly at the place where I work. I've had to give up a lot more than I thought. We used to play touch football games every Sunday. They were fun and we'd go out for drinks afterwards. Sundays now are for catch-up work with my courses. I have to catch up because I don't get home every day until 7, I have to eat dinner first before studying. Sometimes I'm so hungry I just eat cookies or chips. Anyway, by the time I take a shower it's 9 P.M. or later and I'm already feeling tired. I've been up since 7 A.M. Sometimes I write an English paper in twenty minutes and don't even read it over. I feel that I'm missing out

on a lot in college. The other day some people I like were sitting in the cafeteria listening to music and talking. I would have given anything to stay and not have to go to work. I almost called in sick. I used to get invited to parties, I don't much anymore. My friends know I'm not going to be able to make it, so they don't bother. I can't sleep late on weekends or watch TV during the week.

### 3 Outlining



As already mentioned (see page 29), outlining is central to writing a good paper. An outline lets you see, and work on, the bare bones of a paper, without the distraction of a clutter of words and sentences. It develops your ability to think clearly and logically. Outlining provides a quick check on whether your paper will be *unified*. It also suggests right at the start whether your paper will be adequately *supported*. And it shows you how to plan a paper that is *well organized*.

The following two exercises will help you develop the outlining skills so important to planning and writing a solid essay.

#### ACTIVITY 1

One key to effective outlining is the ability to distinguish between major ideas and details that fit under those ideas. In each of the four lists below, major and supporting items are mixed together. Put the items into logical order by filling in the outline that follows each list. In items 3 and 4, one of the three major ideas is missing and must be added.

1. Thesis: My high school had three problem areas.

Involved with drugs

a. \_\_\_\_\_

Leaky ceilings

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

Students

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

Unwilling to help after class

b. \_\_\_\_\_

Formed cliques

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

Teachers

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

Buildings

Ill-equipped gym

c. \_\_\_\_\_

Much too strict

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Thesis: Working as a dishwasher in a restaurant was my worst job.

- |                          |     |       |
|--------------------------|-----|-------|
| Ten-hour shifts          | a.  | _____ |
| Heat in kitchen          | (1) | _____ |
| Working conditions       | (2) | _____ |
| Minimum wage             | b.  | _____ |
| Hours changed every week | (1) | _____ |
| No bonus for overtime    | (2) | _____ |
| Hours                    | c.  | _____ |
| Pay                      | (1) | _____ |
| Noisy work area          | (2) | _____ |

3. Thesis: Joining an aerobics class has many benefits.

- |                              |     |       |
|------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Make new friends             | a.  | _____ |
| Reduces mental stress        | (1) | _____ |
| Social benefits              | (2) | _____ |
| Strengthens heart            | b.  | _____ |
| Improves self-image          | (1) | _____ |
| Mental benefits              | (2) | _____ |
| Tones muscles                | c.  | _____ |
| Meet interesting instructors | (1) | _____ |
|                              | (2) | _____ |

4. Thesis: My favorite times in school were the days before holiday vacations.

- |                               |     |       |
|-------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Lighter workload              | a.  | _____ |
| Teachers more relaxed         | (1) | _____ |
| Pep rallies                   | (2) | _____ |
| Less work in class            | b.  | _____ |
| Friendlier atmosphere         | (1) | _____ |
| Less homework                 | (2) | _____ |
| Holiday concerts              | c.  | _____ |
| Students happy about vacation | (1) | _____ |
|                               | (2) | _____ |

## ACTIVITY 2

Read the following essay and outline it in the spaces provided. Write out the central point and topic sentences, and summarize in a few words the supporting material that fits under each topic sentence. One item is summarized for you as an example.

### Losing Touch

Steve, a typical American, stays home on workdays. He plugs into a computer terminal in order to hook up with the office, and he sends and receives work during the day by electronic mail and a fax-modem. Evenings, he puts on his stereo headphones, watches a movie on his VCR, or logs back onto the computer to visit the Internet. On many days, Steve doesn't talk to any other human beings, and he doesn't see any people except those on television. Steve is imaginary, but his lifestyle is very common. More and more, the inventions of modern technology seem to be cutting us off from contact with our fellow human beings.

Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_

---

The world of business is one area in which technology is isolating us. Many people now work alone at home. With access to a large central computer, employees such as secretaries, insurance agents, and accountants do their jobs at display terminals in their own homes. They no longer actually have to see the people they're dealing with. In addition, employees are often paid in an impersonal way. Workers' salaries are automatically credited to their bank accounts, eliminating the need for paychecks. Fewer people stand in line with their coworkers to receive their pay or cash their checks. Finally, personal banking is becoming a detached process. Customers interact with machines rather than people to deposit or withdraw money from their accounts. Even some bank loans are approved or rejected, not in an interview with a loan officer, but through a display on a computer screen.

First topic sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Support: 1. Many people now work alone at home.

2. \_\_\_\_\_

---

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Another area that technology is changing is entertainment. Music, for instance, was once a group experience. People listened to music in concert halls or at small social gatherings. For many people now, however, music is a solitary experience. Walking along the street or sitting in their living rooms, they wear headphones to build a wall of music around them. Movie entertainment is changing, too. Movies used to be social events. Now, some people are not going out to see a movie. Some are choosing to wait for a film to appear on cable television. Instead of being involved with the laughter, applause, or hisses of the audience, viewers watch movies in the isolation of their own living rooms.

Second topic sentence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- Support: 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Education is a third important area in which technology is separating us from others. From elementary schools to colleges, students spend more and more time sitting by themselves in front of computers. The computers give them feedback, while teachers spend more time tending the computers and less time interacting with their classes. A similar problem occurs in homes. As more families buy computers, increasing numbers of students practice their math and reading skills with software programs instead of with their friends, brothers and sisters, and parents. Last, alienation is occurring as a result of another high-tech invention, DVDs. People are buying DVDs on subjects such as cooking, real estate investment, speaking, and speed-reading. They then practice their skills at home rather than by taking group classes in which a rich human interaction can occur.



Third topic sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Support: 1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Technology, then, seems to be driving human beings apart. Soon, we may no longer need to communicate with other human beings in order to do our work, entertain ourselves, or pursue an education. Machines will be the coworkers and companions of the future.

## 4 Revising

### ACTIVITY

Following is the second supporting paragraph from an essay called “Problems of Combining School and Work.” The paragraph is shown in four different stages of development: (1) first full draft, (2) revised second draft, (3) edited next-to-final draft, (4) final draft. The four stages appear in scrambled order. Write the number 1 in the answer blank for the first full draft, and number the remaining stages in sequence.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have also given up some personal pleasures in my life. On sundays for example I used to play softball or football, now I use the entire day to study. Good old-fashioned sleep is another lost pleasure for me now. I never get as much as I like because their just isn’t time. Finally I miss having the chance to just sit in front of the TV, on weeknights. In order to watch the whole lineup of movies and sports that I used to watch regularly. These sound like small pleasures, but you realize how important they are when you have to give them up.

\_\_\_\_\_ I’ve had to give up pleasures in my life. I use to spend sundays playing games, now I have to study. Im the sort of person who needs a lot of sleep, but I dont have the time for that either. Sleeping nine or ten hours a night woul’dnt be unusual for me. Pscylogists say that each individual need a different amount of sleep, some people need as little as five hours, some need as much as nine or ten. So I’m not unusual in that. But Ive given up that pleasure too. And I can’t watch

the TV shows I use to enjoy. This is another personal pleasure I've lost because of doing work and school. These may seem like small things, but you realize how good they are when you give them up.

---

Besides missing the social side of college life, I've also had to give up some of my special personal pleasures. I used to spend Sunday afternoons, for example, playing lob-pitch softball or touch football depending on the season. Now I use Sunday as a catch-up day for my studies. Another pleasure I've lost is sleeping late on days off and weekends. I once loved mornings when I could check the clock, bury my head in the pillow, and drift off for another hour. These days I'm forced to crawl out of bed the minute the alarm lets out its piercing ring. Finally, I no longer have the chance to just sit watching the movies and sports programs that I enjoy. A leisurely night of Monday Night Football or a network premiere of a Tom Cruise movie is a pleasure of the past for me now.

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Besides missing the social side of college life, I've also had to give up some of my special personal pleasures. I used to spend Sunday afternoons, for example playing lob-pitch softball or touch football depending on the season. Now I use the day as a catch-up day for my studies. Another pleasure I've lost is sleeping late on days off and weekends. I once loved mornings when I could check the clock, then burying my head in the pillow, and you drift off to sleep for another hour. These days I'm forced to get out of bed the minute the alarm lets out its ring. Finally I no longer have the chance to just sit watching the movies and also programs with sports that I enjoy. A leisurely night of Monday Night Football or a network premiere of a Tom Cruise movie is a pleasure of the past for me now.