

Moving from Paragraph to Essay



RESPONDING TO IMAGES

Italian artist Raphael focused on different aspects of the human form in *Sistine Madonna* (pictured here). This detailed image of one of the cherubs who sits at the feet of the Madonna is but a small part of this large, impressive painting. What can a writer learn by focusing on the small details when creating a larger piece of writing like an essay?

CHAPTER PREVIEW

What Is an Essay?

- Differences between an Essay and a Paragraph
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Essay Assignments

TEACHING TIP

You may want to do this activity with the entire class.

TEACHING TIP

You may want to point out the similarities between an essay and a paragraph.

TEACHING TIP

Encourage students to refer to this diagram when working on an essay.

TEACHING TIP

Tell students that this diagram shows one basic model. Some essays do not include a “plan of development” and many include more than three supporting paragraphs.

What Is an Essay?

Differences between an Essay and a Paragraph

An essay is simply a paper composed of several paragraphs, rather than one paragraph. In an essay, subjects can and should be treated more fully than they would be in a single-paragraph paper.

The main idea or point developed in an essay is called the *thesis statement* or *thesis sentence* (rather than, as in a paragraph, the *topic sentence*). The thesis statement appears in the introductory paragraph, and it is then developed in the supporting paragraphs that follow. A short concluding paragraph closes the essay.

The Form of an Essay

The following diagram shows the form of an essay.

Introductory Paragraph

Introduction

The *introduction* attracts the reader’s interest.

Thesis statement

The *thesis statement* (or *thesis sentence*) states the main idea advanced in the paper.

Plan of development:

Points 1, 2, 3

The *plan of development* is a list of points that support the thesis. The points are presented in the order in which they will be developed in the paper.

First Supporting Paragraph

Topic sentence (point 1)

The *topic sentence* advances the first supporting point for the thesis, and the *specific evidence* in the rest of the paragraph develops that first point.

Specific evidence

Second Supporting Paragraph

Topic sentence (point 2)

The *topic sentence* advances the second supporting point for the thesis, and the *specific evidence* in the rest of the paragraph develops that second point.

Specific evidence

Third Supporting Paragraph

Topic sentence (point 3)

The *topic sentence* advances the third supporting point for the thesis, and the *specific evidence* in the rest of the paragraph develops that third point.

Specific evidence

Concluding Paragraph

Summary, Conclusion, or both

A *summary* is a brief restatement of the thesis and its main points. A *conclusion* is a final thought or two stemming from the subject of the paper.

A Model Essay

Mike, the writer of the paragraph on working in a diner and truck stop (page 8), later decided to develop his subject more fully. Here is the essay that resulted.

My Job at the Crescent Falls Diner and Truck Stop

¹In the course of working my way through school, I have taken many jobs I would rather forget. ²I have spent nine hours a day lifting heavy automobile and truck batteries off the end of an assembly belt. ³I have risked the loss of eyes and fingers working a punch press in a textile factory. ⁴I have served as a ward aide in a mental hospital, helping care for brain-damaged men who would break into violent fits at unexpected moments. ⁵But none of these jobs was as dreadful as my job at the Crescent Falls Diner and Truck Stop. ⁶The work was physically hard; the pay was poor; and, most of all, the working conditions were dismal.

⁷First, the job made enormous demands on my strength and energy. ⁸For ten hours, I waited on tables, carried heavy trays of food and dirty dishes, cleaned bathrooms, and unloaded heavy cartons from delivery trucks. ⁹The trays weighed from twenty to fifty pounds. ¹⁰The cartons of food and restaurant supplies could weigh as much as 75 pounds, and I sometimes unloaded full truck trailers by myself.

¹¹I would not have minded the difficulty of the work so much if the pay had not been so poor. ¹²I was paid minimum wage, plus tips. ¹³At first, I thought this would be fine, but then I learned that I would have to share my tips with the kitchen staff and cashiers. ¹⁴The first night, I made over \$50 in tips, but I brought home less than \$8. ¹⁵To make enough money for the following semester's college tuition, I had to work about sixty hours per week. ¹⁶If I worked overtime, I was paid my regular hourly salary. ¹⁷There was no overtime bonus.

¹⁸But even more than the low pay, what upset me about my job was the working conditions. ¹⁹Sometimes, I had to wash dishes in a corner of the kitchen that was extremely hot and steamy. ²⁰Once, when unloading a large delivery truck, I strained my back and was laid up for about a week—without pay, of course! ²¹Finally, the manager was a tyrant. ²²I never seemed to get my orders out quickly enough for him, nor could I ever clean the tables to his satisfaction. ²³He disliked and envied college students, and he went out of his way to favor other employees over me. ²⁴For example, while some of my co-workers got off for holidays, I was expected to work. ²⁵When I asked for two days off to attend a wedding in Georgia, he threatened to fire me. ²⁶He made negative comments about the way I combed my hair and the clothes I wore. ²⁷Once he even made a slur about my race.

²⁸I stayed on the job for five months, all the while hating the difficulty of the work, the low pay, and the conditions under which I worked. ²⁹By the time I quit, I was determined never to do such degrading work again.



Introductory paragraph

TEACHING TIP
Mention to students that some essays contain more than one introductory paragraph.

First supporting paragraph

Second supporting paragraph

Third supporting paragraph

Concluding paragraph

TEACHING TIP

The introductory paragraph serves as the “movie trailer” for the actual “film.”

ESL TIP

The development of an essay may be different in other languages. An awareness of different rhetorical patterns may be helpful to nonnative speakers. In some cultures, a “circular pattern” is common. The writer restates the main point in various ways and does not provide supporting details.

Important Points about the Essay

Introductory Paragraph

An introductory paragraph has certain purposes or functions and can be constructed using various methods.

Purposes of the Introduction

An introductory paragraph should do three things:

1. Attract the reader’s *interest*. Using one of the suggested methods of introduction described under “Common Methods of Introduction” can help draw the reader into your paper.
2. Present a *thesis sentence*—a clear, direct statement of the central idea that you will develop in your paper. The thesis statement, like a topic sentence, should have a keyword or keywords reflecting your attitude about the subject. For example, in the essay on the Crescent Diner and Truck Stop job, the keyword is *dreadful*.
3. Indicate a *plan of development*—a preview of the major points that will support your thesis statement, listed in the order in which they will be presented. In some cases, the thesis statement and plan of development may appear in the same sentence. In other cases, the plan of development may be omitted.

ACTIVITY 1

Introductory Paragraphs

TEACHING TIP

You may want to do this activity with the entire class.

1. In “My Job at the Crescent Falls Diner and Truck Stop,” which sentences are used to attract the reader’s interest?
 sentences 1 to 3 1 to 4 1 to 5
2. The thesis in “My Job at the Crescent Falls Diner and Truck Stop” is presented in
 sentence 4 sentence 5 sentence 6
3. Is the thesis followed by a plan of development?
 Yes No
4. Which words in the plan of development announce the three major supporting points in the essay? Write them below.
 - a. The work was physically hard.
 - b. The pay was poor.
 - c. The working conditions were dismal.

Common Methods of Introduction

Five common methods of introducing an essay are as follows:

- a. Begin with a broad statement and narrow it down to your thesis statement.
- b. Present an idea or situation that is the opposite of the one you will develop.
- c. Tell a brief story or relate an incident.
- d. Explain how your topic is relevant to readers' lives and/or especially important.
- e. Use a quotation—for example, a popular saying or an advertising slogan.

Identifying Methods of Introduction

Following are three introductions. In the space provided, write the letter of the method of introduction used. You may work with a partner to complete this activity.

- c 1. Last week I was in the kitchen preparing dinner when I heard my nine-year-old daughter shriek from behind the computer. I was so startled that I dropped the knife onto the floor. As I ran to where she was doing her homework, she looked up, obviously stunned, and uttered, "That's *too* gross, Mom!" When I looked at the screen, I too was shocked to find an image that was clearly pornographic. Even though I thought I carefully monitored how my children used the computer, I did not realize that one wrong click could bring them to one of the million "adult" sites on the Internet. As a concerned parent, I urge all parents to install software on their home computers that blocks access to pornographic Web sites.
- a 2. College students should understand that there are many skills and behaviors that are necessary in order to be successful. College is very different from high school, so students need to realize that just getting by, not completing homework regularly, and relying on teachers to remind them of deadlines will put them at risk academically. Instead, college students need to acquire a more responsible and adult mindset to help them achieve their goals. Although there are many behaviors that students should adopt, there are some specific ones that will be most beneficial. Students should regularly attend classes and labs, diligently take notes and ask questions, do all course assignments, and study for exams.
- b 3. Most of the customers who come to our restaurant are very courteous. They are friendly when they arrive, respectful to the wait staff, and willing to forgive

ACTIVITY 2



kitchen errors. These customers are usually happy to be eating out and not cooking dinner. They genuinely enjoy the experience of eating in our restaurant. However, some customers find that nothing is ever up to their standards. These customers will complain if a knife has a water spot, if a water glass has too little ice, or if they have to wait longer than they believe is appropriate. They are notorious for loudly complaining when their unreasonable demands cannot be met. Such customers require delicacy when being handled, so we require all wait staff to go through our three-step adversity training program.

TEACHING TIP

Stress to your students that not all essays have three body paragraphs.

Supporting Paragraphs

Many essays have three supporting points, developed in three separate paragraphs. (Some essays will have two supporting points; others will have four or more.) Each of the supporting paragraphs should begin with a topic sentence that states the point to be detailed in that paragraph. Just as the thesis provides a focus for the entire essay, topic sentences provide a focus for each supporting paragraph.

ACTIVITY 3

Supporting Paragraphs

1. What is the topic sentence for the first supporting paragraph of “My Job at the Crescent Falls Diner and Truck Stop”? (*Write the sentence number here.*) 7
2. What is the topic sentence for the second supporting paragraph? 11
3. What is the topic sentence for the third supporting paragraph? 18

Transitional Sentences

In paragraphs, transitions and other connective devices (pages 67–73) are used to help link sentences. Similarly, in an essay, *transitional sentences* are used to help tie the supporting paragraphs together. Such transitional sentences usually occur near the end of one paragraph or the beginning of the next.

In “My Job at the Crescent Falls Diner and Truck Stop,” the first transitional sentence is

I would not have minded the difficulty of the work so much if the pay had not been so poor.

In this sentence, the keyword *difficulty* reminds us of the point of the first supporting paragraph, while *pay* tells us the point to be developed in the second supporting paragraph.

Transitional Sentences**ACTIVITY 4**

Here is the other transitional sentence in “My Job at the Crescent Falls Diner and Truck Stop”:

But even more than the low pay, what upset me about my job was the working conditions.

Complete the following statement: In the preceding sentence, the keywords low pay echo the point of the second supporting paragraph, and the keywords working conditions announce the topic of the third supporting paragraph.

TEACHING TIP

The concluding paragraph serves as the “ending” to a “movie.” Unlike a movie, though, writers should avoid cliffhanger endings.

Concluding Paragraph

The concluding paragraph often summarizes the essay by briefly restating the thesis and, at times, the main supporting points. Also, the conclusion brings the paper to a natural and graceful end, sometimes leaving the reader with a final thought on the subject.

The Concluding Paragraph**ACTIVITY 5**

1. Which sentence in the concluding paragraph of “My Job at the Crescent Falls Diner and Truck Stop” restates the thesis and supporting points of the essay? 28
2. Which sentence contains the concluding thought of the essay? 29

Essays to Consider

Read the following two student essays and then answer the questions that follow.

Definition of a Football Fan

¹Not every person who likes sports would be considered a fan. ²The word “fan” is an abbreviation of “fanatic,” meaning “an insane or crazy person.” ³In the case of football fans, the term is appropriate. ⁴They behave insanely, they are insane about the past, and they are insanely loyal. ⁵First of all, football fans just plain behave insanely. ⁶They wear their official team T-shirts and warm-up jackets to the mall, the supermarket, the classroom, and even—if they can get away with it—to work. ⁷If the team offers a giveaway item, the fans rush to the stadium to claim the hat or sports bag or water bottle that is being handed out that day. ⁸Even the fact that fans spend the coldest months of the year huddled on icy metal

TEACHING TIP

Read these paragraphs aloud. Ask students to underline the topic sentence, specific examples, and transitions in each paragraph before answering the questions.



continued

benches in places like Chicago proves that fans behave insanely. ⁹When they go to a game, which they do as often as possible, they also decorate their bodies. ¹⁰True football fans not only put on their team jackets and grab their pennants, but they also paint their heads to look like helmets. ¹¹At the game, these fans devote enormous energy to trying to get a “wave” going.

¹²In addition, football fans are insanely fascinated by the past.

¹³They talk about William “Refrigerator” Perry’s 1985 Super Bowl touchdown as though it had happened last week. ¹⁴They describe the “Fog Bowl” as if dense fog blanketed yesterday’s game, not 1988’s playoff match between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Chicago Bears.

¹⁵They excitedly discuss John Elway’s final game before retiring—when he won the 1999 Super Bowl and received MVP honors—as if it were current news. ¹⁶If you can’t manage to get excited about such ancient history, they look at you as though you were the insane one.

¹⁷Most of all, football fans are insanely loyal to the team of their choice, often dangerously so. ¹⁸Should their beloved team lose three in a row, fans may begin to react negatively as a way to hide their broken hearts. ¹⁹They still obsessively watch each game and spend the entire day afterward listening to the postgame commentary on TV. ²⁰Furthermore, this intense loyalty makes fans dangerous. ²¹To anyone who dares to say to a loyal fan that another team has better players or coaches, or God forbid, to anyone wandering near the home cheering section wearing the jacket of the opposing team, physical injuries such as bloody noses, black eyes, and broken bones are real possibilities.

²²From February through August, football fans act like any other human beings. ²³They pay their taxes, take out the garbage, and complain about the high cost of living. ²⁴However, when September rolls around, the team’s colors are displayed, the sports record books come off the shelves, and the devotion returns. ²⁵For the true football fan, another season of insanity has begun.



An Interpretation of *Lord of the Flies*

¹Modern history has shown us the evil that exists in human beings.

²Assassinations are common, governments use torture to discourage dissent, and six million Jews were exterminated during World War II.

³In *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding describes a group of schoolboys shipwrecked on an island with no authority figures to control their behavior. ⁴One of the boys soon yields to dark forces within himself, and his corruption symbolizes the evil in all of us. ⁵First, Jack Merridew kills a living creature; then, he rebels against the group leader; and finally, he seizes power and sets up his own murderous society.

⁶The first stage in Jack’s downfall is his killing of a living creature.

⁷In Chapter 1, Jack aims at a pig but is unable to kill. ⁸His upraised arm

continued

pauses “because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh, because of the unbearable blood,” and the pig escapes.

⁹Three chapters later, however, Jack leads some boys on a successful hunt.

¹⁰He returns triumphantly with a freshly killed pig and reports excitedly to the others, “I cut the pig’s throat.” ¹¹Yet Jack twitches as he says this, and he wipes his bloody hands on his shorts as if eager to remove the stains.

¹²There is still some civilization left in him.

¹³After the initial act of killing the pig, Jack’s refusal to cooperate with Ralph shows us that this civilized part is rapidly disappearing. ¹⁴With no adults around, Ralph has made some rules. ¹⁵One is that a signal fire must be kept burning. ¹⁶But Jack tempts the boys watching the fire to go hunting, and the fire goes out. ¹⁷Another rule is that at a meeting, only the person holding a special seashell has the right to speak. ¹⁸In Chapter 5, another boy is speaking when Jack rudely tells him to shut up. ¹⁹Ralph accuses Jack of breaking the rules. ²⁰Jack shouts: “Bollocks to the rules! We’re strong—we hunt! If there’s a beast, we’ll hunt it down! We’ll close in and beat and beat and beat—!” ²¹He gives a “wild whoop” and leaps off the platform, throwing the meeting into chaos. ²²Jack is now much more savage than civilized.

²³The most obvious proof of Jack’s corruption comes in Chapter 8, when he establishes his own murderous society. ²⁴Insisting that Ralph is not a “proper chief” because he does not hunt, Jack asks for a new election.

²⁵After he again loses, Jack announces, “I’m going off by myself. . . . Anyone who wants to hunt when I do can come too.” ²⁶Eventually, nearly all the boys join Jack’s “tribe.” ²⁷Following his example, they paint their faces like savages, sacrifice to “the beast,” brutally murder two of their schoolmates, and nearly succeed in killing Ralph as well. ²⁸Jack has now become completely savage—and so have the others.

²⁹Through Jack Merridew, then, Golding shows how easily moral laws can be forgotten. ³⁰Freed from grown-ups and their rules, Jack learns to kill living things, defy authority, and lead a tribe of murdering savages. ³¹Jack’s example is a frightening reminder of humanity’s potential for evil. ³²The “beast” the boys try to hunt and kill is actually within every human being.

1. In which essay does the thesis statement appear in the last sentence of the introductory paragraph?

“Definition of a Football Fan”

2. In the essay on *Lord of the Flies*, which sentence of the introductory paragraph contains the plan of development? _____ 5

3. Which method of introduction is used in “Definition of a Football Fan”?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| a. General to narrow | c. Incident or story |
| b. Stating importance of topic | d. Quotation |

QUESTIONS

4. Complete the following outline of “Definition of a Football Fan”:
 - a. Football fans behave insanely
 - b. They are insane about the past
 - c. They are insanely loyal
5. How does the essay “An Interpretation of *Lord of the Flies*” connect the first supporting paragraph with the second one?
with a transitional sentence
6. Complete the following statement: Emphatic order is shown in the last supporting paragraph of “Definition of a Football Fan” with the words *most of all*; and in the last supporting paragraph of “An Interpretation of *Lord of the Flies*” with the words the most obvious proof
7. Which essay uses time order as well as emphatic order to organize its three supporting paragraphs? “An Interpretation of *Lord of the Flies*”
8. List four major transitions used in the supporting paragraphs of “An Interpretation of *Lord of the Flies*.” Any four of the following:
 - a. first, Yet, After
 - b. most obvious, After
 - c. But, another, now
 - d. Eventually, now

Planning the Essay

Outlining the Essay

When you write an essay, planning is crucial for success. You should plan your essay by outlining in two ways:

1. Prepare a scratch outline. This should consist of a short statement of the thesis followed by the main supporting points for the thesis. Here is Mike’s scratch outline for his essay on the diner and truck stop:

Working at the Crescent Falls Diner and Truck Stop was my worst job.

1. *Hard work*
2. *Poor pay*
3. *Bad working conditions*

Do not underestimate the value of this initial outline—or the work involved in achieving it. Be prepared to do a good deal of plain hard thinking at this first and most important stage of your paper.

TEACHING TIP

Emphasize the importance of proper planning. Cite examples of “plans,” such as an architect’s blueprints and a traveler’s map.

2. Prepare a more detailed outline. The outline form that follows will serve as a guide. Your instructor may ask you to submit a copy of this form either before you actually write an essay or along with your finished essay.

Form for Planning the Essay

To write an effective essay, use a form such as the one that follows.

<p>Opening remarks</p> <p><i>Thesis statement</i> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Plan of development</p>	Introduction
<p><i>Topic sentence 1</i> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Specific supporting evidence</p>	} Body
<p><i>Topic sentence 2</i> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Specific supporting evidence</p>	
<p><i>Topic sentence 3</i> _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Specific supporting evidence</p>	
<p>Summary, closing remarks, or both</p>	Conclusion

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Practice in Writing the Essay

In this section, you will expand and strengthen your understanding of the essay form as you work through the following activities.

Understanding the Two Parts of a Thesis Statement

In this chapter, you have learned that effective essays center on a thesis, or main point, that a writer wishes to express. This central idea is usually presented as a *thesis statement* in an essay's introductory paragraph.

TEACHING TIP
Point out the similarities between a thesis statement and a topic sentence.

A good thesis statement does two things. First, it tells readers an essay's *topic*. Second, it presents the *writer's attitude, opinion, idea, or point* about that topic. For example, look at the following thesis statement:

Celebrities are often poor role models.

In this thesis statement, the topic is *celebrities*; the writer's main point is that *celebrities are often poor role models*.

ACTIVITY 6

Topics and Main Points

For each thesis statement, single-underline the topic and double-underline the main point that the writer wishes to express about it.

1. My roommate Chang-Yoon helped me overcome prejudice.
2. Raising a family as a single parent can actually have certain benefits.
3. Being the eldest child has its own rewards.
4. Those who want to quit smoking should pledge to do so, throw away all their cigarettes, and ask their friends and family to support their brave efforts.
5. Internet advertisers use several media-savvy techniques to interact directly with online customers.
6. Jealousy often results from lack of self-confidence, lack of self-fulfillment, and lack of trust.
7. Parents should teach their children at an early age how to protect themselves from online predators.
8. My sales techniques benefitted greatly from a weekend seminar on customer needs, customer relationships, and customer negotiation.
9. Adults should feel free to engage in fun activities that they enjoyed as children.
10. Teachers should take certain steps to communicate more openly with their students.

Supporting the Thesis with Specific Evidence

The first essential step in writing a successful essay is to form a clearly stated thesis. The second basic step is to support the thesis with specific reasons or details.

To ensure that your essay will have adequate support, you may find an informal outline very helpful. Write down a brief version of your thesis idea, and then work out and jot down the three points that will support your thesis.

Here is the scratch outline that was prepared for one essay:

The college cafeteria is poorly managed.

The checkout lines are always long.

The floor and tables are often dirty.

Food choices are often limited.

A scratch outline like the previous one looks simple, but developing it often requires a good deal of careful thinking. The time spent on developing a logical outline is invaluable, though. Once you have planned the steps that logically support your thesis, you will be in an excellent position to go on to write an effective essay.

Using Specific Evidence

Following are five informal outlines in which two points (*a* and *b*) are already provided. Complete each outline by adding a third logical supporting point (*c*).

1. Success in college can be attributed to several reasons.
 - a. Regularly attend classes
 - b. Devote enough time to studying
 - c. Ask instructors and tutors for help
2. *Facebook.com* is an important part of my life.
 - a. Keep in touch with friends and family
 - b. Share life's ups and downs
 - c. Meet people from other walks of life
3. My "significant other" has three qualities I admire.
 - a. Sense of humor
 - b. Charming personality
 - c. Good looks
4. A break-up is always filled with mixed feelings.
 - a. Anger
 - b. Sadness
 - c. Loneliness
5. Being promoted to shift manager was a mistake.
 - a. Difficult to supervise employees who still see you as their equal
 - b. Difficult to monitor employees who steal from the company
 - c. Difficult to scold employees who go against company policies

ACTIVITY 7

TEACHING TIP

You may want to do this activity with the entire class.

Answers may vary.

Identifying Introductions

The following box lists the five common methods for introducing an essay that are discussed in this chapter.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Broad statement, narrowed down | 4. Incident or story |
| 2. Contrast | 5. Quotation |
| 3. Relevance/Importance | |

ACTIVITY 8



TEACHING TIP
Consider introducing students to the idea of using rhetorical questions in their introductions. You may want to demonstrate a good example of incorporating a rhetorical question to help students avoid asking questions that use second-person point of view.

Methods of Introduction

Review the methods of introduction on pages 128–130 with a partner. Next, refer to the preceding box and read the following five introductory paragraphs. Together, in the space provided, write the number of the kind of introduction used in each paragraph. Each kind of introduction is used once.

Paragraph A 2

In a perfect school, students would treat each other with affection and respect. Differences would be tolerated, and even welcomed. Kids would become more popular by being kind and supportive. Students would go out of their way to make sure one another felt happy and comfortable. But most schools are not perfect. Instead of being places of respect and tolerance, they are places where the hateful act of bullying is widespread.

Paragraph B 1

Students have to deal with all kinds of problems in schools. There are the problems created by difficult classes, by too much homework, or by personality conflicts with teachers. There are problems with scheduling the classes they need and still getting some of the ones they want. There are problems with bad cafeteria food, grouchy principals, or overcrowded classrooms. But one of the most difficult problems of all has to do with a terrible situation that exists in most schools: bullying.

Paragraph C 4

Eric, a new boy at school, was shy and physically small. He quickly became a victim of bullies. Kids would wait after school, pull out his shirt, and punch and shove him around. He was called such names as “Mouse Boy” and “Jerk Boy.” When he sat down during lunch hour, others would leave his table. In gym games he was never thrown the ball, as if he didn’t exist. Then one day he came to school with a gun. When the police were called, he told them he just couldn’t take it anymore. Bullying had hurt him badly, just as it hurts many other students. Every member of a school community should be aware of bullying and the three hateful forms that it takes: physical, verbal, and social bullying.

Paragraph D 5

A British prime minister once said, "Courage is fire, and bullying is smoke." If that is true, there is a lot of "smoke" present in most schools today. Bullying in schools is a huge problem that hurts both its victims and the people who practice it. Physical, verbal, and social bullying are all harmful in their own ways.

Paragraph E 3

A pair of students bring guns and homemade bombs to school, killing a number of their fellow students and teachers before taking their own lives. A young man hangs himself on Sunday evening rather than attend school the following morning. A junior high school girl is admitted to the emergency room after cutting her wrists. What is common to all of these horrible events is that each was reportedly caused by a terrible practice in schools: bullying. This is a fact that cannot be ignored.

Revising an Essay for All Four Bases: Unity, Support, Coherence, and Sentence Skills

You know from your work on paragraphs that there are four bases a paper must cover to be effective. In the following activity, you will evaluate and revise an essay in terms of all four bases: *unity*, *support*, *coherence*, and *sentence skills*.

Revising an Essay

Comments follow each supporting paragraph and the concluding paragraph. Circle the letter of the *one* statement that applies in each case.

Paragraph 1: Introduction

A Group of People Who Should Be Helped

One day walking to class, I ran into a homeless man. He was dirty and disheveled. It looked and smelled like he hadn't bathed in days. My college is located downtown near a homeless shelter, and I guess the homeless like to stay close to the facility. He asked me for some change. At first I thought about how much pocket money I had, then quickly I thought about a comment I had heard on the news or in some magazine. It was about how some homeless ask for money so they can purchase drugs. So I offered to buy him a breakfast combo at the nearby fast-food place. I still remember what he told me: "Man, I just want some money. You gonna give me some or not?" I realized then he did not want my money for food, but for alcohol or drugs. That incident made me think about how much help these people need. A group of people that I believe should be helped is the homeless.

ACTIVITY 9

TEACHING TIP
You may want to use this activity to assess student learning.



Paragraph 2: First Supporting Paragraph

Many homeless men are veterans of the United States. If we help them get back on their feet by providing them shelters and veterans' assistance, they would be able to become productive citizens once again. Many require medical attention that they can receive free through the local VA hospital. They can receive their monthly stipends from the government, so they can take care of their daily needs, like food and transportation. The VA hospitals and clinics can provide them with the necessary drug rehabilitation program that would allow them to take back their lives and no longer live on the streets begging for money to support their habits.

- a. Paragraph 2 contains an irrelevant sentence.
- b. Paragraph 2 lacks transition words.
- c. Paragraph 2 lacks supporting details at one key spot.
- d. Paragraph 2 contains a fragment and a run-on.

Paragraph 3: Second Supporting Paragraph

Another reason the homeless should be helped is that many homeless women are mothers too. These homeless mothers with children should be able to live in a safe and clean shelter while their children attend school. They should be provided with job training courses and also get any social service resource available from the local government. Often, these women can qualify for housing assistance, food stamps, and other free services. The only thing they need is to be steered in the right direction. This is important, for they are the role models for their children, and providing a stable environment for them is part of the American dream.

- a. Paragraph 3 contains an irrelevant sentence.
- b. Paragraph 3 lacks transition words.
- c. Paragraph 3 lacks supporting details at one key spot.
- d. Paragraph 3 contains a fragment and a run-on.

Paragraph 4: Third Supporting Paragraph

Finally, the most important reason why we should help the homeless is that they are living in the United States of America. We are the richest country in the world, and we should be able to provide for individuals when they can't provide for themselves. We spend countless dollars on objects like cars, houses, pets, and clothing. The communities in which they live should have volunteer efforts like food and clothing drives to aid those in need.

- a. Paragraph 4 contains an irrelevant sentence.
- b. Paragraph 4 lacks transition words.
- c. Paragraph 4 lacks supporting details at one key spot.
- d. Paragraph 4 contains a fragment and a run-on.

Paragraph 5: Concluding Paragraph

Therefore, there are many reasons why a group of people I believe should be helped is the homeless. If we all make an effort to care for one another as a community. Help each other the best way we can, we can eliminate or ease some of the social ills in our communities.

- a. Paragraph 5 contains an irrelevant sentence.
- b. Paragraph 5 lacks transition words.
- c. Paragraph 5 lacks supporting details at one key spot.
- d. Paragraph 5 contains a fragment and a run-on.

Essay Assignments

BALANCING SCHOOL, WORK, AND FAMILY DEMANDS

Many college students struggle to balance school, work, and family. Write an essay about how you are able to balance the many demands in your life. In your introduction, you might begin with a brief story about a particular incident that illustrates your roles as a student, an employee, a spouse, a parent, a mentor, and/or a community member. End your introductory paragraph with your thesis statement and plan of development.

Here are some thesis statements that may help you think about and develop your own essay.

Thesis statement: Time management is the key to balancing my life as a college student, a single mom, and a full-time pharmacy technician.

(A *supporting* paragraph on managing your time as a college student, for example, might focus on the fact that you use a personal organizer and Post-it notes to keep track of your due dates.)

Thesis statement: The only way that I can juggle school, a girlfriend, and coaching is by taking good care of my health.

(A *supporting* paragraph on taking care of your health might explain how you and your girlfriend work out together at the gym and then cook a healthy—and romantic—meal together at home afterward.)

Thesis statement: I learned the hard way that I need at least seven hours of sleep each night if I want to be a student on the dean's list, a loving parent to my three-year-old son, and a caregiver for my aging dad.

(A *supporting* paragraph on the need for adequate sleep could begin with this topic sentence: "If I get adequate sleep, I'm able to pay attention in class." Such a sentence might then be followed with some specific examples to support the main point of your paragraph.)

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1



TEACHING TIP
Encourage students to use the four steps to complete these assignments, including prewriting and revision.

HINT

Listing transitions such as *first of all*, *second*, *another*, *also*, *in addition*, *finally*, and so on may help you introduce your supporting paragraphs as well as set off different supporting details within those paragraphs.

**WRITING
ASSIGNMENT 2**

Academic

LIFE IMPROVEMENT

Many people would love to improve their lives, but lack the time and resources to do so. Write an essay in which you describe one change a person could make to improve his or her life. Describe what he or she should do, and then explain how this change would improve his or her life in three specific ways. Here are some examples:

By paying off all outstanding debts, a person could improve his or her credit score, purchase a home, and begin saving for retirement.

Attending school full-time allows a person to take more courses per semester, participate in more school activities, and become a genuinely active member of the academic community.

Learning to play a new sport increases a person's chances to meet new people, have different experiences, and enhance overall health.

To develop support for this essay, choose a prewriting technique that works for you and list all the possible changes a person may want to make in his or her life. Don't worry about the practical details, such as cost. Then go back to your list and mark those changes that you could develop further. Next, prewrite about the benefits each of these changes would bring. Use the prewriting you generated to select one specific change and three positive effects. Remember, the prewriting techniques listed in Chapter 2 are helpful ways of getting started with an essay and thinking about it on paper.

**WRITING
ASSIGNMENT 3**

Academic

WHAT NEW STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW

New students are often unprepared for the demands of college. Many colleges address this in new student orientation programs that feature current students speaking about what they wish they had known from the start. Imagine that you have been asked to be a presenter at one of these sessions. Write an essay in which you discuss three things that every new college student needs to know in order to have a successful first year.

Begin by prewriting to identify what you want to write about. You could, for instance, try brainstorming a list, choosing the most intriguing ideas, and then freewriting about each of those ideas. In this way, you are likely to find the three most important pieces of knowledge that you feel should be passed along to new students. Each of these three important items will be the basis of a supporting paragraph that will focus on why the information is key for college students to know. Make your support as specific and helpful as possible, using detailed descriptions to reveal the significance of the knowledge you are passing along.

In planning your introduction, consider beginning with an anecdote that illustrates how difficult the first days or first year of college can be and

let this lead to your thesis statement. Here, for example, is one such introduction for this paper:

When I first started college, I was so shy that I was unable to ask anyone for help. Consequently, I couldn't find my classes for the first two days and kept ending up in the wrong classrooms. Instead of leaving when I realized my mistake or asking the professor for help at the end of the class, I would quietly sit in the class until it was over and quickly leave before anyone stopped me. If an advisor hadn't been alerted to my absences, which prompted him to contact me, I might have been dropped from my classes altogether. This experience showed me that it is important to ask other students for help, to talk to the professors, and to use the college's student services.

TEACHING THE BASICS

What are you experienced in? Fixing cars? Growing flowers? Baking? Waiting on customers? Pretend you have been asked to write an insert for an employee manual that explains the basics of an activity at work in which you are experienced. If you're not sure about which activity to choose, use prewriting to help you find a topic you can support strongly. Once you've chosen your topic, continue to prewrite as a way to discover your key points and organize them into three supporting paragraphs. The key details of waiting on customers in a diner, for instance, might be divided according to time order, as seen in the following topic sentences:

Topic sentence for supporting paragraph 1: Greeting customers and taking their orders should not be done carelessly.

Topic sentence for supporting paragraph 2: There are right and wrong ways to bring customers their food and to keep track of them during their meal.

Topic sentence for supporting paragraph 3: The final interaction with customers may be brief, but it is important.

HINT

To make your points clear, be sure to use detailed descriptions and concrete examples throughout your essay. Also, you may want to use transitional words such as *first*, *then*, *also*, *another*, *when*, *after*, *while*, and *finally* to help organize your details.

ADVANTAGES OR DISADVANTAGES OF SINGLE LIFE

More and more people are remaining single longer, and almost half of the people who marry eventually divorce and become single again. Write an essay on the advantages or disadvantages of single life. Each of your three supporting paragraphs will focus on one advantage or one disadvantage. To decide which approach to take, begin by making two lists. A list of advantages might include:

More freedom of choice

Lower expenses

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 4

Work

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 5

Personal

Fewer responsibilities

Dating opportunities

A list of disadvantages could include:

Loneliness

Depression on holidays

Lack of support in everyday decisions

Disapproval of parents and family

Go on to list as many specific details as you can think of to support your advantages and disadvantages. Those details will help you decide whether you want your thesis to focus on benefits or drawbacks. Then create a scratch outline made up of your thesis statement and each of your main supporting points. Put the most important or most dramatic supporting point last.

In your introduction, you might gain your reader's interest by telling a brief, revealing story about single life. As you develop your supporting paragraphs, make sure that each paragraph begins with a topic sentence and focuses on one advantage or disadvantage of single life. While writing the essay, continue developing details that vividly support each of your points.

In a concluding paragraph, provide a summary of the points in your paper as well as a final thought to round off your discussion. Your final thought might be in the form of a prediction or a recommendation.

Detailed writing assignments follow each of the twenty readings in Part 4. As you work on those assignments, you will find it helpful to turn back to the writing activities in this chapter.

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY



1. Reread one of the essays you wrote for an assignment in this chapter. Does your essay have a thesis that states both a topic and a main point? If not, does that affect the effectiveness of the essay? In what way(s)? How might you rewrite this thesis to make it stronger?
2. Is the evidence you provided to support the thesis specific or is it vague and general? How can you make this detail more specific? What other detail might you add to improve the paragraph?
3. Is each of the essay's paragraphs unified and coherent? If not, what ways have you learned so far to correct the problem?

EXPLORING WRITING ONLINE



Visit a favorite Web site of yours and think about how its home page is like an introductory paragraph. Specifically, examine how the home page attracts readers' interest, presents a central idea, and provides an overview of the entire site. Then write an essay in which you present your analysis.

RESPONDING TO IMAGES

These three photographs of the Sistine Chapel's ceiling zoom in closer and closer to focus on Michelangelo's famous depiction of God's finger touching Adam's. Write a paragraph describing any one of these images. Then make an outline for a larger essay that compares and contrasts the three photographs.



A WRITER'S TEMPLATE: *Across Disciplines*

In college, you may want to ask your classmates to give you feedback on your writing, and you may want to help them with their writing. As you are reading the following paragraph written by Deepak for a geology class, think about what advice you would offer him as he prepares to write his final draft by using the questions that follow.

Academic

TEACHING TIP

Stress the importance of reading aloud, and then model this practice for students by reading this paragraph aloud. Ask students to identify the author's pattern of development and use of supporting details.

The Sun's Effect

¹The sun has an effect on the weather. ²First, the sun warms the surface of the earth. ³Some parts of land warm faster than others. ⁴A parking lot, for instance, absorbs the sun's heat more quickly than a forest. ⁵All land, however, absorbs the sun's heat faster than a body of water. ⁶A forest, therefore, warms more quickly than a large lake or ocean. ⁷The warmed land and water give off heat to the air above them. ⁸The hot air rises, and as it goes up, cooler air moves in to replace it. ⁹In addition to the sun, clouds affect the weather.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

TEACHING TIP

Have students discuss these questions with a partner before writing down their answers.

1. The topic sentence (see above) states the paragraph's main point, which is a little broad. How could Deepak narrow and focus his topic sentence?

The sun has a great effect on weather.

2. Does any sentence stray from the main point? If so, indicate the sentence.

9 In addition to the sun, clouds affect the weather.

3. What are some transitional words and phrases that Deepak uses in his paragraph?

First for instance however therefore In addition

EXPLORE WRITING FURTHER

TEACHING TIP

Ask students to discuss their ideas with a partner before making an outline.

1. Write a revision of this paragraph, using the checklist that follows as a guide.
2. How might this paragraph be turned into an essay? Make an outline that shows how Deepak might expand and develop his point.

A WRITER'S CHECKLIST: Four Bases

Unity

- Every sentence in my paragraph is relevant to my main point or topic sentence, which is _____
- A sentence, detail, or word that I have omitted for the sake of unity is _____
- The pattern or patterns of development I'm using serve my topic and point well because _____

Support

- My main idea is supported by several supporting points or by one extended example, which are/is _____
- Several examples of specific evidence for this point/these points are: _____
- I appeal to my readers' five senses with vivid descriptions, such as _____ and _____

Coherence

- I use one or more patterns of development, which is/are _____, to organize my paragraph.
- I use the following transition words or signals to make my paragraph easy for readers to follow: _____

Sentence Skills

Grammar

- I use parallelism to balance my words and ideas. (pp. 296–304)
- I use pronouns and their antecedents correctly. (pp. 252–275)
- My paragraph includes no misplaced or dangling modifiers. (pp. 284–285)
- I read my paragraph out loud to help catch typos and awkward or grammatically incorrect sentences.

Lined writing area with horizontal lines for text entry.

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