CHAPTER 7

# Writing in the Digital Age

**This chapter will**

- offer tips for writing on-screen
- provide information on using digital and electronic resources at each stage of the writing process
- explain and illustrate how to use the Internet to find books and articles on a topic
- show you how to evaluate Internet sources
- present a preview of Part 2

**HOW HAS TECHNOLOGY HELPED YOU?** Laptops, smart phones, and tablets have all made it much easier to have technology on the go. Write a paragraph in which you describe one of your favorite places to study and write. What type of place is it? What is it about that space that inspires you? Do you prefer to be there alone or with others?

In the last decade, computers, tablets, and online resources have become increasingly more important to the writing process. Almost all instructors require that papers be typed and printed (rather than handwritten), and most students use word-processing programs like Google Docs or Microsoft Word to compose, revise, and edit essays. Online resources provide a wide array of opportunities for brainstorming, learning more about topics, and sharing ideas with peers. Even if you don't currently own a computer or if you do but it needs maintenance, your school has one or more computer labs with machines specifically for student use. These labs are sometimes staffed, and if they aren't, most computers have very user-friendly interfaces and Help programs.

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## Tips for Writing On-Screen

**Teaching Tip**
In a computer lab, ask students to create a word-processed document as you review these tips.

- If you are using your school's computer center, allow enough time. You may have to wait for a computer or printer to be free, or your school may have sign-up sheets in the lab or online. In addition, you may need several sessions at the computer and printer to complete your paper.
- When using word-processing programs like Microsoft Word or Google Docs *save your work frequently as you write your draft*. In addition to saving on the computer, back files up on an external disk, a flash drive, or a server. Most computers will auto-save your work, but any file that is not saved may be lost if the program quits, the computer crashes, or the power is turned off.
- Always keep your work in multiple places—the hard drive you are working on; a backup device such as a flash drive or external hard drive; and a server such as Dropbox or iCloud. You can also e-mail a copy to yourself.
- Print out your work at least at the end of every session. Then not only will you have your most recent draft to work on away from the computer, you'll also have a copy in case something should happen to your files.
- Before making major changes in a paper, create a copy of your file. For example, if your file is titled "Worst Job," create a file called "Worst Job 2" or "Worst Job 2-9-15" (using the date as a reference). Then make all your changes in that file. If the changes don't work out, you can always go back to the original file.

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## Using Digital and Electronic Resources at Each Stage of the Writing Process

Word-processing programs like Microsoft Word or Google Docs make it easy for you to experiment with ideas and wording throughout your paper. They also allow you to create and save many versions.

Following are ways to use computers at each stage of the writing process. Note that the sections that follow correspond to the stages of the writing process described in Chapter 2, pages 18–50. Note, too, that although Gene Hert, the student author of "My Job in an Apple Plant," preferred to handwrite his early stages, the computer offers a valuable alternative.

### Prewriting

If you're a fast typist, many kinds of prewriting will work well on the computer. With freewriting in particular, you can get ideas onto the screen almost as quickly

as they occur to you. A passing thought that could be productive is not likely to get lost. You may even find it helpful, when freewriting, to dim the screen of your monitor so that you can't see what you're typing. If you temporarily cannot see the screen, you won't have to worry about grammar or spelling or typing errors (all of which do not matter in prewriting); instead, you can concentrate on getting down as many ideas and details as possible about your subject.

After you complete your prewriting, it's often very helpful to print out a hard copy of what you've done. With a clean printout in front of you, you'll be able to see everything at once and revise and expand your work with handwritten comments in the margins of the paper. Alternately, you can continue to work on-screen and track your changes there.

Working on a computer also makes it easy for you to experiment with the wording of the point (also called a working topic sentence or working thesis) of your paper. You can try a number of versions in a short time. After you have decided on the version that works best, you can easily delete the other versions, simply move them to a temporary "leftover" section at the end of the paper, or move them to a new file.

## Preparing a Scratch Outline

If you used listing as a prewriting technique, you may easily be able to turn your list into an outline. Use the cut and paste functions to shuffle the ideas around until you find the best order of supporting points and details for your paper. You can easily delete any ideas that do not fit and add new ideas as needed.

You can also create scratch outlines using Web-based programs like WorkFlowy (also available as an app for most smartphones) and ThinkLinkr. Both tools can be used, as well, to jumpstart brainstorming and take notes, and they allow you to share and work together on outlines with others. This can be useful when getting peer feedback or working on a group writing project.

**TIP**

At any point in the prewriting, outlining, or drafting process, you might experience writer's block or need some inspiration. One way to get ideas flowing is to do some Google searches based on key words in your topic. For instance, you could do a search for "worst jobs" and find some funny lists or sad stories on the topic. Maybe an anecdote by someone else will help you remember a specific detail from your own experience. It's a little too easy to get caught up in Web searching for hours, so restrict your search to ten or twenty minutes. Set an alarm so you won't go over your time limit.

If you are trying to find a new topic or can't think of one, try reviewing recent e-mails, text messages, posts on Twitter or Facebook, or even your school library Web site. What have you been talking about with friends, family, or classmates? What topics have been hotly discussed on your campus? Try writing about something that interests you.

## Writing the First Draft

**Teaching Tip** Demonstrate using the copy and paste functions in a word-processing program.

Like many writers, you may want to write your first draft by hand and then type it into the computer for revision. The process of simply typing out a handwritten draft for the first time may provide opportunities for making some changes and improvements. Once you have a draft on the screen, you will find it much easier to revise than a handwritten one.

If you feel comfortable composing directly on the screen, you can benefit from a number of special features. For example, if you have written an anecdote in your freewriting that you plan to use in your paper, simply copy the story from your freewriting file and insert it where it fits into your paper. You can refine it then or later. Or if you discover while typing that a sentence is out of place, cut it out from where it is and paste it wherever you wish. And if while writing you realize that an earlier sentence can be expanded, just go back to that point and type in the added material.

As you write a first draft, it can be tempting to break things up by texting, visiting Twitter, answering e-mails, or streaming a film. Avoid the temptation by turning off your phone and hiding these other options. One way to do this is by drafting with a program like Typewriter, TextRoom, JDarkRoom, or FocusCopy. If you use a Mac, WriteRoom is a good option. Each of these programs turns your screen into a blank sheet of paper or chalkboard, and there are options to shield you from alerts about new messages or updates of any kind. You are also free from

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**DO YOU THINK COMPUTERS AND TABLETS HAVE MADE IT EASIER OR MORE** complicated to do research? Do you like the accessibility of electronic resources or do you spend too much time on social networking sites? When you choose research materials, do you prefer electronic or print? Jot down several specific methods you typically employ for research. Highlight one that you feel you could improve and explain why.

the distractions of choices; without menus and, for instance, font options, you can focus on the writing itself. If you'd prefer to use an online text editor instead of one you have to download, try DarkCopy. When you're ready to start formatting your paper, you can copy and paste it into the word-processing program you normally use; TextRoom allows you to export text directly to Google Docs.

## Revising

**Teaching Tip**
If students have MS Word, suggest that they use the "track changes" function.

It is during revision that the virtues of word-processing programs really shine. All substituting, adding, deleting, and rearranging can be done easily within an existing file. All changes instantly take their proper places within the paper, not scribbled above the line or squeezed into the margin. Also, you can choose to track your changes within a draft, instead of saving multiple versions, and leave comments and questions for yourself in the margins with a Comments (or similarly named) feature. You can concentrate on each change you want to make, because you never have to type from scratch or work on a messy draft. You can carefully go through your paper to check that all your supporting evidence is relevant and to add new support as needed here and there. Anything you decide to eliminate can be deleted quickly and neatly. Anything you add can be inserted precisely where you choose. You can undo edits easily, too. If you change your mind, all you have to do is delete or cut and paste. Then you can sweep through the paper focusing on other changes: improving word choice, increasing sentence variety, eliminating wordiness, and so on.

If you are like some students, you will find it convenient to print out a hard copy of your file at various points throughout the revision. Make sure your paper is double spaced to make it easier to revise in longhand. The double spacing will give you room to add, cross out, and indicate changes that you can quickly make when you revise the document.

## Editing and Proofreading

**Teaching Tip**
Remind students to use spelling and grammar checks with caution.

Editing and proofreading also benefit richly from word processing. Instead of crossing or whiting out mistakes, or rewriting an entire paper to correct numerous errors, you can make all necessary changes within the most recent draft. If you find editing or proofreading on the screen hard on your eyes, print out a copy. Mark any corrections on that copy, and then transfer them to the final draft.

If the word-processing software you're using includes spelling and grammar checks, by all means use them. The spell-check function tells you when a word is not in the computer's dictionary. Keep in mind, however, that the spell-check cannot tell you how to spell a name correctly or when you have mistakenly used, for example, *their* instead of *there*. To a spell-check, *Thank ewe four the complement* is as correct as *Thank you for the compliment*. Also use the grammar-checker with caution. Any errors it doesn't uncover are still your responsibility, and it sometimes points out mistakes where there are none.

A freshly printed paper, with its clean appearance and attractive formatting, looks so good that you may think it is in better shape than it really is. Do not be

fooled by your paper's appearance. Take sufficient time to review your grammar, punctuation, and spelling carefully.

Even after you hand in your paper, save the digital file. Your teacher may ask you to do some revising, and then the file will save you from having to type the paper from scratch.

Occasionally, you may be asked to submit a paper in electronic form, either through e-mail or on a school server or FTP site or cloud. In these cases, always double check that the file has gone through. Get confirmation from your instructor, not just from the system or destination itself. Submit a paper electronically only if your instructor specifically asks this of you.

**TIP**

In future assignments, you may be asked to incorporate images or links into a paper. Think of these as garnishes on a dinner plate or lemon slices in glasses of water—they are there to add a bit of color and flavor, but not to overwhelm the main dish. Incorporate visuals or links into a paper only with your instructor's approval and guidance.

Know and follow rules, both legal and ethical, about when and how to use others' images and how to credit them. You probably know the saying "A picture speaks a thousand words." Remember this when selecting an image; aim to find one that illustrates or supports your paper's main idea.

Links should be used when they provide useful information that enhances the content of your paper. As with images, avoid links that might distract readers from the central point of your paper.

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## Using the Internet

The Internet can aid and enhance your writing in numerous ways. It can be especially valuable in aiding you in doing research for a paper or essay but it can also help you check dates, names, and background information for any kind of writing. Here we will look at how you can use the Internet to find books and articles on a particular topic. We will also discuss the important issue of learning how to evaluate Internet sources, as these sources vary greatly in their quality and reliability.

**HAVE YOU USED AN ELECTRONIC SOURCE TO ORDER** books? What is your favorite method of acquiring e-books? In a few lines, describe the difference between browsing in a brick and mortar bookstore or library and browsing online for a book.

## Find Books on Your Topic

To find current books, go to your college's catalog, which you may be able to access from home, and look for books published recently. Another approach is to go online and search the Web site of a commercial bookseller such as Amazon.com (www.amazon.com) or Barnes and Noble Books (www.barnesandnoble.com). You can search for books on these sites for free, and you are under no obligation to buy a book.

### *Use the "Browse" Tab*

On the Web site of a commercial bookseller, click on "Books" and then "Browse." You'll get a list of general categories to search. Suppose you are reporting on the development of the modern telescope. When you click "Browse subjects" on Amazon.com, you get a list of categories that includes "Science & Math." Clicking on that category displays a list of subcategories, one of which is "Astronomy & Space Science." Clicking on this subcategory brings up more subcategories, including "Telescopes." Finally, clicking on "Telescopes" gives you a list of recent books on the topic. You can click on each title for information about each book. All this browsing can be done very easily and will help you research your topic quickly.

### *Use the "Search" Box*

If you are preparing a paper on some aspect of photography, type the word "photography" in the search box. You'll then get a list of books on that subject. Just looking at the list may help you narrow your subject and decide on a specific topic to develop. For instance, one student typed "photography" in the search box on Barnes and Noble's site and got a list of 13,000 books on the subject. Considering only part of that list helped her realize that she wanted to write on some aspect of photography during the U.S. Civil War. She typed "Civil War photography" and got a list of 200 titles. After looking at information about twenty of those books, she was able to decide on a limited topic for her paper.

### *A Note on the Library of Congress*

The commercial bookstore sites are especially quick and easy to use. But to find additional books on your topic, you can also visit the Library of Congress Web site (www.loc.gov). The Library of Congress, in Washington, D.C., has copies of all books published in the United States. Its online catalog contains about twelve million entries. You can browse this catalog by subject or search by keywords. The search form permits you to check only those books that interest you. Click on the "Full Record" option to view publication information about a book, as well as its call numbers. You can then try to obtain the book from your college library or through an interlibrary loan.

### *Other Points to Note*

Remember that at any time you can use your printer to quickly print information presented on the screen. (For example, the student planning a paper on

photography in the Civil War could print a list of the twenty books, along with sheets of information about individual books.) You could then go to your library knowing exactly what books you want to borrow. If your own local or school library is accessible online, you can visit in advance to find out whether it has the books you want. Also, if you have time and money, you may want to purchase them from a local bookshop or an online bookstore, such as Amazon. Used books are often available at greatly reduced cost, and they often ship out in only a few days.

## Find Articles on Your Topic

There are many online sources that will help you find articles on your subject. Following are descriptions of some of them.

### *Online Databases*

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Most college and public libraries provide online computer-search services known as *online databases* or *library subscription services*. Using any of these services, you can type in keywords and quickly search many periodicals for articles on your subject. Some databases, such as General Science Index, cover a specific discipline, but others, such as Academic Search Elite, are more general.

Often, articles you find will appear as "full text." This means that you can print the entire article from your computer. In other cases, only an *abstract* (summary) of the article will be available. However, abstracts are valuable too, because they allow you to determine whether the article is relevant to your research and whether you should continue searching for the full text.

Finally, database articles appear in *HTML* or *PDF* format or in both. Articles in HTML (*hypertext markup language*) have been reformatted for publication on the Internet. Those in PDF (*portable document format*) are exact reproductions of a print document.

Your library may use a service that provides access to many online databases. EBSCOhost, Infotrac, and ProQuest are such services. Here are a few online databases that have proven useful for new student researchers.

**Academic Search Premier** covers a variety of disciplines and includes full-text articles and abstracts of articles from more than 4,400 periodicals.

**CGP (Catalog of U.S. Government Publications)** contains documents published by the U.S. government.

**Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL)** provides access to articles found in more than 1,800 professional journals in the health professions.

**ERIC (Education Resources Information Center)** makes available articles from professional journals, reports, and speeches having to do with education.

**General Science Index** lists articles on biology, chemistry, physics, and the other physical sciences.

**JSTOR (Journal Storage)** provides full-text articles found in back issues of journals in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

***New York Times* Index** lists articles published in this newspaper since 1913.

**PsychInfo** is published by the American Psychological Association. It includes abstracts of books, articles, and doctoral dissertations in psychology. It also provides access to full-text articles through PsycARTICLES.

**Wilson Humanities Index** covers more than 500 English-language periodicals in disciplines such as archaeology, the classics, art, history, theater, music, literature, philosophy, and religion.

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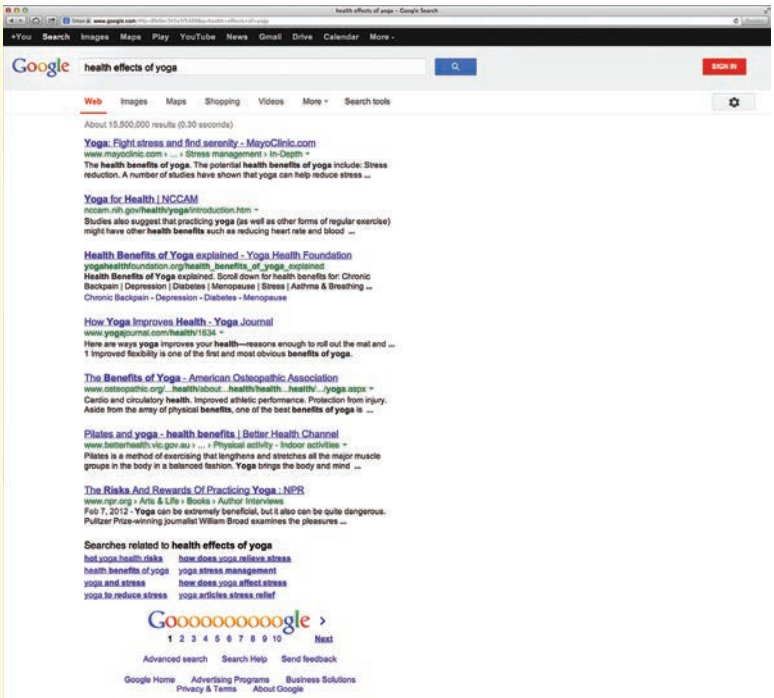


**HERE ARE TWO TIPS TO HELP YOU SIFT THROUGH MULTITUDES OF** search results: Instead of starting with the top-listed page, use the list of results to find the right keywords to narrow and refine your research. Then use those keywords in a more academic search engine like Google Scholar. Or, you might start by employing a search engine that focuses on specific types of Web sites, such as academic or medical.

## *Online Magazine, Newspaper, and Journal Articles*

Although your college library may subscribe to online databases, another online research service, one that you can subscribe to individually on a home computer, is *Question.* You may be able to get a free one-day trial subscription or pay for a monthly subscription at limited cost. This service provides millions of newspaper articles as well as thousands of book chapters and television and radio transcripts.

## *Search Engines*

An Internet search engine will help you quickly go through a vast amount of information on the Web to find articles about almost any topic. Google, the most commonly used search engine, can be accessed by typing "www.google.com." A screen will then appear with a

box in which you can type one or more keywords. For example, if you are thinking of doing a paper on yoga, you simply enter the keyword, "yoga." Within a second or so you will get a list of millions of articles and sites on the Web about the subject of yoga.

You should then try to narrow your topic by adding other keywords. For instance, if you typed "health benefits of yoga," you would get a considerably reduced list of articles and sites. If you narrowed your potential topic further by typing "effects of yoga on reducing stress," you would get a far more focused list. Google does a superior job of returning hits that are genuinely relevant to your search, so just scanning only the early part of a list may be enough to provide you with the information you need.

Very often your challenge with searches will be getting too much information rather than too little. Try making your keywords more specific, or use different combinations of keywords. You might also try using Google Scholar or another search engine, such as Bing. In addition, consult the search engine's built-in "Advanced Search" feature for tips on successful searching.

Finally, save the addresses of relevant Web sites that you may want to visit again. The browser that you are using (for example, Internet Explorer or Safari) will probably have a "Bookmark" or "Favorite Places" option. With the click of a mouse, you can bookmark a site. You will then be able to return to it simply by clicking on its name in a list, rather than having to remember and type its address.

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## ACTIVITY 1

**Note:** Answers will vary.

1. Using your library's list of databases, find a database that would give you information about the following subjects and write the title of that database.
   a. career preparation: _____
   b. Sigmund Freud: _____
   c. space travel: _____
   d. a new state law: _____
2. Using one of the online databases to which your college subscribes, find an article on organic gardening.
   a. Name of the database you used _____
   b. Article title _____
   c. Author (if given) _____
   d. Name of magazine, journal, or newspaper _____
   e. Pages (if given) _____
   f. Date _____

## Evaluating Internet Sources

Keep in mind that the quality and reliability of information you find on the Internet may vary widely. Anyone with a bit of computer know-how can create a Web site and post information there. That person may be a Nobel Prize winner, a leading authority in a specialized field, a high school student, or a crackpot. Be careful, then, to look closely at your source in the following ways.

### Guidelines for Evaluating Online Sources

1. **Internet address:** In a Web address, the three letters after the "dot" identify the domain. The most common domains are .com, .edu, .gov, .net, and .org. You can't always determine a Web site's reliability by the domain type. Almost anyone can get a Web address ending in *.com* or *.org*. So you must examine every Web site carefully. Consider these three points: author, internal evidence, and date.
2. **Author:** What credentials does the author have? What academic degrees does he or she hold? Does the author work for a college, university, well-respected think tank, or research group? Has he or she published other material on the topic?
3. **Internal evidence:** Does the author seem to proceed objectively—presenting all sides of the issue fairly before stating his or her own views?

   Does the sponsor of the Web site seem to be an objective source? For example, it would be fair to assume that a Web article from the American Medical Association discussing irradiated food treats the subject objectively. Can you say the same for an article appearing on the Web site of an irradiated-food distributor?

   Does the author provide adequate support for his or her views? Or does he or she make unsupported generalizations—claims that are simply not backed up with studies or the opinions of other experts?

   Was the article first published in a print version? Is the publisher of this print version reliable? If the article was not first published in print, could it have been, or is it so outlandish that no publisher would take the financial risk of backing it?
4. **Date:** Is the information up to date? Check at the top or bottom of the document for copyright, publication, or revision dates. Knowing such data will help you decide whether the material is current enough for your purposes. For example, would a ten-year-old article on computer viruses yield useful information for a paper that discusses ways to protect today's computers? Probably not.

## ACTIVITY 2

**Note:** Answers will vary. Examples are given.

PART A Go to www.google.com and search for the word "democracy." Then complete the items below.

1. How many items did your search yield?

   over 68 million

2. In the early listings, you will probably find each of the following domains: edu, gov, org, and com. Pick one site with each domain and write its full address.
   a. Address of one .com site you found:

      www.getdemocracy.com

   b. Address of one .gov site:

      www.state.gov

   c. Address of one .org site:

      www.democracy.org

   d. Address of one .edu site:

      cdd.stanford.edu

PART B Circle *one* of the sites you identified above and use it to complete the following evaluation.

3. Name of site's author or authoring institution:

   U.S. Department of State

4. Is site's information current (within two years)?

   Yes

5. Does the site serve obvious business purposes (with advertising or attempts to sell products)?

   No

6. Does the site have an obvious connection to a governmental, commercial, business, or religious organization? If so, which one?

   Yes—federal government

7. Does the site's information seem fair and objective?

   For the most part, though the site supports the policies of the current administration.

8. Based on the information above, would you say the site appears reliable?

   Yes

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## ACTIVITY 3

**Note:** Answers will vary.

Select one of the following areas or (with your instructor's permission) an area of your own choice:

Acid rain
Airport security
All-electric cars
Alzheimer's disease
Animal rights movement
Animals nearing extinction
Assisted suicide
Autism
Best job prospects today
Bill of Rights
Cell phones and driving
Censorship on the Internet
Charter schools
Child abuse
Climate change
Cremation
Declaration of Independence
Drug treatment programs
Everyday addictions
Fertility drugs
Food poisoning (salmonella)
Forecasting earthquakes
Health insurance reform
Heroes for today
Holistic healing
HPV immunizations
Magna Carta
Medical marijuana
Mind-body medicine
New remedies for allergies
New treatments for insomnia
Noise control
Nursing home costs
Online gambling
Organ donation
Origins of Kwanzaa
Pollution of drinking water
Prenatal care
Prison reform
Privacy and technology
Problems of retirement
Recent consumer frauds
Ritalin and children
Self-help groups
Sexual harassment
Steroids and professional athletes
Stress reduction in the workplace
Surrogate mothers
The Aztecs
The Maya
The next ice age
Toxic waste disposal
Vegetarianism/Veganism
Violence in videogames
Witchcraft today

First, look up your topic in a search engine like Google (or Google Scholar if your instructor specifies that your sources need to be academic) and read through the results. In order to narrow your search, note the most prevalent main subject headings and tag words. Employing your library's catalog and database, use the tag words to locate books and articles about your chosen topic. Locate several sources you think might be beneficial.

1. Topic
2. Three books that either cover the topic directly or at least touch on the topic in some way. Include
   Author
   Title
   Place of publication
   Publisher
   Date of publication
3. Three articles on the topic published in 2007 or later. Include
   Title of article
   Author (if given)
   Title of magazine
   Date
   Pages (if given)
4. Finally, write a paragraph describing exactly how you went about researching your topic. In addition, include a photocopy or printout of one of the three articles.

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# A Look Ahead to Part 2

## Patterns of Paragraph Development

Traditionally, writing has been divided into the following patterns of development.

- Exposition
  - Exemplification
  - Process
  - Cause and/or effect
  - Comparison and/or contrast
  - Definition
  - Classification
- Description
- Narration
- Argumentation

**Teaching Tip** Bring to class examples of these writing patterns from magazines or other publications. Help your students make connections.

In *exposition,* the writer provides information about and explains a particular subject. Patterns of development within exposition include *exemplification*, or giving examples; detailing a *process* of doing or making something; analyzing *causes and effects; comparing* and *contrasting; defining* a term or concept; and *dividing* something into parts or *classifying* it into categories.

In addition to the six exposition patterns of development, three other patterns are common: *description, narration,* and *argumentation.* A *description* is a verbal picture of a person, place, or thing. In *narration,* a writer tells the story of something that happened. Finally, in *argumentation,* a writer attempts to support a controversial point or defend a position on which there is a difference of opinion.

The pages ahead present individual chapters on each pattern. You will have a chance, then, to learn nine different patterns or methods for organizing material in your papers. Each pattern has its own internal logic and provides its own special strategies for imposing order on your ideas.

As you practice each pattern, you should remember the following Tip.

**Teaching Tip**
Bring several movie reviews to class to illustrate the example about horror movies.

**TIP**

While each paragraph that you write will involve one predominant pattern, very often one or more additional patterns may be involved as well. For instance, the paragraph, "*The Children of Huang Shi*: A Must See," presents a series of examples to support the argument that people should watch this film. But the author also uses description to support each of his/her points (low-key lighting, vastness and ruggedness of China's wilderness, delicate and intimate music).

No matter which pattern or patterns you use, each paragraph will probably involve some form of argumentation. You will advance a point and then go on to support your point. To convince the reader that your point is valid, you may use exemplification, narration, description, or some other pattern of organization. Among the paragraphs you will read in Part 2, one writer supports the point that a favorite outdoor spot is like "heaven" by providing a number of descriptive details. Another labels a certain experience in his life as heartbreaking and then uses a narrative to demonstrate the truth of his statement. A third writer advances the opinion that good horror movies can be easily distinguished from bad horror movies and then supplies comparative information about both to support her claim. Much of your writing, in short, will have the purpose of persuading your reader that the idea you have advanced is valid.

## *The Progression in Each Chapter*

After each type of paragraph development is explained, student papers illustrating that type are presented. These are followed by questions about the paragraphs. The questions relate to unity, support, and coherence—three of the four bases of effective writing. You are then asked to write your own paragraph. In most cases, the first assignment is fairly structured and provides a good deal of guidance for the writing process. The other assignments offer a wide choice of writing topics. At least one assignment will require some simple research. The final assignment always requires writing with a specific purpose and for a specific audience.

## Tips for Writing On-Screen

**Teaching Tip**
In a computer lab, ask students to create a word-processed document as you review these tips.

- If you are using your school's computer center, allow enough time. You may have to wait for a computer or printer to be free, or your school may have sign-up sheets in the lab or online. In addition, you may need several sessions at the computer and printer to complete your paper.
- When using word-processing programs like Microsoft Word or Google Docs *save your work frequently as you write your draft*. In addition to saving on the computer, back files up on an external disk, a flash drive, or a server. Most computers will auto-save your work, but any file that is not saved may be lost if the program quits, the computer crashes, or the power is turned off.
- Always keep your work in multiple places—the hard drive you are working on; a backup device such as a flash drive or external hard drive; and a server such as Dropbox or iCloud. You can also e-mail a copy to yourself.
- Print out your work at least at the end of every session. Then not only will you have your most recent draft to work on away from the computer, you'll also have a copy in case something should happen to your files.
- Before making major changes in a paper, create a copy of your file. For example, if your file is titled "Worst Job," create a file called "Worst Job 2" or "Worst Job 2-9-15" (using the date as a reference). Then make all your changes in that file. If the changes don't work out, you can always go back to the original file.

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## Using Digital and Electronic Resources at Each Stage of the Writing Process

Word-processing programs like Microsoft Word or Google Docs make it easy for you to experiment with ideas and wording throughout your paper. They also allow you to create and save many versions.

Following are ways to use computers at each stage of the writing process. Note that the sections that follow correspond to the stages of the writing process described in Chapter 2, pages 18–50. Note, too, that although Gene Hert, the student author of "My Job in an Apple Plant," preferred to handwrite his early stages, the computer offers a valuable alternative.

### Prewriting

If you're a fast typist, many kinds of prewriting will work well on the computer. With freewriting in particular, you can get ideas onto the screen almost as quickly

as they occur to you. A passing thought that could be productive is not likely to get lost. You may even find it helpful, when freewriting, to dim the screen of your monitor so that you can't see what you're typing. If you temporarily cannot see the screen, you won't have to worry about grammar or spelling or typing errors (all of which do not matter in prewriting); instead, you can concentrate on getting down as many ideas and details as possible about your subject.

After you complete your prewriting, it's often very helpful to print out a hard copy of what you've done. With a clean printout in front of you, you'll be able to see everything at once and revise and expand your work with handwritten comments in the margins of the paper. Alternately, you can continue to work on-screen and track your changes there.

Working on a computer also makes it easy for you to experiment with the wording of the point (also called a working topic sentence or working thesis) of your paper. You can try a number of versions in a short time. After you have decided on the version that works best, you can easily delete the other versions, simply move them to a temporary "leftover" section at the end of the paper, or move them to a new file.

## Preparing a Scratch Outline

If you used listing as a prewriting technique, you may easily be able to turn your list into an outline. Use the cut and paste functions to shuffle the ideas around until you find the best order of supporting points and details for your paper. You can easily delete any ideas that do not fit and add new ideas as needed.

You can also create scratch outlines using Web-based programs like WorkFlowy (also available as an app for most smartphones) and ThinkLinkr. Both tools can be used, as well, to jumpstart brainstorming and take notes, and they allow you to share and work together on outlines with others. This can be useful when getting peer feedback or working on a group writing project.

**TIP**

At any point in the prewriting, outlining, or drafting process, you might experience writer's block or need some inspiration. One way to get ideas flowing is to do some Google searches based on key words in your topic. For instance, you could do a search for "worst jobs" and find some funny lists or sad stories on the topic. Maybe an anecdote by someone else will help you remember a specific detail from your own experience. It's a little too easy to get caught up in Web searching for hours, so restrict your search to ten or twenty minutes. Set an alarm so you won't go over your time limit.

If you are trying to find a new topic or can't think of one, try reviewing recent e-mails, text messages, posts on Twitter or Facebook, or even your school library Web site. What have you been talking about with friends, family, or classmates? What topics have been hotly discussed on your campus? Try writing about something that interests you.

## Writing the First Draft

**Teaching Tip** Demonstrate using the copy and paste functions in a word-processing program.

Like many writers, you may want to write your first draft by hand and then type it into the computer for revision. The process of simply typing out a handwritten draft for the first time may provide opportunities for making some changes and improvements. Once you have a draft on the screen, you will find it much easier to revise than a handwritten one.

If you feel comfortable composing directly on the screen, you can benefit from a number of special features. For example, if you have written an anecdote in your freewriting that you plan to use in your paper, simply copy the story from your freewriting file and insert it where it fits into your paper. You can refine it then or later. Or if you discover while typing that a sentence is out of place, cut it out from where it is and paste it wherever you wish. And if while writing you realize that an earlier sentence can be expanded, just go back to that point and type in the added material.

As you write a first draft, it can be tempting to break things up by texting, visiting Twitter, answering e-mails, or streaming a film. Avoid the temptation by turning off your phone and hiding these other options. One way to do this is by drafting with a program like Typewriter, TextRoom, JDarkRoom, or FocusCopy. If you use a Mac, WriteRoom is a good option. Each of these programs turns your screen into a blank sheet of paper or chalkboard, and there are options to shield you from alerts about new messages or updates of any kind. You are also free from

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**DO YOU THINK COMPUTERS AND TABLETS HAVE MADE IT EASIER OR MORE** complicated to do research? Do you like the accessibility of electronic resources or do you spend too much time on social networking sites? When you choose research materials, do you prefer electronic or print? Jot down several specific methods you typically employ for research. Highlight one that you feel you could improve and explain why.

the distractions of choices; without menus and, for instance, font options, you can focus on the writing itself. If you'd prefer to use an online text editor instead of one you have to download, try DarkCopy. When you're ready to start formatting your paper, you can copy and paste it into the word-processing program you normally use; TextRoom allows you to export text directly to Google Docs.

## Revising

**Teaching Tip**
If students have MS Word, suggest that they use the "track changes" function.

It is during revision that the virtues of word-processing programs really shine. All substituting, adding, deleting, and rearranging can be done easily within an existing file. All changes instantly take their proper places within the paper, not scribbled above the line or squeezed into the margin. Also, you can choose to track your changes within a draft, instead of saving multiple versions, and leave comments and questions for yourself in the margins with a Comments (or similarly named) feature. You can concentrate on each change you want to make, because you never have to type from scratch or work on a messy draft. You can carefully go through your paper to check that all your supporting evidence is relevant and to add new support as needed here and there. Anything you decide to eliminate can be deleted quickly and neatly. Anything you add can be inserted precisely where you choose. You can undo edits easily, too. If you change your mind, all you have to do is delete or cut and paste. Then you can sweep through the paper focusing on other changes: improving word choice, increasing sentence variety, eliminating wordiness, and so on.

If you are like some students, you will find it convenient to print out a hard copy of your file at various points throughout the revision. Make sure your paper is double spaced to make it easier to revise in longhand. The double spacing will give you room to add, cross out, and indicate changes that you can quickly make when you revise the document.

## Editing and Proofreading

**Teaching Tip**
Remind students to use spelling and grammar checks with caution.

Editing and proofreading also benefit richly from word processing. Instead of crossing or whiting out mistakes, or rewriting an entire paper to correct numerous errors, you can make all necessary changes within the most recent draft. If you find editing or proofreading on the screen hard on your eyes, print out a copy. Mark any corrections on that copy, and then transfer them to the final draft.

If the word-processing software you're using includes spelling and grammar checks, by all means use them. The spell-check function tells you when a word is not in the computer's dictionary. Keep in mind, however, that the spell-check cannot tell you how to spell a name correctly or when you have mistakenly used, for example, *their* instead of *there*. To a spell-check, *Thank ewe four the complement* is as correct as *Thank you for the compliment*. Also use the grammar-checker with caution. Any errors it doesn't uncover are still your responsibility, and it sometimes points out mistakes where there are none.

A freshly printed paper, with its clean appearance and attractive formatting, looks so good that you may think it is in better shape than it really is. Do not be

fooled by your paper's appearance. Take sufficient time to review your grammar, punctuation, and spelling carefully.

Even after you hand in your paper, save the digital file. Your teacher may ask you to do some revising, and then the file will save you from having to type the paper from scratch.

Occasionally, you may be asked to submit a paper in electronic form, either through e-mail or on a school server or FTP site or cloud. In these cases, always double check that the file has gone through. Get confirmation from your instructor, not just from the system or destination itself. Submit a paper electronically only if your instructor specifically asks this of you.

**TIP**

In future assignments, you may be asked to incorporate images or links into a paper. Think of these as garnishes on a dinner plate or lemon slices in glasses of water—they are there to add a bit of color and flavor, but not to overwhelm the main dish. Incorporate visuals or links into a paper only with your instructor's approval and guidance.

Know and follow rules, both legal and ethical, about when and how to use others' images and how to credit them. You probably know the saying "A picture speaks a thousand words." Remember this when selecting an image; aim to find one that illustrates or supports your paper's main idea.

Links should be used when they provide useful information that enhances the content of your paper. As with images, avoid links that might distract readers from the central point of your paper.

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## Using the Internet

The Internet can aid and enhance your writing in numerous ways. It can be especially valuable in aiding you in doing research for a paper or essay but it can also help you check dates, names, and background information for any kind of writing. Here we will look at how you can use the Internet to find books and articles on a particular topic. We will also discuss the important issue of learning how to evaluate Internet sources, as these sources vary greatly in their quality and reliability.

**HAVE YOU USED AN ELECTRONIC SOURCE TO ORDER** books? What is your favorite method of acquiring e-books? In a few lines, describe the difference between browsing in a brick and mortar bookstore or library and browsing online for a book.

## Find Books on Your Topic

To find current books, go to your college's catalog, which you may be able to access from home, and look for books published recently. Another approach is to go online and search the Web site of a commercial bookseller such as Amazon.com (www.amazon.com) or Barnes and Noble Books (www.barnesandnoble.com). You can search for books on these sites for free, and you are under no obligation to buy a book.

### *Use the "Browse" Tab*

On the Web site of a commercial bookseller, click on "Books" and then "Browse." You'll get a list of general categories to search. Suppose you are reporting on the development of the modern telescope. When you click "Browse subjects" on Amazon.com, you get a list of categories that includes "Science & Math." Clicking on that category displays a list of subcategories, one of which is "Astronomy & Space Science." Clicking on this subcategory brings up more subcategories, including "Telescopes." Finally, clicking on "Telescopes" gives you a list of recent books on the topic. You can click on each title for information about each book. All this browsing can be done very easily and will help you research your topic quickly.

### *Use the "Search" Box*

If you are preparing a paper on some aspect of photography, type the word "photography" in the search box. You'll then get a list of books on that subject. Just looking at the list may help you narrow your subject and decide on a specific topic to develop. For instance, one student typed "photography" in the search box on Barnes and Noble's site and got a list of 13,000 books on the subject. Considering only part of that list helped her realize that she wanted to write on some aspect of photography during the U.S. Civil War. She typed "Civil War photography" and got a list of 200 titles. After looking at information about twenty of those books, she was able to decide on a limited topic for her paper.

### *A Note on the Library of Congress*

The commercial bookstore sites are especially quick and easy to use. But to find additional books on your topic, you can also visit the Library of Congress Web site (www.loc.gov). The Library of Congress, in Washington, D.C., has copies of all books published in the United States. Its online catalog contains about twelve million entries. You can browse this catalog by subject or search by keywords. The search form permits you to check only those books that interest you. Click on the "Full Record" option to view publication information about a book, as well as its call numbers. You can then try to obtain the book from your college library or through an interlibrary loan.

### *Other Points to Note*

Remember that at any time you can use your printer to quickly print information presented on the screen. (For example, the student planning a paper on

photography in the Civil War could print a list of the twenty books, along with sheets of information about individual books.) You could then go to your library knowing exactly what books you want to borrow. If your own local or school library is accessible online, you can visit in advance to find out whether it has the books you want. Also, if you have time and money, you may want to purchase them from a local bookshop or an online bookstore, such as Amazon. Used books are often available at greatly reduced cost, and they often ship out in only a few days.

## Find Articles on Your Topic

There are many online sources that will help you find articles on your subject. Following are descriptions of some of them.

### *Online Databases*

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Most college and public libraries provide online computer-search services known as *online databases* or *library subscription services*. Using any of these services, you can type in keywords and quickly search many periodicals for articles on your subject. Some databases, such as General Science Index, cover a specific discipline, but others, such as Academic Search Elite, are more general.

Often, articles you find will appear as "full text." This means that you can print the entire article from your computer. In other cases, only an *abstract* (summary) of the article will be available. However, abstracts are valuable too, because they allow you to determine whether the article is relevant to your research and whether you should continue searching for the full text.

Finally, database articles appear in *HTML* or *PDF* format or in both. Articles in HTML (*hypertext markup language*) have been reformatted for publication on the Internet. Those in PDF (*portable document format*) are exact reproductions of a print document.

Your library may use a service that provides access to many online databases. EBSCOhost, Infotrac, and ProQuest are such services. Here are a few online databases that have proven useful for new student researchers.

**Academic Search Premier** covers a variety of disciplines and includes full-text articles and abstracts of articles from more than 4,400 periodicals.

**CGP (Catalog of U.S. Government Publications)** contains documents published by the U.S. government.

**Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL)** provides access to articles found in more than 1,800 professional journals in the health professions.

**ERIC (Education Resources Information Center)** makes available articles from professional journals, reports, and speeches having to do with education.

**General Science Index** lists articles on biology, chemistry, physics, and the other physical sciences.

**JSTOR (Journal Storage)** provides full-text articles found in back issues of journals in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

***New York Times* Index** lists articles published in this newspaper since 1913.

**PsychInfo** is published by the American Psychological Association. It includes abstracts of books, articles, and doctoral dissertations in psychology. It also provides access to full-text articles through PsycARTICLES.

**Wilson Humanities Index** covers more than 500 English-language periodicals in disciplines such as archaeology, the classics, art, history, theater, music, literature, philosophy, and religion.

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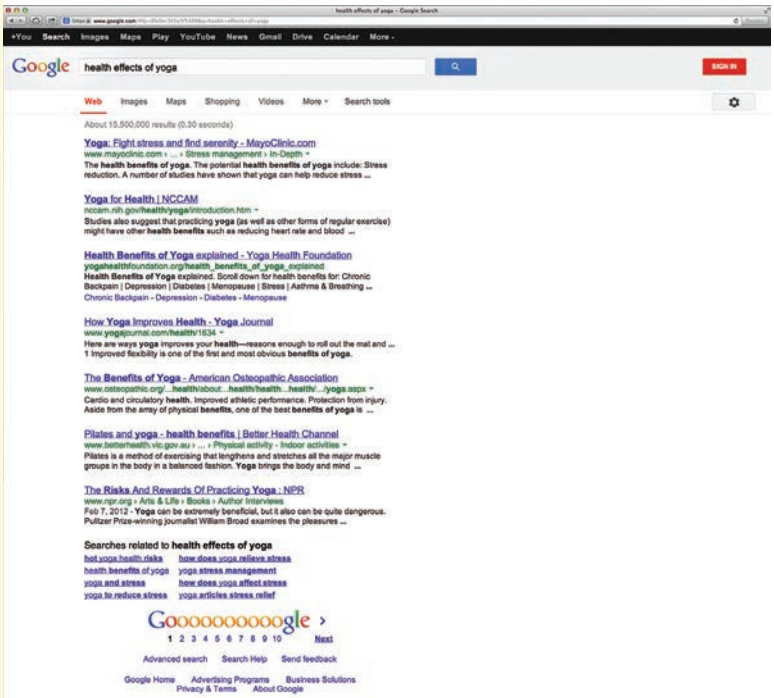


**HERE ARE TWO TIPS TO HELP YOU SIFT THROUGH MULTITUDES OF** search results: Instead of starting with the top-listed page, use the list of results to find the right keywords to narrow and refine your research. Then use those keywords in a more academic search engine like Google Scholar. Or, you might start by employing a search engine that focuses on specific types of Web sites, such as academic or medical.

## *Online Magazine, Newspaper, and Journal Articles*

Although your college library may subscribe to online databases, another online research service, one that you can subscribe to individually on a home computer, is *Question.* You may be able to get a free one-day trial subscription or pay for a monthly subscription at limited cost. This service provides millions of newspaper articles as well as thousands of book chapters and television and radio transcripts.

## *Search Engines*

An Internet search engine will help you quickly go through a vast amount of information on the Web to find articles about almost any topic. Google, the most commonly used search engine, can be accessed by typing "www.google.com." A screen will then appear with a

box in which you can type one or more keywords. For example, if you are thinking of doing a paper on yoga, you simply enter the keyword, "yoga." Within a second or so you will get a list of millions of articles and sites on the Web about the subject of yoga.

You should then try to narrow your topic by adding other keywords. For instance, if you typed "health benefits of yoga," you would get a considerably reduced list of articles and sites. If you narrowed your potential topic further by typing "effects of yoga on reducing stress," you would get a far more focused list. Google does a superior job of returning hits that are genuinely relevant to your search, so just scanning only the early part of a list may be enough to provide you with the information you need.

Very often your challenge with searches will be getting too much information rather than too little. Try making your keywords more specific, or use different combinations of keywords. You might also try using Google Scholar or another search engine, such as Bing. In addition, consult the search engine's built-in "Advanced Search" feature for tips on successful searching.

Finally, save the addresses of relevant Web sites that you may want to visit again. The browser that you are using (for example, Internet Explorer or Safari) will probably have a "Bookmark" or "Favorite Places" option. With the click of a mouse, you can bookmark a site. You will then be able to return to it simply by clicking on its name in a list, rather than having to remember and type its address.

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## ACTIVITY 1

**Note:** Answers will vary.

1. Using your library's list of databases, find a database that would give you information about the following subjects and write the title of that database.
   a. career preparation: _____
   b. Sigmund Freud: _____
   c. space travel: _____
   d. a new state law: _____
2. Using one of the online databases to which your college subscribes, find an article on organic gardening.
   a. Name of the database you used _____
   b. Article title _____
   c. Author (if given) _____
   d. Name of magazine, journal, or newspaper _____
   e. Pages (if given) _____
   f. Date _____

## Evaluating Internet Sources

Keep in mind that the quality and reliability of information you find on the Internet may vary widely. Anyone with a bit of computer know-how can create a Web site and post information there. That person may be a Nobel Prize winner, a leading authority in a specialized field, a high school student, or a crackpot. Be careful, then, to look closely at your source in the following ways.

### Guidelines for Evaluating Online Sources

1. **Internet address:** In a Web address, the three letters after the "dot" identify the domain. The most common domains are .com, .edu, .gov, .net, and .org. You can't always determine a Web site's reliability by the domain type. Almost anyone can get a Web address ending in *.com* or *.org*. So you must examine every Web site carefully. Consider these three points: author, internal evidence, and date.
2. **Author:** What credentials does the author have? What academic degrees does he or she hold? Does the author work for a college, university, well-respected think tank, or research group? Has he or she published other material on the topic?
3. **Internal evidence:** Does the author seem to proceed objectively—presenting all sides of the issue fairly before stating his or her own views?

   Does the sponsor of the Web site seem to be an objective source? For example, it would be fair to assume that a Web article from the American Medical Association discussing irradiated food treats the subject objectively. Can you say the same for an article appearing on the Web site of an irradiated-food distributor?

   Does the author provide adequate support for his or her views? Or does he or she make unsupported generalizations—claims that are simply not backed up with studies or the opinions of other experts?

   Was the article first published in a print version? Is the publisher of this print version reliable? If the article was not first published in print, could it have been, or is it so outlandish that no publisher would take the financial risk of backing it?
4. **Date:** Is the information up to date? Check at the top or bottom of the document for copyright, publication, or revision dates. Knowing such data will help you decide whether the material is current enough for your purposes. For example, would a ten-year-old article on computer viruses yield useful information for a paper that discusses ways to protect today's computers? Probably not.

## ACTIVITY 2

**Note:** Answers will vary. Examples are given.

PART A Go to www.google.com and search for the word "democracy." Then complete the items below.

1. How many items did your search yield?

   over 68 million

2. In the early listings, you will probably find each of the following domains: edu, gov, org, and com. Pick one site with each domain and write its full address.
   a. Address of one .com site you found:

      www.getdemocracy.com

   b. Address of one .gov site:

      www.state.gov

   c. Address of one .org site:

      www.democracy.org

   d. Address of one .edu site:

      cdd.stanford.edu

PART B Circle *one* of the sites you identified above and use it to complete the following evaluation.

3. Name of site's author or authoring institution:

   U.S. Department of State

4. Is site's information current (within two years)?

   Yes

5. Does the site serve obvious business purposes (with advertising or attempts to sell products)?

   No

6. Does the site have an obvious connection to a governmental, commercial, business, or religious organization? If so, which one?

   Yes—federal government

7. Does the site's information seem fair and objective?

   For the most part, though the site supports the policies of the current administration.

8. Based on the information above, would you say the site appears reliable?

   Yes

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## ACTIVITY 3

**Note:** Answers will vary.

Select one of the following areas or (with your instructor's permission) an area of your own choice:

Acid rain
Airport security
All-electric cars
Alzheimer's disease
Animal rights movement
Animals nearing extinction
Assisted suicide
Autism
Best job prospects today
Bill of Rights
Cell phones and driving
Censorship on the Internet
Charter schools
Child abuse
Climate change
Cremation
Declaration of Independence
Drug treatment programs
Everyday addictions
Fertility drugs
Food poisoning (salmonella)
Forecasting earthquakes
Health insurance reform
Heroes for today
Holistic healing
HPV immunizations
Magna Carta
Medical marijuana
Mind-body medicine
New remedies for allergies
New treatments for insomnia
Noise control
Nursing home costs
Online gambling
Organ donation
Origins of Kwanzaa
Pollution of drinking water
Prenatal care
Prison reform
Privacy and technology
Problems of retirement
Recent consumer frauds
Ritalin and children
Self-help groups
Sexual harassment
Steroids and professional athletes
Stress reduction in the workplace
Surrogate mothers
The Aztecs
The Maya
The next ice age
Toxic waste disposal
Vegetarianism/Veganism
Violence in videogames
Witchcraft today

First, look up your topic in a search engine like Google (or Google Scholar if your instructor specifies that your sources need to be academic) and read through the results. In order to narrow your search, note the most prevalent main subject headings and tag words. Employing your library's catalog and database, use the tag words to locate books and articles about your chosen topic. Locate several sources you think might be beneficial.

1. Topic
2. Three books that either cover the topic directly or at least touch on the topic in some way. Include
   Author
   Title
   Place of publication
   Publisher
   Date of publication
3. Three articles on the topic published in 2007 or later. Include
   Title of article
   Author (if given)
   Title of magazine
   Date
   Pages (if given)
4. Finally, write a paragraph describing exactly how you went about researching your topic. In addition, include a photocopy or printout of one of the three articles.

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# A Look Ahead to Part 2

## Patterns of Paragraph Development

Traditionally, writing has been divided into the following patterns of development.

- Exposition
  - Exemplification
  - Process
  - Cause and/or effect
  - Comparison and/or contrast
  - Definition
  - Classification
- Description
- Narration
- Argumentation

**Teaching Tip** Bring to class examples of these writing patterns from magazines or other publications. Help your students make connections.

In *exposition,* the writer provides information about and explains a particular subject. Patterns of development within exposition include *exemplification*, or giving examples; detailing a *process* of doing or making something; analyzing *causes and effects; comparing* and *contrasting; defining* a term or concept; and *dividing* something into parts or *classifying* it into categories.

In addition to the six exposition patterns of development, three other patterns are common: *description, narration,* and *argumentation.* A *description* is a verbal picture of a person, place, or thing. In *narration,* a writer tells the story of something that happened. Finally, in *argumentation,* a writer attempts to support a controversial point or defend a position on which there is a difference of opinion.

The pages ahead present individual chapters on each pattern. You will have a chance, then, to learn nine different patterns or methods for organizing material in your papers. Each pattern has its own internal logic and provides its own special strategies for imposing order on your ideas.

As you practice each pattern, you should remember the following Tip.

**Teaching Tip**
Bring several movie reviews to class to illustrate the example about horror movies.

**TIP**

While each paragraph that you write will involve one predominant pattern, very often one or more additional patterns may be involved as well. For instance, the paragraph, "*The Children of Huang Shi*: A Must See," presents a series of examples to support the argument that people should watch this film. But the author also uses description to support each of his/her points (low-key lighting, vastness and ruggedness of China's wilderness, delicate and intimate music).

No matter which pattern or patterns you use, each paragraph will probably involve some form of argumentation. You will advance a point and then go on to support your point. To convince the reader that your point is valid, you may use exemplification, narration, description, or some other pattern of organization. Among the paragraphs you will read in Part 2, one writer supports the point that a favorite outdoor spot is like "heaven" by providing a number of descriptive details. Another labels a certain experience in his life as heartbreaking and then uses a narrative to demonstrate the truth of his statement. A third writer advances the opinion that good horror movies can be easily distinguished from bad horror movies and then supplies comparative information about both to support her claim. Much of your writing, in short, will have the purpose of persuading your reader that the idea you have advanced is valid.

## *The Progression in Each Chapter*

After each type of paragraph development is explained, student papers illustrating that type are presented. These are followed by questions about the paragraphs. The questions relate to unity, support, and coherence—three of the four bases of effective writing. You are then asked to write your own paragraph. In most cases, the first assignment is fairly structured and provides a good deal of guidance for the writing process. The other assignments offer a wide choice of writing topics. At least one assignment will require some simple research. The final assignment always requires writing with a specific purpose and for a specific audience.