

Essentials in Writing

Level 9

Second Edition

Student Book

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LEVEL 9 SYLLABUS

Second Edition

VIDEO – 92 LESSONS STUDENT BOOK – 292 PAGES

NOTE: Video lessons are indicated by ALL CAPS bold. Worksheets/assignment sheets are listed below each video lesson.

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION

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Lesson 18 Day 1 – Subject/Verb Agreement

LESSON 19: UNCLEAR SUBJECTS

Lesson 19 Day 1 – Unclear Subjects

LESSON 20: GENERIC “YOU”

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Lesson 20 Day 2 – Generic “You”

LESSON 21: FINDING AND PARAPHRASING INFORMATION

Lesson 21 Day 1 – Finding and Paraphrasing Information

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LESSON 22: SUMMARIZING

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(Lessons 2-24)**

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Lesson 28 Day 1 – Organize

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Lesson 29 Day 1 – Finalize

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Lesson 52 Day 1 – Organize and Draft Body Paragraph #3

LESSON 53: EXPOSITORY ESSAY

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Lesson 60 Day 1 – Organize and Draft Body Paragraph #1

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LESSON 63: ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

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Lesson 64 Day 1 – Revise for Content

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Lesson 65 Day 1 – Revise for Word Choice and Sentence Structure

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Lesson 70 Day 1 – Organize and Draft Differences Paragraph

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LESSON 73: COMPARE/CONTRAST ESSAY

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LESSON 78: RESEARCH PAPER

Lesson 78 Day 1 – Quality Sources and Source Cards

LESSON 79: RESEARCH PAPER

Lesson 79 Day 1 – Notecards

LESSON 80: RESEARCH PAPER

Lesson 80 Days 1-5 – Research

LESSON 81: RESEARCH PAPER

Lesson 81 Day 1 – Organize Notecards and Create Thesis Statement

LESSON 82: RESEARCH PAPER

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Lesson 83 Days 1-3 – Draft Body Paragraphs

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Lesson 84 Day 1 – Organize and Draft Opening and Closing Paragraphs

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Lesson 85 Day 1 – Revise for Content

LESSON 86: RESEARCH PAPER

Lesson 86 Day 1 – Revise for Word Choice and Sentence Structure

LESSON 87: RESEARCH PAPER

Lesson 87 Day 1 – Citations Check

LESSON 88: RESEARCH PAPER

Lesson 88 Day 1 – Finalize

LESSON 89: GIVING A SPEECH

Lesson 89 Day 1 – Giving a Speech

LESSON 90: GIVING A SPEECH

Lesson 90 Day 1 – Organize Your Speech

LESSON 91: GIVING A SPEECH

Lesson 91 Day 1 – Practice and Present Your Speech

***UNIT TWO COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT
(Lessons 25-75)**

LESSON 92: FINAL LESSON

Lesson 92 – Comparing Compositions

SAMPLE

CONTENT

Unit One: Grammar and Other Topics

All lessons within this unit teach students how to use quality word choice and effective sentence structure, as well as how to address common problems.

Tools for Effective Communication

- A. Quality Word Choice
- B. Effective Sentence Structure
- C. Common Problems

Unit Two: Composition

In this unit, students explore many different types of compositions, focusing on the parts of compositions, the writing process, and applying effective writing tools.

Students write *with* Mr. Stephens in a ***step-by-step/modeled*** approach to composition. During the video lessons, Mr. Stephens teaches students information and techniques, and ***models*** how to perform each step of the writing process for individual compositions. Students apply what they learn from the video lesson and information presented in the student book.

Step-by-Step/Model: Through a step-by-step, repetitive process, students internalize the writing process and learn how to perform each step. Additionally, Mr. Stephens models the steps of each composition, showing students “how” to complete them.

Immediate Application: By focusing on each step of the writing process through short, modeled lessons with immediate application, students apply what they learn immediately without becoming overwhelmed by other steps and/or forgetting previous steps. This method increases retention.

ASSESSMENTS

A separate *Assessment/Resource Booklet* is available for purchase. The booklet contains:

- 8 assessments
- 2 comprehensive unit assessments
- Additional composition organizers

Assessments provide students opportunities to practice and put to test what they have learned in the lessons, if the parent/teacher believes the student will benefit from it. However, taking the assessments is not required. Students may reference their student book at all times.

ACTIVITIES AND ICONS



Separate Page – Throughout the student book, if this icon is present beside an activity, students will either have the option to or be required to complete the activity on a separate piece of paper. Students may use a piece of lined paper or use a word processor on a computer to complete the activity.

In Unit One, students learn to identify and apply quality word choice and sentence structure.



Identify activities help students learn to identify grammatical elements, quality word choice, and effective sentence structure in written language.



Apply activities help students apply the concepts they learn to their own writing abilities. This provides students with tools they will use when writing in Unit Two.



Common Problems – In Unit One, the common problems icon will be present in activities that focus on topics with which students frequently struggle regarding both grammatical and composition topics.



Tools for Effective Communication – In Unit One, the tool icon will be present to serve as a reminder that the skills practiced on the page are tools to help them communicate effectively in writing. In Unit Two, the tool icon reminds students, when revising compositions, to use their writing “tools” to improve communication.



Transitions – In Unit Two, the transitions icon will remind students to add or evaluate the use of transition words or phrases in their compositions to improve their communication.

In Unit Two, students will create compositions by following the writing process.

The Writing Process – The icons remind students which step of the writing process they are completing.



BRAINSTORM



ORGANIZE



DRAFT



REVISE



FINAL DRAFT

SCORING ACTIVITIES

Homeschool parents/teachers are free to use their own scoring system, but if you prefer, you are welcome to use the point values we assign to each activity. Total available points for each activity can be found beside each set of instructions on the activity pages. In general, identify activities are worth 1 point each, apply activities are worth 2 points each, revision activities are worth 10 points each, and original composition activities are worth 15 points each. Any activities that are to be scored only on a Completion grade will be noted. If parents/teachers wish to assign point values to Completion grades, we recommend assigning 5 points per Completion grade.

SCORING COMPOSITIONS

Scoring written compositions can be challenging due to their subjective nature. Ultimately, we encourage you to do what works for you, your student, and/or your schooling situation. If you already use a method to score written compositions, stick with it. Along the way, try new methods.

We provide **Scoring Rubrics** for each composition if you wish to use those to evaluate your student's work. These rubrics display our recommended balance and available point values. To use these rubrics, evaluate the compositions according to each category and criteria, determine point values for each category, and then add up all awarded points for a final score.

We also provide **checklists** for each composition that can be used either by the student as they finish compositions or by the parent as they evaluate compositions. If you use the checklists to evaluate compositions, focus primarily on completion and conversation. Use the checklist as a guide to discuss how effective or ineffective a composition is as a whole and strengths and weaknesses evident in the composition.

There are several different ways to utilize the rubrics and checklists and to hold discussions:

1. Student completes the checklist before turning in the assignment, and the teacher uses the suggested Scoring Rubric to calculate a grade. The teacher spot-checks a few items and asks the student to point to different items on the checklist evident in the composition and explain why the item was checked. Then, the teacher fills out the Scoring Rubric.

Teacher: "I see you marked that your narrative contains transitions. Show me your transitions."

Student points to the transitions, and the teacher assigns points to the appropriate category of the Scoring Rubric.

2. Teacher checks each item on the checklist and assigns a grade. This works well when time is limited. Assign a letter grade based on the overall composition using the sample composition provided in the Answer Key as a guide. Discuss one or more areas that may or may not include suggestions or requested revision.

After completing the checklist, the teacher might say and ask something like:

"I noticed that your hook for your opening paragraph of the expository essay is weak. I think it is weak because you did not grab my attention. What do you think you could add or change that might help grab my attention?"

3. Teacher assigns a completion grade. Use the checklist as a guide to make sure the assignment is complete. Assign any letter grade based on the fact that the student followed each step of the writing process, and that the composition contains all parts indicated in the checklist. This option works well when time is limited, and the teacher and student want to move on to the next composition.

*Scoring Services are available for purchase for Levels 6-12. Running from September to June each school year, a certified member of our Essentials in Writing team will score written compositions for any or all assignments presented in each level purchased. For more information as well as **formatting instructions**, visit essentialsinwriting.com/scoring-service/.*

Compositions that can be submitted to the Scoring Service are indicated with the Gradient icon:



HOW TO USE

1. View the video lesson.
2. Read the text for today's lesson.
3. Complete the assignment.
4. Verbally describe today's lesson and preview the next lesson.

How long should my student spend on one lesson?

Depending on the topic and the student, there are many different variables to consider in such a question. Typically, a good rule to follow is: Do not complete the worksheets/assignment sheets unless the student understands the concepts presented in the video lesson. Students may need to watch the video more than once. After an understanding of the new concept is evident, students will complete the activity.

Student Book Format

Video lessons and student book lessons correspond by title and number.



Lesson numbers indicate individual days unless the calendar icon is shown. See example below.

Lesson 18 Day 1 (no calendar shown because this lesson has only one written activity)

1. Preview Lesson 18 in the student book.
2. Watch Video Lesson 18.
3. Complete Lesson 18 written work.
4. Explain what you learned and preview the next activity (Lesson 19).

Lesson 19 Day 1 (no calendar shown because this lesson has only one written activity)

1. Preview Lesson 19 in the student book.
2. Watch Video Lesson 19.
3. Complete Lesson 19 written work.
4. Explain what you learned and preview the next activity (Lesson 20 Day 1).

Lesson 20 Day 1 (“Day 1” calendar shown because this lesson has more than one written activity)

1. Preview Lesson 20 Day 1 in the student book.
2. Watch Video Lesson 20.
3. Complete Lesson 20 written work for all days with the Day 1 calendar icon present.
4. Explain what you learned and preview the next activity (Lesson 20 Day 2).

Lesson 20 Day 2 (“Day 2” calendar shown because this lesson has more than one written activity)

1. Preview Lesson 20 Day 2 in the student book.
2. Watch Video Lesson 20 again (*optional*).
3. Complete Lesson 20 written work for all days with the Day 2 calendar icon present.
4. Explain what you learned and preview the next activity (Lesson 21 Day 1).

Lesson 21 Day 1 (“Day 1” calendar shown because this lesson has more than one written activity)

1. Preview Lesson 21 Day 1 in the student book.
2. Watch Video Lesson 21.
3. Complete Lesson 21 written work for all days with the Day 1 calendar icon present.
4. Explain what you learned and preview the next activity (Lesson 21 Day 2).

Answer Key

Answers to the workbook activities are at the back of this Teacher Handbook. Because some activities require students to compose sentences, paragraphs, and essays, “*Answers may vary*” precedes such sample answers. No “answer keys” are provided for the compositions of Unit Two. Instead, in-text examples of an effective composition and an ineffective composition are provided for comparison to the student’s own work.

How do I access my videos?

At essentialsinwriting.com, click User Login at the top of the page. Your login credentials have been sent to the email address you provided during checkout.

A **clause** is a group of words that contains both a subject and verb. In English, there are two main types of clauses: the independent clause and the dependent clause.

An **independent clause** is a clause that contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought; these clauses can stand alone as a sentence.

subject verb

*The large botanical **garden contained** a variety of flowers, from perky, golden sunflowers to romantic, sweet-smelling roses.*

subject verb

***Celebrities deal** with many problems that regular people will never have to handle, such as public pressure and lack of privacy.*

The **dependent clause** also contains a subject and a verb but does not express a complete thought because it begins with a **subordinator**, which is a word that makes the clause dependent on an independent clause. Thus, a dependent clause cannot stand alone as its own sentence and needs to be attached to an independent clause.

subject verb

*My family and friends will support me **whether** **I choose** to go to college or go into the workforce.*

subject verb

***Once** **Jacob finished** his enormous breakfast burrito and glass of orange juice, he started the long trek to the bus stop.*

Notice that when the dependent clause is first, a comma is used. No comma is necessary when the independent clause is first (Lesson 14).

Common Subordinators

- after
- although
- as
- because
- before
- even if
- even though
- if
- once
- since
- though
- unless
- until
- when
- whenever
- where
- wherever
- whether
- while
- whereas



Identify whether each underlined item is a clause. If the item is a clause, _____ / 7
write “Y” for “yes”; if the item is not a clause, write “N” for “no.”

1. Even though I enjoyed the movie, I still managed to fall asleep in the theater. _____
2. The protest quickly turned into a riot when someone started throwing punches. _____
3. While audio books are convenient, I enjoy reading physical books to unwind. _____
4. Once Tom heard Stacy crack a *Lord of the Rings* joke, he instantly fell for her. _____
5. While Robin Williams may be gone, his legacy continues to live on in comedy. _____
6. While music is made to entertain, it can also promote positive messages. _____
7. Michael Jackson made a charity called “We Are The World” to help global causes. _____



Identify the underlined clauses as “IC” for *independent clause* and “DC” _____ / 10
for *dependent clause*.

1. Whenever Naomi goes on vacation, she looks for an interesting rock to take home. _____
2. Trenton strives to be positive during his basketball game even if his team loses. _____
3. Wyatt was able to purchase a new Tesla because he won the Iowa Lottery. _____
4. After the car landed in the ditch, the driver reached for his phone to call for help. _____
5. Farmers perform controlled burns because it maintains the health of the fields. _____
6. Although I was craving a cheeseburger and fries, I ordered a chicken taco salad. _____
7. Though Darion had hiked Angel’s Landing before, the view from the top amazed him. _____
8. Ashley enjoys camping as this activity allows her to be in solitude with nature. _____
9. Amida wanted to be a physical therapist until she learned how long school would take. _____
10. Dogs crave sugary treats whereas cats do not due to the lack of sweet taste receptors. _____

A **clause** is a group of connected words that contains both a subject and a verb. **Independent clauses** can stand alone as a single sentence while **dependent clauses** cannot because they have a subordinator.

A **phrase** is also a group of connected words, but phrases do not have *both* a subject and a verb.

For example, the sentence “The vibrant blue jay soared majestically” is a clause, containing both a subject (“blue jay”) and a verb (“soared”). Inside that clause is the phrase “The vibrant blue jay” (a noun phrase). This group of words contains a subject but no verb.

Review info
about phrases
in Lesson 10!



Identify the underlined groups of words as “C” for *clause* or “P” for *phrase*.

_____ / 13

1. When I woke up this morning, I could not stop sneezing and itching my eyes. _____
2. Whenever Cassie listens to “Chasing Cars” by Snow Patrol, she thinks of her crush. _____
3. Uriah has to participate in a debate for speech class whether he wants to or not. _____
4. While my sister never gets sick, I contract the flu or cold at least once a year. _____
5. Once people start caring more about others, world peace will be achieved. _____
6. Ever since Anthony was young, he dreamed of running an Italian-Asian restaurant. _____
7. Christmas is the greatest holiday of a sense of community and merriment. _____
8. Homemade chicken soup and a mug of hot tea is the perfect remedy for a cold. _____
9. Before Saleema moved to Colorado, she lived in Washington, DC, on Main Street. _____
10. Whenever Antonio’s favorite football team scores, he screams and jumps for joy. _____
11. Tash has to frost and decorate the wedding cake before he goes to the ceremony. _____
12. Emily wants to go backpacking through Europe after she graduates from high school. _____
13. Viola was still freezing cold even though she was wearing five layers of clothing. _____

Note-taking is a way to help yourself pay attention and to better retain information, both when reading or listening to something. The purpose of note-taking is to help yourself learn!

What information should you take notes on?

- ▶ **Big ideas and main points.** You will not be able to record all the information presented, so focus on the most important stuff. If you can, record specific details and supporting points, but concentrate mainly on the larger points.
- ▶ **Key words and phrases.** Record important terms or things that are often repeated.
- ▶ **Summaries of information.** Again, you will not be able to record everything exactly, so focus on summarizing and paraphrasing the information into a condensed format.
- ▶ **Questions you have.** Writing down questions when you think of them will help you remember what you wanted to ask. Be sure to ask the questions when you can!
- ▶ **Words or terms that you do not know/need defined.** Putting a symbol, like a ?, near words/terms you do not know will help you remember to look them up later.

See Lessons 21 and 22 on how to summarize and paraphrase.

What do you do with notes?

Review them frequently.

Reviewing your notes will help you retain the information you read/heard as well as help prepare you for any quizzes or tests. While even just taking notes will tremendously help you remember and understand, reviewing them is even better. Be sure your notes are accurate before you study them, though! Compare them to the original text if you can.

Type or Handwrite?

Either!

Typing notes may be better for those who struggle to write quickly or legibly. Also, most people type faster than they write by hand, so typing may help you keep up with the information better, especially if you are taking notes on something you are listening to.

But watch out! Digital devices are highly distracting. If you type your notes, make sure to close out and turn off any distracting apps, notifications, or websites.

How do you take quality notes?

- ▶ Do not write everything down. Focus on key words/phrases such as terms, people, dates, events, or topics. Summarize/paraphrase information in your own words.
- ▶ Avoid complete sentences. These take longer to write. Convey information in as few words as possible. Use abbreviations and symbols when you can to lessen how much writing you have to do.
- ▶ Use lists (with numbers, dots, dashes, arrows, or whatever you want) whenever possible to record information in a quick and organized fashion.

Information:

“Water is made of two hydrogen atoms bonded to one oxygen atom. This liquid is essential for life and is also the most widely used solvent.”

Notes:

*Water = 2 H + 1 O (H₂O)
- essential for life
- most common solvent*

- ▶ Create casual sketches/charts/graphs when possible. These visuals will help you organize as well as remember the information.
- ▶ Label different sections of notes with headings/subheadings Structuring your notes in an outline format is better than recording blocks of text.

Remember!
Notes are for YOU. It is okay if they are a little imperfect or messy as long as they make sense to YOU.

- ▶ Use colored pens for different types of information or highlight things to stay organized. Be careful, though! Too much color can be confusing or distracting. Use color for only important points.
- ▶ If your notes come out confusing and disorganized, try recopying them into a more organized format later on.
- ▶ Label your notes and keep track of them in a notebook, folder, or binder so you can easily locate them later when you need them.

Look at the difference between the example notes below. One is much easier to record and read, even if they contain basically the same information!

Pandas are technically called giant pandas, or *Ailuropoda melanoleuca*. They are a bear species endemic to China. They are black and white and rotund. They are a conservation-reliant vulnerable species. There are about 270 pandas in captivity and only about 1,900 in the wild. They were endangered but in 2016 were reclassified as vulnerable because the population is on the rise. They are about three to six-feet long and about 24-35 inches tall at the shoulder. Males can weigh up to 350 pounds, but females are smaller. Cool fact: They have a "thumb" (modified sesamoid bone) which helps hold bamboo, which they eat, and five fingers! They have the digestive system of a carnivore as well as some carnivore-type genes, but their diet is herbivorous.

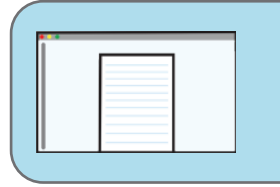
Records too many specifics, writes complete sentences, bunches all information together, uses no symbols to speed things up, difficult to read

ZOOLOGY w/ Mr. Chaudhry Feb 17, 2024
Pandas (giant pandas)
- "*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*"
- bear endemic (?) to China ?
- black and white; fat
- conservation-reliant vulnerable species
• some in captivity; <2,000 in the wild
• pop. on the rise
- 2016 = change from "endangered" to "vulnerable" (diff?)
- size
• 3-6 ft long, 2-3 ft tall
• males = up to 350 lbs (females smaller)
• have a "thumb" (sesamoid bone?) + 5 fingers ☺
- techn. carnivores
• digest. system + genes
• but mostly plant diet; bamboo

Captures main points, avoids full sentences, abbreviates/uses fast symbols, structures notes with headings and lists, uses a single color to help identify questions for later, easy to read



Below is information about the Fall of the Roman Empire. _____ / 15
Read the information and take notes on a separate sheet of paper.
Remember to focus on major points and key terms, and organize
your notes in an easy-to-read manner.



The Fall of the Roman Empire

The fall of the Roman Empire is a complex historical event that unfolded over several centuries, and historians often point to a combination of internal and external factors that contributed to its decline. One significant internal factor was political instability.

The empire experienced a series of weak and ineffective rulers, such as Commodus (180-192 AD), Elagabalus (218-222 AD), and Gallienus (253-268 AD). Also, civil wars and constant changes in leadership weakened the central authority and made it difficult to address external threats effectively.

Economic decline also played a role in the fall of the Roman Empire. Excessive taxation, inflation, and a reliance on slave labor contributed to economic hardships. Slaves in the Roman Empire came from various sources, such as war captives, criminals, debtors, and children of existing slaves. The overreliance on slave labor diminished opportunities for free citizens and hindered technological innovation.

External pressures, such as invasions by barbarian tribes, were crucial contributors to the fall. The Visigoths' sack of Rome in 410 and the Vandals' capture of Carthage in 439 were significant blows. The western part of the empire faced repeated invasions from various Germanic tribes and the Huns, putting immense strain on the Roman military.

Additionally, the vast size of the empire made effective governance challenging. Attempts to defend the extensive borders stretched the Roman military thin, making it difficult to respond adequately to multiple threats simultaneously.

The fall of the Roman Empire is traditionally dated to 476 AD when the last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was deposed by the Germanic Chieftain Odoacer. This event marked the end of the Western Roman Empire. The Eastern Roman Empire, also known as the Byzantine Empire, continued to exist for nearly a millennium until the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The fall of Rome is a pivotal moment in history that marked the transition from classical antiquity to the medieval period in Europe.

Expository Paragraph

Brainstorm, Organize, and Draft

Expository writing is a type of writing that does the following:

- ▶ describes
- ▶ explains
- ▶ informs

For this type of composition, remember to write with a clear, informative tone throughout.

Word of Advice!

Remember that the purpose of expository writing is to inform. Thus, it is important to write with a neutral, informative tone throughout and use facts as support. Expository writing is not the place to insert your opinion. Instead, simply inform.

Prompts:

1. *What are the qualities of a good person or a bad person? Write a paragraph detailing your answer.*
2. *Think about your favorite hobby. Why is it enjoyable to do? Write a paragraph detailing your answer.*
3. *Think about your favorite subject in school. Why is this subject beneficial for students to learn? Write a paragraph detailing your answer.*

Brainstorm : Choose a topic and think of several ideas to support/expound on that topic. Record several ideas, then choose the best ones.



Choose a prompt. On a separate sheet of paper, identify the audience and purpose, then brainstorm for your paragraph.

Complete

Brainstorm a topic to focus on as well as details that you could write about. Mark the best ideas.

Draft : Convert the ideas in your plan into a composition, focusing on creating complete and coherent sentences rather than perfect writing.

Check out the example below, which focuses on the prompt: *Think about your favorite hobby. Why is it enjoyable to do? Write a paragraph detailing your answer.*

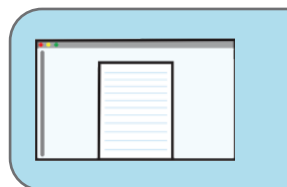
Opening Sentence	<i>Drawing fun hobby</i>
Detail #1	<i>Get out emotions</i>
	<i>Sad or angry, draw something to get out feelings, feel good</i>
Detail #2	<i>See beauty all around</i>
	<i>Forces you to notice little things that make life beautiful, nature, people, random things, appreciate it more</i>
Optional Detail #3	<i>Escape into imagination</i>
	<i>Create cool world, cool characters, relax, escape real life</i>
Closing Sentence	<i>Drawing super fun hobby</i>

Drawing is a fun hobby. You can get out your emotions. If you are sad or angry, you can draw something cool. You feel good. You can see the beauty that is in life. Drawing forces you to notice all the little things around you that make life beautiful. You can notice nature, people, and other random things. It makes you enjoy life more. You can also escape into your imagination. You can create your own world and cool characters. You relax for a little bit. You can escape from real life. Drawing is a super fun hobby.



On a separate sheet of paper, draft your paragraph using the information in your plan. Double-space your draft so you can revise later.

Complete



Finalize : After your composition is at its best, *edit* for mechanical errors and create a clean, properly formatted copy to submit.

Before finishing your composition, look for and correct any mechanical or formatting errors in order to make the composition as clean as possible. If you are typing your composition, utilize the word processor's *spelling and grammar check*. But watch out! These automatic tools do not always catch every error, and sometimes the corrections they offer are wrong. Use the technology that you have at your disposal, but also edit the composition yourself.

Be sure to check for:

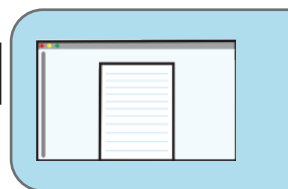
- spelling errors
- homophone errors
- incorrect or missing punctuation
- capitalization mistakes
- spacing problems
- incorrect formatting
- missing citations (if any are needed)

Follow the formatting instructions required by your teacher, or follow the formatting instructions explained on page 130.



On a separate sheet of paper, finalize the composition. Use the checklist on the following page to help you. Edit for errors and format the paper properly.

Complete



Do you need **extra practice** with this type of writing? Follow the steps of the writing process a second time with a new prompt!

Check out pages 142-143 for examples of an effective and an ineffective expository paragraph!

Expository Paragraph Checklist

Opening Sentence

	Do you have an opening sentence that introduces your main topic?
	Is your topic stated clearly?
	Is your opening sentence interesting?

Body Sentences (details and examples)

	Do you include details about your main topic?
	Do you reinforce your details with examples/support?
	Are your details and examples/support strong and well explained?

Closing Sentence

	Does your final sentence bring the paragraph to an effective end?
--	---

Overall

	Do you use appropriate transition words/phrases?
	Do you use vivid language that makes your writing rich and engaging?
	Do you include a variety of sentence structures that give your composition an effective rhythm?
	Do you stay on topic?
	Does the composition fulfill its purpose (to explain, describe, or inform)?

Mechanics

	Do you use proper spelling?
	Do you use capitalization correctly?
	Do you use proper punctuation (particularly commas)?
	Do you follow the formatting guidelines (indent, line spacing, page margins, etc.)?
	Is your name (and any other required information) on the paper?

Expository Paragraph Rubric

Format and Required Information	2 pts Formatted according to instructions with few, if any, mistakes. Name and other required information included.	1 pt Formatted with some mistakes. Name or other required information missing.	0.5 pts Formatted with several mistakes. Name and other required information missing.	____ / 2	
	6 pts Organized effectively (opening sentence, details with examples/support, closing sentence). Appropriate and effective transitions used.	5 pts Organized only generally according to the guidelines. General transitions used.	4 pts Organized vaguely according to the guidelines. Few and vague transitions used.	3 pts Organized poorly according to the guidelines. Transitions are not used.	____ / 6
Content	6 pts Includes at least 2 effective details with excellent examples/support. Word choice and sentence structure are rich and varied.	5 pts Includes at least 2 general details with basic examples/support. Word choice and sentence structure are generally effective and varied.	4 pts Does not include enough supporting details. Examples are missing or lacking in relevancy. Word choice and sentence structure are basic and lacking variety.	3 pts Does not include relevant supporting details or examples. Word choice and sentence structure are simple and vague.	____ / 6
	6 pts An effective example of expository writing.	5 pts A good example of expository writing.	4 pts A basic example of expository writing.	3 pts A poor example of expository writing.	____ / 6
Mechanics	5 pts Contains few, if any, errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling).	4 pts Contains some errors in the conventions of the English language.	3 pts Contains several errors in the conventions of the English language.	____ / 5	
	Total : _____ / 25 points				

Argumentative Essay

Brainstorm and Organize

Argumentative writing is a type of writing that argues the writer's opinion on a topic. The goal is to show how the writer's argument is valid and the stronger argument. When writing this type of composition, remember to do the following:

- ▶ Only use relevant evidence and reasoning as support
- ▶ Acknowledge and examine the other side of the argument
- ▶ Leave out over-the-top language and emotional appeals

Notice!

Before writing, research and analyze the evidence supporting both sides of the argument. Determine your personal stance on the topic based on which argument is stronger.

Prompts:

1. For decades, standardized testing, such as Common Core tests and STAR tests, have been used to assess students' comprehension and intelligence. In an essay to your local school board, defend your point of view on why standardized testing should continue to be used or be abolished. Include relevant evidence that supports your claim.

2. A high school in your community is considering removing their football program due to fear of putting students at risk for serious injuries with major, long-term consequences. Based on current evidence, come to your own conclusion on whether football is too dangerous for minors to play. In an essay, argue your opinion to parents of high school students on if the football program should be discontinued or not.

3. Fields such as science, medicine, and technology have increased human's survival rate and well-being. While fields such as art, music, drama, and literature have not aided survival, they are still upheld by society. Is art (in all its forms) still valuable and necessary even if it does not further human existence? In an essay, argue for your viewpoint on this question. Use solid evidence and reasoning as support.

Brainstorm : Choose a topic and think of several ideas to support/expound on that topic. Record several ideas, then choose the best ones.



Choose a prompt. On a separate sheet of paper, identify the audience and purpose, then brainstorm for your essay.

Brainstorm a topic to focus on as well as details that you could write about. Mark the best ideas.

Complete

Organize : Gather your thoughts and arrange them in a reasonable order to prepare for writing the composition.



Use the graphic organizer to record your argumentative thesis and to plan the three reasons that will form the basis for your body paragraphs.

Complete

Argumentative Thesis

Reason #1

Reason #2

Reason #3

The graphic organizer consists of a large rectangular box at the top labeled "Argumentative Thesis". Below this box, a horizontal line is connected to three vertical lines that lead down to three separate, vertically-oriented rectangular boxes. The first box on the left is labeled "Reason #1", the middle box is labeled "Reason #2", and the right box is labeled "Reason #3". Each of these three boxes is currently empty, intended for the student to write their reasons.

Argumentative Essay

Organize and Draft Body Paragraph #1



Use a separate sheet of paper, or the graphic organizer below, to plan your first body paragraph.

Complete

Opening Sentence	
Detail #1	
	<i>Example/Support</i>
Detail #2	
	<i>Example/Support</i>
<i>Optional Detail #3</i>	
	<i>Example/Support</i>
Closing Sentence	

Draft : Convert the ideas in your plan into a composition, focusing on creating complete and coherent sentences rather than perfect writing.

Check out the example below, which focuses on the prompt: *For decades, standardized testing, such as Common Core tests and STAR tests, have been used to assess students' comprehension and intelligence. In an essay to your local school board, defend your point of view on why standardized testing should continue to be used or be abolished. Include relevant evidence that supports your claim.*

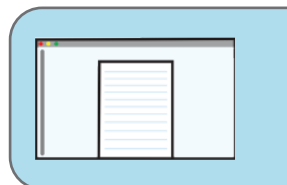
Opening Sentence	<i>Taking standardized tests makes the mental health of students bad</i>
Detail #1	<i>Stress/anxiety</i>
	<i>Test anxiety, worsens mental health of students who already deal with mental health conditions</i>
Detail #2	<i>Self-esteem</i>
	<i>Students feel pressure to be perfect, when students do not get good grades, they feel bad about themselves</i>
Closing Sentence	<i>Taking standardized tests makes the mental health of students bad</i>

Taking standardized tests makes the mental health of students bad. These tests cause a lot of stress and anxiety, like test anxiety. This makes students not perform well. Students sometimes do not have enough time to study, so they cram and get little sleep, which makes test anxiety worse. It makes students' mental health worse if they already deal with mental health issues. They make the self-esteem of students worse. These tests make students feel like they have to be perfect. If they do not get a great score, they feel bad about themselves. Taking standardized tests makes the mental health of students bad.



On a separate sheet of paper, draft your first body paragraph. Double-space your draft so that you can revise later.

Complete



Argumentative Essay

Organize and Draft Opening and Closing Paragraphs

The opening paragraph of an essay should:

- **Hook** the reader's interest
- Introduce the topic
- Present the **thesis statement**

Use a hook that introduces your topic effectively and leads smoothly into the argumentative thesis. See Lesson 42 to review the different types of hooks.

The **closing paragraph** of an essay should:

- **Restate** your thesis
- Include closing remarks
- Finish with a memorable conclusion

Tip!

Consider referring back to the hook (in the opening paragraph) in the closing paragraph. This technique will create a sense of cohesiveness and make the close even more satisfying for the audience!

Check out the example drafts of the opening and closing paragraphs. Notice how the final remarks in the closing paragraph echo statements in the hook and comments in the opening paragraph.

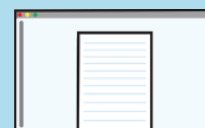
For decades, standardized testing has been used to assess how smart and capable a student is, but it is not effective. Changes need to be made in the education system. Standardized testing should be abolished because it wears down on students' mental health, does not measure students' intelligence, and is unfair.

In closing, standardized testing should be abolished because it wears down on students' mental health, does not measure students' intelligence, and is unfair. These tests are ineffective, and making this change will make the education system better and help students in the long run.



On a separate sheet of paper, draft your opening and closing paragraphs. Include the thesis statement and restatement in the proper places. Double-space your drafts so that you can revise later.

Complete



Argumentative Essay

Revise for Word Choice and Sentence Structure

Revising for Word Choice and Sentence Structure

Make sure your essay is written in an engaging and effective manner. Evaluate your composition by working through the following checklist:

- Do I avoid bland, vague, or repetitive word choices?
- Do I use vivid language?
- Do I use a variety of sentence structures?
- Do I use proper subject/verb agreement?
- Do I avoid unclear subjects?
- Do I avoid the generic “you”?
- Do I avoid using unnecessary/too many personal pronouns?



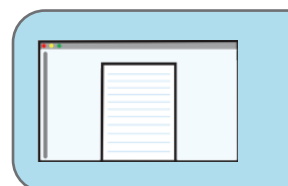
Check out the example below, which is a revision of Body Paragraph #1:

First, standardized testing worsens students' mental health in many ways. Before or during an exam, students commonly experience test anxiety, and while it helps some perform better, many end up doing worse. Students who have busy schedules are more likely to experience overwhelming test anxiety and perform poorly due to sleep deprivation and lack of time to study. Furthermore, standardized testing has negative, long-term consequences on students' self esteem. Due to the competitive nature of these tests, students oftentimes feel the pressure to get a perfect score and define their self-worth by grades. Students who get an average or below average score may feel less confident in themselves, which can heighten students' mental distress, especially if they already have mental disorders. Overall, removing standardized tests from schools is crucial to creating a positive, encouraging learning environment.



Reread your draft and mark areas that need to be adjusted. Make notes around the composition showing the changes you want to make in order to make your writing stronger. Then, revise the draft on a new sheet of paper.

Complete



Argumentative Essay

Finalize

Finalize : After your composition is at its best, *edit* for mechanical errors and create a clean, properly formatted copy to submit.

Before finishing your personal essay, look for and correct any mechanical or formatting errors in order to make the essay as clean as possible. If you are typing your composition, utilize the word processor's *spelling and grammar check*. But watch out! These automatic tools do not always catch every error, and sometimes the corrections they offer are wrong. Use the technology that you have at your disposal, but also edit the composition yourself.

Be sure to check for:

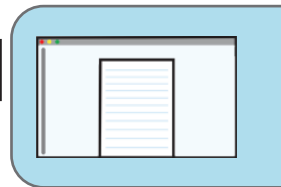
- spelling errors
- homophone errors
- incorrect or missing punctuation
- capitalization mistakes
- spacing problems
- incorrect formatting
- missing citations (if any are needed)

Follow the formatting instructions required by your teacher, or follow the formatting instructions explained on page 130.



On a separate sheet of paper, finalize the composition. Use the checklist on the following page to help you. Edit for errors and format the paper properly.

Complete



Do you need **extra practice** with this type of writing? Follow the steps of the writing process a second time with a new prompt!

Check out pages 235-237 for examples of an effective and an ineffective argumentative essay!

Argumentative Essay Checklist

Opening Paragraph

	Do you include an effective hook?
	Do you introduce your main topic?
	Do you include a thesis statement as the final sentence of the paragraph?
	Does your thesis contain your main point and generally reveal what the rest of the essay is about?

Body Paragraph #1

	Is the paragraph organized with an opening sentence, body sentences, and a closing sentence?
	Are your details strong and argumentative?
	Are your examples/supporting points relevant and effective?
	Does this paragraph effectively support your thesis and argue a point in your essay's main argument?

Body Paragraph #2

	Is the paragraph organized with an opening sentence, body sentences, and a closing sentence?
	Are your details strong and argumentative?
	Are your examples/supporting points relevant and effective?
	Does this paragraph effectively support your thesis and argue a point in your essay's main argument?

Body Paragraph #3

	Is the paragraph organized with an opening sentence, body sentences, and a closing sentence?
	Are your details strong and argumentative?
	Are your examples/supporting points relevant and effective?
	Does this paragraph effectively support your thesis and argue a point in your essay's main argument?

Closing Paragraph

	Do you include a reworded restatement of your thesis as the first sentence of the paragraph?
	Does your final paragraph bring the essay to an effective close and include a memorable conclusion?

Overall

	Do you use appropriate transitions between thoughts and paragraphs?
	Do you use vivid language that makes your writing rich and engaging?
	Do you include a variety of sentence structures that give your composition an effective rhythm?
	Do you stay on topic?
	Does the composition fulfill its purpose (to argue)?

Mechanics

	Do you use proper spelling?
	Do you use capitalization correctly?
	Do you use proper punctuation (particularly commas)?
	Do you follow the formatting guidelines (indent, line spacing, page margins, etc.)?
	Is your name (and any other required information) on the paper?

Argumentative Essay Rubric

Format and Required Information	10 pts Formatted according to instructions with few, if any, mistakes. Name and other required information included.	5 pts Formatted with some mistakes. Name or other required information missing.	1 pt Formatted with several mistakes. Name and other required information missing.	_____ / 10		
Opening Paragraph	10 pts Opening paragraph introduces topic excellently. Interesting and effective hook.	7 pts Opening paragraph introduces topic well. Adequate hook.	4 pts Opening paragraph introduces topic poorly. Ineffective hook.	1 pt Opening paragraph is not included.	_____ / 10	
Thesis	10 pts Thesis statement and restatement are included in the proper places. Thesis correctly and clearly represents the content of the essay.	7 pts Thesis statement and restatement are included in the proper places. Thesis incorrectly and/or unclearly represents the content of the essay.	4 pts Thesis statement and/or restatement are incorrectly placed and/or missing. Thesis does not represent the content of the essay.	1 pt Neither thesis nor restatement are effectively included.	_____ / 10	
Body Paragraphs	20 pts Body paragraphs contain detailed support and examples. Support and examples are presented in an excellent manner.	16 pts Body paragraphs contain general support and examples. Support and examples are presented in a suitable manner.	12 pts Body paragraphs contain adequate support and examples. Support and examples are presented in an average manner.	8 pts Body paragraphs contain poor support and examples. Support and examples are presented in an ineffective manner.	4 pts Body paragraphs do not contain support and examples.	_____ / 20
Closing Paragraph	10 pts Closing paragraph brings essay to a close excellently.	7 pts Closing paragraph brings essay to a close well.	4 pts Closing paragraph brings essay to a close poorly.	1 pt Closing paragraph is not included.	_____ / 10	
Writing Type	10 pts An effective example of an argumentative essay.	7 pts A good example of an argumentative essay.	4 pts A basic example of an argumentative essay.	1 pt A poor example of an argumentative essay.	_____ / 10	
Transitions	10 pts Appropriate and effective transitions are used between thoughts and paragraphs.	7 pts General transitions are used between thoughts and paragraphs.	4 pts Few and vague transitions are used between thoughts and paragraphs.	1 pt Inappropriate and/or missing transitions between thoughts and paragraphs.	_____ / 10	
Word Choice and Sentence Structure	10 pts Word choice and sentence structure are rich and varied.	8 pts Word choice and sentence structure are well-chosen and somewhat varied.	6 pts Word choice and sentence structure are adequate and somewhat varied.	4 pts Word choice and sentence structure are basic and lack variety.	1 pt Word choice is vague, and sentences are simple and fragmented.	_____ / 10
Mechanics	10 pts Contains few, if any, errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling).	5 pts Contains some errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling).	1 pt Contains several errors in the conventions of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling).		_____ / 10	

Total : _____ / 100 points