

PRACTICE BOOK

MACMILLAN ENGLISH

THINKING
AND WRITING
PROCESSES

8055
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OVERVIEW

The Writing Process

The **writing process** is the process by which you discover what you want to say and how you can best say it. The three types of activities that make up the writing process are:

- **prewriting**—generating ideas and preparing to write
- **writing a first draft**, or **discovery draft**—getting your thoughts down on paper
- **revising** (also called **postwriting**)—questioning, rethinking, and editing your draft until it says what you want it to say; preparing a final copy, proofreading it, and “publishing” it so that you can present it and share it with others.

PRACTICE. Read the first draft of a paragraph written by a student. Then read the revised version that follows it. Compare the two versions, and then answer the questions.

FIRST DRAFT

As I stepped outside, I thought that never had I seen such a day. ~~It was a perfect day.~~ The air was soft, clear, and fragrant with the smell of roses, ^{and} ~~and~~ freshly cut grass. The sun shone down warmly. The sound of birds chirping happily came from the shining, green leaves of the tall trees. On the moist, lush grass stretched a large, golden dog, blinking contentedly in ^{the} bright sunlight. I ran into the house for my camera. I knew I wanted a record of this wonderful day.

REVISION

As I stepped outside on that June morning, I thought that never had I seen such a day. The air was soft and clear and fragrant with the smell of roses and freshly cut grass. The sun's rays spread just the right amount of sweet warmth. On the moist, lush grass a large, golden dog blinked contentedly in the bright sunlight. I rushed into the house for my camera. At least I could record the sight of that day. My memory would have to remember its softness and sounds and delicious odors.

1. What misspelled word was corrected? _____
2. What four words were added to the first sentence to make it clearer and more precise? _____
3. What effect does changing “tall trees” to “towering trees” in sentence 4 have on the image of that sentence? _____
4. How does changing the last sentence of the first draft into *two* sentences affect the impression of the paragraph? _____

PREWRITING

Generating Ideas Through Freewriting and Brainstorming

Freewriting is writing done continuously for a specified, very brief period of time. In freewriting you record your thoughts and free associations without worrying about logic, grammar, or style. The following example of freewriting wanders without any structure; it even contains errors. You will notice, however, that it does contain many ideas.

Freewriting Sample

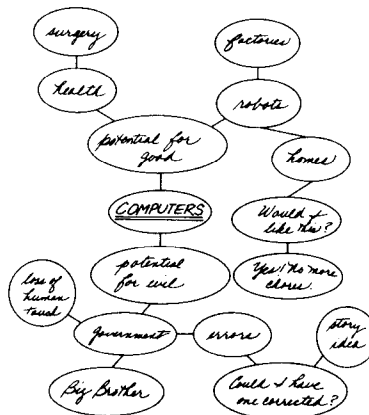
We've been asked to write for five minutes—nonstop. We're supposed to jot down anything that comes into our heads. So far nothing has popped into mine. I feel like a computer without a program. Computers—there must be something I could say about them. Wouldn't it be great if people were like computers and could be programmed? Or would it? Right now, I'd want to be a "writer" computer person. This isn't leading anywhere. What about an all-wise, all-knowing computer? What about its potential for evil? Could it be programmed only to be just, kind, etc.?—now that's a possibility!

Brainstorming is another way to generate ideas through free association. In brainstorming you jot down your thoughts in any order, writing disconnected words or phrases if you want to. There are two formats for brainstorming. In the so-called "list format" an orderly list like the one shown on the left below is created. Other writers use a more open format, with circles and lines showing connections between ideas. The example on the right below is an example of **clustering**, or open-form brainstorming.

Brainstorming: List Format

1. The leader of the world might be an incredibly complex computer.
2. It would be wise, loving, decisive. It would settle problems of nations—all of whom had agreed to abide by its decisions. No more wars, then.
3. What if one nation decided to drop out—no longer abide?

Brainstorming: Clustering



PRACTICE 1. On a separate sheet of paper, freewrite on a topic listed below for as many minutes as your teacher directs. Save your work for later.

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. TV news programs | 3. politics in your community | 5. high school sports |
| 2. videocassettes | 4. parents | 6. humor |

PRACTICE 2. On a separate sheet of paper brainstorm on another topic from the list above. Use either the list format or the clustering format. Save your work for later.

PREWRITING

Generating Ideas Through Charting

Prewriting is that part of the writing process in which you find an appealing writing idea and prepare to write about that idea.

Charting helps you focus on specific life experiences in order to generate writing ideas.

PRACTICE 1. The left-hand column in the chart below lists ten general areas of personal experience that could be the basis for writing ideas. Fill in the middle column with specific instances. Then in the right-hand column list writing ideas suggested by these instances. You may have more than one item in each column.

AREA OF EXPERIENCE	SPECIFIC INSTANCE	WRITING IDEA
HOLIDAY MEMORIES		
NEIGHBORHOODS		
ANIMALS		
ATHLETICS AND FITNESS		
THE NATION AND THE WORLD		
CLOTHES		
MOVIES, TV, AND RECORDS		
CARS		
FRIENDSHIP		
NATURE AND SCIENCE		

PRACTICE 2. Think of another general area of experience and add it to the chart above using the three blank boxes at the bottom. Fill in the middle column with specific instances and the right-hand column with writing ideas.

PREWRITING

Exploring and Focusing a Topic

After you have generated writing ideas, you might explore some of the workable ones. As you do so, keep in mind that your goal is to focus on a specific aspect of the subject about which you will write.

One way to explore a subject is to ask and answer specific questions about it. Among the kinds of questions you could ask are the following:

INFORMATIONAL QUESTIONS: *Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?*

PERSONAL QUESTIONS: EXAMPLES: What are my own experiences of the subject? What were my emotions during these experiences? What did I learn? What sensations did I feel?

PRACTICE 1. Use a writing idea that you generated on Worksheet 3 or one from Worksheet 2 to fill in the Exploring Chart below. In the blanks at the top of the left-hand column, indicate the writing idea and the kinds of questions you will be writing in the spaces. Write *Informational* or *Personal*. Then write those kinds of questions in the spaces. In the column headed "Answers to Questions," write the answers to the questions you wrote about your subject.

WRITING IDEA _____ Questions to Explore a Subject	
Questions	Answers to Questions
1.	
2.	
3.	

PRACTICE 2. Take the subject you explored in Practice 1, and narrow it down so that it can be covered in one paragraph. Use one of the techniques below.

Technique 1. Use an incident from the Answers column of your chart.

EXAMPLE: BROAD SUBJECT: humor
 NARROWER: high school humor
 STILL NARROWER: working on a school humor magazine

Technique 2. Identify one problem from your Answers column and solve it.

EXAMPLE: BROAD SUBJECT: school sports
 NARROWER: scholastic problems of sports
 STILL NARROWER: balancing sports with studying

BROAD SUBJECT: _____
 NARROWER TOPIC: _____
 STILL NARROWER TOPIC: _____

PREWRITING

Identifying Purpose and Audience

After generating and exploring ideas and narrowing your topic, you will need to think about your **purpose**—the goal you hope to accomplish in writing. Ask yourself what your purpose is in writing. Is it to *inform*, *explain*, *persuade*, *amuse*, *narrate*, *describe*, or some *combination* of these?

Next, ask yourself who your audience is. Keep in mind your audience's **identity**, **needs**, and **interests**. Are you writing for a general audience or a special audience? How much does your audience already know about your topic? An audience of senior citizens, for example, might not have the same knowledge of rock music as an audience of your classmates.

PRACTICE 1. Columns 1 and 2 of the Purpose/Audience Chart below have been filled in. You are to fill in columns 3 and 4. Before proceeding, carefully reread the information above. A sample has been given.

1 SUBJECT	2 NARROWED TOPIC	3 ALTERNATIVE PURPOSES	4 POTENTIAL AUDIENCE
parents	my mother's humorous sayings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to entertain readers • to describe one aspect of my mother's character • to narrate an incident about my mother 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • my teacher and classmates • my family • school literary magazine
computers	robots in the home		
TV news programs	TV news is too sensational.		

PRACTICE 2. Using one of the topics that emerged from your work on Worksheets 2, 3, or 4, fill in columns 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the blank spaces at the bottom of the chart above.

WRITING THE PARAGRAPH

Topic Sentences

A **topic sentence** states the main idea of a paragraph and points the direction for the other sentences to follow.

Most topic sentences are *declarative*, or statement sentences. Some topic sentences, however, may take the form of questions.

DECLARATIVE TOPIC SENTENCE: Many people enjoy treasure hunting.

QUESTION TOPIC SENTENCE: Are you aware of how many people enjoy treasure hunting?

Most topic sentences tend to be at the beginning of paragraphs. However, a topic sentence in the middle of a paragraph can unite the sentences that come before and after it. A topic sentence at the end of a paragraph serves as a clincher sentence to ensure that the reader has a firm grasp of your idea.

PRACTICE 1. Underline the topic sentence in each paragraph below.

1. Today treasure hunting is a small but vigorous industry. There are several magazines devoted exclusively to treasure hunting, and each year a number of books on the subject appear. A variety of devices, from simple metal detectors to highly sophisticated instruments for underwater exploration, is offered for sale. There are more than a dozen U.S. companies exclusively devoted to treasure hunting, as well as an unknown number of full-time free-lance treasure hunters. Each year people sink untold hundreds of thousands of dollars into schemes that are supposed to recover this or that sunken galleon or find a buried treasure.

—Daniel Cohen, *Gold*

Turn the topic sentence into a question, and write it in its question form below.

2. The first vampire movie was *Nosferatu*, a silent film made in 1922. In 1931 Bela Lugosi starred in the famous *Dracula*. There have been several versions of *Dracula* since Lugosi's classic. More recent films, such as *The Fearless Vampire Killers* and *Love at First Bite*, are spoofs of the vampire legend rather than serious horror movies. Clearly, people like vampire movies very much.

Turn the topic sentence into a question, and write it in its question form below.

PRACTICE 2. Circle the topic sentence you underlined in paragraph 2 above, and move it so that it appears in the middle of the paragraph. Reread the paragraph carefully so that you place the topic sentence in a logical spot.

WRITING THE PARAGRAPH

**Developing the Topic Sentence with Concrete Details
and with Examples or Incidents**

One way to develop a topic sentence into a paragraph is to support it with concrete details. **Concrete details** describe the appearance, sound, smell, taste, and feel of an object, person, place, or event. Another way to develop a topic sentence is to support it with **examples** or **incidents**.

PRACTICE 1. Read the paragraph below. Underline the topic sentence and the concrete details that support it.

It had been a strong spring day, abruptly as warm as midsummer. The sun flooded the parks and streets with sudden heat—Flegg and his friends had felt stifled in the thick winter clothes. The green glare of the new leaves everywhere struck the eye too fiercely, the air seemed almost sticky from the exhalations of buds and swelling resins. Cold winter senses were overcome—the girls had complained of headaches, and their thoughts had grown confused and as uncomfortable as the wool underneath against their skins.

—William Sansom, "The Vertical Ladder"

PRACTICE 2. Read the paragraph below. Locate the topic sentence and the examples that support it. Write the topic sentence on the first line below the paragraph. Using your own words, write the supporting examples on the numbered lines below the topic sentence.

Searching for the mythological origin of flowers usually leads to tragedy. The narcissus grew where the beautiful Greek youth Narcissus pined over his own image. The hyacinths were born where Hyacinthus was accidentally killed by a discus thrown by Apollo. The red tulip is supposed to have sprung from the blood of the Persian Farhad, who threw himself off a mountain when he heard a false report of his beloved Shirin's death.

—Lillian Langseth-Christensen, "Holland's Spring Flowers"

Topic sentence: _____

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
- _____

WRITING THE PARAGRAPH

Developing the Topic Sentence with Facts or Statistics and with Reasons

One way of developing a topic sentence into a paragraph is by supporting it with **facts** or **statistics**. The strength given by facts and statistics helps give your work authority.

Another way of developing a topic sentence is to support it with **reasons**. Usually, the topic sentence in this kind of paragraph states an opinion of some kind. It may be as simple as why you dislike a certain food. Then the paragraph is developed with reasons why you feel the way you said you do in the topic sentence.

PRACTICE 1. Write a complete paragraph for the topic sentence below by using facts from the list below the writing lines.

Gold has several extremely desirable properties. _____

FACTS

- does not tarnish
- does not rust or corrode
- value fluctuates
- easy to melt and reuse because of low melting point
- useful for many purposes because it is soft

PRACTICE 2. Write a complete paragraph for the topic sentence below by using the reasons from the list below the writing lines.

I wish I had lived in the eighteenth century. _____

REASONS

- little air pollution
- no toxic waste dumps
- peace and quiet—no automobile, radio, or television noises
- no harmful chemical additives in food
- no nuclear war threat or dangerous radioactivity

WRITING THE PARAGRAPH

Closing Sentences

A paragraph often requires a strong closing sentence. A closing sentence can do any of the following:

- clinch an argument
- restate the topic sentence
- announce a conclusion or decision
- give a personal opinion
- ask a question

PRACTICE. Each paragraph below contains no closing sentence. Read the two sentences that follow each paragraph. Put a check mark next to the sentence that would make the stronger closing sentence for that paragraph. In the blank after the sentence you checked, indicate which function that closing sentence serves. Refer to the five functions listed at the top of the page.

1. While glorifying the cowboy's struggle against outlaws, outcasts, and outdoor living, the media have ignored another bane of his existence: headgear. The sad truth is that the early drover had almost as much trouble with his hat as he did with varmints. Made of the cheapest wool, it had no body whatsoever. The brim collapsed after one or two wearings, and if he wanted to see where he was going, he had to pin or tie it to the crown. —Sandra Kauffmann, *The Cowboy Catalogue*
- ☐ It was not until the advent of felt that the cowboy was able to expand his field of vision.
- _____
- ☐ Thus, a cowboy's early headgear was a real hindrance to him.
- _____
2. A certain kind of wind, called a *foehn*, has a drastic effect on people's health and behavior. An Israeli physicist has reported that the wind increases the positive ions in the air; this change, in turn, affects behavior. During a *foehn*, such as California's Santa Ana wind, some people experience headaches and nausea. Blood does not clot normally. People's tempers flare, as well. Teachers report unruly behavior in classroom, traffic accidents increase, and the crime rate goes up.
- ☐ It is amazing that something like weather could have an effect on the crime rate.
- _____
- ☐ What other effects does weather have upon how we humans behave, I wonder?
- _____

WRITING THE PARAGRAPH

Unity

A **unified paragraph** is a paragraph in which all the sentences belong together and develop one main idea.

PRACTICE. In each of the following paragraphs, one sentence spoils the unity of the paragraph. Write the unnecessary sentence on the lines following the paragraph.

1. The game of marbles, in one variation or another, seems to have universal appeal. It is played almost everywhere in the United States and is also popular in the British Isles. Children in Brazil play their version, called *gude*, while African youngsters play *jorrah*. Australian players use marbles made from polished wood, whereas players in Turkey and Syria shoot marbles made from baked clay. Some games are hard to play on concrete.

2. Colonists evidently brought the game of marbles with them from Europe, and Americans became great enthusiasts. In fact, some well-known patriots enjoyed the game. George Washington, reports say, was a great fan of marbles. Washington, during the Revolutionary War, spent a long winter at Valley Forge. Thomas Jefferson not only played marbles with expertise, but also amassed a collection of marbles of which he was extremely proud. John Quincy Adams, too, was a marbles player. Abraham Lincoln reportedly played marbles with gusto and was an extremely competitive player.

3. Marbles are versatile, and people use them for many things beside games. For example, marbles are used as reflectors in road signs and in beds in fish hatcheries. Manufacturers use marbles that have been "treated" to alter their appearance in making costume jewelry. Some costume jewelry is beautiful and, by the way, fairly expensive. Fabric manufacturers use marbles that have been melted to make fiberglass for use in draperies and cars. Marbles are also used in aerosol cans.

WRITING THE PARAGRAPH

Coherence: Repeated Words, Synonyms, Pronouns

A **coherent** paragraph is a paragraph in which the sentences are clearly and logically connected to one another.

You can achieve coherence by

- repeating the same word in two sentences
- using words with the same meanings (synonyms) in two sentences
- using pronouns to refer to a word, group of words, or idea that appears in the preceding sentence

PRACTICE 1. The sentences in each word group below are coherent because they are linked by repetition of the same word, by synonyms, and by pronouns. Circle the words that tie the sentences together in each group.

1. There are three effective methods for protecting woolen garments from moths. The first is using camphor balls. The camphor repels the moths but unfortunately leaves a distinctive smell. Some people, however, do not seem to mind this odor. An alternative is unscented soap. Placed among the garments, the soap also protects them from moths—without the aroma. A third way is wrapping garments in newspaper; printer's ink keeps moths away.
2. Grandfather Novak loved his grandchildren deeply. When they were young, he would spend hours singing songs with them. Many of these songs were ones he remembered from his youth in "the old country," as he called his country of birth. This land was rich in folk songs, and Grandfather seemed to remember many of these tunes.

PRACTICE 2. The paragraph below needs to be made more coherent. Use repetition, synonyms, and pronouns to link the sentences. Write the improved paragraph on the lines provided.

Hot, spicy foods are gaining popularity among Americans of all backgrounds. Gone are the days when hot, spicy foods were consumed only by people of Mexican, Indian, or Szechuan Chinese backgrounds. Now, people of all kinds are rushing to Mexican, Indian, and Szechuan restaurants. People of all kinds are buying cookbooks that teach these cuisines.

WRITING THE PARAGRAPH

Coherence: Time and Place Transitions

Transitions are words that create coherence by making the movement from one sentence to another clear, smooth, and easy to follow.

TRANSITIONS THAT SHOW TIME

after	finally	immediately	meanwhile	soon
always	first	last	now	then
before	following	later	sometimes	until

TRANSITIONS THAT SHOW PLACE

above	beneath	horizontally	opposite	there
ahead	down	inside	outside	under
around	far	near	over	vertically
below	here	next to	parallel	within

PRACTICE 1. Complete the following paragraph by writing an appropriate transition in the numbered blanks. Choose the words from the lists given at the top of the page. The first blank has been filled for you.

The earth is a geologically active and constantly changing planet. The birth of a volcanic island provides dramatic evidence of the geological activity within the earth. First
1, lava from inside the earth pushes up through weak areas on the ocean floor. _____, a sort of
underwater mountain, known as a seamount, begins to develop beneath the sea. _____,
3 because of the great pressure of the sea water, the volcano cannot erupt immediately. Gradually, lava builds up in the mountain. _____,
4 after many eruptions, the top of the volcanic mountain bursts through the sea. _____,
5 gases, steam, and lava erupt into the air, and a new volcanic island becomes visible.

PRACTICE 2. Complete the following paragraphs by writing appropriate transition words in each of the numbered blanks. Choose the words from the lists given at the top of the page.

_____,
1 Russell could see the details of the farmhouse as he came down the lane.
_____,
2 a light flickered faintly. _____,
3 he saw the outline of the chimney tops against the sky. _____
4 the house stood a solitary tree. _____
5 its mighty branches, the house seemed to be safe, to be protected.