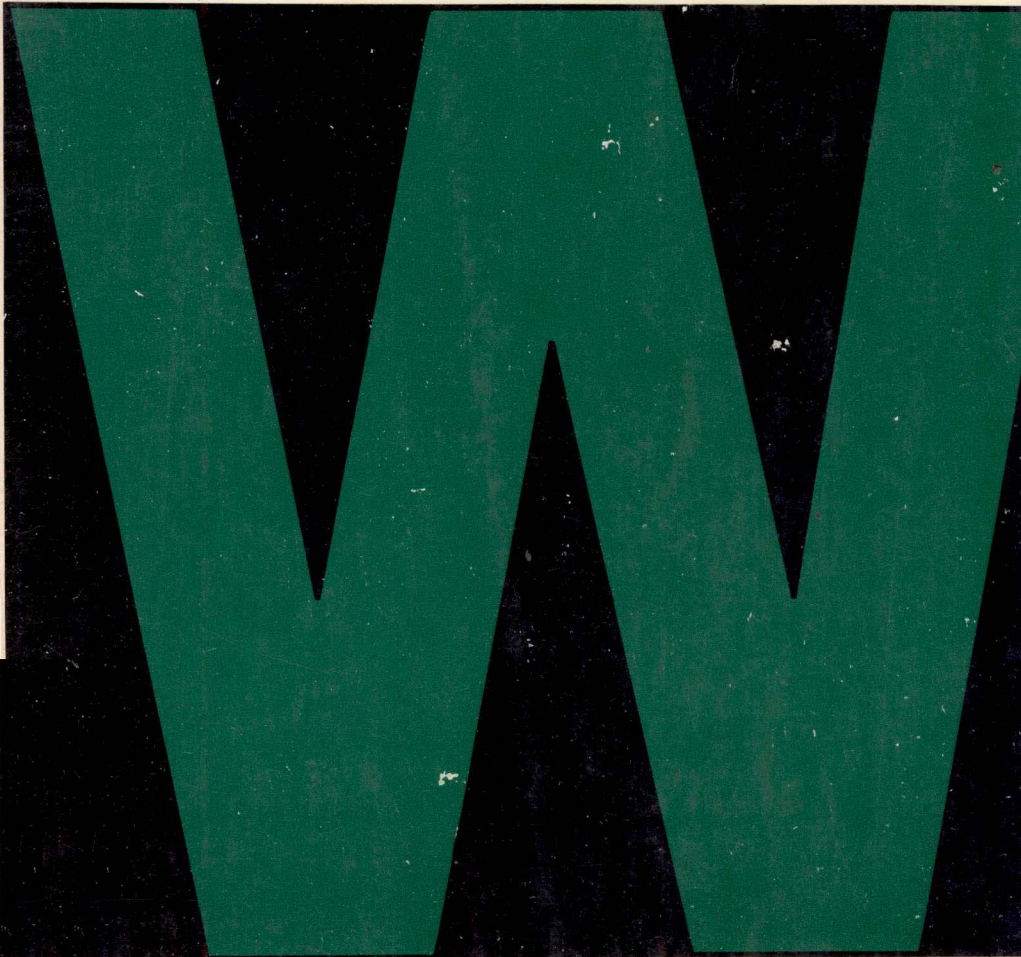


McGraw-Hill
Basic
Skills

Writing Skills

Second Edition

Phillip Shew and Debra Pincar



Writing Skills

**A Program for
Self-Instruction**

SECOND EDITION

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Writing Skills

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Writing Skills

McGraw-Hill Basic Skills

Tools for Learning Success

Dr. Alton L. Raygor, Consulting Editor

STUDY SKILLS	READING	VOCABULARY	SPELLING	WRITING	MATHEMATICS
Yates: <i>Listening and Note-Taking</i> LTI: <i>Library Skills</i> Raygor and Wark: <i>Systems for Study</i> Samson: <i>Problem Solving Improvement</i> Wark and Mogen: <i>Read, Underline, Review</i>	Fisher: <i>Reading to Discover Organization</i> Fisher: <i>Reading to Understand Science</i> Harnadak: <i>Critical Reading Improvement</i> Maxwell: <i>Skimming and Scanning Skills</i> Raygor and Schick: <i>Reading at Efficient Rates</i> Raygor: <i>Reading for the Main Idea</i> Raygor: <i>Reading for Significant Facts</i>	Davis: <i>Basic Vocabulary Skills</i>	LTI: <i>Basic Spelling Skills</i>	Shew and Pincar: <i>Writing Skills</i>	Eraut: <i>Fundamentals of Arithmetic</i> Eraut: <i>Fundamentals of Elementary Algebra</i> Eraut: <i>Fundamentals of Intermediate Algebra</i>

Pretests and Posttests are available to measure progress.

Editor's Introduction

This book is part of a system of materials—McGraw-Hill Basic Skills: Tools for Learning Success. Designed at the University of Minnesota Reading and Study Skills Center, Basic Skills is aimed at college-bound high school students, and junior college and college students who need to improve those skills necessary for academic success. The system consists of *tests* to determine instructional needs and *materials* designed to meet those needs, plus an instructor's manual to explain the tests and materials and the relationship between them. The purpose of the *tests* is to find out what instruction a student needs in basic skills; the purpose of the *materials* is to give that instruction. Each student gets what he or she needs, without wasting time on unnecessary tasks.

Six basic skill topics—study, reading, vocabulary, spelling, writing, and mathematics—are covered, and two tests (A and B forms) are provided for each topic. Subscales on the tests are matched to accompanying instructional materials: thus a student with a low score on one or more subscales gets instruction in the corresponding skill. The second form of the test may be used to evaluate progress after instruction.

The instructional materials are designed to be used separately, if desired, and can be purchased as single units. Most of the materials are suitable for adoption as textbooks in such basic skill courses as Freshman English, Communications, How to Study, Vocabulary Development, and Remedial or Developmental Mathematics. Individualized diagnosis and instruction are optional in such settings.

This second edition, prepared after several years of successful use of the first edition, provides several new features that will make it even more useful. The three books have been combined into one effective program. The material is extremely well organized to teach skills in the early parts that are used in the later parts.

The authors have done many things to increase the clarity, the diagnostic features, and the down-to-earth utility of the material, and they have done so in a pleasant, interesting style.

The main objectives of the authors were to focus on student life in college and to promote strategies for effective study. The authors have done both, and have produced an extremely effective instructional tool.

Alton L. Raygor
Consulting Editor
University of Minnesota

To the Instructor

This book attempts to set forth a clear system for enabling college students to express their intended meaning effectively in both sentences and paragraphs—the basic necessities for good writing.

The revision of three prior texts into one has combined the original traditional grammar emphasis with one that is rooted in transformational grammar and rhetoric. The existing structural strengths of the original text have been maintained, with editing aimed at conciseness and student involvement.

It is hoped that the student will develop a personally useful set of strategies and rules for writing from the ideas presented in this text. The stories and examples were based on two major criteria: student life in college and strategies for effective study.

It is possible to measure growth in knowledge of writing rules by using the companion McGraw-Hill Writing Test. For best use of the text in relation to the test, start with the diagnostic item analysis of the student's writing strengths and weaknesses. Through using specific parts of the text and periodic criterion reference check tests to strengthen diagnosed areas of weakness, the student should be able to progress toward proficiency as a college-level writer.

In order to have the option of directly measuring growth in writing fluency, we are also including a writing sample evaluation form on page xii. Such a form can be modified to your individual tests. The idea is to be able to evaluate systematically the student's actual writing and to be able to get pre- and posttest indices of the student's progress in writing. It may very well be a good idea to generally review for the student a system for organizing his or her initial writing sample theme. The following approach has proved helpful in getting our developmental students started: (1) Identify a topic to write about (you may wish to provide that for the student); (2) brainstorm all the ideas the student can think of on the topic; (3) eliminate all ideas that are not important to the topic as delimited; (4) group related ideas together; and (5) arrange the groups in the order that the writer feels makes most sense. Such a system will enable the student to start out in theme writing. *Writing Skills* should improve the sentence and paragraph skills necessary for writing a polished theme.

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There are many people who have contributed to this text. The Jersey City State College students who have offered suggestions were most helpful. Ellen Fuchs, Don Burden, and Bill Talkington, our editors from McGraw-Hill, offered initial inspiration, sound advice, and warm encouragement. Bob Bently of Lansing Community College, Pat Hartwell of the University of Cincinnati, and Jane Eeder of Manhattan Community College shaped much of the direction of this revised edition with their penetrating reviews. Mark Edmonds and Greg Waters of the University of Michigan, Flint; John Langan of Atlantic Community College; Dave Zwengler of Rutgers University College; Ed Ezor, Liliane MacPherson, and Ted Lane of Jersey City State College provided reinforcement through their shared similar beliefs about the way writing should be taught. Gary Spencer, Jim Hengoe, Hans Held, and Bob Latzer of Jersey City State College have been tremendously supportive allies as administrators of the programs in which we've taught. Thanks most especially to Bobby Kargenian and Candace Freeman for doing the typing and the copying and for offering valuable suggestions about content despite the rigors of their own schedule as full-time students.

*Phillip Shew
Debra Pincar*

To the Student

Writing skill can be helpful in a variety of situations. Many times we write, only to find that our message was misunderstood by our reader. For instance, students often do poorly on essay tests, not because they don't know the answers, but because they cannot explain their thoughts on paper. Many graduates miss out on job interviews because they cannot write personal letters to prospective employers. Furthermore, people are often held back from job opportunities or promotions because of their limited writing skill.

Good writing begins with understanding how to construct and use effective sentences and paragraphs. The intent of this book is to enable you to acquire skill in writing sentences and paragraphs that will be useful to you in a wide variety of situations.

In this book we will set up questions and examples for you, and you will write your answers directly in the book. You can check your answers as you go along. This approach is designed to help you become your own instructor, editor, and critic, so that your writing expresses your intention to your readers. To see how you do this, turn now to the next page.

*Phillip Shew
Debra Pincar*

Writing Sample

Student's Name: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Reader's Name: _____

Number of Words in the Writing Sample: _____

PROBLEM	NUMBER OF ERRORS	NUMBER OF ERRORS PER 50 WORDS
1. Sentence fragments	_____	_____
2. Subject-verb agreement	_____	_____
3. Verb tenses	_____	_____
4. Compound sentences: use of commas and connectives	_____	_____
5. Run-on sentences and comma splices	_____	_____
6. Complex sentences and their punctuation, including the semicolon	_____	_____
7. Commas to set off introductory and parenthetical elements	_____	_____
8. Commas and semicolons in a series	_____	_____
9. Faulty parallelism	_____	_____
10. Dangling modifiers	_____	_____
11. Mixed constructions	_____	_____
12. Shifts in number, tense, and person	_____	_____
13. Pronoun forms	_____	_____
14. Faulty pronoun reference	_____	_____
15. Modifier forms	_____	_____
16. Spelling	_____	_____
17. Omitted words	_____	_____
18. Terminal punctuation	_____	_____

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Section 1

The Sentence

In this section, we will give you some clues for writing good sentences. We will begin working with simple sentences and then proceed to more difficult ones. As you write frequently and compare what you write with what you read, you will develop your own guidelines for writing.

When you finish this chapter you will be able to (1) identify sentences and clauses; (2) avoid the two most common sentence mistakes, the fragment and run-on; and (3) differentiate among the three basic sentence types—simple, compound, and complex.

This program will not try to teach every English rule. Instead, we will help you get in touch with the logical connections that can be made between the natural oral language which you've already learned and the written language which you are learning.

The basic idea in writing is the same as it is in speaking. The sender of a message is trying to transfer his intended meaning to a receiver. People can communicate the same message in many ways. For example, when a baby falls down, he cries. When an older child falls down, she might say, "ow!" An adult who falls down might say, "My knee hurts!"

1

In writing, the form for expressing a message or idea is called the sentence. A sentence expresses a complete idea. It names who or what we are talking about, and it tells us something about it. Which of the examples above is communicating by means of a sentence?

The adult is using a sentence.

2

Look at this sentence: He yawns.

1. Which word answers the question, Who yawns?

2. Which word answers the question, He does what?

1. He (it names who we are talking about)
2. yawns (tells us something about him)

3

Now read these sentences. Then answer the questions that illustrate how a sentence explains itself.

1. Babies cry.
 - a. Who cries?

 - b. Babies do what?

2. George smokes.
 - a. Who smokes?

 - b. George does what?

1. a. Babies
b. cry
2. a. George
b. smokes

4

You can conclude that a sentence must contain at least (Check the correct answer.)

- _____ a. one basic part
 _____ b. two basic parts
 _____ c. three basic parts

b

5

There are names for the two basic parts of a sentence. You have probably heard these names before—subject and verb.

In "He yawns," the *subject* is the word that answers the question, Who yawns?

In the blank below, write the subject of the sentence "He yawns."

He

6

The verb is the word that answers the question, He does what?

In the sentence "He yawns," what is the verb?

yawns

7

Read this sentence: Lightning strikes.

1. a. What strikes?

b. The *subject* of this sentence is _____.

2. a. Lightning does what?

b. The *verb* of this sentence is _____.

1. a. Lightning

b. Lightning

2. a. strikes

b. strikes

8

Two-word sentences are the *simplest* types of sentence. In two-word sentences, one word must be the _____ and the other the _____.

(Either order)

subject

verb

9

From your answer to the last frame, you can see that all sentences *must* have a _____ and a _____.

(Either order)

subject

verb

You may be thinking that people can and do communicate clearly without using sentences. For example, if someone asks, "Who went with you?" and your answer is "George," you will be understood.

However, when you speak, you have an advantage that you don't have when you write—if someone doesn't understand what you say to her, she can ask you what you mean. If she doesn't understand something you have written, you may not be around to explain it.

10

People will understand what you write much better if you _____
use complete sentences. (do) (do not)

do

Every sentence has a subject and verb—but not all groups of words with a subject and verb are sentences. A sentence should express a complete idea. It should make sense. Look at this group of words: "He went to." This group of words has a subject ("He") and a verb ("went"). Is it a sentence?

no

11

"The noisy crowd" is not a sentence because it doesn't express a complete idea. It makes you ask questions like: What about the noisy crowd? Are these two groups of words sentences?

1. The disco was crowded.

Answer _____
(yes) (no)

2. The crowded disco.

Answer _____
(yes) (no)

1. yes
2. no

12

"The crowded disco" does not express a complete thought. It leaves the reader wondering "What happened at the crowded disco?" More information is needed in order for this sentence to make sense. Tell what happened at the crowded disco. For example:

Intimacy was difficult at the crowded disco.

or

The crowded disco excites me.

Writing good sentences becomes easier if you remember these three clues. Ask yourself:

1. Is there a subject?
2. Is there a verb?
3. Does what I'm saying make sense?

Are these groups of words sentences? If not, add what is missing and make them into sentences. Have your instructor check your work.

1. He ate.

(Answer yes or no) _____

2. After he ate.

(Answer yes or no) _____

3. While it rained.

(Answer yes or no) _____

4. Before the concert.

(Answer yes or no) _____

1. yes
2. No, add what happened after he ate.
3. No, add what happened while it rained.
4. No, add what happened before the concert.

13

There are three clues to writing good sentences. Let's review them. Write them in the blanks provided.

1. A sentence has a subject.
2. A sentence has a verb.
3. A sentence expresses a complete idea. It makes sense.

14

Now that we can write sentences, we can make our writing more interesting by adding more information to them. Let's go back to the sentence "He ate." We know that it is a sentence because it has a subject, a verb, and it makes sense. However, if more information were added we would know more about what he ate. For example:

He ate the sandwich.

Sandwich explains what he ate.

The term for the words used to complete the thought by telling who or what is *object*. In the sentence above, "sandwich" is the object. Pick out the object in the following sentences. Remember the two clues for finding the object: it answers the question who or what the subject did.

1. He fixed the car.
2. The secretary answered the telephone.

1. car
2. telephone