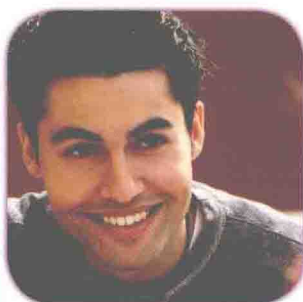


ENGLISH Essentials



What every college student needs to know
about grammar, punctuation, and usage

JOHN LANGAN • BETH JOHNSON



CUSTOM PUBLISHED FOR **NationalCollege**

ENGLISH Essentials

What every college student needs to know
about grammar, punctuation, and usage

John Langan

Atlantic Cape Community College

Beth Johnson

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English Essentials: What Every College Student Needs to Know About Grammar, Punctuation, and Usage.
Custom Published for National College

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NationalCollege

Foreword

If you are a new student, welcome to National College! If you are a returning student, we're glad to have you back!

Our goal is to provide affordable, high-quality instructional materials that are both timely and relevant. Custom textbooks help us to achieve this goal because they provide *only the information* that you need for your current course.

There are two benefits to using custom textbooks. First, the information in the books is streamlined so that it better matches the objectives for the course, meaning that the time you spend reading this textbook will be *time well spent*. Second, custom textbooks are often less expensive. Therefore, using custom textbooks saves you time and money!

We have been fortunate enough to be able to partner with this publisher to create custom textbooks that are specifically designed to meet the needs of National College. We would like to thank the publisher for all of their help, and we would also like to thank all of the staff and faculty who spent numerous hours reviewing each textbook. Without everyone's combined efforts, this custom publication would not have been such a successful venture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Longaker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Frank" being more prominent and the last name "Longaker" following in a similar style.

Frank Longaker
President, National College

NationalCollege

Welcome National College Student!

You may be wondering why are general education classes so important at National College? Believe it or not, these classes increase your technical skills and make you a more valuable and competent member of the work force. General Education courses encourage the appreciation of life experiences that reaches beyond your major field; they help you to develop a kind of world citizenship and strengthen your creative learning environment. These classes will increase your level of general knowledge and encourage critical thinking. The impact of a multi-disciplinary curriculum will prepare you for a lasting and satisfying career, one which supports an appreciation for all life experiences.

National College strives to ensure that every graduate will have exposure to general studies classes in psychology, mathematics, social sciences, language, literature, and written and oral communication. The value of these requirements lies in the importance of educating the complete person, preparing you for a productive life, and encouraging a love of learning. We hope you will want to pass on the legacy of your knowledge and accomplishments gained from the pages of this textbook and reflect on your learning experience as one which takes you to places you may have never visited.

Welcome to a world of exploration and boundless opportunities to frame your goals and achievements beyond your imagination.

Chair, General Studies Department

National College

National College Student Services

Financial Planning Services

For any questions regarding tuition, fees, books, and other charges, please call or stop by Financial Planning to speak with a representative. A Financial Planning representative will be happy to help you complete any necessary financial forms or paperwork that pertains to your financial assistance.

If you have any questions regarding scholarships or grants, please speak with a financial planning representative. Many employers also offer tuition reimbursement for their employees. A financial planner will be happy to assist you in determining whether your employer offers tuition reimbursement.

Student Services

Tutoring—during the course of your program you may find the need for additional assistance with your studies. National College offers peer tutoring services at no cost to you. If you need this service, call or stop by Student Services and a representative will assist you in locating an academic tutor to help you with your studies.

Advanced Placement—exams designed for students who wish to demonstrate their current skill level in selected areas. If successful, you will receive full credit for that particular course. There is no charge for these evaluations or for any credit received. A complete list of Advanced Placement Evaluations and examination times is available from Student Services.

Life Experience Credit—National College recognizes the value of experiential learning as a part of your overall educational experience. If you desire to have your life experience evaluated for college credit, please see a Student Services representative.

Transfer credit questions—National College accepts prior collegiate work from any accredited institutions you have previously attended when it is demonstrated that this work is keeping with career and educational objectives outlined in your chosen program of study. If you have any questions regarding transfer credits, please call or stop by Student Services.

Career Center Services

The Career Center will assist you in your job search both during your college experience and also after graduation. National College wants to help you find and keep meaningful, satisfying employment.

Specifically, the Career Center will help you with:

- Preparing your resume and cover letter
- Interviewing techniques
- Assistance in finding available jobs in your community

ENGLISH
Essentials

What every college student needs to know
about grammar, punctuation, and usage



Preface to the Instructor

“What’s the catch?” you might be asking. “What are people’s photographs doing in this textbook? And just how will they help me teach *English Essentials: What Everyone Needs to Know about Grammar, Punctuation, and Usage*?”

We think the student-pleasing photographs are just one of a number of features that distinguish this book from other grammar texts on the market:

1 Personal photos and stories. All too often, grammar books are dry, dull affairs, about as interesting as a study of rock dust on the planet Mars. As teachers, we sometimes felt we were leading our students on a death march when we moved them through a traditional grammar text. So we have added a strong human dimension to this book by illustrating the grammar skills with photos and stories of interesting people from all walks of life. The stories describe not only their personal lives but also their involvement with reading and writing. Some of these people are pictured on the cover of the book.

2 Ease of use. All of the following make the book easy for students to understand and use:

- The essentials are presented in a highly accessible way. Take a look at any of the one-page reviews that open each of the skill chapters in Part One—the first such review is on page 27. Just the basics of each skill are presented on this page, which students can read and understand fairly quickly. Once they have grasped this basic material, they can go on to learn additional information about the skill and practice applying the skill.

It is better to learn a step at a time than to risk confusion by trying to learn everything at once. For example, dependent-word fragments are the subject of one chapter; other common fragments appear in a second chapter. The most common homonyms are covered in Part One; other homonyms follow in the chapter “More about Homonyms” in Part Two.

- The chapters are self-contained, so that students can work on just those skills they need.
- Explanations are written in simple, familiar language, with a real emphasis on clarity and a minimum of grammatical terminology.
- An inviting two-color design has been used throughout, with headings and other design elements chosen to make the content as clear as possible.
- Finally, the book is written in a friendly and helpful tone of voice—one that never condescends to students, but instead treats them as adults.

- 3 Abundant practice.** The book is based on the assumption that students learn best when clear explanations are followed by abundant practice. For each chapter in Part One, there are three full-page activities and five full-page tests. The last two tests are designed to resemble standardized tests and permit easy grading, including the use of Scantron sheets.
- 4 Engaging materials.** In addition to the photos and true stories, lively and engaging examples and practice materials will help maintain student interest throughout the book.
- 5 Inclusiveness.** The Introduction includes a brief guide to writing and a series of writing assignments to help students practice the grammar, punctuation, and usage skills that appear in the rest of the book. A combined forty years of teaching experience has taught us that applying the skills in actual writing situations helps students truly master them. Part One consists of primary information about fourteen key skills. Part Two presents secondary information about these skills and also covers topics not discussed in Part One. Part Three offers guidance and practice in the crucial skill of proofreading. And Part Four deals with areas that some other grammar texts neglect: spelling improvement, parts of speech, and dictionary use. Within the covers of *English Essentials*, then, are all the basic writing materials that instructors and students are likely to need.
- 6 Superior supplements.** The following supplements are available:
 - For instructors:
 - An Instructor's Edition that is identical to the student text except that it includes answers to all the practices and tests.
 - A password-protected Instructor's Manual and Test Bank, available online at www.mhhe.com/langan, that includes teaching hints, diagnostic and achievement tests, a full answer key, and a bank of additional mastery tests.
 - A Student Answer Key, also available online to instructors, consisting of the answers for all activities in Part One and to the practices and tests in the rest of the book.
 - For students: An abundance of online exercises and other resources available at www.mhhe.com/langan.

In short, *English Essentials* is designed as a core worktext that will both engage the interest of today's students and help them truly master the skills they need for writing well.

John Langan Beth Johnson



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About the Book

“What is this?” you might ask as you page through this book and notice the photographs within it. “Who are these people, and what do they have to do with English essentials? And what are English essentials, anyway?”

The answers to those questions go hand in hand. As you know, “essentials” means things that are basic, necessary, and useful. We’ve designed *English Essentials* to help you quickly master practical English skills that you need every day. How quickly? Glance at one of the one-page reviews that open each of the chapters in Part One of the book. Chances are that you will be able to read that page in perhaps no more than a minute or two. That page will contain basic information about a particular skill. Once you understand the basics, you can turn to the pages that follow to practice that skill. You can also turn to Part Two to learn anything else you may need to know about the skill.

One advantage of *English Essentials*, then, is that it makes grammar skills easy to master. Basic information is presented in a very clear way on the first page of each chapter; the pages that follow reinforce that information with activities and tests. You will be learning in the best possible way: through doing.

And why the photographs? They provide a second benefit of the book by showing real people—men and women, boys and girls, young and not so young, current and former students—who use essential English skills in their daily lives. Their photographs add a human dimension to a subject that people often find dry and unappealing. At the same time you are learning a given skill, you will share in the real lives of interesting people.

A third advantage of the book is that it provides a full treatment of the essential English skills you need to know. Here is what is covered in the four parts of the book:

INTRODUCTION. This opening overview of the book is followed by a section titled “Becoming a Better Writer,” which presents the writing process in a nutshell. Then a section titled “Writing Assignments” provides writing topics you can use to practice the rules of grammar, punctuation, and usage presented in the rest of the book.

PART ONE: Fourteen Basic Skills. Look at the table of contents on page iii for a list of the fourteen basic grammar and punctuation skills presented in Part One. Then turn to the first page of the first skill, “Subjects and Verbs.” You will notice that the basic information about subjects and verbs is presented on one page. Ideally, in a minute or so you should be able to review the basic information about subjects and verbs.

- Now turn to the second page of the chapter, page 28. Write down the two headings on this page:

On the second page of this chapter and all the other chapters in Part One, you are given examples of the skill in question, along with a chance to check your understanding of that skill. You are also introduced, in photos and in the text, to the person or persons featured in the chapter.

- Turn to the third, fourth, and fifth pages of the chapter (pages 29, 30, and 31). How many activities are included on those pages? _____

It is through repeated and varied practice in the skill that you best learn it.

- Turn to the last five pages in the chapter (pages 32-36). How many tests are included on those pages? _____

Note that the last two tests are designed to resemble standardized tests, and you or your teacher can easily grade them.

PART TWO: Extending the Skills. Look again at the table of contents on page iii.

- Part Two presents some topics not included in Part One. For example, what is the first topic, on page 169? _____
- Part Two also includes additional information about many of the topics presented in Part One. For example, what is the first “More about” section? _____

PART THREE: Proofreading. An important part of becoming a good writer is learning to proofread—to carefully check the next-to-final draft of a paper for grammar, punctuation, and other mistakes. This chapter provides you with the hints and practice you need to improve your proofreading skills.

- How many proofreading tests appear at the end of the chapter? _____
You’ll see there are ten tests in all.

PART FOUR: Related Matters. The three chapters here include several areas that may be part of English courses: spelling tips and rules, parts of speech, and dictionary use.

A FINAL WORD

English Essentials has been designed to benefit you as much as possible. Its format is inviting, its explanations are clear, and its many activities, practices, tests, and assignments will help you learn through doing. It is a book that has been created to reward effort, and if you provide that effort, you can make yourself a competent and confident writer. We wish you luck.

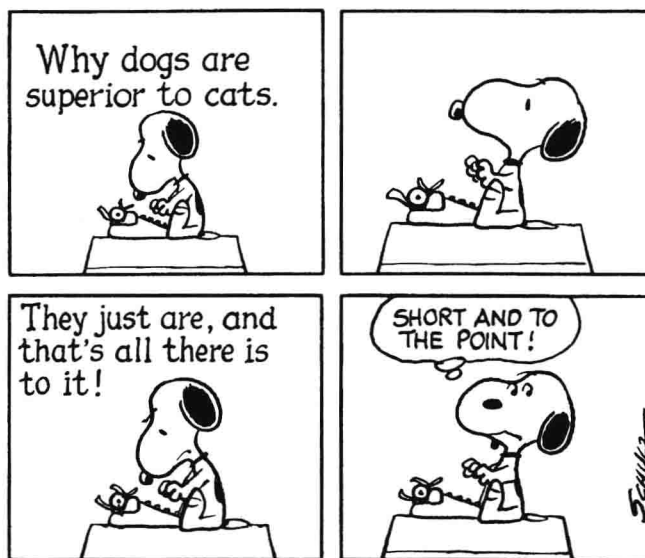
John Langan Beth Johnson

Becoming a Better Writer

What, in a nutshell, do you need to become a better writer? You need to know the basic goals in writing and to understand the writing process—as explained on the pages that follow.

TWO BASIC GOALS IN WRITING

When you write a paper, your two basic goals should be (1) to make a point and (2) to support that point. Look for a moment at the following cartoon:



PEANUTS reproduced by permission of United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

See if you can answer the following questions:

- What is Snoopy's point in his paper?

Your answer: His point is that _____

- What is his support for his point?

Your answer: _____

Explanation Snoopy's point, of course, is that dogs are superior to cats. But he offers no support whatsoever to back up his point! There are two jokes here. First, he is a dog and so is naturally going to believe that dogs are superior. The other joke is that his evidence ("They just are, and that's all there is to it!") is a lot of empty words. His somewhat guilty look in the last panel suggests that he knows he has not proved his point. To write effectively, you must provide real support for your points and opinions.

WRITING PARAGRAPHS

A paragraph is a series of sentences about one main idea, or point. A paragraph typically starts with a point (also called the *topic sentence*), and the rest of the paragraph provides specific details to support and develop that point.

Look at the following paragraph, written by a student named Carla.

Three Kinds of Bullies

There are three kinds of bullies in schools. First of all, there are the physical bullies. They are the bigger or meaner kids who try to hurt kids who are smaller or unsure of themselves. They'll push other kids off swings, trip them in the halls, or knock books out of their hands. They'll also wait for kids after school and slap them or yank their hair or pull out their shirts or throw them to the ground. They do their best to frighten kids and make them cry. Another kind of bully is the verbal bully. This kind tries to hurt with words rather than fists. Nursery-school kids may call each other "dummy" or "weirdo" or "fatty," and as kids get older, their words carry even more sting. "You are such a loser," those bullies will tell their victim, making sure there is a crowd nearby to hear. "Where did you get that sweater—a trash bin?" The worst kind of bully is the social bully. Social bullies realize that they can make themselves feel powerful by making others feel unwanted. Bullies choose their victims and then do all they can to isolate them. They roll their eyes and turn away in disgust if those people try to talk to them. They move away if a victim sits near them at lunch. They make sure the unwanted ones know about the games and parties they aren't invited to. Physical, verbal, and social bullies all have the same ugly goal: to hurt and humiliate others.

- What is the point of the above paragraph? _____

- What are the three kinds of evidence that Carla has provided to back up her point?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

The above paragraph, like many effective paragraphs, starts by stating a main idea, or point. In this case, the clear point is that there are three kinds of bullies in schools. An effective paragraph must not only make a point but also support it with specific evidence—reasons, examples, and other details. Such specifics help prove to readers that the point is a reasonable one. Even if readers do not agree with the writer, at least they have the writer's evidence in front of them. Readers are like juries: they want to see the evidence for themselves so that they can make their own judgments.

As you have seen, the author of the paragraph provides plenty of examples to support the idea that there are physical, verbal, and social bullies. To write an effective paragraph, always aim to do what the author has done: begin by making a point, and then go on to back up that point with strong specific evidence.

WRITING ESSAYS

Like a paragraph, an essay starts with a point and then goes on to provide specific details to support and develop that point. However, a paragraph is a series of sentences about one main idea or point, while an essay is a series of paragraphs about one main idea or point—called the central point or thesis. Since an essay is much longer than one paragraph, it allows a writer to develop a topic in more detail.

Look at the following essay, written by Carla after she was asked to develop more fully her paragraph on bullies.

A Hateful Activity: Bullying

*Introductory
Paragraph*

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

*First
Supporting
Paragraph*

First of all, there is physical bullying. Bigger or meaner kids try to hurt kids who are smaller or unsure of themselves. They’ll push kids into their lockers, knock books out of their hands, or shoulder them out of the cafeteria line. In gym class, a popular bully move is to kick someone’s legs out from under him while he is running. In the classroom, bullies might kick the back of the chair or step on the foot of the kids they want to intimidate. Another classic bully move is to corner a kid in a bathroom. There the victim will be slapped around, will have his or her clothes half pulled off, and might even be shoved into a trash can. Bullies will also wait for kids after school and bump or wrestle them around, often while others are looking on. The goal is to frighten kids as much as possible and try to make them cry. The victims are left bruised, hurting, and feeling emotional pain.

*Second
Supporting
Paragraph*

Perhaps even worse than physical attack is verbal bullying, which uses words, rather than hands or fists, as weapons. We may be told that “sticks and stones may break my bones, but names can never harm me,” but few of us are immune to the pain of a verbal attack. Like physical bullies, verbal bullies tend to single out certain targets. From that moment on, the victim is subjected to a hail of insults and put-downs. These are usually delivered in public, so the victim’s humiliation will be greatest: “Oh, no; here comes the nerd!” “Why don’t you lose some weight, blubber boy?” “You smell as bad as you look!” “Weirdo.” “Fairy.” “Creep.” “Dork.” “Slut.” “Loser.” Meanwhile, the victim retreats into a painful shell, hoping to escape further notice.

*Third
Supporting
Paragraph*

As bad as verbal bullying is, perhaps the most painful type of bullying is social bullying. Many students have a strong need for the comfort of being part of a group. For social bullies, the pleasure of belonging to a group is increased by the sight of someone who is refused entry into that group. So, like wolves targeting the weakest sheep in a herd, the bullies lead the pack in isolating people who they decide are different. They roll their eyes and turn away in disgust if those people try to talk to them. They move away if a victim sits near them at lunch or stands near them in a school hallway or at a bus stop. No one volunteers to work with these victims on class activities, and they are the ones that no one wants as part of gym teams. They make sure the unwanted ones know about the games and parties they aren’t invited to. As the victims sink into isolation and depression, the social bullies feel all the more puffed up by their own popularity.

*Concluding
Paragraph*

Whether bullying is physical, verbal, or social, it can leave deep and lasting scars. If parents, teachers, and other adults were more aware of the types of bullying, they might help by stepping in before the situation becomes too extreme. If students were more aware of the terrible pain that bullying causes, they might think twice about being bullies themselves.

- Which sentence in the introductory paragraph expresses the central point of the essay?
-

- How many supporting paragraphs are provided to back up the central point? _____

THE PARTS OF AN ESSAY

Each of the parts of an essay is explained below.

Introductory Paragraph

A well-written introductory paragraph will normally do the following:

- Gain the reader's interest by using one of several common methods of introduction.
- Present the thesis statement. The thesis statement expresses the central point of an essay, just as a topic sentence states the main idea of a paragraph. The central idea in Carla's essay is expressed in the last sentence of the introductory paragraph.

Four Common Methods of Introduction

Four common methods of introduction are (1) telling a brief story, (2) asking one or more questions, (3) shifting to the opposite, or (4) going from the broad to the narrow. Following are examples of all four.

- 1 Telling a brief story.** An interesting anecdote is hard for a reader to resist. In an introduction, a story should be no more than a few sentences, and it should relate meaningfully to the central idea. The story can be an experience of your own, of someone you know, or of someone you have read about. Carla uses this method of introduction for her essay on bullying:

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

- 2 Asking one or more questions.** These questions may be ones that you intend to answer in your essay, or they may indicate that your topic is relevant to readers—it is something they care about. If Carla had used this approach, here is how her introductory paragraph might have looked:

When you were a kid, were you ever pushed around by bigger children? Were you shoved aside in hallways or knocked out of your seat in classrooms? Were you ever called hurtful names like fatso, worm, dogface, or retard? Or were you coldly ignored by other students? Did they turn their backs on you, pretending you didn't exist? If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," then you were a victim of one of three forms of bullying: physical, verbal, or social.