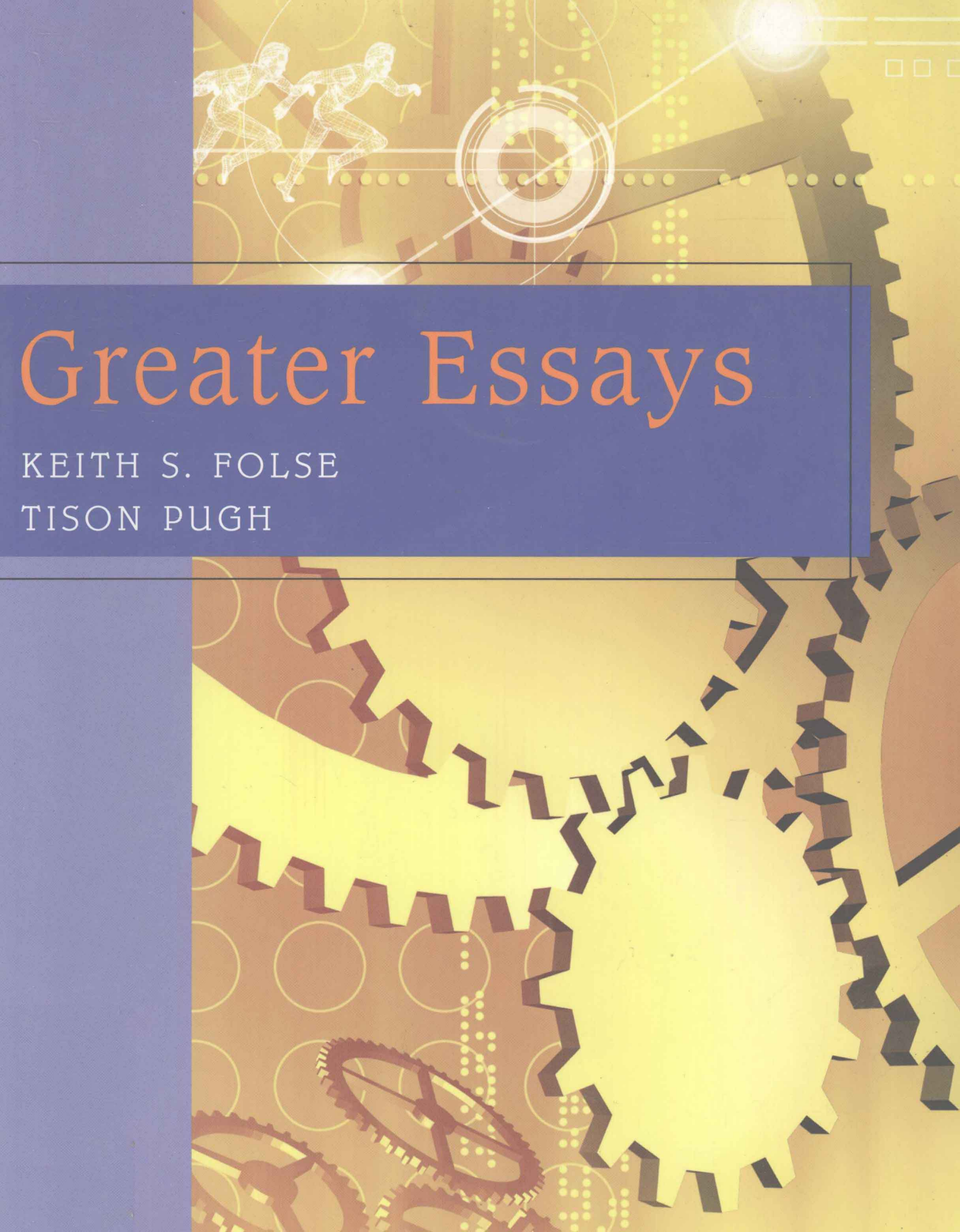

Greater Essays

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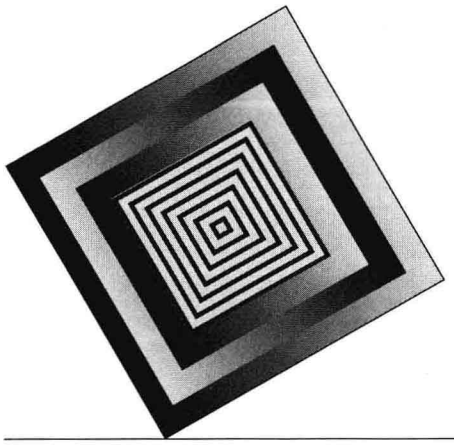

Greater Essays

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University of Central Florida

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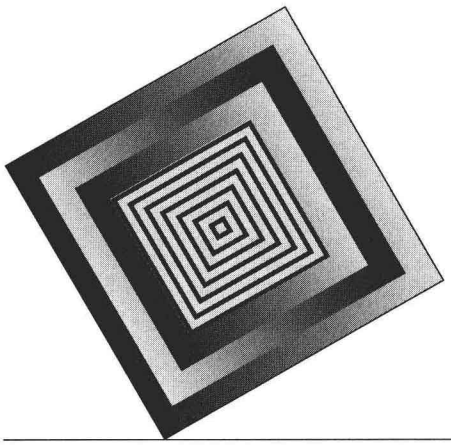

Overview

Greater Essays gives students opportunities to develop their essay writing and language skills. The heart of this book lies in the concept that students will learn to become better writers by learning to become better revisers of their own and of their peers' essays. Professional writers have editors to help them hone their prose. Student writers also need helpful guidance throughout the writing process, from brainstorming and drafting to the final product. To this end, *Greater Essays* models the revision process for students, demonstrating in each chapter an essay's first draft, the draft with teacher's comments, and a final draft that the student has revised in response to the teacher's suggestions. Many writing books address the need for self and peer review, but *Greater Essays* incorporates the revising process into a manageable and effective pedagogical practice.

Because we hope to help students to learn through more engaged revision in *Greater Essays*, we also emphasize the importance of vocabulary for effective essay writing. Quite simply, a high-level vocabulary is essential for effective communication. Numerous studies have documented the decline in vocabulary skills among writing students. *Greater Essays* tackles this incipient problem directly through a series of exercises addressing vocabulary.

In the first unit of *Greater Essays*, we provide a general overview of essays. In the subsequent five units, we discuss in detail five types of essays: process, comparison-contrast, cause-effect, persuasive, and narrative. (These five types may be covered in any order, based on the teacher's preference or students' learning goals.) For each type of essay, we discuss its particular objectives and rhetorical context, as well as providing practice activities in prewriting, revising, organizing, writing effective sentences, and improving grammar skills.

Greater Essays contains a wealth of materials for the classroom, including over 100 activities, six example essays with multiple drafts, and 60 suggestions for additional essay writing assignments.

The three strongest distinguishing features of this book are (1) the multiple drafts of each essay (original student essay, same essay with teacher's comments, the student's revised draft based on the teacher's comments), (2) the connected vocabulary activities, and (3) the five focused grammar points per unit with supporting exercises.

Additionally, we include appendices providing supplementary instruction in such essential areas as sentence types (sentence variety), grammar, and word forms, all of which are challenges to writers at this level.

Excellent writing is a challenge for everyone; even the best of writers will struggle through the process in the never-ending challenge to phrase their thoughts in the most clear and appropriate manner. For students, these challenges can be daunting. *Greater Essays* seeks to alleviate much of the stress of writing through a series of exercises and writing opportunities, but we rely on the teachers in the classrooms to help their students achieve their potential as learners. To that end, *Greater Essays* is a helpful tool, one that we hope you will find useful as you bring forth the best from your students.

Online Study Center

Greater Essays has an Online Study Center website (college.hmco.com/pic/greater-essays1e) for students that provides additional beneficial opportunities for students to learn and practice their new writing skills. Exercises focus on analyzing essay structure, grammar, vocabulary, and writing prompts.

Online Teaching Center

The *Greater Essays* Online Teaching Center (college.hmco.com/pic/greateressays1e) includes a sample syllabus, detailed teaching notes about each chapter, an answer key, and downloadable tests that instructors can administer to students.

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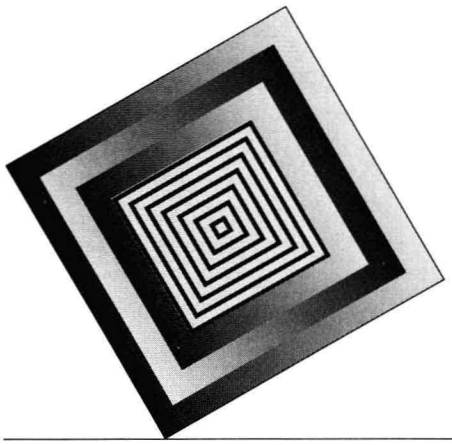
Keith S. Folse

Tison Pugh



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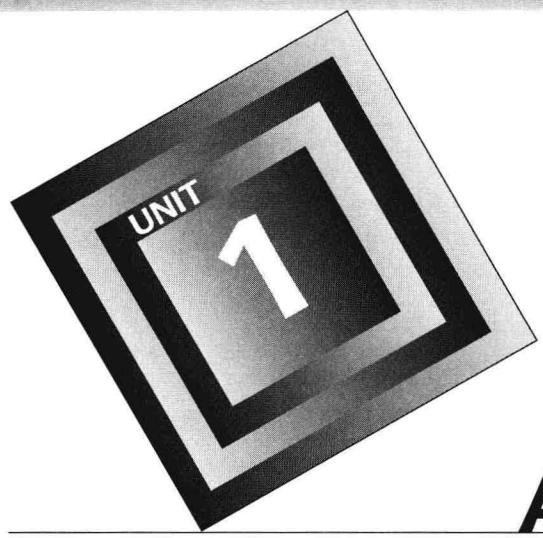


An Introduction to Writing Essays

Writing Goal:	To learn about the structure of a five-paragraph essay
Grammar Topic 1.1:	Nouns and Verbs
Grammar Topic 1.2:	Adjectives
Grammar Topic 1.3:	Prepositions
Grammar Topic 1.4:	Confusing words: *a / an*
Grammar Topic 1.5:	Word Parts

WHAT IS AN ESSAY?

ESSAY	a short written composition on one subject that expresses the views of the writer.

What would the world be like if there were no words? Consider how often we think, speak, read, and communicate with words. How would we talk to our family and friends, or how would we fulfill our basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing if we did not have access to language?

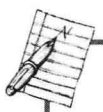
We are surrounded every day by the written word, as seen in notes, postcards, letters, instruction manuals, books, e-mail, websites, and newspapers. In this book, we will study how we communicate through essays, which are short written compositions that share our thoughts about a given topic with an audience. Whether that audience is a teacher, fellow students, or the world beyond the classroom, an essay expresses the writer's point of view so that it may be fully understood.

HOW IS AN ESSAY ORGANIZED?

Though essays vary greatly in their subject matter and style of writing, the most common academic essays share a similar structure. They are made up of five paragraphs organized in an **introduction**, a **body**, and a **conclusion**.

INTRODUCTION	Paragraph 1
BODY	Paragraphs 2, 3, 4
CONCLUSION	Paragraph 5

Some common types of academic essays, all of which you will study in this book, include process, comparison-contrast, cause-effect, persuasive, and narrative essays.



WRITER'S NOTE: The Five-Paragraph Essay

When textbooks teach how to write an essay, the most common form that is taught is an essay of five paragraphs. Why is this form emphasized? The five-paragraph essay allows writers great freedom to explain their ideas on a given subject to their readers. At the same time, the traditional assignment in many writing classes is a five-paragraph essay. In addition, if you understand how to write a five-paragraph essay, you can easily expand this structure to include more paragraphs to address increasingly complex and sophisticated ideas.

Activity 1 **Reading an Example Essay**

Read this five-paragraph essay. Can you identify which paragraphs are the introduction, the body, and the conclusion?

Essay 1

EXAMPLE ESSAY

Against E-Voting

1 Have you ever considered that computers threaten democracy? With computer technology advancing daily, we know that many activities that used to take many long hours can now be accomplished in a few minutes, or even seconds. For the most part, these technological innovations promise to save us time and money and to make our lives easier and more comfortable. Despite the greater efficiency of computers in so many areas, we should not turn over all

aspects of our lives to computers. In particular, I believe that we should not vote with computers or other electronic media because democracy is too important to cede to the unreliability of cyberspace.

2 In years past, people voted on paper ballots and marked them with ink or some similar means. Voters could see the choices they made. They could look back over their ballot to ensure that they did not make a mistake. Also, if arguments arose over the outcome of an election, paper ballots allowed election officials to count votes by hand. This process may be tedious, but it has the benefit of being verifiable. Several areas of the country still use this system of voting, and it provides a crucial foundation for ensuring fairness.

3 Without this traditional system of voting, however, voters do not really know whether their votes are tallied accurately on e-voting systems. It is quite possible that a computer technician could develop a program so that a person could select one candidate on a computer screen, yet the vote would be counted for another candidate. Although some people might think this scenario sounds paranoid, consider how many stories you hear in the news about breaches in computer security. The simple fact is that hackers can gain access to many computer systems for illegal purposes. By illegally entering into a cyber-polling station, they could easily change the outcome of an election.

4 If voting commissions decide to use these electronic voting machines in their districts, they would be well advised to ensure that all voters receive receipts for their votes that would then be collected for subsequent verification. In this manner, voters could make sure that their receipts stated clearly that they did in fact vote for the candidates they desired. Furthermore, if any candidate suspected that the election was unfair, these receipts could be counted by hand and checked against the results that the computers provided.

5 Computer technologies have improved the qualities of our lives vastly, but these technologies are not a panacea for all of society's troubles. Sometimes a little more human work ensures a better result. Since voting is critically important to the effective and honest working of democracy, we should rely on a much older technology—paper and ink—rather than on computers for all of our elections.

EXAMPLE ESSAY

accomplished: completed
innovations: new ideas or systems
cede: yield
arose: came into being, appeared
tedious: tiresome, boring
verifiable: able to be proven true or accurate
tallied: listed or recorded
paranoid: irrationally suspicious
breaches: holes
hackers: people who gain access to computer systems to steal information or money
polling: voting
panacea: a cure for all diseases or problems

How Do You Write an Introduction?

INTRODUCTION	1. gives background information 2. presents the topic—the primary subject of the essay 3. includes a thesis statement—the writer's ideas about or position on the topic

The first paragraph of a five-paragraph essay is the introduction. The introduction has three objectives.

1. It gives background information to connect the reader to the topic.

2. It mentions the topic, which is the subject of the essay.

3. The thesis statement summarizes the main point of the essay and explains the writer's idea or position about the topic. In short, the thesis statement gives the writer's plan for the essay.

What Is the Difference Between the Topic and the Thesis Statement?

The topic is the general subject of the essay, while the thesis statement is a specific sentence that explains the writer's position about the topic.

TOPIC	the subject of the essay
THESIS STATEMENT	the writer's position about the topic

All writers must determine why they are writing; they must know what their main idea is and why it is important to them. This idea is contained in a sentence called the **thesis statement**. The difference between a topic and a thesis statement is illustrated in the following example.

Topic: cell phones in high schools

Thesis statement: Student use of cell phones should be prohibited in high schools.

Note that the topic does not show the writer's idea or position. The writer's opinion is contained in the thesis statement.

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