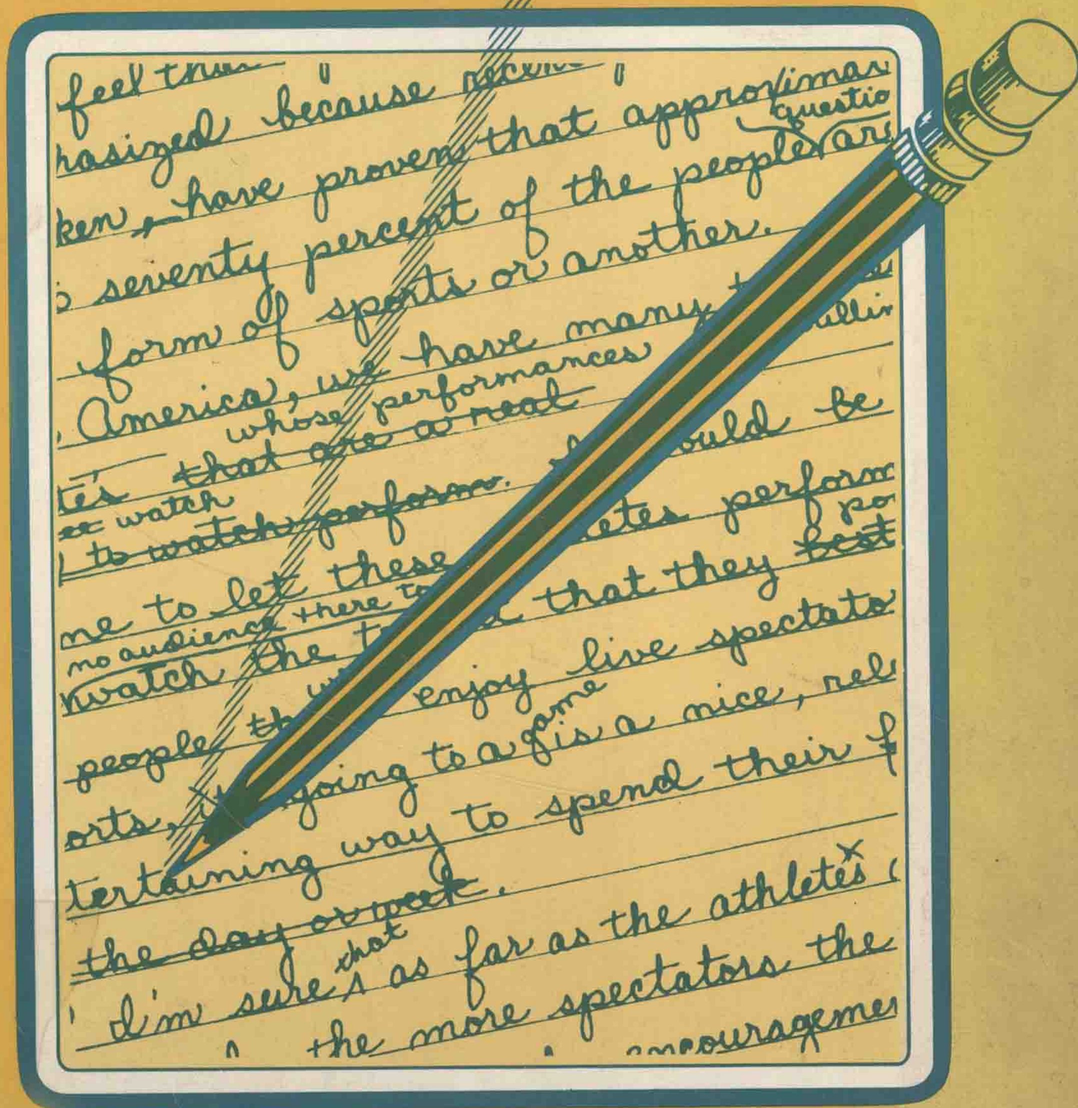
TO BE EXACT

A GUIDE FOR REVISION



John W. Presley

TO BE EXACT
A Guide for Revision

JOHN W. PRESLEY
Augusta College

Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

PRESLEY, JOHN W.
To be exact.

1.–English language—Rhetoric. 2.–English
language—Grammar—(date). I.–Title.
PE1408.P76 808'.042 81-19190
ISBN 0-13-922807-1 AACR2

© 1982 by Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

All rights reserved. No part of this book
may be reproduced in any form or
by any means without permission in writing
from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Editorial/production supervision and interior design by Virginia Rubens
Cover design by Celine Brandes, Photo Plus Art
Manufacturing buyer: Harry P. Baisley

ISBN 0-13-922807-1

PRENTICE-HALL INTERNATIONAL, INC., *London*
PRENTICE-HALL OF AUSTRALIA PTY. LIMITED, *Sydney*
PRENTICE-HALL OF CANADA, LTD., *Toronto*
PRENTICE-HALL OF INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED, *New Delhi*
PRENTICE-HALL OF JAPAN, INC., *Tokyo*
PRENTICE-HALL OF SOUTHEAST ASIA PTE. LTD., *Singapore*
WHITEHALL BOOKS LIMITED, WELLINGTON, *New Zealand*

To the Instructor

Your students can use this book as a reference, and you can also rely on it to help you teach crucial grammatical skills.

All composition teachers are familiar with students who seem to understand grammatical analysis, but who continue to use unconventional forms and usage in their own writing. Transferring grammatical knowledge from completely "arhetorical" exercises to one's own writing process is no simple matter.

This text can help ease that transfer process. Almost all the exercises in this text ask the student to proofread, edit, and revise; the student must find and correct unconventional forms and usage. These exercises are designed to create a rhetorical context for revision; all items are from student writing directly or are based on sentences and structures collected from student writing. Sentences, paragraphs, and essays are all included as texts for revision.

Providing both instruction and reference for basic composition classes, the text begins by introducing and illustrating the principles of paragraph organization, so that the instructor can make paragraph-length writing assignments throughout the course to assess the student's progress. A complete guide to usage, style, and diction in the central portion of the text gives the student clear explanations of the conventions of English, with abundant exercises to develop the skills of proofreading, editing, and revision. The last section introduces the longer form—the five-paragraph essay.

This framework allows a global approach to writing instruction. Chapters 1 through 10 each end with eight "Ideas to Start You Writing," thought-provoking questions that will help students begin their own paragraphs. Each list contains three narrative topics, one descriptive topic, one comparison-contrast topic, and three more complex topics that will probably require classification, cause and effect, or

general-to-specific patterns of development. Chapter 11, on the essay, ends with eight questions of the more complex type.

Thus, once students have mastered paragraph organization, the text continually encourages them to write, even as they study the grammar and usage sections of the textbook. As the book constantly asks them to edit, proofread, and revise sentences, paragraphs, and essays in its exercises, the instructor should ask the students to apply these skills to their own drafts of writing assignments. Paragraph-length assignments should allow for near-constant application of the students' revision skills, without creating an unbearable grading load. By the time students have worked through the text to the essay chapter, perceiving and revising their own language difficulties should be as easy as perceiving and revising the difficulties of others—and it should have become a habit to write, edit, and revise.

The principles of organization are illustrated with both professional and student writing. In both the rhetoric and the grammmar sections, an underlying principle is that correct writing is writing which communicates with a reader best by eliminating all the distractions that divert the reader's attention.

The grammar lessons in this handbook emphasize the inflectional systems of English grammar, particularly verb form and agreement; pronoun form, reference, and agreement; and noun plurals and possessives. An early chapter teaching the student to recognize clause boundaries allows a simplified approach to sentence faults and comma usage.

The matters treated here are those that seem most worrisome to basic writers. Each explanation is brief, so a student can quickly review problems. Points of grammar and usage are developed using grammatical and agrammatical examples for illustration—a technique borrowed from linguistic proofs—to exploit the student's own grammatical intuitions about his or her language. Incorrect examples are clearly marked with asterisks to help the student recognize agrammatical forms.

The textbook helps the instructor set priorities: entire chapters are given over to the discussions of sentence faults, the noun and verb inflection systems, pronouns, commas, syntax, spelling, and diction. In these chapters, instructors will find rules for reference, as in any handbook. But here, these rules are followed by both brief discussions and lengthy sets of revision exercises. For these crucial grammatical concepts that require practice, the book adds a teaching approach to the usual reference approach found in a handbook.

Other concepts such as manuscript form, the distinction between *lie* and *lay,* the distinction between *a* and *an*—those things for which only a brief review or set of reference guidelines is usually needed—are included in the final chapter, entitled "For Your Reference." Also included here are short summaries of the material in Chapters 1 through 11, all alphabetically arranged. An instructor may refer a student to a short review of the rules governing the use of the dash, for example, or the student may be referred to entire lessons, including exercises, to teach major points of grammar such as subject-verb agreement or the formation and use of the plural

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com

noun form. Once a student has mastered these crucial lessons, he or she may require only an occasional brief reminder, a referral to the reference section in ''For Your Reference.''

All the exercises are designed to help students efficiently learn how to transfer grammatical knowledge to their own proofreading, editing, and revision processes. The work in this text will teach students to correct *the unconventional forms they actually use,* and to correct these forms in the context in which they actually appear. The text does not attempt to teach grammar alone, as a subject in itself, divorced from the writing process.

Since each grammar section includes sample paragraphs and essays for revision, the instructor can keep questions of rhetoric, organization, and style before the students at the same time the students are reviewing grammar and usage. As the students proofread the sample paragraphs and essays for mechanics, it is a simple matter to ease into discussion of the rhetorical strengths and weaknesses—and there are both—of the passages under consideration. This will further reinforce the idea that mechanical errors are important simply because they impede communication.

The material in this text reflects much of the current research and writing on composition, and the material has been tested in the classroom for the last six years at levels ranging from developmental to freshman to senior classes. It has helped students who speak and write community dialects, students for whom English is a second language, and students who needed merely a review of basic grammar and rhetoric. Although the text takes a no-nonsense, traditional approach, I believe students will find its tone informal, helpful, and useful. Most important of all, it works.

And for their invaluable help in developing a text that works, I owe thanks to William H. Oliver and Virginia Rubens of Prentice-Hall, to my colleagues across the nation who reviewed my manuscript, to my colleagues at Augusta College who helped test my material, and to our students, whose needs and whose strengths are, I hope, reflected here.

REFERENCE CHART

	Symbol	For Practice	For Reference
Abbreviations			12.2
Capitals			12.8
Colons			12.9
Commas			12.10
In Addresses and Dates		8.1	
Between Independent Clauses		8.2	
After Introductory Modifiers		8.3	
Between Items in a Series		8.4	
Around Interrupters		8.5	
Around Nonrestrictive Clauses		8.6	
Comma Splices and Run-On		2.4	12.11
Sentences			12.34
Comparative and Superlative			
Forms			12.12
Confused Verb Tenses		6.2	
Dangling and Misplaced			12.13
Modifiers		9.5	12.21
Dictionary		10.1	
Double Negatives			12.22
Essays			
Development		11.1	
Introduction		11.2	
Conclusion		11.3	
Revision		11.4	
Fragments		2.2	12.36
and Dependent Clauses		2.3	
Homonyms, Words Often			
Confused		10.2	
Hyphens			12.17
Levels of Diction		10.3	12.14
Manuscript Form			12.20
Noun Possessives		4.1	12.24
Noun Plurals		3.1	12.23
Plurals and Signal Words		3.2	
Numbers			12.25
Paragraph			
Topic Sentence		1.1	
Development		1.2	
Organization		1.3	
Coherence		1.4	
Parallelism		9.4	12.26
Parentheses and Dashes			12.27

REFERENCE CHART (*cont.*)

	Symbol	*For Practice*	*For Reference*
Past Tense and Past Participle Confusion		6.2	12.28
Pronoun Agreement		7.5	12.29
Pronoun Forms			12.30
Nominative Form		7.1	
Objective Form		7.2	
Possessive Form		7.3	
Who and *Whom*		7.4	12.43
Pronoun Reference		7.6	12.31
Quotations and Quotation Marks			12.32
Semicolons			12.35
Shifts		9.1–9.5	12.37
Shifts in Number or Person		9.1	
Shifts in Tense		9.2	
Shifts of Voice		9.3	
Spelling		10.1	12.39
Subject-Verb Agreement in Past Tense		6.1	
Subject-Verb Agreement in Present Tense		5.1	12.40
In Inverted Sentences		5.2	
With Intervening Phrases		5.3	
With Compound Subjects		5.4, 5.5	
With Pronoun Subjects		5.6	
Underlining			12.41

Contents

TO THE INSTRUCTOR vii

REFERENCE CHART x

1. PARAGRAPHS: THINKING, WRITING, REVISING 1

1.1. The Topic Sentence *3*
Exercises *6*
1.2. Developing Your Topic Sentence *11*
Exercises *14*
1.3. Using Transitions to Emphasize Your Organization of Detail *22*
Exercises *30*
1.4. Using Repetition to Emphasize Your Organization of Detail *33*
Exercises *34*
1.5. Ideas to Start You Writing *41*

2. REVISING SENTENCE FAULTS 43

2.1. Subject and Verb Identification *44*
Exercises *47*
2.2. Sentence Fragments *49*
Exercises *51*
2.3. Dependent Clauses as Fragments *53*
Exercises *56*
2.4 Comma Splices and Run-On Sentences *58*
Exercises *61*
2.5. Ideas to Start You Writing *73*

3. NOUN PLURALS: KEEPING NUMBER CONSISTENT 75

3.1. Forming the Plurals of Nouns *76*
Exercises *79*
3.2. Words That Signal Singular and Plural *81*
Exercises *83*
3.3. Ideas to Start You Writing *91*

4. NOUN POSSESSIVES: USING THE APOSTROPHE EXACTLY 93

4.1. Noun Possessives *93*
4.2. Some Cautions about Possessives, Contractions, and Pronouns *95*
Exercises *96*
4.3. Ideas to Start You Writing *104*

5. SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT: MORE ABOUT KEEPING NUMBER CONSISTENT 105

5.1. Subject-Verb Agreement in the Present Tense *105*
5.2. Subject-Verb Agreement in Inverted Sentences *109*
Exercises *110*
5.3. Subject-Verb Agreement, Prepositional Phrases, and Relative Clauses *112*
Exercises *114*
5.4. Compound Subjects Joined by *And* *115*
Exercises *116*
5.5. Compound Subjects Joined by *Or* or *Nor* *118*
Exercises *120*
5.6. Pronouns as Subjects *122*
5.7. Special Problems in Subject-Verb Agreement *123*
Exercises *125*
5.8. Ideas to Start You Writing *135*

6. THE PAST TENSE (AND OTHERS): KEEPING TIMES CONSISTENT 137

6.1. Subject-Verb Agreement in Past Tense *137*
Exercises *139*
6.2. Confusion of Past Tense and Past Participle *142*
Exercises *151*
6.3. Ideas to Start You Writing *161*

7. USING SPECIFIC PRONOUNS: FORM, REFERENCE, AND AGREEMENT 163

7.1. Nominative Form *164*
Exercises *166*
7.2. Objective Form *167*
Exercises *168*
7.3. Possessive Form *169*
Exercises *171*
7.4. *Who* and *Whom* *173*
Exercises *175*
7.5. Pronoun Agreement *177*
Exercises *179*
7.6. Pronoun Reference *183*
Exercises *185*
7.7. Ideas to Start You Writing *193*

8. USING COMMAS TO SEPARATE INFORMATION IN SENTENCES 195

8.1. Commas in Addresses and Dates *196*
Exercises *198*
8.2. Commas between Independent Clauses *201*
Exercises *202*
8.3. Commas and Introductory Modifiers *204*
Exercises *205*
8.4. Commas between Items in a Series *207*
Exercises *208*
8.5. Commas around Interrupters *210*
Exercises *212*
8.6. Commas and Nonrestrictive Adjective Clauses *214*
Exercises *216*
8.7. Ideas to Start You Writing *226*

9. WRITING CLEAR SENTENCES 227

9.1. Unnecessary Shifts of Focus in Number or Person *228*
Exercises *230*
9.2. Unnecessary Shifts of Focus in Tense *231*
Exercises *232*
9.3. Unnecessary Shifts of Focus in Voice *233*
Exercises *235*
9.4. Parallelism *240*
Exercises *242*

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com

9.5. Dangling or Misplaced Modifiers *248*
Exercises *250*
9.6. Ideas to Start You Writing *257*

10. THE EXACT WORD: USING A DICTIONARY 259

10.1. Checking Your Spelling *261*
Exercises *265*
10.2. Checking Homonyms and Similar Words *271*
Exercises *275*
10.3. Levels of Diction *278*
Exercises *282*
10.4. Ideas to Start You Writing *290*

11. WRITING AND REVISING ESSAYS 293

11.1. Checking the Development of an Essay *293*
Exercises *296*
11.2. Checking Your Introduction Paragraph *298*
Exercises *301*
11.3. Checking Your Conclusion Paragraph *309*
Exercises *311*
11.4. Revising the Completed Essay *314*
Exercises *315*
11.5. Ideas to Start You Writing *322*

12. FOR YOUR REFERENCE 323

INDEX 339

1.

Paragraphs: Thinking, Writing, Revising

We all recognize a paragraph when we read one. A paragraph is a block of sentences; the first sentence in a paragraph is indented. But many people feel they have problems in writing a good paragraph; and, since all longer prose works are made up of paragraphs, the study of paragraphs is a good way to begin improving your writing.

Writing is hard work. No one really writes easily all the time. Everyone thinks for a while, writes a first draft, lets that draft sit for a while, then returns and proofreads the draft for errors and revises it until it is clear and complete. "No one but a blockhead ever wrote except for money," Samuel Johnson said, but students and beginning writers often cannot afford the luxury of waiting to be paid for their writing. Since paragraphs are a common writing assignment in college, the student writer's problem is more immediate.

A newspaper reporter often has his subject handed to him or her by an editor. A writing student is sometimes told what to write about, too, but more often a student must "think up" a topic and "think up" something to say about it.

Don't panic when you see that blank sheet of paper and know you have to put a paragraph on it. You probably know more than you think you know about many subjects. Open an encyclopedia or a dictionary at random; running your finger down the page will probably remind you of many subjects about which you have opinions and, probably, no small number of facts—*aardvarks, money, zip guns*. Newspapers,

magazines, your other courses, conversation with friends, even television programs all bombard you constantly, every day, with ideas to write about. Think back to the last argument you had or the last discussion you overheard or the last time you wish you'd either spoken up or even, maybe, wish you'd "kept your mouth shut." The subjects of those conversations would all make good ideas for writing.

Let's say you are in the worst of situations: you think you have nothing to say. You pick up a copy of a newsmagazine and another story on the economy catches your eye. You remember your own economy and decide to write on the subject of money.

Ask yourself some questions, which may help you create your paragraph. Have you had some *experience* with money? Do you know something about the *history* of money? Is there a specific *type* or *kind* or *example* of money, say the Susan B. Anthony dollar, that you'd like to write about? Do you know something about the money used at a particular *time*—early Roman coinage, for instance—or a particular *place*—the money used in Bermuda, possibly—that would make an interesting paragraph? Is there some particular *aspect* of money—say, its use in the control of credit—that you just learned in your Economics 101 class? These questions can be used with just about any topic. Asking them, and answering them, will help you "think up" information for your writing.

Aristotle, the ancient Greek writer, gives four categories, four possible ways of thinking, about topics. These four ways of thinking are:

1. what can be done or cannot be done
2. what occurred or did not occur
3. what will occur if a particular thing is done
4. judgments

A beginning writer should practice thinking about topics in these ways. In addition to reading and studying, which provide facts for the writer, these four perspectives help a writer remember and use these facts in writing.

For example, the topic "money" might be approached by category 1. What can be done to strengthen the dollar? What cannot be done? What can you do to live within your budget? What expenses are impossible for you to control? Category 2 might answer questions such as "What sorts of tax cuts were enacted by President Kennedy?" or "What steps did President Johnson take that weakened the country's currency?" or "What should I have done to stay within my budget?" As often as possible, beginning writers would be well advised to stick to subjects that are personal in nature. If you are an authority on anything at all, you're probably an authority on one subject, at least: you.

Our sample topic, "money," can be explored by asking questions in category

3, as well. What will happen to your finances when you graduate or transfer to another school? What do you—or Milton Friedman, for that matter—think would happen if the United States returned to the gold standard? Finally, you might consider questions of judgment. Which method do you think is best suited to control inflation? Do you think Americans are too concerned with material possessions?

Learn to find a subject, then develop it by asking yourself these categories of questions; then write down your answers to these questions. With this question-and-answer technique, anyone can produce a paragraph on a given subject.

But rewriting—revising the paragraph so that it reads easily and communicates its message—is where the real work lies. Most professional writers revise their work anywhere from once to a dozen times before they're satisfied. Hemingway rewrote the end of *A Farewell to Arms* over twenty times; a busy business executive will check and recheck a business letter before sending it out. Students, who are writing both to communicate their ideas and demonstrate their knowledge of the principles of writing, must be at least as careful as a professional writer if they want to be taken seriously and want their ideas to be read.

Later chapters in this text will tell you how to proofread to make sure your writing is clear, exact, and correct. The rest of this chapter will explain some particular kinds of revisions for your first draft that will make it clearer and easier to understand. Generally, you should reread your first draft as many times as possible, with as much time as possible between writing it and reading it. You should even read it once backwards, to help you see what you actually wrote, not what you think you wrote.

For now, concentrate on the information you included. If possible, have someone else read your first draft. Ask your reader if you sound as if you know your subject. Ask the reader if your ideas are clear, or if you have left questions unanswered, or if some ideas should be explained further.

Remember, a good paragraph is a group of sentences—usually about six sentences, with academic writing tending to have more sentences. This group of sentences must all deal with the same object, and they must be arranged according to a plan of organization. After you have written your first draft of your intended group of planned sentences about one subject, you should once again ask three questions of yourself: **Is this paragraph limited to only one subject? Is this paragraph developed enough to prove or illustrate its subject? Is this paragraph coherent?**

1.1. THE TOPIC SENTENCE

A good topic sentence is the place to begin your revision of your paragraph. The topic sentence is usually the first sentence in a paragraph and states the controlling idea of the paragraph. A good topic sentence ensures that the paragraph

will be all about one subject, and that the paragraph will present one point of view. This gives the paragraph unity. Occasionally, this unity will be re-emphasized by repeating the ideas in the topic sentence in the last sentence of the paragraph.

A good topic sentence is like a contract with your reader. In your topic sentence, you announce the subject of the paragraph, and you make an assertion about that subject. This lets the reader know—and serves as a reminder to you—what you are going to write about and what you are going to say.

Topic	***Assertion***
1. The image of mobile homes	has improved radically recently.
2. Baking a cake	involves three simple steps.
3. Adjusting the valves on a VW	is a very difficult procedure.
4. The Korean and Vietnam wars	were begun in similar ways.
5. The life of an elected official	is not an enviable life.

These topic sentences would *control* any paragraph they started. A paragraph that began with sentence 1 would have to deal with the stated subject, mobile homes' image, and it would include detail that would show how this image has improved lately. Such a paragraph could not go on to talk about "pre-fab" housing, nor should it contain any information about how the image of the mobile home industry may have deteriorated recently.

Similarly, a reader who read sentence 2 would expect that sentence to be followed by an explanation of the three steps involved in baking a cake. Sentence 3 would cause the reader to expect an explanation of valve adjustment, and that every detail of the procedure would help to illustrate how difficult this procedure is. If it turns out that the details show that valve adjustment is a simple procedure, then the writer has broken his "contract" with the reader. The writer has not planned his paragraph or thought through what he plans to say if his topic sentence does not control the paragraph.

Underline the topic sentence in this paragraph:

> The private life of an elected government official is not enviable. These people—whether senators, governors, or mayors—are watched far too closely. Their every word is analyzed. Their choice of clothing becomes a subject for public comment: leisure suits and blue jeans are too casual, business suits are too formal. Their families become the subject of gossip columnists who hope to be the first to discover that a son has experimented with drugs or that a daughter is considering marriage. Public officials can neither attend church or ignore religion; either course of action will invite criticism. They can neither drink nor refuse to drink in public. They cannot speak on any issue without offending some group

of voters and thus jeopardizing their reelection and career. Anyone who would volunteer for this sort of miserable life in order to serve the country should certainly be admired.

Notice that the topic sentence is, first of all, a statement of the topic of the paragraph and the author's assertion about that topic—that elected officials, in his opinion, lead miserable lives. (Do not hesitate to express your opinions; no audience—particularly an instructor—wants to be bored by writing that has nothing especially to say.) Notice also that once the topic sentence has announced the topic and the author's assertion, all the details that follow are part of both the topic and the assertion, that is, everything that follows is contained in the topic sentence. No detail is given that relates to anything but the official's private lives, nor is there any detail present that suggests that the officials' private lives are wonderful—or even enjoyable.

If a paragraph lacks a topic sentence, if no subject and assertion are presented which control the paragraph and tell the reader what to expect, the reader may be confused by the paragraph. The paragraph lacking a controlling idea may wander in circles and never get to the point; such a paragraph may even wander completely off the subject.

A topic sentence also limits the subject of the paragraph. No one could write a successful paragraph about a broad subject such as the public's right to know about the private lives of elected government officials. The subject is simply too broad; it would require an essay, at least, to debate the issue. A topic sentence limiting the subject is necessary. In this case, the subject was limited by making a more limited assertion. All the writer has promised the reader is that he or she will illustrate that officials' private lives are not enviable. By making the subject smaller in scope, the writer has helped insure that he or she can deal with the subject in one paragraph.

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.com