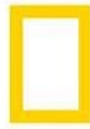


Writing



# INSIDE

LANGUAGE • LITERACY • CONTENT







Writing



# INSIDE

LANGUAGE • LITERACY • CONTENT

PROGRAM AUTHOR

Gretchen Bernabei



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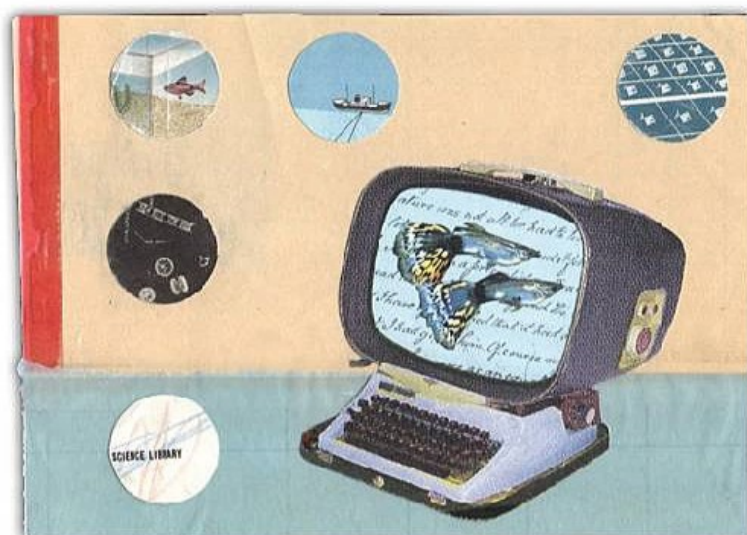


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# THE Writing Process



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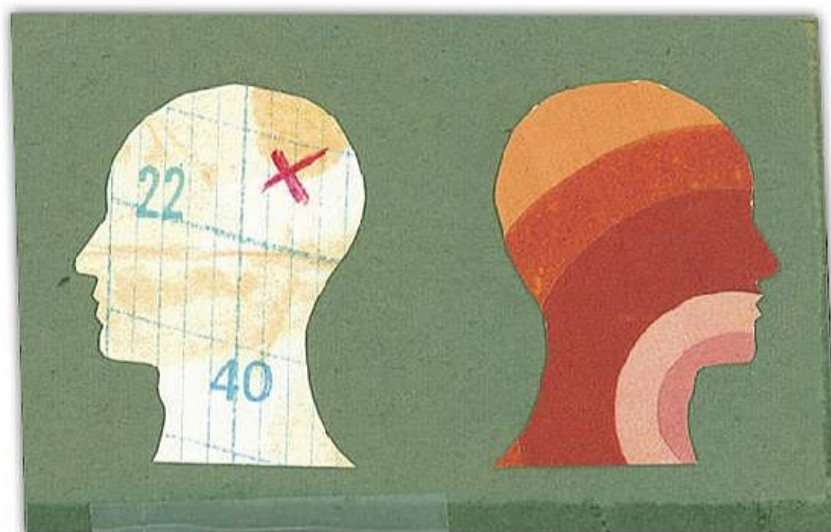
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# **THE** **Building** **Blocks** **OF WRITING**

## **Project 1 Paragraph Structure: Ways to Organize**

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# Paragraph Structure: Ways to Organize



"I had a great dream.  
And I wrote a great  
paragraph in my dream  
journal this morning."

—Alma

## Model Study

## Sentences and Paragraphs

One great way to express your ideas is through writing. When you write, your reader can understand your ideas more easily if they are presented clearly and in an organized way.

### Start with Sentences

You start with writing a group of words that tell a complete thought. There are four types of sentences:

Type of Sentence	Example
A <b>statement</b> tells something.	Greg created many versions of Crittercam.
A <b>question</b> asks something.	What do turtles do underwater?
An <b>exclamation</b> shows strong emotion.	Crittercam is the best invention ever!
A <b>command</b> tells you to do something.	Look at these underwater pictures. Learn more about penguins!

### Build to Paragraphs

When you write, you put sentences together in an organized way to create **paragraphs**. Make sure that each paragraph has a clear **main idea** stated in a **topic sentence**. The other details in the paragraph should support the main idea with **details** and **examples**.

The **topic sentence** tells the main idea of the paragraph.

## PARAGRAPH

Greg Marshall invented the Crittercam to study ocean life. How does it work? The Crittercam is a machine made with a metal tube and a camera. He attaches the Crittercam to animals and lets the animals back into the ocean. Scientists are able to watch through the Crittercam to see just what the animals see as they swim in the ocean. Life in the ocean is still mysterious. But with the Crittercam, scientists are making many new discoveries that would have been impossible before Marshall came along.

This is a **detail** that supports the main idea.

Professional Model

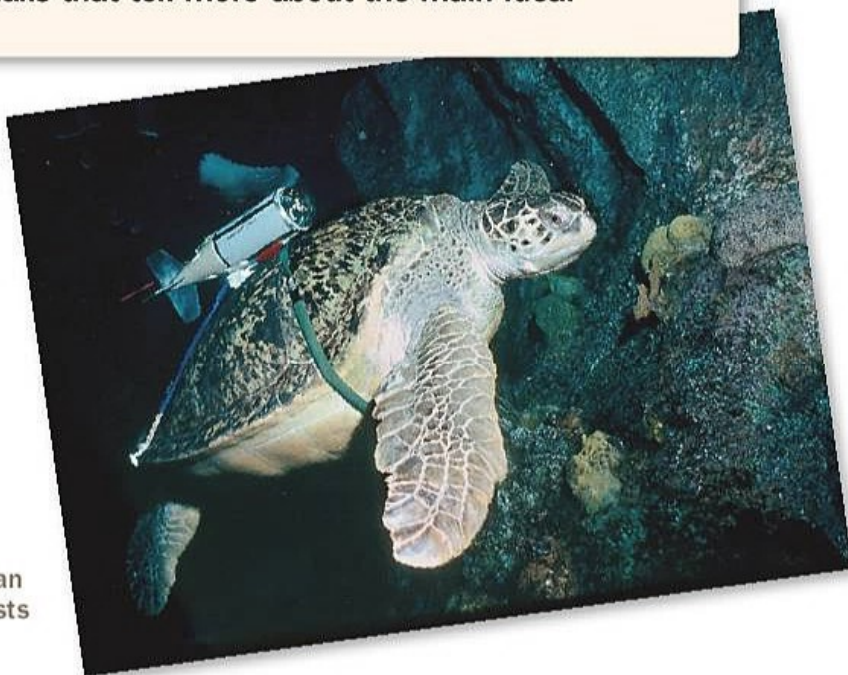
## PARAGRAPH

### A good paragraph

- ☒ has a topic sentence that states the main idea
- ☒ contains details that tell more about the main idea.

Feature Checklist

Strapping the Crittercam to an animal's back allows scientists to study how it lives. ►





## Organize Your Paragraphs

### What's It Like ?

**Look at this tropical aquarium!** You may not know about every sea creature that lives in a tropical reef. But when you hear the words “tropical aquarium,” you have a good sense of what to expect. A topic sentence works that way, too. It doesn’t give away all of the details, but it tells the reader what to expect.

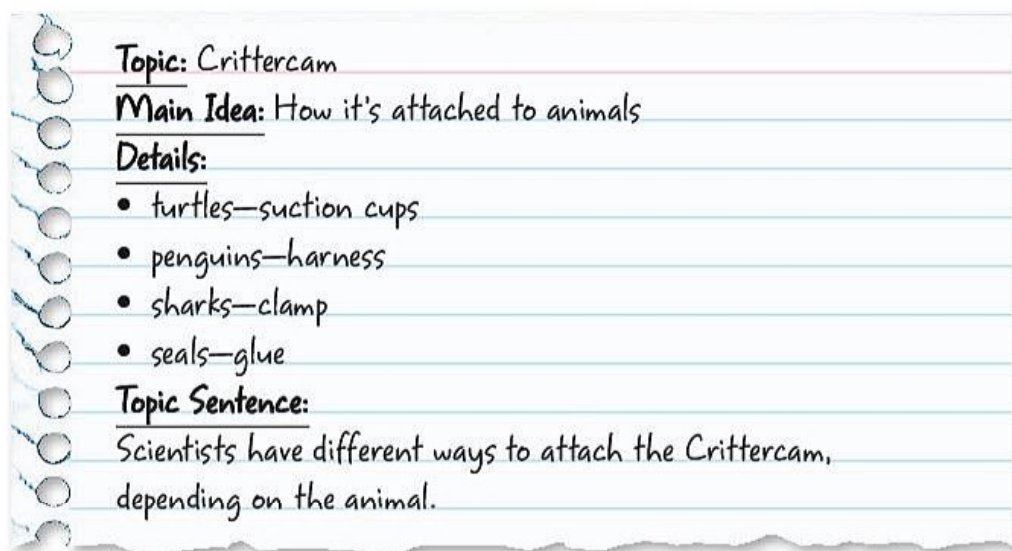


### Getting to a Topic Sentence

First, you need to decide what to write about. That will be your topic. Then think about what you want to say in general about your topic—that will be your main idea. Next, follow these steps to get to a topic sentence:

- Write as many details as you can that support your main idea.
- Look to see how the details are related to each other and to the main idea.
- Write a full statement that expresses your main idea as it relates to the details you plan to cover in your paragraph.

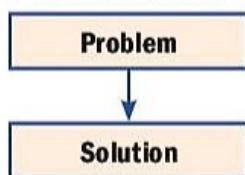
Here's how one student got to her topic sentence.



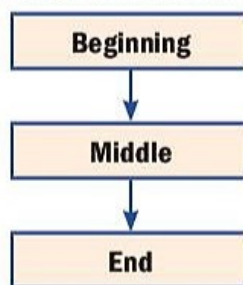
## Topic Sentence

Your topic sentence and supporting details will determine how your paragraph is organized. Below are four common types of paragraph organization. We'll go through each type in more detail on pages 6W–13W.

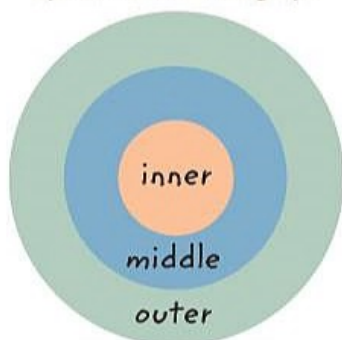
**Problem-and-Solution Paragraph**



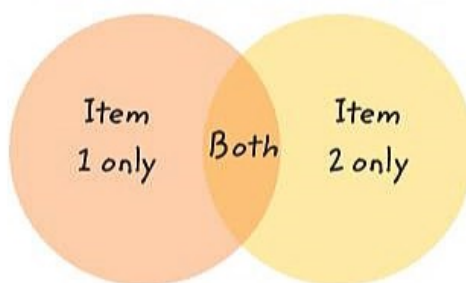
**Chronological-Order Paragraph**



**Spatial-Order Paragraph**



**Compare-and-Contrast Paragraph**



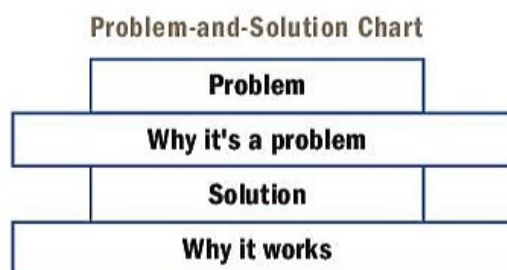
## Problem-and-Solution Paragraph

What is the difference between a good invention and a bad one?  
A good invention solves a problem.

People face problems and think about solutions every day. If you want to write about a problem and a solution, you need to organize your ideas clearly:

- Begin by describing the problem in detail.
- Explain how you think the problem can be solved, or describe how it was solved.

Before you start writing, you can use a problem-and-solution chart to help organize your thoughts.



Read the student model on page 7W. It shows the features of a good problem-and-solution paragraph.

### PROBLEM-AND-SOLUTION PARAGRAPH

#### A good problem-and-solution paragraph

- ☒ presents a problem
- ☒ explains the problem clearly and in detail
- ☒ presents a solution
- ☒ explains how the solution addresses the problem.

Feature Checklist



## PROBLEM-AND-SOLUTION PARAGRAPH

### Perfecting the Crittercam

by Carly Rogers

At first, Greg Marshall's Crittercam was too bulky and heavy to work effectively. Marshall first tried out the Crittercam on a captive nurse shark. The shark was not able to swim as quickly as usual. The weight of the camera was causing drag, which slowed the shark down. Marshall redesigned the Crittercam. He made it smaller and lighter. These changes improved its usefulness, because the shark could swim more normally.

The topic sentence states the **problem**.

Then, the writer shows the **solution**.

#### Student Model

<b><u>Problem</u></b> Crittercam was too bulky, heavy.
<b><u>Why it's a problem</u></b> Shark couldn't swim well.
<b><u>Solution</u></b> Redesign camera to make it smaller and lighter.
<b><u>Why it works</u></b> Shark will be able to swim more normally.

The Crittercam's improved design helped scientists learn more about sharks.





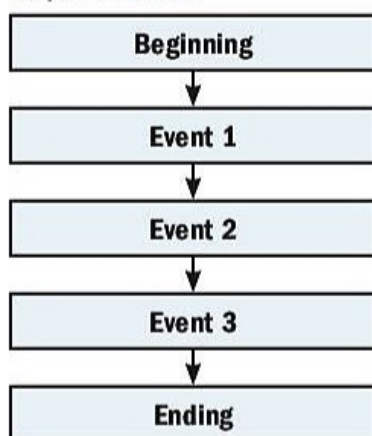
## Chronological-Order Paragraph

You often tell about things that happen to you. When you describe events, you usually tell them in the order they happened. If you mix present and past events, your listener will have a hard time following what you are saying.

When you want to write about a series of events, retell the events in the sequence in which they occurred. This sequence is called **chronological order**. Start with what happened first, and lead the reader to the final event. When you write events in chronological order, use words such as *first*, *then*, *after*, and *finally*.

Read the professional model on page 9W. It shows the features of a good chronological-order paragraph.

Sequence Chain



### CHRONOLOGICAL-ORDER PARAGRAPH

#### A good chronological-order paragraph

- ☒ tells events in the order they happened
- ☒ uses signal words like *first*, *next*, *then*, *after*, and *finally* to show the sequence of events.

Feature Checklist



## CHRONOLOGICAL-ORDER PARAGRAPH

### from **Hitching a Ride**

by Rebecca Johnson

These two events are in **chronological order**.

The team learned how penguins dive. First the penguins dive down and then turn to look up at the ice overhead. Against the bright white of the ice, they can easily spot their favorite fish. They go up to grab a meal. **Next**, they go down again for another look at the ice. The penguins make a few of these food-finding trips. **Then** the penguins pop out of the water with stomachs bulging full of fish.

**Signal words** help the reader understand when something happened.

#### Professional Model



◀ Penguins dive under ice to catch fish.

## Spatial-Order Paragraph

How would you describe the way someone was dressed on a special occasion? You might start by describing the person's hairstyle or hat. Then you'd move down, describing each item of clothing until you got to the person's shoes. To do this a different way, you could start with the shoes and then move up.

When you write to describe something you see, choose a starting point and then move in a clear direction. Use **spatial order** to describe something so your reader can picture what it's like. Proceed from inside to outside, left to right, or top to bottom.

You might want to begin by drawing and labeling a picture. This will help you organize the details of your description.

Read the student model on page 11W. It shows the features of a good spatial-order paragraph.

### SPATIAL-ORDER PARAGRAPH

#### A good spatial-order paragraph

- ☒ proceeds from a visual starting point to an ending point
- ☒ takes the reader logically from one place to the other
- ☒ uses signal words like *above* and *underneath* to show spatial order.

Feature Checklist



## SPATIAL-ORDER PARAGRAPH

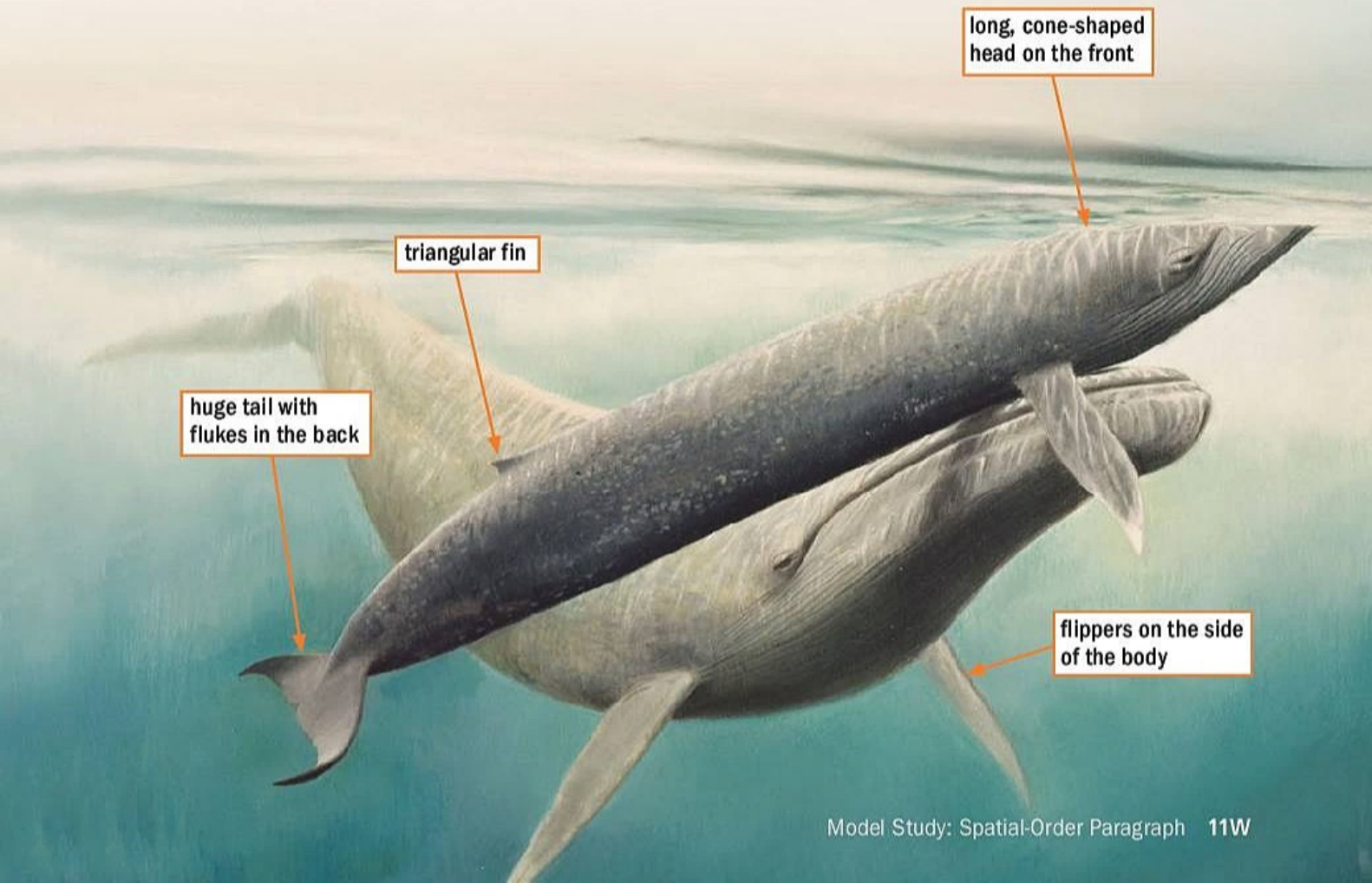
### The Blue Whale

by Emma Triches

The writer describes the whale from front to back.

The blue whale has a long, cone-shaped head. On the top of its head, the blue whale has two blowholes. On its sides, there are the flippers. On its back and close to the tail, the blue whale has a small triangular fin. The blue whale has a huge back fin with broad flukes.

#### Student Model





# Compare-and-Contrast Paragraph

When you want to bring attention to the similarities or differences between two things, you write a paragraph that compares and contrasts.

When you **compare**, you write about how two things are similar. When you **contrast**, you write to show how two things are different.

You can use a **Venn diagram** to show the similarities and differences between two things. A Venn diagram uses overlapping circles to organize these details.

Read the student model on page 13W. It shows the features of a good compare-and-contrast paragraph.



## COMPARE-AND-CONTRAST PARAGRAPH

### A good compare-and-contrast paragraph

- ☒ names the items being compared
- ☒ describes ways the items are similar
- ☒ describes ways the items are different
- ☒ includes signal words like *both*, *same*, *different*, and *however* to show similarities and differences.

Feature Checklist

## COMPARE-AND-CONTRAST PARAGRAPH

### Grizzly Bears and Great White Sharks

by Mamoun Rahman

The writer  
names the  
animals  
being  
compared.

The writer  
tells how  
grizzly  
bears and  
sharks are  
different.

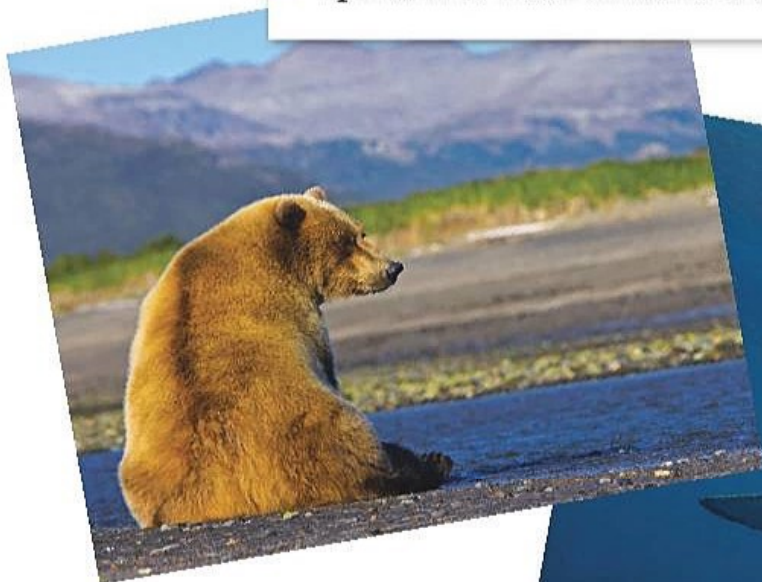
The writer  
tells what  
the animals  
have in  
common.

Grizzly bears and great white sharks are both scary predators that can sometimes terrorize people. Grizzly bears are mammals and live on land, while great white sharks are fish and live in the ocean. Grizzly bears protect themselves from the cold with their fur. Great white sharks, on the other hand, are covered in special scales that protect them. Both animals have been observed through the Crittercam. Apparently, both grizzly bears and great white sharks are a little more friendly than you might think. One way in which they are alike is that they often share their space with other animals of their own species.

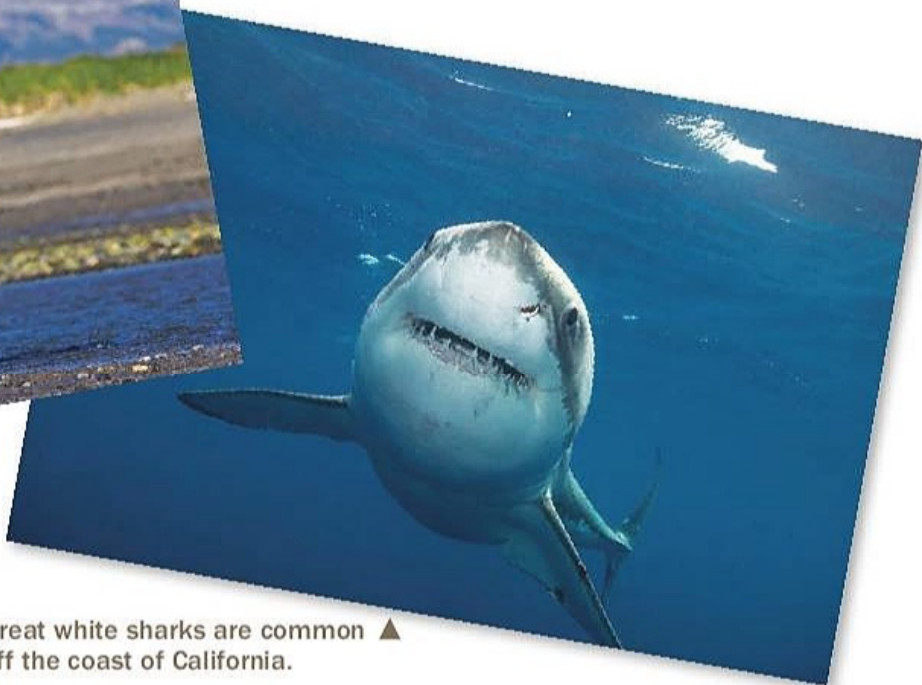
These signal  
words  
cue the  
contrasts.

These signal  
words  
cue the  
similarities.

▲ Student Model



▲ A grizzly bear's fur protects it from cold temperatures.



Great white sharks are common ▲  
off the coast of California.

## Write a Paragraph



**WRITING PROMPT** There are more things to write about than there are fish in the ocean! Now that you have learned about different ways of organizing paragraphs, pick your favorite critter and write a paragraph. You can choose any of the four structures you have learned about.

Be sure you include

- a topic sentence
- a clear organization
- interesting details that support your topic sentence.

## Plan and Write

Here are some ideas for how you can plan and then get started on your writing.

### 1 Choose a Topic

Decide what to write about. You can't tell everything about your favorite animal in one paragraph, so what is it that you want readers to understand? This will be your main idea.

#### The Great White Shark

- in aquariums
- adapted for hunting
- many different species

### 2 Get Some Details Down on Paper

After you choose your topic and decide what you want to say about it, list some details and examples that support your main idea.

- large, saw-edged teeth
- can weigh more than 7000 lbs.
- mottled skin
- has small, hidden ears to help hear prey



### 3 Choose an Organization and Write a Topic Sentence

Think about how your details relate to one another and to the main idea. Your main idea and details will usually suggest a specific organization. Write a topic sentence that expresses your main idea fully and reflects your organization.

#### *Topic Sentence for a Spatial-Order Paragraph*

From nose to tail fin, the great white shark is an efficient, deadly hunting machine.

### 4 Turn Your Details into Supporting Sentences

Turn each detail on your list into a supporting sentence to flesh out your paragraph. Each sentence should explain the main idea or give an example of it. A graphic organizer might help you arrange the sentences effectively.

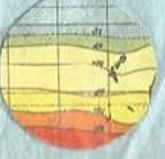
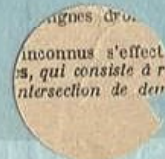
From nose to tail fin, the great white shark is an efficient, deadly hunting machine. Its mouth, on the underside of its head, is filled with rows of sharp, saw-edged teeth.



#### **Reflect**

- Is your main idea clear in your topic sentence?
- Are all of your details connected?





A

Z

# THE Writing Process

## Project 2 Use the Writing Process

The Writing Process . . . . .	18W
Prewrite . . . . .	20W
Draft . . . . .	32W
Revise . . . . .	42W
Edit and Proofread . . . . .	48W
Publish, Share, and Reflect . . . . .	60W



# Use the Writing Process



"Writing doesn't intimidate me because I just take it step by step."

—Ana

## Writing Strategy

### The Writing Process

Writing is like playing basketball or the piano. If you want to be good at it, you have to work on it. And there's a process involved. Some things you do first; some things you do later.

### What Are the Steps of the Writing Process?

Writers follow a process to make their writing the best it can be. The writing process usually involves five stages—**prewriting**, **drafting**, **revising**, **editing and proofreading**, and **publishing**.

#### 1 Prewrite—Get Ready to Write

Prewriting is what you do before you write. You choose a topic, think about what to say, and develop a plan. What is the plan that works best for you? You can write notes, make an outline, or even sketch drawings.

#### 2 Draft—Get It Down on Paper

Drafting is the next step. Writing down that first draft is sometimes the hardest part. But it can also be the most exciting. Remember, your first draft doesn't have to be perfect. You can go back and make changes later, so relax and enjoy the work.





### 3 Revise—Get It to Sing

After you finish your draft, put it aside for a while. Then you can come back to it with fresh eyes. You might end up making major changes! You might move sentences around or add new ideas. You can show your work to someone else, too, and ask for comments.

### 4 Edit and Proofread—Get It Right

Once you've made the big changes, work on getting the details right. This is when you correct your sentences and fix any mistakes in grammar, spelling, or punctuation.

### 5 Publish, Share, and Reflect—Get It Out There

Do you want other people to read your work? Then publish it! Writers share their work in newspapers, magazines, and books. Sharing your writing with your family, friends, and classmates is another form of publishing. Don't forget to reflect on your writing yourself—think about what you have worked so hard to create!

## Your Job as a Writer

Good writers have many trade secrets. One of them is using the writing process. Try it on this project.

### *Write Problem-and-Solution Paragraphs*

**WRITING PROMPT** Inventions are created for a reason: to solve problems. What are some inventions that make your life easier? What do you think life was like before they were invented? Think about an invention that you think really makes life easier. Then write two paragraphs about it. Your paragraphs should:

- present a problem
- explain the problem clearly and in detail
- make a claim about the solution
- give reasons and evidence that support the claim as a good solution for the problem.

## Prewrite: Collect Ideas

Where can you get ideas for your writing? Start by looking around. Reading news stories and books can also help you get an idea. Sometimes ideas come from your past experiences. Once you start looking, you can find ideas everywhere!

### Ways to Come Up with Ideas

Get your idea wheel spinning. Think about:

- items you use every day that help you with difficult tasks
- famous inventions of the past
- news articles you've read about recent inventions
- projects you saw at the science fair
- how life in the past was different from life today
- what your life would be without modern technology
- your top ten favorite inventions.

#### Top Ten Inventions

1. Video games
2. The umbrella
3. Headphones
4. Sunglasses



## Where to Keep Your Ideas

Start an idea file to keep your ideas together in one place. Any container will do. For example, you could:

- keep a journal of your thoughts and ideas
- put articles, stories, and photos you like in a file folder
- keep a few pages of your Writer's Notebook just for your ideas
- write your ideas on strips of paper and put them in a cereal box or in a basket.

### On-the-Go Inspiration

**When you don't have your idea file with you, ask yourself questions like these:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What objects that I use are good inventions?</li><li>• What inventions could change my life at school?</li><li>• Who are my favorite inventors?</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What have people invented in recent years?</li><li>• If I were an inventor, what would I try to create?</li><li>• What big problems did famous inventions solve?</li></ul> |
|---|--|



### TechTIP

You can record your ideas on an electronic device when you're on the go. Look for a microphone, find out how it works, and speak your ideas! You can even talk to a voicemail system.



## Prewrite: Collect Ideas, continued

Some things, like science or spelling, you know in your head. Other things, about people or the world, you know in your heart. That's your truth. When you write about one thing you believe in your heart, your writing will not wander.

## Speak Your Truth

What do you believe is true about people or the world? You may already have an idea in your head, but sometimes looking at a photograph can help you discover your truth. What truth would you add to this list?



### Truths

1. Everyone needs help to learn new things.
2. Families spend time together.
3. Not everyone can get things right without some help.
4. People change as they get older.
5. There are many ways to define a family.

Something that is true for one person is not necessarily true for others. When you look at these photographs, does a different truth come to mind?



*Working together is so much better than working alone.*



*Communication mistakes can cause serious problems.*



*Sometimes you have to look from a distance to see something clearly.*



*Shopping is like searching for treasure; you never know what you're going to bring home.*



## Prewrite: Choose Your Topic

You can use your idea collection to come up with a topic to write about. You want to make sure your topic is not too general, or broad, for the kind of writing you'll do.

A specific, or smaller, topic is easier to write about. It is also much more interesting for your readers. Take a look at how one writer narrowed the topic of "Inventors" for a problem-and-solution essay.

### Inventors

This topic would take pages and pages to cover. Why?



Broad

### Inventions used in my town

This is better, but still too broad. How many inventions can you write about?



### The trash-sorting machine that cleaned my town's landfill

This topic is interesting because it is specific. How could you write a problem-and-solution essay about this?



Narrow

#### Your Topic is Too Broad When . . .

- you type key words into a search engine and get thousands of hits
- you search the library database and find hundreds of books
- there are so many ideas, you don't know where to start

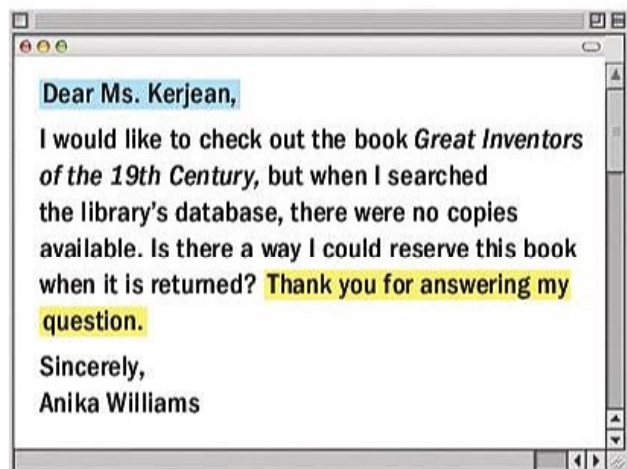


## Prewrite: Choose Your Audience

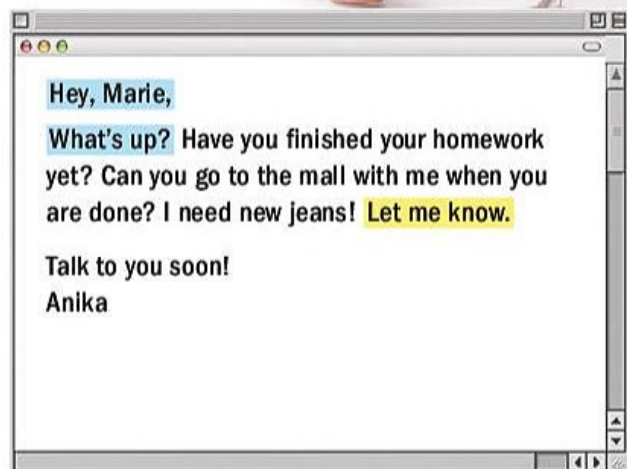
After choosing a good topic, think about your **audience**. These are the people who will read your writing. When you know your audience, you can choose the right tone for your writing.

Audience	Tone	Language
your best friend or someone your age	very informal	Hey Lindsey- Have you ever heard of Linus Yale? He invented the lock.
an older relative	somewhat informal	Hello, Uncle Jim, I'm doing a report about locks. Could you tell me about locks you put in doors when you build them? Thanks.
your teacher	somewhat formal	Dear Mrs. Smith, I would like to invite my Uncle Jim to class to talk about locks. He is a carpenter. When would be a good time to talk more about this?
someone you do not know	very formal	Dear Prof. Goodis, I am doing a report on the invention of locks for school. Would you answer the three questions I've included in this e-mail? I would really appreciate it. Thank you.

Who is the audience for each of these e-mails?



The writer uses a **formal greeting** and words that give her message a **polite, formal tone**.



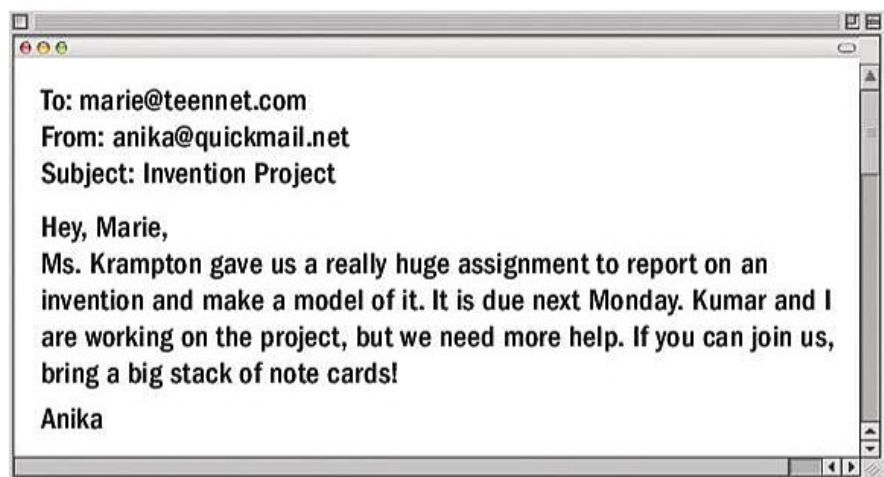
The writer uses an **informal greeting** and words that give her message a **friendly, casual tone**.

## Prewrite: Choose Your Purpose

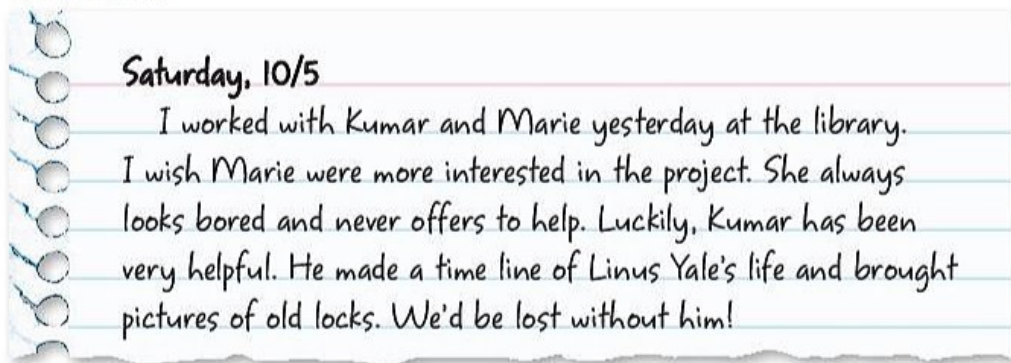
What do you want your audience to know or do? That'll be your **purpose**, or reason, for writing. When you write, choose a tone that fits your purpose.

What is the writer's purpose in the e-mail below? What is the writer's purpose in the journal entry?

### E-mail



### Journal Entry



Anika wrote the e-mail to give Marie information about the project. In the journal entry, Anika wrote about her private feelings.

What was her purpose for writing this letter to her friend Bernie?

Letter

Dear Bernie,

Thank you so much for all the information that you sent me about Linus Yale's invention. However, I think we should do more research about his life growing up in New York. Adding these details will make our report more convincing and interesting to read! Call me if you want to talk more about this. I can explain more why I really think this is the way to go.

## Are Your Audience and Purpose Connected?

Yes. Your audience and purpose are related to one another. One way to get clear about your purpose is to consider how you want your audience to react to what you have to say.

If You Want Your Audience to	Your Purpose Is	For Quick Topic Ideas, List . . .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• learn something new</li><li>• understand something better</li></ul>	to inform or explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ten things people can learn from you</li><li>• ten things you can do really well</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• laugh</li><li>• feel deep emotion</li><li>• enjoy reading your work</li><li>• enjoy reading about a real experience or event</li></ul>	to narrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ten situations that made you laugh</li><li>• funny or strange situations you experienced</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• believe something</li><li>• take action on an important issue</li><li>• know what you think</li></ul>	to argue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• five things you would like to change, how you would change them, and why</li><li>• your ideas about what you like or dislike, and why</li></ul>



## Prewrite: Choose Your Purpose, continued

### Does Your Form Connect to Your Purpose?

You can change how and what you write to fit your purpose. Look at the examples on these pages.

#### To Inform or Explain

You might want to explain how to do something.

##### How to Start a Research Project

1. Go to the library and read all you can about your subject.
2. Take notes and write where the information comes from.
3. Make copies of interesting material.

Instructions

Or, you could give your audience important information.

When you start a research project, you need to find material. The best place to start is the library. Once you're there, look for books about your subject. As you skim through the pages, take notes. You can also make copies of interesting material.

Paragraph

You might want to describe something.

The tablet is one of the most practical inventions of the past few years. Measuring about 7 x 10 inches and weighing about a pound and a half, this powerful computer can do almost everything a laptop can do but in a smaller, lighter package.

Description

You might want to give information about the life of a real person.

The next time you use tape to wrap a package, thank Richard Drew. Drew was an engineer in the 1920s and 1930s. He invented masking tape—a tan paper strip with adhesive—to help painters paint a straight line.

Biography



## To Argue

In an editorial, you make a claim and support it with reasons and evidence.

### Recycle Tech Devices

Every year, we get excited about some new electronic device. Every year, millions of old electronic devices get thrown away. The Environmental Protection Agency says that discarding these devices in landfills is dangerous because electronics contain many harmful metals and chemicals. In landfills, these metals and chemicals can seep into groundwater and poison whole water systems. This is why people need better ways to dispose of old electronics. Recycling them can be part of the solution.

Editorial for School Newspaper

In an advertisement, you can use reasons and evidence to argue why someone should buy something.

### Bike Locks ON SALE NOW!

Bike thefts are at an all-time high in our town. You need the sturdiest lock to protect your bike. Police tests rate U-Locks as the best choice for keeping bikes safe. Choose from the largest selection of U-Locks in town at Locks in Stock. Hurry while supplies last!

#### LOCKS IN STOCK

14 Oak Street • (555) 555-3421

Ad

## To Narrate

You could write a funny essay about a real experience that has a logical sequence of events.

### Laura's Invention

Laura unveiled her invention. It was a spoon with a straw attached to it. "It is for drinking the last drops of soup in the bowl," she explained.

Then she demonstrated her invention. She poured a little bit of orange juice into a bowl. She spooned out as much as she could. Then she used the straw. She made a horrible gurgling sound. Everyone laughed. "Science doesn't care about manners!" Laura exclaimed.

Essay

You could write a story about an imagined experience and use lots of descriptive details.

### The Robot

Josh and Sam stared at their creation. The robot creaked and blinked its little shiny eyes. Then it started talking. Instead of repeating the script Josh and Sam had written, the robot started talking in a strange language. At first, Josh and Sam could not understand what the robot was saying. Then, they began to hear their names, repeated over and over. The robot seemed to mock them. What was happening?

Short Story



## Prewrite: Organize Your Ideas

You know your topic, your purpose, and the form. You know who your audience will be. Sum them up in an FATP chart.

### FATP Chart

Form: problem-and-solution paragraphs

Audience: classmates

Topic: how my town solved the landfill problem

Purpose: to explain a problem and its solution

## First Paragraph

For a problem-and-solution essay, your first paragraph should present the problem.

1. Maybe you want to describe the problem and give details about it. You could use **logical order**, like this:

### Save Sunnydale!

Our landfill has gotten so big, it is blocking the sun from shining on Sunnydale. It is a big, ugly, smelly problem. The pile of trash is so high that many people are worried it might collapse.

The **topic sentence** introduces the **claim**.

The **reasons** support the claim.

2. Maybe you want to describe how the problem started and then got worse, step by step. Then you would use **chronological order**.

### Save Sunnydale!

Last year, my town decided to put all of the trash we collected in a landfill. At first, the pile was small, but then as people kept throwing things away, it got bigger and bigger. By the end of the year, the pile was so big, it blocked out the sun.

**Time words and phrases** help to show chronological order.



3. Maybe you want to describe the scene, so that readers can picture it in their minds. Then you would use **spatial order**.

### Save Sunnydale!

The landfill towers over the town. The base is covered with old trash that smells terrible. The sides are covered by small objects that have fallen from the top. At the top, you can see the seagulls searching for food.

The writer describes the landfill from **bottom to top**.

Check out pages 444W–453W for some tools you can use to organize ideas.

### Second Paragraph

Once you have described the problem, you need to move on to the solution. This second paragraph tells the audience how the problem was solved.

At the town meeting, we found the perfect solution: buying a trash-sorting machine. The machine is able to sort glass from paper, wood from metal. Although some people pointed out that the machine is very expensive, in the long run, it is worth the expense. Sorting trash will help our town recycle more easily, reducing the amount of trash. According to expert estimates, recycling will reduce the amount of trash that ends up in our giant landfill by 42%. And reducing the size of the landfill is our goal.

The writer states the **claim** and provides **reasons** and **evidence** to support it. The writer offers a different, or an **alternative claim** and refutes it to strengthen the claim.

#### Reflect

- What do you want your audience to understand about the problem?
- How can you explain the solution clearly?



## Draft

### What's It Like ?

The first model an inventor creates almost never looks like the final invention. An inventor starts with an idea, sees how the model works, and then keeps toying around with it until the invention does exactly what it is supposed to do. Drafting is like that. You have a plan and good ideas, and you go for it! The whole point is to get your ideas down on paper so that you can see how they work out.



### How Do You Face a Blank Page?

Now that you have a plan, it's time to start the first draft of your problem-and-solution paper. Sometimes, the hardest part of writing a paper is getting started! As you will see, there is no one right way to write a first draft.

All drafts start with a blank piece of paper—or a blank computer screen. Here are some ideas to help you get started:

- Gather all the tools you need. Get pencils and paper. Collect the notes and graphic organizers that you made during prewriting. If you are using a computer, create a folder for your files.
- Find a good place to write. It doesn't have to be a desk, but make sure there are no distractions.
- Start writing! Remember, a draft does not have to be perfect. Just get your ideas down on paper!

Look at Jaime's draft on page 33W. What makes it a good start? How much does it matter if there are spelling mistakes in the first draft?



## An Easier Time for Wheelchair Users

by Jaime Rivera

Thanks to 12-year-old Chandler Macocha, wheelchair users now have an easier time getting things out of backpacks. Chandler invented a swing-out backpack holder for wheelchairs.

The seed for this invention began with Chandler's young next-door neighbor who used a wheelchair. His neighbor always had problems with reaching around the back of her wheelchair for her backpack. Sometimes she had to ask others for help. Chandler figured that a lot of people had this same problem.

Chandler had an idea for a solution, so he developed a working model. Then his neighbor tried out the model. By pulling a lever, she could make the backpack swivel forward.

Chandler's neighbor wasn't the only one who thought the swing-out backpack holder was a good idea. For this invention, Chandler received a Da Vinci Award, which is given for innovations that help people overcome physical limitations. In addition, the U.S. Patent Office gave Chandler a patent on the invention. Now, with Chandler's swing-out backpack holder, Chandler's neighbor and other wheelchair users no longer have to struggle to get their backpacks.

Jaime wrote without worrying about little mistakes. Now he has a draft to work with.

### DRAFTING CHECKLIST

#### In a good draft:

- ☒ the title and first sentence identify the claim
- ☒ the writing includes logical reasons and relevant evidence
- ☒ the concluding sentence supports the claim
- ☒ writers set down ideas quickly, without worrying about spelling or grammar mistakes.



**Draft,** continued

Writing is like playing sports. You don't have to be perfect. You just need to do your best. On the next few pages are some ideas about writing a first draft. Which ideas sound familiar? Which ideas seem like they would work for you?

## Getting Started

**Q:** What do I need to get started?

**A:** Find a quiet place where you can work. Make sure you have enough pencils and paper, or a computer. You should also have your notes and your graphic organizers. These materials will help you when you are unsure about how to organize your writing.

**Q:** What's the right way to start a draft?

**A:** Writers are like snowflakes. No two are exactly alike. While there's no "right" way to start, here are some ideas:

- Draw pictures to get yourself thinking. You can also write whatever comes into your head to get your ideas flowing. It's like doodling with words.
- Write your ideas down quickly. Don't worry about finding exactly the right word.
- Spend some time working on the first paragraph. This will help you find a direction for the body of the paper.
- Work out of order if you need to. Write the parts you feel more comfortable with. Then move to the other paragraphs.

## How Do You Start Writing a Draft?

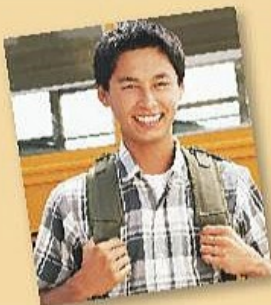


“ I spend five or ten minutes writing down anything I can think of about my topic, even if it sounds silly. Freewriting really helps me get my ideas out.”

—Karen

“ I draw pictures of something that has to do with my topic. If I need to describe something, my picture helps me organize my thoughts.”

—Matthew



“ I talk to my friends about my story first. It helps me figure out what I’m going to write about. Sometimes we instant-message each other to talk about our ideas.”

—Gilberto

“ I create lists or webs of ideas that relate to the topic of my essay. Graphic organizers give me a lot of ideas to start with.”

—Sylvia





**Draft,** continued

## Staying on Track

**Q:** Sometimes when I'm writing, my mind wanders and I get away from the point. How can I stay on track?

**A:** Keep your notes and graphic organizer around you to keep you focused. They will remind you of your plan for your essay.

You can also try to work with a partner. You can ask your partner to read your paper. You can also read your paper out loud and ask your friend what he or she thinks.

Another way to stay on track is by writing a “kernel essay” before you write your paper. A kernel essay shows just the main points of your story. It doesn't have any details. See how this writer used a kernel essay in his final paper.

### Matt's Kernel Essay

#### The Invention of Earmuffs

Inventions solve a problem.

Chester Greenwood's earmuffs were brilliant.

They solved the problem of cold ears.

The earmuffs covered his ears.

With earmuffs on, his ears stayed warm in cold weather.

### From Matt's Essay

Chester Greenwood's invention was a brilliant solution to a problem. Winters were really harsh where Chester lived. One thing that bothered him was that his ears would get cold when he was outside during the winter.



## How Do You Stay on Track?



**“ I need silence when I write. I turn off my phone and the radio so that I won’t be distracted. Quiet helps me focus on my writing.”**

**—Fatima**

**“ I write for five or ten minutes and then reread what I’ve written. If I like it, I write for ten more minutes. If not, I take a short break and then come back with fresh eyes. Then I decide how I want to fix it.”**

**—Mark**

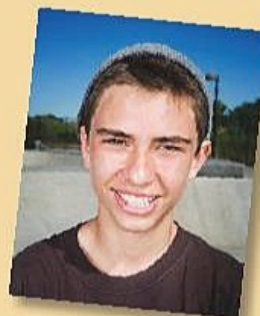


**“ Sometimes it helps to take a short break when I am having a hard time writing. If I keep struggling with a tough paragraph, sometimes I get frustrated and I need to walk away from it for a while. Taking a break helps me go back to my writing with fresh ideas.”**

**—Melanie**

**“ After every couple of paragraphs, I like to share my writing with a friend. It has to be someone I trust and feel comfortable with. It is helpful to hear my essay out loud and ask my friend for questions and comments.”**

**—Dean**



**Draft,** continued

## Knowing When You're Done

**Q:** How do I know when I'm done with the draft and I can move on to the next step?

**A:** You know you are finished when your ideas are all down on paper (or on your computer). Reread your essay and ask yourself some questions:

- Is my opening paragraph interesting? Is my argument clear? Will it make a reader want to know the reasons for my claim?
- Are my reasons clear and logical? Is my evidence relevant? Does it come from accurate and credible sources?
- Does the ending flow smoothly? Does it seem tacked on? Does it follow from and support the argument I presented?

## The Truth About Drafting

**FICTION:** You should write your entire draft at once.

**FACT:** Sometimes you can write a draft all at once. But most drafts will take more time. Take a break if you need to!

**FICTION:** You should use a pencil and lined notebook paper to write a draft.

**FACT:** Use whatever works best for you. Some writers take notes on lots of scraps of paper. Others write on plain paper with colored pens. Some people use a computer to write. The important thing is to keep writing.

**FICTION:** You should never, ever write a draft without doing prewriting first.

**FACT:** Prewriting is a good way to organize your ideas. But sometimes the best way to figure out what you want to say is to just start writing! That way, you have some ideas down on paper. You can always go back and reorganize your ideas later.

**FICTION:** You should always stick to your plan when you're writing.

**FACT:** It's a good idea to stick to your writing plan. But that doesn't mean you can't change your mind. As you write, you might come up with new and better ideas. Don't be afraid to be flexible and change your plan if you need to.