

Content

Part I: Overview of Academic Writing, p. 2

Part II: The Writing Process, p. 3

Part III: Paragraph (A Review), p. 3-4

Part IV: Essay Organization, p. 4-7

Part V: Outlining, p. 7-9

Part VI: Unity & Coherence, p. 9

Part VII: Paraphrasing & Summarizing, p. 10-11

Part VII: Types of Essay, p. 11-14

Process

Cause & Effect

Part IX: Paper Assignments, p. 14

Exercises, E1-E26

Appendices, A1-A3

Transition Signals

Correction Symbols

*The practice exercises for this handbook are taken from Alice Oshima & Ann Hogue's *Writing Academic English* (3rd ed.), 1999.

Part I: Overview of Academic Writing

Academic Writing

This is a type of writing you are required to do in a university setting. It is different from personal (e.g., journals and prose), journalistic, and business writings. You can tell the difference among the different types of writing by 1) audience, 2) tone, and 3) purpose. You must consider these three elements as you plan and write your essays.

Audience- refers to who will be reading what you have written, in this case, the instructor.

Tone- refers to the style and manner of expression. It is largely affected by diction and grammatical structure.

Read the following paragraphs and answers the questions that follow.

Paragraph 1

The bombing against the US surprised many people all over the world. The plans of few men to fly planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were carried out on September 11, 2001, resulting in the loss of about 6000 people. In response to the event, the US called for a war against Bin Laden and his Taliban group, which is assumed to be the number one suspect of the event.

What is the writer's opinion of the bombing? What do you notice about the tone & diction?

Paragraph 2

The atrocious bombing against the US shocked many people all around the world. The evil plans of few men to attack the World trade Center and the Pentagon were maliciously carried out on September 11, 2001, resulting in the death of over 6000 innocent lives. In indignant response to the attack, the US justifiably declared war against Bin Laden and his Taliban group, which is assumed to be the primary suspect of the deadly bombing.

What is the writer's opinion of the bombing? What do you notice about the tone? Diction? List the words that effectively communicate the tone of the passage.

Purpose- refers to the type of essay you are instructed to write. In this class, we will be writing "informative" essays, (i.e., essays that give information about a given topic).

Part II: The Writing Process

Writing is a PROCESS not a product.

What is the difference? Discuss.

The Writing Process (4)

1) Prewriting

Choose and narrow a topic

Brainstorm

- Making lists
- Free-writing
- Clustering

2) Planning

Outline

3) Writing

Rough draft

Final draft (after revising & proofreading)

4) Revising

Revise content & organization

Proofread (grammar & mechanics)

Part III: Paragraph (A Review)

Paragraph

This is the basic unit of organization in writing. It consists of related sentences that develop one main idea. The length of a paragraph can vary but it has to be long enough to develop the main idea. All paragraphs in academic writings have three structural parts: 1) topic sentence, 2) supporting sentences, and 3) concluding sentence.

Topic sentence is a sentence/s that gives the main idea of a paragraph. It has two functions: 1) names the topic and 2) limits the topic by giving it a controlling idea. It is usually located in the beginning of a paragraph.

Topic sentences are always complete sentences (i.e., has a subject, predicate, and usually a complement). What's wrong with the following topic sentences?

- 1a) Driving on freeways . 1b) Driving on freeways is dangerous.
2a) The importance of gold. 2b) Gold is important.
3a) The power of music. 3b) Music can be powerful.

Good topic sentences have both a topic and a controlling idea.

- 1c) Driving on freeways require skill and alertness.
2c) Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics.
3c) Music can have a great impact on the human emotion.

Supporting sentences are sentences that develop the topic sentence. They do this by doing one or more of the following: 1) explaining by giving reasons, 2) defining a main concept or term; 3) giving facts and statistics; 4) quoting sources; and 5) using anecdotes.

Concluding sentence signals the end by summarizing the main idea of a paragraph and leaves the reader with important points to remember. Sometimes the writer's opinion of the topic is given or other related comments are made.

Part IV: Essay Organization

Essay

An essay consists of several related paragraphs that develop a topic. The same organizational and structural principles of a paragraph apply. However, an essay deals with a topic which is too complex to discuss in a single paragraph. Therefore, you must divide the topic and discuss it in a logical way. An essay has at least 3 (usually more) paragraphs: 1) an introduction, 2) body, and 3) conclusion.

Introductory paragraph

It begins the essay by giving a few general statements about the subject to attract the reader's attention. More importantly, it states the thesis statement (also referred to as the topic sentence or the main idea). A good thesis statement should state the topic and give specific subdivisions and/or plan for your paper. Remember, a good thesis statement like a topic sentence should name the specific topic and the controlling idea or subdivisions of the topic.

Read the following introductory paragraph and answer the questions below.

Any person who has lived in the twentieth century has seen a lot of changes take place in almost all areas of human existence. Some people are excited by the challenges that these changes offer; others want to return to the simpler life-style of the past. The twentieth century has certain advantages such as a higher standard of living for many, but it also has some disadvantages such as a polluted environment, the depersonalization of human relationships, and the weakening of spiritual values.

1) *Underline the general statement. Does it introduce the topic of the essay? Does it give general or background information on the topic?*

2) *Circle the thesis statement. Does it state the main topic? Does it list the subdivisions of the topic or subtopics? Can you identify the method of organization?*

Writing a General/Attention-Getter Statement

The following are some of the common types of introductory statements used in academic writing. Study the five types and discuss which ones would be appropriate for the different types of essays.

1) *Background*

Dancing is a universal form of self-expression and creativity.

Capital punishment is a topic of much debate in the United States and it has become one of the most important issues in American politics today.

2) *Question*

Have you been to the bathrooms at Veliko Turnovo University? If you have, you are aware of the urgent changes needed in the area of school facility.

3) *Quotation*

“Schools are a place of knowledge and wisdom.” Unfortunately, such saying is no longer true in the Bulgarian educational system today.

According to Bulgarian Herald, “the number of young people from the age of 18-26 going abroad to study has tripled in the past year from 1562 to 4,673.” This phenomena reveals a serious distrust and doubt of the Bulgarian education system.

4) *Definition*

“School,” defined as “an institution where learning takes place,” is an outdated definition, which no longer applies to today’s educational system in Bulgaria.

5) *Analogy*

Ann loved going to school as a young girl because it was place where she could meet with friends, learn many new things, and experience the joy of childhood. Now Ann is a mother with a daughter who hates going to school because it has become a place of drudgery where she is no longer given the enriching educational experience of the past.

Writing a Thesis Statement

Study the following statements. Which are good thesis statements? Which ones need to be revised? Discuss and make necessary revisions.

1) Computers have revolutionized the world.

2) The large movement of people from rural to urban areas has major effects on a city’s ability to provide housing, employment, and adequate sanitation services.

3) Prejudice arises from three basic causes: childhood conditioning, ignorance, and fear.

4) Young people in my culture have less freedom than young people in the U.S.

Body paragraph

It consists of one or more paragraphs. Each paragraph develops a subdivision of your topic. Like supporting sentences, a body paragraph functions to develop a topic. All body paragraphs should begin with a transition word or phrase and have a topic sentence. You can decide on how you want to organize the body according to the purpose of the essay.

Concluding paragraph

This is simply a summary or review of the main points discussed in the body. It is a restatement of your thesis statement in different words. You can also offer your personal opinion and/or suggestions but be careful not to digress from the main topic and bring in a new topic.

Read the following concluding paragraph and answer the question below.

In short, although the twentieth century has indeed given some of us a lot of advantages by making us richer, healthier, and freer to enjoy our lives, it has, in my opinion, not made us wiser. The twentieth century has also made our earth dirtier, our people less humane, and our spiritual lives poorer. We wish to continue to enjoy the benefits of technological advancement because they free us to pursue our other interests and goals. However, we must make a concerted effort to preserve our natural environment for future generations. Moreover, we should take the time now to make our lives more meaningful in our increasingly impersonal, mechanized world.

Can you identify which sentence/s summarize the main points or paraphrase the thesis statement? Are there also personal comments included in the conclusion? Identify.

Part V: Outlining

Outline

This is a plan for your essay which is thoughtfully and logically written out. The purpose of an outline is to improve your writing by organizing your ideas. Some say that an outline is more than half of the real work in writing a paper because a good outline gives the content and organization of your paper. There are different outline forms. The instructor recommends a simple outline that has the major components. See model.

Outline Format

In outlines, you go from general to specific. Note the numbering & letters and the indentations.

I. General

A. Less general

1. Specific

a. More specific

i. Very specific (not used very often)

Follow the following format for your outline.

I. Thesis

A. General Statement/Attention-Getter

B. Thesis Statement

II. Body

A. Transition & Topic Sentence (body paragraph 1)

1. supporting sentence

a. example/detail

b. example/detail

2. supporting sentence

3. supporting sentence

B. Transition & Topic Sentence (body paragraph 2)

1. supporting sentence

2. supporting sentence

3. supporting sentence

C. Transition & Topic Sentence (body paragraph 3)

III. Conclusion

A. Summary Statement

B. Final Remarks/Comments

Parallel Rule in Outlining

This rule says that equal parts of an outline should be written in parallel form. In other words, all the parts with the same kind of number or letter should have the same grammatical forms.

Study the following examples and make necessary corrections.

I. The English language is constantly changing.

A. Pronunciation has changed in the past 500 years.

B. Some grammatical changes.

C. Vocabulary.

I. San Francisco is famous for its tourist attractions.

- A. Golden Gate Park is very famous.
- B. Chinatown
- C. Fisherman's Wharf attracts hundreds of tourists.
- D. Riding the cable cars.

Assignment

Make an outline with an intro, 3 bodies, and a conclusion. Use the model outline to guide you and apply the parallel rule. Don't forget the transitions! Choose one of the topics from below.

soccer	rugby	rock-n-roll music	classical music
dieting	weddings	winter	wine

Part VI: Unity & Coherence

Unity

This is an important element in academic writing. It says that there is one main idea in your paragraph/essay. For example, if your topic is on the advantages of owning a car, do not discuss the disadvantages. Sometimes, it is possible to discuss different aspects of the same idea in a single paragraph/essay if they are closely related to each other. For example, if your topic is on high cost of college tuition, you could mention inflation as a factor but if you start writing about the Bulgaria's depressed economy at length, you will be "off topic," thereby not having unity. The simple rule to remember is that every supporting sentence should somehow explain or prove the main idea of your paper.

Coherence

This is another important element in academic writing. The fundamental idea of coherence is that all sentences in your paragraph/essay must "hold together." This means that the sentences and/or paragraphs must move logically and smoothly without sudden jumps or breaks. There are four ways to achieve coherence: 1) repetition of key words, 2) use of consistent pronouns, 3) use of transition words/phrases, and 4) use of logical order.

Part VII: Paraphrasing & Summarizing

Paraphrasing

This is a rephrasing or rewriting of information from outside source in your own words without changing its meaning. In paraphrasing, you include all or nearly all of the original passage so it is as long as the original.

Original Paragraph

Language is the main means of communication between peoples. But so many different languages have developed that language has often been a barrier rather than an aid to understanding among peoples. For many years, people have dreamed of setting up an international, universal language which all people could speak and understand, The arguments in favor of a universal language are simple and obvious. If all peoples spoke the same tongue, cultural and economic ties might be much closer, and good will might increase between countries.

Paraphrase 1

Language is the principal means of communication between peoples. However, because there are numerous languages, language itself has frequently been a barrier rather than an aid to understanding among the world population. For many years, people have envisioned a common universal language that everyone in the world could communicate in. The reasons for having a universal language are clearly understandable. If the same tongue were spoken by all countries, they would undoubtedly become closer culturally and economically. It would probably also create good will among nations.

Paraphrase 2

Humans communicate through language. However, because there are so many languages in the world, language is an obstacle rather than an aid to communication. For a long time, people have wished for an international language that speakers all over the world could understand. A universal language would certainly build cultural and economic bonds. It would also create better feelings among countries.

The first paragraph is the original. Which of the other two is an acceptable paraphrase? Which is unacceptable? Why? What are the differences between the two?

Summarizing

This is compressing (squeezing, pressing together) a large amount of information into fewer sentences. It is similar to paraphrasing except that a summary is shorter. In a summary, you should only include the main points and main supporting sentences.

Summary

People communicate mainly through language; however, having so many different languages creates communication barriers. Some think that one universal language would bring countries together culturally and economically and also increase good feeling among them.

Steps to Summarizing

- 1) Read the original passage several times till you understand it fully. Take notes of important points by jotting down key words and phrases.
- 2) Write a summary from your memory. Include the main points and omit the details. Don't look at the original while you are writing a summary.
- 3) Check your summary against the original for accuracy (not wording and phrasing).

Part VIII: Types of Essay

1. Chronological: Process

Purpose- gives chronological order of a topic or explains a process in context of "time."

Types (3)-

- A. Scientific and technical writings to explain a process of how things are done.
(e.g., how a car engine works; why the sky is blue)
- B. "How-to" writings giving directions or instructions.
(e.g., how to operate a computer; how to get to the bus station)
- C. Historical writings, auto/biographies
(e.g., account of WW I; story of my life)

Tone- depends on the topic but it is generally formal in tone. Since this type of writing is most often used in scientific and technical writings, passives and imperatives are commonly used.

Organization-

- A. Introductory paragraph includes a thesis statement which states the topic and indicates that it requires a series of steps. It should also mention any materials needed for the process.
- B. Each body paragraph includes a topic sentence that states the main step/s and its purpose. The rest of the paragraph includes sub-steps and necessary details.
- C. Concluding paragraph summarizes by restating the main steps without the details mentioned in the body paragraphs.

Thesis Statements

The following are some examples of thesis statements. Are these acceptable thesis statements? Suggest how some of them might be revised.

- 1) The desalinization of water is a complex process.
- 2) Administering CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) is a process which requires a careful sequences of steps.
- 3) Even a beginner can make good home videotapes if he/she follows these directions.
- 4) My life can be divided into three main time periods: childhood, primary school years, and high school years.

Read the following paragraph and answer the questions that follow.

How to make a gilled-cheese sandwich

Grilled-cheese sandwich is one of the most easy all-American snacks to make. It requires only two slices of bread, a slice of cheese, butter, sheet of foil, and an iron. First, the bread needs to be buttered, the amount of butter you spread on your bread is, of course, your decision to make. Personally, I'd recommend an extra layer of butter to make sure the sandwich turns out buttery enough. Then place the cheese in between the slices of bread and cover it with the sheet of foil. Fold the foil carefully to make sure the bread is not exposed to any open areas. (You don't want the iron to touch the bread.) Finally, you place the heated iron over each side of the bread till you think the sandwich is ready. The iron shouldn't be turned on too high because that might burn the bread without melting the cheese in the middle. Also, it's important not to press the iron too hard because the butter and cheese will melt unevenly. With these simple directions, you can make your very own grilled cheese sandwich in just 5 minutes.

- 1) *Where's the topic sentence?*
- 2) *Does the paragraph have organization? Identify the main parts.*

- 3) Identify transition words which indicate steps.
- 4) Where's the concluding sentence? Does it summarize the topic? The main points?
- 5) What is the tone of the paragraph?
- 6) What do you notice about the grammatical style? Identify passives and imperatives.

2. Cause & Effect

This type of essay is commonly used in academic writing to discuss reasons and results of a particular topic.

Purpose- discusses the reasons/results or the cause/effect.

Tone- is generally formal and is written in a discussion style of writing. Pay close attention to diction and proper use of structure words to show the cause & effect relationship.

To introduce cause: *the first/second cause, a/another reason, because of, since, as, as result of, due to*

To introduce effect: *the first/second effect, as a result, therefore, thus, consequently, so, hence*

Organization (2)-

A. Block Organization: deals with cause & effect in blocks.

Cause (in paragraph/s)

Effect (in paragraph/s)

Used with essays dealing with larger topic. The cause & effect relationship is usually not directly related.

B. Chain Organization: deals with a first cause & effect, a second cause & effect...

cause → effect → cause → effect

Used with shorter essays with topics which are closely interrelated.

Thesis Statement- states the topic and indicates a cause & effect relationship. It should show organization for the rest of the essay. The following are examples.

Human beings are increasingly becoming alienated in modern day society due to the technological advancement and individual mentality, which in turn is creating a competitive and individualistic society.

The reasons behind the 1987 stock market crash were closely connected to overspending and overestimating, which ultimately lead to the disastrous recession in the following years.

Part IX: Paper Assignments

Paper 1 (15%)

Purpose: Process

Length: Approximately 750 words (3 pages). The entire paper should be double-spaced and in 12 font size. Use standard margin. No cover page.

Due: _____ at the beginning of class. Late papers will be graded down one whole grade for each day it is late.

Topic: You will write a 5-7 paragraph essay on one of the following topics: 1) how to study...; 2) how an MP3 player works; 3) how to diet; 4) how to make a...; or 5) a topic of your choice pending instructor's permission.

Note: You may need to do some research for this paper. You will submit a thesis statement (1%), an outline (2%), and a final draft (12%) for the assignment.

Paper 2 (20%)

Purpose: Cause & Effect

Length: Approximately 1000 words (4 pages). The entire paper should be double-spaced and in 12 font size. Use standard margin. No cover page.

Due: _____ at the beginning of class. Late papers will be graded down one whole grade for each day it is late.

Topic: You will write a 6-8 paragraph essay on one of the following topics: 1) rising divorce rate in...; 2) increasing life expectancy in ...; 3) sex discrimination; 4) stress; or 5) a topic of your choice pending instructor's permission.

Note: You will need researched information to support the cause & effect relationship of your topic. However, don't over-do it with research. This is not a research paper. Remember, no plagiarism! I am looking for YOUR writing & idea. You will need to submit a thesis statement (1%), an outline (2%), a rough draft (2%), and a final draft (15%) for the assignment.

Part X: Exercises

