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# 5 Longman Academic Writing Series

ESSAYS TO RESEARCH PAPERS



Alan Meyers

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# CHAPTER OVERVIEW

*Longman Academic Writing Series, Level 5, Essays to Research Papers*, offers a carefully structured approach to advanced academic writing. It features instruction on the writing process, the organization of essays and term papers, research and documentation, sentence structure, word forms, and grammar.

Four-color design makes the lessons engaging.

**CHAPTER 9**

## RESEARCH PAPERS

**OBJECTIVES**

To write academic texts, you need to master certain skills.

In this chapter, you will learn to:

- Use point-by-point or source-by-source organization
- Find and evaluate sources
- Synthesize materials from sources
- Cite sources according to MLA and APA formats
- Use the correct sequence of tenses
- Write, edit, and revise a research paper

Mayak is a nuclear processing plant near the city of Chelyabinsk.

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Chapter objectives provide clear goals for instruction.

Realistic writing models present the type of writing students will learn to produce in the end-of-chapter Writing Assignments.

**INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, you looked at the observation and classification of behavior. In this chapter, you will focus on analyzing a process. A process essay either describes a process or provides instructions for how to do something. In other words, it is a step-by-step explanation of how something works, or how to perform a task. Such an explanation is especially important in describing scientific experiments and summarizing their results. However, process analysis also applies to many other kinds of explanations or instructions. For example, you might describe the digestive process, the rotation of the moon around the earth, or the way a computer communicates with a laser printer. More simply, you might explain how to make chocolate chip cookies, how to connect the surround sound equipment to accompany a new flat screen television, or how to get from the airport to your home. However, this chapter will concentrate on the process essay as it relates to academic writing about science and medicine.

**ANALYZING THE MODEL**

The model essay describes the process of conducting a scientific experiment. Read the model. Then answer the questions.

**Writing Model**

### What Scientists Do

Human beings are curious. They constantly search for explanations: Why did something happen? How did it happen? They guess at answers to their questions and try to determine if their guesses are correct. In this way, whether they know it or not, they are taking the first step down the road of what scientists refer to as the scientific method. The next steps involve conducting experiments to determine if their guesses are correct, arriving at conclusions, and writing them down in a report. Those actions can take place in a laboratory or in the field. The process of investigation does not stop there, however. Other scientists usually repeat those experiments to verify the results, or conduct further experiments. Their goal is often to answer questions raised by the findings of the original experiments. The scientific method therefore creates a continual, self-correcting cycle of investigation and analysis involving six steps.

■ An example from biology illustrates this process. It would begin with a common sense idea or observation: regular exercise seems to help prevent heart disease and heart attacks. However, can we be sure that the observation is correct? The first step in the scientific method therefore poses a question that an experiment might answer: "Can regular exercise help prevent coronary disease and heart attacks?" Then, scientists could proceed to the second step in the scientific method. They would state a

\* necessary relating to the heart

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either verify or exercise

there would be two categories to examine: an experimental group and a control group. These groups are identical in every way except one: the experimental group includes a variable\* to test—regular exercise—for its effect on coronary disease and heart attacks. Scientists would begin by selecting perhaps 100 specially bred laboratory mice of the same age and with the same genetics. The mice would all have an inherited susceptibility to coronary heart disease or heart attacks. The scientists assign half of the mice to the experimental group and the other half to the control group.

■ Having established the control and experimental groups, the researchers would now move on to the fourth step: conducting the experiment. First, they would have to assign a length of time for the experiment, for example, 120 days. They would also assemble all the materials needed to conduct the experiment: cages, food, water, and tools for monitoring the activities of the mice. They would keep all the conditions for both groups the same: diet, temperature, humidity, waking and sleeping cycles, water availability, and safety from harmful bacteria. However, the cages of the experimental group would be equipped with exercise wheels, while the cages of the control group would not. Then each week the researchers would gather data from the exercise wheels to ensure that the mice in the experimental group had been exercising.

■ At the end of the specified time period, the scientists could move on to the fifth step, analyzing the results. Suppose that the statistics produced by the experiment showed that 25 mice in the control group had heart attacks or developed coronary disease—one half of the total in the group. On the other hand, the disease rate for the mice in the experimental group turned out to be dramatically lower. Only 18 of them exhibited signs of heart disease or had heart attacks, or 36% of the total. In addition, the mice in the experimental group weighed an average of 10% less than the mice in the control group.

\* variable: something that is different

(Continued on next page)

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**Noticing Vocabulary: Irregular Plurals from Latin and Greek**

Chapter 2 explained that the plural of the word *criterion* is *criteria*. This is because the word comes from Greek, which has retained its original plural forms for some words. Likewise some words that come from Latin have irregular plural endings; they do not add -s endings to the singular form. These words can be placed into four categories, which include many words used in scientific writing.

**PRACTICE 1** Singular and Plural Forms of Irregular Nouns

Look at the writing model again. Find irregular nouns for each category in the chart. The beginnings of each word have been included to help you.

Category 1: Nouns from Latin	
Singular (-um) Ending	Plural (-a) Ending
<i>medium</i>	<i>media</i>
1. _____	bac _____
2. _____	dat _____
Category 2: Nouns from Greek	
Singular (-is) Ending	Plural (-es) Ending
<i>thesis</i>	<i>theses</i>
1. ana _____	_____
2. hyp _____	_____
3. bas _____	_____
Category 3: Nouns from Greek	
Singular (-on) Ending	Plural (-a) Ending
<i>criterion</i>	<i>criteria</i>
1. _____	phe _____
Category 4: Singular Nouns from Greek with No Plural Form	
Singular (-is) ending	
<i>mathematics</i>	
1. ger _____	
2. sta _____	

Complete the chart with the singular or plural form of each noun, where possible.

**Noticing Vocabulary** points out useful words and phrases from the writing models.

**Applying Vocabulary** allows students to practice the new vocabulary and then use it in their writing assignments.

**Applying Vocabulary: Using Words Related to Cultural Change**

Before you begin your writing assignment, review what you learned about the words in Practice 1 on page 131.

**PRACTICE 7** Forming Different Parts of Speech

Work in pairs or small groups. Fill in the appropriate word form for each. Use a dictionary as needed. As you work, look for recurring patterns.

Verb	Noun	Adjective
1. acquire	<i>acquisition</i>	acquisitive
2. conflict	conflict	_____
3. reconcile	reconciliation	_____
4. assimilate	_____	assimilated
5. devote	_____	devoted
6. perceive	_____	perceived

Change these nouns into verbs. Most, but not all, of the verbs will follow a consistent pattern. Consult your dictionary as needed.

Noun	Verb
1. demonstration	_____
2. integration	_____
3. education	_____
4. definition	_____
5. invitation	_____
6. conversation	_____
7. evolution	_____
8. resolution	_____

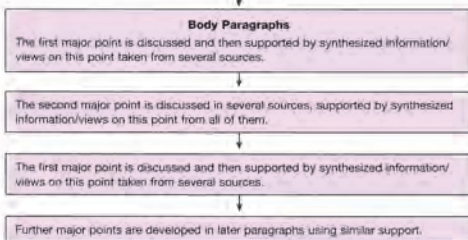
Choose the word form from Parts A and B that best completes each sentence.

- When people get married, they pledge their complete *devotion*.
- Young children learn to \_\_\_\_\_ in a second language more quickly than most adults.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ of a new language can be very challenging.

Organization sections explore essay structure in a variety of organizational patterns.

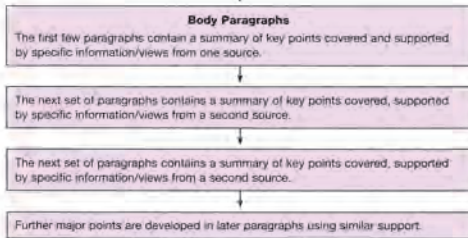
### POINT-BY-POINT ORGANIZATION

You are already familiar with this organizational pattern from Chapter 8. As mentioned in that chapter, a point-by-point pattern is particularly well suited to complex issues and longer papers, which makes it a useful way to organize a research paper. A partial diagram of how a point-by-point organization might be used in a research paper looks like this:



### SOURCE-BY-SOURCE ORGANIZATION

A source-by-source organization is somewhat similar to a block organizational pattern in that it groups the information in blocks according to the source.



Make sure to connect your sources by discussing related key points and by using transitional phrases to show similarities and differences among the sources. For an example of a source-by-source organizational style, return to the writing model from Chapter 5 on pages 87–89.

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Grammar and Sentence Structure sections provide practice with the most challenging structures for advanced students.

### PHRASAL MODALS

Another tool for making recommendations, suggestions, and demands is using a **phrasal modal** (or semi-auxiliary). A phrasal modal consists of two or more separate words and functions somewhat like a modal verb. It expresses ability, offers advice, makes recommendations, or discusses possibilities or probabilities. However, unlike a modal verb, which has one form, phrasal modals change according to person and aspect.

RULES	EXAMPLES
1. Use <i>be able to</i> + [the base form of the verb] for expressing achievement.	They <b>have been able to make</b> significant changes in research methods.
2. Use <i>be likely to</i> + [the base form of the verb] for expressing probability.	This change <b>is likely to have</b> profound effects.
3. Use <i>be going to</i> + [the base form of the verb] for expressing certainty with.	This change <b>is going to benefit</b> millions of people.
4. Use <i>have to</i> + [the base form of the verb] for expressing necessity. <b>Note:</b> The negative of <i>have to</i> means something is not necessary. It differs from <i>must not</i> , which means it is prohibited.	We <b>have to conduct</b> more research. We <b>don't have to use</b> animals in all experiments.
5. Use <i>had better</i> for expressing warning.	You <b>had better be</b> careful when working with dangerous chemicals.
6. Use <i>would rather</i> (without <i>to</i> ) for expressing preference.	Most students <b>would rather apply</b> for a scholarship than take out a loan.

#### PRACTICE 3 Using Phrasal Modals

Choose five of the sentences you wrote in Practice 2 and rewrite them using phrasal modals.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Practice Activities** reinforce learning and lay the groundwork for the end-of-chapter Writing Assignment.

**PRACTICE 8 Planning a Response**

Read this short essay. Write a thesis statement for a response in which you agree or disagree with the conclusion of the paragraph. Then list two points you would make in a response.

**A Cultural Mosaic**  
Philip R. Popple and Leslie Leighninger

The presence of diverse racial, ethnic, and other distinct groups in society gives rise to various notions<sup>1</sup> about the proper relationship between individual groups and “the whole.” Such notions emerge particularly in discussions of immigration, although they have relevance also to the situations of longtime residents (African Americans and American Indians) and of those belonging to categories such as the elderly or people with disabilities. A traditional version of “ideal group relations” in the United States is the idea of a melting pot, in which the cultures of all groups join to produce a new, distinctly American culture. In real life, this early twentieth-century idea of a “blended American” proved unrealistic. Newcomers were unwilling to give up all their traditions, and customs, and, perhaps more significantly, the dominant society had a stake in maintaining its own identity. We like the reframing of the melting pot image proposed by historian Lawrence Levine. Levine argued that today’s model of diversity “is not the American melting pot, but a cultural mosaic in which discrete ethnic groups persist and interact with other groups.”

Source: Excerpted from Popple, Philip R. et al. *Social Work, Social Welfare, and American Society*.

<sup>1</sup>Notions: ideas or theories

Thesis Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

I. \_\_\_\_\_

II. \_\_\_\_\_

**TRY IT OUT!** Here is another paragraph from Serinda Nanda’s article on arranged marriages in India. Write a one-sentence summary of the paragraph and then one or two paragraphs in response. Do you agree with Nanda’s viewpoint, or do you see some value in arranged marriages?

Six years later I returned to India to do fieldwork, this time among the middle class in Bombay, a modern, sophisticated city. From the experience of my earlier visit, I decided to include a study of arranged marriages in my project. By this time, I had met many Indian couples whose marriages had been arranged and who seemed very happy. Particularly in contrast to the fate of my married friends in the United States who were already in the process of divorce, the positive aspects of arranged marriages appeared to me to outweigh the negatives.

Summary / Response Essays 141

**Try It Out!** activities challenge students to apply what they have learned.

**Writing Tips** provide useful strategies to help students produce better writing.

**Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing** instructions provide useful tools for research-based writing.

**Writing a Good Paraphrase**

A good paraphrase:

- identifies the source of the original
- shows that you have fully understood the material
- differs enough from the original that it is clearly your own writing
- does not merely substitute synonyms for the words in the original sentence

Here is an example of a paraphrase from Wade and Tavris, whose work was discussed in the model:

**ORIGINAL MATERIAL:**

Learning explanations of language acquisition assume that children are rewarded for saying the right words and punished for making errors. But parents do not stop to correct every error in their children’s speech, so long as they understand what the child is trying to say (Brown, Cazden & Bellugi, 1969). Indeed, parents often reward children for incorrect statements! A 2-year-old who says, “Want milk” is likely to get it; most parents would not wait for a more grammatical (or polite) request.

**PARAPHRASED MATERIAL:**

Carole Wade and Carol Tavris say that children do not acquire language from parents praising their correct speech and punishing their errors. For example, if parents can understand a child’s request for milk, even if it is ungrammatical, they will give the child the milk. In effect, say Wade and Tavris, the parents “reward the child for incorrect statements” (2011).

Note that the paraphrase identifies the source and restates its ideas without copying them. It also integrates a short quotation from the original when it borrows the exact language.

**Writing Tip:**

To write a good paraphrase you will need to follow a process:

1. Read the original passage carefully more than once, underlining the main points in the passage.
2. Cover the material so you cannot refer to it.
3. To help you restate the material in your own words, imagine that you are explaining the material to a good friend.
4. Finally, compare the original to your restatement to see if it expresses the same meaning—without using the same phrases.

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**Preparation for Writing** develops the research and documentation skills needed for the writing assignment.

### PREPARATION FOR WRITING

You have already learned basic research practices in Chapter 4, page 79. Now you can build on them. Begin your research on the topic by asking yourself a question. Here are some examples.

- Have experts discovered new findings on the topic?
- Is there a debate on this topic that you should explain to readers?
- Do new studies on the topic challenge or change previously held beliefs?
- Has research revealed an important problem that is worth exploring and discussing causes or solutions that people may not have considered before?

Think about the writing model and the research questions Ksenia Laney may have asked herself when she started her research. For example, how and why did the disaster happen? What were its effects on the people, the crops, and the animals surrounding the facility?

### NARROWING YOUR FOCUS

The next step is to ensure that your research question is not too broad; otherwise, you may end up writing a book instead of a five- to twelve-page paper! Note how these broad research questions have been narrowed:

**TOO BROAD:** What are the causes of obesity?

**NARROWER:** Do carbohydrates contribute more to obesity than other food groups?

**TOO BROAD:** What is autism?

**NARROWER:** Why is autism so difficult to treat?

**TOO BROAD:** Are artificial sweeteners dangerous?

**NARROWER:** What has research revealed about the long-term effects of aspartame?

### PRACTICE 5 Forming and Narrowing Research Questions

Work in small groups. Choose a topic and generate possible research questions to pursue. Remember to ask questions that begin with *how?* *when?* *where?* *why?* *who?* and *should?* or *could?* Decide if your research question is sufficiently narrow.

- College admissions standards and the makeup of U.S. colleges and universities
- The wave of immigration to the United States that occurred from 1989 to the present
- Down syndrome
- Medical technology
- Music therapy for mentally or physically impaired people

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Sections on **finding and evaluating information from sources** provide students with essential research skills.

### Finding Information from Sources

Once you have narrowed your research question, use only sources that relate to the question, and read selectively. In books, consult the table of contents or the index to help you find the most relevant parts. Scan long articles, looking especially at the subheadings. Follow this procedure.

1. Be curious as you read, and ask yourself: Is the information important and usable in this paper? Does it raise more questions to explore? What additional research might answer these questions?
2. Annotate as you read. Underline important passages, highlight key points, and make notes in the margin about how and where the information might be used in your paper. Take notes and record your sources, along with the page numbers, on note cards. (See Chapter 6, pages 120–123.)
3. If you print out material, make notes directly on these pages. Highlight passages you may want to quote or paraphrase. Use note cards to jot down a brief summary of each important passage, abbreviate a source (using either the title or the author), and record the page numbers so you can return to them later in the original.
4. Again use note cards to write your own commentary on source material. Make sure, however, that you clearly distinguish that commentary from your source information.
5. Then organize your note cards by subtopics, especially by grouping the evidence that supports the claim of each subtopic.

### Evaluating Sources

Not every source is reliable or objective. Many writers reveal a particular point of view or bias. Even the data they include or the people they quote may be influenced by their political, philosophical, or theoretical viewpoints. Moreover, with the growth of Internet use, virtually anyone can create a website, author a blog, or post an entry on a blog. Therefore, it is extremely important that you evaluate your sources for their reliability, objectivity, and stance on the issue you are researching. Keep the following guidelines in mind.

#### Timeliness

Your subject matter will determine whether a work is outdated. For scientific, psychological, sociological, and technical issues, the most recent publications generally provide the most useful information. However, if you are researching the life of a famous politician, author, or historical figure, older publications may be perfectly good sources of information.

#### Objectivity and Bias

Authors often have strong feelings about their subject matter, or even a financial or personal interest in the issue. Strongly worded opinions, though, do not necessarily mean that the author is unfair. The main test is whether the person's argument is balanced, giving equal, or nearly equal, treatment to more than one side of an issue.

**Step-by-step Writing Assignments** make the writing process clear and easy to follow.

4. A person who fits into a new culture is said to be \_\_\_\_\_.
5. When someone gets new eyeglasses, the person's visual \_\_\_\_\_ may improve.
6. When a person feels divided between one feeling and another, he is said to be \_\_\_\_\_.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

Your assignment for this chapter is to write a summary and response essay on a topic related to culture. Write an essay of at least five paragraphs on one of the topics below or one that your teacher suggests. Follow the steps in the writing process.

**POSSIBLE TOPICS**

- Cultural identity
- Cultural diversity
- Cultural differences
- Adapting to a new culture
- Cultural assimilation
- Cultural practices in education

**Explore**

**STEP 1: Explore your topic, audience, and purpose.**

- Choose your topic from the list above.
- Research an Internet article on your topic.
- Read the article carefully, highlighting or taking notes of main points for your summary.
- Consider who might be interested in this article and a response; they are your audience.
- Consider what you wish to accomplish in your response; this is the thesis of your response.

**Prewrite**

**STEP 2: Prewrite to get ideas.**

- Freewrite, brainstorm, or cluster to uncover your ideas.
- Draft a preliminary thesis statement for your response.
- Brainstorm examples from your personal experience or the experiences of others that support or refute the article's thesis or supporting points.

**Organize**

**STEP 3: Organize your ideas.**

- Select the ideas to include in the summary.
- Outline the response, listing each claim.
- Select passages that you will paraphrase or quote as support for your claims.

Summary / Response Essays 143

**Peer Review and Writer's Self-Check Worksheets** at the back of the book help students collaborate and sharpen their revision skills.

**Write**

**STEP 4: Write the first draft.**

- Summarize the article in the first paragraph. Be sure to include the title of the work and the author's name, a thesis, and the article's main points.
- Include a transition that introduces the response.
- Introduce and develop the response in the remaining body paragraphs.
- End with a return to the summary.

**Revise**

**STEP 5: Revise the draft.**

- Exchange papers with a partner, and give each other feedback on your papers. Use the Chapter 7 Peer Review on page 237 to guide your feedback.
- Carefully consider your partner's feedback. If you agree with it, revise your paper by marking the changes on your first draft.

**Proofread**

**STEP 6: Edit and proofread.**

- Use the Chapter 7 Writer's Self-Check on page 238 to help you look for and correct errors in grammar, mechanics, and sentence structure.

**Write**

**STEP 7: Write a new draft**

- Revise the draft, incorporating all the changes you want to make.
- Make sure the draft is legible and follows the format your instructor has provided.
- Proofread the draft so that it is error free.
- Hand in the essay to your instructor.

**Self-Assessment** encourages students to evaluate their progress.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT**

In this chapter, you learned to:

- Analyze a summary / response essay
- Distinguish between objective and subjective points of view
- Summarize an essay in an introductory paragraph
- Plan and write a response to the essay
- Use active and passive voice in appropriate contexts
- Write, edit, and revise an essay about culture

Which ones can you do well? Mark them ☺

Which ones do you need to practice more? Mark them ☹

## EXPANSION

### TIMED WRITING

Return to "A Cultural Mosaic" in Practice 6 on page 141. Now summarize and write a full response to the passage. You will have 45 minutes. To complete the expansion, you will need to budget your time accordingly. Follow this procedure.

1. Reread the passage, underlining or highlighting the statement of the main argument and key supporting points. (10 minutes)
2. Write a one-paragraph summary of the passage. State the main argument and key supporting ideas you have located. Omit any long examples and explanations. (10 minutes)
3. Then write a response, beginning with a smooth transition and a thesis statement. Make your position clear. Do you agree or disagree with the argument, or is your response mixed? Refer back to the article to support your claims. What in your own experience, or the experience of others you know, can you cite as backing for your claims? Cite examples. (15 minutes)
4. Revise and edit your work. Be sure your summary and thesis are clear. If you write by hand, you may make changes above the lines in the margins. (5 minutes)
5. Check your summary and response for errors. Correct any mistakes. (5 minutes)
6. Hand in your paper to your instructor.

### RESEARCH AND RESPOND

Do an Internet search using the key words "bilingual education" or "bilingual immersion." Find a short article that argues either for or against one of these topics. Summarize the article and respond, using the same procedures you have followed in the chapter.

**Timed Writing** activities develop students' writing fluency under pressure.

**Additional writing tasks** encourage students to further develop the writing skills in each chapter.

Writing Guides provide students with tools to improve the flow of ideas in different types of essays.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A WRITING GUIDES

The following are *writing guides*, or fill-in-the-blank sentences that can help you establish logical relationships as you write. These guides will provide you with models of wording that will make the introduction of ideas or the transition between ideas smoother. At times, you may wish to use the exact wording in the guides. At other times, you will probably need to change the language to fit your content and purpose.

#### Chapter 2

##### Guides for Reporting Statistical Results

1. Most \_\_\_\_\_ are from \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A lot of / twelve of the \_\_\_\_\_ lived \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The majority / \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the students speak \_\_\_\_\_ languages.

##### Guides for Thesis Statements

1. My classmates are similar in \_\_\_\_\_ ways.
2. My classmates differ in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Despite many differences in their backgrounds, my classmates share \_\_\_\_\_.

APPENDIX A: Writing Guides 189

Appendices include a section on **MLA** and **APA formats**, which enable students to correctly document research papers in a variety of academic fields.

### APPENDIX G DOCUMENTING SOURCES WITH MLA AND APA FORMATS

In academic classes, your instructors will ask you to document the sources of outside information you have used in your paper. There are two steps to this process.

1. Insert a short reference in the body of your paper. This is called an in-text citation. The purpose of an in-text citation is to refer the reader to the works-cited list at the end of your paper.
2. Prepare a complete list of your sources. This list is titled either Works Cited or References and appears as the last page of your paper.

The two most commonly used formats for documenting sources are those used by the Modern Language Association (MLA) and the American Psychological Association (APA). Each format specifies style guidelines for referring to authors with in-text citations, footnotes and endnotes, and the sources list.

The MLA (Modern Language Association) system is used primarily for documenting work within the liberal arts and humanities—literature, English, foreign languages, art, and so on. The APA (American Psychological Association) system is mainly used to document source within the social sciences—sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, and political science, etc. The next few pages will show you only the basics of the MLA and APA styles of formal documentation. In addition, be aware that each format has differences in punctuation rules which are too numerous to be dealt with here. Consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for more detailed information. You can find these books and others like them in the reference area of any library.

#### THE BASICS OF MLA FORMAT

In papers using the MLA system, the name of the author typically introduces a quotation, paraphrase, or summary, and the page number of the source (if there is one) follows in parentheses before the period.

##### In-Text Citations

In-text citations give only enough information to allow the reader to find the full reference in the list of works cited at the end of your paper. Here are some guidelines.

##### One Author

Use the last name of the author and a page number (or numbers, if the borrowed information appears on more than one page). Use no punctuation.

(Clinton 17)

##### Two or More Authors

If there are two or three authors, give all the names. If there are four or more, use the first author's name and the Latin abbreviation *et al.* ("and others") followed by a period.

(Bamberger and Yaeger 62)

(Singleton et al. 345)

212 APPENDIX G: Documenting Sources with MLA and APA Formats



# CHAPTER 1

## EXPOSITORY ESSAYS

### OBJECTIVES

To write academic texts, you need to master certain skills.

In this chapter, you will learn to:

- Analyze an expository essay
- Examine the elements of a well-structured essay
- Identify context and grammar clues for correct article use
- Follow and practice the steps in the writing process
- Write, revise, and edit an essay based on personal experience



*No two writers work in the same way. What is your writing style?*

## INTRODUCTION

In many of your courses, you will be asked to write various types of academic papers, from relatively short essays to long papers based on research. Each chapter of this book will teach you the writing and research skills necessary to produce these academic papers, beginning with the essay and ending with the research paper. These skills include finding information through research, evaluating the information, and incorporating it into your essays. For the moment, however, this chapter will focus on the structure of the essay and the process of writing it.

An **essay** is an organized discussion of a topic in a series of paragraphs. It contains three main parts: an **introduction** (an introductory paragraph), a **body** (usually at least two, but often more, supporting paragraphs), and a **conclusion** (a concluding paragraph).

The introduction performs several roles. It attracts readers' interest. It establishes the essay's specific topic and states the writer's position or **claim** about that topic in a **thesis statement**. It may also provide a preview of the body of the essay.

Each body paragraph of an essay supports and develops a subtopic of the thesis statement. The paragraph states its **controlling idea**, or the writer's area of focus, in a **topic sentence**. The remaining sentences support the topic sentence with facts, details, and explanations, which lead logically to the next paragraph. The conclusion, or the essay's last paragraph, may summarize main points, end with a question for the reader, or cite a memorable quotation. In any instance, however, it provides a strong ending to the essay.

## ANALYZING THE MODEL

The writing model describes the different methods that writers use as they begin the writing process. The essay is *expository*; that is, it explains something.

Read the model. Then answer the questions.

### Writing Model

### Explorers and Planners:

#### *Ways to Discover and Organize Ideas*

- 1 You are staring at a blank page or computer screen and encountering familiar questions: *How do I start? What do I have to say?* Everyone shares these problems, but they need not be serious obstacles. Since the average person can think ahead only seven words, plus or minus four, you probably do not begin a sentence knowing exactly how it will end, or exactly what the next sentence will say. Therefore, it is almost impossible to anticipate<sup>1</sup> the exact content of an entire paper. Although some experienced writers approach their first drafts with clearly organized plans, you may



<sup>1</sup> **anticipate**: meet someone or experience something without planning to

not be one of them. Your thinking may be disorganized, but that is to be expected. The beginning stage of writing is a time to discover your ideas and plan how to present them over subsequent<sup>2</sup> drafts, and there is more than one effective way to discover and plan: through freewriting, brainstorming, clustering, and outlining.

- 2 Of course, no two writers work in the same way. Everyone's ultimate<sup>3</sup> goal is to produce a clear, convincing, and engaging piece of writing. However, the process of arriving at that goal differs from person to person, and often from task to task. On the one hand are the planners. They carefully consider the structure and content of their ideas before writing them down. Then they revise their work only once or twice. On the other hand are the discoverers, which means almost everyone else. They compose messy first drafts, sometimes with unrelated ideas, which they progressively clean up and reshape through multiple revisions. One such discoverer was the Nobel Prize winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer. When asked how he went about composing his stories, he replied, "There's no plan, no formula. I may revise something twice or a thousand times."<sup>4</sup>
- 3 Whether writers are planners, discoverers, or a bit of both, their process of revision begins after the first draft. Then they can examine what they have said, see what ideas are emerging<sup>5</sup> or incomplete, and decide which to discard, replace, expand, or refine. They may change their minds and wording two, three, or a dozen times until the ideas and language are clear and concise. A writer's mind is filled with an ocean of ideas awaiting the chance to flow out. The task is to open the floodgates and channel the flow onto the page or screen.
- 4 One method that discoverers use for getting started is freewriting. It involves writing down words as fast as possible without concern for exact phrasing, grammar, or spelling. The work is uncensored and perhaps illogical, but the main goal is merely to keep writing. This process often leads to new discoveries and insights. Much, or even all, of freewriting may not end up in the final draft, but writers can highlight the parts worth keeping and then do a second, more focused, freewriting. By that point they can turn to planning their essay.
- 5 Another method discoverers often employ is brainstorming, or listing ideas. They jot down their thoughts in whatever order they occur. After that initial step, they highlight the most important ideas, cross out the irrelevant ones, and reorganize whatever remains. They may even do a second, more focused and detailed brainstorming list. This list shapes the first draft of the paper.

*(continued on next page)*

<sup>2</sup> **subsequent:** coming after or following something else

<sup>3</sup> **ultimate:** final, most important

<sup>4</sup> This exchange took place between the author and Mr. Singer at a banquet honoring him.

<sup>5</sup> **emerging:** appearing or coming from out of nowhere

- 6 Planners work more systematically than discoverers and organize their ideas from the very beginning. One way they generate and organize ideas is through a different version of brainstorming, called clustering. It starts with drawing a circle in the middle of a page and writing a word or phrase inside the circle. That idea should lead to related ideas, each circled and then linked to the first circle by a line or branch. More circles and branches follow until they form “clusters” of ideas. Planners can then examine the clusters, decide which to keep or discard, and begin a second, more focused, cluster diagram.
- 7 Finally, of course, planners can rely on an outline. One of the most efficient of these devices is the topic sentence outline. It begins with a statement of the essay’s thesis. Then it includes the topic sentences of the body paragraphs and their supporting details. Not only does this type of outline help structure the essay, but it also provides a preliminary<sup>6</sup> set of topic sentences for the first draft.
- 6 Of course, many writers mix these methods or choose different ones, depending on the project. In fact, no matter what method writers choose for getting started, they must keep in mind that each one is merely a way to begin the writing process. Revision, redrafting, editing, and proofreading will follow. *Efficiency* is the key word in writing. Why stare at a blank page and waste your time? Why attempt to write a perfect first draft when you know full well that you are going to revise it later? Try the approaches that have proved so valuable in helping writers, whether they are discoverers or planners.

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<sup>6</sup>preliminary: something that is done first

### Questions about the Model

1. In what ways does the writer try to attract readers’ interest in the introduction?
2. In Paragraph 1, which sentence is the thesis statement? Circle it in the writing model.
3. What two types of writers are introduced in Paragraph 2? Underline them in the writing model.
4. How many methods for beginning to write does the author describe? What are they?
5. Where are the topic sentences that introduce each method? Underline them in the writing model.
6. Why does the author quote the famous writer, Isaac Bashevis Singer?
7. In the concluding paragraph, the author asks, “Why stare at a blank page . . .”. Which sentence from the introductory paragraph does this question echo? Why do you think the author includes this question?

 **Noticing Vocabulary: Negative Prefixes**

Good writers use a rich and varied vocabulary. Paying attention to, and learning more about, words will help you become a better writer, too. Notice that the writing model contains adjectives with **negative prefixes**. Prefixes are word parts that can be added to the beginning of a base word (that is, a full word to which a prefix is attached).<sup>\*</sup> They change a base word's meaning, but not its part of speech.

The prefixes *dis-*, *un-*, *il-*, *im-*, *in-*, and *ir-* can mean "not" or "without." Adding these negative prefixes to an adjective usually creates another adjective with the opposite meaning.

**PRACTICE 1** **Forming Negative Adjectives**

**A** Look at the writing model again. Find and underline adjectives that begin with the negative prefixes *dis-*, *il-*, *im-*, *in-*, and *ir-*.

**B** Choose the adjective from Part A that best completes each sentence.

1. When two things are not connected to each other in any way, they are unrelated.
2. When something cannot be done, it is an \_\_\_\_\_ task.
3. When something has no clear structure, it is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. When something is not finished, it is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. When an idea does not relate to the topic being discussed, it is \_\_\_\_\_.
6. When an idea makes no sense, it is \_\_\_\_\_.
7. When ideas have not been censored, they are \_\_\_\_\_.



<sup>\*</sup>A base word can also take a **suffix**, a word part that is added to the end of the base word. Examples include the suffixes *-able*, *-ful*, and *-less*. Thus the base word *suit* and the suffix *-able* becomes *suitable*, and the base word *hope* + *-ful* or *-less* becomes *hopeful* or *hopeless*.

## ORGANIZATION

A well-organized essay helps readers understand how all its parts fit together in a logical whole. The thesis statement, topic sentences, and conclusion play a central role in that organization.

### A CLEAR THESIS STATEMENT

Every essay addresses a broad general topic, such as *writing*. A **thesis statement**, however, is a full sentence that narrows the topic specifically to what the essay is about, such as *the beginning stage of writing*. It also makes clear the writer's position on or **claim** about that topic. Often the thesis statement gives a preview of the subdivisions or subtopics to be developed in the body of the essay. Look at the thesis statement from the writing model as an example.

THE SPECIFIC TOPIC      THE WRITER'S CLAIM  
 The beginning stage of writing is a time to discover your ideas and plan how to present them, and there is more than one effective way to discover and plan:  
THE PREVIEW OF THE BODY  
 through freewriting, brainstorming, clustering, and outlining.

#### PRACTICE 2

#### Narrowing Thesis Statements

Each thesis statement is too broad. Make each one more specific. Be sure to add a phrase that previews the subtopic that might follow in the body.

1. Learning a new language is not easy. Mastering the pronunciation of a new language can be challenging for several reasons.
2. My family has some interesting people. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. School requires hard work. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The Internet is useful. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. A college education is important. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. I write best under the right conditions. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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