

Part One

**A General
Introduction to
English Writing**



I Writing in Our World

Writing is a way to reach out to your world. When you write, you write to someone. You write to be read. Writing is also a way to find out about yourself. It is a way to explore your ideas, feelings, and dreams. Sometimes you write for others and sometimes you write just for yourself. Sometimes you write to explore ideas.

Writing is creating, and you are its creator. Writing is thinking, and it is discovering what you think. Writing is a way of finding out about your world. Writing is a way to change it! That is a powerful thought. Writing is powerful. It is a powerful tool in your world and in the wonderful world of language.

— ideas from *World of Language*

II Types of Writing

Different types of writing are required for different purposes. In general, we can divide writing into three kinds: **narration**, **description**, and **exposition**.

Narration tells what happened. It tells a story. It is the kind of writing that we find in novels, short stories, and biographies.

Description tells how something looks or feels or sounds. It talks about such features as size, shape, color, sound, or taste.

Exposition is the writing that explains something. It often answers the questions **what**, **how** and **why**. Its purpose is to present ideas and to make the ideas as clear as possible.

It is not always easy to decide what is narration, what is description, and what is exposition. Often a piece of writing includes all three types. A narration may include some description and some exposition. An exposition may use some narration and description in order to explain something as completely as possible. Usually it is possible, however, to decide whether a piece of writing is mainly narration or mainly description or mainly exposition.



Pre-test

Which of the three kinds of writing is illustrated by this paragraph?

One day a crow stole a piece of cheese from a woman's kitchen and flew with it to a tree. A fox who was very hungry saw the crow. He said to the crow, "You have a beautiful voice. Won't you sing for me?" The crow was very pleased by the compliment. As he opened his mouth to sing, the piece of cheese fell to the ground. The fox snatched the cheese and ran away.

1 Narration

There are various ways to organize the sentences in a piece of writing. In narration the sentences are usually organized according to **time order**. One thing happens and then another thing happens, and the events are told in the same order.

We are familiar with time order because we have noticed it when we were reading stories. The story we just read in the Pre-test about the fox and crow follows time order. The sentences in the paragraph tell the story just as the events happened. To show the order of events, the sentences could be arranged like this:

- A crow stole a piece of cheese from a woman’s kitchen.
- He flew with it to a tree.
- A hungry fox saw the crow.
- He said to the crow, “You have a beautiful voice. Won’t you sing for me?”
- The crow was very pleased by the compliment.
- He opened his mouth to sing.
- The piece of cheese fell to the ground.
- The fox snatched the cheese.
- He ran away.

Because the events happened in a certain order, it is important that the sentences in the story follow one another in a certain order. Suppose the sentences were arranged like this:

- He ran away.
- A crow stole a piece of cheese from a woman’s kitchen.
- A hungry fox saw the crow.
- He opened his mouth to sing.
- He said to the crow, “You have a beautiful voice. Won’t you sing for me?” etc.

If the sentences were arranged like this, the story would be so mixed up that we could not understand it. We can see how important it is to arrange the sentences in good order.

To gain a good order, sometimes we need the help of time-order words. If we read the following paragraph about kite flying, we will notice that the highlighted words tell about time order.

Kite flying began long ago. For thousands of years people have sent kites soaring into the sky. Recently, kite flying has become popular. Today hobby shops sell many kinds of kites. Are you ready now to try this sport? At first you may feel clumsy. Before long you will gain skill. Soon you will learn to control a kite. Someday you may even enter kite flying contests.

Practice 1

1. The sentences that follow have no order. Write the correct order on the lines provided.

1) A. George liked one of them.

B. The librarian gave him three books to look at.

C. George visited the library.

D. He checked the book out and took it home with him.

E. He asked for a book to read.

_____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____

2) A. The small car turned over.

B. There was an accident at the street corner.

C. The two men inside it were badly injured.

D. A large truck hit a small car.

E. The police took them to a hospital.

_____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____

3) A. The house began to leak.

B. Then leaks began in other rooms.

C. Fortunately the rain stopped then and the sun came out.

D. The bad leak started in the living room.

E. It rained steadily for two days.

_____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____

4) A. They came to school ready to write the exam.

B. The students studied very hard for it.

C. He was sick that day.

D. They found that the teacher was not there.

E. The teacher said he would give an examination.

_____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____

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2. Think about the list of topics that follow. Put a T before each topic that you would probably develop according to time order if you were writing about it.

- 1) _____ The Importance of Good Health Habits
- 2) _____ My Vacation Trip
- 3) _____ Spring Is My Favorite Season
- 4) _____ The Characteristics of Indian Music
- 5) _____ Why I Want to Be a Lawyer
- 6) _____ How I Spent Last Sunday
- 7) _____ The Growth of Opportunities for Women in Business and the Profession
- 8) _____ My Favorite Actor

3. Write the sentences below as a paragraph, and discover how the story goes with the time-order words.

- A. At first I felt annoyed.
- B. One day my sister told me to go to fly a kite.
- C. I next asked my sister to help me make a kite.
- D. Finally she agreed to do it.
- E. Then when I thought about it, I said, “Why not?”

4. Copy the sentences in Exercise 1 in paragraph form. After you have copied the sentences in paragraphs, read the paragraphs to make sure that you have put the sentences in the correct time order. Also be sure that you have copied the sentences correctly.

2 Description

We have seen that narration usually follows time order. **Description** may follow various kinds of order, depending on what is being described. If we are describing a man, we will choose different things to say than if we are describing a mountain or a restaurant or a dress.

One kind of description follows **space order**. In space order we tell **where** things are. This is the order we will probably follow if we want to describe a place.

For example, here is a description of a classroom.

The classroom is large, clean and well lighted. The walls are pale green. In the wall on the left as you enter there are three large windows. The teacher’s

desk is in the front. Blackboards cover most of the wall on the right.

We may notice that the writer describes how the room looks from the door—what is on the left, what is in the front, and what is on the right. It does not matter which way we move in our description. The important thing is to have some order that will be easy for the reader to follow.

Now, let us compare the description using space order with the description of a man.

The man who opened the door in answer to my knock was an elderly man, white-haired and bent. He looked at me over his spectacles, which were far down on his nose. In spite of his age, his dark eyes were keen and his voice was clear and strong. I noticed that he was wearing a bright-colored sports shirt.

In describing the man, the writer selected the man's most interesting and most outstanding features. This description is quite different from a description of a place based on space order. The kind of description we use depends on what we are describing.

Practice 2

1. The sentences that follow have no order. Write the correct order on the lines provided.

- 1) A. There are four single beds on both sides of the room.
- B. On the desk are some books and newspapers.
- C. This is a bedroom for the students of Teachers' Training Class.
- D. In the middle there stands four desks and chairs.
- E. It is a small but clean bedroom.

_____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____

- 2) A. Behind the house a hill rose sharply.
- B. Standing at the edge of the road, I looked up the gently winding driveway that climbed to the front of the house.
- C. I had never seen such a lovely setting for a house.
- D. The hill ended in a curved peak that seemed to frame the whole scene.
- E. The house stood on a level space surrounded by all oak trees.

_____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____

- 3) A. Then you will come to a hallway leading to the library's music room.
- B. Walking around the information desk to the left, you will pass a children's reading room on your right.
- C. The sign reads, "To the Music Room."

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D. As you enter the main door of the library, you will see the information desk directly in front of you.

E. At the end of the hallway, you will see a sign.

_____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____

4) A. He spent the first 15 minutes of the hour working on the first of 10 examination problems.

B. He spent other minutes doodling on his test paper.

C. Jose did not complete his mathematics examination yesterday.

D. Like many college students, he does not know how to use time profitably during an examination.

_____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____

5) A. Kathy is athletic.

B. No one in school can catch up with her at the track meets.

C. She has won many swimming awards.

D. She is an excellent fencer.

E. Her teammates chose her to be captain of the basketball team.

_____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____

2. Think about the list of topics that follow. Put an S before each topic that you would probably develop according to space order.

1) _____ I Enjoy Weekends

2) _____ She Is Intelligent

3) _____ Our Campus

4) _____ Linda Is an Artist

5) _____ A Scenic View

6) _____ Our Library

7) _____ Nanjing Road on Sunday

8) _____ My Native Town

3. Copy the sentences in Exercise 1 in paragraph form according to the order in which you numbered them. After you have copied the sentences in paragraphs, read the paragraphs to make sure that you have put the sentences in the correct order. Pay attention to the space order. Also be sure that you have copied the sentences correctly.

3 Exposition

Narration tells what happened. Description tells how something looks or feels or sounds. **Exposition** explains something. Here are some examples of exposition.

Our teeth are very important to use. There are two main uses for teeth. One is to chew our food, which then is easy to swallow and digest. The second use is to help us talk. We put our tongues against our teeth to make certain sounds. It is difficult to understand what a person is saying if he does not have any teeth.

We may notice that this paragraph does not tell about a happening and it does not describe the teeth. The paragraph explains why our teeth are important.

The common housefly is very dangerous. It carries germs in its mouth and on its legs and feet. The legs and feet are covered with small hairs. On these hairs there are thousands and thousands of germs. One fly may carry as many as 6,000,000 germs. When a fly stops and eats some food, it leaves thousands of germs on the food.

We may notice that the first sentence says that the housefly is dangerous. Then the sentences that follow explain what this means. They explain by telling why the housefly is dangerous and how it spreads germs.

What kind of order does **exposition** follow? Because **exposition** tries to make ideas clear and understandable to the reader, we say that it follows **logical order**. There are various kinds of logical order. We will learn more about them as we go on in these composition lessons.

Practice 3

1. The sentences that follow have no order. Write the correct order on the lines provided.

- 1) A. Since there is usually no pain except when the ankle is moved, it gives victims a perfect rest and a delightful reason to be waited on.
- B. It never kills anyone, and it always gets better in a short time.
- C. Because a sprained ankle offers all the benefits of an illness and few of the disadvantages, it is a very popular complaint.

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D. It brings sympathy and is a reason for a week's absence from school.

_____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____

- 2) A. Yesterday Mr. Chan kept the Frisbee when it landed on his front porch.
B. Mrs. Brown calls the police whenever we want to play ball on the street.
C. If we happen to stray into Mr. Hardy's yard, he yells at us.
D. All the people on our block give us trouble.
E. Mrs. Johnson complains that skateboarding makes too much noise.

_____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____

- 3) A. I had a terrible morning today.
B. In the middle of a class, I discovered I had left my physics assignments in my locker.
C. I tripped over a curb on my way to my political science class and tore my raincoat.
D. At the end of the class, the professor would not let me go to lunch on time.
E. I slept so late that I did not have time to eat any breakfast.
F. I had not turned in my assignments, and he wanted to talk over this problem with me.

_____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____

- 4) A. When the bus arrives, someone always tries to push past you to get in first.
B. You have to wait in long lines at the bus stop.
C. It is hard to travel to work by bus during the rush hour.
D. It certainly is a relief when you finally reach your stop.
E. A passenger standing near to you might shove his or her elbow in your ribs, step on your toes, or even drop cigarettes ashes on you.
F. After you pay your fare, you are shoved down the aisle by the rest of the boarding passengers.

_____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____ ⇒ _____

2. Think about the list of topics that follow. Put an L before each topic that you would probably develop according to logical order.

- 1) _____ Weekends Mean Different Things to Different People
2) _____ I Enjoyed a Wonderful Holiday
3) _____ A Person You Are Familiar With
4) _____ Why Is the Weather Changeable
5) _____ My First Day to School
6) _____ I Always Feel Lonely
7) _____ A Tale of a Little Girl
8) _____ A Visit to a Foreign Country Is Always Filled with Surprises

3. Copy the sentences in Exercise 1 in paragraph form according to the order in which you numbered them. After you have copied the sentences in paragraphs, read the paragraphs to make sure that you have put the sentences in the correct logical order. Also be sure that you have copied the sentences correctly.



Post-test

1. See if you can identify the types of writing in the following paragraphs. Mark each paragraph with N (for Narration), D (for Description), or E (for Exposition).

The robin is a common American bird. It grows about 9 or 10 inches long. The male has a rusty-red breast, dark gray upper parts, and a blackish head. Its tail feathers are tipped with white. The female is usually slightly smaller than the male and of duller color. Robins live in North America from Mexico to Alaska.

Special schools have been developed in Iran to meet the educational needs of nomads. Nomads are people who move from place to place. Because they move so often, their children cannot read or write. Consequently the government of Iran cannot send letters to them or make agreements with them. To solve the educational problem, the government has started schools in tents in the nomad camps.

The traveler stepped into the hall of the old castle and looked around. It was a large room with stone walls. Several sleeping dogs lay against the wall on the left. In the middle of the room there was a fire. The smoke rose to a hole in the ceiling, but some of it remained in the room. The windows, high in the wall on the right, were not very large and the great room was rather dark.

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In 1928 an English doctor was working in his laboratory in a London hospital. The doctor's name was Alexander Fleming. One day he found a tiny bit of mold in a dish that he was using in his work. He started to throw the mold away. Then he noticed that it seemed unusual. He kept the mold and studied it for a long time. He discovered that it could kill germs. He named it penicillin.

Many foods contain small amounts of substances called vitamins. Vitamins are necessary to the health of the body. Even if we eat a lot of food, we will not be healthy unless the food contains enough vitamins. Vitamins are important for healthy eyes and skin, strong bones and teeth, normal growth, and the regulation of the work of the body's organs.

2. Read and try to appreciate the works of literature. Then, talk with your friends in what basic writing type each of the pieces is.

A

The month Rinko spent on Mrs. Hata's farm one summer was filled with surprises. Auntie Hata and her sons, Zenny and Abu, were much nicer than Rinko had expected. The old man living in Mrs. Hata's barn turned out to be a master kite maker from Japan.

Rinko was amazed when she first walked into the barn and saw the colorful kites hanging from the walls and rafters. She watched in wonder while the old man painted a samurai, kite with the glaring eyes of a warrior's face. As he worked, the old man told Rinko about the magic of kite flying. He said that flying a kite lets you become part of the sky. "You become the kite and the sky and the universe itself," the old man told her, "and then we are all one and the same."

That day, Rinko wasn't sure what the old man meant about the kite and the sky and the universe. Yet one day she understood his meaning. Here is Rinko's story of how it happened.

One evening when I was washing the supper dishes, the old man came to the back door with two of his kites. One was the diamond kite with the cross-eyed samurai who looked as if he'd just swallowed some of Dr. Oniki's awful brown medicine for stomach flu. The other was the yellow-and-black butterfly I'd seen hanging from the rafters of the barn.

“Anybody interested in flying these before it gets dark?” he asked.

“Yeah, me!” Zenny yelled, and I saw the life suddenly come back to his face.

I noticed right away that the old man had only two kites. He’s leaving me out again, I thought. But the old man thrust the butterfly kite toward me and said, “Well, come on, Rinko. Hurry up and dry your hands. I’ll help you get this one up.”

“Me?”

“Yes, you!”

I shook the suds from my hands, wiped them on my skirt, and ran out into the fields with Zenny and the old man. The sun had bleached the weeds so they seemed almost white, and the breeze was making them rustle, as if they were whispering to each other. Auntie Hata probably would have said that was exactly what they were doing.

The old man held the samurai kite high over his head, angling it to catch the breeze, while Zenny held the spool with the flying line and backed away from him.

“Now,” the old man shouted, and Zenny gave the kite a sharp tug. The samurai kite darted around for a while as if it weren’t sure which way to go, and then it began to climb.

I could hardly wait to get my hands on the butterfly kite, but I watched as the old man stood with his back to the breeze and tossed it into the air. The wind lifted it right up as though it belonged in the sky, and pretty soon the butterfly was climbing.

Finally the old man handed me the spool. “Hold the line taut,” he said, “and if the butterfly asks for more, feed it to her a little at a time. Understand?”

“Yes, OK,” I said, turning to him.

But the old man was watching the kite. “Keep your eyes on the kite, Rinko,” he said. “Listen to what it tells you.”

Pretty soon I could feel the butterfly tugging at my line like a living thing, telling me it wanted to climb. So I fed out the line little by little and my butterfly soared higher and higher, its tail dancing, until it was a small black speck in the sky.

All of a sudden I understood what the old man meant that day he was making his samurai kite. I really felt as though I was the butterfly up there and it was me flying in the sky. I felt like I was part of the sky and part of the entire universe.

—Yoshiko Uchida, *The Best Bad Thing*

B

Every spring, Sam Beaver and his father took a trip to their wilderness camp in Canada. Sam's father liked to fish there, and Sam enjoyed exploring. It was while he was exploring, early one morning, that Sam made a wonderful discovery. He found a small, still pond where two great trumpeter swans had built their nest.

The pond Sam had discovered on that spring morning was seldom visited by any human being. All winter, snow had covered the ice; the pond lay cold and still under its white blanket. Most of the time there wasn't a sound to be heard. The frog was asleep. The chipmunk was asleep. Occasionally a jay would cry out. And sometimes at night the fox would bark—a high, rasping bark. Winter seemed to last forever.

But one day a change came over the woods and the pond. Warm air, soft and kind, blew through the trees. The ice, which had softened during the night, began to melt. Patches of open water appeared. All the creatures that lived in the pond and in the woods were glad to feel the warmth. They heard and felt the breath of spring, and they stirred with new life and hope. There was a good, new smell in the air, a smell of earth waking after its long sleep. The frog, buried in the mud at the bottom of the pond, knew that spring was here. The chickadee knew and was delighted (almost everything delights a chickadee). The vixen, dozing in her den, knew she would soon have kits. Every creature knew that a better, easier time was at hand—warmer days, pleasanter nights. Trees were putting out green buds; the buds were swelling. Birds began arriving from the south. A pair of ducks flew in. The Red-winged Blackbird arrived and scouted the pond for nesting sites. A small sparrow with a white throat arrived and sang, "Oh, sweet Canada, Canada, Canada!"

And if you had been sitting by the pond on that first warm day of spring, suddenly, toward the end of the afternoon, you would have heard a stirring sound high above you in the air—a sound like the sound of trumpets.

"Ko-hoh, ko-hoh!"

And if you had looked up, you would have seen, high overhead, two great white birds. They flew swiftly, their legs stretched out straight behind, their long white necks stretched out ahead, their powerful wings beating steady and strong. "Ko-hoh, ko-hoh, ko-hoh!" A thrilling noise in the sky, the trumpeting of swans.

When the birds spotted the pond, they began circling, looking the place over from the air. Then they glided down and came to rest in the water, folding their long wings neatly along their sides and turning their heads this way and that to study their new surroundings. They were Trumpeter Swans, pure white birds with black bills. They had liked the looks of the swampy pond and had decided to make it their home for a while and raise a family.

The two swans were tired from the long flight. They were glad to be down out of the sky. They paddled slowly about and then began feeding, thrusting their necks into the shallow water and pulling roots and plants from the bottom. Everything about the swans was white except their bills and their feet; these were black. They carried their heads high. The pond seemed a different place because of their arrival.

For the next few days, the swans rested. When they were hungry, they ate. When they were thirsty—which was a great deal of the time—they drank. On the tenth day, the female began looking around to find a place to build her nest.

—E.B. White, *The Trumpet of the Swan*



In the early days when America still belonged to England, there lived in Boston a man named Samuel Adams. He was a man who had his own ideas about things. While other men rode horseback, Samuel Adams walked around Boston. While others stayed loyal to England, Samuel said that America should break free.

Samuel and his cousin John Adams felt the same way about America's independence. Yet they had different opinions about riding horses. John thought that Samuel should ride a horse like other men did. Samuel argued that walking or riding in a carriage suited him better. Of course, Samuel knew that his escape from British soldiers at Lexington would have been faster on a galloping horse than in a creaking carriage. Even so, Samuel wouldn't learn to ride.

Then in 1775, Samuel and John Adams were traveling to a meeting in Philadelphia. The leaders of the Revolution were deciding what to do. On the way, Samuel and John often stopped at inns to talk things over. It was at one of these inns that they argued about horses one last time.

At a tavern in Grafton, Connecticut, John Adams decided to make one last attempt to get Samuel on a horse.

"Riding would be good for your health," he began.

Samuel was not concerned with his health.

Riding was sociable, John suggested. Samuel said walking was sociable and riding in a chaise could be sociable, too.

Well, riding was a more convenient way to get about, John went on. As a leader of the Revolution, Samuel was a busy man and needed to get about easily.

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Samuel was not interested in convenience.

Riding was the fastest way to travel, John observed. In time of war, it was sometimes important to move fast.

Still, Samuel was not convinced. If he thought about his escape at Lexington, he didn't mention it.

John sighed and tried another tack. It was a pity, he said, that early man had gone to such trouble to domesticate an animal, only to have Samuel Adams come along and reject it.

Samuel didn't give two hoots for early man.

Then John Adams sat back in his chair and took a deep breath. He had one more argument. "You should ride a horse for the good of your country," he declared. America would surely be declaring its independence soon, he pointed out; if all went well, they themselves would be signing such a declaration in Philadelphia. Then they would be not just leaders of a revolution; they would be the statesmen of a new nation.

John leaned toward his cousin. "A proud new nation," he said. A great nation. A republic as Rome had been in ancient times. And whoever heard of a great nation with statesmen who could not ride horseback? John listed the heroes of Roman history. He reviewed the names of Roman senators. All were horsemen, he said. And he would not want Americans to be inferior in the least way.

For the first time Samuel looked thoughtful. After all, he told himself, he had put on silk stockings and a ruffled shirt so as not to shame the Commonwealth of Massachusetts at the meeting in Philadelphia. How could he refuse to get on a horse if the honor of his country were at stake? How could he put a stain on American history—indeed right on the opening chapter?

—Jean Fritz, *Why Don't You Get a Horse, Sam Adams?*

D

Outside his workshop window, an artist had been watching a fascinating insect—a praying mantis. It lived in a little bush and spent most of the day sitting quietly with its sharply hooked front feet raised and folded.

The artist thought that the praying mantis would make a wonderful exhibit for the museum. But it would be hard for visitors to see because the real insect was just too small for an exhibit. The praying mantis was only three inches long. The artist wanted to make a giant praying mantis many times larger than life. It would be 25 times larger than the real insect. The model would be six feet long.

Before the artist began to make the model he studied the praying mantis carefully. He took photographs and made sketches from different angles. Then, in the workshop, the hard part of the job began. What could be used to build such a creature? The artist decided to make the head of soft clay. A layer of liquid rubber was painted over the soft clay head. After it dried, the sketchy rubber mold was cut peeled from the clay head. Liquid plastic was poured into the rubber mold to make the clear plastic head that would be used in the exhibit.

Next, the body and legs were carved from a lightweight foam material. Thin metal rods were pushed into each leg to make the giant mantis strong. The rods also allowed the artist to bend the legs a little for the final shape.

The wings were the biggest challenge of all. After cutting the shape from clear plastic sheeting, the artist built up each vein by squeezing tile cement out of a catsup dispenser. This took over four hours.

Finally, the body was put together and coated all over with a special liquid that hardens and dries clear. Then the artist painted the model with oil paints to match the colors of the real praying mantis.

After weeks of work, the giant insect was finished and ready to display.

Museums all over the world exhibit larger-than-life animals—from grasshoppers to spiders to microscopic pond life.

—Judy Cutchins and Ginny Johnson, *Are Those Animals Real?*



The edge of the sea is a curious place. Whether the coastline is rocky or sandy, life at the seashore brews and bubbles, but seeing it often takes a sharp eye. Whole neighborhoods of sea creatures may live under the rocks or burrowed in the sand. Some sneak out for food at night, dodging larger animals. Others never leave their damp, dark hiding places. Still other animals are in disguise, looking more like plants than animals. The closer you look, the more you will see.

If you go to the beach at different times of the day, you will notice that the shore looks different. Sometimes the water comes far up on the shore, covering rocks and beach. This is called high tide. At other times you can walk far out on the beach, over the area that was covered by water during high tide. This is low tide. Low tide is a good time to look for shells and rocks or for animals that live in the sand.

One of the best places to look for sea animals at low tide is in a tide pool. This is a small pool of ocean water that the tide leaves in a rocky hole on the shore.

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If you look into a tide pool, you will find a small community of sea creatures living there. Each tide-pool community is different, of course, depending on where you find it. Yet you're likely to see the same kinds of sea animals in almost every one. Soft sponges and hard-shelled mussels are two kinds of sea creatures you'll find in many tide pools. You'll often see snails sliding along the rocks, searching for food to eat.

Another animal commonly found in tide pools is the starfish. The starfish gets its name because its arms, also called rays, often make it look like a star. Along those arms the starfish has little tube feet tipped with suction cups. These can grasp rocks tightly and are used by the starfish to move around. At the end of each arm is a sensitive eyespot. This eyespot cannot see things, but it can tell light from dark.

Some starfish may throw off parts of their arms if they are disturbed. New arms will grow in about a year.

The starfish's mouth is in the middle of the underside of its body. With its arms it can pull at the shells of bivalves like clams and mussels. When a clam's shells open just the tiniest bit, the starfish pushes its stomach out of its mouth and into the bivalve. Now the stomach is inside out and can begin to digest the clam meat while outside of the starfish's body.

Starfish lay their eggs in water. The eggs have developed inside of the starfish's arms and come out of tiny holes on the upper sides, near the bases of the arms.

You'll find starfish on the rocks or in the water of the tide pools or in sandy puddles on the beach just about all over the world.

Brittle stars are similar to their cousins the starfish and get their name from the ease with which they break off arms. As with starfish, brittle star arms grow back. Their arms, however, are usually longer and more flexible than those of starfish, helping them to move faster. Sometimes the brittle star slithers along by stretching an arm forward, fixing the tip of it to a surface, then pulling its body forward by wriggling and bending the stretched-out arm. The brittle star can also crawl about in two other ways. One arm can lead, two can trail behind, and the two in between can move in a rowing or pushing motion. Or four arms can row and the fifth will trail behind.

The tube feet on a brittle star's arms usually don't have suction cups. They are used to breathe, to feel around, and to "sniff" out the small living and dead animals that brittle stars like to eat.

You can find brittle stars in all the oceans of the world. Some live in deep water and some in shallow water, including tide pools. You'll never find brittle stars on the rocks above the water, though. They need to be in water all the time.

—Anita Malnic, *Where the Waves Break*

F

There once was a mighty Dragon King who had a beautiful wife. “I really must have her picture painted,” he thought to himself. Summoning his best court artist, he instructed him to paint a picture of the Dragon Queen.

The artist slithered up to his mountain studio, high above the clouds, took out his brushes and his silks, and began mixing his paints. He then embarked upon his task. Month after month went by, and the Dragon King heard nothing. Finally, flaming at the mouth, he charged up the mountain to the artist’s studio and demanded to see the picture of his wife.

At once the artist unrolled some silk, took out his brushes, and quickly mixed his paints. In a flash a magnificent picture of the Queen emerged on the silk.

“If you can paint such a beautiful picture so quickly,” roared the Dragon King, “why did you keep me waiting a whole year?”

Then the artist opened the back door of his studio. A whole mountain of discarded paintings was there: the Dragon Queen sitting, standing, running, rolling, roaring—the Queen pictured in every aspect of life.

“Your Majesty,” explained the poor artist, “it took a year to learn how to paint a perfect picture of the Dragon Queen in a flash!”

—Adapted by Demi from *A Chinese Zoo*

III Writing Well in English



Pre-test

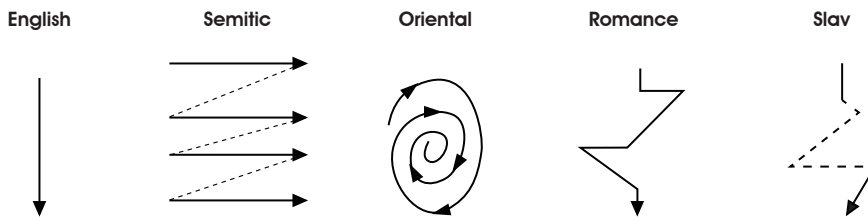
Write down your ideas about good writing, and then talk them over with your friends.

1 Following the English Thought Pattern

Communication is the goal of writing. We write to inform, entertain, or persuade others. What we care much in the first place is how to make our readers understand us. “Make our ideas clear.” This is the common knowledge of human beings. But how to express ourselves clearly in communication can be different from person to person, and from nation to nation. When someone speaks logically and exactly, we understand him. If putting down his words on paper, he can make us see his good organization of thoughts, and his careful employment of words, his diction. However, these qualities are not all for a good writing. In communication between two persons from different countries, we can very often see embarrassment in mutual understanding, even if both of them are trying to speak simply and briefly, or are using simple language on paper. The problem stems from more than a mere difference between words or symbols. It is also a matter of the arrangement of words together in a sentence. The words in one language do not fit together in the same way as the words of another language do. More important, the ideas offered by words do not fit together in the same way from language to language. These differences exist because each nation has its special way of thinking determined by its own culture. And how a person from a certain country thinks largely determines how he speaks or writes.

In order to write well in English, we non-English speakers should first understand how the English-speaking people usually arrange their ideas. This arrangement of ideas can be called a thought pattern. Even though the English thought pattern is not native to us, once we understand it we can imitate it. Then our English writing will turn out to be more like that of the native speakers.

Generally speaking, the English thought pattern has a basic feature of straightforwardness. To realize this feature in developing a paragraph or even a full composition, the English writer will, though not always, present his main idea or point of view at the beginning with a statement, known as the topic sentence of the paragraph, or the thesis statement of the essay. Then he will try every way to get his main idea or point of view directly illustrated with a number of sentences in a paragraph, or a number of paragraphs in an article. At the end, he will write a conclusion to get the main idea or point of view restated for emphasis, if necessary. Robert B. Kaplan once put forward a graph to describe the direct English thought pattern in contrast with other national thought patterns in paragraph development.



In this diagram, the typically straightforward line shows the development of an English paragraph (we will learn also that of a full composition). The broken lines indicate largely irrelevant material introduced into the paragraph.

If we compare the English direct pattern with the Oriental circling pattern, perhaps we can understand their differences this way.

No doubt that our Chinese culture is an important representative of the Oriental culture. Our nation, known as one of courtesy, enjoys a five-thousand-year history. Early in the fourth century before Christ, Confucius, the great thinker and educator of us told his students that they should always remember the golden rule for good manners: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” He asked them to be always friendly with each other and to avoid offending others whenever they spoke or wrote, even for criticism. His students taught more people to act the same way. By and by, in the long run of history, our nation formed a way of circling thinking. Many a time, we would start from beating about the bush when we speak or write, worrying that a direct true-to-fact speech might make others feel unhappy or cause trouble. We would turn and turn from unrelated material to ideas of minor importance and at last make the point.

The British people and American people do not enjoy such a long history as our nation does. They, especially the Americans, developed their culture under the condition of a worldwide rapid development of economy. “Time is money” became their motto in capital accumulation. Then, they would try every means to save time in voicing their opinion in doing business. By and by, they formed the direct way of thinking and would hit the point at the very beginning and go straightforwardly to the goal in their speech and writing.

Practice 4

1. Comment on the interpretation of Robert B. Kaplan's Thought Pattern Graph in the text. Don't be afraid of having your own understanding.
2. Try to recite the following paragraphs to gain a stronger sense of the English thought pattern.

A

Good manners form the basis of modern etiquette. Its component parts are courtesy, promptness, a sense of decorum, good taste, and—most important—consideration of and respect for others. The Golden Rule applies: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” These attitudes and their application are essential to the functioning of society at every level, whether it is social, business, or diplomatic.

B

The early American movies of the twenties and thirties had many elements of a fairy tale. It was always clear which characters were the “good guys” and which were the “bad guys.” The hero was very handsome—his jaw was square and his face was clean-shaven. The villain was slightly foreign-looking, often with a mustache (in the days when most American men didn't wear mustaches). As in a fairy tale, the wicked villain created a series of obstacles which the hero had to overcome. Of course the hero finally defeated the villain and won the beautiful heroine. The movie ended with the final embrace of the hero and the heroine, which suggested the fairytale ending—that they would live happily ever after.

C

Anyone who believes in superstition is superstitious. Superstition is an unreasonable belief in the supernatural. It often originates because of ignorance of natural causes. It may come from a fear of the unknown and the mysterious. Many signs and omens symbolize good luck or bad luck. For example, if you carry a rabbit's foot you will avoid bad luck. If you find a four-leaf clover you will have good luck. Hearing the cry of a crow is a sign of death. Misfortune can result from breaking a mirror, walking under a ladder, or opening an umbrella in the house.

D

The tourist in Chinatown will find himself walking along narrow, winding streets. He will see importing houses and grocery stores selling a wide variety of special Chinese foods. He

will also see many restaurants offering authentic Chinese dishes at moderate prices. He can enjoy looking at the gift shops that sell souvenir-type articles along with finer chinaware and art objects. At the end of January, when the Chinese celebrate their New Year, the visitor to Chinatown will see parades of dragons and lions (with someone at the head and at the tail of each animal) which stop at different stores to wish their owners happiness and prosperity. The loud noise of firecrackers as well as the many gongs that are sounded are supposed to frighten off the evil spirits.



Most wedding customs are very old and come from many different lands. Throwing old shoes or tying them to the bridal car goes back to ancient Egypt. There the father handed the bride's sandal to the groom, symbolizing a transfer of authority. Throwing rice carries the wish that the couple will be blessed with children. Another widespread custom is for the bride to wear "something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue." In ancient Israel the bride's robe had a blue border signifying purity, fidelity, and love. Centuries ago in France the bride threw her garter, and the girl who caught it was believed to be the next bride. Today the bride throws her bouquet.

2 Seeking Clarity, Brevity, and Variety

As is said in the previous section, **clarity** is the essential quality of writing, because no clarity, no understanding, and then no successful communication. Whenever we write or whatever we write about, we must try to make our readers understand our main or central idea. For this reason, we need to arrange our supporting ideas in an orderly sequence. Let us study the following passage to see how a native English-speaker directly presents his main idea at the very beginning and how he tries to use some words to help the smooth or natural movement from one idea to another.

Yesterday at the swimming pool **everything seemed to go wrong**. **Soon after** I arrived, I sat on my sunglasses and broke them. **Later** my bathing suit caught on the rough edge of a chair, tearing a hole in the side of the suit. **But** my worst moment came when I decided to climb up to the high diving tower to see what the view was like. **Once** I was up there, I realized that my friends were looking at me because they thought I was going to dive. I decided I was too afraid to dive from that height. **So** I climbed down the ladder, feeling very embarrassed.

In this paragraph, the writer develops the controlling idea of **everything seemed to**

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go wrong by discussing three incidents—the broken sunglasses, the torn bathing suit, and climbing down the high diving tower. The highlighted words help the discussion move smoothly from one incident to another. Moreover, the writer knows when to end the paragraph and stops writing because there are no more things that went wrong to discuss.

Brevity is interrelated to clarity in writing. It has two aspects: One is using the least possible words to express the idea clearly; another is using possibly simple words and sentence structures to win more readers.

In real communication, we can find that the Westerners use much less words, especially adjectives and adverbs, than us to express ideas, whether in a single sentence or in a passage. If they are hungry, they would say “I am hungry,” without any unnecessary words of courtesy. Such a frank way of wording—speaking or writing directly and briefly has become a modern tendency of English, especially with the impetus of American English to the changing English language. We can interpret this tendency simply like this: If a single word can express their idea, the native English-speakers will not use a phrase; if a phrase can do, they will not use a sentence; if a simple sentence can do, they will not use a complicated one.

Native English-speakers prefer to choose simple, often daily-used, words and sentence structures in writing and speaking. Unnatural wording with many formal or big words, flowery modifiers, complicated sentences, and an abused third person approach is sharply criticized as dazzling English. Let us study the following sentence to see why nowadays such kind of English sounds awkward and is totally unacceptable.

—The **casual factors** of her poverty become **obvious** when one **considers** the number of **offspring** she **possesses**.

In this sentence, the writer has used too many formal words (we will continue to discuss about them in the following section) and unnecessary modifiers such as **casual**, **factor**, **obvious**, **consider**, **offspring**, and **possess**, making the voice bookish and artificial. In the subordinate clause, he has adopted an impersonal approach by using **one** instead of the more personal **I**, **we**, or **you**. The abuse of the third person approach seems to have dropped us back to the English of the 17th or 18th century when the emperor was called “His Majesty” instead of “you.” Besides, the structure of the sentence is complex. In modern English, this sentence can be simplified into a much direct statement like the one below.

—She is poorer because of too many children.

For the virtue of simplicity in writing as a tendency, the following quotation can be a proof.

Today there is so much verbal bloatage in the American air that you can hardly hear a plain declarative sentence. Yet simplicity is a virtue in writing, not something to be ashamed of and embroidered with pretty stitches. The writing that we most admire over the years—the King James Bible, Abraham Lincoln, Thoreau, E. B. White, Red Smith—is writing that has the strength of simplicity.

—“Why Johnny’s Teachers Can’t Write,” *New York Times Magazine*, Nov. 12, 1978

Of course, in seeking brevity and simplicity, we do not want a writer to make his writing all packed with simple sentences of same length or similar structure. We should at the same time seek **variety** to gain liveliness. Whenever necessary, we write longer and complex sentences. Whenever necessary, we shift the subordinate clause to the head of a sentence instead of a fixed tail, and so on so forth.

Practice 5

1. Put the following sentences from dazzling (unnatural) English into straightforward, clear and brief English.

1) This writer’s report enjoyed a not unfavorable reception by the Resource Center Committee.

⇒ _____

2) Police involvement in the conflict was considered to be an inhibiting factor to the peaceful progress of the protest.

⇒ _____

3) It is the feeling of the committee that the established priorities in management-employee relations are in need of realignment.

⇒ _____

4) The unacceptability of one’s lifestyle can result in the termination of one’s employment.

⇒ _____

5) The administrators have designated a period of time within which one must respond to charges carrying threats of disciplinary action.

⇒ _____

6) One realizes as one progresses through life that a great many statements of political figures are without substance or credibility.

⇒ _____

7) It was with no little enthusiasm that one’s peers inflicted various contusions and lacerations on members of the opposing affinity group.

⇒ _____

8) One must recognize the enormous responsibilities that are to be assumed with an office of public trust.

⇒ _____

2. We may find dazzling sentences here and there in our daily reading, if we are keen enough. Whenever you read, try to pick out the sentences which you think are unnatural and don't hesitate to get them improved for your language cultivation.

3 Considering Our Purpose and Our Audience's Usage Levels

We write either to inform, to entertain, or to persuade. Whatever for of writing we may do, we should naturally ask ourselves: "Who is my reader?" or "Who am I writing for?" Reasonably, for people of different usage levels, we should choose different words, sentence patterns and care about many other literal things, such as our tone. Mark Twain would not win popularity among the laboring people if he did not consider all of these factors. His success came from his awareness of writing for people who were suffering what he had suffered, and of using the language welcomed by them.

The English language is formed with three kinds of words: formal, informal, and colloquial. Generally speaking, words originated from French, Latin, and Greek are mostly used in formal writing, and therefore they are called **formal words**. Words from Old English are frequently used in writings for people's everyday life, and thus are named **informal words**. The so-called **colloquial words** are informal, but they are restricted to the writing for reproducing an actual speech. Many dictionaries can help us choose appropriate words for our writings for different audience.

Formal, informal, and colloquial writings are considered appropriate on different occasions. Many textbooks, most scholarly magazines and books, and academic papers are written in formal English. Most business communication still observes formal usage, but the use of **I** and **we** is replacing the strictly formal third person approach. We may sum up the main characteristics of formal usage as follows:

- No contractions (**do not**, instead of **don't**; **he will**, instead of **he'll**)
- No slang and hesitation fillers (**er**, **um**, **well**, **you know**)
- No sentence fragments
- In a serious or neutral tone

In talking about **tones**, we are mentioning about the quality that reveals our attitude toward our subject or our audience—or both. To entertain our friends, we are more likely

to use a humorous tone to help making them laugh. To condemn our enemy, we might write sarcastically. But very often, an experienced writer would prefer to choose a tone that sounds polite, straightforward, and perhaps persuasive. This tone is neither too harsh nor too light and then is more acceptable. It is neutral and is regarded as the best tone for most of writings.

Practice 6

1. In order to be able to adopt an appropriate level of usage in your own writing, you need to become familiar with the characteristics of formal, informal, and colloquial usage. After studying the chart (which shows how word choices may differ on each level), read the paragraphs that follow. Pay particular attention to word choice, and try to determine the usage level of each passage by asking yourself the following questions about each one. Be prepared to support your answers with specific examples from every paragraph.

Usage Levels for All Occasions

Formal: One should not admit defeat too easily.

I shall not admit defeat too easily.

Informal: We shouldn't give up too easily.

I'll not give up too easily.

Colloquial: I'm not going to throw in the towel too easily.

Formal	Informal	Colloquial (slang)
automobile	car	wheels
comprehend	understand	dig
depart	leave	split
residence	house	pad
offensive	unpleasant	gross
exhausted	tired out	wasted
dejected	sad	down
hyperactive	jittery	wired
intoxicated	drunk	sloshed

- Are there any noticeable formal words?
- Do you find any slang?
- Are most of the terms familiar, everyday language?
- Does the writer use *I* or *we* or the more formal third person?
- Are there sentence fragments? (For “fragments,” refer to Section IV, Part Two.)

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- Are there any contractions?
- Does the usage level of each example seem appropriate for the content?
- Can you identify the tone in each of the sections?

A

By the time I entered in the autumn of 1932, the Great Depression had slid to its nadir. I remember how the iron benches under the elms in front of the courthouse and the wooden ones in the treeless, gravelly municipal park where the bandstand stood were occupied all during daylight by the unemployed of our town in Colorado. Sometimes these able men, disabled by inaction, held bitter symposia to discover why their decent lives had become ignominious; shouting and gesticulating, they inveighed against the Government, berated Wall Street, denounced the vile, mysterious forces that had closed down mines and mills and put an end to building, and had subjected them and their blameless families to the indignities of the soup kitchen.

—Jean Stafford, “Souvenirs of Survival,” *Mademoiselle*, Feb. 1960

B

We’d go to school two days sometimes, a week, two weeks, three weeks at most. This is when we were migrating. We’d come back to our winter base, and if we were lucky, we’d get in good solid all of January, February, March, April, May. So we had five months out of a possible nine months. We started counting how many schools we’d been to and we counted thirty-seven. Elementary schools. From first to eighth grade. Thirty-seven. We never got a transfer. Friday we didn’t tell the teacher or anything. We’d just go home. And they accepted this.

I remember one teacher—I wondered why she was asking so many questions. (In those days anybody asked a question, you became suspicious. Either a cop or a social worker.) She was a young teacher, and she just wanted to know why we were behind. One day she drove into the camp. That was quite an event, because we never had a teacher come over. Never. So it was, you know, a very meaningful day for us.

—Cesar Chavez, interviewed by Studs Terkel in
Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression (1970)

C

There are blustering signatures that swish across the page like cornstalks bowed before a tempest. There are cryptic signatures, like a scabble of lightning across a cloud, suggesting that behind is lofty divinity whom all must know, or an aloof divinity whom none

is worthy to know, (though, as this might be highly inconvenient, a docile typist sometimes interprets the mystery in a bracket underneath). There are impetuous squiggles.... There are humble, humdrum signatures. And there are also, sometimes, signatures that are courteously clear, yet mindful of a certain simple grace and artistic economy—in short, of style.

—F.L. Lucas, “On the Fascination of Style,” *Holiday*, March 1960

D

O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste to their humble homes with a hurricane of fire... for our sakes who adore thee Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of love, and Who is the everfaithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset and seek His aid and with humble and contrite hearts. Amen.

—Mark Twain, *The War Prayer*

2. Read the following sample letters of complaint and adjustment, and then revise the last one—Mark Twain’s letter, using a tone that you think will be effective in addressing the gas company.

Plaza Music Store

Cornwall, Calif.

April 27

Gentlemen:

Twelve of the 150 records I ordered from you last Thursday were completely smashed when they arrived at the depot here.

I’m enclosing a carbon copy of your order with asterisks after the name of each of the broken records. Please get them to us within twenty-four hours if possible, because our customer is very eager to have them.

Yours sincerely,

Walter Smith Recording Company
San Francisco 9, Calif.
May 2

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your letter dated April 27.

We were sorry to hear that 12 of the 150 records you ordered last Thursday arrived in poor condition.

We are immediately shipping replacements of those records.

We are also discontinuing the new method of packaging with which we have been experimenting. We do not care to reply upon it when it has failed even once.

Yours sincerely,

The Corner Store
Main and Madison Streets
Middletown, Mid
May 5

Dear Sirs:

A number of our customers have been complaining that your fountain pens leak badly. As a result, we have lost a good deal of time and have been put to considerable expense for cleaning bills.

We have had trouble only with your last shipment of fountain pens. The ones we received before were most satisfactory.

You will probably want to check with your manufacturing department to see if there is any defect in these pens, and with your shipping department to find out if they are packed with adequate protection for shipment.

We are returning the entire remainder of these with a shipment that will not give us any trouble.

Yours sincerely,

Beats-all Pen Corp.
Bigville, N. J.
May 9

Dear Sirs:

Thank you for returning our last shipment of fountain pens. We hope that you returned them at our expense. We have just found a flaw in our manufacturing process, due to the installation of a time-saving machine which we have recently put in.

You may be certain that our pens will be as satisfactory to you in the future as they have been in the past.

We are shipping you replacements immediately. We are taking the liberty of sending you an extra dozen, at no cost, as small compensation for your trouble.

Yours sincerely,

339 Summit Street
Cloverdate, Mich.
November 5

Gentlemen:

Somebody in your organization has made a mistake in filling the order I sent you last Wednesday.

I ordered a gray hat size 7, Model 27B.

I received a green hat size 8, Model 31D.

I am returning the second hat, and would like to receive the first one as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Everybody's Emporium
Detroit 15, Mich.
November 9

Dear Mr. Willington:

With reference to your letter of November 5, we are very sorry that we sent you the wrong hat. Your gray hat size 7, Model 27B is probably on its way to you now, since we ordered it shipped on receipt of your letter.

We will take great care to see that such an error does not take place again.

Yours truly,

Dear Sirs:

Some day you will move me almost to the verge of irritation by your chuckle-headed Goddamned fashion of shutting your Goddamned gas off without giving any notice to your Goddamned parishioners. Several times you have come within an ace of smothering half of his household in their beds and blowing up the other half by this idiotic, not to say criminal, custom of yours. And it has happened again today. Haven't you a telephone?

Ys

S. L. Clemens



Post-test

Write on a topic you want most to talk about. Mind your tone and try to express things directly.