

Map of the Book

Unit	Writing Skills	Language Study
Unit 1 Language and Identity P.1	Introduction to Expository Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the elements and structure of an expository essay• Identify different patterns of development within exposition• Understand writing as a process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use modifiers to avoid making absolute statements
Unit 2 Writing for Self-Discovery P.29	Process Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write a process analysis• Write a clear, concise, and well-defined thesis statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use tense and voice correctly
Unit 3 Old Age and Wisdom P.67	Exemplification <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the importance of exemplification in expository writing• Practice writing short examples and extended examples• Write effective topic sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use specific language
Unit 4 Relationship P.93	Classification and Division <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practice writing an expository essay by using classification and division• Write an effective introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the nominal <i>that</i>-clause

Critical Thinking	Intercultural Competence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the relationship between language and identity • Take alternative perspectives on World Englishes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate Spanglish in the context of American multiculturalism • Understand the concept of “melting pot” and “salad bowl” in American cultural studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the recursive nature of writing process • Evaluate the effect of self-deprecating humor in English writing and speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore writers’ self-discovery across cultures • Identify differences between writings in first language and second language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine old age by making interdisciplinary connections • Interpret the wisdom of the older generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the challenges faced by old people in different cultures • Understand the meaning of old age across cultures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make inferences about the relationship between natural or social conditions and human behavior • Explore different types of human relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore ways of expressing love from people in different cultures • Identify and articulate cultural similarities and differences in social distances by a comparative study of character proxemics in American and Chinese romantic movies

XIV Writing Critically 2

Unit	Writing Skills	Language Study
<p>Unit 5 Environment and Development P.117</p>	<p>Cause and Effect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write an exposition by using cause and effect • Define causation in expository writing • Develop support for a topic sentence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use <i>-ing</i> clauses of result
<p>Unit 6 Men and Women P.145</p>	<p>Comparison and Contrast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write an exposition by using comparison and contrast • Write effective conclusions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use comparison and contrast signal words
<p>Unit 7 Ambition and Success P.175</p>	<p>Definition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write sentence definitions and extended definitions • Write with unity and coherence • Define a concept from diverse perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appositives and attributive clauses in definition sentences
<p>Unit 8 Globalization and Cultural Identity P.217</p>	<p>Mixed Patterns of Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an essay by using mixed patterns of development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve sentence variety

Critical Thinking	Intercultural Competence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the effect of modern technologies on the integrity of the natural world • Explore the relationship between man and nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the differences between Western and Eastern views of nature • Interpret women’s affinity with nature from a cross-cultural perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question blanket statements about biologically-based differences between men and women • Explore the causes and implications of gender differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test hypotheses about gender differences in problem-solving by conducting a small survey in a Chinese classroom • Evaluate stereotypes of men or women who tend to do more talking from a cross-cultural perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct the meaning of ambition from a sociocultural approach • Explore the connotations of ambition to men and women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the different opinions on success and ambition by people in different cultures • Understand the effects of cultural differences on achieving success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the causal relationship between modernization and globalization • Understand the relationship between an individual and his or her cultural identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore people’s attitudes toward globalization across cultures • Interpret the concept of Asian society from the theoretical perspective of an imagined community

2

Unit

Writing for Self-Discovery

Process Analysis



“ It is only when we silence the blaring sounds of our daily existence that we can finally hear the whispers of truth that life reveals to us, as it stands knocking on the doorsteps of our hearts. ”

—K. T. Jong

Objectives

Writing Skills

- ▶ write a process analysis
- ▶ write a clear, concise, and well-defined thesis statement

Language Study

- ▶ use tense and voice correctly

Critical Thinking

- ▶ understand the recursive nature of writing process
- ▶ evaluate the effect of self-deprecating humor in English writing and speech

Intercultural Competence

- ▶ explore writers' self-discovery across cultures
- ▶ identify differences between writings in first language and second language

Pre-Class Exploration

Do some research on one of the following questions. Then prepare to share your findings in groups in class.

1. What kind of process do Chinese students usually go through when they write English essays?
2. Do professional writers usually spend more time producing their first drafts or revising them?
3. "Thinking and writing should be seen as interrelated processes, which stimulate and reinforce each other." To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement? Support your claim with examples.
4. Writing is a process of revising and improvement. Can it also be a process of discovering yourself—your beliefs, values, feelings, way of thinking, interests, preferences, biases, etc.? Share your writing experience with your classmates.
5. During the 1970s and 1980s, the teaching of English writing underwent a "paradigm shift" from a focus on written products to a focus on writing processes. Do some research about these two approaches. What are the claimed strengths and weaknesses of each approach? Which approach do you advocate? Why?

Part I Reading for Ideas

Text A

Writing Drafts

Richard Marius

- 1 Finally the moment comes when you sit down to begin your first draft. It is always a good idea at the start to list the points you want to cover. A list is not as elaborate as a formal outline. In writing your first list, don't bother to set items down in the order of importance. List your main points and trust your mind to organize them. You will probably make one list, study it, make another, study it, and perhaps make another. You can organize each list more completely than the last. This preliminary process may save you hours of starting and stopping.
- 2 Write with your list outline in front of you. Once you begin to write, commit yourself to the task at hand. Do not get up until you have written for an hour. Write your thoughts quickly. Let one sentence give you an idea to develop in the next. Organization, grammar, spelling, and even clarity of sentences are not nearly as important as getting the first draft together. No matter how desperate you feel, keep going.
- 3 Always keep your mind open to new ideas that pop into your head as you write. Let your list outline help you, but don't become a slave to it. Writers often start an essay with one topic in mind only to discover that another pushes the first one aside as they work. Ideas you had not even thought of before you began to write may pile onto your paper, and five or six pages into your first draft you may realize that you are going to write about something you did not imagine when you started.
- 4 If such a revelation comes, be grateful and accept it. But don't immediately tear up or erase your draft and start all over again. Make yourself keep on writing, developing these new ideas as they come. If you suddenly start all over again, you may break the train of thought that has given you the new topic. Let your thoughts follow your new thesis, sailing on that tack until the wind changes.
- 5 When you have said everything you can say in this draft, print it out if you are working on a computer. Get up from your desk and go sit in a chair somewhere else to read it without correcting anything. Then put it aside, preferably overnight. If possible, read your rough draft just before you go to sleep. Many psychological tests have shown that our minds organize and create while we sleep if we pack them full before

bedtime. Study a draft just before sleep, and you may discover new ideas in the morning.

- 6 Be willing to make radical changes in your second draft. If your thesis changed while you were writing your first draft, you will base your second draft on this new subject. Even if your thesis has not changed, you may need to shift paragraphs around, eliminate paragraphs, or add new ones. Inexperienced writers often suppose that revising a paper means changing only a word or two or adding a sentence or two. This kind of editing is part of the writing process, but it is not the most important part. The most important part of rewriting is a willingness to turn the paper upside down, to shake out of it those ideas that interest you most, and to set them in a form where they will interest the reader too.
- 7 Some writers cut up their first drafts with a pair of scissors. They toss some paragraphs into the trash; others they paste up with rubber cement in the order that seems most logical and coherent. Afterward they type the whole thing through again, smoothing out the transitions, adding new material, getting new ideas as they work. The translation of the first draft into the second nearly always involves radical cutting and shifting around. Now and then you may firmly fix the order of your thoughts in your first draft, but I find that the order of my essays is seldom established until the second draft.
- 8 With the advent of computers the shifting around of parts of the essays has become easy. We can cut and paste electronically with a few strokes of the keyboard. We can also make back-up copies of our earlier drafts so we can go back to them if we wish. But as I said earlier, computers do not remove from us the necessity to think hard about revising.
- 9 Always be firm enough with yourself to cut out thoughts or stories that have nothing to do with your thesis, even if they are interesting. Cutting is the supreme test of a writer. You may create a smashing paragraph or sentence only to discover later that it does not help you make your point. You may develop six or seven examples to illustrate a point and discover you need only one.
- 10 Now and then you may digress a little. If you digress too often, or too far, readers will not follow you unless your facts, your thoughts, and your style are so compelling that they are somehow driven to follow you. Not many writers can pull such digressions off, and most editors will cut out the digressions even when they are interesting. In our hurried and harried time, most readers get impatient with the rambling scenic route. They want to take the most direct way to their destination. To appeal to most of them, you must cut things that do not apply to your main argument.

- 11 In your third draft, you can sharpen sentences, add information here and there, cut some things, and attend to other details to heighten the force of your writing. In the third draft, writing becomes a lot of fun (for most of us). By then you have usually decided what you want to say. You can now play a bit, finding just the right word, choosing just the right sentence form, compressing here, expanding there.
- 12 I find it helpful to put a printed draft down beside my keyboard and type the whole thing through again as a final draft, letting all the words run through my mind and fingers one more time rather than merely deleting and inserting on the computer screen. I wrote four drafts of the first edition of this book; I have preserved the final draft of that edition on computer diskettes. But I am writing this draft by propping the first edition up here beside me and typing it all over again. By comparing the first draft and the second draft, one can see how many changes I have made, most of them unforeseen until I sat down here to work.
- 13 I have outlined here my own writing process. It works for me. You must find the process that works for you. It may be different from mine. A friend tells me that his writing process consists of writing a sentence, agonizing over it, walking around the room, thinking, sitting down, and writing the next sentence. He does not revise very much. I think it unnecessarily painful to bleed out prose that way, but he bleeds out enough to write what he needs to write. Several of my friends tell me they cannot compose at a typewriter; they must first write with a pencil on a yellow pad. These are the people most likely to cut up their drafts with scissors and paste them together in a different form. They also tend to be older. Most young writers are learning to compose at a keyboard, and they cannot imagine another way to write. Neither can I—though on occasion I go back to my pencil for pages at a time.
- 14 The main thing is to keep at it. B. F. Skinner has pointed out that if you write only fifty words a night, you will produce a good-sized book every two or three years. That's not a bad record for any writer. William Faulkner outlined the plot of his Nobel Prize-winning novel *A Fable* on a wall inside his house near Oxford, Mississippi. You can see it there to this day. Once he got the outline on the wall, he sat down with his typewriter and wrote, following the outline to the end. If writing an outline on a kitchen wall does the trick for you, do it. You can always repaint the wall if you must.
- 15 Think of writing as a process making its way toward a product—sometimes painfully. Don't imagine you must know everything you are going to say before you begin. Don't demean yourself and insult your readers by letting your first draft be your final draft. Don't imagine that writing is easy or that you can do it without spending time on it. And don't let anything stand in your way of doing it. Let your house get messy.

Leave your magazines unread and your mail unanswered. Put off getting up for a drink of water or a cup of tea. Never mix alcohol with your writing; true, lots of writers have become alcoholics, but it has not helped their writing. Don't make a telephone call. Don't straighten up your desk. Sit down and write. And write, and write, and write.

ACTIVITY I

Task 1 Think critically about the content of Text A and discuss the following questions in pairs.

1. Richard Marius says in Paragraph 3, "Let your list outline help you, but don't become a slave to it." How do you understand his advice?
2. Do you agree with Marius that "Cutting is the supreme test of a writer" in Paragraph 9? Why or why not?
3. How does revising differ from editing?
4. According to Marius, what are the objectives of the first draft, second draft, and third draft respectively? Do you think his suggested process is applicable to non-native speakers' English composition writing? Why or why not?
5. Do you disagree with any of the suggestions in Text A? If yes, why? Add any suggestions that you consider necessary.
6. According to some Chinese writers, writing in Chinese is an individually-oriented, inner-directed cognitive process and their writing skills are acquired primarily by self-exploration. To what extent do you agree with them? If this is the case, do they care how an audience will interpret their work? And how can novice writers learn to write with a "readerly" sensitivity?

Task 2 Marius writes 15 paragraphs to recommend a writing process, but this does not mean that the process should be necessarily broken down into 15 steps. While some paragraphs introduce steps in writing, others offer more explanation to the steps suggested in the preceding paragraphs. Make a list of the writing steps Marius suggests, including important tips for each step. The first step has been provided for you as an example. Compare your summary of the process with your partner's.

Step 1: Make a list outline

- Tips: 1) List main points
 2) Order is not important
 3) Revise it if necessary
 ...

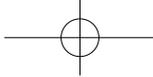
Task 3 Marius used the word “revelation” to describe the moments when writing helps him seek out ideas he has never imagined. Indeed, writing can be a path into our deepest self to reveal how we have become who we are today. In this task, you will write a paragraph beginning with one of the following sentences and try to investigate your inner experiences.

1. What I should have known...
2. Many years later I still dread...
3. At that moment, I knew I would never be the same...

ACTIVITY 2

Task 1 Think critically about the writing techniques used in Text A and discuss the following questions in groups.

1. An introductory paragraph usually raises a topic and gives a brief picture of the whole essay. However, in this essay, Marius just goes straight to the first main point (i.e., his first step) after a brief opening sentence. Do you find it rather abrupt? Or do you find it quite natural? Explain.
2. Marius draws on several metaphors to help him describe the writing process. A



36 Writing Critically 2

typical one is found at the end of Paragraph 4 when he compares writing to sailing. What does he want to illustrate through this metaphor? What other metaphors can you find in this essay? Are they effective or not? Explain.

3. Marius admits in Paragraph 13 that his writing process may not work for everybody. Then why does he explain his process in careful detail? Does this admission weaken the power of this essay? Explain.
4. Marius uses his own experience as well as his friends' to explain his suggested process. He also makes reference to the experiences of great writers such as B. F. Skinner and William Faulkner. Does the use of different types of evidence make his argument more convincing? Why or why not?
5. Comment on the concluding sentence: "And write, and write, and write." Why does Marius repeat the word "write"? Explain.

Task 2 Write a paragraph on how you proofread your classmate's composition during peer review, paying particular attention to your opening and concluding sentences.

Text B

Shitty First Drafts

Anne Lamott

- 1 Now, practically even better news than that of short assignments is the idea of shitty first drafts. All good writers write them. This is how they end up with good second drafts and terrific third drafts. People tend to look at successful writers, writers who are getting their books published and maybe even doing well financially, and think that they sit down at their desks every morning feeling like a million dollars, feeling great about who they are and how much talent they have and what a great story they have to tell; that they take in a few deep breaths, push back their sleeves, roll their necks a few times to get all the cricks out, and dive in, typing fully formed passages as fast as a court reporter. But this is just the fantasy of the uninitiated. I know some very great writers, writers you love who write beautifully and have made a great deal of money, and not one of them sits down routinely feeling wildly enthusiastic and confident. Not one of them writes elegant first drafts...
- 2 Very few writers really know what they are doing until they've done it. Nor do they go about their business feeling dewy and thrilled. They do not type a few stiff warm-up sentences and then find themselves bounding along like huskies across the snow. One writer I know tells me that he sits down every morning and says to himself nicely, "It's not like you don't have a choice, because you do—you can either type or kill yourself." We all often feel like we are pulling teeth, even those writers whose prose ends up being the most natural and fluid. The right words and sentences just do not come pouring out like ticker tape most of the time...
- 3 For me and most of the other writers I know, writing is not rapturous. In fact, the only way I can get anything written at all is to write really, really shitty first drafts.
- 4 The first draft is the child's draft, where you let it all pour out and then let it romp all over the place, knowing that no one is going to see it and that you can shape it later. You just let this childlike part of you channel whatever voices and visions come through and onto the page. If one of the characters wants to say, "Well, so what, Mr. Poopy Pants?," you let her. No one is going to see it. If the kid wants to get into really sentimental, weepy, emotional territory, you let him. Just get it all down on paper, because there may be something great in those six crazy pages that you would never have gotten to by more rational, grown-up means. There may be something

in the very last line of the very last paragraph on page six that you just love, that is so beautiful or wild that you now know what you're supposed to be writing about, more or less, or in what direction you might go—but there was no way to get to this without first getting through the first five-and-a-half pages.

- 5 I used to write food reviews for *California* magazine... These reviews always took two days to write. First I'd go to a restaurant several times with a few opinionated, articulate friends in tow. I'd sit there writing down everything anyone said that was at all interesting or funny. Then on the following Monday I'd sit down at my desk with my notes, and try to write and review. Even after I'd been doing this for years, panic would set in. I'd try to write a lead, but instead I'd write a couple of dreadful sentences, xx them out, try again, xx everything out, and then feel despair and worry settle on my chest like an x-ray apron. It's over, I'd think, calmly. I'm not going to be able to get the magic to work this time. I'm ruined. I'm through. I'm toast. Maybe, I'd think, I can get my old job back as a clerk-typist. But probably not. I'd get up and study my teeth in the mirror for a while. Then I'd stop, remember to breathe, make a few phone calls, and hit the kitchen and chow down. Eventually I'd go back and sit down at my desk, and sigh for the next ten minutes. Finally I would pick up my one-inch picture frame, stare into it as if for the answer, and every time the answer would come: All I had to do was to write a really shitty first draft of, say, the opening paragraph. And no one was going to see it.
- 6 So I'd start writing without reining myself in. It was almost just typing, just making my fingers move. And the writing would be terrible. I'd write a lead paragraph that was a whole page, even though the entire review could only be three pages long, and then I'd start writing up descriptions of the food, one dish at a time, bird by bird, and the critics would be sitting on my shoulders, commenting like cartoon characters. They'd be pretending to snore, or rolling their eyes at my overwrought descriptions, no matter how hard I tried to tone those descriptions down, no matter how conscious I was of what a friend said to me gently in my early days of restaurant reviewing. "Annie," she said, "it is just a piece of *chicken*. It is just a bit of *cake*."
- 7 But because by then I had been writing for so long, I would eventually let myself trust the process—sort of, more or less. I'd write a first draft that was maybe twice as long as it should be, with a self-indulgent and boring beginning, stupefying descriptions of the meal, lots of quotes from my black-humored friends that made them sound more like the Manson girls than food lovers, and no ending to speak of. The whole thing would be so long and incoherent and hideous that for the rest of the day I'd obsess about getting creamed by a car before I could write a decent second draft. I'd worry

that people would read what I'd written and believe that the accident had really been a suicide, that I had panicked because my talent was waning and my mind was shot.

- 8 The next day, I'd sit down, go through it all with a colored pen, take out everything I possibly could, find a new lead somewhere on the second page, figure out a kinky place to end it, and then write a second draft. It always turned out fine, sometimes even funny and weird and helpful. I'd go over it one more time and mail it in.
- 9 Then, a month later, when it was time for another review, the whole process would start again, complete with the fears that people would find my first draft before I could rewrite it.
- 10 Almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts. You need to start somewhere. Start by getting something—anything—down on paper. A friend of mine says that the first draft is the down draft—you just get it down. The second draft is the up draft—you fix it up. You try to say what you have to say more accurately. And the third draft is the dental draft, where you check every tooth, to see if it's loose or cramped or decayed, or even, God help us, healthy.

ACTIVITY 3

Task 1 Think critically about the content of Text B and discuss the following questions in groups.

1. Anne Lamott says most people have misconceptions about how writers work. She refers to this as “the fantasy of the uninitiated” in Paragraph 1. What does she mean?
2. In Paragraph 4 Lamott says the childlike way may be more effective than “grown-up means” in writing the first draft. Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. How do you describe Lamott's writing experience in Paragraph 5? Panic? Anxious? Frustrated? Why?
4. What did Lamott's friend want to tell her by saying “it is just a piece of *chicken*. It is just a bit of *cake*” in Paragraph 6? To what extent do you hold the same view as that of Lamott's friend?
5. Is Lamott's experience of writing the first draft more about the product or the process? What does Lamott want to tell her readers about writing?



Task 2 Is the advice given in Text A and Text B useful for timed essay writing during an English test? First, make a list of useful tips from the two essays that can also be applied in an English writing test. Then propose a writing process that may work for most college students during an English test.

Useful tips that can also be applied in a writing test:

A suggested writing process for timed essay writing:

ACTIVITY 4

Task 1 Think critically about the writing techniques used in Text B and discuss the following questions in groups.

1. Lamott is known for her self-deprecating humor. Can you find instances of such humor in this essay? What kind of effect does it have on you as a Chinese reader? While English writers and speakers usually incorporate abundant humor into their essays or speech, Chinese people are often considered as lacking a sense of humor. Is it true? Does our culture appreciate self-deprecating humor? Give examples to support your claim.
2. Lamott writes in an informal, chatty voice in this essay. What is the effect of such voice on the readers?
3. In Paragraph 5 (starting with “It’s over, I’d think, calmly.”) Lamott uses many short sentences and verbal phrases to tell her readers what she usually does when writing the first draft. What kind of effect do these short sentences and phrases have? Will

long sentences with complex structures achieve the same effect?

4. In the last paragraph of the essay a friend of Lamott refers to the first, second, and third drafts as the “down draft,” “up draft,” and “dental draft” respectively. What other metaphorical terms can you figure out to describe them?
5. Is the organization of the essay inductive or deductive? Discuss the line of reasoning in this essay. Does Lamott provide sufficient evidence to support her conclusion?

Task 2 For many of us, the hardest part of writing is getting started. Sitting in front of a computer screen or a blank sheet of paper, rolling up our sleeves, and—and nothing. We want to write. We may be facing a deadline that forces us to write. We grow anxious and frustrated. These negative feelings can make it even harder to get started. This is what we call “writer’s block.” Have you experienced writer’s block? Try free writing on this topic for five minutes and share your writing with your classmates.

Assignment 1

Write the first draft of your essay of process analysis. Here are some writing prompts:

1. In Text A Marius explains how to draft an essay. But what about other parts of the writing process? Focus on a stage in the writing process other than drafting, for example, how to gather information, to revise, or to edit/proofread. Your intended readers are freshmen.
2. The two texts are mainly targeted at native speakers of English. While writing in your native language and writing in foreign language have a lot in common, they also differ in significant ways. Chinese students, as non-native speakers of English, may encounter difficulties different from English or American students and therefore need advice more relevant to their experience. Interview a few friends about their processes when writing an English essay. Identify some common weaknesses and difficulties in their experience. Search this unit, including the two model essays and some activity questions, for possible solutions. If you can’t find

any satisfactory solution to some problems, interview your writing instructors or do some library research. Write an essay that gives Chinese students some advice on how to better manage their writing process. Remember that one fundamental difference between your essay and the two model essays is that your essay will focus on Chinese students' special difficulties or misunderstandings. Arrange your advice in the chronological order of the writing process. At each step, first present the common problems you find, and then provide your suggestions.

3. Have you written anything—either in Chinese or in English—that is quite special to you? It can be an essay for a writing competition, a script for an important speech, an application letter for a significant event, or a letter to save your friendship. If you have, you may write a process analysis essay based on this particular experience. You can write about an informative process, emphasizing its nature (e.g., painful, delightful, rewarding), or you can write a directional process, giving suggestions to people with similar writing tasks.
4. Write an essay in which you provide sequenced suggestions for doing something that can be difficult or even intimidating to a certain group of people, e.g., how to cope with procrastination. Make sure that your instruction is clear enough for the readers to manage that activity.

Part II Learning the Skills

1. Process analysis

Process analysis explains how something is made or done. Depending on the purpose of writing, process analysis can be divided into two categories: *directional process* (also called instructive process), and *informative process*.

We have all encountered directional process in one form or another in our daily life, such as a brochure that explains to freshmen the steps they need to take to complete the university registration and the directions that explain how to download music from iTunes. Text A "Writing Drafts" also belongs to this type. The purpose of this type of essay is to clarify the steps in the procedure so that readers can recreate the steps.

Informative process explains how something happens or happened so that readers can gain a better understanding of the nature of that particular process.

For example, an essay entitled “How Spiders Catch Their Prey” increases readers’ knowledge about the insect world, while “Why Is It Hard to Be a Celebrity” helps readers appreciate the difficulty or complexity of being in the limelight. In Text B “Shitty First Draft,” the author wants novice writers to understand that professional writers (including herself) experience suffering and anguish just as they do.

Process analysis may be considered a special type of narration, as it also records an event, usually in chronological order. However, as its major purpose is to provide information, clarity is the most important quality expected from its readers. When you are planning your process analysis essay, bear in mind the following tips:



1. **Be aware of the audience.** Depending on whether your readers are familiar with the process you describe, they will have different demands on the amount of information to understand your essay. Identifying the audience is important in deciding what to include and what to omit in the essay. In general, assume that your readers know little about the topic being explained, but have the same general knowledge as you do.
2. **Order the steps chronologically.** The steps should be discussed in the order in which they occur. It also helps to carefully signal the succession of described steps with words such as “first,” “second,” “next,” “then,” and “finally.”
3. **Make sure that the process is complete.** One weakness often found in novice writers is that they omit some steps they consider “obvious,” failing to realize that these are actually not so obvious to their readers. To avoid this problem, ask a friend who is unfamiliar with this process to read your essay and check if he or she can follow each step without difficulty.
4. **Be sure to define new or unfamiliar terms.** These terms may include the names of special tools (e.g., “lug wrench”) or a specific label (e.g., “Class A License”). Again, don’t let your familiarity with your topic prevent you from seeing your readers’ need for clear, sufficient information.
5. **Warn your readers of difficulties in the process.** Point out possible difficulties in understanding or performing the process, and provide detailed information as to how to overcome them. Also warn your readers what *not* to do.

6. **Explain the purpose of a step when necessary.** This is especially useful when your readers may not realize the rationale behind a step. They may skip it if they are not informed about its importance.

ACTIVITY 5

Below are introductory paragraphs of four process essays. Are they more likely to be directional process or informative process? Write down your answer on the line provided.

1. Freewriting is a brainstorming technique made famous by Peter Elbow in two very fine books, *Writing Without Teachers* and *Writing with Power*. It's a language-spinning machine that you can point at lots of different kinds of writing—a kind of spigot you can turn on to tap into some of your ideas and feelings.

Process analysis: _____

2. When I began writing this book on my word processor I didn't have any idea what would happen. Would I be able to write anything at all? Would it be any good? I was bringing to the machine what I assumed were wholly different ways of thinking about writing. The units massed in front of me looked cold and sterile. Their steady hum reminded me that they were waiting. They seemed to be waiting for information, not for writing. Maybe what I wrote would also be cold and sterile.

Process analysis: _____

3. One writing teacher compares the task of a writer to that of a tour guide escorting a group of sightseers who do not have to pay their fares until they arrive at their destination and get off the bus. The job of both the author and the tour guide requires that they keep their audiences so interested in what is going on that they will stay until the end of the journey. Readers, like tourists, are capricious and impatient, and they will go off and do something else if they get confused, bored, or led off on a detour that seems pointless to them. When you write, you may find

it helpful to keep this analogy in mind and from time to time ask yourself, “Are my readers liable to get off the bus here?” And writers, like tour guides, must keep their audiences oriented. If there is any way for readers to get lost, they will!

All writers need to keep this caution in mind as they write (especially their second or third drafts) and to work consciously to help their readers stay on track as they are reading. Once they stray, they are hard to recapture. For that reason, a writer needs to have some specific strategies to hold readers’ attention.

Process analysis: _____

4. I have been asked to write something for a textbook that is meant to teach college students something about writing and revision. I am happy to do this because I believe in revision. I have also been asked to save the early drafts of whatever I write, presumably to show these students the actual process of revision. This is something which I am also happy to do. On the other hand I suspect that there is just so much you can teach college students about revision; a gift for revision may be a developmental stage—like a 2-year-old’s sudden ability to place one block on top of another—that comes along somewhat later, in one’s mid-20s, say; most people may not be particularly good at it, or even interested in it, until then.

When I was in college, I revised nothing. I wrote out my papers in longhand...

Process analysis: _____

ACTIVITY 6

Identify the writing strategies in each of the following passages. Some passages may use more than one strategy.

Using time signals

Explaining the purpose

Defining unfamiliar terms

Anticipating difficulties and problems

Warning the readers what not to do

1. Free writing is a little like running, and you’ll lose energy if you start out too fast. But don’t go too slow, either, or you’ll lose the energy of the words tumbling out and the momentum that builds... The main thing is not to reread what you’ve written but to plunge ahead. That’s surprisingly hard for most of us since we’ve been

trained by years of school to be proper and not make a mess, especially in writing. But resist those impulses. Turn off the light on the screen and even write blind if you have to, just don't worry about grammar and punctuation and eloquence or anything else. Let the words flow out. Don't let your fingers leave the keys. Don't correct.

Main strategy: _____

2. If a page or two of free writing turns out to be awful, throw it away and go on. Think of the writing as a warm-up for whatever conventional writing you have to do that day. In fact, it's a mistake to aim for good or workable free writing each time you sit down at the screen. That attitude only reproduces the kinds of pressure that free writing is trying to subvert.

Main strategy: _____

3. Titles play a crucial part in getting off to a good start with your readers. In fact, your prospective readers will often decide whether or not to read what you write primarily on the information you give them in the title. That is why it's so important that your title is clear, accurate, and if possible, interesting. It should also perform some very specific functions.

Main strategy: _____

4. Writing that is highly readable has a quality called linearity; that is, the readers can move steadily through it in a straight line without having to stop to puzzle about what the writer means or double back to reread. Achieving this quality in your writing isn't easy, but it's a goal worth striving for if you want to hold your readers' attention.

Main strategy: _____

5. Now that we know the focus, the readers, the form and structure, we must make sure that we have the evidence to support that meaning. We should not depend on one form of evidence but have as much variety as possible within the traditions of the genre in which we are writing.

Main strategy: _____

ACTIVITY 7

Donald M. Murray, a famous writer, once suggested the following eight aspects to look at when revising an essay. According to your experience, are they all important? Are there any important aspects that are left out? And in which order should a student writer examine and revise these aspects? On the basis of Murray's lists and your own writing experience, make a list of your suggested steps and write a short paragraph to explain the revising process.

Eight aspects Murray suggested (not in his original order)

- *Development*: enough information in each section of a piece of writing
- *Meaning*: the significant message
- *Information*: specific, accurate, and interesting information
- *Voice*: an expression of the writer's authority and concern through a consistent, individual voice
- *Audience*: readers' expectation of what and how the information is delivered
- *Form*: genre appropriate to the subject and the audience
- *Structure*: the order of what has been written
- *Dimension*: pleasing and effective proportion among all the parts of the writing

Your list of steps in proper order:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____



48 Writing Critically 2

7. _____

8. _____

...

Your suggested process:

ACTIVITY 8 

The following passage describes the revising process of most writers. However, there is a lack of proper transition from one step to another to indicate the chronological order. Underline places where transitional devices are desirable and rewrite these sentences.

Most writers scan their drafts first, reading as quickly as possible to catch the larger problems of subject and form, then move in closer and closer as they read and write, reread and rewrite.

The first thing writers look for in their drafts is *information*. They know that a good piece of writing is built from specific, accurate and interesting information. The writer must have an abundance of information from which to construct a readable piece of writing.

Writers look for *meaning* in the information. The specifics must build a pattern of significance. Each piece of specific information must carry the readers toward the meaning.

Writers reading their own drafts are aware of the *audience*. They put themselves in the readers' situation and make sure that they deliver information which the readers want to know or need to know in a manner which is easily digested. Writers try to be sure that they can anticipate and answer the questions critical readers will ask when reading the piece of writing.

Writers make sure that the *form* is appropriate to the subject and the audience. Form, or genre, is the vehicle which carries meaning to the readers, but form cannot be

selected until the writer has adequate information to discover its significance and an audience which needs or wants that meaning.

Writers must look at the *structure*, the order of what they have written. Good writing is built on a solid framework of logic, argument, narrative, or motivation which runs through the entire piece of writing and holds it together. This is the time when many writers find it most effective to outline as a way of visualizing the hidden spine by which the piece of writing is supported.

The element on which writers may spend a majority of their time is *development*. Each section of a piece of writing must be adequately developed. It must give readers enough information so that they are satisfied. How much information is enough? That's as difficult as asking how much garlic belongs in a salad. It must be done according to taste, but most novice writers underdevelop, underestimating the readers' desire for information.

Writers often have to consider questions of *dimension*. There must be a pleasing and effective proportion among all the parts of the piece of writing. There is a continual process of subtracting and adding to keep the piece of writing in balance.

Writers have to listen to their own voices. *Voice* is the force which drives a piece of writing forward. It is an expression of the writer's authority and concern. It is what is between the words on the page, what glues the piece of writing together. A good piece of writing is always marked by a consistent, individual voice.

ACTIVITY 9

Imagine you are preparing a brochure for new students at your university. Choose one of the two topics: 1) How to register as a freshman; 2) How to enroll for a course. Make a list of all the steps in that process. Be sure that the steps are complete and arranged chronologically. Are there any new or unfamiliar terms you need to define? Are there any difficulties you want to warn your readers about? When you have finished, share your lists in small groups and ask for advice.

Topic: _____

List of steps:



Unfamiliar terms:

Warnings of difficulties:

2. How to write an effective thesis statement

The thesis of an essay is the writer's main point. It can be either implicitly conveyed through what the writer has written, or explicitly spelled out in a single sentence called the "thesis statement." Although professional writers use explicit theses only infrequently, students are always encouraged to put clearly worded thesis statements near the beginning of their essays. This is because as novice writers, students tend to drift away from their main points if they do not write them down clearly. A good thesis statement can be your most valuable organizational tool: You can often refer to it and check if what you have written supports your thesis.

A good thesis statement tells the readers two things. First, it describes an essay's *topic*, i.e., what subject the essay is about. Second, it presents the writer's *point* about that topic, i.e., what the author thinks about it. In the following examples, the single-underlined part is the topic and the double-underlined part is the point the author wants to make about it.

- My weekend walk in the forest was inspiring.
- The government should guarantee homeless children proper nutrition, healthcare, and education.

Here are some guidelines for writing a good thesis:

Make a point, not an announcement

Compare the following “thesis statements” with the ones you have read above. What differences can you see?

- This essay is about my weekend walk.
- In this essay I want to discuss what the government should do to help homeless children.

The problem is that they simply announce the topic rather than state a meaningful point. A reader will probably respond to these statements by asking: “What’s special about the weekend walk?” or “What the government should do then?” They want to know your ideas about these topics right at the beginning of your essay. To meet the readers’ expectations, remember to include both the topic and point in your thesis statement.

Also remember that your essay is always about *your* experience and *your* opinion, so it is redundant to say “This essay is about...” or “I will talk about...” These unnecessary phrases only weaken your thesis and make you sound timid and uncertain.

Sometimes, students fail to state a clear point because they have not thought clearly about what they want to discuss. Therefore, if you want to write a good thesis statement, you must first of all have a good point to make.

Make sure your thesis is neither too broad nor too narrow

Narrow down your subject matter to allow an interesting, in-depth discussion, not a boring, superficial one. If your statement is too broad, it is very likely that you end up summarizing what your readers have already known. Even if you do put forward some new, interesting ideas, you won’t be able to convince your readers with sufficient support in a short essay. To avoid this problem, focus your essay on one important aspect of a broader issue that interests you. Here are some examples:

- Poor** Women are unfairly treated. (*Can the writer study all women in the world and their treatment in all aspects of social and family life? The thesis is probably too broad for a short essay.*)
- Better** Female graduates in China encounter more difficulties than their male counterparts in the job market.
- Poor** High school education in China needs reformation. (*The writer probably has some good thoughts about education. However, it is impossible to convince the readers about all of these good ideas in a short essay. Any complex problem needs to be solved little by little, one part after another. In a short essay, it is better to focus only on one aspect of the issue and discuss it thoroughly. You can always save other parts of the problem for future assignments.*)
- Better** A high school history class should cultivate students' critical thinking abilities, rather than train their memory skills.

On the other hand, a thesis statement must be broad enough to require support in an essay. Don't merely state a well-accepted fact, or an idea that is self-evident or a dead end. Instead, assert an opinion that can lead to a meaningful discussion. For example:

- Poor** The number of near-sighted children has increased rapidly in recent years. (*True, but rather obvious. How could this essay be turned into something more than a list of statistics?*)
- Better** The rapidly growing number of near-sighted children is to a large extent caused by parents who conveniently avoid their responsibility by having televisions and computers to babysit their kids. (*This claim is controversial and the readers will be intrigued to look for persuasive supporting evidence in the following paragraphs.*)
- Poor** The snowstorm that hit southern China last winter was terrible. (*Yes, of course, but so what?*)
- Better** There are a number of lessons the government must learn from the snowstorm that hit southern China last winter.

Assert only one main idea

A good essay communicates a *single* main idea to its readers. To avoid confusing your readers, pick only one main idea and fully develop it in convincing detail. For example:

Poor Young people today are self-centered, and they are seriously addicted to all kinds of electronic gadgets. (*This thesis contains two main assertions.*)

Better Young people today are seriously addicted to all kinds of electronic gadgets.

Poor Participation in student clubs has several benefits, but it also has drawbacks. (*This thesis expresses two different opinions.*)

Better For freshmen who have not learned to manage their time without adult supervision, participating in student clubs may not be as beneficial as they expect.

Define your idea in clear, specific terms

You must present your idea specifically and precisely. Avoid vague words that force your readers to guess what you really mean. For example:

Poor Many people have different opinions on whether the division between arts and science “majors” in high school should be abolished, and I agree with some of them. (*The readers have no idea what opinions the writer holds.*)

Better The division between arts and science “majors” in high school should not be abolished unless college entrance examination is reformed.

Poor Living in a dormitory for the first time can teach you many things. (*Who is the “you” the writer has in mind? What does “many things” refer to?*)

Better By living in a dormitory, first-year students can learn valuable lessons in interpersonal communication such as negotiating differences and reaching compromise.

Include an essay map when desirable

You already know that a good thesis statement introduces a single idea. To fully develop that idea, a writer often divides it into several major points. An essay map is a brief statement that “forecasts” these major points. Like a map which shows travelers where they are going, an essay map allows the readers to predict what they will read. At the same time, it will also help keep the writer from straying from the thesis. An essay map can either follow a thesis statement or be part of the thesis statement itself. Here are some examples:

Thesis followed by an essay map (underlined)

McDonald's is bad for your kids. I do not mean the flat patties and the white-flour buns; I refer to the jobs teenagers undertake, mass-producing these choice items... At first, such jobs may seem right out of the Founding Fathers' educational manual for how to bring up self-reliant, work-ethic-driven, productive youngsters. But in fact, these jobs undermine school attendance and involvement, impart few skills that will be useful in later life, and simultaneously skew the values of teenagers—especially their ideas about the worth of a dollar.

Thesis with an essay map (underlined)

Because of its long opening hours, adequate space, and friendly service, the new library has become the most popular place for students seeking a quiet place to study.

Though the essay map is often helpful to both readers and writers, it is by no means compulsory. In particular, you should avoid obvious, mechanical ones.

Be flexible with your “working thesis”

A “working thesis” is a statement of your main point in an early draft. But as you write, you may discover a new approach to your topic or you may want to focus on only part of it. If this is the case, be flexible. You may need to revise your thesis or begin another draft with a new thesis statement.

Bearing all these principles mentioned above, you can surely write a better thesis statement. Here are some tips especially on how to write thesis statements for process analysis.

**Tips**

1. Avoid a thesis statement that only announces the process to be described. Instead, state your overall aim.

Poor It is possible for you to acquire a competitive spirit. (*How is it possible? The writer does not provide the information the readers want to know most.*)

Better You can acquire a competitive spirit by practicing five personality traits. (*Now the readers know the general strategy, i.e., practicing five personality traits, and they will look forward to more*

information in the following paragraphs.)

Poor This essay will inform you how the company trains new employees.

Better New employees must go through four training sessions before they start to work.

2. A thesis statement for a process essay can be as simple as “There are XX steps in doing something.” However, since the underlying purpose of the essay is more than just making a list of steps, it is a good idea to include in a thesis a more meaningful point, such as the reason for presenting this process or the nature of the process itself.

Good There are three major steps involved in preparing for a PowerPoint presentation.

Better Preparing for a PowerPoint presentation can really be quite easy.

Better Because PowerPoint presentations are widely used in academic and professional settings, every student should learn the basic presentation skills.

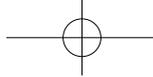
Good There are four major steps involved in building a doghouse.

Better Building a doghouse is a thorough introduction to the building trades, including architecture and mechanical engineering.

ACTIVITY 10

For each thesis statement below, single-underline the topic and double-underline the main point that the writer wants to express about the topic.

1. Three pleasant ways to spend time during a rainy weekend are to write letters to old friends, read a mystery novel, and play cards.
2. Watching television is a waste of time.
3. New Zealand is a place where you can find some of the most beautiful sights you will ever see.
4. Communicating in a foreign language can create some embarrassing misunderstandings.
5. Television commercials are deceiving.



56 Writing Critically 2

6. The laser was one of the most important inventions in the last century in terms of improving our quality of life.
7. For an international student, the first day on campus can be confusing.
8. The traffic conditions in our city are terrible.
9. Dangerous chemical substances are polluting our water supplies.
10. Deception is the most fascinating means for animals to protect themselves.

ACTIVITY II 

Identify each of the following thesis statements as effective or weak and mark them as follows. You may identify more than one problem with some statements. Then, write a more effective thesis for the weak ones in the spaces provided.

E = effective	TB = too broad	TN = too narrow
NC = not clear	MO = more than one idea	MA = making announcement

1. Popular culture from foreign countries has influenced Chinese teenagers in many ways.

2. About 20 percent of high school graduates in my city plan to go to universities abroad.

3. Fear of the dark has made my life miserable.

4. This essay will discuss the people you meet in the university library.

5. Students have different opinions on whether they should be allowed to choose their roommates, and some of them seem reasonable to me.

6. The proposed national park will protect many endangered species, and it is time to slow down urbanization.

7. The subject of this paper is loneliness.

8. Many people like to read.

9. The advantages of joining a student association far outweigh the disadvantages.

10. Modern life makes people suspicious and unfriendly.

11. Smoking can be hazardous to a person's health, and it is also very unpleasant to watch someone smoking.

12. Whether students should be allowed to use their laptops during class is a controversial issue in many universities.

ACTIVITY 12

An essay map usually consists of several parallel points. Complete the following thesis statements by adding another supporting point. Pay attention to the parallel form. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. Bob Dylan was a recording giant for over 40 years because of his spirit of protest, clever phrasing, and unusual musical arrangements.
2. An effective leader of a student association needs to be responsible, enthusiastic, and _____.
3. Tomatoes make excellent plants for children. They're inexpensive to buy, easy to root, quick to sprout, and _____.
4. The orientation workshop will help freshmen learn how to manage their time, their household chores, and _____.
5. The delicious food, reasonable price, and _____ have made Lotus Restaurant the most popular dining place in the district.
6. To qualify as an astronaut, a person must have intelligence, determination, and _____.
7. When I was in London, I improved my English by watching news programs on television, doing crossword puzzles in the newspaper, and _____.
8. My two older brothers' differences in looks, personality, and _____ reflect the differences between Eastern and Western cultures.

ACTIVITY 13 

Write an effective thesis for each group of supporting statements. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. Thesis: Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life.
 - I have sought love, first, because...
 - With equal passion I have sought knowledge.
 - Love and knowledge, so far as they were possible, led upward toward the heavens. But pity always brought me back to earth.
2. Thesis: _____
 - First, I simply tried avoiding the snack aisle of the supermarket.
 - Then I told my friends not to give me chocolate as gifts.
 - Finally, I tried not to look at the dessert menu when I dined out.
3. Thesis: _____
 - During my birthday party, the electricity went off for one hour.
 - My birthday cake accidentally fell off the table.
 - My neighbors protested against the loud music played by the band I invited.
4. Thesis: _____
 - When I started to have my own room at the age of six, my parents encouraged me to design it by myself.
 - When I was in middle school, they let me choose my own clothes.
 - They allowed me to choose my university and major.
5. Thesis: _____
 - The Writing Center provides free services to students with writing difficulties.
 - The center has well-trained tutors.
 - The tutoring session is on a one-to-one basis.
6. Thesis: _____
 - One negative reaction to disappointment is depression.
 - Another negative reaction to disappointment, often following depression, is the desire to escape.
 - The positive way to react to disappointment is to use it as a chance for growth.

ACTIVITY 14

Here is a list of 10 general subjects. Choose five subjects and narrow them down. Then write an effective thesis statement for each of them. The first one has been done for you as an example.

General subject	Limited subject
Environmental issues	Global warming
Online activities	
Eating	
University courses	
Shopping	
Hobby	
Student clubs	
Family	
Traditional culture	
Music	

Thesis statements for five subjects:

1. Global warming has endangered many animals living in polar regions.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

ACTIVITY 15

Here is a list of processes. Write a thesis statement for each of them by including either the reason for presenting that process or the nature of the process itself.

Processes

1. How to take precautions against hurricanes
2. How to prevent HIV and AIDS



60 Writing Critically 2

3. How to survive a hotel fire
4. How the body responds to stress
5. How the leaves change color in the fall

Thesis statements

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Part III Language Study

Tense and voice

Tense

So far you have learned all the common verb tenses as summarized in the table below.

	Simple	Progressive	Perfect
Present	Simple present (e.g., I do)	Present progressive (e.g., I am doing)	Present perfect (e.g., I have done)
Past	Simple past (e.g., I did)	Past progressive (e.g., I was doing)	Past perfect (e.g., I had done)
Future	Simple future (e.g., I will do)	Future progressive (e.g., I will be doing)	Future perfect (e.g., I will have done)

All essays have time frames—either explicit or implied—for the actions discussed and the states described. Changes in verb tense help the readers understand the temporal relationships among various narrated events. But unnecessary or inconsistent shifts in tense can confuse your readers. For example:

- Incorrect** Every morning she gets up at sunrise. Then, she generally put her youngest child on her back and fastened him with a blanket.
- Correct** Every morning she gets up at sunrise. Then, she generally puts her youngest child on her back and fastens him with a blanket.

Generally, writers maintain one tense—usually simple past or simple present—for the main discourse and shift tense only when there is a change in time frame from one action or state to another. For example, Text A uses simple present tense for the main discourse, as is usually the case with process analysis essays, but you can also find that the writer occasionally shifts to other tenses. One typical example is Paragraph 3:

Always keep your mind open to new ideas that pop into your head as you write. Let your list outline help you, but don't become a slave to it. Writers often start an essay with one topic in mind only to discover that another pushes the first one aside as they work. Ideas you had not even thought of before you began to write may pile onto your

paper, and five or six pages into your first draft you may realize that you are going to write about something you did not imagine when you started.

In the example above, the simple present tense indicates the recommended actions in the current step, while simple past tense and past perfect tense indicate actions in the previous steps. As a general rule, keep the verb tenses consistent unless you want to indicate changes in time frame.

Voice

When the subject of a sentence performs the action of the verb, the verb is in the *active voice*. When the subject of a sentence receives the action of a verb, the verb is in the *passive voice*. For example:

Active The Shirley Jackson Foundation sponsored the annual celebration.

Passive The annual celebration was sponsored by the Shirley Jackson Foundation.

While both forms are grammatically correct, in general, active verbs are more effective than passive verbs. Active verbs give your writing a simpler and more vigorous style, while passive constructions are often wordy, awkward, and unclear. Therefore, many professional writers have advised novice writers to use active verbs as often as they can to make their writing clear and direct.

Use passive voice only in the following four situations:

- 1) The person or thing performing the action is unknown, e.g.,

My bicycle was stolen last night.

- 2) You want to emphasize the person or thing that receives the action, e.g.,

Our silk products are exported to many European countries.

- 3) If a sentence contains two verbs with the same subject, you may have to use passive voice to preserve the flow of the sentence, e.g.,

Their team won the singing competition, and was awarded the “Most Promising Group” of the year.

- 4) Some types of professional and technical writing prefer passive voice because people in the related fields wish to put stress on the objects of the discussion rather than on the people performing the actions (e.g., researchers). If this is the case, follow the disciplinary conventions.

ACTIVITY 16

The following passage describes how leaves change color in the fall. As you read the passage, single underline the verbs with tenses other than simple present and double underline the passive voice. Then answer the questions that follow.

A turning leaf stays partly green at first, and then reveals splotches of yellow and red as the chlorophyll gradually breaks down. Dark green seems to stay longest in the veins, outlining and defining them. During the summer, chlorophyll dissolves in the heat and light, but it is also being steadily replaced. In the fall, on the other hand, no new pigment is produced, and so we notice the other colors that were always there, right in the leaf, although chlorophyll's shocking green hid them from view. With their camouflage gone, we see these colors for the first time all year, and marvel, but they were always there, hidden like a vivid secret beneath the hot glowing greens of summer.

1. Why does the author use past tense when she refers to the leaves in the summer? Is it possible to use simple present tense instead? Explain.
2. Change the verbs in passive voice into active voice. Compare the new versions with the ones in the paragraph. Which voice is more appropriate? Explain.

ACTIVITY 17

Read the following passage and evaluate the effectiveness of each verb with passive voice. Then change undesirable passive voice into active voice.

At least two events in the life of Charles Darwin brought him to state his theory of natural selection. The first was his post on HMS Beagle as naturalist. While on voyages of exploration to various parts of the world, differences in certain species of plants and animals were noted by Darwin, even when two species were living in close

proximity. He began to wonder what caused these differences. From his observations, his opinions about the necessity for change in the struggle for survival started to be formed. The second event was his reading of *Essay on Population* by T. Malthus. According to Malthus, the rate of growth of the world population was outstripping the food supply. To bring population down to manageable levels, famine, pestilence, and war were inevitable. From this book it is concluded by Darwin that in these ravages only the strong would survive. His view that evolutionary changes can lead certain organisms to be stronger and survive was reinforced.

ACTIVITY 18

Proofread the following passage for tense errors.

As it happens, I am in Death Valley, in a room at the Enterprise Motel and Trailer Park, and it is July, and it is hot. In fact, it is 119°F. I cannot seem to make the air conditioner work, but there is a small refrigerator, and I can wrap ice cubes in a towel and hold them against the small of my back. With the help of the ice cubes I have been trying to think, because *The American Scholar* asked me to, in some abstract way about “morality,” a word I distrusted more every day, but my mind veered inflexibly toward the particular.

Here are some particulars. At midnight last night, on the road from Las Vegas to Death Valley Junction, a car hit a shoulder and turned over. The driver, very young and apparently drunk, is killed instantly. His girl was found alive but bleeding internally, deep in shock. I talk this afternoon to the nurse who had driven the girl to the nearest doctor, 185 miles across the floor of the Valley and three ranges of lethal mountain road. The nurse explains that her husband, a talc miner, has stayed on the highway with the boy’s body until the coroner could get over the mountain from Bishop, at dawn today. “You can’t just leave a body on the highway,” she said. “It’s immoral!”

Assignment 2

Revise the first draft of your essay in terms of both content and form based on the checklist below.

Checklist

Mark the question with a check (✓) if your answer is yes.

- Have I written an effective thesis statement?
- Is the process complete in my essay?
- Have I arranged all the steps in chronological order?
- Have I offered sufficient information for my readers to understand each step?
- Have I used any terms that may be new to my readers? Have I explained them clearly?
- Have I used transitional words such as *first*, *next*, *then*, *during*, and *finally* to help the readers follow my train of thought?
- Have I used any verbs in passive voices? Are they more effective than their active forms?
- Is my conclusion effective?
- Are there any tense errors in my essay?

Reflective Journal

Please write down your reflection upon what you have/have not yet learnt in this unit.

- ▶ Issues I have investigated

- ▶ Writing knowledge and skills I have acquired and developed



66 Writing Critically 2

- ▶ Critical thinking and intercultural competence I have cultivated

- ▶ Language I have studied

- ▶ Anything I wish to further explore (i.e., puzzles and difficulties)
