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	Readings written by your peers	Writing assignments
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Saying Bye to Cigarettes—How My Father Managed to Quit Smoking</li> <li>2. The Joy of Doing My Fellow Students a Good Turn</li> <li>3. The Procedure Air Passengers Go Through to Board a Plane</li> </ol>	Write an informative process essay of 350-400 words on any of the topics or a topic of your own describing how somebody succeeded in doing something.
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Four Types of Football Fans</li> <li>2. Classification of My Meals</li> <li>3. Global Warming: What's Your Stand?</li> </ol>	Write a classification essay of 350-400 words on any of the topics.
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		Compose two email messages, one to a friend of yours or a family member, the other to a professor asking him/her to do you a favor (e.g. asking him/her to write a letter of recommendation for you).

# We Learn as We Grow

## Objectives

### Pattern of Exposition: Illustration

- The definition of exposition
- The definition of illustration
- Types of examples
- The selection of examples
- Sources of examples
- The organization of an illustration essay
- The method of writing an illustration essay

### Element of the Essay: Outline

- The structure of an exposition
- Components of an exposition
- The definition of outline
- Types of outlines
- Formats of outlines
- Rules of outlining



# Guidelines on illustration

## The definition of exposition

Exposition is an important kind of writing that informs or explains.

- ▶ Patterns of exposition
  - Illustration
  - Process analysis
  - Cause and effect
  - Comparison and contrast
  - Classification
  - Definition
  - Analogy

Broadly speaking, narration and description are also patterns of exposition when they are used to inform or explain.

## The definition of illustration

Illustration is the method of using examples to support or develop an idea under discussion. It is often the most common and the most efficient pattern of exposition. Examples can be short or long: a brief example within a sentence, or a fully developed instance filling a whole paragraph or extending to a series of paragraphs.

## Types of examples

- ▶ Classified on the basis of number and length
  - Multiple brief examples  
To be used when dealing with different aspects of a large topic, like Paragraph 1 of “English Is a Crazy Language” (p. 15)
  - Two or more related, extended examples  
To be used when writing about a particular case, like Paragraph 4 and Paragraph 5 of “Remember, We’re Raising Children, Not Flowers!” (p. 13-14)

- A single extended example  
To be used when the example is persuasive
- A whole series of related examples  
To be used when you are dealing with a complicated subject and you have to support your thesis with a variety of examples: facts and statistics to make your essay convincing, anecdotes to arouse readers' interest, etc.
- ▶ Classified on the basis of form
  - Facts and figures
  - Anecdotes and events
  - Case studies

## The selection of examples

- ▶ Using sufficient examples
  - This is not merely a matter of number.
  - There should be enough to do the job.
  - They should be convincing and persuasive.
- ▶ Using representative examples
  - They should represent the situation accurately.
  - They should support the point you are making.
  - Highly unusual examples should be avoided.
- ▶ Using a variety of examples
  - They must reveal different aspects of your topic.

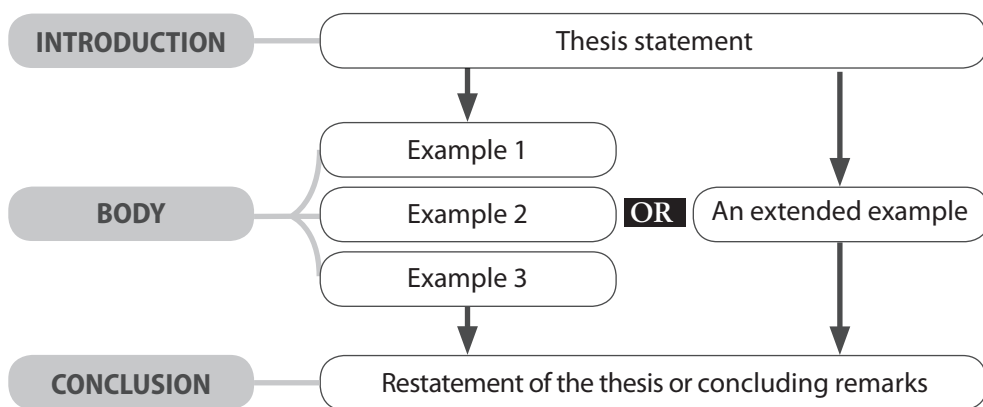
## Sources of examples

- ▶ From your personal experience
- ▶ From your personal observation
- ▶ From the mass media (magazines, newspapers, the Internet, etc.)
- ▶ From academic publications

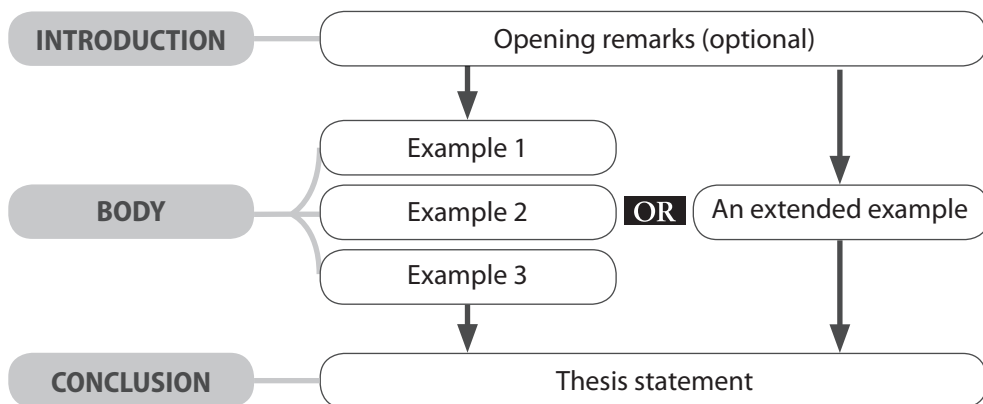
**Note:** When you use information gathered from outside sources, it is important that you mention what your sources are.

## The organization of an illustration essay

**Pattern A: Generalization (thesis) → Specifics (examples)**



**Pattern B: Specifics (examples) → Generalization (thesis)**



## The method of writing an illustration essay

- ▶ Begin with a clear introduction. In most illustration essays, the thesis is stated at the beginning. Your introduction should arouse readers' interest and include necessary background information on the topic.
- ▶ Provide sufficient examples and use vivid language so that your readers feel as if they are experiencing or observing the situation themselves.
- ▶ Connect the topic sentence and your example(s) with a linking sentence.
- ▶ Use transitions to lead your readers from one example to another. Transitions such as *for example*, *once*, *another time*, and *in particular* help to keep your readers on track.
- ▶ End with an effective conclusion. Your essay should conclude with a final statement that pulls your ideas together and reminds readers of your thesis.



## Activity 1 Practicing guidelines on illustration

- ▶ Compare the two paragraphs that attempt to make the same point and explain why one is better than the other.

1) In the summer vacation everything bores my friend Xiao Lin. Nothing seems to interest or excite him. He begins the day convinced that it will be dull and that nothing interesting will happen. This attitude, of course, requires no energy from him. He can just give in to it and let it overcome him. Sometimes, I wonder what would happen if an earthquake hit. Would that raise Xiao Lin's blood pressure?

2) In the summer vacation everything bores my friend Xiao Lin. Nothing seems to interest or excite him. For instance, last week a group of us decided to go on a three-day trip to the beach. The more we planned our trip, the more thrilled we became. But when we asked Xiao Lin to join us, he just shrugged and said, "That sounds pretty pointless to me." On another occasion, I wanted Xiao Lin to help me choose a new iPad at a store near his home, for he is something of an expert in things like that. He agreed, but before we could fix a date, he changed his mind, saying he didn't feel like going to the store because of an unhappy experience there. On still another occasion, when I was utterly fascinated after watching a terrific kung fu film, Lin looked at me with scorn and commented, "That sort of movie is trash." Sometimes I wonder what would happen if an earthquake hit. Would that raise Xiao Lin's blood pressure or would he just yawn and say, "So what?"

- ▶ In each paragraph, identify the topic sentence, number the examples, point out the conclusion, and highlight the linking sentence, i.e. the one that connects the topic sentence and the examples, if any.

1) So, when it was time to return to our home outside of Philadelphia, I insisted that we take a different route. "Let's explore that countryside," I suggested. The two days it took us to make the return trip were filled with new experiences. We toured a Civil War battlefield and stood on the little hill that 15,000 Confederate soldiers had tried to take on another hot July afternoon, 125 years ago, not knowing that half of them would get killed in the vain attempt. We drove slowly through main streets of sleepy Pennsylvania Dutch towns, slowing to 20 miles an hour so as not to crowd the horses and horse



carriages on their way to market. We admired toy trains and antique cars in country museums and saved 70 percent in factory outlets. We stuffed ourselves with spicy salads and homemade bread in an “all-you-can-eat” farmhouse restaurant, then wandered outside to enjoy the sunshine and the herds of cows—no little dots this time—lying in it. And we returned home refreshed, revitalized, and reeducated. This time, getting there had been the fun.

- 2) Let us imagine a country in which reading is a popular voluntary activity. There, parents read books for their own edification and pleasure, and are seen by their children at this silent and mysterious pastime. These parents also read to their children, give them books for presents, talk to them about books and underwrite<sup>1</sup>, with their taxes, a public library system that is open all day, every day. In school—where an attractive library is invariably to be found—the children study certain books together but also have an active reading life of their own. Years later it may even be hard for them to remember if they read *Jane Eyre* at home and Judy Blume in class, or the other way around. In college young people continue to be assigned certain books, but far more important are the books they discover for themselves—browsing in the library, in bookstores, at the shelves of a friend’s place, one book leading to another, back and forth in history and across languages and cultures. After graduation they continue to read, and in the fullness of time produce a new generation of readers. Oh, happy land! I wish we all lived there.

- **Highlight the sentence that conveys the main idea of the following excerpt and analyze the supporting examples.**

The most important goal of any business is to survive. But any number of problems may arise, some threatening the very existence of the company. An ugly fight for control of a company, a product failure, breakdowns in an organization’s routine operations (as a result of fire, for example)—any surprising event may develop into a serious and crippling crisis. Crisis management, the handling of such unusual and serious problems, goes a long way toward determining a company’s future. For example, Johnson & Johnson is widely thought to have done a good job of coping with the two Tylenol poisoning scares, moving quickly to remove the caplets from the shelves and to publicize

<sup>1</sup> **underwrite:** to guarantee financial support

the problem. As a result, the effects of the first scare had been almost completely overcome by the time the second hit.

In contrast, H. J. Heinz handled a crisis so badly that the future of its Canadian subsidiary of StarKist Foods was in doubt. StarKist was accused of shipping a million cans of “rancid and decomposing” tuna, which were first rejected by Canadian inspectors but later passed by a high government official. Under the prodding of Canadian news media, the prime minister finally had the tainted tuna seized. All along, Heinz and StarKist maintained a stony silence over “Tunagate,” and their mishandling of the crisis cost plenty. The company that once controlled half of the Canadian tuna market watched its revenues fall 90 percent.

# Guidelines on outline


## The structure of an exposition

An exposition has three parts:

- ▶ A beginning called the introduction
- ▶ A middle part called the body
- ▶ An end called the conclusion

## Components of an exposition

- ▶ Title
- ▶ Outline (usually in a formal exposition)
- ▶ Thesis statement
- ▶ Supporting details

**Note:** In the following units, you will learn how to write the three parts of an exposition, how to construct the thesis statement and the title, and how to achieve coherence. 

## The definition of outline

An outline is a method of organizing material in a logical order. It is a list that shows the main ideas and the structure of what you plan to write. In other words, it is a plan for a piece of writing. Constructing an outline makes the writing of your essay easier. For formal essays, the outline is an essential component.

## Types of outlines

- ▶ Topic outline, which uses only keywords and phrases
- ▶ Sentence outline, which uses complete sentences

## Formats of outlines

### ▶ Topic outline

Thesis statement: In my first year at college, I learned to spend my money wisely.

- I. Poor budgeting in the first semester
  - A. Unnecessary books
  - B. A used CD player
  - C. A taekwondo training course
- II. My parents' tight budget
  - A. No new clothes for my mother
  - B. Extra work for my father during the Spring Festival
- III. Careful budgeting in the second semester
  - A. Buying only what was necessary
  - B. Paying attention to the quality of secondhand goods
- IV. Conclusion: the results of careful budgeting
  - A. 1,500 yuan less than in the first semester
  - B. The importance of budgeting

### ▶ Sentence outline

Thesis statement: In my first year at college, I learned to spend my money wisely.

- I. In the first semester I didn't budget carefully.
  - A. I bought books I didn't need.
  - B. I bought a used CD player and repairing it cost me much money.
  - C. I paid a lot of money to go to a taekwondo training course but didn't keep it up.
- II. I found my parents on a tight budget and decided to budget wisely.
  - A. My mother didn't buy herself new clothes for the Spring Festival.
  - B. My father worked during the Spring Festival.

- III. In the second semester I spent money carefully.
  - A. I bought only what was necessary.
  - B. I paid more attention to the quality of secondhand goods.
- IV. Conclusion
  - A. In the second semester I spent 1,500 yuan less.
  - B. I learned the importance of budgeting.

**Note:** Use Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV...) for the main ideas.  
Use capital letters (A, B, C, D...) for major subdivisions.  
Use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4...) for further subdivisions.



## Rules of outlining

- ▶ An idea is not divided unless there are at least two points, therefore never include an A without a B, never a 1 without a 2.
- ▶ All the points/items in a division/subdivision should be related and explain or support the topic/subtopic under which they are placed.
- ▶ In a topic outline, the words and phrases used within a division/subdivision should be parallel, i.e. in the same grammatical form.



## Activity 2 Practicing guidelines on outline

► Find out what is wrong with the outline.

Thesis statement: On the first day at college, I realized that what lay ahead of me was a life of exertion, struggle and perseverance.

- I. As a top student at high school, I expected to do well at college.
  - A. I got up early on the first day of class.
  - B. I prepared for my lessons well.
- II. The day turned out to be a mess.
  - A. I couldn't understand anything in the recorded dialog.
  - B. I could hardly open my mouth in the class of Spoken English.
  - C. The Intensive Reading class seemed better.
  - D. I didn't have any more lessons on that day.
- III. Conclusion: I realized what I had to do.
  - A. I must forget that I had been a top student at high school.
  - B. I have to work hard to succeed at college.

► Study the outline for the body of an essay. Find out what is wrong and improve the outline.

Topic: How college has affected my life

- I. What is college for?
  - A. A training camp rather than a relaxing paradise
  - B. Seemingly dull and useless but necessary classes
- II. Improved character
  - A. Think by myself
    1. I no longer follow instructions blindly
  - B. Learning to handle relationships
    1. More tolerance
    2. Being able to get along with different classmates
- III. Having a better attitude
  - A. Concentrating better
  - B. Aiming higher

# Readings on the topic

## Remember, We're Raising Children, Not Flowers!

*Jack Canfield*

- 1 One day David, my next-door neighbor, was teaching his seven-year-old son Kelly how to push the gas-powered lawn mower around the yard. As he was teaching him how to turn the mower around at the end of the lawn, his wife, Jan, called to him to ask a question. As David turned to answer the question, Kelly pushed the lawn mower right through the flowerbed at the edge of the lawn!
- 2 When David turned back around and saw what had happened, he began to lose control. David had put a lot of time and effort into making those flowerbeds the envy of the neighborhood. As he began to raise his voice to his son, Jan walked quickly over to him, put her hand on his shoulder and said, “David, please remember...we're raising children, not flowers!”
- 3 Jan reminded me how important it is as a parent to remember our priorities. Kids and their self-esteem are more important than any physical object they might break or destroy. The windowpane shattered by a baseball, a lamp knocked over by a careless child and a plate dropped in the kitchen are already broken. The flowers are already dead; I must remember not to add to the destruction by breaking a child's spirit and deadening<sup>①</sup> his sense of liveliness.
- 4 I was buying a sport coat a few weeks ago. Mark Michael, the owner of the store, and I were discussing parenting. He told me that while he and his wife and seven-year-old daughter were out for dinner, his daughter knocked over her water glass. After the water was cleaned up without any recriminating<sup>②</sup> remarks from her parents, she looked up and said, “You know, I really want to thank you guys for not being like other parents. Most of my friends' parents would have yelled at them and given them a lecture about paying more attention. Thanks for not doing that!”

① **deaden:** to make a feeling or sense less strong

② **recriminate:** to blame or criticize someone for something that has happened

- 5 Once, when I was having dinner with some friends, a similar incident happened. Their five-year-old son knocked over a glass of milk at the dinner table. When they immediately started in on him<sup>③</sup>, I intentionally knocked my glass over, too. When I explained how I still knock things over even at the age of 48, the boy beamed<sup>④</sup> and the parents seemingly got the message and backed off. How easy it is to forget that we are all still learning.
- 6 I recently heard a story from Stephen Glenn about a famous research scientist who had made several very important medical breakthroughs. He was being interviewed by a newspaper reporter who asked him why he thought he was able to be so much more creative than the average person. What set him so far apart from others?
- 7 He responded that, in his opinion, it all came from an experience with his mother that occurred when he was about two years old. He had been trying to remove a bottle of milk from the refrigerator when he lost his grip on the slippery bottle and it fell, spilling its contents all over the kitchen floor—a real sea of milk!
- 8 When his mother came into the kitchen, instead of yelling at him, giving him a lecture or punishing him, she said, “Robert, what a great and wonderful mess you have made! I have rarely seen such a huge puddle of milk. Well, the damage has already been done. Would you like to get down and play in the milk for a few minutes before we clean it up?”
- 9 This renowned<sup>⑤</sup> scientist then remarked that it was at that moment that he knew he didn’t need to be afraid of making mistakes. Instead, he learned that mistakes were just opportunities for learning something new, which is, after all, what scientific experiments are all about. Even if the experiment “doesn’t work,” we usually learn something valuable from it.
- 10 Let’s remember that our children’s spirits are more important than any material things. When we do, self-esteem and love will blossom and grow more beautifully than any bed of flowers ever could. (668 words)

③ **start in on sb**: to begin criticizing someone about something

④ **beam**: to smile very happily

⑤ **renowned**: known and admired by a lot of people, especially for a special skill, achievement, or quality





## Questions to think about

1. What topic does the essay deal with?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What specific aspect of the topic does the writer narrow down to?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How many parts would you divide the essay into? Analyze the function and organization of each part.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How are the parts connected?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What pattern of organization is used in the essay?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# English Is a Crazy Language (Excerpts)

*Richard Lederer*<sup>1</sup>

- 1 English is the most widely spoken language in the history of our planet, used in some way by at least one out of every seven human beings around the globe. Half of the world's books are written in English, and the majority of international telephone calls are made in English. English is the language of over 60 percent of the world's radio programs. More than 70 percent of international mail is written and addressed in English, and 80 percent of all computer text is stored in English. English has acquired the largest vocabulary of all the world's languages, perhaps as many as two million words, and has generated one of the noblest bodies of literature in the annals of the human race.
- 2 Nonetheless, it is now time to face the fact that English is a crazy language.
- 3 In the crazy English language, the blackbird hen is brown, blackboards can be blue or green, and blackberries are green and then red before they are ripe. Even if blackberries were really black and blueberries really blue, what are strawberries, cranberries, elderberries, huckleberries, raspberries, boysenberries, mulberries, and gooseberries supposed to look like?

**1** **Richard Lederer:** American teacher, speaker, and author of many excellent and humorous books about the English language

- 4 To add to the insanity, there is no butter in buttermilk, no egg in eggplant, no grape in grapefruit, neither worms nor wood in wormwood, neither pine nor apple in pineapple, neither peas nor nut in peanuts, and no ham in a hamburger. To make matters worse, English muffins weren't invented in England, French fries in France, or Danish pastries in Denmark. And we discover even more culinary madness in the revelations that sweetmeat is candy, while sweetbread, which isn't sweet, is made from meat.
- 5 Language is like the air we breathe. It's invisible, inescapable, indispensable, and we take it for granted. But when we take the time, step back, and listen to the sounds that escape from the holes in people's faces and explore the paradoxes and vagaries of English, we find that hot dogs can be cold, darkrooms can be lit, homework can be done in school, nightmares can take place in broad daylight, while morning sickness and daydreaming can take place at night, tomboys are girls, midwives can be men, hours—especially happy hours and rush hours—can last longer than 60 minutes, quicksand works very slowly, boxing rings are square, silverware can be made of plastic and tablecloths of paper, most telephones are dialed by being punched (or pushed?), and most bathrooms don't have any baths in them. In fact, a dog can go to the bathroom under a tree—no bath, no room; it's still going to the bathroom. And doesn't it seem at least a little bizarre that we go to the bathroom in order to go to the bathroom?
- 6 Why is it that a woman can man a station but a man can't woman one, that a man can father a movement but a woman can't mother one, and that a king rules a kingdom but a queen doesn't rule a queendom? How did all those Renaissance men reproduce when there don't seem to have been any Renaissance women?
- ...
- 7 How can a slim chance and a fat chance<sup>②</sup> be the same, “what's going on?” and “what's coming off?” be the same while a wise man and a wise guy<sup>③</sup> are opposites? How can quite a lot and quite a few be the same, while overlook and oversee are opposites?

② **fat chance:** (*informal*) used to say that something is very unlikely to happen

③ **wise guy:** (*informal*) an annoying person who thinks he knows more than he really does

④ **downright:** completely or extremely (used to emphasize how bad something or someone is)

- 8 If button and unbutton and tie and untie are opposites, why are loosen and unloosen the same? If up is the opposite of down, why are upright and downright<sup>④</sup> not an opposite pair? If harmless actions are the opposite of harmful

actions, why shameless and shameful behavior the same and pricey objects less expensive than priceless ones? If appropriate and inappropriate remarks and passable and impassable mountain trails are opposites, why are flammable and inflammable materials, heritable and inheritable property, and passive and impassive people the same and valuable objects less treasured than invaluable ones? If uplift is the same as lift up, why are upset and set up opposite in meaning? Why are famous and infamous neither opposites nor the same? How can raise and raze and reckless and wreckless be opposites when each pair contains the same sound?

- 9 Why is it that when the sun or the moon or the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible, and that when I wind up my watch, I start it, but when I wind up the essay, I shall end it?
- 10 English is a crazy language. (756 words)



### Questions to think about

1. What point does Richard Lederer make in Paragraph 1? What type of examples does he use to support this point?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the main idea of the essay?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What does Lederer mean by saying that “English is a crazy language”?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do you think is Lederer’s purpose in writing this essay? Explain your choice.  
A. To caution learners against the difficulties involved in learning English.  
B. To share the results of his linguistic explorations of English.  
C. To awaken people’s interest in the peculiarities of English.  
D. To remind people they have to live with the peculiarities of English he lists.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What type(s) of examples does Lederer use in Paragraph 4 and Paragraph 9? In what way do the examples in Paragraph 9 differ from those in Paragraph 4?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Lederer is well-known for his humorous or witty remarks. Cite two from the essay.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you agree that English is a crazy language? State your reason(s).  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Double Vision (Excerpts)

Lynn Minton

- 1 When I was a little girl, my mother told me to wait for the light to turn green before I crossed the street and to cross always at the corner. This I did. Indeed, I was positive as a very young child that I would get mashed like a potato if I so much as stepped a foot off the sidewalk while the light turned red. I followed my mother's advice until I realized that she herself jaywalked<sup>①</sup> constantly, dodging<sup>②</sup> in and out of moving traffic—and pulling me with her. And after a while I followed her example and not her advice.
- 2 My father told me never to cheat or steal and I remember my intense humiliation the day, when I was only six years old, I received a public spanking for swiping<sup>③</sup> three dimes from the windowsill where they had been left by a visiting uncle. Yet my father pushed me under the turnstile<sup>④</sup> to get into the subway without paying and got me into the movies for half the price, way after I was old enough to pay a full price. And my mother continually brought home reams of<sup>⑤</sup> stationery and other supplies lifted from the offices where she worked.
- 3 Both my parents exacted<sup>⑥</sup> severe punishment for lying and yet I knew, in time<sup>⑦</sup>, that they lied to me and to each other and to others when, presumably, they felt the occasion warranted it.
- 4 And this was just part of the story. But hypocrisy about sex, about race relations, about religion, took me a longer time to see. I was out of high school before that picture began to pull together. Understanding didn't devastate me because I had begun to absorb the knowledge little by little through the years.

① **jaywalk:** to walk across a road at a place where it is dangerous to do so

② **dodge:** to move quickly to avoid someone or something

③ **swipe:** (*AmE, informal*) to steal something

④ **turnstile:** a mechanical gate consisting of revolving horizontal arms fixed to a vertical post, allowing only one person at a time to pass through

⑤ **reams of:** (*informal*) a large amount of

⑥ **exact:** to make something necessary

⑦ **in time:** after a certain period of time, especially after a gradual process of change and development

By the time I was 18 or 19 I guess I was both old enough to understand and strong enough to face what I saw. And I could face it because I learned my parents were not unusual. Most everybody's parents were the same. And we, my friends and I, did come to take it for granted. Parents were that way. Older people were that way. The word for what we found out about our parents' generation was hypocrisy. And most of us accepted it as part of life—as the way things were. (381 words)



## Questions to think about

1. How does the writer open the essay?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What does the writer want to illustrate in Paragraph 2?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What does the writer bring up in Paragraph 3?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do these experiences finally lead up to?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Write a formal outline of this essay.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How is the essay organized? In what order are the examples listed?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Shoddy Service Sows the Seeds of Discontent

*Dawn Turner Trice*<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Customer Service Gripe No. 1: I'm in the supermarket the other day, nearing the end of my checkout and listening to a popular song "Midnight Train to Georgia."
- 2 I'm humming when I realize I've forgotten milk. Conscious of my fellow 15-items-or-less linemates behind me, I ask the cashier, whom I'll call Broom Hilda, to add the milk to my tab. I tell her I can go back to fetch it.
- 3 She sucks her teeth and rolls her eyes before saying she cannot possibly add milk to my tab because she has to scan the jug<sup>2</sup>. So she waves for a bag boy, a teenager who shuffles over in his stylish but drooping pants. She tells him to run back to the dairy to get milk. Even I know he can't possibly run in those pants. "Uh," he says, swiping the back of his hand against nose drippings. He then reaches (with his dirty hand, mind you) under the counter. "Uh, she can have this one." He pulls out a gallon of milk.
- 4 Confession: I have food problems. I totally admit it. I worry about refrigeration. I religiously check expiration dates. I'm so unnerved by the prospect of

<sup>1</sup> **Dawn Turner Trice:** African American writer, former columnist and specialist reporter at the *Chicago Tribune*

<sup>2</sup> **jug:** milk container

- food contamination that I cook meat until it has the elasticity of a baseball.
- 5 Naturally, the bag boy, Broom Hilda and the growing mob in the express line don't know this so they'd simply prefer I grab the milk and run.
  - 6 Seconds tick past as I feel the bottom of the jug, taking its temperature. Broom Hilda folds her arms across her bosom and balls her face up<sup>③</sup> like a fist.
  - 7 As I suspected, the milk is room temperature. "You want the milk or not?" she says.
  - 8 "No, I do not want the milk." I ask her to scan it and I tell her I'll run back to get another gallon, which I'm sure had been sitting out earlier and now is cold again.
  - 9 She rolls her eyes and tosses my change.
  - 10 Customer Service Gripe 2: I'm having lunch with a girlfriend at a nice restaurant. I assume it's a nice restaurant because we have linen napkins and more than one fork.
  - 11 We get our water. Mine has a poppy seed bobbing around in it, or what I hope is a poppy seed. I point this out to a young man, who says "Oh" (which is far more refreshing than "Uh") and hurries to bring me another glass.
  - 12 During my meal, a wonderful combination of chicken and bow tie pasta with spinach in a light and airy cream sauce, I ask for more water.
  - 13 The server comes over with a pitcher. As she pours, a little piece of a red onion dribbles out into my glass. Silently, I watch it settle near an ice cube.
  - 14 I point this out to the server, who says the onion bit must have already been in the glass. I assure her that it wasn't and I remind her that I didn't order anything with onions.
  - 15 She freezes as though unplugged, then asks, "So, you want another glass?"
  - 16 "Well, duh?"
  - 17 She takes my glass back and when she returns—and I swear this is true—it has a poppy seed in it.

- ③ **ball (one's face) up:** to make (one's face) ball-shaped
- ④ **slinky:** (of a garment) fitting closely to the lines of the body
- ⑤ **number:** (*informal*) an item of clothing, especially women's clothing
- ⑥ **tush:** a person's buttocks

- 18 **Yet Another Gripe:** A friend told me she took her favorite dress, a tasteful yet slinky<sup>④</sup> satin number<sup>⑤</sup>, to a new dry cleaner, and when she brought it home and inspected it, she noticed a scorch mark near the tush<sup>⑥</sup> area. She returned to the dry cleaner's and told the nice

lady behind the counter, who promptly replied: “Don’t blame that on us. You must have brought it here like that.”

- 19 I could go on but I won’t. So here’s my point. I understand fully that dealing with the public can be a grueling<sup>7</sup> and thankless job. We (not me, of course) customers are sometimes a surly<sup>8</sup> bunch of malcontents<sup>9</sup> (especially those consuming beer) who treat customer service folks like crud<sup>10</sup>.
- 20 While I do recognize that there are many in the service industry doing a bang-up<sup>11</sup> job, there’s a handful who aren’t, and for some reason I’ve been running into you a lot lately. So please take note: It would be nice to be treated with a dose of decency and respect, since we are paying customers.
- 21 This, of course, means that if we’re getting something for free, it’s OK to treat us with the utmost disdain. (720 words)

- 7 **grueling:** very difficult and tiring, needing great effort for a long time
- 8 **surly:** bad-tempered
- 9 **malcontent:** a person who is dissatisfied with the way things are, and who complains a lot and is unreasonable and difficult to deal with
- 10 **crud:** (*slang*) something that is considered disgusting or worthless
- 11 **bang-up:** (*informal*) very good or excellent



## Questions to think about

1. What idea does Trice push forward in the essay? In which paragraph is this idea best expressed? Do you think she is making a serious point or just making fun of some service industry people?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What pattern of organization does the essay follow? Generalization-to-specifics or specifics-to-generalization? Why do you think this is a better choice for this essay?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What type of examples is used in this essay? Why do you think Trice selects this type?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Does Trice use sufficient examples to illustrate her point? What are the sources of her examples?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How does Trice organize the examples?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How does Trice conclude the essay?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Readings written by your peers

## A Childhood Full of Freedom

*Wang Xiaoya*

- 1 Unlike many other parents, my permissive father and mother have given me perfect freedom ever since I was in kindergarten. I was allowed to wear the kind of clothes I liked to school, and to invite to my birthday party the friends I liked. In my childhood, I was free as a bird.
- 2 When I was in primary school, pupils in my class had a busy schedule both on weekdays and at weekends. They went to training classes of all sorts arranged by their parents on Saturdays and Sundays. Often, they felt fed up with such classes. Their eyes shone with envy, whenever I told them about a family outing or a visit to a museum at the weekend. I felt lucky: my parents believe that children will not learn much when they are not interested in what their parents force them to do.
- 3 In junior high, once I had a brainwave and wanted to learn to play the flute. Thinking that I was interested in the instrument, the following week, Father bought everything I needed and found a tutor, and I got started. Three months passed, but I was still unable to play a tune from beginning to end. I developed a habitual sore throat each time I played hard. When I told Father I wanted to give up, I cried bitterly, saying I was a total failure. He said mistakes and failures were not shameful as long as you could draw a lesson: they made you stronger before future setbacks. Then and there, I realized my parents did not only allow me the freedom to enjoy myself, but also the permission to make mistakes and fail!
- 4 Living in such a pleasant home environment, I grew up healthily. I learned to make my own decisions. I am proud of myself because I have been able to make my own decisions at every turning point in my life. Father and Mother would show concern and give advice which I always seriously thought about, but it was I who had the final say. I remember one day in the last summer vacation in high



school. I was alone at home when a teacher called to ask whether I would major in liberal arts or in sciences. I immediately answered, “Sciences.” Then he asked in surprise, “Don’t you have to talk to your parents?” I said no and smiled to myself, feeling a sense of pride in myself.

- 5 Precisely because of this upbringing, I don’t need to learn to be independent at college. And now as an adult, I wish to say to my parents, “Thank you, Mom and Dad, for a wonderful childhood you have allowed me to have.” (448 words)

## Learning Beyond the University Classroom

*Wang Yingchong*

- 1 “Hard disk error!” I was helpless sitting in front of the computer. This was the first time I had to deal with a computer problem. As my father was something of a computer expert, whenever such things happened, Father would come on the scene in no time. Now I had to rely on a friend who told me, over the phone, to open the chassis and check. Gosh! I had never used a screwdriver before. At home, my parents did all the mechanical, as well as, manual jobs so that I could concentrate on “academic” tasks. Now, at college far away from home, I had to do things all on my own—borrowing the tools, opening the chassis and finding out what was wrong. Thus learning to use a screwdriver became my first lesson outside the classroom.
- 2 In fact, such minor repairs are relatively easy to tackle. The real problem on campus is to communicate with my fellow students, who come from different places and backgrounds, bringing with them diversified habits, beliefs, and values. For instance, last term I was put in charge of writing the scripts and

directing a play in English for the annual Drama Night. Writing the scripts was no challenge for me, for back in high school, I had written more than a dozen one-act plays in English. But the rehearsal was really a headache for me. A couple of players were unhappy about the roles assigned to them. But no one knew why they were unhappy and why they wanted to back out. A girl did not like to play as someone's girlfriend. A boy speaking with a British accent wanted to play alongside with those who spoke in the same way. To solve this problem, I took pains talking with each of these players privately, either allowing them to exchange roles with other players with their consent, or letting them leave with my best wishes for them in the next play. Finally, the entire cast was happy and our rehearsal began. No doubt, the cast often disagreed. At the beginning, we resolved each disagreement through lengthy discussions, but as the hours of rehearsal went by, and we got to know one another better and better, everything proceeded more and more smoothly. Finally, our play *The Call* made a big hit on campus.

- 3 In a nutshell, no class will teach us to do the things we have never done previously. But there is much to learn outside the university classroom. (415 words)

## Money Management —A Lesson I Learned at College

*Li Na*

- 1 It has been over a year since I came to BFSU. During this period, both in and outside of the classroom, one of the most important lessons I've learned is how to spend my money wisely.
- 2 Before I came to college, my parents opened a bank account for me and deposited enough money to last for the first semester: tuition, fees for room and board, etc., plus a reasonable sum as pocket money. With thousands of RMB at my disposal for the first time in my life, I felt like a real adult and said to myself that now I could behave as one. I began buying what I believed at that time the necessities for my studies, such as a used iPad and quite a few used books. I was also interested in the things I considered good for my health. For instance, I paid quite a sum for a taekwondo training course. Soon I discovered many of

my purchases were unwise. The iPad broke down so frequently that I paid too much to get it repaired. I also found that I didn't really need those books I had bought. As for the expensive taekwondo training course, I never knew that my busy college schedule would leave no time for such a luxury. I simply couldn't keep it up. So at the end of the semester, I had little money left and had to ask my parents for more.

- 3 Back at home in the winter vacation, I was ashamed of myself when I found my parents on a tight budget. My father worked on holidays and weekends, which he seldom did before, to provide me with a decent living at college. My mother hadn't bought herself any new clothes since I left, not even for the Spring Festival. My heart hurt when I realized that they were working hard and trying to save every penny possible for my education. But what had I done? To ease their financial burden, I made up my mind then to use their hard-earned money wisely.
- 4 In the following semester, I always thought twice when I wanted something badly, and I bought only what was absolutely necessary. I also paid more attention to the quality of the used goods I wanted to buy. As a result, that semester, I spent 1,500 yuan less than I did in the first semester. It is not much, but I am proud of myself, for the process of saving proves that I have learned the importance of money management. (421 words)



## Questions to think about

1. Do the three essays follow the same pattern of organization? Why or why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What message does each essay try to communicate to readers? Where is each message located?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What do you think of the examples? Are they relevant to each thesis statement? Are they representative and striking?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Which of the three do you think is the best illustration essay? Why do you think so?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Writing assignment

## Topics

Write an illustration essay of 350-400 words on any of the topics or a topic of your own.

### About your first year at college

- My first year at college was rewarding
- How college has affected my life
- Making mistakes is a great way to learn
- There is a lot to learn outside the classroom
- College turns young people into useful members of society
- The person who did the most in helping me adjust to college life

### About your upbringing

- I had a strict/sheltered upbringing
- One good turn deserves another
- My parents are good examples for me
- Growing up, I found that...(e.g. honesty really was the best policy)
- The longer I live, the more I discover that...
- My upbringing has prepared me for...
- The greatest joy/sorrow/pain/difficulty of adolescence is...
- An essential quality for young people is...

## Procedure

### Pre-writing: choosing a topic and exploring ideas

- ↓ Discuss, in pairs or small groups, how you have benefited from your first year at college, in what way you are becoming mature, or what you have discovered about your upbringing.

- ↓ Choose a topic you find interesting and narrow it down to a manageable scope.
- ↓ Decide what point you want to make, or what idea you want to convey to your readers.
- ↓ Find as many examples as you can to support your point.
- ↓ Select two or three examples that are closely related and that you can develop fully.

### Drafting: getting your ideas on paper

- ↓ Decide how you are going to organize your essay—from generalization to specifics, or the other way around.
- ↓ Make a plan for your essay.

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis statement: \_\_\_\_\_

Tentative title: \_\_\_\_\_

Pattern of organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting details:

Example 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Example 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Example 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

- ↓ Discuss the plan in pairs or small groups and seek peer advice.
- ↓ Write the first draft.

### Evaluating: finding the strengths and weaknesses of your essay from your peers

- ↓ Ask two fellow students to review your draft.
- ↓ Study their comments and discuss with them if necessary.

### Revising: strengthening your draft

- ↓ Read your essay carefully and objectively, taking into account peer suggestions.
- ↓ Ask yourself if your examples are relevant, representative, striking, and related to the thesis statement.
- ↓ Check on the transitions and see if the parts are well-connected and the examples are properly introduced.
- ↓ Cut out any information that does not relate to your thesis statement.

### Editing and proofreading: eliminating technical errors

- ↓ Check your spelling and grammar.
- ↓ Make sure the punctuation you have used is correct.
- ↓ Observe the essay format: capitalization, indentation, and spacing.
- ↓ Make sure your essay has a title.

## Quotations

We cannot teach people anything; we can only help them discover it within themselves.  
—Galileo Galilei

A good education is not so much one which prepares a man to succeed in the world, as one which enables him to sustain a failure.  
—Bernard Iddings Bell

Good writers are those who keep the language efficient. That is to say, keep it accurate, keep it clear.  
—Ezra Pound