

# Patterns of Essay Development



## RESPONDING TO IMAGES

These two recruiting posters are from the United States Navy. The first was used in 1917 and the second is from today. Think about different ways to write about these posters. What is the main point of each poster, and how would you support that point with examples? How would you compare or contrast the posters? How would you describe them? Using a specific pattern of development, write an essay about these posters.

## CHAPTER PREVIEW

Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Exemplification

Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Narration

Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Description

Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Process

Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Cause and/or Effect

Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Comparison and/or Contrast

Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Definition

Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Division-Classification

Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Argument

## TEACHING TIP

Ask students to complete this writing prompt in class.

The nine different patterns of paragraph writing you learned in Part 3—*exemplification, narration, description, process, cause and effect, comparison or contrast, definition, division-classification, and argument*—can also be used to write essays. Because essays are much longer works than paragraphs, it is common that multiple patterns are incorporated to fully support the thesis statement. A history student may need to employ exemplification, cause and effect, and argument in a class paper. A scientist preparing a report may need to employ description, definition, and argument to defend his or her hypothesis. A real estate agent may employ description and narration to write about a house for sale. Everyday writing involves determining which patterns to use and how best to organize them to effectively support your purpose. The rest of this chapter will show you how.

## Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Exemplification

### Considering Purpose and Audience

If you make a statement and someone says to you, “Prove it,” what do you do? Most likely, if you can, you will provide an example or two to support your claim. An essay that emphasizes exemplification has the same purpose: to use specific instances or actual cases to convince an audience that a particular point is true.

In an essay that emphasizes exemplification, you support it by *illustrating* it with examples. These examples may range from facts that you have researched to personal accounts. If, for instance, you decide to write an essay that claims capital punishment is immoral, you might cite several cases in which an innocent person was executed. Keep in mind that your examples should connect clearly to your main point so that readers will see the truth of your claim.

The number of examples you choose to include in your essay may vary depending, in part, on your audience. For a group already opposed to the death penalty, you would not need detailed examples to support your belief that capital punishment is immoral. However, if you were writing to a group undecided about capital punishment, you would need more instances to get your point across—and even then, some would not believe you. Still, when used well, examples make writing more persuasive, increasing the chances readers will understand and believe your point.

### Student Essay to Consider

**Directions for Reading the Essay:** As you read the following essay, circle areas that strike you as interesting or especially descriptive, underline areas that seem to be out of place or need work, place stars by any areas where you think additional information could be added, and mark the different modes of writing within this essay. Finally, respond to the claim made within the essay. Do you agree with the author about Americans’ state of mind?

#### TEACHING TIP

You may want to remind students that an academic audience may not share their beliefs and opinions.



## Altered States

Most Americans are not alcoholics. Most do not cruise seedy city streets looking to score crack cocaine or heroin. Relatively few try to con their doctors into prescribing unneeded mood-altering medications. And yet, many Americans are traveling through life with their minds slightly out of kilter. In its attempt to cope with modern life, the human mind seems to have evolved some defense strategies. Confronted with inventions like television, the shopping center, and the Internet, the mind will slip—all by itself—into an altered state.

Never in the history of humanity have people been expected to sit passively for hours, staring at moving pictures emanating from an electronic box. Since too much exposure to flickering images of police officers, detectives, and talk-show hosts can be dangerous to human sanity, the mind automatically goes into a state of TV hypnosis. The eyes see the sitcom or the dog-food commercial, but the mind goes into a holding pattern. None of the televised images or sounds actually enters the brain. This is why, when questioned, people cannot remember commercials they have seen five seconds before or why the TV cops are chasing a certain suspect. In this hypnotic, trancelike state, the mind resembles an armored armadillo. It rolls up in self-defense, letting the stream of televised information pass by harmlessly.

If the TV watcher arises from the couch and goes to a shopping mall, he or she will again cope by slipping into an altered state. In the mall, the mind is bombarded with the sights, smells, and sounds of dozens of stores, restaurants, and movie theaters competing for its attention. There are hundreds of questions to be answered. Should I start with the upper or lower mall level? Which stores should I look in? Should I bother with the sweater sale at Macy's? Should I eat fried chicken or try the healthier-sounding pita wrap? Where is my car parked? To combat this mental overload, the mind goes into a state resembling the whiteout experienced by mountain climbers trapped in a blinding snowstorm. Suddenly, everything looks the same. The shopper is unsure where to go next and cannot remember what he or she came for in the first place. The mind enters this state deliberately so that the shopper has no choice but to leave. Some kids can be in a shopping mall for hours, but they are exceptions to the rule.

But no part of everyday life so quickly triggers the mind's protective shutdown mode as that favorite pastime of the new millennium: online surfing. A computer user sits down with the intention of briefly checking his or her e-mail or looking up a fact for a research paper. But once tapped into the immense storehouse of information, entertainment, and seemingly intimate personal connections that the Internet offers, the user loses all sense of time and priorities. Prospects flood the mind: Should I explore the rise of Nazi Germany? Play a trivia game? Hear the life story of a lonely

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### TEACHING TIP

Read this essay aloud. In tandem with having students follow the "Directions for Reading the Essay" above, ask them to underline the thesis statement, specific examples, and transitions before answering the questions.

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stranger in Duluth? With a mind dazed with information overload, the user numbly hits one key after another, leaping from topic to topic, from distraction to distraction. Hours fly by as he or she sits hunched over the terminal, unable to account for the time that has passed.

These poor victims are merely trying to cope with the mind-numbing inventions of modern life and are not responsible for their glazed eyes and robotic motions. People need to be aware of them and treat them with kindness and understanding. Going out of the way to bring these coma sufferers back to real life is the job of all those who have managed to avoid the side effects of television, shopping, and the Internet; otherwise, humanity will suffer.

## QUESTIONS

### ESL TIP

To achieve coherence, nonnative students might review connectors that explain or emphasize, that give an example or explain a point, and that add information.

### About the Main Idea and Author's Purpose

1. In your own words, write the main idea of the essay.

*The author is explaining that modern things like TV, malls, and the Internet have caused addiction-like behavior.*

2. What is the author's purpose, and how can you determine this?

*To inform and entertain the reader. The author's purpose is to explain the effects of modern technology. The author uses adjectives and descriptions that relay humor.*

### About Unity

3. Which sentence in paragraph 3 of "Altered States" should be omitted in the interest of paragraph unity? (Write the opening words.)

*Some kids can be . . .*

### About Support

4. What three pieces of evidence does the writer offer to support the statement that the Internet is an "immense storehouse of information, entertainment, and seemingly intimate personal connections"?

*. . . the rise of Nazi Germany . . .*

*. . . Play a trivia game . . .*

*. . . Hear the life story of a lonely stranger . . .*

### About Coherence

5. What sentence indicates that the author has used emphatic order, saving his most important point for last? (Write the opening words.)

*But no part of everyday life . . .*

6. Which sentence in paragraph 1 begins with a change-of-direction signal phrase? (Write the opening words.)

*And yet, many Americans . . .*

7. Which sentence in paragraph 2 begins with an illustration signal phrase? (Write the opening words.)

*This is why, when questioned, . . .*

### About Mixed Modes

8. What are the different types of modes the author employed to create such a fluid and interesting essay?

*The author used exemplification and description.*

### About the Introduction and Conclusion

9. Which sentence in paragraph 5 begins with a concluding signal word? (Write the opening words.)

*Therefore, the next time . . .*

10. Which statement best describes the concluding paragraph?

- It contains a prediction.
- It combines a summary with a recommendation of how to treat people in an altered state.
- It refers to the point made in the introduction about alcohol and drugs.
- It contains thought-provoking questions about altered states.

## Writing an Essay with Emphasis on Exemplification

### RESPONDING TO STATEMENTS

Write an essay that uses examples to develop one of the following statements.

I would do anything for/to \_\_\_\_\_.

There are many terrible jobs that people do, but the worst is \_\_\_\_\_.

I wouldn't \_\_\_\_\_ even if someone paid me a million dollars.

Be sure to choose examples that support your topic sentence. They should include relevant personal experiences (Chapter 7), examples you have read about (Chapter 20), and as many descriptive details as possible (Chapter 8). Organize your paragraph so you save your most vivid, most convincing, or most important example for last.

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1



**TEACHING TIP**  
Encourage students to use the four steps, including prewriting and revision, to complete these assignments.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2



### RESPONDING TO A READING

Write an essay that is based on an outside reading. It might be a selection recommended by your instructor, or it might be a piece by one of the following authors, all of whom have written short stories, books, or essays that should be available in your college library.

Willa Cather	Nelson Mandela
Winston Churchill	Toni Morrison
Sandra Cisneros	George Orwell
Annie Dillard	Katherine Ann Porter
Ralph Waldo Emerson	John Steinbeck
F. Scott Fitzgerald	Amy Tan
Ellen Goodman	Deborah Tannen
Thomas Jefferson	Calvin Trillin
Maxine Hong Kingston	Kurt Vonnegut
Jhumpa Lahiri	Marie Winn
Sinclair Lewis	Walt Whitman

Base your essay on an idea in the selection you have chosen, and provide examples to back up your idea. You will want to review Chapter 6, “Exemplification” and Chapter 8, “Description” to help you provide the best examples for your essay. You will also want to review Chapter 20, “Writing a Research Paper” to help you use quotations and summaries from your chosen work to establish solid support for your thesis.

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

### Exemplification



In this essay that emphasizes exemplification, you will write with a specific purpose and for a specific audience.

**EXPLAINING A DECISION** Often when students are applying for grants or scholarships, they have to write an essay that demonstrates why they should receive the funds. Assume that you are writing an essay to receive a scholarship for “students who are new to college.” The decision to receive the funds is based on your honesty about your reasons for attending college and your hopes of what a college degree will get you. You will want to incorporate stories and examples to support your claims. You will want to review Chapter 6, “Exemplification”; Chapter 7, “Narration”; and Chapter 8, “Description.”

## Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Narration

### Considering Purpose and Audience

In an essay that emphasizes narration you make a point and incorporate one central story or several brief stories as support. Colorful details and interesting events that build up to a point make these essays enjoyable for readers and writers alike.

Life requires recalling events for different purposes. Students tell stories to teachers explaining why they didn't get their homework done. Witnesses recall events to police officers and juries. Boards and committees have to keep detailed minutes of all meetings. All of these examples require people to remember the events in order, provide details that affect meaning and understanding, and relay the information to others in a clear and coherent manner.

Unlike a narrative paragraph that only focuses on telling a story, an essay that emphasizes narration may also contain description, argument, cause and effect, and/or research. As you have seen in the paragraph development sections, different modes require different forms of writing, so it is important to use the specific modes and writing techniques where and when needed. The purpose of your essay will determine what events should be told, what events should be eliminated, and what strategies should be employed when writing.

## Student Essay to Consider

**Directions for Reading the Essay:** As you read the following essay, circle areas that strike you as interesting or especially descriptive, underline areas that seem to be out of place or need work, place stars by any areas you think additional information could be added, and mark the different modes of writing within this essay. This essay remarks about several novels the student read; if you are familiar with any of the books, decide if you agree with the author's opinion. If you aren't familiar with the books, do the author's descriptions make you want to read any of the books? Be prepared to explain your decision.

### Summer Read-a-thons

I remember when I was growing up that I spent many sunny afternoons in my backyard. I was fortunate to have a carefree happy mother who enjoyed reading and helped books come alive. We would spread out a blanket on the long green grass and have read-a-thons together. Reading became a doorway into a new and exciting world that I have often chosen to enter. I fell in love with reading in my yard, where my kind mother helped me find my imagination, learn about the world, and learn more about myself.

At first my mother would bribe me with candy and popcorn, enticing me onto the reading blanket, but soon I would gladly assemble near her ready for the adventures to begin. She would ask me what book I wanted to hear for the day. Did I want to listen to a story of a little mouse that lived in a hotel and snuck around at night, flying through the hallways on his *real* toy-sized motorcycle? Or perhaps I would prefer finding myself in the middle of the Salem witch trials running for my life with Kit Tyler from *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*?

My mom would help me think about new ideas through books. We would read a story together and then discuss deep topics about



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#### TEACHING TIP

Read this essay aloud. In tandem with having students follow the "Directions for Reading the Essay" above, ask them to underline the thesis statement, specific examples, and transitions before answering the questions.

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*continued*

what symbolism we found. My brother often liked to be part of these conversations. One of my favorite discussions we had sparked from the book *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of Nimh*. It's about Mrs. Frisby, a mother field mouse and her determination to protect her children, especially her young, ill son. She needs additional help from some neighbors who happen to be rats. The other animals had previously been afraid of the rats on this farm because they have strange ways and do strange things. Mrs. Frisby learns not to judge only by appearance. One young rat is especially notable as he gives his life for his fellow rats because it is the right thing to do. He became a hero of mine. As a young child I learned about service and sacrifice from this simple, yet beautifully told story of rats and mice. I learned not to be as judgmental, and my imagination grew abundantly.

As I grew older, I developed a love for novels, biographies, and historical fiction. I especially enjoyed reading about World War II. In the book *The Hiding Place*, by Corrie ten Boom, I felt as if I knew Corrie and her sister Betsie, and was alongside them as they helped hide Jews from the Gestapo. They had tremendous courage and became symbols of bravery and tenacity. I learned much from these young girls as I read about the Nazis taking all of their possessions, locking them into a concentration camp, and enduring the indignities that they suffered. If I am ever feeling sorry for myself or that the world is out to get me, I think about Corrie ten Boom and her story, and I am humbled and grateful for my simple life.

Like the previous books, Catherine Clinton's book also inspired me. In *Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom*, a book about the Underground Railroad during the Civil War era, Harriet helps to free 300 slaves and guides them north to safety. I was in awe of the miracles that happened in her quest. No one was captured; again and again she found families to hide fleeing slaves. I found myself wishing I could meet her and talk with her about how she became so daring, so willing to sacrifice her own life for others. An enjoyment of history developed from these books, and I couldn't get enough of them. I wanted to immerse myself in them and learn about other leaders throughout history, what made them strong, what made them act! Harriet Tubman's story inspired me to do more, to not be as selfish, and to be more understanding of different cultures and different beliefs. I learned that it is good to have a strong opinion, but I should listen to others, and be compassionate in my judgments.

I am thankful my mother loves to read, and that she had the insight to hold those summer read-a-thons to help me develop a deep love of reading that has stayed with me throughout my life. I still think back to those summer days beside her in my yard, and the contentment I felt, hearing her laughter and gaining strength from her soft-spoken voice. I remember the encouragement she gave me, telling me that I could do anything I put my mind to, and that I was smart and capable. I am grateful my mother brought reading to life, and I discovered a part of me that I hadn't realized was there to find.

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## About the Main Idea and Author's Purpose

1. In your own words, write the main idea of the essay.

*The author describes how a simple summer activity turned into a lifetime love of reading.*

2. What is the author's purpose and how can you determine this?

*To inform the reader. The author does not use persuasive words or a persuasive thesis, but is relaying information.*

## About Unity

3. Which sentence in paragraph 3 should be omitted and why?

*The sentence: "My brother often liked to be part of these conversations. . . ." This sentence is irrelevant to the purpose of the story. The brother may have been part of the conversations, but the focus of the story is how this activity affected the author.*

## About Support

4. The author uses a variety of descriptive words to help create strong images in the reader's mind. List some of the words and phrases and explain why you chose these specific examples.

*Answers will vary, but some answers could be as follows:*

*... sunny afternoons ... long green grass ... in my yard—gives the reader a sense of what it was like during the read-a-thons*

*... flying through the hallways on his real toy-sized motorcycle—gives a detailed image of the mouse hero*

## About Coherence

5. Which paragraph could be enhanced with stronger transitional words?

*Paragraph 6 needs to reflect back on the first paragraph and let the reader know that the author has taken the reader back into the present and is no longer in the past.*

## About Mixed Modes

6. What are the different types of modes the author employed in her paragraphs to create such a fluid and interesting essay?

*The author employed exemplification, narration, and description.*

## QUESTIONS

**ESL TIP**  
Nonnative speakers may benefit from reviewing grammatical structures that help them achieve coherence and grammatical accuracy in writing (e.g., the simple present and past verb tenses, adverbials of time and sequence, and prepositions in time expressions).

### About the Introduction and Conclusion

7. What technique does the author use in her conclusion? Explain your answer.

*The author summarizes the essay and makes some final remarks. She refers back to the introduction when she reminds the reader that the read-a-thons are what started her love for reading. She then emphasizes how important reading is for her, connecting her past to her present.*

## Writing an Essay with Emphasis on Narration

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1



#### RECALLING AN IMPORTANT LEARNING MOMENT

In this assignment, you should recall a significant learning moment. This learning moment might be learning to read and/or write, learning to read and/or write music, teaching a child to read, or recalling a teacher who made a positive or negative impact. You will want to review Chapter 7, “Narration” and Chapter 8, “Description.” If you choose to focus on someone who had a positive or negative impact on your learning, you should also review Chapter 10, “Cause and Effect.”

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2



#### WRITING YOUR OBITUARY

In the poem “The Dash,” Linda Ellis asks, “Would you be proud of the things they said about how you spent your dash?” (the period between the dates of your birth and death). Many of us live in the here and now, not contemplating what our obituary will say when we die. Think about what your obituary might say if you were to die tomorrow. Then think about what you would like your obituary to say after you have lived a long life. What would you like to change? Write an essay detailing what you would like your obituary to say about you after you have lived a long and happy “dash.” You will want to review Chapter 7, “Narration”; Chapter 8, “Description”; and Chapter 10, “Cause and Effect.”

**TEACHING TIP**  
Encourage students to use the four steps to complete these assignments, including prewriting and revision.

### BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

#### Narration



In this essay that emphasizes narration, you will write with a specific purpose and for a specific audience.

**BECOMING A TRAVEL WRITER** In this assignment, you should pretend to be a travel writer and write about your hometown, making it sound like the ultimate destination. As many travel writers do, you will want to incorporate short vignettes, or stories, to demonstrate the excitement of visiting your hometown. You will want to review Chapter 7, “Narration”; Chapter 8, “Description”; and Chapter 14, “Argument.”

## Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Description

### Considering Purpose and Audience

The main purpose of an essay with an emphasis on description is to make readers see—or hear, taste, smell, or feel—what you are writing about. Vivid details are the key to good descriptions, enabling your audience to picture and, in a way, experience what you describe.

Unlike a descriptive paragraph that focuses only on describing the topic, an essay that emphasizes description may also contain cause and effect, comparison or contrast, or narration. As you start to think about your own essay, choose a topic that will allow you to write descriptions that appeal strongly to at least one of your senses.

As you have seen in the paragraph development sections, different modes require different forms of writing, so it is important to use the specific modes and writing techniques where and when needed. The purpose of your essay will determine what events should be told, what events should be eliminated, and what strategies should be employed when writing. If your topic is a familiar one you can assume your audience already understands the general idea. However, if you are presenting something new or unfamiliar to your readers—perhaps a description of one of your relatives or a place where you’ve lived—you must provide background information.

### Student Essay to Consider

**Directions for Reading the Essay:** As you read the following essay, circle areas that strike you as interesting or especially descriptive, underline areas that seem to be out of place or need work, place stars by any areas where you think additional information could be added, and mark the different modes of writing within this essay. Additionally, think about why the grandmother would have given her granddaughter the picture and whether or not it made a true difference for the granddaughter. Use words and images from the essay to support your opinion.

#### Family Portrait

My grandmother, who is ninety years old, recently sent me a photograph of herself that I had never seen before. While cleaning out the attic of her Florida home, she came across a studio portrait she had taken about a year before she married my grandfather. This picture of my grandmother as a twenty-year-old girl and the story behind it have fascinated me from the moment I began to consider it.

The young woman in the picture has a face that resembles my own in many ways. Her face is a bit more oval than mine, but the softly waving brown hair around it is identical. The small, straight nose is the same model I was born with. My grandmother’s mouth is closed, yet there is just the slightest hint of a smile on her full lips. I know that



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**TEACHING TIP**

Read this essay aloud. In tandem with having students follow the “Directions for Reading the Essay” above, ask them to underline the thesis statement, specific examples, and transitions before answering the questions.

if she had smiled, she would have shown the same wide grin and down-curving “smile lines” that appear in my own snapshots. The most haunting feature in the photo, however, is my grandmother’s eyes. They are an exact duplicate of my own large, dark-brown ones. Her brows are plucked into thin lines, which are like two pencil strokes added to highlight those fine, luminous eyes.

I’ve also carefully studied the clothing and jewelry in the photograph. Although the photo was taken seventy years ago, my grandmother is wearing a blouse and skirt that could easily be worn today. The blouse is made of heavy eggshell-colored satin and reflects the light in its folds and hollows. It has a turned-down cowl collar and smocking on the shoulders and below the collar. The smocking (tiny rows of gathered material) looks hand-done. The skirt, which covers my grandmother’s calves, is straight and made of light wool or flannel. My grandmother is wearing silver drop earrings. They are about two inches long and roughly shield-shaped. On her left wrist is a matching bracelet. My grandmother can’t find this bracelet now, despite the fact that we spent hours searching through the attic for it. On the third finger of her left hand is a ring with a large, square-cut stone.

The story behind the picture is as interesting to me as the young woman it captures. Grandma, who was earning twenty-five dollars a week as a file clerk, decided to give her boyfriend (my grandfather) a picture of herself. She spent almost two weeks’ salary on the skirt and blouse, which she bought at a fancy department store downtown. She borrowed the earrings and bracelet from her older sister, my Great-Aunt Dorothy. The ring she wore was a present from another young man she was dating at the time. Grandma spent another chunk of her salary to pay the portrait photographer for the hand-tinted print in old-fashioned tones of brown and tan. Just before giving the picture to my grandfather, she scrawled at the lower left, “Sincerely, Gloria.”

When I study this picture, I react in many ways. I think about the trouble that Grandma went to in order to impress the young man who was to be my grandfather. I laugh when I look at the ring, which was probably worn to make my grandfather jealous. I smile at the serious, formal inscription my grandmother used at this stage of the budding relationship. Sometimes, I am filled with a mixture of pleasure and sadness when I look at this frozen long-ago moment. It is a moment of beauty, of love, and—in a way—of my own past.

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**QUESTIONS****About the Main Idea and Author’s Purpose**

1. In your own words, write the main idea of the essay.

*The author describes a portrait of her grandmother that was taken when her grandmother was a young woman. As she describes the portrait, the author makes connections between her grandmother and herself.*

2. What is the author's purpose and how can you determine this?

*To inform the reader. The author uses descriptive words to help the reader get to know the grandmother.*

### About Unity

3. Which of the following sentences from paragraph 3 of "Family Portrait" should be omitted in the interest of paragraph unity?
- Although the photo was taken seventy years ago, my grandmother is wearing a blouse and skirt that could easily be worn today.
  - It has a turned-down cowl collar and smocking on the shoulders and below the collar.
  - My grandmother can't find this bracelet now, despite the fact that we spent hours searching the attic for it.
  - On the third finger of her left hand is a ring with a large, square-cut stone.

#### ESL TIP

Nonnative students may need to consult a dictionary to find colorful and vivid vocabulary.

### About Support

4. How many separate items of clothing and jewelry are described in paragraph 3?
- four
  - five
  - seven
5. Label as sight, touch, hearing, or smell all the sensory details in the following sentences taken from the essay.
- "The blouse is made of heavy eggshell-colored satin and reflects the light in its folds and hollows."
  - "Her brows are plucked into thin lines, which are like two pencil strokes added to highlight those fine, luminous eyes."

#### ESL TIP

To improve coherence and grammatical accuracy when describing a place, nonnative speakers should review adverbs of place or prepositional expressions that indicate spatial organization.

### About Coherence

6. Which method of organization does paragraph 2 use?
- Time order
  - Emphatic order
7. Which sentence in paragraph 2 suggests the method of organization? (Write the opening words.)

*The most haunting ...*

### About Mixed Modes

8. What are the different types of modes the author employed in the paragraphs to create such an interesting essay?

*The author uses narration and description.*

### About the Introduction and Conclusion

9. Which statement best describes the introduction?
- It starts with an idea that is the opposite of the one that is developed.
  - It explains the importance of the topic to its readers
  - It begins with a general statement of the topic and narrows it down to a thesis statement.
  - It begins with an anecdote.

## Writing an Essay with Emphasis on Description

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1



#### RECALLING AN IMPORTANT EXPERIENCE

In this assignment, you will write an essay that describes an experience that has significantly affected you. You will want to use specific details in addition to examples that support your purpose. You will want to review Chapter 6, “Exemplification”; Chapter 8, “Description”; and Chapter 10, “Cause and Effect.”

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2



#### WRITING A BIOGRAPHY

In this assignment, you should choose a person whom you would like to know more about. A good biographical profile will include information that is relevant to your purpose, which should describe why you think this person is important enough to profile. As you interview your person, you will want to take careful notes to ensure the material you write is accurate and to allow you to use direct quotes where needed. Your purpose will determine the information you need to include. You may need to write about your person’s childhood, education, and/or work, or you may only need to focus on one specific aspect of his or her life. You will want to review Chapter 7, “Narration”; Chapter 8, “Description”; and Chapter 20, “Writing a Research Paper.”

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3



#### REACTING TO A WORK OF ART

In this assignment, you will be required to choose a piece of art, like the *Mona Lisa* or Michelangelo’s *David*, and explain why it is significant. You will need to describe the work so the reader fully understands what the piece looks like, and you will need to argue the work’s importance. You will want to review Chapter 8, “Description” and Chapter 14, “Argument.” If you need to research information about your chosen work of art, you will need to review Chapter 20, “Writing a Research Paper.”

#### TEACHING TIP

Encourage students to use the four steps to complete these assignments, including prewriting and revision.

In this essay that emphasizes description, you will write with a specific purpose and for a specific audience.

**DESIGNING A BROCHURE** Imagine that you work at your city’s visitor’s bureau and need to create a brochure for tourists describing your city’s top attractions and “selling” your city as a top tourist destination. You will want to consider which sites should be highlighted, which hotels would offer different levels of accommodation, and why your city is the best choice. You will want to review Chapter 8, “Description” and Chapter 14, “Argument.”

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

### Description



#### TEACHING TIP

As an added aspect to this assignment, you might have your students use their essays as bases for actual brochures, which could be submitted to their local tourist boards.

#### TEACHING TIP

Suggest that students survey their audience before writing an essay.

## Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Process

### Considering Purpose and Audience

Glance at a newsstand and you’ll see magazine cover stories with titles such as “How to Impress Your Boss,” “How to Add Romance to Your Life,” or “How to Dress Like a Movie Star.” These articles promise to give readers directions or information they can follow, and they are popular versions of essays that emphasize process.

In general, essays that emphasize process will explain the steps involved in a particular action, process, or event. Some of these essays focus on giving readers actual instructions, others focus on giving readers information, and still others focus on persuading readers. The type of essay you write depends on the specific topic and purpose you choose.

No matter what your main purpose, keep your audience in mind as you work. As with any essay, select a topic that will interest readers. A group of college students, for example, might be interested in reading an essay that explains how and why to get financial aid but bored by an essay on how and why to plan for retirement. In addition, consider how much your readers already know about your topic. An audience unfamiliar with financial aid may need background information and definitions in order to understand your essay. Finally, be sure that your organization is very logically organized so your readers can easily follow your ideas, thus supporting your purpose.

### Student Essay to Consider

**Directions for Reading the Essay:** As you read the following essay, circle areas that strike you as interesting or especially descriptive, underline areas that seem to be out of place or need work, place stars by any areas where you think additional information could be added, and mark the different modes of writing within this essay. Finally, respond to the claim made within the essay. Do you agree or disagree with the author? Could the author have used better examples to support his or her claim? Be prepared to explain your opinion.

**TEACHING TIP**

Read this essay aloud. In tandem with having students follow the “Directions for Reading the Essay” above, ask them to underline the thesis statement, specific examples, and transitions before answering the questions.

### Successful Exercise

Regular exercise is something like the weather—we all talk about it, but we tend not to do anything about it. Exercise classes on television and exercise programs on DVDs—as well as instructions in books, magazines, and pamphlets—now make it easy to have a low cost personal exercise program without leaving home. However, for success in exercise, people should follow a simple plan consisting of arranging time, making preparations, and starting off at a sensible pace.

Most people who don’t regularly exercise have excuses for not exercising: a heavy schedule at work or school; being rushed in the morning and exhausted at night; too many other responsibilities. However, one solution is simply to get up half an hour earlier in the morning. In this thirty-minute time period, a very effective workout can occur. Even without leaving the house, a person can complete a full-body workout using exercise videos, objects around the house, and his or her own body weight. To offset the excuse of not enough time in the morning, preparing ahead of time becomes a necessity. By laying out clothes for the work day, filling the coffee maker, and gathering books and materials for the day before going to bed, a person can wake up knowing that time has been arranged to allow for exercise.

The next step a person should follow is to prepare for the workout. Most people who exercise in the morning do so on an empty stomach. Because food takes a while to digest, it is unwise to attempt to exercise while the body is trying to break down food; plus, people who exercise on an empty stomach have the added benefit of tapping into the body’s fat reserves during the thirty-minute session. Working out in the home has the added advantage of privacy, so a person doesn’t need to invest in high-cost workout gear; usually a loose T-shirt and shorts are fine. Some people, to save time, will throw tennis shoes on with their pajamas, thus saving one extra step! Then people need to make sure their exercise materials are ready.

Finally, a person who is just beginning an exercise regime should use common sense in getting started. Common sense isn’t so common, as anyone who reads newspapers and watches the world can attest. It has taken a while to get out of shape and getting back into shape is not going to be an overnight phenomenon. Starting too quickly can lead to injuries, which will delay the whole process. Whether a person starts with a DVD or with a written program, he or she should know that the first few times are often the hardest. It is not uncommon for someone starting to exercise not to be able to finish the whole program the first time, but it does get easier. After five or six sessions of exercise, most people find that they are able to complete most of the exercises without their muscles screaming in resistance.

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*continued*



Establishing an exercise program isn't difficult, but it can't be achieved by reading about it, talking about it, or watching models exercise on television. It happens only when a person decides to make the change and employs it. Through careful planning and good common sense, anyone can start exercising and start feeling the benefits of health. As doctors often like to say, "If you don't use it, you'll lose it."

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### About the Main Idea and Author's Purpose

1. In your own words, write the main idea of the essay.

*The author is explaining that with a few simple steps, anyone can successfully start an exercise routine.*

2. What is the author's purpose, and how can you determine this?

*To inform and persuade. The author is persuading the reader that anyone can successfully start an exercise program. The author uses simple steps and examples that make following the program easy.*

### About Unity

3. The (fill in the correct answer: first, second, third) first supporting paragraph of "Successful Exercise" lacks a topic sentence. Write a topic sentence that expresses its main point: First, arrange time for exercise.
4. Which of the following sentences from paragraph 4 should be omitted in the interest of paragraph unity and consistent point of view?
- "Starting too quickly can lead to injuries, which will delay the whole process."
  - (b)** "Common sense isn't so common, as anyone who reads newspapers and watches the world can attest."
  - "Whether a person starts with a DVD or with a written program, he or she should know that the first few times are often the hardest."

### About Support

5. Which sentence in paragraph 3 needs to be followed by more supporting details? (Write the opening words.)

*Then people need to . . .*

### About Coherence

6. List three transitional words that are used in "Successful Exercise." (answers will vary)

*however*

*the next step*

*finally*

### QUESTIONS

Wording of answers may vary.

#### ESL TIP

Since process essays are organized sequentially, nonnative students would benefit from reviewing time words and adverbial clauses of time. Participial phrases would also achieve greater coherence by being used to indicate the sequence of actions between clauses. They also add variety to sentence structure. A review of the imperative would also be important because it is often used in describing the steps in a process.

### About Mixed Modes

7. What are the different types of modes the author employed in the paragraphs to create such a fluid and interesting essay?

*process and exemplification*

### About the Introduction and Conclusion

8. Which statement best describes the introduction?
- It begins with a couple of general points about the topic and narrows down to the thesis.
  - It explains the importance of daily exercise to the reader.

## Writing an Essay with Emphasis on Process

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1



**TEACHING TIP**  
Encourage students to use the four steps, including prewriting and revision, to complete these assignments.

### SHARING YOUR EXPERTISE

Everyone is an expert at something. Using your personal experiences and insights, write an essay with an emphasis on process. If you are a parent, you might write about how you taught your children to read. If you work as a sales representative, you might write about how monthly sales quotas are met. If you are a recovering addict, you might write about how the twelve-step recovery process works. As a college student, you might write about how the registration process works at your school. Each of these topics will require you to incorporate several modes of writing, such as narration (Chapter 7) and description (Chapter 8).

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2



### THINKING AS A SCIENTIST

The scientific method is a process that all scientists use. In this essay, you are to research the scientific method; then, using this method, write about an experiment. Possible experiments that could be described are dropping Mentos candies into Coca-Cola bottles, creating non-Newtonian oobleck, or turning needles into magnets. This essay will require you to read Chapter 20, "Writing a Research Paper"; Chapter 8, "Description"; and Chapter 9, "Process."

### BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

#### Process



In this essay that emphasizes process, you will write with a specific purpose and for a specific audience.

**PREPARING A HANDOUT** Imagine that you are a job recruiter working at an employment agency. Your supervisor has asked you to help new clients understand the job-seeking process. You decide to create a handout on how to prepare for a job interview. What would be the first step that a job seeker should consider? What would be the next step? What about the final step? Select three steps and develop each in a separate paragraph. Some areas you might consider are these: dressing appropriately, arriving on time, offering a firm handshake, maintaining eye contact, staying positive throughout the interview, bringing a sense of humor, and being honest at all times. You will want to review Chapter 6, "Exemplification" and Chapter 9, "Process."

## Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Cause and/or Effect

### Considering Purpose and Audience

The main purpose of an essay that emphasizes cause and/or effect is to support your purpose by using examples that explain (1) the causes of a particular event or situation; (2) the effects of an event or a situation; or, more rarely, (3) a combination of both.

The type of essay you write will depend on the topic you choose and the main point you wish to communicate. If, for example, your purpose is to profile a special person who has had a great impact on you, your essay would emphasize the effects of that person. However, if your purpose is to exemplify why you moved out of your family home, your essay would focus on the causes of your decision.

As with all essays, try to pick a topic that will appeal to your audience of readers. An essay on the negative effects of steroids and other drugs on professional athletes may be especially interesting to an audience of sports fans. On the other hand, this same topic might not be as appealing to people who dislike sports. In addition to selecting a lively topic, be sure to make your main point clear so that your audience can follow the cause-effect relationship you've chosen to develop. In the above instance, you might even announce specific causes or effects by signaling them to readers: "One effect drug use has on athletes is to . . ."

### Student Essay to Consider

**Directions for Reading the Essay:** As you read the following essay, circle areas that strike you as interesting or especially descriptive, underline areas that seem to be out of place or need work, place stars by any areas where you think additional information could be added, and mark the different modes of writing within this essay. Additionally, think about the student's experience with college and your own experience. What types of comparisons can you make? Be prepared to share your findings.

#### The Challenges of Going Back to School

When I first decided to go back to school, I wasn't sure about my ability to do the work. When I was in high school, I was a pretty good student. But then I met Jonathan. Everything changed after that. My studies were no longer my main focus, and my relationship became my reason for living. By the end of senior year, I was pregnant. I didn't attend my senior prom, and Jonathan and I were quickly married off by our parents. Well, now it was fifteen years later, and I was back at school. Little did I know that returning to school after a long period would bring me so many challenges.

First of all, my writing skills had really deteriorated. As a result of not having used my grammar skills in fifteen years, I tested into a



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**TEACHING TIP**  
Read this essay aloud. In tandem with having students follow the "Directions for Reading the Essay" above, ask them to underline the thesis statement, specific examples, and transitions before answering the questions.

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*continued*

developmental writing class. I was so ashamed and even frustrated when I couldn't recognize a fragment, use commas correctly, or fix a dangling modifier. My essays started off terribly, but eventually, with a lot of hard work and effort, the grades started to improve. My favorite essay assignment involved attending a campus rally and writing about it.

Second, math classes were another challenge for me. As a housewife and young mother, I had to keep a pretty tight budget with groceries and expenses. I thought I had maintained my basic math skills in check. Was I wrong! That's when it really hit me. I thought about how much I loved being with my children when they were young, and how many important lessons I learned while being home. But I also realized that I should have listened to my parents and friends and continued with my education much sooner. The choices I had made back in high school came suddenly crashing before me.

Socially I felt awkward as well. I didn't seem to have the leisure time some of my classmates had to socialize and study in groups. I once tried to study with a group in my American History class, but the time the group met conflicted with my part-time job I had taken to pay for my classes. I found myself studying mostly on my own. Jonathan was a great support, but he couldn't help me with some of my homework. After much trial and tribulation, I completed all my coursework, including my paralegal courses, and was ready to start my new life.

Going back to school after so many years proved to be an enormous challenge. I am now working as a paralegal and feel that my life is back on track. I'm even thinking about applying for law school. I don't want to rush things, though. I am presently enjoying my job and learning many things about the law and society. My experience with going back to school changed my view of myself and my personal goals. I learned that decisions carry many consequences, and that I should look at all my options before I make an important, life-altering decision.

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## QUESTIONS

### About the Main Idea and Author's Purpose

1. In your own words, write the main idea of the essay.

*The author explains her experience of going to college after being out of school for fifteen years.*

2. What is the author's purpose, and how can you determine this?

*To inform and persuade. The author is sharing her personal experiences to demonstrate what happened to her educational abilities, what life was like before she finished school, and what life was like when she finally finished school. The essay also has a secondary purpose of demonstrating how choices have consequences, and it is important to think before acting.*

### About Unity

3. Which sentence in paragraph 2 should be omitted in the interest of paragraph unity? (Write the opening words.)

*My favorite essay assignment . . .*

### About Support

4. After which sentence in paragraph 3 is more support needed?

*Was I wrong!*

### About Coherence

5. What are the two transition words or phrases that signal two major points of support for the thesis?

*First of all*      *Second*

### Mixed Modes

6. What are the different types of modes the author employed in her paragraphs to create such an interesting essay?

*Narration and Cause and/or Effect*

### About the Introduction and Conclusion

7. Which sentence best describes the opening paragraph?
- It begins with a general statement of the topic and narrows it down to a thesis statement.
  - It uses an incident or brief story.
  - It explains the importance of the topic to the reader.
  - It starts with an idea that is the opposite of the one then developed.
8. Which method is used in the conclusion?
- Summary and final thoughts
  - Recommendation
  - Thought-provoking quotation

## Writing an Essay with Emphasis on Cause and/or Effect

### CONSIDERING THE STATE OF THE HUMAN RACE

If friendly aliens from a highly developed civilization decided to visit our planet, they would encounter a contradictory race of beings—us. We humans would have reasons to feel both proud and ashamed of the kind of society the aliens would encounter. Write an essay explaining whether you would be proud or ashamed of the state of the human race today. Good support may include narration (Chapter 7), description (Chapter 8), cause and effect (Chapter 10), argument (Chapter 14), and possibly some research (Chapter 20).

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1



#### TEACHING TIP

Encourage students to use the four steps to complete these assignments, including prewriting and revision.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2



### ANALYZING A FAMOUS FIGURE

Write an essay about an author, a musician, or an actor who has had a positive or negative influence on society. To develop your idea, use reasons that demonstrate the effects of your chosen subject's actions. You may want to refer to Chapter 6, "Exemplification"; Chapter 10, "Cause and Effect"; and Chapter 14, "Argument." If you use ideas other than your own, refer to Chapter 20, "Writing a Research Paper" for proper documentation and citation.

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

### Cause-and-Effect



In this essay that emphasizes cause and/or effect, you will write with a specific purpose and for a specific audience.

**REVIEWING AN EMPLOYEE** Imagine that you are a retail store manager and must write a quarterly performance report for one of your employees. Not only is this person a top seller, but he or she has a positive attitude and shows leadership qualities. Write an essay in which you focus on how this person has brought about three positive changes in the company. Each change should be developed in a separate paragraph.

Although much of your essay will focus on the effects (Chapter 10) this person has had on the company, it should also incorporate examples (Chapter 6) and anecdotes (Chapter 7) that support the thesis.

## Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Comparison and/or Contrast

### Considering Purpose and Audience

The purpose of an essay that emphasizes comparison and/or contrast is to make a point by including examples that show how distinct items or people are either similar or different. Whether you choose to use comparison or contrast depends on the specific point you want to convey to readers. As you think about your own essay, ask yourself what type of essay would benefit from this type of support. Then determine whether you want to focus on the differences between the items or their similarities. You may even decide that you want to do both. If, say, you choose to persuade your reader that he or she should purchase a specific type of computer, you may include paragraphs on the similarities and differences between Mac and PC computers. Once you determine your purpose, be sure you keep your readers in mind when planning your essay as your audience will determine your tone and needed background information, definitions, and examples.

Unlike a comparison or contrast paragraph that focuses only on the similarities or differences of two or more subjects, an essay that emphasizes comparison and/or contrast may also contain description, narration, persuasion, and/or research. As you have seen in the paragraph development sections, different modes require different forms of writing, so it is important to look at your essay as a mix, using the specific modes and writing techniques where and when needed.

#### TEACHING TIP

Ask students to consider what would happen if they did not consider the purpose and audience for an essay assignment.

## Student Essay to Consider

**Directions for Reading the Essay:** As you read the following essay, circle areas that strike you as interesting or especially descriptive, underline areas that seem to be out of place or need work, place stars by any areas where you think additional information could be added, and mark the different modes of writing within this essay. Additionally, compare the author’s study habits, both in high school and college, to your own study habits, and be prepared to discuss them.

### Studying: Then and Now

One June day, I staggered into a high school classroom to take my final exam in United States History IV. I had made my usual desperate effort to cram the night before, with the usual dismal results—I had gotten only to page seventy-five of a four-hundred-page textbook. My study habits in high school, obviously, were a mess. But in college, I’ve made an attempt to reform my note-taking, studying, and test-taking skills.

As I took notes in high school classes, I often lost interest and began doodling, drawing Martians, or seeing what my signature would look like if I married the cute guy in the second row. Now, however, I try not to let my mind wander, and I pull my thoughts back into focus when they begin to go fuzzy. In high school, my notes often looked like something written in hieroglyphics. In college, I’ve learned to use a semiprint writing style that makes my notes understandable. When I would look over my high school notes, I couldn’t understand them. There would be a word like “Reconstruction,” then a big blank, then the word “important.” Weeks later, I had no idea what Reconstruction was or why it was important. I’ve since learned to write down connecting ideas, even if I have to take the time to do it after class. Taking notes is one thing I’ve really learned to do better since high school days.

Ordinary studying during the term is another area where I’ve made changes. In high school, I let reading assignments go. I told myself that I’d have no trouble catching up on two hundred pages during a fifteen-minute ride to school. College courses have taught me to keep pace with the work. Otherwise, I feel as though I’m sinking into a quicksand of unread material. When I finally read the high school assignment, my eyes would run over the words but my brain would be plotting how to get the car for Saturday night. Now, I use several techniques that force me to really concentrate on my reading.

In addition to learning how to cope with daily work, I’ve also learned to handle study sessions for big tests. My all-night study sessions in high school were experiments in self-torture. Around 2:00 A.M., my mind, like a soaked sponge, simply stopped absorbing things. Now, I space out exam study sessions over several days. That way, the night before can be devoted to an overall review rather than raw memorizing. Most important,



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**TEACHING TIP**  
Read this essay aloud. In tandem with having students follow the “Directions for Reading the Essay” above, ask them to underline the thesis statement, specific examples, and transitions before answering the questions.

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though, I've changed my attitude toward tests. In high school, I thought tests were mysterious things with completely unpredictable questions. Now, I ask instructors about the kinds of questions that will be on the exam, and I try to anticipate which areas or facts instructors are likely to ask about. These practices really work, and for me they've taken much of the fear and mystery out of tests.

Since I've reformed, note-taking and studying are not as tough as they once were. And I am beginning to reap the benefits. As time goes on, my college test sheets are going to look much different from the red-marked tests of my high school days.

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## QUESTIONS

### ESL TIP

To improve coherence and grammatical accuracy, nonnative speakers should review the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs, especially the usage of *less* and *fewer*. They should also practice using adverbial clauses of comparison and contrast.

### About the Main Idea and Author's Purpose

1. In your own words, write the main idea of the essay.

*The author's purpose is to demonstrate how her study skills in college are better than in high school.*

2. What is the author's purpose, and how can you determine this?

*To inform. The author uses personal examples to explain how her studying changed from high school to college.*

### About Unity

3. In which supporting paragraph in "Studying: Then and Now" is the topic sentence at the end rather than at the beginning, where it generally belongs in student essays?

*2 (the first supporting paragraph)*

### About Support

4. Which sentence in paragraph 3 needs to be followed by more supporting details? (Write the opening words.)

*Now I use several techniques ...*

### About Coherence

5. What method of development does the author use?

*Point by point*

### About Mixed Modes

6. What are the different types of modes the author employed to support her purpose?

*Comparison and contrast, exemplification, and narration*



## About the Introduction and Conclusion

7. Which sentence best describes the opening paragraph?
  - a. It begins with a broad statement that narrows down to the thesis.
  - b. It explains the importance of the topic to the reader.
  - c.** It uses an incident or a brief story.

### RESPONDING TO IMAGES

Is there such a thing as a “typical family”? The Pritchetts, a true modern family, resemble what many families of the twenty-first century now look like. What is your idea of a typical family? Write an essay comparing or contrasting your own family with your concept of a typical family.



## Writing an Essay with Emphasis on Comparison and/or Contrast

### ANALYZING ATTITUDES

Write an essay in which you analyze two attitudes on a controversial subject. You may want to contrast your views with those of someone else, or contrast the way you felt about the subject in the past with the way you feel now. You will want to review Chapter 11, “Comparison or Contrast”; additionally, if you choose the first option, you may need to do research, so you will need to read Chapter 20, “Writing a Research Paper” in order to properly document and cite your information.

### COMPARING VIEWPOINTS

Emily Dickinson is known for her poems about solitude. Write an essay that compares or contrasts Dickinson’s view about solitude in two of the poems. Then discuss how your view of solitude is either similar to or different from that which is presented by the poems. To create good support, you will want to review Chapter 11, “Comparison or Contrast” and Chapter 6, “Exemplification.” You may also want to review Chapter 12, “Definition” as this assignment may require you to compare your definition of solitude to Emily Dickinson’s definition. Finally, if you use direct quotes or paraphrases of Dickinson’s poems, you should review Chapter 20, “Writing a Research Paper” for proper citation and documentation.

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1



### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2



#### TEACHING TIP

Encourage students to use the four steps to complete these assignments, including prewriting and revision.

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

### Comparison or Contrast



In this essay that emphasizes comparison and/or contrast, you will write with a specific purpose and for a specific audience.

**REQUESTING A PROMOTION** Assume that there is a desirable job opening at your workplace. Write a letter in which you persuade your boss that you are the ideal candidate for this position. To support your point, you will want to compare your abilities with those of the ideal candidate for this position. Use the point-by-point method, discussing each desired qualification and then describing how well you measure up to it. Use the requirements of a job you are familiar with, ideally a job you would really like to apply for someday. Additional support should be given through actual examples (Chapter 6, “Exemplification” and Chapter 7, “Narration”) of your abilities.

## Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Definition

### Considering Purpose and Audience

When you write an essay that emphasizes definition, your main purpose is to explain to readers your understanding of a key term or concept, while your secondary purpose is to persuade them that your definition is a legitimate one. Keep in mind that when you present a definition in your essay, you should not simply repeat a word’s dictionary meaning. Instead, you should convey what a particular term means to you through persuasive examples. For example, if you were to write about the term “patriotism,” you might begin by presenting your definition of the word. You might say patriotism means turning out for Fourth of July parades, displaying the flag, or supporting the government. Or perhaps you think patriotism is about becoming politically active and questioning government policy. Whatever definition you choose, be sure to provide specific instances so that readers can fully understand your meaning of the term. For example, in writing an essay on patriotism, you might describe three people whom you see as truly patriotic. Writing about each person will help ensure that readers see and understand the term as you do.

As with other essay forms, keep your audience in mind. If, for instance, you were proposing a new definition of “patriotism,” an audience of war veterans might require different examples than would an audience of college students.

### Student Essay to Consider

**Directions for Reading the Essay:** As you read the following essay, circle areas that strike you as interesting or especially descriptive, underline areas that seem to be out of place or need work, place stars by any areas where you think additional information could be added, and mark the different modes of writing within this essay. Do you agree or disagree with these labels? Can you think of a label the author left out? Be prepared to discuss your ideas.



## Student Zombies

Schools divide people into categories. From first grade on up, students are labeled “advanced” or “deprived” or “remedial” or “antisocial.” Students pigeonhole their fellow students, too. We’ve all known the “brain,” the “jock,” the “dummy,” and the “teacher’s pet.” In most cases, these narrow labels are misleading and inaccurate. But there is one label for a certain type of college student that says it all: “zombie.”

Zombies are the living dead. Most of us haven’t known a lot of real zombies personally, but we do know how they act. We have horror movies to guide us. The special effects in horror movies are much better these days. Over the years, we’ve learned from the movies that zombies stalk around graveyards, their eyes glued open by Hollywood makeup artists, bumping like cheap toy robots into living people. Zombie students in college do just about the same thing. They stalk around campus, eyes glazed, staring off into space. When they do manage to wander into a classroom, they sit down mechanically and contemplate the ceiling. Zombie students rarely eat, talk, laugh, or toss Frisbees on campus lawns. Instead, they vanish when class is dismissed and return only when some mysterious zombie signal summons them back into a classroom. The signal may not occur for weeks.

Zombies are controlled by some mysterious force. According to legend, real zombies are corpses that have been brought back to life to do the bidding of a voodoo master. Student zombies, too, seem directed by a strange power. They continue to attend school although they have no apparent desire to do so. They show no interest in college-related activities like tests, grades, papers, and projects. And yet some inner force compels them to wander through the halls of higher education.

An awful fate awaits all zombies unless something happens to break the spell they’re under. In the movies, zombies are often shot, stabbed, drowned, electrocuted, and run over by large vehicles, all to no avail. Finally the hero or heroine realizes that a counterspell is needed. Once that spell is cast, with the appropriate props of chicken feet, human hair, and bats’ eyeballs, the zombie-corpse can return peacefully to its coffin. The only hope for a student zombie to change is for him or her to undergo a similarly traumatic experience.

All college students know that it’s not necessary to see *Night of the Living Dead* or *Land of the Dead* in order to see zombies in action—or nonaction. They can forget the campus film series or the late-late show. All they need to do is just sit in a classroom and wait. They know what they’re looking for—the students who walk in without books or papers and sit in the very last row of seats. The ones with iPods plugged into their ears don’t count as zombies—that’s a whole different category of “student.” *Day of the Living Dead* is showing every day at a college nearby.

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**TEACHING TIP**  
Read this essay aloud. In tandem with having students follow the “Directions for Reading the Essay” above, ask them to underline the thesis statement, specific examples, and transitions before answering the questions.

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## QUESTIONS

### About the Main Idea and Author's Purpose

- In your own words, write the main idea of the essay.  
*The author is defining a type of college student that is found on every college campus.*
- What is the author's purpose, and how can you determine this?  
*To entertain the reader with a definition of a type of college student. The author uses adjectives and descriptions that relay humor.*

### About Unity

- Which sentence in paragraph 2 of "Student Zombies" should be omitted in the interest of paragraph unity? (Write the opening words.)  
*The special effects . . .*
- What sentence in the final paragraph introduces a new topic and so should be eliminated? (Write the opening words.)  
*The ones with iPods . . .*

### About Support

- After which sentence in paragraph 4 is more support needed? (Write the opening words.)  
*The only hope for a student zombie . . .*

### About Coherence

- Which sentence in paragraph 2 begins with a change-of-direction transitional word? (Write the opening words.)  
*Instead, they vanish . . .*

### About Mixed Modes

- What are the different types of modes the author employed in the paragraphs to create such an entertaining and interesting essay?  
*Definition, description, and comparison and contrast*

### About the Introduction and Conclusion

- Which method of introduction is used in the opening paragraph? (Circle the letter of the answer.)
  - Anecdote
  - Idea that is the opposite of the one to be developed
  - Quotation
  - d.** Broad, general statement narrowing to a thesis

## Writing an Essay with Emphasis on Definition

### DEFENDING A BOOK

Each year, the Young Adult Library Services Association puts out a list of the best books for young adults. The decisions are made by a committee. Pretend you are on the committee and you need to defend your choice of book. You will need to define what you think makes a great book, and then demonstrate how this book fits your definition. You will want to review Chapter 12, “Definition” and Chapter 14, “Argument” to help you present a solid essay that persuades the committee to include your book on the list. You may also need to review Chapter 20, “Writing a Research Paper” if you decide to visit the YALSA Web site, <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklistsbook>, and/or incorporate direct quotations or summaries of your book.

### DEFENDING A THEORY

Famous philosophers like Aristotle, Plato, and Friedrich Nietzsche spent their lives thinking about and trying to solve some of life’s most difficult questions. In this assignment, you are to research a philosopher and learn about his or her most famous theory/theories. You could study Epicurus and his theory of happiness or G. E. Moore and his theory of truth. Then, you are to write an essay that explains why you agree or disagree with the ideas you have studied and why.

If your idea of happiness differs from that of Epicurus, give examples of the differences, or if your idea of truth is the same as that of Moore, explain why you have come to that idea. This essay will require you to define the term or theory (Chapter 12), compare or contrast your definition to the philosopher’s definition (Chapter 11), and persuade your audience to believe why your definition is the correct one (Chapter 14).

In this essay that emphasizes definition, you will write with a specific purpose and for a specific audience.

**PROMOTING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE** You work in a doctor’s office and have been asked to write a brochure that will be placed in the waiting room. The brochure is intended to tell patients what a healthy lifestyle is. Write an essay that defines “healthy lifestyle” for your readers, using examples whenever appropriate. Your definition might focus on both mental and physical health and might include eating, sleeping, exercise, and recreational habits. You may want to look at Chapter 6, “Exemplification”; Chapter 7, “Narration”; and Chapter 12, “Definition” for help in developing solid support for your essay.

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1



**TEACHING TIP**  
Encourage students to use the four steps including prewriting and revision, to complete these assignments.

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2



### BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

#### Definition



## Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Division and Classification

### Considering Purpose and Audience

When writing an essay that emphasizes division and classification, your purpose is to present your audience with your own unique way of dividing and classifying particular topics. In order to write a successful essay, you will need to first choose a topic that interests readers and lends itself to support that can be divided and classified. Once you pick your topic and decide on the support you will use, you will then have to come up with your own unique sorting system—one that readers will be able to understand.

For example, if your essay focuses on types of clothing, there are a number of ways to sort this topic into categories. You could divide clothing by the function it serves: shirts and jackets (to cover the upper body), pants and skirts (for the lower body), and shoes and socks (for the feet). Or you could divide clothes according to the materials they are made from: animal products, plant products, and synthetic materials. A more interesting, and potentially humorous, way to divide clothes is by fashion: clothes that are stylish, clothes that are going out of style, and clothes that are so unattractive that they never were in style. Notice that in all three of these cases, the broad topic of clothing has been divided into categories according to a particular principle (function, materials, and fashion).

Unlike a classification and division paragraph that focuses only on presenting the categories, an essay that emphasizes classification and division may also contain description and/or narration. As you have read in the paragraph development sections, different modes require different forms of writing, so it is important to use the specific modes and writing techniques where and when needed. Also, depending on the different categories that you include, you may need to research more information. Your audience and the purpose of your essay will determine the kinds of categorizations you will establish, if research is required, where extra description may be needed, and what strategies should be employed while writing.

### Student Essay to Consider

**Directions for Reading the Essay:** As you read the following essay, circle areas that strike you as interesting or especially descriptive, underline areas that seem to be out of place or need work, place stars by any areas where you think additional information could be added, and mark the different modes of writing within this essay. Additionally, do you think the examples support the purpose of the essay, or should the author have chosen different examples? Be prepared to explain your opinion.



#### Don't Judge a Person . . .

Knowing what is on a person's iPod has become so popular, Web sites and forums are dedicated to answering just that question. On YouTube, people have posted videos creatively sharing what is on their

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*continued*

iPods. In magazines, celebrities are often asked what is on their iPod, and the article that follows then dissects the celebrity's personality based upon his or her music choices. Unfortunately, people are often judged by the type of music they listen to, but stereotyping people according to their music often creates an incorrect picture.

One example of music listeners who are frequently mislabeled is rap music fans. Rap music is often stereotyped as angry, sexual, and violent. Because of this, people who listen to rap are often labeled as gang members or trouble-makers. There are listeners who like it because it symbolizes gangs and trouble, but many people have much simpler reasons for listening. Some people like to listen to rap because the songs usually have very strong rhythms, which can be hypnotic and fun. Others like to listen to rap because they find it therapeutic; the rappers sing about topics that many of the listeners are experiencing, but don't know how to deal with. When Common, a rapper and poet, was invited to a poetry event at the White House, many people were astonished and upset. Picturing a president listening to rap and inviting that artist to the White House was too much. The president shouldn't be inviting rappers to the White House. Common's performance, however, was not angry, sexual, or violent, and those who heard him praised his performance.

Christian music listeners are another group that is often mislabeled. Because of the nature of Christian music, listeners are often labeled as "goody-two-shoes" or naive. Most listeners of Christian music like the fact that it incorporates many genres, including rap, but doesn't usually contain vulgar language or sexually explicit lyrics.

A final group of music listeners that is often wrongly stereotyped is country music listeners. These listeners are often labeled as "pickup-driving hunters" and "hicks." However, many country music fans are urbanites who have spent very little time in the country. Other fans of country music like it because, like Christian music, the songs are often less vulgar and racy than other popular forms of music. Despite his sexy, superstar "nonhick" image, Taylor Lautner listens to several types of music, including country.

Countless numbers of people are judged or stereotyped by what music they listen to. However, wrapping someone in a label according to the music he or she listens to is often more wrong than right. As the saying goes, "Don't judge a book by its cover," or in this case don't judge a person by his or her iPod.

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**TEACHING TIP**  
Read this essay aloud. In tandem with having students follow the "Directions for Reading the Essay" above, ask them to underline the thesis statement, specific examples, and transitions before answering the questions.

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### About the Main Idea and Author's Purpose

1. In your own words, write the main idea of the essay.

*The author is persuading the reader not to judge people by the music they listen to. She then gives examples that support this idea using three types of music*

### QUESTIONS

**ESL TIP**

To achieve greater coherence, nonnative speakers should review the transitions for exemplification and comparison-contrast essays. These include: additive transitions (to introduce categories), transitions to show similarities and differences, transitions to introduce examples, and ones to indicate the importance of a category.

2. What is the author's purpose, and how can you determine this?

*To persuade the reader. The author uses examples to show how different people listen to different music and not everyone fits into the stereotype.*

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**About Unity**

3. Which sentence in paragraph 2 of "Don't Judge a Person . . ." should be omitted in the interest of paragraph unity? (Write the opening words.)

*The president shouldn't be . . .*

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**About Support**

4. After which sentence in paragraph 3 is more support needed? (Write the opening words.)

*Most listeners of Christian music like the fact . . .*

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**About Coherence**

5. List the transitional words used at the beginning of paragraphs 2, 3, and 4.

*One example*

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*Another group*

---

*A final group*

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**Mixed Modes**

6. What are the different types of modes the author employed in her paragraphs to create such a fluid essay?

*Exemplification and classification*

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**About the Introduction and Conclusion**

7. What method of introduction is used in the opening paragraph? (Circle the letter of the answer.)

a. Anecdote

b. Idea that is the opposite of the one to be developed

c. Broad, general statement narrowing to a thesis

d. Quotation



## Writing an Essay with Emphasis on Division and Classification

### EXAMINING CATEGORIES

Choose one of the following subjects as the basis for an essay that emphasizes division and classification. Once you have chosen a topic, you will want to decide what other modes of writing will help support your purpose and review the relevant chapters. If your essay requires description, review Chapter 8; if it requires comparison or contrast, review Chapter 11. Remember, all essays are a mix of writing modes.

Music	Pet owners	Vacations
Videos	Junk food	Bosses
Catalogs	College courses	Voicemail messages
Fiction	Dating couples	Breakfast foods
Web sites	Shoppers	Parties

### GETTING TO KNOW YOUR COLLEGE LIBRARY

The library on your campus is a central part of the learning process. At some point, most classes will require students to use the library for something other than checking their e-mail and Facebook. In this assignment, you will be required to visit your local library and interview a librarian to find out all the resources available. Once you have gathered your information, you will want to classify the types of services offered at your library, supporting the classifications with detailed information. This assignment will require you to review Chapter 6, “Exemplification”; Chapter 8, “Description”; Chapter 13, “Division-Classification”; and Chapter 20, “Writing a Research Paper.”

In this essay that emphasizes division or classification, you will write with a specific purpose and for a specific audience.

**DESCRIBING THE IDEAL JOB** Unsure about your career direction, you have gone to a job counseling center. To help select the work best suited for you, a counselor has asked you to write a detailed description of your “ideal job,” which will be used to match you to different types of employment.

To describe your “ideal job,” choose three categories from the following list:

- Activities done on the job
- Skills used on the job
- People you work with
- Physical environment
- Salary and fringe benefits
- Opportunities for advancement

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1



#### TEACHING TIP

Encourage students to use the four steps to complete these assignments, including prewriting and revision.

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2



### BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

#### Division-Classification



*continued*

In your essay, explain your ideals for each category (Chapter 13, “Division-Classification”). You will also need to use specific examples to illustrate your points like anecdotes (Chapter 7, “Narration”) and possibly researched support (Chapter 20, “Writing a Research Paper”).

## Developing an Essay with Emphasis on Argument

### Considering Purpose and Audience

When you write an essay that has an emphasis on argument, your main purpose is to convince readers that your particular view or opinion on an issue or topic is correct. In addition, at times, you may have a second purpose for your essay: to persuade your audience to take some sort of action.

While consideration of your audience is important for all essay forms, it is absolutely critical to the success of an essay that is persuasive in tone. Depending on the main point you choose, your audience may be firmly opposed to your view or somewhat supportive of it. As you begin planning, consider what your audience already knows and how it feels about the main point of your essay. Say, for example, you want to argue that public schools should require students to wear uniforms. Using this example, ask yourself what opinion your audience holds about school uniforms. What are likely to be their objections to your argument? Why would people not support your main point? What, if anything, are the merits of the opposing point of view? In order to “get inside the head” of your opposition, you might even want to interview a few people you’re sure will disagree with you: say, for instance, a student with a very funky personal style who you know would dislike wearing a uniform. By becoming aware of the points of view your audience might have, you will know how to proceed in researching your rebuttal to their arguments. By directly addressing your opposition, you add credibility to your argument and increase the chances that others will be convinced that your main point is valid.

The purpose of your essay will determine what research should be included (Chapter 20), what tone should be taken, and what modes of writing should be used for support. As you have seen in the paragraph development sections, different modes require different forms of writing, so it is important to look at the specific modes and writing techniques where and when needed.

### Student Essay to Consider

Directions for Reading the Essay: As you read the following essay, circle areas that strike you as interesting or especially descriptive, underline areas that seem to be out of place or need work, place stars by any areas where you think additional information could be added, and mark the different modes of writing within this essay. Additionally, determine if the examples the author provided are persuasive enough, and if not, what would have offered better support. Be prepared to discuss your opinion.

#### in a writer’s words

*“Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind.”*

—Rudyard Kipling

### AAA Gets an A for Service

When many people pack for road trips, they include things like clothes, food, games, more food, and, for some, GPS units. What many people forget to pack is a membership in the American Automobile Association (AAA). AAA offers travel planning, roadside service, and peace of mind. Although more and more people are getting GPS units for their cars, nothing should replace a service like AAA.

Trip planning is one of the services that AAA offers that a GPS unit cannot truly do. Although many people like to plan trips on their own, having a service like AAA can add a whole new dimension to the planning. They offer a service that organizes all the travel, whether road, air, train, or boat. A wonderful product is the TripTik—road trip plans that include navigational directions, roadside interests, fun sites, and restaurants. Although GPS units can offer similar things, not all GPS units can be utilized while the car is being driven, so the driver must pull over in order for the navigator to be able to access the information. A TripTik is paper, so it doesn't require a parked car to override the navigational unit and is easily accessible. Another positive thing about the TripTik is that even if a GPS unit is being used, the navigator can follow along with the TripTik, making suggestions and providing a backup just in case the GPS unit fails. When my husband and I were on a trip, our GPS unit started misreading our location. We were on an interstate in the middle of traffic and were able to continue with the use of the TripTik until it was possible to get our GPS unit reset.

Another great service that AAA offers is a free selection of guidebooks. Travelers can pick up guidebooks for states, regions, and cities. The guidebooks contain everything from information about hotels and restaurants to activities to do in that area. Not only do the guidebooks make finding a last-minute hotel or dinner venue easy, but they can also provide enough background information so that travelers can become their own tour guides. To purchase similar guidebooks at a bookstore would be an annoyance. Although they also contain lists of restaurants, hotels, and activities, GPS units don't have teams of people visiting these venues and rating them on cleanliness, service, quality of food, and value for money. During one trip, we had an unplanned overnight stay. Instead of spending time looking through our GPS hotel listing and possibly staying in a questionable place, we consulted our guidebook and found a great hotel that had been approved by AAA and offered a discounted price for AAA members.

One of the best benefits of AAA is the emergency roadside service. If a car breaks down, the driver can call AAA to get help. AAA will send someone out to change a flat tire, jumpstart the car, or even deliver gas. If the person dispatched to help cannot provide assistance, he or she will call for a tow truck to take the car and its passengers to a nearby garage. Again, like the restaurant and hotel guides, the tow truck will be AAA-approved and



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**TEACHING TIP**  
Read this essay aloud. Ask students to underline the thesis statement, specific examples, and transitions before answering the questions.

3

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should be free to the AAA customer. Additionally, the tow truck will take the car to an approved garage that has proven itself to be honest and reliable. No task is too small for AAA, even retrieving keys locked in the car.

Technology is great and having a GPS unit in a car is a comfort to many drivers. However, one comfort that all drivers should have is the knowledge that they packed their card containing their AAA membership number and the toll-free number that reaches live operators. GPS units may offer navigational security, but they cannot replace the security that AAA provides its members.

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## QUESTIONS

### About the Main Idea and Author's Purpose

1. In your own words, write the main idea of the essay.

*The author offers reasons why everyone should include an AAA membership in his or her packing list.*

2. What is the author's purpose, and how can you determine this?

*Persuasion. The author's examples point out the benefits of AAA but ignore any drawbacks to having a membership.*

### About Unity

3. Which sentence in paragraph 3 should be omitted in the interest of paragraph unity? (Write the opening words.)

*To purchase similar guidebooks...*

### About Support

4. After which sentence in paragraph 4 is more support needed? (Write the opening words.)

*No task is too small...*

### About Coherence

5. What transition words does the author use at the beginning of each paragraph?

*... one of the services...*

*Another great service...*

*One of the best...*

### Mixed Modes

6. What are the different types of modes the author employed in her paragraphs to create such a persuasive essay?

*Exemplification, narration, comparison and contrast*

#### ESL TIP

To achieve coherence and grammatical accuracy in their writing, nonnative students would benefit from instruction in the context of an argumentative paragraph. Among Spanish-speaking students, a typical error is: "I am agree," which is a direct translation. A review of connectors that show adding information would be helpful too.

## About the Introduction and Conclusion

7. What method is used in the conclusion?
  - a. Summary and final thoughts
  - b. Recommendation
  - c. Thought-provoking question

## Writing an Essay with Emphasis on Argument

### SUPPORTING AN ARGUMENT

Write an essay in which you argue *for* or *against* the statement: “An employer should be able to use information from social networking sites such as *MySpace* and *Facebook* before hiring a job applicant.”

Support and defend your essay by drawing on your reasoning ability and general experience. Use the modes of writing that will best help you support your essay. If you use any research, refer to Chapter 20, “Writing a Research Paper,” to help you document and cite your information properly.

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1



**TEACHING TIP**  
Encourage students to use the four steps, to complete these assignments, including prewriting and revision.

### WRITING A LETTER TO THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Write a letter to the president of your college about something that needs to be changed on campus; it could be parking issues, tuition, schedules, fees, and so on. In your letter, explain what the problem is, why it needs to be fixed, and offer a solution. Keeping your audience in mind, you will want to maintain a formal tone and provide solid evidence. Your evidence might include the effects of the problem (Chapter 10), anecdotes of fellow students’ experiences (Chapter 7), and/or examples from other colleges that have had the same problem (Chapter 11 and Chapter 20).

### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2



In this essay that emphasizes argument, you will write with a specific purpose and for a specific audience.

**RAISING AWARENESS** You care deeply about the issues in your community. As a concerned citizen, you would like to make others aware of a growing problem—for example, a rise in auto thefts, speeding in a school zone, graffiti on the roadways, or illegal dumping. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper in which you argue why more should be done to address this problem. Provide convincing reasons to support your position and address any skepticism that readers may have. Good research (Chapter 20) and anecdotes (Chapter 7) will help provide valid reasons to support your position.

### BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

#### Argument

