Writing Style Guides and Exercises

Keep this packet in your class folder and bring it to class every day.

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Paragraph Composition and Unity

Paragraphs are unified by following the MEAL plan and exhibiting sentence continuity.

Unified paragraphs must contain four elements. Follow the MEAL plan:

- **Main point** (stated somewhere in the first three sentences of your paragraph, sometimes in a topic sentence)
- **Evidence** (this is a statement of what you need to prove your point, such as a reference to a secondary source or an example from your primary text)
- **Analysis** (this is where you elaborate on your evidence by using textual evidence such as quotes or paraphrases, specific examples of your evidence, etc.)
- **Link** (Use the closing sentence of your paragraph to “wrap things up” by linking your analysis back to either the main point of your paragraph or the thesis of your paper.)

Paragraphs are unified through **sentence continuity** (i.e., the proper “flow” of ideas from one sentence to the next). There are two main ways to achieve sentence continuity:

Use **key words, phrases, and pronouns** (words/phrases that are repeated from one sentence to the next or otherwise used consistently throughout a paragraph; and words that refer to the subject or content of a previous sentence (this, its, his, her, these, their)

Use **transitional words and phrases** such as: conjunctions and comparisons that announce connections between different ideas such as yet, however, likewise, rather, unlike, in addition, but, in turn, therefore; **turns of phrase** such as “on the one hand…on the other hand,” “not only…but also,” “while…not,” etc.; and **terms of summation** such as “thus” and “after all.” See your grammar handbook for a list of transitional expressions and further explanation for how to use them.

You can also use key words and transitional words and phrases to make transitions between paragraphs. These are called **paragraph transitions**. After all, ideas do not need to be connected only between sentences; the topics of each of your successive paragraphs must be connected as well so that your essay reads like a logically developing argument.

A good paragraph transition will use key words and transitional words and phrases to do two things: to refer back to the topic of the previous paragraph, and to then shift the reader’s attention to the new topic of the present paragraph.
Sentence continuity and paragraph transitions in action:

If words are the atoms of our writing then sentences are the molecules. Like molecules, they must be strung together to form the body of a paragraph. The question then is, how do we connect our sentences to compose a coherent paragraph? The answer is that we must write with good sentence continuity. Sentence continuity is the ‘molecular glue’ for our written ideas. When we write with good sentence continuity we actually repeat a lot of what we’ve already written so that our reader stays on topic. We refer to subjects we’ve already discussed by using key words such as pronouns that refer back to the subjects of previous sentences. When we are not doing that, we may use transitional phrases such as “consequently” to connect our ideas. Consequently, by doing all of these things, our sentences read with what we call good flow, even when all they may be doing is listing a bunch of things that we should do to achieve good sentence continuity.

Although the judicious use of repetition, key words, and transitions works well to link sentences, it works even better to link paragraphs. Transitional phrases are especially good at this. For instance, we could have used another familiar transitional phrase to write the first sentence of this paragraph as “Not only does the use of repetition, key words, and transitions work well to connect sentences within a paragraph, but it also works well to connect paragraphs within an essay.” After all, we may use the same gluey tool kit for both tasks. However, there is a difference. While these tools can be used to connect sentences within a paragraph, when connecting paragraphs within an essay they must actually do two things: they must refer back to the topic of the previous paragraph, and then they must shift the reader’s attention to the new topic of the present paragraph. Thus, perhaps it is best to think of paragraph transitions not so much as bits of molecular glue but rather as big joints within the body of an argument. They are built of the same wordy material, but they do much bigger jobs.
In-class lesson on writing complex sentences with proper clarity, style, and emphasis.

Part I: how to properly coordinate elements in a sentence.

The term “coordination” refers to the proper way to write about two or more things that are of equal importance in a single sentence.

This is a simple sentence with one main element: “The Capital Dome in Atlanta is now restored.”

Oftentimes, though, for the sake of good style, you will want to write more complex sentences with more than one equally important pieces of information in it:

The Capital Dome in Atlanta is now restored, but five years ago it was in bad shape.

The two elements of the sentence above—a main clause and then a dependent clause—are connected by a word called a conjunction. There are several coordinating conjunctions that you can use to write complex sentences with many elements: and, but, or, nor, for, so and yet.

You can also use conjunctive adverbs such as hence, however, indeed, and thus. Note well, though, that if you use a conjunctive adverb then you must also use a semicolon before it because adverbs turn clauses back into main clauses:

The Capital Dome in Atlanta is now restored; five years ago, however, it was in bad shape.

Coordination is a basic part of writing and many college-level writers already know how to intuitively do it. However, everyone can still do it better. We strive to write a good mix of simple and complex sentences.

Coordination is especially useful for cleaning up choppy, simple sentences. Use coordinating conjunctions and adverbs to turn the choppy, simple sentences below into well-coordinated complex sentences. Begin by eliminating excess words and combining the elements of, for instance, sentences 1, 3, and 4.

We should not rely so heavily on oil. Coal and uranium are also overused. We have a substantial energy resource in the moving waters of our rivers. Smaller streams add to the total volume of water. The resource renews itself. Oil and coal are irreplaceable. Uranium is also irreplaceable. The cost of water does not increase much over time. The costs of coal, oil, and uranium rise dramatically.

Sometimes ideas in sentences are not all equal and you can not use coordinating conjunctions to write about them. Revise the following overly-complex sentence below so that the important parts of the sentences are emphasized, and the less important parts are deemphasized.

The weeks leading up to the resignation of President Nixon were eventful, and the Supreme Court and the Congress closed in on him, and the Senate Judiciary Committee voted to begin impeachment proceedings, and finally the President resigned on August 9, 1974.

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1 Exercises in this handout are derived from Jane Aaron, The Little Brown Handbook
In-class lesson on writing complex sentences with proper clarity, style, and emphasis.

Part II: how to write with proper parallelism. ²

Practice revising the following simple, repetitive sentences into a single, well-coordinated sentence:

We should write sentences with proper coordination. We should also write sentences with correct parallelism. Our sentences should use language economically. Our sentences should be written with consistent grammatical construction.

Did you revise that sentence so that it has proper parallel structure? The term “parallelism” refers to the proper way to grammatically express similar elements of meaning within a sentence or among sentences.

This is a sentence with two parallel elements:

The air is dirtied by factories belching smoke and cars spewing exhaust.

For the sake of good style and proper grammar, whenever you have two or more similar elements in a sentence, you must write them using the same organization and grammatical form. In the case above, “factories belching smoke” and “cars spewing exhaust” are the two parallel elements, and they are thus written with the same order and the same verb tense (“ing”).

1. You must write with proper parallelism whenever you use coordinating conjunctions such as but, and, or, nor and yet. The parallel words, phrases, or clauses linked by coordinating conjunctions must be written in the same way.

Fix the following sentence that has non-parallel words:

The boy played in the field by leaping and then he ran.

Fix the following sentence that has non-parallel phrases:

Three reasons why steel companies kept losing money were that their plants were inefficient, high labor costs, and foreign competition was increasing.

Fix the following sentence that has non-parallel phrases:

Success was difficult even for efficient companies because of the shift away from all manufacturing in the United States and the fact that steel production was shifting toward emerging nations.

² From pages 125-128 of Little, Brown
Sometimes, idiom requires different prepositions (in, for, to, etc.) for different verbs; you must include all appropriate idiomatic words in a sentence. Fix the following sentence that has non-idiomatic parallel construction:

Given training, workers can acquire the skills and interest in other jobs.

2. If you use both…and or not…but or other correlative conjunctions, you must write each phrase with the same grammatical construction. Fix the following sentence that has inconsistent, non-parallel phrasing:

Huck Finn learns not only that human beings have an enormous capacity for folly but also enormous dignity.

3. If you are making a comparison with words such as like or as, you must write each element of the comparison with the same organization and grammatical form. The verbs in elements of comparison must all be the same tense.

Fix the following sentence that makes an incorrect, non-parallel comparison:

Huck Finn proves less a bad boy than to be an independent spirit. In the end he is every bit as determined in rejecting help as he is to leave for ‘the territory.’

4. If you are writing a list, headings, or outlines, you must write each element with consistent organization and grammatical construction.

Fix the following non-parallel list:

Changes in Renaissance England:
1. Extension of trade routes.
2. Merchant class became more powerful
3. The death of feudalism.
4. Upsurging of the arts
5. Religious quarrels began.
In-class lesson on writing complex sentences with proper clarity, style, and emphasis.

Part III: how to write with proper sentence variety.

The last time we discussed clarity and style we practiced writing with proper parallelism (i.e., writing complex, coordinated sentences with consistent grammar and organization). Practice revising the following sentence into a well-coordinated sentence with proper parallelism:

We should write sentences with proper coordination and also be writing with proper parallelism by using language economically and having our sentences written with grammatical construction that is used consistently.

Today’s lesson concerns sentence variety. The term “sentence variety” refers to how you should write your sentences. Your sentences should exhibit variety. They should vary in length and structure, and they should be well textured with specific details.

In most writing, sentences vary from about ten to about forty words. If your sentences are all at one extreme or the other, your readers may have difficulty focusing on main ideas and seeing the relations between them. Thus, you want to vary your sentence length.

Here’s how to do it:

1. Write with coordination. If your sentences are all short, combine some. Turn some of your short, choppy sentences into complex, coordinated sentences. Join complete sentences, clauses, and phrases with coordinators (and, but, or, nor, yet, for, so). However, be careful; some sentences should be left short for the sake of variety and emphasis.

Exercise: on a separate sheet of paper rewrite the following complete sentences as a single sentence joined with coordinators.

Doonesbury cartoons satirize contemporary politics. The victims of political corruption pay no attention. They prefer to demand that newspapers not carry the strip.

2. Link two related sentences to each other so that one carries the main idea and the other is no longer a complete sentence. This is called subordination. Use connector terms (e.g. after, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, if only, rather than, since, that, though, unless, until, when, where, whereas, wherever, whether, which, while) to show the relationship.

Exercise: On a separate sheet of paper, combine the following sentences with connector terms.

The campus parking problem is getting worse. The university is not building any new garages.

The US has been overly dependent on foreign oil for many years. Alternate sources of energy are only now being sought.

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3 From pages 128–132 of *Little, Brown* and http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_sentvar.html
4 From http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_sentvar.html
5 From http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_sentvar.html
3. Embed one sentence inside the other using a clause starting with a relative pronoun (which, who, whoever, whom, that, whose)

example: Indiana used to be mainly an agricultural state. It has recently attracted more industry.
revision: Indiana, which used to be mainly an agricultural state, has recently attracted more industry.

Exercise: on a separate sheet of paper revise the following pairs of sentences so that one is embedded inside the other with a relative pronoun.

   One of the cameras was not packed very well. It was damaged during the move.
   
   The experiment failed because of Murphy's Law. This law states that if something can go wrong, it will.
   
   Doctor Ramirez specializes in sports medicine. She helped my cousin recover from a basketball injury.  

4. Use present and past tense participles to combine sentences. Eliminate a be verb (am, is, was, were, are) and substitute a participle (a verb form ending in –ed or –ing).

Exercise: on a separate sheet of paper revise the following pair of sentences so that one is embedded inside the other with a participle.

   Wei Xie was surprised to get a phone call from his sister. He was happy to hear her voice again.

5. Vary your sentence beginnings. You want to keep your writing from being monotonous. For instance, you don’t want to write sentences that all begin with the subject of that sentence. To keep from doing so, you can begin sentences with other expressions such as adverb modifiers, adjective modifiers, and transitional expressions. Vary the rhythm of your sentences by adding transitional words at the beginning of some sentences.

Exercise: Underline the adjective and adverb modifiers in the following sentences. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, revise the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th of the following monotonous sentences by moving those expressions from within the sentences to the beginning of the sentences or using transitional expressions such as “indeed” or “in fact” to begin a sentence:

   The defendant’s lawyer was determined to break the prosecution’s witness. He relentlessly cross-examined the witness for a week. The witness had expected to be dismissed within an hour and was visibly irritated. She did not cooperate. She was reprimanded by the judge.

6. Vary the rhythm of your writing by alternating short and long sentences.

Exercise: on a separate sheet of paper revise the following sentences so that some are long and some are short.

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From http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_sentvar.html
They visited Canada and Alaska last summer to find some native American art. In Anchorage stores they found some excellent examples of soapstone carvings. But they couldn't find a dealer selling any of the woven wall hangings they wanted.

7. Vary your word order. You can vary a sentence and emphasize it at the same time by inverting the usual order of its parts.

**Exercise:** Revise the second sentence so that it does not have the same order as the two clauses in the first sentence:

A dozen witnesses testified for the prosecution, and the defense attorney barely questioned eleven of them. He grilled the twelfth, however.

8. Add details. This is a vital component of good writing. Relevant details such as facts and specific examples create the texture and life that keeps readers awake and helps them grasp your meaning.

**Exercise:** Underline all the flat, empty, or overly general or vague language in the following boring sentences. Then, revise the following flat sentences by making up and inserting specific facts and details:

Constructed after World War II, Levittown, New York, consisted of thousands of houses in two basic styles. Over the decades, residents have altered the houses so dramatically that the original styles are often unrecognizable.
Writing with Sources Overview

In your papers you may be required to find **textual evidence** to help you prove your thesis. This means you will have to incorporate **quotes, paraphrases**, and **summaries** of your secondary sources into your writing. Using textual evidence puts you in conversation with other scholars on your topic. It also puts the expertise of other scholars to work for you.

You may use three kinds of textual evidence in your papers: summaries, paraphrases, and direct quotes. Each will be discussed in turn below; following each discussion you will complete several numbered writing exercises on a separate sheet of paper to acquaint you with how to summarize, paraphrase, and quote your sources.

- **Quotations** must be identical to the original, using a narrow segment of the source. They must match the source document word for word and must be attributed to the original author.

- **Paraphrasing** involves putting a passage from source material into your own words. A paraphrase must also be attributed to the original source. Paraphrased material is usually shorter than the original passage, taking a somewhat broader segment of the source and condensing it slightly.

- **Summarizing** involves putting the main idea(s) into your own words, including only the main point(s). Once again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source. Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.

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Material on this handout has been derived from the following sources:
http://www.lehigh.edu/~incent/old%20site/writing/quotes/quotes.htm
http://www.stark.kent.edu/writing/intquotes.htm
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_quotprsum.html
HOW TO SUMMARIZE

Use summaries to describe work your reader hasn’t read so that they will understand your argument.

Summaries condense an extended idea or argument into a sentence or more in your own words. Use summaries to report the gist of an author’s idea.⁸

Exercise 1. On a separate sheet of paper, summarize in one sentence the following quotation from an official government report on the “digital divide”:

Original quotation:

The following examples highlight the breadth of the digital divide today:
- Those with a college degree are more than eight times as likely to have a computer at home, and nearly sixteen times as likely to have home Internet access, as those with an elementary school education.
- A high-income household in an urban area is more than twenty times as likely as a rural, low-income household to have Internet access.
- A child in a low-income white family is three times as likely to have Internet access as a child in a comparable black family, and four times as likely to have access as children in a comparable Hispanic household.

—US Department of Commerce, Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide, p. 7

⁸From Jane Aaron, Little Brown Handbook, page 422
HOW TO QUOTE

Use direct quotes from your primary text to illustrate and support your analysis. Use direct quotes from your secondary sources only when the words of your own paraphrase would not be as effective or meaningful.

In English 1101 and 1102 you must cite all of your sources using a form of documentation called MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation style. This means that you will have to cite your quotes and paraphrases within your essay a specific way. If you are writing a research paper for English 1102 you will also have to write a “Works Cited” page on a separate page after your essay, in which you write bibliographic entries for your two stories in a specific way.

Here’s how to do it:

- Use parenthetical citations to document your quotes and paraphrases. At the end of each quote or paraphrase, write the source author’s last name and the page number the cited passage is from with parenthesis, like this: (Davis 192).
- Incorporate quotes grammatically within the body of your paragraphs.
- If a quote is over four lines long, then you must left-indent the entire quote within your paragraph. Each line of the quote must be left-indented ten spaces.
- The first time that you cite from a source, you must cite the author’s name either in the body of your paragraph or in the parenthetical citation.
- If you have already mentioned the author’s name in your paragraph or in a previous parenthetical citation, then you need only write the page number in parentheses, not the author’s already mentioned name.

For example, here is a quote from an essay by Flannery O’Connor used in a sentence:

Like many modern authors, Flannery O’Connor has a very stern view of human affairs, claiming that “modern life is seriously distorted” (225).

And here is the same quote in a sentence that does not mention the name of O’Connor:

Many modern authors have a very stern view of human affairs, claiming that “modern life is seriously distorted” (O’Connor 225).
When using direct quotes from your sources you must incorporate them into the grammatical flow of your own writing. You do this by using **signal phrases** that often include **helping verbs**:9

One common error a lot of people make when they include a quote is that they tend to put the quote in a sentence by itself. Unfortunately, we cannot do this because we are then giving the quote without a specific analytical context. We need to use a signal phrase to introduce the quote and give our readers a context for the quote that explains why we are taking the time to include it in our paper.

Take, for example, this section from a paper on Frederick Douglass's slave narrative, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*:

We can see Douglass' marriage as an assertion of his ownership of himself. "What Douglass's certificate of marriage, which is transcribed in full in chapter 11, signifies is that the black man has repossessed himself" (Baker 170).

In the above example, the quote from an essay by the critic Houston A. Baker, Jr. thrusts itself into the flow of the paper, disturbing readers because there is no warning that the quote is coming. Yet, with a signal phrase, we can make the use of the quote seem more natural to readers:

We can see Douglass' marriage as an assertion of his ownership of himself, as the critic Houston A. Baker, Jr. argues in his essay "The Economic of Douglass's Narrative": "What Douglass's certificate of marriage, which is transcribed in full in chapter 11, signifies is that the black man has repossessed himself" (170).

By including a reference to Baker and his essay in the sentence before giving the quote, we let the reader know that we are using someone's opinion to support our own, giving the quote a context that the reader finds relevant to our overall point.

There are three main ways to set up a signaling phrase:

1. With a complete sentence followed by a colon.

   The effects of Auld's prohibition against teaching Douglass to read were quite profound for Douglass: "It was a new and special revelation" (29).

2. With a partial sentence ending in a helping verb, followed by a comma.

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9 Examples derived from Jane Aaron, *The Little Brown Handbook*
Douglass argues that Auld’s prohibition against literacy for him was a profound experience, saying, "It was a new and special revelation" (29).

3. With a statement that ends in “that.”

The importance of Auld’s prohibition to Douglass is clear when he states that "it was a new and special revelation" (29).

You can, however, build your own signal phrases by mixing these three basic styles with helping verbs that describe your source's attitude towards the subject of the quote. Here is a list of such verbs, as well as other phrases you can use: admits; agrees; argues; asserts; believes; claims; compares; confirms; contends; declares; denies; emphasizes; insists; notes; observes; points out; reasons; refutes; rejects; reports; responds; replies; suggests; thinks; writes; In _____’s words; According to ____’s (notes, study, narrative, novel, etc.)

Exercise 2. Using a signal phrase, revise the following quote on a separate sheet of paper so that it fits better with the flow of the writer’s sentence:

Charlotte Brontë believed that novels should be objective and impartial. Jerry Lyman, a literary critic, agrees with this view and “a good writer does not fail to separate opinions from facts” (53).

Exercise 3. Using a signal phrase, revise the following quote on a separate sheet of paper so that it fits better with the flow of the writer’s sentences:

In Charlotte Brontë’s novel, *Jane Eyre*, Jane disagrees with Mr. Rochester’s idea that a husband has the right to control his wife, and she asserts her freedom to be an independent married woman. “I am a free human being with an independent will” (Brontë 252).

Exercise 4. Often, you must tell your reader how to interpret your quote. Revise the following sentences so that the quoted material isn’t just ‘dumped’ after the first sentence. You will have to add signal phrases and transitional words to do so.

Many fiction writers maintain that it is impossible to keep personal opinions from influencing their selection and presentation of facts. “True, authors, like everyone else, form impressions of what they see and hear. However, a good author does not fail to separate opinions from facts” (Lyman 52).
HOW TO PARAPHRASE

You do not want to quote everything that you cite. As a general rule, quotes should never take up over 1/3 of a paragraph—although sometimes they may (if a quote is over four lines long then the entire quote should be left-indented). When you want to cite a specific passage of a story or article but do not want to quote it then you must paraphrase it, which means write the passage in your own words.

When we quote a passage, we do so in order to analyze how a specific effect works in the text. If there is no clear effect that we wish to discuss, we may want to simply paraphrase the key incidents or details of a passage so as to avoid slowing down our own writing with the words of someone else. Paraphrase is most useful when you want to present or examine an author’s line of reasoning but don’t feel the original words merit direct quotation.

We need to be careful when we paraphrase, though. We have to create a sentence that uses a different sentence structure and language. If our paraphrase contains elements that are a word-for-word match to the source text or so close that it is difficult to tell the difference, we could be charged with plagiarism because it looks like we are trying to steal the words or ideas of someone else. In the case of word-for-word paraphrasing, rewrite it or turn it into a direct quote. In the case of a near quote, give a citation for the sentence as if it was a direct quote, just to be safe.

Exercise 5. Paraphrase the quote below on a separate sheet of paper:

The twenties were the years when drinking was against the law, and the law was a bad joke because everyone knew of a local bar where liquor could be had. They were the years when organized crime ruled the cities, and the police seemed powerless to do anything against it. Classical music was forgotten while jazz spread throughout the land, and men like Bix Beiderbecke, Louis Armstrong, and Count Basie became the heroes of the young. The flapper was born in the twenties, and with her bobbed hair and short skirts, she symbolized, perhaps more than anyone or anything else, America's break with the past. From Kathleen Yancey, The Roaring Twenties (1989): 25.
Exercise 6. Paraphrase the quote below on a separate sheet of paper:

"The Antarctic is the vast source of cold on our planet, just as the sun is the source of our heat, and it exerts tremendous control on our climate," [Jacques] Cousteau told the camera. "The cold ocean water around Antarctica flows north to mix with warmer water from the tropics, and its upwellings help to cool both the surface water and our atmosphere. Yet the fragility of this regulating system is now threatened by human activity."


USE QUOTES, PARAPHRASES, AND SUMMARIES TOGETHER

Writers frequently intertwine summaries, paraphrases, and quotations. As part of a summary of an article, a chapter, or a book, a writer might include paraphrases of various key points blended with quotations of striking or suggestive phrases as in the following example:

In his famous and influential work On the Interpretation of Dreams, Sigmund Freud argues that dreams are the "royal road to the unconscious" (12), expressing in coded imagery the dreamer's unfulfilled wishes through a process known as the "dream work" (95). According to Freud, actual but unacceptable desires are censored internally and subjected to coding through layers of condensation and displacement before emerging in a kind of rebus puzzle in the dream itself (66).
HOW TO AVOID PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else’s ideas or words as your own. Every summary and paraphrase that you write must be in your own words. If you are using someone else’s words, you must quote them.

Exercise 7. Underline the terms copied in the passage plagiarized from Jessica Mitford’s book below.

Original: The character and mentality of the keepers may be of more importance in understanding prisons than the character and mentality of the kept. (From Jessica Mitford’s Kind and Usual Punishment, page 9).

Plagiarized: But the character of prison officials (the keepers) is more important in understanding prisons than the character of prisoners (the kept).

Exercise 8. On a separate sheet of paper, use a direct quote to revise the plagiarized paraphrase above so that it is not plagiarized.

Exercise 9. On a separate sheet of paper, without using quotes, revise the plagiarized paraphrase below so that it is not plagiarized.

Plagiarized: In understanding prisons, we should know more about the character and mentality of the keepers than of the kept.
WRITING INTRODUCTIONS

Generally, introductions must contain both a thesis and a preview of your supporting ideas (unless you are writing a non-formulaic essay such as a narrative). They should be as long and developed as your body paragraphs. However, they may be organized in different ways.

Here are some strategies for writing introductions:

1. The funnel. Go from general information about your topic to specific thesis.
2. Incorporate your supporting ideas into sentences before your thesis.
3. Incorporate your supporting ideas into sentences after your thesis.
4. Begin with an anecdote (a small story on your essay topic).
5. Ask a question.
6. Use a vivid quotation.
7. Create a visual image that represents your subject.
8. Offer a surprising statistic or other fact.
9. Provide background.
10. Outline the argument your thesis refutes.
11. Make a historical comparison or contrast.
12. Outline a problem or dilemma.
13. Define a word central to your subject.
WRITING CONCLUSIONS

Generally, conclusions should “wrap up” your argument in an effective manner. You may restate your thesis in your conclusion or otherwise remind your reader of the main ideas of your argument, but do not limit yourself to that. Rather, think of your conclusion as your last, best chance to sell your topic. You are trying to persuade your reader of the validity of your argument, after all.

Here are some strategies for writing conclusions:

1. Strike a note of hope or despair.
2. Discuss the future.
3. Give a symbolic or powerful fact or other detail.
4. Give an especially compelling example.
5. Create a visual image that represents your subject.
6. Use a quotation.
7. Recommend a course of action.
8. Restate your thesis and reflect on its implications.
9. Echo the approach of your introduction.
10. Discuss what you have learned from your essay.
The Rules of Comma Usage

1. Use a comma to separate the elements in a series (three or more things), including the last two. "He hit the ball, dropped the bat, and ran to first base."

2. Use a comma + a little conjunction (and, but, for, nor, yet, or, so) to connect two independent clauses, as in "He hit the ball well, but he ran toward third base."

3. Use a comma to set off introductory elements, as in "Running toward third base, he suddenly realized how stupid he looked."

4. Use a comma to set off parenthetical elements, as in "The Founders Bridge, which spans the Connecticut River, is falling down." By "parenthetical element," we mean a part of a sentence that can be removed without changing the essential meaning of that sentence. The parenthetical element is sometimes called "added information."

5. Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives. You could think of this as "That tall, distinguished, good looking fellow" rule (as opposed to "the little old lady"). If you can put an and or a but between the adjectives, a comma will probably belong there. For instance, you could say, "He is a tall and distinguished fellow" or "I live in a very old and run-down house." So you would write, "He is a tall, distinguished man" and "I live in a very old, run-down house." But you would probably not say, "She is a little and old lady," or "I live in a little and purple house," so commas would not appear between little and old or between little and purple.

6. Use a comma to set off quoted elements. Because we don't use quoted material all the time, even when writing, this is probably the most difficult rule to remember in comma usage. It is a good idea to find a page from an article that uses several quotations, photocopy that page, and keep it in front of you as a model when you're writing. Generally, use a comma to separate quoted material from the rest of the sentence that explains or introduces the quotation:
   * Summing up this argument, Peter Coveney writes, "The purpose and strength of the romantic image of the child had been above all to signify the epistemological advantage of innocence."

7. Use commas to set off phrases that express contrast.
   * Some say the world will end in ice, not fire.
   * It was her money, not her charm or personality, that first attracted him.
   * The puppies were cute, but very messy.

8. Use a comma to avoid confusion. This is often a matter of consistently applying rule #3.
   * For most the year is already finished.
   * Outside the lawn was cluttered with hundreds of broken branches.

9. Typographical Reasons: Between a city and a state [Hartford, Connecticut], a date and the year [June 15, 1997], a name and a title when the title comes after the name [Bob Downey, Professor of English], in long numbers [5,456,783 and $14,682], etc. Although you will often see a comma between a name and suffix — Bob Downey, Jr., Richard Harrison, III — this comma is no longer regarded as necessary by most copy editors, and some individuals — such as Martin Luther King Jr. — never used a comma there at all.
Using Commas with Introductory Phrases
Add a comma where necessary in the following sentences:

1. In Twain's novel childhood provides unique symbolism.

2. Eventually I got around to finishing the term paper.

3. In fact the planet Mars glows red on a clear night.

4. With sweat pouring down his face the point-guard stepped up to the free-throw line

5. Quickly I ran down the street to the corner store.

6. At the casino Mike lost his money and his pride.

7. Pausing only for a sip of water the runner continued on at an exhausting pace.

8. Although I was tired I finished the paper by the 6:00 A.M. deadline.

9. Sleepily the student designed this wonderful exercise.

10. Reluctantly the prisoner accepted his fate.
Using Commas with Coordinating Conjunctions
Add a comma where necessary in the following sentences:

1. In theory, the dark smoke from the burning oil wells absorbs sunlight and the surrounding air is heated.

2. The anticipation that biological and chemical weapons would be used caused unprecedented stress for the troops.

3. It seems that she answered the question easily but her answer was actually quite complex.

4. It can be beneficial to register for classes early yet each student must wait his or her turn.

5. Analyzing the data reveals public support of conflict for as environmental issues become a variable, attitudes towards war become more complex.

6. Because of mass destruction to the system, sewage overflowed and spread diseases.

7. He could either go to the store or go to the basketball game.

8. I did not want to go to class nor did I want to write that paper.

9. She worried about finding someone to take care of the dog and provide a good home for him.

10. I did not want to scare him so I did not tell him about the accident.
Punctuation Worksheet:

1. Select the correctly punctuated sentence in this group.
A. ___My first job in a factory involved the manufacture of escalator handles and ketchup bottle lids.
B. ___My first job in a factory involved the manufacture of escalator handles, and ketchup bottle lids.

2. Select the correctly punctuated sentence in this group.
A. ____Ms. Espinoza has offered to coach the team this year, however, the competition for the job is intense.
B. ____Ms. Espinoza has offered to coach the team this year, however the competition for the job is intense.
C. ____Ms. Espinoza has offered to coach the team this year; however, the competition for the job is intense.

3. Select the correctly punctuated sentence in this group.
A. ____The team's major concerns this year, however, are staying healthy, finding a good shooting guard, and maintaining good relations with the public.
B. ____The team's major concerns this year, however, are: staying healthy, finding a good shooting guard, and maintaining good relations with the public.
C. ____The team's major concerns this year; however, are -- staying healthy, finding a good shooting guard, and maintaining good relations with the public.

4. Select the correctly punctuated sentence in this group.
A. ____Three major cities Hartford Bridgeport and Stamford make up the crucial voting blocks of Connecticut.
B. ____Three major cities, Hartford, Bridgeport, and Stamford, make up the crucial voting blocks of Connecticut.
C. ____Three major cities -- Hartford, Bridgeport, and Stamford -- make up the crucial voting blocks of Connecticut.

5. Select the correctly punctuated sentence in this group.
A. ____My favorite teacher, who just happens to be my uncle, retired from the university last summer.
B. ____My favorite teacher who just happens to be my uncle, retired from the university last summer.
C. ____My favorite teacher, who just happens to be my uncle retired from the university last summer.
6. Select the correctly punctuated sentence in this group.
A. _____ It seems a shame that a diligent, sincere politician like Fuentes should be ignored by shallow and thoughtlessly fickle voters.
B. _____ It seems a shame that a diligent sincere politician like Fuentes should be ignored by shallow and thoughtlessly fickle voters.
C. _____ It seems a shame that a diligent sincere politician like Fuentes should be ignored by shallow, and thoughtlessly fickle voters.

7. Select the correctly punctuated sentence in this group.
A. _____ Given the hard choices our coach has had to make this year it's no wonder she's decided to retire.
B. _____ Given the hard choices our coach has had to make this year, it's no wonder she's decided to retire.

8. Select the correctly punctuated sentence in this group.
A. _____ Raoul has been too busy to keep up with his courses because he took on too many extracurricular activities.
B. _____ Raoul has been too busy to keep up with his courses, because he took on too many extracurricular activities.

9. Select the correctly punctuated sentence in this group.
A. _____ Believing in her own skills and possessing a supreme confidence, proved to make the difference in her campaign.
B. _____ Believing in her own skills and possessing a supreme confidence proved to make the difference in her campaign.

10. Select the correctly punctuated sentence in this group.
A. _____ My favorite pizza combinations are sausage peppers and onions mushrooms extra cheese and anchovies and hamburger sun-dried tomatoes pepperoni and sliced red potatoes.
B. _____ My favorite pizza combinations are: sausage, peppers, and onions, mushrooms, extra cheese, and anchovies, and hamburger, sun-dried tomatoes, pepperoni, and sliced red potatoes.
C. _____ My favorite pizza combinations are sausage, peppers, and onions; mushrooms, extra cheese, and anchovies; and hamburger, sun-dried tomatoes, pepperoni, and sliced red potatoes.
Take your own Comma Quiz.
Add commas in the following paragraphs where necessary (answer on reverse):

Although women's college basketball in Connecticut is a marvelously entertaining and increasingly popular sport it is not hard to remember when it was not so popular. Only a few years ago my friends and I could decide on a Sunday afternoon to go to a women's basketball game at the University of Connecticut and believe it or not we could get seats for free near center court. Of course that was before names such as Rebecca Lobo Jennifer Rizzotti Kara Wolters and Carla Berube became household words. Lobo's book HOME-COURT ADVANTAGE which she wrote with her mother was a best-seller for a brief time in Connecticut. If more than a couple of hundred fans showed up for a game it was considered a big turnout and games were played in practically silent gyms. Nowadays it is almost impossible to buy tickets to a women's game and you can't get seats even in the Civic Center unless you know someone.

Indeed who would have predicted ten years ago that women's basketball would become so wildly popular in Connecticut? Well people who have watched the growth of women's basketball in southern states are not surprised. The enormous campus arenas at the state universities in Tennessee North Carolina and Georgia are filled to capacity for every home game. The coach for Tennessee's Lady Vols Pat Summitt has achieved nearly godlike stature in that state. A tall striking figure on- and off-court Summitt commands respect wherever she goes. My youngest sister Ruth Ann who lives in Tennessee says you can't get near Pat Summit after a game. "You'd think she was a rock star" she says. Although Geno Auriemma Coach of the UConn women's team doesn't yet enjoy that kind of support he is rapidly becoming a widely recognized figure. In Connecticut we no longer say there is basketball in college sports and then there is women's basketball; we say there is men's basketball and women's basketball.
Answer Key:

Although women's college basketball in Connecticut is a marvelously entertaining and increasingly popular sport, it is not hard to remember when it was not so popular. Only a few years ago, my friends and I could decide on a Sunday afternoon to go to a women's basketball game at the University of Connecticut, and believe it or not, we could get seats for free near center court. Of course, that was before names such as Rebecca Lobo, Jennifer Rizzotti, Kara Wolters, and Carla Berube became household words. Lobo's book, HOME-COURT ADVANTAGE, which she wrote with her mother, was a best-seller for a brief time in Connecticut. If more than a couple of hundred fans showed up for a game, it was considered a big turnout, and games were played in practically silent gyms. Nowadays, it is almost impossible to buy tickets to a women's game, and you can't get seats, even in the Civic Center, unless you know someone.

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FIX THE FOLLOWING COMMA SPLICES (Questions 1-20)

1. Entrepreneurship is the study of small businesses, college students are embracing it enthusiastically.

2. My father is chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, he also heads the Warrant Commission.

3. All over the country, people sell products over the Internet, these people are making impressive profits.

4. One person had been exporting farm equipment, in fact he exports over 30,000 pieces of machinery a year.

5. After the sixth inning, I went home, my family stayed.

6. Formal courses at the graduate level are now being taken by many elderly citizens, some schools even offer them special programs.
7. While time often erases bad memories, my ex-girlfriend never forgets anything, she even remembers things that happened over five years ago.

8. I believe that the teacher has been grading me unfairly, all she does is look for minor mistakes.

9. Even though the semester is almost over, the teacher does not know my name, she confuses me with other students.

10. The team valiantly ran down the field, still they could not score a touchdown.

11. Kimberly sat on the bleachers and cheered for the team, Tom watched her as he vigorously defended the goal.
12. The cat jumped from step to step, it gracefully landed with each jump.

13. The professor stated that he especially favors personally connected papers, these papers reflect the most emotion.

14. Anthony did not agree with the method he was taught, he found other means to solve the problem.

15. I learned the song on the piano, I chose to never play it.

16. Nicole chose what she thought were the best answers to the questions, her grade did not reflect these choices.

17. The correct format looked odd, Victoria chose not to complete the problem this way.
18. Michael sculpted the statue, he also painted the picture.

19. The Revolutionary War was a triumph, it was also a struggle.

20. Victoria managed the class, Julia coached the team.
EACH OF THE FOLLOWING IS A RUN-ON SENTENCES. FROM THE GROUP OF THREE
SENTENCES THAT FOLLOWS, SELECT THE GROUP OF WORDS THAT CORRECTS THE
RUN-ON. (ANSWER QUESTIONS A-J.)

A. Our solar system has nine major planets only one is known to have intelligent life.
1. Our solar system has nine major planets, only one is known to have intelligent life.
2. Our solar system has nine major planets only one, is known to have intelligent life.
3. Our solar system has nine major planets; only one is known to have intelligent life.

B. Most asteroids are small and far away therefore they are dim and hard to see.
1. Most asteroids are small and far away, therefore they are dim and hard to see.
2. Most asteroids are small and far away therefore, they are dim and hard to see.
3. Most asteroids are small and far away; therefore, they are dim and hard to see.

C. Look through Angelo's telescope you can see Saturn's rings.
1. If you look through Angelo's telescope, you can see Saturn's rings.
2. Look through Angelo's telescope, you can see Saturn's rings.
3. You can see Saturn's rings, look through Angelo's telescope.

D. Please check the position of that star cluster I can't find it.
1. Please check the position of that star cluster; I can't find it.
2. Please check the position of that star cluster, I can't find it.
3. Please check the position, of that star cluster, I can't find it.

E. Marie is never interested in stargazing during the winter however on warm summer nights she
often goes to the college observatory.
1. Marie is never interested in stargazing during the winter, however, on warm summer nights she
often goes to the college observatory.
2. Marie is never interested in stargazing during the winter. However, on warm summer nights she
often goes to the college observatory.
3. Marie is never interested in stargazing, during the winter however, on warm summer nights she often
goes to the college observatory.
F. The Milky Way looks like a dim cloud stretching across the night sky it is actually a huge galaxy containing millions of stars.
1. _____ The Milky Way looks like a dim cloud stretching across the night sky, it is actually a huge galaxy containing millions of stars.
2. _____ The cloud-like Milky Way stretching across the night sky is actually a huge galaxy containing millions of stars.
3. _____ Although the Milky Way looks like a dim cloud stretching across the night sky. It is actually a huge galaxy containing millions of stars.

G. Watch the sky closely for several minutes you are likely to see an artificial satellite pass over.
1. _____ Watch the sky closely for several minutes; you are likely to see an artificial satellite pass over.
2. _____ Watch the sky closely for several minutes, you are likely to see an artificial satellite pass over.
3. _____ If you watch the sky closely for several minutes. You are likely to see an artificial satellite pass over.

H. Louisa pretended to be interested in her brother's hobby she secretly wished she had stayed at home.
1. _____ Louisa pretended to be interested in her brother's hobby, she secretly wished she had stayed at home.
2. _____ Pretending to be interested in her brother's hobby, Louisa secretly wished she had stayed at home.
3. _____ Louisa pretended to be interested, in her brother's hobby, she secretly wished she had stayed at home.

I. Some club members were late for the meeting for example, Tanya and Scott came in at 9:30.
1. _____ Some club members were late for the meeting, for example Tanya and Scott came in at 9:30.
2. _____ Some club members were late for the meeting, for example, Tanya and Scott came in at 9:30.
3. _____ Some club members were late for the meeting; for example, Tanya and Scott came in at 9:30.

J. We've seen enough for one night pack up the equipment.
1. _____ We've seen enough for one night; pack up the equipment.
2. _____ Pack up the equipment, we've seen enough for one night.
FIX THE FOLLOWING RUN-ON SENTENCES (Questions 1-10):

1. Judy leads a charmed life she never seems to have a serious accident.

2. The airport is about to shut down because of the snow and if the plane doesn't land soon it will have to go on to Boston.

3. The show begins at 7:30 make sure you're there before 7:15.

4. Marcellino always knew his way around the woods this is something he could always depend on.

5. Having prepared himself well for the realtor exams and having exhausted everyone in the family with his requests that someone help him with the true-and-false drills, Jeffrey, who had never been a particularly good student in high school, knew he was ready to take on the greatest challenge of his life.
6. Throughout history money and religion were closely linked there was little distinction between government and religion.

7. The head of state and the religious leader were often the same person all power rested in one ruler.

8. These powerful leaders decided what objects would serve as money their backing encouraged public faith in the money.

9. Coins were minted of precious metals the religious overtones of money were then strengthened.

10. People already believed the precious metals to be divine so their use in money intensified its allure.
SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

OF THE THREE SENTENCES IN EACH GROUP, SELECT THE ONE THAT IS NOT A
SENTENCE FRAGMENT (QUESTIONS A-J).

A.
1.____ Mrs. Blanco gone to visit her mother at the hospital.
2.____ Finding a parking space there is usually easy during the week.
3.____ Driving in the city during the evening rush hour.

B.
1.____ To apply for a job at the new store in the mall.
2.____ Asking the interviewer how often he would have to work on weekends.
3.____ Shaking his new boss's hand, Tony knew he would like working there.

C.
1.____ By the time Frances found out how expensive the wallpapering job would be.
2.____ After getting estimates from five contractors, she decided to do the work herself.
3.____ Before picking out an interesting wallpaper pattern that went well with her furniture.

D.
1.____ Who borrowed Stefanie's car Saturday night.
2.____ The nineteen-year-old car looked out of place next to the new models.
3.____ Which the salesman was surprised to find in such good shape.

E.
1.____ While waiting for her neighbor to move the car that blocked the driveway.
2.____ To avoid hitting the other car, Michael had to back across the corner of the lawn.
3.____ By making sure that no one will park across the driveway again.

F.
1.____ Because Manuel was sure he had heard the same strange story many months ago.
2.____ Although I will never forget how cold we were when we lost our heat last winter.
3.____ Since Anna wasn't at the meeting, I took notes so that she wouldn't miss anything.
G.
1. When my cousin moved to Troy, New York, after he finished school.
2. After he went to all the trouble of fixing up his apartment.
3. While living there, he made very few friends.

H.
1. My brother has been running a charter fishing boat for five years.
2. Many of his customers coming back three or four times over the summer.
3. His business been so busy that he has very little time for anything else.

I.
1. In the hiding place that Carl had been using for years to get away from the noisy house.
2. By the time that everyone had quieted down, my favorite television show was over.
3. Before planning another family get-together at the already crowded park.

J.
1. Although I knew she might wear something outrageous, I was still shocked by her dress.
2. Because she didn't want to tell where she had bought the strange outfit.
3. When we finally heard that she had made the dress herself.
1. Although he had been an often decorated soldier during World War II and had fought many battles for the losing cause of liberalism in Congress.

2. This is going to be the most difficult exam of your college career you had better start studying for it immediately.

3. Knowing better than anyone else how the state legislature had ignored the needs of the community college system and created a crisis characterized by an uneducated workforce that had no place to go for proper training and realizing that someone had to do something about the situation or the state would begin to lose jobs to states in the American south that were more aggressive in providing and publicizing excellence in education, Representative Fuentes began to lay plans for an education bill that took into consideration the needs of the state's community colleges and the students who attended them.
4. Coach Espinoza really wants this job with Notre Dame University, she is very excited about returning to the college she graduated from.

5. Right after the Christmas holidays and during those three weeks before class begins in January.

6. She ran.

7. Perplexed by the rising rates of inflation and alarmed by the decline in major construction projects.

8. Anabel realizes what she is doing, I think, but she doing it anyway.
9. Professor Pepin spends a lot of time translating medieval texts on ancient medicine, however, he also stays informed about the latest developments in modern asthma treatments.

10. If we're ever going to get out of here in time, we're going to have to re-write all these papers, set up the desks, and clean the chalkboards; stack those books in the corner and clean up the mess around the wastebasket; notify security about the broken window, the thermostat that Raoul messed up, and the desk that was stolen before we even got here.

11. In Japan, during the last war and just before the armistice.
12. Working far into the night in an effort to salvage her little boat.

13. Some of the students working in Professor Espinoza's laboratory last semester.

14. Even though he had the better arguments and was by far the more powerful speaker.
15. Although women's college basketball in Connecticut is a marvelously entertaining and popular sport. It not hard to remember. When it was not so popular. Which is hard to believe. Only a few years ago, my friends and I to go to a women's basketball game. And we could get seats for free near center court. Especially on Sunday afternoons. Of course, that before names such as Rebecca Lobo, Jenn Rizzotti, and Kara Wolters became household words. Lobo's book, HOME-COURT ADVANTAGE, which she wrote with her mother. A best-seller in Connecticut. If more than a couple of hundred fans showed up for a game. It was considered a big turnout. And games were played in practically silent gyms. Because the fans didn't care who won. Nowadays, it almost impossible to buy tickets to a women's game, and you can't get seats. Unless you know someone.
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