

Critical Reading and Writing

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Module One Basic Rhetorical Skills

Unit 1 Sentence Variety

1. Appreciative Reading

Just as your dressing style comes from your decision on clothes and shoes, your writing style derives from your choice of words and sentence types. Read the following essay and discuss 1) what impression it leaves on you and 2) what kinds of words and sentences are used to create that impression.

Youth is not a time of life; it is a state of mind, it is not a matter of rosy cheeks, red lips and supple knees; it is a matter of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions; it is the freshness of the deep springs of life.

Youth means a temperamental¹ predominance² of courage over timidity³, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease. This often exists in a man of 60, more than a boy of 20. Nobody grows merely by the number of years; we grow old by deserting our ideas.

Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, fear, self-distrust⁴ bows the heart and turns the spirit back to dust.

Whether 60 or 16, there is in every human being's heart the lure⁵ of wonders, the unfailing childlike appetite of what's next and the joy of the game of living. In the center of your heart and my heart there is a wireless station: so long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, courage and power from men and from the infinite⁶, so long as you are young.

When the aerials⁷ are down, and your spirit is covered with the snows of cynicism⁸ and the ice of pessimism, then you've grown old, even at 20, but as long as your aerials are up, to catch waves of optimism, there's hope you may die young at 80.

——*Youth*, by Samuel Ullman

¹ temperamental *adj.* 气质的

² predominance *n.* 优势, 主导

³ timidity *n.* 胆怯, 胆小, 羞涩

⁴ self-distrust *n.* 畏缩

⁵ lure *n.* 诱惑

⁶ The infinite refers to a space or quantity that is limitless or endless. 苍穹, 喻上帝

⁷ aerials *n.* 天线

⁸ cynicism *n.* 愤世嫉俗, 玩世不恭

2. Mini-Lecture: Styling Sentences

When writing in English, college students as foreign language learners tend to be more grammatically conscious than stylistically or rhetorically⁹. For instance, after they have drafted an essay, the question concerned is more likely to be “Are all my sentences correct?” than “Are they effective?” However, to make an idea or feeling best received, it is not enough to write simply grammatical sentences. Indeed, as shown later in Sample Paragraph 1, a passage free of mistakes but lacking in variety can easily bore its readers.

To improve sentence writing in an essay, there are several commonly used techniques to follow: mixing types of sentences, varying sentence openings, and employing parallel structure.

2.1 Mix Types of Sentence

Description Types	Definition, Function & Examples	Linking Words Most Often Used
Simple sentence	It consists of a single independent clause ¹⁰ ; it may contain more than one subject or verb; it gives one clearly defined idea at a time. <i>We play basketball in the morning and swim in the afternoon.</i>	and (for compound subjects or verbs ¹¹) <i>Joe, Bill, and I went bowling and dancing.</i>
Compound sentence	It consists of at least two independent clauses and no subordinate clauses. The information conveyed should be of roughly equal importance. <i>We waited for them for two hours; then they finally arrived.</i>	Linking words (with a comma before them): and, but, or, for, yet, nor, etc. Linking words (with a semicolon before them): also, besides, however, still, then, accordingly, therefore, etc.
Complex sentence	It consists of a single independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. The information conveyed in the dependent clause is less important. <i>When my parents found out about my</i>	although, as, because, before, if, since, that, unless, until, as if, as though, in order that, even if, and so that; where, when, while, etc.

⁹ rhetorical *adj.* using speech or writing in special ways in order to persuade people or to produce an impressive effect 讲究修辞的，注重语言效果的

¹⁰ clause *n.* 分句

¹¹ compound subjects or verbs 复合主语或谓语

	<i>situation, they tried to help me.</i>	
compound-complex sentence	It consists of two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses; it indicates the complex relationship among ideas. <i>Although I enjoy English courses, I failed English 102, but I received an “A” in all my math courses.</i>	It may contain any of the linking words above.

Table 1 sentence types, summarized from *The Vital Arts-Reading and Writing* by Dorothy Rubin

Sentences can be categorized into different types. They can be divided into “short” (under 10 words), “medium” (under 20 words), or “long” (20 or more words) ones according to length; they can be defined as simple, compound¹², complex¹³, compound-complex sentences (Refer to Table 1 above) according to structure; they can also be labeled as declarative¹⁴, interrogative¹⁵, exclamatory¹⁶, or imperative¹⁷ sentences according to function. Just as a good craftsman uses the right tool for the right job, a good writer chooses each type for a particular purpose and effect. Take the paragraph below for example.

...Talent in writing is overrated. Ninety-nine percent of all writing tasks do not require natural genius, just a reasonable intelligence and a willingness to work. You can do that. Will you? Annie Dillard, a Pulitzer Prize winner, goes so far as to say, “There is no such thing as talent.... We all start out dull and weary and uninspired.... Genius is the product of education.” She says people want to believe in genius because they can blame their genes instead of working to improve themselves. So don’t begin with excuses. Your professor will not ask you to write Pulitzer Prize-winning books. But if you work hard, you will write better than you think you can. ...

——From *Ideas and Details* by M. Garrett Bauman

As it indicates, short sentences such as the underlined ones can drive home a point when placed with longer sentences, while long ones are often intended to provide details precisely; interrogative sentences can emphasize an important point in a group

¹² compound sentence 并列句

¹³ complex sentence 复合句

¹⁴ declarative *adj.* 陈述的

¹⁵ interrogative *adj.* 疑问的

¹⁶ exclamatory *adj.* 感叹的

¹⁷ imperative *adj.* 祈使的

of declarative ones. Considering the paragraph as a whole, alternating¹⁸ short and long sentences also creates a lively rhythm.

Although it does little good to be overly conscious of sentence types in the first draft of your essay, as you review and revise your essay, keep in mind that too many sentences of any one kind, especially too many simple sentences, will be tedious for your readers, whereas varying sentence length, structure, or function helps hold their interest if properly applied. Therefore, to make your writing better received, you are advised to mix various types of sentences.

2.2 Vary Sentence Openings

Another way to achieve sentence variety is to change opening words of your sentences. Although most sentences in the English language follow the SV or SVO¹⁹ pattern and start with the subject, too many in a paragraph can easily lead to monotony and bore the reader. To refresh your writing, you can begin some of your sentences with a coordinating conjunction (such as and, but, so), transitional expression (such as however, therefore, for example, in contrast) or with an adverbial²⁰ ranging from an adverb, an adverbial phrase to an adverbial clause. Example:

When I was a little girl, I accidentally broke a fruit jar. Several brothers and a sister were nearby who could have done it. But my father turned to me and asked, "Did you break the jar, Alice?" Looking into his large brown eyes, I knew he wanted me to tell the truth. I also knew he might punish me if I did. But the truth inside of me wanted badly to be expressed. "I broke the jar," I said. The love in his eyes rewarded and embraced me. Suddenly I felt an inner peace that I still recall with gratitude to this day.

——Alice Walker, Pulitzer Prize-winning author

To do it right, when using an adjective, participial, or infinitive²¹ phrase as the adverbial in the beginning position of a sentence, make sure that the subject immediately following it is modified by the phrase itself. If not, you have created an error called a “dangling modifier²²”.

Example 1:

Incorrect: Unable to answer the teacher’s question, his face turned red.

Revised: Unable to answer the teacher’s question, he blushed.

Revised: Because he was unable to answer the teacher’s question, his face turned red.

¹⁸ alternate *v.* 交替

¹⁹ SV (subject verb) 主谓句式; SVO (subject verb object) 主谓宾句式

²⁰ adverbial *n.* 状语

²¹ infinitive phrase 不定式短语

²² dangling modifier 垂悬修饰语

Example 2:

Incorrect: Stepping into the boat, my camera dropped into the water.

Revised: After/When I stepped into the boat, my camera dropped into the water.

To sum up, starting sentences with elements²³ other than subjects is an important technique for adding variety and avoiding tedium, so remember to apply it in the revision stage of writing.

2.3 Employ Parallel Structure

Parallel structure (also called parallelism) means using the same grammatical form or pattern to express ideas of equal importance. In such a sentence structure, you may see that noun is lined up with noun, verb with verb, phrase with phrase, and clause with clause. It offers us a writing style that uses balance and rhythm to communicate with the readers. Though the term may sound new to some of you, the device has been so commonly used in different kinds of writing that few can be a total stranger to it.

To begin with, parallel structure often goes hand in hand with correlative conjunctions such as both...and, neither...nor, either...or, not only... but also. From the example below, we can see that parallelism balances the structural elements of a sentence and lends symmetry²⁴ and readability to what we write.

Not Parallel: The young woman is pretty and has brains.

Parallel: The young woman is both pretty and smart.

Parallel: The young woman has both looks and brains.

In addition to paired constructions, the device is frequently employed in sentences with series²⁵. As the following examples show, parallelism can create different rhetorical effects in the hands of different writers. It is used to enhance the vividness in Example 1, to emphasize a point in Example 2, to make a statement more forceful in Example 3. Parallel structure also helps with clarity, conciseness and elegance when a series is designed to list specific details or give several examples, as indicated in Example 4.

Example 1: She walked steadily, swiftly, and purposefully.

Example 2: . . . and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

—Abraham Lincoln

Example 3: I came; I saw; I conquered.—Julius Caesar

Example 4: The silent night paints a peaceful picture of life. Stars twinkle in the dark sky like tired eyes trying hard to open; the sea murmurs in a soft voice like a man who prays before his sleep; the silver birches play gentle music with their leaves and branches, sounding like the lullaby a young mother sings to her sleepy baby.

²³ element *n.* 成分, 要素, 元素

²⁴ symmetry *n.* 对称

²⁵ series *n.* 序列

——Li Meng, an undergraduate of Beijing Normal University

Writing parallel structure can be fun, but pay attention to two points in the course. First, do not mix forms. Because of having the same grammatical function, all items in a pair or in a series must be similar in form so that they are parallel: all single words of the same part of speech, all phrases of the same structure, all subordinate clauses²⁶, or all main clauses. Second, put parallel items in order. Well-chosen items in a series often complement each other in content and need to be arranged for clarity. Looking closer, you will find Example 3 and 4 are organized in the order of time and space respectively. In many other cases, items in a series can be arranged in some order of increasing impact. In short, make sure you use parallel structure carefully and correctly.

3. Writing Awareness: Recasting Your Sentences

The fundamental unit of composition is the sentence; rewriting or recasting it can make it more graceful, logical, and emphatic. In fact, the way a sentence is structured reveals a way of thinking, because it reflects a way of organizing and prioritizing information. In recasting a sentence, you have to be able to relate the ideas and decide which idea should be emphasized over the other.

In this sense, recasting sentences is not only a stylistic practice but also a thinking practice. To recast sentences, you need to recognize the four basic sentence types and learn some necessary grammatical terms for this purpose. A brief description of them is made in the table above (see Table 1). Each of these sentence types has force; they just spotlight and relate their ideas in different ways.

Based on the function of each of the four basic types of sentences, you can recast your sentences to achieve the intended purpose, making your writing more forceful and therefore more effective. With little consideration of effect and style, many college students tend to write the way they talk and use mainly short sentences in their essays. Although this sentence type has its own strength, overuse of it makes the writing lose its focus, creates a choppy rhythm and indicates a simplistic way of thinking.

A solution to this problem is sentence combination, which, just as it sounds, means putting short sentences into longer units. It can be quite simple when you follow these common strategies: delete repeated words, add connecting words, adjust word order, and change word forms when necessary. Take the sentences below for example. Try combining them into a natural clear statement with all the original details.

John was a woodcutter.
He worked for a company for five years.
He never got a raise.

Then, what you have written might coincide with one of the samples given here.

Sample 1: John was a woodcutter with five years' working experience; however,

²⁶ subordinate clauses 从句

he never got a raise.

Sample 2: John, a woodcutter, worked for a company for five years but never got a raise.

Sample 3: John, who worked as a woodcutter for a company for five years, never got a raise.

Under the surface, the goal of sentence combination is not to produce a longer sentence but to consider different arrangements before you choose the most effective. As you can see from the above samples, though all of them are grammatically correct, each has a unique structure with a different emphasis, and thus fits in different contexts. Therefore, how to put your words together—whether it should be a compound or complex sentence—depends on what your writing is about and where the sentence stands. Now, decide which combination of the above serves best as the beginning of the story here.

_____. The company hired Bill and within a year he got a promotion. This caused resentment in John and he went to his boss to talk about it. The boss said: “You’re still cutting the same number of trees you were cutting five years ago. We are a result-oriented company and would be happy to give you a raise if your productivity goes up.” John went back, started hitting harder and putting in longer hours, but he still wasn’t able to cut more trees. He went back to his boss to seek some advice. The boss asked him to go and talk to Bill. “Maybe there is something Bill knows that you and I don’t.” John asked Bill how he managed to cut more trees. Bill said: “After every tree I cut, I take a break for two minutes and ‘sharpen my ax’. When was the last time you sharpened your ax?” The question hit home²⁷ like a bullet and John got his answer. “When was the last time you sharpened your ax?” If you want to progress in life, you cannot rest on your past laurels²⁸. You must continuously sharpen your ax of knowledge, skill and expertise, in whatever field of activity you may be.

—Fom <http://www.knowledgebase-script.com/demo/article-138.html>

4. Sample Analysis

The following two sample paragraphs are written by freshmen on the topic “The First Snow in Beijing”. Read the teacher’s annotations, compare each sample with the improved version, and discuss the follow-up questions.

Sample Paragraph 1

I was so surprised with the first snow in Beijing. I was a new comer, and I was born in a farmer’s family in the south, I had never seen such a big snow before. The first

²⁷ to hit home 切中要害

²⁸ laurels 荣誉, 胜利

snow in Beijing came so early this year. It was so heavy and covered everything in the world. I was so surprised to see the silver world covered with snow. I really couldn't believe it was snowing outside when I opened the window. It looked like thousands of small white flowers falling down from the sky. It looked so beautiful that I couldn't help running to the yard in the snow. I never knew that a world covered with snow would be so beautiful. Everything was so surprising to me. I played in the yard with my roommates and took many photos in the snow. The first snow in Beijing really made me happy and surprised.

The Improved Version

As a new comer, I was truly surprised with the first snow of this year in Beijing. To begin with, it arrived at the end of October, much earlier than I expected, for dark green autumn leaves were still lingering on the branches. More importantly, born and bred in a farmer's family in the south, I had never seen such a heavy snow before. It was so heavy that it covered everything outdoors—the roofs, the trees, the streets, and turned the whole world into a silver land. When I opened the window, I couldn't believe what I saw. The flying snowflakes looked like thousands of small white flowers falling down from the sky. So beautiful was it that I couldn't resist running out to the yard in the snow. There I joined my roommates in a wild snowball fight: we chased each other, threw snow at each other, laughed at each other, and finally leaned on each other, breathlessly, for a rest. What great fun! The first snow in Beijing really made me happy and surprised.

Questions for Discussion

1. What problems in word choice and sentence writing are revealed after comparing the two versions?
2. What improvements have been made in terms of sentence style? What techniques have been used in the improved version?

Sample Paragraph 2

When the snow began to fall in Beijing for the first time this year, the whole world became quite peaceful. Those “small-and-white” falling from the high sky seemed to dance in the air silently. Passers-by slowed down or even stopped instead of rushing forward as usual to say hello to the first snow. They must have enjoyed the kisses of snow, for smiles bloomed on their face. While the snow on the road became thicker, fewer cars were on the road and much slower the drivers drove. So the noise of traffic faded off. Even the trees beside the roads stood pretty still, as if they were waiting for being covered by the first snow in Beijing.

The Improved Version

When the snow began to fall in Beijing for the first time this year, the whole world became quite peaceful. Those “small-and-white flowers” falling from the sky seemed like they were dancing in the air quietly and elegantly. Instead of rushing to work as usual, pedestrians slowed down or even stopped to greet those heavenly dancers, to

appreciate their silent performance, and to enjoy their gentle kisses. Thus, a smile blossomed on everyone's face despite the cold weather. As the flying snowflakes softly landed and piled up on the ground, vehicles on the road felt as though they were running on a thick white carpet, so they moved much slower and the noise of traffic seemed to fade out. Even the trees beside the road stood still, as if they were waiting to be embraced by the first snow in Beijing.

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you like about this sample paragraph?
2. What writing problems in word choice and sentence writing are revealed after comparing the two versions?
3. What improvements have been made in terms of sentence style? What techniques have been used in the improved version?

5. Practice

Practice A. Make the following general sentences more specific with a series of words or phrases. Remember to avoid repetition in meaning among your word choices within each sentence.

E.g. He is forever talking about the advantages of living in the country.

He is forever talking about the advantages of living in the country—the friendly people, the clean atmosphere, the closeness to nature and the gentle pace of living.

1. People can enlarge their circle of friends by chatting online.
_____, _____, and _____—all these people can enlarge their circle of friends by chatting online.
2. Enchanted with the life of pop stars, some college students tend to collect everything related to them.
Enchanted with the life of pop stars, some college students tend to collect everything related to them —_____, _____, and_____.
3. I dislike eating in the dining hall because the food there is terrible.
I dislike eating in the dining hall because the food there is _____, _____ and _____.
4. I enjoy traveling because it can benefit me in several ways.
I enjoy traveling because it can _____, _____, and _____.
5. You come to know you have grown up at certain moments.
You know you have grown up when _____, when _____, when _____.

Practice B. Combine each cluster of numbered items into one or more sentences. Then combine clusters into a well-organized paragraph, if you wish.

- 1.1 The waiting area was noisy.
- 1.2 The waiting area was cramped.

1.3 The waiting area was poorly lit.
1.4 It looked like a large broom closet.

2.1 Gary sat with two other applicants.
2.2 He tried to relax.
2.3 His insides felt intense.

3.1 He touched his fingers to his face.
3.2 He noticed they were ice-cold.
3.3 This was a sure sign of nervousness.

4.1 His plan was to sell himself.
4.2 The selling would be straightforward.
4.3 It would be without arrogance.

5.1 He would emphasize his adaptability.
5.2 He would emphasize his friendliness.
5.3 He would emphasize his work habits.
5.4 His work habits were responsible.

6.1 The secretary called his number.
6.2 He wiped his palms dry.
6.3 He adjusted his new tie.
6.4 He arranged his face into a smile.
6.5 The smile was upbeat.

7.1 He strode into the interview room.
7.2 He told himself he had nothing to lose.

8.1 He shook hands with the interviewer.
8.2 He settled into an armchair.
8.3 He noticed his mismatched shoes.
8.4 One was light brown.
8.5 The other was black.

From Writer's Choice: Composition and Grammar

Unit 2 Paragraph Writing

Reading makes a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.

—Francis Bacon

1. Appreciative Reading

A typical English paragraph is composed of a group of related sentences which support the central idea. Read the following paragraphs for the central ideas and discuss what you perceive to be the differences between Chinese paragraphs and English paragraphs.

Excerpt 1

Of the many things that I wish I understood better, the one that I am faced with the most often is my sister. I see her every day; we attend the same school, share a room, and share our parents. I feel as though I should understand her feelings and be able to identify²⁹ her moods with ease after thirteen years of living with her, but she remains one of the biggest mysteries in my life. She's talented, intelligent, and undoubtedly the wittiest³⁰ person I know. Yet she is also picky, stubborn and prone³¹ to outbursts that I am powerless to stop. Not that I think these outbursts are a sign of some underlying psychological problem; they are hardly that serious. But when I am coming closer and closer to moving out of our room and thus putting a hole in our relationship that may not be refilled, I can't bear to watch our days together wasted on her bad moods. Maybe it is because I am too close to her that I can't see the way my own actions affect her, but I simply do not know how to behave so that I won't set her off³². My parents seem to have some idea; they often think that I am trying to aggravate³³ her on purpose. But I want nothing more than to have the harmony (and that truly is how I would describe the situation) that we often live in to be permanent. I'm just not sure how to make that happen.

—From *"That Made a Difference"* by Ellison Ward

Excerpt 2

Even becoming accustomed to the cold climate, however, was not as difficult as getting used to the differences in customs between Honduras³⁴ and the United

²⁹ To identify is to recognize something or discover exactly what it is. 识别, 鉴别

³⁰ Being witty means using words in a clever and amusing way. 诙谐的

³¹ To be prone to do something is to be likely to do something, esp. something bad or harmful. 易于...的

³² To set off originally means to cause to explode. Here it means to provoke her; to cause her to get angry. 招惹, 激怒

³³ aggravate v. to make angry, esp. by continual annoyance 惹恼, 激怒

³⁴ Honduras n. 洪都拉斯 (拉丁美洲国家)

States. For example, I was amazed to hear my classmates at the university address our instructor by his first name. In Honduras, we would always use a title such as “professor” or “doctor” before the instructor’s name. Also, students here joke with their teachers and challenge them on facts or opinions, which Honduran students may find disrespectful. Then, too, American food and meal times vary greatly from food and meal customs in Honduras. I miss the oceans of fresh fruit and vegetables, and I am sick of McDonald’s hamburgers. Dating was another custom that surprised me. I discovered that I could ask a girl to a movie without going steady with her or compromising³⁵ myself in any way. Finally, the differences in family life are quite striking. In my country, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins are likely to share one large house, but here, people usually live in small, isolated family groups. Some of my classmates visit their parents only at Christmas and in the summer, and they haven’t seen their grandparents for years.

—From *Independent Writing* by Teresa D. O’Donnell

2. Mini-Lecture: Paragraph Building

A paragraph is a group of related sentences developing one idea or expressing one unit of thought, which is the topic of a paragraph. It is the basic unit of organization in writing.

A paragraph is made up of three parts: a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence

A topic sentence states the main idea of a paragraph. It not only names the topic of the paragraph, but also limits the topic to one or two areas that can be discussed completely in the space of a single paragraph. The specific area is called the controlling idea. The controlling idea is usually indicated by a single word or a phrase in the topic sentence. A controlling idea helps a writer by reminding him/her at all times to keep to the central idea as he or she writes a paragraph. A concluding sentence summarizes the main idea of the paragraph. For example, in the topic sentence: “Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics”, the topic is “gold”, and the controlling idea is “two important characteristics”. Then, in the supporting sentences, two characteristics are to be explained in detail.

When drafting your own topic sentences, pay attention to the following basic requirements for a good topic sentence:

(1) Being complete

FRAGMENT: How to change a tire.

COMPLETE: Anyone can learn how to change a tire.

FRAGMENT: A safe way to change a tire.

COMPLETE: There is a safe way to change a tire.

³⁵ To compromise oneself is to do something which is against one’s principles and which therefore seems dishonest or shameful. 妥协, 让步

(2) Being neither too broad nor too narrow or vague

A topic sentence that is too broad requires much more than a paragraph to develop. A topic sentence that is too narrow leaves little to be said in the rest of the paragraph. Besides, many topic sentences are opinions rather than a simple statement of fact.

POOR: Championship wrestling is really cool.

BETTER: Championship wrestling is an exciting sport of skill and strategy.

(3) Being unified

Do not involve too many unrelated ideas in your topic. Bear in mind that the topic announces the idea to be developed in the paragraph and that the paragraph must contain only one central idea.

POOR: San Francisco is famous for its temperate climate, its many tourist attractions, and its cosmopolitan atmosphere.

BETTER: San Francisco is famous for its temperate climate.

When developing the topic sentence into a paragraph, you can explain, describe or illustrate it with supporting sentences. Sentences which center around the topic sentence are major supporting statements. They are independent but interrelated with one another. Supporting statements which further elaborate the major supporting statements are minor supporting sentences. They are often more specific such as facts, examples, statistics. Read the following paragraph, and see how the topic sentence is developed from major to minor supporting sentences.

I don't teach because teaching is not easy for me. Teaching is the most difficult of the various ways I have attempted to earn my living: mechanic, carpenter, writer. For me, teaching is a red-eye, sweaty-palm, sinking-stomach profession. Red-eye, because I never feel ready to teach no matter how late I stay up preparing. Sweaty-palm, because I'm always nervous before I enter the classroom, sure that I will be found out for the fool that I am. Sinking-stomach, because I leave the classroom an hour later convinced that I was even more boring than usual.

3. Writing Awareness: Coherence

Coherence of a paragraph refers to the proper arrangement of sentences. That is, each sentence in a paragraph naturally leads to the next sentence in explaining the controlling idea. To achieve coherence, all sentences in a paragraph should be arranged in a logical order. It mainly focuses on the organization of a paragraph, which is the key to coherence of a paragraph. There are two basic ways of achieving coherence.

First, you can achieve coherence by meaning, following chronological arrangement, spatial arrangement, logical arrangement in your writing. In expository and argumentative writing, logical arrangement is most common, which includes specific-to-general pattern and general-to-specific pattern.

In specific-to-general pattern also known as induction, the details are mentioned first, and the general statement, which may be the topic sentence, comes at the end of the paragraph, summarizing the main idea of the paragraph.

In whatever situation men can be placed, they may find conveniences and inconveniences. In whatever company, they may find persons and conversations more or less pleasing. At whatever table they may find good meat and drinks of better and worse taste, dishes better or worse prepared. In whatever climate, they may find good and bad weather. Under whatever government, they may find good and bad laws and good and bad administration of these laws. In every poem or work of genius, they may see beauties and faults. In almost every face and every person, they may discover fine features and defects, good and bad qualities. Under these circumstances, the people who are to be happy fix their attention on the conveniences of things, the pleasant parts of conversation, the well "prepared dishes, the goodness of the wines, the fine weather. They enjoy all with cheerful things. Those who are to be unhappy think and speak only of the contraries. Hence they are continually discontented themselves. By their remarks, they sour the pleasures of society, offend many people, and make themselves disagreeable everywhere.

from *the Deformed Leg* by Benjamin Franklin

In general-to-specific pattern also known as deduction, the general statement, which may be the topic sentence, comes first. And the specific details or examples serve as supporting sentences come after the general statement.

If a reader is lost, it is generally because the writer has not been careful enough to keep him on the path. This carelessness can take any number of forms. Perhaps a sentence is so excessively cluttered that the reader, hacking his way through the verbiage (冗词赘语), simply doesn't know what it means. Perhaps a sentence has been so shoddily (劣质地) constructed that the reader could read it in any of several ways. Perhaps the writer has switched tenses, or has switched pronouns in mid-sentence, so the reader loses track of when the action took place or who is talking. Perhaps sentence B is not logical sequel to sentence A -- the writer, in whose head the connection is clear, has not bothered to provide the missing link. Perhaps the writer has used an important word incorrectly by not taking the trouble to look it up. He may think that "sanguine" (红润的; 乐观的) and "sanguinary" (血腥的, 残暴的) mean the same thing, but the difference is a bloody (very) big one. The reader can only infer what the writer is trying to imply.

Second, coherence can be achieved by the use of linking words. Transitional words and linking devices directly tell the reader the logical relationship between one idea and another idea. The table below lists the frequently used transitions according to the logical relationships between the ideas.

Relationship	Transition Examples
addition	moreover, furthermore, besides, in addition (to)

exemplification	for example, for instance, in particular
comparison or contrast	likewise, compared with, whereas, on the contrary
cause and effect	due to, because of, consequently, hence, therefore
sequence	meanwhile, subsequently, finally
emphasis	indeed, in fact

4. Sample Analysis

Read the Student's sample on the topic sentence "The classroom is a good place to do self-study" and discuss:

1. What do you like about this paragraph?
2. What main problems are revealed judging from the requirements for an effective paragraph?
3. How can you revise the paragraph to develop it more logically and convincingly?

Student's sample

The classroom is a good place to do self-study. Whenever pushing the door open, a warm breath coming straight towards me. It is the very classroom I'm expecting for. The tidy pairs of desks and chairs, together with those hardworking people, form a studying paradise. The classroom offers people a quiet and harmonious atmosphere. Sitting in it, we may easily feel preoccupied with the lessons and keep a high mood. All these lead to an efficient work. Also, without the noises and interference around us, we can gain more knowledge than expected. Therefore, learning in the classroom can help us develop a good learning habit that will benefit us all lifelong.

Improved Version

The classroom is a good place to do self-study. For one thing, the classroom provides a good learning atmosphere for self-study. Whenever I push the door open, a warm breath comes straight towards me. It is the very classroom I'm expecting for. The tidy pairs of desks and chairs, together with those hardworking people, form a studying paradise. Sitting in it, I am surrounded by students who are totally absorbed in their study. Some are reviewing lessons and doing homework; Some, reading novels; Still some, writing papers. Influenced by them, I may easily make myself occupied with my homework. Besides, whenever I encounter any difficulties, I can always turn to somebody for help or even have an in-depth discussion with them. All these lead to an efficient work. Another reason why I prefer to study in classroom is owing to its quiet and harmonious atmosphere. I wouldn't be annoyed with constant noises and

interferences, which I have to put up with while studying in the dormitory. Without all the distractions such as watching TV, talking over cell phone, eating snacks, I can highly boost my working quality, even accomplish more than I intend to. Therefore, learning in the classroom has always been my first choice to do self-study.

5. Practice

1. Write a topic sentence for each topic given below.
 - (1) my favorite sport
 - (2) physical exercises
 - (3) traffic in Beijing
 - (4) air travel
2. Underline the topic sentences, or add one to the paragraph (if a topic sentence does not appear but is implied).

(1) Americans might be embarrassed because their Japanese friends are so formal with them. Japanese might feel insulted because American acquaintances greet them casually. Still, the forms of greeting in both countries only show respect for others. It just happens that Americans and Japanese have a different way of looking at human relationships and thus have a different way of showing respect.

(2) Just as I settle down to watch television, he demands that I play with him. If I get a telephone call, he screams in the background or knocks something over. I always have to hang up to find out what's wrong with him. He refused to let me eat a snack in peace. Usually he wants half of whatever I have to eat. Then, when he finally grows tired, it takes about an hour for him to fall asleep.
3. Support the topic sentences given below with supporting sentences so as to develop it into a short paragraph.
 - (1) Our life today depends very much on the mobile phones.
 - (2) No one can avoid being influenced by advertisements.
4. Write a paragraph on the topic "A Sense of Humor"

Module Two Summary

1. Mini-Lecture: Summary Writing

Of all the writing tasks so far, summary writing may well be the one you are most familiar with. We make summaries of many different things, including meetings, lectures, and readings. Our summaries may be quite elaborate, or they may only involve one or two key words, depending on our purpose for writing them. These summaries of what others have written or said may be for our own personal use. Most often we use this material for future reference. At the university especially, it can form an essential part of our preparation for an exam, a class discussion, a research paper, a thesis, or a dissertation. In these situations, we are free to concentrate on what we ourselves think is important or interesting about the source.

Summary writing may, alternatively, be part of a more public communication and an integral part of other work that you may do. For example, your advisor may ask you to summarize some recent literature that could be useful for your research group. Instructors may assign you to review or critique articles. In each of these cases, you are given the opportunity to “display” your understanding of some material. Summaries as part of a course assignment are relatively common in graduate student writing and may be a *foundation* for other, more complex writing tasks, such as a literature review.

The following box explains how to summarize effectively.

Guidelines for summarizing

- Identify the main points, and take care not to alter the meaning of the original source.
- Don't include your opinions; they don't belong to a summary.
- Never use a summary to present your THESIS STATEMENT or a TOPIC SENTENCE.
- Keep your summary as short as possible to accomplish your purpose.
- Integrate summarized material smoothly into your writing.
- Use your own words. If you need to use key terms or phrases from the source, include them in quotation marks, but otherwise put everything into your own words.
- Document the original source accurately.
- Avoid PLAGIARISM.

2. Writing Awareness: Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting another person's words, ideas, or visual images as if they

were your own. Plagiarizing is a form of academic dishonesty or cheating. Of course, borrowing the words and phrases of others can be a useful language learning strategy. Certainly you would not be plagiarizing if you borrowed items that are commonly or frequently used in academic English or that are part of common knowledge, for example, *Paris is the capital of France*, or *The result from this experiment seems to suggest that...*

An important step in avoiding plagiarism is to learn the techniques of quoting, paraphrasing and summarizing. The three techniques are essential for combining information or ideas from other writers with your own words.

(1) A Quotation is the exact words of a source enclosed in quotation marks. Well-chosen quotations can lend a note of authority and enliven a document with someone else's voice. Here is an example.

SOURCE

Turkle, Sherry. *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. New York: Basic Books, 2011. Print.

ORIGINAL (TURKLE'S EXACT WORDS)

Digital connections and the sociable robot may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other. [from page 1]

ACCEPTABLE SMOOTH USE OF QUOTATION

Turkle explains that networked connections “may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship”.

(2) A paraphrase precisely restates in your own words the written or spoken words of someone else. Paraphrase only passages that carry ideas you need to reproduce in detail to explain a point or support an argument. Avoid paraphrasing more than a paragraph or two; for longer passage, use summary. Below is an example.

SOURCE

Baron, Dennis. *A Better Pencil: Readers, Writers, and the Digital Revolution*. New York: Oxford UP, 2009. Print.

ORIGINAL (BARON'S EXACT WORDS)

One of the advantages that pencils had over pens was that pencil marks could be erased. Erasers became popular in the late eighteenth century as West Indian gum elastic, or India rubber, reached Europe. In fact that substance, actually the resin of ficus or hevea plants, was called “rubber” because of its ability to rub out pencil marks. Erasers were sold as separate cubes, and people carried them along with their pencils. [from page 43]

ACCEPTABLE PARAPHRASE

According to Dennis Baron, the “rubber” used for pencil erasers received that name because it could “rub out” marks, a property that give pencils advantages over pens. Erasers began to be widely used in the late 1700s, when importers brought to Europe a material named West Indian Gum elastic, which was actually “the resin of ficus or hevea plants.” The early erasers were separate from pencils, and people had to carry both.

(3) Whereas a paraphrase restates the original material in its entirety, a **summary** states only the main points of the original source in a much briefer fashion. A summary doesn’t include supporting evidence or details. As a result, a summary is much shorter than a paraphrase. Summarizing is probably the technique you’ll use most frequently to integrate sources. Below is an example of an unacceptable summary and an acceptable one.

SOURCE

Tanenbaum, Leora. *Catfight: Women and Competition*. New York: Seven Stories, 2002. Print.

ORIGINAL (TANENBAUM’S EXACT WORDS)

Until recently, most Americans disapproved of cosmetic surgery, but today the stigma is disappearing. Average Americans are lining up for procedures—two-thirds of patients report family incomes of less than \$50,000 a year—and many of them return for more. Younger women undergo “maintenance” surgeries in a futile attempt to halt time. The latest fad is Botox, a purified and diluted form of botulinum toxin that is injected between the eyebrows to eliminate frown lines. Although the procedure costs between \$300 and \$1000 and must be repeated every few months, roughly 850,000 patients have had it performed on them. That number will undoubtedly shoot up now that the FDA has approved Botox for cosmetic use. Even teenagers are making appointments with plastic surgeons. More than 14,000 adolescents had plastic surgery in 1996, and many of them are choosing controversial procedures such as breast implants, liposuction, and tummy tucks, rather than the rhinoplasties of previous generations. [from page 117-18]

UNACCEPTABLE SUMMARY (Underlined words are plagiarized)

Average Americans are lining up for surgical procedures. The latest fad is Botox. A toxin injected to eliminate frown lines. This is an insanely foolish waste of money. Even teenagers are making appointments with plastic surgeons, many of them for controversial procedures such as breast implants, liposuction, and tummy tucks (Tanenbaum 117-18).

ACCEPTABLE SUMMARY

Tanenbaum explains that plastic surgery is becoming widely acceptable, even for Americans with modest incomes and for younger women. Most popular is injecting the toxin Botox to smooth wrinkles. She notes that thousands of adolescents are even requesting controversial surgeries (117-18).

3. Practice

(1) Read this adaptation of “Transformation of the Nile River Basin” and underline the information you think is significant and should be included in a summary. Next to each underlined section, briefly explain why you think the information is important. The first paragraph has been done for you. Then write in the marginal, in as few words as possible, what each paragraph is about.

Transformation of the Nile River Basin

The Egyptian landscape has been changing for centuries. One area which has undergone dramatic change over the last 7,000 years is the Nile River Basin. One of the most notable aspects of this transformation is the year-round irrigation of land for agricultural purposes, rather than a strict reliance on the annual flood. [This is the topic of the passage.] Conversion to continuous irrigation, which began around 1500 and was limited only by the level of technology, led to improved agricultural productivity. This in turn contributed to an increase in the population of the area. [The effect of the change in irrigation patterns is significant.]

Large-scale conversion of agricultural land involving perennial irrigation began in 1800 with the availability of more modern technology. Water could be retained, raised, and distributed to summer crops with the aid of barrages constructed on the Nile below Cairo and at sites on 30,000 km of new canals. Large dams were built on the Nile at Aswan in 1902, 1912, and 1933. The final transformation to continuous irrigation was finished with the completion of the Aswan Dam in 1960. This full-scale change brought about a major shift and expansion in agriculture. Cash crops such as cotton, sugar cane, and vegetables tended and still tend to be produced at the expense of subsistence crops.

Because Egyptians have historically preferred to live within or near the cultivated land area, agricultural expansion has also had an impact on the environment and livelihood of the Nile population. As the amount of land available for agriculture increased, so did the population. Egypt’s population has increased from 2.5 million in the early 1800s to 9.7 million in the late 1800s, 18.8 million in the 1940s, 37 million in the mid-70s, 46 million in 1984, and nearly 67 million in 2002. The population could reach over 100 million by the beginning of 2050. In 1907, urban dwellers constituted only approximately 17% of Egypt’s population. By 2001, however, they were 45% of

the total. Recent studies have indicated that appropriately 1-2% of Egypt's arable land is lost annually to human encroachment.

(2) Take a look at some attempts at summarizing some of the details in the third paragraph of the Nile River text. Which summary provides the right amount of detail? Explain your choice.

A. In the early 1800s the population of Egypt was 2.5million. By the late 1800s it was 9.7 million. In the 40s the population reached 18.8 million; by the mid-70s it had reached 37 million. In 1984 the population was 46 million. In 2002 it was nearly 67 million. The population could reach over 100 million by 2050. One to two percent of Egypt's fertile land is disappearing annually as a result of the growth.

B. In the 1800s Egypt's population increased from 2.5 million to 9.7 million. In the 1900s it grew again, from 18.8 million in the 1940s to 46 million in 1984, reaching 67 million in 2002. By mid-century, the population will be almost double that in 1984. A result of this population growth is an annual 1-2% loss of agricultural land.

C. The Egyptian population has increased from 2.5 million in the early 1800s to 67 million in 2002. It could grow to approximately 100 million by mid-century. Along with this population growth, Egypt has also experienced a 1-2% loss in the amount of fertile land.

D. The Egyptian population has dramatically increased since the 1800s and is expected to continue to increase. A small percentage of agricultural land is lost each year because of the growth in population.

E. The Egyptian population in 2002 was approximately 30 times that in the early 1800s. By mid-century, it could grow to 100 million. Egypt is also losing agricultural land as a result of the population increase.

Now attempt your own summary of the third paragraph.

(3) Read "Reducing Air Pollution" and try to determine the text-type. Then read the summaries that follow. Decide which of the summaries you like best. Write one or two sentences after each summary, explaining what you like or dislike about each. Finally, discuss each of the summaries with a partner.

Reducing Air Pollution in Urban Areas: The role of Urban Planners

Yasufumi Iseki

Recently, increasingly significant problems regarding energy use have emerged. Enormous amounts of pollutants are being emitted from power plants, factories, and automobiles, which are worsening the condition of the Earth. This environmental degeneration is a clear result of acid rain, increased levels of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in

the atmosphere, and other forms of air pollution.

Acid rain and air pollution, for instance, are devastating forests, crops, and lakes over wide areas of Europe and North American. In fact, in Europe nearly 50 million hectares have been identified as damaged, representing 35% of the total forested area. In the United States, appropriately 1,000 acidified and 3,000 marginally acidic lakes have been reported. Since the midcentury, CO₂ levels in the atmosphere have increased by 13%, setting the stage for global warming. As atmospheric temperature rise, grain output may significantly decrease, making it more difficult for farmers to keep pace with the growth of population. In urban areas, air population is taking a toll on buildings and human health.

To reduce the amount of environmental damage in cities specifically, developed counties have devised technology to control the harmful emissions. However, as these countries already have an abundance of vehicles that continues to grow in number, the efficacy of these measures is diminished. Since cars and other vehicles create more air pollution than any other human activity, the most effective means to reduce pollution is to decrease the number of vehicles. A major shift away from automobile usage in urban areas may be possible with the aid of urban planning.

Summaries

A. According to Yasufumi Iseki, air pollution can be controlled through effective urban planning.

B. Yasufumi Iseki in “Reducing the Air Pollution in Urban Areas: The Role of Urban Planners” states that pollutants are worsening the condition of the Earth as a result of acid rain, increased levels of CO₂, and other forms of pollution. In fact, 35% of the total forested area in Europe has been damaged, and in the Unites States, approximately 1,000 acidified lakes and 3,000 marginally acidic lakes have been reported. Since the midcentury CO₂ levels have increased by 13%. Cars and other vehicles create more pollution than any other activity; thus, decreasing the number of vehicles is the most effective way to reduce pollution. This may be possible with urban planning.

C. Yasufumi Iseki states that because cars and other vehicles are the greatest single source of air pollution, a reduction in the number of vehicles in urban areas would be an effective approach to improving the urban environment. This reduction could be achieved through urban planning.

D. Yasufumi Iseki claims that urban planning can play a role in improving air quality in urban areas by promoting a shift away from heavy vehicles use. This will be difficult to achieve because of the overabundance of vehicles in developed countries.

4. Model Writing

Original Text

Travel Accounts

There are many reasons why individuals have traveled beyond their own societies. Some travelers may have simply desired to satisfy curiosity about the larger world. Until recent times, however, trade, business dealings, diplomacy, political administration, military campaigns, exile, flight from persecution, migration, pilgrimage, missionary efforts, and the quest for economic or educational opportunities were more common inducements for foreign travel than was mere curiosity. While the travelers' accounts give much valuable information on these foreign lands and provide a window for the understanding of the local cultures and histories, they are also a mirror to the travelers themselves, for these accounts help them to have a better understanding of themselves.

Records of foreign travel appeared soon after the invention of writing, and fragmentary travel accounts appeared in both Mesopotamia and Egypt in ancient times. After the formation of large, imperial states in the classical world, travel accounts emerged as a prominent literary genre in many lands, and they held especially strong appeal for rulers desiring useful knowledge about their realms. The Greek historian Herodotus reported on his travels in Egypt and Anatolia in researching the history of the Persian wars. The Chinese envoy Zhang Qian described much of central Asia as far west as Bactria (modern-day Afghanistan) on the basis of travels undertaken in the first century BC while searching for allies for the Han dynasty. Hellenistic and Roman geographers such as Ptolemy, Strabo, and Pliny the Elder relied on their own travels through much of the Mediterranean world as well as reports of other travelers to compile vast compendia of geographical knowledge.

During the postclassical era (about 500 to 1500 CE), trade and pilgrimage emerged as major incentives for travel to foreign lands. Muslim merchants sought trading opportunities throughout much of the eastern hemisphere. They described lands, peoples, and commercial products of the Indian Ocean basin from east Africa to Indonesia, and they supplied the first written accounts of societies in sub-Saharan west Africa. While merchants set out in search of trade and profit, devout Muslims traveled as pilgrims to Mecca to make their hajj and visit the holy sites of Islam. Since the prophet Muhammad's original pilgrimage to Mecca, untold millions of Muslims have followed his example, and thousands of hajj accounts have related their experiences. One of the best known Muslim travelers, Ibn Battuta, began his travels with the hajj but

then went on to visit central Asia, India, China, sub-Saharan Africa, and parts of Mediterranean Europe before returning finally to his home in Morocco. East Asian travelers; were not quite so prominent as Muslims during the postclassical era, but they too followed many of the highway and sea lanes of the eastern hemisphere. Chinese merchants frequently visited southeast Asia and India, occasionally venturing even to east Africa, and devout East Asian Buddhists undertook distant pilgrimages. Between the 5th and 9th centuries CE, hundreds and possibly even thousands of Chinese Buddhists traveled to India to study with Buddhist teachers, collect sacred texts, and visit holy sites. Written accounts recorded the experiences of many pilgrims, such as Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing. Though not so numerous as the Chinese pilgrims, Buddhists from Japan, Korea, and other lands also ventured abroad in the interests of spiritual enlightenment.

Medieval Europeans did not hit the roads in such large numbers as their Muslim and east Asian counterparts during the early part of the postclassical era, although gradually increasing crowds of Christian pilgrims flowed to Jerusalem, Rome, Santiago de Compostela (in northern Spain), and other sites. After the 12th century, however, merchants, pilgrims, and missionaries from medieval Europe traveled widely and left numerous travel accounts, of which Marco Polo's description of his travels and sojourn in China is the best known. As they became familiar with the larger world of the eastern hemisphere and the profitable commercial opportunities that it offered - European peoples worked to find new and more direct routes to Asian and African markets. Their efforts took them not only to all parts of the eastern hemisphere, but eventually to the Americas and Oceania as well.

If Muslim and Chinese peoples dominated travel and travel writing in postclassical times, European explorers, conquerors, merchants, and missionaries took center stage during the early modern era (about 1500 to 1800 CE). By no means did Muslim and Chinese travel come to a halt in early modern times. But European peoples ventured to the distant corners of the globe, and European printing presses churned out thousands of travel accounts that described foreign lands and peoples for a reading public with an apparently insatiable appetite for news about the larger world. The volume of travel literature was so great that several editors, including Giambattista Ramusio, Richard Hakluyt, Theodore de Bry, and Samuel Purchas, assembled numerous travel accounts and made them available in enormous published collections.

During the 19th century, European travelers made their way to the interior regions of Africa and the Americas, generating a fresh round of travel writing as they did so. Meanwhile, European colonial administrators devoted numerous writings to the societies of their colonial subjects, particularly in Asian and African colonies they

established. By midcentury, attention was flowing also in the other direction. Painfully aware of the military and technological prowess of European and Euro-American societies, Asian travelers in particular visited Europe and the United States in hopes of discovering principles useful for the reorganization of their own societies. Among the most prominent of these travelers who made extensive use of their overseas observations and experiences in their own writings were the Japanese reformer FukuzawaYukichi and the Chinese revolutionary Sun Yat-sen.

With the development of inexpensive and reliable means of mass transport, the 20th century witnessed explosions both in the frequency of long-distance travel and in the volume of travel writing. While a great deal of travel took place for reasons of business, administration, diplomacy, pilgrimage, and missionary work, as in ages past, increasingly effective modes of mass transport made it possible for new kinds of travel to flourish. The most distinctive of them was mass tourism, which emerged as a major form of consumption for individuals living in the world's wealthy societies. Tourism enabled consumers to get away from home to see the sights in Rome, take a cruise through the Caribbean, walk the Great Wall of China, visit some wineries in Bordeaux, or go on safari in Kenya. A peculiar variant of the travel account arose to meet the needs of these tourists: the guidebook, which offered advice on food, lodging, shopping, local customs, and all the sights that visitors should not miss seeing. Tourism has had a massive economic impact throughout the world, but other new forms of travel have also had considerable influence in contemporary times. Recent times have seen unprecedented waves of migration, for example, and numerous migrants have sought to record their experiences and articulate their feelings about life in foreign lands. Recent times have also seen an unprecedented development of ethnic consciousness, and many are the intellectuals and writers in diaspora who have visited the homes of their ancestors to see how much of their forebears' values and cultural traditions they themselves have inherited. Particularly notable among their accounts are the memoirs of Malcolm X and Maya Angelou describing their visits to Africa.

A Summary of *Travel Accounts* by Joseph Simpson

This article discusses the myriad of motivations into why people have ventured into foreign lands for over two-thousand years, documenting the changes that have taken place through the ages. It is acknowledged that international travel and writing grew towards the end of the middle ages, with religion and trade being major factors into why people voyaged to all corners of the globe. Many new travel accounts were published due to new revolutionary inventions yet colonialism influenced travel enormously and significant writing about lesser known under-developed societies. In

this contemporary age it is suggested international travel has exploded with the quantity of both writing and frequency. It advocates that reasons for travel have become more diverse over time, with tourism playing a prominent role. It finalizes by stating that we have seen an increasing amount of travel writings due to both technological developments and international migration.

Module Three Expository Essays

Unit 1 An Overview

The bad news is that times flies. The good news is that you are the pilot.

—Anonymous

1. Appreciative Reading

Writing can be classified into four different genres³⁶ or modes³⁷: descriptive, narrative, expository³⁸, and argumentative³⁹. Each of these types has a specific purpose or purposes. Read the following four excerpts and identify the writing mode of each one.

Excerpt 1

I had often watched a large dog of ours eating his food, and I now noticed a decided similarity between the dog's way of eating and the man's. The man took strong sharp sudden bites, just like the dog. He swallowed, or rather snapped⁴⁰ up, every mouthful, too soon and too fast, and he looked sideways here and there while he ate, as if he thought there was danger in every direction, of somebody's coming to take the pie away. He was altogether too unsettled in his mind over it, to appreciate it comfortably, I thought, or to have anybody to dine with him, without making a chop with his jaws at the visitor, in all of which particulars he was very like the dog.

—From *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens

Excerpt 2

Beware of pranksters on April 1. The custom of playing jokers on April Fool's Day began in sixteenth-century France. The French celebrated the New Year on April 1, according to the old calendar. A reformed calendar was adopted in 1564, and New Year's Day was switched to January 1. Some persons resisted the change in dates. As a result, tricksters played jokes on anyone who continued to celebrate the New Year on the old date, April 1.

Celebrating April Fool's Day is popular in many countries. A French person fooled by a joke is called an April fish. Fish are said to be very young and inexperienced in April and caught easily by the fisherman's hook. In Scotland, a person fooled is called

³⁶ genre *informal* a particular type of art, writing, music, etc., which has certain features that all examples of this type share (文学作品等的) 题材、样式

³⁷ mode *n.* a way of behaving, living, operating etc. 方式, 样式

³⁸ expository *n.* 说明文

³⁹ argumentative *n.* 议论文

⁴⁰ To snap sth. up is to take or buy quickly and early. 把...抢先弄到手, 抢购

an April gowk⁴¹ or cuckoo⁴². India celebrates the Feast of Huli, and the unsuspecting joke victim is called a Huli Fool.

—From *Wikipedia*

Excerpt 3

In China, women's good name and integrity⁴³ are well preserved. Their parents are in charge of their marriage. Men are brought up to be breadwinners while women are trained to be homemakers. Therefore, women do not have to devote themselves to socialization⁴⁴ for the sake of marriage or wear themselves out to find their own spouses⁴⁵. Apparently, women's dignity⁴⁶ is highly respected in China. In contrast, women in the West make a point of seeking their spouses as soon as they come of age⁴⁷. Their parents require them to learn music and dancing before allowing them to go out to socialize with men. As a result, those who are good at winning men's favor will get married first, while those who are inflexible and slow of speech, or reluctant to flatter others by humiliating⁴⁸ themselves will remain spinsters⁴⁹ all their life. But who is to blame for driving women to win the heart of men at the cost of their own dignity? What else but the free marriage tradition in the West!

This might sound a bit radical⁵⁰, but I am confident that it is not groundless...

—From *Diary of an Overseas Student* (in Chinese) by Hu Shi

2. Mini Lecture: An Overview of Expository Essays

Expository writing and speech surround us in our everyday lives. It is the type of writing that most of us encounter in our daily lives, such as non-fiction books, magazines, newspaper articles, user's manuals⁵¹ or even recipes⁵². At school, students are required to submit essays and research reports as a means for their teachers to grade their progress. Finally, at work, people are required to produce business reports and memorandums⁵³. In addition, oral expository presentations that are delivered to a group

⁴¹ gowk *n.* a kind of bird 杜鹃鸟, 呆子 (隐喻)

⁴² cuckoo *adj. slang* mad, foolish (俚) 怪人的, 疯疯癫癫的

⁴³ integrity *n.* honesty, trustworthiness 正直, 诚实

⁴⁴ socialization *n.* the process of being made fit or trained for life in a society 社会化

⁴⁵ spouse *n.* a husband or wife 配偶 (指夫或妻)

⁴⁶ dignity *n.* calmness, formality, and seriousness of manner or style 庄严, 端庄, 尊严

⁴⁷ To come of age is to reach the particular age, usually 18 or 21, at which one becomes responsible in law for one's own actions, and one is allowed to vote, own property etc. 达到法定成年年龄

⁴⁸ humiliate *v.* to cause to feel ashamed or to lose the respect of others 使蒙羞, 使丢脸

⁴⁹ spinster *n.* a woman who is not married, especially a woman who is no longer young and who seems unlikely ever to get married 未婚女人, 老处女

⁵⁰ radical *adj.* (of a person's opinions) in a favor of thorough and complete change 激进的

⁵¹ manual *n.* book giving information about how to do something, esp. how to use a machine 手册

⁵² recipe *n.* a set of instructions for cooking a particular type of food 烹饪法, 食谱

⁵³ memorandum *n.* a note of something to be remembered 备忘录

of people are commonly observed for academic and workplace activities. Therefore, it is important to learn to write expository essays for a variety of real world contexts.

2.1 Characteristics

Unlike descriptive essays which paint a picture with words, expository essays communicate knowledge or information and use details to explain processes and relationships. Usually, the readers do not have prior⁵⁴ knowledge of what is being discussed in the writing. Expository essays have three main characteristics.

- **Factual (基于事实的)**

Expository essays require a good understanding of the topic you are going to write about. To do so, you need to research the given topic by making use of all the resources available to gather all the information or facts about the topic. Take notes, and make yourself an expert. This is generally a weak area for Chinese students who have been trained to write test-oriented essays. When the process of researching the topic is skipped, students tend to appeal to their personal understanding or knowledge to fulfill the writing requirements. Consequently, their essays often lack the support of facts.

- **Orderly(有序的)**

The details of an expository essay have to be analyzed and put in a logical order. This calls for the ability to think analytically, which includes being able to stand back from the information and examine it in detail from many angles to make sure it is completely accurate⁵⁵. The line of reasoning⁵⁶ will come up in the process of the analysis, with the thesis statement being followed by supporting details. These details can be put in sequence, cause and effect, problem and solution or process explanation, depending on the purpose of the author.

- **Objective(客观的)**

Expository essays use objective language, avoiding personal, subjective words such as ‘nice’, ‘wonderful’, ‘worthwhile’, ‘usual’ or ‘natural’, because the reader’s understanding of these words may be very different from that of the writer.

An expository essay is usually written in a formal, academic style: the language is different from the way you speak, or the way you write letters to a friend. It is not conversational, so it avoids abbreviations and contractions⁵⁷ as well

⁵⁴ prior *adj.* coming or planned before 先前的, 居先的

⁵⁵ accurate *adj.* exactly correct 准确的, 精确的

⁵⁶ reasoning *n.* the use of one’s reason 推理(方法), 推论

⁵⁷ contraction *n.* a shorten form of a word or words 词的缩略形式

as slang and colloquialisms⁵⁸ like “just the stuff”. In addition, writers are more cautious in their choice of words to indicate that they are aware that nothing is completely certain. Words and phrases that express this lack of certainty include the following:

appears to; seems to; tends to; may; might; possibly; probably, apparently; generally; seemingly, in some cases, this..., the evidence suggests that...

2.2 Qualities of Strong Expository Essays

Clear	⇒	Easy to read
Concise ⁵⁹	⇒	Exact, specific, to the point
Inviting ⁶⁰	⇒	Connects with the audience in direct, creative ways
Informative	⇒	Includes insights and ideas

2.3 Types of Expository Essays

According to the content, expository essays can be divided into three main types:

1) “How to” type

The “how to” type explains **methods and processes**, such as a general explanation of how to do something, or step-by-step directions which are normally written in a chronological order (the order in which things happen). For example, how would you describe a popular children’s game “Dropping the Handkerchief” in China? The following excerpt introduces a traditional game played by people of the Arctic:

Members of the community grabbed hold of the edge of an animal skin. When everyone pulled at once, the center snapped up, propelling the person who sat or stood in the center of the skin into the air, just as if he or she were on a trampoline⁶¹. The leader of the most successful whaling⁶² crew was often rewarded with the place on the skin; it was then a matter of pride to remain standing throughout the vigorous tossing.

—From *The Peoples of the Arctic* by Kevin Osborn

2) “What” type

⁵⁸ colloquialism *n.* an expression used in informal or familiar conversation 俚语或俗语

⁵⁹ concise *adj.* short and clear, expressing a lot in a few words 简洁的, 简明的, 简要的

⁶⁰ inviting *adj.* attractive, encouraging one to take a suitable action 吸引人的

⁶¹ trampoline *n.* 蹦蹦床

⁶² whaling *n.* the activity of hunting whales 捕鲸

The “what” type explains a thing, an incident, a phenomenon⁶³, an idea, etc. and can be written in a particular order chosen by the writer. Examples are definitions of concepts (such as compassion, democracy, tolerance), description of activities or events, reports, book reviews⁶⁴, and product introductions. You’re likely to include descriptive writing in most “what” type essays, but it is easy to give too much detail and forget the underlying purpose of the description.

At the Higher Education level you are unlikely to be asked to describe anything just for the sake of describing. There will be another purpose, such as explaining the methods used in the experiment, giving essential background information or summarizing the main points of a theory or an article you have read. The passage below classifies and defines the four causes of conflict:

There are four major causes of conflict. Some conflicts arise when people differ in what they believe to be right and wrong, good and bad, appropriate⁶⁵ and inappropriate. We call this type of conflict a values conflict. Conflicts can also be caused when people have different goals for themselves, for their families, or for a project on which they may be working. Disagreements or misunderstandings about what behavior, chores, or responsibilities are expected from someone in a family, in a group, or on the job are called role expectation conflicts. When two or more people compete for a position, a title, a reward, or a promotion, we say they are having a competition conflict

—Thomas Gordon

3) “Why” type

The “why” type explains reasons and opinions and is written in a particular order, such as from the core reasons to peripheral (less important) ones. A common assignment for college writing, this type of essays involves cause-and-effect situations and a strong logic in thinking. Therefore, further practice for writing cause-and-effect essays is provided in Unit 10 of this book. Here is a sample passage of the “why” type:

Almost half of the three million people who start their first year of college this month will drop out before they earn their degrees. For the students who do not make it to graduation, that lost opportunity can be expensive both in terms of the income they will lose over the course of their working lives and the debt many of them will have acquired in their thwarted⁶⁶ quests for a diploma.

So what is the problem? Much of the responsibility can be attributed to high schools that do not adequately prepare students for collegiate-level work. But just

⁶³ phenomenon *n.* a fact, event, type of behavior etc. 现象

⁶⁴ A book review (书评) should have four basic parts: an introduction that gives the basic information about the book and its author, a summary of the book (in your own words), an analysis of the book’s literary elements (with well-chosen examples or quotations), and your conclusion about the book’s worth.

⁶⁵ appropriate *adj.* correct or suitable for a particular situation or occasion 恰当的

⁶⁶ thwart *v.* to prevent from happening or succeeding 阻碍, 阻挠

as substantial⁶⁷ is the fact that the pipeline that moves college students from admission to graduation is broken, most notably in the costs of higher education, for both the colleges and the students. During the high times not so long ago, colleges could afford to raise tuition because students had easy access to educational loans. Now that the economy has weakened, universities and undergraduates have been left gasping for ways to fill the budget gaps⁶⁸ in the most difficult financial climate in decades⁶⁹.

—Adapted from *U.S. News & World Report*, September, 2009

2.4 Organizational Patterns

Details support, explain, or illustrate the main idea of a paragraph. They are facts that are essential to the main idea, and they provide information about and give meaning to the main idea. Important or supporting details may be organized in a number of different ways or patterns, depending on the writer's purposes. Some of the organizational patterns are provided in the table below. You may find that most of these organizational patterns are very familiar to you and that you may use them in your writing or speaking on a daily basis without considering them to be organizational patterns. Specific tools used in these patterns are examples, personal experiences *and* knowledge, statistics⁷⁰, pictures, charts or diagrams⁷¹.

Organizational Patterns for Expository Writing

Pattern	Key Feature
Illustration	Using examples to illustrate a point
Description	Giving precise details about methods, essential background information and features or summarizing the main points for subsequent analysis
Process / Sequence	Arranging the details in a time order (e.g. steps or stages), spatial ⁷² order (e.g. left to right, top to bottom, clockwise ⁷³ , foreground to background), or order of importance.
Comparison and Contrast	Explaining how two or more things are alike and/or how they are different.
Cause and Effect	Exploring the reasons for something and examining the results of events or actions.

⁶⁷ substantial *adj.* significant, to have an important effect 重大的, 重要的

⁶⁸ the budget gap 预算赤字

⁶⁹ decade *n.* a period of ten years 十年, 十年期间

⁷⁰ statistics *n.* a collection of numbers which represent facts or measurements 统计数字

⁷¹ diagram *n.* a plan or figure drawn to explain something 图表, 图解

⁷² spatial *adj.* arranged within a certain space 空间的

⁷³ clockwise *adv.* in the same direction in which the hands of a clock move 顺时针的

Problem and Solution	Examining how conflicts or obstacles are overcome.
Classification	Putting people or things into a particular group because they have similar qualities.
Definition	Explaining what a concept is and why it is important, often using examples to show what it exactly means.

3. Practice

3.1 Free-writing Activity

Write for 20-30 minutes on one of the following essay questions or topics:

1. Please briefly elaborate on one of your activities (extracurricular, personal activities, or work experience).
2. What is your favorite word and why?
3. Write a definition essay on a personal quality you admire.

Follow-up question: What explanation method is used in your writing?

3.2 Revising Checklist

Rewrite the topic you have chosen and expand it into an essay (at least 200 words). Use the following peer-review form to collect some peer responses before you finalize it. Try to make your writing as interesting and effective as possible.

1. Identify the introduction, the body, and the conclusion of the essay. Is the opening paragraph interesting?
2. What is the main idea of each paragraph? Does all the information support the main idea?
3. Is the information presented in a logical order?
4. Are explanations accurate, complete, and clear?
5. Are there any unfamiliar terms that are not defined?

Practice A. Identify the organizational patterns of the following paragraphs.

1. To you, she may be just a poor stray cat, but to me, she is the most interesting “girl” I have ever met. When I met her, she was sitting by the road meowing for food and comfort. I rushed home and brought some food for her. How lovely! Her snow white fur was soft and glossy; her pale blue eyes expressed a bit of sorrow. She purred as I gave her some beef, and rubbed herself against me, but she did not eat! She just looked at me... I walked away and hid myself behind the fence. Then, she looked around suspiciously, picked up the whole beef, and scampered away. I followed her, and guess what I found? A big nest of kittens protected by her love. Love is not only in humans; the purest love can also be found simply in a cat, a mother cat.

2. There are three things that the West has: freedom of the individual and this incessant

study of the human mind – why we do things the way we do, what we are made of, and how we think and how we behave. The third one is, of course, music. Music, for whatever reason, has developed in the West a lot. Maybe because people in the West and in Europe are more intuitive, more right-sided in their brains. Maybe there are emotions and processes that are developed and need to be articulated and understood. I have tried to be aware of all these gifts, more or less, that are available now in the West.

3. We all go through three stages of development. The first one is when a child is told that he can be wonderful and have all these wonderful things in life: virtue and truth, compassion, altruism, and so forth. The next stage is when he realizes that the world is not actually like that, and neither is he, so he rebels. He thinks most people remain in that second stage of cynicism, rebellion and disbelief. Then he thinks that there is a fortunate group that says, well, I have to live in this world and contribute to it and be sensitive to mankind, so I will utilize all this good and bad in me.

4. I came back to my hometown and felt the wonderful white world. Everywhere were covered with the angels of winter. The trees were wearing blouses to take part in a wonderful party. The snowmen were smiling at everybody. For the whole vacation, I played with snow and ice. I like the feeling, because I want to be close to nature. No matter where I go, I will keep this beautiful feeling in my heart forever.

5. What impressed me most was the new relationship between my parents and me. We all acted so friendly and tolerant toward each other. I helped with the housework as often as possible, which I used to consider dull. And I was willing to take a walk along the riverside with my dad, joking and listening carefully to him all the way, which I used to consider a waste of time.

4. Model Essay: The Great Wall of China

In China there is a saying: you won't be considered a great person until you've been to the Great Wall. Well, I visited the Great Wall last year. While it has not made me a great person yet, I do know its grand beauty and would like to share with you some of the wonders of the Wall.

The beauty of the Great Wall lies in its grand view as a whole, with its long arms resting on rolling hills and its towers peering across the valleys. The wall stretches across more than half of China, from the sea in the east, past Beijing, to Gansu Province in the west. With a total length of 4000 miles, it is the longest man-made construction in the world. If the Great Wall were translated to the United States and stretched out in a straight line, it would run from New York City, completely across the Atlantic Ocean, past Spain, England, and France, and all the way to Berlin, Germany.

The Great Wall has undergone three major stages in its construction: from the first phase during the Qing Dynasty through the second phase during the Han dynasty, until the third phase during the Ming Dynasty. The beginning of the Great Wall, as we know it, dates to 221 B.C. (more than 2000 years ago), when Emperor Qin Shi Huang

ordered his top general to lead 300,000 soldiers in rebuilding and connecting separate old walls that had been built by princes of warring states. In just 12 years, Qin had a 3000-mile wall, using primarily wood frames filled with stones and compacted earth. While the wall proved effective in keeping out the tribes who threatened to invade China from the North, it created dissent⁷⁴ within China. According to Arthur Waldron's "The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth," ditches⁷⁵ on the roadside were filled with corpses⁷⁶ of men who had been forced into construction of the Great Wall. Compelled into hard labor and burdened by heavy taxes to finance the project, the people grew unhappy, and a year after Qin's death, the peasants revolted⁷⁷. While the wall stood, the empire⁷⁸ collapsed.

The second major period of construction for the Great Wall occurred during the Han Dynasty which lasted from 206 B.C. to 220 A.D. Emperor Wu Di ordered expansion of the existing wall to protect land won when his army defeated the Northern tribes. Workers added 3000 miles to the existing wall. They built wooden frames which they filled with willow reeds⁷⁹ and a mixture of fine gravel⁸⁰ and water. The ruins of the Han Wall are very different in construction and appearance from the Great Wall as it exists today.

The third major building period of the Great Wall occurred 1,100 years later during the Ming Dynasty. In 1368, during the first year of the Ming Dynasty, Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang ordered more expansion of the Wall. Subsequent Ming emperors strengthened and extended the Wall further until it reached its current length. Builders of the Ming Wall made three important architectural⁸¹ advancements, which resulted in the distinctive⁸² features of the Wall as it exists today. You can see those features especially well in this photograph. First, rather than using earth and stone, they used kiln-fired⁸³ bricks to create a stronger wall. Second, they erected more than 3000 beacon towers⁸⁴ to keep watch on the mountain passes for potential invaders. These towers rise from the Wall like mighty outposts, and are one of the most striking aspects of the Wall when you see them in person. Third, the Ming builders made the Wall so large that it would be impossible to break through. In fact, the Wall is so wide that the soldiers could ride several horses abreast⁸⁵ along the top of the Wall.

⁷⁴ dissent *n.* difference of opinion 异议

⁷⁵ ditch *n.* a V-or U-shaped passage cut into the ground for water to flow through 沟, 渠

⁷⁶ corpse *n.* a dead body 尸体

⁷⁷ revolt *v.* to take strong and violent action against those in power 造反, 起义, 反叛

⁷⁸ empire *n.* a group of countries all ruled by the ruler or government 帝国

⁷⁹ reed *n.* a grasslike plant that grows in wet places 芦苇, 苇草

⁸⁰ gravel *n.* small stones usually mixed with sand 碎石, 沙砾

⁸¹ architectural *adj.* of architecture 建筑的, 建筑风格的, 建筑样式的

⁸² distinctive *adj.* clearly making a person or thing as different from others 有特色的

⁸³ kiln-fired *adj.* 砖窑烧制的

⁸⁴ beacon tower *n.* 烽火台

⁸⁵ abreast *adv.* next to one another and facing the same way 相并, 并肩, 并排

In conclusion, the Great Wall of China enjoys a rich history. Built over a course of 2,500 years during the Qing, Han, and Ming Dynasties, it is a magnificent feat of human engineering. While the Wall no longer continues to defend China from invaders, it does continue to play a central role in Chinese culture and international identity⁸⁶. Now that you know a little more about the Wall, I hope you will have a fuller appreciation of why it is regarded as great, not just in China, but throughout the world.

—Adapted from *The Art of Public Speaking* by Stephen Lucas

Unit 2 Cause and Effect

I have spent most of the day putting in a comma and the rest of the day taking it out.

—Oscar Wilde

1. Appreciative Reading

Read and work in pairs to identify the organizational pattern in the following excerpt about “**the benefits of volunteering**”.

Although it may sound paradoxical, volunteering is one of the easiest ways to find a job. After graduating from a college or university, many get stuck in the situation of trying to find a job, but needing working experience, but you cannot obtain working experience because no one hires you. Statistics show about 73% of employers would rather prefer to hire a person with volunteering experience in the field than a person without one; 94% of employers share the belief that volunteering helps potential employees obtain new skills and diversifies their qualification, and thus are more prone to hiring people who volunteer. Respectively, 94% of those people believe that volunteering can add to one's skills; 94% of people who were hired after a volunteering experience say such an experience aided them in getting their first job, or benefited them in other ways, such as quicker promotion, salary increases, or obtaining new skills. Having relevant work experience obtained during volunteering and specifying it in your CV can be a kickstarter for your career, because nowadays more and more employers tend to count volunteering as actual work experience. Besides, volunteering is a great

⁸⁶ identity *n.* who or what a particular person or thing is 身份, 本身, 本体

option to explore possible career opportunities if you are unsure what you would like be doing for living. Through various programs, you can try yourself in a number of organizations, working on different problems, and on different positions, without having to do job-hunting, and then job-hopping. Therefore, if you still think you do not have time to volunteer because you need to look for a job, or because volunteering could be a nuisance to your duties, you might want to reconsider your opinion.

—Adapted from “*Benefits of Volunteering*”, World Volunteer Web. 14 Sept. 2016

2. Mini-Lecture: Writing Cause-and-effect Essays

Cause-and-effect essays explore the reasons for something and examine the results of events or actions. For college students in China, most of the causal essays explore the reasons for some social phenomena or personal opinions. Writing a cause-and-effect essay in English is an effective way of developing your analytical thinking. A strong cause-and-effect essay requires a clear understanding of the cause-and-effect relationships, a strong logic in the reasoning, and sound language proficiency for the best effect.

2.1 Cause-and-effect Relationships

The method of cause-and-effect is much used in arranging supporting details because many events are connected by cause-and-effect relationships, and some are even connected by a chain of cause-and-effect relationships, in which the effects become causes of other effects. Writing cause-and-effect essays is a challenge because very often an effect may have many causes and a cause may have many effects. You have to be well-informed to be clear about all the possible cause-and-effect relationships.

Therefore, before starting to write, make sure a genuine cause-and-effect relationship exists. Remember that an event that came before another event has not necessarily caused it. Next, explore the types of cause-and-effect relationships present. Is there one cause for several effects? Are there several causes leading to a single effect? Or are there multiple⁸⁷ causes with multiple effects? Finally, choose a pattern of organization for your writing as suggested in section 2.2 below. After you have completed your draft, review it to be sure that the cause-and-effect relationships are clear.

2.2 Organizational Patterns

Depending on the purpose, the author often takes one of the following three organizational patterns for a cause-and-effect essay.

⁸⁷ multiple *adj.* including many different parts, types, etc. 多样的, 多重的

A *cause* essay begins with an introduction which briefly describes the *effect*, and then the entire body of the essay analyses the causes, each of which is generally discussed in one paragraph. An *effect* essay reverses⁸⁸ the procedure. It begins with an introduction describing the *cause*, and the rest of the paper discusses the effects. Sometimes an essay may contain both the causes and the effects of something; for example, when analyzing China's one-child policy, the writer may begin with the causes, explaining why the policy was adopted, and then discuss the effects of this policy.

Read the following two essays and decide what kind of pattern has been employed respectively.

Essay 1

People are exposed to huge amounts of stress each day. Problems at work, dysfunctional relationships, insurance issues, taxes, children's misbehavior, and so on—these typical misfortunes can upset anyone. However, there is a psychological problem which can make one's life excessively complicated even on its own, without adding up the aforementioned factors. This problem is social anxiety; unfortunately, the modern world is permeated with these factors, which contribute to the development of this psychological disorder.

Although the environment we live in definitely has an effect on how people feel, it is important to consider the biological factors leading to social anxiety disorder (SAD). In particular, biologists believe that SAD is related to a dysfunction of brain circuits responsible for regulating emotions and the “fight or flight” response center. In particular, there is a brain structure called amygdala; it is known to play a role in controlling the fear response. If a person has an overactive amygdala, they often display an excessive “fear” type of emotional response; therefore, whenever a situation occurs that can be interpreted as even slightly uncomfortable, a person with SAD will overreact in terms of fear. In addition, genetic factors should also be considered when studying the causes of SAD, because social anxiety may occur when it was also present in a first-degree relative: parent, sibling, or child.

Another significant group of factors responsible for the development of SAD is a group of environmental factors, including psychological climates. The first social interactions people make in their lives are usually connected to parents; from them, people learn basic social rules, what is acceptable and what is not, how it is like to be loved and to be ignored, and so on. Based on what happened in their childhood, people construct their personal systems of beliefs, including assumptions on what other people think about them. Commonly, if a child is loved and respected by parents, he or she later assumes that other people treat them in the same way; however, if a child is often criticized, it prevents him or her from developing a sense of personal value, and for such people, it is more difficult to become socially confident.

In addition, the way parents deal with different life situations also influences children's personality. According to Cheryl Carmin, a psychiatrist and director of the

⁸⁸ reverse *v.* to change round (usual order or position) 颠倒 (通常的次序或位置)

clinical psychology training program at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, parents are often responsible for developing social anxiety in a child. “A parent or a significant adult figure may model that it’s appropriate to be anxious in situations where your performance will be evaluated [...]. For example, a parent who is commenting on being nervous about a performance review or who tells their child to not be anxious before their first “show and tell” may be priming the child to, in fact, be anxious in that situation. It’s also quite possible that any number of these factors interact,” says Dr. Carmin (Live Science).

The reasons why people develop social anxiety are different, but generally they can be divided into two categories: biological and environmental. A biological group of reasons includes dysfunctions in brain work, as well as excessive “fight or flight” reactions. Environmental factors include psychological influences caused by parents on their children, as well as role models which parents provide a form of teaching to their children consciously or unconsciously.

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“Social Anxiety Disorder (social Phobia).” Mayo Clinic. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 June 2015.

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“Understanding Social Anxiety and Shyness.” Overcoming. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 June 2015.

Zimmermann, Kim Ann. “Social Anxiety Disorder: Causes, Symptoms and Treatment.” LiveScience. TechMedia Network, 28 Aug. 2014. Web. 09, June 2015.

Essay 2

Everyone has at least once in their lives stayed awake throughout an entire night. Usually, being up all night is a choice of high school or college students—usually, for partying; excessively responsible workers and workaholics also tend to spend sleepless nights working on their tasks. It is widely believed that, unlike insomnia (which means a regular lack of sleep), a couple of sleepless nights now and then cannot do much harm. Unfortunately, this is not true—being awake for 24 hours even once in a long period of time has unpleasant effects on health.

Everyone knows that a night spent without sleep (or having little sleep) can result in fatigue and bad mood in the morning; many would consider this a small price for a night of fun or productive labor. However, several sleepless nights can cause more serious mental effects. In particular, your ability to focus and to make decisions will decrease significantly; having a foggy brain and unclear thinking, as well as falling asleep mid-day are also among the possible negative effects. However, in a long-term perspective, the health effects are much worse: proneness to obesity, high blood pressure, heart diseases, diabetes, and so on.

Actually, fatigue and sleepiness are just the tip of the iceberg. Specifically, experts from Sweden compared the effects of one-night sleep deprivation to a mild concussion. They conducted a study in which a group of healthy young men slept 8 hours one night, and then abstained from sleep another night. The blood samples taken

from the men after the sleepless night revealed a 20% increase of neurochemical markers associated with brain cells damage (compared to the samples taken after the full rest night). “Dysfunctional sleep has been linked with a range of health problems, and it looks like that’s because we’re injuring our brain by not getting enough sleep,” says W. Chris Winter, M.D., medical director of the Martha Jefferson Sleep Medicine Center in Charlottesville, Virginia.

At the same time, some results of the studies were surprising. According to new research, one night without sleep can increase the levels of dopamine in the brain—a substance responsible, in particular, for wakefulness. Scientists believe that by producing more dopamine, the brain tries to compensate for the negative effects of a sleepless night; still, according to the study, cognitive deficits caused by sleep deprivation remain significant. “[...] Dopamine may increase after sleep deprivation as a compensatory response to the effects of increased sleep drive in the brain,” says David Dinges, PhD, at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

Obviously, abstaining from sleep has no positive effects on the human body. One-night deprivation of sleep results in fatigue and irritability; several sleepless nights affect one’s ability to concentrate and make decisions. Swedish experts compared the negative effects of the lack of sleep to a mild concussion, and although studies show that the brain tries to compensate the lack of sleep by producing more dopamine, it is still not enough to compensate the harm dealt. So, no matter what your reasons are to stay awake for a prolonged time, make sure to have a normal 8 hours sleep.

References:

Girdwain, Jessica. “The Scary Side Effect of One Sleepless Night.” *Men’s Health*. N.p., 12 Jan. 2014. Web. 11 Jan. 2016.

“Why Lack of Sleep Is Bad for Your Health.” NHS. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Jan. 2016.

“One Sleepless Night Increases Dopamine” In *The Human Brain*, Science Daily, 21 Aug. 2008. Web. 11 Jan. 2016.

Clearly, the above two samples were well-organized five-paragraph essays, with three body paragraphs each describing the causes or effects of different issues.

In writing cause-and-effect essays, some transitions can be used to indicate cause-effect relationships, such as *because*, *since*, *so*, *as a result*, *as a consequence*, *cause*, *result in*, *lead to*. However, not all the causes are stated directly.

3. Writing Awareness: Opinions and Facts

Good writers must be able to determine whether the information they are providing is factual or not. One problem typical of the English essays by college students (as can be seen from the sample essays below) is that students often present opinions as though they are facts. But opinions are not facts; they are based on attitudes or feelings and can vary from individual to individual. Opinions cannot be conclusively⁸⁹ proven right or wrong. Facts, on the other hand, do not change from person to person. Facts are things that exist and can be proven true. An example of facts: *Beijing is the Capital of China*.

⁸⁹ conclusively *adj.* putting an end to doubt or uncertainty 结论性地, 决定性地

An example of opinions: *Beijing is a charming city.*

You must do research to find facts that will support your opinions or ideas. The supporting materials can be examples, statistics, or testimony⁹⁰. Examples can be brief, extended (like a brief account of a story), or even imaginary. Statistics are also an effective way to support the ideas, but the source of statistics should be identified. Statistics should be used sparingly⁹¹ because cluttering⁹² an essay with too many numbers can make it dull and uninteresting. You must evaluate their supporting materials to make sure that the materials are accurate, relevant and come from reliable sources.

4. Practice

4.1 Free-writing Activity

Write for 20-30 minutes on one of the following topics.

1. The effects of nomophobia (no mobile phone phobia) on modern people
2. The causes of students' heavy dependence on social networks

Follow-up question: What organizational pattern is used in your writing?

4.2 Revising Checklist

Rewrite the topic you have chosen and expand it into an essay (no less than 200 words). Go through the checklist below to revise your first draft; collect some peer responses before you finish your final draft. Try to make your writing as interesting and effective as possible.

1. Is there a thesis statement in the opening paragraph?
2. Do the stated cause-and-effect relationships exist?
3. Are opinions supported by facts?
4. Are there clear connections between ideas?
5. Are transitions used to make the cause-and-effect relationships clear: *so, if, then, since, as a result*?
6. Does the ending sum up the thesis clearly and effectively?

4.3. Read the text and fill in the cause and effect table.

Climate

For the last hundred years the climate has been growing much warmer. This has had a number of different effects. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, glaciers have been melting very rapidly. For example, the Muir Glacier in Alaska has retreated two miles in ten years. Secondly, rising temperatures have been causing the snowline to retreat on mountains all over the world. In Peru, for example, it has risen as much as 2700 feet in 60 years.

As a result of this, vegetation has also been changing. In Canada, the agricultural

⁹⁰ testimony *n.* a formal statement that something is true, as made by a witness in a court 证词

⁹¹ sparingly *adv.* using or giving little 节约地, 节俭地

⁹² clutter *v.* to make untidy or confused 使---混乱, 使---杂乱

cropline has shifted 50 to 100 miles northward. In the same way cool-climate trees like birches and spruce have been dying over large areas of Eastern Canada. In Sweden the treeline has moved up the mountains by as much as 65 feet since 1930.

The distribution of wildlife has also been affected, many European animals moving northwards into Scandinavia. Since 1918, 25 new species of birds have been seen in Greenland, and in the United States birds have moved their nests to the north.

Finally, the sea has been rising at a rapidly increasing rate, largely due, as was mentioned above, to the melting of glaciers. In the last 18 years it has risen by about six inches, which is about four times the average rate of rise over the last 9000 years

Cause	Connective/ marker	Effect
The climate has been growing much warmer	(different effects)	1 Glaciers have been melting very rapidly, e.g. the Muir Glacier in Alaska has retreated 2 miles in 10 years

4.4. Exercises

Look at Table: *Accidents in a large British city (1996) carefully. Complete the description that follows of the information it contains. In the spaces write a suitable cause-effect connective.*

Main accident causes		Number of accidents 1996	Percentage rise (+)/fall (-) compared with 1995
1	Drivers turning right without due care	593	+12%
2	Pedestrians crossing roads carelessly	402	+7%

3	Drivers failing to give a signal	231	-3%
4	Drivers losing control of vehicles	312	+40%
5	Drivers improperly overtaking other vehicles	173	-10%
6	Drivers misjudging distances	96	-20%

Table: Accidents in a large British city (1996)

Firstly, turning right without due care (1) _____ 593 accidents in 1996. Secondly, (2) _____ pedestrians crossed roads carelessly, 402 accidents occurred. Next, although there was 3% decrease in drivers failing to give a signal, nevertheless there were still 231 accidents (3) _____ this. In 1996, 40% more drivers than in 1995 lost control of vehicles. (4) _____ there were 312 accidents. In fifth place came drivers improperly overtaking other vehicles: these (5) _____ 173 accidents. Finally, there was a 20% fall in drivers misjudging distances; however, they were still the (6) _____ 96 accidents.

5. Model Essay

Unsinkable or unthinkable?

On the evening of April 14, 1912, on its maiden voyage, the “unsinkable” luxury liner the Titanic struck an iceberg in the freezing waters of the North Atlantic. Within a few hours the ship sank, taking with it some fifteen hundred lives. Why did so many people die, particularly when there was another ship within ten miles? Subsequent investigation by national and international agencies showed that the three major reasons the ship sank were: an insufficiently trained crew, limited lifesaving facilities, and poor telecommunication services.

One reason so many people died in the Titanic tragedy was that the crew was insufficiently trained for such an emergency. In the face of grave danger, evidently the crew of the Titanic was simply unable to meet the situation. Many of the lifeboats left the ship only half full and others could have taken several more people. The passengers were not informed of the imminent danger upon impact with the iceberg, investigation suggested, and the officers deliberately withheld their knowledge of the certain sinking of the ocean liner. Therefore, when lifesaving maneuvers were finally begun, many passengers were unprepared for the seriousness of the moment. Further indication of poor crew leadership was that when the Titanic disappeared into the ocean, only one lifeboat went back to pick up survivors.

Another reason so many people lost their lives was that the ship was not equipped with enough lifeboats. Although hundreds of millions of dollars had been spent in decorating the ship with palm gardens, Turkish baths, and even squash courts, the most luxurious liner afloat was lacking the vitally important essentials of lifesaving

equipment. Records reveal that the Titanic carried only sixteen wooden lifeboats, capable of carrying fewer than twelve hundred persons. With a passenger and crew list of exceeding twenty-two hundred, there were at least a thousand individuals unprovided for in a possible sea disaster --- even if every lifeboat was filled to capacity.

Undoubtedly, however, the primary reason that so many people aboard the Titanic died was that the international radio service was not perfected. Within ten miles of the Titanic was the Californian, which could have reached the Titanic before she sank and rescued all of her passengers. When the Titanic sent out emergency calls near midnight, the radio operator of the Californian had already gone to bed. A crew member, however, was still in the radio room and picked up the signals. Not realizing that they were distress signals from a ship nearby, the crew member decided not to wake up the radio operator to receive the message. At that time there were no international maritime regulations requiring a radio operator to be on duty twenty four hours a day.

Therefore it can be seen that the great ship Titanic sank due to its unqualified crew, its inadequate number of lifeboats, and an imperfected international radio system. Hopefully, this kind of tragedy will never happen again.

Unit 3 Comparison and Contrast

The different between the right word and the almost-right word is as great as that between lightning and the lightning bug.

— Mark Twain

1. Appreciative Reading

Read the following essay and work out an outline of the structure.

Eating and Reading

As a creature, I eat; as a man, I read. Although one action is to meet the primary need of my body and the other is to satisfy the intellectual need of my mind, they are in a way quite similar.

To keep ourselves alive, we need all kinds of nutrition. Eating is the most important way by which we can get starch, protein, vitamin, sugar, fat, and some trace elements. On the other hand, we eat not only because we have to do so, but also because we enjoy doing so. Having satisfied our hunger, eating can then be a kind of enjoyment. The color, the smell, and the taste of the food are considered as important as its nutritive value. Very often we eat some food not because it is nourishing but simply because we like it. This partiality for certain food will not affect our health, so long as we do not indulge heavily in it. There are many people, however, who do not eat the food they dislike and consequently suffer from malnutrition. So, for the sake of health, we have to eat some food even though we may not like it.

Similarly, to enrich our minds, we need information and knowledge which can be obtained through reading. Reading is one of the most important ways of learning. Without reading our minds will become empty like that of an animal. Sometimes, we take reading as a pastime, and we relax and learn at the same time. Since recreation is involved, we will naturally have a partiality for some particular kinds of books, just as we do for certain kind of food. It is all right if we read more books on history than books on literature. But suppose we focus on one subject only and pay no attention to anything else, we will face the problem of imbalance. Nutrition for our minds should be as comprehensive as the nutrition for our bodies. An educated person is a person who knows a lot of things about something and something about a lot of things. One's mind needs all kinds of nourishment, whether they are to one's liking or not.

Besides, there are other similarities between eating and reading. We should not eat too much without digesting and assimilating, nor should we read too much without understanding and remembering. While we are eating, we should leave out the rotten part of the food which will do harm to our health; and while we are reading, we should be able to reject the poisonous content in a book, if any, for it will poison our minds.

So, eat sensibly and read sensibly to give yourself a strong body and a healthy mind.

2. Mini-Lecture: Comparison and Contrast Essays

Throughout our lives we are bombarded with countless pieces of information from

newspapers, television, radio, and personal experiences. Yet somehow we must make sense of the jumbled⁹³ facts and figures that surround us. One way is to compare and contrast, as when we make personal decisions, asking ourselves whether one option is better than another. We arrive at the conclusion by a method of thinking called comparison and contrast. A comparison shows how two or more similar things are alike, and a contrast shows how they are different.

People make comparisons and contrasts every day, though they may not be aware of it. For example, you may ask yourself questions like “Which dictionary shall I buy?” or “Which major or job might suit me?” or “Which place should I visit on holiday, the mountain or the beach?” Even a little child might compare a mother’s behavior by asking “Why can a child’s mother be so nice to the other mother’s child?” Similarly, when you write an essay, you will often make comparisons and contrasts.

2.1 The Purposes of Comparison and Contrast

Below are three major purposes of comparison and contrast, followed by an example of a model paragraph.

1. To present information about something unfamiliar by comparing it with something familiar.
2. To show the superiority of one thing by comparing it with another.
3. To show the reader the similarities and differences of two things to help the reader understand or evaluate them.

Example 1

It’s easier to walk away from a relationship if two people live together instead of getting married. Financial responsibilities are one big difference. A couple living together have their own financial responsibilities and a shared account with money. A single person has his or her own credit rating⁹⁴, credit cards, and loans, whereas a married couple usually share credit cards and loans, and their credit ratings go together. Money matters play a significant role in relationships and may keep people together. Another difference between living together and being married is children. People who live together are less likely to have children. For that reason, they will find it easier to leave a relationship. In contrast, married people with children often stay together “for the kids’ sake.” Religion is another important matter. A couple will probably be condemned by their relatives for living together; married couples, in contrast, are more likely to have religion on their side. They usually have the same religious belief. If not, at least no one can say they are “living in sin.” The influence of religion can do a lot to keep people together. Finally, legal⁹⁵ matters also come into this discussion. Ending a marriage is a

⁹³ jumbled *adj.* 混乱的, 乱七八糟的

⁹⁴ Credit rating is an estimate of the ability of a person or organization to fulfill their financial commitments, based on previous dealings. 信誉评价; 信誉评级

⁹⁵ legal *adj.* of or using the law (有关) 法律的

complicated process. Papers have to be filed; a divorce has to take place. Splitting up while living together is much easier: no papers, no divorce. Say what you will, there are more things than love keeping married people together. If you think staying together is good, you should get married.

—From *Destination* by Richard E. Bailey & Linda Denstaed

After reading the above paragraph that compares living together and getting married, which of the purposes listed in the box do you think fits the contrast? Have you achieved a better understanding of the two life styles because of the comparison? Clearly, the specific purpose of the comparison is to inform the readers of the advantage of getting married over living together in keeping a stable relationship.

2.2 Basis of Comparison

It is important to identify the basis of comparison before drafting a comparison or contrast essay. When two things are very similar, it is the contrast that is worth writing about. And when they are not very much alike, you should highlight similarities. In either case, you should think about each point to decide whether it is significant or not. For instance, to find out the similarity between two wedding photos, one taken in the 20th century and the other in the 21st century, you will select significant points, such as the expressions in the new couple's eyes longing for a happy life. You would not say that both photos are of two people, because it is meaningless.

When you decide on the points of comparison, make sure that you treat the same number of elements for each subject you discuss. The following is a framework to help you outline your essay. Notice the writer may focus only on similarities or differences depending on the purpose of his writing.

Framework for a Comparison (or Contrast) Essay

Introduction (with the theme implied)		
Areas to be compared or contrasted	A	B
Similarities		
1		
2		
3		
...		
Differences		
1		
2		
3		
...		
Significance of similarities or differences (How do I decide whether something is significant?)		
Conclusion (Draw the reader's attention to the main points.)		

2.3 Organizational Patterns

Details in a comparison (or contrast) essay may be arranged either in subject-by-subject (S-b-S) or point-by-point (P-b-P) pattern (Refer to the two boxes below for illustration). Sometimes, both patterns are adopted in the same essay when both similarities and differences are highlighted. Subject-by-subject comparison discusses each subject separately, devoting one or more paragraphs to *subject A* and then the same number to *subject B*. The S-b-S pattern often presents points in the order of increasing significance to hold your reader's interest; it is usually used only for short essays.

Subject by Subject Pattern

Thesis: A is a much better restaurant than B because of its superior food, service, and environment.

- I. Restaurant A
 - A. Food
 - B. Service
 - C. Environment
- II. Restaurant B
 - A. Food
 - B. Service
 - C. Environment

For point-by-point comparison, you discuss one common element in each section, making your points about *subject A* and *subject B* in turn. To be well balanced, each point made about *subject A* is compared with the point made about *subject B*.

Point by Point Pattern

Thesis: A is a much better restaurant than B because of its superior food, service, and environment.

- I. Food
 - A. Sea Food World
 - B. Roast Goose City
- II. Service
 - A. Sea Food World
 - B. Roast Goose City
- III. Environment
 - A. Sea Food World
 - B. Roast Goose City

Now, read the following two samples and discuss in pairs about the effect of different patterns.

(1) My hometown and my college town have several things in common. First, both are small rural communities. For example, my hometown, Gridlock, has a population of only about 10,000 people. Similarly, my college town,

Subnormal, consists of about 11,000 local residents. This population swells to 15,000 people when the college students are attending classes. A second way in which these two towns are similar is that they are both located in rural areas. Gridlock is surrounded by many acres of farmland which is devoted mainly to growing corn and soybeans. In the same way, Subnormal lies in the center of farmland which is used to raise hogs and cattle. Thirdly, these towns are similar in that they contain college campuses. Gridlock, for example, is home to Neutron College, which is famous for its Agricultural Economics program as well as for its annual Corn-Watching Festival. Likewise, the town of Subnormal boasts the beautiful campus of Quark College, which is well known for its Agricultural Engineering department and also for its yearly Hog-Calling Contest.

(2) My hometown and my college town are similar in several ways. First, my hometown, Gridlock, is a small town. It has a population of only about 10,000 people. Located in a rural area, Gridlock is surrounded by many acres of farmland which are devoted mainly to growing corn and soybeans. Gridlock also contains a college campus, Neutron College, which is famous for its Agricultural Economics program as well as for its annual Corn-Watching Festival. As for my college town, Subnormal, it too is small, having a population of about 11,000 local residents, which swells to 15,000 people when students from the nearby college are attending classes. Like Gridlock, Subnormal lies in the center of farmland which is used to raise hogs and cattle. Finally, Subnormal is similar to Gridlock in that it also boasts a beautiful college campus, called Quark College. This college is well known for its Agricultural Engineering department and also for its yearly Hog-Calling Contest.

One important principle in writing comparison-and-contrast essays is that the points of comparison or contrast should be balanced; the two items being compared or contrasted are to be given equal treatment. In the subject-by-subject pattern, both parts are about equal in length (or preferably have the same number of paragraphs) and the second part deals with each point brought up in the first part. Besides, each point of each part must also be discussed and arranged in the same order.

A common fault in comparison/contrast is to discuss one item more fully or in more aspects than the other. Likewise, in a point-by-point pattern, the writer should follow a consistent order. To be well balanced, each point he makes about *subject A* he should also make about *subject B*.

3. Writing Awareness: The Significance of Comparison

It is crucial to be clear about the significance of your comparison or contrast before drafting such essays; otherwise, your essay will sound like a shopping list, without a focus. The significance determines the theme of your essay. For example, if you write an essay comparing print book and Ebooks, you need to establish a meaningful focus for a specific purpose.

Read the following excerpt and then answer two questions: (1) Does the author

focus on differences or similarities? (2) What is the purpose of writer?

Example 2

One major decision which faces the American student ready to begin higher education is the choice of attending a large university or a small college. The large university provides a wide range of specialized departments, as well as numerous courses within such departments. The small college, however, generally provides a limited number of courses and specializations but offers a better student-faculty ratio, thus permitting individualized attention to students. Because of its large, cosmopolitan student body (often exceeding 20,000) the university exposes its students to many different cultural, social, and extra-curricular programs. On the other hand, the smaller, more homogeneous⁹⁶ student body of the small college affords greater opportunities for direct involvement and individual participation in such activities. Finally, the university closely approximates⁹⁷ the real world; it provides a relaxed, impersonal, and sometimes anonymous existence. In contrast, the intimate atmosphere of the small college allows the student four years of structured living in which to contemplate⁹⁸ and prepare for the real world. In making his choice among educational institutions the student must, therefore, consider many factors.

—From *From Paragraph to Essay* by Maurice Imhoof & Herman Hudson

Therefore, do remember to be sure of the significance of your comparing or contrasting before drafting your essay. Refer to the framework in Section 2.2 to practice outlining for your essay.

4. Writing Activities

4.1 Free-writing Activity

Practice A. Write an essay comparing any two people or things you are interested in, such as:

1. Two friends/Two teachers
2. Two attitudes towards life
3. Two ways of travel
4. Life in the countryside/Small cities vs. Life in Big Cities
5. Shopping online vs. Shopping in malls
6. Two lifestyles (e.g. Living at home vs. living in dorm)
7. High school life vs. university life
8. Men vs women in work style/speech

Follow-up question: What is the theme of your essay?

Practice B. Choose an appropriate conjunction from the box below, and fill in each of

⁹⁶ homogeneous *adj.* of the same kind; alike 同种的; 相似的

⁹⁷ To approximate is to come near (to) in amount, nature, etc. 接近, 近似

⁹⁸ To contemplate is to think deeply and thoughtfully. 深思, 细想, 仔细考虑

the blanks in the two paragraphs.

in the same way

likewise

another similarity

whereas

too

While

Both

another difference

but

on the other hand

A Even though Arizona and Rhode Island are both states of the US, they are different in many ways. For example, the physical size of each state is different.

Arizona is large, having an area of 114,000 square miles, ¹ Rhode Island is

only about a tenth the size, having an area of only 1,214 square miles. ² is

in the size of the population of each state. Arizona has about four million people

living in it, ³ Rhode Island has less than one million. The two states also

differ in the kinds of natural environments that each has. For example, Arizona is a very dry state, consisting of large desert areas that do not receive much rainfall every

year. ⁴, Rhode Island is located in a temperate zone and receives an average

of 44 inches of rain per year. In addition, ⁵ Arizona is a landlocked state and thus has no seashore, Rhode Island lies on the Atlantic Ocean and does have a significant coastline.

B Even though we come from different cultures, my wife and I are alike in several

ways. For one thing, we are ⁶ thirty-two years old. In fact, our birthdays

are in the same month, hers on July 10 and mine on July 20. ⁷ is that we

both grew up in large cities. Helene was born and raised in Paris and I come from

Yokohama. Third, our hobbies are alike, ⁸. My wife devotes a lot of her free

time to playing jazz piano. ⁹, I like to spend time after work strumming my

guitar. A more important similarity concerns our values. For example, Helene has strong opinions about educating our children and raising them to know right from

wrong. I feel ¹⁰. Our children should receive a good education and also have strong moral training.

—From *College English* by Li Yanglong

5. Model Essays

Model essay 1

Why E-books are Preferable to Print

Modern digital technologies today can easily substitute almost any analogue thing that people had been using for decades or even centuries. Bulky vinyl players have turned into tiny iPods, huge TV-sets have become super-flat plasma wall panels, phones are getting more and more impossible to distinguish from pocket computers, and so on. Books have also undergone such a transformation, and today many people prefer using an electronic book, or e-book, rather than a regular printed one. Why? Because e-books are in every possible way better than printed books, no matter what the antique lovers say.

The most obvious advantage is portability. If you have been a book-lover for a long time, you most likely had to carry a book or two with you wherever you go. If you could afford carrying a backpack around, it was not a problem; however, if you are a lady or a clerk in some serious corporation, most likely you either had to fit a book into your purse or folder, or leave it at home. On the other hand, any modern e-book is almost flat and light weight, so you can easily carry one – even in your pocket. You can read it in any position, and take it anywhere with you. By the way, try to make it comfortable to read a printed book while lying on your side – it is almost impossible (Snarkynomad.com). With an e-book device, all your problems with a book's weight and shape are solved.

The next reason why e-books are more preferable is that even a cheap e-book device allows one to carry the whole Library of Congress in your pocket. Depending on an e-book device's memory capacity, you can store gigabytes of data on your device. The file format is usually not a problem: many e-book devices support all popular formats of electronic books such as fb2, djvu, pdf, azw, kfx, and so on.

Also, electronic books are reasonably cheaper than printed ones, and the price seriously depends on which store you buy them at, so in fact you can get a lot of nice books for a humble price. Of course, a device costs more than a book, but this difference in prices pays off quickly (Spreader.com).

We live in an age when ecological problems have turned from unproven scientific hypotheses to a disturbing reality. Vanishing of the Amazonian rainforests, massive deforestation all over the planet, and the extinction of species of plants are only some parts of a larger ecological problem. The industry of book printing contributes significantly to global warming, because for the paper on which books are printed, they need to cut down trees. There are many books printed on recycled paper as well, but their overall percentage is tiny. Therefore, by preferring an e-book over a printed one, a customer can actively contribute to the matter of saving trees. The less print books you buy, the more trees you help to save (Epublishers Weekly).

If you like old things, then you most likely stand for print books. However, the majority of rational people today stand for e-books, and there exist several strong reasons for this. E-books not only help to save the environment (since they do not need paper to be printed on), but they also take less space, are cheaper, and allow owners to

carry entire libraries in their pockets, wherever they would go. All this proves that choosing an e-book over a printed one is a truly wise and reasonable decision.

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Questions for Discussion

1. What major differences are discussed by the author?
2. Are there any similarities between these kinds of books?
3. What is the purpose of comparison and contrast of Ebooks and print books?
4. What other expository patterns are employed in the essay?

Model essay 2

Travelling Vacations vs. Staycations

Staycations have become the most popular alternative to vacation travelling. This is most likely due to the fact that staying at home for the holidays is cheaper, safer and easier (Richards, *Temptations of Travelling*). It only stands to reason that back-porch vacations and poolside holidays are becoming the new trend for middle-class Americans, especially in light of the recent economic crisis. However, there are some specific reasons why travelling will remain a better alternative, despite the cost issues and any possible inconveniences.

Going on a journey involves experiencing your own senses: seeing, touching, hearing and smelling the new, unusual and unique atmosphere of places you visit while on vacation. If someone described to you what a new ice-cream flavor tastes like using a hundred words, but instead you could choose to simply try it yourself, would you have preferred the description or the experience of your own? It is the same with travelling. Unlike watching the Discovery Channel or National Geographic, reading about exotic places on somebody’s blog and watching even the most colorful and fun podcasts about travelling, actually visiting the place is ten times more powerful of an experience. In addition, you get to form your own opinion about what you see instead of just watching it through the eyes of a documentary director or through the lens of a photographer.

Leaving to involve yourself in an adventure is arguably the best source of inspiration one could think of. Even if you have been to the chosen location for travel a few times already, the next time you visit it the impressions you receive can be different, have a new spice or a fresh hint, since the weather, your mood and the people you come across will be distinctive, and your impression of the place can change radically or become fuller and more holistic. To me, travelling brings new discoveries, whether they are revelations of environments or discoveries

within myself. In this regard, travelling can be the best cure for depression, the feeling of inner perplexity and fears for what the future may bring and where you are heading. Sometimes, a vacation to a place you have never been before or know little about can do more than just broaden your knowledge and inspire new emotions. It can change your whole life perspective and cause you to revise your life values (Howards, Destination Joy). It is no wonder that many people return from vacations as completely new persons and never come back to their old lifestyles.

Travelling means meeting new people. Unlike staycations that normally revolve around the same group of people you are already on good terms with, travelling brings together at times absolutely different people, from various cultures and backgrounds. Travelling is a chance to get to know others better and to learn to adjust to new traditions and other peoples' lifestyle (Opus, The Social Road). While on the road, you can meet someone you would never get a chance to bump into if you stayed within your comfort zone, at home or with a group of people you have known for ages. Travelling is a chance to make new friends and change the cycle of the everyday routine that you have gotten trapped in over the years.

There is a place for discussion of whether travelling is worth the money you will spend on it or is it simply better to save up, spend your vacation at home and stay within your comfort zone. Travelling may seem like a challenge at times – it needs a great deal of planning, a decent budget, and a certain enthusiasm and willingness to challenge yourself. But those who have the courage to follow their dreams and overcome obstacles will find a way to pursue a hobby they like. And if you feel that overwhelming desire to see a place far away, do not let the fears take over your dream. Having once traveled, you will most likely not ask yourself whether to spend your vacation at home or travel – staycations will simply not be an option.

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Model essay 3

The Handsome and Deformed Leg

Benjamin Franklin

There are two types of people in the world. Although they have equal degrees of health and wealth and the other comforts of life, one becomes happy, the other becomes miserable. This arises from their different ways in which they consider things, persons and events, and the resulting effects upon their minds.

In whatever situation men can be placed, they may find conveniences and inconveniences. In whatever company, they may find persons and conversations more

or less pleasing. At whatever table they may find good meat and drinks of better and worse taste, dishes better or worse prepared. In whatever climate, they may find good and bad weather. Under whatever government, they may find good and bad laws and good and bad administration of these laws. In every poem or work of genius, they may see beauties and faults. In almost every face and every person, they may discover fine features and defects, good and bad qualities.

Under these circumstances, the people who are to be happy fix their attention on the conveniences of things, the pleasant parts of conversation, the well "prepared dishes, the goodness of the wines, the fine weather. They enjoy all with cheerful things. Those who are to be unhappy think and speak only of the contraries. Hence they are continually discontented themselves. By their remarks, they sour the pleasures of society, offend many people, and make themselves disagreeable everywhere. If this turn of mind was founded in nature, such unhappy persons would be the more to be pitied. The disposition to criticize and be disgusted is perhaps taken up originally by imitation. It grows into a habit, unknown to his processor. The habit may be strong, but it may be cured when those who have it are convinced of its bad effects on their congeniality. I hope this little admonition may be of service to them and help them change this habit. Although in fact it is chiefly an act of imagination, it has serious consequences in life, as it brings on real grief and misfortune. These people offend many others, nobody loves them, and no one treats them with more than the most common civility and respect, and scarcely that. This frequently puts them out of humor and draws them into disputes. If they aim at obtaining some advantage in rank or fortune, nobody wishes them success. Nor will anyone stir a step, or speak a word to favor their ambitions. The people should change this bad habit and condescend to be pleased with what is pleasing, without fretting themselves and other. If they do not, it will be good for others to avoid an acquaintance with them. Otherwise, it can be disagreeable, and sometimes very inconvenient, particularly when one becomes entangled in their quarrels.

An old philosophical friend of mine grew very cautious from experience, and carefully avoided any contact with such people. He had a thermometer to show him the temperature, and a barometer to show when the weather was likely to prove good or bad. Since there is no instrument to discover at first sight this unpleasing disposition in a person, he made use of his legs. One of his legs was remarkably handsome, the other, by some accident crooked and deformed. If a stranger looked at his ugly leg more than his handsome one, he doubted him. If he spoke of it, and took no notice of the handsome leg, my friend had sufficient reason not to bother with him any longer.

Not everyone has this two-legged instrument, but everyone, with a little attention, may observe signs of that kind of fault-finding disposition and make the same resolution to avoid those infected with it. I therefore advise these critical, argumentative, discontented, unhappy people, that if they wish to be loved and respected by others, and happy in themselves, they should stop looking at the ugly leg.

Unit 4 Essays Based on Graphs

You can't change the direction of the wind but you can change the sail.

—John F. Kennedy

1. Appreciative Reading

Analytical writing with data often helps readers comprehend the messages conveyed in the visual forms more easily and clearly. Read the following passages and discuss in pairs the characteristics of data description.

Excerpt 1

According to a recent survey conducted by the Beijing-based Chinese Mainland Marketing Research Company, the amount of cash being spent each month on the 4.41 million children aged between 0 to 12 in the five cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu and Xi'an has reached as much as 4 billion yuan (US\$ 481 million). The survey also found that the amount of cash spent on education is more than 21 percent of the total amount, and is going up rapidly. But money spent on food and clothes is still where the biggest proportion⁹⁹ of cash goes, accounting for more than 64 per cent of the total.

—From *China Daily*, June 11, 2001

Excerpt 2

A questionnaire issued jointly by Shanghai-based magazine *Attractive Power* and the French *Science and Life*, on young people's ideals revealed a great difference between the personal ambitions of young Chinese and French people. Those interviewed were in the 12-18 age range. Results showed that 52 percent of young French people regard a good family life as their ultimate¹⁰⁰ ambition, while to 53 percent of their Chinese counterparts a successful career is the main goal, and a further 41 percent see achieving millionaire status as the pinnacle¹⁰¹ of success. Fan Lizhu of Fudan University's Sociology Department commented that the Chinese choices in this survey reflect that in Chinese society wealth is now an accepted yardstick¹⁰² for success in life.

⁹⁹ Proportion refers to a part of a number or amount, considered in relation to the whole. 比例

¹⁰⁰ Someone's ultimate aim is their main and most important aim, that they hope to achieve in the future. 最终的

¹⁰¹ Pinnacle is the most successful, powerful, exciting part of something. 顶峰

¹⁰² Yardstick is something that you compare another thing with, in order to judge how good or

Excerpt 3

If we start with 1975, we can see that at the beginning of the year, inflation stood at 5%. It increased steadily over the next 12 months to 8%. Things improved at the beginning of 1976 and it leveled off¹⁰³ for a six-month period. The improvement continued and inflation decreased gradually by 2% during the rest of the year. Unfortunately, as we can see, the decline was not maintained and over the next six months inflation rose slightly and reached 9% by the middle of 1977. Then we hit a bad patch¹⁰⁴ --- we will remember how inflation went up dramatically to 17% during the next 12 months and the effect this had on our exports. After a drop of 3% over the 2nd half of 1978 when we all thought that things were improving, inflation increased rapidly until it reached a peak of 24% in mid-1979. This subsequently leveled off until the middle of 1980.

—Taken from *College English Writing Lectures & Practice*

2. Mini-Lecture: Essays Based on Graphs

Graphs are ways of data presentation during a research process. Writing essays based on graphs involves understanding the data presented to draw a conclusion (to generalize), describing the data accurately to support the conclusion, and explaining the cause-effect relationships involved, often by way of comparison and contrast. Writing “graphic” essays is an important way to develop critical, analytical thinking (abstract thinking) which is essential for writing research reports, and essays for CET 4/6, and IELTS.

At college level, the graphs for essay writing are often data from mini research programs, so they are easy to understand and process. Since you have learned how to write cause-and-effect and comparison and contrast essays, the focus of this unit is data interpretation¹⁰⁵ and data description in the way they reflect findings.

2.1 Types of Graphs and their Function

Based on the nature and number of variables¹⁰⁶ involved, data will be presented in different types of graph. If there is just one independent variable involved, a single

successful it is. 比较或衡量的标准

¹⁰³ To level off is to become level or even. 使平稳

¹⁰⁴ A bad patch here refers to a period of bad luck. 倒霉时期, 衰败时期

¹⁰⁵ Interpretation means the way in which someone explains or understands an event, information, someone's actions etc. 解释

¹⁰⁶ Variable is something that may be different in different situations, so that you cannot be sure what will happen. 变量

bar or circle or one line will suffice¹⁰⁷ to present the pattern or trend; if there are two or more variables, the number of bars increases accordingly, requiring more complex comparison of the data when describing the graphs.

Three types of graphs are common for essay writing and they each have a function of their own (see the examples below). They are tables, bar graphs, and pie charts. Tables are used for setting out information in clear categories, bar charts, for comparison and contrast, and pie charts for presenting information in a way that the eye can take in at once.

For example, the table below presents the percentage recall (six options) of information by using each of the five senses, including multi-sensory¹⁰⁸ involvement (six options).

Percentage Recall	Sensory Involvement
20%	of what we read
30%	of what we hear
40%	of what we see
50%	of what we say
60%	of what we do
90%	of what we read, hear, see, say and do

Table: *What Do We Remember?* (Flanagan, 1997)

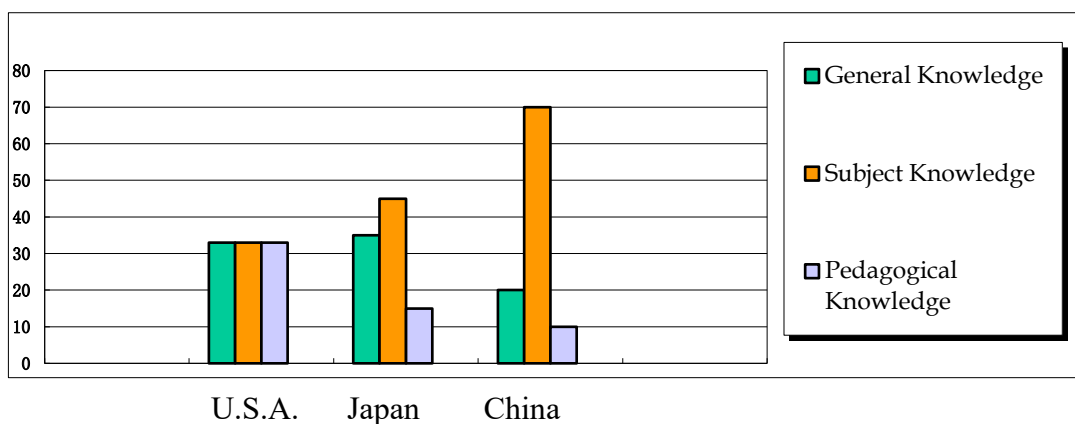
When information is presented in graphs, two or more things are compared against each other. In the bar graph below, the horizontal line (axis¹⁰⁹) provides details of what is being compared: the three countries: U.S.A, Japan, and China, while the vertical axis presents the different percentages that are being measured for the distribution of three kinds of knowledge for teacher education in general knowledge, subject knowledge, and pedagogical¹¹⁰ knowledge respectively. In contrast to the table above, the bar graph involves two variables — three different kinds of knowledge as well as three different countries, so both data description and analysis involve more complex relationships.

¹⁰⁷ To suffice means to be enough. 足以

¹⁰⁸ multi-sensory *adj.* relating to or using your senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, or touch 多种感觉(并用)的

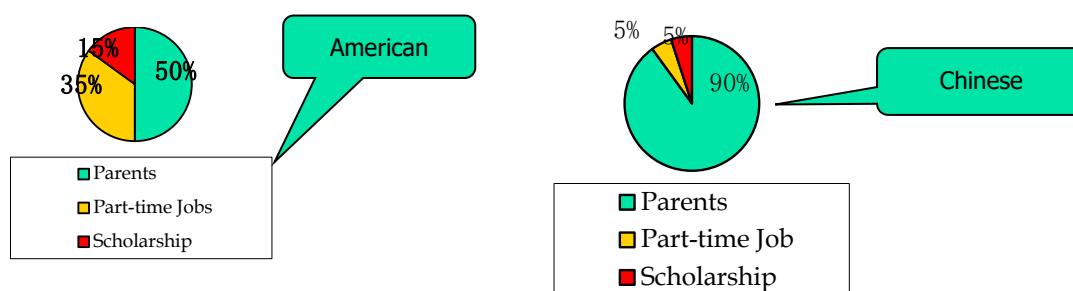
¹⁰⁹ Axis is either of the two lines of a graph, by which the positions of points are measured. 轴

¹¹⁰ pedagogical *adj.* relating to teaching methods or the practice of teaching 教学(法)的



Bar Graph: The Curriculum¹¹¹ Structure of Teacher Education

Pie charts are particularly good illustrations when considering parts of a whole. The pie charts below present information about the sources of income for American and Chinese students at a glance. Even though it is also meant for contrast, a pie chart is preferred because it is comparing the same source of income in the two countries; the three sources are not contrasted against one another. In this case, both data description and analysis are much less complex than in the bar graph above.



Pie Charts: Sources of Income for American and Chinese Students

2.2 The Writing Process

The following steps are necessary for writing “graphic” essays:

Prewriting (data interpretation): Find the title and key words of the graphic to see what information is given. What does it tell you? What and how many variables are involved? Look for patterns (relationships) and draw conclusions; summarize the theme in one sentence.

Data description (brief): Write down the theme (topic sentence) that indicates the subject or topic displayed in the graphic. Support it with accurate or precise details from the graphic. You may compare the facts or figures to reveal the underlying relationships. Start with the most important detail. Guard against explaining the data at the beginning, which is a common mistake for many college students. Wait to offer explanations at the next step.

Discussion (focus of the essay): Reveal the nature of the phenomenon and offer explanations (such as comparison and contrast, cause and effect). The same skills are

¹¹¹ Curriculum refers to the subjects that are taught by a school, college etc, or the things that are studied in a particular subject. 全部课程

involved for writing common expository essays.

Conclusions (brief): implication/ solution / hope...

2.3 Writing Style & Useful Expressions

Before drafting, it is necessary to know that the writing style of “graphic” essays is similar to research reports with the following features:

1. formal—avoid slang and abbreviations
2. focused—address only the given topic and the data from the graphs
3. concise—keep to the point and avoid unnecessary examples
4. analytical —follow a line of reasoning with both facts and opinions.

In terms of wording, data description requires accurate and varied expressions. To make it clear and interesting, it is necessary to use a variety of expressions and word options to describe the data presented in the graphs. The following are common expressions for data description.

For introductory sentences

The graph presents /reveals/indicates /suggests that ...

The table represents the development and changes in ... over the past 10 years.

According to / Based on the figure shown in the table/graph ...

As is shown/can be seen in the chart ...

For patterns or trends (classified into four types)

1. The price rose/increased/went up/rocketed/shot up/significantly/ slightly /rapidly/dramatically over the period.
The price decreased/dropped/fell/plunged/plummeted/ steeply significantly /suddenly/rapidly/dramatically/ slowly over the period.
2. There was a minimal/slight/slow/gradual/steady/dramatic/sharp/ rapid/sudden rise/ increase/ leap (in the price) over the period.
There was a slight/steep/dramatic/sharp/rapid/gradual decrease/decline /reduction/fall/drop/plunge in 2008.
3. The price remained stable/was fairly steady/leveled off over the period.
There was a leveling off/hardly any change/little or no change in the price from 2006 to 2009.
4. The price fluctuated dramatically/sharply/wildly/significantly/ slightly over the period.
There was a dramatic/sharp/wild/significant/slight fluctuation (in the price) over the period.

Expressions for illustration

to make up 98% of .../to amount to .../to reach .../to constitute .../to represent .../to stand for .../to account for .../to take up

For conclusion

In short, .../ In brief, .../ Briefly, .../ In summary, .../ To sum up, .../ All in all, .../ In conclusion, .../ To conclude, .../ On the whole, .../ Altogether, ...

3. Writing Awareness: *Steps for Data Description*

When faced with the task of data description for the first time, you might feel at a loss where to start. You might be eager to quote the figures first instead of starting with a topic sentence. To describe the data of the given graphic effectively, it is important to follow three basic steps for data description.

(1) Write an introductory statement about the theme reflected in the graphs. E.g. The above/ given graph shows the average number of hours a student spends on the computer per week in 1990, 1995, 2000 respectively.

(2) Write a statement to indicate the trend or pattern that you have generalized from the data. E.g. During this period, there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of time spent using a computer. When necessary, the first two steps can be combined into one sentence.

(3) Illustrate the trend or pattern with details or figures. E.g. The average time a student spends per week on the computer rises from about three hours in 1990 to seven hours in 1995, and then soars to over twenty hours in 2000.

At the end of the paragraph for data description, a statement is usually made to connect to the next paragraph, indicating the direction of data discussion. Look at the paragraph below for data description. Can you identify the three steps and the transitional statement?

The graph shows the change of rates of male and female smokers in a city between 1960 and 2000. It is clear that while the number of male smokers peaked at 600 in 1960, the number of female smokers stood at just under 100 in the same year. Meanwhile, the number of male smokers has reduced gradually to less than 300 between 1960 and 2000, whereas the number of female smokers rose rapidly until 1975, then went down steadily to around 200 in 2000. The results indicate that effective measures have been taken to discourage people from smoking.

4. Practice

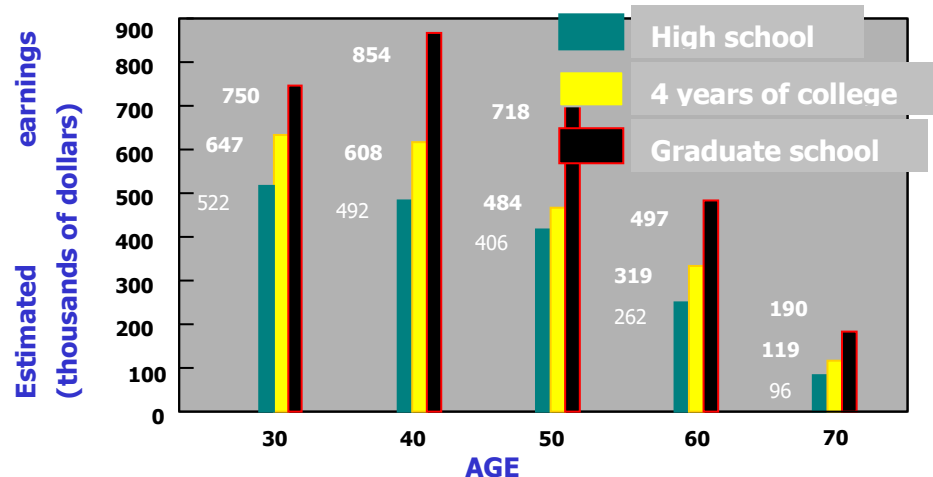
4.1 Data Description

1. Look at the pie graph in Section 2.1 and try to fill the blanks according to the information provided in it.

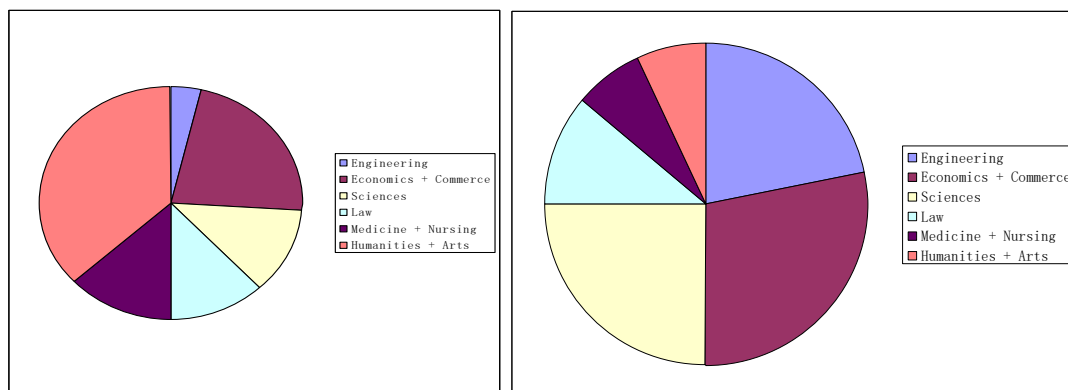
These two pie charts show the difference in _____ between American and Chinese students. We can see that Chinese students get _____ of their income from their parents, while American students only get _____ from their parents. Besides, Chinese students gain only 5% of their income from doing _____ and another 5% from _____, whereas money from the same sources for American students amounts to/ reach _____ and _____ respectively. (Note: the signal words of comparison and contrast are used in the paragraph)

2. Describe one of the following graphs by following the three steps suggested in Section 3. Remember to refer to the writing process in Section 2.2 before drafting, particularly the prewriting part for data interpretation.

Graph 1: *Estimated earnings of people with different education at different ages*



Graph 2: Proportional representation of male and female students in different faculties of a university



4.2 Revising Checklist

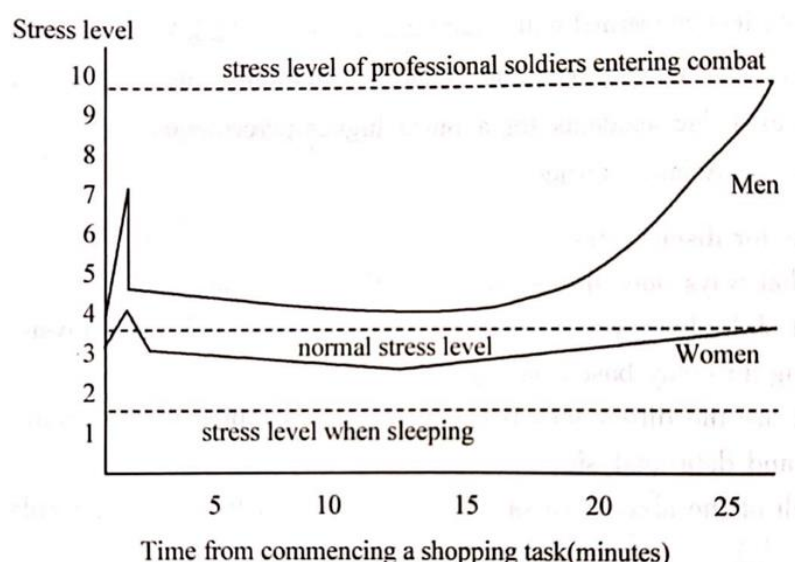
Use the following peer-review form to collect some peer responses before you finish your final draft. Try to make your writing as interesting and effective as possible.

Peer-Review Form

1. Is there an introductory statement about the theme reflected in the graphics?
2. Does the writer avoid giving any of his or her personal opinions at the beginning of the paragraph?
3. Is there any pattern or trend revealed in the graphic essay?
4. Does the writer remember to illustrate the trend or pattern with details or figures?
5. Does the writer vary the word options or expressions to avoid monotony and boredom?

When you finish the work, discuss the comments with your peer reviewer and decide what changes you will make to your writing.

5. Model Essay



Graph 1 Stress levels of men and women with duration of shopping time

The graph shows the effect shopping has on both men and women in terms of stress levels calculated from the time a shopping task is begun.

Basically, the graph illustrates that shopping is a very stressful experience for men, who experience increased stress levels which, after prolonged shopping periods, even reach levels comparable with the stress experienced by professional soldiers in combat. Women, on the other hand, experience reduced stress levels when shopping, which suggests that shopping is a relaxing experience for them.

In the first minute after commencing a shopping task, men experience a dramatic increase in stress level. Their level of stress rises from the normal level of 3 to 7, though it quickly drops down to about 4.5 in the next two minutes. From there the level of stress stabilizes, even falling very slightly, until 10 minutes of shopping time have elapsed, after which the level of stress grows rapidly, attaining a level close to 10 once 25 minutes have passed.

Initially, women also experience a sharp rise in the level of stress, but, unlike men whose stress level never returns to normal during the shopping task, women quickly recover. Their stress level drops during the second minute from 3.5 to about 2.75, 0.25 below the normal stress level. From there the stress level continues to decline until around 11 minutes after the shopping task was begun when it starts to gently return to normal levels.

It can be concluded that the graph clearly shows that, when shopping, women are

less affected by stress than men are.

Group project

Cooperative Learning: A Mini-survey

Conduct a mini-survey on one of the following topics:

1. Sources of pressure for college students
2. College students' addiction to computer or net games
3. Students working part time while attending college
4. College-crowded Library, not easy to find a seat
5. The lack of understanding between the young and the old
6. The obsession of many young women and men with their weight and body image
7. Increasing popularity of plastic surgery among young people
8. Young people's obsession with cell phones
9. College student's overdependence on social media like Wechat, QQ
10. Young people falling into an unhealthy diet in our society.
11. Western festivals like Valentine's Day, Halloween, Christmas getting popular in China

Procedures:

1) First remember to narrow down the topic to a more manageable research question and then formulate 2-3 related sub-questions covering different aspects of the subject. The following is an example demonstrating how to use more specific and focused sub-questions to refer to the more general concept of "ambitions".

Survey question: What are your ambitions?

Sub-questions for the survey:

1. *What do you do for a living?*
2. *What do you do for fun?*
3. *What's the most exciting thing that's happened to you recently?*
4. *Who do you admire most in the world?*
5. *What do you want to be doing five years from now?*

Do not forget to include basic demographic information of the respondent such as their age, gender, etc., which can provide supportive clues for data interpretation and analysis.

2) Then interview your classmates or schoolmates on campus to get their responses to your questions. Afterwards, sum up your data within groups and present the data in the form of graphs or charts.

3) Finally, write a short essay according to the data presented in the graph or chart. Try to employ the organizational patterns you've learned in the previous units, i.e. cause and effect, comparison and contrast. Be ready to present your survey results to class.

Module Four Argumentative Essays

Unit 1 An Overview

Lead-in activity

The photograph below was taken on a university campus in California where students were demonstrating against **tuition increases**.

Further thinking: Since this sign is too small to list their reasons for opposing the increase, what reasons might the students give to fight against the tuition raising?

Discussion: talk with your partners about **the issue** that concerns many college students, either on your campus, or nationally. Write a paragraph that identifies the issue, takes a position on it, and offers reasons that the position should be accepted by others.



1. Appreciative Reading

How (and Why) to Stop Multitasking

Peter Bregman

(Peter Bregman is a leadership consultant and CEO of Bregman Partners, Inc., a global management consulting firm. He is the author of Point A: A Short Guide to Leading a Big Change (2007). He blogs for Harvard Business Review, where this essay appeared in 2010. As you read,

highlight Bregman's claim and the reasons he gives to support it.)

During a conference call with the executive committee of a nonprofit board on which I sit, I decided to send an email to a client. I know, I know. You'd think I'd have learned. Last week I wrote about the dangers of using a cell phone while driving. Multitasking is dangerous. And so I proposed a way to stop. But when I sent that email, I wasn't in a car. I was safe at my desk. What could go wrong?

Well, I sent the client the message. Then I had to send him another one, this time with the attachment I had forgotten to append. Finally, my third email to him explained why that attachment wasn't what he was expecting. When I eventually refocused on the call, I realized I hadn't heard a question the Chair of the Board had asked me.

I swear I wasn't smoking anything. But I might as well have been. A study showed that people distracted by incoming email and phone calls saw a 10-point fall in their IQs. What's the impact of a 10-point drop? The same as losing a night of sleep. More than twice the effect of smoking marijuana.

Doing several things at once is a trick we play on ourselves, thinking we're getting more done. In reality, our productivity goes down by as much as 40%. We don't actually multitask. We switch-task, rapidly shifting from one thing to another, interrupting ourselves unproductively, and losing time in the process.

You might think you're different, that you've done it so much you've become good at it. Practice makes perfect and all that. But you'd be wrong. Research shows that heavy multitaskers are less competent at doing several things at once than light multitaskers. In other words, in contrast to almost everything else in your life, the more you multitask, the worse you are at it. Practice, in this case, works against you.

I decided to do an experiment. For one week I would do no multitasking and see what happened. What techniques would help? Could I sustain a focus on one thing at a time for that long? For the most part, I succeeded. If I was on the phone, all I did was talk or listen on the phone. In a meeting I did nothing but focus on the meeting. Any interruptions — email, a knock on the door — I held off until I finished what I was working on.

During the week I discovered six things:

- **First, it was delightful.** I noticed this most dramatically when I was with my children. I shut my cell phone off and found myself much more deeply engaged and present with them. I never realized how significantly a short moment of checking my email disengaged me from the people and things right there in front of me. Don't laugh, but I actually — for the first time in a while — noticed the beauty of leaves blowing in the wind.
- **Second, I made significant progress on challenging projects,** the kind that — like writing or strategizing — require thought and persistence. The kind I usually try to distract myself from. I stayed with each project when it got hard, and experienced a number of breakthroughs.
- **Third, my stress dropped dramatically.** Research shows that multitasking isn't just inefficient, it's stressful. And I found that to be true. It was a relief to do only one thing at a time. I felt liberated from the strain of keeping so many balls in the air at each moment. It felt reassuring to finish one thing before going to the next.

• **Fourth, I lost all patience for things I felt were not a good use of my time.** An hour-long meeting seemed interminably long. A meandering pointless conversation was excruciating. I became laser-focused on getting things done. Since I wasn't doing anything else, I got bored much more quickly. I had no tolerance for wasted time.

• **Fifth, I had tremendous patience for things I felt were useful and enjoyable.** When I listened to my wife Eleanor, I was in no rush. When I was brainstorming about a difficult problem, I stuck with it. Nothing else was competing for my attention so I was able to settle into the one thing I was doing.

• **Sixth, there was no downside.** I lost nothing by not multitasking. No projects were left unfinished. No one became frustrated with me for not answering a call or failing to return an email the second I received it.

That's why it's so surprising that multitasking is so hard to resist. If there's no downside to stopping, why don't we all just stop? I think it's because our minds move considerably faster than the outside world. You can hear far more words a minute than someone else can speak. We have so much to do, why waste any time? So, while you're on the phone listening to someone, why not use that *extra* brain power to book a trip to Florence? What we neglect to realize is that we're already using that brain power to pick up nuance, think about what we're hearing, access our creativity, and stay connected to what's happening around us. It's not really extra brain power, and diverting it has negative consequences.

So how do we resist the temptation? First, the obvious: the best way to avoid interruptions is to turn them off. Often I write at 6 a.m. when there's nothing to distract me, I disconnect my computer from its wireless connection and turn my phone off. In my car, I leave my phone in the trunk. Drastic? Maybe. But most of us shouldn't trust ourselves. Second, the less obvious: Use your loss of patience to your advantage. Create unrealistically short deadlines. Cut all meetings in half. Give yourself a third of the time you think you need to accomplish something. There's nothing like a deadline to keep things moving. And when things are moving fast, we can't help but focus on them. How many people run a race while texting? If you really only have 30 minutes to finish a presentation you thought would take an hour, are you really going to answer an interrupting call? Interestingly, because multitasking is so stressful, single-tasking to meet a tight deadline will actually reduce your stress. In other words, giving yourself less time to do things could make you more productive and relaxed.

Finally, it's good to remember that we're not perfect. Every once in a while it might be OK to allow for a little multitasking. As I was writing this, Daniel, my two-year-old son, walked into my office, climbed on my lap, and said "Monsters, Inc. movie please." So, here we are, I'm finishing this piece on the left side of my computer screen while Daniel is on my lap watching a movie on the right side of my computer screen. Sometimes, it is simply impossible to resist a little multitasking.

2. Mini-lecture: Argumentative Writing

All arguments are concerned with issues. In developing an argument essay, you

need to have a clear and specific stand/claim about the issue, give reasons and evidence to support the claim. In addition, you should follow a logical line of reasoning; use emotional appeals appropriately; and acknowledge, and/or refute opposing views. Basically speaking, argumentative essays have the following characteristics:

(1) Take a clear claim/stand

The first thing you must know as young writers, about argumentation, is to take a clear position. Taking a stand on a controversial issue can be quite demanding. You need to think hard for a clear thought, you need to have a reasonably cool head for a sound and persuasive argument. To achieve this, you need to explore the issue thoroughly at the prewriting stage. First, compile a pro-and-con table. Then, study each side by asking questions as follows:

- Which point of view agrees with your values?
- Which of the points do you want to argue for?
- Which of the claims do you want to refute?

Your answers to these questions may lead you to a clearer position on the issue as well as a well-thought out organizational pattern. Finally, construct a proposal from the main points you choose and put it in one sentence.

(2) Give strong and logical reasons supported with convincing evidence

In developing an argument, you need to have reasons for making a claim. A **reason** is a general statement that backs up a claim; it answers the question, Why do I have this opinion about the issue? You also need to support each reason with **evidence**. Suppose you want to argue that *high school uniforms should be mandatory* for three reasons: The uniforms (1) reduce clothing costs for parents, (2) help eliminate distractions in the classroom, and (3) reduce peer pressure. Each of your reasons would need to be supported by evidence, facts, statistics, examples, personal experience, or expert testimony. Carefully linking your evidence to reasons helps readers see how the evidence supports your claim.

(3) Deal with opposing views

Recognizing or countering opposing arguments forces you to think hard about your own claims. When you listen to readers' objections, you may find reasons to adjust your own reasoning and develop a stronger argument. In addition, readers will be more willing to consider your claim if you take their point of view into account. There are three methods of recognizing opposing views in an argument essay: *acknowledgment*, *accommodation*, and *refutation*.

- A.** When you **acknowledge** an opposing viewpoint, you admit that it exists and show that you have considered it. For example, readers opposed to mandatory high school uniforms may argue that a uniform requirement will not eliminate peer pressure because students will use other objects to gain status—such as backpacks, iPods, hairstyles, and cell phones. You could acknowledge this viewpoint by admitting that there is no way to stop teenagers from finding ways to compete for status.
- B.** When you **accommodate** an opposing viewpoint, you acknowledge readers' concerns, accept some of them, and incorporate them into your own argument. In arguing for mandatory high school uniforms, you might accommodate readers' view that uniforms will not eliminate peer pressure by arguing that the uniforms will

eliminate one major and expensive means of competing for status.

- C. When you **refute** an opposing viewpoint, you demonstrate the weakness of the opponent's argument. For example, some people may support the view of creation, and they think that learning and following rules just make people ordinary. They may talk about Gates or Jobs as examples. *However, I think that the experience of these successful people are too special to define success.* It is easy to call on to create. How many people can in fact achieve success by whatever kinds of creation? There must be a huge number of people failed before Gates and Jobs. Because of the risks, many people pay a high price for creation.

(4) Methods of development

We choose methods of development that will present our arguments in the most effective way for our reader. Developing skills include:

- ◆ exemplification,
- ◆ definition,
- ◆ comparison and contrast,
- ◆ process,
- ◆ classification,
- ◆ cause and effect,
- ◆ generalization.

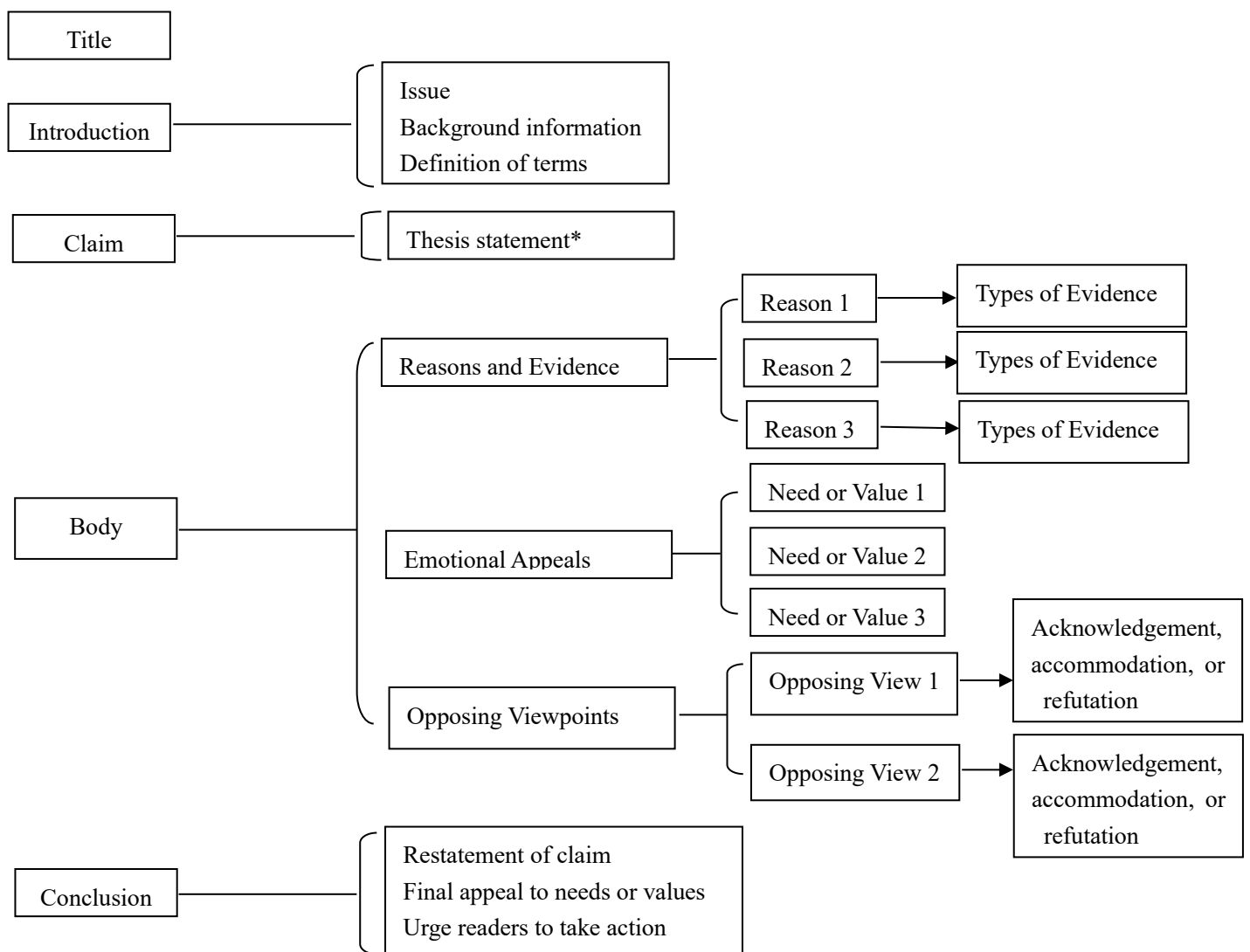
We can use the following types of evidence to make our claim convincing. Types of Evidence include:

- ◆ Exemplification (Fact),
- ◆ Statistics,
- ◆ Research results,
- ◆ Personal experience,
- ◆ Others' experience,
- ◆ Quotation/Citation.

3. Writing Awareness: Graphic Organizer

Graphic organizer is a good strategy for following the structure of an argument. In some ways an argument resembles a building. The writer lays a foundation and then builds on that foundation. Reasons and evidence presented early in the essay often support ideas introduced later on, as the lower floors in a building support the higher ones. Once you recognize an argument's plan or overall structure, you are in a better position to understand it and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. This section offers strategies for following the structure of an argument — including identifying key elements in a graphic organizer and writing a summary — which can help you analyze and evaluate an essay.

Here is a sample. The following graph outlines the basic relationships among ideas in an argument essay.



This above graph doesn't necessarily reflect the order in which the ideas are presented in an argumentative essay. Instead, it provides a way for you to organize those ideas. Therefore, when reading an argument, you can have the following steps:

1. Read and highlight the essay before drawing a graphic organizer.
2. Record ideas with your own words, not in the author's words.
3. Reread difficult or confusing parts of the essay before filling in those sections of the organizer.
4. Try working through the organizer with a classmate.

4. Practice

Exercise 1.

Read the passage and work out the organization graph followed.

Organ Donation: A Life-Saving Gift

Quinne Sember

The idea of helping someone less fortunate is not a novel idea in our society. However, when people think about someone by giving a part of their body away, they become uncomfortable. According to Donate Life America, a Website that promotes donation, organ donation is “the process of giving an organ or a part of an organ for the purpose of transplantation into another person” (“Understanding Donation”). In addition to organs (like the heart, liver, and eye), tissue, blood, and corneas can be donated when a person dies. It is also possible to donate parts of organs or entire organs (like a kidney) while living.

Organ, eye, and tissue donation has the potential to enhance or save the lives of many people. Surprisingly, however, most people in this country will never donate. If everyone chose to donate whatever they could during their lifetimes and after their death, a lot of grief for families could be prevented.

The most compelling argument for organ donation comes from statistics. Over 100,000 people need organ transplants right now, and someone is added to the waiting list every ten minutes (“Understanding Donation”). In 2009, a total of 7,048 patients died while waiting for an organ. The number is up from 2000, when it was only 5,000 (Delmonico). If more people are willing to donate their organs after death or even contribute while they were living, these numbers could decrease substantially.

The most common organ donor is someone who has experienced brain death. Brain death is “the death of the brain stem, and the diagnosis of brain death is made by examining the function of nerves that originate in the brain stem” (Kerridge 89). For someone to be considered as a donor after death, he or she must be declared to be brain dead. Someone who is brain dead appears to be alive. The person continues to breathe with the help of a ventilator, and the body remains warm. Therefore, families often have a difficult time recognizing that the person is dead. The prospect of organ donation can be therapeutic to a family going through a difficult time. It is the one good thing that can come out of an unfortunate situation. The family may feel that by donating organs, their beloved did not die in vain.

Even if the person is not eligible to donate organs to someone else, he or she can donate them to research that may further medical knowledge. In 2007, researchers discovered a link between the Epstein-Barr virus and multiple sclerosis by examining the postmortem brain tissue of a donor who had MS (“Brain Tissue”). This advance in science occurred only because someone’s family members decided that they wanted to try to help others with MS, even though their own family member could no longer be helped.

I have volunteered for four years with Upstate New York Transplant Service, which works to promote organ donation awareness. I have become close to a woman who chose to work with UNYTS because of a personal experience. Her four-year-old daughter was diagnosed with a failing heart and needed a transplant as soon as possible. Every day, the girl’s breathing became more labored. Finally, a heart was located. After she had the transplant, however, she began to lose blood and required a large amount of blood. Because of the generosity of a family and countless individual blood donors,

this young girl now lives a healthy life. Her family is forever thankful for the gift that she received. They often hold blood drives in her name.

Some people dislike the prospect of organ donation, either for themselves or for their loved one. Usually, these people have misconceptions about it. The Mayo Clinic Website addresses some of these mistaken ideas in “Organ Donation: Don’t Let These Myths Confuse You.”

Many people believe that if they are a registered organ donor, the hospital staff won’t work as hard to save their life. This is not true. The doctor who tries to help you is not the same doctor who would be concerned with the transplantation. Your doctor’s job is to save your life. In that moment, he cares about nothing else.

Others worry that they won’t actually be dead when the death certificate is signed. This is highly unlikely. According to the Mayo Clinic, “people who have agreed to organ donation are given more tests (at no charge to their families) to determine that they are truly dead than are those who haven’t agreed to organ donation.” These tests would be reassuring to the family, as well.

Another major concern that comes up is disfigurement of the body. People believe that they won’t be able to have an open-casket funeral if they donate their organs. This is untrue. The body is clothed so that no signs of organ donation can be seen. For bone donation, a rod may be inserted in place of the bone. For skin donation, a small sample of skin can be taken from the back of the donor and placed where the donated skin was taken.

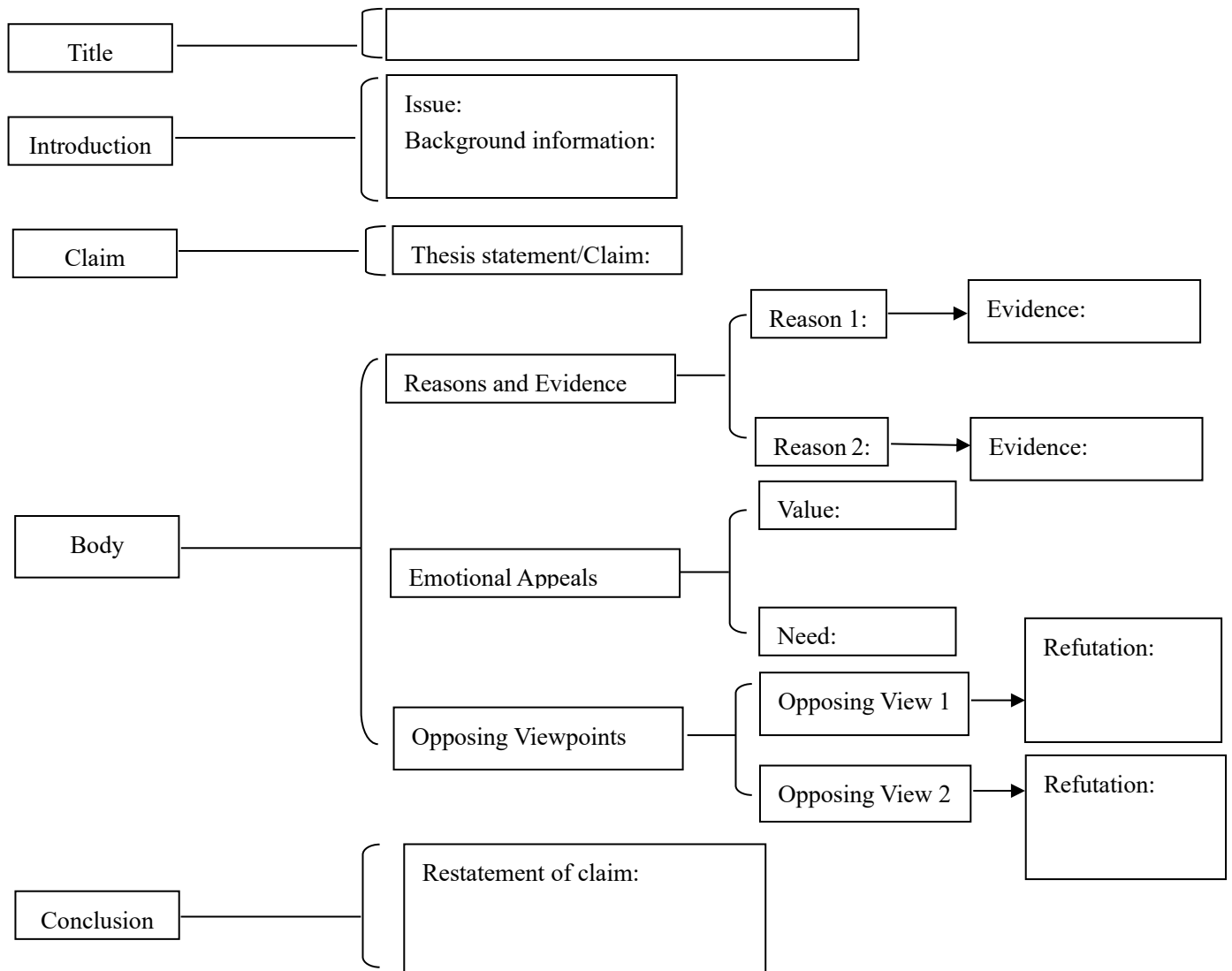
Finally, many people worry whether their religion accepts organ donation. Courtney S. Campbell addresses this issue in her article “Religion and the Body in Medical Research.” She recognizes two key characteristics of organ donation---“altruistic intent” and “therapeutic expectation”---that explain why most religions accept it. Altruistic intent means that the donor is giving an important gift to the recipient without expecting anything in return. Therapeutic expectation means that this gift is expected to “offer a pronounced therapeutic prospect for the recipient” (281). Basically, these concepts simply mean that because the donor is trying to help someone else save his or her life, donation is acceptable in almost any situation.

Campbell also identifies the specific beliefs that some major religions hold about organ donation. In Judaism, a great deal of importance is placed on the preservation of the body after death. Campbell says, however, that “this presumption can be overridden--- by the requirement of *pikkuah nefesh*, the saving of human life”. Roman Catholicism holds much the same belief. Islam believes organ donation to be acceptable as well, as long as the remaining parts of the body are buried. Most Protestant denominations have no objection to organ and tissue donation.

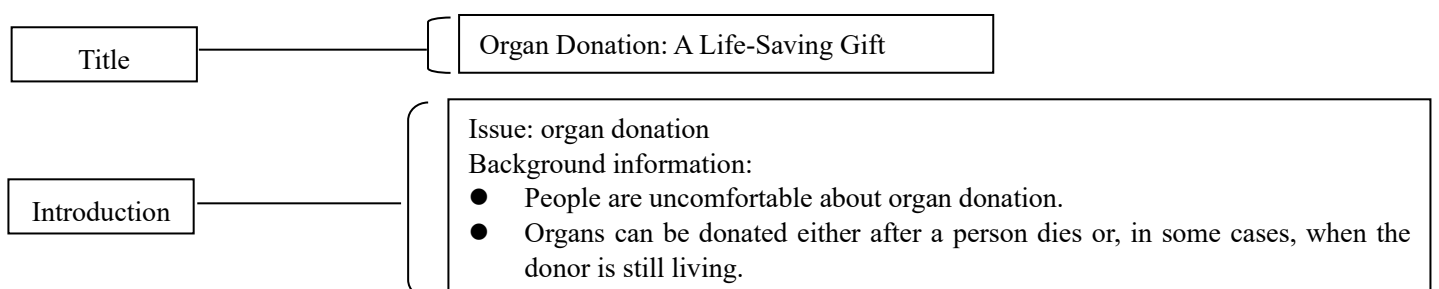
Most people decide not to donate their organs for reasons that are untrue. If everyone donated their organs when they died, we would make enormous advances in science as well as save countless lives. The best way to become an organ donor is to talk to your family. If they know what you want to happen when you pass away, they are much more likely to carry out your wishes. In most states, you can also sign the back of your driver’s license to indicate that you would like to be an organ donor. Organ donor cards are available online, and many states have a donor registry that you can

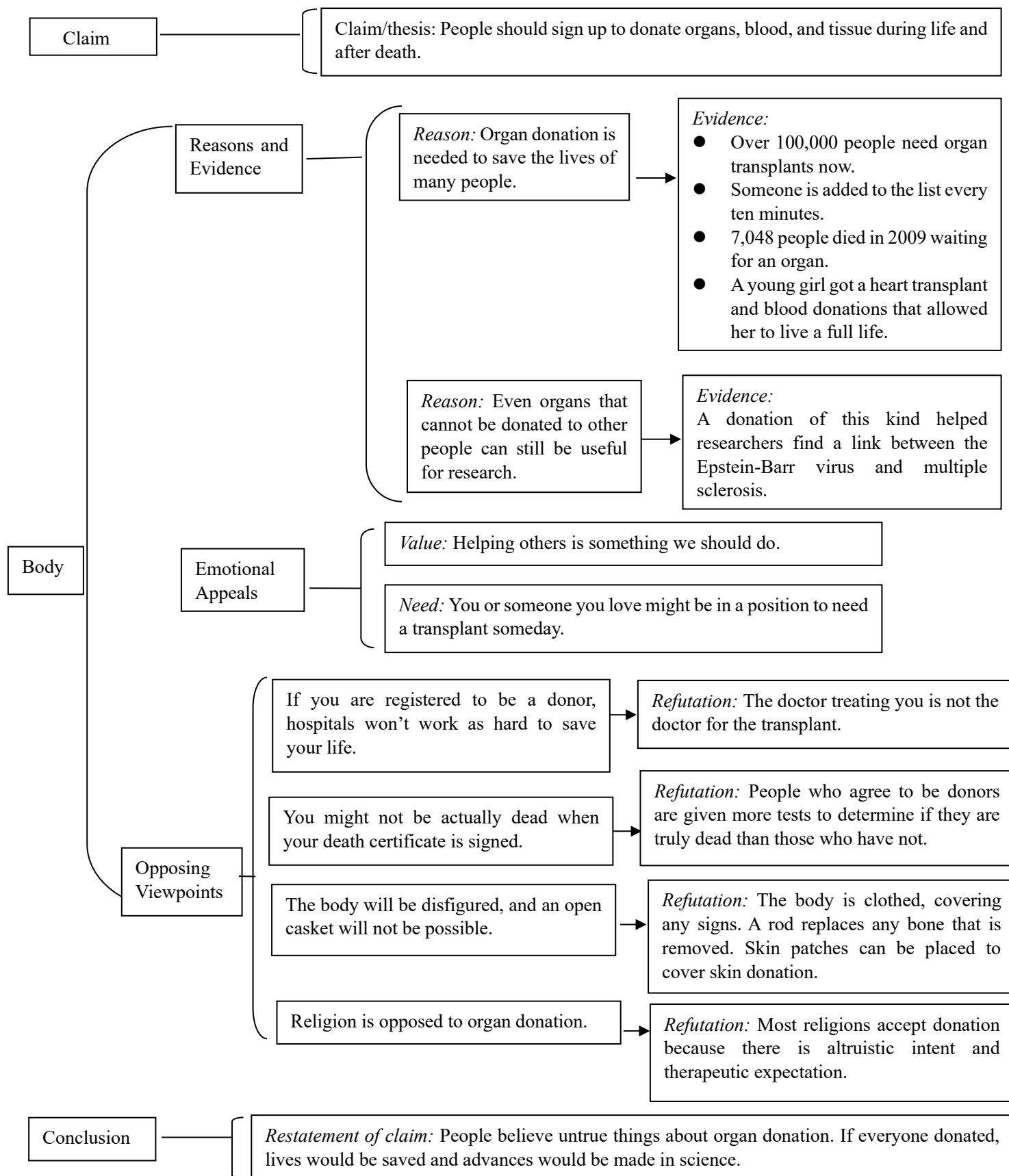
become a part of. Become an organ donor, save a life!

Organization Graph



For Reference:





Exercise 2.

Free-writing Activity

1. Imitate the pattern and write a paragraph to refute the saying:
The primary purpose of education is not to teach you to earn your bread, but to make every mouthful sweeter. -J. Angell, American psychologist
2. Passage writing: choose one topic and write an argumentative essay with no less than 160 words.
 - a. Which comes first in choosing a major, job opportunities or interests?
 - b. Should we buy Chinese-made products only?
 - c. Are you what you wear?
 - d. Does one take the color of his own company?

5. Model Essay

In Defense of Multitasking

David Silverman

(David Silverman has worked in business and taught business writing. He is the author of *Typo: The Last American Typesetter or How I Made and Lost Four Million Dollars* (2007). He blogs for Harvard Business Review, where this essay appeared in 2010, ten days after the previous one by Peter Bregman. As you read, notice how Silverman attempts to refute Bregman's position.)

HBR.org blogger Peter Bregman recently made some excellent points about the downside of multitasking — as did Matt Richtel in his New York Times article on Monday. I will not deny that single-minded devotion often produces high quality. Nor will I attempt to join the misguided (and scientifically discredited) many who say, “Yeah, other people can’t do it, but I’m super awesome at doing 10 things at once.”

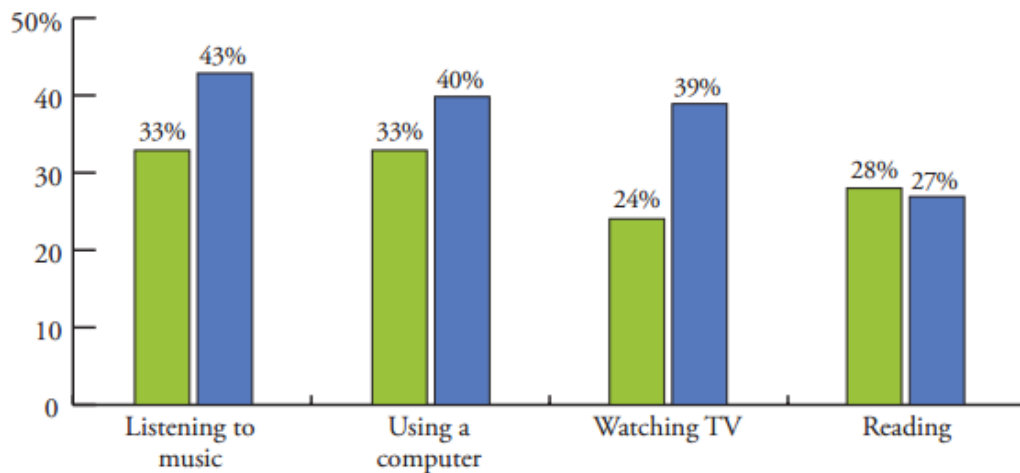
But let’s remember, unitasking has a downside too — namely, what works for one person slows down others. Multitasking isn’t just an addiction for the short-attention-spanned among us; it’s crucial to survival in today’s workplace. To see why, take a look at computing, where the concept of multitasking came from.

Long ago, in the days of vacuum tubes and relays, computers worked in “batch” mode. Jobs were loaded from punched cards, and each job waited until the one before it was completed. This created serious problems. You didn’t know your job had an error until it ran, which could be hours after you submitted it.

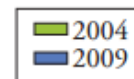
Electronic Multitasking Is on the Rise

The percentage of youngsters who multitask while using electronic media—such as checking their Facebook page on their laptops while watching TV—has increased in recent years, but the percentage who multitask while reading has changed very little.

Percentage of 7th- to 12th-graders Who Multitask Most of the Time While:



Source: "Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8-to-18-Year-Olds" (#8010), Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, January 2010.



You didn't know if it would cause an infinite loop and block all the other jobs from starting. And any changes in external information that occurred during processing couldn't be accounted for.

The invention of time-sharing resolved these issues: Multiple tasks can now be done concurrently, and you can interrupt a task in an emergency. Incoming missile? Stop the backup tape and send an alert to HQ. So, how does all that apply to the way people work? In several ways:

- 1. Multitasking helps us get and give critical information faster.** You can get responses to questions quickly, even if the person you're asking is on another task. For example: I was at an all-day offsite (no BlackBerrys allowed) when one of my direct reports received a request from an internal customer to make a slide. Since I was unreachable by phone when he started on it, my employee worked the entire afternoon on something that, after I finally read my e-mail and called him, took us only 30 minutes to do together because I had information he didn't have.
- 2. It keeps others from being held up.** If I don't allow for distractions in an attempt to be more efficient, other people may be held up waiting for me. This is the classic batch job problem. Going back to my slide example: The next day, the person who had requested the slide said he only needed a couple of bullet points. Had he been reachable earlier, and not devoted to a single task and blocking all interruptions, we wouldn't have wasted what ended up being nearly six hours of work time (my employee's and mine).
- 3. It gives you something to turn to when you're stuck.** Sometimes it's good to butt your head against a task that is challenging. And sometimes it's good to walk away, do something else, and let your subconscious ponder the ponderable. When you return 25 minutes later, maybe you'll reach a better solution than you would have if you'd just stuck it out. And in the meantime, you've finished some other task, such

as writing a blog post. (By the way, my 10.6 minute attempt to uncover how many minutes it takes to get back to a task after an interruption yielded a variety of answers — 11, 25, 30 — and links to a lot of dubious research, such as this University of California study of 36 workers and this study that tracked “eleven experienced Microsoft Windows users [3 female].”)

4. The higher up you are in the organization, the more important multitasking is.

The fewer things you have to do, the more you should concentrate on them. If I’m painting my house, and I’m on a ladder, I’ve got to keep on that one task. But if I’m the general contractor, I need to stay on top of the house painter, the carpenter, the electrician, and the guy swinging that big ball on the end of a giant chain, lest the wrong wall or an unsuspecting worker get demolished. To take this to the logical extreme: Does Barack Obama get to unitask? Can he say, “I’m not available for the rest of the day, because I’ll be working on that spreadsheet I’ve been trying to get done on the number of my Facebook friends who aren’t updating their pages with posts about their pet cats?” Or does he have to keep doing his job while handling whatever spilled milk (or, say, zillions of gallons of oil) comes his way?

What do you think? Are we comfortable pretending we really can live our lives not multitasking? Or are we like my father and others who say smoking is bad but can be found on the front porch in the dead of night, a small red glow at their lips, puffing away while texting their BFFs and playing Words with Friends?

Before you answer, think about the eight Washington Post reporters who tried to go a week without the Internet and failed miserably. The truth is, we need multitasking as much as we need air.

Examining the Reading

1. Summarize Silverman’s reasons for defending multitasking.
2. Explain Silverman’s analogy about computers. What is he trying to show with it?
3. What message does Silverman convey by discussing his father in the next-to-last paragraph?
4. Explain the meaning of each of the following words as it is used in the reading:
discredited (para. 1), *unitasking* (2), *concurrently* (4), *ponderable* (4), and *lest* (4).

Analyzing the Writer’s Technique

1. What type of claim does Silverman make?
2. Is Silverman’s analogy about computers effective? Why or why not?
3. What additional information, evidence, or explanation would make this essay more convincing?
4. The end of the essay talks about multitasking and the presidency. Is this an effective example? How useful is it in applying the issues in this essay to regular people?
5. Who is Silverman’s intended audience?

Visualizing the Reading

Create a graphic organizer for the argument in this essay.

Thinking Critically about Text and Visuals

1. To what needs and values does Silverman appeal?
2. What fallacies, if any, can you find in Silverman’s essay?

3. Evaluate Silverman's use of sources in this essay. What kinds of sources could he have added?
4. How does Silverman present opposing viewpoints? Does he refute them? If so, how?
5. Discuss whether Silverman's essay is made up primarily of fact or of opinion. How does this balance affect the success of his argument?
6. What are the connotations of the word addiction in paragraph 2 and of the word **missile** in paragraph 4?
7. Look at the bar graph on page 538. (This graph did not appear in the original blog post.) What does the graph indicate about the rate of multitasking over time among teenagers? What do you think accounts for the fact that multitasking while watching television or listening to music has increased? Why might the percentage of teenagers who multitask while reading not have increased much between 2004 and 2009?

Reacting to the Reading

1. Do you agree or disagree with Silverman's assertion that multitasking is essential for survival at work? Why?
2. Keep a journal for a day to track important interruptions that you would miss if you were unitasking.
3. Write an essay describing how and why multitasking might have developed as human behavior. When would it have been a valuable skill? How would it have helped early humans?
4. Imagine you are having surgery. Explain how your surgeon might need to unitask or multitask during the procedure at different times.

Integrating the Readings

1. Which writer's argument did you find more convincing? Why?
2. Compare how each writer introduces the issue. In what context does each writer frame it?
3. Silverman and Bregman do not seem to be talking about exactly the same kinds of activities in their discussions of what people try to do simultaneously. How do you think this difference affects their opinions of multitasking?
4. What is the primary difference in the ways that Bregman and Silverman view multitasking? Do they define it differently? If so, describe how each might define it.
5. How do you think Bregman might respond to Silverman's claims?

Unit 2 Using Solid Evidence

1. Appreciative Reading

The Problem with Common Sense

by Keith E. Stanovich

Often a person uses some folk proverb to explain a behavioral event even though, on an earlier occasion, this same person used a directly contradictory folk proverb to explain the same type of event. For example, most of us have heard or said, “look before you leap.” Now there’s a useful, straightforward bit of behavioral advice—except that I vaguely remember admonishing on occasion, “he who hesitates is lost.” And “absence makes the heart grow fonder” is a pretty clear prediction of an emotional reaction to environmental events. But then what about “out of sight, out of mind”? And if “haste makes waste,” why does “time wait for no man”? How could the saying “two heads are better than one” not be true? Except that “too many cooks spoil the broth.” If I think “it’s better to be safe than sorry,” why do I also believe “nothing ventured, nothing gained”? And if “opposites attract,” why do “birds of a feather flock together”? I have counseled many students to “never to put off until tomorrow what you can do today.” But I hope my last advisee has never heard me say this, because I just told him, “cross that bridge when you come to it”.

The enormous appeal of clichés like these is that, taken together as implicit “explanations” of behavior, they cannot be refuted. No matter what happens, one of these explanations will be cited to cover it. No wonder we all think we are such excellent judges of human behavior and personality. We have an explanation for anything and everything that happens. As British writer Matthew Parris has said, “folk wisdom is such a cowardly thing”. By this he means that it takes no risk that it might be refuted.

So sometimes our implicit psychological theories can’t be refuted. However, a further problem occurs even in cases in which our folk beliefs do have some specificity, that is, even when they are empirically testable. The problem is that psychological research has shown that, when many common cultural beliefs about behavior are subjected to empirical test, they turn out to be false.

It is not difficult to generate instances of folk beliefs (or “common sense”) that are wrong. Take, for example, the idea that children who excel academically or who read a lot are not socially or physically adept. This idea still circulates in our society even though it is utterly false. There is voluminous evidence that, contrary to “commonsense” folk belief, readers and academically inclined individuals are more physically robust and are more socially involved than are people who do not read. For example, children high in scholastic achievement are more likely to be accepted by their peers than children low in achievement. People who are avid readers are more likely to play sports, jog, camp, hike, and do car repair than are people who do not read very much.

Many of our folk beliefs about behavior arise and take on a life of their own. For example, throughout the 1990s the folk belief developed in our society and in schools that low self-esteem was a cause of aggression. But empirical investigations indicated that there was no connection between aggression and low self-esteem. If anything, the opposite appeared to be the case—aggression is more often associated with high self-esteem. Likewise, an extremely popular hypothesis in the 1990s was that school achievement problems were the result of low self-esteem. In fact, it turns out that the relationship between self-esteem and school achievement is more likely to be in the opposite direction from that assumed by educators and parents. It is superior accomplishment in school (and in other aspects of life) that leads to high self-esteem and not the reverse.

Another example of folk wisdom run amok is the folk myth that we use only 10 percent of our brainpower. Despite having absolutely no basis in cognitive neuroscience, this one has been around for decades and has taken on the status of what has been termed a “psycho-fact.” Radford quotes columnist Robert Samuelson’s definition of a psycho-fact as “a belief that, though not supported by hard evidence, is taken as real because its constant repetition changes the way we experience life”.

Folk beliefs are not always immune to evidence. Sometimes, when the contradictory evidence becomes too widely known, folk psychology (“common sense”) does change. For example, years ago, one widely held cliché about children was “Early ripe, early rot”. The cliché reflected the belief that childhood precocity was associated with adult abnormality, a belief sustained by many anecdotes about childhood prodigies who came to ruin in later life. In this case, the psychological evidence documenting the inaccuracy of the cliché has been absorbed into the general culture, and you will almost never hear this bit of folk “wisdom” anymore.

This last example also carries a warning by reminding us to beware of today’s “common sense”—because it is not difficult to show that yesterday’s common sense has often turned into today’s nonsense. After all, common sense is what “everybody knows,” right? Right. Well, everybody knows that women shouldn’t be able to vote, right? Everybody knows that African Americans shouldn’t be taught to read, right? Everybody knows that individuals with disabilities should be institutionalized out of the sight of society, right? In fact, 150 years ago, all of these beliefs were what “everybody knew.” Of course, we now recognize this common sense of the past as nonsense—as beliefs based on totally unverified assumptions. But in these examples we can see the critical role that psychology plays vis-à-vis common sense. Psychology tests the empirical basis of the assumptions of common sense. Sometimes the assumptions do not hold up when tested, as we saw in many of the previous examples. From the examples discussed—and many more could be cited—we can see that psychology’s role as the empirical tester of much folk wisdom often brings it into conflict with many widely held cultural beliefs. Psychology is often the bearer of the “bad tidings” that comfortable folk beliefs do not stand up to the cold light of day. Perhaps it is not surprising that many people would like not only to ignore the message but also to do away with the messenger.

2. Mini-lecture: Criteria to Evaluate Evidence

As Balwanz-Emmel (1989, p189) indicated, "... all essays share in the following structural truth: that the development of evidence makes up a large part of the actual page length of an essay, and that the degree to which the evidential line of reasoning is developed (and the skill of its development) contributes significantly to the success of the essay."

After you have taken a stand, evidence comes into its stage to support your arguments and urge people to share the writer's perspective and insights. Therefore, evidence makes a reasoned, logical way of asserting the soundness of a position, belief, or conclusion possible.

The most common types of evidence are facts, statistics, examples, and quotes. If you intend to use facts in your argument, then do not confuse facts with opinions. If you plan to cite statistics, check if they are accurate and come from reliable sources, which you should also include in your writing. If you want to use personal examples, make sure they show or apply to general situations. If you are quoting someone, confirm that he or she is an authority on the issue. All the above matters, because your position will be strengthened if readers accept your evidence, whereas it will be greatly weakened if they spot inaccuracies in your argument. All the concerns above fall into the general four criteria you can follow to evaluate the evidence in your writing.

(1) **Relevance:** Evidence should support the essay's thesis or claim and be pertinent to the argument being made.

(2) **Typicality:** Evidence should represent the full range of opinions about the subject and not just one side or the other; the examples and expert opinions you include should be typical rather than aberrant.

(3) **Sufficiency:** There should be enough evidence to support the claim(s). The amount of evidence required depends upon the length of your paper, your audience, and the nature of your thesis.

(4) **Accuracy:** Data shouldn't be used unless it is accurate and up-to-date, and it can't be persuasive unless the audience believes in the writer's credibility.

3. Writing Awareness: Qualifying Your Statements

Argument exists not only in ideas but also in the way those ideas are presented through language. Precise¹¹² language increases the power of persuasion in your writing, but general or exaggerative language decreases it. For example, when writing on the topic "Can Money Buy Happiness?", some students made claims as follows.

1. Everyone works very hard for money. Some people succeed, but they can't find any happiness. Others fail, but they lead an happy life.

¹¹² precise *adj.* exact, as in performance, execution, or amount; accurate or correct 精确的, 准确的

2. In modern society, everything you need to live on can only be bought with money.
3. You can buy anything you want if you are rich.

As readers, we can easily find fault in those statements: the use of the words *any*, *everything*, *only* and *anything* overstates the fact and leaves no room for exceptions. However, as writers, we are all likely to produce overgeneralizations¹¹³ in our arguments, especially when we are too confident in our own position to have any opposing view in mind.

To avoid overgeneralization and add precision to our writing, we can use limiting words to qualify what we say in addition to using specific and concrete words. Some examples are given in the table below.

Limiting Words		
almost never	in most cases	occasionally
certain	many	often
few	most	seldom
frequently	mostly	several
hardly ever	nearly all	sometimes
in general	nearly always	usually

Simplified from *Writer's Choice: Composition and Grammar*, p295

By selecting a suitable qualifier as well as providing specific details, we can change the previous claims into more reasonable statements and thus stand a better chance of winning over our readers.

1. *Many* people work hard for wealth. Some people succeed, but they can't find happiness. Others fail, but they lead a happy life.
2. In modern society, *almost* everything you need to live on — food, clothing and shelter — can be bought with money.
3. You can buy *almost* anything you want if you are rich — a luxurious car, a beautiful villa, a trip around the world.

In some other cases, we can also use subordinate clauses to qualify our language in argumentation, such as clauses introduced by *if*, *though*, *when*, as indicated in the model essays of this unit.

4. Practice

1) Read the following statements and identify what types of evidence they are.

(1) It cost the State of Utah nearly a million dollars to execute Gary Gilmore.

¹¹³ overgeneralization *n.* oversimplification or gross exaggeration of facts 夸大的归纳

- (2) Blood donation is not as dangerous to donator's health as some people imagine. Only healthy people are allowed to donate just a small amount of blood each time. As long as the donator has a short period of rest, he/she will recover.
- (3) 50 million tons of coal will be saved every year to generate the same amount of electricity. Consequently the quality of our environment will be considerably improved.
- (4) My cousin and her friend just felt a little weak and easily got tired in the first two or three days after donating blood, but they could go to school and chorus as they do every day.
- (5) A study by Dr. Gordon Grisby of the University of Florida shows that 75 percent of males and more than 90 percent of females who committed violent crimes were under the influence of alcohol or drugs and not rational at the time.
- (6) In the 1930s, 1,667 people were executed, compared to 717 in the 1950s and only 47 since 1970s.

2) Make the language precise by using limiting words or phrases in the following passage.

The interview is not an effective way of recruitment because of the subjectivity it involves in decision making. Interviewers build their judgment on the first impression of candidates. They make choices based on what applicants say and how they behave on the day of interview rather than what they really are. Besides, an interview is open to favoritism. Influenced by conventional stereotypes, interviewers prefer men to women, the younger to the older, and the handsome to the plain-looking as prospective employees, which deprives their companies of qualified candidates. Interviewers also take advantage of their work to recruit their acquaintances, friends or relatives instead of suitable candidates for their companies.

3) Freewriting Activities

- (1) Introduce a debatable issue you have recently heard about on campus, on TV, or via the Internet. Then take a position and support it with reason and evidence.
- (2) Should cell phones be banned in classrooms? Do a survey in your classes and use your first-hand evidence in addition to other information to support your position.
- (3) Should undergraduates be allowed to get married at college? After taking a stand, consult different sources of information such as marriage law, school regulations, educationists, etc. Then, select relevant reliable quotes as well as using reasoning to build your argument.

5. Model Essays

- 1) Read the two essays entitled "Can Money Buy Happiness?", and then write the outlines.
- 2) Compare the introduction of the two essays and tell which one is a more attractive beginning to an argumentative essay, why?
- 3) How has each author dealt with the opposing view?

- 4) Despite the opposite stands in the two essays, similar types of evidence could also be detected. Compare the similar types of evidence used and tell how they contribute to the claim? What other types of evidence are used differently?
- 5) What limiting words have been used in the two essays to avoid overstatement?
- 6) Pick out the most convincing claim illustrated with sufficient evidence in the two essays and propose a similar claim supported with evidence.

Model Essay 1

Can Money Buy Happiness?

What we have been told since childhood about money is “It can’t buy happiness, it can’t buy health, and it can’t buy love.” But the facts don’t support this. Evidence shows that money can buy happiness, but it doesn’t come cheap.

To begin with, medical evidence shows those with more money live longer, healthier lives than those with less. There are always the stories featuring¹¹⁴ the rich young man who rebelled and died of an overdose or the moneyed uncle who had a heart attack while living the high life¹¹⁵, but on average, those with more money live longer and healthier lives. In the Whitehall Survey, conducted at University College London, 17,000 civil servants have been followed. All are well educated and have the same access to health care. Yet the clerks at the bottom of the income scale have tripled the mortality rate¹¹⁶ as those at the top. A U.S. study involving 300,000 men, called the Multiple Risk Intervention Factor, discovered every income class was healthier than the classes below them and sicker than the ones above.

Moreover, a 1998 survey conducted by the magazine *Town & Country* shows people with more money tend to have better marriages, are happier with the friends they make, and find their jobs more interesting. There are many other surveys indicating that the rich are more optimistic about their lives, which is clearly a major factor in happiness.

These studies come as no surprise to me. Though it’s not like you can go to the market and buy two pounds of happiness, money can make you happier because it represents freedom and time. With money you can buy convenience and other people’s time. By convenience I mean that more of the necessities in life are readily available to you. When I say you can buy time, I mean time in two senses: first, because your health improves and you are likely to buy a few more good years of life; second, every time you pay someone to type your paper, clean your house, or babysit your child, you are literally buying his or her time to do something you don’t want or don’t have time to do yourself. Of course, if you are not rich, you have to put in your own time to earn the money you use to buy his. But if you are rich, you no longer have to use the limited amount of time you have on this planet to buy someone else’s time. Thus, you stand a better chance of doing what you enjoy.

Of course, this is not to say only the rich are happy or you can only be happy if

¹¹⁴Feature *vt.* to show a particular person or thing in a film, magazine, etc. 特写

¹¹⁵To live the high life is to live in an extravagant or luxurious way. 过奢靡的生活

¹¹⁶mortality rate 死亡率

you're rich. Lots of people are happy. But, if you have lots of dough¹¹⁷, it's likely that you're going to be even happier.

Model Essay 2

Can Money Buy Happiness?

Would you feel happy when given an additional 10% pay raise? Would you feel excited when winning generous prizes while competing in a TV show? Would you feel ecstatic when getting 10000 dollars by winning the lottery? In these cases, the pleasure centers of your brain may light up, but actually that initial rush does not translate into long-term pleasure for most people. Why doesn't money bring a constant sense of joy? The answer is that the relationship between the two is fairly small.

Many people are under the illusion that the more money they make, the happier they will be. They put all their resources into making money at the expense of their family and health. However, they fail to realize that people's material wants increase with the amount of money they make. Many of us must have experienced this without realizing it. When our income is small, we can usually stretch it to cover all our basic needs. When our income increases, we think we will have plenty left over, but it turns out that we spend it all anyway. And when we think about it, we do not know where all that money went. The reason is that when we have more money, we see and crave many more things, and we accumulate many things we do not really need. To quote the American philosopher Henry David Thoreau, "Superfluous¹¹⁸ wealth can buy superfluities only." Admittedly, happiness is dependent on being able to meet basic needs for food, shelter and clothing, but after meeting those needs you need to turn to something other than consumerism¹¹⁹ because additional money has negligible¹²⁰ impact on how happy you are.

Rather than earning and spending more, true happiness lies somewhere else. It typically comes from good health, close friendship, loving marriage, warm family. According to the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago, people with five or more close friends are 50% more likely to describe themselves as "very happy" than respondents with fewer; on the other hand, a survey of 800 college alumni¹²¹ showed that classmates who valued high income, job success, and prestige more than close friends and love were twice as likely to be "fairly" or "very" unhappy. In addition, happiness is about managing what you already have, concentrating on your own successes instead of comparing yourself—your income—with others. A person with a 5000-yuan salary has more fun using the money to take his family out than thinking how much more fun those earning 6000 would have than him.

Money will buy food, but not an appetite; a house, but not a home; luxuries, but

¹¹⁷dough *slang* money 钱

¹¹⁸Superfluous *adj.* being beyond what is required or sufficient 多余的, 过剩的, 过量的

¹¹⁹Consumerism *n.* attachment to materialistic values or possessions 拜金思想

¹²⁰Negligible *adj.* not significant or important enough to be worth considering 可以忽略的

¹²¹alumni(男)校友

not culture; amusements, but not happiness. It is good to have money to buy what it can, but it is better not to lose what it cannot. Therefore, if you hunt for happiness, don't pin your hopes on the next big pay raise; look at your money with a different eye instead.

From *Recitable Model Essays for TEM-8*

Unit 3 Dealing with Counterarguments

1. Appreciative Reading

Argumentative writing can serve to defend an existing position against criticism, providing robust support to reinforce its validity. However, it can also challenge widely accepted beliefs or norms by exposing their weaknesses, inconsistencies, or lack of evidence. Read the following text, where the author refutes the claim of American exceptionalism by presenting a series of historical facts, and consider these questions: 1) When writing a rebuttal, how does clearly identifying the counterargument lay the foundation for an effective refutation? 2) What types of evidence are cited to counter the idea of America's unique virtue? What principles should one follow when selecting evidence for a rebuttal essay? 3) What can we learn from its structural arrangement when organizing a rebuttal?

Excerpt

Declarations of American exceptionalism rest on the belief that the United States is a uniquely virtuous nation, one that loves peace, nurtures liberty, respects human rights, and embraces the rule of law. Americans like to think their country behaves much better than other states do, and certainly better than other great powers.

If only it were true. The United States may not have been as brutal as the worst states in world history, but a dispassionate look at the historical record belies most claims about America's moral superiority.

For starters, the United States has been one of the most expansionist powers in modern history. It began as 13 small colonies clinging to the Eastern Seaboard, but eventually expanded across North America, seizing Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California from Mexico in 1846. Along the way, it eliminated most of the native population and confined the survivors to impoverished reservations. By the mid-19th century, it had pushed Britain out of the Pacific Northwest and consolidated its hegemony over the Western Hemisphere.

The United States has fought numerous wars since then—starting several of them—and its wartime conduct has hardly been a model of restraint. The 1899–1902 conquest of the Philippines killed some 200,000 to 400,000 Filipinos, most of them civilians, and the United States and its allies did not hesitate to dispatch some 305,000 German and 330,000 Japanese civilians through aerial bombing during World War II, mostly through deliberate campaigns against enemy cities. No wonder Gen. Curtis

LeMay, who directed the bombing campaign against Japan, told an aide, “If the U.S. lost the war, we would be prosecuted as war criminals.” The United States dropped more than 6 million tons of bombs during the Indochina war, including tons of napalm and lethal defoliants like Agent Orange, and it is directly responsible for the deaths of many of the roughly 1 million civilians who died in that war.

More recently, the U.S.-backed Contra war in Nicaragua killed some 30,000 Nicaraguans, a percentage of their population equivalent to 2 million dead Americans. U.S. military action has led directly or indirectly to the deaths of 250,000 Muslims over the past three decades (and that’s a low-end estimate, not counting the deaths resulting from the sanctions against Iraq in the 1990s), including the more than 100,000 people who died following the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003. U.S. drones and Special Forces are going after suspected terrorists in at least five countries at present and have killed an unknown number of innocent civilians in the process. Some of these actions may have been necessary to make Americans more prosperous and secure. But while Americans would undoubtedly regard such acts as indefensible if some foreign country were doing them to us, hardly any U.S. politicians have questioned these policies. Instead, Americans still wonder, “Why do they hate us?”

The United States talks a good game on human rights and international law, but it has refused to sign most human rights treaties, is not a party to the International Criminal Court, and has been all too willing to cozy up to dictators—remember our friend Hosni Mubarak?—with abysmal human rights records. If that were not enough, the abuses at Abu Ghraib and the George W. Bush administration’s reliance on waterboarding, extraordinary rendition, and preventive detention should shake America’s belief that it consistently acts in a morally superior fashion. Obama’s decision to retain many of these policies suggests they were not a temporary aberration.

The United States never conquered a vast overseas empire or caused millions to die through tyrannical blunders like Stalin’s forced collectivization. And given the vast power at its disposal for much of the past century, Washington could certainly have done much worse. But the record is clear: U.S. leaders have done what they thought they had to do when confronted by external dangers, and they paid scant attention to moral principles along the way. The idea that the United States is uniquely virtuous may be comforting to Americans; too bad it’s not true.

—From “The Myth of American Exceptionalism” by Stephen M. Walt

2. Mini-Lecture: *Rebuttal*

2.1 Define the Counterargument

In academic settings, strong essays, research papers, and debates thrive on the tension between different viewpoints, as engaging with opposing ideas demonstrates intellectual rigor, critical thinking, and fairness. Central to this process is the ability to effectively rebut counterarguments—those viewpoints that challenge or contradict the central thesis of an argumentative text. They usually come after your main arguments. Counterarguments are essential to meaningful discourse because they force writers to

confront limitations, refine their logic, and strengthen their claims.

To understand this, consider a simple example: Suppose you are writing a thesis arguing, “Colleges should eliminate tuition fees to increase access to higher education”. A counterargument here might be, “Eliminating tuition would place an unsustainable financial burden on taxpayers, leading to cuts in other public services like healthcare”. This counterargument directly challenges the feasibility of your proposal by highlighting a potential negative consequence, making it critical for you to address it.

Before a writer can rebut a counterargument, they must first identify and summarize it accurately. This requires avoiding bias, oversimplification, or exaggeration. A good summary should follow these basics:

- **Capture the core of the counterargument:** What is the central claim? What evidence or reasoning supports it?

- **Use neutral language:** Avoid loaded terms that dismiss the counterargument before addressing it (e.g., “the naive belief that…” or “the absurd claim that…”); make sure you maintain an objective, polite academic style.

- **Be concise:** Focus on the most relevant points and skip minor details.

Consider the example of American exceptionalism given in Section 1. The author’s summary is effective because it is specific and neutral, listing the key tenets of American exceptionalism (“loves peace, nurtures liberty, respects human rights, and embraces the rule of law”) and leaving no ambiguity about what is being challenged. In contrast, a biased summary might read: “American exceptionalism is the arrogant delusion that the U.S. is better than everyone else, ignoring all its flaws”. This misrepresents the counterargument as mere arrogance, which weakens the rebuttal—readers who hold the belief above will dismiss it as unfair, rather than engaging with the evidence.

To sum up, by defining the counterargument fairly and precisely, an author creates a clear target for their rebuttal and invites readers into the exchange of ideas.

2.2 Rebut a Counterargument

While the exact approach may vary depending on the context, effective rebuttals typically follow three basic steps: introduce the counterargument, expose its weakness, and provide further evidence, as illustrated in the following paragraph.

Many supporters of the death penalty argue that it is a strong deterrent to people who could be criminals. They reason that if the punishment is great enough, a person will weigh the amount of the reward of killing against the pain of the punishment, and then will not commit the crime. However, this is a false argument because most who commit violent crimes are not rational at the time. A study by Dr Gordon Grisby of the University of Florida shows that 75 percent of males and more than 90 percent of females who committed violent crimes were under the influence of alcohol or drugs and not rational at the time.

The first step in rebuttal, as mentioned earlier, is to present the counterargument fairly, conveying to readers that you have well understood the opposing view. This disarms the hostility in readers taking an opposite position. In some cases, this may even involve acknowledging a valid part of the counterargument—admitting that it has

merit in certain contexts, signaled with such expressions as *it is true that* ..., *one cannot deny that* ..., *admittedly/certainly*.

The next step is to expose the weakness of a counterargument. One challenge in this step is to identify the logical flaw of the counterargument, since it often seems hidden if you are not sensitive to fallacies. In this case, you can start to address a flawed argument by questioning its definition, premise, assumption, cause-and-effect reasoning. For instance, you may ask if the meaning of a key word has been shifted to fit in different arguments, and if its definition conforms to common sense or values; you may ask if a premise leads naturally or necessarily to the conclusion of an argument, and if the taken-for-granted assumptions of an argument are true; you may also ask if two coincidental happenings are linked in a cause and effect relationship, and if a supposed cause is claimed to have produced an effect which it only contributed to. Take the following claims for example.

1. College students should not be allowed to get married, because they are not emotionally mature.

2. If Bill Gates had stayed at Harvard and become a teacher there, he would not have today's success.

3. The shirt is on sale, so you will save if you buy it now.

4. The more money you have, the happier you are.

5. Modesty makes one go forward; conceit makes one lag behind.

By asking some of the questions above, you will find it easier to identify their logical problems in the assumption (1, 2), premise (3), and cause-and-effect (4, 5) respectively. For young writers who seldom question the beliefs inherited from others, this practice of refutation not only helps you attack the opposing side but also enables you to check over your own arguments.

The final step in rebuttal is to provide further evidence, so that you can refute the counterargument both logically and factually. The text on American exceptionalism uses evidence-based rebuttal masterfully. The counterargument claims the U.S. is "uniquely virtuous", but the author dismantles this by citing rich, specific, verifiable facts. Each piece of evidence directly contradicts a tenet of American exceptionalism. For instance, the claim that the U.S. "loves peace" is refuted by data on its expansionist wars and civilian casualties; the claim that it "respects human rights" is challenged by its refusal to join international human rights bodies and its history of supporting dictators. Thus, with factual evidence, the author disproves the belief or assumption American exceptionalism is based on, and makes the rebuttal irrefutable.

Rebutting counterarguments is a cornerstone of strong argumentative writing, requiring writers to engage with opposing viewpoints thoughtfully, fairly, and strategically. For college students, mastering this skill is transformative. It moves writing beyond mere opinion and into the realm of critical inquiry, where ideas are tested, refined, and defended with purpose.

3. Writing Awareness: *Recognize and Avoid Fallacies*

A fallacy is not simply a false statement; it is a flaw in reasoning that makes an

argument appear stronger than it really is. Fallacies often arise when a writer tries to win readers over by emotion, distraction, or distortion rather than evidence and logic. When we are presenting a counterargument, recognizing such fallacies becomes the key step in exposing its weaknesses and undermining its credibility. Conversely, when we craft our own rebuttal and argument, avoiding fallacies keeps our reasoning rigorous and preserves our integrity.

There are many common logical fallacies, and one simple way to learn about them is to group them into two types: fallacies of relevance and fallacies of insufficient evidence. Fallacies of relevance occur because the premises in reasoning are logically irrelevant to the conclusion, while fallacies of insufficient evidence occur because the premises fail to provide enough evidence to support the conclusion. The following tables illustrate most common fallacies of each type.

Type 1: Fallacies of Relevance

Fallacy	Description	Example
Personal attack	Arguer attacks the character of another arguer.	Those opponents of AI-assisted writing at college are slow at mastering new technologies and blind to the empowering functions of all the AI tools, so it is groundless to prevent students from using AI in their studies.
Two wrongs make a right	Arguer tries to justify a wrong by citing another wrong.	Since some students have already got high scores for their AI-produced works when they are not caught, it is only fair that all students should be allowed to do so.
Appeal to pity	Arguer tries to evoke pity from a reader.	College students should be allowed to use AI in writing. They are always tired and stressed with too many assignments, and they need more time for rest and relaxation.
Bandwagon argument	Arguer appeals to a reader's desire to be accepted or valued.	Recent surveys show that over 70 % of undergraduates already use AI to brainstorm or polish their papers. If you want to stay competitive and avoid falling behind your peers, adopting these tools is simply the new normal.
Red herring	Arguer tries to distract the attention of the reader by raising an irrelevant issue.	College students should be allowed to use AI in writing. Actually, they should use AI as much as possible in all aspects of their life.

—Simplified and adapted from *Critical Thinking: A Student's Introduction*

Type 2: Fallacies of Insufficient Evidence

Fallacy	Description	Example
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Hasty generalization	Arguer draws a general conclusion from a small sample.	My roommates used ChatGPT once in their writing and all got low marks on that paper, so AI tools clearly make everyone's writing worse.
Slippery slope	Arguer claims that an action will lead to a disastrous outcome without sufficient evidence.	If professors allow them to write their drafts with the help of AI, the students will become lazy and gradually stop thinking for other assignments. This will destroy their ability of writing.
Questionable cause	Arguer claims that one thing causes something else without sufficient evidence.	Once a Sichuan university required freshmen to run every essay through an AI checker, their average CET-4 writing scores jumped by 1.5 points. The dean claimed the AI tool "directly improved English proficiency". (Ignoring that the same semester introduced extra weekly writing labs)
Weak analogy	Arguer compares two or more things that aren't comparable in relevant aspects.	Using AI to polish an essay is no different from using a calculator on a calculus exam—both are just machines that give you the right answer, so if calculators are allowed, AI should be too.
False alternatives	Arguer poses a false either/or choice.	Either we ban all AI writing tools on campus, or Chinese graduates will never learn to think critically and the nation's innovation pipeline will collapse.

—Simplified and adapted from *Critical Thinking: A Student's Introduction*

When dealing with counterarguments, read them aloud, and if you hear sarcasm or exaggeration, look for fallacies. By learning to spot these patterns, you can then avoid falling into these traps when making a rebuttal or building your own argument. For example, you should focus on evidence (data, studies, expert testimony) rather than personal traits of opponents; check causal links carefully by asking, "Have I shown that X actually causes Y?"; use qualifiers such as "many", "some", or "often" to avoid hasty generalizations. Thus, you replace rhetorical shortcuts with genuine critical thinking.

4. Integrated Practice

Practice A. Read the following paragraph and identify the basic steps in the refutation.

Many government officials in the US and UK often conceive China's rise as a threat to the security of the West. They have this misconception because historically, Western powers' rise was often accompanied by colonialism, territorial expansion, or military hegemony (e.g., 19th-century European empires or 20th-century U.S. interventions).

But China, by contrast, adheres to the path of peaceful development, enshrined in its constitution and foreign policy doctrine of “non-interference in internal affairs”. Unlike Western powers that imposed their systems through coercion, China promotes “a community with a shared future for mankind”, advocating multilateralism and equal dialogue. This model—rooted in win-win cooperation rather than zero-sum competition—redefines what “rise” means in the 21st century, making the “threat” claim an outdated projection of historical patterns onto a fundamentally different actor. Also, China’s actions in global affairs directly refute their “threat” narrative. Take the Belt and Road Initiative for example: since 2013, it has funded infrastructure projects in over 150 countries, including Western allies like Italy and Greece. The Port of Piraeus in Greece, upgraded with Chinese investment, has become the Mediterranean’s busiest port, boosting local employment and EU trade efficiency.

Practice B. Below are 10 arguments related to the topic: Should college students start their own business? Each argument contains one logical fallacy from the two categories—fallacies of relevance or fallacies of insufficient evidence. Identify the fallacies by referring to the descriptions given in the section of Writing Awareness.

1. Those who say college students shouldn’t start their own business are just afraid of change—they’ve never taken any risks in their lives, so their opinion is worthless.
2. College students should start their own business. In fact, they should also invest their savings in the stock market to grow wealth faster.
3. Several senior students started a business last semester and all lost money, so it’s clear that college students can never succeed in business.
4. My cousin started a bubble-tea shop in her sophomore year and now earns more than her professors; therefore, college students should launch a start-up if they are passionate about it.
5. If colleges encourage students to start businesses, they’ll skip more classes to focus on their projects. Soon, they’ll neglect their studies entirely, graduate without basic knowledge, and end up unemployed for life.
6. After a Shanghai university launched a “student entrepreneurship program”, its graduate employment rate rose by 1.2%. The president, therefore, claimed the program “directly caused the higher employment rate”.
7. Starting a business as a college student is just like playing a video game—you can restart if you fail, so there’s no real risk. Since video games are harmless, student entrepreneurship is too.
8. Running a start-up is exactly like gambling in a casino: both involve money and risk, so both should be banned on campus.
9. Either we support student entrepreneurs or watch China’s economy stagnate for the next decade.
10. Think of the students from less well-off families who have to pay increasing tuition; denying them a chance to earn tuition through start-ups would be heartless.

Practice C. Choose a saying from below to refute with reason and evidence.

1. From saving comes having.
2. One takes the color of his own company.
3. A fall into a pit, a gain in your wit.
4. The primary purpose of education is not to teach you to earn your bread, but to make every mouthful sweeter.
–J. Angell, American psychologist
5. It is not true suffering ennobles character; happiness does that sometimes, but suffering, for the most part, makes men petty and vindictive.
–William Somerset Maugham, British writer

Practice D. Read the speech by Ryan, a character in the film *Up in the Air* and comment on his values reflected here by following the steps below.

1. Summarize his ideas on life and family in one sentence.
2. Point out the flaw in his reasoning.
3. Refute his claim with evidence.

How much does your life weigh? Imagine for a second that you're carrying a backpack. I want you to feel the straps on your shoulders ... You feel them? Now, I want you to pack it with all the stuff you have in your life. Start with the little things: the stuff in drawers and on shelves, the collectables and knick-knacks. Feel the weight as it adds up. Now, start adding the larger stuff: your clothes, table top appliances, lamps, linens, your TV. That backpack should be getting pretty heavy at this point. Go Bigger: your couch, your bed, your kitchen table. Stuff it all in. Your car, get it in there. Your home, whether you have a studio apartment or a two-story house, I want you to stuff it into that backpack.

Now try to walk. Kind of hard, isn't it? This is what we do to ourselves on a daily basis. We weigh ourselves down until we can't even move. And make no mistake — moving is living. Now, I'm going to set your backpack on fire. What do you want to take out of it? Photos? Photos are for people who can't remember. Drink some ginkgo and let the photos burn. In fact let everything burn and imagine waking up tomorrow with nothing. It's kind of exhilarating, isn't it? That is how I approach every day.

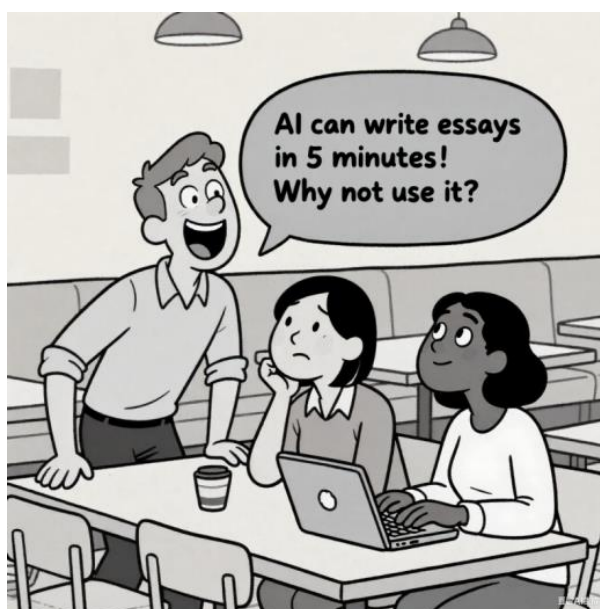
Okay. This is where it gets a little difficult, but stay with me. You have a new backpack, but this time, I want you to fill it with people. Start with casual acquaintances, people around the office, friends of friends and work your way to the people you trust with your most intimate secrets. Now move into family members—cousins, aunts, and uncles. Get your sisters and your brothers and your parents. Get them all in that backpack. And finally your husband or wife or boyfriend or girlfriend. Get them in there too. Don't worry. I'm not going to ask you to set it on fire. Feel the weight of that bag. Make no mistake, your relationships are the heaviest components of your life. Feel the straps cutting into your shoulders. All those negotiations and arguments and secrets and compromises. Now set that bag down. You don't need to carry all that weight. Some animals were meant to carry each other to live symbiotically over a lifetime: star-crossed lovers, and monogamous swans. We are not one of those animals. The slower

we move, the faster we die. We are not swans. We're sharks.

5. Writing Activities

5.1 Freewriting Activities

1. Choose a common opinion you disagree with (e.g., “Social media does more harm than good”). First, spend 5 minutes writing as if you fully support this opinion—list its strongest arguments, evidence, and emotional appeals. Then, flip: spend 10 minutes refuting these points using the strategies you have learned from this unit. Focus on addressing the core strength of the original argument, not just its weaknesses.
2. Should undergraduates be allowed to use AI for their English assignments? After taking a stand, consult different sources of information such as school regulations, educationists, research findings, etc. Then, build your argument and refute common counterarguments with reasoning and evidence.



5.2 Revising Checklist

Go through the checklist here before you work on the second draft.

1. Do I take a clear stand on the issue?
2. Do I respond to counterclaims within my argument?
3. Do I support my argument or refute the opposing view with logical reasoning?
4. Do I support my argument or refute the opposing view with evidence? Do I make clear the connection between the evidence and my argument?
5. Are there any exceptions to my statements? Do I use limiting words as well as specific and concrete words to qualify my viewpoint?

5.3 Cooperative Learning

Share your writing and check over its persuasiveness by following these steps:

- 1) Write your position on an issue on a separate sheet of paper. Ask a partner to read

it and indicate whether he or she agrees with it by using the following scale:

0	1	2	3	4	5
Disagree	mostly	partly	agree	mostly	completely
Disagree	agree	50%		agree	agree

- 2) Ask your classmate to read your entire essay. After reading the essay, your classmate should again indicate agreement on the above scale.
- 3) Repeat this activity with two or three classmates. Do you feel that your essay achieved its goal of persuasiveness?

6. Model Essay:

Should we use AI for English writing assignments?

AI tools like Grammarly, DeepSeek, and others are everywhere now. So, the big question for us college students is: Should we use them for our English writing assignments? Honestly, I think we should be able to use AI as a kind of smart helper, as long as we're honest about how we do it. Trying to ban it completely just doesn't make sense in this digital intelligence era. Let me explain why the common worries shouldn't turn into a red light to AI use in writing.

Some professors argue that leaning on AI will stop us from developing our own critical thinking and writing skills. They worry that if AI gives us ideas or fixes our sentences, we won't learn how to do it ourselves. This fear makes sense, but they may ignore the fact that AI is just a powerful tool and the key is how we use it. For example, don't just tell AI to "write my essay", which doesn't help you learn. Instead, use it like a brainstorming buddy or an editor. Stuck on your thesis? Ask an AI for a few different options. Then, you pick the best one and explain why it's the strongest for your argument. Used this way, AI can actually push you to think more critically about your own writing choices, not less.

People also worry that AI makes plagiarism super easy, which means students aren't turning in their "own" real work. Submitting a whole essay written by AI is definitely plagiarism. But that doesn't mean any use of AI is cheating. It's like saying you can't use a calculator in math class because someone might use it to cheat. The solution isn't banning calculators; it's teaching people how to use them properly and making rules about showing their work. It should be the same for AI. We need clear rules from professors and honesty from students. Using AI ethically means doing things like brainstorming ideas when you're totally stuck, getting feedback on a rough draft you already wrote, checking grammar or wordiness after you've tried your best. Most importantly, always be upfront with your professor about how you used AI and indicate it clearly which part of your writing is AI-assisted.

Trying to avoid AI in writing feels like pretending smartphones don't exist. The smarter path is learning to use these tools responsibly and transparently. We shouldn't let AI do the core thinking and writing for us, but it shouldn't be completely off-limits, either. With clear rules, a focus on honesty, and an understanding that AI is a helper not

a replacement, we can use it to actually become more confident and capable writers.

Questions for discussion

1. What are the main counterarguments the author addresses? What are the flaws in the reasoning of the counterarguments?
2. In refutation essays, connecting the rebuttal to a broader context often enhances persuasiveness. The author compares AI tools to calculators and smartphones to argue against banning AI. How does this analogy-based reasoning support the refutation? Can you think of other potential analogies that might strengthen this line of argument?

7. Group Debate

Activity Objectives:

1. To improve students' English language skills, particularly in debate.
2. To enhance critical thinking and the ability to construct logical arguments.
3. To foster teamwork and collaboration among group members.
4. To encourage respectful communication and the ability to consider different perspectives.

Preparation:

1. Topic Selection: Choose a debate topic that is engaging and allows for diverse viewpoints. Ensure the topic is clear and well-defined.
2. Group Formation: Divide the class into groups of equal size. Each group will represent one side of the argument.
3. Role Assignment: Within each group, assign roles such as opening, free and concluding debaters.
4. Research: Each group must research their assigned position thoroughly, gathering facts, arguments, and potential counterarguments.
5. Preparation of Opening and Closing Statements: Each group should prepare an opening statement to present their stance and a closing statement to summarize their arguments.

Procedure:

1. Introduction: The teacher introduces the debate topic and the rules of the debate.
2. Opening Statements: Each group presents their opening statement, outlining their position and main arguments.
3. Free Debate: This is an open phase where any member of a group can speak to further their argument or counter the opposition.
4. Closing Statements: Each group presents their closing statement, reinforcing their position and summarizing their key points.
5. Feedback: The class comments on the performance of the debaters, such as the richness of their arguments and facts as well as their delivery.
6. Reflection: After the debate, groups reflect on their performance and what they have

learned.

Useful Expressions:

- Presenting Arguments:

- "One of our main arguments is that..."
- "We believe this because..."

- Clarifying:

- "Could you clarify your argument regarding..."
- "I'm not sure I understand your point about..."

- Asking for Evidence:

- "Could you provide evidence to support your claim?"
- "What sources do you have to back up this statement?"

- Conceding a Point:

- "We acknowledge that the opposing side has a valid point in..."
- "However, this does not change our stance because..."

- Refuting an Argument:

- "The argument presented is flawed because..."
- "In fact, the evidence suggests the opposite..."

- Summarizing:

- "In summary, our position is based on the following points..."
- "To conclude, we have shown that..."

Appendix I Macro-revision

How to check your essay by yourself

