

Abigail Adams: Persuading Her Husband

Abigail Adams (1744-1818) was the wife of Founding Father John Adams. While he attended the Continental Congress in Philadelphia in 1776, Abigail wrote to her husband often. Below is part of her letter from March 31, 1776.

I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.

That your sex are naturally tyrannical is a truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute; but such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of master for the more tender and endearing one of friend. Why, then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity? Men of sense in all ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your sex; regard us then as beings placed by Providence under your protection, and in imitation of the Supreme Being make use of that power only for our happiness.



What is Abigail trying to convince her husband to do? Give two examples of how she attempts to persuade him.

Find the Main Idea

As important as water conservation is, it is also very easy. A few simple habits can significantly reduce the water consumption of a household. One way to save water is to turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth. Also, don't allow faucets to drip; one drip can waste a large amount of water over a short period of time. Baths require less water than showers, so by taking a bath instead of a shower, you can reduce the amount of water your home uses. In the kitchen, running a dishwasher when it is completely full, rather than half full, can save up to 20 gallons a day. These simple changes will save water and save money.

Circle the main idea of the paragraph.

- A. Water conservation is important.
- B. Consumers can save money by conserving water.
- C. A few simple changes can save water in the home.
- D. Baths take less water than showers.

One the most popular musical instruments is the piano. In the traditional musical instrument classification system of string, woodwind, percussion and brass, the piano falls into two categories. It is considered a string instrument because the sound comes from the strings inside the piano. It is also considered a percussion instrument, since the player strikes the keyboard, which signals an internal hammer to strike the strings.

Circle the main idea of the paragraph.

- A. The piano is both a string and percussion instrument.
- B. The piano is a string instrument.
- C. The piano is a popular instrument.
- D. The strings of a piano makes the sound.

Irish immigration to the U.S. began during the early development of the American colonies. It is estimated that 200,000 Irish came to the U.S. in the 17th and 18th centuries. The numbers swelled from 1820 to 1850 to almost 2 million Irish immigrants. Most of these were fleeing the potato famine from 1845 until 1852. Steady numbers continued to arrive during the late 19th and 20th centuries. Today, over 36 million Americans claim some level of Irish ancestry.

Circle the main idea of the paragraph.

- A. The potato famine caused many Irish to immigrate to the U.S.
- B. The U.S. is a country of immigrants.
- C. The Irish are coming to the U.S. still today.
- D. The Irish came in large numbers to the U.S.

What's on the ACT Reading Test?

There are four reading passages of about 800 words each, always in this order:

1. prose fiction
2. social science
3. humanities
4. natural science

After each passage, you'll answer 10 questions that test you on what was directly stated as well as what meanings were implied in the text.

| | What it is | What you can expect |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Prose Fiction | Excerpts from novels or short stories Most passages are contemporary, emphasize diversity, and often center on family relationships. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Setting, atmosphere, and the relationships between characters are more important than facts• Questions likely to involve identifying the implied meanings vs. what was directly stated |
| Social Science | Topics: anthropology, archaeology, biography, business, economics, education, geography, history, political science, psychology, and sociology | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organization flows logically with clear topic sentences and well-chosen transitions to develop the main idea• Author may have a point of view on the subject or may simply deliver informative facts in a neutral tone |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>Humanities</p> | <p>Nonfiction passages—usually memoirs or personal essays</p> <p>Topics: architecture, art, dance, ethics, film, language, literary criticism, music, philosophy, radio, television, and theater</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative may use a more organic development instead of a linear one • Tone will be more personal and perhaps more emotional |
| <p>Natural Science</p> | <p>Topics: anatomy, astronomy, biology, botany, chemistry, ecology, geology, medicine, meteorology, microbiology, natural history, physiology, physics, technology, and zoology</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of details and sometimes very technical descriptions • Linear organization with clear topic sentences and transitions to develop the main idea • Author may or may not have an opinion on the topic • Questions usually track the text pretty closely and require you to make few inferences |

How to Tackle the ACT Reading Test

Now that you know what to expect, here are six ACT reading strategies that will help you approach any passage:

1. Choose Your Own Adventure

On the ACT Reading Test, you only have 35 minutes to answer 40 questions. To earn your best possible reading score, you have to invest your time where it will do the most good. Always choose your own order, working first the passages that are easiest for you and leaving for last the most difficult. Learn more [ACT strategies](#) for working questions out of order.

2. Get Plenty of Practice

The best way to determine which categories you tend to ace is through repeated practice tests. Do you consistently do the best on social science? What types of questions do you find easy or difficult? Try some [ACT reading practice](#) or take a full-length [ACT practice test](#).

3. Read the Questions First

Reading actively means knowing in advance what you're going to read. So, before you start in on the passage, take a look at the questions. You'll know what important details to look for, and you won't waste time on details that never appear in a question.

4. Keep Moving

If you read something you don't understand, do not reread it. Just keep going, and worry about it later only if you have to. Learn more about finding the right [ACT pacing](#) for you.

LESSON 4

Identifying the Parts of Speech

Each word in a sentence performs a basic function or task. Words perform four basic tasks; they name, modify, express action or state of being, or connect. By the arrangement of words in a sentence and the task that each word performs within a sentence, you can understand a sentence’s meaning. To illustrate how parts of speech work together, try to decipher the following nonsense sentence.

EXAMPLE

The strutum pensundsworder sworded about the grunewald bools of Kilargo.

What nonsense noun is the subject of the sentence? What adjective modifies the word *pensundsworder*? Which nonsense verb expresses the action in the sentence? If you substitute real words for the nonsense words, but keep the same arrangement of words, you can identify the nouns, verb, and adjectives in the sentence.

EXAMPLE

The famous author wrote about the green hills of Africa.

There are eight basic parts of speech. Each part of speech is defined in the following chart.

| Parts of Speech | Definition | Example |
|-----------------|---|--|
| noun | A noun names a person, place, thing, or idea. | Apples, oranges, and potato chips were the only items on the list . |
| pronoun | A pronoun is used in place of a noun. | Fanny whispered to her friend as they waited for their new teacher. |
| verb | A verb expresses action or a state of being. | Playful fox cubs tumbled out of the den and chased one another across the field. |
| adjective | An adjective modifies a noun or pronoun. The most common adjectives are the articles <i>a, an,</i> and <i>the</i> . | Tattered curtains hung in the dark windows of the gray, sagging house. |
| adverb | An adverb modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. | Sharply turning to the left, the bicyclist nearly caused an accident. |
| preposition | A preposition shows the relationship between its object—a noun or a pronoun—and another word in a sentence. Common prepositions include <i>after, around, at, behind, beside, off, through, until, upon,</i> and <i>with</i> . | During winter we often sit by the fireplace in the evening. |
| conjunction | A conjunction joins words or groups of words. Common conjunctions are <i>and, but, for, nor, or, so,</i> and <i>yet</i> . | Neither Grant nor Felix felt tired after two miles, so they ran another mile. |
| interjection | An interjection is a word used to express emotion. Common interjections are <i>oh, ah, well, hey,</i> and <i>wow</i> . | Wow! Did you see the dive he made from the high diving board? |

EXERCISE 1

Identifying the Parts of Speech in Literature

Identify the part of speech of each underlined word in the following excerpt. Write your answers on the corresponding lines below.

When he was two, if you ¹laid him on his stomach, ²he began to try to move himself, straining ³terribly. The ⁴doctor said that with his ⁵weak heart this strain would probably kill him, ⁶but ⁷it didn't. Trembling, he'd push himself ⁸up, turning first red, then ⁹a soft purple, and finally ¹⁰collapse back onto the ¹¹bed like an ¹²old worn-out doll. I can still see Mama watching him, ¹³her hand pressed ¹⁴tight ¹⁵across her mouth, her eyes wide and unblinking. But he ¹⁶learned to crawl (it was his third winter), ¹⁷and ¹⁸we brought him out of the front bedroom, putting him ¹⁹on the rug before the ²⁰fireplace.

*from "The Scarlet Ibis," page 108
James Hurst*

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 20. _____ |

EXERCISE 2

Understanding the Parts of Speech

Use each word as its designated part of speech in a sentence.

EXAMPLES

along (preposition) *Purple lilacs were blooming along the fence.*

along (adverb) *Will you bring along a bouquet of lilacs to the party?*

1. someone (pronoun)
-

2. neither/nor (conjunction)

3. oh, no (interjection)

4. more (adverb)

5. frail (adjective)

6. review (noun); review (verb)

7. practice (noun); practice (verb)

8. over (preposition); over (adverb)

9. mystified (adjective); mystified (verb)

10. calm (noun); calm (adjective)

EXERCISE 3

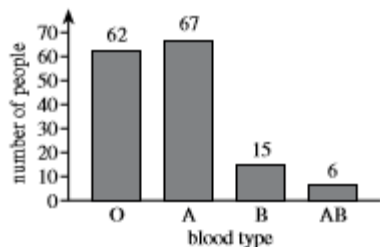
Using the Parts of Speech in Your Writing

Imagine that you are seeing your town for the very first time, as a tourist. Write a paragraph for a postcard to send to friends back home. In the paragraph describe the town's location and some of the town's major features. Include in your paragraph at least two examples of each part of speech.

Inclement Weather Math Packet #1

DO YOUR FIGURING HERE

1. The blood types of 150 people were determined for a study as shown in the figure below.



If 1 person from this study is randomly selected, what is the probability that this person has either Type A or Type AB blood?

- A. $\frac{62}{150}$
B. $\frac{66}{150}$
C. $\frac{68}{150}$
D. $\frac{73}{150}$
E. $\frac{84}{150}$
2. The monthly fees for single rooms at 5 colleges are \$370, \$310, \$380, \$340, and \$310, respectively. What is the mean of these monthly fees?
F. \$310
G. \$340
H. \$342
J. \$350
K. \$380
3. On a particular road map, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch represents 18 miles. About how many miles apart are 2 towns that are $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart on this map?
A. 18
B. $22\frac{1}{2}$
C. 36
D. 45
E. 90
4. Given $f = cd^3$, $f = 450$, and $d = 10$, what is c ?
F. 0.45
G. 4.5
H. 15
J. 45
K. 150
5. If $f(x) = (3x + 7)^2$, then $f(1) = ?$
A. 10
B. 16
C. 58
D. 79
E. 100

DO YOUR FIGURING HERE

6. Jorge's current hourly wage for working at Denti Smiles is \$12.00. Jorge was told that at the beginning of next month, his new hourly wage will be an increase of 6% of his current hourly wage. What will be Jorge's new hourly wage?

F. \$12.06
 G. \$12.60
 H. \$12.72
 J. \$18.00
 K. \$19.20

7. The first term is 1 in the geometric sequence 1, -3, 9, -27, ... What is the SEVENTH term of the geometric sequence?

A. -243
 B. -30
 C. 81
 D. 189
 E. 729

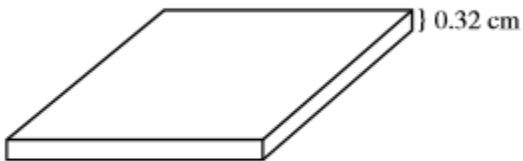
8. The shipping rate for customers of Ship Quick consists of a fee per box and a price per pound for each box. The table below gives the fee and the price per pound for customers shipping boxes of various weights.

| Weight of box (pounds) | Fee | Price per pound |
|------------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Less than 10 | \$ 5.00 | \$1.00 |
| 10-25 | \$10.00 | \$0.65 |
| More than 25 | \$20.00 | \$0.30 |

Gregg wants Ship Quick to ship 1 box that weighs 15 pounds. What is the shipping rate for this box?

F. \$ 9.75
 G. \$16.50
 H. \$19.75
 J. \$20.00
 K. \$24.50

9. A computer chip 0.32 cm thick is made up of layers of silicon. If the top and bottom layers are each 0.03 cm thick and the inner layers are each 0.02 cm thick, how many inner layers are there?



A. 13
 B. 15
 C. 16
 D. 52
 E. 64

10. The table below shows the number of cars Jing sold each month last year. What is the median of the data in the table?

| Month | Number of cars sold |
|-----------|---------------------|
| January | 25 |
| February | 15 |
| March | 22 |
| April | 19 |
| May | 16 |
| June | 13 |
| July | 19 |
| August | 25 |
| September | 26 |
| October | 27 |
| November | 28 |
| December | 29 |

- F. 13
 G. 16
 H. 19
 J. 20.5
 K. 23.5

11. Students studying motion observed a cart rolling at a constant rate along a straight line. The table below gives the distance, d feet, the cart was from a reference point at 1-second intervals from $t = 0$ seconds to $t = 5$ seconds.

| | | | | | | |
|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| t | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d | 14 | 20 | 26 | 32 | 38 | 44 |

Which of the following equations represents this relationship between d and t ?

- A. $d = t + 14$
 B. $d = 6t + 8$
 C. $d = 6t + 14$
 D. $d = 14t + 6$
 E. $d = 34t$
12. The length of a rectangle with area 54 square centimeters is 9 centimeters. What is the perimeter of the rectangle, in centimeters?
- F. 6
 G. 12
 H. 15
 J. 24
 K. 30

Name _____

Growing Plants

When you look out on a sunny day, the light appears colorless. In fact, that light contains all of the colors of the visible light spectrum, from red to violet (Figure 1). Each color has a different wavelength. Red has the longest wavelength and violet has the shortest wavelength. When all the waves are seen together, they make white light. Light is essential in a plant's life. Without light a plant cannot grow, reproduce, or photosynthesize (make energy). Plants utilize the different colors found in visible light to control different aspects of their growth. Different wavelengths of light can trigger or inhibit (stop) growth and flowering in plants. Light is extremely important to the healthy growth of plants.

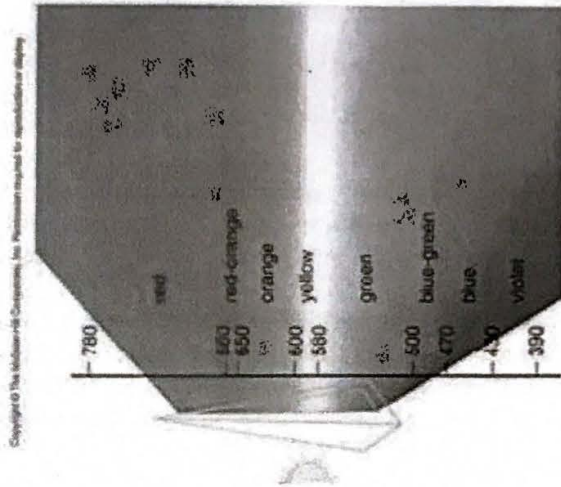
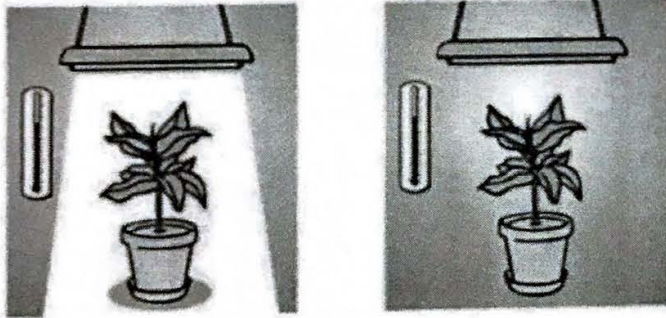


Fig. 1 Wavelengths of visible light in nanometers (nm).

A student was doing an experiment using the scientific method. A picture of the student's project is shown below.



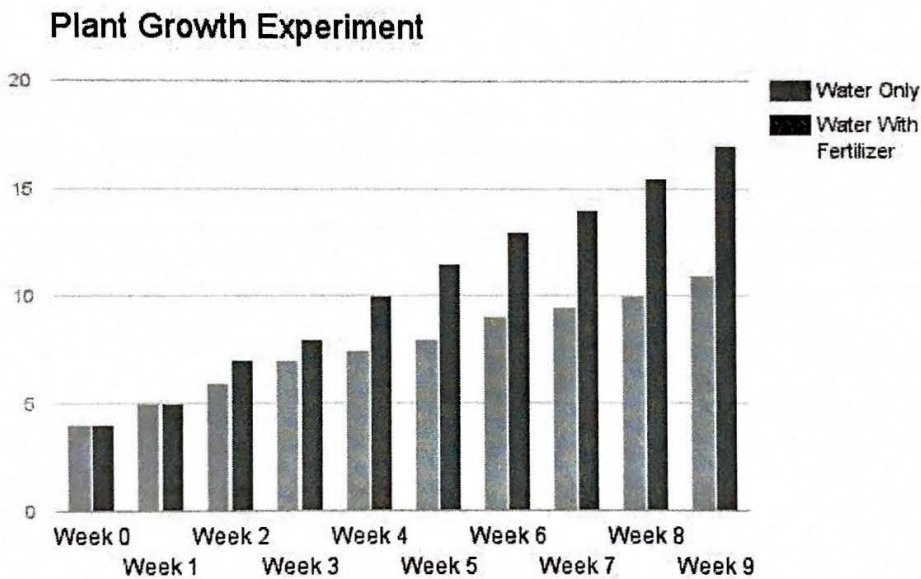
1. What is the student's variable?
 - a. the temperature of the air around the plant
 - b. the angle of the light shining on the plant
 - c. the brightness of the light shining on the plant
 - d. the type of plant being tested

2. List the controls you see in the image.

3. Based on the passage and the model, how do you think each plant will grow? Provide evidence to support your claim.

Mary was interested in how plants grow since her grandparents grew a garden each year. She always heard them talking about putting fertilizer on their garden. She wondered if the fertilizer really helped the plant grow better. She followed these steps to perform her experiment:

1. Gather 6 plastic cups. Fill each of the plastic cups $\frac{1}{4}$ full with potting soil.
2. Plant one bean seed in each of the plastic cups. The seeds should be planted $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep in the soil. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water to each cup.
3. In half the cups, add fertilizer, following the directions of the fertilizer package.
4. Place the cups in an area that gets plenty of sunlight during the day.
5. Water each plant with up to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water each day unless there is standing water in the cup. Because the cups have no drainage, fungus can grow and kill the plant if it receives more water than it can use, so water by pouring small amounts of water into the cup and allowing it to sink into the soil, and stop when a miniature puddle forms at the soil surface.
6. Keep a careful record of the plants' growth each week.
7. Take measurements of the length of the plants. Measure from the base of the plant where it touches the soil to the top of the stem. Be careful not to break the growing tip off of the plant while measuring, be very gentle.
8. Note the color when the plants begin to germinate, describe the thickness of the stem, record the numbers of leaves present. Keep all the information in your log book. This will help determine which plants were the healthiest.



4. How tall were the plants when this experiment began? _____

5. According to this graph, was the fertilizer helpful to Mary's plants? Provide evidence from graph to support your claim.

6. How much taller did the plants grow with the fertilizer than without the fertilizer? _____

7. On week 8, how tall were the plants without fertilizer? _____

8. Another student completed the same experiment. He had a picture of a fertilized plant that had a height of 12 cm. Between which two weeks did the student's plant probably come from? Provide evidence from graph to support your claim.

9. Draw a diagram of how the plant should be measured according to the text. Be sure to include labels for your diagram.

10. Based on the passage and Mary's experiment, what would happen to a plant with fertilizer that didn't have light? Provide evidence to support your claim.

SECTION

1



PLANNING THE ESSAY

While creativity and inspiration can play an important role in good essay writing, planning, drafting, and revision are critical. Whether you have to write an essay in class, during a test, or at home, getting down to the business of writing means focusing on these three things. They benefit your reader by showing him or her how the various points you make in your essay work together and how they support your thesis.

When you begin your essay with planning, you will have guidance and direction through the writing process, especially if you are in a timed situation. Planning lets you see how your many developing ideas fit within a framework and clearly maps out the type of essay you are trying to write.

In this section, you'll learn planning strategies that will not only improve the effectiveness and quality of your writing, but will also help eliminate many of the frustrations writers face.

1



THINKING ABOUT AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

LESSON SUMMARY

This lesson explains how knowing *why* and *for whom* you're writing helps improve its effectiveness.

There are few things in life students dread more than an essay assignment. But the essay prompt and the instructions to complete it are critical to your success: they are both the starting point for your ideas and your guide through the writing process. The more you've considered what is being asked of you, the clearer your task is—and the steps necessary to complete it. That first step is to understand *what* and *why* you are writing, and *for whom* you are being asked to write. Purpose and audience not only determine *how* you write; they shape your content.

For example, imagine you've just had this amazing experience: You were able to save someone's life by performing CPR. You want to share the experience with three people: your father, your best friend, and the admissions officer at your first-choice college. How will you describe what happened? Will that description be the same for each person? The likely answer is, probably not.

Although the subject remains a constant, each person is a different *audience*, requiring different word choices, levels of formality, and tone. Because you are sharing the experience with these three people for different reasons, the *purpose* of your description changes, too. You might tell your father to let him know that his advice about taking a CPR course was invaluable. To your friend, you might stress the emotions the experience evoked. In your college application essay, you place an emphasis on the experience's revelation of your competent and responsible nature.

Understanding Your Audience

The essay assignments found on college applications, AP exams, the SAT, and the ACT are designed to elicit essays that fulfill a specific need or purpose. In order to fulfill the assignment, you must understand exactly what the assignment is asking you to do. This may sound simple, but consider that many essay assignments aren't obvious. What does it mean, for example, to discuss an experience? How are you supposed to *analyze* an issue?

Breaking Down the Assignment

To understand an assignment, you first need to understand the following:

- What you need to respond to (the topic)
- How you are to respond to it

In some cases, there may be more than one topic and more than one way to respond. First, underline the words that *describe* the topic—look for keywords and phrases from your current course of study, or for repeated nouns and terms. Next, circle all of the verbs that tell you how to address the topic—e.g., *analyze, describe, discuss, explain, evaluate, identify, illustrate, and argue*.

For example, here is a writing assignment from an AP Biology exam:

Describe the chemical nature of genes. Discuss the replicative process of DNA in eukaryotic organisms. Be sure to include the various types of gene mutations that can occur during replication.

By breaking down the assignment, you can identify three subjects, each with its own direction word. The subjects are underlined and the direction words are circled:

Describe the chemical nature of genes. Discuss the replicative process of DNA in eukaryotic organisms. Be sure to include the various types of gene mutations that can occur during replication.

To help make the assignment even more manageable, break down the two parts (topic and direction words) into a simple chart:

| Subject | Directions |
|--|------------|
| 1. The chemical nature of genes | describe |
| 2. The replicative process of DNA in eukaryotic organisms | discuss |
| 3. The various types of gene mutations that can occur during replication | include |

To completely fulfill the assignment, you must cover all three of these subjects in the manner in which the assignment dictates.

Understanding Direction Words

You've broken down the assignment and isolated the direction words. But what do those direction words really mean? In the following table, you'll find the most common essay direction words and their explanations.

| TERM | MEANING |
|------------|---|
| Analyze | Divide the issue into its main parts and discuss each part. Consider how the parts interact and how they work together to form the whole. |
| Argue | Express your opinion about the subject, and support it with evidence, examples, and details. |
| Assess | See <i>evaluate</i> . |
| Classify | Organize the subject into groups and explain why the groupings make sense. |
| Compare | Point out similarities. |
| Contrast | Point out differences. |
| Define | Give the meaning of the subject. |
| Describe | Show readers what the subject is like; give an account of the subject. |
| Discuss | Point out the main issues or characteristics of the subject and elaborate. |
| Evaluate | Make a judgment about the effectiveness and success of the subject. What is good and bad about it? Why? Describe your criteria for your judgment. |
| Explain | Make your position, issue, process, etc. clear by analyzing, defining, comparing, contrasting, or illustrating. |
| Identify | Name and describe. |
| Illustrate | Provide examples of the subject. |
| Indicate | Explain what you think the subject means and how you came to that interpretation. |
| Relate | Point out and discuss any connections. |
| Summarize | Describe the main ideas or points. |

Here are a few examples:

Compare and contrast prohibition and the current anti-tobacco movement.

This assignment gives you two direction words: *compare* and *contrast*. Therefore, you should locate and discuss the similarities and differences between the two subjects (prohibition and the anti-tobacco movement).

Rousseau offers judgments about the relative goodness and badness of life as a savage and of life in society. Assess the validity of these judgments. What arguments does he provide to support them? Are they sound arguments?

THINKING ABOUT AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

The explicit direction word in this assignment is *assess*. The implied direction word for the first question, "What arguments does he provide to support them?" is *identify*. The implied direction word for the second question, "Are they sound arguments?" is *evaluate*. For this assignment, you are expected to:

1. Assess the validity and soundness of Rousseau's judgments
2. Identify the arguments he uses to support his judgments
3. Evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of his argument

Practice 1

Read the essay topic carefully. Use the subject and directions columns in the tables provided to break them down into parts. (Note: You may not need to fill each table.)

Describe the change in citizens' attitudes toward the federal government in the last decade. Explain what you believe to be the causes of this change. Finally, assess the impact of this attitude on the power of the government.

| SUBJECT | DIRECTIONS |
|---------|------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

When the Assignment is a Question

In some assignments, you are given questions instead of direction words. Here's an example:

What were the issues, successes, and failures of the Civil Rights movement from the 1960s through the 1970s?

Notice that there are no direction words. For this type of essay prompt, you will need to determine the word(s) yourself. Reread the question, paying careful attention to each word. Notice it begins with *What were*. This is a good clue that you should *identify* the issues, successes, and failures.

Translating questions into directions can be tricky, but it's a critical step in understanding the prompt. You need to determine exactly how you're supposed to respond to the subject. The following chart lists common question words and corresponding direction words.

THINKING ABOUT AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

| QUESTION WORDS | WHAT THEY USUALLY MEAN |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| What is/are . . . | define or identify |
| What caused . . . | identify or explain |
| How are/does . . . | explain or evaluate |
| How is X like . . . | compare |
| How is X different . . . | contrast |
| In what way . . . | illustrate |
| Do you agree? | argue |
| Why is/does . . . | explain |
| What do you think of X? | evaluate |

Knowing Your Purpose

Analyzing an assignment task helps to not only clarify the requirements, but also helps you define your own goal(s) for what you hope to convey in writing. To help you clarify your purpose, you can try completing a simple fill-in-the-blank:

My goal in this essay is to _____

Try to find a verb or verbs that best describe what you want your essay to do; the “Understanding Direction Words” table on page 21 can help. Notice in the following example how the verb specifies purpose and subject matter:

My goal is to *prove* that Victor Frankenstein, rather than his creature, is the monster.

Think of a goal statement as a preliminary thesis: By indicating what you want to achieve and how you will go about doing so, you’ve articulated the main idea of your writing.

Practice 3

Review the instructions for an essay you have recently been assigned. How would you describe your purpose? Write a goal statement that expresses what purpose your essay will attempt to achieve and how.

Understanding Your Audience

At the beginning of the lesson, you were asked to consider how to communicate the experience of using CPR to save a life to three very different people—your father, your best friend, and an admissions officer. Now imagine that you’ve been asked to write about your experience for the local hospital newsletter. You expect your audience to be adults, so you’ll need to plan and draft your article in anticipation of that audience.

What are the likely characteristics, needs, and wants of the audience reading the hospital newsletter? Fill out the audience analysis chart below.

| Audience Analysis: Hospital Newsletter | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Characteristics of Audience | Needs or Wants of Audience |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

When you submit it, you find that the hospital plans to use your article in a supplement for elementary school students. Can they print it as written? Perhaps not if they want their readers to understand what you’ve written. You’ll likely need to plan and draft your article to meet the needs of your young audience.

What are the likely characteristics and needs or wants of the audience reading the elementary school supplement to the hospital newsletter? Fill out the audience analysis chart below.

| Audience Analysis: Elementary School Student Supplement to Hospital Newsletter | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Characteristics of Audience | Needs or Wants of Audience |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Knowing Your Audience

As the previous exercise illustrates, a writer cannot begin to achieve his or her purpose for writing until it is clear who the reader is and what his or her needs are. *Who* will read your essay, and *why* are they reading it? *What* do they know about your subject?

Here are some general guidelines:

| WHO THEY ARE | WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR |
|----------------------|---|
| Admission officer | an engaging essay that reveals your personality, goals, and values; evidence that you can organize your thoughts and communicate effectively |
| SAT and ACT scorers | a polished rough draft that responds to the topic, develops a point of view, and supports that point of view with examples and evidence |
| AP exam evaluators | a clear and cohesive essay that demonstrates mastery of the subject matter |
| High school teachers | a combination of the following: mastery of the material (do you understand the book, concept, issue?); a clear and original thesis; mastery of standard written English |

Although they differ in many ways, these audiences share the same purpose for reading: to *evaluate*. Your writing is being used to assess your competency—your ability to demonstrate an understanding of coursework, your readiness for college-level work, etc. Given this purpose, what are they looking for when evaluating your writing? Think about it for a minute. This last question is especially important when writing an essay; you need to know the expectations in order to fulfill them.

What does your English teacher consider an A essay? How does a college admissions officer judge an essay? For the SAT and ACT, what are the differences between an essay that gets a 6, and one that gets a 2? Understanding your role as a writer and the role of the reader helps determine the style, tone, and format of your essay.

In this case, consider the essay evaluator: he or she likely knows a great deal about your subject, is looking for a fully developed and well-reasoned argument, and expects that the directions of the assignment and of formal writing in general are to be followed throughout the response. No text messaging language here; you'll need lots of clear, detailed, and specific evidence.

Consider what must be done to achieve the essay purpose and reach the intended audience—that is, what it will take to get an A, a 6, or accepted by a college—and use it to create the framework or map to guide your planning and drafting. In many cases, your reader has provided a guide that states his or her expectations—a scoring guide or rubric. In the case of college application essays, The College Board (the publishers of the SAT and AP exams) publishes sample essays at www.collegeboard.com/student/apply/essay-skills/. Review their rubrics carefully. With a clear purpose and an understanding of what is expected of you, you can know where you need to be!

Practice 4

Think about a class you are currently taking, one in which writing is an important part of the coursework. What are the essential characteristics of grade-A essay work in this class? What must you do in your writing to fulfill the expectations of the teacher? Write down your thoughts on the following lines.

In Short

Effective writing begins with a clear understanding of purpose and audience. Break down the writing assignment so you can clearly grasp your evaluator's expectations. As always, know your audience: *who* will read your essay? Consider your relationship to your readers, and be sure to carefully consider your purpose.

Skill Building Practice

Review sample ACT student essays at actstudent.org/writing/sample/index.html, and SAT essays at sat.collegeboard.com/scores/sat-essay-scoring-guide, focusing on those that scored 6. What makes these exemplary essays? What will you need to work on in order to meet these expectations?