

Writer's Choice
Grammar and Composition

Composition Practice

Grade 9



New York, New York Columbus, Ohio Woodland Hills, California Peoria, Illinois

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1.1 Writing to Discover

Key Information

You can learn a great deal about yourself by freewriting, by making observations, by remembering feelings and experiences, and even by sketching yourself.

■ A. Learning About Yourself

Here's one more way to learn about yourself. Answer the following questions. Then record how you feel about your answers.

Question	Answer	Comments, Feelings, Reactions
What do you do best?	_____	_____
What do you find hardest to do?	_____	_____
What is your favorite color? Number? Flavor?	_____	_____
If you could spend a day doing anything you wanted, what would it be?	_____	_____
What makes you a little different from everyone else?	_____	_____

■ B. Writing About Who You Are

Use the material in the chart to write a paragraph about what makes you unique. Imagine that you are writing to help a new teacher understand your unique personality and abilities. Use a separate sheet of paper. Suggestion: Begin with a topic sentence that states the particular item or items from the chart on which you will focus.

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1.2 Keeping a Journal

Key Information

Journals are places in which to store thoughts, feelings, and wishes, as well as your reactions to life. You need not share them with anyone.

■ A. Practicing Journal Entries

This exercise should show you how easy it is to make journal entries. Follow the directions in each numbered item. Make sure you write about something that you are willing to share with your teacher.

1. Imagine you just did something really silly. Write an exclamation that tells how silly you feel.

2. Write a sentence that tells about the silly thing you did.

3. Write a sentence describing the reactions of people around you to your action.

4. Write a sentence that tells what you or someone else said about the situation.

5. Write a sentence telling what you'll always remember about that moment.

■ B. Making Your Own Journal Entries

Now try your hand at writing a journal entry on your own. Write about either an imaginary experience or an actual one. Think of something you might want to look back on and remember. You might want to make up an adventure for yourself. Explain the experience, how you felt, and perhaps what you learned from it. Make sure you write about something that you are willing to share with your teacher.

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1.3 Writing a Personal Essay

Key Information
A **personal essay** reflects your thoughts and feelings on a topic you know about. It can be organized formally—with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion—or in an informal, loosely organized style.

A. Getting Started

You've decided to write an essay on how one's choice of clothing reveals a person's inner self. Here's an idea to get you started. Keep adding arrows and thoughts to see where your ideas take you.

stylish clothes versus casuals. . . . no, that's not it →
the collegiate look? the windblown look? → the *really grungy* look?
no-o-o, it's not so much the clothes as the way they're worn

B. Drafting the Essay

Continue with the topic above, or use the arrow method to get some similar thoughts flowing on another topic. Compose a first draft. To write a traditional essay, organize your thoughts by topics. To use a breezier style, start with an anecdote, a little clothes-related story that really happened. Later, if you choose, you may turn your draft into a finished essay. Use additional paper to write your essay.

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1.4 Writing Autobiography

Key Information

An **autobiography** is a written account of a person's life by that person. An **autobiographical sketch** is a brief account of one period in the writer's life.

■ A. Writing a Snappy Beginning

Your attitude toward what you write shows in your very first word. So begin with confidence and style! Follow the directions to try some snappy openers.

1. Write a sentence about yourself beginning "You'd never guess that _____."
_____.
2. Write a sentence that begins "Today while (doing something ordinary) _____
I suddenly remembered _____."
_____.
3. Write a sentence beginning "When I was only _____ years old, I thought that _____."
_____.
4. Write an opener that begins "Did you see that _____? It reminds me about the time I _____."
_____.
5. Write a sentence that begins with a sound word such as CLANG-G-G! (school bell?) or Brrr-ring! (alarm clock? phone?) and see what memory it leads to.
_____.

■ B. Writing the First Paragraph of a Sketch

Use your best beginning above, or think of another one like it. Then write just the beginning of an autobiographical sketch. Think hard about the incident you've begun with, then go with it. If you feel yourself verging onto another topic, stop.

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1.5 Writing a Poem

Key Information

A **poem** is an intensely vivid statement of a feeling, idea, or thought. It may be rhymed or unrhymed, but it often includes such figures of speech as simile, metaphor, and personification, as well as strong sensory appeal.

A. Searching for That Intensely Vivid Moment

What sudden, vivid awareness do you sometimes have when you look at something ordinary? Do you see it as if you'd never seen it before? For each object below, write the phrase, figure of speech, color, or sound image it suggests.

1. the deep blue of a lake

2. the rumble of distant thunder

3. the trust in a pet's eyes

4. the center of a flower

5. the sharpness of winter wind

6. the warmth of a smile

7. one translucent drop of rain

8. a shivering bird on a bare branch

9. one blade of summer grass

10. the wail of a faraway train

B. Getting the Image onto Paper

Choose your most vivid image from Part A and write, in poem form, the thoughts and feelings that come to you. Use figures of speech if they help express your ideas. You might wish to strive for the light touch of a haiku.

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WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

1.6

Keeping a Reader-Response Journal

Key Information

A **reader-response journal** may be a separate notebook or part of an ongoing personal journal. In it you can record reactions to literature. You may sometimes draw parallels from your reading to situations in your own life.

A. Sorting Out Your Thoughts

Think of a piece of literature that impressed you, and use the following questions to begin responding to it. Name the literature in your first answer.

- 1. What was it that impressed you overall? _____

- 2. What character did you feel closest to? _____

- 3. What did you like about the way the writer used words? _____

- 4. What chapter, paragraph, or verse do you still remember? _____

- 5. What did you take away from this piece of literature that relates somehow to your own life? _____

B. Making Your Response

Write a passage that pulls together your impressions and recollections from Part A. Your most personal response will come from the point that elicited your strongest reaction, so you may want to begin with that one. Then follow where it leads.

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WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

1.7 Writing About Biography

Key Information

A **biography** is an account of a person's life written by someone else. One good way to respond to a biography is to "interview" its subject.

■ A. Conducting an "Interview"

First, choose a subject whose biography you have read or whose life you are interested in. Your subject might be Abraham Lincoln or your great uncle Zeke. Be sure you're familiar with your subject's biography. Then focus on a period during which the subject made his or her greatest accomplishments. Imagine that you are actually interviewing your subject. Work alone or with a partner to answer these questions as your subject might.

1. What were you most afraid of at the time? What were you most confident of?

2. Where did you think your work would lead? Did it turn out as you expected?

3. How did the public react to your accomplishments at the time?

4. Which aspect of your work gave you the most satisfaction? Why?

5. How do you want future generations to remember you?

■ B. Responding to the Biography

This time go beyond the interview format to respond to your chosen subject's biography in your own way. What are your thoughts about this person's life? Your responses may reflect your answers from Part A, or they may go off in different directions.

1 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

An autobiographical sketch is personal writing about a significant event or period in your life. Including comparisons and dialogue are two ways to make your autobiographical writing more engaging and more authentic.

■ A. Writing Comparisons

Write one or two sentences comparing each of the following items with an object, animal, or idea. Your sentences should reveal key traits or your feelings about each item being compared.

1. a person _____

2. an event _____

3. a place _____

4. a season _____

■ B. Writing Authentic Dialogue

In the excerpt from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou uses a dialogue between two individuals to illustrate contrasts. Think of the differences between your typical speech patterns and those of someone else you know, such as a relative, friend, or employer. Write a dialogue of at least two or three exchanges between you and this other individual. Use both the content and the language of the conversation to reveal differences and similarities in background and personality.

2.1 Overview of the Writing Process

Key Information

During **prewriting** you explore ideas and decide what to write about. In **drafting** you set your thoughts on paper. When **revising** you evaluate your work as a whole, pulling the pieces together to make sense. In **editing/proofreading** you correct your spelling, grammar, and mechanics. Finally, in **publishing/presenting**, you share your work to demonstrate its best qualities.

■ A. Prewriting

Jot down some ideas on a topic that interests you. Consider using charts or word webs to help clarify your ideas. You may need to do this for more than one topic to figure out which one will work for you. As your topic becomes clearer in your mind, identify a purpose and an audience.

Topic: _____

Purpose: _____

Audience: _____

■ B. Drafting

Write three related sentences about your topic. Don't worry about format; just get your ideas on paper.

■ C. Revising

Go back to the sentences you wrote above, and use a different color pen or pencil to make changes. Be sure all three of your sentences deal with the same topic and that they flow smoothly together. Change any inexact words to make the sentences sound more polished.

■ D. Editing/Proofreading

Write your revised sentences on the lines below. Then use a different color pencil to correct any spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors you find.

■ E. Publishing/Presenting

Write your three final sentences below. Think of a good way to share them.

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2.2 Prewriting: Getting Started

Key Information

Four good prewriting techniques are **freewriting**, **collecting information**, **listmaking** or **brainstorming**, and **questioning**. Before drafting, narrow your focus to fit the length specified in your assignment.

■ A. Freewriting

Imagine that you're going to write a short paper on your family history. Below, do some freewriting on the subject.

■ B. Collecting Information

Talk to a family member about the assignment. Collect some interesting facts to use in the paper. Write them here.

■ C. Listmaking/Brainstorming

Use the space below to make lists of events and memories that may be useful.

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

■ D. Questioning

Look back at the ideas you've generated and choose the most interesting one. Then ask the five *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* questions to help generate more information.

Who? _____

What? _____

Where? _____

When? _____

Why? _____

How? _____

■ E. Narrowing Your Topic

Select a topic from among all of your ideas on this page. Write several paragraphs on a separate sheet of paper. Be sure that you narrow your topic appropriately for a short, one-page paper.

2.3 Prewriting: Identifying Purpose and Audience

Key Information

First, before you begin, know your **purpose** or purposes for writing. Second, know your **audience**. Think how much your readers know about the topic, and determine the language and tone you'll need to communicate with them.

A. Clarifying Purposes

List two purposes for writing about each topic below. Then study what you've written. If both are good and you can handle them together, leave them alone. If one is clearly superior or if it might be hard to deal with both at once, cross out the one you probably won't use.

1. a neighborhood dump site

2. the school science curriculum

B. Communicating with an Audience

Think about the topics above. For each one, list a possible audience. Then describe (a) how much you think the audience knows about the topic and (b) what kind of language you'll use to address the audience you've identified.

1. audience: _____

how much they know: _____

language to use: _____

2. audience: _____

how much they know: _____

language to use: _____

C. Checking Language and Tone

Rewrite each sentence below to communicate better with the audience to whom it was addressed. Write on a separate sheet of paper.

1. So, Mayor, you'd better get this dump site outta our neighborhood.
2. Neighbors, the levels of chlorofluorocarbons, phosphates, aldehydes, and sulfides in that dump are atrocious.
3. Yes, fellow educators, I am here to tell you how we plan to change that miserable, old science curriculum into one that actually will work in the new century.
4. It's this way, voters. Either you give our schools more money, or in a few years we'll all be too dopey to get jobs and pay your pensions!

2.4 Prewriting: Gathering Information

Key Information

Libraries provide valuable material on topics dating from prehistoric ages to the present. Interviews are excellent sources of first-hand information.

■ A. Using the Library

Imagine that you're writing a short paper on memorable women in history. Explain how the following books and on-line materials might be useful.

1. a card catalog subject card entitled WOMEN: PROFESSIONS

2. a computer database _____

3. a book on the American Civil War _____

4. the reference *Books in Print* _____

5. the reference series *Current Biography* _____

■ B. Conducting Interviews

You're still writing the same paper as in Part A. Explain how you would prepare for and conduct each interview below.

1. You go back to your elementary school to interview your sixth-grade teacher, who knows about notable women from the past two hundred years.

2. You're granted a special interview with Barbara Bush, who has agreed to discuss the First Ladies she has known.

3. You talk with your grandmother who knew the famous American painter, Georgia O'Keeffe.

2.5 Drafting: Turning Notes into Paragraphs

Key Information

A paragraph is a group of related sentences on a single topic. It includes a main idea and several **supporting details** that clarify or extend the main idea.

A. Choosing Supporting Details

Write two supporting detail sentences for each main idea sentence below.

1. When I was little, no one ever dared call me a 'fraidy-cat.

I once _____

Another time, _____

2. You might not believe this, but I just love to cook.

B. Writing a Topic Sentence

Read the following details about early nineteenth-century Australia. Then write a topic sentence that pulls the details together.

- 1787: Captain Arthur Phillip and 1,100 passengers, 750 of whom were British convicts, founded a penal colony named Sydney
- Annexed eastern half of Australia, named New South Wales
- Soldiers stationed at colony later settled on land
- Although free settlers from Britain came slowly, new colonies gradually formed.
- Gold discovery in 1851 caused dramatic increase in population.

C. Organizing a Paragraph

Organize these mixed-up details into a logical paragraph. Be sure to create a topic sentence for your paragraph from some of the details. Write your paragraph on another sheet of paper.

- Aboriginal influence great for names of places, trees, animals
- pidgin English—one of trademarks of Australian English
- observed by new arrival less than decade after Captain Phillip's landing—mixture was standard spoken by both English settlers and Aborigines
- number of Aboriginal words in Australian English quite small
- about one third of all Australian place names Aboriginal
- visitors to new colonies noticed pidgin English springing up between settlers and Aborigines

D. Writing an Original Paragraph

Now write your own paragraph, topic sentence and all, on another sheet of paper. Use any topic for which you have already gathered information. Consider your paragraph to be a source of information for a classmate.

2.6

Drafting: Writing Unified Paragraphs

Key Information

In a unified paragraph all the sentences relate to its stated or unstated main idea. Supporting details might be **sensory details, examples** or **incidents, facts** and **statistics, or reasons**.

■ A. Choosing Details According to Purpose

For each of the following main ideas, write two detail sentences based on the idea in parentheses.

1. The United States is the best place in the world to live. (reasons)

2. Some people see me as a _____ person, but I'm really _____. (examples/incidents)

■ B. Writing for Your Own Purpose

Write three detail sentences for the topic sentence below. You choose the kinds of details that will suit the topic.

If I could choose my home state, it would certainly be _____

■ C. Drafting an Original Paragraph

Write a paragraph on a familiar topic such as family, friends, or activities. Include a topic sentence and detail sentences that develop the topic using at least one of the four kinds of supporting details.

2.7 Drafting: Ordering the Details

Key Information

Writing details in logical order gives a sense of wholeness to your work. Details can be arranged in **order of importance** or in **chronological, spatial, or cause-and-effect order**.

A. Recognizing Effective Order of Details

Read each of the following topic sentences. Write down which kind of order you think would best develop each topic.

1. If Egon hadn't called me a coward when I was five, I might never have become a stunt pilot.

2. I've learned three good rules for healthful living, each one more effective than the one before it.

3. It all started last Tuesday when I broke my glasses.

4. The one-hundred-gallon fish tank at the north end defined the character of the room.

5. When Frank Mendoza invented the Sierra Sizzle, a whole new era in dance was born.

B. Choosing Effective Order of Details

In each of the following spaces, write a topic sentence for a possible paragraph. Then, write which kind of order you think would best develop the topic.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

C. Turning a Topic Sentence into an Ordered Paragraph

Choose one topic sentence from those above and develop it into a paragraph of your own. Be sure it follows one of the formats referred to in this lesson.

2.8

Drafting: Writing Coherent Paragraphs

Key Information

In a coherent paragraph all the sentences are clearly and logically connected. **Transitional expressions, repetitions, synonyms, and pronouns** build coherence.

A. Using Transitions, Synonyms, and Pronouns for Coherence

Read the following sentences. Then underline the words and phrases that help make these sentences a coherent paragraph. Above each word or phrase you underline, write *t*, *s*, or *p* to indicate whether the underlined item is a transition, a synonym, or a pronoun.

1. No one expected Marta to fly the cargo plane; however, she got in anyway.
2. First she started the engine; then she lowered the flaps and taxied down the runway.
3. We just couldn't believe our classmate was flying that airborne mailbag, although we were standing there watching her.
4. Above, the jet streaked across the sky, then looped and dived toward earth.
5. Back on the ground again, Marta explained: she had been a licensed pilot for years but had just never thought to mention it.

B. Writing Coherently

Try freewriting about an important event in your life. Then go back and build coherence. Rearrange thoughts to arrive at a logical order. Add words and phrases to create complete sentences and tie your ideas together. Write additional sentences as needed and delete sentences or parts of sentences that cause problems.

2.9 Revising: Improving Paragraphs

Key Information

It's a good idea to set aside each draft for a day or two. Then give it three separate readings: one for **meaning**, one for **unity**, and one for **coherence**.

■ A. Revising for Meaning

Using three different colors of pens or pencils, revise the paragraph below. Use any revising symbols with which you're familiar. Use the first color to revise for meaning. One or more sentences may be omitted in order to achieve unity and coherence.

The Gateway Arch is in Saint Louis along the western shore of the Mississippi River. Saint Louis is the largest city in Missouri. To be more specific, the Arch is in the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. Saarinen wanted to celebrate the role of Saint Louis as "Gateway to the West." This stainless-steel structure was designed by Eero Saarinen. It is, by the way, 629.5 feet high. This makes it the tallest monument in the United States. The monument has small cars inside it that carry people to the top for a spectacular view.

■ B. Revising for Unity

Use the pen or pencil in a second color to revise the paragraph for unity.

■ C. Revising for Coherence

Use the pen or pencil in a third color to revise the paragraph for coherence.

■ D. Checking Your Revisions

Copy your revised paragraph below. Be sure that its meaning is clear and that it flows smoothly.

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2.10 Editing/Proofreading: Final Checking

Key Information

When you **edit for sense**, check that you've said what you mean. When you proofread, look for errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

■ A. Editing for Sense

Read the following paragraph and make any corrections it needs for sense. Mark your corrections with a regular pen or pencil.

Barney woke just as the sun was coming up and felt like a slice of toast. Glancing out the window the beach was deserted. A slite breeze ruffled the feathers of gulls looking for breakfast. One gull finding an oyster flew with it up to about twenty feet and dropped them onto the rocks below. Yes, all was the same. Barney picked up a towel he walked out onto the warm sand.

■ B. Editing to Help Your Peers

Exchange this paper with a classmate. Study the editing he or she has done on the paragraph above. If you think more corrections should be made, use a red pencil to add your corrections.

■ C. Proofreading and Marking a Paragraph

Go back to your own copy of the paragraph in Part A and proofread it. Use a pencil with blue lead to mark corrections in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Use the proofreading symbols listed in your textbook.

■ D. Making a Clean Copy

Finally, write the revised paragraph below.

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2.11 Publishing/Presenting: Sharing Writing

Key Information

Writing may be shared in both **written** and **oral** form. Find the method of presentation that best suits the kind of writing you've done.

■ A. Finding a Forum for Writing

Next to each of the following kinds of writing, write down what you think the best method of presentation would be. Be as specific as possible.

1. a persuasive essay _____
2. short story _____
3. a cartoon about school life _____
4. a one-act play _____
5. a book review _____
6. a poem _____
7. a humorous essay about life in your town _____
8. a character sketch of a classmate _____
9. a photo essay on school spirit _____
10. an article on the history of your state _____

■ B. Adapting Writing to a Particular Forum

Imagine that you wrote the humorous essay in item 7 above. Write down how you might adapt it for each of the following forums.

1. the school newspaper _____

2. a drama magazine _____

3. *Cricket* (a magazine for elementary-school children) _____

4. a segment on a local TV news broadcast _____

5. a speech tournament _____

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WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

2.12

Explaining Theme

Key Information

A **theme** is a generalization about life or human nature expressed through a piece of literature. To identify the theme of a story, try freewriting about it. To support your idea about the theme, analyze characters, setting, and plot.

■ A. Identifying Story Themes

Circle one of the following stories or choose another that you remember well. Freewrite to identify the theme for the story. Then write your version of the theme.

“The Fisherman and His Wife”

“The Three Little Pigs”

“Snow White”

“Beauty and the Beast”

■ B. Supporting a Theme

Now jot down ideas about characters, setting, and plot to support your notion of the story’s theme.

Notes about characters: _____

Notes about setting: _____

Notes about plot: _____

■ C. Writing a Paragraph About Theme

Use your work above to write a paragraph. Begin with a topic sentence that identifies your chosen story and its theme. Then select from your notes three points that best support your idea.

3.1 Writing a Descriptive Paragraph

Key Information

An effective description contains details that evoke a single mood. A topic sentence helps establish the mood and ties the supporting details together.

■ A. Identifying Details to Establish Mood

The following descriptive paragraph fails to evoke a consistent mood. The details clash and confuse the reader. Identify the two moods conveyed by the paragraph, and list the details that support each mood.

The sun shone brightly on the quiet, suburban street. The light filtering through the leafy trees cast eerie patterns on the pavement. Children played happily in front of the house, although they were careful to hide behind their freshly painted, sparkling, white picket fence whenever a car drove by. The children's laughter blended with the lively and cheerful music drifting through an open window. Only the distant but approaching wail of a siren threatened to disturb their pleasant harmony. It was a typical summer's day in Anytown, U.S.A.

Mood 1 _____

Mood 2 _____

■ B. Choosing Details to Project a Single Mood

Prepare to write a new paragraph based on the scene in the paragraph you just read. First decide which single mood you want to project. Then list new details that support that mood.

■ C. Writing the Paragraph

Now write a new paragraph that communicates a unified impression. Feel free to place your topic sentence at the beginning or end of the paragraph, and write supporting details that help transport the reader to the scene.

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3.2 Using Descriptive Language

Key Information

When you write descriptively, choose specific words with connotations that re-create your vision and make your writing more lively.

■ A. Identifying Connotations

The word pairs below have similar dictionary definitions, but their connotative meanings are very different. Supply the connotative meaning of each word.

Example: pale/ashen *pale: faint, delicate color; ashen: deathly white*

1. fantastic/bizarre _____
2. slender/skinny _____
3. fashion/fad _____
4. hint/insinuate _____
5. run/flee _____

■ B. Using Precise Nouns and Vivid Modifiers

Replace the general nouns and modifiers below with two increasingly specific words.

Example: vehicle *truck* *pickup*

1. play _____ _____
2. entertainment _____ _____
3. happy _____ _____
4. money _____ _____
5. sad _____ _____

■ C. Conveying a Feeling or Vision

You have been asked to write a descriptive paragraph that will appear in a general study on city, suburban, and rural life. Choose one of the following scenes, and use descriptive language to convey a particular feeling or vision. Be sure to pay attention to connotative meanings, and use specific words wherever possible.

a summer meadow just before a storm a suburban shopping mall
rush hour in the city winter in the city

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3.3 Describing an Imaginary Place

Key Information

When you describe an imaginary place, use sensory details that suggest a particular mood and help the reader visualize the place.

A. Discovering Your Imaginary Place

Once you have an idea for an imaginary place, explore it by answering the following questions.

- 1. What does the place look, sound, smell, feel, and taste like? _____

- 2. What real place does it resemble? _____

- 3. What work and leisure activities take up the inhabitant's time? _____

- 4. What do the inhabitants eat? _____

B. Generating Details That Convey a Specific Mood

Now determine the mood of your imaginary place. Does it move you with its beauty, make you ache with loneliness, lull you to sleep, or frighten you out of your wits? Once you've determined the mood, generate some sensory details that you could use to convey that mood.

Mood: _____

C. Organizing the Details

After you have generated descriptive details for your imaginary place, draft your description. Be sure to organize the relevant details using a method that works well for your scene.

3.4 Describing an Imaginary Person

Key Information

When you describe an imaginary character, you should include details that give the character a three-dimensional personality. Add quirks and traits that seem a little inconsistent with your character's personality to help bring him or her to life.

A. Getting to Know Your Imaginary Character

Once you have an idea of what kind of person your imaginary character is, get to know him or her by answering the following questions.

1. What do you notice first about the character's appearance? Does your character have any physical traits that stand out?

2. How does your character carry himself or herself? Does he or she walk or talk in a distinct way? If you talked to or touched your character, what would you see, smell, hear, or feel?

3. How would you describe your character's personality? Is there something about it that sets your character apart from others? Does he or she have a daily routine? How old is your character? Does your character act his or her age?

B. Generating Details That Make Your Character Come to Life

Use the answers to the questions above to generate vivid, descriptive details that will bring your character to life. As you write details, think about what makes your character seem like a "real" person. Does your character have any bad habits or quirks? Does he or she have inconsistencies?

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C. Organizing the Details

After you have generated details for your imaginary character, draft a description. Organize your details in a way that captures the essence of your character and brings your character to life. Continue on another sheet of paper.

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3.5 Analyzing Character Descriptions

Key Information

When you write about a character in literature, consider the character's appearance as well as his or her thoughts, words, and actions. You should also analyze the reactions of other characters to the character you have selected. However, be sure to ask yourself whether their reactions are accurate or trustworthy.

■ A. Organizing Your Reactions to Characters

Select three characters from a book or story you have recently read. Then complete the chart below to help you analyze the characteristics of each one.

Name of Work _____	First Character _____	Second Character _____	Third Character _____
Character's Appearance			
Character's Thoughts			
Character's Words			
Character's Actions			
Reactions of Other Characters			

■ B. Writing a Character Analysis

Now choose one of the characters you analyzed, and write two paragraphs about him or her, incorporating ideas from your chart. Continue on another sheet of paper.

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3 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

An effective description of a place conveys a mood and an overall picture to the reader. The sensory details are presented in logical order and are written in language chosen for its precision and vividness.

Organizing Details

Read each of the items below. Use a separate sheet of paper to do some freewriting to discover details. Then use the organizational method specified in each exercise to write a descriptive paragraph on the lines below.

1. Envision a specific car. What car model is it? Include at least five details about the car. Present the details in the order of importance.

2. Envision your school cafeteria. Use left to right spatial order to point out at least five details about the cafeteria.

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4.1 Writing Simple Narratives

Key Information

All narratives contain characters, setting, and plot. Characters are the individuals in a story, setting establishes its time and place, and plot is the sequence of events that occur in a story. The plot may contain a conflict, a struggle that triggers the action.

A. Using Character to Develop a Narrative

Think about an interesting family member or friend who can serve as the model for a character. Then use the questions below to help you generate material that you can use in a story about this character.

1. What does the character look like? _____

2. Describe the setting in which the character lives. _____

3. How does this setting affect the character? _____

4. Freewrite about another character and place him or her in the same setting. What conflict between the two characters might occur? _____

5. Will the conflict cause the characters to change? If so, in what ways? _____

B. Plotting Events in a Narrative

Now that you have created characters, setting, and conflict for your narrative, try organizing its sequence of events in chronological order. Think about how the conflict might begin and how it might be resolved. List the events in your narrative on the lines below, or create a timeline.

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4.2 Developing Conflict in Narrative

Key Information

Conflict drives the action in a narrative and helps keep the reader interested. As a character struggles with the conflict, the plot builds to a climax, the high point of the story. The resolution, or aftermath of the climax, brings the narrative to an end. A character's conflict may be external, involving another person, nature, or society; or the conflict may be internal, occurring within the character.

A. Brainstorming About Conflict

Imagine that you have moved with your family to a place that contrasts sharply with where you live now. If you live in a rural area, imagine that you have moved to a city. If you live in an urban area, imagine that you have moved to the country. First, write the name of the place that is your new home. Then brainstorm to come up with an idea for each type of conflict listed below.

New home: _____

Conflict with another person: _____

Conflict with nature: _____

Conflict with society: _____

Conflict with self: _____

B. Developing Conflict

Choose one of the conflicts that you listed above. On a separate sheet of paper, use prewriting techniques to create a climax and the resolution of the conflict. Finally, on the lines below write a paragraph summarizing the conflict. Explain how the conflict begins, builds to a climax, and eventually becomes resolved.

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4.4 Using Anecdotes

Key Information

Anecdotes are short narratives that help to illustrate a point or reveal character. They can stand on their own or be part of a longer piece of writing. Whether based on real-life experiences or invented, most anecdotes entertain or instruct, and they often contain dialogue.

■ Generating Anecdotes

On a separate sheet of paper freewrite to come up with an anecdote that illustrates one of the statements given below. You may draw on incidents from your own life or invent an anecdote that illustrates the statement. Then draft your anecdote below, using dialogue to enliven it.

1. A particular character is generous.
2. A particular adult has a childish nature.
3. A child can sleep anywhere.

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4.5 Writing a Sports Narrative

Key Information

A sports narrative includes elements essential to any good narrative: characters, setting, and conflict. The sports narrative usually begins, however, at the point when the conflict starts to build. The writer begins the narrative with an attention-getting lead and then develops the conflict to its climax and resolution. Action verbs and vivid sensory details help hold the reader's interest.

■ Selecting Details for a Sports Narrative

Read the following details from a fictional basketball game between two real teams. Decide which details you would use in a sports narrative based on the game. Cross out, renumber, or annotate items as you consider how to put the narrative together. You may want to chart the action that develops the conflict to help you identify the important events. Then write your narrative on a separate sheet of paper, using vivid action verbs and sensory details to help bring your story to life.

1. The game was played at Richfield Coliseum near Cleveland, Ohio.
2. It was the thirty-sixth straight sellout there.
3. The final score was 113–110; the Chicago Bulls beat the Cleveland Cavaliers.
4. Michael Jordan (star guard for the Bulls) twisted his ankle and went out of the game with two minutes left in the first half.
5. Jordan scored 20 points in the first half.
6. The Bulls led 58–51 at halftime.
7. Jordan reentered the game with three minutes remaining and the Bulls trailing by 8 points. He was limping slightly.
8. The Bulls scored 10 unanswered points as the game was winding down. Six of the points were scored by Chicago forward Scottie Pippen.
9. Larry Nance (Cavalier forward) hit a fifteen-foot jump shot with four seconds left. The shot tied the game at 110.
10. After a Chicago timeout, Jordan hit a 3-point jump shot from the left baseline to give the Bulls the win.
11. Jordan finished with 27 points.
12. Pippen led all scorers with 33 points.
13. Craig Ehlo led the Cavaliers with 22 points.
14. The loss was the first the Cavaliers had sustained at home since the Bulls beat them a month ago.
15. The Chicago win was the team's sixth in a row.

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4.6

Writing About Suspense

Key Information

Writers may create suspense in a narrative by foreshadowing events to come and by withholding information and keeping the reader guessing. A writer may also use details in the descriptions of characters and setting, as well as events in the plot, to build suspense.

■ **Analyzing Suspense in a Narrative**

Read the short story excerpt below. Then write one or two paragraphs analyzing the techniques the writer uses to create suspense.

Literature Model

But her husband was on his hands and knees, groping wildly on the floor in search of the paw. If he could only find it before the thing outside got in. A perfect fusillade of knocks reverberated through the house, and he heard the scraping of a chair as his wife put it down in the passage against the door. He heard the creaking of the bolt as it came slowly back, and at the same moment he found the monkey's paw, and frantically breathed his third and last wish.

W. W. Jacobs, "The Monkey's Paw"

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4.7

Analyzing Point of View in a Narrative

Key Information

A writer may choose one of three basic points of view in telling a story: first person, third-person limited, and third-person omniscient. A story's point of view affects the presentation of the story and the reader's reaction to it.

■ Understanding Point of View

Read the excerpts below from three narrative works. On the lines provided indicate whether each story is told by a first-person narrator, a third-person limited narrator, or a third-person omniscient narrator. Then explain what effect the point of view has on the story and the reader.

1. One of the passengers was jarred out of his seat belt and began floating around the cabin. Lorl wanted to laugh, but she was too frightened. Another passenger gripped the leader rope that was strung down the center aisle, latched onto the floating victim, and helped him back to his seat.
—Nancy L. Robison, "A Space-Shuttle Trip"

2. The niece thought no more of it; but Auntie did. She brooded over the strangeness of her long sight—over the seeing of faraway things that came nearer. She now kept that strangeness private to herself—secret; but sometimes something popped into a conversation before she could prevent it.
—Philippa Pearce, "Auntie"

3. Every time, just before I take off in a race, I always feel like I'm in a dream, the kind of dream you have when you're sick with fever and feel all hot and weightless. I dream I'm flying over a sandy beach in the early morning sun, kissing the leaves of the trees as I fly by.
—Toni Cade Bambara, "Raymond's Run"

4 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

By using the skills you've learned in this unit, you can write a narrative based on a conflict and resolution. You can choose a particular point of view from which to tell the story and use dialogue and anecdotes to enliven the narrative.

■ A. Prewriting

Look through your journal for ideas for a narrative. Then do some brainstorming on a separate sheet of paper to discover a problem or incident involving conflict. Map out the sequence of events in the problem or incident, and decide on the order in which you will present them. Finally, choose the point of view you will use.

■ B. Drafting

On your own paper start a draft by telling about the main conflict. Next, fill in information about characters, setting, and events that lead up to the conflict. Then write about events that resolve the complication. Be sure to include information about how characters change as a result of the conflict. When you have written the events of your narrative, look through your draft to discover where dialogue and anecdotes might enrich the narrative. Then write them into your draft.

■ C. Revising

Present your writing to one or two peer editors. Depending on their comments, you may find you need to go back and do some prewriting to invent more details to make the sequence of events clearer. You may also need to add or revise dialogue and anecdotes or withhold information to create suspense. As you revise your draft, look for ways to bring your story to life. Be aware of the connotations of words and of the mood or tone they create.

■ D. Editing/Proofreading

Check the paragraphing and punctuation of your dialogue. Then edit your sentences and paragraphs, making sure they are unified and coherent. Proofread for errors in grammar and spelling. Finally, create a clear copy of your story.

■ E. Publishing/Presenting

You may want to present your narrative to one or two of your peers again for their comments. After receiving their feedback, let your story sit for a couple of weeks before looking at it again and making revisions. At some point, you may want to create another clear copy and submit it to a magazine that publishes student writing.

5.1 Explaining and Informing

Key Information

Expository writing explains and informs, often in the form of an essay. Exposition may take the form of **definition, process, cause and effect, classification, or comparison-contrast**. Choose the expository format that best fits your purpose for writing.

A. Choosing an Expository Format

Select the format that you feel would work best for writing about each of the topics below. On the line after each topic, write in *definition, process, cause and effect, classification, or comparison-contrast*.

1. what DNA is _____
2. making my favorite pasta _____
3. fads in teen fashion _____
4. how jazz and rock are alike _____
5. how exercise tones the body _____
6. why owning a dog changes your lifestyle _____
7. the kinds of bears _____
8. how Justin learned to ski _____
9. why it's better to commute by train than by car _____
10. the varieties of *dracaena* _____

B. Writing Thesis Statements for Exposition

Choose two topics from Part A and imagine that you will be writing a one-page paper about each of them. To help you narrow your focus, write a thesis statement for each topic. (Remember that a thesis statement is the main idea of a paper, written in sentence form.)

1. topic _____

2. topic _____

5.2 Going into Detail

Key Information

Facts, statistics, examples, sensory details, and reasons are kinds of supporting details that strengthen your expository writing. The kind of supporting details you need to include depends on your main and secondary purposes for writing, the format you have selected, and your audience's level of knowledge.

■ Selecting Appropriate Details

Imagine you are writing a paper comparing and contrasting your community today with your community ten years ago. For each numbered purpose and audience named below, make up two appropriate supporting details, one of each type identified.

- 1. purpose:** to show the desirability of the changes
audience: a close friend who moved out of the community

fact _____

sensory detail _____

- 2. purpose:** to show your knowledge of community history
audience: a scholarship committee

statistics _____

reason _____

- 3. purpose:** to interest readers in recent community changes
audience: community newspaper readers

example _____

fact or statistics _____

- 4. purpose:** to interest your audience in the community
audience: a family, with two high school students, that is new to the community

sensory detail _____

your choice _____

5.3 Explaining How To ...

Key Information

A paper explaining how to do something consists of three parts. An introduction states the process to be explained. The main part of the paper gives the steps in chronological order. The conclusion tells the result of the process.

A. Troubleshooting a How-To

The following set of instructions was intended to teach a ninth-grader how to roller skate. Read the instructions and try to determine why they don't work. Then, below the paragraph, explain what went wrong. Watch for errors in clarity, order, transitions, and general good sense.

Walk over to the edge of the rink and glide off. By the way, remember that roller skating is great exercise. In addition, don't expect too much of it. Put on your skates, and tie the laces tight. I meant to tell you to hold on to the handrail first. As a result, you can stop with the rubber stop on your skate boot. Now glide a little, first one foot and then the other. What? Your feet feel numb? Don't tie your laces too tight!

B. Writing It Right

Now that you know what can go wrong in how-to writing, write your own, avoiding the pitfalls that the writer fell into in Part A. Choose a process or activity that you know very well but that your classmates may not. Use the planning outline below to help you organize your explanation. Then draft your how-to on a separate sheet of paper. Don't forget transitions!

1. Topic: _____
2. Audience: _____
3. Possible sources of information: _____
4. Chronological list of steps: _____

5. Any special instructions: _____

6. Result of process: _____

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5.4 Explaining Cause and Effect

Key Information

To increase the effectiveness of your cause-and-effect writing, include a thesis statement in your first paragraph. Organize your facts from **cause to effect** or from **effect to cause**. Be sure to use appropriate transitions.

■ A. Choosing Cause to Effect or Effect to Cause

Whether you choose to organize your writing from cause to effect or from effect to cause depends on what you want to emphasize. Sometimes it's better to begin with a dramatic effect, to capture your reader's attention. Other times you might start with a cause and build to the effect. Read the two introductory passages below. Both begin an explanation of the power of a hurricane. Add a thesis statement to each one to complete the paragraph.

The wind howled, and the sea roared into Miami. Cars were lifted and tossed like tinfoil. Palm trees were ripped from the sand. Workers in seaside office towers watched horrified as sea water swirled below them and began to rise.

Hurricane Marta whispered its approach with a few high clouds. The winds picked up, and rush-hour workers leaned into it. No one seemed worried, though. Miami would feel only the edge of the storm, and even that was a day away.

■ B. Outlining a Cause-and-Effect Paper

Choose one of the papers begun in Part A and draft an outline of the body and conclusion in the space below. You should outline at least two body paragraphs, each focusing on a cause or an effect, and one paragraph that effectively concludes your paper.

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5.5 Classifying a Subject

Key Information

When you classify a subject, you create groups that share common features. Groups should be mutually exclusive; each classified item should fit into one and *only* one group.

A. Making Classifications

Classify each of the following subjects into three categories according to the stated feature. Make your categories mutually exclusive. Then give two or more examples for each category. Item 1 has been done for you.

Categories	Examples
1. Classify careers according to working environment.	
outdoor occupations _____	telephone installer, mail carrier, gardener _____
office occupations _____	book designer, accountant, file clerk _____
school occupations _____	teacher, school nurse, school librarian _____
2. Classify pets according to what they live in.	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
3. Classify music according to type.	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
4. Classify food according to its source.	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
5. Classify books according to subject matter.	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

B. Introducing a Classification

Choose one of your classifications from Part A. On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph that can introduce an essay that develops the categories of the classification. Include a thesis statement, and list the categories that the essay will cover. If necessary, you may add categories to the three you listed in Part A.

5.6 Comparing and Contrasting

Key Information

To **compare** two things, look for ways they are alike. To **contrast** them, find how they are different. Venn diagrams are excellent prewriting charts for comparing and contrasting.

■ A. Finding Things to Compare and Contrast

Write *comparison* after each pair of items below if they are more alike than different. Write *contrast* if they're more different than alike. Write *comparison and contrast* if they are about evenly divided between the two.

1. **healthful foods:** chicken soup and spinach _____
2. **colors:** green and purple _____
3. **trees:** Douglas fir and sequoia _____
4. **kinds of writing:** science fiction and historical fiction _____

■ B. Prewriting for a Comparison-Contrast Paper

Choose one of the ideas in Part A or one of your own in which the items have about as many similarities as differences. Then make a prewriting diagram showing two or three features of the subjects you'll compare and contrast.

■ C. Planning the Paper

On a separate sheet of paper, do each of the steps below.

1. After evaluating the prewriting diagram you prepared, decide whether to use the *subject-by-subject* or *feature-by-feature* method of development.
2. Then determine how long your paper should be. You'll need one paragraph each for an introduction and conclusion and one paragraph for each subject or feature you plan to compare and contrast.
3. Next, decide who your audience will be.
4. Finally, write the thesis statement for the paper, which will appear somewhere in the introduction, and the topic sentences for your remaining paragraphs.

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5.7 Writing with Graphics

Key Information

Writers use **graphics** to present complicated information in a clear way. There are four main types of graphics: **maps, diagrams, tables,** and **graphs**. Label each graphic clearly, and make sure it relates to the writing around it.

■ Designing a Graphic

Read the paragraph below. Then, in the space that follows, design a map, diagram, table, or graph that conveys all or part of the information given in the paragraph.

The population of the United States in 1990 was about 250 million, about 70 people per square mile. The population of Canada was about 25 million, about 6 people per square mile. The population of Mexico was about 90 million, about 120 people per square mile. The percent of the population over 60 years of age was about 15 in the United States, 15 in Canada, and 5 in Mexico.

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5.8 Writing a Feature Article

Key Information

Feature articles provide the human-interest angle behind news stories. They begin with a **lead** that catches the reader's interest. An effective lead might use a surprising detail, an anecdote, image, vivid description, portrait, or lively quote. Features should include lively details and should end by summing up and leaving the reader with something to think about.

■ A. Writing About a Personal Interest

You're the honorary writer of the month for your school paper. You've been asked to write an article on something that interests you. On the lines below list three to five personal interests, such as classical music or Chinese cooking.

■ B. Framing the Lead

Choose a personal interest from Part A as the subject of your article. Now develop the lead for your feature. Start with a surprising detail, a vivid description, or some other content that will pull your reader into the story. Write your lead in the space below.

■ C. Outlining the Article

Prepare an outline of the body and conclusion of your feature article in the space below. You should outline at least two body paragraphs, each focusing on a main detail of your subject, and one paragraph that effectively concludes your article. Use another sheet of paper if you need additional space.

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5.9 Answering an Essay Question

Key Information

Before you write an answer to an essay question, spend a few minutes organizing your thoughts. First, underline **clue verbs** and other key words in the question. These words will identify what kind of answer you need to provide. Then jot down some of your main ideas. Devise a thesis statement and decide how you want to organize your answer. After sketching a brief outline, begin writing. You may not have much time to revise, but be sure to read your paper for content and mechanical errors.

■ A. Underlining Key Concepts and Verbs

Underline key concepts and verbs in the following essay question.

Explain why going to the movies has remained a popular activity even in an age of cable television and VCRs.

■ B. Listing Notes

List information that will help you answer the essay question.

■ C. Developing a Thesis Statement

Write a thesis statement that indicates the structure and main focus of your answer.

■ D. Outlining an Answer

Construct a brief outline that shows the organization of your answer.

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5.10 Comparing and Contrasting Two Myths

Key Information

A **myth** is a story that explains events or forces of nature. Most myths contain the elements of *setting*, *characters*, *conflict*, *plot*, and *theme*. Many myths have points of comparison and contrast with myths of other cultures and times.

■ A. Making a Comparison Frame

Read the two summaries of myths below. Then complete the comparison frame that follows them. If necessary, refer to the comparison frame on page 270 in your textbook.

- According to the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh, the virtuous sage Utnapishtim was told by the god Ea in a dream that the gods were about to flood the whole earth. Utnapishtim obeyed instructions to build an ark and to take with him the seed of every living thing. After a week-long flood, Utnapishtim and his wife came to rest on Mount Nisser. The god Enlil, who intended all humanity to be destroyed, was displeased that they had survived. Ea told him that only evildoers should be punished for evil. Enlil then blessed Utnapishtim and his wife and gave them the secret of immortality.
- According to Ovid, in *Metamorphoses*, the god Jupiter punished evil humanity by sending a destructive flood that covered the whole earth. Deucalion and Pyrrha, a virtuous husband and wife, were the only ones to survive. When Jupiter saw that their raft had come to rest on Mount Parnassus, he stopped the rain. When they prayed for humanity to be restored, Deucalion and Pyrrha were told to throw their mother's bones over their heads. An oracle told them this meant stones—that is, Mother Earth's "bones." The stones turned into a new human race.

Comparison of Two Myths		
Element	_____ Myth	_____ Myth
Setting		
Characters		
Conflict		
Plot		
Theme		

■ B. Focusing Your Thoughts

Use the information in your comparison frame to create a thesis statement for a two-paragraph comparison-contrast feature.

5 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

After choosing a topic for expository writing, you need to decide what kind of expository writing and what kinds of details you will use. Then you can brainstorm to discover specific details. Organizing these details will help you draft a thesis statement that indicates the direction your essay will take.

A. Finding a Writing Strategy

For each of the strategies below, write a sentence explaining how you might use it to write about an animal that would make a good pet. You may base your choice on a pet you own, have owned, or would like to own. Be as specific in your sentences as possible.

1. explaining how to _____

2. explaining cause and effect _____

3. classifying a subject _____

4. comparing-contrasting _____

5. using graphics _____

B. Discovering Details

Choose one of the sentences you wrote for Part A. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, do some brainstorming for each kind of detail you might use in your writing about a pet. List details for at least three of the following categories: facts, statistics, examples or incidents, sensory details, and reasons.

C. Writing a Thesis Statement

Based on the strategy you have chosen and the details you have listed, write a thesis statement for your essay about a pet. The statement should make your main point clearly and indicate how the essay will be set up.

6.1 Writing Persuasively

Key Information

Persuasive writing presents a **logical argument** that tries to influence the reader to accept the writer's position. The argument consists of a **central claim** and **evidence** that supports it. The connection between the claim and the evidence should always be clear.

A. Stating a Central Claim

Read the statements of purpose and audience below. For each pair, write a central claim that you believe will catch the attention of the stated audience. An example of a central claim has been done for you in the first item.

1. Purpose: to persuade people to attend a fund-raiser for the humane society

Audience: students at your school

Example: Help the homeless dogs and cats in your neighborhood by attending the fund-raiser for the humane society.

2. Purpose: to persuade businesses to advertise in the fund-raising brochure

Audience: area business owners

3. Purpose: to persuade people to adopt a pet from the humane society

Audience: people who attend the fund-raiser

4. Purpose: to persuade people to volunteer their time to take care of animals at the humane society

Audience: people who attend the fund-raiser

B. Supporting a Claim with Evidence

From Part A choose one of the central claims that you believe you have the evidence to support. Indicate your choice of claim by placing an X beside it in Part A. Then write two sentences, each offering evidence that supports the claim, in the spaces below.

1. _____

2. _____

6.2 Using Evidence Effectively

Key Information

Evidence may take any of the following forms: **facts, statistics, examples or incidents, opinions, and reasons.** It should be **relevant** to the subject and should come from a **reliable** source.

■ A. Deciding Whether Evidence Is Relevant

Suppose you want to persuade your school principal that ninth graders need a fall dance of their own. Read each bit of evidence below and decide whether it is relevant or irrelevant. Then explain your answer.

1. A fall dance gives us an informal way to meet and mingle with new students.

2. A fall dance gets an important school year off to a good start.

3. Sabrina Evans, a friend of mine who is a senior over at Bristol High, pointed out that if senior high students get to have a fall dance, it's only fair to let ninth graders have one too.

4. Mrs. Leahy, the school secretary here at West Chester High, checked records of all the ninth-grade dances within the last five years and found no reports of unacceptable behavior.

■ B. Using Various Kinds of Evidence

Write one example of each of the kinds of evidence below. Each should contribute to persuading your school principal to allow the fall dance. Be sure each kind of evidence is relevant.

1. fact _____
2. statistic _____
3. example or incident _____
4. opinion _____
5. reason _____

6.3 Checking Reasoning

Key Information

Faulty logic can do great harm to an otherwise carefully constructed argument. Check your work for **red herrings, either/or thinking,** and **cause-and-effect errors.** Knowledge of these flaws in logic can help you strengthen your argument and detect weaknesses in the arguments of others.

■ A. Eliminating Red Herrings

Suppose you're trying to convince your parents to buy you a new outfit. Which of these arguments would be a red herring? Explain your answer.

1. Patsy Crowther's dad buys her anything she wants.
2. The outfit is on sale for this week only.

■ B. Eliminating Either/Or Thinking

You still want your parents to finance that new outfit. Which of these arguments exhibits either/or thinking? Explain your answer.

1. This is the only outfit I've asked for in the last year.
2. Unless I get this new outfit, I won't be able to go to the Drama Club tryouts.

■ C. Eliminating Cause-and-Effect Errors

You're still trying for that new outfit. Which of the arguments below probably contains a cause-and-effect error? Explain your answer.

1. I'd feel much more confident at the tryouts if I had a new outfit to wear.
2. Sandra Johnson was cut last year because she wore one of her old dresses.

■ D. Choosing an Argument

Look back over the six arguments on this page and decide if one or more would be effective. If it would be, write it below and explain its effectiveness. If none of the arguments would be effective, invent your own and write it below. Then explain why it would be effective.

6.4 Using Language to Advantage

Key Information

To make your writing express the meaning you intend, use **limiting words**, replace general words with **specific words**, and be aware of the **connotations** of words.

■ A. Using Limiting Words

Rewrite these gross overstatements by using limiting words.

1. Not one rock star deserves so much as fifteen seconds' listening time.

2. On the other hand, that politician epitomizes skill and versatility.

■ B. Using Specific Words

Rewrite these sentences by using specific words.

1. Some television shows earn honors for viewership in certain categories.

2. Certain students should be barred from various extracurricular activities.

■ C. Using Words with Strong Connotations

To demonstrate that you're aware of the connotative powers of words, rewrite these negative sentences so that they evoke positive feelings about the people they describe.

1. Miguel is an outspoken and thoughtless opportunist; he's the candidate I'd elect as yes-man of the year.

2. Donald is a high-handed intellectual snob with the graciousness of a tyrannosaurus rex.

6.5 Writing an Editorial

Key Information

To write an effective editorial, find an **issue** that interests you, take a **stand**, accumulate **evidence**, and write to your specific **audience**. Many editorials end with a call to action.

■ A. Choosing an Issue You Care About

You'll do your best job of persuading if you choose an issue about which you have strong feelings. List some issues below that you feel strongly about. Then circle one to use in your editorial.

■ B. Finding Evidence for Your Side

Think about what would persuade people to listen to your opinion about the issue you have circled. How does the issue affect people's feelings or beliefs or pocketbooks? Jot down evidence that will appeal to a large number of people.

■ C. Speaking the Language of Your Audience

Identify your audience. Are they students? Parents? Sports fans? Community workers? Senior citizens? With your audience in mind, choose two or three of the strongest pieces of evidence you listed in Part B. Number your evidence in the order in which you'll use each point. Remember that it is usually best to save your strongest evidence for last.

■ D. Writing to Your Audience

Draft your editorial on another sheet of paper. Speak the language your audience will understand.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

6.6

Writing a Movie Review

Key Information

A movie review usually begins with an opinion of the movie. It then offers background information and examines the movie's elements to support this opinion. A review often emphasizes and focuses on one or two elements.

■ A. Thinking About the Elements of a Movie

Choose a movie that you really liked or really disliked. Then write notes about each of the movie's elements below.

Title of Movie: _____

Plot: _____

Theme: _____

Characterization: _____

Acting: _____

Special Effects: _____

Sound Track: _____

■ B. Deciding on a Focus

Look at the notes you made in Part A and decide which element is the most interesting or important. Underline that element above. Then write the opening paragraph of a review. Be sure to state your opinion of the movie and make the focus of your review clear.

6 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

When you write persuasively, you should begin by zeroing in on your purpose and by considering the needs and attitudes of your audience. When you build your case, you need to gather solid, accurate evidence that will help you achieve your purpose and persuade your audience. You should also address opposing viewpoints and use forceful, direct language to put your point across.

■ A. Freewriting for an Editorial

Choose one of the general topics below or choose one of your own for an editorial to send to your school or city newspaper. On a separate sheet of paper, freewrite about the topic to generate ideas about what your central claim is, what evidence supports your claim, and who your audience is. If you find that, after you freewrite about a topic, you don't have much to say about it, choose another topic and freewrite, and another, if necessary, until you find a topic you feel comfortable with. Use your freewriting notes to identify a purpose, state your claim, and determine your audience. Write these items down beneath your freewriting notes.

- the effect of television on adolescents
- mandatory school uniforms
- wearing animal furs
- mandatory voting for officials for public office

■ B. Drafting an Editorial

Use your freewriting notes to draft your editorial. Choose language that is forceful and to the point. Decide how to present your information so that it has a strong impact on your audience. For example, will you first present your central claim and then provide supporting evidence, or will you begin with a presentation of supporting evidence and gradually build up to your claim? In what order will you present your evidence—from most important to least important, or vice versa? Remember to address the opposing view and to reinforce your argument with a strong conclusion.

■ C. Revising and Editing an Editorial

Review your draft carefully. Decide if your central claim is clear and direct, and if your evidence is accurate and supports your central claim. Could you change the organization to make your editorial stronger? Have you used sound reasoning and phrasing that appeals to your audience? Revise your editorial as needed. Then edit it, checking your use of language closely. Have you used words and phrases that make your argument stronger and more convincing?