



Bridging the Gap: Retaking the Accuplacer WritePlacer College Placement Test

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Table of Contents

Content	Page
Instructor’s Preface	
a. Informational Letter	3
b. Accuplacer WritePlacer Scoring Dimensions	4-9
Accuplacer WritePlacer Curriculum Instructional Objectives	10
“Scope and Sequence” Weekly Instructional Chart	11
Letter to Students	12, 13
Diagnostic Essay Topics	14-17
Model Essays	18-21
The Writing Process: A Review	
a. Essay Purpose and Focus	22-27
b. Essay Organization and Structure	28-39
c. Essay Development and Support	40-46
Suggested Instructional Activities	47
Grammar Rules Overview	48-56
Practice Timed Essays	57, 58
Supplementary Resources	59
Language Arts Grammar Packet	60-117

Instructor's Preface: Informational Letter

Dear Educator,

Thank you for participating in the Accuplacer Bridge Program. The Accuplacer test helps to determine whether applicants to college need basic skills assistance in the areas of Language Arts and Mathematics.

The Language Arts section of the test features a writing section in which students are asked to write a persuasive essay on a designated topic. If a student fails to reach a score of 6 or better on the essay, he or she must take developmental English classes in college before taking English I. In addition to these conditions, students who do not achieve a 6 or better must take extra language arts sections of the test, which contain reading comprehension and sentence skills-based questions.

Students will be permitted to take the Accuplacer test for the first time either at the end of their junior year or at the start of their senior year of high school. Students who do not pass this writing test in their first attempt will be allowed to take it a second time before entering college.

As an educator, your services and expertise will be extremely valuable in tutoring students and preparing them for their second attempt at passing the writing section of the Accuplacer. These students will surely benefit from meeting with you and working with you to improve their writing. The following is a six-step curriculum to assist students in preparing to take the Accuplacer WritePlacer essay placement test the second time:

- Step 1: Review with individual students their Accuplacer essay scores and assessment comments
- Step 2: Ask students to write a diagnostic essay. (*See packet for topics*)
- Step 3: Discuss key essay writing skills (*see packet*) and encourage students to revise their diagnostic essays, with attention paid to the following:
 - i. Improving essay content
 - ii. Organizing the essay's paragraph structure
 - iii. Recognizing and revising weak sentence structure.
 - iv. Proofreading to correct writing errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation
- Step 4: Ask students to write a second diagnostic essay
- Step 5: Discuss and review the second diagnostic essay with individual students
- Step 6: Students retake the Accuplacer Writing Section

By participating in the program, students can learn valuable writing skills, as well as avoid taking remedial English classes in college.

Again, your participation in this program is greatly appreciated. In addition to this letter, please find enclosed in this packet numerous resources that will help you complete this tutorial, such as an informational student letter, diagnostic essay topics, a set of instructional objectives, a "scope-and-sequence" weekly plan for instructional activities, suggested supplemental activities, and a list of reference materials.

Thank you for your time and your dedication to education.

Instructor's Preface: WritePlacer Rubric and Dimension Scores

WritePlacer (2009)

New Rubric and Dimension Scores

Score of 8

An essay in this category demonstrates *clear and consistent mastery* of on-demand essay writing with a few minor errors. A typical essay

- Effectively and insightfully develops a point of view on the issue
- Addresses an appropriate audience and demonstrates a clear purpose for writing in the thesis statement
- Demonstrates outstanding critical thinking, using effective examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position
- Is well organized and clearly focused, demonstrating clear coherence and smooth progression of ideas
- Exhibits skillful use of language, using a varied, accurate, and apt vocabulary
- Demonstrates varied and effective sentence structure
- Is free of major errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation

Score of 7

An essay in this category demonstrates *consistent mastery* of on-demand essay writing although it may have occasional minor errors. A typical essay

- Effectively and insightfully develops a point of view on the issue
- Addresses an appropriate audience and demonstrates a clear purpose for writing in the thesis statement
- Demonstrates outstanding critical thinking, using appropriate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position
- Is well organized and focused, demonstrating clear coherence and smooth progression of ideas
- Exhibits appropriate language, using a varied and accurate vocabulary
- Demonstrates varied sentence structure
- Is practically free of errors in sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation

Score of 6

An essay in this category demonstrates *reasonably consistent mastery* of on-demand essay writing although it may have occasional lapses in quality. A typical essay

- Effectively develops a point of view on the issue
- Addresses an appropriate audience and demonstrates a clear purpose for writing
- Demonstrates strong critical thinking, generally using appropriate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position
- Is well organized and focused, demonstrating coherence and a logical progression of ideas
- Exhibits consistent control in the use of language
- Demonstrates adequate variety in sentence structure
- Is generally free of errors in sentence structure, grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation

Score of 5

An essay in this category demonstrates *adequate mastery* of on-demand essay writing although it will have lapses in quality. A typical essay

- Develops a viable point of view on the issue
- May stray from the audience and purpose but is able to refocus
- Demonstrates competent critical thinking, using adequate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position
- Is generally organized and focused but could lack coherence and logical progression of ideas
- Exhibits adequate but inconsistent control of language
- Demonstrates some variety in sentence structure
- Contains some minor errors in sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation

Score of 4

An essay in this category demonstrates *developing mastery* of on-demand essay writing. A typical essay

- Develops a viable point of view on the issue
- May stray from audience and purpose
- Demonstrates some critical thinking but may do so inconsistently or use inadequate examples, reasons, or other evidence to support its position
- May lack control of organization or focus, demonstrating some lapses in coherence or progression of ideas
- Contains some errors in sentence structure and use of grammatical conventions such as word choice, usage, spelling, and punctuation

Score of 3

A response in this category demonstrates *little mastery* of on-demand essay writing; the response is flawed by *one or more* of the following weaknesses:

- Presents a vague or limited point of view on the issue
- Demonstrates little awareness of audience
- Attempts to develop the main idea though that attempt is inadequate
- Demonstrates weak critical thinking with little complexity of thought or with flawed reasoning
- Provides inappropriate or insufficient examples, reasons, or other evidence to support its position
- Is poorly organized and/or focused or demonstrates serious problems with coherence or progression of ideas
- Displays limited word choice and little sentence variety
- Contains many errors in mechanical conventions of usage, sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation

Score of 2

A response in this category demonstrates *very little mastery of* on-demand essay writing; the response is flawed by *many or most* of the following weaknesses:

- Presents a vague or limited point of view on the issue
- Demonstrates little awareness of audience
- Presents an unclear main idea
- Demonstrates weak critical thinking with little complexity of thought or with flawed reasoning
- Organizes ideas ineffectively, demonstrating a problematic progression of ideas
- Displays numerous errors in word choice, usage, and sentence structure
- Contains significant spelling, grammar, punctuation, and mechanical errors

Score of 1

A response in this category demonstrates *no mastery of* on-demand essay writing; the response is severely flawed by *many or most* of the following weaknesses:

- Lacks a viable point of view on the issue
- Demonstrates no awareness of audience
- Fails to present a main idea
- Demonstrates flawed reasoning
- Demonstrates no complexity of thought
- Is disorganized and/or disjointed
- Displays fundamental errors in word choice, usage, and sentence structure
- Contains pervasive spelling, grammar, punctuation, and mechanical errors

Score of 0

No holistic score - This essay has not been given a holistic score or the six dimension scores because it is either a blank page, incoherent, insufficient (too short to assess), in a foreign language, or off topic.

WritePlacer - Dimension Score Descriptions

Purpose and Focus - The extent to which the writer presents information in a unified and coherent manner, clearly addressing the issue. Specific elements to consider include

- Unity
- Consistency
- Coherence
- Relevance
- Audience

Score*	Score Point Description – Purpose and Focus
3	Your response shows a clear purpose and a consistent focus.
2	Your response does not fully communicate purpose, and focus may be inconsistent.
1	Your response lacks clear purpose and focus.

***Scores will not be reports, only one of the descriptions above**

Organization and Structure -The extent to which the writer orders and connects ideas. Specific elements to consider include

- Introduction
- Thesis
- Body paragraphs
- Transitions
- Conclusions

Score*	Score Point Description - Organization and Structure
3	Your response demonstrates strong organization of ideas.
2	Your response demonstrates limited organization of ideas.
1	Your response demonstrates poor organization of ideas.

***Scores will not be reports, only one of the descriptions above**

Development and Support - The extent to which the writer develops and supports ideas. Specific elements to consider include

- Point of view
- Coherent arguments
- Evidence
- Elaboration

Score*	Score Point Description - Development and Support
3	Your response is logically developed and well supported.
2	Your response has limited support for your ideas.
1	Your response needs additional ideas and support.

***Scores will not be reports, only one of the descriptions above**

Sentence Variety and Style - The extent to which the writer crafts sentences and paragraphs demonstrating control of vocabulary, voice, and structure. Specific elements to consider include

- Sentence length
- Sentence structure
- Usage
- Tone
- Vocabulary
- Voice

Score*	Score Point Description - Sentence Variety and Style
3	Your response shows skillful control of sentence structure and style.
2	Your response shows inconsistent control of sentence variety, word choice, and flow of thought.
1	Your response shows limited ability to vary sentence length and apply appropriate vocabulary.

***Scores will not be reports, only one of the descriptions above**

Mechanical Conventions - The extent to which the writer expresses ideas using standard English.

Specific elements to consider include

- Spelling
- Grammar
- Punctuation

Score*	Score Point Description - Mechanical Conventions
3	Your response shows strong control of mechanical conventions such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
2	Your response shows limited control of mechanical conventions such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
1	Your response shows poor control of mechanical conventions such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

***Scores will not be reports, only one of the descriptions above**

Critical Thinking - The extent to which the writer communicates a point of view and demonstrates reasoned relationships among ideas. Specific elements to consider include:

- Clarity
- Depth
- Precision
- Logic
- Accuracy
- Fairness
- Breadth
- Relevance

Score*

Score Point Description – **Critical Thinking**

3	Your response shows clear and reasoned analysis
2	Your response shows limited clarity and complex
1	Your response shows insufficient reasoning and l

***Scores will not be reports, only one of the descriptions above**

WritePlacer Curriculum: Instructional Objectives

Students will be able to... plan, write, revise, and edit a three-to-five-paragraph online essay in one hour or less based on a topic provided by the instructor

- create or map an outline for a three-to-five paragraph essay based on a topic provided by the instructor
- develop a thesis statement for a three-to-five paragraph essay based on a topic provided by the instructor
- choose an organizational strategy for a three-to-five paragraph essay based on a topic provided by the instructor
- develop detailed essay paragraphs for a three-to-five-paragraph essay based on a topic provided by the instructor
- use basic revision and editing techniques to improve their essays

Students will be able to... use editing techniques to improve their essays

- edit their own writing for ideas and organization
- apply the grammar rules of Standard English in order to revise sentences provided by the instructor
- edit their own writing for grammatical accuracy
- edit their own writing for word choice, sentence fluency and style

Students will be able to... use the Accuplacer scoring rubric to evaluate and improve essay proficiency

- evaluate their own writing using the Accuplacer scoring rubric for the purposes of revision
- evaluate and score their own writing and the writing of others using the Accuplacer scoring rubric

Scope and Sequence: Weekly Schedule of Instructional Activities

This tutorial contains a series of instructional activities that will teach students to be more proficient essay writers for timed writing tests such as the Accuplacer WritePlacer. The listed activities should be followed in sequence, but may be expanded beyond the nine-hour suggested timeline.

To expand the tutorial, instructors may choose from the supplementary activities and resources included in this packet, or they may independently use relevant instructional materials.

<u>Week</u> (1 hour sessions)	<u>Instructional Topic</u>
1	Informational Letter to Students Diagnostic Essay
2	Teacher-Student Writing Conferences
3	Demonstration and Discussion of Model Essays
4	The Essay: Purpose and Focus-- Opening/Focus Thesis Statement
5	The Essay: Organization and Structure-- Introduction, Body Paragraphs, Conclusion
6	The Essay: Development and Support-- Specific Details, Topic Sentences, Paragraphing, Using Transitions
7	The Essay: Revising and Editing Sentence Variety and Style Mechanical Conventions
8	Timed Final Practice Essay (on computer)
9 and beyond	Grammar Section

Scope and Sequence: Week 1

Informational Letter to Students

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Informational Letter to Students

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To inform those students who have not passed the WritePlacer college entry test of their status and prospects
- To list the instructional steps that will prepare students to retake the placement test

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will make copies of the letter and distribute them to students
- The instructor will review and clarify letter details with students as necessary
- The students will take the letter home to share with parents

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Students and parents will indicate satisfaction that all their questions about the purpose and content of the WritePlacer tutorial program have been answered

Student's Letter:

Dear High School Student,

Recently you took the Accuplacer WritePlacer Essay Placement Test to qualify for entry into college English courses. Unfortunately, the score for your placement essay did not reach Level 6, the threshold level for English I.

As a result of that score, when you enter college, you will be placed in a non-credit developmental English course sequence before you can enroll in English I. If your developmental course placement is ENGL 091—Reading and Writing I, you must pay for and complete a total of 8 developmental credits (two courses) before registering in English I. If your developmental course placement is ENGL 095—Reading and Writing II, you must pay for and complete 4 developmental credits (one course) before registering in English I. If you are a potential STAR's student, you must pass the Accuplacer test or complete all remedial requirements before you will be eligible to enter the program and receive STAR's funding.

Before you are placed into the developmental course sequence, however, you are being given an opportunity to prepare for and retake the WritePlacer Test. Instruction and practice under the supervision of a qualified writing instructor will better prepare you for your second WritePlacer attempt. Working through the following tutorial with your instructor's guidance will help you build the skills you need to pass the WritePlacer essay and qualify for College English I:

- Step 1: Review your original WritePlacer essay score and assessment comments with your instructor
- Step 2: Write a diagnostic practice essay for analysis and revision
- Step 3: Learn key essay writing skills, and revise your diagnostic essay
 - i. Organize your essay's paragraph structure
 - ii. Develop the information content of your essay
 - iii. Recognize and revise weak sentence structure
 - iv. Proofread to correct writing errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation
- Step 4: Write a timed, online, final practice essay
- Step 5: Receive final feedback from your instructor
- Step 6: Retake the Accuplacer Essay Placement Test

As you complete each of Steps 1-3 of the tutorial, your instructor will guide you in revising your diagnostic essay to improve content, organization, and writing skills.

When you've fully revised your diagnostic essay, you'll complete Steps 4 and 5, writing a final timed, online practice essay and reviewing it with your instructor. Then you'll be ready for Step 6—retaking the Accuplacer Essay Placement Test.

Good Luck! Remember that effective writing is within the reach of every motivated individual who makes the effort to learn and apply good writing skills.

Scope and Sequence: Week 1

Diagnostic Essay

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Diagnostic Timed Essay

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To provide an example of the student's current skill level so that the instructor may tailor his or her instruction to the individual student
- To serve as the basis for the instructor's initial writing conference with individual students

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will assign students a sample essay topic from the program packet and allow them 60 minutes to complete an essay. To simulate the Accuplacer writing situation, the students should be allowed to write the essay on a word processor. No use of spelling or grammar checkers should be permitted
- The instructor will give instructions for the essay as they are given on the actual test, but will provide no additional help to the students
- The instructor will collect and holistically grade the essays using the Accuplacer rubric provided in the instructional packet
- The instructor should make written notes about the strengths and weaknesses of each essay in preparation for the student conference

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- In Week 2, the instructor should follow-up with individual teacher-student conferences in order to tailor individual goals for each student during the program semester

Instructional Activity 1.1

Diagnostic Essay Topics

The Accuplacer essay topic selections are of two varieties: students are either asked to make a personal choice and support it, or they are asked to take a position on an issue and persuade an audience by giving reasons in support of the position. The most useful ways to develop these kinds of topics are through examples or reasons.

Supporting a Personal Choice:

1. You have won a free vacation for one week anywhere in the world. What place would you choose and why?
2. If you were elected President of the United States, what issue would be most important to you? Give your reasons for why this issue is significant.
3. If you were forced to evacuate your home due to a natural disaster, what personal possession of sentimental value would you make sure to take with you? Explain.
4. If you could have any job in the world, what would it be? Explain.

Persuading an Audience:

5. The Board of Education in your town has voted to put cell phone jamming equipment in every school. Only school administrators could use a cell phone in an emergency. Prepare a response for the board either supporting or opposing this decision.
6. The English department in your school is re-evaluating their choices of reading material. Propose a book that you believe all students should read. Support your choice by explaining the educational and real world value of the book.
7. Should high school students be permitted to leave the school grounds to eat lunch? Take a position on the issue and explain it.
8. Should all teens be required to do two years of military service after high school? Take a position on the issue and explain it.
9. Do you agree with the law that new drivers be required to place an identifying sticker on their car the first year? Take a position on the issue and explain it.

Scope and Sequence: Week 2

Instructor-Student Diagnostic Conference

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Conferencing with students about initial Accuplacer essay results

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To identify writing errors and improve writing skills in order to successfully pass Accuplacer
- To improve ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, sentence structure, and mechanical conventions when writing
- To set goals for individual students and motivate them to improve writing proficiency

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- Student will read his/her essay aloud with instructor
- Instructor and student will identify problem areas and assess for each (using rubrics)
- Instruction and revision through mini lessons to address problem areas (see additional lessons)
- Student rewrites essay or writes another essay with a new topic

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- After instruction of mini lessons, student will type his/her essay on a computer without using spell check or grammar check and progress will be re-evaluated with the instructor

Instructional Activity 2.1

WritePlacer Scoring Rubric

Instructors should reproduce this scoring rubric checklist and use it to guide their conferences with individual students.

Diagnostic Essay Scoring Checklist (for conferencing with students)

	Score	Comments:
Purpose and Focus	1 2 3	
Organization and Structure	1 2 3	
Development and Support	1 2 3	
Sentence Variety and Style	1 2 3	
Mechanical Conventions	1 2 3	

Scope and Sequence: Week 3

Model Essays

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Demonstrating model WritePlacer essays to students

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To give instructors an understanding of the competencies that students must demonstrate to qualify for placement in college writing courses
- To be used as reference points to teach students how to improve their own essays. Using models as illustrations, the WritePlacer dimensions of purpose and focus, organization and structure, development and support, sentence variety and style, and mechanical conventions can be discussed and practiced with students
- To identify writing errors and improve writing skills in order to successfully pass Accuplacer

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- Instructor will project models and discuss them with students
- Students will independently analyze and critique strengths and weaknesses of the models
- Students will revise the model essays to improve them

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Students will demonstrate an increasing understanding of the writing process

Instructional Activity 3.1

Critiquing and Revising a Model Essay

The following essay needs revision and editing to earn a passing score on the Accuplacer. Place students in groups, and ask them to critique it, based on the criteria of purpose and focus, organization and structure, support and development, sentence structure, and mechanical conventions. Then have each group write an improved revision.

Essay 1: WritePlacer Prompt: Wearing Helmets While Skateboarding

I believe that people under the age of 18 should be required to wear helmets when skateboarding. skateboarding is fun but is also dangerous as without a helmet you could suffer a massive head injury. It is a fact that if we all wore helmets it would save over 500 lives every year. Those people who say that wearing a helmet is not cool should look to professional skateboarders as an example. If Shaun White were not wearing a helmet for example, he would add a head injury to his list that he sustained.

There are things we can do to motivate kids to wear helmets and prevent head injuries. We can put safety classes in schools that teach kids how to be safe. We can have a guest speaker come to schools to talk about all types of safety including fire safety, home safety, school safety, and specifically skateboard safety. It is also a fact that if we wore helmets it can prevent a quarter of a million head injuries every year. \

Another thing we should learn about how important wearing a helmet is is what can happen to you if you don't wear a helmet. If you don't wear a helmet while skating, you could end up with a massive head wound or brain damage. Another thing that could happen if you don't wear a helmet, although it's a little extreme, you could die from not wearing a helmet. Think about it, if he didn't wear a helmet we wouldn't have Shaun White around.

The world is a scary place and you have to use your brain. Which is why when biking or skateboarding you should keep your head in a safe place, your helmet. Wear your helmet and you'll save your life and your brain.

Instructional Activity 3.2

Critiquing and Revising Additional Model Essays

The model essays that follow demonstrate varying levels of achievement in the five cited areas. Each essay is accompanied by a series of brief commentaries that explain what the writer needs to do to bring the essay to the level of “competent” in each writing area. After reading the essays and the commentary that suggest the improvements needed to bring them to a passing level, choose one and revise it to earn a passing grade on the Accuplacer. If time permits, critique and revise the second essay.

Essay 1 WritePlacer Prompt: Requiring Seat Belts While Driving

Some people may be right about waering seat belts while driveing, as other may not care be ccause they take the risk of getting hurt. Espeshally some pernts may infulsnce teenagers to ware them just beuse thay don't have the money to pay for the buills when they do get in acident & hurt thme themeslevs. I think that is should be up to the person wearing the belt in t he frost place who shiuld decied wheater or not the should wear anything at all. That is toldy up to them, and being for ther age to get a lisence & drive a car they should be able to wear wut they want, when the want to. If a young kid gos on the parkeway, they are driving at there “own risk” and the do and have a accidet & get hurt well that is ther own fult. Then the mother or father willl get invled and try and ask there child where they wearing there belt and they say no, who is to blam? I think it should be the child , just becusoe he knew that beeing on the parkway canbe a dangrous for a young drivers and he still didnt “bukkel up” will that is his on fulst. But I do understand why some polple felll this way about this pertikular siction, becusoe if I had kids they will be wareing sear belts allwaes so the don't get hurt, bucouse as kid myslfe I never ware my seat belt and my moter was never happy with that,but on this pertiker subject I think it can go eater way if you area paerint u make that decion when there are youg then they will not no any better but not to ware it, just bucouse there know what woob happen to them if they got caught not waering it.

Commentary

Focus: This essay needs a clear thesis statement and a consistent topic focus.

Development: Although this essay contains some development of ideas, it's difficult to process these ideas because they are incoherent. As the essay is reorganized into coherent paragraphs, the writer will be able to develop the topic of each paragraph adequately.

Organization: This essay needs to be organized into coherent paragraphs that support a thesis. It also needs defined introductory and concluding paragraphs.

Sentence Structure: This sentence structure of this essay should be carefully revised, eliminating run-on sentences and comma splices and improving the use of logical conjunctions or adverbs to join related ideas.

Mechanical Conventions: This essay needs a great deal of attention to proofreading for word errors.

Instructional Activity 3.3 cont.

Essay 2

WritePlacer Prompt: A Personal Hero

If I were asked to identify a personal hero, it would most definitely be Oprah Winfrey. She host one of the most popular T.V. show in America. The name of the show is “the Oprah Winfrey show”. The reason why I choose her, is because I had watch her programme for may years, and I have become impress in the way in how she host her show.

I have always wanted to become a T.V. host some day.

I would like to meet her and spend time with her, doing fun things. I would take a toure around her show and sit on her couch like I was having an interview, have dinner, and even have a moment where we can talk about ways in how to host a show.

Some day I hope I will be given that oppportunity to meet with Oprah Winfrey.

Commentary

Focus: The thesis and focus of this essay are adequate.

Development: This essay’s development is very weak. The student should be guided in discovering at least three subtopics in support of the topic and developing each into a detailed and informative body paragraph.

Organization: There is a rudimentary sense of organization here; however, the student needs to use transitional words or phrases at the beginnings of body paragraphs to signal the progression of ideas.

Sentence Structure: Currently, sentence structure is sound. When the essay is expanded, the student should be encouraged to use varied sentence constructions.

Mechanical Conventions: In such a brief sample, it is difficult to assess writing skills. The student should be shown how to proofread carefully, especially looking for correct verb forms and the accurate use of –s endings.

Scope and Sequence: Week 4

The Writing Process: Purpose and Focus

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Purpose and Focus: Focusing a Topic

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- Narrow the topic
- Match the purpose with the intended audience
- Provide students with an understanding of the categories of prompts that they might face when taking the Accuplacer WritePlacer test
- Provide students with the ability to anticipate the prompts that they might face on the Accuplacer WritePlacer test

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will explain the general categories from which the Accuplacer WritePlacer prompts are chosen
- The instructor will provide and explain several examples of prompts from these categories for students to examine
- The students will then be assigned the task of creating several (with the number to be determined by the instructor) prompts of their own that fit into the Accuplacer WritePlacer prompt categories

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the students' work in a group discussion session to determine how well the students have replicated the Accuplacer WritePlacer prompt scenario

Instructional Activity 4.1

Sample WritePlacer Essay Prompts

The Accuplacer WritePlacer Essay Placement Test scores your essay partly on Purpose and Focus—the extent to which the writer presents information in a unified and coherent manner, clearly addressing the issue. Specific elements to consider include:

Prompt: You will probably be given a prompt from one of these categories:

- A. Choosing and arguing a position on a controversial issue
- B. Choosing and supporting a personal choice from a given topic

Examples:

- A. Should all non-educational video games be banned?
- B. What book or film has had the strongest effect on your life?

Activity: Anticipate possible prompts by **creating several prompts of your own.**

A Controversial Issue:

1.

2.

3.

A Personal Choice:

4.

5.

6.

Scope and Sequence: Week 4

The Writing Process: Purpose and Focus

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Purpose and Focus: The Thesis Statement

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To provide students with an understanding that in a standardized testing situation, their choice of thesis is less important than how clearly they express that thesis
- To provide students with the ability to respond to a prompt by creating a thesis

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will explain the concept of thesis
- The instructor will provide and explain several examples of thesis statements based on prompts that have been previously provided for the students to examine
- The students will then be assigned the task of writing several (with the amount to be determined by the instructor) thesis statements to respond to prompts that they have previously created

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the students' work in a group discussion session

Instructional Activity 4.2

Creating Thesis Statements

The Accuplacer WritePlacer Essay Placement Test scores your essay partly on Purpose and Focus—the extent to which the writer presents information in a unified and coherent manner, clearly addressing the issue. Specific elements to consider include:

Thesis: In any standardized testing situation, your choice of thesis is less important than your support of the thesis you choose. Don't be concerned about giving "the right answer." Instead, convince your reader that the answer you've chosen is right by stating your thesis clearly and forcefully.

Examples:

- A. We should institute a ban against all video games that lack educational value.
- B. Seeing the film *The Matrix* was a completely life-changing experience for me.

Activity: For each prompt that you've created in Activity 4.1, provide the thesis statement for the essay that you would write if you were to be given that prompt.

A Controversial Issue:

1.

2.

3.

A Personal Choice:

4.

5.

6.

Instructional Activity 4.3

Improving Thesis Statements

Some thesis statements are more clearly written than others. Read the four draft thesis statements below, and identify the one that is ready to serve as the thesis for a well-focused essay. Then, in the spaces provided, revise the others as needed.

1. **Prompt:** How should civil-service positions, like firefighting or police work, be awarded to applicants?

Thesis: *Sometimes people in charge give political jobs to their friends, but sometimes these jobs are given out fairly to the most qualified people.*

Revision:

2. **Prompt:** Describe a dog that makes a good pet.

Thesis: *The Labrador Retriever is a great pet.*

Revision:

3. **Prompt:** How can someone conduct a successful job search?

Thesis: *Conducting a successful job search requires honest assessment, creativity, and determination.*

Revision:

4. **Prompt:** Is today's American culture free of all bias?

Thesis: *America today is still a biased culture.*

Revision:

Instructional Activity 4.3 cont.

Analysis and Revision of Thesis Statements 1, 2, 3, and 4:

1. *Sometimes people in charge give political jobs to their friends, but sometimes these jobs are given out fairly to the most qualified people.*

This thesis fails to state the writer's position on the topic.

Revision: *Civil-service jobs must be made accessible to all qualified applicants.*

2. *The Labrador Retriever is a great pet.*

This very general thesis will improve with more detail about the topic focus.

Revision: The Labrador Retriever is an ideal pet for families with young children.

3. *Conducting a successful job search requires honest assessment, creativity, and determination.*

This clearly expressed, well-detailed thesis needs no revision.

Revision: This is a very strong thesis statement. Revision is not necessary.

4. *America today is still a biased culture.*

Like draft thesis 2, this thesis is too broad. The topic area should be more focused.

Revision: Racial prejudice still exists in twenty-first century America.

Scope and Sequence: Week 5

The Writing Process: Organization and Structure

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Organization and Structure: The Essay Introduction

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To provide students with an understanding of the value of a well-written opening statement
- To provide students with the ability to craft a well-written opening statement

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will explain the concept of an opening statement
- The instructor will provide and explain several examples of opening statements based on the thesis statements that have been previously provided for the students to examine
- The students will then be assigned the task of writing several (with the amount to be determined by the instructor) opening statements to respond to thesis statements that they have previously written for Activity 4.1

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the students' work in a group discussion session

Instructional Activity 5.1

Writing an Essay Introduction

The Accuplacer WritePlacer Essay Placement Test scores your essay partly on **Organization and Structure** - the extent to which the writer orders and connects ideas. Specific elements to consider include:

Introducing the Essay: Begin with an opening statement that uses powerful language to get your reader's attention and that introduces your reader to the topic without giving away the entire point of the essay. Consider the way a newspaper headline or title of a magazine article does this. Then, write a paragraph that leads to your Thesis Statement.

Examples:

- A. Non-educational video games are devouring kids' souls.
- B. Sometimes, a movie can really blow your mind.

Activity: For each thesis that you've written in Activity 4.2, write an attention-getting opening statement.

Scope and Sequence: Week 5

The Writing Process: Organization and Structure

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Organization and Structure: Body Paragraphs

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To provide students with an understanding of the importance of a topic sentence in focusing the writing of body paragraphs
- To provide students with the ability to write body paragraphs based on a focused topic sentence

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will explain the concepts of body paragraph and topic sentence
- The instructor will provide and explain several examples of topic sentences that could apply to body paragraphs for essays based on thesis statements that have been previously provided for the students to examine
- The students will then be assigned the task of writing several (with the amount to be determined by the instructor) topic sentences that could apply to body paragraphs that would develop the thesis statements they have previously created in Activity 5.2
- The students will then be assigned the task of writing several (with the amount to be determined by the instructor) fully developed body paragraphs, based on the topic sentences that they have written

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the students' work in a group discussion session

Instructional Activity 5.2

Building Body Paragraphs

The Accuplacer WritePlacer Essay Placement Test scores your essay partly on **Organization and Structure** - the extent to which the writer orders and connects ideas. Specific elements to consider include:

Body Paragraphs: In the body of your essay, give reasons for why your answer is right, and give evidence to support those reasons. Begin each body paragraph with a topic sentence that connects the reason to the thesis, and then write the paragraph to describe your evidence.

Examples of Topic Sentences:

- A. There are lots of kids out there, like my cousin, who do nothing but sit on the couch playing mindless video games all day long.
(The paragraph would then go on to explain the cousin's situation in further detail.)
- B. The view of how a society can be dominated by computers, as shown in *The Matrix*, allowed me to re-consider my own dependence on technology.
(The paragraph would then go on to explain how the film presents this view and how it relates to the essay-writer's own life.)

Activity: For each thesis that you've written in Activity 4.2, write one fully-developed body paragraph, focusing on the topic sentence.

Scope and Sequence: Week 5

The Writing Process: Organization and Structure

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Organization and Structure: Transitions

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To provide students with an understanding of the importance of transitions and of the particular value of writing with higher-order transitions
- To provide students with a list of higher-order transitions that they can use on the Accuplacer WritePlacer test

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will provide students with examples of ordinal transitions (“*my second reason is*”), and examples of higher-order transitions, and explain the difference between the two sets
- The students will then be assigned the task of making a list of transitions that avoid mention of numbers, and advised to memorize three or four of them for use on the Accuplacer WritePlacer test

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the students’ work in a group discussion session

Instructional Activity 5.3

Using Logical Transitions

The Accuplacer WritePlacer Essay Placement Test scores your essay partly on **Organization and Structure** - the extent to which the writer orders and connects ideas. Specific elements to consider include:

Transitions: An easy way to make transitions look impressive is to avoid ordinal numbers (“*my second reason is*”) and instead use higher order transitions:

Examples: “Also” “Furthermore” “In addition”

Activity: Make a list of transitions that avoid mention of numbers. Memorize three or four of them and use them in your essay.

Transition

Meaning of Transition

1. however

to show a contrast

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Scope and Sequence: Week 5

The Writing Process: Organization and Structure

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Organization and Structure: Transitions

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To provide students with an understanding of the importance of transitions and of the particular value of writing with higher-order transitions
- To provide students with a list of higher-order transitions that they can use on the Accuplacer WritePlacer test
- To practice incorporating higher-order transitions into sentences and paragraphs

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The students will be assigned to complete two sentence-editing activities in which they combine sentences by using logical transitions with correct punctuation

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the students' work in a group discussion session

Instructional Activity 5.4

Varying Logical Transitions

Sentence Editing 1: Read each pair of simple sentences below to determine the relationship between them. Then join each pair three ways, using the conjunctions at the left. Write each revised sentence out, and punctuate correctly.

1. My parents live three miles away. I don't visit them very often.

(but) _____

(although) _____

(nevertheless) _____

2. Alison enjoys browsing in vintage clothing shops. She loves to buy stylish outfits at reasonable prices.

(because) _____

(as) _____

(consequently) _____

3. David seldom cooks elaborate meals. He hates to wash dishes.

(so) _____

(because) _____

(therefore) _____

4. Lisa went to Spain alone. She couldn't speak a word of Spanish.

(yet) _____

(until) _____

(however) _____

5. Julio tries out for a part in every play in town. He wants to be a professional actor.

(so) _____

(since) _____

(therefore) _____

6. Hannah tried to please her mother. They still had an argument.

(but) _____

(although) _____

(yet) _____

7. I would like to stay in New York City this summer. It's very expensive.

(unless) _____

(however) _____

(although) _____

8. Brianna didn't put any money into the parking meter. The police officer gave her a ticket.

(because) _____

(so) _____

(consequently) _____

9. Darren was old enough to vote. He never paid any attention to political events.

(before) _____

(while) _____

(nevertheless) _____

10. I enjoy reading. I am going to the discount bookstore.

(since) _____

(because) _____

(so) _____

Instructional Activity 5.5

Improving Sentence Flow with Logical Transitions

Revise both paragraphs below to eliminate monotonous simple sentences.

Follow these steps:

- Identify related ideas, and choose the conjunctions that best express these relationships
- Write the sentences out, using the conjunctions to combine the related ideas into longer sentences
- Follow standard punctuation rules to punctuate the revised sentences correctly

A. The bike trail is one of the nicest places I know. It runs alongside the river. It takes riders through the most beautiful scenery you can find this close to the city. Many people take the trail to work every day. It is easy to get to, relatively flat, and safe. The only problem is that it is longer than the city route. It follows the river's path exactly. The river bends and twists its way into the city. A straight trip on city streets would be two miles shorter. Heavy traffic, noise, and fumes fill the city streets. Some of the city's hills are steep. I'll stick to the bike trail by the river.

B. Many people consider chop suey a Chinese dish. It was invented in the United States. A Chinese official visited this country late in the nineteenth century. His American hosts asked him to cook a Chinese meal. None of the right ingredients was available. He told his cook to buy anything that looked interesting. Then the cook steamed everything in a big pot. He seasoned the mixture with soy sauce. Everyone thought it was delicious. They asked what it was called. The official saw a pair of chopsticks lying on the table. He saw a bottle of soy sauce standing next to them. He invented the name "chop-soya." He did not pronounce the English words clearly. The American listeners thought he said "chop suey." That is what they called the new dish.

Scope and Sequence: Week 5

The Essay Process: Organization and Structure

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Organization and Structure: Conclusions

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To provide students with an understanding of the importance of powerful conclusions
- To provide students with the ability to write a powerful conclusion

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will explain the concept of conclusion as more than just a summary of what has already been written
- The instructor will provide and explain several examples of conclusions that provide the reader with some sense of direction to follow upon completed reading of the essay. These will be based on the thesis statements, opening statements, and body paragraphs that have been previously provided for the students to examine
- The students will then be assigned the task of writing several (with the amount to be determined by the instructor) conclusions that advise the readers of their essays to take a side on the controversial issue or to accept and act upon the value of the student's personal choice

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the students' work in a group discussion session

Instructional Activity 5.6

Writing Essay Conclusions

The Accuplacer WritePlacer Essay Placement Test scores your essay partly on **Organization and Structure** - the extent to which the writer orders and connects ideas. Specific elements to consider include:

Conclusions: In addition to reviewing what has already been presented, a good conclusion will also give the reader some advice as to what to do with the information that has been presented.

Hypothetical Examples:

- A. Please contact your local or state lawmakers and help support the ban on non-educational video games.
- B. If you haven't already seen it, make an effort to see *The Matrix*.

Activity: For each thesis that you've written, write a sentence advising the reader to:

- -take your side on the controversial issue
- or
- -accept and act upon the value of your personal choice

Scope and Sequence: Week 6

The Writing Process: Development and Support

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Development and Support: Evidence

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To provide students with the understanding of the importance of including evidence in their writing
- To provide students with the ability to include evidence in their writing

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will explain the concept of evidence and its importance in writing
- The instructor will provide and explain several examples of writing that demonstrate the use of evidence and several examples of writing that do not
- The students will then be assigned the task of writing several (with the amount to be determined by the instructor) statements that require support in the form of evidence, and then expanding those statements into paragraphs that demonstrate the ability to provide evidence
- Finally, to demonstrate the difference between the two, students will purposely write a second series of paragraphs that fails to provide evidence

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the students' work in a group discussion session

Instructional Activity 6.1

Developing a Statement with Evidence

The Accuplacer WritePlacer Essay Placement Test scores your essay partly on **Development and Support** – the extent to which the writer develops and supports ideas. Specific elements to consider include:

Evidence: One problem that young writers have is the tendency to rephrase an idea over and over without providing any actual evidence to back it up. Notice the difference between the two provided examples.

Examples:

- A. Our school's team is the best. We rule. Our team kicks butt. We're awesome.
(Insufficient supporting evidence)

- B. Our school's team is the best. We were undefeated in fifteen games last year, and we won the state tournament. In fact, our defensive players scored more points than they allowed to be scored upon them.
(Supporting evidence is more precise and informative)

Activity:

1. Create a list of statements that, like the first sentence in the examples, require evidence.
2. Then, choose one and write a paragraph containing specific evidence that proves the statement to be true.
3. Finally, to demonstrate the difference between the two, write a second paragraph that purposely fails to provide evidence.
4. Repeat this process as many times as the instructor deems necessary for each item on the list.

Scope and Sequence: Week 6

The Writing Process: Development and Support

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Development and Support: Elaboration

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To provide students with the understanding of the importance of using elaboration in their writing
- To provide students with the ability to use elaboration in their writing

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will explain the concept of elaboration and its importance in writing
- The instructor will provide several examples of unelaborated ideas
- The students will then be assigned the task of choosing one of these examples (or changing it to the opposite argument), and creating a list of specific details or information that could give the basic thought some life
- The students will construct a brief paragraph that contains some of the details, trying to avoid including the original sentence in their paragraphs. The students will then repeat the process for the other sentence
- The students will then create lists of their own statements that require further development, and repeat this process for each

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the students' work in a group discussion session

Instructional Activity 6.2

The Writing Process: Elaborating a Point

The Accuplacer WritePlacer Essay Placement Test scores your essay partly on **Development and Support** – the extent to which the writer develops and supports ideas. Specific elements to consider include:

Elaboration: Another problem is the tendency to make a point and then fail to elaborate on it. The following are examples of ideas that could be further developed.

Examples:

- A. The only thing that's guaranteed in life is that things change.
- B. Movies are more entertaining than books.

Exercise:

1. Choose one of these examples (or change it to the opposite argument), and create a list of specific details or information that could give the basic thought some life.
2. Construct a brief paragraph that contains some of the details. Try to avoid including the original sentence in your paragraph.
3. Repeat the process for the other sentence.
4. Create a list of your own statements that require further development, and repeat this process for each.

Scope and Sequence: Week 6

The Writing Process: Review of Essay Organization, Structure, and Development

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Organization, Structure, and Development - Practice

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To provide students with an understanding of how two essays that are organized in essentially the same way can still contain significant differences in quality
- To provide students with the ability to improve their writing by focusing on a few specific concepts and strategies

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will provide two different essays on the same topic, and will point out the differences between individual writers' strategies
- The students will then consider and discuss ways that the superior essay could be further improved

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Evaluation will take place throughout instructor-directed group discussion

Instructional Activity 6.3

Critiquing and Revising Essays

Compare these two essays to see how the second is an improvement over the first:

Essay 1 WritePlacer Prompt: Banning Non-Educational Video Games

I have recently found out that you are considering a ban on all non-educational video games. This is a bad idea because, in this country, we are supposed to have freedom. It is also a bad idea because this ban is going to shut down a huge industry, and people will lose their jobs. Finally, this ban is a bad idea because no one can prove which games are educational and which games aren't. These are the reasons why I oppose the ban on all non-educational video games.

My first reason is that video games are a huge industry and people will lose their jobs. A lot of people work in the labs and factories that develop video games, and if we ban the games, then these people will be out of work. They won't have any income and they will be in a lot of trouble.

My second reason is that no one can say which games are educational and which games aren't. Some games may be educational and some may not, but no one can really prove that they are or they aren't. You really can't say that a video game is educational or that it is not because somebody else could say that it's not.

In conclusion, these are all of the reasons why this should not happen.

Flaws

Introduction paragraph: *The writer of this essay makes the common mistake of previewing the reasons that support his thesis. It's really not necessary to tell your reader what you are about to tell them; in the next few paragraphs, they will have this information (although this writer also previews one reason that doesn't even get supported later in the paper). Instead, try to write an introduction paragraph that appeals to the reader on an emotional level, and makes the reader interested in the rest of the essay.*

Body paragraphs: *Both of these body paragraphs provide valid reasons, but neither is really supported by any evidence. The writer makes unsubstantiated claims that read as if they were invented out of nowhere. On a standardized test, a writer may have to invent his claims out of nowhere, but there are techniques that can make the claims seem more sophisticated. Also, the writer uses very unsophisticated transitions.*

Conclusion paragraph: *The writer here doesn't really reach any conclusion at all, but instead reflects back on what has been written (barely even doing that) to arrive at the exact same thought with which he started (and again, not even doing it thoroughly). Summarizing your previous ideas is a fine strategy, but you should try to reach a conclusion that presents the reader with something new.*

Instructional Activity 6.3 cont.

Essay 2 WritePlacer Prompt: Banning Non-Educational Video Games

Freedom to choose is the most important of American values, and this ban on video games goes against our entire way of life. When my cousin was fighting in Iraq, she saw young people who had no recreational activities at all, or if they did, then it was only an old, beat-up ball to kick around or a raggedy, homemade doll to play with. Those kids didn't get to enjoy the healthy, peaceful, and enjoyable lifestyles of U.S. kids. This is the way of life that our troops are working so hard to change because we, as a society, are sworn to try to improve things for people that are not as fortunate as we are, and to protect important American values such as the freedom to choose. This is why I oppose the ban on all non-educational video games.

The most important reason that non-educational video games should not be banned is that video games are a huge industry and a ban would cause people to lose jobs. John Lydon, vice-president of OnlyFunGames, Inc., said in a recent interview, "We have a lot of people working here. This ban will put them out of work, and then they'll be in trouble. People have bills, man. What are they supposed to do?" This expert opinion should be considered and should lead us to oppose the video game ban.

Furthermore, these games should not be banned because no one can really determine which games are educational and which games are not. A study from Rutgers University's Educational Technology Department determined that of 350 new video games released in the last five years, 3% could be determined to be completely educational, and 2% were found to have no educational value at all, but an overwhelming 95% could not be proven to be either educational or non-educational. This was because of how hard it is to interpret what is really educational, and it proves that the ban on non-educational games should not be supported.

In summary, there should not be a ban on non-educational video games because of what will do to our nation's freedoms and to our economy, as well as because it can't be clearly determined what is educational and what is not. Instead of a ban, I would recommend that we educate the kids of today to be more fully able to make their own decisions. I hope that you will agree with me on this important issue.

Improvements

Introduction: *The writer of this essay writes an introduction paragraph that appeals to the reader on an emotional level, and makes the reader interested in the rest of the essay.*

Body paragraphs: *These body paragraphs provide valid reasons and are supported with evidence. The fact that the evidence is completely fabricated isn't really the issue. The writer demonstrates the ability to use the persuasive techniques that would apply if the research were available, which, in any standardized testing situation, it is not. Also, the writer uses more sophisticated transitions.*

Conclusion: *The writer summarizes his reasons, but also uses them to bring the reader to a new conclusion in his suggestion of action and support on the part of the reader.*

Now, consider how the second essay could be further improved. With your instructor's guidance, revise this essay.

The Writing Process: Supplemental Instructional Activities

As time permits, instructors are encouraged to use the following supplemental activities as creative lessons to reinforce the concepts outlined above:

1. Take a “telling statement” and turn it into a detailed and unique statement; a “showing statement”- i.e. “The weather is warm today” or “School is important.”
 - Have students make up their own details independently or in groups (think, pair, share)
 - Have students add ‘showing’ details
 - Share and elaborate
2. Challenge the students to write a visual representation of
 - a picture
 - an animal
 - a season
 - a type of food
 - a favorite piece of clothing
 - a facial expression
3. Encourage the students to ‘paint a picture with words’
 - Write a short, bare-bones description of a person, place, or object
 - Have students think aloud all associations with the person, place, or object and then get a picture in their minds while focusing on interesting or unusual details
 - Layer the details and improve word choice
 - Discuss the descriptions and observe who has the most detail
4. Compare/contrast different versions of expository writing on any given topic, or find a sample of writing that is devoid of voice (a manual or textbook) and try putting a voice to it.
5. Have students write the first sentence of a letter to five different audiences and discuss the voice that would be appropriate for each.
6. Invite students to write a paragraph about an inanimate object in an original, entertaining way, making it as imaginative as possible (i.e. coffee, margarine, cookies, a hamburger, a piece of paper towel).
7. Discuss the difference between *denotation and connotation*. Have students choose a familiar place and write two paragraphs: one from the point of view of someone who loves this place, and the other from the perspective of someone who hates it (using denotations and connotations). Discuss.

8. Choose one word that everyone uses and ask students to write a list of other everyday words and phrases that mean the same thing (Examples: *cool – awesome, groovy, phat, far out*).

Scope and Sequence: Week 7

Grammar Rules Overview

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Grammar Rules Overview

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- Students will understand how to insure proper grammar in writing
- Students will demonstrate this understanding by successfully completing grammar exercises

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the information and rules about proper grammar in writing
- The instructor will review the examples of the information and rules with the students

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Students will complete the exercises contained in the lesson
- The instructor will review the exercises with the student after they are completed

Grammar rules that make a big difference in writing

This is an overview of important grammar rules that can improve writing. Some of these concepts have been discussed in more depth earlier in this packet.

Sentences

Avoid Sentence Fragments

Make sure all of your sentences express complete thoughts.

A sentence fragment is a group of words that does not express a grammatically complete thought. It may lack a subject, a predicate, or both. Fragments may be connected by adding the missing elements or changing the punctuation to make the fragment part of another sentence.

Fragment example – We admire George Eliot. A woman who prevailed over the many prejudices of her time.

Complete example – We admire George Eliot. She was a woman who prevailed over many prejudices of her time. (adding a subject and a predicate)

Complete example – We admire George Eliot, a woman who prevailed over many prejudices of her time. (changing the punctuation)

Avoid Run-on sentences.

Make sure all clauses in a sentence have the proper punctuation and / or conjunction between them.

A run-on sentence consists of two or more sentences written as though they were one or separated only by a comma. Correct run-ons by making two separate sentences, using a semi-colon, adding a conjunction, or rewriting the sentence.

Run-on: Greg Cole is a great musician, he plays the drums

Correct: Greg Cole is a great musician. He plays the drums.

Correct: Greg Cole is a great musician; he plays the drums.

Correct: Greg Cole, who plays the drums, is a great musician.

Use end marks correctly. Use a period, not a question mark, at the end of an indirect question.

An indirect question is a question that still uses the exact words of the original speaker. Note the difference between the following sentences, and observe that the second sentence ends in a period, not a question mark.

Direct: Nick asked, "What is that?"

Indirect: Nick asked what it was.

Do not use quotation marks with indirect quotations within a sentence.

A direct quotation uses the speaker's exact words. An indirect quotation puts the speaker's words in other words. Compare these sentences:

Direct: Kimmy said: "I'm going to up all night writing this paper." (quotation marks appropriate)

Indirect: Kimmy said that she was going to be up all night writing this paper. (no quotation marks)

Phrases

Place participial and prepositional phrases as close as possible to the events they modify.

Participle and prepositional phrases are modifiers; that is, they tell about some other word in a sentence. To avoid confusion, they should be placed as closely as possible to the word that they modify.

Incorrect example: Tiny microphones are planted by agents called bugs.

Correct example: Tiny microphones called bugs are planted by agents.

Avoid dangling participles. Make sure a participle phrase does modify a word in a sentence.

Incorrect: Disappointed in love, a bachelor's life seems attractive.

Correct: Disappointed in love, the man became a bachelor.

Clauses

Use commas to set off the nonessential adjective clause.

Do you need the clause in order to indicate precisely who or what is meant? If not, it is nonessential and should be set off by commas.

Use commas: Nick Stetz, who is a great role model for young writers, received the 1999 Nobel Prize in literature.

No commas: A writer who is a great role model for young writers received the 1999 Nobel Prize in literature.

Verbs

Don't use past tense forms with an auxiliary verb or past participle forms without an auxiliary verb.

Incorrect: I have saw her somewhere before. (saw is in the past tense and should not be used with have)

Correct: I have seen her somewhere before.

Incorrect: I seen her somewhere before. (seen is a past participle and should not be used without an auxiliary)

Shift tenses only when necessary.

Usually, when you are writing in present tense, stay in present tense; when you are writing in past tense, stay in past tense.

Incorrect: When my grandmother tells stories, everybody listened.

Correct: When my grandmother told stories, everybody listened.

Subject / Verb Agreement

Make sure subjects and verbs agree in number.

Incorrect – The Blyer sisters of Ireland was great writers.

Correct – The Blyer sisters of Ireland were great writers.

Incorrect – Kristie, as well as her sisters, were reserved.

Correct – Kristie, as well as her sisters, was reserved.

Incorrect – Nick and Mike was born in the 1970's

Correct – Nick and Mike were born in the 1970's.

Use a singular verb with nouns that look plural but have singular meaning.

Some nouns that end in –s are singular, even though they look plural. Examples are measles, news, Wales, and the names ending in –ics when they refer to a school subject, science or general practice.

Examples – Measles is a serious disease. Politics is a great subject to study.

Use a singular verb with titles.

Example – Scenes of Beachwood was published in 2008.

Rule: Use a singular verb with words of weight, time, and measure.

Example – Seven years is the length of time it took Matt to find a house.

Example – 200 pounds is expectable weight for Carl.

Pronouns

Use personal pronouns correctly for compounds.

Incorrect – Him and his friends went to the mall.

Correct – He and his friends went to the mall.

Incorrect – The teacher recommended Hamlet to Lauren and I.

Correct- The teacher recommended Hamlet to Lauren and me.

Incorrect – Give Lynn and they some flowers.

Correct – Give Lynn and them some flowers.

Usually, if you remove the noun and, the correct pronoun will be obvious.

Use we and us correctly with nouns.

When a noun directly follows we or us, the case of the pronoun depends upon its function.

Incorrect – Us readers enjoy romantic poetry.

Correct – We readers enjoy romantic poetry.

Incorrect – The teacher read Milton’s Paradise Lost to we students.

Correct – The teacher read Milton’s Paradise Lost to us students.

Avoid unclear pronoun references

The reference of a pronoun is ambiguous when the reader cannot tell which of two preceding nouns is its antecedent. The reference is indefinite when the idea to which the pronoun refers is only weakly or vaguely expressed.

Ambiguous : Homer, not Hesiod, wrote the Iliad, and he wrote the Odyssey too.

Clearer: Homer, not Hesiod, wrote the Iliad, and Homer wrote the Odyssey too.

Indefinite : The Nobel Prize, was won by Paul Stenzel in 1998, which is given to the greatest writers.

Clearer: The Nobel Prize, which is given to the greatest writers, was won by Paul Stenzel in 1998.

Avoid change of person

If you are writing in the third person – using pronouns such as she, he, it, they, them, his, her, its – do not shift to second person – you.

Incorrect – The feudal laborer had to obey his lord, and you needed to obey the king as well.

Correct – The feudal laborer had to obey his lord, and he needed to obey the king as well.

Use correct pronouns in elliptical comparisons.

An elliptical comparison is a comparison from which words have been omitted. In order to choose the proper pronoun, fill in the missing words. Note the difference below:

Example – I know my English teacher better than him.

Example – I know my English teacher better than he.

Don't confuse pronouns and contractions

Personal pronouns are made possessive without the use of an apostrophe, as is the relative pronoun whose. Whenever you are unsure whether to write it's or its, who's or whose, ask if you mean it is /has or who is /had. If you do, write the contraction. Do the same for you're and your, they're and their, except that the contraction in this case is for the verb are.

Modifiers

Avoid double comparisons

A double comparison is a comparison made twice. In general, if you use –er or –est on the end of a modifier, you would not also use more or most in front of it.

Incorrect – I like Shakespeare more better since I've read King Lear.

Correct – I like Shakespeare better since I've read King Lear.

Incorrect – He's the most greatest playwright in the world.

Correct – He's the greatest playwright in the world.

Avoid Illogical Comparisons

Can you tell what is wrong with the following sentence?

Plays are more entertaining than any kind of performance art.

This sentence is difficult to understand. To avoid such illogical comparisons, use other when comparing an individual member with the rest of the group.

Plays are more entertaining than any other kind of performance art.

To avoid another kind of illogical comparison, use *than* or *as* after the first member in a compound comparison.

Illogical – Joe baked many tasty pies if not more than Bob. (Did he bake as many pies as Bob?)

Logical – Joe baked as many tasty pies as Bob, if not more.

Avoid misplacing modifiers

Modifiers of all kinds must be placed as close as possible to the words they modify. If you place them elsewhere, you risk being misunderstood.

Misplaced – Dumbledore is “a wise man” in the Harry Potter series.

Correct – Dumbledore in the Harry Potter series is a “wise man.”

Words not to capitalize

Do not capitalize north, south, east and west when they are used to tell direction.

Example – Miami is south of New York.

Example – Mexico is located in North America.

Do not capitalize sun and moon, and capitalize earth only when it is used with the name of other planets. *Example – The sun and the moon are heavenly bodies in a solar system that includes Mars, Jupiter and the Earth.*

Do not capitalize the names of seasons

Example – One of Greg Cole’s best poems alludes to the seasons of winter and summer.

Do not capitalize the names of most school subjects.

School subjects only are capitalized when they name a specific course, such as World History II.

Otherwise, they are not capitalized.

Example – I’m taking physics, social studies and a foreign language this year. I might take American History I next year.

Note: English and the names of the other languages are always capitalized.

Example – Everybody takes English and either German or French.

Exercises

Rewrite each sentence correctly, and correct any and all grammar errors.

1. The professor, a renowned authority on Geoffrey Chaucer.
2. A modern version of King Lear is A Thousand Acres by Jane Smiley, an award winning novel.
3. The tragedies of Shakespeare is more popular than his histories.
4. When Hamlet was performed, the tickets are impossible to get.
5. Make sure to reserve tickets for Neil and I.
6. Several productions of Julius Caesar are performed on warm Summer nights in Central Park.
7. Having written both plays and sonnets, millions of readers admire the work of Shakespeare.
8. I like West Side Story more better that Romeo and Juliet.
9. The cast held a workshop for we students.
10. Founded in 1599, people still enjoy performances of Shakespeare’s plays at the Globe Theater.

Scope and Sequence: Week 8

End of Term Timed Essay

CONCEPT/TOPIC

End of Term Timed Essay

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To provide comparison of the student's end of term current skill level with his or her initial skill level so that the instructor may determine the student's readiness to retake the Accuplacer test
- To provide each student with practice for the upcoming Accuplacer test

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will assign students a sample essay topic from the program packet and allow them 60 minutes to complete an essay. To simulate the Accuplacer writing situation, the students should be allowed to write the essay on a word processor. No use of spelling or grammar checkers should be permitted
- The instructor will give instructions for the essay as they are given on the actual test, but will provide no additional help to the students
- The instructor will collect and holistically grade the essays using the Accuplacer rubric provided in the instructional packet
- The instructor should make written notes about the strengths and weaknesses of each essay in preparation for the student conference

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- The instructor should follow-up with a teacher-student conference in order to provide a final evaluation of each student's skills and suggestions for further improvement in the future

Instructional Activity 8.1

Final Timed Online Practice Essay

Steps for Completing a Timed Writing

1. Read the topic several times. Make sure you understand all parts of the assignment. As you write your essay, refer to the topic several times and make sure that you are writing on topic. The biggest mistake students make is misunderstanding the topic or writing on only part of the assigned topic.
2. Pay attention to the verbs in the topic. Are you supposed to analyze, discuss, compare, contrast, describe, prove, etc.?
3. Watch your time. You will have only 60 minutes for the Accuplacer Timed Writing.
4. Make a brief sketch of an outline or cluster. Plan for at least three paragraphs. Develop a thesis statement which advances the topic. Do not just restate the topic in your thesis.
5. You do not have time to craft a beautiful introductory paragraph. Instead, write the thesis statement and a couple of good sentences to lead in to your thesis in the opening paragraph.
6. Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence which relates to the thesis. Within the paragraph, prove your point with specific examples and explanations.
7. Use transitional phrases to make your paper flow and to connect thoughts.
8. Write in an ACTIVE voice.
9. Read the topic again and make sure you are writing on topic. If you have wandered off topic – get back to the topic.
10. Close the paper with a conclusion which restates the main points of the paper and provides closure. If you run out of time before you finish the conclusion, just write a one sentence conclusion. It will hurt your score very little because you simply do not have time to write a good complete essay in 60 minutes.
11. Watch the tone of your paper. Generally, the topic will require a serious, dignified response. Avoid sarcasm and humor unless the topic lends itself to these tones, and, even then, use humor and sarcasm only if you can do so skillfully without belittling the writing process or your reader.
12. Even if you are not finished with the essay, stop early so you have a couple of minutes to proofread the paper carefully.

Below you will find a list of some of the skills that will greatly improve your papers:

- A. Create an introduction which will capture your reader's attention immediately.
- B. Include more sophisticated and varied vocabulary.
- C. Consciously use sentence variety (both in the order of your words, in the length of your sentences, and in the types of sentences).
- D. Add specific examples and analysis to support your thesis.
- E. Include interesting rhetorical strategies that will make your writing more compelling.

Instructors' Resources for Accuplacer Test

Books:

- Burke, Jim. *Writing Reminders: Tools, Tips, and Techniques*. New York: Boynton-Cook, 2003.
- Culham, Ruth. *6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide*. New York: Scholastic, 2003.
- Keene, E.O. and S. Zimmermann. *Mosaic of Thought*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2007.
- Ledbetter, Mary Ellen. *Ready-to-Use English Workshop Activities for Grades 6-12: 180 Daily Lessons Integrating Literature, Writing & Grammar Skills*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- O'Conner, Patricia T. *Woe is I, Revised and Expanded*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2003.
- Strunk, William, and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th Edition. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

Websites:

Collegeboard.com – Rules for Accuplacer test

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/accuplacer/accuplacer-tests.html>

Google: Writing Accuplacer Test – PowerPoint

<http://74.125.47.132/search?q=cache:dJgt4Dqq1OsJ:www.academics.utep.edu/LinkClick.aspx%3FLink%3DAccuplacer%2BWriting%2BTest.ppt%26tabid%3D17320%26mid%3D63571+accuplacer+essay+writing&cd=4&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us>

Accuplacer Study Guide <http://www.studyguidezone.com/pdfs/accuplacerteststudyguide.pdf>

A HANDBOOK FOR PREPARING FOR THE SENTENCE SENSE SECTION
OF THE NEW JERSEY BASIC SKILLS PLACEMENT TEST (NJBSPT)

Developed for the Tech-Prep Program OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE By
William R. Kanouse, Associate Professor of English

<http://www.ocean.edu/humanities/PlacementHandbooks/sentencesense.htm>

A HANDBOOK FOR PREPARING FOR THE ESSAY SECTION OF THE
NEW JERSEY BASIC SKILLS PLACEMENT TEST (NJBSPT)

Developed for the Tech Prep Program Ocean County College by Richard X. Bailey, Assistant
Professor of English

<http://www.ocean.edu/humanities/PlacementHandbooks/sentencesense.htm#ESSAY%20SECTION>

Guide for Writing a 5 Paragraph Essay for Accuplacer

<http://www.ancilla.edu/pdf/Placement/Essay%20Guide.pdf>

Part II:

Accuplacer

Bridge Program

Language Arts Grammar

Intervention



Table of Contents

Lesson 1 – Parts of Speech Overview

- a. Nouns
- b. Pronouns

Lesson 2 - Active / Passive Voice and Modifiers

- a. Active / Passive
- b. Modifiers (adjectives and adverbs)

Lesson 3 - Prepositions

Lesson 4 - Sentence Parts

- a. Quick reference
- b. Run-on sentences and fragments

Lesson 5 - Subject / Verb Agreement

Lesson 6 - Punctuation

Lesson 7 - Capitalization

Lesson 8 - Confusing Words / Word choice

Lesson 9 - Rules to Improve Grammar in Writing

Lesson 1

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Parts of Speech Overview / Nouns / Pronouns

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- Students will understand the proper usage of nouns and pronouns in grammar and writing
- Students will demonstrate this understanding by successfully completing grammar exercises

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the parts of speech chart
- The instructor will review the information and rules about nouns and pronouns
- The instructor will review the examples of the information and rules with the students

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Students will complete the exercises contained in the lesson
- The instructor will review the exercises with the student after they are completed

Lesson 1

Parts of Speech (Nouns and Pronouns)

Part of Speech	Definition	Example
Noun	Names a person, place, thing or idea	England, dog, house
Pronoun	Takes a place of a noun or another pronoun	I, me, you, his, she, him, us, our,
Verb	expresses action, condition or state of being	
<i>Action</i>	Tells what the subject does or did	run, reaches, dream, decides, thinks
<i>Linking</i>	Connects subjects to that which identifies or describes them	am, is, are, was, were
<i>Auxiliary</i>	Precedes and introduces main verbs	be, have, do, can, could, will, may, might
Adjective	Modifies nouns or pronouns	<u>strong</u> women, <u>happy</u> dog, two books
Adverb	Modifies verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs	walked <u>out</u> , <u>really</u> funny
Preposition	Relates one word to another (following) word	at, by, for, from in, of, on, to
Conjunctions	Joins words or word groups	
<i>Coordinating</i>	Joins words or word groups used the same way	and, but, or, for, so, yet
<i>Correlative</i>	Join words or word groups used the same and are used in pairs	both...and, either...or
<i>Subordinating</i>	Joins word groups not used in same way	although, after, as, before, when, if
Interjection	Expresses emotion	wow, ouch, hurrah!

Nouns

A noun is a word used to describe a person, place, thing, quality or idea. Nouns can be put into several classifications. All nouns are either common or proper. All are either abstract or concrete. Some can even be classified as compound, collective and passive as well.

Common Nouns – general names common to a whole group

Ex – author, cat, dog, house, battle

Proper Nouns – one-of-a-kind things

Ex – New York, Obama, Viking

Concrete Nouns – things that can be perceived by the senses

Ex – bird, scream, Seattle, Stephen King

Abstract Nouns – things that cannot be observed by the senses

Ex – intelligence, joy, bravery

Compound Nouns – words formed from two or more words but express a single idea. They are written as single words, as separate words, or as hyphens.

Ex – kingmaker, Fire house, ring-giver

Collective Nouns – single nouns that refer to groups of people or things

Ex – army, flock, herd, class

Possessive nouns – show who or what owns something (see chart on next page)

Possessive Noun Example Chart

Category	Possessive Noun Rule	Example
All singular nouns	Add apostrophe plus –s	Dad’s, George’s, city’s
Plural nouns not Ending in –s	Add apostrophe plus –s	children’s, women’s, people’s
Plural nouns ending In –s	Add apostrophe only	churches’, Johnsons’, bats’

Exercise

1. Write down three compound nouns and three collective nouns
2. Write the possessive form of the following words:
 - a. Family
 - b. Darkness
 - c. Herb
 - d. Oceans
 - e. Navy
 - f. Warrior
 - g. Tom
 - h. Greg
 - i. Cat
 - j. Dogs

Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that is used in place of another noun or pronoun. The word or word group to which the pronoun refers is called its antecedent.

Personal Pronoun – a pronoun that expresses person, number, gender, or case. See the chart below.

	Nominative	Objective	Possessive
<u>Singular</u>			
First Person	I	Me	my, mine
2 nd Person	you	you	your, yours
3 rd Person	she, he, it	her, him, it	his, hers, his
<u>Plural</u>			
First Person	we	us	our, ours
2 nd Person	you	you	your, yours
3 rd Person	they	them	their, theirs

Pronoun agreement – Pronouns should agree with their antecedents in number and person. Singular pronouns are used to replace singular nouns. Plural pronouns are used to replace plural nouns.

Pronouns must also match gender.

Pronoun case – personal pronouns change form to show how they function in a sentence. This change is called a case.

Nominative pronoun – used as the subject or the predicate nominative of a sentence

Objective pronoun – used as the direct or indirect object of a sentence

Possessive pronoun – shows ownership

Reflexive pronouns – they follow verbs or prepositions and reflect back on an earlier noun or pronoun

Ex – He likes himself too much. She is now herself again

Intensive Pronouns – intensify or emphasize the nouns or pronouns in to which they refer

Ex- They themselves will educate their children.

TIP – avoid using the words hisself or themselves. Standard English does not include these words

Demonstrative pronouns – point out things that are near and far.

Near – this (singular) and these (plural)

Far – that (singular) and those (plural)

TIP- avoid using the word THEM in place of the word THOSE.

Ex – Lets dramatize one of them tales.

Indefinite pronouns – they do not refer to specific persons or things and usually have no antecedents.

The chart shows some commonly used indefinite pronouns:

Singular	Plural	Singular or Plural	
each	both	all	half
either	few	any	plenty
neither	many	more	none
another	several	most	some

Exercise

Rewrite the sentences below, and please write the correct form of all incorrect pronouns.

1. Dave Bilgrim hisself appears in one of his movies.
2. Each student selected one of them stories to read in class
3. Did everybody have their turn?
4. My best friend and myself read “Harry Potter.”
5. After the show, the students treated theirselves to dinner at the restaurant.

Lesson 2

CONCEPT/TOPIC

- Active/Passive Voice and Modifiers

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- Students will understand the proper usage of active/passive voice and modifiers in grammar and writing
- Students will demonstrate this understanding by successfully completing grammar exercises

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the information and rules about active /passive voice and modifiers
- The instructor will review the examples of the information and rules with the students

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Students will complete the exercises contained in the lesson
- The instructor will review the exercises with the student after they are completed

Lesson 2

Active and Passive Voice & Modifiers

Active and Passive Voice

The voice of a verb tells whether the subject of a sentence performs or receives the action expressed by the verb. When the subject performs the action, the verb is in the active voice. When the subject is the receiver of the action, the verb is in the passive voice.

Compare these two sentences:

Active – Buster Douglas beat Mike Tyson in the fight.

Passive – Mike Tyson was beaten by Buster Douglas in the fight.

To form the passive voice, use a form of be with the past participle of the main verb.

TIP – use passive voice sparingly. Try to always use active voice. Passive voice, when overused, can make writing sound awkward.

Here are certain occasions when you may want to use passive voice:

- you want to emphasize the receiver of the action
ex – The king was shot.
- the doer of the action is unknown
- the doer of the action is unimportant

Exercise (Active / Passive)

Rewrite the following sentences, and change them to active voice.

1. The dog was purchased by Mike.
2. The oath was sworn by the knights.
3. The Red Sox were beaten by the Yankees.
4. The car was hit by the truck.
5. The house was purchased by Lauren.

Now, rewrite the following sentences, and change them to passive voice.

1. The New Jersey Devils won the Stanley Cup.
2. The hunter captured the alligator.
3. Jimmy wrote a great essay.
4. Herbert purchased a brand new truck.
5. Diane took Chuck to the Olive Garden for dinner.

Modifiers

Modifiers are words or groups of words that change or limit the meanings of other words. The two kinds of modifiers are adjectives and adverbs.

Adjectives – an adjective is a word that modifies a noun or pronoun by telling which one, what kind, how many or how much.

The articles a, an, and the are usually classified as adjectives. These are the most common adjectives that you will use.

Predicate Adjectives – most adjectives come before the nouns they modify. Predicate adjectives follow linking verbs and describe the subject.

Ex – My dog is very intelligent.

Adverbs – modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs. They can occur in many places in a sentence.

Ex – The children played outside

Ex- The dog ran fast.

Ex- the author spoke yesterday.

Using Modifiers Correctly

Follow these tips to avoid mistakes in your writing

Farther and Further - farther is used for distances, further is used for everything else.

Avoid double comparisons – you make a comparison by using –er or –est, or by using more / most.

Using –er with more or using –est with most is incorrect.

Incorrect example – I like her more better than she likes me.

Correct example – I like her better than she likes me.

Avoid Illogical Comparisons – this comparison results if two unrelated things are compared or if something is compared with itself. The word other or the word else should be used in a comparison of an individual member with the rest of the group.

Illogical example – Sir Walter Raleigh was as interesting as any English explorer. (was he an English explorer?)

Logical – Sir Walter Raleigh was as interesting as any other English explorer.

Bad vs. Badly – Bad, always an adjective, is used before nouns or after linking verbs to describe the subject. Badly, always an adverb, never modifies a noun. Be sure to use the right form after a linking verb.

Incorrect: Ed felt badly after his team lost

Correct: Ed felt bad after his team lost.

Good vs. Well – Good is always an adjective. It is used before nouns or after a linking verb. Well is often used as an adverb meaning “properly.” Well can also be an adjective after a linking verb, where it means “in good health.”

Incorrect: Helen writes very good

Correct: Helen writes very well

Correct: Yesterday I felt bad; today I feel well

Double Negatives – If you add a negative word to a sentence that is already negative, the result will be an error known as a double negative. When using not or -n't with a verb, use “any” words, such as anybody or anything, rather than “no” words, such as nobody or nothing, later in the sentence.

Incorrect: I don't have no money.

Correct: I don't have any money.

Incorrect: We haven't seen nobody.

Correct: We haven't see anybody.

Using hardly, barely, or scarcely after a negative word is also incorrect.

Incorrect: They couldn't barely see two feet ahead.

Correct: They could barely see two feet ahead.

Misplaced modifiers – a misplaced modifier is one placed so far away from the word it modifies that the intended meaning of the sentence is unclear. Place modifiers as close as possible to the words they modify.

Misplaced – We found the child in the park who was missing. (the child was missing, not the park)

Clearer- We found the child, who was missing, in the park.

Exercise

Rewrite these sentences, and correct the modifier mistakes.

1. The author of “Female Thoughts” enjoyed the most freedom of any other French woman of her time.
2. Her education and position allowed her to travel further than many men.
3. Many feel that women of the 17th century had the most hardest lives.
4. The life of a farmer’s wife was particularly difficult, especially when important crops failed bad.
5. Farmers forced to leave their land didn’t have nowhere to go.
6. It is hard to tell whether a farmer’s wife or an aristocratic lady had the most interesting life.
7. Although Candace wrote good on a number of subjects, some people thought she was mad.

Lesson 3

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Prepositions

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- Students will understand the proper usage of prepositions in grammar and writing
- Students will demonstrate this understanding by successfully completing grammar exercises

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the information and rules about prepositions
- The instructor will review the examples of the information and rules with the students

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Students will complete the exercises contained in the lesson
- The instructor will review the exercises with the student after they are completed

Lesson 3

Prepositions

Preposition – a preposition is a word used to show the relationship between a noun or a pronoun and another word in a sentence.

Commonly used prepositions

above	for	on	without
down	from	out	with
at	in	over	
before	into	through	
below	near	to	
by	of	up	

The preposition is always followed by a word or group of words which serve as its object. The preposition, its object, and modifiers of the object are called the prepositional phrase. In each example below, the prepositional phrase is underlined and the object is in boldface type.

*The future of **Toms River** is uncertain.*

*We searched through the deepest **woods**.*

Prepositional Phrases may be used as adverbs or as adjectives. The phrase in the first example is used as an adjective, modifying the noun future. The phrase in the second example is used as an adverb modifying the verb searched.

Conjunctions – a conjunction is a word used to connect words, phrases, or sentences. There are three kinds of conjunctions: coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions, and subordinating conjunctions.

Coordinating conjunctions – connect words or word groups that have the same function in a sentence. These include and, but, or, for, so, yet, and nor.

Example –

I have many friends but few enemies.

We ran out the door and into the street.

We have to go now, or we will be late.

Correlative Conjunctions – are similar to coordinating conjunctions. However, correlative conjunctions are always used in pairs.

Example -

And....both, neither.....nor either.....or

Subordinate Conjunctions – introduce subordinate clauses, which are clauses that cannot stand on their own as complete sentences. The subordinate conjunction shows how the subordinate clause relates to the rest of the sentence. The relationships include time, manner, place, cause, comparison, condition, and purpose.

Time: after, as, as long as, as soon as, until, while, whenever

Manner: as, as if

Place: where, whenever,

Cause: because, since

Comparison: as, as much as, than

Condition: although, as long as, even if

Purpose: in order that, so that, that

In the example below, the boldface word is the conjunction, and the underlined words are called a subordinate clause.

*Example – I whistle a happy tune **whenever** I feel afraid.*

Conjunctive Adverbs – are used to connect clauses that can stand by themselves as sentences.

Conjunctive adverbs include *also, besides, finally, however, moreover, nevertheless, otherwise, and then*.

Example – He loved the winter; however, he hated the summer and the heat.

Exercises

For the following sentences, choose the correct word in the parenthesis

1. Lauren Simpson went to the party (because / however) she wanted to hear the great tenor sing.
2. (After / Until) George arrived, he greeted his hosts and listened to the singer perform.
3. (Because of / During) the heat in the crowded room, the singer moved outside.
4. Lauren and Michelle spoke with the singer (during / before) he could escape.
5. (Without / Because) of the performance, the girls had a great night.

Lesson 4

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Sentence Parts / Fragments and Run-On Sentences

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- Students will understand how to write complete sentences and avoid fragments and run-on sentences
- Students will demonstrate this understanding by successfully completing grammar exercises

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the information and rules about writing complete sentences
- The instructor will review the examples of the information and rules with the students

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Students will complete the exercises contained in the lesson
- The instructor will review the exercises with the student after they are completed

Lesson 4

Writing Good Sentences

The sentence and its parts (a quick review)

The Pilgrim's ship / reached North America.

The complete subject:

includes words that identify the person

The complete predicate:

contains words that tell about the subject.
place, or thing.

The simple subject: in this case, it is *ship*. It is what the sentence is about. The simple subject does not include modifiers.

The simple predicate, or the verb: in this case, it is *reached*. It tells what the subject does, or is.

Writing Complete Sentences

Correcting fragments – a sentence fragment is a group of words that is only part of a sentence. It does not express a complete idea or thought and may be confusing to the reader or listener. A sentence fragment may be lacking a subject, a predicate or both.

Fragment example – waited for the boat to arrive.

Corrected – We waited for the boat to arrive.

Fragment – My brother and I.

Corrected – My brother and I purchased a boat.

In your own writing, a fragment may be the result of incorrect punctuation or haste. Sometimes, you can fix a fragment by attaching it to a preceding or following sentence.

Fragment – We saw the two boys. Waiting for the bus to arrive.

Corrected – We saw the two boys waiting for the bus to arrive.

Fragment – Movies appeal to a wide audience. Including the elderly.

Corrected – Movies appeal to a wide audience, including the elderly.

Correcting Run-On Sentences

A run-on sentence is made up of two or more sentences written as though they were one. Some run-on sentences have no punctuation within them. Others may use only a comma where a conjunction or stronger punctuation is necessary. Use your judgment in correcting run-on sentences, as you have choices. You can make two sentences if the thoughts are not closely connected. If the thoughts are closely related, you can keep the run-on sentence as one sentence by adding a semi-colon or conjunction.

Examples

Run-on sentence – *We found a new house it is three miles from the city.*

Corrected – *We found a new house. It is three miles from the city.*

Run-on sentence – *I found a new job at the mall it is a perfect job.*

Corrected – *I found a new job at the mall; it is a perfect job.*

TIP – When you add a conjunction, make sure you use appropriate punctuation before it:

A comma for a coordinating conjunction

A semi-colon for a conjunctive adverb

BIG TIP – A common mistake, in fact, one of the most common mistakes in writing, is when students use a comma instead of a conjunction or an end mark. This is called a comma splice.

Run-on - *He finished college, he left the town to work in the city.*

Correct – *He finished college, and then he left town to work in the city.*

See Next Page for an exercise for Fragment and Run-on Sentences

Fragment and Run-on Sentences

Exercise:

Rewrite the following short paper about movies. Find and correct the sentence fragments and run-on sentences. Look for incomplete ideas, phrases or clauses used alone, complete sentences separated by commas, and sentences that are not punctuated correctly.

Why We Love Movies

Ever since movies have had sound. Films have been classified according to several different types. One of these was the action film, perhaps the most famous film of this genre was *Lethal Weapon*. Which was produced in 1988. A second genre included the science fiction movie, this genre was extremely popular with audiences. Especially teenagers. Stars such as Harrison Ford and Mark Hamill became famous in science fiction movies. Such as *Star Wars*. Rick Moranis and John Candy starred. In other science fiction movies. A third important type of movie is the comedy, some famous comedies include *Spaceballs*, *Caddyshack*, and *National Lampoons Family Vacation*, some other famous comedies were *Van Wilder*, *Not Another Teen Movie* and *Elf*. Some of the most famous comedic actors include Chevy Chase, Jack Black, John Belushi, Dan Ackroyd . And Bill Murray.

Ever since movies appeared in the 1940's. People have used them to escape from reality and their daily routine. Stars like Mel Gibson and Brad Pitt have been making audiences. Laugh and cry for many years. These stars have helped people relax and laugh for years, the public looks to them for entertainment, and they never let their audience down.

Lesson 5

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Subject / Verb Agreement

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- Students will understand how to insure proper subject /verb agreement in writing
- Students will demonstrate this understanding by successfully completing grammar exercises

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the information and rules about subject /verb agreement in writing
- The instructor will review the examples of the information and rules with the students

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Students will complete the exercises contained in the lesson.
- The instructor will review the exercises with the student after they are completed

Lesson 5

Subject / Verb Agreement

The subject and verb of a sentence must agree in number. Agreement means that when the subject is singular, the verb must be singular as well. When the subject is plural, the verb must be plural as well.

Basic Agreement – Fortunately, agreement between most subjects and verbs in English and writing is simple. Most verbs show the difference between singular and plural only in the third person present tense. The present tense of the third person singular usually ends in –s.

Example

Singular	Plural
I sleep	we sleep
you sleep	you sleep
she, he, it sleeps	they sleep

Agreement with Be

The verb be presents special problems in agreement because this verb does not follow the usual verb patterns.

Forms of be

<u>Present Tense</u>		<u>Past Tense</u>	
<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
I am	we are	I was	you were
you are	you are	you were	you were
she, he, it is	they are	she, he, it was	they were

Words between the subject and verb – a verb agrees only with its subject. When words come between a subject and its verb, ignore them when considering proper agreement. Identify the subject and make sure the verb agrees with it.

Examples - A story in the newspapers tells about 1960's.

Mom as well as Dad goes on the internet daily.

Agreement with Compound Subjects – use a plural verb with most compound subjects joined by the word and.

Example – My brother and his friends go to the mall daily.

If the compound subject is thought of as a unit, use a singular verb. Test this by substituting the singular pronoun IT.

Example – Peanut butter and jelly (it) is my brother's favorite sandwich.

Use a singular verb with a compound subject that is preceded by each, every, or many a.

Example – Each movie and play seems grounded in personal experience.

With or, nor, and the correlative conjunction either....or and neither...nor, make the verb agree with the noun or pronoun nearest the verb.

Examples

Cookies or ice cream is my favorite dessert

Either Cheryl or her friends are being invited.

Neither rain or snow is predicated today.

Personal Pronouns as Subjects

When using a personal pronoun as a subject, make sure to match it with the correct form of the verb be. Note especially that the pronoun you takes the verbs are and were, regardless of whether it is referring to the singular you or to the plural you.

You is and you was are nonstandard forms and should be avoided in writing and speaking. We was and they was are nonstandard forms and should be avoided in writing and speaking. We was and they was are also forms to be avoided.

Incorrect example – *You was my best friend. They was going away.*

Correct example – *You were my best friend. They were going away.*

Indefinite Pronouns as subjects

Some indefinite pronouns are always singular; some are always plural. Others may be either singular or plural.

Singular Indefinite Pronouns

another	either	neither	other
anybody	everybody	nobody	somebody
anyone	everyone	no one	someone
anything	everything	nothing	something
each	much	one	

Indefinite pronouns that are always plural are:

few

several

both

many.

These take plural verbs

Some indefinite pronouns can be singular or plural:

all	any	enough	more
plenty	none	some	most

The number of these indefinite pronouns any and none depends on the intended meaning.

The indefinite pronouns all, some, more, most, and none are singular when they refer to a quantity or part of something. They are plural when they refer to a number of individual things. Context will usually give you a clue.

Examples –

All of the flour is gone. (referring to a quantity)

All of the flowers are gone. (referring to an individual item)

Inverted sentences

Problems with agreement often occur in inverted sentences beginning with here or there; in questions beginning with why, where, and what; and in inverted sentences beginning with a phrase. Identify the subject – wherever it is – before deciding on the verb.

There clearly are far too many cooks in this kitchen

What is the correct ingredient for this stew?

Far from the embroiled cooks stands the master chef.

Predicate Nominatives – when a predicate nominative serves as a compliment in a sentence, use the verb that agrees with the subject, not the compliment.

Examples – The novels of Hardy are a milestone in British Literature. (novels is the subject, not milestone, and it takes the plural verb are)

Doesn't and Don't as Auxiliary verbs – The auxiliary verb doesn't is used with singular subjects and with the personal pronouns she, he, and it. The auxiliary verb don't is used with plural subjects and with the personal pronoun I, we, you and they.

Examples

Singular - *Doesn't Bob read very much?*

Plural – *Novelists don't necessarily write short stories.*

Collective Nouns and Subjects

Collective nouns are singular nouns that name a group of persons or things. Team, for example, is the collective name of a group of individuals. A collective noun takes a singular verb when the group acts as a single unit. It takes a plural verb when the members of the group are separated.

Examples –

Our team usually wins. (the team as a whole wins)

Our team voted differently on most issues. (the individual members vote)

Relative Pronouns as Subjects

When a relative pronoun is used as a subject, its clause - who, which, and that can be seen as subjects – the verb of the clause must agree in number with the antecedent of the pronoun.

Singular Example – I didn't read the book on horses that was given to me, but I did leaf through it.

The antecedent of the relative pronoun that is the singular book; therefore, that is singular and must take the singular verb was.

Plural Example –

Aldous Huxley and Charles Dickens, who were very different from each other, are both outstanding novelists.

The antecedent of the relative pronoun who is the plural compound subject Aldous Huxley and Charles Dickens. Therefore, who is plural, and takes the plural verb were.

Exercise

Locate the subject of each sentence. Then choose the correct verb.

1. There (is, are) several reasons for Bill's decision.
2. Some (know, knows) that Christian is a chef.
3. Both Steve and Frank (was, were) in my class this year.
4. Neither the authors nor the illustrator (was, were) famous when they collaborated on the book.
5. Where (is, are) James originally from?
6. (Has, Have) anyone here seen Jamie lately?
7. Lindsey's politics (is, are) not a secret to anyone.
8. Politics (is, are) Daquan's favorite subject.
9. Five dollar s (was, were) all Vanessa had until Friday
10. Isaiah is one of the coaches who (teach, teaches) skating to the little kids.
11. Many writers have been controversial, but few (is, are) as controversial as Aldous Huxley.
12. Neither his novels nor that shocking short story (is, are) censored today.
13. Nearly everybody who has read him either (love / loves) or (hate / hates) him.
14. There (is / are) no opinions in between.

15. He and his wife Frieda searched for new ways to relate to people. They (was / were) a remarkable couple.
16. The novel “Brave New World” (doesn’t / don’t) end happily.
17. Nevertheless, it is a novel that (entertains / entertain) most readers.
18. Even a collection of old toys (hear / hears) the secret whisper.
19. The boy asked why some people (attract / attracts) luck.
20. Paul is (partners / partner) with the older men.
21. What do you think the voices in the house that (were / was) speaking to Paul symbolize?
22. Why is it that Bob’s dog (does / do) not have a name?
23. Our class (vote / votes) on each story we read.
24. My story about Jake’s family, which (were / was) read last week, was a big winner in our poll.
25. A group of actors (have / has) decided to dramatize it.

Lesson 6

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Punctuation

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- Students will understand how to insure proper punctuation in writing
- Students will demonstrate this understanding by successfully completing grammar exercises

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the information and rules about proper punctuation in writing
- The instructor will review the examples of the information and rules with the students

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Students will complete the exercises contained in the lesson
- The instructor will review the exercises with the student after they are completed

Lesson 6

Punctuation

End Marks – . ? !

Punctuation that includes periods, question marks and exclamation points

End Marks have three functions:

a. to end sentences

example –

It was the best time of my life

Was it the best time for you?

What a baseball player Derek Jeter is!

b. to be initials and other abbreviations

examples –

Dr. Robert Boyle

Yds. Ft. Ave.

c. items in an outline

examples –

1. Volcanoes

a. Central vent-shield

Commas ,

Commas have many functions

a. before a conjunction in a compound sentence

example - I never disliked movies, but now I really love them.

b. items in a series

examples – She is brave, loyal, and kind.

c. words of address

example – We need to solve this problem, men.

d. parenthetical expressions

example – I'm not a quitter, believe me.

e. introductory phrases and clauses

example – While she was out, I was there.

f. nonessential phrases and clauses

example – Tommy Paro, who is the captain, won.

g. in dates and addresses

example – Send it by April 9th, 2009.

h. in letter parts

example – Dear Jim, Sincerely yours,

i. for clarity, or to avoid confusion

example – By noon, time had run out.

Semicolons ;

Semicolons have many functions:

a. in compound sentences that are not joined by coordinators

example- I read the Bible; however, I have not memorized it.

b. with items in a series that contains commas

example - We invited my brother, Mike; his friend, Kevin ; and my uncle Jerry.

c. in a compound sentence that contains commas

example - After I ran out of my money, I called parents; only my brother was home.

Colons :

Colons have many functions.

- a. to introduce lists

example – Those we called were the following: Joe, Greg, Shawn and Vin.

- b. before a long quotation

example – Lincoln once said: “Four score and seven years ago....”

- c. after the salutation of a business letter

example – To Whom it May Concern:

- d. with certain numbers

example – 1:28 P.M.

Dashes -

Dashes indicate an abrupt break in thought

Example – I was thinking of my father – who is arriving tomorrow – when you walked in.

Hyphens -

Hyphens can be used in many different ways

- a. with a compound adjective

example – I come from a family of hot-tempered people.

- b. in compounds with all-, ex-, -self, -elect

example – Our President-elect is too self-important

- c. in compound numbers

example – Today, I turned twenty-nine.

- d. in fractions used as adjectives

example – My cup is one-half full.

- e. between prefixes and words beginning with capital letters

example – Who was the best pre-Romantic writer?

- f. when dividing words at the end of the line

example – Churchill won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1930.

Apostrophes ‘

Apostrophes have many different uses

- a. to form possessives of nouns and indefinite pronouns
example – my friend’s book, my friends’ book
- b. for omitted letters in numbers / contractions
example – don’t, class of ‘99
- c. to form plural of letters and numbers

Quotation Marks “

Quotation Marks have many different uses

- a. to set off a speaker’s exact words
example – Sara said, “I want to go home.”
- b. for titles of stories, short poems, essays, songs, and book chapters
example – I liked Joyce’s “Araby.” My favorite song is “This Love.”

Ellipses ...

Ellipses is used for material omitted from a quotation

example – “It would foolish.....to disguise the gravity of the hour.....”

Italics

Italics are used for titles of books, plays, magazines, long poems, operas, films, and names of ships

example – Brave New World, Hamlet, Sports Illustrated, Titanic

Punctuation Sheet

Each passage has some punctuation errors, or is missing punctuation. Please rewrite each sentence, using correct punctuation.

1. I had a good time at the show yesterday Did you have fun at the show Nigel was there with Mike. Nigel is dating a doctor Her name is Dr Sara Evans.
2. Jimmy decided to buy a new car Melissa wanted him to get a corvette, but why would Jimmy want that car He decided to buy himself a new Pathfinder What a car it was Melissa was really happy with the Pathfinder.
3. Mike met a girl named Liz. She is brave loyal and kind. Mike never had met a nice girl before but he met one now.
4. Before first period I feel tired. Coffee as you know is my favorite drink. Coffee wakes me up believe me.
5. Brie had a lot work to do. While she was working Frank was having a party. Having finished her work at 8 Brie went out.
6. John captain of the football team was at Frank's party. Paul who is a player on the team was at the party. Frank and Paul having argued all night got into a fight at the end of the party.
7. Hazel must mail the letter by June 15th 2007. She must mail it to Sears Inc. 33 Winter Street Toms River NJ 08754
8. Nigel was worried about the snow storm. By noon the town was covered in snow. Nigel had to go outside and shovel snow. While shoveling snow Nigel hurt his back.
9. Lauren decided to apply for a new job she was determined to get one. She had gotten the application however she had not filled it out yet.
10. Julie is having a party this weekend. She is inviting my brother Mike her friend Brie Nigel Martin and Ivan.

11. Those who owe me work are the following Jimmy Liz Amanda Vanessa and Jake.
12. Anthony once said “Those who do not remember the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them.
13. I come from a line of strong armed men.
14. Mike is still friends with his ex girlfriend.
15. Does anyone want tickets to a pre season hockey game.
16. Did anyone take Sams book? Its anyones guess who has it. For that matter, who took Johns wallet?
17. Bob got three As and no Fs on his report card.
18. Jake took his test. He said Can I have a pencil? I said Okay. Jake took the pencil and said Can I sharpen this pencil? I said Yes.

Lesson 7

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Capitalization

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- Students will understand how to insure proper capitalization in writing
- Students will demonstrate this understanding by successfully completing grammar exercises

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the information and rules about proper capitalization in writing
- The instructor will review the examples of the information and rules with the students

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Students will complete the exercises contained in the lesson
- The instructor will review the exercises with the student after they are completed

Lesson 7

Capitalization

Capitalization mistakes can ruin a good essay. Here are some words and categories of words that must always be capitalized.

People and Titles

Names and Initials of People

Example – Joe Lipari, Greg Cole, Ryan Smith

Titles with names or in place of them

Example- Professor Simpson, Senator Orton, The Senator has arrived

Deities and members of religious groups

Example – Jesus, Allah, the Buddha, Zeus, Baptists

Names of ethnic and national groups

Example – Jews, Hispanics, African-Americans

Geographical Names

Cities, states, countries, continents

Example – London, Avon, Ireland, Australia

Regions, bodies of water, mountains

Examples – the Far East, Loch Ness, Mount Olympia

Geographic features, parks

Example – Great Plains, Island Beach State Park

Streets and roads, planets

Example – 45 East 2nd Avenue, Blue Lane, Earth, Jupiter

Organizations and Events

Companies and Organizations, teams

Example- Gaming Laboratories Inc., New Jersey Devils, New York Yankees

Buildings, bridges, monuments

Example – Dosantos Castle, Westminster Bridge, Washington Monument

Documents, awards

Example – Magna Carta, Purple Heart

Special named events

Example – Super Bowl, Stanley Cup Finals

Government Bodies, historical periods and events

Example – the House of Lords, Congress, World War II, the Elizabethan Age

Days and months, holidays

Example – Monday, Christmas, Canada Day, June, April

Specific cars, boats, trains, and planes

Example – MG, Titanic, Honda Civic, Carnival Triumph

Proper Adjectives

Adjectives formed from proper nouns

Example – Socratic Method, Irish cooking, Chaucerian age, Atlantic coast

First Words and the Pronoun I

The first word in a sentence or quote

Example – This is it. He said, “Let’s go”

Salutation and closing of letters

Example – Dear Sir, Very truly yours

First lines of most poetry

Example – Then am I

The personal pronoun, I

Example – I am happy, Or if I die

First, last and all important words in titles

Example – A Tale of Two Cities, Brave New World, The Catcher and the Rye

Capitalization Exercise

Rewrite the sentences and correct the capitalization errors

1. donavan mcnabb should stop trying to play football.
2. senator Bobby Smith arrived for the meeting. the senator looked angry.
3. i believe in the yankees.
4. Sampson likes to study hispanic and Jewish history.
5. lindsey and lauren want to visit europe next summer. lindsey wants to go to ireland, and lauren wants to visit paris.
6. jimmy once climbed mount everest.
7. bill lives on 1587 west third avenue in toms River, New jersey.
8. Danielle works for sears Incorporated.
9. When john went to Washington, he visited the lincoln Memorial.
10. christian learned about the magna carta in English class today.
11. james played in last year's super bowl.
12. Liz wants to learn more about world war II.
13. Did you know that next thursday is thanksgiving?
14. I want to buy a new car. I want either a jeep sahara or an 07 honda civic lx.

15. The atlantic coast is bracing for more hurricanes.

16. luis walked into the room at 11:30. The teacher said, "you are late."

17. Jamie just finished reading a book called "the great Gatsby." she loved the book.

Lesson 8

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Correct Word Choice

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- Students will understand how to insure proper word choice in writing
- Students will demonstrate this understanding by successfully completing grammar exercises

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the information and rules about proper word choice in writing
- The instructor will review the examples of the information and rules with the students

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Students will complete the exercises contained in the lesson
- The instructor will review the exercises with the student after they are completed

Lesson 8

Commonly Confused Words

Using correct word choice is a key to having good writing. Make sure to use the correct form of the following words below in your writing.

Accept / except

The verb accept means “to receive or believe.” Except is usually a preposition meaning “excluding.”

Example – The ticket office accepted all forms of payment, except personal checks.”

Advice / advise

Advise is a verb; advice is a noun naming that which an adviser gives.

Example – How did the witches advise Macbeth? Did they give him good advice?

Affect / effect

As a verb, affect means “to influence.” Effect as a verb means “to cause.” If you want a noun, you will almost always want effect.

Example – Did the man’s plea affect his beloved? It may effect a change in her attitude. Its effect is unknown.

All ready / already

All ready is an adjective meaning “fully ready.” Already is an adverb meaning “before or by this time.”

Example – Two hours later, they were all ready to leave. I had already read Beowulf.

Allusion / illusion

An allusion is an indirect reference to something. An illusion is a false picture or idea.

Example – T.S. Elliot makes many allusions to the literary works of others. It’s an illusion to believe you are always right.

Among / between

Between is used when you are speaking of only two things. Among is used for three or more.

Example – I had to choose between chocolate and strawberry ice cream. Beowulf is among my favorite poems.

Bring / take

Bring is used to denote motion toward a speaker or place. Take is used to denote motion away from such a person or place.

Example – Bring the keys over here, and I will take them to the house.

Fewer / less

Fewer refers to the number of separate, countable units. Less refers to bulk quantity.

Example – We have less literature and fewer selections in this year’s class.

Leave / let

Leave means “to allow something to remain behind.” Let means to be patient.

Example – The librarian will leave some books on display, but will not let us borrow them.

Lie / lay

To lie is to “rest or recline.” It does not take an object. To lay always takes an object.

Example – Cats love to lie in the sun. The worker will lay the carpet on the floor.

Loose / lose

Loose means “free, not restrained;” lose means “to misplace something or fail to find.”

Example – Who turned the horses loose? I hope we won’t lose any of them.

Precede / proceed

Precede means, “to go or come before.” Use proceed for other meanings.

Example – The Anglo-Saxon period precedes Middle English. The student proceeded to begin working.

Than / then

Use than in making comparisons. Use then on all other occasions.

Example – Shakespeare is better than Chaucer. We read one and then the other.

Two / too / to

Two is the number. Too is an adverb meaning “also” or “very.” Use to before a verb or as a preposition. *Example – Lauren had to go to town. I have too much homework. I have two children.*

Commonly Confused Words

Circle the correct word in the parenthesis

1. The ticket office would not (accept, except) Michelle's credit card.
2. I hate all vegetables (accept, except) corn.
3. How did your dad (advise, advice)you?
4. Did he give you good (advice, advise)?
5. How did the hurricane (affect, effect) the city?
6. What was the hurricane's (affect, effect) on the economy of the city?
7. Two days later, they were (all ready, already) to eat again.
8. I had (already, all ready) seen Paul play football.
9. Shakespeare makes many (allusions, illusions) to the work of others
10. The magician created an (allusion, illusion)
11. I had to choose (among, between) pizza and hamburgers for dinner.
12. The movie "Spiderman 3" is (between, among) my favorite movies.
13. (Bring, take) the remote control over here.
14. I will (bring, take) the movie back to Blockbuster.
15. We have (less, fewer) movies and (less, fewer) selections at Blockbuster this year.
16. Lauren will (leave, let) some money for Jimmy, but she will not (leave, let) Carol borrow any.
17. I love to (lie, lay) on the beach in the summer.
18. He will (lie, lay) a rose next to his grandmother's grave today.
19. Who turned the dogs (lose, loose)?
20. The Revolutionary War (precedes, preceded) the Civil War.
21. The Eagles are better (than, then) the Cowboys.
22. I ate one slice of pizza, (then, than) the other.
23. Danielle (proceeded, precedes) to order the pizza.

24. I am going (to, too, two) Joe's party.

25. (To, too, two) cops are going (to, too, two) Joe's party (to, too, two)

Lesson 9

CONCEPT/TOPIC

Grammar Rules Overview

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- Students will understand how to insure proper grammar in writing
- Students will demonstrate this understanding by successfully completing grammar exercises

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

- The instructor will review the information and rules about proper grammar in writing
- The instructor will review the examples of the information and rules with the students

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

- Students will complete the exercises contained in the lesson.
- The instructor will review the exercises with the student after they are completed.

Lesson 9

Grammar Rules That Make a Big Difference in Writing

This is an overview of important grammar rules that can improve writing. Some of these concepts have been discussed in more depth earlier in this packet.

Sentences

Avoid Sentence Fragments

Make sure all of your sentences express complete thoughts.

A sentence fragment is a group of words that does not express a grammatically complete thought. It may lack a subject, a predicate, or both. Fragments may be connected by adding the missing elements or changing the punctuation to make the fragment part of another sentence.

Fragment example – We admire George Eliot. A woman who prevailed over the many prejudices of her time.

Complete example – We admire George Eliot. She was a woman who prevailed over many prejudices of her time. (adding a subject and a predicate)

Complete example – We admire George Eliot, a woman who prevailed over many prejudices of her time. (changing the punctuation)

Avoid Run-on sentences.

Make sure all clauses in a sentence have the proper punctuation and / or conjunction between them.

A run-on sentence consists of two or more sentences written as though they were one or separated only by a comma. Correct run-ons by making two separate sentences, using a semi-colon, adding a conjunction, or rewriting the sentence.

Run-on: Greg Cole is a great musician, he plays the drums

Correct: Greg Cole is a great musician. He plays the drums.

Correct: Greg Cole is a great musician ; he plays the drums.

Correct: Greg Cole, who plays the drums, is a great musician.

Use end marks correctly. Use a period, not a question mark, at the end of an indirect question.

An indirect question is a question that still uses the exact words of the original speaker. Note the difference between the following sentences, and observe that the second sentence ends in a period, not a question mark.

Direct: Nick asked, "What is that?"

Indirect: Nick asked what it was.

Do not use quotation marks with indirect quotations within a sentence.

A direct quotation uses the speaker's exact words. An indirect quotation puts the speaker's words in other words. Compare these sentences:

Direct: Kimmy said: "I'm going to be up all night writing this paper." (quotation marks appropriate)

Indirect: Kimmy said that she was going to be up all night writing this paper. (no quotation marks)

Phrases

Place participial and prepositional phrases as close as possible to the events they modify.

Participle and prepositional phrases are modifiers; that is, they tell about some other word in a sentence. To avoid confusion, they should be placed as closely as possible to the word that they modify.

Incorrect example: Tiny microphones are planted by agents called bugs.

Correct example: Tiny microphones called bugs are planted by agents.

Avoid dangling participles. Make sure a participle phrase does modify a word in a sentence.

Incorrect: Disappointed in love, a bachelor's life seems attractive.

Correct: Disappointed in love, the man became a bachelor.

Clauses

Use commas to set off the nonessential adjective clause.

Do you need the clause in order to indicate precisely who or what is meant? If not, it is nonessential and should be set off by commas.

Use commas: Nick Stetz, who is a great role model for young writers, received the 1999 Nobel Prize in literature.

No commas: A writer who is a great role model for young writers received the 1999 Nobel Prize in literature.

Verbs

Don't use past tense forms with an auxiliary verb or past participle forms without an auxiliary verb.

Incorrect: I have saw her somewhere before. (saw is in the past tense and should not be used with have.)

Correct: I have seen her somewhere before.

Incorrect: I seen her somewhere before. (seen is a past participle and should not be used without an auxiliary.)

Shift tenses only when necessary.

Usually, when you are writing in present tense, stay in present tense; when you are writing in past tense, stay in past tense.

Incorrect: When my grandmother tells stories, everybody listened.

Correct: When my grandmother told stories, everybody listened.

Subject / Verb Agreement

Make sure subjects and verbs agree in number.

Incorrect – The Blyer sisters of Ireland was great writers.

Correct – The Blyer sisters of Ireland were great writers.

Incorrect – Kristie, as well as her sisters, were reserved.

Correct – Kristie, as well as her sisters, was reserved.

Incorrect – Nick and Mike was born in the 1970's

Correct – Nick and Mike were born in the 1970's.

Use a singular verb with nouns that look plural but have singular meaning.

Some nouns that end in –s are singular, even though they look plural. Examples are measles, news, Wales, and the names ending in -ics when they refer to a school subject, science or general practice.

Examples – Measles is a serious disease. Politics is a great subject to study.

Use a singular verb with titles.

Example – Scenes of Beachwood was published in 2008.

Rule: Use a singular verb with words of weight, time, and measure.

Example – Seven years is the length of time it took Matt to find a house.

Example – 200 pounds is expectable weight for Carl.

Pronouns

Use personal pronouns correctly to compounds.

Incorrect – Him and his friends went to the mall.

Correct – He and his friends went to the mall.

Incorrect – The teacher recommended Hamlet to Lauren and I.

Correct- The teacher recommended Hamlet to Lauren and me.

Incorrect – Give Lynn and they some flowers.

Correct – Give Lynn and them some flowers.

Usually, if you remove the noun and, the correct pronoun will be obvious.

Use we and us correctly with nouns.

When a noun directly follows we or us, the case of the pronoun depends upon its function.

Incorrect – Us readers enjoy romantic poetry.

Correct – We readers enjoy romantic poetry.

Incorrect – The teacher read Milton’s Paradise Lost to we students.

Correct – The teacher read Milton’s Paradise Lost to us students.

Avoid unclear pronoun references

The reference of a pronoun is ambiguous when the reader cannot tell which of two preceding nouns is its antecedent. The reference is indefinite when the idea to which the pronoun refers is only weakly or vaguely expressed.

Ambiguous: Homer, not Hesiod, wrote the Iliad, and he wrote the Odyssey too.

Clearer: Homer, not Hesiod, wrote the Iliad, and Homer wrote the Odyssey too.

Indefinite: The Nobel Prize, was won by Paul Stenzel in 1998, which is given to the greatest writers.

Clearer: The Nobel Prize, which is given to the greatest writers, was won by Paul Stenzel in 1998.

Avoid change of person

If you are writing in the third person – using pronouns such as she, he, it, they, them, his, her, its – do not shift to second person – you.

Incorrect – The feudal laborer had to obey his lord, and you needed to obey the king as well.

Correct – The feudal laborer had to obey his lord, and he needed to obey the king as well.

Use correct pronouns in elliptical comparisons.

An elliptical comparison is a comparison from which words have been omitted. In order to choose the proper pronoun, fill in the missing words. Note the difference below:

Example – I know my English teacher better than him.

Example – I know my English teacher better than he.

Don't confuse pronouns and contractions

Personal pronouns are made possessive without the use of an apostrophe, as is the relative pronoun whose. Whenever you are unsure whether to write it's or its, who's or whose, ask if you mean it is /has or who is /had. If you do, write the contraction. Do the same for you're and your, they're and their, except that the contraction in this case is for the verb are.

Modifiers

Avoid double comparisons

A double comparison is a comparison made twice. In general, if you use -er or -est on the end of a modifier, you would not also use more or most in front of it.

Incorrect – I like Shakespeare more better since I've read King Lear.

Correct – I like Shakespeare better since I've read King Lear.

Incorrect – He's the most greatest playwright in the world.

Correct – He's the greatest playwright in the world.

Avoid Illogical Comparisons

Can you tell what is wrong with the following sentence?

Plays are more entertaining than any kind of performance art.

This sentence is difficult to understand. To avoid such illogical comparisons, use other when comparing an individual member with the rest of the group.

Plays are more entertaining than any other kind of performance art.

To avoid another kind of illogical comparison, use than or as after the first member in a compound comparison.

Illogical – Joe baked many tasty pies if not more than Bob. (did he bake as many pies?)

Logical – Joe baked as many tasty pies as Bob, if not more.

Avoid misplacing modifiers

Modifiers of all kinds must be placed as close as possible to the words they modify. If you place them elsewhere, you risk being misunderstood.

Misplaced – Dumbledore is “a wise man” in the Harry Potter series.

Correct – Dumbledore in the Harry Potter series is a “wise man.”

Words not to capitalize

Do not capitalize north, south, east and west when they are used to tell direction.

Example – Miami is south of New York.

Example – Mexico is located in North America.

Do not capitalize sun and moon, and capitalize earth only when it is used with the name of other planets.

Example – The sun and the moon are heavenly bodies in a solar system that includes Mars, Jupiter and the Earth.

Do not capitalize the names of seasons

Example – One of Greg Cole’s best poems alludes to the seasons of winter and summer.

Do not capitalize the names of most school subjects.

School subjects only are capitalized when they name a specific course, such as World History II.

Otherwise, they are not capitalized.

Example – I'm taking physics, social studies and a foreign language this year. I might take American History I next year.

Note: English and the names of the other languages are always capitalized.

Example – Everybody takes English and either German or French.

Exercises

Rewrite each sentence correctly, and correct any and all grammar errors.

11. The professor, a renowned authority on Geoffrey Chaucer.
12. A modern version of King Lear is A Thousand Acres by Jane Smiley, an award winning novel.
13. The tragedies of Shakespeare is more popular than his histories.
14. When Hamlet was performed, the tickets are impossible to get.
15. Make sure to reserve tickets for Neil and I.
16. Several productions of Julius Caesar are performed on warm Summer nights in Central Park.
17. Having written both plays and sonnets, millions of readers admire the work of Shakespeare.
18. I like West Side Story more better that Romeo and Juliet.
19. The cast held a workshop for we students.
20. Founded in 1599, people still enjoy performances of Shakespeare's plays at the Globe Theater.

Specific Instructional Sequence of Activities:

1. Introduce the five writing competencies to students with a brief overview of each. (See “Writing Process Overview” handout)
2. With individual students, review each student’s original WritePlacer essay score and commentary. (Individual conferences)
3. Assign students to write an onsite, timed practice essay on one of the topics supplied in this packet. (See “Writing Topics”)
4. Teach students the fundamental steps of the writing process, using the materials and handouts in this packet. Take time to help individual students focus on areas of greatest need. (See instructional handouts; practice worksheets; supplementary materials)
5. At each instructional step, take time for students to improve their practice essays by applying the instructional steps they have learned and rewriting the essays to bring them to the level of “competent” in each area.
6. When instruction in the writing process has been completed, have students write a final practice essay on a second topic from the list provided in this packet.
7. Evaluate the second essay based on the WritePlacer “competency” criteria, and share that evaluation with students.