

The Writing Process: Practice

Writing Paragraphs

Objectives

Prewriting:

Planning:

First draft:

Partner feedback:

Second draft:

Editing:

Grammar Focus:

Sentence Check:

Mechanics:

Final draft:

In Part B, you will:

brainstorm ideas about a topic

(1) ask questions as a way to organize ideas; (2) use an outline

learn the correct formatting for a paragraph

review classmates' paragraphs and analyze feedback

use partner feedback to write a second draft

write both singular and plural forms of count nouns

practice writing complete sentences that always include a verb

use commas with certain transition words

complete the final draft of a paragraph

The Writing Process: Writing Assignment

Your assignment is to write an original paragraph of five to ten sentences describing your favorite vacation. The vacation can be real or imaginary. Follow the steps in the writing process in this section.



Prewriting: Brainstorming

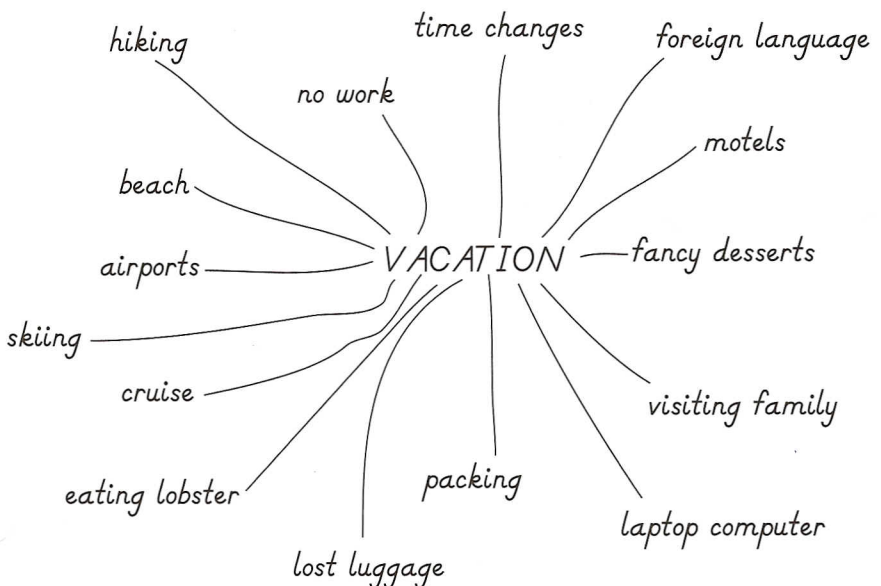


Brainstorming can help writers get ideas before they write. You can brainstorm with a group or a partner, or you can brainstorm by yourself. To brainstorm, think of as many ideas as possible about a topic. Write the ideas as they come to you without evaluating, connecting, or editing them.

Write Ideas Quickly

For this assignment, brainstorm about three or four of your favorite vacations or about vacations in general. Write quickly whatever comes to mind: where you went, when you went, what you did, how you felt, and so on. Do not worry about the importance or sequence of your ideas for now. Just try to think of as many ideas as you can. Remember that you can include imaginary vacations, too. Here is a sample brainstorming.

Sample Brainstorming About Vacations



Now try brainstorming about a vacation in the box below. Do not worry about using complete sentences or correct grammar. This exercise should help you get ideas for your paragraph.

Write More About a Specific Vacation

Next, look at the ideas you wrote. Use them to decide which vacation you will write a paragraph about. To do this, ask yourself some questions:

1. Which vacation was the most memorable?
2. Which vacation can you write the most about? Remember you will be writing five to ten sentences.
3. Which vacation was so good that you would like to experience it again?

Once you choose a specific vacation, you can answer more questions about it and continue brainstorming.

- ▶ Where did you go?
- ▶ When did you go?
- ▶ Whom did you go with?
- ▶ What transportation did you use?
- ▶ Was it your first time there?
- ▶ How long were you there?
- ▶ Did you have a good time?

- ▶ What are some things that you did there?
- ▶ Is there anything now that reminds you of that place when you see it, hear it, or smell it?
- ▶ If you had a chance, would you go back?

Planning: Lists and Outlining

Make a List

The next step is to plan and organize your ideas. You will also generate more ideas in this step. An easy way to organize is to first make a simple list of the most important information from your brainstorming. Feel free to add new information as necessary. Fill in the blanks below about your vacation.

Time: _____

Travel companions: _____

Mode of travel: _____

First time there? _____

Who decided on the trip? _____

Length of stay: _____

Have a good time? _____

Activities: _____

What was your favorite? _____

Is there anything that reminds you of that place now when you see it, hear it, or smell it?

How would you rate your desire to return and why?

Make an Outline

Now reread the information you filled out in the list above. Choose the information that you want to include in your vacation paragraph. Remember that you do not have to use all the information. Study the outline below as an example.

A. Where/when/with whom

1. Orlando
 2. 1999
 3. With family
- B. Describe the trip
1. Planning
 - a. Rental car
 - b. Hotel
 - c. Itinerary
 2. Activities
 - a. Weather
 - b. Different parks
 3. How do I feel about it now?
 - a. It was the best trip!
 - b. I would like to go again.

Now write an outline of your vacation paragraph.

[illegible]

First Draft

You are now ready to write the first draft of your paragraph. Many writers begin with the topic sentence. Review your list and outline in the previous section, then write your topic sentence here:

If you cannot think of a topic sentence right now, write a few sentences about the details of your vacation. As you write these details, you may think of a more general sentence to use as a topic sentence, for example, *My trip to Brice Canyon in Utah was the most adventurous vacation I have ever taken.* With a topic sentence like this, all your supporting sentences would show how the trip was an adventure.

Paragraph Format

Now is a good time to learn the format of a paragraph. You can then refer to this section when you write other paragraphs in this book.

When you write your paragraph, follow these paragraph-formatting rules.

The Format of a Paragraph

1. Give your paragraph a title, and write it in the center of the top line.
2. Double-space your paragraph to make it easier to read.
3. Indent the first line.
4. Leave a one-inch margin on all sides.
5. Write continuously and do not start each sentence on a new line. (In word processing, do not use a hard return at the end of a sentence.)
6. Begin each sentence with a capital letter.
7. End each sentence with correct punctuation.
8. Be sure to have a topic sentence.
9. Write three to eight supporting sentences.
10. End with a concluding sentence.

EXERCISE

12

PARAGRAPH FORMAT

Read the paragraph. Write the format rule labels on the lines.

1. _____ *My Best Vacation*

2. _____ *I will never forget the excellent*

3. _____ *trip I took to Orlando, Florida. My*

4. _____ *parents, my brother, and I decided to*

5. _____ *go there in the summer of 1999. The*

6. _____ *four of us flew from our hometown of*

7. _____ *Denver to Orlando. When we arrived*

_____ *in Orlando, we got a rental car and*

_____ *drove to our hotel. After dinner, we*

_____ *planned our itinerary for the next*

_____ *three days. The weather was great*

_____ *the whole week, and I had the time*

_____ *of my life!*

_____ *We visited the Magic*

_____ *Kingdom, Epcot Center, Universal,*

_____ *and Animal Kingdom. Each park was*

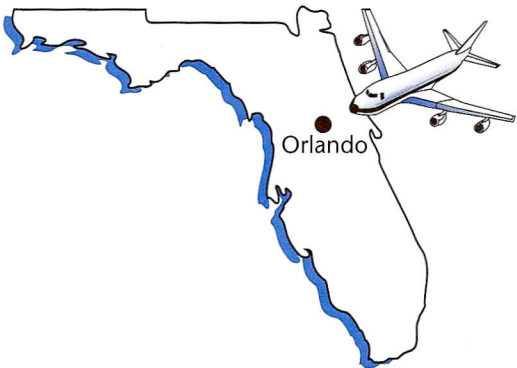
_____ *different from the others, and we had*

_____ *an incredible time at each one. I have*

_____ *taken several trips since that summer*

_____ *of 1999, but the best trip in my life*

_____ *was my trip to Orlando!*



First Draft

Now write the first draft of your paragraph on separate paper. When you finish, use this checklist to review your writing.

First Draft Checklist

1. Do I have a topic sentence that contains a clear topic and controlling idea?
2. Are all the sentences about the topic?
3. Are the sentences in a logical order?
4. Did I include transition words to help the reader?
5. Does my concluding sentence summarize the paragraph or express feelings?
6. Did I format my paragraph correctly?

Guidelines for Partner Feedback

Here are some guidelines about how to listen and talk to your partner about his or her work:

- ▶ Begin by saying something positive about the paragraph.
- ▶ Be specific about what works well and about what needs work.
- ▶ Find a straightforward but polite way to suggest improvements to the writing.
- ▶ When it is your turn to listen, take notes about how to revise your paragraph on the basis of your partner's feedback.
- ▶ Do not interrupt when your partner is talking. Try to save your response until he or she is finished speaking.

Peer Review

Exchange papers with another student. Read your partner's paper, and answer the questions on Partner Feedback Form: Unit 1, pp. 193–194. Discuss your partner's reactions to your paragraph. Make notes about any parts you need to change in your second draft.

Second Draft

Second draft revising should include more than grammar, punctuation, and spelling corrections. You should also be checking the topic sentence, the supporting details, the concluding sentence, and the overall completeness and clarity of your paragraph. Now carefully revise your paragraph using feedback from your partner and your own ideas for revising.

Second Draft Checklist

1. Is my topic sentence easy for the reader to understand?
2. Does the topic sentence give an idea of what the paragraph is about?
3. Are all the sentences about this topic? Is there any sentence that does not belong here?
4. Is there any sentence that seems out of order?
5. How many transition expressions are there? (Underline them.)
6. Have I considered all my partner's comments and suggestions?

Editing: Grammar and Mechanics

Now that your paragraph has taken shape and the content is clear, it is time to edit for grammar and mechanics (punctuation). In this part of the unit, you will look at two kinds of grammar as well as mechanics. The first grammar instruction, Grammar Focus, highlights English grammar points that are common problems for English-as-a-second-language students. The second grammar instruction, Sentence Check, will help you write better sentences and, therefore, better paragraphs.

Grammar Focus: Singular and Plural Nouns

- ① Remember that a count noun can be counted (*brick, bicycle, shoe*). When you write a singular count noun, make sure it has one of the following elements in front of it.
 - ▶ An article—*a, an, the*
 - ▶ A demonstrative form—*this, that*
 - ▶ A possessive form—*John's, Pamela's, my, his, her*

Incorrect: Hillary Clinton became senator in 2001.

Correct: Hillary Clinton became a senator in 2001.

Incorrect: The mayor is angry because there is lack of funds for new roads in plan. To some, the reason for problem is obvious.

Correct: The mayor is angry because there is a lack of funds for new roads in his plan. To some, the reason for this problem is obvious.

- ② Most plural count nouns end in *-s*. Some clues that indicate a plural noun is needed are *some, many, a few, these, those, numerous, a number of, all, most, and various*.

Incorrect: Those fund will pay for various project that the mayor wants to start.

Correct: Those funds will pay for various projects that the mayor wants to start.

Incorrect: At last week's meeting, many citizen voiced their opposition to those recent decision.

Correct: At last week's meeting, many citizens voiced their opposition to those recent decisions.

EXERCISE

13

GRAMMAR: EDITING FOR SINGULAR AND PLURAL COUNT NOUNS

Some of the underlined nouns in the sentences below are correct and some are incorrect. Correct the errors and be prepared to explain why you did or did not change the nouns.

1. According to the mayor's recently released plan, one part of the city will undergo a major changes in the next few months.
2. Though this changes is supposedly for the best overall, many resident are of course upset by the plan because they may be relocated to other places.
3. The parts of the city that the mayor's plan affects directly is the area between the river on the west and Highway 50 on the east.
4. All of the residences located in this areas of the city will have to be demolished to make way for a new shopping centers.
5. Whether or not this plans is realistic remains to be seen, but the mayor certainly has a great deal of support from the business community because this new shopping center could bring in over two millions dollars every months.

EXERCISE

14

GRAMMAR: CHOOSE SINGULAR OR PLURAL NOUNS

Fill in each blank with the correct singular or plural form of the noun in parentheses. Look for language clues about singular and plural (see Grammar Focus, p. 34).

I believe that capital punishment is wrong. First of all, there is the question of guilt or innocence. What if the person is really innocent? We now know of many **1.** (case) _____ in the United States in which an innocent **2.** (person) _____ was put to death. Because the result of capital punishment is permanent, it is important to be 100 percent sure of a person's guilt. However, in some **3.** (case) _____, this is simply not possible, so capital punishment will result in killing innocent **4.** (human) _____ from time to time. Second, capital punishment is killing. I do not believe in killing for any reason. Killing someone who may have killed someone else is not a valid

5. (solution) _____. Finally, one of the 6. (reason) _____ that many people cite for having capital punishment is that it is a 7. (deterrent) _____. That is, the fear of capital punishment will stop people from committing a 8. (murder) _____. However, this is simply not true. If it were true, then we would have very few 9. (case) _____ of capital punishment. History shows us that this has not been the case and that capital punishment has not been a deterrent to murder. For these and many other 10. (reason) _____, I cannot support capital punishment in any form.

Sentence Check: Include a Verb in Every Sentence

A sentence is a collection of words that expresses a complete thought. Each English sentence must have a **verb**. Examples of verbs are *go*, *is*, *took*, *wondered*, and *pretends*. Always check every sentence to make sure that it includes a verb.

Because verbs go with subjects, you should then check for the subject. Remember that the subject of an English sentence is the person or thing that does the action of the main verb. (Ask: *who or what does the action of the verb?* The answer is the subject of the sentence.)

Incorrect: Calcutta, with more than fourteen million people, the largest city in India. (no verb)

Correct: Calcutta, with more than fourteen million people, **is** the largest city in India.

Incorrect: In 1911, at the young age of twenty-five, Niels Bohr his Ph.D. degree in physics. (no verb)

Correct: In 1911, at the young age of twenty-five, Niels Bohr **received** his Ph.D. degree in physics.

Incorrect: From 1861 to his death in 1865, everyone the name of Abraham Lincoln. (no verb)

Correct: From 1861 to his death in 1865, everyone **knew** the name of Abraham Lincoln.

EXERCISE

15

GRAMMAR: MISSING VERBS

The following paragraph is missing some verbs. Insert the following verbs in the correct places.

has	is
come	add
produce	are
grows	needs



caladium

The caladium is a popular garden plant because it ^{grows} quickly, is easy to take care of, and comes in a variety of colors. To grow well, it water and a warm climate. The caladium is rather small. At its peak, it reaches only 18 inches in height, which is approximately 46 centimeters. Its heart-shaped leaves in a variety of colors, but a basic color found in each variety is green. In fact, the most common variety the one with dark green leaves. This particular variety a deep red center. Though the caladium with dark green leaves is the most common type, there many other varieties. These other varieties leaves that are white, pink, or speckled. A few caladiums can certainly a lot of color to any garden. For these important reasons, the caladium is popular with gardeners.

EXERCISE

16

GRAMMAR: LOOKING FOR THE VERB

Read this paragraph and look for sentences that are missing verbs. Add appropriate verbs.

The most fundamental classification of the chemical elements is into two groups: metals and nonmetals. Metals typically certain physical properties. For example, they have a shiny appearance. In addition, they the ability to change shape without breaking, and they have excellent conductivity of heat and electricity. Nonmetals, on the other hand, do not usually have these same physical properties. These three differences important, but there are chemical differences between metals and nonmetals that interest us more. When there is any doubt whether a chemical element is a metal or a nonmetal, a chemical

analysis will yield the final answer. In sum, a careful consideration of the three physical properties and a chemical analysis necessary to separate chemical elements into metals and nonmetals.

Mechanics: Commas with Transition Words

When transition expressions such as *in addition* (*to*), (*al*)*though*, and *later* appear at the beginning of a sentence, a comma is required after the phrase that the transition word begins.

<i>Examples:</i>	<i>in addition to</i>	<u>In addition to</u> the house, he bought the car.
	<i>(al)though</i>	<u>Although</u> she hit the brakes, she did not stop in time.
	<i>later</i>	<u>Later</u> that same morning, he met with me.

When the transition words occur in the middle of a sentence, generally no comma is required.

<i>Examples:</i>	<i>in addition to</i>	He bought the car <u>in addition to</u> the house.
	<i>(al)though</i>	She did not stop in time <u>though</u> she hit the brakes.
	<i>later</i>	He met with me <u>later</u> that same morning.

EXERCISE

17

MECHANICS: COMMAS WITH TRANSITIONS

Add the correct punctuation. Sometimes more than one answer is possible, and sometimes no punctuation is needed. You should be able to explain your answers.

1. She was first known as a famous child actress. Later in her life Shirley Temple Black became U.S. Ambassador to Ghana.
2. Mrs. Wills can speak Greek and Italian in addition to Afrikaans.
3. Orlando is a well-known international tourist destination. Though millions of tourists visit the area each year relatively few of them stay in the city of Orlando.
4. Though no one has come forth as a witness police believe that someone might have seen the car on Friday, July 17th.
5. In the 2000 U.S. presidential election, the winner was not known immediately. An exact count of the votes was finally available several weeks later.
6. In addition to teaching French Dr. Lorraine can be found counseling students.

Return to Your Second Draft

Now look at your second draft again and check these items. Make corrections where necessary.

Second Draft Checklist II

1. Did you use singular and plural nouns correctly?
2. Does each sentence contain a verb?
3. Check carefully for run-on sentences, comma splices, and fragments. (See Appendix 2, Appendix 3, and Appendix 4 for more information on these three sentence problems.)
4. Have you used the transitions *in addition (to)*, *although*, *though*, or *later*? If so, are they correctly punctuated?

Final Draft

Carefully revise your paragraph using all of the feedback you have received: partner feedback review, instructor comments, and self-evaluation. In addition, try reading your paragraph aloud. This can help you find awkward-sounding sentences and errors in punctuation. When you have finished, neatly type your final draft.