

# Writing Skill: Development



The writing stage of the writing process is often called **drafting**. When you draft, you should be focused mainly on ideas, rather than worrying too much about your grammar. Use your outline as you draft to make sure you don't lose your focus.

Many students find it easier to begin drafting the body paragraphs before drafting the introduction and conclusion paragraphs. This can be an excellent strategy to write more efficiently because the introduction and conclusion are based on what you write in the body paragraphs.

## Development

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Writing is well-developed when the ideas are explained in sufficient detail. You need to show that you have thought about the topic and that you have something meaningful to say. Paragraphs that lack development often sound too general or are redundant.

Compare the examples below. The first body paragraph is not developed well. The ideas are repeated and there are no solid examples, details, reasons, etc. Find the supporting sentences in the revised version that help develop the ideas.

### Example: Body Paragraph (Little Development)

Many students who study and work have to balance their schedules carefully. They have to make time for a lot of things because they have a lot of things to do. They are really busy with all of these things. There are lots of tasks that they need to finish on time. It can be very difficult for students to make time for all of their obligations.

### Example: Body Paragraph (Revised for Development)

Many students who study and work have to balance their schedules carefully. They have to make time to go to class, go to work, and also complete their homework. If they don't plan their time carefully, they may not be able to meet these obligations and then they will face serious consequences. They may lose money by not making time for work, or they may get bad grades in their classes by not having time to study. After these obligations are met, there are other activities many students enjoy, like spending time with friends, doing hobbies, or dating. They will not have time for these extra activities without balancing their schedules first. It can be very difficult for students to make time for all of their obligations, but it is essential to their success and well-being.

You can revise a paragraph that lacks development by adding or revising supporting sentences. Supporting sentences can give examples, explanations, details, descriptions, facts, reasons, etc. Which types of supporting sentences you use will depend on your topic.

You can start revising a paragraph by asking questions about the topic sentence (or the other supporting sentences). Ask questions like "Why?" "Like what?" and "How?" The answers to these questions can give you ideas to include that will help you develop your paragraph.

The first example paragraph had poor development because the ideas stopped too soon. The writer said that students need to balance their schedules carefully because they are busy.

The revised body paragraph has better development. It stated that students need to balance their schedules carefully because they are busy, and it did not stop too soon. It gave lots of examples and relevant details.

In order to revise the paragraph, the author might have asked questions like this:

Students are busy.

- Question: Why are students busy?
  - Answer: Because they have many obligations.
- Question: What obligations?
  - Answer: School, work, homework.
- Question: Why should they fulfill all of these obligations?
  - Answer: So they don't face serious consequences.
- Question: Like what?
  - Answer: Losing money or getting bad grades.

Sometimes paragraphs that lack development have the length of a developed paragraph, but don't clearly develop an idea because the writer was trying to sound academic or add extra words to make a paragraph longer. **Good development is not the same thing as length.** You need to focus on supporting your ideas rather than making your sentences or paragraphs long. Compare the following paragraphs. Even though the second paragraph is a little shorter, the paragraph is more developed. The redundant words are crossed out.

### Example: Body Paragraph (Poor Development)

Many students who study and work have to balance their schedules carefully. They have to make time to go to all of their different classes, go to work, and also complete their many various homework assignments. If they don't plan their time carefully, they may not be able to meet these obligations and then they will face serious and very large consequences. They may lose money by not making time for work or they may get bad and very poor grades in their classes by not having time to study. After these obligations are met, there are other activities many students enjoy like spending time with friends, doing hobbies, or dating. These are enjoyable activities for them. They will not have time for these extra activities without balancing their schedules first. It can be very difficult for students to make time for all of their obligations, but it is essential to their success.

### Example: Body Paragraph (Revised for Development)

Many students who study and work have to balance their schedules carefully. They have to make time to go to ~~all of their different~~ classes, go to work, and also complete their ~~many various~~ homework ~~assignments~~. If they don't plan their time carefully, they may not be able to meet these obligations and then they will face serious ~~and very large~~ consequences. They may lose money by not making time for work or they may get bad ~~and very poor~~ grades in their classes by not having time to study. After these obligations are met, there are other activities many students enjoy like spending time with friends, doing hobbies, or dating. ~~These are enjoyable activities for them.~~ They will not have time for these extra activities without balancing their schedules first. It can be very difficult for students to make time for all of their obligations, but it is essential to their success.

## Exercises

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### Exercise 1: Ask questions to generate supporting sentences.

*Write questions about this topic sentence or the answers to the questions you write.*

Topic sentence: There are many reasons for people to travel abroad.

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Question: Why should people travel abroad?

Answer:

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Question:

Answer:

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Question:

Answer:

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## Exercise 2: Ask questions to generate supporting sentences.

*Write questions about the topic sentence. Use the answers to write a developed paragraph on a piece of paper.*

EX: Topic sentence: Learning how to cook is a valuable skill.

Possible questions:

1. Why is cooking a valuable skill to learn?
2. Who should learn how to cook?
3. What happens to people that don't know how to cook?

Paragraph:

*Learning how to cook is a valuable skill. Everyone needs to eat, so everyone should learn to cook a few basic dishes. The first reason that cooking is so valuable is because it can save money. People that don't know how to cook eat out or purchase prepared meals at the grocery store, which can be very expensive. Another reason that learning how to cook is so valuable is because it is often healthier. Many meals that are ready-to-go have preservatives and the ingredients aren't as fresh. Learning this skill is essential.*

Practice with these topic sentences.

1. Topic sentence: People need to learn how to set goals.
2. Topic sentence: People should learn another language.

## Exercise 3: Eliminate redundancy to improve development.

*This body paragraph has poor development. Read the paragraph and revise it on a piece of paper.*

Students who do not work may not have exactly all of the same stress that working students have, but they have other things to worry about. Some students need to plan a very careful budget in order to save as much money as they can and not spend too much money that they shouldn't spend because they don't have very much money to spend. Other students worry about maintaining very high grades so that their sponsor will see their diligence and allow them to continue studying. They spend a lot of time studying as much as possible and practicing the skills they learn in class so that they can do well on the exams and pass the exams and quizzes with very good scores. Passing the exams and quizzes is very important to them and so they spend a lot of time studying. This can cause significant stress in their lives. These are just some of the additional concerns students face when they are not working during the semester.



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