



University Prep Writing B

A textbook for advanced-low ESL writing students

Christin Stephens and ELC faculty at Brigham Young University

University Prep Fall Writing B

Fall Semester Packet

Version: 0.211

Built on: 07/26/2022 08:40pm

This book is provided freely to you by



Table of Contents

Addressing the Prompt	5
Timed Writing 1	10
Integrated Writing 1	14
A Shifting Structure	19
Timed Writing 2	21
Integrated Writing 2	25
Creative Writing	32
Timed Writing 3	40
Integrated Writing 3	43
Personal Statements	45
Example Personal Statement	46
Types of Personal Statements	48
Organization For Comprehensive Personal Statement	54
Organization for Personal Statement with Prompt	57
Revising	62
Writing: Development	64
Example Personal Statement	68
Mini-Writing: Formal Emails	71
Timed Writing 4	79
Integrated Writing 4	84
Mini-Writing: Reviews	87
Timed Writing 5	94
Integrated Writing 5	97
Reflections	100
Timed Writing 6	105
Integrated Writing 6	110
Back Matter	116
Citation Information	117

Addressing the Prompt

One of the most essential steps of writing is ensuring that you fully understand what you are being asked to write about.

Verbs

First of all, the verb used in the prompt is an important signal to you on how you need to write your essay. If you think carefully about the meaning of the verb, it will help you decide on your organization and you can use it to check that you included all of the necessary information.

Example Prompt Verbs

- Describe your home city.
 - This topic is more general. You could approach it by describing the people who live in your city, history, architecture, popular tourist sites, or even the urban planning.
- Compare and contrast your home city and Provo, UT.
 - You need to explain similarities and differences. You must include both in order to completely respond to the prompt. This requires you to do a little more than describe the characteristics of the two places, you need to also make some judgements about them.
- Summarize the speaker's thoughts about Provo, UT.
 - In this response, your supporting ideas should be limited to the content in the original source. You should not have any of your own ideas mixed into this answer. It should also be limited to the opinion about the city, not about any other area in Utah.
- Many cities in the United States do not have reliable, widespread public transportation. Do you think college towns, such as Provo, UT, should be required to provide public transportation for the students? Support your position on this issue with reasons and examples.
 - The question is about more than your opinion. The idea of supporting your ideas implies that you need to bring in additional sources to add strength to your argument. If the prompt is timed, you would need to focus your support on general knowledge or personal experience to give reasons and examples.

1 Exercise: Prompt Analysis

1. Take a look at these [TOEFL Writing practice items from ETS](#)
2. Identify the prompt for each writing task.
3. Discuss what the prompt verb would require the writer to do?
How would a successful response be organized?

Content

Next, you need to understand what content you are expected to include. The prompt may be very narrow because the topic is very specific. In other cases, the prompt may be very general and allow you space to make personal decisions about what supporting ideas to include.

Always remember to review the prompt throughout the writing process to make sure that the focus of your essay matches the same scope as the prompt.

Example Content Breakdowns

- Describe your home city.
 - This topic is more general. You could approach it by describing the people who live in your city, history, architecture, popular tourist sites, or even the urban planning. If you had the opportunity, it would be wise to clarify with the teacher if there is a more specific explanation of what aspect of your city should be described.
- Compare and contrast your home city and Provo, UT.
 - Again, this topic is fairly broad. You know you need to talk about what is the same or different, but it could again be about many different attributes of the two cities.

- Summarize the speaker's opinion about Provo, UT.
 - In this response, your supporting ideas should be limited to the content in the original source. You should not have any of your own ideas mixed into this answer. It should also be limited to the opinion about the city, not about any other area in Utah.
- Many cities in the United States do not have reliable, widespread public transportation. Do you think college towns, such as Provo, UT, should be required to provide public transportation for the students? Support your position on this issue with reasons and examples.
 - The content of this essay is restricted to public transportation accessibility for college students specifically. Your focus should only be on this population and the unique environment of college towns. Additionally, you need both reasons and examples as support, excluding one of those types of support would result in an incomplete response.

2 Exercise: Writing Prompts

Choose a topic (content) for your partner to write about. Choose a verb that identifies a specific task. You can use this resource ([UARK Verb chart](#)) to help select an appropriate verb for your prompt. Write a prompt and exchange it with a partner. Analyze your partner's prompt for the task and content that the writer should target.

Constraints

Finally, you should also look at any limitations included in the prompt. Constraints could include

- limits of time

- characters (letters, punctuation, and spaces)
- words
- revision tools (dictionaries, thesaurus, spell check)
- sources (required or no access)
- teacher, tutor, or peer review (required or no access)

Timed Writing 1

Timed writing can take many forms, but the obvious unique factor of this type of writing is the fact that there is a limit on the amount of time you have to complete it. This most commonly occurs in an exam situation, where the tester is evaluating how well you understand a topic and/or can explain your thoughts without any external assistance. The amount of time and the expected length of your writing will vary based on the instructions.

You could expect to find a timed writing portion of a test or quiz in virtually any subject. It doesn't matter whether you plan to study business, engineering, music, or linguistics. Timed essays are used frequently to get you to analyze, argue, or create something with what you have learned. Essays push you to show more than just recognizing a correct answer.

Although this section is about timed writing in general, all of the timed writing tips in this textbook will help you with the 30-minute essay on the TOEFL.

Step One: Recognize the constraints

This means that when you encounter a timed writing prompt, you should first think about the context.

- How much time do you have?
- What length of a response does the teacher expect?
- What aspect of my writing is most important to the teacher?

- Are there other sections of the test that you need to complete?
- Does the testing format provide spell check?

Usually you will know in advance that there will be a timed writing component to an assessment, so you can think about these questions beforehand. This will help you prioritize your time.

Step Two: Organizing your ideas AND your time

It is common for students to feel a sense of panic when they see a clock counting down the seconds during an exam. Because of this psychological pressure, it is easy to overlook a few important things.

First of all, an outline will *always* benefit you. You may think that the best idea is to immediately start writing because the time is limited, but that could lead to a very disorganized presentation of an answer. Read the prompt carefully and make a brief outline of ideas so that you know all parts of the prompt will be addressed and all of your most important details will be included.

Second, consider how to use the time as your ally. Rather than allowing it to control you, think of how you can use the time to keep yourself on track. For example, if the essay is only a small part of the total grade, control the amount of time you give yourself to write the answer. You might do this by answering that question first under a stricter time limit before you answer any of the multiple choice questions. Divide your the time you have to work with so you can work smarter.

As an example, you may have 30 minutes to complete an essay. In order to work quickly, you could follow a time schedule like this:

Time (Counting down)	Task
30:00-27:00	Write your thesis and topic sentences (outline)
27:00-20:00	Write your first body paragraph
20:00-13:00	Write your second body paragraph
13:00-8:00	Write your introduction paragraph
8:00-3:00	Write your conclusion paragraph
3:00-0:00	Revise and edit your essay

You will obviously need to structure your times differently depending on the length of time you have to work with. It may also be necessary to adjust times depending on what is most important to the teacher. For example, there may be a larger emphasis on accuracy, so you will need to give yourself more time to revise and edit.

Examples of timed writing prompts

- Compare and contrast the similarities and differences between Greek and Roman civilizations. Choose at least three aspects in your comparison. (Civilization-History)
- As part of a midterm, you would need to read and analyze financial statements. (Intro to Business)
- Analyze the rhetorical devices used in the poem above. Be sure to include at least 5 specific terms from the textbook in your analysis. (English Literature)
- Explain the process for prototype design. Include each step and a complete description of each stage of the process. (Engineering)
- Discuss the physiological and psychological changes that occur in humans between the ages of 18-25. (Psychology)

1 Exercise: Timed Writing 1

Set a timer for 20 minutes. Write about one of the following topics. Your response should be between 250-300 words.

- Describe an important person in your life. Why has that person had a significant impact on you?
- Why did you decide to learn English? What specific moments led you to being in this class? How will this decision impact your future?
- Homesickness is a common difficulty that international students face during their first semester living abroad. What can a homesick student do to improve their situation? What (if anything) should schools do to support these students?
- What is one characteristic you think is key to being a good friend? Why do you think that characteristic is so vital? What are the consequences of not developing this characteristic?

Integrated Writing 1

Integrated writing is an extremely common task type at the university level. In fact, almost all of the writing you will do may be considered "integrated" to some degree. Integration simply means including ideas found using one or both of your receptive language skills: reading and listening. At the most basic level, when we read and respond to a text, we are using a receptive skill to inform our writing. At the more academic level of this skill, you will express an understanding both of explicit and implicit information. This may include comparing/contrasting or providing your own opinion on the topic.

Because this is such a common expectation of academic writing, you can expect to see integrated tasks in potentially any college course you enroll in. Typically a true integrated task would allow you the support of referring to the original material (or at least the notes you took) while writing. However, there may be instances when there will be a constraint of time (such as on a quiz or test).

Writing about a topic you were expected to understand and drawing connections between different sources pushes you beyond a passive understanding to recreating the essential knowledge of the course in your own words.

Although this section is about integrated writing in general, all of the writing tips in this textbook will help you with the integrated essay on the TOEFL.

Step One: Review the source material

This means that when you encounter an integrated writing prompt, you should first think about the content.

- Is there one required source material or multiple?
- Is the content written or spoken?
- How complex are the ideas presented?
- What connections can I draw between the content and other concepts discussed in this (or another) course?
- What connections are there between the various sources?
- What complexity of a response does the teacher expect?
- To what degree can I include my own opinion or background knowledge?
- Am I expected to include direct quotes/references to the text or to discuss it more abstractly?
- Is there a time limit for reviewing the source and/or writing my response?

Because integrated writing generally includes access to the source material in advance of writing and during the writing process itself, this will feel more like a drafted task.

Step Two: Organizing your ideas AND your time

Because of this task can range in the demand both in comprehension and in linguistic ability, it is understandable that this writing may require more planning and time.

First of all, an outline will *always* benefit you. You may think that the best idea is to immediately start writing, but that could lead to a very disorganized or unfocused answer. Read the prompt carefully and make a brief outline of ideas from the source(s) that are necessary to

include in an answer. Ensure that you know all parts of the prompt will be addressed and all of your most important details will be included. Identify any specific phrases or sentences you would want to include verbatim.

Second, be realistic about the time you have to work on this task. Review the source material to estimate the time it will take to read or listen to it. This may include multiple reviews and/or notetaking, which will add to the overall time. Next, consult the syllabus deadlines and your other commitments to set a personal timeline for working on this project. Will you have time to write multiple drafts? Is there time to have a classmate review your writing or to visit the campus Writing Center?

It may also be necessary to adjust times depending on what is most important to the teacher. For example, there may be a larger emphasis on accuracy, so you will need to give yourself more time to revise and edit. You will also want to consider how necessary it is for you to fully grasp the concepts. In other words, if this assignment is for a core course in your major or in a particularly challenging class, it will be worth scheduling additional time. However, if the assignment is a small percentage of your total grade or for a general education course you're doing well in, it may be fine to lower the priority for reviewing and drafting this essay.

Examples of integrated writing prompts

- Compare and contrast the similarities and differences in opinion between the authors of the two articles on screen time limits for children. Choose at least three aspects in your comparison. (Early childhood education)
- As part of a midterm, read the source provided and discuss if this account is trustworthy according to the points discussed in class lectures. (History)
- Analyze this stanza from a poem. What is the implied meaning? Explain this poem using the four analysis steps from the video we watched for homework about Shakespeare's sonnets. (English Literature)

1 Exercise: Integrated Writing 1

Prompt: Altitude can have a significant impact on our bodies. Using the information from the article and video, explain why altitude training can be beneficial for athletes over time. You should also explain why exercising at a high altitude can be dangerous if done incorrectly. Refer to at least one specific detail from each source in your response. Your answer should be between 250-300 words.

Click on the link below to read an article from the local Utah news, then watch the following TED Talk. You may take notes.

<https://edtechbooks.org/-qFqW>

A Shifting Structure

This structure is sometimes referred to as a traditional "five-paragraph essay." When you write a five-paragraph essay, your organization is very predictable. There is always one introduction paragraph with the thesis at the end, body paragraphs that each develop one topic related to the thesis, and a conclusion paragraph that begins with a restatement of the thesis. This structure is excellent to use when you write **short** essays (e.g., essays for AA/AB, the TOEFL independent essay, etc.).

By properly using a five-paragraph essay structure, you show that you understand the basics of American English writing. This foundation is important because once you can write a solid five-paragraph essay, then you can expand it without confusing your reader.

In **longer** academic essays, the structure has to become more flexible. Imagine an eight-page research paper with only five paragraphs. The topic and the length is too complex for a five-paragraph structure. Longer essays may have more than one paragraph for the introduction, headings may signal major parts of the essay, or one topic may be developed over several paragraphs. The same general principles apply to longer writing that you have learned for shorter essays, but you should not try to fit an eight-page research paper into five massive paragraphs.

Do not be surprised if your college writing teachers ask you to stop using the five-paragraph essay for your writing assignments. One of the most essential steps to success when you write in college is to

clearly understand the professor's expectations. If your professor shows you a sample of what you need to write, you should use the sample to help you understand what your professor expects.

Your college teachers may ask you to write something other than an essay (e.g., a literary analysis, reflection, chapter summary, etc.). Often, these other types of writing assignments will have an entirely different structure. This book emphasizes the importance of analyzing model writing because that will help you know how to write whatever you need to write in college, regardless of the structure of the assignment.

Consider how the following essay starts to break the patterns of a typical five-paragraph essay. The structure is less predictable, but it still follows the same general principles of good essay writing that you have learned. Click to see the example essay on the next page.

1 Exercise: Analyze Example Essay

Consider how the essay in the following chapter of this book starts to break the patterns of a typical five-paragraph essay. The structure is less predictable, but it still follows the same general principles of good essay writing that you have learned.

Timed Writing 2

This timed writing tip section and practice is focused specifically on the unique aspects of the TOEFL independent writing task (30-minute essay). As previously mentioned, all of the timed writing practice in this book will help you work toward success on the TOEFL writing section. However, there are some specific points that need to be made about the expectations for the writing on the test.

The TOEFL independent writing task requires you to explain and defend a position.

Response format

Your answer should look like a balanced essay. You should write a four or five paragraph essay with an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Choosing the number of body paragraphs will depend on your ability to write fluently and develop your ideas. Typically, it is easier for students to develop their ideas if they choose to write two body paragraphs. Writing two developed body paragraphs is better than writing three underdeveloped body paragraphs. An effective response is usually around 300 words. Remember that quality is more important than quantity in this instance.

Focus on what is possible for you to do well during the time limit without access to any additional help.

Scoring

This is the biggest difference between TOEFL timed writing and the others discussed in the previous section. Because the TOEFL is a *language* test, the emphasis in the grading will be on your language use. Your actual ideas are a secondary to the language you use to express the ideas. Therefore, while the TOEFL is imitating the type of writing you will do in a college setting, the task itself is different because of the rubric.

1 Exercise: TOEFL Rubric

Take some time to look over the [TOEFL Independent Writing Rubric](#).

1. What will the test raters be focusing on as they assign a score to your essay?
2. How is this rubric similar or different from the rubrics your UP Writing teacher has used this semester?
3. Imagine a writing rubric for a class in your anticipated major. What similarities or differences would you expect there to be? Why would you see those differences?

2 Exercise: Independent Question

Prompt: What is the most important skill for students to develop before they attend college? You have 30 minutes to respond to this prompt. Your answer should be around 300 words long.

Timed Writing Tips

Because students take the TOEFL at various points in the semester, here is a list of strategies that are discussed at other points in this textbook. All of these strategies are things to keep in mind as you prepare. You may want to skim through the textbook ahead of the class schedule to learn more about these points in more detail.

- Read the prompt carefully.
- Brainstorm your ideas for each part of the prompt.
- Organize your ideas into a logical outline.
- Decide on what is the most important to include.
- Write a thesis statement that directly answers the main part of the prompt.
- Write topic sentences for your main points.
- Write a restated thesis statement.
- Begin developing your ideas into full paragraphs. There are different approaches to this. Find what works for you.
 - Start with the point that is easiest to write, leaving the sections that are hardest for when you have some momentum to your writing. (Note: This may create a challenge if you are still stuck and have no time to revise)
 - Start with the body paragraphs and then work your way to the introduction and conclusion. (Note: This does not mean the introduction and conclusion are unimportant! Make sure to include them)
 - Start from the beginning and work to the end. (Note: Although this seems like the obvious way to approach writing, it can often lead to disorganized thoughts)
- Leave at least 5-10 minutes to review and revise your writing.
 - Before the test, look at feedback your writing teacher has given you on your writing. Are there patterns of organization, development, coherence, or unity errors? Meet with your teacher during office hours before if

possible to get tips for how to recognize and resolve those errors during the test.

- Also look at feedback your grammar teacher has given you on your accuracy errors. Are there patterns of errors with grammar structures that you can look for? Meet with your teacher during office hours before if possible to get tips for how to recognize and resolve those errors during the test.
- Any additional points in your brainstorm and outline can be added if there is time.

Integrated Writing 2

In the first integrated writing practice, you learned that integrated writing is a common task at the college level. Because incorporating ideas from outside sources through summary and synthesis is so important, it is a task included on the TOEFL. This section of the integrated writing practice focuses on the unique differences between a normal integrated writing task and the very controlled version you will encounter on the TOEFL.

It is important to first note that the TOEFL integrated writing task is not a true essay as you have likely learned to create. There is no introduction. There is no conclusion. There is no room for your own personal reactions and opinions on the topic. You do not write a thesis statement. You don't need 5 paragraphs with 5 sentences each.

The TOEFL integrated writing structure is very prescribed, and the content is provided directly. The integrated writing task requires you to summarize and compare academic information.

Task format

You will have three minutes to **read** a passage about an academic topic. You should take notes about the main points that the author makes, but you do not need to write a lot because you will be able to see the reading again when it is time to write.

Then you will **listen** to a piece of an academic lecture that addresses

the same topic that you read about. The professor that is speaking may have the same opinion as the author of the article you read, but the professor often has an opposing point of view. You need to take good notes during the listening. You can only listen one time. Make sure you listen for the main points you found in the reading.

You will have 20 minutes to **write** your response to the question.

Read the question carefully and address all the parts of the question. For example, in this example question, the primary task is to summarize the points made in the lecture. Then you should explain how they relate to points in the reading. Always answer both parts of the question.

Example: TOEFL Integrated Writing Prompt

Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to explain how they challenge specific arguments made in the reading passage.

Response format

Your answer will not look like a traditional essay because this task is not an essay. This task is a summary. In order to summarize the information they give you, you will typically need four paragraphs. The first paragraph will state the relationship between the reading and the listening (e.g., do they agree about the topic, or do they disagree?). The other three paragraphs will each focus on a specific point that was addressed in both the reading and the listening. You do not need a conclusion paragraph. An effective response will have approximately 200 words.

Strategy

Many students find it helpful to organize their notes with a “T-Chart.” On one side of the T chart, write down the main points from the reading. On the other side of the T-Chart, write down the corresponding points found in the listening. Even though the reading passage reappears on your screen while you write, taking notes on the reading is important. It can help you focus during the listening and give you something to listen for.

This is a sample T-Chart that could be used to show the points made in the example task.

Reading Passage	Lecture
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

These are two sample responses. The first response is a low-mid response because it has some of the details, but is missing significant points made in the lecture. It is not very developed and seems to focus a lot on the reading.

The second response is a high response because all of the main points are addressed, and the emphasis is on summarizing the listening and comparing it to the article, rather than summarizing every detail mentioned in both.

Scoring

In order to receive a high score on this section, you need to answer the question by writing about the important points from the reading and listening in a clear and accurate way.

The sample task on the following pages contains a reading passage, a

lecture transcript, and a response that would receive high marks.

1 Exercise: Reading Passage

1. Read the following passage.

There are different types of universities. Some universities focus almost completely on research. These universities reward professors for doing research. They hire professors that are dedicated to discovering new things and publishing their findings. Other universities focus more on teaching. These universities hire professors that are able to explain concepts to their students clearly. Some universities have tried to blend both approaches and focus on both research and quality teaching, which is problematic.

First, both doing research and teaching take time, and having a dual focus will distract professors from being adequately prepared for their classes. Doing research can often be a messy, complex process, and they may end up spending so much time doing research that they don't have time to prepare their lectures or exams. When professors are not adequately prepared for classes, students may struggle more to understand the concepts and do well in class. If professors are expected to both teach and research, they will not have time for both.

Also, there is no real benefit researchers bring to the classroom if they lack teaching skills. Many researchers who teach as professors have had limited teacher training. They have extensive knowledge of their field, but do not know how to manage a classroom, write a reliable assessment, or scaffold student learning. Students are very frustrated by professors who lack these teaching skills. Teaching skills are necessary in order to help students learn; thus, experts without formal teacher training don't have a clear advantage.

Finally, by choosing one focus, professors can become more skilled in what they choose to do. If they choose to be a researcher, they can make a name for themselves in research because they can devote all of their time to research. If they choose to be a teacher, they can gain the teaching skills they need to be an excellent teacher, rather than trying to make time to research as well.



2. Listen to the following lecture.

[Click here to listen.](#)

3. Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to explain how they challenge specific arguments made in the reading passage.

Integrated Writing Tips

Because students take the TOEFL at various points in the semester, here is a list of strategies that are discussed at other points in this textbook. All of these strategies are things to keep in mind as you prepare. You may want to skim through the textbook ahead of the class schedule to learn more about these points in more detail.

- The prompt does not really change. The content will be different, but you will always be comparing two different perspectives.
- The reading will be visible when you write. Only take simple notes of the main points to make it easier to listen for the comparison point.
- Take careful notes during the listening.
- Organize your ideas into a logical outline.
 - Paragraph 1 What do the reading and lecture discuss?
 - Paragraph 2 What is the speaker's first point? How does it challenge the reading?
 - Paragraph 3 What is the speaker's second point? How does it challenge the reading?
 - Paragraph 4 What is the speaker's third point? How does it challenge the reading?
- Leave at least 5 to review and revise your writing.
 - Check your notes again. Did you accurately present the perspective of the lecture as it compares to the reading? Are all 3 main points included in your essay?
 - Before the test, look at feedback your writing teacher has given you on your writing. Are there patterns of organization, development, coherence, or unity errors? Meet with your teacher during office hours before if possible to get tips for how to recognize and resolve those errors during the test.
 - Also look at feedback your grammar teacher has given you on your accuracy errors. Are there patterns of errors

with grammar structures that you can look for? Meet with your teacher during office hours before if possible to get tips for how to recognize and resolve those errors during the test.

Creative Writing

While there may be some educational and professional settings that will encourage creative writing, the purpose of this practice is more about developing your own voice in writing. Creation in your second language is an important part of both establishing your sense of self and extending your language finesse without the pressure of grades or rigid structure of academic writing.

Organization

Creative writing is an excellent opportunity to practice "breaking the rules" of writing. It is a common saying that you have to know the rules in order to know how to effectively ignore or change them for a specific task.

1 Exercise: Artistic Freedom

A great example of this principle can be seen in the artwork of the famous painter Vincent van Gogh. Complete this exercise to learn more about artistic freedom in creative writing.

1. Take a look at some of van Gogh's early work on [this page from the van Gogh Museum](#).
2. Then click through to see his later self-portraits, landscapes, and floral artwork on [this page from the van Gogh Museum](#).
3. Discuss the differences and similarities between his early artwork and the paintings and drawings he created later in life.
4. How does this relate to writing?

Writing follows a similar pattern. You begin by learning very strict rules about punctuation, organization, appropriate length, etc. However, as you practice and explore and gain skills, you will see that there are many opportunities to break from the rigid structure and expectations to create something that is uniquely designed to fit the task.

This all goes to show that although creative writing is very free and open, there are elements of organization patterns that will be familiar to you from your heavily structured academic writing experiences.

Before beginning the main exercise for this chapter of describing a fictional character, practice describing a classmate using the instructions below.

2 Exercise: Describe a classmate

Choose a classmate to work with on this assignment. You will write individual sentences using the prompts below. Then revise the paragraph for flow.

1. What does your partner look like? What descriptive words would you use about your partner's appearance that would help a reader identify this person in a crowd?
2. How would you describe your partner's personality?
3. Write a few words about how your partner feels today and why.
4. Check your description to see if there are any words you can replace with more specific synonyms.

Introduction to Creative Writing

Creative writing is centered on the idea of expressing original ideas and reflecting on experiences. The most common purpose for creative writing is entertainment. This takes many forms, from novels to poetry to movie scripts to song lyrics to a personal history. In all of those forms (and many others), creative writing serves as a vehicle to share ideas and emotions with the audience.

Creative writing also often has the purpose of description and reflection, which further connect the audience to your ideas by painting a picture with words in such a way that the reader can see or feel that same experience second-hand. Finally, creative writing is often for the purpose of self-expression. In these cases, the potential audience is less important than you as a writer having a space to explore your internal world through your own words.

In other words, the purpose of creative writing is a varied as the product itself. Although there are many types of creative writing, in this chapter you will only practice creative fictional descriptions.

1 Exercise: Creative prompt

The first step of the process is to read and understand the prompt.

Prompt: Describe a fictional character for a short story. The first paragraph should be a description of the physical and personality characteristics of the person. The second paragraph should be a short description of an event that highlights one of these characteristics.

Prewriting

Although some creative writing can be spontaneous, for the purpose of this course, you will be producing planned and drafted creative work.

Character

Once the genre has been decided, brainstorming about character and setting begins. In order for creative writing to effectively connect with the audience, the reader needs to be able to visualize the story and understand the people involved. In a novel, you have plenty of space to describe physical appearance, give examples of personality in different situations, and describe the full, detailed world inhabited by the characters. However, in one paragraph, you can only communicate only the essential details.

Because of this limited space, take time to brainstorm details about the character. When you have a full mind map of everything you *could* include in the character, it will be much faster to identify the *essential* details.

2 Exercise: Description brainstorm

Write as many descriptive words as you can within 5 minutes. Check with a thesaurus to change any basic vocabulary for more specific words with more accurate connotations.

Example brainstorm: giant, ugly, angry, greedy, monstrous, scary, lonely, pale skin, dark hair, moustache and beard, dirty/ripped clothes, loud voice, etc

3 Exercise: Description paragraph

Use the brainstorm for your description to start creating a paragraph to describe your character.

Short Story

From here, you can decide on a type of story to illustrate one of those characteristics. The character you have created may exist in a variety of fictional genres such as humor, romance, horror, action, drama, mystery, etc. Because this chapter is focused on *short* creative writing, you will not have the space to develop a narrative, but you can connect the way you describe the person and the story you include to the tone of the type of story it could exist in.

For example, you would not want to attempt to tell the whole story from beginning to end of how your character fell in love. However, it would be possible to describe a likeable person and demonstrate how pleasant and interesting he is by telling a short story of a first date that emphasizes these qualities. Thinking of a specific situation (like an episode of a tv show) will help you to show the reader important information about the character in a more meaningful way than reading a list of adjectives.

4 Exercise: Story brainstorm

Decide how you want to illustrate an important characteristic of your character through a story. This part of the assignment is only a paragraph long, so consider the limits of how much story you can tell in that space.

Example story: Instead of saying that this character is greedy, it would be better to give a simple descriptive story about stealing from the village and hiding the treasure in a cave. This is a fantasy story, so the genre becomes clear in this setting as well.

Story Outlining

The importance of the outlining stage of writing becomes more clear when you have limited space. There is no room for extra ideas. You do not have the luxury of anything unnecessary. The shorter the word or page count, the more intentional you need to be about what details you will include.

Plot outlining begins with identifying the problem, conflict, or peak of drama at the center of the episode. This is known as the *story climax*, and it is the most critical part of the story because it answers both the question *what happened* and *why does it matter*. In a humorous story, this would be the *punchline* or the moment that makes you laugh. In a dramatic story, it may be the moment the main character realizes the truth of the situation. You can think of it as a late thesis statement. It is the sentence, or sometimes paragraph, that is the whole purpose of the story. Everything before it builds up to this moment. The conclusion is the reaction to it.

5 Exercise: Creative Prewriting

1. Write your story climax sentence.
2. Choose about 2 moments that explain how the character arrived to that situation.
3. Decide how to explain the importance or impact of that situation.
4. Practice telling the story to a partner using only the remaining brainstorming details.
5. Add or delete any details based on your spoken draft.

Writing

Aside from the usual practice in presenting clear ideas and logically organized connections between those ideas, creative writing is an opportunity to continue practicing descriptive writing. Creative writing should push you to expand your vocabulary and to understand the connotations of synonyms. Finding a more interesting word that conveys an additional meaning (ex. speak vs whisper vs mumble vs rant) can add depth to understanding without using a significant amount of space. This skill transfers very well to academic writing, where you often have strict length limitations and you need to reduce your word count to be more precise.

5 Exercise: Adding Detail

Read this example of a character description and story. Add more descriptive language. Don't just focus on adding adjectives and adverbs. Think about how synonyms with more specific connotations can add interest to all of the parts of speech.

Outside of the village lives an ugly giant. He is very tall, and he is so scary that the village people avoid him. His loud voice can be heard miles away. The giant's appearance is so terrible, but his behavior is even worse. There are many stories in the village of his anger and bad manners when he could not be avoided.

One of the stories is about a contest. The village held a contest for the heaviest pig. The farmer who won received a bag of gold. After winning the prize, the farmer returned home. He did not know that the giant was waiting in the dark. The giant stole the bag of gold and the pig too! The prize pig and treasure were taken far away and never seen again. The greed of the giant was never forgotten in the village.

7 Exercise: Creative Draft

Write a draft of your character description.

- 2 paragraphs (double-spaced)
 - First paragraph description of the character
 - Second paragraph story to highlight an attribute
- fiction
- descriptive language

Timed Writing 3

Word Choice

In this textbook chapter on descriptive writing, you learned about the importance of word choice. This writing skill should be kept in mind as you write under time constraints. Because timed writing often does not allow the comfort of access to a thesaurus or ample time for revision, this skill needs to be automatic in order to have a significant benefit.

Automaticity comes from practice. Whenever you practice incorporating new vocabulary into your drafted writing, you are steadily gaining new words that you will have access to when writing under a time limit. In fact, this skill does not only strengthen through active use of new words in drafted essays. When you read and listen with the intention of recognizing and learning new words and phrases, you can also expand your vocabulary. Sometimes these words and phrases can enter your vocabulary without intentional practice due to repeated exposure to them in context. In other words, automaticity of word choice is a skill you build just by practicing English as much as possible.

Sentence Variation

Variety not only improves writing by including more descriptive and specific words and phrases. Even sentence structure choices can have an impact on the clarity of your ideas and the continued interest of a

reader. There isn't a "better" or "best" grammatical structure for a sentence. Focus on learning how to use each type to best present your ideas. A more advanced writer does not over-rely on one type.

Like word choice, sentence variation will become natural for you over time as you write more. It will also be strengthened as you hear and read how others structure their ideas.

A **simple sentence** has just one independent clause (subject + verb). It is one complete idea.

- Mother Teresa was a great woman.

Compound sentences have two independent clauses. This means that there are two separate and complete ideas that are combined using a connector word (also known as a *compound conjunction* or *FANBOYS*; ex. for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).

- Mother Teresa was a great woman, and she had a significant impact on the world.

The third would be a **complex sentence** which has one independent clause and one (or more) dependent clause. The dependent clause is incomplete without the inclusion of an independent clause. You may have learned these in grammar class with a different names (such as *time clause*, *conditionals*, or *subordinating conjunctions*).

- Although she initially had no money to support her work, Mother Teresa dedicated her life to serving the poor.

Finally, you can have a **compound-complex sentence** these sentences have both a compound conjunction and a subordinating conjunction.

- Mother Teresa dedicated her life to serving the poor even though she initially had no money to support her work, and this

example is a reminder to help others regardless of our personal situation.

Revising for Variation

Although these skills will find their way into your writing naturally, your revision time is perfect for checking for variety. During a timed writing situation, you should always reserve some time to check your work before submitting. In this practice, you will focus on using that revision to look for words that are: repetitive, imprecise, basic, or weak. Additionally, you will revise by looking at grammatical structure of sentence to create a more interesting rhythm of ideas and restructure for clarity.

1 Exercise: Timed Writing (Revision Focus)

For this timed writing practice, you will have 20 minutes to write on the topic. At the 20-minute timer, you will begin your revision time. You will have 5 minutes to revise for word choice and 5 minutes to revise for sentence variation.

1. A friend from your hometown is considering coming to study at the ELC but would like to know more about the experience first. Describe your experience at the ELC in detail.
2. One of your classmates is applying for a job. The job requires at least one character reference* and your classmate has asked you to write it. Describe the positive qualities and characteristics of your classmate to this potential employer.
3. The ELC administration has sent you a survey. The purpose of the survey is to help train teachers to be more effective. One question on the survey is a short answer (1-2 paragraphs) asking you to describe a good writing teacher. Using details from the writing classes you have taken and your own personal preferences, describe what makes a writing teacher effective.

Integrated Writing 3

Integrated writing assignments target listening and/or reading comprehension as well as your writing ability. One way to demonstrate advanced comprehension is to vary your word choice and sentence structure while maintaining the ideas.

Simple Paraphrasing

An application of the strategies of word choice and sentence variation can be seen through the writing task of paraphrasing. You will learn more about paraphrasing in greater detail in a later chapter of this textbook. In this practice, you will see how these strategies can be used to do basic paraphrases.

Paraphrasing is to share the same meaning as what was originally stated using different words. A restated thesis is essentially a paraphrase because it retains the original meaning but says the information in a new way. Paraphrasing occurs in conversations when you ask someone to repeat what they said because we rarely repeat ourselves word for word.

Therefore, at its most basic, paraphrasing requires you to search for and use synonyms. Often, it requires an adjusted sentence structure as well. These changes provide clarity about what was most important in the original statement.

As discussed previously in this chapter, it is imperative not to alter the meaning of the original ideas when you restate them. You will need to

pay particular attention to word choice so that there is no interference from connotations used in your paraphrase. Additionally, you will need to check the grammar of any restructured sentences to ensure that you have preserved the intention of the original.

Integrated Writing Tip

It is common for an integrated writing assignment to include multiple original sources connected by the same topic. These sources may have the same position on the topic (supporting the same main idea and point of view), but they may present opposing opinions as well. This second option is most common on the TOEFL.

Some differences between author/speaker point of view may be more implicit and subtle. Use your understanding of connotation to recognize opposing viewpoints.

1 Exercise: Integrated Writing (Paraphrase Focus)

Read the article and watch the video below. Using the information you learned from the sources, describe the excavation by Howard Carter. Why was the tomb preserved so well? What did they find?

[Nov 4, 1922 CE: Excavation King Tutankhamun's Tomb Begins](#)

[The Discovery of King Tut: The Antechamber](#)

Personal Statements

Personal statements are writing tasks that require the writer to describe their experiences, characteristics, purpose, or plans. These types of writing are common for job and school applications. While there is a lot of variation in the prompts and expectations, there are some key things writers need to know about this style of writing.

Example Personal Statement

Exercise: Analyze a personal statement

1. *How does the writer introduce himself?*
2. *Look at the prompt below. Do you think that the author appropriately responded to all of the prompt?*
3. *Are the ideas sequenced in a logical order?*
4. *Is there a clearly stated purpose (conclusion) in this personal statement?*
5. *What suggestions would you give this writer to improve the personal statement?*

Prompt: Have you become aware of significant needs in your family, school, and/or community? Please explain how you have worked toward meeting those needs. (300 words max)

Through my studies and professional career, I have had the opportunity to serve in different areas. Before graduating from university, I did social service in a nonprofit organization called [Organization]. [Organization] is in [City, Country] and its objectives are to empower women from the poorest valley in [City] to have better opportunities, be healthy, and start their own businesses. My role was to help women find opportunities to eat healthier, prevent diseases, and be self-sufficient. I worked with a group of nurses and doctors to create and teach workshops on how to choose healthier options. Due to their low income and lack of food available, the most significant

challenge was their limited variety of food. Thus, we had to create specialized meal plans that fit their necessities but were also easily accessible for them. We also taught them how to cook their meal plans with the food they had available at that time. In addition, although the organization I worked for didn't ask me to teach their families, I took the time to provide information to them because I thought it was important for the patient to have support from their family so that the patient could reach their goal easily. That experience not only opened my perspective and helped me recognize the diversity that we have in the world, but also made me realize that we, as health professionals, need to understand those differences in order to best treat our patients.

Types of Personal Statements

There are different situations that would require a personal statement, each of which would have slightly different approaches. The most common types of personal statements are: cover letters, admissions essays, and statements of purpose. In all three of these situations, you as a writer are trying to convince the reader to invest in you by showing evidence of your ability and potential.

While the exact specifications of these writing tasks will vary, all of them expect the writer to disclose personal information and respond to the prompt clearly and fully. The idea of sharing details about your life or "bragging" about your qualities can feel deeply uncomfortable for many people. It is therefore important to remember the purpose of a personal statement. This type of writing exists to provide the reader with relevant information about you that would set you apart from others. A personal statement stands in conjunction with the rest of an application and transforms that data into a full picture of you as a person and how you would fit into the institution.

[The Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) has some excellent personal statement advice and examples.

Admissions Essay

An admission essay is part of the application to a college or university. The school will have access to a lot of information about you from the rest of your application, but this is your opportunity to present your full self. Think of it as a written interview where you get to provide

more details about yourself that add to their understanding of how you would fit in the college environment.

The admissions essay typically prompts you to talk about a specific aspect of yourself that they would not know about from just your transcript and demographic information. The question may be about your goals, overcoming past challenges, service, or any other attribute the college views as being essential for success in that specific school.

Every university will have different expectations for how many admission essays you submit. They will also have varying word or character counts. It is important for you to use that limited space wisely to really persuade the reader that you are an ideal future student.

Examples of admission essay prompts include:

1. Many students submit applications to several colleges. What will determine which one you will choose to attend? Please be specific in your response.
2. Describe a specific time when you were aware of a need in your family, school, or community. How did you respond to that need?
3. Tell us about a time when you did not achieve a goal or experienced a difficult challenge. How did you recover from this experience? What did you learn from this and how will it influence your future reactions to challenges?
4. Discuss an area of interest that you find really engaging. Why is this topic so fascinating to you? What do you do to learn more about this topic?

1 Exercise: Admissions Essay Brainstorm

1. Choose a school to apply to or program you would be interested studying. Even if you are not planning on studying at a US college, you can choose a technical training or certification program that would be of interest to you.
2. Take a look at the website for the program/school to get a general idea of the purpose/mission and the expectations for enrolled students.
3. Make a list of talents, skills, experiences, etc that you already have that would fit the purpose/mission and help you be successful in meeting the expectations for students.
4. Make an additional list of features or aspects of the program/school that appeal to you. What will you gain from this specific learning opportunity?
5. Once you have your list, choose the ideas that feel like the strongest or most unique points from your brainstorm.
6. Think of how you can show these ideas instead of telling your audience. Is there a story you can share that demonstrates these ideas in a more interesting way?

Cover Letter

Cover letters serve a similar function to an admissions essay. This type of personal statement goes along with your resume or curriculum vitae to give a more complete description of you and why you would be the best choice for the position. Again, it serves as a written interview that allows a potential employer to narrow down the search to candidates that would be most competitive.

In today's world of online submitted job applications, the resume or CV will get you through the initial sorting of applicants if the necessary experience is listed and certain buzz words are mentioned. The cover letter then discriminates between the applicants based on

their character and personal alignment with the business.

Therefore, it is important to fully research the business you are applying for and to tailor your cover letter to the specific company. You can do this by looking at the mission or vision statements on the company website's About Us page. You can also learn about specific current projects and reference them in your cover letter. The cover letter is your way of showing that you really understand what the business is about and how you could contribute to it.

Cover letters do not generally have specific prompts. However, if the prompt were to be articulated, it would be something along the lines of:

- How do your experience and your skills qualify you for this role and why should we choose you instead of the many other applicants?

That being said, some specialized careers may include a short written response to a question. For example, a teacher may be asked to provide their philosophy on learning.

2 Exercise: Cover Letter Brainstorm

1. Search for a job online. Look for one you would actually be interested in applying to.
2. Read through the description and the qualifications (required and desired/preferred).
3. Make a list of all of the characteristics and skills you currently have that meet the job description.
4. Make another list of the characteristics and skills you do not think you already have.
5. With the "not yet" list, think of how to put a positive spin on your lack of experience in these areas. Do you learn new things quickly? Are you open to adapting to a different company culture? Have you ever had to quickly learn how to complete tasks in a previous job?
6. Think about what items on the list will be most important to highlight in your cover letter. A cover letter is always used together with a resume or curriculum vitae (CV), so you don't want it to just list experience. You are telling a story.
7. Next to those most important highlights, write how you would choose to present that information in a memorable way.

Statement of Purpose

Finally, there are times when you may be asked to write a more general personal statement. This might be as part of an application for a scholarship, a nomination to receive an award, a promotion, or an investment pitch. It may also be part of your personal goal setting routine.

The statement of purpose is slightly different than the other two personal statements because it is more focused on the present and future goals rather than your past experience. Like a cover letter, there is unlikely to be a specific prompt to respond to. However, you

can approach a statement of purpose by thinking about these questions:

- Where do you see yourself in (number) years?
- How do you plan to achieve your goals?

3 Exercise: Statement of Purpose Brainstorm

For this practice, you will write the statement tied to your personal goals in learning English.

1. Make an honest list of all of the reasons you decided to learn English.
2. Make a list of the benefits you imagine for your future self because of this goal. Be specific about how learning a second language will make that future ideal self possible.
3. Make a list of the challenges you have faced during this experience.
4. If there is a specific story from your English learning experience that demonstrates both the highs and lows of reaching for this goal, write down some of the key points.

Organization For Comprehensive Personal Statement

To write a personal statement, let's begin with a general, comprehensive approach. This means that rather than develop your statement for a specific purpose, you will consider how you would respond to the three main personal statement types in general.

The Hook

A personal statement needs a hook, just like any other type of writing. In fact, a personal statement is almost more in need of getting the reader's attention early because you want to be memorable among the many statements the reviewers will see. While this can be done in the usual ways you have learned for writing hooks, one of the most common types is the use of an anecdote. An **anecdote** is simply an interesting and relevant true story. A personal statement often uses a specific story to illustrate important attributes or to create an organization for highlighting experience.

The Thesis

Your personal statement should have a clear sentence that directly expresses your purpose. Your goal should be abundantly clear in this sentence and all other points in your personal statement need to

support this main idea.

Supporting Ideas

The remainder of your personal statement should focus on clearly establishing your qualifications and experience, demonstrating your character and personal qualities, and indicating your potential for growth. This may be done with a variety of examples or one extended description that highlights all of the necessary traits that set you apart.

Conclusion

Finally, your comprehensive statement should have a concluding sentence that recommends you to the reader. This final sentence should be memorable and emphasize your purpose in sending this information.

1 Exercise: Storytelling

Personal stories are a useful tool for showing your points rather than listing them. Look at the list of points below and write a short story (5 sentences or less) that illustrates your character, skills, or potential. Try to start your story with a strong hook to pull the reader into the story and clearly relate it to the desired qualifications.

1. Meeting deadlines
2. Teamwork
3. Critical thinking
4. Technical knowledge
5. Training

Writing a Comprehensive Personal Statement

Here are some things to keep in mind as you write this general form of a personal statement.

1. The terms *general* and *comprehensive* here are about purpose, not content. This version is meant to be a starting point for you to use when you are called on to provide a personal statement. Therefore, the examples, reasons, and descriptions should be powerful, clear, and detailed. Once you have a comprehensive statement you are happy with, it will be easier to make adjustments to it for a specific situation.
2. Because it is a *personal* statement, remember to focus on yourself and present yourself honestly and fully. You do not need to adhere to the same rigid writing style as the typical academic writing.
3. Your writing should be full of energy. You want to present the best version of yourself in the writing. If you think of this as a preliminary interview, you can imagine the combination of positivity and professionalism you would want to present. Especially if you are sharing an experience that had some negative aspects, remember to focus on the positive side and the lessons learned.
4. Make it stand out! Imagine sitting in an office for hours looking at short essay after short essay. You are trying to narrow down the search for a new employee. As a writer, you need to pop off of the page and share something that will stay with the reader.

Organization for Personal Statement with Prompt

Once you have your more general personal statement, you will need to tailor it for specific audiences. This means that whenever you are asked to submit a statement, you make adjustments to your personal statement to fit the requirements, expectations, or tone of the unique situation.

Specific Prompts

There may be times when you will need to start from scratch because there is a specific prompt or the circumstance renders the general statement irrelevant, but you will usually have at least some part of the general statement that you can use as a starting point. This will typically be the case when the person or organization requesting the personal statement is looking for specific information that would not be included in a resume that is necessary for the applicant.

Examples of information they would try to find through providing a specific prompt would be:

- How you respond to challenges
- Your philosophy on a topic and whether or not it aligns with their own
- Intentions and long-term perspective
- Signals that indicate how well you would mesh with an existing team

When you face a specific personal statement prompt, be sure to look at each part of the question and consider:

- What does the reviewer expect to learn from my answer?
- How would my answer separate me in a positive way from other applicants?
- How to I show myself in the best light in this question?
- What information is not included in my personal data and resume that they already have access to?

1 Exercise: Analyze the Prompt

Before you begin writing, you always need to be sure you fully understand the question so that you include all of the necessary details. Use the questions below to analyze the prompt.

Prompt: Our college aims to have small class sizes and to promote mentoring between faculty and students and between peers. Explain how you will contribute to and benefit from those mentorships.

1. What does the reviewer expect to learn from my answer?
2. How would my answer separate me in a positive way from other applicants?
3. How to I show myself in the best light in this question?
4. What information is not included in my personal data and resume that they already have access to?

Brainstorming

Before you begin writing, break down the prompt into the individual pieces. Make sure that you fully understand what it is asking and that you include answers to every part of it. Once you have the prompt broken down into pieces, begin your brainstorm. Your brainstorm should give you a chance to write down all ideas you have about each

section. At this stage, nothing is good or bad. The only purpose of the brainstorm is to get all of the ideas out of your head and onto paper. Then you can begin to look for patterns and evaluate the strength of the different points. You may want to mark the ideas you like so that they stand out. Then, review your general personal statement and identify any parts of it that would be useful in responding to this particular prompt.

Development

Once you know what the reviewer wants to know and have brainstormed your ideas of your response, you need to consider how to develop those ideas further. To do this, consider the points in your brainstorm in terms of your motivation, your qualifications, and the expectations of the reviewer. Choose a limited number of items from your brainstorm to include. Because a personal statement is so brief, you want to thoughtfully construct your ideas.

As you develop your ideas, you may find yourself writing much more than you can actually include in your final product. This is ok during the drafting stage. You want to fully build a mental image for your reader, but you also want to discard the irrelevant points later. After you have drafted your ideas, think about these questions to eliminate the extra thoughts.

- Does the reader *need* to know this?
- Is anything here sufficiently included in the materials I have already submitted?
- How does this sentence add to the reader's understanding of me?
- Is the information memorable and unique?
- Do I fully answer the question?

2 Exercise: Give Feedback on Development

Here is an example body paragraph from a student's application essay describing a time when the student did not achieve a goal or experienced a difficult challenge. Use the questions above to give feedback to the writer about the development of this idea.

Three years ago, I tried out for the soccer team at school and thought everything was going to be fine since I had been practicing for a long time to be accepted. Nevertheless, I wasn't chosen for the soccer team, and this put me in a place of uncertainty, doubting myself and worrying about my performance in sports which I have always been good at. This experience was hard and complex because being accepted was what I wanted the most. This caused my life to be badly affected in many aspects.

Cohesion

The most important thing to remember as you finalize your personal statement is that it should feel very clear and direct. It should be obvious to the reader why you included specific details. Every idea needs to point back to the prompt. The response should show unity in the tone and content. You do not have room for any stray ideas in this short of a writing task. After you think you have answered the question as completely as you can, give yourself time to look over it again for cohesion and/or ask for someone to review it for you.

3 Exercise: Give Feedback on Cohesion

Here is an example body paragraph from a student's application essay to a psychology program at a US college. Be prepared to discuss how the writer effectively creates cohesion in this paragraph or how the writer can improve this paragraph to clearly tie it back to the prompt (Why do you want to study psychology at this university?).

My previous education in [country] helped me to study and learn new things by myself. Since the tuition was expensive, I tried my best to be a person who has the highest grades in the field I was studying to get scholarships because only the person who has the highest grades can get full scholarships. What I have done to get good grades on the test is to reduce sleeping time, preview and review every day, and teach my classmates. Teaching my classmates allowed me to be prepared for the test efficiently because preparing for teaching helped me understand better what we had learned from class and make what I had taught into my own knowledge. Eventually, my goal became true. Even though I did not like the education system, it has helped me develop some good learning and studying habits to transfer to a new learning environment. Furthermore, it has taught me that I can do whatever I plan and work hard.

Revising

Review the Prompt

One strategy for revision that may help you is to highlight the different points of the prompt in different colors. Then use those same colors to highlight the sentences in your response that relate to those parts of the prompt. For example, a prompt may ask you to describe an award you received, what you did to earn it, and what resources you used to achieve success. You may mark any ideas in your writing that relate to the purpose of the award in yellow, the narrative/process sentences in green, and the resources in blue. This will help you recognize if there are any unmarked sentences that might not address the prompt. It can also help you to see if ideas are repeated or underdeveloped.

Word Choice

Because personal statements are often limited in terms of character or word count, you want to be sure that you get the most impact out of the words you choose to use. Choosing a word that is more precise in its meaning and connotation will help you to use the space wisely.

1 Exercise: Develop a Paragraph

Read this example student paragraph from a personal statement. This was a general college application essay without a specific prompt. What general advice would you give the writer? What specific advice would you give about details and word choice?

The advises that my parents gave to me helped me to deal with this hard moment. That experience gave me more strength to deal with challenges. I know that during my time at college I will have many challenges, but I won't give up because know that I can do hard things.

2 Exercise: Revise Your Writing

Follow the steps below to revise your personal statement.

1. Open your essay and save a copy called "Revision."
2. Choose two or three colors to represent your main points. If you have more than that many points, you can choose more colors. However, it will be good to think about whether or not the additional points actually add strength to your essay or use space that could be better used for something else.
3. Change the text color for all sentences connected to each of those two or three points.
4. Look at any sentences that are still in black. Are they necessary? Should they be connected more clearly to your thesis and supporting details?
5. Select the highlighter in yellow.
6. Highlight any sections of your essay where words repeat too frequently or you use too many words to express an idea. Is there another way to say these points?
7. Make changes based off of this review of your draft.

Writing: Development

Writing is 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)

The branch of science known as geology relates to the study of solid earth. Some of the features that geologists study include mountains and other solid features of earth. Geologists study these features extensively. Geologists study the composition of these formations. These studies of the earth are collectively called geology.

Example: Body Paragraph (Better development)

The branch of science known as geology relates to the study of solid earth. That means that geologists study features of earth that are based on rocks and minerals. Some of the features that they study include mountains, volcanoes, canyons, and plate tectonics. Geologists study these features extensively because they want to investigate the gradual processes that form them and by studying the processes, they can help prevent devastation from future disasters (King, 2018). These processes include natural disasters like earthquakes. Geologists also study the composition of these formations by taking samples and analyzing them. These studies of the earth are collectively called geology.

You can revise a paragraph that lacks development by adding 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. In researched essays, using and explaining sources can also help you develop your ideas.

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 develop your paragraph.

The first example paragraph had poor development because the ideas stopped too soon. The writer basically only said that geologists extensively study solid earth features and their composition.

The revised body paragraph has better development also stated that geologists extensively study solid earth features and their composition, but it did not stop too soon. It gives lots of examples and

relevant details.

In order to revise the paragraph, the author might have asked questions like this: Geology relates to the study of solid earth.

- Question: What does that mean?
 - Answer: That means that they study features of earth that are based on rocks and minerals.
- Question: What features do they study?
 - Answer: Mountains, volcanoes, canyons, and plate tectonics.
- Question: Why do they study these features extensively?
 - Answer: Because they want to study the processes that form them.
- Question: What processes do they study?
 - Answer: Natural processes like earthquakes.
- Question: What else do they study?
 - Answer: The composition of earth formations.
- Question: How do the composition of these formations?
 - Answer: By taking samples and analyzing them.

Exercise: Ask questions to generate supporting sentences

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

Topic sentence: It is essential to understand the natural resources that exist on the planet.

- Question:
 - Answer:
- Question:
 - Answer:
- Question:
 - Answer:

Example Personal Statement

Exercise: Analyze a personal statement

1. How does the writer introduce herself?
2. What information do you think the prompt asked for?
3. Are the ideas sequenced in a logical order?
4. Is there a clearly stated purpose (conclusion) in this personal statement?
5. What suggestions would you give this writer to improve the personal statement?

As the daughter of a lawyer, when I was a young woman I saw many people suffer the injustice of poverty, discrimination, divorce, and criminality. So after my LDS mission in [country], I decided to study law. I built a law firm in [country]. Even though my services were very specialized in legal medicine, many of my clients came to my office, not for trials, but for family problems, they wanted a divorce. As a missionary, I taught about celestial marriage, I testified that families can be together forever. Therefore, my instinct has been to help people understand the importance of family, and I have explained to them how destructive divorce is, not just for the couple, but for the children. I could have earned a lot of money divorcing people, but money is not everything in life. I find satisfaction in helping families remain together.

It has been an amazing experience for me to work with couples in

order to reinforce their marriages and their relationships. I am proud that many of my clients and friends are even now together, thriving to have an eternal family. Furthermore, I have worked as an advisor to young single adults, and I have taught them how to acquire the qualities in order to become the right person and to find the person with the right kind of qualities to get married to by applying the principles of *The Family: a Proclamation to the World*. I am a unique woman who strives to achieve my goals every day. For instance, I earned a magna cum laude during my bachelor's degree. Recently, I have been studying English, and I have been recognized as an outstanding student by the BYU English Language Center. I am a good listener and a good adviser. I am a lifelong student who wants to become an expert in marriage and family relationships.

In addition, after finishing the BYU's Pathway program, I began to study for a certificate in Marriage and Family Relationships at BYU-I. Because of my studies, I now have a better understanding of the doctrine and principles of the family. For that reason, I am profoundly interested in applying for a master's program in marriage and family relationships at BYU-Provo because I know that BYU has the best academic program for what I want to learn and what I want to become. BYU focuses on eternal principles applied to understand the significance of family for the individual and society. I want to belong to and learn from people who are engaged with the family.

I am committed to the most essential institution in the world: the family. I know that I can be a great influence on the university community because I am an example of a successful marriage. My husband and I have been married for almost twenty-two years. We have two children, and we will all be together forever and ever because we have been sealed for time and all eternity. I want to earn a master's degree in Marriage and Family Relationships at BYU-Provo considering that my purpose is to acquire all the knowledge, experience, abilities, and skills BYU has to offer in order to defend the family as God has ordained. I want to inspire young people about

marriage and help families in conflict, not just as a counselor, but as a voice to all nations.

Mini-Writing: Formal Emails

One of the common types of writing you will encounter is writing emails in English. The expectations for formality and content vary dramatically in this format depending on to whom you are writing and the topic of the email. For this section of the course, we will focus on formal emails like the ones you will likely send in the future to professors or employers.

subject → Subject: Speaking request

salutation → Dr. Damron,

opener → 안녕하십니까? I'm not sure if you remember me, but I audited your Korean linguistics class as a TESOL MA student several years ago. I now work full-time at the ELC as the Reading Skill Area Supervisor. I'm reaching out to ask if you'd be willing to come to the ELC and present at our weekly soup 'n' seminar.

introduction → This semester, in an effort to build community in the TESOL program among the students, faculty, and those teaching at the ELC, and to promote professional development and presentation skills, we've decided to hold an informal lunch each Friday where we invite someone from the university to present about something related to the field. We know you have a TESOL background, and we would love for you to come and talk to our students about other opportunities and ways to use their TESOL degrees and experience outside of teaching or researching ES/FL. If you'd be willing, we'd also love if you could talk about the experience of being a woman working in higher ed / academia; as you know, TESOL as a field is heavily dominated by women, but we currently have no female TESOL faculty who could speak to that experience.

short (polite!) request → We were tentatively planning on having you come ; would that date work with your schedule? If not, please let me know if there's another Friday afternoon you would be available -- we would really love to have you!

details (if necessary)

closer → We look forward to hopefully hearing from you!

signature → AnnMarie Saunders

The Structure

An email has a very different look than the other types of writing discussed in this text. However, there are still similarities when you are writing a formal email. The basic outline of a formal email is as

follows:

1. Subject line (similar to an essay title)

Although the subject line is similar to a title for a typical essay, it is important to keep the information limited to only what is necessary. This type of "title" is not meant to be creative, but rather to give the reader an immediate idea of the content of the email. Do not leave this field of the email blank. Keep the ideas brief, and put the most important information first.

Most purposes for emailing can be boiled down to a single noun phrase that highlights the most important information.

2. Salutation

The salutation is where you address the reader. You should use the title that best shows the level of formality. If the reader has a title, be sure to use the appropriate form. Do not assume it is appropriate to use only a first name in the salutation.

Most Common English Titles (honorifics)

Mr.	all men
Miss	unmarried women
Mrs.	married women
Ms.	woman regardless of marital status
Dr.	someone with a PhD, a medical doctor or veterinarian
Professor	used less frequently in the US than Dr.
President/Principal/Dean/Director/Chief Executive	other titles specific to the job may also be used
To Whom it May Concern	when emailing to a general office/business account without knowing the name of the person to address your question to

Some examples of different formal salutations include:

- (Title + full name of recipient only)
- Hello
- Good morning/afternoon
- Dear (full name of recipient)

3. Opener (similar to an essay hook)

The opener should match the level of formality of the email and reflect your relationship with the reader. In other words, a salutation such as "How's it going?" would only be appropriate in an email to a friend. A more common formal version of this would be "I hope this email finds you well."

Similarly to how a conversation in English begins with a pleasantry, or a polite question about your well-being that is not intended to get a true response, this opener exists only for the sake of manners. No one expects an actual response to the opener.

4. Introduction

At this point in the email, you will introduce yourself to the reader. This helps to create context for why you are sending the email. For example, you might mention the course you are taking or the department you work in. Unless you have communicated with the individual multiple times, it is helpful to use this space to help the reader identify you.

5. Short request (similar to an essay thesis)

After you have created this brief introduction, you can immediately introduce your purpose for the email. Remember to keep his request polite and clear. Include any references to specific times, places, or products involved in the request. In general, you should try to limit an

email to one main idea.

At some point in your email, it is good to acknowledge that you are likely asking them to do additional work, adjust their schedule, or some otherwise inconvenient favor. Where possible, provide some flexibility in the request and emphasize gratitude.

6. Necessary details (similar to an essay supporting ideas)

You may need to include additional information about the request after it is clearly stated. For example, the reader may need to know about the topic of the presentation, concerns about a project, or an outline of the agenda for a meeting. The request should be separate enough to be quickly understood, and this section allows for the additional clarification of the situation. Again, remember to maintain appropriate distance from the reader by not oversharing beyond what is essential to know.

In this section of the email, it may be helpful to use a numbered or bulleted list to separate pieces of information related to the topic. This is a good way to create blank space in the email and to keep it focused on the essentials.

7. Closer (concluding sentence)

As with a typical concluding sentence, it can be helpful to end your email with a sentence that states expectations or a call to action. The most common closers are either in the form of requesting a timely response or a proposing a meeting time.

8. Signature

Always remember to close the email with your name and any other identifying information. This could include a phone number (if

needed) or your job title, but can also be as simple as just your name. Don't forget to use the form of your name that would be most easily recognizable to the reader.

1 Exercise: Outline

Read the situation below and create an outline to show how you would organize your email.

Your professor has scheduled office hours. Unfortunately, you are unable to make it at that time because of a schedule conflict. You have a question about the course that would be too difficult to discuss over email.

2 Exercise: Draft an email

Read the situation below and create an email draft explaining the situation and offering a solution.

You transferred from Ensign College to BYU Provo. Although you took an Introduction to Economics class as part of your Associate's Degree at Ensign, the class credit did not transfer and you are expected to take the class again. Write an email to the BYU Enrollment Services explaining why you think the course should be re-evaluated to count toward your degree at BYU.

Polite Requests

One of the important aspects of writing a formal email is using polite language to make requests. Culturally speaking, a request in English is more polite the less direct it is. Note the difference between someone saying "I would appreciate it if you would wash your hands before dinner." vs "Wash your hands."

Two ways that grammar can support creating a polite request is through the use of modals and *if* clauses. In the example above, the word *would* is used to soften the request. This can also be done using modals like *could*, *might*, and *can*. Dependent clauses with *if* soften a request as well by focusing on the reader's ability to decline the request and the writer's awareness of the potential disruption the request may cause.

Examples of polite requests:

- "I would appreciate it if you could [request]."
- "It would be [adj] if you could [request]."
- "If you could [request], that would be [adj]."
- "Can/Could you/I [request]?"
- "Would you/I be able to [request]."
- "Would [time/request] work for you?"
- "If possible...?" / "Would it be possible to [request]?"
- "Do/would you mind [request]?"
- "Would you be willing to [request]?"

3 Exercise: Polite requests

Your teacher will assign a partner to you. With your partner, practice 2-3 different ways of making a polite request in each of the following scenarios:

- You need to borrow a stranger's phone to make a call because you lost yours.
- You are sick on the day of a major presentation and need to reschedule it.
- You need your team at work to come to an urgent extra meeting about a project.

Other common words used to demonstrate politeness are known as hedging adverbs. These are words such as *just*, *only*, *possibly*,

maybe, and *perhaps*. Writers will include these to increase the courtesy felt in a request.

- I am just emailing to ask if you could check the budget report attached in this email.
- Would you possibly be available for me to interview for my career development course? It would only take twenty minutes, I know you are very busy.

4 Exercise: Draft an email

Read the situation below and create an email draft explaining the situation and offering a solution.

You have a personal emergency that you need to take care of during one of your class times. However, the schedule for that class day includes information that is essential for the upcoming test. You know that the professor teaches another section of that class at a later time which you could attend after resolving the personal issue.

Formatting

Formal emails follow many of the same conventions of formatting and style as an essay. It should be written in an easy to read font in a 10-12pt size. Colorful text should be avoided unless necessary to draw attention to something (such as a deadline). Do not use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS at any point in your email because the internet culture designates this as yelling (angry). You are welcome to instead use bolded, italicized, or underlined text to make an emphasis. Expressive punctuation (such as multiple exclamation points or ellipsis) and emojis should also be avoided. The main difference between an email and an essay is that an email does not need to be indented, and can instead just be left-aligned.

5 Exercise: Choose a prompt

Choose one of the prompts below as your situation for an email that you will submit as your final assignment. Remember to explain the situation, propose solutions, and maintain an appropriate level of formality.

- Request to add a course that is currently full
- Contact a potential employer about your interest in applying for a job (no job is currently open)
- Invite a speaker to present at an upcoming club event
- Ask for a prerequisite class to be waived
- Send a thank you after an interview

Responding to a formal email

The advice here applies to responding to a formal email, not just when you initiate the conversation yourself. In some cases, someone in higher authority may not begin the conversation in a formal manner, but you should still maintain the standards here unless told otherwise. For example, a professor may ask students to call her by her first name rather than her last name or an office environment may frequently use emojis. Once you are aware of the expectations for that context, you are able to adjust your writing accordingly.

Timed Writing 4

Audience

One of the first steps in all writing is to recognize your audience. When you are thinking about your audience, it may help to ask yourself some questions.

- *Who will be reading?*
- *What does the reader need to know?*
- *In what context (where) is the reader connecting with your writing?*
- *When (under what conditions) would this information be important for the reader?*
- *Why would the reader be reading this?*
- *How will you most effectively express the information to this audience?*

Unfortunately, many college writers simply write because it is a required task and do not think carefully about the audience. If you were to ask a student working on an essay about their audience, you would most likely hear the simple response "My professor" or "The TA, I guess." While it may be true that the paper will only be read by the instructor for the course, do not assume that you can ignore the question of audience. These questions about the intention of your audience are equally valuable when considering your instructor.

If you receive a writing assignment that does not provide a specific audience, you can work with the assignment description, rubric, and

your knowledge of the instructor to understand your audience. Ask yourself some additional questions like the following:

- *What knowledge or skill is the instructor evaluating through this assignment?*
- *What information do I not need to address directly because it is foundational (or too basic) for this specific assignment?*
- *How do the rubric categories and possible points indicate what is important to the reader?*
- *Were any example essays provided?*
- *What real-life situation does this particular writing assignment prepare me for?*

Thinking through your audience before you write can help you frame an effective thesis statement and choose supporting details that would have the greatest impact on your reader.

To use an analogy, considering your audience for writing is like going to a tailor. Many times you can buy clothes from the store and wear them exactly as they were sold. There may be small problems with the fit, but you can still wear them. However, spending a little extra time and money to have the too-long pants altered to fit your height can be worth it. And there are times when the occasion for the clothes (such as a nice dress or a suit) is more formal or important and that extra effort is of greater value. Similarly, there are times when a "one size fits all" essay will be fine, and there are times when that extra attention to your audience will make a big impact on the final outcome.

Register

Continuing with the clothing analogy, different situations have different social expectations for dress code. The dress code at BYU is more strict than the outfit expectations at a birthday party. And there are obvious differences between what you wear to the gym and what

you wear as a guest to a wedding.

Register is the word used to describe the language differences we notice in different contexts. There are differences between written and spoken English, and there are many differences in the language we use depending on our audience. Here are some writing register differences you may have noticed:

- When you use contractions (informal writing)
- When you use acronyms like TBH or IDK (texting, social media)
- When you use hedging (formal writing)

Adjusting the words and phrases you write depending on your audience is likely a strategy you already use without thinking about it too carefully. In this section, you will learn a little more about the strategy of hedging.

Hedging

A simple definition of linguistic hedging in academic writing is to phrase a point carefully to soften a point. This is common in college writing because hedging acknowledges that the writer is not an expert. You are reporting what you have learned, but you allow for correction.

Here are some examples of how hedges can be used in writing

Hedge type	Examples	Hedging examples
Verbs:	appear, seem, suggest, argue, claim, tend, believe, think, looks like, assume, consider, indicate	<u>Many</u> people <u>assume</u> that...
Modals:	may, might, could, can	<u>Based on</u> this evidence, it is <u>possible</u> that...
Adjectives:	likely, unlikely, probable, possible, some, many, much	<u>Generally</u> speaking, this does not <u>seem to be the case</u> ...
Adverbs:	probably, not necessarily, potentially, perhaps, apparently, evidently, presumably, relatively, occasionally, sometimes, generally, usually, often, seldom	<u>According to</u> lead researchers, this <u>may</u> change...
Phrases:	based on, according to, in light of, in the view of, it could be the case that, to some extent, when compared to, in the context of, in certain situations, as shown/indicated by	<u>Often</u> opponents <u>claim</u> that...

1 Exercise: Timed Writing (Hedging Focus)

Write for 30 minutes about the following topic. Use one hedging word from each of the hedge type categories above to soften your claims.

1. Your boss sent you an email about a higher position that is now open in the company. He asks if you are interested in the position. After looking at the job description, you want to respond that you are not interested in this job. However, you want your boss to think of you for other jobs in the future. Respond to his email with a short explanation (1-2 paragraphs) of why this job is not interesting to you, but you would like to be considered in the future.
2. People sometimes say that a job interview is more about you checking that the position is a good fit for you than it is about the employer checking that you are a good fit for the position. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your position.
3. In 1 year, you receive a message from one of your former UP classmates. Your classmate asks you to peer review a final essay for her class. You read through the draft, and you find some significant organizational problems. Write an email to your classmate giving suggestions on how to improve her writing.

Integrated Writing 4

Audience & Register

Just as with all writing, integrated writing is more successful when you have considered the intended audience and appropriate register for the assignment. The added challenge here is that the audience and register of the original sources may differ from your assignment and may even vary between the sources themselves.

1 Exercise: Identify Audience and Register Differences

Take a look at these different sources. Who is the audience for each of these? How do you know? What differences in register do you notice?

- [Lullaby - Wikipedia](#)
- [What the Lullabies We Sing to Our Children Reveal About Us - National Geographic](#)
- [20 Best Lullabies to Calm Your Baby to Sleep - Verywellfamily](#)
- [Frère Jacques, are you sleeping? - Harvard Gazette](#)
- [The Lullaby Project - Carnegie Hall's Musical Connections \(Listening\)](#)

This means that as you mentally prepare to write for your specific audience, you need to consider the audience of the source and make some adjustments to fit a new context. As you learned in the last integrated writing chapter, you can change the wording through paraphrase, but you should not change the meaning itself.

2 Exercise: Integrated Writing (Audience/Register Focus)

Below is a department email sent to all students in your major. Read through the announcement of the change to the program. Then choose one of the additional sources. Using information from both sources, write an email explaining your situation and goals.

Department announcement:

The University has recently made a significant push toward increasing experiential learning during the undergraduate experience. Those who have graduated having taken advantage of such experiences report that it was fundamental in to their learning. As more colleges shift toward this type of learning, expanding experiential learning here will help our graduates be more competitive in the job market. Effective next semester, the department will require all students in this major to register for an off-campus internship directly related to the coursework.

Because this program of study change will impact a large number of students, we suggest that you contact your faculty advisor as soon as possible to set an appointment to discuss this new requirement. Your advisor will help you to make any necessary changes to your plan for coursework and can connect you to internship opportunities, which is especially crucial if you hope to do your internship outside of Provo. Although the credits will be primarily given based off of the work you do through the internship, you will report throughout the semester to your faculty advisor and meet for an online class every other week. To get the add code for the internship course, you will need to (1) meet with your faculty advisor and (2) write a short proposal explaining how this internship connects to your coursework and professional goals.

Additional sources:

1. Email from faculty advisor: Hello. I would be happy to meet with you, but I'm out of town for the next two weeks. I can see that you have already registered for a heavy load of courses next semester. Are you planning to graduate soon? Or would you be able to delay taking any of these courses? I'm concerned that adding an internship would make the semester too demanding. Let me know what your plan is, and I'll get back to you when I'm back in the office.
2. Comment from a professor in class: Actually, I have been doing some consulting work with the local museum about community engagement. It's been eye-opening, but I honestly haven't had as much time to dedicate to the project as I originally hoped for. So if any of you are interested in something like that, you can send me an email or stop by my office for more details.
3. Email from a friend: It's so good to hear from you! Yes, I'm doing an internship in Chicago right now, and it has been so great! Are you interested in doing an internship here too? What requirements do you have? I can see if I can put in a good word for you!!

Mini-Writing: Reviews

In most cases, reviews will not be part of your academic writing experience. The majority of your evaluation writing will occur in the form of a reflection or a critical reading analysis. That being said, there will be many situations in your life that call for a review of a product or experience. For that reason, this chapter will focus on preparing you to write effectively for the purpose of review.

Purpose

Reviews exist to give potential future consumers or participants of a product or experience an idea of what to expect from the service based on your own experience. The review can also benefit the provider by giving them feedback on what was successful or what needs to be improved.

For this chapter, when the word product is used, it is referring to items or articles that are typically purchased:

- items such as electronics, books, clothing, games, software, artwork, movies etc
- consumable substances such as food, drinks, candy, beauty supplies, art and craft supplies etc

When the words experience is used, it includes either a place/event or treatment and assistance from a specialized workers :

- places like hotels, vacation resorts, salons, businesses, etc

- events like concerts, art shows, festivals, university courses, etc
- services like repair or maintenance work, healthcare, customer support, public transportation, education, application processes etc

As you can see, there are many different contexts that can lead to either formal or informal reviews.

You are often prompted to leave a review after purchasing a product online. While not required, your insight can be very beneficial. Reviews can also be given for experiences like a performance, vacation, or even a course. The majority of these situations allow you to choose whether or not you give feedback. However, in a context like the English Language Center, you are required to give end of semester feedback.*

Because the feedback you provide on the product or service can have a strong influence for change, it is important to carefully craft a review so that it reaches the widest audience and provides focused feedback.

*This is because the ELC is a lab school, meaning many of the teachers are in training and need to get input from the students to improve their teaching. It is also because the administrators are constantly trying to improve the student experience and need to hear directly from the target audience.

1 Exercise: Online shopping reviews

Work with a partner to discuss the following questions.

1. Do you read reviews before buying something online? Do you read the reviews before agreeing to a service or experience? Why or why not?
2. Do you follow any social media influencers? Why do you follow them?
3. Have you ever purchased a product or experience because of a review? Why or why not?
4. How often do you write reviews (your native language included) about products or experiences you purchased? How often do you review them informally (such as in a conversation or social media post)?

2 Exercise: Reviewing reviews

As a group, choose a product or experience that you are either familiar with or are interested in knowing more about. Follow the steps below to complete this exercise.

1. Search online to find reviews.
2. Read one positive review (4 or 5 stars, 9/10 or 10/10, etc).
3. Read one negative review (1 star, 0/10 or 1/10, etc).
4. Discuss what details, examples, or other points in the two reviews had the most influence over your opinion.
5. After reading the reviews, do the members of your group feel more or less confident in the product or experience?

Prewriting

Before you begin to write a review, you need to brainstorm about your

own experience. Remember that a brainstorm does not require complete sentences, it only requires you to make a list of ideas to help you begin the writing process. To create your brainstorm, you can try asking yourself the questions below to generate your list:

1. Why did you choose this product or experience?
2. Describe your perspective of it. Focus on choosing your adjectives carefully.
3. Did the product or experience live up to your expectations?
4. What are the positive aspects? (pros)
5. What are the negative points? (cons)
6. Do you think others should participate or purchase this?

Once you have your list of ideas, it helps to read through it and mark the most important points. This narrows down the scope of your review and keeps it at paragraph length instead of feeling like an essay.

3 Exercise: Brainstorm

As a class, you will choose a general product or experience that everyone is familiar with. For example, you may choose cellphones or your experience traveling to the United States.

Use the questions above to create a brainstorm for your review. Compare your brainstorm with a partner.

Writing

When writing a review, it is always important to keep your intended and unintended audience in mind. An intended audience would be the people you expect to read the review. This could be a potential consumer before committing to the product or experience. An

unintended audience is often an employee over online customer service for the related company. This person is monitoring the customer satisfaction levels based on this feedback and reports back trends or patterns (both positive and negative). Remembering that your review will be read by both types of audience is key to writing an effective review.

An effective review is defined by four main characteristics

1. **Honesty:** Submitting a review that inaccurately presents your experience is both unethical and unhelpful. You should avoid purposefully inflating the popularity or effectiveness of something as well as purposefully damaging a reputation without cause. Simply limit your review to truth without exaggeration.
2. **Clarity:** If a review is not clear in presenting ideas, it will be disregarded completely. Your opinion, advice, and/or recommendation should all be easily recognizable.
3. **Specificity:** The brainstorm helps to refine your focus so that your review does not ramble with unnecessary detail or overlook needed support.
4. **Politeness:** Always remember that a review is communication, so on the otherside of your often anonymous review is an actual reader. Especially when dealing directly with a company, recognize that your review may have an impact on someone. This understanding should not come at the cost of being honest, but it should influence your tone.

Organization

The review should begin with a brief description of the context for the use of the product or your experience. For example, knowing that your negative review of a flight is given in the context of an unexpected snowstorm gives the readers context of how much of your review is applicable to their situation. Another example would be if

you used a security camera inside a building instead of outside, it can help a reader know if your context is similar. Keep this section short and specific.

Your thesis statement for this type of writing will be your overall opinion, advice, or recommendation. This should be very clear and obvious.

Next, explain both the positives and negatives you identified in your brainstorm. These points should highlight the parts of your own experience that you think someone needs to know before continuing. Online reviews will often include bullet points to list the pros and cons. This simplifies reading the review and makes it easier for someone to process. Bulleted items will often be reduced to phrases rather than sentences. For example, the bulleted pros and cons list of a review for a camera battery might say: *lasts for seven hours, takes too long to charge, not worth the cost etc.*

Remember to restate your thesis so that your purpose in writing the review is abundantly clear to the readers.

The length of a review response should be around a paragraph. If the paragraph is any longer, readers will either skim or move to a different review. A longer response typically does not narrow the focus enough on the most important ideas to share with a reader.

In some online review contexts, photos or videos can be helpful additions to clarify your bullet point pros/cons. For example, describing a festival as well-attended or organized will not be as powerful to a reader as seeing videos or pictures that show crowds of people or short lines.

4 Exercise: Write a product review

Choose a product that you recently purchased to use as the focus of this review.

1. Decide on your intended audience, but keep the unintended audience in mind.
2. Brainstorm using the questions in this chapter.
3. Write a product review draft

5 Exercise: Write an experience review

Choose an experience that you recently participated in to use as the focus of this review.

1. Decide on your intended audience, but keep the unintended audience in mind.
2. Brainstorm using the questions in this chapter.
3. Write a product review draft

Timed Writing 5

The Prompt

One of the challenges of timed writing is making quick decisions about content and organization. The brainstorming stage is limited and requires you to move swiftly into composing your paragraphs. A luxury of drafted writing is that you can spend time exploring different supporting ideas before revising and finalizing your essay.

With timed writing, a thorough understanding of the prompt is first needed. You need to recognize the linguistic task (compare, describe, argue, explain) and create a thesis statement and supporting points that make a clear road map for what you will say. Additionally, you need to check the prompt to ensure that you are addressing all of the points.

Once you have analyzed the prompt, you should be able to start structuring your outline to ensure you have all of the necessary components.

1 Exercise: Analyze Timed Writing Prompt

Read the prompts below. Identify the linguistic task. Break the prompt down into the individual parts.

1. Many people suggest that self-driving cars are the future for transportation. Do you think that self-driving cars will be beneficial for society? What do you think the short-term and long-term impacts of these vehicles will be?
2. A significant problem for many teenagers is cyberbullying. Why do you think this is a prevalent issue in today's society? What solutions do you propose for this issue? Be sure to address solutions at the individual, family, and societal levels.
3. Imagine the ideal future society. What does this society look like and how is it different from the one you live in now? Do you think this ideal is possible? Why or why not?

Making a brief list of the parts of the prompt that are most important to respond to or include is a great first step for creating your thesis statement, topic sentences, and overall outline.

Understanding and including all of the parts of the prompt is important for two reasons.

The first reason is that the question is specifically designed to get you to write about the target content. A multi-part question indicates the degree of complexity that the audience expects to find in your response. If you miss information from your response, it can be interpreted as missing knowledge about an important concept for the course.

Second, your audience may attribute missing information to a lack of language. This is especially true in a language test like the TOEFL where the audience knows nothing about your ability other than what you show. Not writing about part of the question could be an

avoidance strategy because you do not have the vocabulary or grammar control necessary to respond. This may also be an unfortunate assumption at the college level as well, especially if your professor has minimal interaction with you.

Therefore, it's in your best interest to carefully read through the prompt and dissect it. This strategy will lead to a stronger response with more purposeful organization.

2 Exercise: Timed Writing (Prompt Focus)

Choose one of the prompts below. Set a timer for 30 minutes. Write your response to the question. Remember to leave time for revision.

1. You recently applied for a job, and you moved to the first screening of applicants. Before deciding whether or not to interview you, the committee sends the following question: This position requires an employee to problem solve quickly and to manage multiple tasks. Imagine your supervisor asks you to complete a proposal by the end of day but is unavailable to walk you through the specifics for this task. Explain how you would handle any complications with the proposal.
2. Your family is planning a vacation for everyone. One of your siblings really wants to go to Hawaii, but you know that suggestion will not work for all of the family members. Write an email response explaining why the family should not go to Hawaii and offer another option with explanation of why it is a better fit.

Integrated Writing 5

The Prompt

Integrated writing prompts are also important to read and interpret. Just as with other writing assignment prompts, you need to recognize the linguistic task (compare, describe, argue, explain) and create a thesis statement and supporting points that make a clear road map for what you will say.

The difference with integrated writing prompts is that they may indicate if there is a hierarchy to the sources. Although integration tasks by nature require references to a set number of sources, that does not mean that the audience requires equal focus on each one.

The TOEFL integrated writing task, for example, places a priority on explaining the position of the lecture speaker and only using the reading to show contrast in the support. Therefore, your body paragraph should center on the listening source.

Check your prompt to see if any preference is shown for a source compared to others.

Once you have analyzed the prompt, you should be able to start structuring your outline to ensure you have all of the necessary components.

Making a brief list of the parts of the prompt that are most important to respond to or include is a great first step for creating your thesis statement, topic sentences, and overall outline.

Understanding and including all of the parts of the prompt is important for two reasons.

The first reason is that the question is specifically designed to get you to write about the target content. A multi-part question indicates the degree of comprehension and synthesis that the audience expects to find in your response. If you miss information from your response, it can be interpreted as an issue of listening and/or reading comprehension.

Second, your audience may attribute missing information to a lack of language. This is especially true in a language test like the TOEFL where the audience knows nothing about your ability other than what you show. Not writing about part of the question could be an avoidance strategy because you do not have the vocabulary or grammar control necessary to respond. This may also be an unfortunate assumption at the college level as well, especially if your professor has minimal interaction with you.

Therefore, it's in your best interest to carefully read through the prompt and dissect it. This strategy will lead to a stronger response with more purposeful organization.

Exercise: Integrated Writing (Prompt Focus)

Read the passage.

As you know, our first beta test of our app did not go as hoped. Aside from the code issues that are being worked out now, the testers rated the app below the major social media platforms out there in terms of content. The marketing interns put together a simple focus group with our target customers to find out more about their preferences on the apps we would be competing with. Will you take a look and send me a report on your findings? We need to let the programmers know by tomorrow if we have some major changes to make to the type of content users can share and find in their feed. I expect your report by end of day.

Now watch the video of a product focus group.

[Social Media Focus Group](#)

Set a timer for 20 minutes. Write your response to the question below. Remember to leave time for revision.

- *Write a short report (1-2 paragraphs) for your boss explaining the likes and dislikes the focus group mentioned about social media platforms. Include any suggestions you might have for a new prototype of your company's app that would increase user satisfaction. Be sure to include specific references to the feedback from the video.*

Reflections

In the majority of this text, academic writing relies heavily on summaries and demonstrating a clear understanding of an issue. However, some academic writing you will encounter at the college level will have a different purpose and therefore requires a different approach.

Purpose

A reflection essay is primarily used by professors to hold students accountable for out of class learning. By requiring you to reflect about what you read or listened to as part of your homework, the reader is able to quickly identify three important outcomes from that homework:

- The student is prepared for the class discussion and/or to participate in a learning experience that requires background knowledge.
- The student understands key information and is attempting to integrate this new knowledge.
- The student can identify and explain questions, lack of understanding, or disagreement with the content.

The first of these outcomes is important because many courses will expect you to come to class with foundational knowledge in place so the professor can focus on the more challenging skills of applying, creating, evaluating, or analyzing. By holding you responsible for that initial learning, everyone in the class can take full advantage of the

limited face-to-face time.

The second point is important because information does not exist in isolation. All new knowledge should connect to things you previously learned or what you are currently learning in other courses. Finding connections allows you to think more critically about the content and also improves the likelihood that you will retain the knowledge.

Finally, a reflection gives you time to think through your questions or your counterarguments. The professor can either prepare for the course by reading reflections in advance to anticipate questions or it can simply save time by having ready made comments and questions instead of losing time while you try to figure out what it is you don't understand and/or agree with.

Prewriting

Before you can begin writing your reflection, you must first prepare for the learning experience you are going to reflect on. One idea for preparing to write a reflection is using an adapted KWL chart. A typical KWL chart has a column for *know*, *want to know*, and *learned*. These are often used with reading assignments because it encourages students to connect to their background knowledge before learning something new. For this purpose of this assignment, the *want to know* column has been removed and *reflect* has been added. Look at the chart below and the prewriting questions in each column to help you understand what notes you might add there.

Know	Learned	Reflect
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you already know about this topic?• What beliefs (if any) do you have connected to this topic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What about the experience stands out to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did what you learn add to and/or change your understanding or opinions?• What questions (if any) do you have after the learning experience?

Writing

As stated previously, a reflection should not be a summary of the material. Rather, the reflection is focused on your feelings, reactions, beliefs, understanding, and other aspects of your experience during the learning process. This is meant to be more personal and subjective than other writing. This means that your reflection will vary from the others that are submitted because it is specific to you.

Although it is personal, it should still be academic in the tone. This should not sound like a social media post or an email with informal language. Remember that this is still an essay that will be reviewed by a professor and/or teaching assistant. So while personal pronouns may occur more frequently, the ideas should be expressed appropriately.

In many cases, a reflection-style essay will include some questions to prompt your writing. However, if the assignment does not include any specific questions to guide your reflection, you can use the example questions below to help you develop your ideas.

General guiding questions for a reflection

- Does the reading, lecture, or experience challenge you socially, culturally, emotionally, or theologically? If so, where and how? Why does it bother you or catch your attention?
- Has the reading, lecture, or experience changed your way of thinking? Did it conflict with beliefs you held previously, and what evidence did it provide you with in order to change your thought process on the topic?
- Does the reading, lecture, or experience leave you with any questions? Were these questions ones you had previously or ones you developed only after finishing?
- Did the author, speaker, or those involved in the experience fail to address any important issues? Could a certain fact or idea have dramatically changed the impact or conclusion of the reading, lecture, or experience?
- How do the issues or ideas brought up in this reading, lecture, or experience mesh with past experiences or readings? Do the ideas contradict or support each other?

SOURCE: <https://edtechbooks.org/-bBZp>

Depending on the length, complexity, and familiarity of the content you are reflecting on, you may have more ideas than you can develop in the limited space given for this assignment. In this case, it is important to carefully choose the ideas that most clearly demonstrate that you completed the work and have considered the implications of that learning.

On the other hand, you may find that your ideas for the reflection are encapsulated in one major idea. This is also appropriate as long as it can be fully developed and fulfill the purpose of the assignment.

Organization

The organization of a reflection paper is generally dictated by the number of points you decide to include. In the case of multiple points of reflection, you may have topic sentences that separate your ideas into three or four paragraphs. If you only have one main idea, your essay may have more of a traditional thesis statement that expresses this overarching theme from the learning experience.

Most reflection essays range from about 300-700 words, which is about 1-2 pages double spaced.

Timed Writing 6

Scope

Throughout this textbook you have practiced the writing process: prewriting, writing, and revising. No matter what you are writing or under what conditions it occurs, you should experience these three stages of writing. Even a text message is drafted mentally, written, and then often reviewed quickly, if for no other reason than to catch failed autocorrections.

In formal, academic writing contexts, the prewriting stage holds extra significance. Prewriting is when you check your understanding of the prompt, decide the direction you want to take on the topic, and put limits on what you will include. This stage can often make or break an essay.

The word *scope* is used to describe extent and relevance. In the context of writing, you determine scope through your thesis statement and topic sentences. Your thesis controls what ideas will be relevant in the overall essay, and each topic sentence dictates the limits of that one point that you are addressing. In other words, scope is seen at the paragraph and the essay level.

Effective control of scope in an essay means that you will have unity of ideas and cohesion. Again, this unity and cohesion should be evident at the sentence, paragraph, and essay level.

In timed writing, you need to decide very quickly what your scope will

be. While this is partially set by the requirements of the prompt, there will always be some degree of freedom with the scope you choose. For example, a TOEFL prompt requiring you to propose a solution to a problem may allow the freedom of choosing one solution and describing at length why it is the best option or suggesting multiple solutions that are described in less detail.

1 Exercise: Outlines (Scope Focus)

Compare the two outlines for the same timed essay below. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each outline? Which would you prefer to use with a time limit of 30 minutes? Why? What changes (if any) would you make to these outlines?

Prompt: In many countries, the birth rate is decreasing. There are many potential causes of this trend depending on the country in question. Regardless of the cause, there is a debate about whether this will have a positive or negative impact on society. Do you think that a declining birth rate will have a positive or negative impact on society? What are some of the short-term and long-term effects you would expect to see?

Outline 1	Outline 2
TH: A decrease in birth rates will have a significant negative impact on the future, both as individual nations and as a global society.	TH: Although there are many potential negative impacts of a declining national birth rate, the most concerning is the stress this will place on the economy.
TS1: Our economies are dependent on a strong force and a decrease in population will make our current economic system impossible to maintain.	TS1: Lower birth rates will cause the workforce to decrease dramatically, placing unsustainable strain on companies.
TS2: There are many institutions and careers that either require a steady population of children or benefit from larger families.	TS2: With fewer adults in the workforce, governments will not be able to continue supporting important tax-funded programs.
TS3: A smaller population of children will also lead to the breakdown of many of the events and programs that create a sense of community.	TS3: A larger number of retired adults who are supported by fewer children also puts extra financial stress on the economy.
RTH: The national and global impacts of declining birth rates will have a negative effect.	RTH: The economic stress caused by a decrease in birth rates will have both short-term and long-term negative impacts on society.

Scale

A concept that goes hand in hand with scope is the idea of *scale*. Scale in writing focuses on how much you will say about a topic. At first glance, this may seem very similar to the definition of scope. However, the difference here is that scale is more connected to development of those united and cohesive ideas.

Scale comes down to how many body paragraphs are needed and how many supporting ideas are best for each paragraph. You do not want

to overwhelm your reader by including too much information, but you also do not want to undersupport your ideas.

When you brainstorm, the scale of your writing is also controlled by your thesis and topic sentences. Additionally, any bullet points you add in that brainstorm will help you remember your scale.

For example, the scale reminders for the outlines in the first exercise in this chapter would be to include both short- and long-term effects. Without including that scale of time, you miss part of the prompt. Outline 1 includes both national and global impacts of declining populations, which expands the scale for the essay by location as well. Outline 2, however, keeps a smaller scale on the topic by only mentioning the effects at the national level.

2 Exercise: Outline (Scale Focus)

Create an outline for the same prompt used in the previous exercise. Do not copy the sentences from that exercise, and try not to use any of the supporting ideas if possible.

As you write your thesis and topic sentences, pay close attention to your scale. After you complete the outline, compare with a partner to see different approaches to the same prompt.

Prompt: In many countries, the birth rate is decreasing. There are many potential causes of this trend depending on the country in question. Regardless of the cause, there is a debate about whether this will have a positive or negative impact on society. Do you think that a declining birth rate will have a positive or negative impact on society? What are some of the short-term and long-term effects you would expect to see?

3 Exercise: Timed Writing (Scope & Scale Focus)

Choose one of the prompts below. Set a timer for 30 minutes and write about the topic. Be sure to outline your essay first with specific emphasis on controlling your scope and scale.

- Your local school district has recently banned books from high school libraries because of offensive language use. Write an email to the school board explaining your support or disapproval of this decision.
- The idea of a "gap year" is becoming increasingly popular. Some people think this break from the routines and restrictions of school and work is valuable for young adults, while others believe it is an irresponsible use of time and money. What is your opinion on young adults taking a gap year? Why do you think that?
- You have been asked to write a short op-ed article for your university newspaper. The topic you were assigned is whether it is better for students to read digital or print versions of textbooks. Although the audience of the newspaper is the entire study body, the newspaper editor said that you are welcome to talk about the pros and cons from the perspective of your major.

Integrated Writing 6

Integrated Content

Because integrated writing depends on including support from an outside source, the strategies of quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing are essential for success. But before you can utilize this strategy, you must first identify the most relevant information from the sources.

Just like the discussion of scope and scale in the Timed Writing 6 chapter, outlining your essay first will set you up for success. The outline will establish if your writing is more focused on a summary comparison or synthesis. In other words, are the sources meant to work together to support the same ideas? Or are you meant to find and explore differences? That scope will be clear from the prompt, but the scale of the detail that you need for your writing is often open.

This means that it is up to you to recognize important information as you read or listen. In highly controlled integrated writing tasks like you see on the TOEFL, the sources and task are always structured the same and require minimal effort in the choosing.

Typical TOEFL Integrated Writing Structure

Clearly stated position in reading	Clearly stated opposing position in listening
Supporting statement 1 + limited detail	Opposing statement 1 + limited detail
Supporting statement 2 + limited detail	Opposing statement 2 + limited detail
Supporting statement 3 + limited detail	Opposing statement 3 + limited detail

As you can see, the structure in the two sources is exactly parallel. The same points are given in the same order, with the only variation being the point of view on the topic. This allows you to focus on creating your contrasting organization without requiring multiple reviews of the original source.

However, most real-life integrated tasks will have greater expectations for sifting through the available resources and choosing what to include. At the most extreme end of this process of choosing content, consider the process you went through to find, read, and use sources to support the essays you worked on throughout the semester. Many of your college courses will expect this degree of research and critical thinking about source material.

The middle point of this spectrum is the most frequent. This integration is pulling from the readings assigned from the class (e.g. textbook or articles) and the lectures. The majority of your writing tasks will expect you to find connections between those primary sources.

So how do you know what is important from the reading and lectures? This is where the skills and strategies you are learning and developing in your Listening & Speaking and Reading classes come in as essential to your improving as an academic writer. Look at the box below for some tips on how to recognize important information:

Tips for Receptive Skills

Receptive skills is the term used for language that you receive from either listening or reading. This often seems like a "passive" side of language learning and use, and therefore they are skills that get less attention from learners. The idea of passivity in listening and reading could not be further from the truth of what is truly happening as you engage those skills. Here are some reminders of strategies and skills you discuss in these courses that are extremely valuable for integrated writing:

Reading	Listening
Understanding main ideas and major details	Understanding main ideas and major details
Noticing repetition of words	Noticing repetition of words
Skimming	Understanding the use and purpose of suprasegmentals like pausing, intonation and stress
Scanning	Making inferences
Making inferences	Recognizing use and meaning of vocabulary (connotation)
Recognize organizational structures and purpose	Effective use of selective listening
Using grammar and word part knowledge to understand unfamiliar words	

Choosing Content

Below you will find a step-by-step explanation of how to choose content. Because this process has been integrated into the practice you have done throughout the semester, none of this should feel like completely new information. Instead, this should function as a reminder of the writing skills you have worked to develop over the past few months.

The prompt

It should come as no surprise that the first step to appropriately choosing content to integrate into your writing begins with understanding the prompt. You must first understand what you are meant to write about before you can move any further.

The thesis

Depending on the context and parameters of the assignment, there are two different approaches. The first approach would be to first read through the material you have been given or have gathered to decide on the position you wish to take in your thesis. The second option would be to create your thesis statement based off of your initial thoughts on the prompt and then to look at the sources. The latter is only advisable if you are familiar enough with the topic to have an informed opinion before evaluating the existing writing on the issue.

Supporting ideas

The advice here is the same as number two. You would do best to first see what strong supporting ideas already exist. Use the reading and the listening to inform your own supporting organization. It is possible to decide on your supporting ideas before carefully reading through the sources, but this may lead to a loss of time or a weak position if you find that little has been written or said that aligns with what you believed you wanted to say.

Exploration

Once you have completed the first three steps, explore your sources as thoroughly as possible given the constraints of the assignment. Read with a highlighter in hand. Listen and read multiple times. Check transcripts or dictionaries if needed. If this is not possible

because of testing center limitations, give all of your focus to the source when it is available to you. It should always be possible for you to take notes on a pad of paper or in an open document.

Connections

If you based your thesis and supporting ideas off of what you learned while exploring the sources, it will be much easier to make connections between the notes and highlights you created in step 4 to your outline.

Evaluation

Decide which sources to integrate by assessing the strength. Strength is decided by relevance and by how compelling that point is in supporting or developing your own ideas.

Integration

The next step is to decide if you will incorporate that supporting information from a source as a quote, summary, or paraphrase. You can revisit those sections of this textbook if you need a reminder of the conditions where these different uses are best implemented.

Be sure to introduce, credit, and respond to the source appropriately as explained in those three chapters. The source should feel like part of the paragraph, not like a copy and paste addition.

1 Exercise: Integrated Writing (Choosing Focus)

You received an email at work asking for your opinion about a possible company change to a shorter workweek. Before responding to the email, you decide you should learn more about the pros and cons of this change. Read at least one of the two articles and watch one of the two videos. You may take notes and/or highlight. You are welcome to discuss the ideas with a partner as part of your brainstorm.

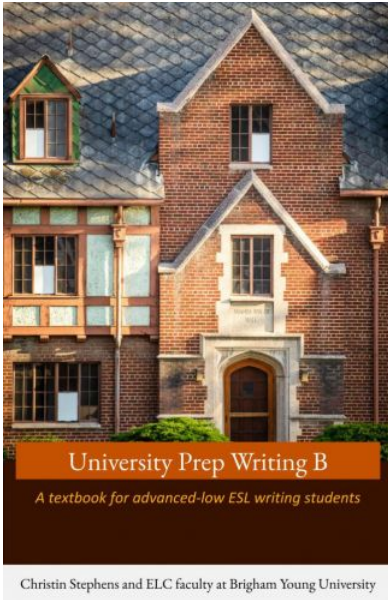
You must respond to the email by tomorrow. Include references to both the article and video you watched to support your position. Because you have many other tasks to complete, set a timer for 20 minutes to write your response using your notes.

[More leaders are scrapping the 40-hour workweek. Here's how it became so popular in the first place - Business Insider](#)

[More companies are trying out the 4-day workweek. But it might not be for everyone - NPR](#)

[The case for a 4-day work week - TED](#)

[The five-day workweek was made up. What if we changed it? - Washington Post](#)



University Prep Fall Writing B.
https://edtechbooks.org/up_writing_fall