High School Writing Handbook

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

This handbook was created by HISD teachers and staff as a resource and reference guide. It includes discussions of the essential elements for successful writing instruction, suggested activities, and a STAAR/EOC specific addendum.

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Writing Handbook

Introduction

The purpose of this writing handbook is to offer information related to good writing instruction, including providing specific strategies and identifying/defining specific terms and elements for all stages of the writing process. The terms and approaches that follow are predicated on the idea that writing is a process with distinguishing elements and stages.

Genres

Genres are categories of literature; the style, the structure, the content, and often the length of a work determine the category. Understanding types of genres is essential for understanding specific writing assignments. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

Fiction

- Novel
- Graphic Novel
- Short Story
- Poetry
    - Epic
- Drama
    - Comedy
    - Tragedy
- Science Fiction
- Fantasy

Nonfiction

- Creative Nonfiction
- Memoir
- Personal Essay
- Analytical Essay
- Argument
- Persuasive Nonfiction
- Expository Nonfiction

As with any categorization system, the scrutiny of the classifications can cause confusion, especially when attempting to fit selections of writings into only one genre. For example, memoirs and personal essays can be difficult to delineate because they share many qualities.

The Four Rhetorical Modes

- Exposition – writing to explain or inform; examples include business letters, reports, textbooks, press releases, etc.
- Argumentation – writing to persuade or convince a reader of a point of view or the validity of an assertion; examples include advertising, critical review, closing argument, etc.
- Description – writing that attempts to recreate, invent, or visually represent a person, place, or thing.
- Narration – writing that attempts to tell a story or narrate a series of events; examples include novel, short story, etc.

The Difference Between Genre and Mode

It is important to note that good writing pieces will often utilize more than one mode of writing. All four modes of discourse can be present in almost any given genre. For example, a novel can easily incorporate all modes of discourse throughout the text.

Modes of Exposition or Types of Paragraphs

- Definition – writing to explain what it is and/or what it is not.
- Comparison – writing to compare and contrast topics.
- Process Analysis – writing that provides a series of steps, sometimes bulleted or numbered.
- Problem-Solution – writing that introduces a problem and the attempts to solve it.

Genres Required by TEKS

The following chart lists the writing TEKS that are required by the state. This chart illustrates the genres and forms in which students are required to engage, along with their associated standards/skills. It is important to note that both editing skills and research skills are not listed in the chart. The editing TEKS should be consistently incorporated into writing instruction, and the research skills can be integrated into both the analytical and argumentative essays. The HISD curriculum presents the editing and research skills as a process and shows how they can be integrated into multiple genres.

Grade Level	Short Story	Poetry	Script	Analytical Essay	Procedural/ Work Related– e-mails, memos, etc.	Interpretive Response	Multimedia Presentation – class newspaper, documentary, theater presentation	Argumentative Essay
9th	9.14A	9.14B	9.14C	*9.15A.i *9.15A.ii *9.15A.iii *9.15A.iv *9.15A.v	9.15B.i 9.15B.ii	9.15C.i 9.15C.ii 9.15C.iii	9.15D	9.16A 9.16B 9.16C 9.16D 9.16E
10th	10.14A	10.14B	10.14C	*10.15A.i *10.15A.ii *10.15A.iii *10.15A.iv *10.15A.v *10.15A.vi	10.15B.i 10.15B.ii 10.15B.iii	10.15C.i 10.15C.ii 10.15C.iii	10.15D	*10.16A 10.16B 10.16C *10.16D *10.16E 10.16F
11th	11.14A	11.14B	11.14C	11.15A.i 11.15A.ii 11.15A.iii 11.15A.iv 11.15A.v 11.15A.vi	11.15B.i 11.15B.ii 11.15B.iii 11.15B.iv 11.15B.v	11.15C.i 11.15C.ii 11.15C.iii 11.15C.iv 11.15C.v	11.15D	11.16A 11.16B 11.16C 11.16D 11.16E 11.16F
12th	12.14A	12.14B	11.14C	12.15A.i 12.15A.ii 12.15A.iii 12.15A.iv 12.15A.v 12.15A.vi 12.15A.vii	12.15B.i 12.15B.ii 12.15B.iii 12.15B.iv 12.15B.v	12.15C.i 12.15C.ii 12.15C.iii 12.15C.iv 12.15C.v	12.15D	12.16A 12.16B 12.16C 12.16D 12.16E 12.16F 12.16G

* Denotes a genre/type of essay required on the STAAR/EOC

Portfolios

One way to encourage students to reflect on their writing and internalize writing as a process is the use of writing portfolios. Having students keep all their writing in one place, including current works in various stages of the writing process as well as completed pieces, ensures that students are able to see their writing evolve and improve over time.

Setting a Purpose

Before planning lessons, teachers must start with the end product in mind. In order for students to understand what they are to produce, they need to see the expected end product and have a purpose for engaging in the assignment (or project).

When introducing a writing assignment, start with mentor texts. Model the process of evaluating a prompt to create a purpose for writing. Doing so begins with the end in mind and illustrates the format students will use when completing the publishing stage. Whether it is a letter to the mayor of Houston, articles for a class magazine, or a literary/fictional story, students need to understand the expectations for the finished product before they write. When students begin the writing process knowing their target audience and format for presentation, they have a clearly established purpose for writing and are motivated to select a topic and become invested in their own writing piece.

"Texts are teachers." — Jeff Anderson

Models and Mentor Texts

Just as a driver uses a road map to arrive at his/her destination, writers use guides and/or resources to help them achieve their task. Texts that serve as guides or models for a given mode of writing are known as mentor texts**.** One of the most important aspects of teaching writing is providing models and mentor texts. If students are to understand how a piece of writing is supposed to look, they must review and dissect mentor texts, analyzing the structure, language, and content and evaluating their effectiveness. Students follow a sequence of activities that improve their writing: reading, analyzing, and emulating (Anderson 24). Mentor texts may be utilized in multiple readings, providing examples of organizational patterns, diction, thesis sentence construction, supporting evidence, etc. This process provides the scaffolds necessary to support and encourage student engagement and success. According to Anderson, "Research tells us that reading, analyzing, and emulating model texts increase students' writing abilities" (24).

Using models effectively requires planning and preparation. Teachers must assemble multiple mentor texts appropriate for the genre studied and anticipate sections students will likely find problematic. Mentor texts should illustrate the elements of the genre, are of high interest to students, and provide effective or ineffective examples of expectations (Anderson 38).

Teachers' active modeling of writing is also an integral part of successful instruction. Anderson advocates the process of modeling writing, saying "the least used and most beneficial example is to write in front of our students, modeling any stage or part of the process" (Anderson 34). The use of a Teacher's Writer's Notebook is an effective tool to present teacher-generated models of writing as well as examples of the writing process.

- **Reading models and mentor texts** allows students to connect the expectations of the writing assignment to real world examples. This helps establish a firm concept of audience, purpose, and form and illustrates the variety of writing within a genre, leading to an understanding that even if all students are writing an expository essay, the content and format will be unique to the writer. Students are able to internalize aspects of good writing by learning to sort effective examples from ineffective examples, thereby increasing their ability to create effective writing pieces themselves.

  
  Provide cooperative learning opportunities to increase students' engagement and support understanding. Distribute excerpts of selections that exhibit varying levels of effective writing. Divide students into groups and have each sort and rate the selections, providing explanations and evidence to support their ratings (e.g., this selection is implausible, so it's ineffective). Lead groups in sharing their ratings, comparing ratings and reasoning. Selections may be rated regarding plausibility, introductions and conclusions, clear thesis statements or controlling ideas, etc.

- **Analyzing models and mentor texts** provides students with opportunities to study samples in depth and internalize the structure, format, and content of assigned writing projects. Producing an essay or assigned writing project is one of the most difficult tasks assigned to students, yet it is often the most under taught. "Teaching is not telling, it is not assigning—it is experiencing" (Carroll and Wilson 64). When students are confronted with a writing assignment they do not fully understand, their response is often avoidance, disruption, and off-task behavior. The use of models and mentor texts provides students with concrete, tangible examples of the writing assignment that supports the creation of their own product.

  - Genre studies- Students are expected to write in a variety of genres. Providing mentor texts in the same genre is essential. If students are to write letters to the editor, then they must review and evaluate multiple examples of editorial letters.

Consider providing examples of editorials on opposing sides of the same issue. Divide students into debate groups and have each use the information provided in the mentor texts to support or defend their position. Provide students with sentence stems to facilitate appropriate position statements and rebuttals. Score the debates using a rubric to add accountability.

- Organization- Students must have an in-depth understanding of the various organizational patterns and their relationship to purpose. This ensures students utilize clear organizational patterns appropriate to the purpose. For example, students writing an expository essay in which they are to compare multiple products or examples would be expected to use a compare/contrast organizational structure. Students writing a narrative may develop a linear plot line and therefore would be expected to present the events in chronological order, or they might choose a nonlinear plot line in order to incorporate flashback. If students are to use appropriate and increasingly sophisticated organizational structures, they must see them modeled (Carroll and Wilson 64).

As an introduction, consider providing students with copies of mentor texts cut into chunks. Students must then organize the pieces into a coherent essay by using the author's content and transitions to assemble them correctly. The chunks can be differentiated based on students' needs. Advanced students might embrace the challenge of an essay cut into sentences, while others might begin with essays cut into paragraphs.

- Essential Components- Within each genre of writing, there are certain components or elements that are essential. For example, narratives often utilize figurative language and imagery in order to develop the characters, setting, and plot, while persuasive writing utilizes counterarguments and persuasive techniques and appeals The use of models allows students to see the effective use of these elements, and then students begin to infuse them in their own writing!

Model the inclusion of essential components using teacher-generated writing to help students see examples of the same issues with which they struggle. Using the Teacher's Writer's Notebook, write a "bad-on-purpose" piece that illustrates examples of ineffective elements. This provides students with the opportunity to critique teacher writing, identifying what's wrong and how it might be improved. Rewrite the piece to demonstrate the qualities of effective revision (Atwell 94).

- Language and Diction- Students tend to use language that is familiar and comfortable. This leads to essays that are repetitive, formulaic, and dull. As students analyze models, highlight words and phrases that are compelling or powerful. In narratives, this is usually imagery and figurative language. In persuasive texts, it might be words that evoke emotional responses or have certain connotations. By analyzing what choices authors make and why, students learn how to use language more effectively and intentionally in their own writing.

As a cooperative learning activity, provide students with excerpts from descriptive texts such as *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* or *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Have students highlight the descriptive words, and rewrite the sentences without those words, or replace them with less descriptive terms. Anderson provides a descriptive writing example in his book *10 Things Every Writer Needs to Know*.

In *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Baum writes, “The sun had baked the plowed land into a gray mass, with little cracks running through it. Even the grass was not green, for the sun had burned the tops of the long blades until they were the same gray color to be seen everywhere.” Students may point out that Baum’s writing has the same feel as the black and white portion in the beginning of the movie version of the book (33).

Provide students with this version: “The hot sun had dried out the land and burned the grass.” Have students discuss how the change in language changed the feel and understanding of the piece. This provides students with a more in-depth understanding of the impact of language in conveying ideas and descriptions.


As an extension activity, use wordless picture books to stimulate discussion of language and diction. Have students work in pairs to create text for the picture book, using the pictures as guides to explain the story and create dialogue. Once completed, have groups share and compare their texts, discussing the choices they made.

- **The process of evaluation** is a key component in the use of mentor texts. It is not enough for students to review models; they must also evaluate their effectiveness (Gallagher 103). Evaluating models and mentor texts allows students to link the expectations of the writing assignment with elements in the selections reviewed. This provides a method for students to gain an in-depth understanding of a rubric while fostering their ability to evaluate their own writing.
    - Engage the students- Begin by having students evaluate commonplace or relevant print and nonprint texts, such as ads, television commercials, films, YouTube videos, information on websites, political advertisements. Because such texts deal with interesting topics that are engaging and relevant, students come to understand the evaluation process in a non-threatening manner (Gallagher 103).


Model the evaluation process students are expected to implement. Consider providing sentence stems to facilitate a discussion about the effective and ineffective aspects of the featured text(s). Have students score the text(s) using the rubric for the assigned project to add accountability. Students can use the same text(s) later to deepen revision skills by revising ineffective sections.

    - Develop questions- Provide questions to guide and enhance students’ interaction with models. Questions such as “What’s working well?,” “What’s not working?,” and “What techniques can I try in my own writing?” increase students’ understanding of the writing assignment and increase students’ abilities to emulate the texts reviewed (Anderson 27).


Consider providing students with sentence stems as conversation starters while working in their writing groups. Doing so provides struggling students with support and fosters engagement and understanding as they discuss the texts.

- **Emulating texts** is a way for students to practice implementing effective writing as they develop their own writing piece. Encourage students to experiment with the application of the effective aspects or elements observed in the mentor texts (Anderson 34).

Consider providing students with an excerpt and have them recreate the piece, retaining the structure but using their own words. For example, distribute a poem with a distinct pattern, such as *Who's Who* by Judith Viorst, and have them emulate the pattern and structure but change the verbiage to provide descriptions of their own friends and family.

Emphasize that emulation does not mean plagiarism. It means utilizing what students have learned from deconstructing *how* authors effectively or ineffectively developed a piece of writing and using similar methods to create their own.

"Questions force you down from a great cloudy mass of ideas to the solid ground of real thought."
— Lucile Vaughan Payne

Prewriting

In *ACTS of Teaching*, Carroll and Wilson aptly express the purpose of prewriting:

> Prewriting is part of the writing process, not an isolated exercise. True, students do benefit from these strategies, but they are not the end goal. We need to take students to a place where they can determine, when reading a prompt or given an assignment, which strategy to use, what works best. To that end, "Effective use of prewriting allows for connections between what is taught and what is thought. [. . .] it is a way of learning to perceive, a way of thinking, a way of choosing potentialities from the writer's life [and research] to use as grist for writing. It is living the writing" (5).
>
> Prewriting provides students the opportunity to "develop a habit of thought and learn to choose and use the appropriate prewriting strategy as a way of interpreting the world and experiencing it as rich rootstock" (6).

Interestingly, our first task is not to teach students a variety of prewriting strategies; instead, it is to teach them to decipher the type of prompt with which they are presented.

Students must understand whether they are to deconstruct a fully formed prompt or narrow a general prompt in order to construct a more specific topic.

The following breakdown reflects this distinction:

- General prompts: Research Papers, International Baccalaureate (IB) Required Assessments (Personal Project, Written Assignment, Extended Essay, Individual Oral Presentation (IOP), Individual Oral Commentary (IOC), Paper 3), Advanced Placement (AP) Assessments, and Formative Assessments
    - Require narrowing a topic to develop an arguable thesis, identify mode(s), and then prewriting strategies
- Specific prompts: SAT, ACT, AP, IB (Paper 2, Theory of Knowledge [TOK]), STAAR

The initial steps in the writing process are deconstructing the prompt, identifying mode(s), and then using strategies to prewrite. The following "Deconstructing the Prompt" activities are from *SpringBoard Level 5*, Unit 2.

ACTIVITY 2.13
Deconstructing a Prompt

Materials:
- Highlighters or markers

Purpose:
- To develop strategies for deconstructing, or analyzing, writing prompts
- To apply prompt-deconstruction strategies to the prewriting process

Steps:
1 Read the introductory paragraph on the student page with students. Then, refer students to the parts of a writing prompt. The list provides a quick reference students can use to identify the components of a writing prompt.

TEACHER TO TEACHER Some important information about the four prompts on page 95:
- The first prompt is similar to a writing task students may encounter on a state or standardized test. It is simple, but the examination of the parts will still yield an enlarged understanding of the task.
- The second and third prompts are from past Advanced Placement tests. You might consider becoming a member of AP Central and logging on to view other past prompts. (www.collegeboard.com)
- The final prompt is the one that appears in Embedded Assessment 1 for Unit 2.
- Students do not need the reading passage associated with the third prompt and the press release is not included in the student materials. The activity's focus is solely on prewriting and planning.

ACTIVITY 2.13

Deconstructing a Prompt

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: **Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer, Word Map, Think-Pair-Share**

Writing prompts often contain many details but little direction. It is easy to get caught up in the details and forget the main task. You may write an excellent response with flawless syntax, but if you do not respond to the prompt, you will not receive a high score. This activity offers guidance in deconstructing—or reading, analyzing, and understanding—writing prompts.

When considering any prompt, look for five basic parts. Most if not all of the parts will be present. Finding as many as you can will help you figure out what you need to do and how to respond to the prompt correctly.

Five Parts to Look for in a Writing Prompt

1. **Subject:** What is the subject you need to write about? A well-written prompt will identify the subject, but it may be vague. For example, a prompt might tell you to think of a childhood experience. What common themes or ideas (either implicit or explicit) are associated with the subject?
2. **Speaker:** Who is writing the answer? (You are, but are you writing it as a student, a citizen, an authority?) The prompt should tell you who you are as the writer.
3. **Type of Essay:** What kind of response are you writing—expository, persuasive, synthesis, personal narrative? An effective prompt must tell you the type of writing you need to do. It may give you a choice. Choose wisely.
4. **Task:** What is the prompt asking you to do? For example, your task may be to take a stand on an issue and write a five-paragraph persuasive essay. Read the details carefully to identify exactly what you need to do.
5. **Hints:** Does the prompt give you suggestions to get started? The prompt may suggest ideas to think about or literary devices to identify and analyze.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Synthesis is the act of combining ideas from different sources to create, express, or support a new idea.

Writing Workshops

You may wish to extend or support students' writing preparation by accessing Workshop 9, Response to Literary or Expository Text, which provides direct instruction in the drafting and revising of an essay of literary analysis.

Identify all the parts in the four prompts below. You may use different colored markers to highlight different parts in each prompt. The first prompt may be done together as a class. Afterward, complete the remaining prompts.

Prompt 1: Think of something at your school that you would like to change in order to create a more positive learning environment. The change could affect anything from a policy or procedure to an attitude or tradition. In a well-organized persuasive letter, write to an adult at your school presenting the problem, your solution to that problem, and why the environment would change.

Subject: Something at my school that I could change, perhaps a policy (like the Tardy Policy) or the exclusive cliques that cause some students to feel left out of social groups, affecting their ability to learn in class.

Speaker: I am the speaker. I am a student in this school. I will have to use personal experiences and voice will be important.

Type of Essay: I am to write a persuasive letter, using appropriate formatting and deciding whether to use formal or informal language. I will need to persuade an adult and use the most persuasive techniques I know.

Task: Construct a persuasive argument. Present the problem, my solution, and why the environment would change. I will need to include elements of the argument, such as my claim and specific examples to support my claim. It will also be important to show the counterarguments.

Hints: The prompt gives me a hint on organization because I need three separate chunks: to address the problem, my solution, and why the environment will change. The prompt does not give me the adult to write to, so it might be smart to choose someone who can actually help me initiate the change.

Prompt 2: Contemporary life is marked by controversy. Choose a controversial local, national, or global issue with which you are familiar. Then, using appropriate evidence, write an essay that carefully considers opposing positions on this issue and proposes a solution or compromise.

Prompt 3: The following is a mock press release from *The Onion*, a publication devoted to humor and satire. Read the article carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the strategies used in the article to satirize how products are marketed to consumers.

Prompt 4: Choose a character from a text you have read (not necessarily the **protagonist**) whose mind is pulled in conflicting directions by two compelling desires, ambitions, obligations, or influences. Then, in a well-organized essay, identify each side of the conflict and examine the reasons for the conflict, the conflict's resolution, and how this conflict illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole.

WORD CONNECTIONS

Synthesis contains the root *-thes-*, from the Greek word *thesis* meaning "put, place, or set." This root also appears in *hypothesis, photosynthesis,* and *antithesis*. *Syn-* is a prefix meaning "with or together."

LITERARY TERM

A **protagonist** is the main character of a fictional story.

ACTIVITY 2.13 *Continued*

Steps:

2 Read aloud the first prompt to students. Have them **mark the text**, indicating as many of the five elements as they can find. Tell them to write their findings on separate paper (see the reduced student page for sample responses). Finally, have students **think-pair-share** with a partner.

3 Next, instruct all students to complete the rest of the assignment by deconstructing, or analyzing, the remaining three prompts. Students may work alone or with partners. Encourage students to use highlighters to **mark the text** and record their answers.

4 When students have completed their deconstructions, assign groups a prompt and have them discuss and record possible organizational strategies for answering it. Students should consider the following questions: How many body paragraphs would they have? How would they divide their information? What would be important to put first?

5 Ask students to analyze the academic vocabulary term ***synthesis*** on a **word map** and place it in their **Vocabulary Notebooks**.

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Development and appropriate organizational structure are essential aspects of effective writing. Different modes invite different kinds of prewriting strategies/organizers:

Narrative

Descriptive

Expository

Argumentative/Persuasive

For example, a sequence of events organizer or concept web are typically the best tools to use to develop a narrative, while an outline type of organizer helps ensure an expository or argumentative essay has the proper thesis development and supporting evidence.

Prewriting Strategies

- **Freewriting involves students jotting down all the ideas** they have on a particular topic before even beginning to read about it or do research. They should not be worried about complete sentences or conventions. Instead, they are to focus on "dumping" all of the information they have on paper. They are to write everything that comes into their heads—even if it doesn't necessarily make sense yet. Establish a set amount of time (maybe five to ten minutes) for students to record everything that comes to mind about their topics.

  Student Example: I have to write a paper about the environment. I have no idea where to start! I know there are many problems with the environment, but I don't know much about this topic. Maybe I could take a look at my biology book to come up with some ideas. I know my biology professor is also really into the environment, so maybe I could ask for his help. I remember he was talking about hybrid cars in class the other day and how much better those are for the environment. What is a hybrid car? I know it uses some sort of alternative fuel and they are becoming very popular. Maybe that is something I could write about …

- **Brainstorming is much like freewriting** and involves students capturing all of their thoughts and ideas—complete thoughts and/or fragments—on paper. Often, brainstorming looks more like a list while freewriting may look more like a paragraph. With either strategy, the goal is to get as many ideas down on paper as possible.

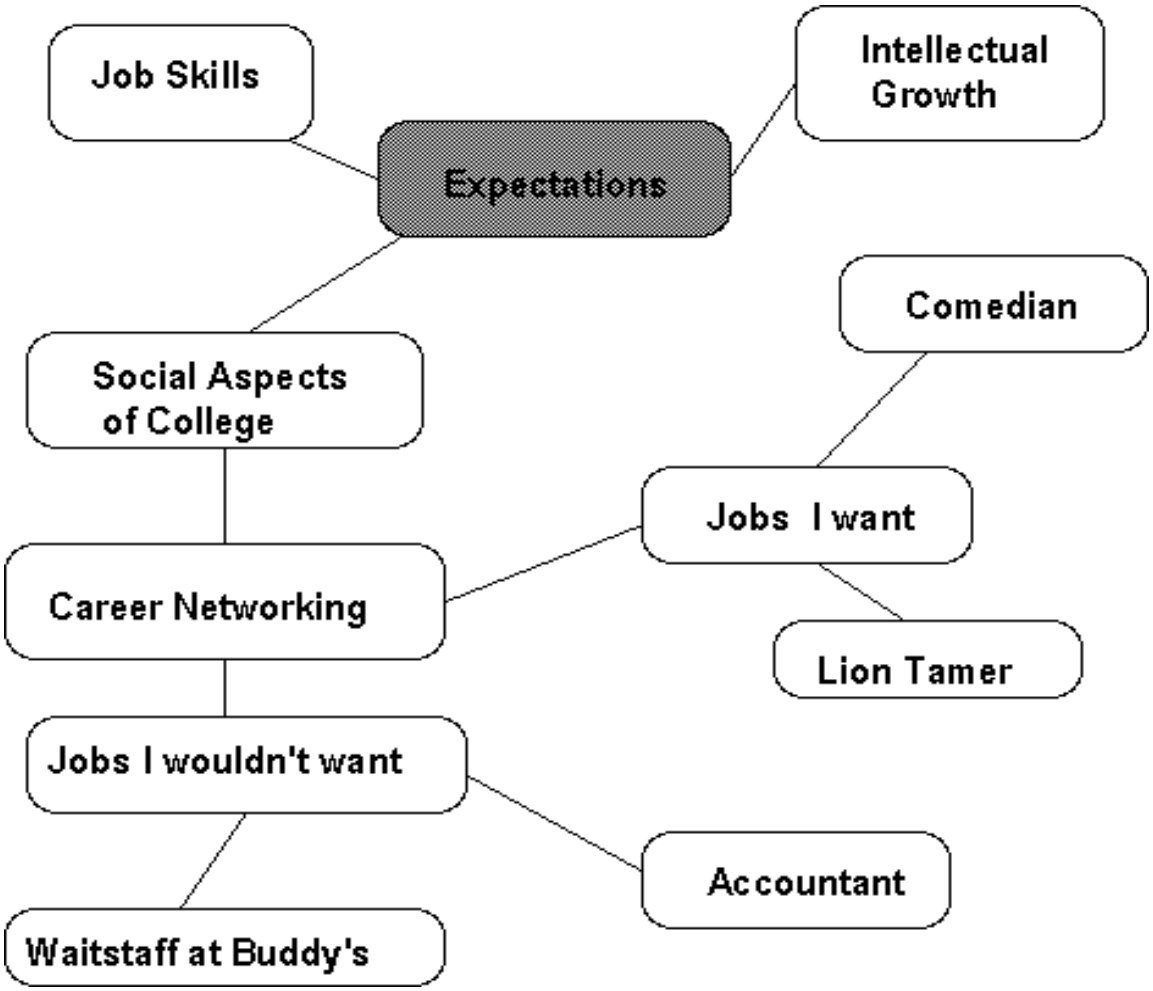
  

  Student Example (following the above topic thread):

  - Environment
  - Problems
  - Future
  - Cars
  - Alternative fuels
  - Hybrid cars
  - Costs
  - Benefits?

- **Clustering is a technique** where a student draws a circle that contains his/her main idea and then draws lines to smaller circles that contain ideas or issues related to the main idea. Encourage students to group like ideas together so as to organize themselves.

Student Example: My Expectations About College



- **Particle, Wave, Field is a strategy** that helps students narrow the focus of their prewriting. The basic idea of this strategy is:
    - an object, experience, or idea can be viewed as a particle (a static unit)
    - a wave (a dynamic unit changing over time)
    - a field (a unit seen in the context of a larger network of relationships)

  Each of these perspectives encourages students to ask different kinds of questions about their subjects (represented here as X).

    - Particle perspective: What is X?
    - Wave perspective: How has X changed over time?
    - Field perspective: How does X relate to Y or Z?

  Examples: If one views something as a **particle**, he/she focuses on it as a static (still) entity. For example, if a student was exploring ideas for a sociology paper on the transformation of the idea of family in America, s/he could use a particle perspective to ask questions like the following:

    - What did a "normal" family look like in the past?
    - How is that different than today's idea of family?
    - Why is the idea of family such a controversial topic in today's world?

  Looking at a subject from the **wave** perspective, one views it as dynamic or changing over time. The wave perspective would encourage the following questions:

    - How long has the idea of a "normal" family structure been promoted in America?
    - When did the definition of family begin to change?
    - What factors have caused the definition of family to change?
    - How might these factors affect the American family in the future?

  Finally, if one looks at a subject from a **field** perspective, he/she asks questions about the way that the subject functions as a part of a larger network of relationships. This perspective would encourage questions like these:

    - How are changes in the structure of the American family related to other changes, such as those in the work force, organized religion, the educational system, and divorce rates?
    - What are the consequences of changes in the family structure for American life in general? For politics? For social services? For education?

- **Journalistic prewriting is a technique** in which students ask questions about their topic. Journalists usually have six important questions they need to answer about any story: who, what, when, where, why, and how. By answering these questions, journalists can be certain that they have provided the most important information about an event, issue, or problem to their readers.

  These six questions are useful to our student writers when they are describing an event or writing an informative essay. This questioning technique encourages students to make sure that they have provided all of the important and specific details of a situation.

Example: A government professor asks his students to write an informative essay about the political conflict in the Middle East. Using the journalistic technique, they could begin working on the paper by asking themselves the following questions:

- **Who** is involved in the conflict?
- **What** issues most clearly divide those engaged in this dispute?
- **When** did the troubles in the Middle East begin, and how have they developed over time?
- **Where** does the conflict seem most heated or violent?
- **Why** have those living in this area found it so difficult to resolve the situation?
- **How** might this conflict be resolved?

Using the journalistic technique helps students make sure they address many of the critical aspects of the topic.

Other Useful Strategies

- **Talking** is often a very useful strategy for students to do with a classmate, friend, or teacher. Brainstorming aloud and hearing ideas in auditory fashion can help students think about ways to start their papers. Alternately, **discussion circles** may provide fodder for students to use as a jumping off point.

- **Journaling** and **Quick-writes** allow students to pause during the middle of a class discussion and respond in writing to a question before continuing. Because these responses tend to be more focused than a typical freewrite, they offer starting points for writers searching for something to comment on. A **Do Now**, while typically generated prior to a lesson, provides students with an opportunity to explore ideas without previous input and may just contain seeds of thought that some of them want to contemplate further.

- **Viewing previously graded writing** provides a wonderful springboard for practicing and/or incorporating new writing strategies and techniques. Use timed writings, supervised writings, portfolio work, etc., to revisit a topic. Doing so provides students with an opportunity to achieve a greater depth of knowledge of a topic while developing additional writing and analytical skills.

Why Use These Techniques?

Brainstorming, clustering, and similar prewriting techniques may be quite familiar to students, so encourage students to use a variety of techniques so that no single one becomes dull and loses its usefulness. Provide opportunities for students to learnnew ways of prewriting—such as trying particle, wave, field— and compare them to the previous strategies they've used. The key to prewriting is finding something that is user-friendly and yields a good deal of content. Jotting down a word or sentence or two is usually not enough; the more ideas that students can get on paper in the early stages of writing, the stronger their final papers will be.

Parting Words

Before beginning prewriting, students must make sure that they thoroughly understand the purpose and audience for the assignment. Encourage them to ask questions if they are unsure about what to do; after all, it's difficult for anyone to prewrite if he/she doesn't understand the assignment.

Assignments often include submitting prewriting with the rough draft and final copy, so students should make sure that they keep all of their work in their Writers' Notebook.

Students should understand their prewriting will often look very different from the final draft. Assure them this is just the first step in the writing process and their writing will evolve with each step of the process.

Organization

Students need to be aware that regardless of genre, all good writing requires proper structure in order to achieve a clear, effective presentation of ideas.

During prewriting, students have been allowed a freeform experience to generate thoughts and ideas. Teachers can maximize the prewriting process by facilitating activities that allow students to use strategies that generate the most ideas, create the most productive working environment, and foster the confidence students need to expand and express their thoughts and ideas in an effective organizational structure.

During the organization process, it is important to emphasize to students that the thesis statement (focal point, controlling idea) must be developed to ensure a clear progression of ideas is achieved throughout the essay. Remind students that the thesis drives the organizational structure of an essay. **Note: Further discussion of thesis statement development may be found in the Drafting section.**

Teachers need to clarify that organization is merely arranging ideas and details together in a logical order so that their writing makes clear sense to anyone reading it.

Teachers may also simplify instruction of organization during the writing process by reminding students that they will always have a Beginning, Middle, and End, or Introduction, Body, and Conclusion, and they must organize the information and specific components of their essays in that format.

Some students may have difficulty expressing great ideas simply because they do not know how to organize those ideas when prompted to write specific kinds of essays. To assist students in an executing effective organizing structure, teachers should utilize graphic organizers that support a progression of thought from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph. Students should also be exposed to a comprehensive list of transition words and or phrases to help ensure a cohesive and focused presentation of ideas. **Note: A comprehensive list of suggested transitions is included in the Revising section.**

For a Literary/Narrative essay, instruction should include the story elements requirements and the following components of the plot diagram:

Beginning-	Exposition
	Rising Action
Middle-	Climax
End-	Falling Action
	Resolution

For the Expository/Descriptive/Persuasive type essay, instruction should include the organizational elements requirements and the following components of the essay design:

Beginning-	Introduction
	Thesis Statement
Middle-	Body Paragraph #1
	Transition Word/Phrase
	Body Paragraph #2
	Transition Word/Phrase
	Body Paragraph #3
	Transition Word/Phrase
Ending-	Conclusion/Illumination/Summary Paragraph

Teachers must ensure that while offering strategies for organization during the writing process, students are given freedom to experiment and select strategies that provide the easiest, least restrictive

path to successful completion of higher- level writing while still maintaining the individual style and expression of their original ideas.

Additionally, students should be provided a variety of strategies to help them to develop and maintain all levels of organization (**purpose, audience, structure and usage of language, genre, focus and coherence, and craft**) paragraph by paragraph within the essay. In *ACTS of Teaching*, four specific organizational patterns from Kenneth A. Bruffee's *A Short Course in Writing* are offered to assist students in achieving a strong organizational structure. These patterns, as detailed by Bruffee, present form, but not formula, and give students workable, expandable structures within which to write (Carroll and Wilson 60). The patterns are as follows:

- **Two Reasons-** This pattern may be the easiest, most straightforward pattern for students to organize points, arguments, and steps, and it is favored typically by testing agencies and traditionalists.
    - **1st Paragraph**
        Introduction
        Proposition
    - **2nd Paragraph**
        First reason developed
        Explanation or defense
    - **3rd Paragraph**
        Second reason developed
- **Nestorian Order-** This pattern is helpful to use when students are responding to EOC types of prompts or when writing about topics of which they have lesser depth of knowledge, allowing students to present their best points and arguments.
    - **1st Paragraph**
        Introduction
        Proposition
    - **2nd Paragraph**
        Second best reason developed
        Minor reasons
    - **3rd Paragraph**
        Major reason developed
- **Strawman and One Reason-** This pattern helps students raise an opposing point, argument, or idea and systematically invalidate it.
    - **1st Paragraph**
        Introduction
        Proposition
    - **2nd Paragraph**
        Main opposing argument developed
        Refutation of the opposition
    - **3rd Paragraph**
        Major positive reasons developed
- **Concession-** This pattern helps students acknowledge opposing ideas and viewpoints and use data to fortify their own ideas and viewpoints.
    - **1st Paragraph**
        Introduction
        Proposition
    - **2nd Paragraph**
        Important opposing argument developed
    - **3rd Paragraph**
        Concession
        Positive argument developed

Drafting

Students need to understand that at the basic level, drafting is just taking the ideas created from prewriting and fleshing them out in sentence form. It is also important for students to know that the initial draft of an essay is just that—a rough draft. Make sure that the rough draft is legible, but do not be concerned about grammatical errors. Even accomplished writers do not attend to such concerns during the drafting stage. Have students focus on developing their ideas and voice.

To reinforce these concepts, model the drafting process for students using a Think-Aloud. Model the creation of all parts of the essay: the introduction, which typically includes the thesis; the body; and the conclusion.

- **The Introduction:** Most introductions begin with a "hook" or something to get the reader's attention and make him/her want to read the rest of the essay. The most important part of the introduction is the thesis statement. The thesis statement or controlling idea is what dictates the organization and progression of the essay. (An important note: Not all thesis statements occur in the introduction. Advanced students may be able to imply the thesis during the paper and then directly state it in the conclusion.)
  - **Effective introductions** engage the reader and provide the focus point of the essay. Use mentor texts to provide examples of effective introductions. Instruct students to use the following questions to critique sample introductions:
    - Does this introduction catch the reader's attention?
    - Does this introduction tell the reader what the essay will be about?
    - Does this introduction focus the reader on what is to come?

  Caution students against using unnecessary and weak fillers in their introduction, such as "I am going to tell you about …," or relying on weak ploys to grab the reader's attention, such as starting off with onomatopoeia (e.g., Boom! Bang!).
    - Consider visiting the LEO- Strategies for Writing an Introduction website for more information and assistance.

    
    Some students may struggle with the introduction. As long as students have a thesis or controlling idea to work with, allow them to develop the body of the essay first and then come back to do more thinking about the introduction.

  - **The thesis statement** identifies the focus for expository, argumentative, interpretative, and analytical essays.
    - A thesis identifies the topic or subject and then voices an opinion about that topic.
    - Model the process of creating a thesis statement using the Teacher's Writer's Notebook.
    - The thesis of an essay should be broad enough that a student can easily answer it and provide sufficient evidence. Direct students away from narrow, fact-based statements that can be easily proved or disproved. Remind students that their job is to make a statement and then spend the rest of the essay using supporting evidence to prove they are correct. Consider visiting the LEO- Thesis Statement website for more information and assistance.
    - Conduct Writing Conferences and provide feedback to assist students. Remind students that a thesis statement is the backbone of the entire essay.

    
    Provide cooperative learning opportunities to increase students' engagement and support understanding. Consider having students write thesis statements in pairs until they become proficient. As an alternative activity, provide students with text evidence and have them compose a thesis statement, or provide students with a thesis statement and have them find supporting textual evidence.

- **An effective lead** is important when developing an introduction. Leads are a way to pique a reader's interest and entice him/her to continue reading. Narrative leads usually provide insight into the story to come, while expository leads provide clues to topics of discussion.

  Jeff Anderson identifies various ways to construct an effective narrative or literary lead in his book *10 Things Every Writer Needs to Know*. Below are several examples of introductions that utilize various types of narrative leads:

  - **Sensory Leads:** This type of lead utilizes one or more of the five senses to help the reader feel as though they are present in the setting of the story. Although some students may want to include all five senses, encourage them to be judicious and use the one(s) that will make the most impact to the reader. "I woke to the sound of a mosquito whining in my left ear and my mother screeching in my right" (*Fever 1973* by Laurie Halse Anderson).
  - **Hint Leads:** This type of lead creates suspense and compels the reader to keep reading. "It's a Tuesday morning in February, and I get up as usual, and I stumble into the bathroom and take a shower in the dark. Which is my school-day method because it's sort of like an extra ten minutes of sleep. It's after the shower. That's when it happens" (*Things Not Seen* by Andrew Clements).
  - **Shocking Image:** This type of lead uses description to capture the reader's attention. "The human head is of the same approximate size and weight as a roaster chicken. I have never before had occasion to make the comparison, for never before today have I seen a head in a roasting pan" (*Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers* by May Roach).
  - **Context Leads:** This type of lead borrows from a basic journalistic principle and gives information about the 5Ws-and-an-H (who, what, when where, why, and how). Caution students about making this type of introduction too simplistic or formulaic by providing them a beautifully crafted sample. "When I wake up, the other side of the bed is cold. My fingers stretch out, seeking Prim's warmth but finding only the rough canvas cover of the mattress. She must have had bad dreams and climbed in with our mother. Of course, she did. This is the day of reaping" (*The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins).
  - **Action Leads:** This type of lead starts in the middle of the action to get the reader's attention. "On the eve of a 1917 performance at New York City's Hippodrome, Harry Houdini was cinched into a straightjacket and hoisted upside down from his ankles by a subway derrick. Thirty feet about Forty-Sixth Street and Broadway, he convulsed, wriggled, and swayed" (*Houdini: Art and Magic* by Brook Kamin Rapaport).
  - **People Leads:** This type of lead places a spotlight on a specific character to get the reader's attention. "The day before Mrs. Starch vanished, her third-period biology students trudged silently, as always, into the classroom. Their expressions reflected the usual mix of dread and melancholy, for Mrs. Starch was the most feared teacher at the Truman School. When the bell rang, she unfolded stiffly, like a crane, and rose to her full height of nearly six feet. In one hand she twirled a sharpened Ticonderoga No. 2 pencil, a sure sight of trouble to come" (*Scat* by Carl Hiaasen).

  Below are several examples of introductions that utilize various types of expository leads. These have been adapted from Barry Lane's *Reviser's Toolbox.*

  - **Start with a Snapshot:** This type of lead describes a scene related to the topic of discussion. "It's ten degrees below zero and the river is frozen a foot thick. It makes a snapping sound like the limbs of trees cracking. A lone figure glides along the black ice, moving towards the city. The only sound is the scraping of each blade as it bites into the river. Ice-skating is an amazing sport" (*Reviser's Toolbox* by Barry Lane)

- **Start with One Important Observation:** This type of lead provides a thought-provoking statement related to the topic of discussion. “Seeing stars, it dreams of eternity. Hearing birds, it makes music. Smelling flowers, it is enraptured. Touching tools, it transforms the earth. But deprived of these sensory experiences, the human brain withers and dies.” (*Inside the Brain* by Ronald Kotulak).
- **Start with a Strongly Stated Question Your Readers Might Have:** This type of lead engages the reader by asking questions. “What’s the point of studying history? Who cares what happened that long ago? After all, aren’t all the people in history books dead?” (*The History of Us* by Joy Hakim).
- **Flaunt Your Favorite Bit of Research:** This type of lead draws the reader’s attention by providing an interesting tidbit of information. “Though we’ve been killing them for years now, most people have never tested the folklore that with a little cream and sugar, flies taste very much like raspberries.” (*Reviser’s Toolbox* by Barry Lane)

- **The Body:** The body develops the main ideas and details that support the thesis. Typically essays are structured in paragraphs, with each paragraph providing supportive evidence and commentary to support the thesis. A body paragraph may be developed in various ways depending on the genre of the essay. If the genre is expository, it is important to provide facts, details, and examples. If the genre is argumentative, it is important to use logic and evidence in the essay. More information on developing specific genres of writing is provided below. **Note: More information on organizing essays is available in the Organization section of this handbook.**

  - **Topic sentences** are one of the most important aspects of the body because they connect to the thesis and focus on specific aspects of support. Typically, a body paragraph begins with a topic sentence and then is followed by related textual evidence or facts and commentary. Commentary contains the thoughts and opinion of the writer and unites the paragraph. This is where voice is developed.

    
    Provide cooperative learning opportunities to increase students’ engagement and support understanding. Distribute paragraphs of information and have students craft topic sentences for them. Once students become more proficient, provide students with topic sentences and have them complete the development of the paragraphs with supporting evidence and commentary.

  - **Textual evidence** is an essential component of an essay. Analysis and interpretation of elements must be based on elements found within a text. Students sometimes make assumptions and inferences based on how they feel or how they would react in a given situation and overlook evidence within the text. It is imperative that students understand that inferences made must be supported by evidence.

    
    Dialectical Journals, sometimes known as two-column or three-column journals, provide valuable opportunities for students to interact with a text and develop solid habits of noting text evidence to support inferences. Students make notes of dialogue, events, language, style, diction, etc., in the left column and write matching thoughts, questions, inferences, etc., in the right column. Doing so provides students with a way to organize their thoughts and provides a foundation for analysis.

  - **Commentary** is really the heart of any essay. Commentary is the author’s interpretation or analysis of text evidence and provides readers with insights into the author’s reasoning, beliefs and/or values as well as overall tone.

Dialectical Journals also provide valuable opportunities for students to develop commentary to use when writing essays related to texts. For example, if a student is writing an analytical essay about *Romeo and Juliet*, he/she could incorporate Dialectical Journal notations and commentary on language use, word choice, style, events, characterization, and/or inferences made to support his/her analysis and interpretation.

- **The Conclusion** typically restates the thesis in a new way and summarizes the most important ideas in the essay. Sometimes students overlook the necessity of providing closure for an essay and end with the final body paragraph. Remind students that their essay must contain an effective conclusion in order to be considered complete.

  - **Effective conclusions** should be engaging rather than formulaic (i.e., not just a recast of the introduction). Guide students away from depending on stock transitions such as "In conclusion" and "In summary." Consult the LEO- Strategies for Writing a Conclusion website for more ideas.

Use models and mentor texts to provide examples of effective conclusions. Have students work in cooperative groups to critique various conclusions. Consider providing samples of both effective and ineffective conclusions to provide comparison opportunities. Support participation by providing students with questions to guide discussions. For example:

- Does this conclusion sum up the essay?
- Does this conclusion tie up loose ends and answer all questions posed?
- Does this conclusion restate the thesis in a different way?
- Does this conclusion give the reader something more to think about?

  - **Constructing an effective conclusion** is as important as constructing an effective lead. Anderson also identifies various ways to construct effective conclusions in his book *10 Things Every Writer Needs to Know.*

    Below are several examples of narrative conclusions:

    - **Look Back, Look Forward Conclusion:** This type asks the reader to reflect either on how a text may have changed his/her views or at how the future might be different. "[T]he graves and the remains of the colonial settlers carry a message to the people of today. They remind us not to forget their lives and accomplishments—and not to lose our connection to the past. A broken tooth, a fractured bone, and a strand of brown hair—all of them whisper: '*Rest with me for a moment or two. I have a story to tell.'* These talks, written only in bone, await those with the patience to find them" (*Written in Bone: Buried Lives of Jamestown and Colonial Maryland* by Sally M. Walker).
    - **Now-I-Got-It Conclusion:** This type captures the writer's takeaway message for the reader, usually by focusing on how the main character has changed or is changing. "There is no magic cure, no making it go away forever. There are only small steps upward; an easier day, an unexpected laugh, a mirror that doesn't matter anymore. I am thawing." (*Wintergirls* by Laurie Halse Anderson).
    - **Summary Conclusion:** This type basically summarizes the most important events of the text. Note: This type of conclusion can be formulaic, repetitive, and boring if done incorrectly. Students need to see a model of how it should look. "When they were growing up, Bob and Joe Switzer wanted different things. Bob wanted to make his fortune by becoming a doctor, and Joe wanted to make his mark on the world through magic. At first it may seem that neither brother ended up where he wanted to be. But in that darkened basement, the Switzer brothers began to look at the world in a different light.

One brother wanted to save lives. The other wanted to dazzle crowds. With Day-Glo they did both (*The Day-Glo Brothers: The True Story of Bob and Joe Switzer's Bright Ideas and Brand-New Colors* by Chris Barton).

- **Call-back Conclusion:** This type refers back to events that were already mentioned or discussed in the text. "His murals were all that mattered to him. He put everything he's ever seen into them—things from Antonio's hut, things from the Day of the Dead, the fiestas, scenes from the desert, from the jungle…Everything. His murals were huge. There was nothing else like them in the world. Diego Rivera became a famous artist. His paintings made people proud to be Mexican. They still do" (*Diego* by Jonah Winter).

o The Purdue University North Central Wring Center provides the following examples of effective conclusions for expository writing. These can be adapted for argumentative and analytical essays.

- **Return to the introduction:** This type incorporates parts of the introduction. (The italicized words in the following example refers to a comparison presented in the introduction.) "Despite all these suggestions, finding a summer job may still be as *difficult as locating an inexpensive apartment near campus*. But at least you can be confident that you have gone about it efficiently and looked into all the possibilities. The rest is up to luck."
- **Restate the thesis:** This type restates the controlling idea of the essay. "Looking for a summer job need not be a hit-or-miss process. It can be conducted in a systematic, efficient manner that should produce results. Almost always, it will."
- **Summarize the main points:** This type provides a brief summary of the main points of the essay (and used only on longer papers). "What is important is to start looking for a summer job early and to follow the specific suggestions noted here. You may not want to investigate all the possibilities—employers overseas, federal agencies, local or state governments, industries in other areas, and local businesses. But you should realize it is better to have too many opportunities than too few. That is why all of these suggestions have been offered."
- **Forecast the future:** This type provides a hint of future outcomes. "Even if you follow these suggestions, you still may not find summer work. The growing demand, yet diminishing supply, of these positions means that many young people will be unemployed. The result may be a return to academics to attend summer sessions, which could double present enrollments."
- **Call for action:** This type asks the reader to take a certain action. "The important point to remember is to start looking for that summer job today. You can write letters to federal agencies, check into local and state government possibilities, get a copy of the *Summer Employment Directory*, and follow the suggestions about seeking work in local businesses. Those who hesitate may not find work this summer."
- **Discuss implications:** This type discusses possible outcomes of actions. "The implications of these suggestions should be apparent. Summer jobs will be more difficult to find this year than last. You may wait for Lady Luck to smile upon you or roll up your sleeves and start searching for yourself. You may even decide to chuck the idea of getting a job and enroll in summer school."
- **Point out the significance of ideas:** This type highlights ideas of importance. "Perhaps what is more significant than these specific suggestions is that even such an undertaking as finding a summer job can be carefully researched and planned. Some people go through life haphazardly, meeting problems with hastily conceived, last-minute answers. Other people anticipate problems and study how to meet them. To do so is usually more rewarding."

- **Transitions:** Explain to students that transitions are another important aspect of organization. Remind students that transitions not only lead readers from one paragraph to another, but also from one idea or sentence to another.
    - Transitions can:
        - ✓ Show location
        - ✓ Show time
        - ✓ Add information
        - ✓ Compare/contrast
        - ✓ Conclude/summarize
    - For further support and practice, consult The Writing Center- Transition Words website for more information and assistance. **Note: More information on transitions is available in the Revising section.**

      
      Have students practice with transitions. Read aloud a selection from a text that students have access to and have students identify the transition words. Next, ask students to classify these words and place them in a graphic organizer in their Writer's Notebook. An example is as follows:

Location	Compare/ Contrast	Time	Importance	Conclude

      Hold a class discussion about the effects of these words. Ask students, "How would removing these words impact the organization of this piece?"

- **The genre of an essay or piece of writing** typically dictates the structure and form it takes. For example, a narrative or literary work such as a short story usually follows a chronological or sequential order. Expository essays may be organized in a variety of ways depending on the topic of discussion. For example, an essay comparing and contrasting the benefits of exercise would take on a compare/contrast organizational structure. **Note: More information on organization is available in the Organization section.**

  The following list provides helpful information and examples of various genres of writing:

    - **Short Story:** A short story is a brief work of fiction that presents characters in a conflict that is first developed and then resolved. In this type of writing, students are expected to develop an engaging story that includes a well-developed conflict and resolution, interesting and believable characters, and a range of literary strategies and devices to enhance the plot. The basic structure is:
        - **Introduction:** Includes the setting, characters, and the conflict
        - **Body:** Includes the plot with well-paced action, climax of the plot, and use of literary devices to develop tone and style
        - **Conclusion:** Includes the resolution and the results of the main character's actions
    - **Expository Essay:** An expository essay explores a topic by providing relevant or important information on a topic. In this type of writing, students are expected to develop an expository essay of sufficient length that includes organized and accurately conveyed information; effective introductory and concluding paragraphs; sentence variety; a controlling idea or thesis; an organizing structure (e.g. inductive/deductive, compare/contrast) appropriate to purpose, audience, and context; relevant information and valid inferences; rhetorical devices; and transitions between paragraphs. The basic structure is:
        - **Introduction:** Identifies the topic and clearly states the thesis statement

- **Body:** Provides main ideas and details that support the topic sentences and connect back to the thesis statement
- **Conclusion:** Restates the thesis statement and summarizes the most important main ideas or details

- **Argumentative Essay:** An argumentative essay presents a viewpoint or opinion on a specific issue. In this type of writing, students are expected to develop an argumentative essay to the appropriate audience that includes a clear thesis or position based on logical reasons; relevant supporting evidence that may include facts, expert opinions, quotations, and/or expressions of commonly accepted beliefs; and counterarguments based on evidence to anticipate and address objections. The basic structure is:
  - **Introduction:** Provides a lead and a clear thesis statement
  - **Body:** Contains persuasive and logically organized arguments and counterarguments
  - **Conclusion:** Restates the position and contains a memorable ending or call to action
    - This essay is usually focused on a thesis that adopts one side of an issue. The thesis must be proven by using relevant evidence from authoritative sources and the essay as a whole must take into consideration any counterarguments and dispute them with relevant evidence.
    - This type of essay typically includes evidence in the form of facts, alternate opinions, statistics, etc. Emphasize the importance of researching information that addresses all sides of the topic to ensure that they can successfully anticipate counterarguments based on evidence and address possible objections.
    - Students are expected to use persuasive techniques and appeals, addressing their essay to an appropriate audience and providing considerations of the whole range of information on the topic. This means students need to have information about all sides of an argument in order to predict any counterarguments and refute them effectively. In order to be credible, the entire range of information and views on the topic needs to be accurate.
    - **As the students develop their draft, it may become necessary to modify their thesis**. If students find that they do not have enough information on one or both sides of the issue and/or that their opinion on the issue has changed, they should adjust the thesis to reflect appropriately

      
      Have students self-question as a method of critiquing their process. This strategy helps guide students as they modify their research question and critique their research process. By questioning themselves, students can develop a better understanding of research as a process. Some suggested questions include:

      - Is my thesis clear and able to be proved?
      - Do I have enough evidence to prove my thesis?
      - Have I found enough evidence to present various sides of my topic?
      - Have I thought about and researched counterarguments?
      - Are my sources creditable and unbiased?
      - Has my evidence made me change my position?
      - What adjustments, if any, should I make in my research process?

- **Analytical Essay:** An analytical essay analyzes an author's use of style or rhetorical devices. In this type of writing, students are expected to develop an analytical essay that extends beyond a summary and literal analysis, addresses the writing skills for an analytical essay, provides evidence from the text using embedded quotations, and analyzes the aesthetic effects of an author's use of stylistic and rhetorical devices. The basic structure is:
  - **Introduction:** Contains interesting opening statements, the name of the work and the author, and a clear thesis

- **Body:** Contains in-depth analysis and interpretation, relevant and organized evidence, and consideration of the author's style
- **Conclusion:** Contains a restatement of the thesis and main points and an explanation of why the evidence is significant

  - For this type of essay, students are expected to have a working knowledge of literary criticism. Explain that literary criticism is the evaluation, analysis, description, or interpretation of literary works.
  - One of these three approaches is generally followed:
    - Biographical: The writer shows how the author's life affects the work.
    - Historical: The writer researches a specific time period and shows how it influences the work.
    - Aesthetic: The writer focuses on what makes a work appealing to the reader.
  - For biographical and historical approaches, after students choose the literary selection about which they want to write, they will need to research the life and times of the author in order to find influences in the text.
  - For aesthetic approaches, students focus more on their own reactions and feelings related to the author's craft and style. This allows students to evaluate and critique the author's effectiveness.

  Provide cooperative learning opportunities and graphic organizers to help students record the results of their investigations and their thoughts about how this information relates to the literary selection. Help students distinguish between biographical and historical influences by emphasizing the personal nature of biographical influences. Highlight examples of literary elements in the selections that have been read and discussed.

  Samples of graphic organizers include the following:

  - Biographical Influences

In Author's Life	In ... (name of selection)

  - Historical Influences

In Author's Life	In ... (name of selection)

  - Aesthetic Success

My Opinion	In *The Interlopers*
Saki is successful at using irony to surprise the reader and show that the unpredictable is beyond our control.	We expect the two enemies to fight, but they are stopped by an unexpected accident.

Revising—Listening to the Page

Is there rhythm, flow, cadence? Do you hear the music of the language? Mem Fox suggests that "While conflict, fear, heartache, and humor may be desirable, they are not, by themselves, sufficient to hold the attention of readers. … [I]t's fine writing that keeps the audience rapt: it's exquisitely constructed sentences; it's carefully honed cadences; it's the marvelous satisfaction of the sensual rhythm of perfect prose" (54).

What needs to be addressed during the revision process?

- **The structural organization** within the essay must be clear and appropriate to the purpose.
  - Do paragraph topic sentences tie to thesis statement?
  - Within paragraphs, do examples support the topic sentences?

- **The essay must be coherent and cohesive**, with all components connected in a smooth flow of information.

Consider sharing a metaphor with students so that they understand the importance of cohesion in an essay: "Think of an essay as a train. The introduction is the locomotive; it commands a clear view of the track [. . .] and supplies the power to set all the wheels in motion. The body of your essay is the string of paragraphs behind that locomotive, each one a freight car with its particular load of thought. And your conclusion, of course, is the caboose—the little car on the end commanding a view of the country just passed through" (Payne 81).

Coherence is critical to a reader's understanding. Below is a discussion of the components of coherence.

- **Transitions**:
  - **Automatic**- In *10 Things Every Writer Needs to Know*, Jeff Anderson refers to the words and phrases that we typically think of as transitions as "automatic" transitions. These standard words and phrases are the first learned and, thus, the most easily used. They include words such as *however, in fact, first, for example*, etc. (Anderson 150).

Automatic Transitions		
Function	**Examples**	
Addition	a further x and and then then also too next another other nor	further furthermore moreover in addition additionally besides again equally important first, second finally, last

Function	Examples	
Comparison	just as ... so too a similar x another x like	similarly comparable in the same way likewise
Contrast	but yet and yet still otherwise or though but another rather	however still nevertheless on the other hand on the contrary even so notwithstanding for all that in contrast alternatively at the same time though this may be otherwise instead nonetheless conversely
Time	then now soon afterward later shortly earlier recently first, second, third next before after today tomorrow	meanwhile at length presently at last finally immediately thereafter at that time subsequently eventually currently in the meantime in the past in the future
Purpose	to do this so that	to this end with this object for this purpose for that reason because of this x

Function	Examples	
Place	there here beyond nearby next to	at that point opposite to adjacent to on the other side in the front in the back
Result	so and so then	hence therefore accordingly consequently thus thereupon as a result in consequence
Example	that is specifically in particular for one thing	for example for instance an instance of this this can be seen in
Summary and Emphasis	in sum generally after all by the way in general incidentally naturally at least it seems in brief finally	in short on the whole as previously stated in other words to be sure in fact indeed clearly of course certainly remarkably therefore assuredly definitely without doubt for all that on the whole in any event importantly

- **Manual**- These words and phrases are student-created; however, there are "replicable patterns for creating manual transitions" (Anderson 152) for a specific piece of writing, and they are used to bring the reader from a given time or location to a new place in time or location. These words or phrases such as *after much study of ___, even better than ____, reminiscent of ___,* are not as common as the automatic transitions. We shape manual transitions for a particular piece of writing. They may share some of the automatic transition words and functions, but they are combined with other words relevant only to the writing at hand.

Manual Transitions	
Function	**Examples**
Contrast	• **Unlike _____,** • **If _____ isn't your style, perhaps you'd like _____.** • **One kind _____, and another _____.** • **Even better, _____.** • **Without _____, your life would be . . .**
Comparison	• **Like _____,** • **Similar to _____,** • **Reminiscent of _____,** • **In common with _____,**
Time	• **In _____ (month, season, year, century, grade, stage),** • **Late in _____,** • **Easily in _____,** • **At age _____,** • **By this time, _____** • **At the time, _____** • **After much study, _____** • **Within a few _____ (hours, weeks, months, decades),** • **Eventually, _____**
Examples	• **One of the places they go _____** • **For _____ (artists, students, scientists), _____ can be. . .** • **Even if _____,** • **Most troublesome was _____**
Cause-Effect Relationship	• **When the _____ (something happens that causes something else to happen), _____** • **With _____'s discovery, _____** • **At the request of _____,** • **To foster the boy's curiosity, _____** • **If _____, then _____**
Place	• **When we got to _____ (name any person, place, or thing),** • **In _____ (name the class, restaurant, city, state, country, park, etc.),** • **Growing up in _____,** • **Inside the _____,**

- **Repetition of key words and phrases**:
  We do not want students to be redundant, but nobody would consider the following observation by Abraham Lincoln to be redundant: “You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.” It is, in fact, finely crafted. This interweaving of key words and phrases creates a musical motif that fosters understanding.

- **Parallelism**:
  Parallelism is created through repetitive sentence structure that results in balance. One of the most compelling examples of parallelism in all of literary history is the opening of Charles Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair…”

- **Pronoun reference**:
  As Anderson observes, the relationship of pronouns to specific subjects needs to be clear or the reader will be confused: “For cohesive writing, readers need a clear antecedent to anchor the pronoun to who, what, when, where, or why” (160).

- **Consistent use of tense, point of view, active voice, tone, and mood**:
  We know that e e cummings uses no capitalization, Gertrude Stein is allergic to commas, and T.S. Eliot intimately knows the run-on sentence. But we as professionals know that masters of their craft can break the rules because they know them. Our job is to move students to mastery. In other words, students must use consistent tense and point of view, recognize the value of active voice, take a purposeful tone, and create mood into their writing.

  - Tense– Tense should remain consistent throughout a piece of writing. Literary analysis, specifically, must be written in present tense.
  - Point of View– Point of view should remain consistent throughout a piece of writing. Academic essays should be written in third person, avoiding the use of first and second person (I, me, you, us, we, our, your).
  - Active voice– Active voice needs to be maintained consistently as it is preferred over passive voice. Active voice is more direct and concise, and it makes writing more interesting.
    - Active: The boys *ate* the pizza.
    - Passive: The pizza *was eaten* by the boys.
  - Tone and Mood– While tone and mood are interwoven, they cannot be confused one with the other. In *Mini Lessons for Revision*, Susan Geye describes tone as a writer’s particular way of “expressing [his or her] feelings or attitudes that will influence how the reader feels” about the subject of the text—the mood (25).

The following activity is from Capital Community College Foundation in Hartford, CT. See http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/transitions.htm.

The following paragraph provides students an opportunity to work with creating consistency. Have students look for pronouns, repeated/restated key words, transitions and parallel structures.

The ancient Egyptians were masters of preserving dead people's bodies by making mummies of them. Mummies several thousand years old have been discovered nearly intact. The skin, hair, teeth, fingernails and toenails, and facial features of the mummies were evident. It is possible to diagnose the disease they suffered in life, such as smallpox, arthritis, and nutritional deficiencies. The process was remarkably effective. Sometimes apparent were the fatal afflictions of the dead people: a middle-aged king died from a blow on the head, and polio killed a child king. Mummification consisted of removing the internal organs, applying natural preservatives inside and out, and then wrapping the body in layers of bandages.

Though weak, this paragraph is not a total washout. It starts with a topic sentence, and the sentences that follow are clearly related to the topic sentence. In the language of writing, the paragraph is *unified* (i.e., it contains no irrelevant details). However, the paragraph is not *coherent*. The sentences are disconnected from each other, making it difficult for the reader to follow the writer's train of thought.

Below is the same paragraph revised for coherence. *Italics* indicate pronouns and repeated/restated key words, **bold** indicates transitional tag-words, and underlining indicates parallel structures.

The ancient Egyptians were masters of preserving dead people's bodies by *making mummies* of them. **In short**, *mummification* consisted of removing the internal organs, applying natural preservatives inside and out, and then wrapping the body in layers of bandages. **And** *the process* was remarkably effective. **Indeed**, *mummies* several thousand years old have been discovered nearly intact. *Their* skin, hair, teeth, fingernails and toenails, and facial features are **still** evident. *Their* diseases in life, such as smallpox, arthritis, and nutritional deficiencies, are **still** diagnosable. **Even** *their* fatal afflictions are **still** apparent: a middle-aged king died from a blow on the head; a child king died from polio.

The paragraph is now much more coherent. The organization of the information and the links between sentences helps readers move easily from one sentence to the next. Notice how this writer uses a variety of coherence devices, sometimes in combination, to achieve overall paragraph coherence.

- **Reader engagement** is a key component of a successful essay. Strategies include the following:

    - **Dialogue**: In *ACTS of Teaching*, Carroll and Wilson note that, "Dialogue allows the writer to catch up the reader on background. … By giving the reader an intimacy with the character, dialogue also permits the reader to hear the authentic voice. … Perhaps most importantly, dialogue reveals the character. We speak what we are." Papers need to be reviewed to assess when and where dialogue is appropriate. Students should be judicious in adding (properly punctuated) dialogue in order to add interest to the essay.

    - **Figurative language**: Teachers are ever on a quest to help students make their writing more alive, more concrete, more immediate. Figurative language offers the descriptive vehicle to "Show, Not Tell." All papers should be revised to offer a variety of descriptive devices. (Anderson 218)

    - **Syntax/Sentence Structure**: We use sentence variety for a specific purpose: to change pace, to add emphasis, to vary energy, to create rhythm, to underscore tone and mood. Students need to understand the power that manipulating the language instills in their writing. Of course, we want students to know their basic sentence constructions (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex), but there are other patterns to consider. Combining sentences offers a wonderful opportunity for students to tighten their writing.

Sentence Pattern Options from *11 Birthdays* by Wendy Mass

<u>Introductory Elements</u>	
Introductory Adjective	**Dazed**, I stare up at the dusky sky.
Introductory Prepositional Phrase	**In a panic**, I try to remember what Stephanie taught me. **From across the room**, I swear I can feel Leo's eyes on me.
Introductory Subordinate Clause	**As Leo crawled toward Amanda**, he dragged his bear on the ground. (Although, as, when, while, until, before, if, since)
Introductory Participial Phrase or Participle	**Bending my knees**, I spring backward before I can change my mind. **Grumbling**, I pick up my backpack and run to class.
<u>Sentence Patterns</u>	
Short Sentences	**Dad chuckles.** **The air smelled like cake.**
Serial Comma	With a final glance behind me to make sure the mat is in place, I **take a deep breath, raise my arms next to my head, then swing them down really fast.**
Appositives	The oldest man in town, **Buck Whitehead**, swears Angelina was an old lady when HE was a boy.
Appositive Adjectives	Angelina, **small and swift**, was moving even faster than usual because today was the day she had been waiting for.
Dash Setting Off an Appositive	Dad's inside making his usual mom-working-late dinner—**macaroni and cheese with salami melted on top**.
Concluding Participial Phrase or Participle(s) Concluding Adjective	Stephanie shakes her head, **unwilling to even answer**. I'm next to him, **clapping and staring**. Amanda watched, **curious**.

    - **Diction**: If we want the reader to see turquoise, we do not call it blue. Effective word choice is crucial and involves knowledge of connotative and denotative meanings of words, an awareness of redundancy, and the power of vivid verbs and sensory

adjectives. Help students recognize that verbs and adjectives give writing precision by supplying a "starter" list and inviting students to add examples over time from their own reading and writing.

Vivid Verbs and Sensory Adjectives	
Vivid Verbs: Movement	**Student Examples**
Cast **Dash** **Drift** **Flick** **Heave** **Mince** **Pirouette** **Plummet** **Plunge** **Pulverize** **Scramble** **Stretch** **Swerve** **Whisk** **Wrangle**	
Vivid Verbs: Sound	**Student Examples**
Blare **Crackle** **Grate** **Gurgle** **Jangle** **Murmur** **Patter** **Rustle** **Screech** **Sigh** **Snap** **Swish** **Thud** **Whir** **Whistle**	
Sensory Adjectives	**Student Examples**
Animated **Buttery** **Earthy** **Glistening** **Gritty** **Imposing** **Reeking** **Serene** **Shabby** **Silky** **Spicy** **Stately** **Sturdy** **Tarnished**	

- **Writing is a social act** and should be supported by peer interaction. Once a revision strategy has been taught and explored, peer conferencing is a valuable form of feedback. Authors noted for their expertise with peer conferencing strategies include Tom Romano, Barry Lane, and Penny Kittle.

  Trust and a sense of immediacy are foundational to the success of writing groups. Trust creates the power and the authenticity of writing groups so that students may grow in their ability to articulate their thinking through written expression. Using writing groups has a variety of advantages in addition to development of writing skills. Students also develop a sense of inclusion in the process and in the group; an opportunity for discovery, risk-taking, and experimentation; and a newfound comfort with the writing process.

  In *ACTS of Teaching,* Carroll and Wilson outline numerous strategies for writing groups, conferencing and debriefing that they have found useful from their own work as well as from other writing authorities such as Peter Elbow and June Gould.

  A few of these strategies are described below. Specific methods of implementation are available in *ACTS of Teaching* as well as many other writing reference materials.

  - *Writing Groups*

    
    Teachers may develop their own process for writing groups, but generally the following procedures outline this process:

    1. Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4.
    2. Students either have a copy of their work to pass to group members or bring multiple copies, one for each member.
    3. Teacher prescribes task and sets a time limit for the activity.
    4. Students work quietly for initial reading of the writing piece and then share constructive feedback with the writer.

  Targeted group strategies include the following:

    - Pointing/Highlighting (Elbow and Gould)

      Students point out or highlight what they find effective in a writing piece. This strategy is particularly student-friendly, constructive, and non-threatening.

    - Summarizing (Elbow)

      Summarizing invites synthesis. Instead of restating the content of a piece, this strategy invites the group to provide what stuck with the reader the most by focusing on the main idea using a sentence, a word, or even a synonym.

- Plus and Minus (Carroll and Wilson)

  Plus and minus is a tabulated version of thumbs up, thumbs down. It gives students an indication of first reactions to specifics in the writing. Plus and Minus Charts provide a tremendous amount of input from the group for the writer's rough draft. This chart can be adapted for a variety of writing modes and genres. For implementation steps, see *ACTS of Teaching* pp. 72-73.

Plus and Minus Chart										
Criteria	Groups' Members									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Title catches the reader's attention										
First two sentences hook the reader										
Purpose is clear										
Uses phrases that work										
Appeals to reader's interest										
Vocabulary is appropriate to audience										
Reels the reader in										
Believable characters										
Not confusing										
Ending works										
Grammar OK										
Language is fresh										
Overall evaluation										

- *Writing Conferences*

  The writing conference is a conversation between the teacher and student with a purpose and a structure. Conferences may take place in a particular area of the room, at the teacher's desk in a designated chair, or at the student's desk. Conferences may be individual or group. Woven throughout the writing process, these conversations provide time for students to discuss their writings, so conferring demands active listening on the part of both conferences (Carroll and Wilson 82).

  Characteristics of Conferences (Carroll and Wilson):

  - Conferences have a purpose.
  - Conferences have a structure.
  - During conferences, teacher and student pursue a line of thinking.
  - Teachers and students have conversational roles in conferences.
  - Teachers show students they care about them.

  
  Teachers may develop their own process for writing conferences, but generally it is recommended to have a mini-teach on student-teacher conferences (Carroll and Wilson):

  1. Gather the students around in a comfortable area of the room.
  2. Talk about talk, why we do it, what purpose it serves.
  3. Discuss the importance of both student and teacher understanding productive conference talk. Explain that for a conference to be productive, students should analyze their writing and generate several questions about that writing beforehand. These questions then kick off the conference.
  4. Invite students to brainstorm appropriate questions to ask when they come to conference.

- *Writing Debriefings*

  Writing debriefings are times at the end of a lesson or class period for students to chat about their own writing—what they learned and what they think about what they learned. It is a time for students to sort out their thoughts and share these thoughts with their peers. Debriefings are student-led and teacher facilitated. The teacher has no set agenda or questions.

"To edit is to prepare for … public presentation." — Merriam Webster

Editing

Once students are in the final stages of their writing process, it is time to edit their paper. Students should understand that this is the culmination of the writing process and the opportunity to ensure that it is as polished as possible before presentation or publication. The first step in improving students' editing skills is to create a positive experience during the editing process. Students must understand that editing is the time when they should fine-tune their paper and check for errors in capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling (or CUPS).

In order for students to accept editing as a positive part of the writing process rather than a punishment, they must have a safe environment in which to work. This means creating an instructional climate of support where errors are discussed and corrected rather than ridiculed. Students need to gain confidence and believe they are capable of preparing their writing for public presentation. In addition to setting behavioral expectations for students, teachers can establish a supportive environment through modeling, eliminating "bleeding" papers, and utilizing peer and teacher writing conferences.

- **Teachers' active modeling of the editing process** is a great way to create a safe environment and help students begin to feel comfortable editing their own as well as their peers' papers.

  
  In whole-class discussions, use a document camera or projector to correct teacher-generated papers with intentional common CUPS errors, providing students the opportunity to see the editing process in action. When these papers are projected, students are able to actively participate in the editing process by "catching mistakes," adding suggestions, and asking specific questions about grammar rules or specifications. Teacher modeling opens up dialogue about the editing process.

  While providing editing instruction, teachers don't always have to use a whole paper. In *Everyday Editing: Inviting Students to Develop Skill and Craft in Writer's Workshop*, Anderson suggests using mentor sentences to promote sentence imitation and error analysis to help shape students' awareness during editing (128-140).

  
  Utilize cooperative groups to support understanding before students are expected to edit independently. Project texts with incorrect sentence constructions or grammatical/punctuation errors on the document camera, having students correct the errors to help students understand how to recognize errors and choose the correct word usage, punctuation marks, etc. Consider focusing on one aspect of editing at a time, such as comma use in introductory phrases or within serial lists. Students will eventually begin to imitate these editing strategies when independently editing their papers.

- **The elimination of returning "bleeding" papers** also helps establish a supportive environment. When students' writing samples are handed back covered in red ink, students are sometimes left feeling intimidated and discouraged.

  
  A great way to eliminate those "bleeding" papers, when grading the revised drafts to be edited, is to use a "numbered comment rubric." Teachers create a rubric with numbered comments. While grading first drafts (or second drafts, depending on how many drafts you allow), you would then write the respective number that aligns with the comment on the rubric. These numbered rubrics can be customized for a particular aspect of editing or an overall rating. It is important to balance notations of errors with celebrations of success. Odd numbers can serve targeted areas students need to improve, while the even numbers can be used to boost students' confidence on their writing strengths. For example:

1. See the MLA guideline for the correct way of punctuating quotations and including citations.
2. Great use of exclamation points!
3. There are spelling errors in the introduction, body, and/or conclusion (circle the ones that apply).
4. You used an adequate/inadequate variety of sentence structures.
5. There are punctuation (comma use, semicolons, quotation marks, etc.) errors in the introduction, body, and/or conclusion (circle the ones that apply).
6. Your capitalization is on point!

Teachers have the liberty to create their own comments based on the aspect of editing being reviewed. Once papers are returned, students have feedback that provides positive reinforcement and suggestions for improvement as they begin editing their papers. This rubric also holds the students accountable for their own editing. Sometimes, by habit, teachers tend to give students too many explicit comments on errors that hinder students' development of independent editing abilities.

- **Writing Conferences** are an essential aspect of the writing process and can be especially useful during editing.
  - **Teacher/Student Writing Conferences** provide teachers with opportunities to meet one-on-one with a student, allowing the teacher to make suggestions, provide direct instruction on CUPS aspects, or focus the student's editing on certain areas. These conferences also provide students with the opportunity to ask questions and receive instruction in a secure environment. This is especially beneficial since students who may struggle often are the last ones to actively ask for assistance. **Note: More information on Writing Conferences can be found in the Revising section.**
  - **Peer conferences** provide students with the opportunity to edit papers other than their own which develops and improves their abilities to identify errors in their own papers.

    
    Having an interchangeable "peer conference" word wall provides students with a wider range of vocabulary to use while conferencing. This provides for a greater depth of discussion and can function as conversation starters or sentence stems to support the progression of feedback. Creating additional questions for the peer conferences—"Did I use my commas and semicolons correctly?" or "Did I consistently write in the correct tense?"—will work well as comment prompts during these conferences.

    The following are common mistakes that peer groups might discuss during their conferences. Having posters of the general rules for these common mistakes may provide support and guidance for corrections.
    - Comma vs. semicolon vs. colon
    - Comma usage in various sentence constructions, introductory words, and serial lists
    - Subject/verb agreement
    - Verb tenses remaining consistent throughout the essay
    - Audience (TURN OFF THE TEXTING BRAIN!)

      
      It is imperative to model and demand proper speech in the classroom. When students use proper English consistently, it becomes easier for them to locate errors during the editing process.

Things to Remember

- Peer modeling for editing can support learning as much as teacher modeling.
- Editing posters must be consistently referenced as references throughout the year for students to internalize the content.
- Cornell notes help students own editing rules and guidelines. These notes serve as quick reviews and reminders when students are editing outside of the classroom.

"Writers write to be read." – Troy Hicks

Publishing

When discussing reading with our students, we often begin with author's purpose. While academia separates author's purpose into specific goals—to inform, to persuade, to express, to entertain—the basic truth is that writers write to be read. Part of our job as teachers is to provide students with "opportunities to print, go public, disseminate, issue, air, or circulate—in a word, *publish* their work" (Carroll and Wilson 164). Publishing provides students with motivation and a sense of accomplishment. In today's digital age, publishing has taken on a broader meaning than a hard-bound, printed book. In this respect, publishing incorporates two of the three research-based best practices for improving students' motivation and engagement—students are engaged in authentic tasks and use technology to support literacy instruction (Irvin, Meltzer, and Dukes 2007). There is no better authentic task in writing than publishing. It creates a real-world application for student writing, and it provides an audience, which is often an abstract concept to most students until the publishing process. Publishing also helps to develop a sense of community among students and within the classroom. In moving through the publishing process, students experience the joys and frustrations of creating a final draft, submitting it for review/acceptance, receiving both positive and constructive feedback, and seeing their work in print or online.

For the purposes of this handbook, publishing is delineated based on formality and audience. While these categories are not all-encompassing, they provide a point of reference.

- **Informal classroom publishing** is the most basic form of publishing. It refers to publishing and sharing opportunities that occur within the class. This includes Gallery Walks, Author's Chair, the Read-Around, and the Writer's Lunch. The purpose of these activities is to provide a venue for students to share their work and receive positive and constructive feedback.

    - Gallery Walks- Students post their work around the room. As in an art gallery, students move from essay to essay, reading each piece and providing feedback on sticky notes.

      
      Consider playing soft music in the background. Provide students with sentence stems to facilitate appropriate feedback. Have students use various colors of sticky notes to indicate warm and cool feedback.

    - Author's Chair- In this sharing experience, students are given the opportunity to read their work aloud and receive feedback. The author sits in a designated chair or on a stool, reads aloud his/her work, and asks a few students to share their thoughts, suggestions, and questions pertaining to the writing (Carroll and Wilson 165).

      
      Model the process students are expected to follow. Consider providing sentence stems to facilitate an academic discussion of writing. To add accountability, incorporate a rubric for both presenters and the audience.

    - Read Around- This is a cumulative sharing experience. While sitting in a circle, each student reads aloud his/her completed work. Audience members listen and respond nonverbally (nodding, clapping, applauding, etc.) (Carroll and Wilson 166).


Model the process students are expected to use, including appropriate forms of nonverbal feedback. Incorporate a rubric for both presenters and the audience to add accountability.

- Writer's Lunch- This is an informal gathering of writers. Students eat lunch and listen while one student reads aloud his/her writing. This structure allows for students to receive constructive feedback or nonverbal praise (nodding, clapping, applauding, etc.) (Painter 109).

- **Formal classroom publishing** occurs within the class but expands the audience to include the school, district, and parents. This typically includes school literary magazines, classroom anthologies, and Author's Discussions. Unlike informal classroom publishing, formal classroom publishing is solely to exhibit finished work.

  - School literary magazine- A literary magazine is a printed chronicle of student work from across a campus and can include cross-curricular or broader, more global themes and issues. These magazines foster a sense of community among writers and provide a sense of status and the crucial element of writing for an audience. Students can showcase writing in languages other than English and incorporate student-produced artwork and photography (Barile).

    
    The creation of a literary magazine allows students to exhibit work other than writing. It also allows for students who may not be interested in publishing their work an opportunity to participate in the publishing process as editors, photographers, artists, etc.

  - Classroom anthology- This type of anthology contains the work of one class. Typically printed and bound, it supports students' ability to "release the piece." This serves as a class portfolio and allows students the opportunity to perform self-reflection (Bottone).

    
    Creating classroom anthologies can be accomplished using materials found within the classroom. Consider creating accordion books, eight-page books (quires), pop-up books, or slotted books (Carroll and Wilson 166).

  - Author's Discussion- Similar to an author's signing or booktalk, this opportunity allows students to read their work aloud to a group of parents, campus staff, and community members (Painter 109).

    
    Consider scheduling this event during Parent Night or other campus function.

- **Informal digital publishing** changes the venue of informal classroom publishing but addresses the same audience and purpose. This includes class anthology and digital portfolios.

  - Wiki anthology- Much like the class anthologies of old, a wiki anthology provides students with a venue to share their work; however, in creating these anthologies online, students receive the added benefits of sharing their work with a wider audience, providing

comments on the work of others, and gaining a better understanding of audience and the necessity of revision.


Encourage students to engage in "multimedia authoring," including adding videos, images, and hyperlinks to their wiki text (Hicks 89). Hick's *The Digital Writing Workshop* offers step-by-step directions for creating a wiki anthology.

- Digital portfolio- Similar to the idea of a writing portfolio, this type of portfolio is a digital collection of student writing over a period of time. Using technology, students are able to reflect upon the writing process and their beliefs about writing. In using a blog (blogfolio) or a website, students can post their finished drafts and link to their reflections (Hicks 84).


Students can include audio, video, and images in their digital portfolios. Consider using Google Sites, Yahoo!'s Geocities, and Webs (Hicks 84). Hick's *The Digital Writing Workshop*, offers step-by-step directions for creating a digital portfolio using blogs.

- **Formal digital publishing** is similar to formal classroom publishing in purpose, but it reaches a wider audience. Audio anthologies, online publishing (e-zines and websites), and self-publications using applications or programs are a few types.

  - Audio anthologies- In its most basic form, an audio anthology is a CD recording of students reading their work. Enhancements such as background music and sound effects can be added to create a more finished product. These recordings require students to think differently about their writing. Writing is no longer a written word; it becomes an audio expression (Hicks 94).


Keep in mind the creation of audio anthologies requires hardware (digital recorders, microphones, etc.) and software to record and burn CDs. Programs such as Audacity serve as a user-friendly recording tool, and media players such as Apple's iTunes and Microsoft's Windows Media Player assist in creating CDs for distribution (Hicks 94).

  - Online publishing (e-zines and websites)-

    - TeenInk.com- *Teen Ink* is an online national teen magazine and website devoted to teenage writing, art, photos and forums. Students, age 13-19, are offered the opportunity to publish their creative work and opinions on issues that impact their world.

    - Imagine- John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth- *Imagine* magazine provides students with opportunities to explore topics in the sciences, arts, and humanities. Writers include students and experts who are shaping the fields in which they work, including Nobel laureates, MacArthur Fellows, and winners of prestigious middle and high school competitions.

- Self-publications using applications or programs-
    - Figment- Figment is an online community where students can share their writing, connect with other authors and readers, and read their peers' work.
    - Flipsnack- Flipsnack provides the capability to convert PDF files into interactive books.
    - iBooks Author- iBooks Author is an application that allows students to create touch books for iPad.

Regardless of the type of publishing, teachers must be aware of copyright and safety issues. Teachers must assist students in understanding fair use and copyright policies when gathering resources, whether they are audio, images, or videos. Students often understand plagiarism when referencing a printed text but struggle with the concept of piracy and the ethics of the "cut and paste" method of including research.

Consider asking students to use materials licensed through Creative Commons (creativecommons.org) (Hicks 100).

Safety is an ever-present issue when considering online publishing and online communities. When publishing, online or in print, teachers must impress upon students the need to limit the amount of personal information they include.

Consider protecting wikis and blogs so only authorized users can modify and view them (Hicks 100).

Regardless of the writing task, genre, or mode, teaching students the writing process is an essential component of teaching writing. And while not every work should be taken to the publishing stage of the writing process, students must be allowed to experience the rewards of publishing. As Carroll and Wilson express in *ACTS of Teaching*, "Teachers who have classrooms where publication is encouraged, nurtured, and taught have students who get published. Some of the publications are stunning and prestigious; some are local and ordinary—all are rewarding" (173).

To ensure publishing is viewed as a natural part of the writing process, teachers should model the publishing process. Teachers should submit their writing for publication and share acceptances or rejections with students. Teachers should create a wiki anthology or digital portfolio and welcome feedback from students. Teachers must model putting their work on display and explicitly illustrate the hope and fear of writing (Carroll and Wilson 177).

STAAR/End of Course (EOC) Addendum

Caveat Emptor: If it were possible, this section would come wrapped in warning tape because it discusses specific advice for writing for specific tests—the English I and English II End-of-Course exams.

It is critical that teachers teach good writing through quality instruction, first and foremost. But writing on demand in a testing situation *is* a particular kind of writing that must be addressed with students. Students should be familiar with test tasks and requirements so that they can develop a plan of action and strive to do their best writing within those constraints.

The following suggestions and practical tips are meant to help your students understand how to approach the exam. These should come **only** after students have developed a deep understanding and comfort level with planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Students should understand that the writing portion of an EOC exam is simply one very specific way of showing that they can apply those previously taught skills. To attempt to shortcut skill-building and quality instruction will certainly inhibit, rather than support, their success.

Timed vs. Extended

Students need experience with both timed pieces and extended process pieces. While timed writings go through a writing process, the approach is sometimes different and/or condensed. What's important is that students understand the differences and the skills involved so that they can develop an approach that works for them.

Exposing students to the differences between timed and extended process writing can be as easy as brainstorming with your classes and capturing ideas in a T-chart:

Timed	Extended
• Short period of time to complete—normally under an hour • Class Essay Exam • State Exams • College Entrance Exams • No Peer Editing • Revision is minimal • End product is scored as a draft	• A lengthy period of time to complete—such as several days or several weeks • Term Papers • Research Papers • College Application Essays • Peer Editing • Revision is extensive • End product should be error free •

The Basics of Writing for the STAAR Exam

The STAAR Composition Box is all the space students have to write in: 26 lines. Please ensure that students understand the following:

1. Stay inside the box: Anything outside of these lines will not be graded.
2. No extra lines: Some students may have been taught to draw their own lines in between to create more writing space on TAKS. This is no longer allowed on STAAR.
3. Legible handwriting counts: Ensure students understand the need to take the time to write clearly. You may have experience deciphering your student's hieroglyphics, but a STAAR scorer will not.
4. Size matters: Students who use big or bubbly handwriting will quickly fill the requisite 26 lines, leaving them with little room to fully develop their essay.

Types of Prompts

Expository and/or Persuasive Prompt

- **The new format is often confusing to students** who are not familiar with the process of unpacking a prompt. Students who become distracted by the information provided in the Read and/or Think statements may write an entire essay that is completely off topic, leading to unscorable or low-scoring essays. It is imperative to teach students to deconstruct the prompt before responding.

  BATman takes on the EOC.

  One simple acronym to help students break down the expository and persuasive prompts is BAT:

  Background
  Access
  Task

  Have students label each component as illustrated in the annotated prompt on p. 49 and explain what each means. Drawing a goofy bat is optional, but it is a nice bit of levity and a symbol for visual learners to latch onto. Ultimately, students must complete the task, so that is where their main focus should be.

- **When the BAT matters:** A prompt may read "Write an essay explaining the importance of reading." If a student reads only this part, their essay may focus on functional literacy—being able to read signs, etc. However, if the Read or Think statements address people who can read books and choose not to, the prompt is clearly suggesting a different kind of reading—in this case, a broader literacy that includes independent reading for pleasure and information.

  - Once students label their BAT components, have them circle the words in the task indicating which kind of essay they are writing. Does the prompt say "explain" or does it say "state your position"? These are the words that provide students with clues about the type of prompt they are addressing. Students can then jot down a quick T-chart to brainstorm ideas. For expository, the chart might list key points in one column and corresponding examples in the other; for persuasion, the chart's two columns might capture two sides of the argument.

Teaching Levels of Evidence

Most of our students are familiar with Short Answer Response (SAR) questions requiring textual evidence. This is an easy place to link onto their prior knowledge as you approach the STAAR writing prompts. They still need evidence, so guide them through where this evidence will come from, if not from a text.

There are three levels of evidence:

1. Personal– examples from a student's own life. "This one time, my mom went to the store and saw someone with a gun, which makes me think there should be stricter laws."
2. Local– examples from students' school or neighborhood. "In my school, we do not have metal detectors."
3. Global– examples from national or world events. "The recent tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary highlights the need for a reconsideration of our school safety policies."

Walk students through brainstorming these levels so that they become comfortable applying the levels to a given writing topic. Remind students that they have nearly ten years (years!) of learning to draw from—a vast wealth of knowledge they can use to respond successfully to an expository or persuasive topic.

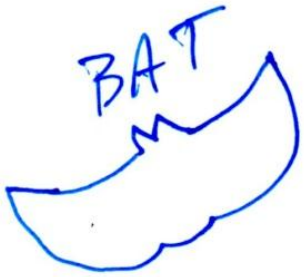
- **Expository Prompt**

Steps for responding to the prompt:

1. Understand the prompt. The prompt is asking you to explain, define, or analyze a given topic, which includes providing examples to support the controlling idea. Annotate the prompt to ensure you understand the task.
2. Brainstorming. List ideas and examples that are related to the topic.
3. Identify/Create your controlling idea. Based on the ideas and examples from step 2, state the focus of your essay.
4. Organization. Arrange your ideas and supporting examples.
5. Write your essay and make revisions as necessary. Be aware of the amount of space you have to develop each of your ideas and examples.
6. Reread your work and make revisions and corrections. Use a dictionary!
7. If you have time, read your work again and make corrections.

See the following page for an example of an annotated expository prompt.

English I Writing
Expository Prompt



Read the information in the box below.

Background

The digital audio player, also known as the MP3 player, first became available to the general public in 1996. Unlike the compact disc player, this technology did not require that music be stored on separate discs. MP3 players have now become the dominant medium for listening to music.

Access

Think about the new technologies that people use in everyday life.

TASK

Write an essay explaining the effect of one new technology on people's lives.

Be sure to —

- clearly state your thesis
- organize and develop your ideas effectively
- choose your words carefully
- edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling

Organize
- Explain why people like it
- Addictive
- Stop caring about what's important
- Lower salaries
- Bad Grades
- Damage Relationships
- Explain having the right priorities

ONE New Technology
- ~~iPod~~
- ~~iPhone~~
- ~~iPad~~
- ~~Computers~~
- Video Games
- ~~GPS system/ Satellite~~

Effect
- waste of time (Neg. effect)
- fun
- Addictive
- Put off important stuff
  - Lower paycheck
  - Bad grades
  - Damage relationships

Controlling Idea ☆
New gaming technologies can affect people's lives with negative consequences.

Example using the state prompt and score 4 essay:

Explain the effect of ***one*** new technology on people's lives.

1. Brainstorming.

One New Technology	Effect on People's Lives
~~iPod~~ ~~iPhone~~ ~~iPad~~ ~~Computers~~ Video Games ~~GPS System/Satellite~~	• Waste of time (effect is negative) • Fun • Addictive • Put off important things o Lower paycheck o Bad grades o Damage relationships

Note: Listing effects for more than one technology may be necessary before crossing off ideas.

2. Identify/Create your controlling idea.
   a. New gaming technologies can affect people's lives with negative consequences.
3. Organization.
   i. Explain why people like it
   ii. Addictive
   iii. Stop caring about what's important
   iv. Lower salary
   v. Bad Grades
   vi. Damage Relationships
   vii. Explain that having the right priorities can make gaming an enjoyable hobby
4. During drafting, pay attention to the amount of space devoted to each part of the development listed in the step above. There are only 26 lines, so don't make the mistake of spending 13 lines on explaining one aspect of the topic.
5. Read your work and make revisions and corrections. Use the dictionary!
6. If you have time, proofread your work again and make final corrections.

For a student-friendly Expository Rubric, click here.

For the state released rubric and score point 4 student samples with explanations, click here.

Persuasive prompt

Persuasive Essay Structure:
1) Hook/Thesis statement: The thesis should clearly answer the prompt and must be stated in the student's own words.
2) Main supporting point for the chosen side with global evidence to back it up
3) Second supporting point with global evidence
4) Concession and refutation
5) Conclusion: The conclusion should be a call to action, should push the topic/issue further. Have students ask themselves: Why does this matter? Why should readers care? Once they care, what do I want readers to do in response?)

Best Practice Tip:
Try leading students through a discussion of a court case. Have students ponder that if a lawyer defends a client with personal examples, is doing so as effective as using concrete, factual examples?

See the following page for an example of an annotated persuasive prompt.

BAT

Read the following quotation.

Background

> Authentic patriotism is not about you, what you believe or what you think is right. . . Authentic patriotism is not an opinion. It is an action.
>
> —*Stephen Kiernan*

- Pull from only if helpful.
- Tie in? → Politics?

Think carefully about the following statement.

Some people define themselves by what they believe, while others allow their actions to speak for them.

Access Task

Write an essay stating your position (persuasive) on which is more important (1) what a person thinks or what a person does.

Be sure to (2)

- state your position clearly
- use appropriate organization
- provide specific support for your argument
- choose your words carefully
- edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling

Thoughts vs. Actions

Thoughts	Actions
- Impetus behind action - Driven vs - Every action is first a thought - We change society by changing thought	- Create actual change - Talk is cheap (Politicians) - Founding countries - Civil Rights - Hiding Jews (Ann Frank - holocaust)

Rosa Parks

- MLK Jr.

Example using the state released sample prompt and score 4 essay:

Prompt—Write an essay stating your position on which is more important: what a person thinks or what a person does.

1. The prompt specifically asks about actions vs. words. These are the two main "sides."The "background" and "access" boxes also address patriotism as it relates to these two items, and allows a tie-in, but only if desired.
2. Brainstorming (which may well involve getting down lots of ideas and tossing some out later):
   - Sayings that stay with us due to their truth
   - Truth behind the words
   - Politicians – talking in circles, no real action
   - Military battles – words are nice, but in the end no one cares
   - Rosa Parks – known for what she did, not what she said
   - MLK
3. Expand and organize
   - Sayings – use in intro
   - Politicians – who cares what you say if you do nothing?
   - Battles – winning is what decides history – decisive action
   - Rosa Parks – her action, refusing to stand, changed history, not her words
   - MLK – use as a counterargument – most famous for speeches, but it is the many actions that propelled freedom
4. Make the writing flow. Choose diction intentionally and vary sentence structures.
5. During drafting, pay attention to the length for each section. Remember to balance the weight of your information for each of the main points. There are only 26 lines!
6. Read through and make corrections. Does your argument flow? Are your thoughts fluid? Is the counterargument solid, with a strong enough refutation to ultimately support your thesis?
7. Read and revise as much as time allows.

Best Practice Tip:
Have students write in pencil whenever possible. Pencil is all they will have on the actual test, and the more those conditions can be emulated, the better it supports students' success.

For a student-friendly Persuasive Rubric, click here.

For a student sample with a score of 4, click here.

Scaffolding the Timed Writing Process

The best way to prepare kids for any timed writing prompt is to ensure that they have had sufficient opportunities to understand the kinds of writing tasks they can expect to encounter. But students do not need to engage in all stages of the writing process each time they practice—and they certainly don't need to write in isolation! Teachers can help students understand how to approach timed writings by conducting Think-Alouds and facilitating discussions about tasks and strategies in large and small groups. The following is an example of what the instruction might look like over the course of a week.

Monday

- Prompt 1: *I do*. Model the processes of annotating and brainstorming about a prompt with a Think-Aloud. Doing it cold and letting them know you haven't seen it is even more effective. It requires you to be more methodical and specific with presenting your process and allows the students to see you authentically grapple with a prompt.

   Have another teacher pull prompts for you and put them in an envelope and don't pull one out until you're ready to annotate and brainstorm in front of the students.
- Prompt 2: *We do.* Work through the steps of annotating and brainstorming a prompt as a class.
- Prompts 3, 4, and 5: *We do.* Place students in small groups and allow them five minutes to annotate and brainstorm each prompt. After 15 minutes, review all the prompts and the possible responses.
- Prompt 6: *You do*. Have students annotate and brainstorm about the last prompt independently.

Understand that seeing many prompts is only one part of being prepared to write on demand. Pacing is also a process you need to take your students through. After working through 5 prompts, begin the next day by scaffolding the remaining steps. Here is an example of the remainder of the week:

Tuesday

- Prompt 1: *I do.* Model how to organize the brainstorming. Think aloud the process, add details where necessary, throw out what won't work, and write a controlling idea or thesis that responds to the prompt.
- Prompts 2, 3, and 4: *We do.* Have the students work in small groups to complete the organization of prompts 2, 3, and 4 from Monday. Encourage the groups to talk through their reasoning, adding details, throwing out, and creating their thesis statement for each essay. Allow the students at least 5 minutes for each prompt.
- Allow groups to share their organization and process with the class for each prompt.
- Prompt 5 or 6: *You do.* Have students work independently to organize their brainstorming and create a thesis statement for one of the two remaining prompts.

Wednesday

- Prompt 1: *I do.* Show students a teacher-written model essay that responds to prompt 1 and is a product of the process from Monday and Tuesday.
- Prompts 2, 3, or 4: *We do.* As a class, write an essay together using the process from Monday and Tuesday. This can be done as a whole class (as the teacher types on an interactive whiteboard or other display device) or divided up into chunks that small groups work on and then piece together as a whole group.

Thursday

- Prompt 5 or 6: *You do.* Allow students the class period or a certain amount of time in the class period to use their annotation, brainstorming, and organization from either prompt 5 or 6 in order to complete a 26-line essay.

Friday

- Provide students with a prompt they have not previously seen/discussed. Ask that they complete a 26-line essay within one hour.

Note: All of these can be considered first drafts and students can choose to take one of them through the entire process.

Working with Rubrics

To enable students to understand and evaluate their own work, a teacher may want to train their students in scoring EOC essays based on rubrics. Doing so can help students understand the grading process and to evaluate the quality of their own work. Student-friendly rubrics (such as those included on pages 50 and 53 in this handbook, which are based on the TEA-released rubrics) are an excellent tool for this process. If laminated, one class set can be reused multiple times with dry erase markers.

I do: Project and discuss the rubric for the type of essay to be scored. Model scoring an essay using the rubric (circling which categories/scores are applicable, etc.).

We do: Show previously graded essays "blind" without visible scoring. Project each essay for the entire class to see, using an Elmo or overhead projector. Assign students to small groups, and instruct them to come to a consensus regarding their scoring of the essay. Explain that they must be able to back up their reasoning based upon the rubric.

You do: This can easily become a "game" with students raising their scores (in teams or individually) after a quick countdown. The instructor can keep a running tally on the dry erase board or chalkboard. Differences in ratings often lead to lively and important discussions about the quality of writing. Be sure to select a range of essays—released state tests are an excellent baseline and can be supplemented with student samples that the instructor has previously graded.

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