

Writing For Success

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Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.

—Anton Chekhov

Like everything metaphysical, the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of the language.

—Ludwig Wittgenstein

[Please turn off and put away electronic equipment; please switch cell phones to the silent mode. If you need to use your electronic equipment, please step outside the seminar room to do so. Thank you.]

Two kinds of language

- Receptive: the language we acquire from family, friends, media
- Productive: the language we use to speak and to write

- Receptive: we generally acquire this language unconsciously.
- Productive: we must learn how to use this language, especially in writing.

- Receptive and Productive language serve different purposes; connections must be consciously established between them.

- First, increase the amount receptive language.
- Second, teach the processes of production.

NB: When we write, we always write *something*: a letter, a poem, a story, an essay, etc. There is no “writing”; there are only *kinds* of writing.

SOME WRITING FORMS/GENRES

Narrative Writing

anecdote
autobiography
ballad
biography
diary/journal
epic
fable
folk/fairy tale
legend
myth
novel
parable
paragraph
short story
story-poem

Dramatic Writing

comedic play
French scene
monologue
soliloquy
movie script
musical
reader's theatre
tragic play

Persuasive Writing

advertisement
bumper sticker
debate
editorial
essay
letter
paragraph
review/critique
sermon
slogan
speech

Expository Writing

advice column
announcement
article
brochure
business letter
essay
letter
memo
pamphlet
paragraph(s)
program guide
report
text book

Poetic Writing

acrostic
allegory
alliteration
alphabet poem
ballad
ballade
blank verse
blues poem
bouts rimés
calligram
canto
canzone
cento
chant
cinquain
concrete poem
dramatic monologue
eclogue
elegy
epic
epigram
epistle
epitaph

epithalamium
event poem
found poem
free verse
ghazal
haiku
limerick
list poem
lune
lyric
macronic verse
madrigal
metaphor
ode
ottava rima
pantoum
parody
pastoral
projective verse
prose poem
rondeau
senryu
sestina

skeltonic verse
sonnet
spoonerism
syllabic verse
tanka
tercet
terza rima
triolet
vallanelle

Expressive Writing

diary/journal
joke
letter
lyric poem
personal essay
riddle
song

Descriptive Writing

catalogue
haiku
essay/paragraph
prose poem
report
travelogue

Procedural Writing

directions
experiment
how-to paragraph
recipe

NB: All writing is based on the 8 parts of speech (noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, interjection) 6 phrases (absolute, appositive, gerund, infinitive, participial, prepositional), 3 clauses (adjective, adverb, noun), 4 basic sentence patterns (simple), and/or 2 advanced sentence patterns (compound, compound/complex).

The State of Most Student Writing

Struggling writers have mental representations of text that influence their writing, but their mental representations tend to be generalized across a few basic genres—such as a story, an answer to a test question, an answer to a question at the end of a reading selection. . . . *The most frequent representation of text is an image of a certain amount of space that must be filled.*

—James L. Collins, *Strategies for Struggling Writers*

- What do most students ask when they receive a writing assignment?
 - 🍏 How long does it have to be?

- Why do most student writers write?
 - 🍏 To fill space.
 - 🍏 To finish as quickly as possible.

- What do most student writers write?
 - 🍏 One draft.

- How do most student writers write?
 - 🍏 Quickly. Thoughtlessly. Driven by content.

- What do most student writers do when they revise?
 - 🍏 They fix a surface error, change a word or two, or increase the length of the piece of writing.

Teaching Writing: 3 Key Components

In other times and places, students . . . often brought with them a repertory of sentence patterns and syntactical structures, developed by virtue of having been read to or of having read, of having been continually talked to and with, especially in the early years. . . . *Modern culture does not foster literacy.* Our students, generally speaking, do not have their heads full of patterns and ways of articulating thoughts, which could provide the armature for their own style.

—Ann E. Berthoff, *The Making of Meaning: Metaphors, Models, and Maxims for Writing Teachers*

- **Daily Read-Alouds:** quality input = quality output
- **Procedural Guided Writing:** sentences, constructed responses, paragraphs, writing prompts
- **Voice:** tools and choices

Two Learning Systems

The brain has two distinct learning systems—the rote and the associative. Disconnected facts, via much repetition, are stored in the rote system. . . . *Most of what we use to create meaning is stored in the associative system.* The facts, terms, etc. in the associative system are all associated with one another in a vast, complex network. When we find one, we find others.

—Patricia Cunningham and Richard Allington, *Classrooms That Work*

NB: Effective writing is based in effective thinking.

Paco and the Giant Chile Plant by Keith **Error! Contact not defined.**

- Find words in the picture that begin with each letter of the alphabet.

Prepositions: *tools for observing, thinking, and writing*

about	below	for	throughout
above	beneath	from	to
across	beside	in	toward
after	besides	into	under
against	between	like	underneath
along	beyond	of	until
amid	but (“except”)	off	unto
among	by	on	up
around	concerning	over	upon
at	down	past	with
before	during	since	within
behind	except	through	without

Participle Phrases: tools for writing

- Combine these by using *participle phrases*:

1. Rapunzel frets. Rapunzel sighs. Rapunzel grabs the rail. Rapunzel longed for a better life.

Fretting, sighing, and grabbing the rail, Rapunzel longed for a better life.

2. The ogre strains against the boulder. The ogre pushes with all his might. The ogre digs in his horn-toed feet. The ogre growled with determination.
3. The queen threw up her hands. The queen signaled the band. The queen stepped onto the dance floor. The queen was the belle of the ball.
4. The elves crowded together. The elves smiled in amazement. The elves sang secret songs. The elves welcomed the stranger.

Here are six basic purposes of sentences:

1. **To inform (give facts and information)**

Many frogs live in ponds.

The skin of the Ghost Frogs have skin that is nearly transparent.

2. **To describe**

Olive spots stipple the back of the Lake Frog.

The toad grew as sullen as a tarnished spoon.

3. **To compare or contrast**

Both White-lipped Frogs and Orange-eyed Frogs live in trees.

The Australian Water-holding Frog is like a camel.

All Bullfrogs are green, but only some Poison-dart Frogs are blue.

4. **To show cause/effect**

Because Wallaces Frog has large webs on all of its feet, it can glide through the air.

Peepers chirp at night because they want to attract mates.

5. **To assert (given an opinion)**

The Leopard Frog is the most handsome of all frogs.

6. **To inquire**

Have you ever kissed a frog?

Constructed Responses

- One effective way to introduce “constructed” writing to students is to have them imitate the structure of pre-existing forms, especially children’s books.
- Begin simply, then slowly increase the complexity of the writing form the students are to imitate.

Fortunately by Remy Charlip

1. Choose a topic (nonfiction).
2. Gather resources.
3. Create a data-base of facts about the topic. Cite where you obtained the information.
4. Use the “Fortunately – Unfortunately” pattern.

Examples:

Ancient Egypt

Fortunately, if you were an important person in ancient Egypt, you would be embalmed after you died so that your remains would last forever.

Unfortunately, if you were a peasant, you would most likely be pickled in brine after you died.

Fortunately, you would have your dog to keep you company in the afterlife.

Unfortunately, if you were a dog, you would be killed when your owner died so that you could continue being a companion.

An Electron

Fortunately, if you are an electron, you get to be the equivalent of a cheetah in the atomic world as you scamper and dash around the outer edges of an atom.

Unfortunately, you have to be a minuscule cheetah because you are 1800 times smaller than a proton or neutron.

Fortunately, you can sometimes be knocked loose from your orbit — and then you can be free — accelerating tremendously!

Unfortunately, you sometimes have to become part of a herd of electrons and dwell forever in a magnetic field — where you cannot roam freely.

Snowflake Bentley

Fortunately, if you were Snowflake Bentley, you would be fascinated by the intricate designs of snowflakes.

Unfortunately, you fail multiple times in your attempt to capture those designs on film.

Fortunately, you would use your ingenuity to create a process of freezing snowflakes so that you could photograph them through a microscope.

Unfortunately, you would, ironically, catch pneumonia during a winter snowstorm and die shortly thereafter.

Data-Base: categories for the organization of facts

Animal:	habitat	diet	physical attributes
	abilities	lifespan	enemies
	offspring	number	

Person:	childhood	places	traits
	desires	fears	accomplishments
	setbacks	friends	enemies
	changes	talents	skills
Thing:	qualities	location	origin
	uses	functions	dangers
Place:	location	attributes	qualities
	products	size	notability
	services	events	“character”

Constructed Response Prompt

Explain how information in the article shows how Cuddles changed Dan’s life. In your response, use information from the article that supports your explanation.

Here are five types of constructed response questions:

Data: the question is asking for facts.

Definition: the question is asking for a definition of an idea, quality, trait, or concept.

Example: the question is asking for at least one example of an idea, quality, trait, or concept.

Explanation: the question is asking for the cause and/or effect of something or how something works (process).

Relationship: the question is asking how two things are similar or different or how one thing is better (more effective, of higher quality) than another.

Data: the question is asking for facts.

- Who is the author of the story?
- Where did the story take place?
- What action started the Civil War?
- In what year did the Titanic sink?
- How many acres were rendered useless during the “Great Dust Bowl”?
- How many miles did Marco Polo travel during his entire expedition?

Definition: the question is asking for a definition of an idea, quality, trait, or concept.

- What is heroism?
- What is democracy?
- What is justice?
- Define courage.
- What is a friend?
- What was the “westward expansion”?

Example: the question is asking for at least one example of an idea, quality, trait, or concept.

- Give an example of someone who is a hero.
- Give an example of a democratic country.
- Name two characters who were courageous.

Explanation: the question is asking for the cause and/or effect of something or how something works (process).

- Explain why Charles Lindberg was courageous.
- Why did the framers of the U.S. Constitution choose a democratic system?
- How did Bertha von Suttner try to achieve a more just society in Europe?
- Why is courage an important trait for a political leader?
- Why do hurricanes generally not occur during the winter?

Relationship: the question is asking how two things are similar or different or how one thing is better (more effective, of higher quality) than another.

- Who was more heroic: Rosa Parks or Marco Polo?
- Which is the most democratic country in the world?
- What is the difference between a proton and an electron?
- How was Charles Lindberg similar to Little Red Riding Hood? How was he different?
- Would you prefer to have a friend who was loyal or courageous? Why?

Constructed Response: how to construct a constructed response

Explain how **information** in the article shows *how Cuddles changed Dan's life*. In your response, use **information** from the article that *supports* your **explanation**.

1. What To Answer

- **Information** about how Cuddles changed Dan's life
- **Information** to support an explanation
- **Explanation:** cause - how something came to be

2. How to Answer: General to Specific

First, find (or infer) **general ideas** about *how* Cuddles changed Dan's life.

Second, find specific **examples** of how Cuddles changed Dan's life.

Third, explain **how the examples support the general ideas** (use cause and effect sentences - sentences with adverbial clauses).

Example:

First, find (or infer) general ideas about how Cuddles changed Dan's life.

*Cuddles has changed Dan's because he now feels **safe** and has more **freedom and independence**.*

Second, find specific examples of how Cuddles changed Dan's life.

Here are examples of how Cuddles has changed Dan's life. First, the author tells us that Cuddles keeps Dan safe: "If Dan commands her to cross the street when a car is coming, Cuddles won't cross." She adds that "Cuddles saved Dan from danger recently when a bike raced into his path. She quickly stepped between him and the bicycle." Second, we learn that Cuddles gives Dan freedom and independence. The author states that with the help of Cuddles, Dan can ride in elevators, go to restaurants, and even fly on airplanes.

Third, explain how the examples support the general ideas (use cause and effect sentences - sentences with adverbial clauses).

Because Cuddles acts as Dan's "eyes," she protects him from dangers he cannot see and she enables him to do things that he was not able to do before.

Constructed Response

Read the article "Protecting the Pandas" and answer the following question. The author says that giant pandas are "special creatures." Explain whether the word special is a good word to use to describe the giant panda. In your response, use information from the article that supports your answer.

1. What To Answer

- **Definition** of the word special
- **Information** about whether or not the Giant Panda is special
- **Persuasion:** argue that the word "special" does or does not appropriately describe the giant panda; use information in your reasoning

2. How To Answer

First, define the word *special*

Special – *adjective*

- 1) better, greater, or otherwise different from what is usual;
- 2) belonging specifically to a particular person or place

Second, decide if the panda is "better, greater, or otherwise different from what is usual" and/or if it has a quality that belongs "particularly" to it

Third, make an assertion (a statement with a general idea) and use information from the article to support it.

Constructed Response: The Special Panda

Robin Santos says that pandas are “special creatures,” and I think that she is right. One thing that makes the pandas special is that they are “in danger of dying out” and that there are “fewer than 1000 pandas left in the wild in China.” Because they are in danger of dying out and because there are fewer than 1000 currently living, pandas are *rare* — *and anything that is rare is special because it is “different from the usual.”*

Another thing that makes pandas special is that their diet consists almost entirely of bamboo and that they can eat “85 pounds of bamboo in just one day.” In fact, pandas are one of only a few animals that eat bamboo — the mountain gorilla of Africa is another one that does — and because they are, they are special.

A final way that pandas are special is because their skins, taken and sold by poachers, are worth “lots of money.” Since their skins are so valuable, they must be special; people only pay high prices for things that are unique, hard to find, or unusual.

Constructed Response: “Special” — Not!

In her article, “Protecting the Pandas,” Robin Santos says that pandas are “special creatures,” but she doesn’t support that statement with any facts or explanations. Rather than tell the reader *why* she thinks that pandas are “special,” she simply makes that assertion and then goes on to state that the “creatures are in danger of dying out.” Just because the pandas are in danger of dying out does not make them “special” because other animals on the planet are in that very same danger. She then devotes the rest of the article to discussing why the pandas are in danger and what people are doing to help them, *but she does not explicitly explain how or why the panda is special*, that is, how it is “better, greater, or otherwise different from what is usual,” or what qualities or attributes are particular to the panda. As such, Santos implies the panda is special, but she does not make a well-reasoned, a well-developed, or a well-organized argument to explain how or why it is.

Writing Prompts

Prompt #1: We all experience stressful times in our lives. Name three strategies you use to overcome stress and explain how they help you.

Prompt #2: Friendships are important to most people. Write a definition of what your friends mean to you and be sure to include examples.

Prompt #3: A rainy day doesn't have to be bad. Some people like rainy days. Explain how to turn a rainy day into a good day.

Prompt #4: You know a lot about different things. Pick one thing on which you are an expert or know a lot about. For example, it could be an illness, a hobby, or a place. Write an explanation about your expertise.

Prompt #5: Explain the pros and cons of a job, a profession, or an activity. Based on the pros and cons, state whether or not you would like the job, profession, or activity; explain why.

Prompt #6: A hero is someone who is admired for bravery or unusual accomplishments. Most people have someone in their life they consider a hero.

Before you begin to write, think about a person you think of as a hero. What are the qualities this person has that make him or her a hero? What has your hero done or said that would show his or her heroic nature?

Write a paragraph describing your hero. Tell what this person has done or said to deserve being called a hero.

Heroic Writing Prompt

First, decide what the prompt is asking.

Second, choose ideas or concepts from the prompt and break them down.

Third, decide what expository text structure to use.

Fourth, generate and organize ideas to fit into the needed text structure.

- selfless
- brave
- overcomes great odds, trials and tests
- actively works to help others because their fate rests on his or her shoulders
- displays integrity and perseverance
- battles injustice or malevolence
- modest (not arrogant or boastful)
- _____ (?)

Procedure for Heroic Writing

First, choose a person who is heroic because he/she displays one of the heroic qualities you listed.

Second, think of something your hero did or said that reveals the quality.

Third, construct a paragraph.

Example:

My Uncle J. is a hero. He is a brave person. He once got a lady's purse back from someone who took it. I think my Uncle J. is a hero.

Procedure for Writing an Explanatory Paragraph (Heroic Writing)

1. Begin with a topic sentence that asserts one idea: someone is a hero.
2. Offer a restriction sentence that asserts why the person is a hero: mention a heroic quality from your list.
3. Set the scene: give background information (setting, people involved).
4. Describe the action that exemplifies the heroic quality. Use sequence.
5. Explain how the action section displays the heroic nature of the person you are describing.
6. Conclude the paragraph.

To look at him, you wouldn't think my Uncle J. is a hero. He doesn't look like the typical heroes that you normally see in the movies. Even though he is only 5'7" inches tall and is a little overweight, my Uncle J. is one of the bravest people I know. I discovered how brave he was when we were on vacation at South Padre Island last summer. We had gone to the beach to take a swim and had just put down our towels, lawn chairs, and cooler when we heard a scream. Looking up, we saw a guy racing our way; behind him was a woman flailing her arms and screaming that her purse had just been grabbed. I didn't know what to do, but my Uncle J. launched himself towards the guy who was holding a purse like a football. In a matter of seconds, my Uncle threw himself at the culprit. My Uncle tackled him with so much force that both he and the purse-grabber flew into the water. At that point, other people ran to help and pulled both my Uncle and the thief out of the water. By helping out the woman whose purse had been taken, my Uncle showed his heroic qualities. More importantly, though, my Uncle displayed bravery by tackling the thief in the water. You see, my Uncle doesn't know how to swim. What bravery he showed by putting someone else's welfare above his own safety!

Ways to write a topic sentence:

1. **Announcement:** My Uncle J. is a hero because he is one of the bravest people I know.
2. **Question:** Who would have thought that my Uncle J. was really a hero?
3. **Definition:** The dictionary says that a hero is someone who is brave and puts other people's needs above his own. I discovered one day that my Uncle J. fits that definition like a glove.
4. **Different Direction:** To look at him, you wouldn't think my Uncle J. is a hero. He doesn't look like the heroes that you see in the movies. Even though he is only 5'7" inches tall and is a little overweight, my Uncle J. is one of the bravest people I know.
5. **Facts:** Summer vacation, South Padre Island, and a stolen purse are three things that came together to show me that my Uncle J. is a hero.
6. **Simile:** I'll never forget the day I found out that my Uncle J. was a little like Batman.
7. **Quotation:** My dad always told me, "Heroes pop up when you least expect to see them." My dad was right because one day my Uncle J. popped up as a hero.

Nonfiction Text Structures

- **Personal Narrative:** one overall idea that is exemplified in a personal experience. Scene is set: time, place, people. Chronological sequence of events. Thoughts about, and reactions to, the events (reflects the main idea). Conclusion.
- **Description:** something or someone is described. One main idea is developed. Spatial arrangement is used: top to bottom, bottom to top, inside to outside, near to far, etc. All details convey one general impression or idea. Concrete words are used; figurative language is usually present.
- **Persuasive:** an attempt to get someone to believe or do something. The “claim” is usually stated in the beginning of the persuasive text. The claim is followed with reasons, ones that usually appeal to the self-interest of the audience.
- **Compare and/or Contrast:** the differences, or similarities, of two things or persons are articulated. Block or point-by-point method is usually used. Generally categories are presented and supported by facts.
- **Cause/Effect:** An event is discussed, usually from the perspective of what caused it or the effects of the event (sometimes both are discussed). Sometimes multiple causes and/or multiple effects are presented — usually in a clear sequence.
- **Problem/Solution:** a problem is presented and solutions are offered to solve the problem.
- **Sequence (Process Analysis):** usually “how” something happens or “how” something is done. A clear step-by-step process is presented.
- **Expository (Informational):** factual information about a person, place, event, animal, or object is presented — usually the facts are arranged under sub-headings.

Flexible Thinking: Using All Nonfiction Text Structures (topic sentences)

Personal Narrative: Even though the sun blistered the desert, I broke into a cold sweat when I came face to face with a bad-tempered, malnourished coyote.

Description: The coyote was a mangy creature.

Persuasion: “Coyote, I would make a terrible lunch for you, and here are the reasons why.”

Compare/Contrast: Isabel and the coyote shared three important similarities: physical attributes, habitat, and destination.

Cause/Effect: Because Isabel met the coyote in the desert, two important things happened.

Problem/Solution: For the coyote, there was only one way to stop his stomach from rumbling.

Sequence: To get what he wanted, the coyote had to do three things. First . . .

Expository: The coyote has a well-deserved reputation for being a clever carnivore.

Compare / Contrast

Close Observation: how are the frog and toad different? Similar?

FROG

TOAD

Write a paragraph describing the differences between a frog and a toad.

Gather: create a list of specific differences: skin, body, etc.
Choose three.

Assemble: Create a topic sentence: “There are three key differences between frogs and toads.” Use three facts:

Frogs have _____.	Toads have _____.
Frogs have _____.	Toads have _____.
Frogs have _____.	Toads have _____.

Point by Point: Contrast

Quality 1

Topic A

Topic B

Quality 2

Topic A

Topic B

Quality 3

Topic A

Topic B

Block Style: Contrast

Topic A

Quality 1

Quality 2

Quality 3

Topic B

Quality 1

Quality 2

Quality 3

Compare: Similarities

Quality 1

Topic A

Topic B

Quality 2

Topic A

Topic B

Quality 3

Topic A

Topic B

There are *three key differences* between toads and frogs: *skin, poisons, and bodies*. Toads tend to have dry, bumpy, “warty” skin. Toads also have poison sacs behind their eyes. Toads have short bodies, and their legs are stubby and muscular. On the other hand, frogs have smooth, moist skin. Most frogs, unlike toads, are not poisonous, but one kind of frog is: the poison dart frog of South America. This frog’s poison is on the surface of its skin. Frogs have narrower bodies than toads, and a frog’s legs are long and sleek. Because of the differences in their legs, toads and frogs move differently: toads walk, frogs hop.

Frogs and toads are amphibians (the word amphibian means “double life”), animals that begin their lives in the water (breathing with gills) and then, during maturity, live on land (breathing with lungs). Both animals are both cold-blooded, both lay their eggs in water, and both transform from tadpoles into adult animals. Being widespread, frogs and toads live on all continents except Antarctica.

Persuasive ¶: *Click, Clack, Moo, Cows that Type* by Doreen Cronin
Who Wants a Cheap Rhinoceros? by Shel Silverstein

- a. List the attributes of a rhinoceros. Make a list of practical uses (around the house) for a rhinoceros: i.e., *can-smasher*
- b. Decide which items on the list would most appeal to mother and father.
- c. Chose either mother or father as your audience for a persuasive paragraph.
- d. Use this sentence as your topic sentence: _____ a cheap rhinoceros would be a wonderful addition to our house. Use this sentence as your restriction sentence: Just consider the practical things that it could do.
- e. Choose your three best reasons that show the practical aspects of own a rhinoceros.

Reason 1:

Benefit 1:

Reason 11:

Benefit 11:

Reason 111:

Benefit 111:

- f. Write a persuasive paragraph: topic sentence, restriction sentence, three reasons, concluding sentence.

Mom, a cheap rhinoceros would be a wonderful addition to our house [topic sentence]. Just consider the practical things that it could do [restriction sentence]. First, it could be a great trash compactor; imagine all the time and energy it would save you from having to crush all those soda cans. Second, it could move the furniture for you when you're cleaning. This way you would never strain your back again—and save money on chiropractor bills. Finally, it could both plough and fertilize the garden, which would give you the extra time you need to work on your Elvis photo collection. Because a cheap rhinoceros could do these practical things, don't you think that we should get one today? [concluding sentence]

The Armadillo

Native to the southwestern United States and Mexico as well as Central and South America, the armadillo is a piglike creature with bony armor. The three, six, and nine-banded armadillos are named for the number of movable bands in their armor. Jointed plates, which cover the back and sides of the animal, look like the armor worn by medieval knights and feel like leather. These plates protect the armadillo from attacks by wolves or mountain lions or from cactus thorns. When danger threatens, some species are able to roll up into tight round balls, with nothing showing but the thick, hard plates on their backs.

The armadillo is a timid creature with very poor eyesight. It depends almost entirely upon its senses of hearing and smell for guidance. It has short legs, but when alarmed it can run with considerable speed. The animal's digging claws enable it to bury itself in an incredibly short time. It makes its burrow in the dry soil of arid regions. It feeds at night, largely on insects, worms, roots, fruits, and sometimes carrion. Its flesh is occasionally eaten. Its shell may be turned into a novel basket.

Armadillos belong to a group of toothless or nearly toothless animals. They are usually brownish-black, marked with yellow above and yellowish-white underneath. Species may range in length from about 6 inches to 5 feet. The female normally bears 2 to 12 young at a time which are all the same gender.

Persuasive Expository Writing

- a. A general word to describe the animal: *timid*.
- b. What the animal does that exemplifies the general word: When danger threatens, some species are able to roll up into tight round balls, with nothing showing but the thick, hard plates on their backs. It has short legs, but when alarmed it can run with considerable speed.
- c. How the animal does things: The animal's digging claws enable it to bury itself in an incredibly short time.
- d. Simile or metaphor to describe the animal: Jointed plates, which cover the back and sides of the animal, look like the armor worn by medieval knights.
- e. What the animal is not: The armadillo is not ferocious like a badger.

Armadillos are *timid creatures*. Even though they resemble medieval knights because they wear an armor of joined plates, they do not like to fight. For example, armadillos feed on insects, worms, roots, fruits, and even carrion; in fact, they so timid that they never attack animals even as small as a mouse for a meal. Armadillos also reveal their timidity when they are attacked by a wolf or a mountain lion. Rather than scratch and bite their enemies the way a ferocious badger would, most armadillos roll up into tight round balls, with nothing showing but the thick, hard plates on their backs. Others run away on their short, swift legs and then use their sharp claws to burrow quickly into the ground. Once inside the safety of the burrow, armadillos will use their keen hearing to listen for further danger. Despite being timid, however, armadillos know how to survive.

Voice & Tone

Tone (voice) is the manner in which a writer relates to an audience, the “tone of voice” used to address readers. Tone may be *friendly, serious, distant, angry, cheerful, bitter, cynical, reverential, awe-struck, enthusiastic, morbid, resentful, warm, cold, remorseful, sad, playful, lonely, bored, confused, curious, sarcastic, nostalgic, pleading, assertive, gloomy, frightened, happy, threatening, apologetic, nervous etc.*

Tone/voice results from the writer’s diction (word choice and use, or lack, of figurative language) and sentence structure. Tone is also dependent upon the writer’s purpose(s) and his/her (explicit/implicit) relation to his/her audience.

- Examine the following.
 - a. During the whole of a dull, dark and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone on horseback through a singularly dreary tract of country.
 - b. I was, like, riding this really radical horse, and it’s name was, I think, Silver or Scout or something, and I was trotting through this totally trashed territory, you know, and the clouds—they were kinda gray and heavy like half-fat water balloons (Dude, I love water balloons!)—made me feel sort of sad, but then I thought, “Da, lighten up, ’cause I’m like a knight riding this really radical horse,” and I felt better, you know?

- c. My mom likes my brother best. She always gives him what he wants, but she never gives me anything that I want. The last time we went to buy shoes, my brother got really expensive ones with the gel in the heel and the cool flames on the side, but I got stuck with a pair of ugly-looking shoes made out of hard plastic.
- d. Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Mirror Neurons

Why do sports fans feel so emotionally invested in the game, reacting almost as if they were part of the game themselves? According to discoveries in brain imaging, inside our heads we constantly “act out” and imitate whatever activity we’re observing. Our so-called “mirror neurons” help us understand the actions of others and prime us to imitate what we see.

—*Nova*, January 25, 2005

The human brain has multiple mirror neuron systems that specialize in carrying out and understanding not just the actions of others but their intentions, the social meaning of their behavior and their emotions. . . . Everyday experiences are also being viewed in a new light. Mirror neurons reveal how children learn, why people respond to certain types of sports, dance, music and art, and why watching media violence may be harmful.

—Sandra Blakeslee, “Cells That Read Minds” (*New York Times*, January 10, 2006)

10 Basic Ways to Begin a Sentence

Noun:	Rats peered from garbage cans.
Article + Noun:	The rats peered from garbage cans.
Adj. + Noun:	Greedy rats peered from garbage cans.
Pronoun:	They peered from garbage cans.
Adverb:	Cautiously, rats peered from garbage cans.
Absolute Phrases:	Eyes wide, ears twitching, rats peered from garbage cans.
Part. Phrase:	Munching on stale cheese, rats peered from garbage cans.
Prep. Phrase:	Beneath the glow of a full moon, rats peered from garbage cans.
Infinitive Phrs:	To watch for prowling cats, rats peered from garbage cans.
Adverbial Cls:	As the half moon arose in the dingy sky like a hunk of rancid cheese, rats peered from garbage cans.
Adj., Prep Phs:	Suspicious of their surroundings, cats peered from garbage cans.

Subordinating Conjunctions

time	after, before, since, until, when, whenever, while
place	where, wherever
cause/reason	as, because, since, whereas
purpose	in order that, so that
result	that, so
condition	although, even though, unless, if, provided that, while

Time

Whenever the sky turns grey and green, the ogres gather to frolic.

The frog will not give back the golden orb until the princess apologizes.

After Ajax won the race, Achilles sat in his tent and sulked.

While the Trojans were sleeping, Odysseus silently slipped out of the big, wooden horse.

Place

The gnome slept wherever he could.

Wherever he went, the hobbit found signs of impending doom.

Cause/Reason

Because no one could pull the sword from the stone, Arthur decided to try.

As no one seemed to be home, the wolf crept inside the cottage.

Since he was still hungry, the wolf loped to the second pig's house.

Purpose

The ogre ate the map so that no one else could find the magic fountain.

The dragon bellowed in order that he might frighten the tourists.

Result

The wolf was so ornery that he changed into grandmother's clothes.

Achilles was angry, so he decided to sulk.

Condition

Although the gremlins have never won a game, they keep hoping.

Even though the ogres had a bake sale, no one bought their brick cakes.

Unless it snows, the elves cannot wear their snowshoes.

Add an adverbial clause to each of the following. You may add the clause at the beginning or the end of the sentence.

3. The wolf's stomach rumbled.
4. The elf sat alone.
5. The hobbit carried a magical sword.
6. The hobbit climbed the mountain.
7. Harry Potter lost the secret key.

Life Map



Personal Narrative Paragraph

Topic

Word that describes the event (topic): *happy, sad, shocking, scary, surprising . . .*

Where the event takes place

When the event happens

Who is involved

Sequence of actions

Reactions/thoughts

Conclusion

Draft: Personal Narrative Paragraph

[Topic sentence: one idea that controls the paragraph] One of the scariest things I ever did was visit a house that everybody said was haunted. *[Discussion # 1: set the scene, give background information, introduce people]* It happened last summer. We wanted to see the inside of the house on the edge of our neighborhood. No one had lived in that house, and everybody in the neighborhood said the place was haunted.

[Discussion # 2: describe the action, show how the actions support the topic sentence] We went to the house. When we got there, it was quiet. We were a little nervous. When we went inside and we saw that the house was a mess. We heard a noise. We ran outside. We never went back to that house.

Topic sentence that presents the controlling idea of a “fearful” experience through analogy: Fear is like a bolt of lightning: you never know when it’s going to strike. And it struck me the day I decided to explore a house that was supposed to be filled with ghouls. *Transition sentence that sets the scene, gives background information and a brief description of the place (when, where, and who):* The “visit” happened last summer when my best friend, J., and I decided to venture into the old, abandoned house on the edge of our neighborhood. *Four sentences that give a sensory description of the place (where) to give a visual idea of how the scene supports the idea in the topic sentence:* No one had lived in that house, which must have been fifty years old, for over two years, and everybody in the neighborhood said the place was haunted. The house itself was slowly falling apart. Most of it’s windows were shattered; many of it’s shingles had fallen off, leaving the roof with a leprous look. Paint, once a cool blue, was peeling off in great flakes exposing a dingy white undersurface. *Transition sentence that, once the scene has been described, recounts the action in a sequential manner; the adjective “carefully” works to support the topic sentence (what happened first, second, third):* That day, J. and I approached the house carefully. Sentence describing the place, what the narrator notices (all descriptions support the idea in the topic sentence: that the place was haunted and thus frightening): When we got there, we noticed the dead silence that saturated the place under the baking sun. *Sentence that continues the description and gives the narrator’s reaction (in support of the topic sentence):* The loneliness and desolation of the place were like great grey clouds and were so strong that we were afraid, for a moment, to go in. *Sentence describes the action, uses language to support the topic sentence:* When we crept through the door and took our first trembling peep, we saw a weed-infested floorless room, unplastered walls, a sooty fireplace, shattered windows, and cobwebs festooning every corner. *Sentence describes the action that is most frightening:* Just as we were about to ascend the stairs, we heard a low, moaning groan. *Sentences describe action and reaction:* Our breaths caught in our throats. Without a sound, we turned and bolted out the door. *Conclusion:* We never found out who or what made the noise because we never went back to that house.

Topic Sentences for a Personal Narrative Paragraph

Straightforward Announcement:

I remember one of the scariest things I ever did was the time I visited a house that everybody said was haunted.

Quotation:

“I wouldn’t go into that house, if I were you,” my uncle told me. Thinking about it now, I should have taken his advice. If I had I would have saved myself the fright of my life.

Question:

I keep asking myself, why did I go into that house, the one everyone said was haunted? Had I known how scary such a trip was, I wouldn’t have gone.

Series of Unrelated Facts:

Grey clouds, a weed-infested floor, and a low bone-chilling moan are three frightening things I’ll never forget.

Definition:

Webster’s Dictionary defines being scared as “to be filled with fear.” I never knew how accurate a dictionary could be until the day I entered a haunted house.

Analogy (simile):

Fear is like a bolt of lightning: you never know when it’s going to strike. And it struck me the day I decided to explore a house that was supposed to be filled with ghouls.

Reflection:

Thinking back on it now, I realize that I discovered how curiosity can instantly transform into fear the day I brazenly stepped into a haunt of a house.

Personal Narrative: The Rock Cycle

Call me igneous, cooled lava; unbreakable and once shiny, my sheen has been dulled by constant blasts of wind and rain. Speck by speck, I erode, slowly dissolving into sediments—chunks of what I once was.

I seep into soil, sink into watery depths, the layers of what I once was and the layers of others settling upon me. Pressed into a new shape, I'm a sedimentary rock, a collection of rocks I've known and rocks that are strangers to me. The weight of us pushes us down, down, always down.

In so deep a place the pressure becomes a fever, a fever that welds us into a metamorphic rock, and the fever does not break, only grows greater, melts us into magma, until we ignite, explode into lava, erupt out of a volcanic funnel, fly through the air, and settle (searing with steam) onto the ground where I cool and become igneous once again. . . .