

Writing Suggestions

As students write their own three-category rating systems, remind them to keep their writing professional and informative, their descriptions concise, and their categories clear. Once students are finished, you may want to have them “translate” their rating systems into informal or casual language—or even texting language. This may reinforce their ability to switch between different tones and styles of writing.

Process

Marvin Harris

How Our Skins Got Their Color

Teaching Tip

Ask students if they believe that race and skin color still matter today. Has race become more or less of an issue than it was 50 years ago? Prepare students to read this objective essay on skin color by asking them to stand if they are able to roll their tongues into a taco shape. What if we discriminated against the tongue-rollers? How is that similar to or different from discriminating against a certain skin color?

Understanding Meaning: What Is the Writer Trying to Say?

1. The natural color of skin is brown.
- 2-3. Lighter and darker complexions were caused by the living conditions at different latitudes, natural selection, the need to protect against skin cancer, and the need for vitamin D.
4. Discuss with students how their views about skin color changed after reading this essay.

Evaluating Strategy: How Does the Writer Say It?

1. Harris begins by relating the science behind human skin, and then he describes how lighter and darker skins developed.
2. Harris includes the findings of an experiment with Caucasian skin and how it reacted to sunlight at various latitudes.

Appreciating Language: What Words Does the Writer Use?

1. *Melanin* is a particle in the skin that reacts to and protects from sunlight. More melanin produces darker skin.
2. Ask students if they felt offended by Harris's use of *black* and *white*. Are there other, less offensive words Harris could have used?

Writing Suggestions

Use Harris's essay as a model for students to write an essay explaining another process. It could be a process with which they are already familiar or a process they are learning about in another class.

Vicki Mazza for Congress *Staff Directive*

Teaching Tip

This document can be used to point out the value of using bulleted or numbered points in process writings, especially when giving directions. Provide other examples, such as recipes and instructions, to show students that process writing often does not use standard sentence structure or paragraphs but lists of numbered, action-oriented statements.

Understanding Meaning: What Is the Writer Trying to Say?

1. The campaign will respond with facts that about Mazza's career that distance her from the Bioff Funds scandal.
2. The facts include when Mazza worked for the law firm and in what department. The facts also include her pro bono work.
3. Volunteers cannot mention the Knox campaign or use words like "lies" or "smears," and they cannot answer leading questions.
4. The campaign wants consistency in its message to the public.

Evaluating Strategy: How Does the Writer Say It?

1. Red ink, bullets, capitals, and underlines lead readers to focus on the most important points. Ask students if they think the document looks confusing or if it is easy to read and why.
2. A campaign strives to keep a good "face" for the public and for constituents. Leaking internal information to the media or the public would make that more difficult.
3. Ask students what they think. The negative instructions are shorter and more emphatic. Does that make them easier to remember or are negative instructions easier to remember in general?

Appreciating Language: What Words Does the Writer Use?

1. The term *allegations* has a criminal connotation to it, and even though Mazza is "innocent," the term *allegations* makes her sound more like a criminal.
2. A leading question is one that subtly leads the responder to answer negatively or reveal information. Have students read the examples and come up with a few of their own leading questions.

Writing Suggestions

Break the class into small groups or pairs and have them write an internal document responding to on one of the writing prompts. Ask students how they would write differently if the document was a press release or a public statement.

Cause and Effect

John Taylor Gatto

Why Schools Don't Educate

Teaching Tip

Introduce Gatto's essay by asking students about their experience in public schools. Do they think students of different backgrounds or income levels are treated differently? Why are some schools more effective than others?

Understanding Meaning: What Is the Writer Trying to Say?

1. Gatto's thesis is stated most succinctly in his first two sentences and his last two sentences.
2. Television has affected children's lives by monopolizing their free time, teaching them to create an artificial personality, and encouraging materialism.
3. Ask students if that agree that children can be both "cruel" and "passive". Can they give examples that either support or oppose Gatto's statement?
4. Discuss with students the rise of materialism. Is it caused by television, or does television merely reflect the ideals of American society? How does the phrase "the American Dream" affect materialism?
5. Ask students what they believe about living constantly in the present. Do they believe knowledge of history is essential to a balanced life?

Evaluating Strategy: How Does the Writer Say It?

1. Ask students if reading an essay with numbered points was easier or more difficult than an essay without.
2. Discuss the pros and cons of repetition in an essay.
3. Discuss Gatto's critique of children. Was he harsher on children or on parents? How?

Appreciating Language: What Words Does the Writer Use?

1. Ask students what they think *ahistorical* means. Why does Gatto think a sense of history is important?
2. Discuss Gatto's use of the term *pornography*. Some synonyms for *pornography* and *pornographic* include *smut*, *filth*, *dirt*, *obscene*, *lewd*, *offensive*, *indecent*, and *salacious*. Could Gatto have made his point as effectively by using one of these other words? Why or why not?

Writing Suggestions

You can use Gatto's essay as a prompt for students to discuss how television has affected them or children they know. You can also begin a discussion on the pitfalls of the public school system and how students would improve it.

Highland Park Day School

Understanding Dyslexia

Teaching Tip

Before assigning this essay, ask students if they know someone who has struggled with a learning disability or struggled with school in general. How much responsibility should parents take for helping their child overcome a learning disability? How much responsibility belongs to teachers and schools?

Understanding Meaning: What Is the Writer Trying to Say?

1. Both are listed clearly. Dyslexia is caused by genes and has several effects including delay in learning new words and low letter recognition.
2. Ask students what they think. Some characteristics, like letter reversals and difficulty with rhyming words, are easier to recognize than others, like a delay in learning new words.
3. The school doesn't want to alarm parents.

Evaluating Strategy: How Does the Writer Say It?

1. The tone is calm. The letter emphasizes that dyslexia can be overcome but shouldn't be ignored.
2. If the letter connected dyslexia to lower intelligence, parents may be more reluctant to contact the school about their children's symptoms.
3. Two statements in particular inform without alarming: "children can learn strategies that help them cope with the disorder and make academic progress" and "one or more of these characteristics should not be viewed as proof of dyslexia."

Appreciating Language: What Words Does the Writer Use?

1. Dyslexia is a "genetic learning disability," has "no relationship to intelligence," and is called a "disorder."
2. The letter is predominantly reassuring. Words and phrases like "gifted," "can learn," and "progress" are hopeful. Ask students to identify others.

Writing Suggestions

As students write their own cause and effect informational web page, encourage them to choose a subject with which they are already familiar. Or, if time permits, allow students to research a topic and then write. This could be an opportunity to practice documenting outside sources.

Argument and Persuasion

Mary Sherry

In Praise of the F Word

Teaching Tip

Before assigning this essay, ask students if they have ever failed or feared failing a course. Did the possibility of failure prompt them to study harder or did it discourage them?

Understanding Meaning: What Is the Writer Trying to Say?

1. Failing forces students to take responsibility.
2. Her students comment that they wish teachers had been tougher and more demanding and forced them to be responsible.
3. Schools, in Sherry's view, have allowed students to pass with minimal effort and few challenges.
4. Ask students if they think flunking students can be positive. Did their schools flunk students? Were there policies of social promotion?

Evaluating Strategy: How Does the Writer Say It?

1. Sherry uses her experiences as a parent to support her argument. Teachers who might be afraid of hurting students by failing them may listen to a teacher who is also a parent.
2. Sherry points out that when her son was threatened with failing, he changed his attitude and became a better student.

Appreciating Language: What Words Does the Writer Use?

1. A "do-gooder" is an optimist or activist who works for progressive reform and believes individuals can change society.
2. "Caring conspiracy" is a striking and memorable phrase because of the ironic contrast of the two words.

Writing Suggestions

Direct students to write a response to Sherry's piece based on their own experiences and their observations. Do they agree with her or not?

Alton Enterprises

"Preliminary Security Analysis"

Teaching Tip

Ask students what they have done when they noticed a person or a company breaking the rules or using unsafe practices. Ask students to consider how they would respond if their child's school seemed to be doing something unsafe. Would adding emotional language help or hurt the situation?

Understanding Meaning: What Is the Writer Trying to Say?

1. This report aims to persuade the reader to immediately review Alton Enterprises' security policies.
2. The author lists three specific physical safety rule violations and three specific data security violations.
3. Alton could lose its government contract, get blamed and/or sued for physical injuries, and/or see a rise in insurance premiums.
4. If the company takes no action and data is mishandled or people are hurt, the company can be charged with negligence.

Evaluating Strategy: How Does the Writer Say It?

1. This report shows some weaknesses in Alton's security and, if leaked publicly, could hurt the reputation and profits of the company.
2. The bullet points highlight the number of security lapses and make them easier to read. Consider writing this report as a paragraph and handing it out to students so they can see the difference.
3. Dates are important for documenting specific security violations and for recording the day supervisors were notified.

Appreciating Language: What Words Does the Writer Use?

1. Ask students how they would describe the tone and style. It seems strong and forceful without being overbearing. It is direct, yet it remains professional. Would emotionally charged language help or hurt this report?
2. Ask students what they think. The writer obviously feels strongly about the gravity of the security lapses. How could this report be changed to make it sound alarmist? How could it be rewritten to sound less forceful and pressing?

Writing Suggestions

As students write a short call to action or a statement on behalf of Alton Enterprises, consider connecting this report to the letter to alumni on page 581. What kind of phrases could students use to persuade the public or persuade the military contract contacts that security lapses were being quickly and thoroughly fixed?

Not For Sale

Test Bank

Not For Sale

Chapter 1: Why Write?

Answer True or False for each of the following statements.

- _____ 1. Writing is not important for “regular” jobs like being a nurse, contractor, or police officer.
- _____ 2. If written badly, e-mails, letters, and reports may have serious consequences in a court of law.
- _____ 3. Responding to a question or complaint when angry captures the passion of the moment, which makes the writing more assertive and effective.
- _____ 4. When told to “put it in writing,” make sure what you write clearly expresses what you are trying to say.
- _____ 5. Good writing depends on the context of the writing situation.

Choose the correct answer.

- _____ 6. What is considered as “good writing” is shaped by its context, which consists of four elements: _____.
 - A. the topic, the introduction, the body paragraphs, and the conclusion
 - B. personal impressions, objective terminology, creative language, and colorful words
 - C. the writer’s goal, the reader’s needs, the situation, and the nature of the document
 - D. the paper’s format, the writer’s opinion, the evidence, and the effective use of words
- _____ 7. A possible goal for writing would be to _____.
 - A. get the assignment done
 - B. write everything down as quickly as possible
 - C. express all of your emotions in an angry letter to your teacher
 - D. motivate the reader to take action
- _____ 8. In determining your audience, you should consider _____.
 - A. the readers’ familiarity with your subject
 - B. the readers’ attitude toward your subject
 - C. the type of evidence that will most likely persuade your reader
 - D. all of the above
- _____ 9. What is expected in the document most likely _____.
 - A. won’t affect the word choices, sentences, or paragraphs you write
 - B. will be different depending on the goal, audience, and situation
 - C. consists only of simple words and short sentences
 - D. is the same for all documents you write

- _____ 10. In order to avoid plagiarism, you should _____.
- A. avoid using outside sources
 - B. always record the source of outside material
 - C. color-code your final draft so readers know which parts come from outside sources
 - D. always use quotations

Chapter 2: The Writing Process

Choose the letter that best completes the statement.

- _____ 1. When you think critically, you _____.
A. look at your subject carefully and ask questions
B. collect facts and test common beliefs
C. consider alternative interpretations
D. all of the above
- _____ 2. Good writing _____.
A. shares facts, first impressions, and immediate reactions to a subject
B. is “about” a topic
C. simply relates what you have read about and heard about
D. has a purpose and makes a point about a subject
- _____ 3. Prewriting _____.
A. needs to be done the same way every time for consistency
B. helps you explore a subject and discover ideas
C. is basically the same as writing the first draft
D. can only be done after you’ve decided on your narrow topic
- _____ 4. Which of the following is NOT a recommended method of prewriting?
A. brainstorming
B. clustering
C. asking questions
D. drafting
- _____ 5. The goal of freewriting is to _____.
A. identify what you already know about your topic and discover new ideas
B. give you an opportunity to spot spelling and punctuation errors
C. produce a well developed rough draft so you may continue to your final draft
D. offer you the practice in writing complete sentences rather than listing ideas
- _____ 6. After you limit your topic, the next step is to develop a main point.
This main point is known as a _____.
A. cluster
B. transition
C. thesis
D. questioning technique
- _____ 7. A good thesis _____.
A. expresses an opinion and makes a statement
B. is the same thing as a narrowed topic
C. always belongs at the end of your paper
D. is easiest to write before you begin prewriting activities

- _____ 8. An effective method of organizing your ideas is to _____.
A. create various thesis statements as alternatives to better topics
B. engage in further clustering or mapping
C. outline your paper's introduction, body, and conclusion
D. read your draft several times, and then edit it
- _____ 9. In the "revise" stage of the writing process, your goal is to _____.
A. try to revise on a computer so you can apply the spell and grammar check
B. examine all sections of your essay to check for logic, organization, support, and transitions
C. focus on your use of transitions
D. revise for spelling and punctuation, two areas frequently ignored by students
- _____ 10. Which of the following is NOT an effective way to study for an essay exam?
A. Focus only on memorizing definitions from your subject matter.
B. Practice writing possible answers to test questions.
C. Consider how patterns of development (i.e. definition, cause and effect, and compare and contrast) fit with your subject matter.
D. Start studying several days before the exam.

Chapter 3: Developing Topic Sentences and Controlling Ideas

Choose the correct answer.

- _____ 1. Which of the following is NOT a function of a paragraph?
- A. Paragraphs serve as building blocks.
 - B. Paragraphs usually present a single main idea expressed in a topic sentence.
 - C. Paragraphs serve to summarize the purpose expressed in the thesis.
 - D. Paragraph breaks signal transitions, moving readers from one main idea to another.
- _____ 2. A topic sentence should NOT _____.
- A. make a general statement supported by the rest of the paragraph
 - B. include several controlling ideas
 - C. indicate the kind of detail readers should expect in a paragraph
 - D. explain what the paragraph is about
- _____ 3. Precisely worded topic sentences _____.
- A. guide your writing by helping you decide which details to include
 - B. introduce a paragraph's main idea
 - C. make it easier for your readers to understand what you are saying
 - D. all of the above
- _____ 4. Paragraph breaks _____.
- A. signal transitions between main points
 - B. are not used to separate direct quotations in dialogue
 - C. should occur every five sentences
 - D. need to be minimized to keep readers focused on the essay
- _____ 5. If you reproduce a conversation using direct quotations, paragraph breaks serve to _____.
- A. show when one person stops talking and another begins
 - B. make the descriptions of the surroundings clear and vivid
 - C. signal when the essay is reaching its conclusion
 - D. summarize how each of the speakers feels about a specific idea

Examine each group of sentences and choose the topic sentence (A or B) that has a more focused controlling idea.

- _____ 6. A. The most challenging aspect of college is sticking to a schedule.
B. There are many challenges that college students face.
- _____ 7. A. My college writing course helped me improve my resume.
B. College prepared me for the world of work.