

UNIT ONE

Language

CHAPTER 1

Destination: College, U.S.A.

CHAPTER 2

*How to Be a Successful
Language Learner*

CHAPTER 3

*The Education of
Berenice Belizaire*

Chapter One

DESTINATION: COLLEGE, U.S.A.



PREREADING

Discussion

Before reading “Destination: College, U.S.A.,” discuss the following questions as a class.

- 1 *Culture shock* is the sense of disorientation, confusion, and anxiety that is often experienced by people exposed to a different culture or environment. In what ways do you think a person attending college in a foreign country might experience culture shock?
- 2 What kinds of “culture shock” do people moving from one level of education to another – or even from one school to another – experience? What strategies have you learned for dealing with such experiences?
- 3 In “Destination: College, U.S.A.,” the author of the selection, Yilu Zhao, explains some of the strategies she used to become a successful student, first in China and then at Yale University in the United States. What kinds of study strategies may have helped her become successful?

Vocabulary: Words in Context

Read these passages from “Destination: College, U.S.A.” Work with a partner. Use the context to help you understand the meaning of the italicized words. Then take turns explaining to your partner the meaning of each passage in your own words.

- 1 I had been admitted into a three-course, yearlong freshman program called Directed Studies, *dubbed* Directed Suicide by Yalies. It was supposed to introduce us to “the splendors of the Western civilization,” in the words of the catalog, by force feeding the *canons* of philosophy, literature and history.
- 2 I *yearned* to understand the American society. What better way to comprehend it than to study the very ideas on which it is based?
- 3 The professors here do not teach in the same way that teachers in China do. Studying humanities in China means memorizing all the “correct,” *standard interpretations* given during lectures. Here, professors *toss out* . . . questions and let the students argue, research and write papers on their own.
- 4 I visited the writing tutor . . . for every paper I turned in. My papers were always written days before they were *due*. I *lingered* after classes to *pester* professors with questions. My classmates lent me their notes so I could learn the skill of note-taking in English.

GENRE: Personal Essay

Destination: College, U.S.A.

Yilu Zhao

Yilu Zhao came from China to the United States in 1994 to study at Yale University. After graduating from Yale and getting a master’s degree in journalism from New York University, she became a writer for The New York Times. While she was still an intern at the Times, Zhao wrote the piece from which this excerpt is taken. It was published on January 13, 2002.

⋮ It was the fall of 1994, and the campus was verdant.* Ten of us were now 1
⋮ sitting in a circle under the canopy of a thick oak tree. For orientation, we
⋮ were supposed to get to know one another. But I couldn’t understand
⋮ much of what they were saying, which I realize now was probably because
⋮ the word “like” was sprinkled into almost every other sentence – “I was,
⋮ like, whatever.” And that is when I started to panic.

⋮ The afternoon is now stored in my brain like scenes from a silent 2
⋮ movie. I tried to look and sound cool, but it seemed impossible. . . .
⋮ A student from California cracked a joke, and the rest laughed, leaning
⋮ backward and forward, unable to sit straight. I sat like a statue. Soon,
⋮ people stopped talking with me. When the time came for hamburgers,

* *verdant*: green, filled with trees and plants

everybody sprinted toward the grill, and I trailed behind, wondering what a grill was.

Soon, my panic turned into doubt. Why was I here? I had been perfectly happy in China. When night fell, I wanted to cry.

But there was no way back, not when my mother had spent a whole year's salary, \$800, just to fly me here. The Cultural Revolution had closed all schools when my parents were teenagers, and neither finished high school. My dad was a government clerk, and my mom worked in a textile factory, bent over a sewing machine year after year in a thick soup of air filled with tiny cotton fibers. But she had a great passion for her only child's education.

In 10th grade, I had discovered from a pirated* book about American college admissions that I could apply just like any American teenager, taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language and the G.R.E., the graduate admissions test (the SAT was not given in China).

"Lulu, this is your chance," my mother told me. Lulu is what my family calls me.

So on the nights when I didn't sleep at my high school dormitory (eight to a room), I stayed with my grandparents, whose one-room apartment was bigger than my parents', memorizing English words from vocabulary books. I would sit with my back facing the color TV, on which my grandmother watched sentimental novellas with earphones. On another side of the room, my grandfather sat in bed with earphones, holding a radio tuned to the BBC's Chinese-language programs.

Even when I was very small, my mother had told me that I could do anything and be anyone, and that smart people went abroad to study. I hadn't known there were many countries; I had thought there were only two: China and the Foreign Country. I remember wishing I had been in the Foreign Country.

Now, here I was.

* * *

In the grogginess* at the end of a library nap, I wasn't sure where I was. I stretched out my arm to reach a human being, but what I grabbed was a used copy of *The Odyssey*, the book about going home. My heart ached.

It was 2 a.m. The library, flooded with white fluorescent light and reeking of musty books and sweaty sneakers, was eerily quiet. My readings seemed endless. I had been admitted into a three-course, yearlong freshman program called Directed Studies, dubbed Directed Suicide by Yalies. It was supposed to introduce us to "the splendors of the Western civilization," in the words of the catalog, by force feeding the canons of philosophy, literature and history.

I wanted very much to study the Western canon, because I knew nothing about it. Yes, McDonald's ads and Madonna posters are

* *pirated*: reproduced without authorization * *grogginess*: weakness due to exhaustion

plastered on Shanghai streets, but few Western ideas filtered through. We had been informed of Karl Marx's* habit of sitting at the same spot in the British Library, for instance, but had read none of his original words. Western civilization was alien, mysterious and thus alluring. Besides, because I longed to be accepted here, I yearned to understand the American society. What better way to comprehend it than to study the very ideas on which it is based?

But at 2 a.m., I was weary of them all: Homer,* Virgil,* Herodotus* and Plato.* Their words were obtuse and the presentations circuitous. The professors here do not teach in the same way that teachers in China do. Studying humanities in China means memorizing all the "correct," standard interpretations given during lectures. Here, professors toss out provocative questions* and let the students argue, research and write papers on their own. At Yale, I often waited for the end-of-class "correct" answers, which never came. 13

Learning humanities was well-grounded repetition in China, but it was shaky originality here. And it could be even shakier for me. The name Agamemnon* was impossibly long to pronounce, and as a result I didn't recognize it when we were discussing him in the seminars. I had written my first English essay ever just a year earlier, when applying to colleges, and now came the papers analyzing the canons. And I simply didn't write in English fast enough to take notes in classes. 14

I hoped my diligence would make up for lack of preparation. On weekend nights, when my American roommates were out on dates, I would tell them I had planned a date with Dante* or Aristotle.* (They didn't think it was funny.) 15

* * *

During calls home every two weeks, my mother pleaded with me to take chemistry or biology. Science was the same everywhere, she said. And I, like everybody else from China, was well prepared in math, physics and chemistry. (To graduate from a standard six-year Chinese high school, one needs to take five years of physics, four years of chemistry and three years of biology.) 16

Instead, I visited the writing tutor – there is one in every undergraduate residential hall – for every paper I turned in. My papers 17

* *Karl Marx*: (1818–1883) German philosopher and social and economic theorist; coauthor of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) * *Homer*: (8th century BCE) Greek epic poet to whom are ascribed the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* * *Virgil*: (70–19 BCE) [Publius Vergilius Maro] Roman epic poet who wrote the *Aeneid* * *Herodotus*: (ca. 484–425 BCE) Greek historian * *Plato*: (ca. 427–347 BCE) Greek philosopher who is a dominant figure in Western thought * *provocative questions*: challenging and stimulating questions * *Agamemnon*: an important character in Greek legend and classical drama * *Dante*: (1265–1321) [Dante Alighieri] Italian poet and author of the *Divine Comedy* * *Aristotle*: (384–322 BCE) Greek philosopher who was a student of Plato and an equally dominant figure in Western thought

were always written days before they were due. I lingered after classes to pester professors with questions. My classmates lent me their notes so I could learn the skill of note-taking in English.

By the time I missed home so much that soup dumplings and sautéed eels popped up in my head as I read, Nietzsche* had replaced Plato on the chronological reading list and Flaubert* Homer. And every paper of mine came back with an A. 18

* * *

When I met Niping Wu in my freshman year, I knew instantly that my parents would like me to be like her. Niping, a Shanghai native who had graduated from Yale College, was starting her first year at Yale Law School, hoping to become a Wall Street lawyer. . . . 19

“If you study hard and get good grades, you can attend Yale Law, too,” Niping told me as we nibbled on meatloaves at one of the Yale dining halls, her smile tinged with pride. 20

* * *

I was practically the only one left in my dorm, since most people had gone home for Thanksgiving. On my to-do list was to order practice tests of the LSAT, the law school admissions exam. But I was depleted of the adrenaline and enthusiasm that had filled me when I was a high school senior applying to American colleges. 21

* * *

Drew Nuland, who had interviewed me so many years earlier for admission to Yale, happened to call. . . . What were my plans, he asked. “Law school,” I said. But hadn’t I told him I wanted to be a reporter when he first interviewed me? 22

“Yes, what happened to that?” I asked myself. 23

I had wanted to be a writer since I was little, and I had indeed arrived at Yale wishing to become a journalist. But that dream had seemed preposterous when I arrived. “You don’t even speak English that well, and you want to make a living off writing?” I thought. The editors at *The Yale Daily News* hadn’t had the patience for my imperfect English. 24

But now, more than two years later, I spoke better English, and I had finally started to believe that I got good grades for my papers not because the professors had taken pity on that poor Chinese girl. 25

So I changed directions. During my senior year, I applied to graduate programs in journalism at Columbia and New York University. 26

* *Nietzsche*: (1844–1900) [Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche] German philosopher and classical scholar who is influential in Western thought * *Flaubert*: (1821–1880) [Gustave Flaubert] French novelist well known for *Madame Bovary*

POSTREADING

Think about the Content

Discuss the following questions in a small group.

- 1 What do you think are some of the differences between Zhao's childhood and that of a typical Yalie?
- 2 What aspects of college life did Zhao find very different from the Chinese school system?
- 3 What does she do that helps her find academic success?

Think about the Writing

Discuss the following questions as a class.

- 1 One of the purposes of an introductory paragraph is to make the reader want to read more. What does Zhao do in the first paragraph that makes you want to continue reading?
- 2 What examples does the writer include to convey the feeling of alienation she has during her first days at Yale?
- 3 What examples does the writer provide that convey a sense of what life was like for her in China and then what it was like for her at Yale?

A Personal Response

Discuss the following questions with a partner.

- 1 Have you ever had feelings of culture shock or alienation similar to those experienced by Zhao? Explain.
- 2 Think of a time when you took a course, had a teacher, or were given an assignment that was unusual or confusing for you. How did you handle the situation? After reading this essay, do you think there could have been other ways of handling the situation that might have worked better for you?
- 3 What influences Zhao's decision about what she wants to do after she finishes school? Do you know what you want to do? What has helped you make your decision?

WRITING

Journal Writing

Writing in a journal about something you have read is a good way to reinforce your understanding of the text and to reflect on it. In this section of each chapter, there will be questions for you to respond to in your journal. Do not worry about spelling, grammar, or the mechanics of writing, such as punctuation and run-on sentences; your journal is a place to reflect and think in writing.

Write for at least ten minutes about one or more of the following questions.

- 1 Did you realize anything about yourself as a learner when you read “Destination: College, U.S.A.”?
- 2 Did you recognize any aspects of yourself in the way Zhao reacted to her academic challenges?
- 3 Have you ever been overwhelmed by the amount of studying you had to do? What did you do about it?

Formal Writing: Autobiographical Essay

As you work with this book, you will write on topics related to the readings in each chapter. Generally, you will have several topics from which to choose. In this first chapter, however, the assignment is different. The focus of the essay you will write is you – as a reader and writer, a user of language. You will write in the first person, using *I*, and your essay will be a personal exploration of your own process of learning. Writing this essay will help you and your teacher better understand your strengths and weaknesses as a writer and reader.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Write an essay that is a “writing autobiography,” an essay in which you reflect on yourself as a reader and writer. Think about the people and experiences that have influenced you in this part of your life. Think about what has helped you get to the level that you are at today. Think about what you still want to accomplish.

Read the following questions to get some ideas for your essay. You do not have to answer all of them – their purpose is to help you understand the kinds of things you can include.

- What do you remember about learning to read as a child? How old were you?
- What do you remember about learning to write as a child?
- Do you write in more than one language? If so, what do you remember about learning to write in a second language?
- What kinds of writing have you done in school up to now? Which types of writing have been most interesting to you? Which have been least interesting? Why?
- How have teachers helped or frustrated your reading and writing progress?
- Did your family have any involvement in helping you learn? Did your friends?
- Do you write letters, poems, stories, or do other kinds of writing for pleasure? What type of writing do you enjoy doing the most? Why?
- What type of writing do you enjoy reading the most? Why? What is your favorite book? Who is your favorite author?
- What is the easiest part of writing for you? What is the hardest? How do you feel about writing? Are these answers the same in all the languages you know? If not, how do you explain the differences?

- What would you like to change about your writing habits or writing ability?
- What do you hope to learn from this course and this book?

As you write, keep your audience in mind. Try to make your writing interesting to your readers. Include an introductory paragraph telling who you are and what the focus of your essay will be. Each additional paragraph should build on that introduction and lead to a conclusion that ties together the main ideas of the essay.

Getting Started: Freewriting

Writers use a variety of techniques to help them get started or find ideas. In this section of each chapter, you will have an opportunity to practice a different technique for getting started. By the time you have completed the book, you will have a good idea of which techniques work well for you.

Freewriting is a technique that is used by many writers to help them get started. It's easy to do. All you need are a pen and a blank piece of paper or a blank document on your computer screen. Write for at least ten minutes without thinking about correct form or organization. Just keep writing whatever comes into your mind. After about ten minutes, most people have loosened up and are ready to begin a more formal piece of writing.

- 1 Read through the essay assignment for this chapter. Then start to write whatever comes into your mind, whether it seems connected to the topic of your essay or not. Do not worry about spelling, punctuation, grammar, or even writing complete sentences. If you cannot think of anything, write, "I have nothing to write about" until some other words come to your mind.
- 2 At the end of ten minutes, review what you have written. You will probably find some ideas that will help you start writing your essay. Underline those ideas.



Now write the first draft of your essay. Refer to the Writing Assignment questions on page 8 and to your freewriting for ideas.

REVISING





All good writers revise their work. Good writers know that writing is really *rewriting*, that is, *revising*.


Revising begins with a critical reading of the piece of writing to be revised. As you read it, think about the organization, the focus or main idea, the development of ideas, and the coherence of the writing. Think of what could be added, deleted, or moved around so that the piece of writing is clearer and better expresses the writer's ideas. When you revise, you should not be too concerned about grammar or the mechanics of writing, such as punctuation and run-on sentences.

Analyze Other People's Writing

Read “Becoming a Writer,” a student essay by Spiros Mourelatos, with a critical eye. Then analyze the essay with a partner by answering the questions that follow.

Becoming a Writer

The first recollection I have of letters and an alphabet is a visual recollection. Being the son of Greek-Hellenic parents, I was exposed to differing lessons at home, at Greek-Hellenic school, and in my English schooling. I was born with an artistic talent, which made me susceptible to alphabetic characters. The very first letters I remember seeing were Phoenician, and they resembled artwork – for example, aleph , beth , gimel , daleth . I truly enjoyed re-creating these letters, which resembled art as opposed to letters. After the Phoenician, I was exposed to the Greek alphabet, which is similar to the Phoenician. It helped me in my experience with the English alphabet, which has its roots in these ancient alphabets, but especially in the Roman alphabet.

Aside from being recognized as a “neat” writer, I do not recall a particular experience where a teacher recognized a particular piece of writing as exceptional or poor in structure. I was taught, along with my fellow students, to write short, neat, coherent sentences, as opposed to long sentences or run-on sentences, which were frowned on greatly. However, one experience concerning my writing proved to be a little embarrassing and humorous: When I wrote my name with cursive letters, I would draw flowers on my name – for example, . This drawing of flowers came impulsively from being an artist.

During my years at the High School of Art and Design, emphasis was placed on art as opposed to writing. It was not until I enrolled in college that my writing was subject to scrutiny. In my English courses, the most pleasurable writing experience was in a literature course I took on John Milton. I allowed myself free rein to be creative in describing the experience of Milton's characters. My professor was exceptional and encouraged creativity, which allowed for a liberating and enthusiastic mood. When I completed my paper and anxiously waited for it to be returned, I was overjoyed, not for the grade (which was an A), but for the professor's remarks in recognition of my writing. The professor's remarks matter more than the grade, and this holds true for me in all my courses and with all my professors and mentors.

When I am faced with writing something or writing about something that engages me with interest, I enjoy beginning the task. I do like my

style of writing, but again the subject I am writing about has to be of interest. Further, my writing absolutely represents the kind of person I am, and it reflects my poetic and artistic nature. Oscar Wilde wrote, “There is no art where there is no style, and there is no style where there is no harmony, and harmony comes from the individual.” And this holds true for writers and artists attempting to express their style.

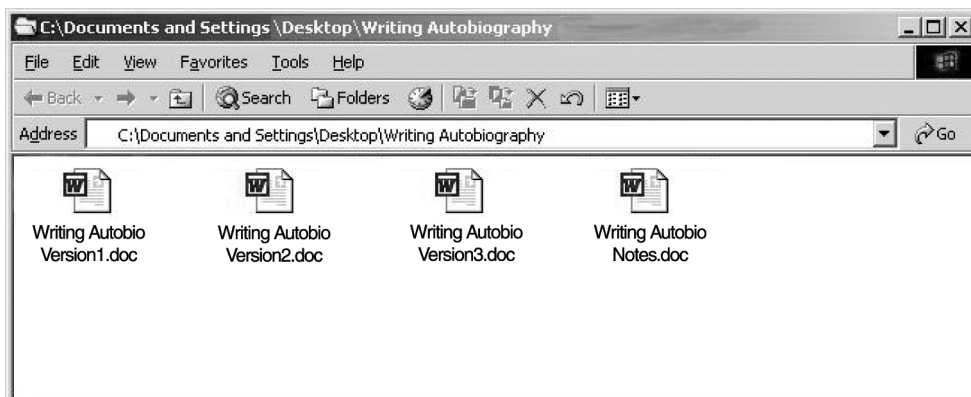
- 1 Does the first paragraph make you want to read more? What do you expect to find out in the essay?
- 2 What interested you most in this essay?
- 3 Do you have questions that the writer does not answer? What would you still like to know?
- 4 Does the last paragraph end the essay effectively? Does it summarize or connect the ideas in the essay?

Analyze and Revise Your Writing

Work with a partner.

- 1 Analyze each other’s essays by using the four questions above.
- 2 When you have finished, revise your essay, taking into account your partner’s critique. As you revise, remember that at this point you do not have to be too concerned about grammar or the mechanics of writing.

TIP > If you are using a word processor, you may save your revision(s) as separate files, using the same name but adding a number to the file name. You can revise your essay by adding, deleting, and moving around sentences and paragraphs and saving each version. Then you can look at the various versions and decide which one you prefer.



EDITING

Editing – preparing your writing for presentation – is the last step in the writing process. After you are satisfied that you have revised your essay sufficiently so that its content and organization are as good as you can possibly make them, you are ready for the final tasks: editing your work for grammar and mechanics.

To help you edit your essays, this section of each chapter begins by focusing on a particular grammar issue that causes problems for students. The second part of this section focuses on an issue concerning the mechanics of writing that causes problems for students.

Grammar: *Appropriate Tenses for Expressing Past Time*

Since the essay you wrote for this chapter required you to describe events in your past, this grammar section will focus on the different – and sometimes confusing – ways of expressing past time in English.

You have a general sense of how to express present, past, and future in English, but you may sometimes have difficulty deciding which of the several past tense forms is best for expressing a particular idea or sequence of events. One reason for the confusion may be that two of the tenses most often used to express past time are called present tenses: the present perfect and the present perfect progressive. Another source of confusion is that sometimes more than one tense may be possible, depending on the meaning you want to express.

Simple Past Tense

[-*ed* ending for regular verbs; see Appendix for irregular verbs]

This tense is used to indicate that an event began and ended at a specific time in the past. Whether the event occurred once at a specific point in time, took place over an extended period of time, or occurred repeatedly, it is no longer occurring in the present.

Yilu Zhao *studied* into the early morning hours because she *wanted* to do well in school.

Past Progressive

[*was / were* + *present participle* (-*ing* form of the verb)]

This tense is used to express that an action was in progress at a specific time in the past. It is often used to contrast two events, one of which occurred while the other was still ongoing. *While* is often used with the past progressive tense.

While Olga *was practicing* English, her roommate *came* into their dormitory room.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE 1

Read the following paragraphs with a partner and underline all the past tenses. Identify each past tense form and explain why each past tense was used.

- 1 Ying had always lived in Shanghai and had never traveled until she won a scholarship to study abroad. Ever since she was a child she had wanted to visit Spain, and so she decided to go there to study. Ying studied for one year in Spain. While she was living there, she frequently visited the Prado Museum.
- 2 Olga has studied five languages in addition to her native Russian. In high school, she studied French. A distant relative who lived in Paris heard that Olga was studying French and invited her to visit Paris after she graduated to continue her studies. By the time Olga arrived in Paris, she had been studying French for three years.
- 3 I enjoy learning about countries other than the United States, where I live. As a teenager, I read every book I found in the library about other countries, and I went to watch almost every movie that took place somewhere else. But since I started working, I haven't had as much time to read or go to movies. Once in a while, however, I take a trip. I've gone to Canada and Mexico several times, and last year, I spent a month traveling around Europe. I had been hoping to return to Europe this summer, until a friend told me about her trip to Australia. Since then, I've been planning a trip to Australia too.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE 2

Read the following sentences with your partner. Then decide which verbs and which of the six past tenses would work best in each blank.

- 1 Robert _____ to Chile five times since his cousin _____ a job with an airline and can get him a large discount.
- 2 She _____ well in all her classes until last week when she _____ a D on an important exam. She _____ very upset.
- 3 It _____ three years since I _____ my brother.
- 4 Mariko _____ her homework when her brother _____ at her door. He _____ her to read the first draft of his research paper.

- 5 I _____ (not) the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* until I _____ a literature course in college.
- 6 Lee always _____ dinner at his grandparents' home on Sunday when he _____ at home. Since he _____ away at college, he misses those dinners.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE 3

Read the following paragraph and underline each use of the past tense. Then correct any mistakes in the use of past tenses. (Answers are on page 235.)

I had read in my sociology textbook about a family that lived separately in order to move to the United States. The mother came to California first because she was a nurse and she could find a job easily. Her husband had been staying at home in the Philippines with the children, and both parents saved their money. Next, the oldest son was moving to California to join his mother. He had been accepted to a college, and his mother had helped him find a job in her hospital while he attended school. Two years later the husband and the other two children were joining the rest of the family. The couple said they missed each other, but that it had been worth the hard times because they were able to buy a house and save enough to support themselves and their children. They had been in the sociology book as an example of a family that cooperated and worked together to achieve a goal.

EDIT YOUR WRITING FOR GRAMMAR

Reread the essay you wrote for this chapter and check it for grammatical accuracy.

- 1 Make sure the past tenses you have chosen are appropriate.
- 2 Choose two or three other areas of grammar that you often have trouble with and check your writing for those. Make any necessary changes so that your essay is grammatically correct.

Mechanics: Paper Format

In this section of each chapter, you will review an issue in the mechanics of writing that causes problems for students.

In this chapter, you will review how to format your writing. The guidelines below are generally accepted as the way to format essays that you write for academic assignments. Follow these guidelines unless your teacher or school has other requirements.

- Use $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ inch white paper.
- Word process your paper in a 12-point font. (If you must handwrite, use lined paper and write in dark blue or black ink.)
- Make 1-inch margins on all four sides.
- Print (or write) on one side of the paper only.
- Double-space your paper whether it is word processed or handwritten.
- Put your name, your teacher's name, the date, and the course number at the top of the first page.
- On the first page, center the title of your essay or the name of your assignment two lines above the first line of the essay.
- Indent the first line of each paragraph five spaces (or 1 inch, if handwritten).



EDIT YOUR WRITING FOR MECHANICS

Use the checklist below to help you make sure that there are no errors in mechanics in the essay you wrote for this chapter. Check (✓) each item after you have made sure it is correct.

- 1 8½ × 11 inch white paper (lined paper, if handwritten)
- 2 Word processed in a 12-point font (or handwritten in dark blue or black ink)
- 3 Double-spaced
- 4 1-inch margins on all four sides
- 5 Writing on one side of the page only
- 6 Name, date, course number, and teacher's name at top of first page
- 7 Title centered on first page, two lines above essay
- 8 First line of each new paragraph indented five spaces (or 1 inch, if handwritten)

Chapter Two

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HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL LANGUAGE LEARNER



PREREADING

Discussion

Before reading “How to Be a Successful Language Learner,” discuss the following questions as a class.

- 1 Do you feel more comfortable speaking, reading, or writing in English? Explain your choice.
- 2 In which situations do you speak English most – at home, in school, at work, with friends, or in some other setting? In which situations do you read English most? In which situations do you write English most? Explain your answers.
- 3 In “How to Be a Successful Language Learner,” you will read about different methods for studying English. What methods do you think the author, Anita L. Wenden, will identify? Which methods have been most helpful to you in learning a new language?

Vocabulary: Words in Context

Read these passages from “How to Be a Successful Language Learner.” Work with a partner. Use the context to help you understand the meaning of the italicized words. Then take turns explaining to your partner the meaning of each passage in your own words.

- 1 Learn the natural way. This statement means that it is not necessary to be in a classroom to learn a second language. One simply *utilizes* it in the social contexts in which one finds oneself to fulfill the functions necessary to communication in the context.
- 2 One should not first plan the *utterance* in one’s native language and then translate. Says Laszlo, “Even when someone asks me a question, I concentrate on the meaning. I don’t plan what I have to say. I try to *eliminate* my native language so the idea and word are almost *simultaneous*.”
- 3 Learning better meant learning the language more *authentically*: “When you are in a country, you get everything, . . . not only grammar and vocabulary. . . . It’s mixed up more.”
- 4 “I think one problem for me and perhaps everyone learning a language, you have to be *stimulated* to learn.” In some cases, feelings can *facilitate* learning: “If the discussion is interesting, one’s mind is awake and one is open to learn – even unconsciously.” And in others learning is *inhibited* unless feelings are overcome: “I was not ashamed to ask. That was the main point. I had to overcome this shame or fear.”

GENRE: Academic Essay

How to Be a Successful Language Learner

Anita L. Wenden

Anita L. Wenden teaches English as a Second Language at York College in Jamaica, New York. For many years, she has been interested in understanding the strategies that successful students use to learn English. The following description of Wenden’s research includes the results of interviews with adult ESL learners at Columbia University in New York City.

- A group of 25 adults who had lived in the United States for no longer 1
- than two years and who were enrolled part time (5 hours a week) in the
- advanced level classes of the American Language Program at Columbia
- University were selected and interviewed . . . Fourteen of the twenty-
- five learners made explicit* statements about how best to approach
- language learning. Five of the statements stressed the importance of
- using the language, i.e. especially of speaking and listening. Four pointed

* *explicit*: clear

to the need to learn about the language, especially grammar and vocabulary. Three others emphasized the role of personal factors.

Group 1: Use the Language

1. *Learn the natural way.* This statement means that it is not necessary to be in a classroom to learn a second language. One simply utilizes it in the social contexts in which one finds oneself to fulfill the functions necessary to communication in the context. Moreover, while opportunities to use the language should not be avoided, this does not mean that learners should force themselves to use it. Stating his view on using new words, a young Israeli who stressed the importance of “living the language” explained: “I don’t think I have to use it. If it happens to me to use it, I use it. I don’t force myself to use a word, ’cause if it’s compulsive, it’s not natural.” Describing his stay with a British family, Miguel says: “Everything was natural. The relationship [with my landlord] was as with a family. We watched TV and talked about what we saw.” And later referring to his courses in the Business School at Columbia University: “I took two courses in business – microeconomics and accounting. . . . I read, studied, listened to lectures and took notes in English. I thought about the meaning of the subject. I did not think about the language. I was trying to learn the natural way.”

2. *Practice.* This second theme stresses the necessity of using the language as often as possible. There is a note of intensity not present in the preceding theme, e.g. “I tried this way not only to study very hard, but to take every opportunity (to speak) . . .”; “I tell myself . . . if you are here you must speak”; “You have to do everything in English . . .”; “Practice. That’s the secret.” Learners varied on what the result of intensive practice would be. For some practice was necessary or one would forget or lose one’s sense of English. Others felt that with practice one would learn “automatically,” “get accustomed to speaking,” “understand better,” and/or “learn to think in English.”

3. *Think in your second language.* This third theme emphasizes the need to focus directly on the meaning of the communication when using the language. One should not first plan the utterance in one’s native language and then translate. Says Laszlo, “Even when someone asks me a question, I concentrate on the meaning. I don’t plan what I have to say. I try to eliminate my native language so the idea and word are almost simultaneous. This is the best way not to think in your native language. You must think in the language you are learning.” Ilse’s view is similar. Reflecting upon a listening strategy she had used during her first month in the United States, she says: “[It’s] also very important to get the sound and keep it, then to transfer everything into thinking.”

Generally, it was felt that thinking in the second language would enable one to learn better: “I thought the less we think, speak, read Portuguese,

the better we can get in English . . .” And, more specifically, it was felt there was a kind of reciprocal* relationship between using the language and thinking in the language: “You hear it, you speak it, you learn to think in the language. . . . If you have to think in English, you speak better.”

4. *Live and study in an environment where the target language is spoken.* For most learners this guideline meant that one should be in the country where the target language was the main or official language of communication. And so, if one wanted to learn English, for example, one should go to the United States or Britain. On the other hand, one learner decided it might be even better to go to a country where neither his native language nor the target language was the main language of communication but where one could expect to meet speakers of the target language. He felt that it would be easier to become a part of a community of [target language] speakers living abroad (in his case, Americans) than it was to do so in their country of origin.

Learners had different reasons for stressing this guideline. For some, living in a target language community provided one with the opportunity to practice: “You learn to speak English when you learn here because you have to practice, . . . because everywhere you have to speak English and have to listen. . . . I think if you don’t go to the place, you don’t learn the language.”

Others, such as Ryuichi, a Japanese businessman, felt that if his “hearing is a little better” it is because “now, he understands America.” So even if he can’t understand some words, he can guess. “It’s not related [to] the improvement of language.” In other words, being in the target language country, one could better understand the culture and once that happened one would better understand the language.

For Ilse, however, “It’s not important to know the culture. But when you are in the culture it’s easier to learn and when everything is in this language, then it’s better. You learn it better, . . . not easier.” Learning better meant learning the language more authentically: “When you are in a country, you get everything, . . . not only grammar and vocabulary. . . . It’s mixed up more.”

5. *Don’t worry about mistakes.* Of course most learners wanted to learn to speak accurately, but learners who made this statement believed that excessive concern about accuracy would get in the way of using the language. “If you don’t speak and if you don’t write because of your mistakes, you’ll have to wait twenty years before you say something. It’s better to talk.” Asked what advice he would give a friend coming to study English Oshi said, “Speak as much as you can . . . [and] don’t care about mistakes.” Or (Oshi again), “Just say it. Never be concerned about English structure.”

* *reciprocal*: two-way; giving and taking back and forth

Group 2: Learn about the Language

1. *Learn grammar and vocabulary.* Learners who made this statement considered grammar and vocabulary fundamental to successful learning for they are the building blocks of English: “I’m watching my English by learning more vocabulary. . . . English consists of words and I think I should learn more vocabulary.” Or, “Grammar background is important to learn. Without grammar background you can’t improve. There are some limitations.” One learner spelled out these limitations: “If I don’t pay attention to constructions, I may translate all the words, but I don’t know what they’re talking about.” 11

2. *Take a formal course.* Learners had different reasons for recommending the taking of a formal course. For some it is the “best way” because “it’s systematic.” One proceeds “step by step from easy to hard” and in that way does not “miss some basic material” (which was usually grammar, vocabulary and in some cases the “right pronunciation”). Taking a course was also a means of ensuring* that one learned correct English: 12

The course gives me the right base. . . . If you learn to play tennis . . . if you don’t have the right base . . . you make mistakes all the time and afterwards you get to making mistakes and you’ll never be good ’cause someone who makes mistakes sticks to them. They’ll never get rid of them. Anyway, someone who wants to learn the language has to take a course for the direction.

3. *Learn from mistakes.* This view on mistakes is different from the view presented in the previous category in that it emphasizes the importance of feedback as a way to learn, i.e. mistakes brought to one’s attention should be reflected on so that they may be avoided in the future. In some cases feedback comes from friends or a teacher: “When I make a mistake [my friends] correct me. It is a good way to learn from those mistakes.” Or “the best way is to write the sentence and let the teacher correct you.” And, in others, one becomes aware of one’s mistakes oneself. One simply speaks out and contrasts what one has said with what native speakers say and notes the differences. Of this strategy, Jairo says: “I think it’s a good way to learn . . . though what one says may not always be right. But, if I don’t speak out my mistakes I’ll never learn. . . . I’ll never find out the right way.” Alternately, in the very act of speaking out one becomes aware of one’s mistakes. Says Oshi: “Don’t care about mistakes, grammar or rules of English. Speak according to the order of your thinking; it will be wrong. You will notice it is different [from English]. Then I’ll think according to the English way. I’ll speak naturally English. I can change the order of thinking.” 13

4. *Be mentally active.* This statement stressed the need for deliberate, conscious effort on the part of the learner. For Jose, this means paying a lot of attention: “It’s very important that you have attention. Without 14

* *ensuring*: making sure

attention, I couldn't understand." Laszlo adds a note of intensity* to the same notion when he says, "My mind is always open to accept information about the language. . . . I always concentrate because I have to learn." Moreover, when one doesn't understand, it is important to ask: "This is the best way to learn – ask always." Finally, being mentally active means acting upon or transforming what one has received or asked about: "I just don't take it as it comes. I change it in my mind. There's always movement."

Group 3: Personal Factors Are Important

1. *The emotional aspect is important.* It is understood that feelings have a strong influence on language learning and that they must be taken into account. "I think one problem for me and perhaps everyone learning a language, you have to be stimulated to learn." In some cases, feelings can facilitate learning: "If the discussion is interesting, one's mind is awake and one is open to learn – even unconsciously." And in others learning is inhibited unless feelings are overcome: "I was not ashamed to ask. That was the main point. I had to overcome this shame or fear." 15

2. *Self-concept can also facilitate or inhibit learning.* Cida reports, "My theory was similar to the theory I had working with adults. They become like children when they're in school . . . ; they regress.* I decided when it happened to me I wouldn't worry. But still it wasn't easy to endure and live through it." And so, referring to her landlady, she acknowledges, "She treated me like a child – she only made me regress further." 16

3. *Aptitude* for learning is a third personal factor considered necessary for learning.* Says Ryuichi, "I think the improvement of language is due to some inheritance. . . . I think the most important thing is our personal ability to learn English. In my case, I have no personal ability, so I think it will take a long time. . . . There is no good way to speed up my learning." 17

The beliefs identified in this study can be interpreted as representing the students' "theories in action." The beliefs point to the fact that these learners have begun to reflect upon what they are doing in order to understand the principles behind it. 18

* *intensity*: force; strength * *regress*: go back; return to an earlier time * *aptitude*: natural ability

POSTREADING

Think about the Content

Discuss the following questions in a small group.

- 1 For each of the three groups of language learners, summarize the strategies that help people in that group learn a new language.
- 2 Divide the five strategies in Group 1 among the members of your group and think of at least one situation, other than the examples given, in which the strategy could be used.
- 3 Explain the following statement made by a student talking about Group 2 strategies: “If I don’t pay attention to constructions, I may translate all the words, but I don’t know what they’re talking about.”
- 4 In which group would you place Yilu Zhao, the author of “Destination: College, U.S.A.” (Chapter 1)? What aspects of her learning process influenced your placement of her?

Think about the Writing

Discuss the following questions as a class.

- 1 Look at the italicized words at the beginning of paragraphs 2–4, 6, and 10–17. How do these italicized words help to organize the article and clarify the meaning for the reader?
- 2 Why does Wenden quote students’ actual words? What is gained by including these quotations?
- 3 Locate the paragraph in which Wenden explains who the people in her study are and how she got information from them. Is it at the beginning of the essay, at the end, or in the middle? Do you think the position of this information in the essay is helpful to readers, or should the information be in a different place?
- 4 Locate the paragraph in which Wenden discusses the significance of her study. Is it at the beginning of the essay, at the end, or in the middle? Do you think the position of this information in the essay is helpful to readers, or should the information be in a different place?

A Personal Response

Discuss the following questions with a partner.

- 1 Which strategy or strategies best describe you as a language learner? Do you find that you fit into more than one category of language learner? Explain your answers.
- 2 Which quotes do you think are the most effective in the selection? Which quotes seem less effective or even confusing? Explain your choices.

- 3 Ryuichi, in Group 3, says that the ability to learn a language well must be inherited. On the other hand, it has been argued that the most important thing in learning a language is to be motivated. Which do you think is more important? Explain.

WRITING

Journal Writing

Remember that your journal is a place to reflect and think in writing. When you write in your journal, do not worry about spelling, grammar, or the mechanics of writing.

Write for at least ten minutes about one or both of the following questions.

- 1 What new ideas about language learning did you find in “How to Be a Successful Language Learner”?
- 2 What in “How to Be a Successful Language Learner” interested you most?

Formal Writing: *Introduction to the Academic Essay*

Although you will learn about many types of essays and styles of writing as you read and write for your college classes, it is important to know the form of the traditional academic essay because you will frequently be required to write this type of essay. For that reason, you will write academic essays for your writing assignments in most of the chapters of this book.

The basic building block of an essay is the paragraph – a group of sentences related to a single subject or idea. The first line of a paragraph is indented (usually about five spaces or 1 inch) as a signal to readers that a new paragraph is beginning. A paragraph usually has a topic sentence that expresses the paragraph’s main idea, although sometimes the topic sentence is implied.

Academic essays consist of three parts:

- Introduction
- Body
- Conclusion

The illustration on page 26 shows a typical five-paragraph academic essay. However, essays can vary greatly in the number and length of paragraphs that make up each of their three parts.

Introduction

The first paragraph usually includes the main idea, or thesis statement, of the essay. It may also explain the main points to be developed in the body of the essay.

Body Paragraph 1

This paragraph contains a topic sentence, which is sometimes implied. It develops the first supporting point with specific evidence and details.

Body Paragraph 2

This paragraph contains a topic sentence, which is sometimes implied. It develops the second supporting point with specific evidence and details.

Body Paragraph 3

This paragraph contains a topic sentence, which is sometimes implied. It develops the third supporting point with specific evidence and details.

Conclusion

The last paragraph ties together important points in the essay. It is usually short, and it may include a brief summary of the main points in the essay.

School is important
School is important
School is important
School is important

Introduction. When you go to college makes it much easier because you do not have many distractions. You can study in your own room and go to sleep at a reasonable hour. You can wake up on time and get to your classes feeling rested and prepared for the next day. You will feel safe because you are living with your family, people you know and care about. You are in your own neighborhood and see your friends and other family members with ease. Your expenses are low because you share them with your family and many times do not have to pay for your own food. Entertainment, not on paying for an expensive college dorm or apartment.

Body Paragraph 1. When you go to college makes it much easier because you do not have many distractions. You can study in your own room and go to class.

2

Introduction. When you go to college makes it much easier because you do not have many distractions. You can study in your own room and go to sleep at a reasonable hour. You can wake up on time and get to your classes feeling rested and prepared for the next day. You will feel safe because you are living with your family, people you know and care about. You are in your own neighborhood and see your friends and other family members with ease. Your expenses are low because you share them with your family and many times do not have to pay for your own food. Entertainment, not on paying for an expensive college dorm or apartment.

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3

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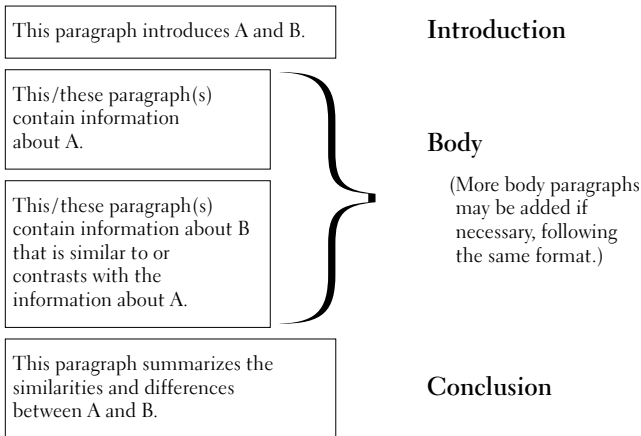
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Formal Writing: Compare and Contrast Essay

In academic contexts, you are often asked to write essays in which you compare, that is, look at the similarities between two things, or contrast, that is, look at the differences between two things. In some essays, you are asked to do both: compare and contrast. This type of essay usually follows one of two basic patterns of organization.

Compare and Contrast Method 1: Block Pattern

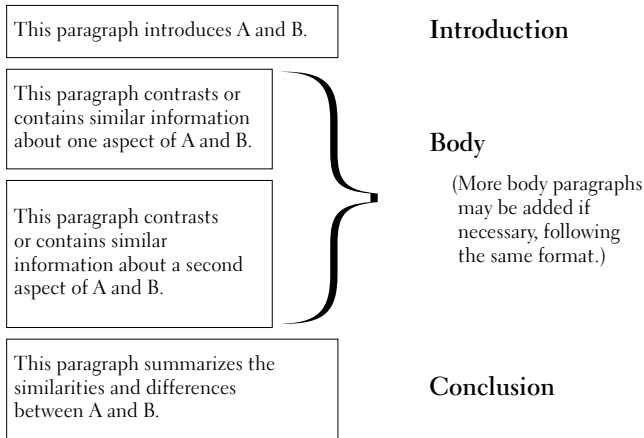


The following example is an excerpt from the body of an essay written in the block pattern; the first paragraph presents information about the advantages of living at home when you go to college, and the second discusses the advantages of living in a dormitory.

Living at home when you go to college makes it much easier because you do not have many distractions. You can study in your own room and go to sleep at a reasonable hour. You can wake up on time and get to your classes feeling rested and prepared for the next day. You will feel safe because you are living with your family, people you know and care about. You are in your own neighborhood and see your friends and other family members with ease. Your expenses are low because you share them with your family and many times do not have to pay for your own food. If you work, you can spend your income on your books, clothes, and entertainment, not on paying for an expensive college dorm or apartment.

On the other hand, some students think that living away from home is better. You can meet lots of new and interesting people and study with them. It often helps to study with friends because they have new ideas and perspectives. You stay up studying, but you also party and have fun. You can play music and make noise without worrying about keeping up younger siblings or parents. You are in a new neighborhood where you learn new things, meet new people, and face new challenges. You also appreciate your family and friends more when you go home to visit them.

Compare and Contrast Method 2: Alternating Points Pattern



The following example is an excerpt from the body of an essay that illustrates the second compare and contrast method.

There are different advantages to living at home and to living away from home when you go to college. Living at home may give you fewer distractions. You can study in your own room and go to sleep at a reasonable hour; however, when you live away you may stay up late and study with friends. Nevertheless, you may end up learning more because your study mates may have new ideas and understand the material better than you could by yourself. It is true that living at home, you can wake up on time and get to your classes feeling rested and prepared for the next day, but social life is part of college too. It can be fun to party and be able to play music and make noise without worrying about keeping your family awake.

On one hand, you will feel safe because you are living with your family, people you know and care about. On the other hand, living away from home teaches you about what it is like to be on your own in a new situation where you meet new people and have to deal with new challenges. Although being in your own neighborhood and seeing your friends and other family members is great, you may find you appreciate them more when you don't see them all the time and go home just to visit. Likewise, people say that expenses at home are low because you share them with your family and many times do not have to pay for your own food, while dorm living is expensive. This is definitely true, but if you work and spend all your income on your books, clothes, and entertainment, you don't learn much about budgeting and the difficulties of living on a limited income.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Write an essay on one of the following topics. As you write, keep your audience in mind. Try to make your writing interesting to your readers.


- 1 Compare and contrast the way you learned a second language with some of the strategies described in “How to Be a Successful Language Learner.” You may want to quote from the text itself.
- 2 Compare and contrast English with another language that you know. Consider such characteristics as the order of words in a sentence, the ways questions are constructed, the use of articles, the use of tenses and plurals, or any other characteristics that you find interesting in the two languages.
- 3 Compare and contrast the way language is taught in two different systems of education. You might discuss two different systems in the same country or in different countries. Explain which system you prefer and give reasons for your choice. Support your position by telling about your experiences as a student or by giving examples and quotes from students you have interviewed.

Getting Started: *Making Lists*

Many writers make a list of ideas about a topic before actually writing an essay. When you do this, keep in mind that you do not have to use all the items on the list. Think of the list as a tool to help you realize how many ideas you have about a topic. Lists are usually made up of words or phrases, so you do not have to be concerned about writing complete sentences.

Once you have a list, you can rearrange the order of the items until you have a good pattern of organization for your essay. This method of getting started is particularly effective for compare and contrast essays.

- 1 Choose your topic.
- 2 Divide a piece of paper into two columns.
- 3 In one column, make a list of the similarities between the things you are comparing. In the second column, make a list of the differences.
- 4 Review your lists and decide whether the block pattern or the alternating points pattern is more appropriate for your essay.
- 5 Taking into consideration the pattern you have chosen, arrange the items on your lists in the order that you think will make an effective essay.

 *Now, write the first draft of your essay. Refer to the arrangement of items you made in 5 above.*

REVISING

Review the information in the Revising section of Chapter 1, on page 9, if necessary. Remember that at this point you should not be too concerned about grammar or the mechanics of writing.

Analyze Other People's Writing

Read the two drafts of “Comparing School Systems,” a student essay by Mohibur Rob, with a critical eye. Then analyze each draft with a partner by using the Peer Response Form on page 228. What differences do you notice between Draft 1 and Draft 2? Which do you prefer? Why?

Alternatively, one partner can analyze Draft 1, the other partner can analyze Draft 2, and then you can compare your analyses.

Comparing School Systems (Draft 1)

Teaching is the basic way to educate the student. It differs from country to country. My native country is Bangladesh, and its teaching method and education system is much different from the United States of America. Here are a few comparisons between the two countries.

The basic teaching system of Bangladesh is very different from the United States of America. In Bangladesh, teachers lecture in the class and ask the students to follow the lecture and memorize the book. To get the good grade, students should write what the teacher lectures in class and whatever is written in the book. If some students have opinions different from the teacher's, they will not get good grades in the examination. But in America, when teachers lecture in class, students take notes, study different books, and draw their own opinions. These opinions could differ from the teacher's opinion and conception. As long as the students can prove their logic, they will get good grades. In this way, students in America develop their own opinion and ideas.

The examination system of both countries is also very different. In Bangladesh, most of the schools and colleges have two major examinations throughout the year. One is midterm and the other is final examinations. The formats of the examinations are also different. Students have to write five or six essay questions in the examination. But in America, there is a semester system and there are many examinations throughout the year or semester. There are three formats of the examination. One is multiple-choice questions, another is true-false questions, and the third one is essay type questions. These examinations are cumulative.

In Bangladesh, teachers are respected like parents. Students respect the teachers and obey their words. Students must pay attention when a

teacher teaches the class. If teachers find someone who is not paying attention, that student will be punished by standing on the chair, standing in front of the class, or the teacher can throw that student out from that class. In the elementary class, the teachers can beat the student. All students must be in the class as long as the teacher is present in the class. If someone wants to go out of the class, that student needs permission from the teacher. In the United States of America, beating students or punishing in front of the class is not possible. Students can go out from the class whenever they want to, and they don't need permission from the teacher. Students treat the teacher like a friend, not a parent. They also respect the teachers.

As a matter of fact, there are many differences in the teaching systems between the two countries. Both countries have their own ways of teaching methods and educational systems, depending on economic, social, and cultural positions.

Comparing School Systems (Draft 2)

Although most educators agree that teaching is the basic way to educate a student, teaching itself differs from country to country. For instance, my native country is Bangladesh, and its teaching method and educational system are much different from those of the United States of America. In this essay, I will discuss a few differences between the two countries.

The basic teaching system of Bangladesh is very different from that used in the United States of America. In Bangladesh, teachers lecture in the class and ask the students to follow their lectures and memorize the books. To get a good grade, students should be able to write exactly what the teacher lectures in class and whatever is written in the book. If some students have different opinions from the teacher and they express these, they will not get good grades in their examinations. But in America it is different. When teachers lecture in class, students take notes, study different books, and draw their own opinions. These opinions could differ from the teacher's opinion and conception. As long as the students can prove their logic, they will still get good grades. In this way, students in America are encouraged to develop their own opinions and ideas.

The examination system of both countries is also very different. In Bangladesh, most of the schools and colleges have only two major examinations each year: midterms and final examinations. Not only is this different from America, but also the formats of the examinations are different. Students have to write five or six essay questions in the examination. However, in America, there is a semester system,

and there are many examinations throughout the two semesters each year. There are three basic formats for examinations: multiple-choice questions, true-false questions, and essay questions. Some teachers create combinations of these three types of examinations, too. The examinations are cumulative, and a student's grade is based on an average of the various tests.

Classroom behavior is different in the two countries as well. In Bangladesh, teachers are respected like parents. Students respect the teachers and obey their words. Students must pay attention when a teacher teaches the class. If teachers find someone who is not paying attention, that student will be punished by being made to stand on a chair or stand in front of the class, or the teacher can throw that student out of the class. In the elementary classes, teachers can beat students. All students must be in the class as long as the teacher is present. If someone wants to go out of the class, that student needs permission from the teacher. In the United States of America, beating students or punishing them in front of the class is not possible. Students can leave the class whenever they want to, and they don't need permission from the teacher. Students treat the teacher like a friend, not a parent. They also respect the teachers, but in a different way, not through fear.

As a matter of fact, there are many differences in the teaching systems of the two countries. I have focused on only a few of these. Both countries have their own teaching methods and educational systems. Each country's system seems to work for its particular population.

Analyze and Revise Your Writing

Work with a partner.

- 1 Analyze each other's essays by using the Peer Response Form on page 228.
- 2 When you have finished, revise your essay, taking into account your partner's critique. As you revise, remember that at this point you do not have to be too concerned about grammar or mechanics.

EDITING

After you are satisfied that you have revised your essay sufficiently so that its content and organization are as good as you can possibly make them, edit your essay for grammar and mechanics.

Grammar: Using the Present Tenses

In this section, you will learn about the various forms of the present tense in English. As you saw in Chapter 1, two of the present tenses are used to describe events that took place or began in the past. Present tense forms are also used, however, to describe what is happening at this moment, the actual present, and to express general truths about life. The present tenses may at first seem confusing, so this section will present some guidelines for when each of them can be used.

Simple Present Tense

[Add the *-s* ending to the verb for third person singular subjects.]

The simple present tense can be used to describe the following:

- Habitual or routine activities
Anita Wenden *teaches* English as a second language at York College in Jamaica, New York.
- States of being
She *is* a professor of linguistics at York College.
- General truths
People *use* language to communicate.
- Present state of affairs in news, science, or research
Linguists *believe* that there *are* some language universals.

Present Progressive

[*am / is / are + -ing* form of the verb]

This tense can be used to describe actions that are in progress right now or at the moment of speaking or writing. Some expressions that are often used with the present progressive tense are *now*, *right now*, *at this moment*, and *at present*.

The students in Wenden's class *are taking* an advanced level class.

Right now, we *are reading* a chapter entitled "How to Be a Successful Language Learner."

Present Perfect

[*have / has + past participle*]

The present perfect tense can be used to describe an action or state that began in the past and continues in the present.

Students in an advanced English class *have studied* the language for some time.

This tense is also used to indicate that an action occurred in the past, but the exact time is either unknown or unimportant.

Sylvia *has taken* three classes at the university.

Present Perfect Progressive

[*have / has + been + -ing* form of the verb]

The present perfect progressive tense can be used to emphasize the duration of an activity that began in the past and continues in the present.

Anita Wenden *has been teaching* English as a second language for many years.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE 1

Read the following paragraphs with a partner and underline all the instances of present tense. Identify each present tense form and explain why each present tense was used.

- 1 Wenden has been teaching for many years, but she does not always interview her students. In the interviews she describes in her essay, Wenden has discovered some interesting things about how her students have been studying and using English. Some students believe that the best way to learn is to use the language whenever possible. They read, study, listen to, and write in English all the time. Another group is trying to learn all the rules in the new language – grammar, vocabulary, and what is correct in English. The third group is a little different, because those students think that personal factors, such as one’s personality and one’s ability, are what is important. By interviewing her students, Wenden has learned much, and she shares that information with her readers.
- 2 The famous linguist Noam Chomsky wrote, “When we study human language, we are approaching what some might call the ‘human essence,’ the distinctive qualities of mind that are, so far as we know, unique to man.” All humans have a need to communicate. Whenever humans are together, they use language – spoken or signed. We talk to each other all the time – whether we are eating, playing, working, or studying, we talk. Some people talk in their sleep. We talk to ourselves, our pets, and our toys. Some people even talk to their plants. In some cultures around the world, a person becomes a full human in the act of learning the community language. So in studying about language, in a sense we are studying about what it means to be human.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE 2

Read the following sentences with your partner. Then decide which verbs and which of the four present tenses would work best in each blank.

- 1 Wenden _____ English as a second language, and for many years she _____ it at York College, which _____ in Jamaica, New York.

- 2 We _____ about language learning because it _____ us as learners of English in college. Colleges often _____ language courses because educators _____ the more languages a person _____ the more well-rounded and learned the person _____.
- 3 Some people _____ that learning a new language _____ memorizing lots of words and phrases. Others _____ it _____ studying verb endings in the dictionary. From what we _____ in the Wenden essay, learning a language _____ different things to different people.

Grammar: Subject-Verb Agreement in the Simple Present Tense

One grammar problem that students sometimes face when using the simple present tense is maintaining subject-verb agreement. The simple present normally requires an -s ending for verbs in the third person singular. But in certain situations, such as the ones below, you must analyze the sentence carefully to determine whether the subject is singular or plural.

When the Subject and Verb Are Separated

In the sentence below, *program* is the subject and must agree with the third person singular form of the verb *teach*, which is *teaches*. Do not be confused because the noun immediately preceding the verb is plural. *Studies* (or *Directed Studies*) is not the subject of the sentence.

The three-course, yearlong freshman program called Directed Studies teaches students about the splendors of Western civilization.

(The words *three-course*, *yearlong freshman* are adjectives that describe the noun *program*. The words *called Directed Studies* form a relative clause that also functions as an adjective telling us more about the program.)

When the Subject Contains *Either / Or* or *Neither / Nor*

When two nouns in a subject are connected by *either . . . or* or *neither . . . nor*, the verb agrees with the noun in the subject that is closer to the verb.

Either the teacher or the tutors *work* with the students during each class.

Neither the students nor the teacher *is* in the classroom now.

When a Sentence Has a Compound Subject

When a sentence has a compound subject (two nouns connected by *and*), the verb agrees with a third person plural subject.

The mother and daughter *work* as tutors in my school.

When a Sentence or an Independent Clause Begins with *There*

When a sentence or an independent clause begins with the word *there*, the verb agrees with the noun that follows the verb.

There *is* a student from Poland in each of my three classes this year.

There *are* many students from Korea in my classes.

When a Sentence Begins with a Collective Noun

Nouns such as *audience, class, committee, community, couple, crowd, family, gang, government, group, majority, population, team, and troop* are usually treated as singular in American English to emphasize the group as a unit acting as one.

The audience *is* made up of hundreds of people from all over the world.

The baseball team *practices* in the park on my corner.

When the Subject of a Sentence Is an Indefinite Pronoun

The indefinite pronouns below are singular and, when they are the subject of a sentence, they are followed by the -s form of the verb:

anybody, anyone, anything

each, each other

either, neither

everybody, everyone, everything

nobody, no one, nothing

somebody, someone, something

Anyone who *wants* to is eligible to try out for the team.

Everybody *uses* some form of language to communicate.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE 3

Work with a partner and identify the subject and the verb in each of the following sentences. Underline the subject in each sentence once and underline the verb twice. Then decide whether the verb agrees with the subject. If it does not, explain why and change the form of the verb so that it does agree with the subject.

- 1 Students in a standard six-year Chinese high school takes five years of physics, four years of chemistry, and three years of biology.
- 2 Listening and speaking are both necessary to develop good pronunciation.
- 3 No one likes to be called on when he or she is not prepared.
- 4 Learning English, whether in a college or in other types of schools or programs, is a challenge for many students.

- 5 The government work to ensure the safety of its citizens.
- 6 Either my older brother or my parents helps me with my homework.
- 7 Laptop computers, which are used by students in many parts of the world, allow people to take notes, read pages, and even go on the Internet.
- 8 Linguists agree that there is no superior or inferior languages.
- 9 Either the door or the windows need to be opened to cool off the room.
- 10 Reading, writing, speaking, and listening to a new language are necessary to learn it.
- 11 The library and the Internet helps students find information.
- 12 Nobody want to fail a course.
- 13 I notice that there are always lots of people waiting for the bus at five o'clock.
- 14 When I write an essay, either my teacher or the tutors in my English class goes over it with me.
- 15 My neighbors, who usually drive me to work in the morning, are out of town, so I have to take the bus.
- 16 The band and the singer is great!
- 17 The drama club goes to two plays every month.
- 18 The children's choir sings with the adult choir on holidays.
- 19 There is a painting and a drawing by Picasso in our local museum.
- 20 My aunt and uncle, my cousins, and my grandmother comes to our house for dinner every Sunday.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE 4

Read the following paragraph. Underline each use of the present tense and circle each subject. Then correct any mistakes in the form of present tense used and in subject-verb agreement. (Answers are on page 235.)

The English language classes in my school are offering three levels. You find out your level by a test. You are either taking a test at home on the computer or else the school give everyone a test that places you in the right level. Everyone I know has end up having to take at least one course. A teacher, assisted by two tutors from the learning center, teach the class. Someone always ask questions, and the tutors helps us. The tutors and the teacher sometimes talks to us separately. There is

always some problems that students learning a new language faces. Rules or ways of saying things in one language translate differently in the new language, so we try not to translate word by word. Even though it takes time, every one of us feel that knowing another language is important and that the class with the teacher and the tutors help us a lot. After reading the Wenden essay, we plan to interview each other and find out how we each learn best. The class members thinks they learn in different ways, just like the students in Wenden’s class.

EDIT YOUR WRITING FOR GRAMMAR

Reread the essay you wrote for this chapter and check it for grammatical accuracy.

- 1 Make sure that your subjects and verbs agree.
- 2 Choose two or three other areas of grammar that you often have trouble with and check your writing for those. Make any necessary changes so that your essay is grammatically correct.

Mechanics: Using Quotation Marks, Brackets, and Ellipses

After you read about how to use quotation marks, brackets, and ellipses, reread “How to Be a Successful Language Learner” and notice how Wenden uses them to make her students’ ideas clear to her readers.

Quotation Marks

Place quotation marks around any words, phrases, or sentences that you have borrowed from someone else.

Learners had different reasons for recommending the taking of a formal course. For some it is the “best way” because “it’s systematic.”

(If you are using a lengthy quote, it should be set off in an indented block without quotation marks. Note how Wenden does this as part of her description of group 2 on page 22.)

Use quotation marks when citing the titles of articles, book chapters, essays, poems, short stories, or songs.

“How to Be a Successful Learner,” by Anita L. Wenden, discusses a research study in language learning that Wenden conducted.

TIP ➤ The titles of books, movies, operas, plays, magazines, and newspapers are set in italics (if you are word processing) or underlined (if you are handwriting).

Put commas and all end punctuation – periods, question marks, and exclamation points – inside the end quotation mark.

Says Laszlo, “Even when someone asks me a question, I concentrate on the meaning. I don’t plan what I have to say. I try to eliminate my native language so the idea and word are almost simultaneous.”

Use single quotation marks (‘’) for quotes within quotations.

Wenden explains how important taking a course is for some students: “For some it is the ‘best way’ because ‘it’s systematic.’ One proceeds ‘step by step from easy to hard. . . .’”

When including a quotation after a complete sentence or independent clause, use a colon followed by a capital letter to introduce the quotation.

Stating his view on using new words, a young Israeli who stressed the importance of “living the language” explained: “I don’t think I have to use it. If it happens to me to use it, I use it.”

When including a quotation after a verb such as *said*, use a comma followed by a capital letter to introduce the quotation.

Asked what advice he would give a friend coming to study English Oshi said, “Speak as much as you can . . . [and] don’t care about mistakes.”

Brackets

Brackets are used in research writing to add words or phrases that provide a context for the quoted material, making the quotation easier to understand.

In some cases feedback comes from friends or a teacher: “When I make a mistake [my friends] correct me. It is a good way to learn from those mistakes.”

Brackets allow you to add words to quotations. Unless you use brackets, you are not permitted to alter or add words in direct quotations.

“Speak as much as you can . . . [and] don’t care about mistakes.”

Ellipses

An ellipsis (pl. *ellipses*) is a series of three periods with spaces between them. It is used to indicate that the writer has deleted some words from a quotation. You must be careful that the meaning of the quotation is not changed by the ellipsis. The sentence must also remain grammatically correct.

“An ellipsis (pl. *ellipses*) is . . . used to indicate that the writer has deleted some words from a quotation.”

An ellipsis can be used in the middle of a sentence or at the end, but it is not to be used at the beginning of a quotation. If you are ending a quote at the point of a period, then you will follow the period with an ellipsis, the three spaced periods. If you are ending at the point of a comma, you keep the comma and add the ellipsis marks.

“You hear it, you speak it, you learn to think in the language. . . . If you have to think in English, you speak better.”

Another student explained, “You hear it, you speak it, you learn to think in the language. . . . If you have to think in English, you speak better.”

Ilse said, “You learn it better, . . . not easier.”

MECHANICS PRACTICE 1

Work in a small group. Take turns reading the excerpts below and answering the questions about them. Try to answer the questions before you look back at the rules to check your answers.

- 1 What is the purpose of the quotation marks in this excerpt? When do you use quotation marks with titles and when do you underline or use italics?

“How to Be a Successful Language Learner,” by Anita L. Wenden, is the main reading for Chapter 2 in *A Writer’s Workbook*.

- 2 Do question marks belong inside or outside quotation marks? Why are there single and double quotation marks in the second sentence?

“What strategies help you to learn English?” Wenden asked the twenty-five students in her study. Wenden quotes a student who stressed the “importance of ‘living the language.’”

- 3 Why does the author use a set of brackets? When you are quoting a person or from a text such as a book, story, or Web site, when do you use brackets? What goes inside the brackets?

Describing his stay with a British family, Miguel says: “Everything was natural. The relationship [with my landlord] was as with a family. We watched TV and talked about what we saw.”

- 4 Why are there four periods after the word *accounting*? What does this type of punctuation tell the reader about what is being quoted?

And later referring to his courses in the Business School at Columbia University: “I took two courses in business – microeconomics and accounting. . . . I read, studied, listened to lectures and took notes in English. I thought about the meaning of the subject. I did not think about the language. I was trying to learn the natural way.”

- 5 Why do you find a comma and then three periods after *better* in the third sentence? What does this type of punctuation tell the reader about what is being quoted?

For Ilse, however, “It’s not important to know the culture. But when you are in the culture it’s easier to learn and when everything is in this language, then it’s better. You learn it better, . . . not easier.”

MECHANICS PRACTICE 2

The following paragraph is an unedited draft summarizing some of the main points from “How to Be a Successful Language Learner.” With a partner, find and correct as many errors as you can in paragraph format, quotations, and the use of brackets and ellipses. (Answers are on page 236.)

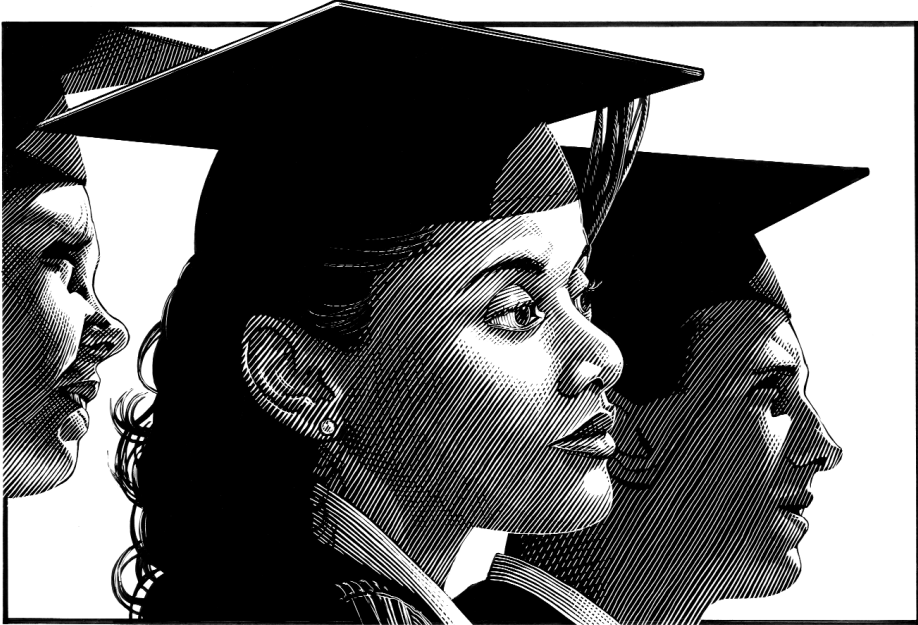
Anita L. Wenden is the author of the essay How to Be a Successful Language Learner. After teaching for many years, she decided to do some research with her students. The research group included twenty-five students from Columbia University who talked to Wenden about their experiences learning English. Some of them thought that students need to use ‘English’ in a natural way. Some believed that “. . . one should be in the country where the target language was the main or official language of communication’. One person said, “If you don’t speak and if you don’t write because of your mistakes, you’ll have to wait twenty years before you say something. . . . It’s better to talk.” A student named Jairo said, . . . But if I don’t speak out my mistakes I’ll never learn . . . I’ll never find out the right way.” A student named Ryuichi said, “I think the improvement of language is due to some inheritance. . . . I think the most important thing is our personal ability to learn English.” Students described different methods that helped them learn. “I learned a lot from reading this article.”

EDIT YOUR WRITING FOR MECHANICS

Use the checklist below to help you make sure that there are no errors in mechanics in the essay you wrote for this chapter. Check (✓) each item after you have made sure it is correct.

- 1 8½ × 11 inch white paper (lined paper, if handwritten)
- 2 Word processed in a 12-point font (or handwritten in dark blue or black ink)
- 3 Double-spaced
- 4 1-inch margins on all four sides
- 5 Writing on one side of the page only
- 6 Name, date, course number, and teacher’s name at top of first page
- 7 Title centered on first page, two lines above essay
- 8 First line of each new paragraph indented five spaces (or 1 inch, if handwritten)
- 9 Use of quotation marks, brackets, and ellipses

THE EDUCATION OF BERENICE BELIZAIRE



PREREADING

Discussion

Before reading “The Education of Berenice Belizaire,” discuss the following questions as a class.

- 1 Berenice Belizaire was born in Haiti. Where is Haiti located? What language do the people speak? What do you know about Haiti’s history?
- 2 What differences and similarities do you expect to find between the experiences of an immigrant to a new country, such as Berenice Belizaire, and those of a foreign student, such as Yilu Zhao (see “Destination: College, U.S.A., Chapter 1, page 3), studying in a new country?
- 3 What does it mean to become “Americanized”? What do you think is positive about this and what is negative?

Vocabulary: Words in Context

Read these passages from “The Education of Berenice Belizaire.” Work with a partner. Use the context to help you understand the meaning of the italicized words. Then take turns explaining to your partner the meaning of each passage in your own words.

- 1 The family had to live in a *cramped* Brooklyn apartment, a *far cry* from the comfortable house they’d had in Haiti.
- 2 School was torture. Berenice had always been a good student, but now she was learning a new language while *enduring* constant *taunts* from the Americans (both black and white).
- 3 Within two years Berenice was speaking English, though not well enough to get into one of New York’s *elite* public high schools. She had to *settle for* a neighborhood school, James Madison . . . a school with a history of unlikely success stories.
- 4 “They have a *drive* in them we no longer seem to have. You see these kids, who aren’t prepared academically and can barely speak the language, struggling so hard. They just *sop it up*. They’re like little sponges.”
- 5 Indeed, it is possible that immigrant energy *reinvigorated* . . . the city itself in the 1980s. “Without them, New York would have been a smaller place, a poorer place, a lot less *vital* and exciting,” says Prof. Emanuel Tobier of New York University.

GENRE: Magazine Journalism

The Education of Berenice Belizaire

Joe Klein

Joe Klein is a journalist famous for his political novels Primary Colors and The Running Mate. He is now a senior writer for Time, where he writes a weekly column and is known for his profiles of the famous and not so famous. While writing for Newsweek, he won an award for his writing, a good example of which can be seen in the following article written for the August 9, 1993, issue of Newsweek.

⋮ When Berenice Belizaire arrived in New York from Haiti with her 1
⋮ mother and sister in 1987, she was not very happy. She spoke no English.
⋮ The family had to live in a cramped Brooklyn apartment, a far cry from
⋮ the comfortable house they’d had in Haiti. Her mother, a nurse, worked
⋮ long hours. School was torture. Berenice had always been a good
⋮ student, but now she was learning a new language while enduring
⋮ constant taunts from the Americans (both black and white). They
⋮ cursed her in the cafeteria and threw food at her. Someone hit her sister

in the head with a book. “Why can’t we go home?” Berenice asked her mother.

Because home was too dangerous. The schools weren’t always open anymore, and education – her mother insisted – was the most important thing. Her mother had always pushed her: memorize everything, she ordered. “I have a pretty good memory,” Berenice admitted last week. Indeed, the other kids at school began to notice that Berenice always, somehow, knew the answers. “They started coming to me for help,” she says. “They never called me a nerd.”*

Within two years Berenice was speaking English, though not well enough to get into one of New York’s elite public high schools. She had to settle for a neighborhood school, James Madison – which is one of the magical American places, the alma mater* of Ruth Bader Ginsburg* among others, a school with a history of unlikely success stories. “I didn’t realize what we had in Berenice at first,” says math teacher Judith Khan. “She was good at math, but she was quiet. And the things she didn’t know! She applied for a summer program in Buffalo and asked me how to get there on the subway. But she always seemed to ask the right questions. She understood the big ideas. She could think on her feet. She could explain difficult problems so the other kids could understand them. Eventually, I realized: she wasn’t just pushing for grades, she was hungry for *knowledge* . . . And you know, it never occurred to me that she also was doing it in English and history, all these other subjects that had to be much tougher for her than math.”

She moved from third in her class to first during senior year. She was selected as valedictorian,* an honor she almost refused (still shy, she wouldn’t allow her picture in the school’s yearbook). She gave the speech, after some prodding – a modest address about the importance of hard work and how it’s never too late to try hard: an immigrant’s valedictory. Last week I caught up with Berenice at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where she was jump-starting* her college career. I asked her what she wanted to be doing in 10 years: “I want to build a famous computer, like IBM,” she said. “I want my name to be part of it.”

Berenice Belizaire’s story is remarkable, but not unusual. The New York City schools are bulging with overachieving immigrants. The burdens they place on a creaky, corroded system are often cited as an argument against liberal immigration policies, but teachers like Judith Khan don’t seem to mind. “They’re why I love teaching in Brooklyn,” she says. “They have a drive in them we no longer seem to have. You see

* *nerd*: a slang expression that refers to a dull, unattractive person who is primarily interested in intellectual matters * *alma mater*: a Latin phrase that refers to a school or college one attended or graduated from * *Ruth Bader Ginsburg*: the second woman to be appointed (1993) a justice of the Supreme Court of the United States * *valdictorian*: a student, usually the highest ranking academically, who makes the valedictory or farewell address at the graduation ceremony
* *jump-starting*: starting quickly

these kids, who aren't prepared academically and can barely speak the language, struggling so hard. They just sop it up. They're like little sponges. You see Berenice, who had none of the usual, preconceived racial barriers in her mind – you see her becoming friendly with the Russian kids, and learning chess from Po Ching [from Taiwan]. It is so exciting.”

Dreamy Hothouse

Indeed, it is possible that immigrant energy reinvigorated not just some schools (and more than a few teachers) – but *the city itself* in the 1980s. “Without them, New York would have been a smaller place, a poorer place, a lot less vital and exciting,” says Prof. Emanuel Tobier of New York University. They restored the retail life of the city, starting a raft of small businesses – and doing the sorts of entry-level, bedpan-emptying jobs that nonimmigrants spurn.* They added far more to the local economy than they removed; more important, they reminded enlightened New Yorkers that the city had always worked best as a vast, noisy, dreamy hothouse for the cultivation of new Americans.

The Haitians have followed the classic pattern. They have a significantly higher work-force participation rate than the average in New York. They have a lower rate of poverty. They have a higher rate of new-business formation and a lower rate of welfare dependency. Their median household income, at \$28,853, is about \$1,000 less than the citywide median (but about \$1,000 higher than Chinese immigrants, often seen as a “model” minority). They've also developed a traditional network of fraternal societies, newspapers and neighborhoods with solid – extended, rather than nuclear – families. “A big issue now is whether women who graduate from school should be allowed to live by themselves before they marry,” says Lola Poisson, who counsels Haitian immigrants. “There's a lot of tension over that.”

Such perverse propriety* cannot last long. Immigrants become Americans very quickly. Some lose hope after years of menial* labor; others lose discipline, inebriated* by freedom. “There's an interesting phenomenon,” says Philip Kasinitz of Williams College. “When immigrant kids criticize each other for getting lazy or loose, they say, ‘You're becoming American.’” (Belizaire said she and the Russians would tease each other that way at Madison.) It's ironic, Kasinitz adds. “Those who work hardest to keep American culture at bay* have the best chance of becoming American success stories.” If so, we may be fixed on the wrong issue. The question shouldn't be whether immigrants are ruining America, but whether America is ruining the immigrants.

* *spurn*: reject * *perverse propriety*: stubborn or wrong belief in standard of behavior

* *menial*: hard, servantlike work * *inebriated*: drunk * *keep at bay*: hold at a distance

POSTREADING

Think about the Content

Discuss the following questions in a small group.

- 1 What was life like for Berenice and her family when they arrived in the United States? Give examples.
- 2 In what ways has Berenice changed from her early days in the United States? What might explain those changes?
- 3 According to Klein, in what ways have immigrants had a positive effect on New York and on the United States as a whole?
- 4 In what ways have Berenice Belizaire's experiences been similar to or different from those of Yilu Zhao (see Chapter 1, page 3)?

Think about the Writing

Discuss the following questions as a class.

- 1 One way to write an introduction is to begin with an anecdote, or very short story, that makes your readers want to know more. Reread the first paragraph of Klein's essay. Do you think it is effective? Why or why not?
- 2 Notice that paragraph 2 begins with a sentence fragment. Why do you think Klein does this? Is it effective? Write a sentence in which you make this fragment grammatically correct. Which do you prefer – your sentence or Klein's fragment? Why?
- 3 Where in the essay does Klein make the transition from the specific story of Berenice to the general idea that immigrants have altered U.S. society? Whom does Klein quote to support this point of view? Why might a writer include the points of view of others?

A Personal Response

Discuss the following questions with a partner.

- 1 Reread paragraph 2 of Klein's essay. In what ways has your memory helped your progress in English? Are there any ways in which your memory has interfered with improving your English? In what subjects do you rely on memory? What techniques do you use to improve your memory?
- 2 Are you someone who "push[es] for grades" or are you someone who is "hungry for knowledge"? (See paragraph 3 of the essay.) Explain.
- 3 Do you feel that immigrants change a country for the better or for the worse? Explain.

WRITING

Journal Writing

Remember that your journal is a place to reflect and think in writing. When you write in your journal, do not worry about spelling, grammar, or the mechanics of writing.

Write for at least ten minutes about one or both of the following questions.

- 1 What impressed you most about Berenice Belizaire's story?
- 2 Have you or anyone you have known faced problems similar to hers? If so, what strategies have been helpful in overcoming them?

Formal Writing: *Introductions*

The introductory paragraph(s) of an essay serves three main purposes:

- To capture or engage the reader's interest
- To state the thesis or main idea of the essay
- To introduce the major ideas that will be developed in the body of the essay

Some of the methods for writing an introduction are described below. Try using a variety or combination of these methods. Decide which works best for the particular essay you are writing. Your overall goal is to make your reader want to continue reading.

Anecdote

One way to begin an essay is with an anecdote, or brief story, as Klein does in "The Education of Berenice Belizaire."

When Berenice Belizaire arrived in New York from Haiti with her mother and sister in 1987, she was not very happy. She spoke no English. The family had to live in a cramped Brooklyn apartment, a far cry from the comfortable house they'd had in Haiti. Her mother, a nurse, worked long hours. School was torture. Berenice had always been a good student, but now she was learning a new language while enduring constant taunts from the Americans (both black and white). They cursed her in the cafeteria and threw food at her. Someone hit her sister in the head with a book. "Why can't we go home?" Berenice asked her mother.

General Statement

Another way to begin is with a general statement that will be developed in the rest of the essay by moving from the general to the specific.

A group of 25 adults who had lived in the United States for no longer than two years and who were enrolled part time (5 hours a week) in the advanced level classes of the American Language Program at Columbia University were selected and interviewed . . . Fourteen of the twenty-five learners made explicit statements about how best to approach

language learning. Five of the statements stressed the importance of using the language, i.e. especially of speaking and listening. Four pointed to the need to learn about the language, especially grammar and vocabulary. Three others emphasized the role of personal factors.

– from “How to Be a Successful Language Learner”
by Anita L. Wenden (page 19)

Definition

Defining a word or phrase that is important to understanding the essay helps readers grasp the writer’s ideas.

I live a hyphenated existence. South Asian-American. Indian-American. Punjabi-American. Physically, I am also a patchwork of different cultures: I wear jeans and T-shirts, I braid my hair in Punjabi *kudiya* style, have a nose ring, and wear a *bindi*, a small colored dot worn in between the eyebrows by South Asian women.

– from “Cultural Identity vs. Ethnic Fashions”
by Sunita Puri (page 63)

Question

The introduction includes one or more questions that will be answered in the body of the essay. If the question is thought-provoking or not easy to answer, this technique can stimulate a great deal of reader interest.

The world is full of cultures. But are cultures universally the same in some ways? Do cultural differences cause international conflict and violence? These are some of the questions of global significance that we will address here.

– from “A Global Analysis of Culture”
by Alex Thio (page 80)

Quotation

The writer begins with a quotation that contains ideas to be developed in the rest of the essay through the answering of questions raised or the analyzing of issues introduced in the quotations.

With all the talk about resuming diplomatic relations with Cuba, and with the increasing number of Cuban exiles returning to visit friends and relatives, I am constantly being asked, “Would you ever go back?” In turn, I have asked myself, “Is there any reason for me to go?” I have had to think long and hard before finding my answer. Yes.

– from “Back, but Not Home”
by Maria L. Muñiz (page 169)

A lot of the research about immigration to the United States tells about the lives of men and sometimes about their children, but there is not much written about the women. In her introduction to *Immigrant Women*, Maxine Schwartz Seller (1994) writes: “Much of the voluminous literature on immigration has been male-centered, taking men’s experience as the norm . . .” (p. 3). Seller disagrees with the idea that men’s and women’s experiences are the same and that men’s are more normal. She thinks that women and men immigrants’ lives are similar but also different.

– from “Immigrant Women” (page 194)

FORMAL WRITING PRACTICE 1

Working with a partner, read introductions from several of the essays in this book (either professional or student writing). For each introduction that you read, decide which method(s) described above is used. Then discuss whether the introduction is effective. Does it make you want to continue reading? Why or why not?

FORMAL WRITING PRACTICE 2

Choose one of the essays you have written and analyze your introduction to determine which method you used. Then rewrite your introduction using a different method (referring to the list above). When you have finished, exchange your original and rewritten introductions with your partner. Discuss whether you prefer the original or the new ones. Why?

Formal Writing: Process Essay

When you write a process essay, you are taking a complex process and breaking it down into individual steps. For example, you might write a process essay about learning a new skill, coming to a decision, or dealing with a difficult experience. First, you must analyze the process carefully. Your goal is to determine what the steps in the process are, arrange them in a logical order, and then describe each one so clearly that your reader will understand the entire process.

Here are some suggestions to help you write a process essay.

- Think about the steps involved in the process you are describing.
- Organize the steps into a logical order, e.g., chronologically. Use words such as *first*, *second*, *later*, *earlier*, *before*, *after*, and *finally* to help your reader follow the order.
- Think about the specific details relating to each step. Be sure to describe them clearly.
- You could include an analysis of what made the process successful.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT


Write an essay on one of the following topics. As you write, keep your audience in mind. Try to make your writing interesting to your readers.

- 1 Write an essay in which you describe the process that you or someone you know went through in dealing with the problems of living in a new home, school, culture, or country. (You can use “The Education of Berenice Belizaire” as a model if you choose this assignment.) Why did the person come to this new situation? How did the person feel at first? What problems did the person face? What events challenged the person? How did the person handle these challenges? Include a description of two or three of these challenging events, including at least one in which the person was successful. What has the person learned from facing these challenges?
- 2 Write an essay in which you explain the steps someone should take to become a successful college student. What types of problems might a new college student face? What steps should the person take to deal with the problems?
- 3 Write an essay in which you describe a difficult thing you have learned how to do. Explain step by step how you learned and the difficulties you faced. What did you learn about yourself through this experience?

Getting Started: *Talking with a Partner*

Talking over your topic with another student gives you an opportunity to discuss what you plan to write about with someone else. It will help you develop good ideas you might not have thought of on your own.

- 1 Write your topic on a piece of paper and exchange your paper with a partner.
- 2 Under your partner’s topic, write four or five questions that you would like to ask about the topic and give the paper with your questions back to your partner.
- 3 Tell each other the answers to the questions.
- 4 As you talk with your partner, make notes about any new ideas that come up during your conversation.

 *Now write the first draft of your essay. Refer to the notes you took while talking to your partner for ideas.*

REVISING

Review the information in the Revising section of Chapter 1, on page 9, if necessary. As you revise, remember that at this point you should not be too concerned about grammar or the mechanics of writing.

Analyze Other People's Writing

Read “Learning to Be a College Student,” a student essay by Dagoberto Alves, with a critical eye. Then analyze the essay with a partner by using the Peer Response Form on page 228. Pay particular attention to the introduction, what purpose it serves, and whether it is effective.

Learning to Be a College Student

When people first go to college, they do not know what to expect. College is different from high school in many ways, but if you are prepared academically and have self-discipline, then you can do well in college. The hard part is finding the balance between wanting to do well in all your courses and having time to make friends and to have a social life. But it can be done. Here are some steps that you should follow in order to succeed in college.

As an incoming college student, you are probably coming out of a high school and know the routine of that school. In high school, your schedule is usually made for you, and teachers tell you when your homework is due and tell you when you can go outside and for how long. These things are different in college. You have to learn a new routine. But the big thing is the responsibility is now on you. You can't expect someone else to do your planning, to let you know when you are falling behind, and to watch you when you are outside the classroom. So you have to start to think for yourself, which is good and bad.

My first advice is that you should visit your college before you go there as a student. If there is an orientation day, you should go to it. Colleges sometimes have lots of buildings and weird codes for rooms and room numbers. It helps to take a tour with another student or student adviser, so you can learn where things are. Next, you need to read the college catalog or papers they give you, so you can know what courses to register for. Some schools block all the freshman courses together, so you register for them all at once. That's more like high school, so it makes it easier. If you have to pick your own courses, you should probably make a list in advance. One interesting thing in college is that you do not have to go to school every day. You can take classes early in the morning or late at night. Some students only go to school three days a week, but they go for long hours with no breaks. Some students take classes only in the morning, but they go every day. This is another way that it is different from high school.

My second advice is to go to the bookstore early and get the books for your classes before there are long lines with lots of students wanting the same books. Plus you can start to look at your books before everyone else. Professors order the books before classes begin, and the bookstore

has a list for each class. In college, you buy your own books and they belong to you. You can write in them or do whatever you want, but you can also be very careful with them and then sell them back to the bookstore at the end of the semester. Most students decide to keep some of the books and sell back some others. You will also need to get notebooks, pens, and those kinds of things too, although some schools let you use laptop computers in your classes. That can be good too.

Now you are a college student. You have signed up for your classes and bought your books. Before classes begin, walk around the school and make sure you know where are the rooms for your classes. In college, they don't ring bells to tell you when classes start and end. They don't make announcements over the loudspeakers. You need a watch and a good idea where the buildings, rooms, stairs, and elevators are. Another thing you need is a calendar book to write down important dates.

In each class, the professor gives out a syllabus for the course. It tells you the names of books you have to read and has a list of when papers are due and tests are given. You should write down those dates in your calendar book. One trick that someone told me is to write down the due dates one month, then two weeks, and then one week in advance so you have enough time to work on the things that are due. College professors do not like late work. They sometimes do not even accept it, and most times, they lower the grade when the work is late or does not follow the instructions, so read them carefully. Professors usually have conference times when they meet with students. You should try to meet with every professor at least one time each semester. They like to get to know you, and you can ask questions you might not want to ask in class.

An important thing to do in every class is to meet another student. You can give that person your name and e-mail address or phone number. When you do this, you will have someone to talk to about the class or to call if you have to miss class. Professors expect you to get the class notes and find out what the homework is and then do it whether you are in class or absent, so it is important to have someone to contact. It also helps to study with other students. Sometimes when you talk about the class together, you learn things you didn't know in class. Lots of times students study together for midterms and final exams. Most professors think it is a good idea to do this too.

Take every class seriously. Listen to the professors and write down everything that seems important. If they write on the blackboard, you should probably copy it, because that usually means it is important. Never plagiarize or take anyone else's work and say it is your own. Students fail or can even get thrown out of college if they plagiarize.

Finally, relax and enjoy. We all have a difficult time when we try something new. But if you follow the easy steps I told you, you will be ready for your first year of college. College isn't all work either. It is a good place to meet lots of nice people. There are clubs, sports teams, and concerts and plays. If you take your classes seriously but also have a good time with friends, then college will be everything you want it to be.

Analyze and Revise Your Writing

Work with the same partner you worked with in the Getting Started section on page 50.

- 1 Analyze each other's essays by using the Peer Response Form on page 228. Pay particular attention to the introduction, what purpose it serves, and whether it is effective.
- 2 When you have finished, revise your essay, taking into account your partner's critique. As you revise, remember that at this point you do not have to be too concerned about grammar or mechanics.

EDITING

After you are satisfied that you have revised your essay sufficiently so that its content and organization are as good as you can possibly make them, edit your essay for grammar and mechanics.

Grammar: *Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement*

Pronouns are words that take the place of nouns and are used to refer to nouns that were mentioned earlier. A pronoun must agree in number and gender with the noun it refers to, its antecedent. While the pronoun system of English is simpler than that of many other languages, students sometimes have difficulty deciding which pronoun to use. This section presents some guidelines to help you choose the correct pronoun and maintain pronoun-antecedent agreement in your writing.

When a Pronoun Has a Compound Antecedent

Compound antecedents are made up of two or more nouns connected by the word *and*. Compound antecedents usually take a plural pronoun.

The teacher and the students went to see a play. *They* all sat together in the same row.

Berenice, her mother, and her sister arrived in New York from Haiti in 1987. *They* lived in a cramped Brooklyn apartment.

Sometimes a compound antecedent has a singular sense because it is made up of words that are frequently used together. If a compound antecedent has a singular sense, it requires a singular pronoun.

Rock 'n' roll has been a popular form of music for several decades. *It* has influenced many new forms of music.

Rice and beans is my favorite food. I eat *it* as often as I can.

When Two Antecedents Are Connected by *Either / Or* or *Neither / Nor*

Sometimes a pronoun has two antecedents connected by *either . . . or* or *neither . . . nor*. When one of these antecedents is plural and the other is singular, the pronoun agrees with the antecedent closer to it. In most cases, it is best to put the plural antecedent closer to the pronoun.

Neither the teacher nor the students would give *their* support to one method of learning a new language.

When the Antecedent Is Preceded by *Each, Either, Neither, Every, or One*

A single antecedent preceded by the quantifier *each, either, neither, every, or one* is always referred to by a singular pronoun.

Each sister had *her* own way of dealing with the new culture.

The quantifiers *each, either, neither, every, and one* are often followed by prepositional phrases beginning with *of*. Even if the object of the preposition is plural, however, the pronoun that follows should be singular.

Each of the brothers had *his* own way of dealing with the new culture.

When the Antecedent Is an Indefinite Pronoun

Indefinite pronouns such as *anybody, anyone, anything, everybody, everyone, everything, somebody, someone, and something* are referred to by singular pronouns.

Everything is in *its* place.

Something smells funny. *It* must be bad food.

When the Antecedent Is a Collective Noun

Collective nouns such as *audience, class, committee, couple, family, government, group, jury, and troop* are usually treated as singular and are referred to by singular pronouns. However, they may be treated as plural nouns when the writer wants to focus on the individual members within the collective group. (See page 36 for more information on collective nouns.)

In the first sentence of each of the following pairs, the subject is viewed as one entity. In the second sentence, the subject is viewed as being made up of individuals.

The audience jumped to *its* feet.

The audience jumped to *their* feet to applaud the performers.

The jury reached *its* verdict after two long days of deliberation.

The jury reached *their* verdict after persuading one juror to vote yes.

When the Antecedent Is Followed by a Relative Clause

Sometimes a pronoun's antecedent is followed by a long relative clause. In cases like this, you must still make sure that the pronoun agrees with the antecedent and not with one of the nouns in the relative clause.

Joe Klein, who wrote the essay about Berenice Belizaire, a girl who moved from Haiti to the United States, thought *his* essay presented a good example of how much immigrants contribute to American society.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE 1

Fill in the correct missing pronouns.

- 1 Berenice studied very hard in school, and _____ academic accomplishment became the subject of an article in a major magazine.
- 2 The author states that immigrant energy reinvigorated some schools; _____ restored the life of the city because the students who worked so hard inspired _____ teachers and classmates.
- 3 The committee reached _____ decision after only five minutes of discussion.
- 4 Every woman who has ever been through a divorce will tell you that it was one of the most stressful experiences of _____ life.
- 5 Berenice Belizaire, who came to the United States from Haiti and attracted the attention of Joe Klein, a well-known journalist, impressed _____ because of _____ hard work and ability.

Avoiding Sexism While Maintaining Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

As you read earlier, a single antecedent preceded by *each*, *either*, *neither*, *every*, or *one* takes a singular pronoun. However, choosing the correct pronoun becomes difficult when you have a sentence such as the following:

Each member of the class is required to hand in *his* essay after editing it.

A singular pronoun (*his*) is used because the antecedent (*member*) is a singular noun. However, the singular pronoun is masculine, while the class may be made up of both male and female students. Using the masculine pronoun to stand for both males and females was considered correct at one time, but now it is considered sexist to use the masculine pronoun in this way. In formal written English, it is best to avoid this construction altogether.

One way to do this is to make the antecedent plural and use a plural pronoun.

All members of the class are required to hand in *their* essays after editing them.

But if you are not able to create the type of sentence above, the best solution is to use both the masculine and feminine singular pronouns.

Each member of the class is required to hand in *his* or *her* essay after editing it.

Most writers try to avoid the *his* or *her* (*his* / *her*) and *he* or *she* (*he* / *she*) constructions if possible.

TIP > In spoken English, we often use *them* or *their* even though the antecedent is singular so we can avoid sexism: *Everyone handed in their homework*. Or we change the subject so it is plural: *All the students handed in their homework*.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE 2

With a partner, read the sentences below and find the antecedent and pronoun in each case. Decide which rule applies in choosing the correct pronoun. If the sentence could be considered sexist, change it so it is not.

- 1 Every student in my class is required to hand in an early draft of his term paper.
- 2 My teacher, who speaks four languages and has taught for sixteen years, published her first book of poetry this year.
- 3 Anyone can offer his opinion in my class, but everyone will not necessarily agree with him.
- 4 Each individual who faces challenges has her own way of dealing with them.
- 5 Even though each twin dressed slightly differently, some people could not tell them apart, so each one wore his name tag in school.

Grammar: Three Special Pronoun Problems

The problems discussed below are not specifically about pronoun-antecedent agreement, but they concern mistakes with pronouns that students often make.

Possessive Pronouns Are Never Followed by an Apostrophe + s ('s)

The apostrophe + s ('s) form usually indicates possession in English, but the possessive pronouns have their own forms and do not require the apostrophe + s ('s). Possessive pronouns include *my*, *your*, *her*, *his*, *its*, *our*, and *their*, as well as *mine* and *theirs*.

The book that was ^{hers}~~her's~~ was on the dining table.

Pronouns Are Not Placed between a Clause and a Verb to Help Readers Identify the Subject

In many languages, when a clause separates a subject and a verb, it is necessary to include a pronoun before the verb. But in English, that is not correct.

The teachers who taught Berenice Belizaire when she first arrived in the United States ~~they~~ were not surprised with their student's success.

Yilu Zhao, who wrote the essay in the first chapter, ~~she~~ faced some of the same problems that Berenice Belizaire did.

Where Do You Place the Pronoun When There Is a Compound Subject?

The pronoun *I* (not *me* and not *myself*) is the only singular subject pronoun for the first person. When the subject pronoun *I* is part of a compound subject, it always comes last.

Malcolm, Rita, and I
~~I, Malcolm and Rita~~ went to the library to study for our midterm.

Malcolm, Rita, and ~~I~~ ^I went to the library to study for our midterm.

My teacher, ~~I, and several students~~ ^{several students, and I} went to a play last night.

My teacher, several students, and ~~myself~~ ^I went to a play last night.

GRAMMAR PRACTICE 3

Work with a partner. Read the following paragraph, underline each pronoun, and identify its antecedent. Then analyze each pronoun and its antecedent to see whether they agree. Correct any pronoun and pronoun-antecedent errors. (Answers are on page 236.)

Joe Klein's essay about Berenice Belizaire it interested everyone in my class. Everyone had their own ideas about why she succeeded in school even though she did not know much English when the family they arrived from Haiti. I and a few other students did not know much about Haiti. A couple of students in the class they told us about it's beaches, beauty, and also it's poverty. When people arrive in a new country, especially one with an unfamiliar language, they have many of the same problems as herself. Neither Berenice nor the students in my class were able to deal with all her problems right away. People need patience to learn about a new language and culture. One of the things that helped Berenice in hers' struggle to succeed was her family. All people need to find his or her way, and they need time. But it is always easier when a person is not alone.

Reread the essay you wrote for this chapter and check it for grammatical accuracy.

- 1 Make sure that your use of pronouns is correct and that your pronouns agree with their antecedents.
- 2 Choose two or three other areas of grammar that you often have trouble with and check your writing for those. Make any necessary changes so that your essay is grammatically correct.

Mechanics: Capitalization

The rules for capital letters may be different for different languages. This section focuses on the rules for the use of capital letters in English.

Here are some guidelines for capitalization.

- The first word in every sentence is capitalized.
- The pronoun *I* is capitalized.
- Names of people are capitalized.
My friend thinks that I will be able to read Shakespeare soon.
- Names of the months, days of the week, and holidays are capitalized, but seasons are not.
Sun Hee was born in the fall, on October 31. That day is Halloween in the United States.
- Names of countries, cities, particular streets and places, languages, and nationalities are capitalized.
A Brazilian student in my class speaks French because she went to Le Havre High School in Montreal, Canada.
- Do not use capital letters unless you are referring to a specific place.
He enjoys attending college and working in a store, but he likes to have time to visit museums and churches.
- Titles of books, magazines, newspapers, stories, articles, movies, television programs, plays, songs, and poems are capitalized. However, articles and prepositions are not capitalized unless they are the first word in the title.
When I saw Nina, she was carrying *The Lord of the Rings*, *Newsweek*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. She was going to see the play *A Doll's House* with her class.

- The first word in a direct quotation is capitalized.
Boris asked, “Would you like to see a movie with me?”
- Brand names of products are capitalized.
The man bought a Pepsi at McDonald’s.
- Names of religious and political groups, companies, corporations, and clubs are capitalized.
Jeanine joined the Independent Party when she was in college. She became less active in the party when she started to work for Amnesty International, however, because she was very busy with her job and her work with the Catholic Students’ League and the Red Cross.

MECHANICS PRACTICE

The following paragraph is an unedited draft summarizing some of the main points from “The Education of Berenice Belizaire.” Work with a partner and rewrite the paragraph, correcting as many errors as you can in paragraph format, quotations, and the use of capital letters. (Answers are on page 237.)

In the article ‘The Education Of Berenice Belizaire’, Joe Klein describes a girl who arrived in new york from her homeland of haiti in 1987. She moved to the United states with her Mother and Sister. They lived in a small apartment in brooklyn, where Berenice struggled to learn english. Her mother told her ‘memorize everything.’ Berenice tried, and other students soon noticed that she always “knew the answers.” She faced many obstacles, but she also had help from her Mother. There were also great Teachers who believed in her, like judith khan, who said about Berenice, ‘she was good at math, but she was quiet. . . . she wasn’t just pushing for grades, she was hungry for *knowledge* . . .’ i liked this idea and admired a student like Berenice, who moved to the united states and fought her way to great success. She became the Valedictorian of her graduating class and now is a student at massachusetts institute of technology, a very good school. Klein quotes another teacher, a Professor from New York university, who said that immigrants like Berenice and her Family do the hard work needed to keep big cities going. even though they may not always be appreciated, in the end they win because their children, like Berenice, often become successful.

EDIT YOUR WRITING FOR MECHANICS

Use the checklist below to help you make sure that there are no errors in mechanics in the essay you wrote for this chapter. Check (✓) each item after you have made sure it is correct.

- 1 8½ × 11 inch white paper (lined paper, if handwritten)
- 2 Word processed in a 12-point font (or handwritten in dark blue or black ink)
- 3 Double-spaced
- 4 1-inch margins on all four sides
- 5 Writing on one side of the page only
- 6 Name, date, course number, and teacher's name at top of first page
- 7 Title centered on first page, two lines above essay
- 8 First line of each new paragraph indented five spaces (or 1 inch, if handwritten)
- 9 Use of quotation marks, brackets, and ellipses
- 10 Capitalization