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# Common Core Coach

for  
**Composition II**



First Edition

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Common Core  
State Standards

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# The Writing Process

**W**hen you read someone else's writing, you are either pulled into the writing or you read it without a lot of interest, maybe even stopping before the text is finished. Why? What makes a piece of writing compelling enough that you want to keep reading? What do strong writers do to make their writing come alive?

This unit will walk you through each step of the writing process. It will define the steps and provide tips and strategies to help you execute

them more efficiently. You will also examine an example of a student's writing process. As you read the student's work, you will develop your own written response to an assigned prompt. As you learn techniques for strengthening your style and language, your writing will become more effective.

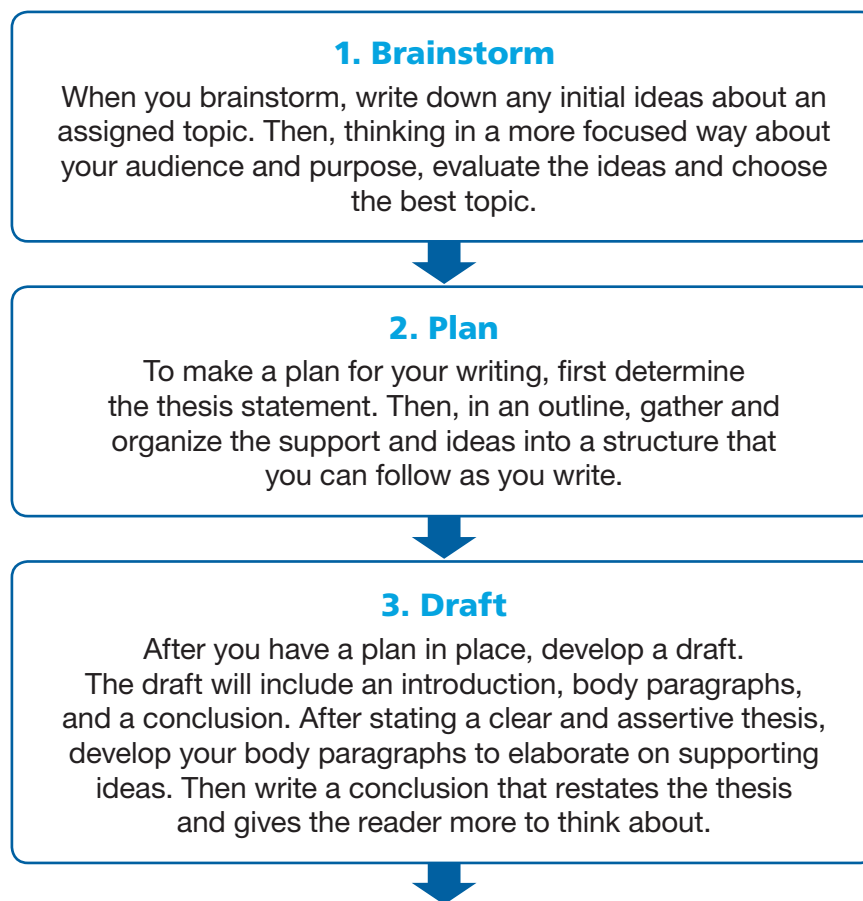
Once you have completed this unit, you should have a clear understanding of how to turn your ideas into a strong piece of work, ready to be published.

# What Is the Writing Process?

Writing is an effective way for you to share your ideas and knowledge about a topic or text. The challenge writers face is how to convey their ideas in a focused, sophisticated manner so a reader will understand those ideas. A well-written piece takes planning, forethought, and organization before the actual writing begins.

As you look at a writing assignment for the first time, you may not know where to begin. You may wonder how you are going to translate all of your ideas into a cohesive written piece. How will you connect ideas? How will you maintain a reader's interest? How will you ensure you are using correct grammar, spelling, and mechanics?

There is a lot to consider when starting a writing project. The best writers break their writing process into smaller, more manageable steps. Each step has different elements to focus on so the entire project does not get overwhelming. No matter what kind of writing you do, allow the following steps to guide you in composing a thoughtful and polished written piece.





#### 4. Revise

When you revise, consider how the content, organization, and style of your writing work together. Then make changes that will improve your composition. At this stage, you can ask a peer to review your work if you would like additional feedback.



#### 5. Edit

To edit your writing, carefully read and correct errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and usage. Your finished work should follow standard English conventions.



#### 6. Publish

At the end of the process, share your writing with readers by publishing it. You may do this in a variety of ways, such as turning in your writing to your teacher, sending it to friends or family to read, or posting it online in an official venue.

### Writing Assignment

The following prompt asks you to write a personal narrative. Refer to this prompt as you work through the various steps of the writing process.

Write a narrative about a favorite memory from childhood. Use descriptive details and sensory language to set the scene, introduce the people involved, and tell an entertaining story. Explain why the memory is a favorite, and what you learned from the experience.

## ► Brainstorm

Typically, you begin the writing process by brainstorming. The prompts you respond to will vary: you may be asked to make an argument, explain a process, tell a story, or write a response to literature. Sometimes, you will have to come up with an idea entirely on your own. In every case, though, you will **brainstorm** ideas in order to choose and narrow your topic. When you put effort into this brainstorming step, you are likely to develop a topic that you can write about successfully.

When you brainstorm, you quickly collect ideas about a topic, getting your thoughts flowing without judging them for quality. Just write down what comes to mind. You can pick and choose the best idea or ideas later. As you brainstorm a narrative, the thoughts you write down might be events in the story, character traits, or details about the setting. All of these parts will be used to construct a complete story later.

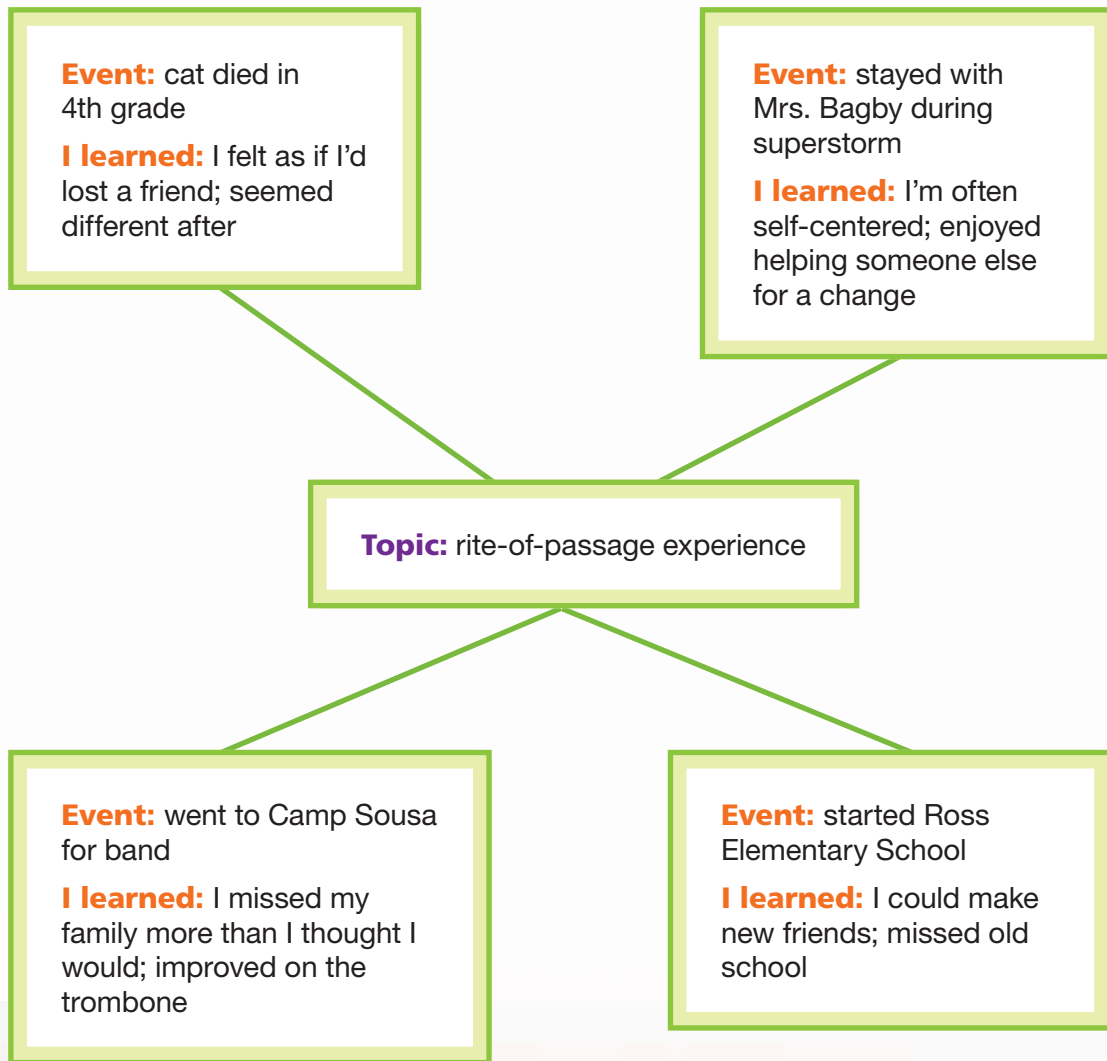
Take look at how a student brainstormed a topic and supporting ideas for the following prompt.

Write about a time you had a rite-of-passage experience. Use descriptive details and sensory language to set the scene and introduce the people involved. Explain what events happened, and what you learned as a result.

### Brainstorm a Topic

Different topics demand different brainstorming methods—you will need to choose the method that works best for you. For instance, a graphic organizer works well for a narrative prompt. An informational prompt might simply call for a table.

Here's how the student brainstormed a topic for her personal narrative.



## Brainstorm Supporting Ideas

Choosing a topic is a great starting point, but you still have some work to do before you can begin writing. The next step is to brainstorm supporting ideas that develop and explain your topic. Use webs, lists, charts, or outlines, or do some freewriting—whichever method works best for you.

For example, as you brainstorm for the assigned prompt in this lesson, you should figure out who is involved in the story, list the main events that take place, and roughly describe where the action occurs.

Here is how a student used a graphic organizer to brainstorm supporting ideas about her chosen topic.

**PROMPT** The prompt asks the student “to set the scene and introduce the people involved.” She begins to do that in her brainstorming by recording information. Circle the sections of the chart that address this part of the prompt.

**DETAILS** The details writers collect when brainstorming will often be developed throughout the writing process. Jot down additional details the student might add to the chart.

**TOPIC** The prompt asks writers to describe a rite-of-passage moment and tell what they learned. What did this student learn from that rite-of-passage moment?

<b>Chosen Topic</b>	stayed with Mrs. Bagby during superstorm
<b>Who</b>	me my parents Mrs. Bagby
<b>Where</b>	my house Mrs. Bagby’s house
<b>When</b>	during the storm worst part of the storm
<b>What happened</b>	electricity went out didn’t care about coming storm stayed with and talked to Mrs. Bagby storm got serious
<b>Why it changed me</b>	I learned that I enjoyed helping someone else. I realized I didn’t need to have TV or Internet all the time. I learned about someone else’s life.

## Writing Assignment

Now it’s time for you to brainstorm for a response to the personal narrative prompt on page 7. On a computer or on a separate sheet of paper, use a graphic organizer, a list, or another method to brainstorm ideas for your writing.



## ► Plan

When you **plan** your writing, you put the information and details you have gathered into an organized structure. An effective organization will make it easier to write a draft, and it will improve your final product.

At this point, it is important to develop a thesis to guide you in your planning and drafting. A **thesis statement** is a sentence declaring your position on the topic of your writing and may contain major supporting ideas. The thesis is usually included toward the beginning of a work, giving the audience an idea of what they can expect to read. All of the ideas in a written work should relate to the thesis. In a personal narrative, the thesis is often an indication of the meaning of the story to the author. In a persuasive piece, the thesis would be a statement of the author's opinion on a topic along with significant supporting evidence. Although you may adjust your thesis as you write, you need to come up with a solid working thesis for now.

A thesis statement needs to be interesting to the reader. Thesis statements that are specific, clear, and intelligible usually capture readers' attention. Take a look at the following weak thesis statement:

The summer my dog died, I learned a lot of important lessons.

This statement doesn't suggest to the reader what kind of story will follow it. Your thesis statement should be as specific as possible in order to keep the scope of your writing manageable. A strong thesis statement will also keep your readers reading past the first paragraph, wanting to learn more about what you have to say.

Now look at a revised version of the thesis statement, which offers details about the story and indicates its message:

The summer my dog died in the country, I came to value the ties of love and friendship that stretch beyond death.

Once you have a strong thesis statement, you can begin organizing. The most common kinds of organization for narratives are chronological, or time-order, and problem-solution, in which the characters in a story have a clear problem at the outset that they must solve in order to reach a resolution.

After deciding on an organizational pattern, develop an **outline**. A standard outline, with Roman numerals, letters of the alphabet, numbers, or bullets labeling different levels of ideas, works well for a narrative composition. You could create one section on characters, one on setting, and one on plot. Or you could organize the outline according to the different stages of the plot. You can also make a less formal outline, as long as it clearly shows the different parts of your narrative. The most important thing is that you are able to follow it when you begin drafting.

Here is the outline the student used to organize her personal narrative.

**THESIS** In the thesis statement, the student expresses the main idea she wants to convey to the reader. What makes this student's thesis statement interesting? How is it specific?

**SUPPORT** In this outline, the student records notes about the basic ideas and supporting details she will include in her narrative. How does the student denote the major supporting ideas she will be writing about? Draw a star next to these letters or numbers. How does she indicate the details she will include? Circle these letters or numbers.

## I. Introduction

- A. Thesis** When I came out of the storm, I was a different person.
- B.** We heard about the storm four days in advance.
- C.** I didn't pay attention; I was distracted:
  - 1. wanted to watch a new movie
  - 2. cross-country team had race coming up
  - 3. two papers due at school

## II. Support

- A.** My parents prepared for the storm.
  - 1. bought batteries, flashlights, food and water
  - 2. put sandbags around basement windows
- B.** During the storm
  - 1. I texted with friends.
  - 2. We watched TV coverage.
  - 3. Mom saw an explosion.
  - 4. Power went out.
- C.** First response to the storm
  - 1. Frustrated when I couldn't use electricity or Internet
  - 2. Dad said we needed to check on Mrs. Bagby.
- D.** We went to see Mrs. Bagby.
  - 1. Background on Mrs. Bagby
  - 2. We found Mrs. Bagby terrified in the dark.
  - 3. I talked to her.
  - 4. She asked me to stay.
- E.** I stayed with Mrs. Bagby.
  - 1. Mom brought food.
  - 2. We played cards and talked.

### III. Conclusion

- A. Life went back to normal.
  - 1. school
  - 2. track
  - 3. electricity
- B. Lessons learned:
  - 1. I didn't feel the same after spending time with Mrs. Bagby.
  - 2. I felt older, ready to help other people more.

**ORGANIZATION** The student's outline reflects the organizational pattern she has chosen for her narrative. Consider how the events are presented. What pattern does it look like she is planning to use?

### Writing Assignment

Now it's time for you to plan your personal narrative. Using the thesis statement and the supporting details you generated during your brainstorming, organize your thoughts on a separate sheet of paper. Use an outline form you are comfortable with.

Write a narrative about a favorite memory from childhood. Use descriptive details and sensory language to set the scene, introduce the people involved, and tell an entertaining story. Explain why the memory is a favorite, and what you learned from the experience.



## ► Draft

You have brainstormed a topic and thesis and gathered your ideas into a writing plan. Now it's time to turn all that work into sentences and paragraphs in a well-developed **draft**. The first draft is called a *rough* draft for a reason. As you write, you're still thinking, so you will probably make some changes to your outline and even your thesis.

- Your **introduction** should present the main idea of your composition in an engaging and interesting way. The first sentences of your introduction should grab your readers' attention and keep them invested in your work. For example, you might open a narrative with a line of dialogue, a shocking event, or a flashback. An informational piece, on the other hand, might begin with a startling fact or a quote from an expert on the topic.

Remember to include your **thesis** in the introduction in order to let your readers know what to expect in your piece. Also consider that, while the introduction might seem like the most logical place to begin writing, some people find it easier to develop the body of the composition or narrative first, and then use those developed ideas to help formulate the best way to write the introduction.

- Develop the **body** of your composition by presenting support in well-constructed paragraphs that focus on a central idea or event and specific details connected to that central idea. To support the structure of a personal narrative, develop characters and events through sensory details, description, and dialogue. Remember that without adequate support, your thesis serves no purpose, and your writing will not have a proper shape; the story will ultimately leave the reader disappointed.
- Use your **conclusion** to wrap up the story and provide your readers with additional thoughts to consider. For example, if you are writing a personal narrative, you might offer final details about an event as well as your own reflections on the event. In an argument, you should reassert your position and make a final appeal to the reader to accept your argument.

Use **transitions** such as *first*, *next*, *however*, *after*, *additionally*, *because*, and *therefore* to help readers make connections between ideas as they read, both within paragraphs and between them. Transitions help your ideas flow smoothly and logically.

Here is a draft of the student's personal narrative about a rite-of-passage experience. This is a late draft, after the student had time to revise and edit.

We heard the first weather forecasts on a Thursday evening in mid-October, almost four days before the storm was predicted to hit. But I didn't really pay attention. My mind was focused on other things. I really wanted to watch a new movie over the weekend. My cross-country team had an important race on Saturday, and I had two papers due for school the following Monday! None of that, however, stopped the storm. Although it only lasted a few days, I came out of the storm a different person.

By Sunday, I realized the storm was really coming. My parents, usually very relaxed people, had bought batteries, flashlights, candles, and a lot of food. They had even put sandbags around all the basement windows.

The storm really got going on Monday afternoon. I texted with my friends while Mom and Dad watched coverage on television. They kept looking outside, especially toward Main Street. At about eight o'clock, my mom stood in front of the window and gasped. A huge explosion lit up the sky. We all stared in shock. It looked like a light show. Then the lights in the house went out.

My first thought was to get online to find out more information. But our Internet, just like our electricity, was out. Frustrated, I daydreamed about the funny things I could Tweet about later. Then I heard my dad shout from the other room, "Mrs. Bagby! Simona, come help me with Mrs. Bagby!" He raced toward the front door.

Mrs. Bagby has been our neighbor for a long time. When I was young, she always had a piece of candy to give me. But as she got older, she seemed to become afraid. "Who are you and what are you doing on my porch?" she'd snapped at me recently, even though she had always called me by name. I'd heard her grown children and grandchildren describe her as "stubborn and difficult." Now Dad wanted us to go see her in the middle of a terrible storm.

When we entered Mrs. Bagby's house, I did not find a stubborn and difficult woman. I found a terrified one. Mrs. Bagby sat wide-eyed and shaking in a rocking chair in her living room. The room was dark—no candles, no flashlight. I looked toward Dad, and he nodded at me. Carrying my flashlight, I moved closer to her. Finally, I leaned down and put my hand on her shoulder.

**INTRODUCTION** The student sets up the situation of the storm in an intriguing way in the first paragraph. Underline the words that tell you her focus.

**CENTRAL IDEA** Within a cohesive paragraph, all the supporting sentences work together to strengthen the central idea or relate to a sequence of events. What is the central idea of paragraph 2? Circle the sentence that tells you.

**ORGANIZATION** In paragraph 5, the student provides important background information for the reader. Draw two lines under the sentence that connects the background information with the present situation.

**DETAILS** The student develops the events in the narrative through description and dialogue. In paragraph 6, she describes Mrs. Bagby's condition when she finds her. Draw boxes around the descriptive details that paint a picture of the situation.

“Mrs. Bagby, it’s me, Simona. I live next door, remember?” I tried to speak as gently as I could.

Slowly she raised her head and looked at me. I could see tears sitting at the very edges of her eyes. Both her fists were clenched around the edge of a frayed blanket. She smiled weakly and grabbed my hand.

“Please stay with me, Simona. I am so afraid.”

For three days, I lived with Mrs. Bagby. My parents tried to convince her to stay at our house, but she was too nervous to leave. Her relatives were unable to get to her because of closed roads and airports. Several times a day, my mom brought over meals. Most of the time, though, it was just Mrs. Bagby and me. We played cards when it was light out. Mrs. Bagby took a lot of naps in her chair. And we talked—a lot. Mrs. Bagby told me about serving as a nurse during World War II. I told her about my cross-country team and my dream of becoming a social worker when I grow up.

By the following week, I was back at school and running with my team again. We had electricity, fresh food, and access to the Internet. After the storm was over, my life seemed to go back to normal on the outside, but I did not feel like the same person. The experience of living with Mrs. Bagby for those days—of seeing her fear and sharing her life—had changed me. I no longer felt like Simona, just another teenager. Instead, I was Simona, a young adult ready to go into the world and make a difference for the sake of other people—people like Mrs. Bagby.

**TRANSITIONS** In paragraph 10, the student uses transitional phrases to show the sequence of events over three days. Draw stars beside the transitional phrases in the paragraph.

**CONCLUSION** In the conclusion, the student reflects on her experience and what she has learned from it by contrasting what was happening in the real world with what was happening inside her head. Underline the sentence that shows when the student moves from external experiences to internal ones.

## Writing Assignment

Now it’s your turn. Write a draft of your personal narrative on a computer or on a separate sheet of paper.

Write a narrative about a favorite memory from childhood. Use descriptive details and sensory language to set the scene, introduce the people involved, and tell an entertaining story. Explain why the memory is a favorite, and describe what you learned from the experience.



## Writer's Craft

### Formal Style and Objective Tone

When you are writing, your audience and purpose influence the content of your text. You are frequently asking yourself if your readers will understand what you are saying and whether you are saying it as well as possible in order to reach your overall goal.

Audience and purpose also affect the style and tone you use in writing. For example, you know the difference between the language you use in an e-mail to a friend and the language you might use in a school assignment. The first uses informal language; the language in the latter is formal. When you are writing for academic and work purposes, use **formal** language, which avoids slang and nonstandard grammar. Maintain an **objective tone**, as well, which is straightforward, impersonal, and unbiased. The only exception would be, for instance, when you are developing dialogue in a narrative. In those cases, you may use informal language.

The student has used a formal style and objective tone in the following excerpt from her personal narrative. If she were using an informal style, how might she reword the second sentence?

By Sunday, I realized the storm was really coming. My parents, usually very relaxed people, had bought batteries, flashlights, candles, and a lot of food. They had even put sandbags around all the basement windows.

### Try It

Read the sentences below. Rewrite each sentence so that it uses the appropriate formal style and tone for writing in a school setting.

1. That experience was, like, so life-changing, it was amazing.

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2. I couldn't stand my next-door neighbor because he was just so, so weird.

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## ► Revise

When you **revise** your draft, you improve its content, organization, and style. Revising is more than correcting simple mistakes—you will do that in the editing stage. Revision can involve substantial changes that add insight to your draft, and you may adjust your content to fulfill your purpose for writing. Many writers go through several rounds of revision before they begin editing and publishing their work.

Look at the types of sentences you have used in your composition. Think about the ways all the sentences in a paragraph work together. Do they all sound the same? You should always provide **sentence variety** for your readers by mixing simple, compound, and complex sentences. Vary the way you begin sentences, as well. They should not all begin with simple subjects. You might begin sentences with transitions, prepositional phrases, or dependent clauses. Use short sentences when you want to convey an idea forcefully or summarize a complicated idea. Use longer sentences to provide more information and complex ideas.

### Writer's Craft

#### Precise Language and Concrete Details

Vague or general language can keep readers from understanding—or envisioning—what the writer intends. Look for places where you can provide more **precise language** and **concrete details**. Replace vague or general terms with descriptive and sensory details that give life to characters, settings, and events. Use vocabulary that is specific to a subject area or field to make your work more authentic. Provide explanations to give readers the clearest possible understanding of concepts, processes, or arguments. Here is a sentence from an early version of the mentor text:

Mrs. Bagby looked sad and scared.

Can you really see or understand Mrs. Bagby's condition from this sentence? Take a look at the sentence with sensory details and vivid action verbs:

I could see tears sitting at the very edges of her eyes. Both her fists were clenched around the edge of a frayed blanket.

As a reader, you suddenly see the frightened, elderly woman in her dark home.

#### Try It

Rewrite the following sentence using more precise language.

I looked at the sky.

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When you revise a draft, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are my tone and level of formality appropriate for my audience and purpose?
- Does my descriptive language create a clear, vivid picture?
- Have I used precise verbs, nouns, and adjectives?
- Have I varied my sentences by adjusting how they begin and by using simple, compound, and complex sentences?
- Have I used devices such as parallelism, repetition, and figurative language to give certain parts of my composition a greater impact?
- Would changing the point of view of the piece be helpful?
- Are there places where I should delete, add, or rearrange material?
- What additional supporting details do I need to include?
- Where might I include transitional words, phrases, and sentences to help connect my ideas?

## First Draft

I lived with Mrs. Bagby for three days. My parents tried to convince her to stay at our house. She was too nervous to leave. Her relatives were unable to get to her because of closed roads and closed airports. Several times a day, Ma brought over munchies for us to chow on. Most of the time, though, it was just Mrs. Bagby and me. We played cards when it was light out. Mrs. Bagby took a lot of naps in her chair. And we talked—a lot. Mrs. Bagby talked about her life in the past. I told her about my cross-country team. I told her my ideas about becoming a social worker.

### SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Varying the sentence structure helps to connect ideas and keep readers from getting bored. You can do this by starting sentences in different ways or by combining sentences. Underline the sentences in the student's composition you would revise.

**FORMAL STYLE** Compositions written for school assignments need to use a formal writing style. Circle the sentence that is too casual for this type of writing.

### PRECISE LANGUAGE

Authors use precise language and concrete details to make their writing come alive for readers. What words or phrases might the student use to better convey her conversation with Mrs. Bagby?



## Revised Draft

**SENTENCE STRUCTURE** The writer adjusted the first sentence of the paragraph by putting the introductory phrase “For three days” at the beginning so the first few sentences don’t all begin with the subject. Underline another change in sentence structure.

**FORMAL STYLE** To make the style more formal and objective, the student replaced “Ma” with “my mom.” Circle another phrase that was changed to be more formal.

**PRECISE LANGUAGE** Notice that the student included a more detailed description of what Mrs. Bagby discusses with her. Draw a box around these precise details about Mrs. Bagby’s life.

For three days, I lived with Mrs. Bagby. My parents tried to convince her to stay at our house, but she was too nervous to leave. Her relatives were unable to get to her because of closed roads and airports. Several times a day, my mom brought over meals. Most of the time, though, it was just Mrs. Bagby and me. We played cards when it was light out. Mrs. Bagby took a lot of naps in her chair. And we talked—a lot. Mrs. Bagby told me about serving as a nurse during World War II. I told her about my cross-country team and my dream of becoming a social worker when I grow up.

### Try It

#### Revise a Draft

The following paragraph did not make it into the final draft of the student’s personal narrative. Read the paragraph below and then revise it on a separate sheet of paper.

My parents had to rescue me after two hours. I remembered a storm from about five years earlier. I totally freaked out during that storm. I crawled into my closet. I cried. I took my stuffed animals and books into the closet. I had some real big issue-type things with storms. I wasn’t one bit excited about another one.

## Peer Review

Having a peer read your writing can be a great help when you are revising your work. Conducting a peer review gives you the opportunity to work with a classmate to evaluate and improve your draft. Focus on providing your peer with constructive feedback. When you are critiquing someone else's writing, you are also developing your own writing skills, so be sure to take the time to analyze carefully.

As you critique your classmate's work, first explain the strengths of their writing. For example, "I think this sentence is strong because it communicates the main character's personality so clearly."

Then identify specific weak areas and suggest solutions. Never say, "This part just isn't very clear to me. I got confused." Instead, ask specific questions that your classmate can answer. For example, "I don't understand what you mean by *significant experience*. What was the experience exactly? Why was it important? Can you revise to clarify that idea?" You could also ask questions about the writing choices your classmate made, such as the processes they used to choose a topic and develop an outline and a draft.

Here are some questions that you can ask as you review a peer's writing:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the introduction? What effect does it have on me as a reader? Can I identify the main idea or thesis?
- Does each body paragraph support the main idea or thesis?
- Does each body paragraph include strong supporting or descriptive details?
- Does the writer connect ideas in the composition fluidly?
- Does the conclusion summarize the main ideas and offer something to consider?
- Are the language and writing style appropriate for the audience and purpose?

## Writing Assignment

Exchange your draft with a peer and use the peer review forms provided by your teacher to review each other's work. Remember to be thoughtful and constructive in your comments, and take a few minutes to discuss your feedback with your classmate.

Once you are finished with your peer review, it's time to revise your draft. Read through your draft with a critical eye and make changes using the revision checklist your teacher has provided or one of your own. Be sure to incorporate any helpful comments or suggestions from your peer review. You may compose your revised draft on a computer or a separate sheet of paper.

Write a narrative about a favorite memory from childhood. Use descriptive details and sensory language to set the scene, introduce the people involved, and tell an entertaining story. Explain why the memory is a favorite, and what you learned from the experience.


















## ► Edit

When you **edit** your writing, you read it carefully to be sure your grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization follow all the conventions of standard English.

You have probably already developed some of your own strategies for editing your work. Thoroughness is the most important part of editing, however, so you need to slow down and look at the composition in several different ways. For example, you might read through your revision one time to find spelling mistakes, another time to check for correct grammar, and a final time to make sure you have punctuated and capitalized correctly. If possible, read your text out loud slowly, so that you can hear grammar mistakes. Or, you can ask someone to read the text to you as you read along, marking noticeable errors as you see or hear them.

Conventions and grammar rules occasionally change over time. For example, in the past, commas were always used after each item in a series except for the last item. (*Sheree used her birthday money to buy books, headphones, and movie tickets.*) Now some style guides allow the final comma, before the conjunction in the list, to be removed. (*Sheree used her birthday money to buy books, headphones and movie tickets.*) Be sure to find out which conventions your teachers prefer, or which style guides to refer to for usage rules.

Use the following editing marks to correct errors you find.

 Insert parentheses	 Insert em dash	 Close up space
 Add space	 Indent	 Insert
 Delete	 Insert hyphen	 Transpose
 Period	 Insert comma	 Insert apostrophe
 Insert quotation marks	 Capitalize	 Lowercase
 Insert en dash	 New paragraph	

This excerpt from a draft of a student's response shows how the student used editing marks to make corrections.

— We heard the first ~~whether~~<sup>weather</sup> forecasts on a Thursday evening in mid<sup>-</sup>October, almost four days before the storm was predicted to hit. But I didn't really pay attention. My mind ~~is~~<sup>was</sup> focused on other things. # I really wanted to watch a new movie over the weekend. My cross-country team had an important race on Saturday, and I had two papers ~~do~~<sup>due</sup> for school ~~the~~ following Monday! None of that, however, stopped the storm. Although only ~~it~~ lasted a few days, I came out of the storm a different person.

By Sunday, I realized the storm ~~is~~<sup>was</sup> really coming. My parents, usually very relaxed people, had bought ~~bateries~~<sup>batteries</sup>, flashlights, candles, and a lot of food. They had even put sandbags around all the basement windows ~~.~~

**SPELLING** The student confused the words *whether* and *weather*. These two words sound the same but have different spellings and meanings. How can the student make sure she has spelled the word correctly?

**HYPHENATION** The student did not originally use a hyphen to join the prefix *mid-* with the word *October*. However, the word did not look right, so she reviewed the rules about the use of hyphens. List some other prefixes that require hyphens to connect to words.

**VERB TENSE** The student made an error here in verb tense. She reread the sentence and realized she had used the present-tense form of the verb *to be* rather than the past-tense form, so she replaced *is* with *was*. Underline three other past-tense verbs used in the draft.

## Grammar Review

### Syntax

**Syntax** refers to the way sentences are structured. The English language allows for a variety of sentence structures, but they need to follow certain conventions.

The four basic types of sentences include:

- **simple** (an independent clause):

*My mind was focused on other things.*

- **compound** (more than one independent clause):

*My cross-country team had an important race on Saturday, and I had two papers due for school the following Monday!*

- **complex** (one independent clause and at least one dependent clause):

*When we entered Mrs. Bagby's house, I did not find a stubborn and difficult woman.*

- **compound-complex** (more than one independent clause and at least one dependent clause):

*After the storm was over, my life seemed to go back to normal on the outside, but I did not feel like the same person.*

Make sure you have used correct syntax in your writing. Additionally, it is important to vary your sentence structure. Using a variety of sentence types helps to keep your reader from getting bored. One way you can add variety to your sentence types is to express related ideas in a single sentence. For example, if you have several sentences with the same subject or verb, consider combining them.

Example: *Kaila was interested in pursuing a degree in marine biology.  
Douglas was interested in pursuing a degree in marine biology.*

Combined Subject: *Both Kaila and Douglas were interested in pursuing degrees in marine biology.*

Example: *Cynthia walked into the library.  
Cynthia climbed the stairs to her favorite reading room.*

Combined Verb: *Cynthia walked into the library and climbed the stairs to her favorite reading room.*

Sentence structure can also link ideas within a composition. As you revise and edit a draft, look carefully for ways to combine or separate sentences so that your ideas are clear. Your composition should show a logical progression of thought.



**Try It**

Revise each set of sentences below into one or two stronger sentences that show the connection between ideas as clearly as possible. Remember that you do not have to make all the sentences long and complicated, but you should use correct syntax.

1. I had a terrible bike accident. I learned that I was not as indestructible as I thought. I also learned that I was happier recognizing my limitations.

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2. All the things I hoped for were now within reach. Adopting a new puppy was within reach. My mom’s desire for a new job was within reach. Also, my future at a good college was within reach. My whole perspective was changed.

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3. We drove around the small town of Springfield, Illinois. Abraham Lincoln lived there for 25 years as a lawyer. We visited several of the historical sites. I wanted to learn more about Abraham Lincoln’s early life. I also wanted to read more about his presidency.

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**Writing Assignment**

Now it’s time for you to edit your narrative, using the editing checklist your teacher has provided, or one of your own. You may work either on your computer or on a separate sheet of paper.

## ► Publish

**Publishing** is the final step in the writing process. At this point, you produce a final draft for others to read. If your final draft is handwritten, your handwriting must be neat and legible.

At this point, you can add a title that will grab the reader's attention. You may also want to divide your composition into smaller chunks of text by using subheadings to make your writing easier to follow. Many authors add photographs, illustrations, maps, or diagrams to a composition to enhance the reader's understanding of the topic.

Your teacher may have specific guidelines for submitting your work, such as double-spacing the text and using a certain margin width to allow for comments. You may be asked to submit a stapled hard copy of your writing, or to submit a digital copy as an email attachment. Carefully follow your teacher's or school's publishing guidelines, or you might not get proper credit for your work. In addition to giving your work to your teacher, consider other ways to share your writing with a wider audience:

- Submit creative writing, such as narratives, to a writing contest for a literary magazine.
- Submit pieces like arguments and informative texts to your school or local newspaper.
- Exchange writing with classmates and discuss both the content and format of your completed writing assignment.
- Print copies of your writing and distribute them to friends and family.
- Read your writing aloud to a librarian or author you know.

### Technology Suggestions

- Post your writing to your class Web site or blog.
- Create your own Web site to feature your writing and that of your friends. Provide hyperlinks of art and information related to your topics.
- Develop a wiki with classmates on a topic covered in your writing.
- Record an online video or podcast in which you and your classmates read and discuss a specific type of writing.
- Create a video tutorial on writing the type of text you wrote. Use your own process and final text as an example.

### Writing Assignment

Once you have finished revising and editing your work, follow your teacher's instructions for publishing your final draft. Be sure to follow any formatting and submission guidelines your teacher or school may have.