Chapter 6 Writing Effectively

Writing is made up of several steps that lead you to your first draft. So far, you have been given a subject (learning about life) and worked with a number of prewriting techniques. You have generated ideas that you can use in your essay and have decided on a purpose and audience. In addition, you have composed a working thesis statement.

At this point, you are ready to write your essay. This chapter deals with the heart of the writing process: developing body paragraphs; organizing your essay; and writing the introduction, conclusion, and title. Once you work through this chapter, you will be more comfortable with these elements of the process and the way they function as part of the whole. Again, you will be writing alongside Beth as she goes through the writing process with you.

As you learned in the first few chapters of this text, all stages of the writing process are part of a recurring cycle that you will mold into a routine to suit your lifestyle. The more you write, the more natural this process will become for you.

DEVELOPING BODY PARAGRAPHS

Now that you have written a thesis statement at the end of your introduction, you are ready to write the body paragraphs of your essay. The body paragraphs explain and support the thesis statement.

Support for Your Thesis

Which ideas will support the statement you make in your thesis? This is the question you need to answer at this point. The supporting ideas are what make up the body of your essay. Each body paragraph covers one major idea of your thesis. The body paragraphs consist of a topic sentence and concrete details that support the topic sentence.

Student Comment:

"My teachers would always tell me to develop my paragraphs, so I used to just add a few sentences at the end of the paragraph. I know now how to make my paragraphs longer without Coping Out."

Understanding Development

To make sure you understand how to develop your body paragraphs, go to WritingLab.com, and click on Developing and Organizing a Paragraph. Watch the three videos to find out how to develop, organize, and draft your paragraphs. When you think you understand these ideas, check your level of comprehension by completing the Recall, Apply, and Write activities in MyWritingLab. The Recall activity asks you to answer some general questions about what you just learned in the videos; the Apply exercise uses a sample
paragraph to test your knowledge; and the Write task provides writing prompts that will help you practice your new skills.

**PRACTICE 1**  
For each of the following lists, cross out any ideas that do not support the thesis statement.

1. **Thesis:** Children are desensitized to violence by television, video games, and comic books.
   - Children don't react to the violent acts they see on TV.
   - Children do not care when the heroes beat up the villains in comic books.
   - Many video games cost too much.
   - Children often want to be just like the sports figures they watch on TV. Most children learn very early in life to shoot figures in video games.

2. **Thesis:** Political campaigns often bring out the worst in candidates.
   - Most people are either Republican or Democrat.
   - Candidates try to find secrets from their opponents' pasts. Candidates use the media to help ruin other candidates' reputations. Presidential campaigns occur every four years.
   - Some candidates even resort to name-calling and twisting their opponents' words.

3. **Thesis:** To qualify for the FBI, applicants must meet certain requirements.
   - People interested in joining the FBI must have a college degree.
   - FBI applicants must be in great physical shape and have excellent eyesight.
   - The events on 9/11 have created a great interest in the CIA.
   - FBI agents work within the United States, while CIA agents work outside the United States.
   - FBI applicants must be willing to go through rigorous training and to move anywhere in the United States.
4. Thesis: Starting your own business takes a lot of planning and work.

Prospective business owners must create a business plan in order to borrow money from a bank.

Owning your own business is rewarding.

People should research the current trends in the market for the type of business they plan to open.

Sometimes business owners can get their families to work for free. People should determine how much money they will spend and how much money they will make so they can project possible earnings.

5. Thesis: To maintain a long-distance relationship, both people must be willing to sacrifice.

Couples often separate when they go to different universities.

Both parties must be sensitive to the other's needs—even at a distance. People have to communicate often with each other, even if it's hard to find the time.

Both people must put extra effort into the relationship to make it work. My parents had a long-distance relationship.

PRACTICE 2   For each of the following thesis statements, list three supporting ideas.

1. People should always look for three qualities when searching for a job.
2. Moving away from home for the first time can be hard.
3. Animals can help people live longer.
4. Vacations can often be more strenuous than restful.
5. Studying the right way can make a difference in a test grade.

Essays can be different lengths and often have a varying number of ideas that support their thesis statements. The thesis statement generally determines the length of an essay and the amount of support necessary to make a point. Some statements require very little proof and might need only one body paragraph; others require much more support and might need four or more body paragraphs for a complete explanation. An essay that falls somewhere in the middle has an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
Beth's Supporting Ideas  Beth decided on three supporting ideas for her essay, which means she will write three body paragraphs.

Thesis Statement: I know that I learn from many things in life.

Supporting Idea 1: Taking risks
Supporting Idea 2: Watching others
Supporting Idea 3: Making mistakes

Your Supporting Ideas  Now list the support you might use for your thesis statement.

Your Thesis Statement:

Supporting Idea 1:
Supporting Idea 2:
Supporting Idea 3:

Outlining

At this stage of the writing process, many people benefit from putting their main ideas in the form of a rough, or working, outline. A rough outline can help you plan your essay and lets you see the relationship of your ideas to one another. In this way, you can easily identify ideas that don't support your thesis and locate places where you need to provide more information. A rough outline can evolve and become more detailed as your paper develops.

PRACTICE 3  Fill in the following rough outlines.

1. Subject: College life
   Limited Subject:
   Thesis Statement:
   Topic Sentence:
   Topic Sentence:
   Topic Sentence:
2. Subject: Animal rights

Limited Subject:

Thesis Statement:

Topic Sentence:

Topic Sentence:

Topic Sentence:

3. Subject: Intercollegiate sport

Limited Subject:

Thesis Statement:

Topic Sentence:

Topic Sentence:

Topic Sentence:

4. Subject: Summer jobs

Limited Subject:

Thesis Statement:

Topic Sentence:

Topic Sentence:

Topic Sentence:

5. Subject: The Internet

Limited Subject:

Thesis Statement:

Topic Sentence:
Beth's Rough Outline Here is a rough outline of Beth's ideas so far:

**Thesis Statement:** I know that I learn from many things in life.

A. I learn from taking risks.

B. I learn from watching others.

C. I learn from making mistakes.

Your Rough Outline Now put your ideas in outline form.

**Thesis Statement:**

A.

B.

C.

**Topic Sentences**

Now you need to state each of your supporting ideas in the form of a topic sentence that will be developed into a body paragraph. The decisions you made in Chapter 5 about subject, purpose, and audience will lead you to your topic sentences. Look back at your prewriting notes and think about which topics will best support your thesis statement. These will be the topics of your body paragraphs. These paragraphs will each include a topic sentence. The **topic sentence** of a paragraph is its controlling idea. A typical paragraph consists of a topic sentence and details that expand on that topic sentence. A topic sentence performs two important tasks in its paragraph: (1) It supports the essay's thesis statement, and (2) it tells what the paragraph will be about. It functions best as the first or last sentence in its paragraph. Beginning or ending a paragraph with the topic sentence gives direction to the paragraph and provides a "road map" for the reader.

Like a thesis statement, a topic sentence has two parts—a topic and a statement about that topic. The topic should be limited enough to be developed in a paragraph. It should also be focused and not vague or scattered.
### Topic Sentences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Limited Topic</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Frequent reading</td>
<td>improves thinking skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotteries</td>
<td>Winning the lottery</td>
<td>will change a person's life forever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Having children</td>
<td>is a huge responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hate</td>
<td>Hate crimes</td>
<td>are one of life's worst horrors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Comment:**

"**Topic Sentences** was my favorite topic because it helped me learn what they should look like, and now my paragraphs and essays are stronger because of it."

### Understanding Topic Sentences

Now that you have been working with topic sentences, let's make sure you have a solid understanding of their fundamentals. Go to MyWritingLab.com, click on The Topic Sentence, and watch the video. When you think you have a good grasp of this concept, check your level of understanding by completing the Recall, Apply, and Write activities in MyWritingLab. The Recall activity asks you to answer some general questions about what you just learned in the videos; the Apply exercise requires you to identify the topic sentence or controlling idea of a sample paragraph; and the Write task provides an opportunity to use the skills you've just learned in your own writing.

### PRACTICE 4

Limit the following topics. Then develop them into statements that could be topic sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Limited Topic</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mondays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hobbies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Theme parks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Summer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRACTICE 5   Complete the following topic sentences. Make sure they are general enough to be developed into a paragraph but are not too broad.

1. Work-related injuries______________________________________________________________________.

2. ____________________________________________________________________ is my favorite television show.

3. Sex education ____________________________________________________________________________.

4. Stray dogs and cats______________________________________________________________________.

5. ________________________________________________________________________________ must be looked at on my college campus.

PRACTICE 6   Write topic sentences for the following paragraphs.

1. She watches the old ones like Perry Mason and can't get enough of the newer ones like CSI. But my mom really prefers the not-old and not-new mystery shows like Matlock and Murder, She Wrote. My mom will watch any of these shows for hours. My dad has a joke that she's watching all these TV show so she can learn how to get rid of him and get away with it. I think she's just gathering information to write a book similar to these shows she loves to watch.

2. First, you must follow the directions to install it onto your computer. Then you must read the directions to learn what you should do first with the program. It's best to read all the directions first, but most of the time people just go straight to the program and try to navigate their way through it. Once you get a handle on how to work the program, it's best just to play around and use the book only when you have questions. Mastering computer programs can be hard, but once you've done it, you can be sure you'll never forget how to use them.

3. Because she wanted to have money for other parts of her wedding, the consultant was the first expense she cut. Everything went fine until the day of the wedding. My sister didn't get the flowers she ordered, but the ones that were delivered were OK. The cake arrived four hours late, and the reception hall wouldn't let us attach anything to the walls. And just before my sister walked into the church, she discovered that the train on her wedding dress was completely inside out. Luckily, no one but my sister and our family knew of the mishaps, but a consultant would have been worth every penny on the actual day of the wedding.
PRACTICE 7  Supply three topic sentences for each thesis statement.

1. Many people enjoy resting on Sundays.
2. Teachers should encourage all students to learn.
3. Computers will enable people to function more efficiently at work, at home, and at play.
4. Planning is the key to a successful vacation.
5. The abilities to think critically, act quickly, and communicate clearly are essential in the business world.

Beth's Topic Sentences Beth writes three topic sentences she thinks will support her thesis statement.

**Thesis Statement:** I know that I learn from many things in life.

**Topic Sentence:** I have discovered that I learn a lot by taking risks.

**Topic Sentence:** I also benefit from watching other people.

**Topic Sentence:** I believe that I learn from making mistakes.

Your Topic Sentences Develop each of the ideas you listed on page 56 into a topic sentence directly related to your thesis statement. List your thesis first.

**Thesis Statement:**

**Topic Sentence:**

**Topic Sentence:**

**Topic Sentence:**

Specific Details

Now you are ready to generate the specific details that will make up the bulk of your body paragraphs. Later in this text, you will learn about different methods of developing your ideas, such as describing, comparing and contrasting, and analyzing causes and effects. For now, we are simply going to practice generating concrete supporting details and examples directly related to a specific topic. Concrete words refer to anything you can see, hear, touch,
smell, or taste, such as trees, boats, water, friends, fire alarm, and bread. They make writing come alive because they help the reader picture what the writer is talking about.

PRACTICE 8 Put a check mark by the details and examples listed that support each topic sentence.

1. Many people are addicted to soap operas.
   __ viewers get caught up in the story
   __ people care about the characters
   __ soap operas are often springboards for actors wanting more work
   __ people are anxious to see what happens next
   __ mindless but entertaining TV
   __ viewers often strongly identify with the characters
   __ CBS has had the number one soap opera for years

2. My parents have reversed the stereotypical roles in their marriage.
   __ my dad decorates the house
   __ my mom and dad both work
   __ my sister wants to be just like our mom
   __ my mom mows and takes care of the lawn
   __ my dad cleans the inside of the house
   __ I hope to marry someone like my mom

3. The members of every generation think they'll understand their kids' music—until they actually hear it.
   __ parents don't appreciate today's rock music
   __ parents who like rock and roll don't understand heavy metal
   __ parents become wary of musicians like Kid Rock and Marilyn Manson
no parents understand new wave or punk music
Dick Clark has helped all kinds of music get established
parents have a hard time letting their kids listen to rap music
Elvis helped put rock and roll on the map

4. Students change their majors often throughout their academic careers.

general education courses make students learn about a variety of subjects
in college, students discover new interests in subjects they have never been exposed to
professors bring new subjects to life for many students
math is difficult for many students
other students often influence a student's decision about a major
the reality of the job market creates changes in majors
academic performance sometimes makes students look for alternative interests

5. The best way to lose weight is through a good diet and exercise.

snacking all day long can cause a person to eat more than usual
people who exercise a lot need enough sleep
skipping meals is counterproductive for people on diets
people should exercise at least three time per week
running is great exercise
people should eat three sensible meals per day
ESPN has many exercise shows
PRACTICE 9  For each of the following topic sentences, list five details or examples to develop them.

1. Everywhere I go, I seem to see someone I know.
2. When I was in high school, I enjoyed many different extracurricular activities.
3. People are beginning to use their personal computers for many different types of business transactions.
4. Friends and family are very important parts of life.
5. People must be careful when they are swimming.

Beth’s Development  To come up with concrete details and examples that would support her topic sentence, Beth uses the brainstorming and focused freewriting techniques she learned in Chapter 5. This is what she wrote:

I have discovered that I learn a lot by taking risks.
  buying a used car
  quitting my new job
  leaving Aaron to come to this school
  driving way too fast
  trying new foods
  changing majors
  procrastinating in school

I also benefit from watching other people.
  moving in with roommates I don't know
  watching my friends make mistakes with their boyfriends
  looking at my parents make rules
  seeing my cousin ruin her life
  watching my brother mess up
  observing people around me get involved with drugs
  learning about other people's mistakes from my friends

I believe that I learn from making mistakes.
  cheating on the test
  believing the rumor about my best friend
  lying to my parents
  not believing my sister
  waiting too long to write a paper
  watching TV instead of studying
Here is Beth's new freewriting:

I know I learn a lot by taking risks, watching other people, and making mistakes. I'm sure I learn in other ways too, but these are the ways that seem to give me the most information about life in general.

Taking risks really helps everyone learn in life, but I think this is especially true for me. I mean, right now I'm sitting here in this class thinking about Aaron and how we want to get married someday. But I left my hometown and Aaron to come here for the nursing program. So far everything is great, but I knew it was a risk coming here. But how could I learn if I didn't?

I also learn by watching other people. My parents are great role models, but it's hard to really learn because they are so much older. I mean, they tell me not to join a gang, but they're my parents. I learned more about gangs from my cousin than from my parents. Watching my cousin go through her experiences was way better than just listening to my parents. I definitely learn by watching others.

And I definitely learn by making mistakes. And boy do I have tons of those. Most of my mistakes are pretty small, but I still learn from them. I think I learned the most from Mr. Turner, though, when he caught me cheating on his test. He talked to me, and that really helped. In fact, I think it's because of him that I started paying attention in class and decided to pursue nursing at this school.

I will always learn about life from these sources. I guess I will always learn about life as long as I keep my eyes open, but these ways seem the most important to me right now.

Your Development  Choose at least one of the prewriting strategies you learned in Chapter 5, and use it to generate more specific details and examples for each of your topic sentences.

ORGANIZING YOUR ESSAY

You are moving along quite well in the writing process. You have determined your subject, purpose, and audience, and you have written your thesis statement. You have also written topic sentences for your body paragraphs and thought of details, examples, and facts to develop those topic sentences. You are now ready to organize your ideas. What should come first? What next?

To organize the ideas in your essay, start by considering the purpose of your essay and the way each body paragraph serves that purpose. Then, arrange your body paragraphs in a logical manner to achieve that purpose. If your essay's main purpose is informative—to describe the layout of a building, for example—you would probably arrange the details spatially. That is, you might begin with the entrance and move to the other parts of the building as if you were strolling through it. If, however, you want to persuade a reader to buy one type of car over another, you might arrange the essay so that it moves from one extreme to another—for example, from the least important feature of the car to the most important. Once you decide on the order of your paragraphs, you need to organize the details in each paragraph.

Most paragraphs and essays are organized in one of five ways:

1. From general to particular
2. From particular to general

3. Chronologically (by time)

4. Spatially (by physical order)

5. From one extreme to another

Let’s look at these methods of organization one by one.

**General to Particular**

The most common method of organizing an essay or paragraph is from general to particular. This method begins with a general topic and becomes more specific as it progresses.

A paragraph organized from general to particular might look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here is an example of a paragraph organized from general to particular:

When I began attending college, I was very nervous because I was afraid I would not do very well in my classes. My first year, I took general education classes that reviewed a lot of the material I learned in high school. There was a lot of studying involved in these classes, but I was able to pass all of them. Soon I decided that my major would be business, so I began taking classes that dealt with business. All of the business classes were harder than the classes I had taken in general education. Just when I thought I would not pass a class, I would do well on a test, which would raise my confidence level again. I worked very hard in every class I took and was able to pass everyone. Tomorrow I am graduating with my bachelor’s degree in business.

This paragraph moves from the general idea of going to college to the specific notion of taking classes, graduating, and receiving a degree. Notice that it includes such transitions as when, but, soon, just when, and which. They show the relationship among the writer’s thoughts.

The skeleton of a general-to-particular essay looks like this, although the number of paragraphs and details will vary:
An example of an essay organized from general to particular is "The Decorated Body" on page 220. The essay begins by introducing the cultural messages connected with decorating the naked body. The author then explains what various decorations mean in different civilizations, moving to topics that become more and more specific as the essay progresses. You might want to read this selection to see how this method of organization works in a full essay.

PRACTICE 10  Turn to the essay “El Hoyo” on page 149, and find two paragraphs organized from general to specific.

PRACTICE 11  Write a topic sentence for the following group of sentences. Then organize the sentences into a paragraph using general-to-particular order. Add words, phrases, or sentences as necessary to smooth out the paragraph.

Topic Sentence: ________________________________________________________________

During these events, not only do you get to watch the athletes play their games, but you get to see former athletes announcing the action play-by-play.

Anytime you turn on the TV, there are at least 14 sporting events happening at one time.

You can see anything from basketball to golf to racing to fishing. Let's face it; the likelihood of seeing a sports figure on TV is great. And just when you think you've seen enough of the players, you are flooded with commercials that have athletes selling various products.
**Particular to General**

When you reverse the first method of organization, you arrange your material from particular to general. In this case, more specific ideas start the essay or paragraph and lead up to a general statement. This type of organization is particularly effective if you suspect that your reader might not agree with the final point you are going to make. With this method, you can lead your reader to your opinion slowly and carefully.

A paragraph organized from particular to general looks like this:

```
Detail
Detail
Detail
Detail
Topic Sentence
```

Here is a paragraph of particular-to-general organization.

The water is so crystal clear that I can see every pebble settled on the bottom. A small sandy beach reaches the water's edge and makes a perfect spot to spend the afternoon. Across the water, I can see the mountainside covered in the greenest trees imaginable. A log cabin also sits among the trees halfway up the mountain, so peaceful and secluded. The puffy white clouds make the sky appear to be a brighter blue, and the birds seem to enjoy floating on the soft breeze. I could sit all day next to the lake in the valley and just stare at my surroundings.

This paragraph starts with specific details about the area around the lake and ends with a topic sentence. Transitions such as *across the water, also, and and* move readers through the paragraph.

This is how a particular-to-general essay looks, though the number of details will vary:

**Introduction**

- Topic sentence stating the most specific point
  - Detail
  - Detail
  - Detail

- Topic sentence stating a less specific point
  - Detail
  - Detail
  - Detail

- Topic sentence stating the most general point
  - Detail
  - Detail
  - Detail

**Conclusion**
The essay titled "Spanglish Spoken Here" on page 354 is a good example of organization from particular to general. It moves from examples out of the writer's life to his thesis at the end—that work is his therapy. If you read this selection, you will see firsthand how this method of organization works in a complete essay.

**PRACTICE 12** Turn to the essay "What Are Friends For?" on page 323, and find two paragraphs that demonstrate particular-to-general organization.

**PRACTICE 13** Write a topic sentence for the following group of sentences. Then organize the sentences into a paragraph using particular-to-general order. Add words, phrases, or sentences as necessary to smooth out the paragraph.

**Topic Sentence:** ______________________________________________________________

My mom hopes I'll order something more grown-up, but I never will.  
My family knew I loved pizza and always let me order one once a week.  
I have always loved pepperoni, even on sandwiches and in soups.  
I used to love pizza night when I lived at home.  
I believe that pizza is the best food ever created.  
Now when I go home, we just go to an Italian restaurant where I can order pizza.

**Chronological Order**

When you organize ideas chronologically, you are organizing them according to the passage of time—in other words, in the order in which they occurred. Most of the time, when you tell a story or explain how to do something, you use chronological order: First this happened and then that. Or first you do this, next you do that, and so on.

A paragraph organized chronologically looks like this:

**Topic Sentence**

  First  
  Then  
  Next  
  Finally

Here is an example of a paragraph organized chronologically:

Preparing to go snowboarding for the first time can be a lot of fun. First of all, you must get into full gear when you arrive at the mountain. Then, you ride a ski lift to the top of the mountain. Once at the top, it is time to buckle your boots into the bindings on the board. The bindings must be tight, but not so tight that they are uncomfortable. Next, you are ready to begin your descent. On the way down the mountain, pay attention to how the board moves when pressure is applied to the toes
and heels of the feet. Finally, you need to learn which way to lean in order to turn right and left so you can fly down the mountain. Once you have mastered the basics, you will have fun perfecting your new hobby.

This paragraph is chronological because it explains snowboarding according to a time sequence and uses transitions such as first of all, then, next, and finally.

Here is what an essay organized chronologically looks like:

**Introduction**
- What happened first
  - Detail
  - Detail
  - Detail
- What happened next
  - Detail
  - Detail
  - Detail
- What happened after that
  - Detail
  - Detail
  - Detail

**Conclusion**

A good example of this method of organization is the essay titled "Black Music in Our Hands" on page 319. It begins with the author explaining the three types of music she sang in the early 1960s. She then explains, according to a time sequence, all the circumstances that caused her to look at music differently. Reading through this essay will help you understand this method of organization.

**PRACTICE 14** Turn to the essay "Writer's Retreat" on page 187, and find two paragraphs that are organized chronologically.

**PRACTICE 15** Write a topic sentence for the following group of sentences. Then organize the sentences into a paragraph using chronological order. Add words, phrases, or sentences as necessary to smooth out the paragraph.

**Topic Sentence:**

Spread the jelly on top of the peanut butter.
Unscrew the lid from a jar of peanut butter and from a jar of jelly.
Using the knife again, remove a small amount of jelly from the jar.
Place two slices of bread on a plate.
Using the knife, remove a small amount of peanut butter from the jar.
Place the second slice of bread on top of the slice with the peanut butter and jelly on it.
First, remove a butter knife from the drawer. Spread the peanut butter on one slice of bread with the knife.

Spatial Order

Another method of arranging details is by their relationship to each other in space. You might describe the layout of your campus from its front entrance to its back exit or the arrangement of a beautiful garden from one end to the other. Explaining a home page from top to bottom and describing a screened-in porch from inside to outside are also example of spatial order. Beginning at one point and moving detail by detail around a specific area is the simplest way of organizing by space.

A paragraph organized spatially might look like this:

Topic Sentence

Here
There
Next
Across
Beyond

Here is an example of a paragraph organized spatially:

It was the first football game of the season and her first football game ever as a cheerleader. Standing in front of the huge crowd made the butterflies in her stomach begin to flutter again. In the front row sat a group of her friends cheering her on. Two rows behind them sat her psychology professor. Next to her professor sat a few of her new sorority sister. As the cheerleader looked across the aisle, she noticed a group of rowdy students screaming and cheering for their team. Beyond the crowd, the tall announcer’s booth where all of the press people and the athletic director sat seemed to glare down at her. Any minute the music would begin to blare from that very booth, and she would begin her first half-time dance routine.

This paragraph is arranged spatially because it moves physically around the football stadium, using such words as in front of, in the front row, two rows behind, next to, and beyond as transitions.

Here is what an essay organized spatially looks like:

Introduction

Here
Detail
Detail
Detail
An example of this method of organization is the essay titled "Dwellings" on page 153. It moves in spatial order around the vicinity of the author's home. Reading through this essay will help you understand this method of organization.

**PRACTICE 16** Turn to the essay "The Sanctuary of School" on page 183, and find two paragraphs that use spatial organization.

**PRACTICE 17** Write a topic sentence for the following group of sentences. Then organize the sentences into a paragraph using spatial order. Add words, phrases, or sentences as necessary to smooth out the paragraph.

**Topic Sentence:**

The hotel's check-in desk is located on the left side of the lobby. Two little boys are sitting quietly on the couches next to the check-in desk, waiting for their parents to finish checking in. In the center of the lobby are four massive couches arranged in a conversational setting. Directly across from the check-in desk is the activities counter, where people can plan their days. Inside the front door, the guests' attention is immediately drawn to the ceiling. Painted as a sky, the ceiling gives guests the feeling that they have never left the outdoors. Framing the front door are two huge dolphins, each perched in the center of a water fountain.
From One Extreme to Another

Sometimes the best way to organize a paragraph is from one extreme to another: from most expensive to least expensive, from most humorous to least humorous, from least frustrating to most frustrating, and so on. Use whatever extremes make sense for your topic. You might explain how to choose a pet by elaborating on the most important qualities of an animal and then considering the least important. For example, an apartment dweller's most important consideration would be the size of the pet and its need for exercise. Least important would be watchdog qualities. To accomplish another purpose, you might reverse this order and begin with the least important quality; this method is good in persuasive writing because you end with your most important idea.

This method of organization has one distinct advantage over the other four approaches: It is the most flexible. When no other method of organization works, you can always arrange details from one extreme to another.

Here is an outline of a paragraph organized from one extreme to another:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here is an example of a paragraph that moves from one extreme to another:

Ever since I was old enough to join Little League teams, I have played a variety of sports. I would have to say that my favorite sport has always been football. Absolutely nothing can top the feeling of running for a touchdown and passing the defensive safety. My next favorite sport would have to be baseball. I used to love to pitch to catchers when we would work as though we were one athlete. My next favorite sport is basketball. As a teenager, I played guard in basketball, but eventually I got bored with the position. My least favorite sport is soccer. No matter how much I trained and ran before soccer season, I always got exhausted during the games—all we did was run up and down the field. Now that I’m in college, I’m grateful for the intramural teams that let me keep playing the sports that I love.

This paragraph moves from most to least preferred sports and is marked by such words as favorite, next favorite, and least favorite.

Here is what an essay organized according to extremes looks like:
"What Are Friends For?" on page 323 is a good example of this method of organization. It begins with a discussion of "relative friends" and moves to an explanation of "new friends." The author organizes her essay from least meaningful to most meaningful friends. Reading through this essay will help you understand this strategy.

**PRACTICE 18** Turn to the essay "Happiness Is Catching" on page 386, and find two paragraphs that are organized from one extreme to another.

**PRACTICE 19** Write a topic sentence for the following group of sentences. Then write a paragraph arranging the sentences from one extreme to another. Add words, phrases, and sentences as necessary to smooth out the paragraph. Also, label your system of classification (from most to least or from least to most).

**Topic Sentence:**

First, they have a hard time asking people for money. Consequently, they allow debtors extra time to pay the bill. But after a few months, the new employee has heard all the sob stories and is immune to their power. That just makes it harder to get the money. This may be because they believe the sob stories they hear, which probably aren't true. Unfortunately, once the date has been extended, we all have to agree to it.

**System of Classification:**
PRACTICE 20  List the best method of development for paragraphs on the following topics.

1. How to make homemade salsa.
2. I think I am going to rearrange my dorm room to create more space.
3. What I will have for dinner tonight.
4. Today, people question the ethics of capital punishment.
5. I lift weights for an hour and run five miles every day.

PRACTICE 21  Write a topic sentence that introduces the following details in a paragraph. Then arrange the details in logical order, and write a paragraph.

Topic Sentence:  

exercising three times a week  
the advantages of aerobic exercise  
exercising with a friend  
the difficulty of starting an exercise routine

Beth's Organization  Beth decided to organize her essay from one extreme to another—from the most important ways of learning for her to the least important. She, first wants to introduce the idea of taking risks, which she believes is very important. Next, she will discuss watching others and finally learning from mistakes because she thinks she learns a lot from her own mistakes. She thinks this order might work, so she lists as many concrete details as she can under each main idea.

Here is Beth's working outline at this point:

**Thesis Statement:** I know that I learn from many things in life.  
**Taking Risks:** taking risks and learning from them  
**(most important)**  
**Specific Details:** finding a good nursing program; leaving my boyfriend back home; going to college  
**Watching Others:** learning from watching others  
**(less important)**  
**Specific Details:** watching my cousin in gangs; living in fear; not in a gang because of her  
**Making Mistakes:** making mistakes and learning from those mistakes  
**(least important)**
Specific Details: cheating on test; talking with Mr. Turner; learning to pay more attention in school for a better future

Concluding Thoughts: people can learn from everything they do
Specific Details: taking risks; watching others making mistakes

Does the method of organization Beth has chosen suit her topic? Would any other method of organization work as well?

Your Organization What method of organization will work best for your ideas about learning? Why do you think this method will be best?

Student Comment:

"Essay Organization was a really hard topic for me. I exhausted it 4 times and really struggled, but I do feel like I now understand the difference between the types of organization."

Understanding Organization

Organizing your essay is a crucial step. Let's see how well you remember the most common types of organization. Go to MyWritingLab.com, and click on Essay Organization. Each of the five videos will explain a different type of organization. When you think you have a good grasp of this concept, check your level of understanding by completing the Recall, Apply, and Write activities in MyWritingLab. The Recall activity asks you to answer some general questions about what you've just learned in the videos; the Apply exercise requires you to identify patterns of organization in sample paragraphs; and the Write task provides writing prompts that will help you practice the new skills you have learned.

WRITING THE INTRODUCTION, CONCLUSION, AND TITLE

By now, you have written your thesis statement and topic sentences for your body paragraphs. You've thought of supporting details, facts, examples, and the most effective way of organizing your thoughts. At the end of this chapter, you will write a complete first draft of your essay. First, though, let's look at three important parts of your essay: the introduction, the conclusion, and the title.

You might have written some of these parts already. Some people write their introduction with their thesis; others write the introduction last. Some have an idea of how they want to conclude from the time they begin their papers; others write the conclusion last. Some struggle with a title; others write their titles as they generate their drafts. The order in which you write these three parts of an essay depends on your own personal writing process.
All that matters is that your papers have a title, an introduction, several body paragraphs, and a conclusion that work together.

Introduction

The introduction to your essay—your first paragraph—should introduce your subject and stimulate your audience's interest. The introduction of an essay captures the readers' interest, gives necessary background information, and presents your thesis statement. This paragraph essentially tells readers what the essay is going to cover without going into detail or discussing specifics.

Writers generally use the introduction to lead up to their thesis statement. As a result, the sentences at the beginning of the introductory paragraph need to grab your readers' attention. Some effective ways of capturing your audience's interest and giving necessary background information are to (1) furnish a vivid description; (2) tell a brief story; (3) give a revealing fact, statistic, or definition; (4) make an interesting comparison; (5) present a dramatic example; and (6) use an exciting quotation.

Also, be sure your introduction gives your readers any information they may need to follow your train of thought. One way to check that your readers have all the necessary background is to apply the five Ws and one H: who, what, when, where, why, and how. Any of this information that is important to your readers' understanding of your thesis statement should go in the introduction. You might also ask a friend to read your first draft and tell you if any background information is missing.

Beth's Introduction  Beth wrote a first draft of her introduction just to get started. She knew she would have to work with it later, but at least she was able to get some of her ideas down on paper.

Everyone learns in different ways. Some people learn by watching, some by reading, and others by themselves. The way people learn is a part of who they are. Knowing how we learn can help us understand ourselves better. I know that I learn from many things in life.

Your Introduction  Use the guidelines suggested here to capture your readers' interest and, if necessary, give them background information. Write two different introductions for your essay. End each with your thesis statement.

Conclusion

The concluding paragraph is the final paragraph of an essay. It draws your essay to a close, giving readers a sense of closure. That is, readers feel that all the loose ends are wrapped up and the point of the essay is clear. As with introductions, there are many good techniques for writing a conclusion. You might (1) summarize the main ideas, (2) highlight the most important issue, (3) ask a question that gets readers to think about something in particular, (4) predict the
future, (5) offer a solution to a problem, or (6) call readers to action. In some cases, you might want to use several of these strategies.

You should avoid two common problems in writing a conclusion. First, do not begin your conclusion with the words "in conclusion," "in summary," or "as you can see." Your conclusion should show—not tell—that you are at the end of your essay. Second, do not introduce a new idea. The main ideas of your essay should be in your body paragraphs. The conclusion is where you finish your essay, leaving your readers with a sense of closure or completeness.

Beth's Conclusion Here is a rough outline of what Beth wants to include in her conclusion. These are the notes she came up with at this point.

People can learn about life from just about anything.

• made me the person I am
• watching other people
• taking some risks myself
• making mistakes

Your Conclusion Sketch out an outline or write a draft of a possible conclusion for your essay.

Title

A title is a phrase, usually no more than a few words, that gives a hint about the subject, purpose, or focus of what is to follow. For example, the main title chosen for this book, Mosaics, reflects a particular view of the writing process—as many bright pieces logically connected to complete a picture. In other words, that title expresses in capsule form this textbook's purpose, which is to guide writers through the process of fitting the separate pieces of their ideas into a single meaningful whole to make an essay. The title of this chapter, however, is a straightforward naming of its contents: "Writing Effectively."

Besides suggesting an essay's purpose, a good title catches an audience's attention or "hooks" readers so that they want to read more. Look at some of the essay titles in the readings in Part II. For example, "Happiness Is Catching: Why Emotions Are Contagious" attracts the readers' attention because they will probably want to find out exactly how happiness is catching. "What Are Friends For?" is a title that will naturally draw in most readers. And "Dawn's Early Light" is intriguing because it brings up so many references in American culture. Do not underline or use quotation marks around your essay titles. Do not put a period at the end of your title, and be sure to capitalize your titles correctly. The first word and last word in a title are always capitalized. Capitalize all other words except articles (a, an, the) and short prepositions (such as in, by, on, or from; see page 516 for a more complete list of prepositions).
Beth's Title  Beth has several possible titles for her essay. She doesn't really know which one to use.

Learning About Life
The Way We Learn
Everyone Can Learn

Your Title  Write three titles for your essay: (1) one that gives a hint of your subject, (2) one that gives a hint of your purpose, and (3) one that gives a hint of your focus. Make each title as catchy as you can.

Student Comment:
"Essay Introductions, Conclusions, and Titles was great because I've always had a hard time writing the first paragraph of my essays, and this topic helped me know how to make everything fit together and flow."

Understanding the Introduction, Conclusion, and Title

Now that you have learned about what makes up a complete essay, go to MyWritingLab.com, and click on Essay Introductions, Conclusions, and Titles. The three videos there will help prepare you to write helpful and informative introductions, conclusions, and titles. When you feel you understand these concepts, check your level of comprehension by completing the Recall, Apply, and Write activities in MyWritingLab. The Recall activity asks you to answer some general questions about what you just learned in the videos; the Apply exercise questions you about the effectiveness of various introductions, conclusions, and titles; and the Write task prompts you to choose one of the scenarios provided and create these features in your own writing.

Beth's First Draft  In Chapters 1 through 5 and again in this chapter, you have watched Beth thinking about, planning, developing, and organizing her essay. It is now time to get a complete first draft down on paper. Here is Beth's first draft.

The Way We Learn

1  Everyone learns in different ways. Some people learn by watching, some by reading, and others by themselves. The way people learn is a part of who they are. Knowing how we learn can help us understand ourselves better. I know that I learn from many things in life.

2  I have discovered that I learn a lot by taking risks. Being at this college was a risk. I have a boyfriend back home, we want to get married someday. We are hoping for a spring wedding with all of our friends and family. I left my boyfriend to come here. Coming here was a risk to our relationship. But if I am ever going to make it, I have to be willing to take risks.
I also benefit from watching other people. When my cousin became heavily involved with gangs, I watched my cousin live in constant fear. By watching my cousin, I made a conscious decision to be nothing like my cousin. By watching and understanding my cousin's life, I learned to live mine better.

I believe that I learn from making mistakes. When I was in high school, I didn’t study for a major science test. So I cheated. My sister cheated once. I was so scared to do it. The teacher caught me. The teacher took the time to talk to me about the mistake I was making. This mistake made me reevaluate my education. I could have laughed off the cheating experience. I decided to slow down and learn from the experience.

People can learn about life from almost anything they do. They just have to be willing to do so. When I take risks, I think about what I will learn. I definitely try to learn as much as I can from watching others. When I make mistakes, I figure out why I made each mistake and how to avoid it a second time.

Your First Draft Now write a complete first draft of your essay on learning.

Helpful Hints

Need more ideas now that you are going to write? Generate more ideas through prewriting; visit Prewriting in MyWritingLab to find out how.

Still struggling with your thesis statement? Your thesis should guide the rest of your paper. The Thesis Statement in MyWritingLab can help you focus and refine this important sentence in your essay.