

WRITING ESSENTIALS

SPRING COURSE 2018



"Get it down. Take chances. It may be bad, but it's the only way you can do anything really good."

--William Faulkner

INTRODUCTION TO “WRITING ESSENTIALS” COURSE

Writing Essentials course aims to help students improve their writing skills in variety of texts. The various problem-solving activities and exercises included in the course are designed to help students discover what a well-written text is and how it is different from a series of poorly connected sentences. Once the students become aware of the differences, they then have the opportunity to practice skills that are needed in order to write effectively. This three-semester course will

concentrate on the skills that are specific to the writing of English. The approach is ***learning by doing***. By completing certain tasks such as organizing ideas, using linking words and phrases, students become aware of what a well-written texts looks like and is comprised of. The course is attended for adult learners of all kinds, thus, students studying business English can gain from the program as much as college students studying literature and grammar, or house-wives expanding their

vocabulary and fluency. The skills practiced through the course are useful for all kinds of writing. This course aims to develop your writing in a huge range of styles and formats - from **history essays, science reports, stories, articles, memos, opinions to formal and informal letters and business reports**. It helps develop essential skills, such as identifying your **audience**, clarifying the **purpose** of the writing and judging the appropriate **style**.

Learning by Doing

Learners generally find that doing something (being active) is more interesting than being told about it (being passive), and that to understand something involves using own resources to solve problems. More importantly experience shows that **Learning by Doing** is interesting, efficient and most importantly successful.



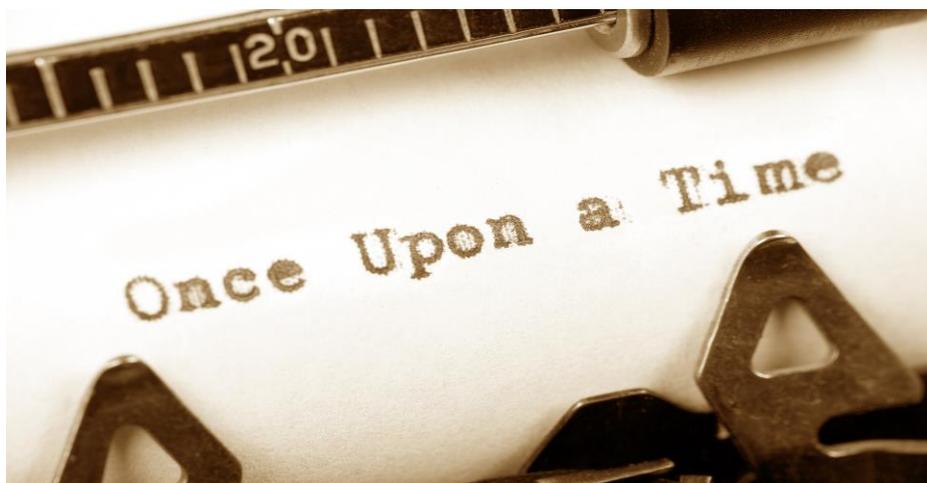
PROBLEMS IN WRITING

Here are some of the reasons why student's writing may be ineffective and difficult to understand.

- I. The ideas may not be presented in an order that makes sense to a reader.
- II. The relation between ideas may not be clear because of absence or inappropriate use of linking words.
- III. The writer's attitude to what he or she is writing may not be clear: Is the writer describing, suggesting or criticizing something?
- IV. Grouping ideas into paragraphs (logical organization) ideas are not grouped together into distinct paragraphs.
- V. Beginning of a paragraph – or beginning of a longer texts-might not start the reader in the right direction.

Ending of a paragraph – or ending of a longer text – may not end appropriately.
- VI. A text may contain ideas that are not relevant to what the writer wants to express, or the writer may find it difficult to think of enough ideas.
- VII. The sentences may not have clear punctuations: There may be commas and periods without any good reason, or there may be no punctuation where there should be.

Cohesive Ties are words and phrases that join sentences into unified, well-integrated, cohesive texts.



APPROACH AND SOLUTIONS TO MOST FREQUENT PROBLEMS

TYPES OF EXERCISES

Each lesson contains a different combination of exercises and activities. **WHAT:** A description of what each exercise type consists of. **WHY:** The reason for each exercise type within the overall objective of learning to write better. **HOW:** General suggestions on how each type of exercises can be approached.

I. ORGANIZING IDEAS: Selecting and ordering information.

WHAT The sentences of the text appear in random order. Students try to recompose the text by deciding on the correct order of the sentences.

WHY The objective to find the right order of the sentences is not the only purpose. In addition to group work and discussion, this exercise helps understand the importance of “cohesive ties” in joining sentences together into unified wholes.

HOW The paragraphs are cut into strips so that each strip has one sentence. This makes it easier for students to move the sentences around into different arrangements.

II. RELATING IDEAS: Linking Words & Phrases

A linking word is defined as a word or phrase that shows the logical relation between sentences or between clauses. Structurally there are three kinds of linking words and phrases that we are going to be focusing on:

Transitioning words like *however, well, besides, and for instance*, join two sentences by meaning. They are generally set off by commas, no matter what positions they are in, because, in a sense they interrupt the structure of the sentence. **Conjunctions** joining two independent clauses, such as *and, so, but, and or*: They show a connection in meaning between the two clauses, and are generally preceded by a comma.

Subordinating conjunctions such as *because, although*, require no commas to set it off, however, the depended clause is followed by a comma if it begins a sentence. Ex: I can't go *because* I'm working. *Because* I'm working, I can't go.

WHAT The first linking words and phrases in each passage are underlined. Students are asked to explain what these words mean, how they link ideas and how are they punctuated. For the

rest of the passage the linking words have been removed, and students must supply a suitable word to fill the blank, either by choosing a word from a list or thinking of a word by themselves.

WHY Students who are learning English often have difficulty using linking words and phrases to show relationship between sentences. Correct and appropriate use of these words and phrases helps hold a piece or writing together and gives readers clues to the writers meaning.

HOW Working in groups of two or more, students would first read the whole text to understand the meaning, and then discuss the underlined words and phrases in the first part of the text, answering the questions given in the instructions.

III. SHOWING ATTITUDE

An attitude word can be defined as a word or a phrase that shows how the writer feels about what he or she is writing. For example the words in bold text bellow are attitude words: *Obviously if the scandal became public knowledge, some politicians would have to resign, and personally, I don't think that would be such a bad thing.*

WHAT The attitude words have been removed from text and students supply an appropriate word to fill the blank by choosing from a given list.

WHY Words that show the writers feeling or attitude toward a subject are especially important when a piece of writing expresses opinion such as a personal letter, or an argumentative essay. Such words greatly strengthen a piece of writing that intends to convince readers of something.

HOW Groups of two or more, students would first read the text to understand the meaning, and discuss the underlined phrases in the part of the text, answering the questions given in the instructions.

IV. GROUPING IDEAS: Logical Organization

The way you organize your information depends on the kind of paragraph you are writing. If you are telling a story the logical organization of the sentences will be chronological, that is, according to **time order**. If you are describing what your bedroom looks like, you will organize details according where they are located, that is, **spatial order**. Finally, if you are discussing examples, causes, effects, or reasons, you will probably use **order of importance**.

WHAT Several paragraphs of different text are presented to the student for analyzing.

WHY Identifying the method of organization used in each paragraph will help the students how he or she should organize their own writings.

HOW In groups read the following paragraphs and identify one of the three methods of organization used in each paragraph.

V. WRITING PARAGRAPHS: First and Last Sentence

Well-written paragraphs make a written text easier to understand. Each paragraph should usually have first sentence that introduces or leads into the rest of the paragraph, and a final sentence that summarizes the paragraph (makes a final point) or a sentence that leads into the next paragraph.



In a long text, like a letter or a report, the first paragraph should get the reader interested in the, and usually should outline the main points.

WHAT There are several types of exercises such as *choosing the best answer from the list; making up a suitable answer to fill a blank; and writing the rest of an incomplete text.*

WHY Well-written paragraphs allow rapid and efficient reading of the text. It should be possible for a reader to skim through a long passage by reading the first paragraph, then the first sentence of any successive paragraph, and the final paragraph, to get an overall idea what the text contains.

HOW Again, students work in groups when making choices. The whole class will discuss the findings of each group. If they work as individuals the same follow-up applies as if they were working in a group.

VI. SELECTING AND ORDERING INFORMATION

These exercises are designed to make students aware of what makes something relevant by forcing them to consider not only **what** they are writing, but also **why** are they writing and to **whom**.

WHAT Students are given a beginning of a written text, such as a letter, and are asked to complete it. They are given a long

WRITING TIP

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS

- Brush up on the basic principles of writing, grammar and spelling.
- Write like it's your job and practice regularly.
- Read more so you develop an eye for what effective writing looks like.



list of ideas for possible inclusion. Students will write the complete text, adding linking words, phrases, sentences, and concluding paragraphs where necessary.

WHY Students often complain about not having enough ideas on any given topic to include in their written piece. In these exercises, a list of ideas is given to the students; then they work to identify relevant and less relevant ideas. *In doing so they realize the difference in **having an idea and choosing to use it.***

HOW Each individual should first read through the list silently, making a note of the ideas he or she would include. After that, all together will go through the list marking the ideas all students agree on and noting the ideas where there is a disagreement. The disputed ideas will be discussed as thoroughly as time allows.



VII. PUNCTUATING

Punctuation marks are **essential** when you are writing. They show the reader where sentences start and finish and if they are used properly they make your writing easy to understand. This part of the course gives practical guidance on how to use commas, semicolons, and other types of punctuation correctly, so that your writing will always be **clear** and **effective**.

Punctuation is used to create sense, *clarity and stress* in sentences. You use punctuation marks to structure and organize your writing.

WHAT Punctuation exercises cover most uses of the main punctuation marks such as: periods, commas, colons, and semicolons, as well as proper use of capital letters and apostrophes.

WHY Badly punctuated writing is usually difficult to understand and gives an impression of sloppiness. Students can usually learn some basic punctuation rules easily that help them make their writing understandable to readers.

ESL Writing Tips



- > Organize your thoughts first
- > Write a first draft, then edit it
- > Show the connections between ideas with clear transitions
- > Always proofread your work.

HOW Students first study models of correct punctuation and capitalization and discuss the rules that underline their uses.

Discussing why punctuation is used helps students establish the “rules” they need to do the rest of the exercises. Class discussion helps to lead to a “correct” version. This exercise helps students build awareness of why they punctuate things in a certain way.

See why punctuation is important - no punctuation at all:

perhaps you dont always need to use commas periods colons etc to make sentences clear when i am in a hurry tired cold lazy or angry i sometimes leave out punctuation marks grammar is stupid i can write without it and dont need it my uncle Harry once said he was not very clever and i never understood a word he wrote to me i think ill learn some punctuation not too much enough to write to Uncle Harry he needs some help

See why punctuation is important - with punctuation:

Perhaps you don't always need to use commas, periods, colons etc. to make sentences clear. When I am in a hurry, tired, cold, lazy, or angry I sometimes leave out punctuation marks. "Grammar is stupid! I can write without it and don't need it," my uncle Harry once said. He was not very clever, and I never understood a word he wrote to me. I think I'll learn some punctuation - not too much, enough to write to Uncle Harry. He needs some help!



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【受付】水・金 12:00~21:00
火・木・土 10:00~21:00