MacKinnon Middle School
Writing Handbook
Table of Contents

● The Five-Paragraph Essay
● Argumentative Essay
● Persuasive Writing Prompt
● Narrative/Speculative Writing
● Informative/Explanatory Writing
● Answering Open-Ended Questions
● Works Cited Page (M.L.A. Style)
● MLA Formatting
● Grammar - Basic Rules & Conventions
● Vocabulary Development
● Transition Words in their Writing
● Over-Used Words
● Basic Punctuation
● Writing a Perfect Paragraph
● Research Synthesis Task
● Open-Ended Scoring Rubric
● Student Exemplars
Writing the Five Paragraph Essay

The five paragraph essay is the most basic model for essay writing. The five paragraph essay format emphasizes organization and the inclusion of supporting details.

**Paragraph One- Introduction:**

This paragraph introduces the topic. It should include: A hook to grab the reader's attention, a statement of the topic of the paper/ a clear thesis statement, and THREE clear subtopics or strong arguments in support of the thesis.

**Paragraph Two- Body Paragraph #1:**

This paragraph breaks down the FIRST of three arguments or subtopics. It is a good idea to make this your STRONGEST argument or most logical subtopic. Your first body paragraph should include a TOPIC SENTENCE which clearly states the first argument/ subtopic. It also includes detail sentences that focus ONLY on subtopic/argument #1. These sentences EXPLAIN your topic and provide examples and details. Wrap up the first body paragraph with a restated version of your topic sentence and connect it to your second argument/ subtopic.

**Paragraph Three: Body Paragraph #2:**

This paragraph breaks down the SECOND argument or subtopic. Because this paragraph is in the middle of your paper, it is a good idea to choose the weakest argument or simplest subtopic for this paragraph. Again, this paragraph should include a topic sentence that clearly states your argument/ subtopic; detail sentences that explain, illustrate, or add support; and a concluding sentence that restates your topic sentence and/or connects to the next topic.

**Paragraph Four: Body Paragraph #3:**

This paragraph breaks down the THIRD argument or subtopic of your essay. This is the last informational paragraph, so choose a strong and lasting argument or subtopic. Include a topic sentence, details and examples, and a concluding sentence that restates and summarizes your paragraph's topic.

**Paragraph Five: Concluding Paragraph**

This paragraph restates the paper's topic or thesis in an original way. DO NOT simply copy the thesis statement from the opening paragraph. Use the information you have presented throughout the essay to give the reader a new perspective on your thesis. Remind the reader of your three major arguments or subtopics. Conclude your paper with a final, effective thought or call to action.
Argumentative Essay

- **Purpose:** to persuade the audience to agree with his or her opinion about a controversial topic.
- Must be six paragraphs.

**Structure:** (See Persuasive Writing)

- Paragraph 1: Introduction
- Paragraph 2: First reason
- Paragraph 3: Second reason
- Paragraph 4: Third reason
- Paragraph 5: Counter argument and Refutation
  - Use the following format or something similar:
  
  I understand that [a strong reason that supports the other side of the argument]; however, [rebut/refute that reason with a stronger reason (in other words, prove that reason to be wrong or untrue)].

- Paragraph 6: Conclusion

- Can be referred to as a persuasive essay.
- Choose a topic that can be argued.
- You can argue either for (pro) or against (con).
- Your job: convince your readers that your opinion about a topic (your thesis statement) is the most valid viewpoint.
- The essay needs to be balanced- it must include an opposing viewpoint, or counterargument.
- With every counter argument, you must offer a refutation. (a response to the counterargument that disproves it)
Persuasive Writing Prompt

First Paragraph:
Attention grabber
3 reasons- main reasons to support your thesis
Thesis statement (your viewpoint)

Second Paragraph:

1st Main Reason (To begin with, First, .....)
● Support this main reason with 3 additional supports (data, facts, etc)
● Closing sentence statement (refer back to thesis statement, but do not copy it word for word)

Third Paragraph
2nd Main Reason (Additionally, Second, .....)
● Support this main reason with 3 additional supports (data, facts, etc)
● Closing sentence statement (refer back to thesis statement, but do not copy it word for word)

Fourth Paragraph
3rd Main Reason (Finally, .....)
● Support this main reason with 3 additional supports (data, facts, etc)
● Closing sentence statement (refer back to thesis statement, but do not copy it word for word)

Fifth Paragraph
● Restate thesis (put into different words)
● Restate reasons (put into different words)
● Action statement*** ( A call to action...)

*PLAN YOUR WRITING!!
*Anecdote, Statistic, Expert Opinion- use these for supporting details
*Magic number is 3!!- 3 main reasons each supported by 3 supporting details.
*Imagine......

Narrative/Speculative Writing

When a student is asked to write a narrative/ speculative piece, they are being asked to write a story. Some narrative prompts ask for personal experience, but some prompts provide details to be included. What is most important with a narrative piece is that a story includes:

a beginning
In the beginning of the year, students learn elements of a short story. In this unit, students learn the various parts that go into story format, called the Plot Diagram. These elements include:

**exposition**- what the reader is “exposed” to- setting and characters

**inciting incident**- first mention of a problem in the story.

**rising action**- all the actions and story-line elements unfold

**climax**- the most intense, suspenseful part of a story

**falling action**- how the characters and story elements handle the problem (climax)

**resolution/denouement**- where does the author leave the characters? How is it resolved?

Throughout the course of the first marking period, students identify these elements in reading, as well as their own writing. The Plot Diagram is consistently referred to throughout the school year. In recognizing these plot diagram elements, students are encouraged to use these elements in their own writing.

One of the first elements to encourage in student narrative writing is **prewriting**. Students benefit from graphic organizers, such as the attached document.

Just one example of a graphic model is called “The Secret Planner”. It was designed specifically for narrative writing to organize thoughts, ideas, and plot diagram elements within a five minute prewriting frame. This stage in student writing is crucial for content and organization, which is the largest block on the six-point rubric. This rubric has also been attached for reference, and will be referred to later.

In middle school **writing**, students are asked incorporate something call a **compositional risk**. Simply, this is a risk they take in their writing! A learning risk that builds each year in narrative writing is punctuating dialogue. Dialogue can be very difficult for students because punctuation is key for understanding. For example:

Sentence A: Linda was wondering if Taylor was going to the dance.

Sentence B: Linda asked, “Taylor, are you going to the dance?”

It is *easier* for students to write sentence A, and more of a risk to get the punctuation correct in sentence B. Though foundational punctuation of dialogue may be introduced in the younger grades (5th and 6th) this is not a skill that is mastered until 7th and 8th.
Once students identify their characters, setting, problem, and solution in a prewriting organizer, students develop their story from beginning to end. Other compositional risks in narrative writing include figurative language techniques, such as onomatopoeia, similes, metaphors, alliteration, flashback, allusions, idioms, puns, imagery, and personification. Students are encouraged to incorporate these risks in the drafting stage of essay writing.

After the pre write and draft phrase, students are encouraged to conference. Student conferencing with teachers about their writing is crucial for development; however, due to content area time constraints, peer revision is also suitable and encouraged. This not only strengthens the student-reader, but the student-writer as well.

**Self-assessment** is not only being pushed from the Common Core, but in ALL content areas. Students can self-assess their writing by using the six-point rubric, or a rubric you provide for the written assignment. This guide helps them throughout their writing, as well as a post-reflection on their skills. Student-based assessment is not the final assessment; however, it does encourage ownership, pride, and work-ethic.

Overall, narrative writing enables creativity in the student-author, and with proper guidance, support, and expectation, student writing will show growth and development in all content areas.

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**Informative/Explanatory Writing**

Examples of informative/explanatory writing might include:

- explaining a process
- developing a concept
- providing new knowledge

This type of writing might focus on:

- providing explanations of why or how
- explaining behaviors or functions
- defining, enumerating or clarifying different type
- categorical
- part-to-whole relationships
- cause and effect
- comparing and contrasting

➔ For example, explaining how by recounting past events is useful in social studies, while explaining how by relating step-by-step procedures is beneficial in math and science.
Examples/ Forms of Informative Writing:

- Reports
- Informative speeches
- Research
- Essays
- Poetry
- Brochures
- Introductions
- Teaching
- Presentations
- Memoirs
- Messages
- Letters
- Biographies
- Autobiographies
- Experiments
- Testimonies
- Itinerary

Structure of an Essay:

- The Introduction:
  - The purpose of an introduction is to grab the reader’s attention and to let the reader know what the essay is about.
  - The writer may also use the introduction to draw the reader into the historical setting of the essay.
  - When writing a formal essay, the introduction should include a thesis statement, a sentence that makes the author’s point of view apparent. An example of this is, “The colonies were right to separate from Great Britain.” A transition sentence should be used to list the supporting facts for the thesis and to let the reader know what will be discussed in the body of the essay.

- The Body:
  - The body of an essay is where the writer supports the thesis.
  - A five paragraph essay will have three paragraphs in the body.
  - Each of those paragraphs will address a different topic and give details to support that topic.
    - For example, in the essay about the colonies separating from Great Britain, the first body paragraph will talk about taxes and could discuss The Stamp...
Act, Tea Act, and Sugar Act as specific details to explain why taxes were an important issue.

- The next paragraph would discuss the governmental oppression and the final support paragraph would discuss the British greed. It is important that the body paragraphs discuss the supporting details in the order that they were listed in introductory paragraph.

- The Conclusion:
  - The purpose of a conclusion is to ensure that the reader remembers the essay after they are done reading.
  - While it does repeat the writer’s opinion, it does not restate the thesis or summarize the entire essay. New information should never be presented in the conclusion

Answering Open-Ended Questions

1. Read the question and make sure you understand it.
2. Underline key words in the question.
3. Plan what you want to say first.
4. Use the RSSE strategy to write your response.
5. Answer all the parts of the question (bullets).
6. Use transition words.
7. Check your grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation when you finish.
8. WRITE NEATLY!

Structure

1. R- restate the question- this is the first sentence of your paragraph(s)
2. S- support from text (In the text..., In the story..., In paragraph 3 in stated...etc.).
   - ex: In the story it states, “________________________”

   - ex: On page _____ in the story it says, “________________________”
   - ex: In paragraph/line/stanza ___ on page ____ the author writes, “____________________”

3. S- support again in your own words.
   - ex: This quote means ________________
   - ex: This quote shows/demonstrates that ________________
4. E- extend or end your thoughts (I can connect to this because....., This reminds me of.....,
etc.).

**Self: Connecting to the text through your own personal experience**

ex: Just like in the story, I ____________________
ex: I can relate to this because ____________________

**Text: Connecting ideas in the reading selection to ideas in other stories, movies, or articles**

ex: This story reminds me of the story/movie [insert title here] because ____________________

**World: Connecting ideas in a reading selection to history or current events in the world**

ex: Just like in this story, throughout the world people ____________________
ex: Similar to this story, [insert name of historical person/event] ____________________
ex: This story reminds me of [insert name of historical person/event] ____________________

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**Works Cited Page (M.L.A. Style)**

**Citations Within the Document:**
Within the document you should place a parenthetical citation with enough information to send your reader to the correct source in your Works Cited list (Marcuse 197). [Note: no commas and the period goes outside of the parentheses.]

If more than one work by the same author is used, a shortened version of the title is given in the citation: “(Marcuse, *Survey* 197).”

**When creating your Works Cited Page, remember to:**
- Begin the Works Cited on a new page, but number consecutively (for example, if the last page of your essay is page 3, the Works Cited is page 4).
- Alphabetize each entry by first letter.
- Italicize all titles of books, magazines, films, etc. No underlining.
- Put quotation marks around the titles of poems, short stories, and articles.
- Indent the 2nd line and all subsequent lines of each citation.
- Double-space all entries.

**Works Cited Entries** - Each citation has three parts separated by periods: Author’s name. Book Title. Publication Information.
- **The author’s name should include:**
  - Last name, first
  - Two or more authors: the second author is listed first name first
  - Three or more authors: the third and subsequent authors are marked as “et al.”
  - The editor of an anthology: listed as last name, first name, ed.
The title should include:
- "Title of Article, or story, poem, or song"
- *Title of Book* (Italicize the book title. Always include the book’s subtitle. [ex: *Twelfth Night: Or What You Will*] Capitalize the first letter of all words in the title, except internal short prepositions and articles: (the of to a at.)

Publication information should include:
- The place of publication:
  - The name of the publisher [You may use a shortened form of the publishers name as long as it’s clear. (ex: “Holt” instead of “Holt, Reinhart, and Wintson.”)]
  - The date of publication.
  - Page numbers
  - Publication medium, such as: Print, Web, Performance, DVD, or T.V.
  - The date of access for Web sources.
Sample Works Cited Entries

Books:

One Author


Two or More Authors

More than Three Authors

No Authors or Anonymous Author

Magazines and Newspapers:


Unsigned articles:

Daily Newspaper:
“Study Labels Alcohol Fuel as Threat to Food Supply.” *Dallas Times Herald*.

16 mar. 1980: A: Print. [Note section number]

Web Site:
Waxman, Sharon. “From King of Pop to Wacko Jacko: A Tragedy in Black and White.”


Movie or Video:

First & Last Name

Teacher Name

Class or Period

Due Date

MLA Formatting

1) First line of every paragraph is indented.

2) Everything is equally double-spaced.

3) Everything is size 12 font.

4) Nothing in title is bold or underlined.

5) Last name and page number in upper right header.
Grammar - Basic Rules & Conventions

NJASK/PARCC: Students in grades 6-8 are expected to demonstrate command of the conventions of the English language when writing and speaking. The six-point NJASK Holistic Scoring Rubric for gr. 6-8 timed writings places a heavier emphasis upon CONTENT & ORGANIZATION. However, once a score is determined for CONTENT & ORGANIZATION, grammar and mechanics are generally considered as follows:

- **If grammatical errors/patterns of errors are so evident that meaning is impaired, then 1 point would be deducted from the original score.**
- **If grammatical errors are minor and do not detract from the reader's ability to understand content, the original score for CONTENT & ORGANIZATION would stand as the final score.**
- **PARCC seems to continue to rate, on a scale of 1-5, the impact of “patterns of errors in grammar and usage” upon meaning.**

Grammar/mechanics criteria in the 6-point NJASK Holistic Scoring Rubric (gr. 6-8):

**A. USAGE:** tense formation, subject-verb agreement, pronoun usage/agreement, word choice/meaning, and proper modifiers.

**B. SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION:** variety of type/structure/length, and correct construction.

**C. MECHANICS:** Spelling, Capitalization, Punctuation

Errors in a text interfere with meaning; sentence fragments, misspellings, and poor usage create a visual picture of the author as uneducated, careless or lazy.

- **Average student:** write it, hand it in
- **Above-average student:** write it, edit it, rewrite it, hand it in
- **Exceptional student:** write, edit it, rewrite it, edit it, rewrite it, hand it in
- **Professional writer:** write it, edit it, rewrite it, edit it, rewrite it, edit it, rewrite it, edit it, rewrite it, edit it, rewrite it, edit it, rewrite it, edit it, hand it in.

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**Standard English.** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.3b: Recognize and observe differences between the conventions of spoken and written standard English. **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.1e:** Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.*

**Formal vs. informal language.** Although informal spoken language is generally accepted in everyday conversation, **students should not use informal language such as slang, texting shortcuts, emoticons, shortened words, or incorrect grammar when writing formal essays or open-ended responses in school; it is not the appropriate “time or place”**. Students need to develop a growing awareness of situations when certain styles of speaking and writing may or may not be acceptable, and one way that teachers can collectively foster this is through asking students to **TAP before writing in order to establish the following:** T – **type of writing assigned; A – who is the intended audience?; and P – what is the purpose? of the writing.**

- The word “you” is one of the most overused words in English. In formal writing, “you” should only be used to refer to “you, the reader” (2nd person), not someone, anyone, or everyone! The 2nd person point-of-view is used in such writing as advice columns; it is rarely
used in academic writing. (The only time “you” is appropriate in an essay is if it is used as part of a rhetorical question in a “hook” strategy that draws the reader into the first paragraph. (Imagine this: you barely studied for this History test, and your buddy snapped pictures of his completed study guide. The teacher lets students use cell phones in this classroom because he trusts that students will “make appropriate decisions.” Your cell phone is in your pocket; it would be so easy to cheat! Would you?)

INCORRECT: If you add one and one, you get two. CORRECT: One plus one equals two.
INCORRECT: You have to pay $3.50 for admission. CORRECT: The movie costs $3.50.
INCORRECT: If you’re late for school, you’ll get in trouble. CORRECT: Students who are late for school will get in trouble.
INCORRECT: You have to pay taxes when you grow up. CORRECT: All people have to pay taxes when they grow up.

Contractions and possessives. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.2c: Use an apostrophe to form contractions and frequently occurring possessives.

CONTRACTIONS: Contractions are not generally used in formal essay writing because they are considered informal language. Contractions would be appropriate, however, in written dialogue in a story if they reflect how the character would naturally speak.

Common gr. 7 errors:
• Should’ve/could’ve/would’ve are contractions for should HAVE, could HAVE, and would HAVE. Because of the sound of those contractions, students often write them incorrectly, as follows: should of/could of/would of. (Could is a helping verb and have is the main verb in the verb phrase; of is a preposition and never a verb).
• Some students confuse plurals with possessives:
  • cats is plural (The cats have black fur)
  • cat’s is either possessive OR a contraction (depending upon its use in a sentence).
    • ex: The cat’s fur is black. (possessive)
    • ex: The cat’s clawing the chair. (cat is)
    • ex: The cat’s disappeared. (cat has)

POSSSESSIVES:
• Singular: Add ‘s (EX: the kid’s bike) (exceptions are old-fashioned or historical names: Achilles’ heel, Jesus’ words)
• Plural: If the plural ends in -s, just add an apostrophe (EX: the kids’ bike = two or more kids sharing the same bike; the kids’ bikes = two or more kids with different bikes). If the plural doesn’t end in –s. add an apostrophe and an –s (EX: women’s).

  • Mr. and Mrs. Jones have a new car.
  • The Joneses have a new car. (plural)
  • Mr. Jones’s car is new. (singular possessive)
  • The Joneses’ car is new (plural possessive)

• If two people own the same thing, use -’s for only the second person.
• (EX: Adam and Debbie’s baby)

• Inanimate objects don’t usually own things, but some possessives are okay: (EX: two months’ vacation, three dollars’ worth, the two razors’ edges, the chair’s legs). Formal writing: the chair leg or the leg of the chair.

• OKAY: my bike’s tire. BETTER: my bike tire (I own the tire — the bike doesn’t own it) or the tire of my bike.

**Parts of Speech.** **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.1a:** Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences.

**Noun:** names a person, place, thing, idea (democracy, truth), or idea (beauty, hatred, boredom)

**Pronoun:** takes the place of a noun (or of a group of words acting as a noun). The noun being replaced is the antecedent. There are three cases: subjective, objective, and possessive. Pronouns must agree with antecedents in gender, number, and person.

**Verb:** ACTION or LINKING (state of being: mainly forms of the verb “be”). Some words can be action or linking verbs, depending upon how they are used in the sentence).

**Adjective:** describes nouns or pronouns and answers the following questions: How many, which ones, or what kind

**Adverb:** modifies verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs and answers the following questions: where/when/how/how often/how long/how much. Many adverbs are formed by adding –ly to the adjective.

**Nouns.** **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.1b:** Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns.

**REGULAR PLURAL NOUNS:**
- Usually add -s (EX: wave, waves)
- If noun ends in o, usually add –es: (EX: hero, heroes; potato, potatoes)
- If noun ends in s, x, or sh, add –es: (EX: glass, glasses; box, boxes)
- If noun ends in y and there’s a vowel (a, e, i, o, u) before the y, add –s: (EX: play, plays; monkey, monkeys; donkey, donkeys)
- If the word ends in y and there’s a consonant before the y, change the y to i and add –es (EX: party, parties; duty, duties)
- If a proper noun ends in y, just add –s: (EX: the Kennedys, the Finleys)
- If a compound noun has a main noun in it, add the –s to the main noun: (EX: two fathers-in-law; two chiefs of staff)
- If a compound noun has no main noun in it, add the –s at the end: (EX: two follow-ups; two trade-ins)

**IRREGULAR PLURAL NOUNS:**
Pronouns. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.1f: Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.1c: Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.1d: Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).*

PRONOUN-ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT:

1. **The pronoun needs to clearly refer to the noun closest to it (called the antecedent).**
   
   WRONG: There was a knock at my door. *It* was my mother. (*It* doesn’t refer to door)
   
   CORRECT: There was a knock at my door. *Mother* had arrived.
   
   WRONG: My cat was outdoors, so I grabbed my flashlight and listened for *its* purr.
   
   CORRECT: My cat was outdoors, so I grabbed my flashlight and listened for *Magic’s* purr.

2. **Pronouns must agree with antecedent in gender.**
   
   WRONG: Each of the girls put *his* stuff into the car.
   
   CORRECT: Each of the girls put *her* stuff into the car.

3. **Pronouns must agree with antecedents in number (i.e., singular pronouns should refer to singular antecedents, and plural pronouns should refer to plural antecedents).**
   
   INCORRECT: A baseball player leads an exciting life because *they* get to travel.
   
   CORRECT: A baseball player leads an exciting life because *he* gets to travel.

4. **Pronouns must agree with antecedents in person (1st, 2nd, 3rd):**
   
   INCORRECT: The new students were overwhelmed, but they soon learned that with hard work *you* can make good grades.
   
   CORRECT: The new students were overwhelmed, but they soon learned that with hard work *they* can succeed.

Pronouns. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.1a: Use relative pronouns (who, whose, whom, which, that) and relative adverbs (where, when, why).

**Who (subject pronoun); Whom (object pronoun):** if you can substitute “she” for the troublesome word in the sentence, you should use “who.” If you can substitute “her,” the word should be “whom.”

For example, “Who/whom was supposed to walk the dog this morning?” Ask yourself which one of the following sounds correct: “She was supposed to walk the dog this morning,” or “Her was supposed to walk the dog this morning”? Clearly she; therefore “who. “

For example, “To who/whom were you speaking?” can easily be answered: “I was speaking to her,” therefore, “whom” is the correct choice.

Pronouns. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.1a: Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, and possessive).
1. **Subject pronouns** function as the *subject* of the sentence: I, you, he/she/it, we they, who.

2. **Object pronouns** cannot function as the subject of a sentence: me, you, her, him, it, us, us, them, whom. They can only function as *objects* of the sentence; they receive the action.

   - Ex: He and I went to the store (not him and me went to the store). Ex: He gave her a rose.

   *After a linking verb, in formal writing one should use the subject form of a pronoun:*

   - Ex: It was he. It is I. It was she who left. (normal word order: He was it.) She is taller than I (am). The winner is she. (She is the winner)

3. **Possessive pronouns** show ownership - no apostrophes (my, mine, your, yours, her, his, its, our, ours, their, theirs, whose).

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**Verbs.** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.1d: Form and use regular and irregular verbs.

1. **REGULAR VERBS:** add –ed to change from present to past tense

2. **IRREGULAR VERBS:** Sometimes there is a pattern to irregular verbs:
   - Blow/blew/blown (as in "He had blown his line many times at rehearsal" i.e., happened many times)
   - Grow/grew/grown, Blow/blew/blown
   - Sell/sold/sold, Tell/told/told

   Often, however, there is no pattern to irregular verbs, such as in these examples:
   - Ride/rode/ridden, Slide/slid/slid, Wake/woke/woken, Take/took/taken, Eat/ate/eaten, Beat/beat/beaten, Drink/drank/drunk, Think/thought/thought, Sing/sang/sung, Fling/flung/flung

---

**Verb tenses.** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.1c: Use modal auxiliaries (e.g., can, may, must) to convey various conditions. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.1e: Form and use the simple (e.g., I walked; I walk; I will walk). CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.1b: Form and use the progressive (e.g., I was walking; I am walking; I will be walking). CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.1b: Form and use the perfect (e.g., I had walked; I have walked; I will have walked). CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.1c: Use verb tense to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.1d: Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.*

**The six tenses of verbs let us know when the action happens:**

- Present tense: I eat pizza often.
- Past tense: I ate pizza last night.
- Future tense: I will eat pizza later today.
- Present perfect tense: I have eaten pizza many times.
- Past perfect tense: I had eaten pizza just before you arrived.
Future perfect tense: I will have eaten pizza at least a million times before the year 2000.

The six progressive forms of verbs show that the action continues for awhile:
- Present progressive: I am eating pizza now.
- Past progressive: I was eating pizza when you called.
- Future progressive: I will be eating pizza at 8:30 tonight.
- Present perfect progressive: I have been eating pizza all day.
- Past perfect progressive: I had been eating pizza for three hours when Mom said my eyeballs looked like pepperoni.
- Future perfect progressive: I will have been eating pizza for five hours nonstop when bedtime rolls around.

WEAK: I got home late and Mom fusses at me for not calling to let her know where I will be
- I got home = past tense
- Mom fusses = present tense
- Where I will be = future tense

BETTER: I got home late and Mom fussed at me for not calling to let her know where I had been.
- I got home = past tense
- Mom fussed = past tense
- Where I had been = past perfect tense

Verb voice. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1b: Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice.

Generally, writing in active voice is much preferred over writing in passive voice:

PASSIVE (weak writing): The ball was hit, a score was kept, and eventually the game was won. Strong emotions were felt by the fans and much applause was heard.
ACTIVE (strong writing): In the bottom of the ninth inning, Slugger Batson slammed the ball across the fence, and every player on the loaded bases slid home. Our team won 10-8! The crowd exploded in applause!

However, there are some exceptions when the passive voice should be used:
- The doer of the action is unimportant or unknown. (School is canceled today.)
- The writer wants to be polite or you want to soften a strong statement. (Your application was rejected. - passive. We rejected your application. - active)
- The writer wants to emphasize the thing being spoken about rather than the person who does the action. (This big blue ribbon will be given to the winner).
- The writer wants to write in a scientific or impersonal manner. (The mice were separated into two groups. - passive. My lab partner and I separated the mice into two groups. - active)

Sentence structure / Subject-verb agreement. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.1f: Ensure subject-verb
SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT:

1. When the subject of a sentence is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by *and*, use a plural verb. *She and her friends are* at the fair.

2. When two or more singular nouns or pronouns are connected by *or* or *nor*, use a singular verb. *The book or the pen is* in the drawer.

3. When a compound subject contains both a singular and a plural noun or pronoun joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb should agree with the part of the subject that is nearer the verb. *The boy or his friends run* every day. *His friends or the boy runs* every day.

4. *Doesn't* is a contraction of “does not” and should be used only with a singular subject. *Don't* is a contraction of “do not” and should be used only with a plural subject. The exception to this rule appears in the case of the first person and second person pronouns I and you. With these pronouns, the contraction don't should be used. *He doesn't like* it. *They don't like* it.

5. Do not be misled by a phrase that comes between the subject and the verb. *The verb agrees with the subject, not with a noun or pronoun in the phrase.*

   One of the boxes is open
   The people who listen to that music are few.
   The team captain, as well as his players, is anxious.
   The book, including all the chapters in the first section, is boring.
   The woman with all the dogs walks down my street.

6. The words *each, each one, either, neither, everyone, everybody, anybody, anyone, nobody, somebody, someone*, and *no one* are singular and require a singular verb.

   Each of these hot dogs is juicy.
   Everybody knows Mr. Jones.
   Either is correct.

7. Nouns such as civics, mathematics, dollars, measles, and news require singular verbs.

   The news is on at six.
   Note: the word *dollars* is a special case. When talking about an amount of money, it requires a singular verb, but when referring to the dollars themselves, a plural verb is required.

   Five dollars is a lot of money.
   Dollars are often used instead of rubles in Russia.

8. Nouns such as scissors, tweezers, trousers, and shears require plural verbs. (There are two parts to these things.)

   These scissors are dull.
Those trousers are made of wool.

9. In sentences beginning with *there is* or *there are*, the subject follows the verb. Since there is not the subject, the verb agrees with what follows.

There are many questions.
There is a question.

10. Collective nouns are words that imply more than one person, but they can be considered singular or plural. Decide what is being discussed: either the group as a whole or individuals within the group. Ex: group, team, committee, class, and family.

The team runs wants to win. (the team as a whole)
The team put on their uniforms. (each individual player)
The committee decides how to proceed.
The family has a long history.
My family has never been able to agree.
The crew prepares to dock the ship.

11. Expressions such as *with, along with, together with, including, accompanied by, in addition to, or as well* do not change the number of the subject. If the subject is singular, the verb is, too.

The President, accompanied by his wife, is traveling to India.
All of the books, including yours, are in that box.

---

**Sentence structure / Simple, compound, and complex sentences.**

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.1h: Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.1i: Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.2c: Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.1b: Choose among simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas.

1. **SIMPLE SENTENCE** = subject + predicate.

2. **COMPOUND SENTENCE:** (2 independent clauses joined together).

- **Coordinating conjunctions join sentences: FANBOYS** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)
  
  Common error: DON’T use a comma every time there is a conjunction.

  - **WRONG:** Tori ate a big dinner, and slept soundly all night. (This is NOT a compound sentence; instead, it is a simple sentence with a compound predicate).
  
  - **CORRECT:** Tori ate a big dinner and slept soundly all night (simple sentence with a compound predicate).
  
  - **CORRECT:** Tori ate a big dinner, *and* she slept soundly all night. (compound sentence = 2 independent clauses joined with a coordinating conjunction and a comma)

---
3. COMPLEX SENTENCE: (dependent clauses + independent clause)

- Subordinating conjunctions (after, as, because, before, if, since, until, unless, when, while…) create dependent clauses which, when joined with an independent clause, create complex sentences – a sign of mature writing technique. Either use them at the beginning of sentences (with a comma after the clause) OR in the middle of the two clauses to join them:

  EX: *Since* Emily Dickinson published only a handful of her poems, it is amazing that she became so widely known. (Don’t forget the comma!)

  EX: It is amazing that Emily Dickinson became so widely known *since* she published only a handful of her poems. (No comma!)

4. COMPOUND-COMPLEX sentence: (2 independent clauses joined with at least 1 dependent clause):

  EX: Although I like to go camping, I haven’t had time to go lately, and I haven’t found anyone to go with.

**Sentence structure:** Complete sentences. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.1f: Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons.*

**Sentence fragments are missing either a subject or a predicate. Fragments are sometimes okay BUT ONLY IF:**

- Used for emphasis (use sparingly for emphasis, and only if all other sentences are correctly formed!) (EX: Things were worse than she’d feared. Not one. Two of them!)
- Informal dialogue
- Exclamations/interjections

**Punctuation matters:**

  FRAGMENT: Soon after Kasey fell asleep.
  SENTENCE: Soon after, Kasey fell asleep.
  FRAGMENT: Before I went shopping.
  SENTENCE: Before, I went shopping.

**RUN-ONS** are two or more independent clauses that have been run together without an appropriate conjunction and/or punctuation between them:

  WRONG: It was a beautiful day there was not a cloud in the sky. (run-on)
  WRONG: It was a beautiful day, there was not a cloud in the sky. (comma splice)

  CORRECT: It was a beautiful day. There was not a cloud in the sky.
  CORRECT: It was a beautiful day, and there was not a cloud in the sky.
  CORRECT: It was a beautiful day because there was not a cloud in the sky.
  CORRECT: It was a beautiful day; there was not a cloud in the sky. (note: the two sentences joined with a semi-colon must be very closely related in content.)

**Sentence structure:** Phrases and clauses. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.1a: Explain the function of
phrases and clauses in general and their function in specific sentences.

A phrase does not contain both a subject and a verb. (EX: through the woods)
A clause does contain both a subject and a verb.

- An independent clause can stand alone because functions as a complete sentence.
- A dependent clause cannot stand alone; it needs something else to make it a complete sentence.

**Sentence structure: misplaced and dangling modifiers.** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.1c: Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.*

**MISPLACED MODIFIER ERRORS:** Keep modifiers as close as possible to the thing they are modifying.

- **WRONG:** I had only been asleep for ten minutes when the phone rang. (only sleeping – not also jogging or eating or dancing).
- **CORRECT:** I had been asleep for only ten minutes when the phone rang.
- **WRONG:** My darling, I only think about you. (I don’t feel anything about you – I only think.)
- **CORRECT:** My darling, I think only about you.
- **WRONG:** We spent almost all our money playing video games. (money is nearly gone)
- **CORRECT:** We almost spent all our money playing video games. (but something happened, and we didn’t).
- **WRONG:** Rolling down the hill, Barney was frightened that the rocks would land on the campsite.
- **CORRECT:** Rolling down the hill, the rocks threatened the campsite and frightened Barney.

**DANGLING MODIFIER ERRORS:** A modifier must modify something; if not, it creates a dangling modifier.

- **WRONG:** Hoping to excuse my lateness, the note was written and given to my teacher. (the note wasn’t hoping – the subject “I” is missing)
- **CORRECT:** Hoping to excuse my lateness, I wrote a note and gave it to my teacher.
- **WRONG:** After reading the new book, the movie based on it is sure to be exciting. (the movie didn’t read the book – the subject “Anna” is missing)
- **CORRECT:** After reading the new book, Anna thought that the movie was sure to be exciting.

**Adjectives.** CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.1g: Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified.

- **Positive (no comparison):** big, capable, willing
- **Comparative (comparing 2 things):** bigger, more capable, less willing
- **Superlative (comparing more than 2 things):** biggest, most capable, least willing
Irregular adverbs (not to be confused with adjectives):
You sing well. He sings better. She sings best.  (describes the verb)
I ski badly. He skis worse. She skis worst.  (describes the verb)
I ran far. You ran farther. He ran farthest.  (describes the verb)

Irregular adjectives:
Joe is a good athlete. Jack is a better athlete. Jill is the best athlete.  (describes the noun)
Beets are bad. Olives are worse. Brussels sprouts are the worst.  (describes the noun)
I have little luck. You have less luck. He has the least luck.  (describes the noun)
I have many cats. You have more cats. She has the most cats.  (describes the noun)
I ate too much pizza. He ate more pizza. You ate the most pizza.  (describes the noun)

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Adjectives. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.1d: Order adjectives within sentences according to conventional patterns (e.g., a small red bag rather than a red small bag).

*Determiner + General opinion + specific opinion + size + shape + age + color + origin + material + qualifier + noun*

(The) (nice) (tasty) (huge) (round) (old) (green) (American) (bronze) (hunting) dog


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Adjectives. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.2a: Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., *It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie* but not *He wore an old[,] green shirt*).

*Coordinate adjectives* separately modify a noun. Their order can be scrambled, and they can be joined by *and*. A comma is needed to separate each coordinate adjective (unless *and* is already there).

*Cumulative adjectives* “pile up” to jointly modify the noun and need to be arranged in a specific order. No commas are needed to separate the adjectives. Try these two strategies:

a. Try placing the word *and* between the two adjectives. If it sounds correct, then place a comma between the adjectives (coordinate). If it doesn’t, then don’t (cumulative).
b. Try reversing the order of the two adjectives. If it sounds appropriate, they are most likely coordinate adjectives, so place a comma in between the two adjectives (coordinate). If it doesn’t, then don’t (cumulative).

Ex: We were prepared for a long, tedious planning session. (coordinate)
EX: Allen owns several blue wool sweaters. (cumulative)
EX: We traveled over several narrow, winding, treacherous roads. (coordinate)
Prepositions. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.1e: Form and use prepositional phrases.

The old rule advising never to end a sentence with a prepositional phrase has softened. If you can rewrite it so as not to end with a prepositional phrase and the sentence sounds good, go ahead and do it. If, however, the editing makes the sentence sound awkward, then leave it alone.
- OKAY: Carlos hits the ball with ease.
- BETTER: Notice the ease with which Carlos hits the ball.
- OKAY: I’m the one she’s sitting next to.
- BETTER: She is sitting next to me.
- OKAY: A senator is someone most people look up to.
- BETTER: Most people look up to a senator.

Conjunctions. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.1e: Use correlative conjunctions (e.g., either/or, neither/nor).

See the section “Sentence structure / Simple, compound, and complex sentences” for using coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so) in compound sentences and subordinating conjunctions (after, as, because, before, if, since, until, unless, when, while…) in complex sentences.

Correlative conjunctions must be used in pairs (either-or; nether-nor; not only; but-also):
- Neither Wesley nor Elizabeth scored a hit in the game.
- Not only Meg but also David got a part in the play.
- Sal can neither pitch nor catch. (Also CORRECT: Sal cannot pitch or catch.)

Sentence Fluency. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.3a: Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.*

Style: Sentences which begin with a subject, followed by a predicate, reflect normal word order. Although such sentences are grammatically correct, one sign of immature writing is sentences which always begin with the subject. Here are some techniques for varying sentence beginnings:
- Begin with two adjectives
- Begin with an interesting question
- Begin with a prepositional phrase (answers where or when)
- Begin with a gerund (verb + ing)
- Begin with an infinitive (to + verb)
- Begin with an interjection
- Begin with a subordinating conjunction (After, although, while, when, unless, until, because, if, since, etc…)

Word Choice. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.1g: Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., to, too, two; there, their).* CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.3a: Choose words and phrases for effect.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lie/lay/lain/lying: (to lie down as in a bed):</th>
<th>Bad/real/sure/easy/good:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Today I lie in bed.</td>
<td>· Adjectives: bad, real, sure, easy, good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Yesterday I lay in bed.</td>
<td>· Adverbs: badly, really, surely, easily, well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Many times I have lain in bed.</td>
<td>· WRONG: I am real sure. RIGHT: I am really sure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Yesterday I was lying in bed all day.</td>
<td>· WRONG: I did good on the exam. RIGHT: I did well on the exam and got a good grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Lying in bed all day is boring.</td>
<td>· WRONG: Austin won the match easy. RIGHT: Austin won the match easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lay/laid/laid/laying (to place something, to set something down)</strong></td>
<td>· WRONG: This sure seems like a sure bet. RIGHT: This surely seems like a sure bet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Today I lay the book on the counter.</td>
<td>· WRONG: She performed bad. RIGHT: She performed badly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Yesterday I laid the book on the counter.</td>
<td>· WEAK: Mom asked me to help set the table, so I did.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Many times I have laid the book on the counter.</td>
<td>· BETTER: Mom asked me to help set the table, and I did.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Yesterday I was laying the book on the counter when Mom came home.</td>
<td>· WEAK: Austin studied hard, so he got a good grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Laying books on the kitchen counter is against the rules in my house.</td>
<td>· BETTER: Austin got a good grade because he studied hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· WEAK: The doll was old and torn, so I threw it away.</td>
<td>· WEAK: The day was unforgettable. I will never forget it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· BETTER: I threw away the old, torn doll</td>
<td>· BETTER: The day was unforgettable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· WEAK: The day was unforgettable. I will never forget it.</td>
<td>· WEAK: I ate dinner, then I watched TV, and then I went to bed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· BETTER: The day was unforgettable.</td>
<td>· BETTER: I ate dinner, watched TV, and went to bed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· WEAK: I woke up at midnight because of a loud sound that woke me up.</td>
<td>· WEAK: I needed a new coat, and so my mom took me shopping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· BETTER: I needed a new coat, and my mom took me to buy one.</td>
<td>· BETTER: I needed a new coat, and my mom took me to buy one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETTER: I woke up at midnight because of a loud sound.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Examples of overused, dead, tired words to avoid:

- *You* (never in formal writing unless it’s a rhetorical question used to hook the reader at the beginning of an essay)
- *Really/Very*
- *Bad/good/nice*
- *Just*
- *Sort of/kind of*
- *Thing/Stuff*
- *Fun*
- *Up*
- *All*
- *Big/little*
- *It/They*
- *Said*
- *Got*
- *So*
- *Sad/mad/glad*
- *Contractions* (ok in dialogue but not in formal writing)
- *I think/I feel/I believe/I know*
- *Totally*
- *Basically*
- *Well, *
- *Forms of the verb “be”* (passive; try to choose active verbs instead)

### Examples of redundant words/phrases:

- I want to improve my writing, and yet I just love to throw extra, unnecessary words into sentences at every chance I get.  
  (BETTER: I improve my writing by deleting unnecessary words.)

| I cleaned up all of my stuff. |
| This is some kind of a zebra. |
| The doctor stitched up my cut. |
| We’re all out of toothpaste. |
| Put the dog outside of the house. |
| I can’t decide whether or not to go. |
| I opened up my birthday gift before my birthday. |
| Robin admitted to hiding his sister’s doll. |
| It snowed all night long. |

| Well off financially |
| Revert back |
| Personal friend |
| Usual customs |
| Stalling for time |
| Mix together |
| Rock back and forth |
| Advance warning |
| True fact |
| 100% unanimous |
| Each and every one |
| Original founder |
| Important essentials |
| So forth and so on |
| One and the same |
| First start, End result |
| Local resident |
| Tuna fish |
| Other alternative |
| Rise up |
| This point in time |
| Over and done with |
| Continue on |

| Extra additions |
| Two polar opposites |
| Right beside |
| Free gift |
| Small in size |
| Red in color |
| Square in shape |
| Really truly |
| Satisfactory enough |
| Grateful thanks |
| New innovation |
| Sum total |
| Whole wide world |
| Few in number |
| The reason is because |
| The reason why |
| Reserved exclusively |
| Circulate around |
| In this day and time |
| Regular routine |
| Final outcome |
| Unexpected surprise |
| Rarely ever |
**Verbals. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1a:** Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.

**GERUNDS:** If you put –ing on the end of a verb, you turn the verb into a noun; that noun is called a **gerund**.

- *Running* is fun.  *(running = gerund)*
- *Eating* ice cream is even more fun than running *(eating = gerund)*

(Possessive nouns and pronouns are usually used with gerunds):

- **WRONG:** Mom doesn’t like *me* eating too much ice cream.
- **CORRECT:** Mom doesn’t like *my* eating too much ice cream.
- **WRONG:** *Josh* smacking his chewing gum is driving me crazy.
- **CORRECT:** *Josh’s* smacking his chewing gum is driving me crazy.
- **WRONG:** I hope you don’t mind *me* eating this apple.
- **CORRECT:** I hope you don’t mind *my* eating this apple. *(emphasis is upon the action)*

**PARTICIPLES:** Words formed from verbs which can be used as adjectives or nouns.

- The **crying** baby fell asleep.
- The **mangled** sunglasses, **bruised** face, **broken** arm, and **bleeding** knees meant Gabrielle had taken another spill on her mountain bike.
- *Sneezing* hurts my ribs.
- Valerie hates *cooking*.
- Joelle bit her tongue instead of **criticizing** her prom date’s tuxedo.
- Omar’s least favorite sport is **water-skiing**. *(predicate noun)*

**INFINITIVES:** “to” + verb. **Infinitives** can be used as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs (NOT verbs).

- *To sleep* is the only thing Eli wants. *(functions as noun – subject of the sentence)*
- He turned his head and refused to **look**. *(functions as noun – direct object for verb refused)*
- Melissa always brings a book to **read**. *(functions as adjective – modifies book)*

**SPLIT INFINITIVE:** No word should separate *to* from the simple verb that follows.

- **WRONG:** Sara hopes to quickly **finish** her homework.
- **CORRECT:** Sara hopes **to finish** her homework quickly.

**Numbers and Numerals:** Although usage varies, **most people spell out numbers that can be**
Expressed in one or two words and use figures for other numbers; therefore, write out numerals 1-99 into word form. See examples/exceptions below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Identification Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>two pounds</td>
<td>Room 8, Channel 18, Interstate 65, Henry VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>six million dollars</td>
<td>Large Round Numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thirty-one years</td>
<td>four billion dollars (or) $4 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eighty-three people</td>
<td>16,500,000 (or) 16.5 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figures</th>
<th>Numbers in series and statistics should be consistent.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>after 126 days</td>
<td>two apples, six oranges, and three bananas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>only $31.50</td>
<td>NOT: two apples, 6 oranges, and 3 bananas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,381 bushels</td>
<td>115 feet by 90 feet (or) 115' x 90'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.78 liters</td>
<td>scores of 25-6 (or) scores of 25 to 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The vote was 9 in favor and 5 opposed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days and Years</th>
<th>Write out numbers beginning sentences.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 12, 1965 or 12 December 1965</td>
<td>Six percent of the group failed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.D. 1066</td>
<td>NOT: 6% of the group failed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in 1900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in 1971-72 or in 1971-1972</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the eighties, the twentieth century</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the 1980's or the 1980s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Day</th>
<th>Page and Division of Books and Plays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 A.M. (or) a.m. (or) eight o'clock in the morning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30 P.M. (or) p.m. (or) half-past four in the afternoon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>page 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chapter 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in act 3, scene 2 (or) in Act III, Scene ii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addresses</th>
<th>Use a combination of figures and words for numbers when such a combination will keep your writing clear.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 Tenth Street</td>
<td>Unclear: The club celebrated the birthdays of 6 90-year-olds who were born in the city. (may cause the reader to read '690' as one number.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350 West 114 Street</td>
<td>More clear: The club celebrated the birthdays of six 90-year-olds who were born in the city.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decimals and Percentages</th>
<th>Vocabulary Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a 2.7 average</td>
<td>Chapter or Unit-Based Vocabulary Words and their Retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.25 percent (in nonscientific contexts)</td>
<td>A student's vocabulary develops through comprehension and frequent use. In all subject areas, new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% (in scientific contexts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.037 metric ton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vocabulary Development
Chapter or Unit-Based Vocabulary Words and their Retention

A student's vocabulary develops through comprehension and frequent use. In all subject areas, new
vocabulary is introduced, but often taught in-context with the lesson at hand; thus, students recall new vocabulary with certain criteria.

The best way to retain new vocabulary is to infuse new, academic language into lessons of writing and discussion.

The “old style” memorization and copy do not effectively teach a child how to use new vocabulary terms in conversation, writing, etc. It does help students with word-recognition and spelling, but not how to effectively use it in a sentence or conversation.

By incorporating the word’s part of speech (is it a noun, verb, adjective, etc) students may be able to recognize how to use it in a sentence easier.

Studies have shown that building vocabulary word walls in a particular unit or study enhance student-use of these words on their own. Teachers should also encourage students to use those words throughout their homework, quizzes, tests, etc.

**Transition Words in their Writing**

In written paragraphs, every student needs to transition the reader from reason to reason, and signal when they are starting or ending a new idea. Transitions used in ILA can be used cross-curricular for paragraph development. The following are examples of transitions to use in student exemplars:

**To Begin a Paragraph (New Idea):** First of all, second of all, most of all, Lastly, as previously mentioned, Last and most important, Above all, To begin with, Last of all

**To Use between Details in the same paragraph:** For example, such as, also, furthermore, in addition, another, specifically, likewise, similar to, within the text

**To End a Paragraph (Close out an Idea) OR Start a conclusion Paragraph:** Therefore, As a result, thus, with this in mind, to conclude, (in conclusion is ok, too, but try not rely on this one too heavily!)

**To Start the counter-argument:** On the contrary, On the other hand, However, Some may say....but I disagree because, instead, for this reason, in contrast, yet
*In the counter-argument, students can use regular transitions between details and to end the paragraph.

Whenever teachers assign a written paragraph or essay, transitional words and phrases should be included on the rubric of your assignment. They make for more-coherent writing, and enforces fluid writing skills.

**Over-Used Words**

All the Language arts teachers refer to this “list” of words we never want to see in a student’s writing, and we all basically have the same words that accompany this list. Some of these “problem” words include, but are certainly not limited to:

you  got  it  dead verbs, such as “said”

thing  stuff  they

I think  I feel  I believe  *In some instances, these phrases may be acceptable

contractions- ALL contractions in formal, academic writing need to be written out (ex, I’m should be I am).

numbers- ALL numbers in formal, academic writing between 1-99 should be written out (for example= 5-five, 44-forty-four).

indefinite pronouns Pronouns such as anybody, someone, something, anything, etc without their antecedents make their writing vague and unclear.

The reason we encourage these words OUT of their writing is to bring in specificity. With words like “thing, stuff, they, it”, the reader can almost always ask, “like what? who?” etc. In narrative writing, the word “said” is often over-used, so I provide a list to my students of 204 words that can be used instead of “said”. Varying lists can often be found on the internet.

Students should also never refer to the reader in their writing (second person) if it is not part of a rhetorical question (or hook). Because often, students find themselves in a trap “speaking” to the reader, as if they were literally talking. This is the case with “I think” or “I feel”; most of the time, students are writing an opinion piece, so this goes without saying it is what the writer thinks.

Most students have comfort vocabulary words they use over-and-over again, and often need to be reminded to vary their word-choice and sentence structure. Again, encourage new vocabulary terms brought in from the unit, and swapping out “dead verbs” for lively ones!
Basic Punctuation

**Comma**

- **Use a comma to join 2 independent clauses by a comma and a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, for, nor, so).**
  Ex: Road construction can be inconvenient, but it is necessary.
  The new house has a large fenced backyard, so I am sure our dog will enjoy it.
- **Use a comma after an introductory phrase, prepositional phrase, or dependent clause.**
  Ex: To get a good grade, you must complete all your assignments.
  Because Dad caught the chicken pox, we canceled our vacation.
- **Use a comma to separate elements in a series. Although there is no set rule that requires a comma before the last item in a series, it seems to be a general academic convention to include it. The examples below demonstrate this trend.**
  Ex: On her vacation, Lisa visited Greece, Spain, and Italy.
  In their speeches, many of the candidates promised to help protect the environment, bring about world peace, and end world hunger.
- **Use a comma to separate nonessential elements from a sentence. More specifically, when a sentence includes information that is not crucial to the message or intent of the sentence, enclose it in or separate it by commas.**
  Ex: John's truck, a red Chevrolet, needs new tires.
  When he realized he had overslept, Matt rushed to his car and hurried to work.
- **Use a comma between coordinate adjectives (adjectives that are equal and reversible).**
  Ex: The irritable, fidgety crowd waited impatiently for the rally speeches to begin.
  The sturdy, compact suitcase made a perfect gift.
- **Use a comma after a transitional element (however, therefore, nonetheless, also,**
otherwise, finally, instead, thus, of course, above all, for example, in other words, as a result, on the other hand, in conclusion, in addition)

Ex: For example, the Red Sox, Yankees, and Indians are popular baseball teams. If you really want to get a good grade this semester, however, you must complete all assignments, attend class, and study your notes.

- Use a comma with quoted words.
  Ex: "Yes," she promised. Todd replied, saying, "I will be back this afternoon."
  - Use a comma in a date.
  Ex: October 25, 1999
  Monday, October 25, 1999
  25 October 1999
- Use a comma in a number.
  15,000,000
  1614 High Street
  - Use a comma in a personal title.
  Ex: Pam Smith, MD
  Mike Rose, Chief Financial Officer for Operations, reported the quarter's earnings.
  - Use a comma to separate a city name from the state.
  West Lafayette, Indiana
  Dallas, Texas
  - Avoid comma splices (two independent clauses joined only by a comma). Instead, separate the clauses with a period, with a comma followed by a coordinating conjunction, or with a semicolon.

**Semicolon**
- Use a semicolon to join 2 independent clauses when the second clause restates the first or when the two clauses are of equal emphasis.
  Ex: Road construction in Dallas has hindered travel around town; streets have become covered with bulldozers, trucks, and cones.
  - Use a semicolon to join 2 independent clauses when the second clause begins with a conjunctive adverb (however, therefore, moreover, furthermore, thus, meanwhile, nonetheless, otherwise) or a transition (in fact, for example, that is, for instance, in addition, in other words, on the other hand, even so).
  Ex: Terrorism in the United States has become a recent concern; in fact, the concern for America's safety has led to an awareness of global terrorism.
  - Use a semicolon to join elements of a series when individual items of the series already include commas.
  Ex: Recent sites of the Olympic Games include Athens, Greece; Salt Lake City, Utah; Sydney, Australia; Nagano, Japan.

**Colon**
- Use a colon to join 2 independent clauses when you wish to emphasize the second clause.
  Ex: Road construction in Dallas has hindered travel around town: parts of Main, Fifth, and West Street are closed during the construction.
Use a colon after an independent clause when it is followed by a list, a quotation, appositive, or other idea directly related to the independent clause.
Ex: Julie went to the store for some groceries: milk, bread, coffee, and cheese.
In his Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln urges Americans to rededicate themselves to the unfinished work of the deceased soldiers: "It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."
I know the perfect job for her: a politician.

Use a colon at the end of a business letter greeting.
Ex: To Whom It May Concern:

Use a colon to separate the hour and minute(s) in a time notation.
Ex: 12:00 p.m.

Use a colon to separate the chapter and verse in a Biblical reference.
Ex: Matthew 1:6

Parentheses

Parentheses are used to emphasize content. They place more emphasis on the enclosed content than commas. Use parentheses to set off nonessential material, such as dates, clarifying information, or sources, from a sentence.
Ex: Muhammed Ali (1942-present), arguably the greatest athlete of all time, claimed he would "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."

Dash

Dashes are used to set off or emphasize the content enclosed within dashes or the content that follows a dash. Dashes place more emphasis on this content than parentheses.
Ex: Perhaps one reason why the term has been so problematic—so resistant to definition, and yet so transitory in those definitions—is because of its multitude of applications.
In terms of public legitimacy—that is, in terms of garnering support from state legislators, parents, donors, and university administrators—English departments are primarily places where advanced literacy is taught.
The U.S.S. Constitution became known as "Old Ironsides" during the War of 1812—during which the cannonballs fired from the British H.M.S. Guerriere merely bounced off the sides of the Constitution.
To some of you, my proposals may seem radical—even revolutionary.
Use a dash to set off an appositive phrase that already includes commas. An appositive is a word that adds explanatory or clarifying information to the noun that precedes it.
The cousins—Tina, Todd, and Sam—arrived at the party together.

Quotation Marks
• Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations. Note that commas and periods are placed inside the closing quotation mark, and colons and semicolons are placed outside. The placement of question and exclamation marks depends on the situation.

Ex: He asked, "When will you be arriving?" I answered, "Sometime after 6:30."

Use quotation marks to indicate the novel, ironic, or reserved use of a word.

History is stained with blood spilled in the name of "justice."

Use quotation marks around the titles of short poems, song titles, short stories, magazine or newspaper articles, essays, speeches, chapter titles, short films, and episodes of television or radio shows.

"Self-Reliance," by Ralph Waldo Emerson
"Just Like a Woman," by Bob Dylan
"The Smelly Car," an episode of *Seinfeld*

• Do not use quotation marks in indirect or block quotations.

**Italics**

• Underlining and Italics are often used interchangeably. Before word-processing programs were widely available, writers would underline certain words to indicate to publishers to italicize whatever was underlined. Although the general trend has been moving toward italicizing instead of underlining, you should remain consistent with your choice throughout your paper. To be safe, you could check with your teacher to find out which he/she prefers. Italicize the titles of magazines, books, newspapers, academic journals, films, television shows, long poems, plays of three or more acts, operas, musical albums, works of art, websites, and individual trains, planes, or ships.

Ex: *Time*
*Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare
*The Metamorphosis of Narcissus* by Salvador Dali
*Amazon.com*
*Titanic*

Italicize foreign words.

*Semper fi*, the motto of the U.S. Marine Corps, means "always faithful."

Italicize a word or phrase to add emphasis.

The *truth* is of utmost concern!

Italicize a word when referring to that word.

The word *justice* is often misunderstood and therefore misused.
Writing a Perfect Paragraph

A paragraph is a series of sentences that are about a single topic. Write a coherent paragraph by clearly communicating a main idea (the topic sentence), supporting it with details and bring the paragraph to an end with a closing or concluding sentence.

IN A NUTSHELL:
* A paragraph is a series of sentences about one topic.
* A paragraph is made up of three parts:
  Topic sentence
  Supporting sentences with transitions + details or examples
  Concluding sentence

Topic Sentence - Write your TOPIC sentence in the box below

Detail 1

Detail 2
Research Synthesis Task

RST- will replace the persuasive writing task on the PARCC Testing.

Defined: Students will be given an anchor text (non-fiction - Science or Social Studies content), along with two other texts which could include the following: pictures, graphs, recipe, political cartoon, audio/video clip.

Students will be asked to use three of the resources and respond to a prompt. The information from the resources must be synthesized into the response.

Students must be able to:
- Check for credibility and validity of sources (i.e. the source of graphs or charts)
- Identify bias within text
- Critically look at charts and graphs
- Identify overall themes and concepts presented in all the sources given
- Take notes while viewing a video

RST Steps
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Read through the question carefully. Make sure to decipher if the question is asking you to convey an opinion, or to convey information/research objectively.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>In the upper right-hand corner of your paper, simplify what the question is asking you to do. Put the question/task into your own words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Circle the minimum amount of sources that need to be addressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Take notes with each of the sources. Address the source's main points. Underline actively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>After you've addressed and highlighted the main point of the source, make separate notes on the reliability of these sources. Is the source reliable in general? Is it slanted in any way? Do logical fallacies or “holes in argument” exist?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>You've read through your sources. Choose the sources that you are most comfortable with, and put a star (*) in the upper right-hand corner of each source that you will be using in your research simulation task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td>In source chart, copy your notes from your sources into each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 8</td>
<td>Now, look at the relationships of your sources. Do they agree with each other? Do they disagree? Use your source-relationship chart to begin thinking about how you will have your sources begin conversing with one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 9</td>
<td>Complete the outline for your essay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 10</td>
<td>Complete your essay, using the outline/framework as a guide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 11</td>
<td>After you have completed your essay, go back to check that your sources have a conversation, and replace the verbs you've used to integrate these sources with the action verbs from the sheet provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Open-Ended Scoring Rubric

## NJ ASK Reading
Open-Ended Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A 4-point response clearly demonstrates understanding of the task, completes all requirements, and provides an insightful explanation/opinion that links to or extends aspects of the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A 3-point response demonstrates an understanding of the task, completes all requirements, and provides some explanation/opinion using situations or ideas from the text as support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A 2-point response may address all of the requirements, but demonstrates a partial understanding of the task, and uses text incorrectly or with limited success resulting in an inconsistent or flawed explanation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A 1-point response demonstrates minimal understanding of the task, does not complete the requirements, and provides only a vague reference to or no use of the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>A 0-point response is irrelevant or off-topic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Exemplars

An Inadequate Response
Open-ended Response
Directions: Read the questions. Answer the questions using the 5 step open-ended response strategy. Remember to check your work.

In the following passage, from the last chapter of Walk Two Moons, Sal explains the importance of her trip out west.
One day I realized that our whole trip out to Lewiston had been a gift from Gram and Gramps to me. They were giving me a chance to walk in my mother’s moccasins to see what she had seen and feel what she might have felt on her last trip (p. 276).

- Why does she describe it as a “gift”?
- What did she come to understand about her mother along the way that allowed her to accept the truth?

Sal describes the trip as a “gift” because Sal’s grandparents didn’t have to go the same way her mother did or even go at all.

Sal came to understand about her mother along the way that made Sal accept the truth was that Sal saw the bus that rolled down the hill by herself and sal also saw her mother’s grave. That is what made her accept the truth.

- Needs support
- Extension to another text

An Adequate Response
Throughout their friendship, Kevin continuously tells Max that research is being done in order for Kevin to receive a bionic body, ultimately enabling him to be "normal." After finding out that the entire story was made up, I believe Kevin lied about this operation so he could convince the others, as well as himself, that his life would be lived to the fullest. When Freak learned about his disease, he probably felt lost and utterly hopeless. Contemplating the bionic body story gave himself and his loved ones the hope and optimism that he needed to move forward in life. In the story, Kevin says you can remember anything whether it happened or not. He also states that you can think your way out of anything, even pain. "This shows that Kevin was well aware of the fact that he wouldn't have the average life expectancy. Although, he had the courage necessary to remain true to himself. The saying that you should live everyday as if it were your last was obviously not a foreign concept to Kevin. He lived, learned, and explored far more than most people do throughout their entire lifetimes. This reminds me of The Fault in Our Stars, by John Green. Hazel and Augustus, both cancer patients, knew their time would soon be up. So, they traveled, explored, and did adventurous things before they passed. The two of them ensured they wouldn't miss out on what life had to offer, and fought until the very end, as best friends.
An Argumentative Essay - Adequate Response

Does Charley Have A Soldier's Heart?

"War is haunting. Death. Pain. Dismemberment. A buddy dying in your arms. Imagine trying to get over the memory of a bomb splitting a Humvee apart beneath your feet and taking your leg with it." This is a quote from an article written by Max Cleland. This is exactly what Charley Goddard did in the book Soldier's Heart by Gary Paulsen. After a soldier comes out of battle, it is said that they have a soldier's heart. Charley Goddard has a soldier's heart because he has suicidal thoughts, he suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, he secludes himself from everyone, and he experienced gruesome things while fighting only a true soldier experiences.

To begin with, Charley suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD for short. PTSD is a disease suffered by many soldiers just exiting from war. Some people can get over it with lots of therapy, while others may go mad or suffer with it for the rest of their lives. One of the main aftereffects from this disease includes thoughts of suicide. In the book, when Charley is fighting at the Battle of Bull Run, he yells "Make it stop!" This shows that Charley doesn't want to go through the battle anymore and would much rather die instead. Also, towards the end of the book, Charley has many thoughts of suicide, including almost killing himself one day while out for a picnic. In the book on page one hundred of the book, it says, "It was a .35-caliber cap-and-ball revolver he'd taken off of the body of a Confederate officer...looked at his finger on the trigger and knew that if he just touched it there, just a light touch, it would trip the hammer to slap the percussion cap and set off the powder and send the little .36-caliber ball speeding out of the barrel and into his..." This shows that Charley was thinking of committing suicide, but decided not to. Another one of the results of this disease includes depression. After the war, Charley is very lonely. He doesn't write to his family and suffers very much. He feels hopeless most of the time and feels as if he will never recover. The last important result from PTSD is
drinking. After the war, Charley drinks all of his worries away. The whiskey that he drinks soothes his pain and makes him feel better. It relieves all of his memories from the war. If it wasn’t for the whiskey, Charley would end up being mentally unstable.

To continue, Charley secludes himself from everyone. He isn’t very social with everyone. In the book, after Charley is finished with his time in the war, he moves back to Minnesota and doesn’t interact with any of the people in his town. This shows that he doesn’t feel comfortable with socializing with any of the townsfolk after the Civil War. Also, Charley lives in a cabin in the woods all by himself. He doesn’t want his house to be around a lot of people. Finally, Charley secludes himself to keep him away from loud noises, which could result in bad memories. For example, if Charley heard a loud noise that sounded like a musket being fired, he could have a tragic breakdown. Thus, keeping him away from loud noises could save his life.

In addition, Charley has seen gruesome scenes that only a true man has experienced. Charley has seen most of his friends die in the war. For example, his friend Massey died while in battle. Charley was really disappointed to see one of his friends in the war die right in front of him. Also, Charley had to stack dead people at the battlefield hospital. On page eighty-nine of the book, it says, “And so they did. Each taking an end, they moved the bodies, stacking them like bricks and angling them at the corners so they would not tip over, until they had a stout frozen wall five feet high and thirty feet long to stop the wind.” Charley will always remember this scene because it horrified him that the medics used dead bodies to block out the wind. Finally, Charley had to kill the horses for the sick men. He had to kill them because the meat inside of them was a good way to revive the sick men. In the book, Charley says that he’s killed many farm animals like pigs and cow, but nothing was compared to a horse. These incidents can only be experienced by true men who won’t shy away when seeing something like this, and Charley showed no emotional reaction to any of these gruesome scenes.
However, some may say that Charley is perfectly fine after war, but he is not. Charley suffers from PTSD, which is a very serious condition that stays with a person forever. Also, people say that Charley has no signs of depression after exiting the battlefield, but Charley is definitely suffering from depression. Someone really happy wouldn't seclude themselves deep in a cabin in the woods all by themselves. There is also no mention of Charley writing to his other family members while living in the cabin, thus showing Charley's depression. Finally, some people can agree that Charley is too young to have a soldier's heart, but he isn't. Even though Charley entered the war when he was too young, he still experienced many things that only true men have gone through. He went into the war a young boy, but came out of it a true man with a soldier's heart.

In conclusion, Charley has PTSD, seclusion, and having gory experiences. Next time you see a war veteran, you should appreciate all they have done for our country, and what they are currently going through.

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Strong support throughout your paper!