

# **MAAP-EOC Exam**

## **English II Student Review Guide**

### **Writing**

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# Preface

The *MAAP-EOC Exam English II Student Review Guide: Writing* is written to help students master the skills needed to receive high scores on the Performance Task of the English II end-of-course exam in Mississippi. This review book covers the Writing (W.10.1, W.10.2, and W.10.3) and Language standards (L.10.1, L.10.2, and L.10.3) that are tested by the performance tasks as specified in the 2016 Mississippi College- and Career-Readiness Standards (MS CCRS) for English Language Arts published by the Mississippi Department of Education. The MS CCRS for English II Reading Literature and Reading Informational Text standards, as well as additional Language standards, that are tested on the MAAP-EOC by the computer-scored closed-ended and open-ended questions are addressed in a separate book: *MAAP-EOC Exam English II Student Review Guide: Reading*.

## How To Use This Book

### Students:

You are required to pass English II in order to graduate, and the MAAP-EOC exam for English II factors heavily toward your getting graduation credit for the course. This book covers the writing skills needed for you to score well on the essay-writing portion of the English II MAAP-EOC exam. The English II MAAP-EOC Performance Task essay is worth 12 points.

- Read the instructional material in this review book and do the practice exercises. Practice writing paragraphs and essays as instructed throughout the latter sections.
- Write a practice essay for the student prompts given in Sections 9-12. Have a teacher or qualified professional grade each essay and give instruction on areas for improvement.
- Find additional texts and writing prompts in the Appendix. Continue writing responsive essays as often as time permits to improve your writing skills.

### Teachers:

This review book is also intended to save you, the teacher, time in the classroom. It can be used for classroom instruction or for individual student review. This book reviews the Writing and Language standards that are evaluated by the English II MAAP-EOC Performance Task and gives specific step-by-step instruction writing informative, argumentative, and narrative essays that accurately respond to prompts and that are supported by evidence from one or more given texts.

- When teaching or tutoring individual students, use the strategy outlined above for students.
- For classroom study, use this book to supplement lesson plans and to give additional review for skills required by the MAAP-EOC for English II. Purchase a class set of books for use in the classroom or assign books to students for out-of-classroom work.
- Use the Appendix at the back of this book to assign additional practice essays for your students.
- Please **DO NOT** photocopy materials from this book. These materials are intended to be used as a student workbook, and individual pages should not be duplicated by any means without permission from the copyright holder. To purchase additional or specialized copies of sections in this book, please contact the publisher at 1-800-745-4706.

# Parallel Structure

## Section 4.1 Parallel Series



### Key Term 4.1

- **Parallel structure** – having like grammatical parts joined together

**Parallel structure** occurs when like grammatical parts are used correctly in a sentence. Using parallel structure is considered a grammar and usage skill. You will be expected to construct sentences with correct parallel structure on your MAAP-EOC English II essay.

The most basic type of parallel structure in sentences is found when writing items in a series. When using a coordinating conjunction — *and*, *or*, *but* — in a series, you must always use the same grammatical elements joined by the conjunction to keep the sentence parallel. A grammatical element could be a part of speech (an adverb, an adjective, a noun, a prepositional phrase, etc.) or it could be a specific type of phrase or clause (a participle/participial phrase, a gerund/gerund phrase, an adjective clause, etc.)

**Example 1:** The man was old, lonely, and a miser. NOT parallel

↙ ↘                      ↑  
adjectives                      noun

This sentence is not parallel; in other words, it doesn't use parallel structure. It uses the coordinating conjunction *and* to make three comparisons about the man. *Old* and *lonely* are adjectives, and *miser* is a noun. In order to be parallel, each item in a series must be the same part of speech.

You can make this sentence parallel by making all the comparisons adjectives, or you can reword the sentence by taking out the *and*. Look at the two corrected sentences below.

The man was old, lonely, and miserly. Parallel

↙ ↘ ↗  
adjectives

The old, lonely man was a miser. Parallel

**Example 2:** The dog learned to sit, shaking hands, and that he could not beg at the table.

↑                      ↑    ↑  
infinitive                      gerund    noun clause

Is this sentence parallel? No, it is not parallel because it has different grammatical elements in the series. To make this sentence parallel, use the same type of grammatical element for each item in the series. In this example, it makes the most sense to use infinitive phrases. Keep in mind that it doesn't matter how long how each item is as long as it is the same type of grammatical element as the others in the series.

The dog learned to sit, to shake hands, and not to beg at the table.

↑                      ↑    ↑  
infinitive                      infinitive phrase    infinitive phrase

This sentence is parallel because the grammatical elements are all the same type. Verbals and their phrases are considered the same grammatical type, so infinitive phrases are parallel with infinitives.





## Section 5.2, continued

### Sentence Variety

The author created a dynamic story line with a realistic plot and an unexpected climax.

**Simple sentence;  
prepositional phrase**

This sentence combines the ideas into a single simple sentence that uses a prepositional phrase. The ideas flow much more smoothly in this sentence.

There is not one “right” way to combine ideas. Consider another way these ideas could be written.

The author created a dynamic story line that included a realistic plot and an unexpected climax.

**Complex sentence;  
adjective clause**

This sentence uses a main clause with a subordinate adjective clause to create a complex sentence.

### Misplaced Modifiers/Dangling Participles

When combining ideas into a single sentence, be careful where you place adjective phrases. An adjective phrase should be placed directly before or directly after the word it describes. Misplaced modifiers and dangling participles are common mistakes that can be made by putting these phrases in the wrong place in a sentence. When put in the wrong place, these phrases change the meaning of the sentence. You may know what you mean, but the reader may not.

Consider the following ideas that need to be combined into a sentence:

*The assassin approached the target vehicle. He wore a bulky sheepskin coat. The bomb was hidden within his coat. It was a snowy, wintry night.*

How can you effectively and correctly combine these ideas into a single sentence?

**Example 2:** On a snowy, wintry night, the assassin in a bulky sheepskin coat hiding the bomb approached the target vehicle.

**Correct**

This sentence uses prepositional and participial phrases to combine the ideas into a single sentence. Notice the placement of the phrases.

- The prepositional phrase *in a bulky sheepskin coat* comes directly after *assassin* to clearly communicate that the assassin was wearing the bulky sheepskin coat.
- The participial phrase *hiding the bomb* comes directly after *coat* to clearly communicate that the coat was hiding the bomb.
- The prepositional phrase *on a snowy, wintry night* is an adverb phrase telling when this event took place. It could come either at the beginning or at the end of the sentence without causing confusion.

Now consider how these ideas could be combined incorrectly to cause confusion for the reader.



## Section 5.2, continued

### Sentence Variety

On a snowy, wintry night, the assassin in a bulky sheepskin coat approached the target vehicle hiding the bomb.

**Dangling participle**

In this sentence, the participial phrase *hiding the bomb* is in the wrong place and changes the meaning of the sentence. By placing the participial phrase directly after *vehicle*, this sentence is saying that the vehicle is hiding the bomb instead of the coat. A participial phrase, which acts as an adjective, needs to be placed either directly before or directly after the noun it modifies.

On a snowy, wintry night, the assassin hiding the bomb approached the target vehicle in a bulky sheepskin coat.

**Misplaced modifier**

In this sentence, the participial phrase *hiding the bomb* now comes directly after *assassin*, which is okay since the assassin is the one hiding the bomb. The prepositional phrase *in a bulky sheepskin coat*, however, now comes after *vehicle* and makes it sound like the vehicle is wearing the coat. This prepositional phrase is an example of a misplaced modifier. Remember that a prepositional phrase that acts as an adjective needs to be placed either directly before or directly after the noun it modifies.

### Sentence Variety

A feature of good writing is sentence variety. To hold the interest of your reader, use a variety of sentence structures throughout your essay. Even though you may have written a great complex sentence to begin a paragraph, do not use the same structure for all of your sentences. Using the same sentence structure in every sentence becomes monotonous and boring even if the sentences are not short and choppy.

To create sentence variety, use a combination of complex sentences, compound sentences, and simple sentences. Especially when using simple sentences, incorporate descriptive phrases in different parts of the sentences.

**Example 3:** The contrast between the President and the nameless, faceless peasant population allowed the plot to develop. The differences between the thoughts of one man versus the thoughts of the general population demonstrated a stark contrast. The extreme behavior of the dictator versus the extreme behavior of the peasants led them to revolt.

**Similar, monotonous sentence structures**

All of these sentences are simple in structure. They contain prepositional phrases and verbal phrases. Notice how every sentence is structured in very similar ways: Subject + prepositional phrase + verb + direct object. Can you hear how monotonous these sentences sound?

It is okay to use simple sentences especially with phrases, but every sentence shouldn't be structured in the same way. Put phrases in different places within the sentence or reword the ideas by using subordinating conjunctions to form complex sentences. Consider how these sentences can be improved.

## Section 5.2, continued

### Sentence Variety

The contrast between the President and the nameless, faceless peasant population allowed the plot to develop. When pitted against the thinking of this one man, the beliefs of the general population stood in stark contrast. The dictator's extreme behavior forced the peasants into an extreme response against him in the form of a violent revolt.

**Varied sentence structures**

The first sentence is the same, but notice how the remaining sentences have different structures. The second sentence is now complex in its sentence structure. The third sentence returns to a simple structure, but it now contains prepositional phrases in different places to communicate the idea. The variety of sentence structures creates a more effective and more interesting paragraph.

Consider another example that represents monotonous sentence structures versus varied sentence structures.

**Example 4:** The narrator uses humor in his short story, and he minimizes the hardships. First he uses humor by describing the things that he and his brother choose to pack for the journey, and then he describes his inaccurate seven-shooter pistol in a funny way. He briefly describes hardship as the stagecoach being crowded with mail bags, and he mentions that the mail reached the roof.

**Similar, monotonous sentence structures**

What is the main sentence structure used in this paragraph? Each of these sentences is compound with only the last part of the last sentence being complex. Every sentence combines two ideas with the use of the coordinating conjunction *and*. The repetitious use of compound sentences makes this paragraph monotonous.

The narrator uses humor in his short story while minimizing the hardships. First he uses humor by describing the things that he and his brother choose to pack for the journey, and then he humorously describes his inaccurate seven-shooter pistol. Regarding hardship, he describes the stagecoach only briefly by saying that it is crowded with mail bags that reach the roof.

**Varied sentence structures**

This paragraph communicates the same ideas, but the sentences are now varied in structure. The paragraph now contains only one compound sentence with *and* as the coordinating conjunction. Notice the use of phrases and subordinate clauses to communicate the ideas more effectively in the first and third sentences.

When writing, experiment with different ways of structuring sentences to communicate your ideas. Then choose the way that seems to have the greatest impact.

## Section 5.3, continued

### Transitions

#### Transitions in a Paragraph

In a paragraph, transitions can occur within a sentence or between sentences. Writing a paragraph that flows smoothly from idea to idea is almost impossible without the use of transitional words, phrases, and clauses. When you take out all transitions, you are left with short, choppy, and often awkward sentences that leave the reader unclear in how the ideas are related. Read the following example paragraph that uses no transitions.

**Example 2:** In this excerpt from “Roughing It,” Mark Twain used figurative language effectively in his descriptions. It added humor to the passage. He used a metaphor for the woman passenger’s change. Her change from a “Sphynx” was dramatic. He said “she rained the nine parts of speech.” His description of her non-stop talking was hilarious. He used exaggeration to add humor. The narrator felt she talked for “forty days and forty nights.” He used repetition to show humor. He showed the passengers’ anguish in “How we suffered, suffered, suffered!” These examples accentuate the humor of the situation in the passage.

**Choppy sentences;  
no transitions**

Without transitions, notice how choppy this paragraph reads. Also notice how difficult it is to follow the ideas from one to another. It isn’t clear how these ideas and examples relate to one another.

Now read a rewritten version of the paragraph that combines the ideas in a way that more clearly communicates the connections between the ideas.

In this excerpt from “Roughing It,” Mark Twain’s effective use of figurative language added humor to the passage. For example, he used the metaphor of a “Sphynx” to describe the woman passenger before her dramatic change. After her change, he illustrated her non-stop talking with the hilarious description that “she rained the nine parts of speech.” In addition, he added exaggeration when the narrator felt she talked for “forty days and forty nights.” Moreover, his use of repetition emphasized the humor of the situation when the narrator showed the passengers’ anguish by exclaiming “How we suffered, suffered, suffered!” As can be seen from these examples, the author’s words accentuate the humor of the situation in the passage.

**Sentences combined  
with transitions**

This paragraph uses transitional words to link ideas. Notice how transitional words can be used to form phrases and clauses to communicate how one idea relates to another. Also notice that transitional words are used between sentences as well as within sentences.

#### Transitions between Paragraphs

Most essays contain multiple paragraphs, so transitions are also important in linking one paragraph to another. As you write your own essays, remember to use transitions to connect ideas from one paragraph to another when appropriate.

## Section 5.3, continued

### Transitions

Consider the following two paragraphs taken from a student essay. In this essay, the student analyzes a passage from *Life on the Mississippi*. The purpose of the essay is to determine how Mark Twain uses analogy to communicate a central idea.

**Example 3:** In this passage from *Life on the Mississippi*, Twain uses an analogy to compare the river to a book. By using this analogy, Twain explains the importance of reading the river. To Twain, the river was “a wonderful book” that communicated to him “its most cherished secrets.” In other words, Twain was able to read the river for valuable information just like a person might read a book. For example, he explained that a faint dimple on the surface of the river was like text in a book that had been italicized or in large capital letters and punctuated with exclamation points. The dimple, to him, represented a dangerous hidden wreck or rock buried beneath the surface of the river.

Twain says that the river was like “a book that was a dead language to the uneducated passenger.” Furthermore, the book contained only “pretty pictures” that were “painted by the sun and shaded by the clouds.” In other words, the river’s message could only be read by a trained pilot. Twain successfully uses this analogy to emphasize the importance of reading the river’s messages.

No clear connection between paragraphs

Each of these paragraphs contain appropriate transitions that lead the reader from one idea to the next, but there is no clear connection *between* the paragraphs. How is the second paragraph related to the first? A transition sentence at the beginning of the second paragraph is needed to connect the ideas within both paragraphs.

In this passage from *Life on the Mississippi*, Twain uses an analogy to compare the river to a book. By using this analogy, Twain explains the importance of reading the river. To Twain, the river was “a wonderful book” that communicated to him “its most cherished secrets.” In other words, Twain was able to read the river for valuable information just like a person might read a book. For example, he explained that a faint dimple on the surface of the river was like text in a book that had been italicized or in large capital letters and punctuated with exclamation points. The dimple, to him, represented a dangerous hidden wreck or rock buried beneath the surface of the river.

Using this same analogy, Twain is able to contrast his skills to the average person who sees the river but is unable to read its danger. Twain says that the river was like “a book that was a dead language to the uneducated passenger.” Furthermore, the book contained only “pretty pictures” that were “painted by the sun and shaded by the clouds.” In other words, the river’s message could only be read by a trained pilot. Twain successfully uses this analogy to emphasize the importance of reading the river’s messages.

Transitional sentence between paragraphs

Using a transition sentence to begin the first paragraph allows the reader to more easily follow the writer’s ideas and to understand the relationship among the ideas. With this added sentence, the ideas in the first paragraph are connected to the ideas in the second paragraph.

# Essay-Writing Basics

## Section 6.3

### Writing an Effective, Basic Paragraph



#### Key Terms 6.3

- **Conclusion Sentence** – a sentence in a paragraph that brings the ideas in the paragraph to a logical close
- **Topic sentence** – a sentence in a paragraph that tells the subject and the purpose of the paragraph

Up to this point, you have reviewed the grammar, usage, and mechanics skills that are the foundation for effective writing. Before tackling an entire essay, let's review how to write an effective, basic paragraph. After all, an essay is made up of several paragraphs.

In this subsection, we will review the skills needed to write one well-developed informational paragraph. In subsequent sections, we will build on these basics for writing paragraphs for specific types of essays. These basics will apply to most informative and argumentative paragraphs, but as a side note, narrative paragraphs are likely to have several exceptions.

#### Basic Paragraph Blueprint

A well-developed paragraph, especially an informative or argumentative one, will have several components:

- A topic sentence
- Sentences with ideas, reasons, supporting details, and/or examples
- A conclusion sentence

These components appear simple; however, it is important to realize that the ideas in each of these sentences should be connected. Consider each of these components more carefully as they apply to a general informative paragraph.

#### Topic Sentence

A **topic sentence** introduces the subject of the paragraph and leads the reader to the purpose of the paragraph. It gives the paragraph a direction and lets the reader know what to expect. This sentence is important because it is the core to which everything else must connect. The topic sentence must be broad enough to encompass the range of ideas to be included in the paragraph and yet narrow enough to focus the reader's attention on the main idea.

Let's say you want to write an informative paragraph that analyzes the importance of physical exercise for teenagers. Consider some examples of effective versus ineffective topic sentences.

**Example 1:** Physical exercise is crucial to a teenager's healthy development. **Effective**

This sentence is effective because it gives both the subject and the purpose of the paragraph. The subject is physical exercise as it applies to teenagers. The purpose of the paragraph is to inform the reader of how physical exercise is crucial for the healthy development of teenagers. Notice how this sentence gives direction. The reader expects the rest of the paragraph to explain this statement with reasons and/or facts.

## Section 6.3, continued

### Writing an Effective, Basic Paragraph

**Example 2:** Teenagers need physical exercise to maintain both physical and mental health. **Effective**

This sentence is also effective as a topic sentence. Again, it gives the subject as physical exercise as it applies to teenagers. The purpose of the paragraph is to inform the reader of how teenagers need physical exercise to maintain physical and mental health. Notice how this sentence gives a slightly different direction from Example 1. The reader expects the rest of the paragraph to explain how physical exercise allows teenagers to maintain physical and mental health.

**Example 3:** Teenagers sometimes get physical exercise. **Ineffective; no clear purpose**

If you are writing a paragraph that analyzes the importance of physical exercise for teenagers, this sentence is not an effective topic sentence. It addresses the general topic, teenagers and physical exercise, but it fails to indicate a purpose. It is merely a statement about teenagers and physical exercise.

**Example 4:** Physical exercise is important for overall health. **Ineffective; subject is too broad**

This example is also ineffective as a topic sentence because it doesn't clearly state the intended subject, which is teenagers. This sentence addresses the intended purpose of the paragraph, to show the importance of physical exercise, but it fails to narrow the subject to teenagers.

**Example 5:** Physical exercise is necessary for teenagers because it improves alertness when doing homework. **Ineffective; subject is too narrow**

This sentence gives subject and purpose, but it is very narrow. It indicates that the rest of the paragraph will explain how exercise helps teenagers to be alert when doing their homework. It doesn't leave room to discuss other important aspects of physical exercise for teenagers.

**Note: A common mistake students make when writing a topic sentence is to include the first detail in the topic sentence. Then they go on to describe other details. Remember that a topic sentence should not include a single detail unless the entire paragraph is about that one detail. Be careful using *because* followed by one detail in your topic sentence since it makes your topic sentence very narrow.**

### Practice 1

A high school's student counsel wants a brief paragraph for its newsletter that is written to explain how smartphone access can benefit student learning during class. Keep this task in mind as you respond to the following questions.

Consider the following topic sentence written for the newsletter paragraph:

*Students' ability to access their smartphones at school greatly enhances their learning potential.*

1. What is the subject in this topic sentence?



# Essay-Planning Skills

## Section 7.3

### Paraphrasing, Summarizing, and Quoting



#### Key Terms 7.3

- **Direct quote** – a quote taken directly from another text and used word-for-word
- **Indirect quote** – a paraphrased version of what is said in another text
- **Paraphrasing** – restating someone else’s text by using different words
- **Summarizing** – paraphrasing the main points of a text

Your essay prompt for the MAAP-EOC English II exam will include instructions to “provide key details and examples from the passage to support your writing/response.” In order for you to give details and/or examples of the passage in your essay, you will need to use the following skills: paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting. Notice that “copying” is not one of those options. While you may copy specific segments to include as quotes in your essay, you do not want to simply copy whole sentences and treat them as if you had written them. Avoid copying straight from the text for two reasons. First, copying entire sentences does not show your skill of reasoning through the passage to come up with your own ideas and interpretation. Second, copying without quoting the source is considered plagiarism, which is never acceptable. Now let’s quickly review each of the skills you will be using so that you are ready to apply them to the essay-writing process.

#### Paraphrasing

**Paraphrasing** is simply using your own words to restate what you’ve read in a text. The general steps to paraphrasing are as follows:

1. Read and reread the text to understand its complete meaning.
2. Highlight the parts of the text that you want to capture.
3. State the information in your own words by using synonyms and ideally, a different sentence structure.

Consider the following text taken from *The Story of My Life* by Helen Keller.

excerpt from *The Story of My Life*, Part I Chapter IV  
by Helen Keller

The morning after my teacher came she led me into her room and gave me a doll. The little blind children at the Perkins Institution had sent it and Laura Bridgman had dressed it; but I did not know this until afterward. When I had played with it a little while, Miss Sullivan slowly spelled into my hand the word “d-o-l-l.” I was at once interested in this finger play and tried to imitate it. When I finally succeeded in making the letters correctly I was flushed with childish pleasure and pride. Running downstairs to my mother I held up my hand and made the letters for doll. I did not know that I was spelling a word or even that words existed; I was simply making my fingers go in monkey-like imitation.

Let’s assume this paragraph is part of a longer passage and you are given a prompt that is asking you to *explain Helen Keller’s journey to learn*. For your essay, you identify the underlined sentences in this paragraph as being important to answering the prompt, so you want to paraphrase the ideas in these sentences. How would a paraphrase of these sentences look that addresses the purpose of the prompt? Consider the following example.

## Section 7.3, continued

### Paraphrasing, Summarizing, and Quoting

**Example 1:** Even though she copied the motions of the word *doll* correctly for her mother, she was just copying her teacher’s motions because she did not yet comprehend what words were.

This sentence is a paraphrase of the ideas in the two underlined sentences. Notice how this paraphrased sentence uses these ideas to explain the first step to Helen’s learning to sign words.

### Summarizing

**Summarizing** is similar to paraphrasing but includes only the main ideas of a text. This skill can be used in several different ways. For example, a summary of a paragraph will reduce its length to just a few sentences because it excludes non-essential details. Another way to use this skill is to summarize general or important ideas from the text that you want to use in your essay.

Consider the next paragraph of text taken from *The Story of My Life* by Helen Keller.

excerpt from *The Story of My Life*, Part I Chapter IV  
by Helen Keller

We walked down the path to the well-house, attracted by the fragrance of the honeysuckle with which it was covered. Some one was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word *water*, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten—a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that “w-a-t-e-r” meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! There were barriers still, it is true, but barriers that could in time be swept away.

How might you summarize the main idea of this paragraph to use in an essay with the purpose of explaining Keller’s journey to learn? Again, consider an example below.

**Example 2:** The breakthrough of Helen’s journey of learning came when her teacher led her to the water pump and signed the word “w-a-t-e-r” into one hand as Helen felt the water flow over her other hand. She finally understood that words existed to stand for objects; therefore, her learning could begin.

The main idea of the paragraph is about Helen’s breakthrough, so paraphrasing and summarizing was used to put the idea into the essay.

### Quoting

When giving specific details or examples in your essay, you will probably want to use quotes from the passage that you’ve read. A **direct quote** takes the exact words from a text and puts those words in quotation marks. An **indirect quote** is a paraphrase of what an author or character has said in the text. It uses similar but not exact words as what is found in the text and does not use quotation marks. In your essay, you will want to use a combination of direct and indirect quotes as examples and details.

Read another portion of text taken from *The Story of My Life* by Helen Keller.



## Section 7.3, continued

### Paraphrasing, Summarizing, and Quoting

excerpt from *The Story of My Life*, Part I Chapter IV  
by Helen Keller

Have you ever been at sea in a dense fog, when it seemed as if a tangible white darkness shut you in, and the great ship, tense and anxious, groped her way toward the shore with plummet and sounding-line, and you waited with beating heart for something to happen? I was like that ship before my education began, only I was without compass or sounding-line, and had no way of knowing how near the harbour was. “Light! give me light!” was the wordless cry of my soul, and the light of love shone on me in that very hour.

Again, let’s assume this paragraph is part of a longer passage, and you are addressing the same prompt to explain Helen Keller’s journey to learn. For your essay, you identify a detail of her journey to learn from this paragraph. Consider how your essay could use either a direct or an indirect quote to incorporate this detail.

**Example 3:** Prior to having her world expanded through learning, Helen Keller compares her journey to a ship sailing “in a dense fog.” She felt disconnected from everything around her and consequently had no sense of bearing or direction.

These sentences summarize the main idea of the text but incorporate a direct quote “in a dense fog.” These words surrounded by quotation marks are quoted word for word exactly as Keller writes them in the paragraph. These exact words help to describe Helen Keller’s journey prior to having a teacher.

This same idea could also be written using an indirect quote. Consider the following example.

**Example 4:** Prior to having her world expanded through learning, Helen Keller compares her journey to a ship navigating in a thick mist. She felt disconnected from everything around her and consequently had no sense of bearing or direction.

These sentences are similar to Example 3 except all the summarized ideas are paraphrased without using Keller’s exact words. The writer uses the phrase “in a thick mist” instead of quoting “in a dense fog.” The writer quotes Keller’s words indirectly.

Both of these examples are acceptable ways to use quotes within an essay. You simply have to decide which way seems more effective.

## Section 8.1, continued

### Analyzing Text to Write an Informative Paragraph

Read the following short passage and the prompt that follows.

Skip ahead and read the prompt first. Before you read the passage, be sure you understand what the prompt is asking. Based on the prompt, what should you be looking for as you read the passage?

Once you understand the purpose of your written response based on the prompt, then read the passage with that purpose in mind. As you read, underline the parts of the text that might be useful in addressing the prompt.

excerpt from *The People of the Abyss*, Chapter IX — “The Spike”  
by Jack London

Conversation was slack at first, standing there, till the man on one side of me and the man on the other side of me discovered that they had been in the smallpox hospital at the same time, though a full house of sixteen hundred patients had prevented their becoming acquainted. But they made up for it, discussing and comparing the more loathsome features of their disease in the most cold-blooded, matter-of-fact way. I learned that the average mortality was one in six, that one of them had been in three months and the other three months and a half, and that they had been “rotten wi’ it.” Whereat my flesh began to creep and crawl, and I asked them how long they had been out. One had been out two weeks, and the other three weeks. Their faces were badly pitted (though each assured the other that this was not so), and further, they showed me in their hands and under the nails the smallpox “seeds” still working out. Nay, one of them worked a seed out for my edification, and pop it went, right out of his flesh into the air. I tried to shrink up smaller inside my clothes, and I registered a fervent though silent hope that it had not popped on me.

In both instances, I found that the smallpox was the cause of their being “on the doss,” which means on the tramp [homeless]. Both had been working when smitten by the disease, and both had emerged from the hospital “broke,” with the gloomy task before them of hunting for work. So far, they had not found any, and they had come to the spike for a “rest up” after three days and nights on the street.

**Prompt:** You have read an excerpt from *The People of the Abyss* by Jack London. In this excerpt, London recounts his experience with two men waiting in line with him to enter “the spike.” As you read and reread this excerpt, think about how London conveys a tone of repulsion. Then, write a paragraph that explains how London develops this tone. Provide key details and examples from the excerpt to support your response.

The following examples will show you how this prompt and passage could be analyzed, but before turning the page, think through the prompt and text. Underline parts of the excerpt that you believe would help you if you were to write a paragraph that responds to the prompt.

## Section 8.1, continued Analyzing Text to Write an Informative Paragraph

Remember that step 1 is to read and analyze the prompt.

### **Example 1:** Analyze the prompt as you did in Section 7.2.

- What type of response does this prompt require? How do you know?
- What is the purpose of the response? Based on the prompt, what should be included in the response?

The prompt requires an informative response because it asks you to explain. The purpose of the response is to explain how London develops a tone of repulsion in the excerpt. Remember that tone is the author's attitude towards a subject. Based on the prompt, the response would need to include details and examples of how London indicates that he is repulsed. Since tone is most often communicated by word choice, the response will likely include specific examples of how London uses words to reveal tone.

The next step, step 2, is to read the text with a specific purpose in mind. In this case, read the text with tone in mind. Which words or sentences indicate a tone of repulsion? If you haven't done so already, underline these now. Compare what you have underlined to the list in the following example.

### **Example 2:** Words, phrases, and sentences used by London to convey repulsion include the following:

- loathsome features of their disease
- Whereat my flesh began to creep and crawl
- Their faces were badly pitted
- Nay, one of them worked a seed out for my edification, and pop it went right out of his flesh into the air. I tried to shrink up smaller inside my clothes, and I registered a fervent though silent hope that it had not popped on me.

These words, phrases, and sentences are all examples of how London conveys a tone of repulsion. This list represents evidence that can be used in the response.

With our list of evidence, we can now proceed to steps 3 and 4. We need to use reasoning to analyze our list and to develop ideas for our paragraph. These two steps can be a challenge but are necessary for an effective response.

Let's take a closer look at the bulleted list in Example 2 and the text you have underlined. How closely do these lists match? Eliminate any items on your own list that do not specifically address the prompt.

Now, analyze each bullet point below and make notes on how each addresses the prompt. What idea or ideas do they share? Before turning the page, make your own notes beside each point in the list.

- loathsome features of their disease
- Whereat my flesh began to creep and crawl
- Their faces were badly pitted
- Nay, one of them worked a seed out for my edification, and pop it went right out of his flesh into the air. I tried to shrink up smaller inside my clothes, and I registered a fervent though silent hope that it had not popped on me.

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**Section 8.1, continued**  
**Analyzing Text to Write**  
**an Informative Paragraph**

**Example 3:** Now consider how we have annotated this list.

- loathsome features of their disease      a description of smallpox as a repulsive disease
  - Whereat my flesh began to creep and crawl      London's reaction to their descriptions shows repulsion.
  - Their faces were badly pitted      a description of the men as a result of smallpox
  - Nay, one of them worked a seed out for my edification, and pop it went right out of his flesh into the air. I tried to shrink up smaller inside my clothes, and I registered a fervent though silent hope that it had not popped on me.      another reaction that shows repulsion
- Unifying Idea:  
All of these examples use vivid, descriptive words to indicate repulsion.

The prompt asks us to explain how London develops the tone of repulsion, so ask the question, “How does London develop a tone of repulsion in the text?” We must use reasoning skills to answer this question.

Notice that each point in the list paints a vivid picture, so they have in common the use of imagery. Since the use of imagery unifies all of these examples from the text, the focus of our response could be that London conveys repulsion through imagery. This statement answers the question of how London creates tone. He creates this tone through the use of imagery.

Using additional reasoning skills to analyze the bullet points, we see that the imagery includes physical descriptions of the effects of smallpox and descriptions of his own responses. These two slightly different general ideas can also help us to focus a response.

The final step, step 5, in the prewriting process is to organize your ideas for writing. What does that really mean? Have you ever decorated a tree at Christmas time and plugged several strings of lights together in order to cover the tree? Like those strands of lights on the tree, you need to string together your ideas so that they “cover” the task of the prompt. Linking the ideas together is done through determining what they have in common.

In Example 3, we analyzed and annotated the list of selections from the text. Now let’s organize our ideas based on our notes. Look back to Example 3.

**Example 4:** Of the four bullet points, which ones are similar?

- loathsome features of their disease
  - Whereat my flesh began to creep and crawl
  - Their faces were badly pitted
  - Nay, one of them worked a seed out for my edification, and pop it went right out of his flesh into the air. I tried to shrink up smaller inside my clothes, and I registered a fervent though silent hope that it had not popped on me.
- describe effects of smallpox
- describe London's reaction
- All of these use imagery.
- 

The first and third bullet point are similar because they both describe the effects of smallpox. The second and fourth bullet points are similar because they both relate to London’s own reaction. All four of the bullet points use imagery, or vivid descriptions.

## Section 8.1, continued Analyzing Text to Write an Informative Paragraph

**Example 5:** Based on this analysis, the ideas could be organized in the following way:

**Unifying idea:** vivid imagery is used to develop a tone of repulsion

**Supporting idea #1:** descriptions of the physical effects of smallpox

**Evidence/details:**

- loathsome features of their disease
- Their faces were badly pitted

**Supporting idea #2:** author’s reaction to his interaction with the men

**Evidence/details:**

- Whereat my flesh began to creep and crawl
- Nay, one of them worked a seed out for my edification, and pop it went right out of his flesh into the air. I tried to shrink up smaller inside my clothes, and I registered a fervent though silent hope that it had not popped on me.

Having organized our ideas and identified where our evidence will go, we are now ready to tackle the actual writing process. Following these prewriting steps may take a little time, but the benefits are worth the effort. These steps develop reasoning, eliminate guessing, and speed up the actual writing.

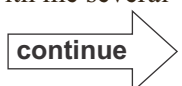
Now practice these prewriting steps on your own using a different text and prompt.

### Practice

Read the following excerpt and prompt. Analyze the prompt and the text to determine what a response would include. Remember that you may want to read the prompt first before reading the text. Underline words, phrases, or sentences in the text that are relevant to addressing the prompt. Complete the exercises that follow the prompt to help you in your analysis.

excerpt from *The Story of My Life*, Part I, Chapter IV  
by Helen Keller

The morning after my teacher came she led me into her room and gave me a doll. The little blind children at the Perkins Institution had sent it and Laura Bridgman had dressed it; but I did not know this until afterward. When I had played with it a little while, Miss Sullivan slowly spelled into my hand the word “d-o-l-l.” I was at once interested in this finger play and tried to imitate it. When I finally succeeded in making the letters correctly I was flushed with childish pleasure and pride. Running downstairs to my mother I held up my hand and made the letters for doll. I did not know that I was spelling a word or even that words existed; I was simply making my fingers go in monkey-like imitation. In the days that followed I learned to spell in this uncomprehending way a great many words, among them pin, hat, cup, and a few verbs like sit, stand and walk. But my teacher had been with me several weeks before I understood that everything has a name.

continue 

## Section 9.3, continued

### Writing the Introductory Paragraph for an Informative Essay

This basic model is NOT the only way to write an introductory paragraph. You can be as creative as you wish, but remember that your introductory paragraph must meet the criteria in the scoring rubric. This basic model is an easy way for you to write a solid first paragraph.

A strong introductory paragraph lays a foundation for your reader. (Remember your reader for the MAAP-EOC essay is the grader!) The paragraph needs to introduce the central idea as well as how that idea is going to be supported. These elements should already be identified in your writing outline as determined in the prewriting steps.

### Thesis Statement

When writing the introductory paragraph, we strongly suggest that you construct the thesis statement first. The thesis statement gives the *what* and the *how* of the essay; the *what* is the topic of the essay, and the *how* is the direction or focus of that topic.

If you've taken the time to work through the prewriting steps, your unifying idea should give you the basis for your thesis statement.

**Example 1:** For our teaching prompt, consider the unifying idea in our outline. Does it express the topic and the focus of the essay?

*Washington's character traits of determination and resilience allowed him to find ways to overcome the obstacles of constructing all of the buildings on campus with students.*

Notice that this unifying idea gives both a topic and a focus. It could serve as the thesis statement because it provides both the *what* and the *how*.

*What:* The topic is Washington's character traits of determination and resilience.

*How:* The focus is how these traits allowed Washington to overcome obstacles.

As the introductory paragraph is written, the specific words of the thesis statement may be changed to improve fluidity, but this statement is a good place to start.

### Practice 1

Your outline addressing the student prompt should contain a unifying idea. Does this idea summarize the ideas in the outline and address the prompt with a topic and focus? Revise your unifying idea as needed to create a thesis statement. Review Section 8.5 if you need to refresh your memory on writing thesis statements.

Thesis statement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Section 9.3, continued

### Writing the Introductory Paragraph for an Informative Essay

#### Introductory and Transition Sentences

Now that the thesis statement is established, the rest of the paragraph is built around it. In a basic introductory paragraph, the first sentence can be a general statement that reflects the prompt and summarizes part of the passage. It is a good idea to reference the author and title of the passage in this opening sentence, and if not here, then in a subsequent sentence. Once the introductory sentence is written, one or more sentences will be needed to smoothly transition to the thesis sentence.

Review our teaching prompt and thesis statement and then consider examples of introductory sentences for an essay that addresses this prompt.

**Teaching Prompt:** You have read an excerpt from *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington. In this excerpt, Washington's character traits are illustrated through the effort required to construct the campus buildings. Write an essay that identifies these character traits and analyzes how they are demonstrated over the course of this text. Provide key details and examples from the excerpt to support your response.

**Thesis statement:** Washington's character traits of determination and resilience allowed him to find ways to overcome the obstacles of constructing all of the buildings on campus with students.

#### **Example 2:** A basic but effective introductory sentence might look like the following:

In the excerpt from *Up From Slavery* by Booker T. Washington, Washington describes the experiences he had while erecting campus buildings with student labor, which would have challenged a man of lesser character.

This sentence acts as a topic sentence for the introductory paragraph. It gives the title and the author of the text to which the essay is responding, and it summarizes the information from the prompt and the text.

What does this sentence tell the reader?

- Washington constructed campus buildings with student labor.
- Character was important in accomplishing this objective.
- Washington demonstrated character.

From this topic sentence, the reader expects to read about Washington's experiences and his character.

#### **Example 3:** Consider another good example of introductory sentences:

When challenges arise, a person must rely on character to overcome them. In this excerpt from *Up From Slavery*, character is exactly what Booker T. Washington needed when he aspired to having students build campus buildings.

These two introductory sentences give similar information as in Example 2, but the first sentence makes a general observation. This introduction is a little more creative.

## Section 9.3, continued

### Writing the Introductory Paragraph for an Informative Essay

Once you have one or more introductory sentences and a thesis sentence, all you need is one or more transition sentences to act as a bridge. Remember that your introductory paragraph can be short, but it needs to be well organized and well written. Consider our example introductory sentence and our thesis sentence.

*Opening sentence:* In the excerpt from *Up From Slavery* by Booker T. Washington, Washington describes the experiences he had while erecting campus buildings with student labor, which would have challenged a man of lesser character.

*Thesis statement:* Washington’s character traits of determination and resilience allowed him to find ways to overcome the obstacles of constructing all of the buildings on campus with students.

Notice that the opening sentence is general while the thesis statement is specific. The purpose of a transition sentence is to build a logical and smooth bridge to connect these two sentences.

**Example 4:** Consider the following introductory paragraph. Notice how the underlined sentence acts as a transition between the opening sentence and the thesis statement.

In the excerpt from *Up From Slavery* by Booker T. Washington, Washington describes the experiences he had while erecting campus buildings with student labor, which would have challenged a man of lesser character. These experiences were filled with hardships, such as problems with the machinery and discouragement from the students and others involved. Washington’s character traits of determination and resilience allowed him to find ways to overcome the obstacles of constructing all of the buildings on campus with students.

The transition sentence connects the opening sentence with the thesis statement by addressing “experiences” and then describing those experiences as difficult.

Our introductory paragraph in Example 4 still needs some editing. Did you notice that the idea of building campus buildings with student labor is unnecessarily repeated in both the first and last sentences? How could this paragraph be rewritten so that the ideas flow more smoothly?

**Example 5:** In the excerpt from *Up From Slavery* by Booker T. Washington, Washington describes the experiences he had while erecting campus buildings with student labor, which would have challenged a man of lesser character. These experiences were filled with hardships, such as problems with the machinery and discouragement from the students and others involved. However, when facing adversity, Washington’s character traits of determination and resilience allowed him to find ways to overcome these obstacles.

Did you notice the changes in rewording the thesis sentence?

“However, when facing adversity” is a transitional phrase that connects the description of difficulties in the transition sentence to the central idea of the essay. Using “obstacles” in the thesis sentence as a stand-alone word eliminates the unnecessary repetition.



## Section 9.3, continued

### Writing the Introductory Paragraph for an Informative Essay

Now consider an example of an ineffective introductory paragraph that has been written to address the teaching prompt.

**Example 6:** Washington forced students to build the buildings on campus. He was always the man in charge of construction. I think he demanded too much from the students.

This introductory paragraph is weak for several reasons.

- It doesn't reference the title of the passage and only partially references the author's name, Booker T. Washington.
- The second sentence is not a smooth transition between the first and last sentences. It is not clear how this detail is relevant to the essay.
- The last sentence is not an effective thesis sentence. It uses first person, *I think*, which should be avoided in a formal essay. It only indirectly addresses a character trait, that Washington was demanding, and it offers no focus for the essay.

When writing your essay, always remember that it must address the prompt. Resist the temptation of skipping over all the prewriting steps. It would be easy to simply begin writing a summary of what you just read without addressing the prompt. Consider one more ineffective introductory paragraph.

**Example 7:** Booker T. Washington wrote this passage about how he wanted students to do all the work and even build their own buildings. Many people advised him against this idea, but Washington didn't listen to them. One of his main challenges was making bricks. It would have been easier just to buy the bricks, but Washington insisted that they make their own.

This paragraph is not an effective introduction for the essay. The first sentence starts okay, but the rest of the paragraph begins to simply summarize what was in the passage. Can you see how this paragraph is off-topic? It doesn't address the prompt at all because there is no mention of character traits. None of these sentences represent a thesis sentence that would direct the rest of the essay and address the prompt. Without a clear topic and focus, this essay would likely continue to summarize what happened in the passage without addressing specific character traits.

## Practice 2

Using your thesis statement from Practice 1, write a complete introductory paragraph on your own paper. Use the following steps as a guide.

1. Write one or more introductory sentences that include the title of the passage and the author. Also include a general summary of the passage as it relates to the student prompt.
2. Write one or more transition sentences to bridge your opening sentence(s) to your thesis.
3. Add your thesis statement. Revise it as needed so that your paragraph flows smoothly.
4. Edit and rewrite your paragraph so that the ideas flow smoothly from one to another.
5. Review the rubric. Are you on track so far?

# Writing an Argumentative Essay

## Section 10.5 Considering Counterarguments for an Argumentative Essay



Before we wrap up our teaching essay with the conclusion paragraph, there is one more component to consider—counterarguments. Remember that a counterargument is an opposite position or viewpoint to your claim. Addressing a counterargument is called a rebuttal, and it shows that you have considered the opposing viewpoint but that you have reason to disagree with it.

We briefly mentioned counterarguments in Section 10.1 when we were analyzing the text, but now let’s see if addressing counterarguments would improve our essay.

Consider the following questions: What is the counterargument? How much can or should be said about it? Will the rebuttal add to the defense of the claim or weaken it? Where is the best place in the essay to insert a rebuttal? If you cannot quickly and easily answer these questions, then it is best to leave out a rebuttal since your time for writing your essay is limited. If you can quickly state a possible counterargument and briefly disprove or oppose it, then you should consider adding a rebuttal. Addressing a counterargument demonstrates to the test grader that you have reasoned through all sides of the argument.

Consider some general language that can be used to effectively address a counterargument. Whenever you state a possible counterargument, use transitional language to introduce your rebuttal. The following are some recommendations:

- While some argue/state/believe . . .
- Even though the opposition asserts/claims . . .
- This statement is only partially accurate because . . .
- Though these concerns may be valid, the argument fails to acknowledge/does not take into account . . .

Now let’s specifically address the counterarguments for our teaching essay.

For our teaching essay, we acknowledged two possible counterarguments: 1) If businesses do not expand to meet customer demands, they will go out of business, and 2) Property owners are simply doing the best they can to meet an overwhelming demand for housing.

After reading the text and our teaching essay so far, how do you feel about these counterarguments? How would you refute them? Since the claim is that these two groups of owners are responsible for the decay of the neighborhoods, any counterargument needs to be framed with that same perspective in mind.

### **Example 1:** How could we address and refute the counterarguments?

- 1) **Counterargument:** *If businesses do not expand to meet customer demands, they will go out of business.*

**Rebuttal:** *While business owners might claim that expansion is necessary if they are to stay in business, there is no good reason that businesses have to grow irresponsibly. Residences and businesses can coexist successfully when profit isn’t the only motive.*

- 2) **Counterargument:** *Property owners are simply doing the best they can to meet an overwhelming demand for housing.*

## Section 10.5, continued

### Considering Counterarguments for an Argumentative Essay

**Rebuttal:** *In defense of their actions, property owners may claim that they were simply meeting a need. However, it is abundantly clear through this passage that these individuals were exploiting the poor for profit instead of trying to solve the housing problem in a more caring manner.*

While both of the proposed counterarguments have some validity, neither of them addresses the greater responsibility for the decay of the neighborhoods. These rebuttals to the counterarguments emphasize the point that their greed was to blame for the decay.

Now consider where to place a rebuttal of one or more counterarguments. In writing an argumentative essay, the momentum of the defense is built throughout the essay. You want to be thoughtful in how you interject new ideas because they could break the momentum that you have been building. In fact, they could interrupt the logical progression. For the purposes of your MAAP-EOC essay, an easy way to inject a rebuttal to counterarguments is to add a short paragraph before the conclusion paragraph. Think about it. You have built your case in the previous body paragraphs, and now you give your reader an “oh by the way” thought for which you immediately offer a rebuttal. This additional paragraph could be very effective in strengthening your overall argument. However, do not forget your time limit. Only consider adding this type of paragraph if you have the time.

Since we have identified two counterarguments with rebuttals for our teaching essay, let’s address these counterarguments in a short paragraph.

#### **Example 2:** An additional body paragraph that addresses counterarguments might look like the following:

One might ask if the decay of London’s lower and middle class neighborhoods is inevitable and if these two groups are really to blame. While business owners might claim that expansion is necessary if they are to stay in business, there is no good reason that businesses have to grow irresponsibly. Residences and businesses can coexist successfully when profit is not the only motive. Similarly, in defense of their actions, property owners may claim that they are simply meeting a need. However, it is abundantly clear throughout this passage that these individuals are exploiting the poor for profit instead of trying to solve the housing problem in a more caring manner. The action of both business and property owners speak loudly to their lack of consideration for those less fortunate.

While this is an additional paragraph that we did not include in our writing outline, it is an example of how a student could address counterarguments. The essay as it is written without this rebuttal paragraph is perfectly acceptable to address the prompt and the passage.

If you have only a rebuttal that addresses one counterargument, consider how you might be able to incorporate it into one of your body paragraphs. Just be careful to add appropriate transitions so that its addition to the paragraph flows smoothly without interrupting other ideas.

### Practice

**Review your student essay. Consider again any possible counterarguments to the claim that poor families had few choices for lodging and available choices were undesirable. For any counterargument you can identify, write one or two statements as a rebuttal to refute it. Do you have enough of a rebuttal to write a paragraph? If so, write one. If not, consider where your rebuttals might fit into your existing body paragraphs.**

## Section 11.1, continued

### Prewriting for Two Texts

#### Example 4: How can we summarize the ways that both passages develop the central idea of the difficulties of living off the land?

From *O Pioneers!*

- One winter his cattle had perished in a blizzard. Loss of livestock
- The next summer one of his plow horses broke its leg in a prairie dog hole and had to be shot. Loss of livestock
- Another summer he lost his hogs from cholera, and a valuable stallion died from a rattlesnake bite. Loss of livestock
- Time and again his crops had failed. Loss of crops
- He had lost two children, boys, that came between Lou and Emil, and there had been the cost of sickness and death. Loss of life
- Now, when he had at last struggled out of debt, he was going to die himself. Loss of life

From *Wells Brothers, the Young Cattle Kings*

- In response to their hail, two boys, about fourteen and sixteen years of age, emerged from the dug-out Harsh living conditions
- It was also learned that their mother had died before their father had taken the homestead, and therefore they were left orphans to fight their own battle. Loss of life
- their father had died during the previous winter, at a settlement on the Solomon River, and the boys were then confronted with the necessity of leaving the claim to avoid suffering want. Loss of life
- “But our garden failed, and there won’t be a dozen roasting-ears in that field of corn. If hot winds don’t kill it, it might make fodder. We expect to pull out next week.” Loss of crops
- “We had two [cows], but the funeral expenses took them.” Loss of livestock

In this step of our analysis, we have identified elements that both of the passages share. Three common aspects of difficulties have emerged: loss of livestock, loss of crops, and loss of life. Both texts share these three common aspects of loss.

By using reasoning, we can say that both authors developed the central idea of difficulties of living off the land by describing these common losses. It is easy to conclude that these same losses also impacted the families financially.

The last part of this step is to develop a unifying idea that ties these passages and their common elements together. With the reasoning from above, consider this possible statement:

Both authors create a common central idea of the difficulties of living off the land by describing crop failures, livestock losses, and deaths of family members, resulting in financial instability.

## Section 11.1, continued

### Prewriting for Two Texts

This unifying idea encompasses the purpose of the prompt as well as the common evidence found in both of the texts. Did you develop a different unifying idea using different evidence? Again, there is no right or wrong answer. Your list and ideas just need to be supported by evidence.

#### Practice 4

Further analyze your list from Practice 3. What ideas do they have in common? Use reason to determine connections among your list. On your own paper, group your list according to common ideas. Do any general ideas emerge? Write a general unifying idea that ties your examples and ideas together to address the prompt.

#### Step 5: Organize Ideas

The last step in prewriting is to organize ideas and evidences into a rough outline. This outline will be refined in the next section, but for now you need to identify which ideas and evidences are going to be used in the essay.

When you are given two passages to use as evidence in an essay, you will need to make a decision on how to organize your ideas. You have two general choices. You can organize your ideas by similarities and/or differences, or you can organize your ideas by passage. If you organize ideas by similarities and/or differences, you will want a body paragraph for each similar or different idea that you've identified. If you organize your ideas by passage, you will want one body paragraph for each passage. Organizing ideas by passage is easier in most cases, especially under a time limit.

For our teaching essay, consider how we could organize our ideas in these two ways. Consider these two general ways before we decide on one.

#### Example 5:

**organized by similarities**

**Unifying idea**

**Supporting idea #1:** Crop failures

- Evidence of crop failures from both passages

**Supporting idea #2:** Livestock losses

- Evidence of livestock losses from both passages

**Supporting idea #3:** Death of family members

- Evidence of deaths from both passages

**organized by passage**

**Unifying idea**

**Supporting idea #1:** Hardships in the *O Pioneers!* passage

- All evidence from *O Pioneers!*

**Supporting idea #2:** Hardships in the *Wells Brothers, the Young Cattle Kings* passage

- All evidence from *Wells Brothers*

In both of these outlines, the unifying idea is the same, but the supporting ideas that represent the topics for each body paragraph are different. If we organize our ideas by similarities, we should include three body paragraphs that each discuss a similar idea. If we organize our ideas by passage, we should include two body paragraphs that each discuss the evidences of a specific passage.

Let's carefully consider the teaching prompt. It instructs us to "write an essay in which you evaluate the effectiveness of each author's development of this idea." Since it isn't specifically asking that we compare or contrast the ways the authors develop this idea, organizing evidence by passage makes sense and is easier to do.

## Section 11.4, continued

### Writing the Body Paragraphs from Two Texts

**Example 1:** Read the following first body paragraph, and then let's analyze it.

John Bergson, the farmer in *O Pioneers!* by Willa Cather, experienced firsthand the struggles that come with living off the land. Bergson knew disappointment when “time and again his crops had failed.” Because crops are typically a farmer’s main source of income, this continual crop failure shows the financial difficulty of living off land that is unable to produce. On top of that problem, Bergson continuously lost livestock throughout the seasons. One winter he lost his cattle in a blizzard. The following summer, he lost one of his plow horses. The next year, it was his hogs from cholera, followed by a valuable stallion. With the death of so many livestock of different kinds over the years, it can be assumed Bergson’s income and food sources were affected. Even further, the illness and death of two of Bergson’s children demonstrate again the harshness of life in the western frontier. Collectively, all of these losses and tragedies illustrate the struggle that a farmer and his family suffered to simply live off the land of the frontier.

**Topic sentence:** “John Bergson, the farmer in *O Pioneers!* by Willa Cather, experienced firsthand the struggles that come with living off the land.”

This topic sentence tells us that this paragraph will be about *O Pioneers!*, the first passage to be discussed, and it will describe the struggles this pioneer experiences in living off the land. In essays where you are analyzing two texts, it is important that you cite which passage is being discussed within the appropriate body paragraph by including author and title.

#### **Supporting Sentences:**

The supporting sentences follow the order indicated by the thesis sentence: crop failures, livestock losses, and deaths of family members. Notice how the student explains how these losses were associated with financial instability. The supporting sentences use evidence from the passage in the form of direct quotes, summaries, and paraphrases.

Notice that the highlighted evidence “when he had at last struggled out of debt, he was going to die himself” was not used at all in the paragraph. It isn’t as relevant to the hardships of living off the land as the other evidences. Remember that you should choose the evidences that best support your ideas. As you begin to write, you may find that some evidences don’t fit well. If so, leave them out.

#### **Concluding Sentence:**

“Collectively, all of these losses and tragedies illustrate the struggle that a farmer and his family suffered to simply live off the land of the frontier.”

This concluding sentence effectively summarizes the paragraph and ties it directly to the thesis statement.

## **Body Paragraph #2**

The main topic of the second body paragraph is the hardships in the *Wells Brothers, the Young Cattle Kings* passage. Review our outline for this body paragraph:

**Supporting idea #2:** Hardships in the *Wells Brothers, the Young Cattle Kings* passage

- In response to their hail, two boys, about fourteen and sixteen years of age, emerged from the dug-out.
- It was also learned that their mother had died before their father had taken the homestead, and therefore they were left orphans to fight their own battle.

## Section 11.4, continued

### Writing the Body Paragraphs from Two Texts

- their father had died during the previous winter, at a settlement on the Solomon River, and the boys were then confronted with the necessity of leaving the claim to avoid suffering want.
- “but our garden failed, and there won’t be a dozen roasting-ears in that field of corn. If hot winds don’t kill it, it might make fodder. We expect to pull out next week.”
- “We had two [cows], but the funeral expenses took them.”

**Example 2:** Here is the second body paragraph for our teaching essay. Read it, and then let’s analyze it.

Near the Republican River, the Wells brothers faced the same issues in *Wells Brothers, the Young Cattle Kings* by Andy Adams. Dell Wells, the younger brother at 14, described their experience with crop failure when he said, “but our garden failed, and there won’t be a dozen roasting-ears in that field of corn.” Adams’ description of the rough homestead with a “dug-out” that housed the two teenage boys further develops the central idea of the struggles of survival. With the death of their father, they lost both of their cows due to the funeral expenses, and now they faced the harsh reality of “leaving the claim to avoid suffering want.” These fatherless teenage boys were confronted with the issue of survival in an area of the country that was challenging in every aspect.

**Topic sentence:** “Near the Republican River, the Wells brothers faced the same issues in *Wells Brothers, the Young Cattle Kings* by Andy Adams.”

This topic sentence cites the title and author of the next passage to be considered, *Wells Brothers, the Young Cattle Kings* by Andy Adams. The sentence smoothly transitions by referring to the “same issues” from the previous paragraph.

#### **Supporting Sentences:**

The supporting sentences begin with the same hardship of crop failure but also add the detail of the boys’ harsh living conditions. The death of their father and the loss of their cows (livestock) are discussed together in this paragraph since they were related by cause and effect. Financial instability is addressed in this passage by pointing out that boys “lost both their cows due to funeral expenses” and that they faced “leaving the claim to avoid suffering want.” Again, these supporting sentences use a combination of direct quotes, summaries, and paraphrases from the passage to act as evidence.

#### **Concluding Sentence:**

“These fatherless teenage boys were confronted with the issue of survival in an area of the country that was challenging in every aspect.”

This final sentence summarizes how difficult living off the land was for two teenage boys. We can further see that all of the factors mentioned in the thesis statement were relevant for these boys. This sentence brings the paragraph to a logical close.

## Appendix Additional Texts with Prompts

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the following passage. Write a response to the prompt that follows the passage.

### from *Neighbors: Life Stories of the Other Half*

(A collection of true stories)

by Jacob Riis

#### “His Christmas Gift”

1 “The prisoner will stand,” droned out the clerk in the Court of General Sessions. “Filippo Portoghese, you are convicted of assault with intent to kill. Have you anything to say why sentence should not be passed upon you?”

2 A sallow man with a hopeless look in his heavy eyes rose slowly in his seat and stood facing the judge. There was a pause in the hum and bustle of the court as men turned to watch the prisoner. He did not look like a man who would take a neighbor’s life, and yet so nearly had he done so, of set purpose it had been abundantly proved, that his victim would carry the disfiguring scar of the bullet to the end of his life, and only by what seemed an almost miraculous chance had escaped death. The story as told by witnesses and substantially uncontradicted was this:

3 Portoghese and Vito Ammella, whom he shot, were neighbors under the same roof. Ammella kept the grocery on the ground floor. Portoghese lived upstairs in the tenement. He was a prosperous, peaceful man, with a family of bright children, with whom he romped and played happily when home from his barber shop. The Black Hand fixed its evil eye upon the family group and saw its chance. One day a letter came demanding a thousand dollars. Portoghese put it aside with the comment that this was New York, not Italy. Other letters followed, threatening harm to his children. Portoghese paid no attention, but his wife worried. One day the baby, little Vito, was missing, and in hysterics she ran to her husband’s shop crying that the Black Hand had stolen the child.

4 The barber hurried home and sought high and low. At last he came upon the child sitting on Ammella’s doorstep; he had wandered away and brought up at the grocery; asked where he had been, the child pointed to the store. Portoghese flew in and demanded to know what Ammella was doing with his boy. The grocer was in a bad humor, and swore at him. There was an altercation, and Ammella attacked the barber with a broom, beating him and driving him away from his door. Black with anger, Portoghese ran to his room and returned with a revolver. In the fight that followed he shot Ammella through the head.

5 He was arrested and thrown into jail. In the hospital the grocer hovered between life and death for many weeks. Portoghese lay in the Tombs awaiting trial for more than a year, believing still that he was the victim of a Black Hand conspiracy. When at last the trial came on, his savings were all gone, and of the once prosperous and happy man only a shadow was left. He sat in the courtroom and listened in moody silence to the witnesses who told how he had unjustly suspected and nearly murdered his friend. He was speedily convicted, and the day of his sentence was fixed for Christmas Eve. It was certain that it would go hard with him. The Italians were too prone to shoot and stab, said the newspapers, and the judges were showing no mercy.

6 The witnesses had told the truth, but there were some things they did not know and that did not get into the evidence. The prisoner’s wife was ill from grief and want; their savings of years gone to lawyer’s fees, they were on the verge of starvation. The children were hungry. With the bells ringing in the glad holiday, they were facing bitter homelessness in the winter streets, for the rent was in arrears and the landlord would not wait. And “Papa” away now for the second Christmas,

GO ON 



## Appendix Additional Texts with Prompts

### Prompt #1

**Read the following prompt and write your complete response on your own paper.**

You have read a true story by Jacob Riis “His Christmas Gift” from a collection of stories entitled *Neighbors: Life Stories of the Other Half*. A claim could be made that jumping to conclusions without gathering all of the facts can have disastrous results. Write an essay that defends this claim using details and evidence from the passage.

Your writing will be scored based on the development of ideas, organization of writing, and language conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

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### Prompt #2

**Read the following prompt and write your complete response on your own paper.**

You have read a true story by Jacob Riis “His Christmas Gift” from a collection of stories entitled *Neighbors: Life Stories of the Other Half*. Write an essay that analyzes Riis’ effectiveness in creating a surprise ending to this story. Provide key details and examples from the passage to support your response.

Your writing will be scored based on the development of ideas, organization of writing, and language conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

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### Prompt #3

**Read the following prompt and write your complete response on your own paper.**

You have read a true story by Jacob Riis “His Christmas Gift” from a collection of stories entitled *Neighbors: Life Stories of the Other Half*. Imagine this story through the eyes of the neighbor Vito Ammella. Write an essay that retells this story through Ammella’s perspective. Provide key details and examples from the passage to support your response.

Your writing will be scored based on the development of ideas, organization of writing, and language conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

# English II Writing Standards Correlation Chart (Teacher's Edition)

The chart below correlates each 2016 Mississippi College- and Career-readiness Standard (MS CCRS) for English II to the student guide. The Text Section(s) column gives the section numbers in the text where each standard is reviewed. Some material in the student guide represent essential writing skills that are aligned with the broader CCR Standard rather than the grade-specific Standard, and these Sections are identified beside each broad CCR Standard. *(Note: Only the MS CCRSs tested by the essay portion of the exam are covered in the student guide and listed in the following chart.)*

MS CCRS English II Standards	Text Section(s)
<b>Writing (Text Types and Purposes)</b>	
<b>W.10.1</b> Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.	
<b>W.10.1a</b> Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.	Subsection 6.1, Subsections 7.1, 7.2, Subsections 8.3, 8.4, Section 10
<b>W.10.1b</b> Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.	Subsections 8.3, 8.4, Section 10
<b>W.10.1c</b> Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.	Subsection 5.3, Subsection 6.3, Subsection 8.4, Section 10
<b>W.10.1d</b> Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.	Subsections 6.2, 6.3, Subsections 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7
<b>W.10.1e</b> Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.	Subsection 6.3, Subsections 8.4, 8.5, Subsection 10.6
<b>W.10.2</b> Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	
<b>W.10.2a</b> Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.	Subsection 6.1, Subsections 7.1, 7.2, Subsections 8.1, 8.2, Sections 9, 11
<b>W.10.2b</b> Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.	Subsection 6.3, Subsections 8.1, 8.2, Sections 9, 11

## English II Writing Standards Correlation Chart, continued

MS CCRS English II Standards	Text Section(s)
<b>W.10.2c</b> Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.	Subsection 5.3, Subsections 6.3, Subsections 8.1, 8.2, Sections 9, 11
<b>W.10.2d</b> Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.	Subsection 5.1, Subsections 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6
<b>W.10.2e</b> Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.	Subsections 6.2, 6.3, Subsections 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6
<b>W.10.2f</b> Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).	Subsection 6.3, Subsections 8.2, 8.4, 8.5 Subsection 9.5
<b>W.10.3</b> Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	Subsection 6.1, Subsection 7.2
<b>W.10.3a</b> Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.	Section 12
<b>W.10.3b</b> Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.	Section 12
<b>W.10.3c</b> Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.	Section 12
<b>W.10.3d</b> Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.	Subsection 5.1, Section 12
<b>W.10.3e</b> Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.	Subsection 12.6

## English II Standards Correlation Chart, continued

MS CCRS English II Standards	Text Section(s)
<b>Language (Conventions of Standard English)</b>	
<b>L.10.1</b> Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.	Subsection 1.4, Subsections 2.1, 2.2
<b>L.10.1a</b> Use parallel structure.	Section 4
<b>L.10.1b</b> Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.	Subsections 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, Subsections 5.2, 5.3
<b>L.10.2</b> Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.	Sections 1, 3
<b>L.10.2a</b> Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.	Subsections 3.3
<b>L.10.2b</b> Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation.	Subsections 3.4, 3.5, 3.7
<b>L.10.2c</b> Spell correctly.	Subsections 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
<b>Language (Knowledge of Language)</b>	
<b>L.10.3</b> Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	
<b>L.10.3a</b> Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual (e.g., MLA Handbook, Turabian’s Manual for Writers) appropriate for the discipline and writing type.	Subsection 3.5