



Tutoring Writing

Resources for helping students with writing

Grammar:

- English for Everyone
 - Great worksheets on many grammar and style topics. Most include answer keys (so you don't need to know all the answers!)
 - <http://www.englishforeveryone.org/>
- Chomp Chomp
 - Interactive grammar games. If you get it wrong, you can click to learn why. Again, you do not have to know all the right answers!
 - <http://www.chompchomp.com/>

Writing and Research Skills:

- Purdue Owl – The Owl is the writing center at Purdue University. It has tons of resources. Below are the ones you might find helpful for getting students writing and researching.
 - Style guides: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>
 - Grades 7-12 Instructors and Students: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/677/01/>
- Temple University Writing Center
 - Worksheets and Handouts: <http://www.temple.edu/writingctr/support-for-writers/handouts.asp>
 - Note that many of these resources are better for college-level research and writing, but others are useful for writers at all levels.

Glossary of useful writing terms

Argument – An opinion that can be supported by evidence. Must be backed up with a supporting explanation or “because” reason and should be arguable by someone who disagrees. **Ex:** *The school should support a baseball team because it will provide exercise for students and increase school spirit. (argument against: Having a baseball team would cost the school too much money.)*

Audience – The group of people to whom a text is directed. Students often think of their writing as being directed only to their teacher. Try to encourage them to think of an audience who might be interested in the topic they are writing about. Also think about what the appropriate style to reach that audience might be.

“Because” reason – A reason that supports an opinion that is being argued. See Argument above.

Coherence – Making the paragraph understandable to the reader/audience. This requires using appropriate transitions, maintaining unity, and providing enough information so that there are not holes in the logic or point the writer is trying to make.

Concluding sentence – A sentence that either wraps up the ideas of the current paragraph without repeating the topic sentence or provides a transition into the next paragraph. Ideally, any body paragraph should move the essay forward into the next idea that will be discussed.

Contrast – identifying differences between two subjects, places, persons, things or ideas. Simply, it is a type of opposition between two objects highlighted to emphasize their differences. **Ex:** *Baseball is a better choice for our school than football because our field is not big enough for a football field but is just the right size to accommodate a baseball diamond and stands.*

Development – Fleshing out of an idea, point, or argument. This is done with supporting details, examples, and evidence.

Evidence – factual information presented to persuade the reader of an argument. Evidence can be facts, quotes, paraphrases, or examples.

Example – An illustration that serves to support a point. Could be any number of things from an event to a person to statistics. **Ex:** *Many other local schools have had great success with their baseball programs, including Central High, George Washington High, and Latin Academy.*

Paraphrase – words that approximate the ideas from another text, either oral or written. All paraphrases should be attributed using signal phrases (see below), correctly cited, and maintain the integrity of the ideas in the original source without coming too close to the original language.

Purpose – describes the author’s intent for his/her writing. This should be obvious by the writer’s topic sentence. Are they trying to argue a point or just give a report about the facts related to their topic? Are they trying to tell a personal story or are they trying to write a more academic piece?

Quotation – words copied exactly from another text, either written or oral. All quotations (or quotes) should be attributed using signal phrases (see below), correctly cited, and copied verbatim from the source.

Signal phrase – A way of attributing a quote or paraphrase to the original speaker or author. *Ex: Walt Whitman wrote; Benjamin Franklin said; Hillary Clinton argued.*

“So what” – This is not an “official” term but can be helpful in guiding the student writer to think about the point he or she is trying to make. It is especially useful in discussing concluding sentences. Ask the student what point he or she wants the reader to take away from the paragraph. If they make a point that doesn’t seem very consequential or if they are not fully explaining their point, ask them, “So what? What’s important about this? Why should your reader care about this?” Encourage them to think harder about why their point is meaningful.

Summary - a comprehensive and usually brief abstract of facts or a text.

Supporting details – A paragraph contains facts, statements, examples-specifics which guide us to a full understanding of the main idea. They clarify, illuminate, explain, describe, expand and illustrate the main idea.

Topic sentence – Gives the main idea of the paragraph. Could be an argument/opinion or simply a statement of a unifying fact. *Ex: Many people who enjoy baseball attend local school games for a variety of reasons. (This is a simple statement of fact. For argument example, see Argument above)*

Transition – A word or sentence that helps carry a thought from one idea to another within one subject or from one subject to another. Transitions can be a word, phrase – usually within a paragraph - or entire sentence – usually a concluding sentence of a paragraph. Transitions can be used to add to a thought (*Ex: and, in addition to, also*) or to provide contrast (*Ex: However, but, yet*).

Unity - Keeping all of the thoughts in a paragraph on the same topic and related to each other and the topic sentence.