Contact Addresses

Test Administration
Excelsior College
7 Columbia Circle
Albany, NY 12203-5159
Phone: 888-647-2388 ext. 166
Fax: 518-464-8777
Email: testadmin@excelsior.edu
Web: www.excelsior.edu

Excelsior College Bookstore
bookstore.excelsior.edu

Examination Registration
Toll free: 888-72EXAMS (888-723-9267)

Note to Educators:
Institutions wishing to license *English Composition* as a part of their curriculum can obtain licensing information by contacting the Center for Online Education Learning and Academic Services.
Tips for Using This Course Guide
and Accessing Online Writing Services

How To Use This Course Guide
If you have not taken a course at a distance before, you should plan to spend at least a week of your study time getting acquainted with the distance learning concepts covered in this Course Guide. A recommended approach to Part I of the Course Guide is provided in the “16-Week Syllabus for the UExcel exam in English Composition” found in Appendix H.

If you are an experienced distance learner, you may save time by skimming or skipping some of the information on preparing for distance learning in Part I of this Course Guide.

How To Access the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab

The Excelsior College Online Writing Lab (OWL) is a free public writing resource covering all aspects of undergraduate writing. To learn more about the many writing resources available at this interactive online service, navigate to http://www.excelsior.edu/owl. There, you'll find undergraduate writing rooms with in-depth guides to all aspects of undergraduate writing and instructional multimedia; links to informative writing Web sites, an FAQ, tips from instructors, and much more.
Welcome to English Composition. Learning to read more perceptively and to write more proficiently may be among the most challenging and rewarding experiences that you will ever have. This Course Guide is designed to help you learn about the most important aspects of close reading and of good writing and to give you practice in improving both. Almost everyone reads and writes in the course of everyday life, and many people find that the ability to read carefully and write well are essential parts of their jobs. As you continue college-level study, you will be asked to write essays, papers, and examinations that demand a high level of both reading and writing skills.

Each new reading or writing situation presents an opportunity for learning, no matter how experienced you are. You will learn how to analyze several different types of writing, including such literary forms as fiction, poetry, and drama. You will also learn how to analyze situations for writing and decide on various approaches, strategies, and forms to use. You will write a variety of essays: in one case, for example, you will write a personal narrative in which you describe a significant experience in your life; in another, you will compose a formal argument in which you take a stand on an issue; in yet another, you will offer your interpretation of a short story in which you argue for or against a character’s choice. These learning experiences will give you practice in considering various purposes and audiences.

Learning to read and write from various perspectives will give you a flexibility with language that you can use throughout your college studies, in your work, and in your personal life. Whether you find writing difficult or not, this sequence of units will take you step by step through the stages of reading and writing, offering you many options that you can use to develop your own expertise. Discovering new ideas and arranging them in prose that is effective and powerful can be among the most useful learning you will ever acquire. Similarly, discovering that you can read works of literature with a subtle understanding you never knew you possessed may open to you a new world of fascinating possibilities. You are likely to find your efforts repaid over and over in many situations you will encounter. We wish you success!

The Excelsior College Materials Development Committee in English Composition

This Course Guide was awarded a Meritorious Course Award by the Division of Independent Study of the University Continuing Education Association (UCEA) in 1998. The UCEA is the principal organization for continuing education in the United States.
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Part I

Preparing for Study

Overview

Part I of this Course Guide introduces you to *English Composition*. This part orients you to this course so that you will know what to expect and how to successfully prepare yourself for study. You will find information that will help you create an effective long-term study plan, obtain required study materials, and select appropriate learning strategies. Part I also includes a general description of the examination and information on computer-delivered testing.
Where Do I Begin?

Begin here. This Course Guide is the central component of an integrated package of guided study materials designed and developed for English Composition. This book guides you step-by-step through the process of learning to write on a college level.

Why Was This Course Guide Written?

This Course Guide was written to help you achieve the learning outcomes for English Composition. Part I introduces the course and helps you prepare for study. Part II guides you through course content by identifying required reading and writing assignments and by providing study questions for you to answer. Part III helps you prepare for the examination. It provides tips on writing essays for the examination, sample examination questions, sample student essays, and criteria used to score student responses.

What Is “Guided Learning?”

Guided learning is a form of study that enables you to earn college credit without attending traditional college classes. Instead of having to travel to a college campus to attend classes, you will be able to acquire college-level knowledge at a time and a place convenient for you. Guided learning offers a rich learning environment designed to help you achieve your educational goals and enhance the quality of your learning. This learning environment includes an integrated package of study materials and resources drawn from a variety of print and nonprint media. Through computer networking, guided learning also provides you with an opportunity to participate in online study groups, to pursue online academic research, to exchange drafts of your writing with other students, and to obtain feedback from a subject matter expert. Your mastery of knowledge and skills developed through guided learning will be evaluated by an a UExcel Exam.

English Composition Via Guided Learning

English Composition is designed to help you develop writing skills normally taught in an introductory six-credit, two-semester composition course on an American college or university campus. This course of study will help you acquire fundamental writing concepts and develop skills necessary for writing situations you are likely to encounter in college, on the job, and in your personal life. You will discover that writing is a process and that to write well you must develop your own version of that process.
The guided learning package designed for English Composition includes three textbooks, a handbook, and this Course Guide. The UExcel exam in English Composition will be used to evaluate your competence in writing. When you pass this examination, Excelsior College will award you six college credits. If you are a student at Excelsior College, three of these credits will fulfill your written English requirement, and three credits will be applied to your humanities requirement.

What Study Materials and Resources Are Required?

The following package of guided study materials and resources for English Composition was selected by the Excelsior College Examination Development Committee. Each of these materials and resources is described below.

We make every effort to update study materials as new editions appear, but students should be aware that some creativity may be required in matching current Course Guide assignments to a new edition of a textbook. You should assume that the edition listed in these Excelsior College materials OR the newer edition can be used to prepare for the examination.

Course Guide

The Course Guide for English Composition (this book) was designed by the Excelsior College Materials Development Committee to help you successfully acquire college-level writing skills through guided learning. This book includes 14 units of study that guide you through the content and learning activities contained in the textbooks. It also provides examination preparation activities.


Content Guide

As part of the study materials for their English Composition examination, students should make use of the English Composition Content Guide, which provides an outline of the topics covered, a list of recommended study resources, sample questions, and the section “Preparing with the Content Guides and Related Materials.” Content Guides are updated periodically to correspond with changes in particular exams and in textbook editions. Be sure you have the most recent guide available before taking your exam. Download free content guides by visiting our Web site at www.excelsior.edu/exams.
Textbooks
The textbooks listed below contain the assigned readings and exercises found in the Course Guide for English Composition. These textbooks complement one another, and each is an integral and necessary part of the guided learning package.


Axelrod, Rise B. & Charles R. Cooper, eds. Sticks and Stones and Other Student Essays. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s.


Handbook
A Writer’s Reference is a compact, user-friendly writing handbook. It addresses common problems in English usage, grammar, punctuation, and spelling and it includes sections on English as a Second Language (ESL) trouble spots, Modern Language Association (MLA) style, and document design.


Interactive Web-based Exercises
The publisher of A Writer’s Reference has made interactive exercises available on a Web site at (http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/writersref7e). These exercises correspond to sections of A Writer’s Reference and provide valuable practice on several aspects of writing, including word choice, grammatical sentences, punctuation, and spelling. Several units (e.g., Units 2 and 3) in this Course Guide list specific interactive exercises and information on accessing them. If you find the assigned exercises challenging, you should do additional interactive exercises to strengthen your skills in a particular area.

Excelsior College Library
The Excelsior College Library (ECL) is an online library designed for distance learners, created through our partnership with the Sheridan Libraries of The Johns Hopkins University. Enrolled Excelsior College students can visit the Excelsior College Library on the Web. Go to www.excelsior.edu/library and click on the ECL link on your MyExcelsior page. The library provides access to a broad array of resources such as journal articles, books, Web sites, databases, and reference services. These resources can help you prepare for Excelsior College courses and UExcel exams, and you can use them to enhance your research activities as well.
MyExcelsior Community
MyExcelsior Community provides the opportunity for enrolled students at Excelsior College to interact academically and socially online. As a member of the Community, you will be able to participate in live chats, discussion groups, locate study partners, exchange books and have access to an array of online services.

Excelsior College Online Tutoring Service
Excelsior College, in collaboration with Smarthinking.com, provides online tutoring services. These services are available to anyone who is enrolled in online courses and examinations.

Work with a tutor online in real-time or submit questions or essays for a next day response.

Please note: We have learned of a Web site that may confuse our students into paying for the tutoring support we make available to them—free of charge—via Smarthinking. NOTE the single “t” in the name of the legitimate site. An unofficial site has apparently been launched (www.smarthinking.com—notice the double “t.”) This unofficial site contains listings for an array of vendors, unaffiliated with Excelsior or the legitimate Smarthinking, offering fee-based tutorial assistance on multiple subjects.

As an Excelsior student, you can access the legitimate site and its services at no cost via the Resources tab at your MyExcelsior main page. (Login required.)

Additional Internet Resources

Writing Resources on the Web
Aside from the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab and the free Smarthinking tutoring service, you can find many other Web resources for learning to write. At bedfordstmartins.com/theguide, you will find thousands of interactive exercises correlated to SMG. At bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/writersref7e, you will find a wealth of resources linked to A Writer’s Reference. You may also locate a number of Online Writing Labs (OWLS) that may provide limited tutorial services to students not enrolled at the college or university supporting the OWL. Two OWLS that Excelsior College students have reported using are those provided by Washington State University (owl.wsu.edu) and Purdue University (owl.english.purdue.edu/owl). To locate additional OWLS, search the Internet using the term “Online Writing Lab.” Another interesting site is Paradigm Online Writing Assistant (www.powa.org). If you find another online writing site that provides excellent service, please let the Center for Online Education Learning and Academic Services know (learn@excelsior.edu).
Why Were These Materials and Resources Selected?
The Excelsior College Examination Development Committee selected these particular study materials and resources to ensure that you will have the best available package of materials that will enable you to develop college-level writing skills through guided learning. The Committee selected materials that reflect current knowledge and theory of how writing is learned. The Committee was careful to select well-written materials that provide the kind of practice required to help you achieve the specific outcomes of English Composition.

What Additional Materials and Resources Will I Need?

Learning Tools and Supplies
In addition to this Course Guide, the Content Guide, the textbooks, and reference book, you will need a notebook or computer folder (containing several files) so that you can maintain a writing journal, essay notebook, error log, spelling log, and list of literary terms. You will find that writing in your journal is an important part of each unit in this Course Guide. The purpose and the use of the writing journal are explained in Unit 1. The essay notebook will provide a convenient place for you to store all the drafts of each writing assignment, including the final draft. A periodic review of your essay notebook will help you gain insight into yourself as a writer and provide visible evidence of your progress. Throughout this book you will be directed to use error and spelling logs to record and track the mechanical and spelling errors most common in your writing. These logs will help you develop your own editing strategy.

Community Resources
As an independent learner, you should investigate possible sources of learning assistance available to you in your community. These resources include friends and family members, co-workers, fellow students, and local writing groups. In addition, public libraries (and often local college libraries) offer free assistance with using various research tools and finding facts to support the ideas in your essays. Many school districts and community colleges also offer access to writing groups and free or low-cost workshops for writers.

What Will I Learn?
You will learn to write on a college level. English Composition will help you acquire fundamental writing concepts and develop thinking and writing skills necessary for the kind of writing situations you are likely to encounter in college, on the job, and in your personal life. You will discover that writing is a process, and
that to write well, you must develop your own version of that process and learn to apply it to a variety of situations and under a variety of conditions, including examination conditions.

**Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course of study, you should be able to write college-level essays that demonstrate your ability to

1. Develop and maintain a clear controlling idea (thesis) and coherent organization.
2. Organize knowledge, ideas, and information in support of a thesis or proposition.
3. Recognize rhetorical strategies and modes (narration, description, and persuasion) and use them in appropriate ways.
4. Establish and maintain a tone and a point of view appropriate for a specific audience and rhetorical situation.
5. Write within the rhetorical, syntactical, and mechanical conventions of standard written American English.
6. Write at an appropriate length and level of detail for the requirements of a specific prompt:
   a. Compose an argument using written sources and personal experience to persuade the reader.
   b. Analyze a literary text (story, essay, poem, drama) in order to illuminate and appreciate the complexity of ideas and human experiences presented.
   c. Critique an essay written by someone else by analyzing and evaluating a draft and writing an evaluation that would help the writer revise the draft.
How Will I Be Evaluated?

Your writing ability will be assessed by the UExcel exam in English Composition. This examination will measure your ability to

- Explain a concept, argue a position, or evaluate a written text. To do so, you will need to document your summaries, paraphrases, and quotations from that text by using the Modern Language Association (MLA) style, the American Psychological Association (APA) style, or the Chicago Manual of Style (Chicago).
- Analyze and respond to a literary text.
- Recognize and write about the strengths and weaknesses of a piece of writing.

Examination Length and Scoring

The examination consists of three (3) extended response questions (writing prompts). You should expect to prepare college-level essays in response to these prompts. Students who receive high ratings tend to have responses that are approximately 500-600 words in length. This is not to suggest that a long response is automatically a good one. But ratings at the upper end of the scale require demonstration of higher-order analytical and evaluative skills, and the ability to work through complex rhetorical issues in writing. It is difficult to provide good evidence of these skills in few words. Your score will be reported as a letter grade. You will have three (3) hours to complete the exam. Your score will be mailed to you within 45 days after the date of your exam.

Examination Administration

The examination is administered by computer at Pearson VUE Testing Centers throughout the world. All questions regarding international administration of the examinations should be directed to the Test Administration office at Excelsior College. The Disability Services office at Excelsior College is responsible for considering requests for reasonable accommodations (exceptions for individual students with documented disabilities).

Computer-Delivered Testing

Your examination will be delivered by computer. The questions for your examination—including stimulus material such as the texts for analysis and the writing sample—will be presented on the computer screen. You will enter your answers on the computer using a simple word-processing function.

The system used for our computer-delivered testing is designed to be as user-friendly as possible, even for those with little or no computer experience. Instructions provided on screen are similar to those you would receive in a paper examination booklet.
We strongly encourage you to use the online tutorial before taking your exam at Pearson VUE Testing Centers. To access the tutorial, go to www.excelsior.edu/exams, and click on Books Study Guides & Exam Resources and then on the Testing Tutorial link. A tutorial will not be available at the test center.

If you are used to analyzing or critiquing a text by marking it up, you will need to prepare yourself to handle text presented to you on a computer screen. You may want to develop a system for indicating what part of the text your note applies to, using screen number, location on screen, etc. If possible, spend some time reading from a computer workstation if this is not something you are accustomed to doing.

**Scheduling Your Examination**

You should register for your examination as soon as you feel ready to test. After your examination registration has been processed by Excelsior College, you will receive an Authorization To Test (ATT) letter. Your ATT letter will indicate an approximate six-month test window which is the time period during which to schedule and take your examination at the Pearson VUE Testing Centers.

To ensure a testing time that is convenient for you, be sure to reserve your appointment well in advance of the date you want to test.

**How Can I Create an Effective Long-Term Study Plan?**

After assessing your readiness and taking action to address weaknesses and build on strengths, you will be ready to create a personal long-term study plan. A long-term study plan is a chart that contains well-defined learning activities and key dates covering the period that you plan to begin independent study until the date you plan to take the final examination. A well-designed study plan for English Composition will provide you with a schedule that will enable you to develop the writing skills necessary to perform well on the examination. To create a personal long-term study plan, you must determine

- The amount of time you will need to complete English Composition.
- The amount of time you will have available for study each week.
- The learning activities you will undertake each week.

1. **Determine the time you will need to complete English Composition.** As a general rule, you should plan to budget approximately 270 hours of study time to achieve the learning outcomes set for English Composition. This is approximately the amount of time students are expected to devote to a six-credit campus-based course. However, the actual amount of time you need to develop college-level writing skills depends, in part, on your readiness level. If your readiness level is low, you may need to set aside substantially more than 270 hours. If your readiness level is high, you may budget less time.
Take a few minutes to review your readiness profile; then, in the space below, write the number of hours you will allocate to complete English Composition. (Note: It is better to write down too many hours rather than too few!)

Hours Required =

2. **Determine the time you will have available for independent study.** Because you are an adult with many responsibilities, finding time to study can be a challenge. The following procedure will help you identify periods of time that you can use for study. Construct a time-use chart on which to record your daily activities over a one-week period. The most accurate way to do this is to complete the chart on a daily basis to record the actual amount of time you spend eating, sleeping, commuting, working, watching television, caring for your children, reading and, everything else. However, if your schedule is regular, you might prefer to complete the chart in one sitting and, perhaps, by consulting your appointment book or planner.

After you have recorded your activities, you will be ready to schedule study periods around these activities or, perhaps, instead of some of them. In the space below, write the number of hours you will be able to set aside for study each week.

Hours Available =

3. **Divide the first number by the second number.** This will give you the number of weeks you will need to set aside for independent study. For example, if you think you will require 270 hours of study to complete your preparation for the English Composition examination, and you have 10 hours available to study each week, divide 270 hours by 10 hours and you will get 27. This means that you will need about 27 weeks of study to develop your writing skills. You will also need to allow about a week for review and self-testing. Moreover, to be on the safe side, you should also add two weeks to allow for unforeseen obstacles and periods when you know you will not be able to study (e.g., during family illnesses or holidays). So, in this case, you should allot a total of 30 weeks to complete your study.

\[
\frac{\text{Hours Required}}{\text{Hours Available}} = \text{Review} + \text{Obstacles} = 30
\]
4. **Schedule your examination to coincide with the end of your independent study period.** For example, if you plan to allow 30 weeks for study, identify a suitable examination date and begin study at least 30 weeks before that date. (The date you begin study assumes that you will have received all of your study materials by that time.)

5. **Estimate the amount of time you are likely to spend on each Course Guide unit, and write the appropriate unit numbers on the time slots you reserved for study sessions.** This will be more difficult than it may first appear because the 14 units in the Course Guide will require different amounts of time. Moreover, the amount of time required to complete a unit will vary considerably from person to person. It is anticipated that it will require about two to three weeks (at 10 hours of study per week) for most students to complete a unit. However, Units 1, 4, and 11 will require only about one week (or 10 hours of study) each.

You now have a personal long-term study plan. Keep in mind that you will almost certainly have to adjust your personal long-term study plan, perhaps several times, as you study. It is only by actually working through the units that you will be able to determine how long it takes you to work through a unit.
Part II

Foundations of Writing: Developing Your Own Writing Process

Overview

In Part II, you will learn the content for *English Composition*. Part II shows how the course content is organized, suggests learning strategies, and contains a learning plan that guides you through the study materials.
How Is the Course of Study Organized?

English Composition is divided into Part II: Foundations of Writing: Developing Your Own Writing Process, and Part III: Preparing for and Taking the Examination. Part II consists of 10 units of study, and Part III consists of 4 units. This Course Guide has been designed so that later units build on skills developed in earlier units; therefore, you should begin with Unit 1 and work your way sequentially through the units.

Part II: Foundations of Writing: Developing Your Own Writing Process

This part will help you explore and develop your individual writing process. You will examine your current approach to writing, learn about techniques that can strengthen your writing process, practice a variety of strategies that can be applied to a wide range of situations, learn to analyze and respond to works of literature, gain experience with integrating and documenting primary and secondary source material, and review common editing problems. You will be writing eight practice essays. Once you have developed an effective writing process, you can apply those skills to virtually any writing task in your academic, professional, or personal life.

Part III: Preparing for and Taking the Examination

This part will help you adapt the writing process you developed in Part II to the special constraints of timed examinations, particularly to the three essay questions found on the UExcel exam in English Composition. You will examine sample questions, sample student responses, graded evaluations, and commentary for each essay. You will also have an opportunity to practice writing essays of this type.

What Learning Strategies Should I Use?

Now that you have determined your readiness level and created a long-term study plan (Part II), you are ready to consider learning strategies. First, you must identify the type of learning you are about to undertake. The focus of many college courses is on helping you master a large or complex body of knowledge (e.g., facts, concepts, and principles). However, the focus of an English Composition course is not on acquiring a body of knowledge; instead, the focus is on helping you develop a complex set of skills and subskills that will enable you to understand what you read and to write well in response to this reading. Your learning strategy should reflect this emphasis on skill development.
**Developing Skills**

Two crucial aspects in skill development (as opposed to knowledge acquisition) are practice and feedback on performance. Imagine trying to learn a complex skill such as driving a car or playing a musical instrument without actually driving the car or playing the instrument. No matter how much time you might spend reading about how to drive or play the instrument, your skills would not develop until you actually practiced them. Furthermore, developing a complex set of skills requires a substantial amount of practice over a long period of time and in a variety of contexts. This is particularly true for developing writing skills.

But practice alone is not enough. The quality of practice and the feedback on your performance make a difference in how well and how quickly you learn a skill. For example, you may be able to acquire some skill in learning to play a musical instrument on your own. However, if someone guides you in the proper techniques, arranges a sequence of practice activities, and provides you with feedback on your performance, you are likely to learn more quickly and more effectively than you would otherwise. In developing college-level reading and writing skills, you will learn more efficiently by practicing skills contained in a carefully designed sequence of writing activities and obtaining feedback on your work along the way. Feedback on your interpretation of what you read allows you to know when you understand a reading. Feedback on your writing allows you to know when your reader is understanding you.

**Learning Strategies**

To be effective, the learning strategies that you choose to follow must take into account that you will be learning a complex set of skills. These skills include higher order thinking, critical reading, literary analysis, and problem solving. The following learning strategies are recommended to facilitate your progress.

**Practice, practice, practice.**

Do all of the writing activities described in your study materials faithfully and thoroughly.

The writing activities in this Course Guide have been designed by composition experts who have taught writing successfully for many years. These activities have been carefully selected and sequenced to facilitate the development of your reading and writing skills. The more conscientiously you do the activities in the Course Guide, the more you will improve your writing.
Obtain a reader.
Find a friend, family member, or fellow student (or students) with whom you can share your writing. Your reader need not have any special knowledge or experience beyond a willingness to read your work carefully. As a participant in the online study group, you will be able to share your writing with other writers who are also taking English Composition. Reader feedback is an important tool in learning how to evaluate and revise your work.

Be an active learner.
You must be an active, engaged reader and writer in order to improve your work. Read with a critical eye and a responsive attitude; write with a sense of purpose; work through all of the stages outlined in each unit; and be open to feedback from your reader.

Approach writing with a positive attitude.
Everyone can write. What separates people who are uncomfortable with writing tasks from those who are confident is often the degree to which they have developed their own writing processes. All writers, even professional writers, have areas of difficulty in their writing. The keys to success are discovering your own strengths and weaknesses as a writer and identifying learning strategies to capitalize on your strengths and overcome your weaknesses.

Don’t try to do everything at once.
Accept the idea that writing is a process. Don’t try to think, write, and edit all at once. While it is true that each writer has an individual approach to writing, the best writers tend to break their writing tasks down into a series of stages that they work through in turn.

Cultivate and expand your learning community.
Find a friend, family member, co-worker, or fellow student who is willing to serve as your reader; or join an online writing group. It is often difficult to view your own writing objectively. Response from a real audience can help you see your writing through the eyes of a reader.

Take advantage of the resources in your community.
Your local library is a terrific source of primary and secondary research materials you can use to enhance your writing on a variety of topics. Many libraries and community colleges also sponsor free or low-cost fiction and poetry readings, discussion groups, and writers’ workshops. In addition, your community may offer free or low-cost dramatic performances, or your local video store may carry tapes or DVDs of plays.
Accommodate your preferred learning style.
What type of thinker are you? Do you tend to think linearly, from “point A to point B”? Or do you tend to think in more abstract ways? Do you naturally notice little details about people and places? Or do you need to force yourself to recall visual details? Different types of thinkers and learners approach writing quite differently from one another. As you are introduced to the various writing techniques in the units that follow, carefully consider all of the options; then, pick and choose those methods that best suit your preferred learning style.

Remember that the best cure for writer’s block is writing!
Do not get discouraged if you occasionally find yourself having trouble getting started on a writing assignment. Often, the best cure for writer’s block is to write! If you have trouble beginning a particular assignment, try setting a timer for ten minutes and vow to write non-stop until the timer goes off. You may be surprised at how much you can write in a short period of time and at how much just the act of writing itself can often help you overcome procrastination or lack of inspiration.

How Should I Work Through a Unit?
The structure of most of the units is similar. All but Units 1, 4, and 11 (which do not contain writing assignments) follow a similar format. Each unit contains an introduction, a list of unit objectives, and eight sections that lead you through the stages of the writing process. The amount of time you spend on each section will depend on your background, interest, and individual writing process. Your time will also depend on logistical factors, such as how long it takes for your reader to return your paper after reviewing it.

The following guidelines are intended to help you effectively work your way through each unit. These guidelines are

Unit Title
Note the title of each unit. Ask yourself why a particular title was chosen and what you know about the topic. Try to predict what will follow.

In This Unit
This section introduces you to the type of writing you will be doing in the unit and explains why it is a necessary and important part of the writing process.

Unit Objectives
The objectives for each unit introduce key features of each type of writing. Keeping these objectives in mind will help you focus your thinking, reading, and writing on the most important aspects of the writing process.
Search Your Memory
The purpose of this section is to help you explore your background and experiences in a topic area so that you can identify something significant to write about. The activities in this section often involve writing in your journal as a way to develop your topic.

Read and Respond
Learn to read like a writer. As you read the sample essays (from the textbooks) in each unit, read to understand the content of the essay and to analyze the devices used by the author to paint a picture, evoke a mood, or move the audience to action. As you read the “Commentary” sections that follow each essay, note the techniques that may be useful to you in your own writing.

The Assignment
This section provides a detailed description of the writing assignment. It describes the subject, audience, purpose, format, and characteristics of a good essay.

Prepare to Write
The purpose of this section is to help you select an appropriate subject for your essay. The activities in this section will also help you plan your essay.

Write
You should reserve a large multi-hour block of time to write the first draft of your essay.

Revise
You should wait a day or two before beginning this section while your reader responds to your work. This section includes time you will spend exchanging feedback with your partner.

Edit and Proofread
After revising your work, check for grammatical errors such as missing commas, spelling errors, run-ons, and lack of agreement between subject and verb as well as errors in consistency and accuracy.

Evaluate Your Work
Try to evaluate your final essay as objectively as possible. Many writers judge themselves far too harshly, while others see their work quite superficially. Use the evaluation guide provided in the unit to focus your assessment specifically on those features highlighted in each unit.
Divide your study time by section.
Complete all of the activities in each section in sequence. Except for Units 1, 4, and 11 (which follow a slightly different format), each unit is designed so that you can complete one or two sections in a several-hour study session. For example, in one or two sessions you might dedicate several hours to the activities in the “Search Your Memory” and “Read and Respond” sections. Then, you might examine “The Assignment” and do the preliminary activities in the “Prepare to Write” section in another session of an hour or two. The time you need to complete the fifth section, “Write,” which guides you through drafting the essay itself, will vary greatly depending upon the topic, the type of essay, and your individual writing process. You should then plan to spend at least two sessions of a few hours each on the activities in the “Revise” section. You might choose to elicit peer response and plan your revision in one session, with a second session devoted to actually writing the revision. Finally, you should plan at least one or two more sessions to “Edit and Proofread” and “Evaluate Your Work.”

Learn to read critically.
Use your peer reader(s) well. Several times in each unit, you will be directed to share your writing with a peer reader or online writing group. Carefully consider the reactions and suggestions of your readers, particularly their comments on clarity, organization, and effectiveness. They will help you view your work through a reader’s eyes and be objective in revising and editing your essays. You, as a writer, should evaluate peer responses carefully, implementing those comments you find most helpful, but setting aside feedback that you do not feel will enhance your writing.

Revise and edit in stages.
Try to allow a day or two of “down time” before each revising or editing session. You’ll see your work clearly if you can approach it with “fresh eyes.” Each stage of your writing process will be more effective if you can focus on the activity at hand instead of trying to plan, write, revise, and edit simultaneously.
Am I Ready to Begin?

Answer the following questions to determine if you are ready to begin learning the content.

- Do you have all of the recommended materials?
- Have you considered additional learning resources?
- Have you joined an online study group or considered using a writing tutor?
- Have you determined that your readiness level is satisfactory?
- If you found one or more readiness areas unsatisfactory, have you taken corrective action?
- Have you prepared a personal long-term study plan?
- Have you decided on a learning strategy?

If you answered “no” to any of the preceding questions, take the appropriate action to prepare yourself to begin study.

If you answered “yes” to all of the preceding questions, you should proceed to Unit 1 of this Course Guide.

Policies and Procedures

Excelsior College has various academic and administrative policies that are important as you move forward with your studies. Information on these policies can be found at www.excelsior.edu/studentpolicyhandbook. Please take a few minutes today to review this important information.

It is your responsibility to be familiar with all the policies related to your activity as a student at Excelsior College. The term “student” includes: students currently matriculated at Excelsior College taking examinations and/or courses, non-matriculated students taking examinations and/or courses, non-matriculated students in the application process, individuals using credit bank, formerly matriculated students currently in withdrawn status, and graduates.

Academic Honesty Nondisclosure Statement

All test takers must agree to abide by the terms of the Excelsior College Academic Honesty Policy before taking an examination. The agreement will be presented on screen at the Pearson VUE Testing Center before the start of your examination. Once you accept the terms of the agreement, you will be able to proceed with your exam. If you choose not to accept the terms of this agreement, your examination will be terminated and you will be required to leave the testing center. You will not be eligible for a refund. For more information, review the Student Policy Handbook at www.excelsior.edu/studentpolicyhandbook.
Foundations of Writing:

Developing Your Own Writing Process
Unit 1

Introduction to the Writing Process

In This Unit
In this unit, you will examine writing as a process, examine the steps in that process, and explore ways to develop your own personal writing process. You will examine concepts associated with writing such as “audience,” “purpose,” “genre,” “rhetoric,” and “invention strategies.” You will also be introduced to a fundamental tool for developing writing skills: the writing journal.

Unit Objectives
At the end of this unit, you should be able to
► Explain how writing is learned.
► Explain why it is important to take into account the audience for whom you are writing and your purpose for writing.
► Identify the audience for whom you are writing and state the purpose for your writing.
► Define “genre” and provide at least five examples of different types of genres.
► Define “rhetoric.”
► Identify the stages or steps of the writing process.
► Describe different approaches to writing.
► Describe various invention strategies.
Using a Writing Journal

Throughout this Course Guide, you will frequently be asked to write in your journal. You should have a notebook or computer file that you use exclusively as a writing journal. The purpose of the writing journal is to help you search your memory on a topic, explore your feelings on a particular issue, and try out new ideas on paper before drafting them into your essays. Your writing journal also gives you a place to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of your developing writing process as you move from essay to essay. You should have separate sections of your journal for writing assignments, unit exercises, an error log, a spelling log, rhetorical strategies, and for thoughts on your writing process.

Writing as a Process

How do you usually begin a writing project? Do you just begin to write? Or do you think about the topic (perhaps for quite a while) before you write a single word? Do you jot down ideas as they come to you and organize them later? Or do you outline your ideas before writing them down? Do you sometimes stare at a blank sheet of paper or computer screen, waiting for the first sentence to pop into your head? Or do you write a line, stop, re-read, correct, then write some more, back and forth throughout the entire essay?

Writing is a highly individual process; what works well for one writer may not work well for the next. But it is important that you view writing as a process, a series of stages or steps that you must work through in order to complete any writing project. These stages vary from one writer to another, but they usually include the following:

- thinking
  (about your topic, your purpose, and your audience)
- inventing
- planning
- drafting
- revising
- editing
- proofreading

These are all separate tasks and are treated as such by professional writers. If you skip a stage in the process, or if you try to think, write, and edit all at once, chances are that your writing process will not be as effective as it could be. It is important to understand yourself as a writer and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of how you currently write so that you can develop an effective process that suits your individual style.
The Importance of Rhetoric

As you respond to the essay assignments beginning with Unit 2 of this Course Guide, you will find yourself defining three elements belonging to the stage of the writing process called “thinking”: topic, purpose, and audience. Such definition is crucial because, as one of your textbooks, The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing (SMG), explains: “The expectations of readers are aroused when they recognize a text as a particular genre or type of writing.” Keeping this genre in mind as you work through your writing process will help you decide what you need to do next. When you understand what the genre you are working on requires, you are on your way to practicing rhetoric, “the skill of using language effectively and persuasively” (American Heritage College Dictionary, 3rd ed.). Each time you go through this thinking process, you will become more confident about your writing process and more hopeful about the project you will create: in fact, you will feel yourself becoming a rhetorician.

Most writers understand the importance of choosing a topic suitable to their assignment and their interests. Not all, however, remember the importance of defining their audience and their purpose. Yet keeping your purpose clearly in mind as you proceed with drafting and revising can be very effective in keeping your essay on track.

Write

In your journal, make three lists: in the first, write as many genres of writing as you may need to do: lab reports, thank you notes, marketing reports, resumes, email, letters of complaint or congratulations, shopping lists, kitchen table notes. In a second list to the right of the first, note the purpose of each kind. A shopping list’s purpose would probably be to remind a shopper—you yourself or another—what to buy. Finally, to the right of the second list, write a third in which you briefly define the audience for each genre. To go back to the shopping list, the audience might be yourself or another. Consider for a moment how the language of your shopping list might vary, depending on whether the audience was yourself or another.
Write
Using your triple-columned lists, write a letter (a letter is a genre) that is about one page long to your reader or learning community: its purpose is to introduce yourself as a writer. Before you begin drafting your letter, however, write briefly in your journal to define your audience—the reader or the learning community. Whom does it include? What are its probable interests or values? How much explaining will you need to do to be certain that those you address will understand? Not everyone, for example, knows what a marketing report is. Use as many items on your triple-columned lists as possible to present yourself to your audience and to explain to those readers what rhetorical demands the various audiences on your list make upon you as a writer. (This assignment is your topic, but your purpose is to answer the assignment in a way that makes your topic interesting and informative to members of your audience: the result is your writing project, in this case, a letter.) Mail, email, or hand-deliver your letter, and ask your reader or learning community to respond.

In the assignment above, you as a writer, your writing project, and your audience create, among the three of you, a “rhetorical situation.” As you make your way through this guide, you will become more and more confident that you can control your rhetorical situation by defining your purpose and your audience before you create your writing project.

Read
This reading consists of the introductory chapter to The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing (SMG). This chapter reinforces and extends your current understanding of the writing process by breaking that process down into stages and providing specific guidelines to help you manage each stage. These stages form the basis of the rest of the chapters in the book.

In each assignment chapter, SMG leads you through several pages of preliminary exploration of the type of essay you are being asked to write in that particular chapter. This material includes written examples of this genre, invitations to search your own memory for such examples, and guidelines for defining purpose and audience. In effect, this section gives you a valuable expedition through the preliminary thinking process.
You will find writing exercises interspersed throughout this chapter. Depending on your individual learning style or preference, you may wish to do them (in your journal) as they appear or wait until you have finished reading the chapter.

**Read**

*Read the introductory chapter of The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing (SMG).*

**Write**

*Do the first chapter SMG exercises in your journal.*

*(Unless you have already done them!)*

Review your letter to your reader or learning community: did you consciously go through particular stages of a writing process, perhaps of your own invention, or did you skip some? Did you follow three or four stages in the order in which they appear, then circle back to repeat some stages? (Most writers do this “recursive” rethinking and reworking of their writing projects, so you don’t need to work through the stages in a rigid, mechanical way.) If you needed to revise your letter, upon which stage might you focus?

**Invention Strategies**

Now that you are familiar with the basic steps in the writing process, you are ready to explore some specific strategies to help you develop your own best writing process. Chances are you already have some techniques for thinking, prewriting, and planning (that is, getting ready to write) that serve you well. But there are many different approaches to prompting your thought process and capturing those thoughts on paper. (For example, you employed one useful approach (i.e., *listing*) in your letter to your reader or learning community.) If you are familiar with these different techniques, you can use them to develop or refine the preliminary stages of your own process.
Read

In the final reading assignment of this unit, you will encounter several “invention strategies.” As you read these approaches, remember that each writer is different and each writing project is different. What may be a useful invention strategy for one person may not be for another. For example, if you tend to think linearly, i.e., from “point A to point B,” you may prefer listing or outlining. But if you tend to think more conceptually or abstractly, mapping or clustering might better suit your personal style. Similarly, a brief description of the types of writing you must do in daily life may require only the “listing” you did for that project, while a full-scale argumentative essay might require a more conceptual approach such as mapping or outlining. As you work through the first few writing assignments in this Course Guide, experiment with these various strategies until you discover which approach (or approaches) work best for you when you need to do particular kinds of writing.

Read the SMG chapter on Invention Strategies.

You should note that the technique referred to as “quick drafting” is sometimes referred to as “freewriting.” This Course Guide uses freewriting to refer to preliminary writing that you do “off the top of your head.”

Summary

In this unit you have examined writing as a process, the stages in that process, and various invention strategies. In addition, you have explored your view of writing and have practiced some analytic writing of your own. Now you are ready to develop that process further as you write essays treating a variety of topics and belonging to a variety of genres. You are ready to practice rhetoric!
In This Unit

In this unit, you will explore various stages of the writing process as you tell a story drawn from your personal experience. In addition to practicing and refining your writing process, you will sharpen your narrative and descriptive skills and review your use of sentence structure on your way to producing a polished final version of your story.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

► Select and apply invention and organization techniques that facilitate your writing process.
► Write an autobiographical essay that expresses something significant about your life and holds your reader’s interest.
► Revise an autobiographical essay for focus, detail, coherence, and unity.
► Edit an essay to identify sentence structure problems.
Search Your Memory
Do you remember the first time you realized that you were good at something? Is there a specific event in your personal history that revealed a talent for playing a sport, writing a poem, painting a picture, riding a bike, restoring an old car, or baking a perfect loaf of bread? How about a time when you first became aware of the world outside your own family unit? Do you remember your first encounters with those of different ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds? When did you first decide to pursue a particular career or course of study? What stories illustrate the great successes or failures in your life? Chances are you have lots of stories to tell; stories that are engaging and interesting; stories that somehow led you to know yourself and others in a new way.

Divide a page in your writing journal into several sections, each representing a five- or ten-year period of your life. Reflect on each time period and list three to five significant events that you remember from those years such as the first day of school, your first job, moving to a new place, a venture into politics, launching a career, a great personal success, or a failure. Choose the two or three most promising ideas from your list, and spend about ten or fifteen minutes freewriting as much as you can remember about each event. These ideas will form the basis for your next writing assignment.

Read and Respond
The first reading in this unit provides you with an opportunity to read and analyze four sample autobiographical essays that illustrate features of a well told autobiographical event. These are the features that you should try to incorporate into your writing.

Read the SMG chapter on Remembering an Event. Be sure to start with the highlighted examples in the chapter.

As you read the sample essays:

• **Mark** those sections or paragraphs that you find especially engaging or effective.

• **After you finish each essay, read** the commentary section that summarizes the most important features of the story.

• **Return to your journal to reflect** on the sections that follow each sample essay, which ask you to consider topics for your own essay. **Write** down new topics that occur to you.

The second reading offers you an opportunity to see how other students have responded to an autobiographical essay assignment. As you read, consider which sections or paragraphs are especially well written; notice, also, which might need revision or even deletion.

Read the chapter in Sticks and Stones about Remembering an Event. In your journal, write down new topics that occur to you.
The Assignment

Essay 1: Writing about an Event
Read and reflect on the following assignment description. Before you begin writing, proceed to the next section of this unit.

Subject: Choose an event from your journal writings. Pick one that holds special significance for you and that you feel you can describe in vivid detail.

Audience: Your audience for this essay is a group of your peers. Peers include those who have a similar background in terms of age, experience, and historical frame of reference, but who do not know you well.

Purpose: To narrate an event that is significant to you and of general human interest to the audience.

Format: Write an essay of about 500–600 words drafting your story. Follow the procedure described in the next section of this Course Guide ("Prepare to Write").

Evaluation: Your final draft should display the following features:
- A focus on a specific event
- Vivid, engaging description
- An effective pattern of organization
- A clear sense of significance
- Careful editing and proofreading, especially for sentence structure

Prepare to Write

The next reading will help you to choose an appropriate autobiographical event to write about. You will be directed to do several writing activities such as describing scenes or key people related to an event. Write your responses to these activities in your journal where you will have them for reference and future writing assignments.

It is essential that you diligently complete the activities specified in this reading because each activity plays a particular role in helping you to develop your writing skills. At the end of the reading, you will be shown a procedure for evaluating the choice that you have made.

Read the Guide to Writing section in the SMG chapter on Remembering an Event. Stop reading after the paragraph headed “Test Your Choice.”
Now that you have selected an appropriate event to write about, contact one or more of your peers and verbally describe the event you have chosen. Encourage your listeners to ask questions and express opinions. What do they want to know more about? What part of the story do they like best? Were they confused at any point? Use their feedback to fill in any gaps in your prewriting, and then proceed with the freewriting activities in the Guide to Writing section of the SMG chapter on Remembering an Event.

**Write**

Use the questions and suggestions in the Writing a Draft section, found in the Guide to Writing section of the SMG chapter on Remembering an Event, to review your prewriting and decide on a rough plan for your essay. How will you begin? Dialogue? An observation? A statement? How will you organize your material? Chronologically? Flashbacks? In order of importance? Which details from your prewriting will you include? Where do you need to expand or add detail?

Once you have a tentative plan for your essay, you are ready to write your first draft. As you draft, remember to try, as much as possible, to write without worrying about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Try to focus just on your story, referring to your plan if necessary, to keep your essay on track. Write until your story is completely told. After you complete the first draft, you will be ready to get some reader response and then work on revising.

**Revise**

Use the “Critical Reading Guide” in the Guide to Writing section of the SMG chapter on Remembering an Event to review and mark up your draft. Then, ask your reader or your writing group to read your essay, using the Critical Reading Guide to respond to your draft.

Before you begin revising, read the instructional material in the SMG chapters on Cueing the Reader and Narrating (but do not do the exercises as presented). Instead, for each of the exercises in these chapters, ask yourself the questions about your own essay. For example, when you are asked to review an essay’s paragraphing, apply the questions to your draft. Make notes on your draft of any trouble spots that the questions reveal.

Use your marked-up draft, self-evaluation, and peer responses to decide on a revision plan.

- Which parts of your essay do you feel are most effective?
- Did any passages confuse your readers or leave them guessing?
- Did your self-evaluation reveal any gaps in information?
- Is your organizational pattern easy for the reader to follow?

The revision suggestions in the Revising section of this chapter’s Guide to Writing will help you focus your efforts on those aspects of your essay that would benefit most from revision. Once you have planned your revision, write a second draft of your essay.
Edit and Proofread

Among the most noticeable and disruptive errors for readers are errors in sentence structure, such as sentence fragments, run-ons, and comma splices. These errors suggest to the reader that you, as a writer, are unsure of how to write a complete sentence correctly. These types of errors are serious, but, unfortunately, they are also common for some writers.

Test your ability to spot common sentence structure errors by completing the following readings and editing exercises. Read the sections in A Writer’s Reference by Hacker (Hacker) on Grammatical Sentences (Sentence fragments and Run-on sentences) and on Punctuation (Semicolon and colon). Then visit the online resource that accompanies the Hacker text, and complete the interactive exercises that accompany the above subjects.

Once you have reviewed these basic sentence errors, examine your draft for similar problems. Try out the following proofreading techniques.

1) Read the essay aloud, marking any unclear or difficult spots as you read.

2) Read each sentence again, checking for specific trouble spots. If you suspect that you might have run-on sentences or comma splices in your draft, try checking each sentence for pieces that could stand alone as sentences. Are these pieces joined correctly (i.e., by using a comma before words like for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)? If you are using a word processor, make a list of any errors uncovered by the grammar checker.

3) Read the essay backwards, one sentence at a time. Taking the sentences out of context often makes it easier to spot these types of errors.

4) Record each type of error you discover on your “Error Log.” Then, correct the errors in your draft.

5) Before preparing your final essay, be sure to proofread for spelling. If you are using a computer, make a list of any spelling errors uncovered by “Spell Check.” While “Spell Check” is a useful tool, you should maintain a spelling log to alert yourself to those words that you are most likely to misspell. After all, essay tests and work assignments sometimes require you to write without the aid of a computerized spelling program. You should train yourself to be able to proofread for your most common spelling errors. Proofread a second time without using “Spell Check.” Words that are spelled correctly but used incorrectly will not be detected by “Spell Check” (e.g., if you write “no” instead of “know,” “Spell Check” will not show the error).

After careful editing and proofreading, you are ready to print out or recopy your final draft. Remember to proofread that copy to ensure you haven’t created any new errors in the process of revising.
**Evaluate Your Work**

After you have finished your final draft, try to get the same person or persons who read your first draft to read your final product. Ask them to comment briefly on what they feel improved the essay the most, and which sections, if any, are still unclear or confusing to them. Note their comments in your journal.

*Using a scale of 1 to 5, rate your essay on the features displayed in the following chart. (This list of features also appears at the end of the assignment description on page 37 in this unit.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Feature</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A focus on a specific event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vivid, engaging description</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An effective pattern of organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>A clear sense of significance</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careful editing and proofreading (especially for sentence structure)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reflect on Your Writing Process**

Now that you have written an autobiographical piece and rated your work, it is time to reflect on your developing writing process. Reflecting on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered as you prepared your essay for this unit will help you develop as a writer. The following reading will facilitate your reflection.

Read the SMG section on thinking critically about what you have learned and write your responses to the questions in your journal.
Unit 3
Writing Profiles

In This Unit

In this unit, you will be introduced to field research (sometimes called “primary research”) techniques as you write a profile of an interesting person, place, activity, or event. As you continue to build on the descriptive skills used in your earlier essays, you will gain experience with considering the needs of your audience and using techniques to heighten reader interest in your work. You will also review your use of punctuation.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

► Profile an interesting person, place, activity, or event.
► Refine your use of detail, description, and dialogue to create a vivid presentation.
► Organize information in a way that is interesting and accessible to your reader.
► Convey a dominant impression, or theme, drawn from the subject.
► Edit for punctuation.
Search Your Memory
As you go about your daily life, what interesting or unusual people do you notice? Is there a local personality, a dynamic teacher or spiritual leader, or a colorful business owner you’d like to know more about? Are there places in your community—whether little, out-of-the-way restaurants, or jam-packed shopping malls—where people tend to congregate? What about activities and events? Does your town have a unique business or popular regional festival? Chances are there are dozens of fascinating people and places right in your city or town, subjects that you can investigate and bring to life for your readers.

In your journal, label four columns “People,” “Places,” “Activities,” and “Events.” Then, list several interesting subjects in each category.

Read and Respond
The first reading in this unit introduces profile writing. You will note the similarities and differences between profile writing and the type of writing you did in Unit 2. The reading also contains four essays that illustrate features of a well-written profile. These are the features that you should try to incorporate into your writing.

As you read the sample essays, try to identify the devices used by each author to capture the reader’s interest and to leave the reader with a dominant impression. You should identify the following characteristics of each essay:

- Organization (by subtopic? space? time? importance?)
- Point of view (I? We? They?)
- Direct and indirect speech
- Definition
- Sensory detail (sights, sounds, smells)
- Figurative language (especially metaphor and simile).

Be sure to read and reflect on the textbook sections following each sample essay. These sections will help you analyze the writing strategies used in each essay, provide ideas for you to write about, and help you compare techniques used by the authors. Write your responses to these sections in your journal so that you will have a growing array of techniques and topics from which to choose.

Read the SMG chapter on Writing Profiles.
The second reading in this unit offers four essays written by students in response to an assignment “to write an essay...profiling an interesting person, place, activity, or event.” As you read, write in your journal answers to the following: (a) What kind of (and how much) research did this writer need to do? (b) How did the writer make the subject vivid, engaging, and entertaining? and (c) What point of view did the writer adopt (I? We? They?).

Read the Sticks and Stones chapter on Writing Profiles.

The Assignment

Essay 2: Writing a Profile
Read and reflect on the following assignment description. Before you begin writing, proceed to the next section of this unit.

Subject: Choose an interesting person, place, activity, or event from your journal writing; one that you can observe closely and describe in vivid detail.

Audience: Imagine yourself as a reporter for a local-interest magazine or newspaper. (Many communities have community-based publications that feature profiles of local people and places.) Write your profile for that general audience of “neighbors.”

Purpose: To inform, educate, and entertain your reader(s) with a vivid picture of the subject.

Format: Write an essay of 500–600 words profiling an interesting person, place, activity, or event. Follow the procedure described in the next section of this Course Guide (“Prepare to Write”).

Evaluation: Your final draft should display the following characteristics:
- A focus on a specific person, place, activity, or event
- A vivid, engaging presentation using detailed description
- An effective pattern of organization and development
- A clear interpretation of the subject that leaves the reader with a dominant impression
- Careful editing and proofreading, including use of punctuation
Prepare to Write

The next reading will help you choose an appropriate person, place, activity, or event as the subject of your profile and help you plan and carry out your field research. You will find that preparing to write a profile can require a substantial amount of time, depending on the accessibility of your subject and the amount and type of research required. Be sure to take these considerations into account.

The following steps guide you through the process of selecting your subject and doing your research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Write (in your journal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Select a subject.</td>
<td>SMG, Writing a Draft section of this chapter’s Guide to Writing.</td>
<td>Do activities as directed including “Test Your Choice.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Plan your research.</td>
<td>SMG, Writing a Draft section of this chapter’s Guide to Writing.</td>
<td>Do activities as directed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Evaluate your research questions.</td>
<td>SMG, chapter on Field Research</td>
<td>Evaluate your preliminary questions using the criteria for good questions presented in this chapter. Revise as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Carry out your research plan.</td>
<td>Review SMG, chapter on Field Research</td>
<td>Visit your subject, observe and take notes as directed in the reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Interpret your subject.</td>
<td>SMG, chapter on Writing Profiles: “Readings” section</td>
<td>At the end of this section, review the material on the writer’s role and perspective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write

Before you can begin drafting your essay, you must review the material you collected during your research and plan your profile. The questions and activities in the Writing a Draft section of this chapter’s Guide to Writing will guide you through this process.

Learning Tip

Let your first draft sit for a day or two before proceeding with revision.
In this section, you will be asked to prepare a rough outline of your essay. Use this outline to guide you through your first draft. As you write, try to capture the sights, sounds, smells, and feeling of the people and/or places you encountered. Make your readers feel the experiences you describe!

**Revise**

Now that your first draft has been written and you have not seen it for a day or two, you are ready to revise your work. This will require feedback from your audience and your own assessment of the effectiveness of the profile.

Ask your reader or writing group to read your essay according to the Critical Reading Guide in the **Writing a Draft** section of the SMG chapter on Writing profiles. Encourage your reader to point out the sections of the essay that are most interesting and engaging, and those that are unclear, vague, or confusing.

While you are waiting for feedback on your essay, you can assess your own work. The revision guidelines and questions in the **Revising** section of this chapter’s Guide to Writing (SMG) will help you identify problems in your first draft and identify possible solutions. Use each question to critique your work. Mark up the sections of your draft that you think will most benefit from revision, and chart your revision plan as suggested in the **Revising** section of this chapter’s Guide to Writing (SMG). Finally, using reader feedback, your revision plan, and your marked-up draft, write a revised draft of your profile. The changes you decide to make are ultimately up to you. Try to make them objectively.

Read the **Revising** section in this chapter’s Guide to Writing.

**Edit and Proofread**

Punctuating direct and indirect speech can present some special editing problems. Many writers are unsure about where to place quotation marks, commas, and end punctuation, especially in direct quotes. The following short reading illustrates how to punctuate quotations.

Read the Editing and Proofreading section of this chapter’s Guide to Writing (SMG).
To test your ability to spot punctuation problems with direct and indirect speech, complete the following readings and exercises.

Review the following Punctuation sections of Hacker: Commas, Apostrophe, Quotation marks, and Spelling and hyphenation.

Then visit the online resource for the Hacker text, where you will complete the exercises that accompany the above subjects.

After you have completed the punctuation exercises, edit your own draft for similar errors as well as the sentence problems and spelling discussed in earlier units. Prepare a corrected draft and proofread carefully for any new errors. Finally, record in your error and spelling logs any errors you discover in your essay.

**Evaluate Your Work**

After polishing your final draft, have your peer reader or writing group review your finished draft. Ask your reader(s) which revisions most improved your essay, and which sections of the essay are most and least effective.

After taking into account reader feedback and your own assessment, complete the following chart.
Using a scale of 1–5, rate your essay on the features displayed in the following chart by checking or shading in the appropriate boxes. (This list of features also appears at the end of the assignment description on page 43 in this unit.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Feature</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A focus on a specific person, place, activity, or event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A vivid, engaging presentation using detailed descriptions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An effective pattern of organization and development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A clear interpretation of the subject that leaves the reader with a dominant impression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careful editing and proofreading, including use of punctuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Reflect on Your Writing Process

Now that you have written a profile and rated your work, it is time to reflect on your developing writing process. Reflecting on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered while writing will help you chart your progress as a developing writer.

Before you reflect on your own writing process, see what you can learn from the process Brian Cable used to go from his interview notes to his write-up. Did you follow a similar process? Do you see anything that you might like to try out the next time you write an essay?

Read A Writer at Work, at the end of the SMG chapter on Writing Profiles.

Now reflect on your own developing writing process.

Read the SMG section on thinking critically about what you have learned and write your responses to the questions in your journal.

Learning Tip

Review earlier journal notes you made about your writing process.
In This Unit

In this unit, you will add to the field research skills you acquired in Unit 3 through an exploration of library and Internet resources. While you will not write an essay in this unit, you will begin to gather information about an area of interest to you, information that will become the subject of your writing assignment for Unit 5.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

► Describe how to use library and Internet resources to research a topic of interest to you.
► Identify major library and Internet resources and search tools.
► Identify a variety of specific sources on a topic of interest to you.
► Integrate research sources effectively, using summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation.
► Use American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago Manual of Style (Chicago), or Modern Language Association (MLA) guidelines to acknowledge and document sources.
► Evaluate content and features of electronic resources.
► Distinguish between resources offered electronically from a library and those offered free through the Internet.
Search Your Memory
What topics interest you? Is there a term or phenomenon from your major field of study that you’d like to know more about? Is there a job-related problem or procedure that you need to research in detail? Do you have a health problem that you would like to investigate? Is there a pressing issue in local or national politics that you would like to understand better?

In your journal, make a list of 5–10 topics that are of great interest to you. Then choose the two or three topics of most interest and freewrite for about 5–7 minutes on one of them. Jot down whatever you know about the topic and then write down several questions you would like to answer. Repeat this procedure for the other topic(s) you have selected.

Read and Respond
The readings in this unit will help you use the library and the Internet to locate information on a topic of interest to you. You will be guided through the process of taking notes on your sources, keeping track of bibliographic information, integrating sources, and acknowledging sources using one of the three documentation styles noted on page 49 of this Course Guide.

Before you begin the readings, look ahead to the assignment for Unit 5. The subject of that assignment is “a term, concept, or procedure that you have some knowledge of, but that you’d like to know more about.” Look back at the topics you listed in your journal, and choose one that is appropriate for the Unit 5 assignment.

Before you go to the library to search for information on your topic, familiarize yourself with the following readings by carefully reflecting on the headings and introductory paragraphs to each section. You will refer to these resources often as you use research materials for the remaining writing assignments in the Course Guide. These sources complement and, to a degree, duplicate one another. Refer to the sources that you find most helpful and convenient to use.
The process of using libraries can initially seem complicated. There are now many different formats of information from which to choose, and it may not be apparent, at first, how to access the variety of information. There is print material as well as electronic material that may be on a CD-ROM or in a networked database. In addition, there is material that you can freely access over the Internet that is not connected in any way to a library. We will refer to these resources as material on the Web. You will be better equipped for your research if you familiarize yourself with the range of options that you have.

Entering a Physical Library Near You

Although you may be entering a physical library, you will increasingly find that there is a mix of material formats. Many libraries now offer not only physical resources, but also offer a bulk of material online. The online material often includes the library’s catalog (a database containing information about the books, journals, and other material a library owns) and online periodical databases. A library often also has Web pages with annotated links to material that is offered freely through the Internet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SMG chapters on finding and evaluating sources online and in libraries. These readings provide a general overview of departments at your local public or academic library. They will help you develop an overall library search strategy and methods of keeping track of your research. They will also outline strategies for searching electronic resources offered through the library and the World Wide Web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Barnet, Appendix selection on Documentation, Internal Parenthetical Citations, and a List of Works Cited (MLA Format). This reading supplies information about taking notes on the material you read, and documenting them properly to avoid plagiarism. It also provides basic sample citations in MLA format, including electronic resources. This reading also offers information about evaluating resources found on the World Wide Web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hacker, Researching section, “Choosing a documentation style”; MLA section; APA/ CMS section. These readings will help you choose a quotation and documentation style for citing resources you have used.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Library and Internet Research

The process of using libraries can initially seem complicated. There are now many different formats of information from which to choose, and it may not be apparent, at first, how to access the variety of information. There is print material as well as electronic material that may be on a CD-ROM or in a networked database. In addition, there is material that you can freely access over the Internet that is not connected in any way to a library. We will refer to these resources as material on the Web. You will be better equipped for your research if you familiarize yourself with the range of options that you have.
It is important to distinguish between material that is offered on the Web and material that is offered through your library through subscriptions that are purchased for your use. Although both types of electronic material are accessible through the Internet, there is a difference. The electronic material made available by your physical library, such as the electronic databases, have been chosen and evaluated by library staff and are carefully organized. The resources you find freely over the Internet through a search engine are not centrally organized and are often not reliable.

Since there is a wide range of material available, it can be useful to take a few minutes to get acquainted with the range of resources in the library which you are entering. Although physical libraries have many common elements, it will ultimately save you time to walk around the library and look for the following information points.

**Listed below are main steps to take when visiting a library:**

1. **Locate the reference and information desks.** Two main information points are the reference desk and information desks. These areas are where librarians and other library professionals are located for you to ask questions at any point during your visit. You can ask very specific questions (e.g., how do I cite a book in my bibliography?) to more open-ended questions (e.g., I am looking for literary criticism on Ernest Hemingway and am not sure where to begin). You could even ask the librarian for a brief orientation to the library’s resources. Sometimes the reference and information desks are set up as two different service points while other times there is just one service point. In either case, it can be helpful to touch base with a librarian to discuss the best resources to use in the library on your topic. Incorporating librarians and other library staff into your learning network will be valuable for your writing in this class as well as for writing projects you will encounter in your personal, academic and professional lives.

2. **Identify areas where you can use computers to access the library’s catalog and other electronic material.** Most libraries have computers where you can search the library’s catalog (its record of the books and other materials it owns). Libraries often also have other electronic resources such as databases, which are online indexes that you can search to locate individual periodical articles. You’ll want to determine if the databases are freely available to use or if there are any restrictions. You may also want to see what other software (e.g., Microsoft Word or other word processing software) is available on the computers.
3. **Check to see how the physical books and periodicals in the library are organized.** Examples: Are periodicals kept in a separate place? Does the library have more than one floor? What subjects are on each floor? Where are the reference books, such as encyclopedias or directories?

4. **Determine the location of the circulation desk.** You can ask the policies of taking out books. For example, you should determine the length of time you can keep a book and how many you can take out at one time. You could also inquire about interlibrary loan services—the process of having the library borrow material from another library on your behalf—and if there is any fee.

**Focusing on Electronic Resources in a Library or on the Web**

As discussed above, many libraries today have an array of electronic resources for you to use. You may have heard the terms “digital library” or “virtual library” or “electronic library” used interchangeably. These terms can be confusing since there is not one agreed-upon definition. Sometimes libraries use “virtual library” to describe the portion of their library that provides electronic resources, even if it is essentially a physical library. Other libraries are entirely virtual.

Excelsior College has an entirely virtual library, available to students enrolled in Excelsior College degree programs. The Excelsior College Library (ECL) at www.excelsior.edu/library does not have a physical collection, but it has a wide range of resources available. There are collections of annotated and evaluated quality Internet sources to help supplement your studies. Enrolled Excelsior College students can call the Excelsior College librarian at any time to ask a reference question, for help starting research, for one-on-one instruction in the use of electronic resources, or any other information question that arises in their studies.

**Concepts to Keep in Mind When Using Electronic Resources**

1. **Library databases have ranges of scope of material they cover.** Some databases may only index articles from scholarly journals. Another database on a similar subject may index articles, dissertations, and books. Some cover scholarly journals, while others index more general, non-scholarly journals meant to be read by the layperson (e.g., *Newsweek*). Be sure to explore what types of material the database covers.

2. **Library databases vary in the amount of full-text material they offer online.** Some databases only provide citations. To get the full text of the material, you may need either to physically obtain the journal from the shelf of the library and copy the article or order it through the library’s interlibrary loan service.
3. **Electronic resources have a variety of user features.** As you begin to use more electronic resources, either through the library or the Web, you will find that there are many different types of interfaces and user features. For example, some databases may provide a thesaurus to help you with potential terms to search. Most databases provide access to a “basic” search as well as a more “advanced” search. When using a database, either a library database or an Internet Search Engine, take a few minutes to explore the database’s help screens. The few minutes you take may save you time by making you a more efficient searcher. (Review the outline of electronic search techniques found in the SMG chapters on finding and evaluating sources online and in libraries.)

Before completing the following exercises, you will need to read Hacker, *A Writer’s Reference* “Researching” section to choose a quotation and documentation style. Choose among the styles from the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA), *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago) or the *Modern Language Association Handbook for Writers of Research* (MLA). Select, if possible, the style that best matches your academic or professional interests.

Using the information in SMG as well as resources in your local library, complete the following:

Your topic:

Questions you are interested in exploring:

For each category below, list the citation information in your chosen format for at least one source on your topic:

- A specialized encyclopedia
- A bibliography
- A book
- A periodical article
- A scholarly article
- A newspaper article
Using Electronic Resources

If you have access to the Internet, pick a database that is offered through your local library or through the ECL (if you are an enrolled degree student), and complete the following:

1. Name of the database ______________________________________________________

2. Describe the scope of the database __________________________________________

3. What fields can you search in the database (for example, can you search the author? The subject? Can you search more than one field at a time?) __________________________________________________________

4. Does the database offer a thesaurus? ______________________________________

5. Does the database search the words you enter into the text-entry box as separate words or as a phrase? ____________________________________________

6. When you find citations or a full text of an article in the library database, does the database allow you to email the citation and text to yourself?___

7. Choose an Internet Search Engine and search for two relevant World Wide Web sites. ________________________________________________________________

Answer the following:

Search Engine Used__________________________________________________________

How does the Search Engine gather its material? For example, are sites primarily recommended by users? Do companies pay to have their site listed? Or do experts gather and organize the material? ________________________________

Title of page ______________________________________________________________

URL ______________________________________________________________________

Date you accessed page_____________________________________________________

Date of the page itself______________________________________________________

Who is the author or publisher of the page ________________________________

Do you detect any bias in the material?______________________________________
Does the material contain a bibliography or other indications of knowledge of the field? ____________________________

How is the material you found via the Internet Search Engine different from the material found in a library database? (Note, for example, the organization of the material or the search options.) ____________________________

Write
Using the information in the previously cited readings, write a bibliographic citation for one of the articles you found in the library in print or electronically. Then read the article carefully, taking notes (using summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation) on the article.

Save these notes for use in Unit 5. Refer to the readings as necessary.

Evaluate Your Work
Using a scale of 1–5, rate your essay on the features displayed in the following chart by checking or shading in the appropriate boxes. (This list of features also appears on page 49 in this unit.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can you describe how to use library and Internet resources?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you identify major library and Internet search tools?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you identify specific sources on a topic?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you distinguish between electronic material that a library has purchased and material that is freely available on the Web?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you integrate sources effectively, using summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation? Can you evaluate the content and features of electronic resources?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you use APA, Chicago, or MLA guidelines for acknowledging and documenting sources?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Unit 5
Explaining a Concept

In This Unit

In this unit, you will draw on the secondary research techniques you developed in Unit 4 as you write an essay that explains a concept to your readers. You will add analyzing, defining, classifying, and comparing and contrasting ideas to your repertoire of rhetorical strategies. You will also sharpen your ability to edit for effective word use and spelling.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

► Explain a concept using information drawn from multiple sources and your own knowledge of the subject.
► Use rhetorical strategies of definition, classification, and comparison and contrast to explain a concept.
► Reflect the needs of your audience in relation to your topic.
► Organize and integrate multiple sources that help to explain a concept.
► Document sources using APA, Chicago, or MLA documentation style.
► Edit for effective word choice.
Search Your Memory
Look back at the topic you selected for the research exercise in Unit 4. Use this topic (or another, if you change your mind) and brainstorm for 5–10 minutes, listing in your journal as many concepts associated with your topic as possible. For example, if the topic you investigated in Unit 4 was “environment,” your list might include “ozone depletion,” “deforestation,” “acid rain,” and “recycling.”

Next, choose one concept from your list that you think you could explain to other people. In your journal, freewrite for 5–10 minutes everything you can recall about this concept. Then share your freewriting with your reader or writing group. Do the collaborative activity in the SMG chapter on Explaining a Concept, recording in your journal the responses to the questions in Part 2.

Read and Respond
Your reading in earlier units of this Course Guide introduced you to the rhetorical strategies of narration and description and to other strategies that are useful in a variety of writing situations. The readings in this unit introduce the rhetorical strategies of process narration, definition, classification, and comparison and contrast. Together with cause and effect, these are the major ways people think about and organize information.

The following set of readings gives you an overview of the rhetorical strategies found in this unit. You may decide to do an exercise for a particular reading as soon as you come to it or after you have finished the whole reading. In either case, write your response to each exercise in the section of your journal reserved for rhetorical strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetorical Strategy</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Exercises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Narrating a Process</td>
<td>“Narrating a Process” section of the SMG chapter on Narrating</td>
<td>Complete the exercises associated with this section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Defining</td>
<td>SMG chapter on Defining</td>
<td>Complete the exercises associated with this chapter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Classifying</td>
<td>SMG chapter on Classifying</td>
<td>Complete the exercises associated with this chapter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Comparing and Contrasting</td>
<td>SMG chapter on Comparing and Contrasting</td>
<td>Complete the exercises associated with this chapter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Read

The next two readings offer samples of successful essays that “explain a concept.” The first presents and analyzes four writings that illustrate features of successful explanatory essays. These are the features that you should try to incorporate into your writing. The authors of these essays use the full range of rhetorical modes addressed so far by this Course Guide.

Be sure to read and reflect on the analysis and commentary sections following each sample essay. These sections will help you analyze the writing strategies used in each essay, provide ideas for you to write about, and help you compare techniques used by the authors. Write your responses to these sections in your journal.

Read the “Readings” section within the SMG chapter on Explaining a Concept.

Be sure to read the annotated student essay found in the SMG chapter on Explaining a Concept.

The second reading gives you a chance to analyze brief essays by students who responded to an assignment to “explain a concept.”

Read the chapter on Explaining a Concept in Sticks and Stones.

Choose one of these essays in which the writer seems particularly successful in (a) organizing information; and (b) engaging the reader’s interest in the “concept.” In your journal, note briefly the strategies the writer uses to accomplish these two rhetorical aims.

Read

The next reading is very brief but important, for it will help you review and think carefully about two key aspects of any rhetorical situation—your purpose and your audience. Review, if necessary, Unit 1 of this Course Guide, p. 29.

Read the section on Writing a Draft in the Guide to Writing in this SMG chapter.

Think about the concept that you will develop for the essay in this unit, and specify an audience for your essay. Depending on your purpose and concept, you may be able to use one of the audiences for a medium suggested in the reading—for example, an audience for a newspaper or magazine. You might also address a class of students (perhaps in a specific discipline or at a certain grade level). Freewrite in your journal for 5–10 minutes, profiling your intended readers. Who are they? How much do they know about your topic? What aspects of your topic will interest them the most?
The Assignment

Essay 3: Explaining a Concept
Read and reflect on the following assignment description. Before you begin writing, proceed to the next section of this unit.

Subject: A concept that you have some knowledge of, but that you would like to know more about.

Audience: Specify an audience for your essay. Be sure to consider carefully what your readers already know about the topic and what information will interest them the most.

Purpose: To explain thoroughly a concept, using your own knowledge and information from at least two different sources.

Format: Write an essay of 500–600 words that explains a concept to your readers. Follow the procedure described in the next section of this Course Guide ("Prepare to Write"). Document your sources using the APA, Chicago, or MLA citation and documentation format that you chose for Unit 4.

Evaluation: Your final essay should display the following characteristics:
• A well-focused subject
• A clear, effective pattern of organization
• Awareness of the needs and interests of the audience
• Clear, effective use of one or more of the following rhetorical strategies: definition, description, classification, narration, comparison and contrast
• Smooth integration of source material using summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation, as appropriate
• Correct use of the documentation style you have chosen
• Careful editing and proofreading, especially for effective word choice

Prepare to Write

Use the information in the Writing a Draft section of the Guide to Writing in the SMG chapter on Explaining a Concept to explore your topic and focus your concept. Apply the “Test Your Choice” questions to your topic before you begin drafting. If your topic seems workable, continue with the remainder of this section. If you decide that your topic will not work well for this essay, return to the earlier sections of this unit to select a new topic.
Once you are confident that you have a workable topic, use information from at least two sources to fill out your knowledge base. This will require additional library or Internet research. Remember to take careful notes from your sources as you read, in order to determine whether summary, paraphrase, or direct quotation is best suited to each piece of information. Then use the questions and guidelines in the Writing a Draft section of the Guide to Writing in the SMG chapter on Explaining a Concept to plan your essay.

Write

Using the research notes, prewriting, and a tentative outline, begin drafting your essay. As you write, remember the needs of your audience, and try to organize information from your sources and your own knowledge in a way that will be understood by your reader(s). Try to make your focus clear, define all special terms, describe procedures in detail, and use classification and/or comparison and contrast to help your reader understand your subject thoroughly. As you incorporate your sources, vary your use of summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation as appropriate. Finally, be sure to document information drawn from your sources and prepare a bibliography or a “Works Cited” page. Put your essay aside for at least a day or two before beginning your revisions.

Revise

Now that you have not seen your first draft for a day or two, you are ready to revise your work. This will require feedback from your reader(s) and your own assessment of the effectiveness of your essay.

Ask your reader or writing group to read your essay according to the guidelines found in SMG, in the Critical Reading Guide in this chapter’s Guide to Writing. Encourage your reader to point out the sections of the essay that are most interesting and engaging, as well as those that are unclear, vague, or confusing.

While you are waiting for feedback on your essay, you can assess your own work. The revision guidelines and questions found in SMG, in the Revising section of this chapter’s Guide to Writing will help you identify problems in your first draft and possible solutions. Use each question to critique your work. Mark up the sections of your draft that you think will most benefit from revision, and chart your revision plan as suggested in SMG, in the Revising section of this chapter’s Guide to Writing. Be sure that you have a clear, sharp focus, adequate definition and description, effective use of the various writing strategies, and smooth integration of sources. Finally, using feedback from your reader(s), your revision plan, and your marked-up draft, write a revised draft of your essay. The changes you decide to make are ultimately up to you. Try to make them objectively.
Edit and Proofread

Effective word use is critical to your reader’s clear understanding of your ideas. Sentences that are wordy or full of jargon, slang, or poor word choices are disruptive to your reader and detract from your message. In addition, your choices of words help set the tone for your entire essay. If your language is not appropriate to the audience and topic, your ideas may not be taken as seriously as you would like. Therefore, you should train yourself to edit your work for effective word use as well as the grammatical errors discussed in earlier units.

To test your ability to spot wordy sentences and word-use problems, complete the following readings and exercises.

Read Word Choice section in Hacker, focusing on Wordy sentences, Active verbs, Appropriate language, and Exact language.

Then visit the Hacker online resource, and complete the interactive exercises that accompany the above subjects.

Next, scan the list of frequently misused words in Hacker, Word Choice: Glossary of Usage. Note any unfamiliar or problem words, and add them to your spelling log. Then, review the basic rules for spelling and mechanics in the Hacker section on Punctuation and Mechanics.

Finally, edit your essay for similar problems in word use, spelling, and mechanics, as well as for the sentence problems reviewed in earlier units. Remember to read your essay aloud to check for problems with word usage. Often, reading the essay backwards, one word at a time, is an especially effective way to check for problems with spelling. Record in your spelling and error logs any problems you uncover, and prepare a final copy of your essay. Then, carefully proofread your final copy for any new errors.
**Evaluate Your Work**

Have your reader or writing group read your revised essay. Ask them to comment specifically on which parts of the essay they find most interesting or effective, and which passages could benefit from more detail or explanation, smoother integration of information from sources, or sharper word use.

After taking into account reader feedback and your own assessment, complete the following chart.

*Using a scale of 1–5, rate your essay on the features displayed in the following chart by checking or shading in the appropriate boxes. (This list of features also appears at the end of the assignment description on page 60 in this unit.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Feature</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A well-focused subject</td>
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<tr>
<td>A clear, effective pattern of organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness of the needs and interests of the audience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clear, effective use of one or more of the following rhetorical strategies:</td>
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<tr>
<td>definition, description, classification, narration, comparison and contrast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smooth integration of source material using summary, paraphrase, and direct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quotation, as appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Correct use of the documentation style you have chosen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careful editing and proofreading, especially for effective word choice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Reflect on Your Writing Process
Now that you have written an essay explaining a concept and rated your work, reflect on your writing process. Reflecting on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered as you planned, wrote, revised, and edited your essay will help you develop your individual writing process.

Read “A Writer at Work” at the end of the SMG chapter on Explaining a Concept.

Now, reflect on your own writing process. Do the following reading, and write your responses to the questions in your journal.

In the end of the SMG chapter on Explaining a Concept, read the section on thinking critically about what you have learned and write your responses to the questions in your journal.

Do the writing exercises at your discretion.
Unit 6

Arguing a Position

In This Unit

In this unit, you will apply your knowledge of the writing process as you write an essay that argues in support of a specific position. In your essay, you will assert a thesis, use evidence to support that thesis, address counterarguments, and avoid logical fallacies. You will also practice editing sentences for effective style.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

► Argue in support of a specific position on a well-defined issue.

► Support an argument’s thesis with a variety of evidence, including facts, statistics, and authorities.

► Address counterarguments and avoid logical fallacies.

► Organize claims, evidence, and counterarguments effectively.

► Document sources using chosen style of documentation (APA, Chicago, MLA).

► Edit for effective sentence style.

Information Tip

Parts I and III of the UExcel exam in English Composition draw heavily on this unit.
Search Your Memory
What kinds of issues do you care about? Are you deeply concerned about crime, drug use, homelessness, environmental policies, school safety, or television ratings? American society is filled with issues for which there is no clear-cut “right” or “wrong,” issues for which different people have different answers. Public debate about these issues is critical to a democratic society. To participate fully in a democracy requires the ability to explore diverse evidence and viewpoints on public issues, and to persuade others to accept a particular position or course of action. To which debates would you like to contribute, whether as a member of an organization, a local resident, or a concerned citizen?

Review the contents of your journal and write down three or four issues or problems that interest you. Try to phrase each issue as a “Should” question (e.g., “Should public schools require students to wear uniforms?”). Then try to answer each question with a direct statement (e.g., “Public schools should or should not require students to wear uniforms.”). After that, spend about 10 minutes freewriting in support of each position for each issue. Try to come up with at least two or three strong reasons to support your opinion. Finally, list several objections that might be raised by someone who does not agree with you.

Read and Respond
The first two readings in this unit introduce the fundamentals of arguing a position by providing you with nine sample essays that illustrate features of well-written, reasoned arguments. These essays use a variety of argumentative strategies for arguing and counterarguing.

To maximize your learning,

- **Mark** those sections or paragraphs that you find especially engaging or effective.

- **Note** the author’s use of definition, description, comparison and contrast, and cause and effect.

- **Read** the commentary sections in SMG that summarize the most important features of the essays in that book.

- **Return** to your journal to reflect on the sections that follow each sample essay in SMG, which ask you to consider topics for your own essay.

Read the section titled “Readings” in the SMG chapter on Arguing a Position.

Read the chapter on Arguing a Position in Sticks and Stones. In your journal, note the thesis of each essay.
Read
The next reading in this unit is short but important because it brings your focus back to the main features of essays that effectively argue a specific position. These essays include a well-defined issue; a clear position; a convincing, well-reasoned argument; and an appropriate tone.

Read the “Purpose and Audience” section of the SMG chapter on Arguing a Position.

Read
In the following reading, you will examine the structure of a good argument and identify this structure in the writing of others. When you do the writing assignment for this unit, you will have an opportunity to illustrate the structure of a good argument in your own writing.

Read the SMG chapter on Arguing a Position. Do the exercises associated with this chapter.

To maximize your learning,

- **Mark** those paragraphs, lines, or words in the sample essays that address the exercises.
- **Write** your responses to the exercises in your journal.
- **Compare** your responses to the exercises with someone in your writing group.
- As you read, **think** of your topic and the ways you might structure your essay so that it has a good thesis and appropriate reasons and support. Think, too, how you will anticipate reader concern by counterarguing, and how you will avoid logical fallacies.

To identify the differing types of arguments you will encounter in the course of your readings for this unit, the following information might be helpful:

Aristotle (a Greek philosopher, who lived in the fourth century B.C.E.) distinguished among three kinds of argumentative support: logic—using facts and reason; credibility—showing that you are well informed; emotion—playing on your reader’s feelings.
For example, you might want to persuade your audience that saving the spotted owl, an endangered species in the Pacific Northwest, is an important public goal:

- To write a logical argument, you would gather facts, figures, and expert opinion to persuade your reader that the government should restrict logging in the affected habitats.
- To write a credible argument, you would refer briefly to your study of ecology in BIO 101.
- To write an emotional argument, you would mention the summer you spent rescuing baby owls shaken from their nests by the rumble of heavy logging trucks.

The first two “appeals” are more appropriate for academic essays than the last. If you use “emotional” appeals at all, you should restrict them primarily to your introductions or conclusions—as “hooks” to capture your reader’s interest or to leave your reader with an emotional tilt toward your thesis. Thomas Beckfield’s essay “Banning Cell Phone Use While Driving” (Sticks and Stones) uses this strategy effectively.
Write
In your journal, briefly note examples of logical, credible, and emotional "appeals" in one of the essays from SMG.

The Assignment
Essay 4: Arguing a Position
Read and reflect on the following assignment description. Before you begin writing, proceed to the next section of this unit.

Subject: A controversial issue, one for which you can formulate and defend a position

Audience: Choose a specific audience for your position. You might choose the readers of a local newspaper, the members of an organization, or your city council or school board

Purpose: To argue in support of a clear position on a specific issue

Format: Write an essay of 500–600 words arguing a position. Follow the procedure described in the next section of this Course Guide ("Prepare to Write"). Document your sources using APA, Chicago, or MLA style (whichever you chose in Unit 4 and used in Unit 5).

Evaluation: Your final essay should display the following characteristics:

• A well-defined issue
• A clear position on that issue
• A convincing, well-reasoned argument supported by adequate evidence
• Careful consideration of counterarguments
• A tone appropriate to your topic and audience
• Sources documented using chosen style of documentation
• Careful editing and proofreading, especially for correct documentation and effective sentence style
Prepare to Write

Once you have decided on an issue to pursue, you will need to do a substantial amount of preparation before you begin drafting. You will need to explore your issue, identify the purpose of your essay, consider your audience’s views, decide if your issue is in fact a good one for this assignment, and develop your argument, counterargument, and argumentative strategy. The following set of readings will guide you through this process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Purpose</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1   To define your issue, determine whether to do research, and decide on your position</td>
<td><strong>Writing a Draft</strong>, found in the Guide to Writing section of the SMG chapter on Arguing a Position</td>
<td>Answer the questions in this section as directed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2   To identify the purpose of your essay and to anticipate your audience’s views</td>
<td><strong>Writing a Draft</strong>, found in the Guide to Writing section of the SMG chapter on Arguing a Position</td>
<td>Do the exercises associated with this section in SMG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3   To decide if your issue is appropriate</td>
<td>“Test Your Choice,” found in the <strong>Writing a Draft</strong>, area within the Guide to Writing section of the SMG chapter on Arguing a Position</td>
<td>Do the activity as directed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Record new issues, claims, evidence, or counterarguments in your journal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4   To develop your argument, counterargument, and argumentative strategy</td>
<td><strong>Writing a Draft</strong>, found in the Guide to Writing section of the SMG chapter on Arguing a Position</td>
<td>Do the exercises as directed, writing your responses in your journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5   To plan your essay</td>
<td><strong>Writing a Draft</strong>, found in the Guide to writing in the SMG chapter on Arguing a Position</td>
<td>Do the exercises and answer the questions as directed, writing your responses in your journal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A note on organization: At this point, your preparation activities should have generated several pages of notes and planning. Now you need to decide how you will organize the information in your essay.

The classical method of organization, similar to that illustrated in the Writing a Draft section of this chapter’s Guide to Writing (SMG) usually introduces the issue, states the thesis, proceeds through the main supporting ideas, refutes counterarguments, and concludes by reasserting the position. An alternative method of organization, often referred to as Rogerian argument (after psychologist Carl Rogers), takes a less confrontational approach to the topic by stating the problem, giving the opponent’s position, acknowledging the validity of that position, and attempting to show how the problem will best be solved by adopting the writer’s position.

Both methods of arrangement are effective ways to organize your information, depending upon the rhetorical situation. Whether you use one of these outlines or form another of your own, you should plan your organization carefully so that your argument is logical and coherent.

Write

Using your research notes and the plan for your essay, draft your argument. Try to keep your audience in mind as you write the essay, adopting word choices and tone appropriate for the topic and readers. If you get stuck at any point in your drafting process, look back at your plan and try to keep writing. If new ideas emerge as you write, don’t worry too much about deviating from your outline; you can always rework the new ideas, if necessary, during your revision process. Often your best ideas emerge as you write, so you should plan on reorganizing rather than discarding your best thinking. When you are finished drafting, be sure you have cited any outside sources you’ve used.

Revise

Now that your first draft has been written, and you have not seen it for a day or two, you are ready to revise your work. Revising your draft will require feedback from your audience and your own assessment of the effectiveness of your essay.

Ask your reader or writing group to read your essay according to the guidelines contained in the “Critical Reading Guide” in this chapter’s Guide to Writing (SMG). Encourage your reader(s) to take issue with your opinions, challenge your arguments, and raise any counterarguments you may have neglected.
Read the “Critical Reading Guide,” (SMG).

While you are waiting for feedback on your essay, you can assess your own work. The revision guidelines and questions in the Revising section of this chapter’s Guide to Writing (SMG) will help you identify problems in your first draft and come up with possible solutions. Use each question to critique your work. Mark up the sections of your draft that you think will most benefit from revision and chart your revision plan as suggested in the Revising section of the chapter’s Guide to Writing (SMG).

Finally, using feedback from your reader(s), your revision plan, and your marked-up draft, write a revised draft of your essay. The changes you decide to make are ultimately up to you. Try to make them objectively.

Edit and Proofread

Sometimes, as writers grapple with working out and expressing difficult concepts or issues, they mix ideas, drop needed words, or tangle pieces of their sentences. Some writers, in an effort to avoid such problems, purposely write in short, choppy sentences that they know they can control. But since adult writers often think complex thoughts, these simple sentences cannot always do justice to the writer’s ideas. The keys to writing sentences that clearly express your sophisticated thoughts and ideas are 1) to make sure that you have thought through your ideas thoroughly before drafting, and 2) to learn to edit your drafts for ineffective sentences.

To test your ability to edit for effective sentence style, complete the following readings and exercises. Then check your own essay for similar problems.
Evaluate Your Work

After you have carefully edited your essay, prepare a final copy and proofread that copy for new errors. Add errors you discover to your error and spelling logs. Then, have your peer reader or writing group read your final essay. Encourage them to comment on which revisions most improved your argument and which sections of the essay, if any, are still weak or unclear. Return to your journal to reflect on the SMG questions.

After taking into account reader feedback and your own assessment, complete the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read Hacker*</th>
<th>Interactive Web-based Exercises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Sentence Style” sections on Parallelism, Needed Words, Problems with Modifiers, Shifts, Mixed Constructions, Sentence Emphasis, and Sentence Variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Word Choice” section that covers Wordy Sentences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A Writer’s Reference, Hacker
Using a scale of 1–5, rate your essay on the features displayed in the following chart by checking or shading in the appropriate boxes. (This list of features also appears at the end of the assignment description on page 69 in this unit.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Feature</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A well-defined issue</td>
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<tr>
<td>A clear position on that issue</td>
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<tr>
<td>A convincing, well-reasoned argument supported by adequate evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Careful consideration of counterarguments</td>
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<tr>
<td>A tone appropriate to your topic and audience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sources documented using chosen style of documentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Careful editing and proofreading, especially for correct documentation and effective sentence style</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Reflect on Your Writing Process

Now that you have written an essay that argues in support of a specific position and rated your work, reflect on your writing process. Reflecting on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered as you planned, wrote, revised, and edited your essay will help you develop your individual writing process.

Read “A Writer at Work,” at the end of the SMG chapter on Arguing a Position.

Now, focus on your own writing process. Do the following reading, and write in your journal your responses to the questions.

In the end of the SMG chapter on Arguing a Position, read the section on thinking critically about what you have learned and write your responses to the questions in your journal.
In This Unit

Being able to read critically and to evaluate a piece of writing is important in many professional and academic settings. In this unit, you will apply your knowledge of argumentative writing as you write an essay evaluating an argument written by someone else. You will also be given an opportunity to practice your editing skills.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

- Analyze an argumentative essay.
- Summarize the chief features of an argumentative essay.
- Evaluate and critique an argumentative essay.
- Formulate and support your judgment about an argumentative essay.
- Display a clear pattern of organization in your essay.
- Document sources using APA, Chicago, or MLA documentation style.
- Edit and proofread an evaluative essay.

Identify and distinguish among the key terms for this unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Argumentative</td>
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<tr>
<td>(or Persuasive) Essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Persona</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Tone</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thesis</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Search Your Memory

Based on your reading over the last few weeks, what do you think makes a good piece of writing? Is it just correct grammar and spelling? Or is there more? After your work in Units 1–6, you have probably come to realize that there is, in fact, much more to “good writing” than merely eliminating surface errors. Think back on the best essays you have read, or written, in these units. What made them memorable? An engaging introduction? Lots of examples and details? Clear organization? Awareness of the audience? A logical argument?

Try to come up with at least a few specific features of individual essays that you found especially effective. Then, in your journal, freewrite for 5–10 minutes about what you think makes a good essay.

Read and Respond

The first reading in this unit introduces you to the key terms and critical reading strategies that will help you evaluate an essay. It shows you what to look for in a piece of writing designed to inform, persuade, or entertain. To prepare yourself for the writing assignment in this unit, you will find it useful to pay special attention to the sections of the reading devoted to evaluating persuasive or argumentative writing.

To maximize your learning

- Open a new section in your journal, “Glossary of Literary Terms.”
- Enter in your journal definitions of “persona,” “tone,” “topic,” and “thesis.”
- Write an example after each key term.

Read Barnet, chapter on Reading and Writing about Essays, through the “Getting Ideas for Writing about Essays” checklist.

Read and Respond

The next reading assignment provides you with an opportunity to read a required reading (Appendix A) for this course, Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” You will evaluate the essay for this unit’s writing assignment.
To maximize your learning

- **Review** the definitions and examples of “persona,” “tone,” “topic,” and “thesis” that you have written in your journal.
- **Re-read** your chosen essay to discover the ways in which the essay’s author establishes these elements.
- **Write** in your journal brief descriptions including summaries, paraphrases, and quotations that you can draw upon when you begin the writing assignment for this unit.

Notice, especially, the importance of “persona” and “tone” in giving a personal quality to your chosen essay. These terms are very useful when you want to point to ways in which the essay employs not only “logical” but also “credible” and “emotional” arguments to move its reader. (Review Unit 6 for definitions and examples of these arguments, which may also help you with your current writing assignment.)

**Read and Respond**

The next readings illustrate features of a well-written, reasoned argument by providing a critique of a student essay written by Jessica Statsky. First you will read Statsky’s essay and then a critique (in the highlighted comments in the margins beside the essay in SMG) by the textbook authors.

To maximize your learning

- **Write** in your journal the main points made in the textbook authors’ comments on Statsky’s essay. As you will see, you are asked in your writing assignment to consider as many of these elements as seem appropriate. What does the author have to say about Statsky’s tone, persona, and organization?
- **Write** brief answers in your journal.

Read the SMG chapter on Arguing a Position. Focus on the introductory points the author makes about Statsky’s essay in the beginning of the chapter. Then read Statsky’s essay. Finally, review the remainder of the chapter to study the author’s analysis of Statsky’s writing.
**Read and Respond**

In the last reading of this section, you will learn a repertoire of critical reading strategies that will help you to mark up or take notes on your chosen essay. Using two or three of the strategies from the reading assignment, mark up or take notes on the essay you have chosen, making sure that you understand it thoroughly and that you have its structure clearly in mind. (“Marking up” or “annotating” implies writing on the text itself—either in the book or on a copy; “taking notes” suggests writing on a separate sheet as with listing or outlining. The latter two strategies offer good practice for a computer-delivered essay exam when you won’t be able to use such techniques as annotation on an on-screen text.)

To maximize your learning,

- When analyzing your chosen essay’s “persona” and “tone,” you may find it helpful to identify the essay’s figurative language.
- Once you have underlined or listed the essay’s figures of speech, use the checklist in the SMG chapter on Cataloging Reading Strategies, to see how the use of figurative language impacts the essay’s persona and tone.
- To analyze your chosen essay’s “logic,” focus on the relevant section in the SMG chapter on Cataloging Reading Strategies.

Read the SMG chapter on Cataloging Reading Strategies.
The Assignment

Essay 5: Evaluating An Argument
Read and reflect on the following assignment description. Before you begin writing, proceed to the next section of this unit.

Subject: An evaluative essay on an argumentative essay of your choice.

Audience: Imagine your audience as a group of readers who are interested in the topic of the argumentative essay but who might not have read the particular piece of writing you’ve chosen.

Purpose: To analyze, summarize, critique, and evaluate an argumentative essay.

Format: Write an essay of 500–600 words evaluating an argumentative essay. Follow the procedure described in the next section of this Course Guide (“Prepare to Write”).

Evaluation: Your final essay should display the following characteristics:
• A specific focus on one argumentative essay
• A concise summary of the chief features of the essay
• A clear, authoritative judgment about the essay
• A well-supported argument for the judgment
• A clear pattern of organization
• Clear documentation of sources, using APA, Chicago, or MLA style
• Careful editing and proofreading

Note: Remember that, as your readings have noted, an evaluative essay is itself an argumentative essay. Your purpose is to argue that your judgment of another’s essay is sound.

Prepare to Write

Before beginning to draft your essay, you will need to review the essay you have chosen to critique, evaluate that piece of writing, establish a purpose for your essay, develop an argumentative strategy, and plan your essay. The following set of readings will guide you through this process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Purpose</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To refresh your memory of the essay you have</td>
<td>Your journal, notes on the piece of writing you will evaluate</td>
<td>Review your notes, and, if necessary, re-read the essay you will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chosen to evaluate</td>
<td></td>
<td>evaluate until you are familiar with it. Notice especially your journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>writings on persona, tone, topic, and thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To make a judgment about the essay, you will</td>
<td>SMG Guide to Writing in the chapter on Justifying an Evaluation,</td>
<td>Freewrite your responses to the questions posed. (Your “subject” is the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluate and identify the values and techniques</td>
<td>section on selecting and reviewing your subject.</td>
<td>essay you’ve chosen to analyze and evaluate.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on which it is based</td>
<td>Barnet chapter on Reading and Writing about Essays, section on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical Thinking and Writing and the Checklist: Getting Ideas for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing about Essays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To identify the purpose of your essay and to</td>
<td>SMG Guide to Writing in the chapter on Justifying an Evaluation,</td>
<td>Answer the questions about “Identifying Your Readers” in this section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anticipate your audience’s views</td>
<td>section on selecting and reviewing your subject.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To develop your argumentative strategy</td>
<td>SMG Guide to Writing sections on developing reasons and evidence to</td>
<td>Do the activities in this section, by writing your responses in your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>support your evaluation, designing your draft, and formulating your</td>
<td>journal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thesis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To plan your essay</td>
<td>SMG Guide to Writing, section on Writing a Draft.</td>
<td>Reflect on the questions and write your outline responses in your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>essay; outline your essay, following the Outlining section in the Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To draft your essay</td>
<td>SMG Guide to Writing, section on Writing a Draft.</td>
<td>Draft your essay following your outline.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Write**

Once you have planned your own essay, you may want to re-read the essay that you intend to evaluate one more time before you begin drafting. As you begin to write your evaluation, remember that your essay is also an argument. As such, your essay should not be merely a “book report” about the essay you are evaluating. Rather, your essay should have its own thesis, support, evidence (drawn from your analysis of your chosen essay), consideration of potential counterarguments, and conclusion. In other words, you are taking a position, as you did in Unit 6; here, however, you are responding to the ways in which a position is being argued by another instead of choosing your own topic. Review if necessary: “Outlining,” in the Guide to Writing section of the SMG chapter on Justifying an Evaluation.

**Revise**

Now that your first draft has been written, and you have not seen it for a day or two, you are ready to revise your work. This will require feedback from your audience and your own assessment of the effectiveness of your essay.

Ask your reader or writing group to read your essay by following the guidelines contained in the “Critical Reading Guide” in the Guide to Writing in this chapter of SMG, and to provide you with feedback, preferably in writing. Having your readers write down their comments is likely to encourage a higher quality of feedback and will enable you to have a copy on which to reflect as you consider revisions. You may want to furnish your readers a copy of the essay you are evaluating, although the reader should be able to understand your evaluation without having to read the original essay.

If you have been working with a smarthinking tutor or with the Excelsior College OWL, this would be a good time to submit your practice essay for evaluation.

After you have reviewed feedback from your reader(s), follow the guidelines in the Revising section of this SMG chapter’s Guide to Writing to analyze and evaluate your draft and to plan your revision. These revision guidelines and questions will help you identify problems in your first draft and discover possible solutions. Use each question to critique your work. Mark up the sections of your draft that you think will most benefit from revisions, and chart your revision plan. Using reader feedback, your marked-up draft, and your revision plan, write a revised draft of your essay.
Edit and Proofread

At this point in the Course Guide, you have reviewed all of the editing errors that are most common among adult writers. You should be able to apply those editing skills to your own work and to the work of others.

Briefly review the editing suggestions found in the Editing and Proofreading section of the Guide to Writing for this SMG chapter, then check your error and spelling logs to remind yourself of your most frequently occurring problem areas. Then, carefully edit your draft. After you have edited your essay, record in your error and spelling logs any errors you uncover, and prepare a final copy of your work. Proofread that copy carefully for any new errors.

Evaluate Your Work

To evaluate your work, ask your peer reader or writing group to read and respond to your final essay. Encourage your readers to point out those revisions that strengthened your evaluation the most, as well as any passages that are still unclear or unsupported. After taking into account reader feedback and your own assessment, complete the chart below.

Using a scale of 1–5, rate your essay on the features displayed in the following chart by checking or shading in the appropriate boxes. (This list of features also appears at the end of the assignment description on page 81 in this unit.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Feature</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A specific focus on one argumentative essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>A concise summary of the chief features of the essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>A clear, authoritative judgment about the essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>A well-supported argument for the judgment</td>
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<tr>
<td>A clear pattern of organization</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Correct use of APA, Chicago, and MLA documentation style</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Careful editing and proofreading</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>
Reflect On Your Writing Process
Now that you have written an essay evaluating an argumentative essay and rated your work, it is time to reflect on your individual writing process. Reflecting on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered as you planned, wrote, revised, and edited the essay will help you continue to develop your individual writing process.

Read “A Writer at Work,” in the Guide to Writing section of this SMG chapter.

Do the following reading, and write your responses to the questions in the part of your journal reserved for this ongoing process of reflection and skill development. Then, complete the reading and record any insights about your own writing in your journal.

In the end of the SMG chapter on Justifying an Evaluation, read the section on thinking critically about what you have learned and write your responses to the questions in your journal.
In This Unit

In this unit, you will apply your knowledge of argumentation as you argue in favor of your interpretation of a story. In your essay, you will assert a thesis, use evidence from the story to support that thesis, address counterarguments, and avoid logical fallacies. You will also practice quoting and documenting material from the story you interpret by consistently using a standard format (APA, Chicago, or MLA).

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

- Analyze a story.
- Summarize concisely the chief features of a story.
- Interpret a story.
- Formulate and support your interpretation of a story.
- Address counterarguments in your interpretive essay.
- Display a clear pattern of organization in your essay.
- Integrate sources effectively, using summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation to acknowledge your sources.
- Use standard stylistic guidelines (APA, Chicago, or MLA) to acknowledge and document your sources.

Identify and distinguish among the key terms for this unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Terms</th>
<th>• Irony</th>
<th>• Point of View</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Imagery</td>
<td>• Thesis Statement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Search Your Memory

Most of us have read (or had read to us!) stories that are “fictive” (“made up”) and that lure and hold our attention with their exciting plots, exotic settings, and dynamic characters. Some stories rivet us with remote locales and curious inhabitants while others appeal to us with realistic, insightful renditions of surroundings and lives very much like our own. Think back to the best stories—or movies based on such stories—you’ve ever known. What made them memorable?

Try to come up with at least a few specific features of individual stories that you remember most clearly and found especially effective. Then, in your journal, freewrite for 5–10 minutes about what you think makes a good story.

Read and Respond

Before you can interpret a story, you must analyze it. The following two readings were selected to help you develop skill in analyzing a story. In the first reading, the authors of your textbook explain what it means to analyze a story. Then, they provide two examples of their analyses of stories, one from the Hebrew Bible and another from the New Testament. As you read their analyses, note the aspects that the authors include in their discussions and how they write about them.

Read the Barnet chapter on “Reading Literature Closely: Analysis,” focusing on The Judgment of Solomon and its analysis, as well as The Parable of the Prodigal Son and its analysis.

Now you will have a chance to try out your skills in analyzing a story. The next reading assignment provides you with an opportunity to read two stories from your required list (Appendix A) for this course—James Thurber’s “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty” and Toni Cade Bambara’s “The Lesson”—and to analyze one of them. Your writing assignment for this unit will be based on the story you choose to analyze.

To maximize your learning

- **Read** each story straight through with the intention of enjoying each story as a whole.
- **Write** in your journal your response to each story immediately after finishing it.
- **Choose** the story you found engaging and re-read it. As you read the story the second time, identify two or three aspects of the story that you find particularly striking. (Define the key words on page 87 in your journal’s “Glossary of Literary Terms” and provide an example for each, taken from your chosen story; some of these may suggest aspects you might use as tools of analysis.) Write down in your journal the aspects you chose and explain how they contribute to the story as a whole.
If you have difficulty identifying aspects to write about, refer to the sample student comments and questions following these stories ("Working Toward a Thesis: Journal Entries," Barnet, following the Thurber story; “Critical Thinking and Writing,” Barnet, following the Bambara story). As noted above, one or more of the key words from page 87 might suggest an aspect or aspects upon which you might focus.

Read Barnet, The Secret Life of Walter Mitty by James Thurber; then read The Lesson by Toni Cade Bambara.

Read and Respond
The next reading introduces the interpretive essay. It discusses important features and conventions of interpretive essays that you will need to incorporate into your writing. The reading includes four famous short stories (two that are on your required course reading list), questions for interpretation, and two examples of interpretive essays written by students.

To maximize your learning

• **Complete** the two-part Collaborative Activity found in the beginning of the SMG chapter on Analyzing Stories. This activity directs you to do the readings found in the Anthology of Short Stories found in this chapter, and to answer the questions that follow the stories. Work with your study group or partner to decide which questions to answer. Then, you can practice arguing for your interpretation. If you do not have a writing group or partner, write out your answers in your journal.

• **Read** the two student essays from this SMG chapter. These essays respond to, and interpret a short story.

• **Review** the “Analyzing Writing Strategies” section that corresponds to these two student essays. Write out the answers in your journal and, if possible, share them with your writing group or partner.

• **Summarize** the “purpose” and “audience” as described in the Purpose and Audience section of this SMG chapter. This will help to remind you of an interpretive essay’s purpose and of your readers’ expectations.

• **Note** briefly in your journal the ways in which the sample student essays you read (in the Readings section of this SMG chapter) reflect the list of features usually found in interpretive essays (found in the Readings section of this SMG chapter).

Read SMG, chapter on Analyzing Stories.
**Read and Respond**

In the next reading, you will examine the structure of a good interpretive essay and identify this structure in the writing of others. When you do the writing assignment for this unit, you will have an opportunity to illustrate the structure of a good interpretation in your own writing.

For this reading, you will once again need to select either “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty” or “The Lesson.” You may decide to use the same story you selected earlier in this unit or switch to the other one.

*To maximize your learning*

- **Use** the suggestions you read in Unit 7 to annotate the story you have chosen. To make annotating easier, word process your story, leaving three or more spaces between lines. (Use a search engine (e.g., http://www.google.com) to locate a copy of your chosen story and download it to your computer. Enter the author’s name followed by the story title.)

- **Do** a “focused freewriting” (Barnet, chapter on The Reader as Writer) in your journal for 5–10 minutes, describing a principal character in the story you have chosen.

- **List** (Barnet, The Reader as Writer) in your journal four or five symbols from the story you have chosen.

- **Write** in your journal five or six questions (Barnet, The Reader as Writer) you might ask yourself about the story you have chosen.

- **List** the structural elements of an interpretive essay.

- **Review** your annotations to find one or two aspects of the story that seem significant: for example, in Sally Crane’s essay on “Araby” (SMG, Analyzing Stories), she discovered the importance of “irony” in the story and was able to unify her own essay around that key term. By re-rereading the story with each of these aspects in mind, you may discover that the two work together to convey meaning. In writing your essay, you need to focus on one or, at most, two aspects, but you may enrich your interpretation by integrating others.

Read the following chapters in Barnet: How to Write an Effective Essay; The Writer as Reader; The Reader as Writer.

**Read and Respond**

The next reading will help you develop a thesis statement to use when you complete the writing assignment for this unit.
To maximize your learning

- **Read** the section on Annotations within the Guide to Writing in this SMG chapter to discover your tentative thesis.

- **Choose** the suggestions (terms) on SMG that yielded your most interesting (and numerous) annotations, and write a journal page on each.

- **Write** a tentative thesis statement focusing upon literary concepts such as character, setting, plot structure, point of view, and literary motif (theme), or upon key terms specific to the story. Follow the instructions in SMG, keeping the resulting lists and drafts in your journal.

---

**The Assignment**

**Essay 6: Interpreting A Story**

Read and reflect on the following assignment description. Before you begin writing, proceed to the next section of this unit.

**Subject:** An interpretive essay on one or two aspects of a story, showing knowledge of fictive technique

**Audience:** Imagine your audience as a group of readers who have read your chosen story and who will welcome the new ideas your interpretation will offer.

**Purpose:** To interpret a story by analyzing the story and focusing on one or two significant aspects

**Format:** Write an essay of 500–600 words interpreting a story. Follow the procedure described in the next section of this Course Guide (“Prepare to Write”).

**Evaluation:** Your final essay should display the following characteristics:

- A specific focus on one or two aspects of one story
- A very concise summary of the plot of the story, including its title, author, and topic
- A clear thesis statement that forecasts, using well-defined key terms, the reasons the writer will use to develop and support the thesis
- A well-supported argument (or set of arguments) for this thesis statement
- Careful consideration of counterarguments
- Careful editing and proofreading, following consistently one of the standard stylistic formats (APA, Chicago, MLA) for quotation and documentation
Prepare to Write

Before beginning to draft your essay, you will need to refresh your memory of the story you have chosen, revise your thesis statement, plan your interpretive strategy, plan your essay, and identify the purpose of your essay and your audience’s expectations. The following set of readings will guide you through this process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Purpose</th>
<th>Read/Review</th>
<th>Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To refresh your memory of the story you have chosen</td>
<td>Review your journal and annotations on your story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To revise your thesis statement, making sure to focus on one or two aspects of your story</td>
<td>Read the Writing a Draft section of this SMG chapter’s Guide to Writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To plan your interpretive strategy</td>
<td>Review your journal. Read the Writing a Draft section of this SMG chapter’s Guide to Writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To plan your essay</td>
<td>Review your notes from the Writing a Draft section of this SMG chapter’s Guide to Writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To identify the purpose of your essay and your audience’s expectations</td>
<td>Review Purpose and Audience from the beginning of this SMG chapter on Analyzing Stories.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Write

Using your journal notes and your scratch outline, draft your interpretation. Try to keep your audience in mind as you write the essay, adopting word choices and tone appropriate for topic and readers. If you get stuck at any point, look back at your plan and keep writing. If new ideas emerge as you write, don’t worry too much about deviating from your plan; you can always rework the new ideas, if necessary, during your revising process. Often your best ideas emerge as you write, so you should plan on reorganizing rather than discarding your best thinking. When you have finished drafting, be sure that you have used correct quotation and documentation format, taken from the style you have chosen.

Learning Tip
Remember to let your draft sit for a day or two before revising it.

Revise

Now that your first draft has been written and you have not seen it for a day or two, you are ready to revise your work. Revising your draft will require feedback from your audience and your own assessment of the effectiveness of your essay.

Ask your reader or writing group to read your essay according to the guidelines contained in the “Critical Reading Guide” in this SMG chapter’s Guide to Writing. Encourage your reader(s) to take issue with your opinions, challenge your arguments, and raise any counterarguments (such as questions a reader might ask or differing interpretations a reader might offer) you may have neglected.

While you are waiting for feedback on your essay, you can assess your own work. The revision guidelines and questions in the Revision section of this SMG chapter’s Guide to Writing will help you identify problems in your first draft and come up with possible solutions. Use each question to critique the sections of your draft that you think will most benefit from revision, and chart your revision plan. Be sure that you have addressed each of the basic features of a good interpretive essay listed on that page.

Finally, using feedback from your reader(s), your revision plan, and your marked-up draft, write a revised draft of your essay. The changes you decide to make are ultimately up to you. Try to make them objectively.
Edit and Proofread

As you are already familiar with the use of standard formats of quotation and documentation in research papers (Unit 4), you will only need to review those when you edit and proofread the next-to-final copy of your interpretative essay.

- Review Hacker: Researching section, focusing on the Managing Information lesson on avoiding plagiarism; MLA section, focusing on Supporting a Thesis, and Citing Sources/Avoiding Plagiarism
- Review the Editing and Proofreading section in this SMG chapter’s Guide to Writing.
- Read your final copy aloud, preferably to another person.

Evaluate Your Work

After you have carefully edited your essay, prepare a final copy and proofread that copy for new errors. Add errors you discover to your error and spelling logs. Then, have your peer reader or writing group read your final essay. Encourage them to comment on which revisions most improved your argument and which sections of the essay, if any, are still weak or unclear.

After taking into account reader feedback and your own assessment of your essay, complete the following chart.
Using a scale of 1–5, rate your essay on the features displayed in the following chart by checking or shading in the appropriate boxes. (This list of features also appears at the end of the assignment description on page 91 in this unit.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Feature</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tr>
<td>A specific focus on one or two aspects of one story, showing knowledge of fictive techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td>A very concise summary of the plot of the story, including its title, author, and topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>A clear thesis statement that forecasts, using well-defined key terms, the reasons the writer will use to develop and support the thesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>A well-supported argument (or set of arguments) for this thesis statement</td>
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<td>Careful consideration of counterarguments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Careful editing and proofreading, following consistently one of the standard stylistic formats (APA, Chicago, MLA) for quotation and documentation</td>
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</table>
Reflect on Your Writing Process

Now that you have written an essay that argues for an interpretation of a story, reflect on your writing process. Reflecting on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered as you planned, wrote, revised, and edited your essay will help you develop your individual writing process. See what you can learn from the process David Ratinov used to annotate his story; explore his annotations and list ideas for a thesis.

Read “A Writer at Work,” in the Guide to Writing section of this SMG chapter.

Did you follow a process similar to Ratinov’s? Do you see anything that you might like to try out the next time you write an interpretive essay? If so, write an appropriate note in your journal.

Now focus on your own writing process. In the end of the SMG chapter on Analyzing Stories, read the section on thinking critically about what you have learned and write your responses to the questions in your journal.
Unit 9

Interpreting a Poem

In This Unit

In this unit, you will apply your knowledge of argumentation and interpretation of literature as you argue in favor of your interpretation of a poem. In your essay, you will assert a thesis, use evidence from the poem to support that thesis, address counterarguments, and avoid logical fallacies.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

► Analyze a poem.
► Summarize concisely the chief features of a poem, including poetic techniques.
► Interpret a poem.
► Formulate and support your interpretation of a poem.
► Display a clear pattern of organization in your essay.
► Integrate your sources effectively, using summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation to acknowledge your sources.
► Use standard stylistic guidelines (APA, Chicago, or MLA) to acknowledge and document your sources.

Identify and distinguish among the key terms for this unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Terms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symbolism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paradox</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhythm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Versification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patterns of Sound</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanzaic Patterns</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Search Your Memory

Poetry, it seems, has been with us almost from the beginning. “One, Two, Buckle My Shoe” and “Mary Had a Little Lamb” are read aloud to children before the children themselves can read, and, even before birth, an infant’s heartbeat keeps its own time. Do you remember a poem? What made it memorable? Rhythm? Rhyme? Freewrite in your journal for 5 to 10 minutes. (Don’t hesitate to use a nursery rhyme; you’ll soon encounter one in this unit’s reading!)

Your writing assignment for this unit will give you an opportunity to focus on a single poem and to explain your interpretation of that poem to a reader. The six Read and Respond assignments will guide you through the poems on the “Course Reading List: Poetry” (Appendix A) and will help you get started interpreting the poem that you will choose. Not all the poems in the assignments appear on the list, but all will give you practice in reading and understanding poetry.

Read and Respond

The first reading in this section will give you a chance to develop your close reading skills and to explore poems by Langston Hughes and William Shakespeare. Read each of the poems (listed below) and choose one on which to do a “scratch” (quick) explication and another on which to do a scratch analysis. Keep these in your journal.

Read Barnet: chapter on “Reading Literature Closely: Explication”; and the following poems found in Barnet: Langston Hughes, “Theme for English B” and William Shakespeare, “Sonnet 29,” “Sonnet 73,” and “Sonnet 116.”

Read and Respond

The second reading offers further exploration of the concepts of speaker and tone (which you studied in Units 7 and 8) and two other concepts key for reading and writing about poetry: imagery and symbolism. In addition, you will study such concepts as irony, paradox, structure, rhythm, versification, patterns of sound, and stanzaic patterns.

To maximize your learning:

- **List and define literary terms and concepts in your journal’s “Glossary of Literary Terms.”**
- **List in your journal examples of the literary techniques to which these terms refer.** Take your examples from these four poems on the “Course Reading List” (Appendix A) that appear in Barnet, “The Sick Rose,” “Upon Julia’s Clothes,” “My Last Duchess,” and “A Noiseless Patient Spider.”
- **Answer** in your journal questions from “Critical Thinking and Writing” that appear throughout the reading assignment.

Read Barnet, chapter on Reading and Writing About Poems.

**Read and Respond**
The third reading features a concentrated “casebook” on Emily Dickinson; three poems from this casebook appear on your “Course Reading List: Poetry.”

To maximize your learning

- **Answer** in your journal the Critical Thinking and Writing questions that follow Barnet’s case study of Dickinson.

- **Add** to your “Glossary of Literary Terms” examples of literary techniques that you find in Dickinson’s poetry such as irony, paradox, rhythm, and versification.

Read Barnet’s chapter on Thinking Critically about Poems: Two Case Studies, focusing on the first study of Emily Dickinson.

**Read and Respond**
The fourth reading will help you review and consolidate the idea of literary interpretation that you encountered in Unit 8. You will also have an opportunity to study poems from your reading list and to read two sample essays interpreting a poem by Robert Frost and arguing for these interpretations.

To maximize your learning

- **Read** the two poems, “Design,” and “Mending Wall,” by Robert Frost, found in Barnet.

- **Write** in your journal answers to the Critical Thinking and Writing questions that follow each poem.

- **Add** new literary terms to your “Glossary.”

Read Barnet, chapter on Arguing an Interpretation, stopping after the section entitled “Your Turn: Poems for Interpretation.”

**Read and Respond**
The fifth reading offers several poems from your required reading list (Appendix A), each of which treats a well-known theme. These poems appear in Barnet, expressing the themes of love and hate, gender roles, innocence and experience, and identity in America.
To maximize your learning

- **Preview** the entire chapter in Barnet containing the reading assignment and read any unassigned readings that strike your eye.
- **Write** in your journal your answers to “Critical Thinking and Writing.”
- **Add** to your “Glossary of Literary Terms.”
- **Write** in your journal other thematic categories to which the poems you read might belong.

In the first thematic section (Barnet’s chapter on “Love and Hate”), you will read two poems that appear on your “Course Reading List.”

**Read Barnet, Christopher Marlowe, “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” and John Donne, “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning.”**

In the second thematic section (Barnet’s chapters on “Making Men and Women” and “All in A Day’s Work”), you will find two poems from your “Course Reading List” and three nursery rhymes. Be sure that you do not skip the nursery rhymes: they are easy to remember and useful as examples of rhyme and versification.

**Read Barnet, Robert Hayden, “Those Winter Sundays,” and Julia Alvarez, “Woman’s Work.”**

The third thematic section (Barnet’s chapter on “Innocence and Experience”), includes five poems from your “Course Reading List.”


A fourth thematic section (Barnet’s chapter on “Identity in America”), includes Langston Hughes’s famous “Theme for English B” (you may have chosen to explicate this poem earlier in this unit), a required course reading.

**Read Barnet, Langston Hughes, “Theme For English B.”**

**Read and Respond**

After you have completed your reading of the “Course Reading List: Poetry,” choose one poem to analyze as you complete the writing assignment for this unit. Select your poem from among the following three: “The Tyger,” “I Heard a Fly buzz-when I died,” or “Woman’s Work.” Then, follow the checklist in Barnet, (“Checklist: Getting Ideas for Writing Arguments about Poems” in the chapter on Reading and Writing about Poems) finding as many ideas as possible for an essay interpreting your chosen poem.
Interpreting a Poem 101

You might also find it useful to review SMG, the Guide to Writing in the chapter on Analyzing Stories, which guides you through the process of analyzing a work of literature and drafting a tentative thesis statement. Although SMG focuses on interpreting a story, many of the same steps in the process can be adapted to interpret a poem.

To maximize your learning

- **Write** answers in your journal to the questions on Barnet’s checklist.
- **Respond** to the suggestions in SMG (the Guide to Writing in the chapter on Analyzing Stories, focusing on analyzing stories and formulating a thesis) adapting the suggestions for analyzing a poem.

The Assignment

**Essay 7: Interpreting a Poem**

Read and reflect on the following assignment description. Before you begin writing, proceed to the next section of this unit.

**Subject:** An interpretive essay on one or two significant aspects of a poem

**Audience:** Imagine your audience as a group of readers who have read your chosen poem and who will welcome the new ideas your interpretation will offer.

**Purpose:** To interpret a poem by analyzing the poem and focusing on one or two significant aspects

**Format:** Write an essay of 500–600 words interpreting a poem. Follow the procedure described in the next section of this Course Guide ("Prepare to Write").

**Evaluation:** Your final essay should display the following characteristics:

- A specific focus on one or two aspects of one poem, showing knowledge of poetic technique
- A very concise summary of the poem, including its title, author, and theme
- A clear thesis statement that forecasts, using well-defined key terms, the reasons the writer will use to develop and support the thesis
- A well-supported argument (or set of arguments) for this thesis statement
- Careful consideration of counterarguments
- Careful editing and proofreading, following consistently one of the standard stylistic formats (APA, Chicago, MLA) for quotation and documentation
# Prepare to Write

Before beginning to draft your essay, you will need to refresh your memory of the poem you have chosen, refresh your memory of poetic techniques, discover your poem’s meaning, stimulate your response to your poem, plan your interpretive strategy, and plan your essay. The following set of readings and activities will guide you through this process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Purpose</th>
<th>Read/Review</th>
<th>Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 To refresh your memory of the poem you have chosen</td>
<td>Re-read the poem.</td>
<td>Copy out the poem, leaving space between lines for annotations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 To refresh your memory of poetic techniques</td>
<td>Review your journal writings and sections of Barnet that focus on poetic technique: Barnet, chapter on Reading and Writing about Poems.</td>
<td>Annotate your poem, identifying where your poet has used these techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 To discover your poem’s meaning</td>
<td>Review Barnet’s sections on explication: chapters on “Reading Literature Closely: Explication” and “Reading and Writing about Poems.”</td>
<td>Draft an explication of your poem. Unlike an explication for a course assignment, this explication can follow the poem; more polished explications need more sophisticated organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 To stimulate your response to your poem</td>
<td>Review Barnet’s Checklist.</td>
<td>Answer Barnet’s questions in your journal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 To plan your interpretive strategy</td>
<td>Review (“Revising the Thesis Statement”), substituting “poem” for “story.” Review “purpose and audience,” SMG, substituting “poem” for “story.”</td>
<td>Note in your journal key terms you’ve chosen and the reasons you found to support your interpretation. Summarize your purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 To plan your essay</td>
<td>Review your notes from SMG, and the sample essays in Barnet, (written by students Arguing an Interpretation), noting especially the ways in which the writers handle readers’ potential counterarguments.</td>
<td>Revise your outline to make sure that you acknowledge readers’ possible counterarguments: what questions or differing interpretations might your audience propose?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Write

Using your journal notes, your explication, and your scratch outline, draft your interpretation. In your introduction, you need to mention the poem’s title, author, and theme; offer a very concise summary of the poem; and include a clear thesis statement, together with definitions of any key terms that you plan to use in special senses.

Try to keep your audience in mind as you write the essay, adopting word choices and tone appropriate for topic and readers. As with your last essay assignment (Unit 8), assume that your reader is familiar with your poem. If you get stuck at any point, look back at your plan and keep writing. If new ideas emerge as you write, don’t worry too much about deviating from your plan; you can always rework the new ideas, if necessary, during your revising process. Often your best ideas emerge as you write, so you should plan on reorganizing rather than discarding your best thinking. When you have finished drafting, be sure that you have used correct quotation and documentation format, taken from the style you have chosen.

Revise

Now that your first draft has been written and you have not seen it for a day or two, you are ready to revise your work. Revising your draft will require feedback from your audience and your own assessment of the effectiveness of your essay.

Ask your reader or writing group to read your essay according to the guidelines contained in the “Critical Reading Guide” in the Guide to Writing found in the SMG chapter on Analyzing Stories. Ask your readers to substitute “poem” for “story,” and encourage them to take issue with your opinions, challenge your arguments, and raise any counterarguments (such as questions a reader might ask or differing interpretations a reader might offer) you may have missed.

Read the “Critical Reading Guide,” substituting “poem” for “story.” While you are waiting for feedback on your essay, you can assess your own work. Again substituting “poem” for “story,” use the revision guidelines and questions in the Revision section of this SMG chapter’s Guide to Writing, to help you identify problems in your first draft and come up with possible solutions. Use each question to critique the sections of your draft that you think will most benefit from revision and chart your revision plan. Be sure that you have addressed each of the basic features of a good interpretive essay listed on that page.
Finally, using feedback from your reader(s), your revision plan, and your marked-up draft, write a revised draft of your essay. The changes you decide to make are ultimately up to you. Try to make them objectively.

**Edit and Proofread**

As you are already familiar with the use of standard formats of quotation and documentation in research papers (Unit 4), you will only need to review those when you edit and proofread the next-to-final copy of your interpretative essay.

- Review Hacker: Researching section, focusing on the Managing Information lesson on avoiding plagiarism; MLA section, focusing on Supporting a Thesis, and Citing Sources/Avoiding Plagiarism
- Review the **Editing and Proofreading** section in this SMG chapter’s Guide to Writing.
- Consider reading your final copy aloud, preferably to another person.

**Evaluate Your Work**

After you have carefully edited your essay, prepare a final copy and proofread that copy for new errors. Add errors you discover to your error and spelling logs. Then, have your peer reader or writing group read your final essay. Encourage them to comment on which revisions most improved your argument and which sections of the essay, if any, are still weak or unclear. After taking into account reader feedback and your own assessment of your essay, complete the following chart.
Using a scale of 1–5, rate your essay on the features displayed in the following chart by checking or shading in the appropriate boxes. (This list of features also appears at the end of the assignment description on page 101 of this unit.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Feature</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A specific focus on one or two aspects of one poem, showing knowledge of poetic technique</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A clear thesis statement that forecasts, using well-defined key terms, the reasons the writer will use to develop and support the thesis</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A well-supported argument (or set of arguments) for this thesis statement</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Careful consideration of counterarguments</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careful editing and proofreading, following consistently one of the standard stylistic formats (APA, Chicago, MLA) for quotation and documentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflect On Your Writing Process

Now that you have an essay that argues for an interpretation of a poem, reflect on your writing process. Reflecting on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered as you planned, wrote, revised, and edited your essay will help you develop your individual writing process.

Focus on your writing process. In the end of the SMG chapter on Interpreting a Poem, read the section on thinking critically about what you have learned and write your responses to the questions in your journal. Substitute “poem” for “story.”
Unit 10

Interpreting a Play

In This Unit

In this unit, you will apply your knowledge of argumentation and dramatic technique as you argue in favor of your interpretation of a play. In your essay, you will assert a thesis, use evidence from the play to support that thesis, address counterarguments, and avoid logical fallacies.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

► Analyze a play.
► Summarize concisely the chief features of a play, including dramatic techniques.
► Interpret a play.
► Formulate and support your interpretation of a play.
► Display a clear pattern of organization in your essay.
► Integrate your sources effectively, using summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation to acknowledge your sources.
► Use standard stylistic guidelines to acknowledge and document your sources.

Identify and distinguish among the key terms for this unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Terms</th>
<th>Example Terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tragedy</td>
<td>Rising Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tragic Flaw</td>
<td>Climax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tragic Error</td>
<td>Falling Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td>Dénouement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satiric Comedy</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreshadowing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gestures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Characterization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Search Your Memory

Drama is all around us: in sitcoms, movies, and stage plays, we see characters living out portions of their lives, interacting with others, and expressing inner reality through language and gestures. Can you remember a favorite TV drama, movie, or live drama you’ve seen? What made it memorable? Freewrite in your journal for 5–10 minutes.

Your writing assignment for this unit will give you an opportunity to focus on a single play—one of the two on the “Course Reading List: Drama” (Appendix A)—and to explain your interpretation of one or two aspects of that play to a reader.

Read and Respond

The first reading in this section gives you an introduction to drama, offering key terms and a strategy for analyzing a character. Add the terms to your “Glossary.”

Read Barnet, chapter on Reading and Writing about Plays.

Read and Respond

The second reading introduces a one-act play, Trifles, written in 1916 by Susan Glaspell for the Provincetown Players.

To maximize your learning

- **Read** and enjoy the play.
- **Write** answers in your journal to the Critical Thinking and Writing questions that follow the play (Barnet).
- **Use** the checklist in Barnet, from the chapter on Reading and Writing about Plays, to explore Trifles and to identify one or two interesting aspects of the play on which to focus an essay. Jot these possibilities in your journal.

(Barnet, Trifles, by Susan Glaspell)

Read and Respond

The third reading introduces you to Lorraine Hansberry’s A Raisin in the Sun.
To maximize your learning

• **Read** and enjoy the play.

• **Write** a summary in your journal of each of the play’s scenes. As you move from one summary to the next, use transitions that indicate how the scenes are related.

• **Answer** in your journal the Critical Thinking and Writing questions that follow the play (Barnet)

The Assignment

Essay 8: Interpreting a Play
Read and reflect on the following assignment description. Before you begin writing, proceed to the next section of this unit.

Subject: An interpretive essay on one or two aspects of a play

Audience: Imagine your audience as a group of readers who have read (or seen performed) your chosen play and who will welcome the new ideas your interpretation will offer.

Purpose: To interpret a play by analyzing the play and focusing on one or two significant aspects

Format: Write an essay of 500–600 words interpreting a play. Follow the procedure described in the next section of this Course Guide (“Prepare to Write”).

Evaluation: Your final essay should display the following characteristics:
  • A specific focus on one or two aspects of one play, showing knowledge of dramatic technique
  • A very concise summary of the plot of the play, including its title, author, and theme
  • A clear thesis statement that forecasts, using well-defined key terms, the reasons the writer will use to develop and support the thesis
  • A well-supported argument (or set of arguments) for this thesis statement
  • Careful consideration of counterarguments
  • Careful editing and proofreading, following consistently one of the standard stylistic formats (APA, Chicago, MLA) for quotation and documentation
**Prepare to Write**

Before beginning to draft your essay, you will need to refresh your memory of the play (*Trifles* or *A Raisin in the Sun*) you have chosen, refresh your memory of dramatic genres and techniques, plan your interpretive strategy, and plan your essay. The following set of readings and activities will guide you through this process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Purpose</th>
<th>Read/Review</th>
<th>Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 To refresh your memory of the play you have chosen</td>
<td>Re-read your play.</td>
<td>Watch a video of your play or attend a performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 To refresh your memory of dramatic genres and techniques</td>
<td>Review journal writings and sections of Barnet that focus on dramatic genres and techniques.</td>
<td>Annotate your play, identifying where your playwright has suggested a genre or used these techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 To plan your interpretive strategy</td>
<td>Review the SMG chapter on Analyzing Stories (“Revising the Thesis Statement”), substituting “play” for “story.” Review “purpose and audience,” in the SMG chapter on Analyzing Stories, substituting “play” for “story.” Note in your journal key terms you’ve chosen and the reasons you found to support your interpretation. Summarize your purpose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 To plan your essay</td>
<td>Review your notes from the Writing a Draft section of the SMG chapter on Analyzing Stories, noting especially the ways in which the writer handles readers’ potential counterarguments.</td>
<td>Revise your outline to make sure that you acknowledge readers’ possible counterarguments: what questions or differing interpretations might your audience propose?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning Tip**

Referring to your notes and your finished essay for Unit 9 will help you organize this new essay on drama.
Write

Using your journal notes, your explication, and your scratch outline, draft your interpretation. In your introduction, you need to mention the play’s title, author, and theme; offer a very concise summary of the play; and include a clear thesis statement, together with definitions of any key terms that you plan to use in special senses. So long as you are using these terms in the senses defined in Barnet’s “Glossary,” you don’t need to define them.

Try to keep your audience in mind as you write the essay, adopting word choices and tone appropriate for topic and readers. As with your last two essay assignments (Units 8 and 9), assume that your reader is familiar with your play. If you get stuck at any point, look back at your plan and keep writing. If new ideas emerge as you write, don’t worry too much about deviating from your plan; you can always rework the new ideas, if necessary, during your revising process. Often your best ideas emerge as you write, so you should plan on reorganizing rather than discarding your best thinking. When you have finished drafting, be sure that you have used correct quotation and documentation format, taken from the style you have chosen.

Revise

Now that your first draft has been written and you have not seen it for a day or two, you are ready to revise your work. Revising your draft will require feedback from your audience and your own assessment of the effectiveness of your essay.

Ask your reader or writing group to read your essay according to the guidelines contained in the “Critical Reading Guide” in the Guide to Writing in the SMG chapter on Analyzing Stories. Ask your readers to substitute “play” for “story,” and encourage them to take issue with your opinions, challenge your arguments, and raise any counterarguments (such as questions a reader might ask or differing interpretations such a reader might offer) you may have missed.

Read the “Critical Reading Guide,” substituting “play” for “story.” While you are waiting for feedback on your essay, you can assess your own work. Again substituting “play” for “story,” use the revision guidelines and questions in the Revision section of that SMG chapter’s Guide to Writing to help you identify problems in your first draft and come up with possible solutions. Use each question to critique the sections of your draft that you think will most benefit from revision and chart your revision plan. Be sure that you have addressed each of the basic features of a good interpretive essay listed on that page.
Finally, using feedback from your reader(s), your revision plan, and your marked-up draft, write a revised draft of your essay. The changes you decide to make are ultimately up to you. Try to make them objectively.

**Edit and Proofread**

As you are already familiar with the use of standard formats of quotation and documentation in research papers (Unit 4), you will only need to review those when you edit and proofread the next-to-final copy of your interpretative essay.

- Review Hacker: Researching section, focusing on the Managing Information lesson on avoiding plagiarism; MLA section, focusing on Supporting a Thesis, and Citing Sources/Avoiding Plagiarism
- Review the **Editing and Proofreading** section in this SMG chapter’s Guide to Writing.
- Consider reading your final copy aloud, preferably to another person.

**Evaluate Your Work**

After you have carefully edited your essay, prepare a final copy and proofread that copy for new errors. Add errors you discover to your error and spelling logs. Then, have your peer reader or writing group read your final essay. Encourage them to comment on which revisions most improved your argument and which sections of the essay, if any, are still weak or unclear. After taking into account reader feedback and your own assessment of your essay, complete the following chart.
Using a scale of 1–5, rate your essay on the features displayed in the following chart by checking or shading in the appropriate boxes. (This list of features also appears at the end of the assignment description on “Essay 8: Interpreting a Play” on page 110 of this unit.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Feature</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflect On Your Writing Process

Now that you have an essay that argues for an interpretation of a play, reflect on your writing process. Reflecting on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered as you planned, wrote, revised, and edited your essay will help you develop your individual writing process.

Focus on your writing process. Do the following reading, and write your responses to the SMG questions in your journal, substituting “play” for “story.”

In the SMG chapter on Analyzing Stories, read the section on thinking critically about what you have learned and write your responses to the questions in your journal.
Feedback Form:
Part II: Foundations of Writing – Developing Your Own Process

Please give us your feedback on Part II so that we can use your comments to improve our course guides. We want to design the best possible materials and resources for you. However, we need your help to do this. Please complete this form and mail or fax it to us at the address below.

Mailing address:
Center for Online Education
Learning and Academic Services
Excelsior College
7 Columbia Circle
Albany, New York 12203

Fax: (518) 464-8777
Web: www.excelsior.edu
Email: learn@excelsior.edu

Directions: Please answer the questions as indicated.

1. About how many hours did you spend on each of the following units of this Course Guide? (Write the number of hours on the appropriate line for each unit.)
   - Unit 1: ___  Unit 3: ___  Unit 5: ___  Unit 7: ___  Unit 9: ___
   - Unit 2: ___  Unit 4: ___  Unit 6: ___  Unit 8: ___  Unit 10: ___

2. How difficult were these units?
   - easy  average  difficult  very difficult

3. What did you like about the units in Part II?

4. What did you dislike about the units in Part II?

5. What suggestions do you have for improving Units 1–10?
   (Please attach additional paper as needed.)

6. Are you participating in a study group of any kind? If so, please describe it briefly.

Name ____________________________ Date ________ Social Security # _____________________
   (Optional)  (Optional)

(All information reported on this form will be kept confidential.) THANK YOU.
Preparing for and Taking the Examination
The purpose of Part III is to help you adapt the writing process you developed in Part II to the constraints of timed examinations, particularly to those associated with the three essay questions you must answer on the UExcel exam in English Composition. Part III consists of four units. Unit 11 introduces you to the constraints of timed writing and provides you with general guidelines for writing in timed situations. Units 12–14 focus on the three types of examination questions you must address, and they provide you with specific guidelines for answering them. In these units you will examine sample questions, sample student responses, and the rating scale used to score the examination. You will have several opportunities to practice writing essays of each type.
Unit 11
Writing Essay Examinations

In This Unit

Being able to write well in timed situations is important in academic settings and in the workplace where you may have to meet tight deadlines. The purpose of this unit is to provide you with general guidelines for adapting your individual writing process to writing timed essays, particularly written essay examinations.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

► Identify the values and expectations of an academic audience.
► Analyze examination essay questions and assignments.
► Formulate a time management plan for writing a timed essay.
► Construct a personal editing plan for use in a timed writing situation.

Information Tip

This unit does not have a writing assignment.
Read
As you prepare to write answers to essay questions, you should consider the values and expectations of the people who will read and evaluate your essays—college instructors in the field of English. They are looking for insightful essays that demonstrate the writer’s ability to think deeply and critically about complex issues. They appreciate essays in which arguments and supporting evidence are well chosen, well sequenced, and sophisticated. They do not value essays that contain weak, fallacious, or unsupported arguments. Nor do they value essays that over-simplify issues or merely summarize them. College instructors look forward to reading essays that are effectively organized and written in a skillful style. And, of course, they seek essays free of grammatical and mechanical errors and essays in which citations are correct and appropriate.

Read and Respond
The next reading provides you with an opportunity to try to view a student essay as a college instructor might. Select and read a student essay from the Arguing a Position chapter in Sticks and Stones. As you read the selected essay, keep in mind the type of writing that college instructors value and expect from students. Then write in your journal a brief evaluation of the essay.

Read an essay of your choice from the chapter on Arguing a Position in Sticks and Stones.

Note that characteristics of essays listed at the end of each assignment description in Part II of this Course Guide are good indications of what college instructors look for in student essays. For example, the list of at the end of Assignment 4 (Unit 6) suggests that an essay arguing a position should display the following characteristics:

- A well-defined issue
- A clear position on that issue
- A convincing, well-reasoned argument supported by adequate evidence
- Careful consideration of counterarguments
- A tone appropriate to your topic and audience
- Sources documented using chosen style of documentation
- Careful editing and proofreading, especially for correct documentation and effective sentence style
With minor adjustments for subject matter, this list of characteristics will be helpful for almost any essay question you encounter on the UExcel exam in English Composition.

Read and Respond
The next reading provides general guidelines that will help you prepare for and answer essay examination questions. It describes nine common types of essay examination questions and suggests strategies for answering them. Some of these types are similar to the examination questions that will be used to measure your writing skills for English Composition. The next three units of this Course Guide will give you detailed information on the specific types of questions you will be asked to address.

After you complete this reading, write in your journal answers to the Exercise items at the end of the chapter. Notice that you need not answer the questions: your task here is to analyze what each question requires.

Read the SMG chapter on Essay Examinations.

Time Management and Your Writing Process
The key to success on a timed essay examination is to successfully adapt your writing process to the constraints of the testing situation, conditions under which you will not have time to write multiple drafts or to substantially revise and recopy your essay. However, that constraint does not mean you should abandon the writing process that you have worked so hard to develop. You should not return to “just writing” — trying to think, write, revise, and edit all at once. Instead, find out as much as you can about the examination conditions you will face and the writing tasks you will be given. Then, use this information to formulate a time management plan for each part of your writing process. The following steps illustrate how you can do this.

Step 1 Write down the stages of your writing process.

Stage 1: Thinking, Inventing, and Planning
Stage 2: Drafting
Stage 3: Revising, Editing, and Proofreading

Step 2 Identify the stages that are most time-consuming for you.
The following chart will help you reflect on your writing process and suggest how to accommodate it.
If Then

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If</th>
<th>Then</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You tend to be a “planner,”</td>
<td>you might need more time for Stage 1, but less for Stage 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your ideas come easily, but you struggle while composing,</td>
<td>you might spend less time on Stage 1, but allow more time for Stage 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have significant mechanical or spelling problems,</td>
<td>you might need more time for Stage 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 3** Prepare a chart showing how you should allocate your time to each stage of your writing process for the testing situation that you face.

For example, if you know that you must answer three essay questions of equivalent importance within three hours, you should think in terms of how you would allocate your time for each one-hour essay. The following sample time management plan shows how 60 minutes might be allocated to answer a one-hour essay. However, depending on your personal writing process, the number of minutes you allocate to the different stages of writing may be quite different.

In the sections about the exam prompts, you will find the recommended time to be spent responding to each prompt.

**Sample Time Management Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10–15 minutes | I
Thinking Pre-writing Planning | Read and analyze the question and sample essays. Decide how to respond, prewrite ideas to include in the response, and plan a tentative outline. |
| 35–40 minutes | II
Drafting | Write your response to the question.                                       |
| 10 minutes    | III
Revising Editing Proofreading | Re-read your essay, revise on the original copy, edit, and proofread. |
**Your Editing Plan**

In testing situations, you will not have time to write successive drafts or to recopy your essay. Therefore, good planning is essential before you begin drafting. With careful prewriting and planning, you should not have to make major organizational changes to your essay. What you will have to do, however, is to develop a strategy for revising, editing, and proofreading on your original copy.

First, develop a personal “trouble list.” Review your error and spelling logs, and make a list of your three or four most common editing errors; make another list of any frequently used words that you tend to misspell. Try to find out in advance if you will be allowed to use a dictionary or computerized spell-checker. Review these lists often so that looking for your “trouble spots” becomes automatic.

During the examination, use the editing process discussed in Unit 2 of this Course Guide to revise and edit your essay. A sample editing plan might look like this:

**Step 1 Read the essay.**
Under examination conditions, you will not be able to read your essay aloud as suggested in Unit 2. Instead, read your essay silently and slowly, trying to “hear” your voice in your head as you check for missing words and unclear sentences.

**Step 2 Read for trouble.**
Read through the essay a second time, looking specifically for those errors on your “trouble list.” If you usually have a number of mechanical problems, allow plenty of time for this step so that you can read slowly, one sentence at a time.

**Step 3 Read backwards, one word or sentence at a time.**
Reading backwards takes your sentences and words out of context and forces you to focus just on the word or sentence itself. If you have trouble with sentence errors, reading backwards sentence by sentence may help you to isolate those problems. If you have spelling difficulty, reading backwards word by word can help you to see errors that you might otherwise miss.

Once you have finished editing, be sure to re-read your essay, this time proofreading for any new errors you may have created as you revised and edited. If you have time and you choose to recopy your essay, remember to proofread the final copy as well. Many new errors can occur due to recopying quickly.
Summary

This unit has provided you with general guidelines for adapting your individual writing process to writing timed essays. You have identified the amount of time you spend on each stage in your writing process and formed a tentative time management plan. You have also created a personal editing plan. The next three units provide you with opportunities to try out and adjust these plans, if necessary, to better accommodate your writing process.
In This Unit

The purpose of this unit is to help you to prepare for the argumentation essay question you will answer on the UExcel exam in English Composition. In this unit, you will analyze a sample examination question, write a response to it, evaluate your response according to official examination scoring guidelines, examine sample student responses to the same question, and develop your own set of guidelines for answering this type of question.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

► Respond to a sample examination question by writing an essay that illustrates features of a strong argumentative essay as identified in Units 5 through 7 of this Course Guide.

► Specify a set of guidelines that you plan to follow in responding to an examination question that requires you to write an argumentative essay.

► Describe an effective strategy for analyzing a sample examination question.

► Differentiate strong from weak answers written in response to a sample examination question.

► Evaluate and refine the time-management plan you prepared in Unit 11 of this Course Guide.
Search Your Memory

In Units 5–7, you acquired knowledge and skills that you will need to consolidate and apply as you respond to an examination question that requires you to write an argumentative essay. Review the notes you wrote in your journal for these units, and create a set of tentative guidelines that will help you write an effective argumentative essay. Keep in mind that you will not have to choose a problem to write about—the examination question will do that for you. The following questions will help you develop your guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Questions to Consider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>What steps will you take in analyzing a text containing a position against which or in favor of which you will argue (see Unit 6)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>What strategies do you have for creating a thesis statement (a statement of your position)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguments</td>
<td>What invention techniques are helpful in finding supporting arguments and information?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Counterarguments   | • Why do you need to think about counterarguments?  
• How will counterarguments enter into the planning, organization, and presentation of your idea?                             |
| Organization       | What ways of organizing your arguments, counterarguments, and supporting evidence might you use?                                                     |
| Style              | What kind of style, especially with respect to tone, do you think you will use?                                                                          |
| Revising, Editing, and Proofreading | What strategies will you use to revise, edit, and proofread your essay?                                                                                |
| Techniques         | What did you find was especially successful in the way you wrote the essay for Unit 6?                                                                     |
| Time Management    | How much time will you spend on each stage (thinking, prewriting, planning, drafting, revision, editing, proofreading)? |
When you have developed a set of guidelines, format them so that they are on one page. A table or a set of headings with bulleted subpoints is a concise way to display your guidelines. Keep in mind that your guidelines are tentative. This unit contains strategies and information that you will almost certainly wish to incorporate into your initial set of guidelines.

**Read and Respond**

The argumentation essay is one of three essays you will be asked to write when you take the UExcel exam in English Composition. This type of prompt tests your ability to compose an argument using written sources and personal experience to persuade a reader. It tests your ability to assert a thesis (a position, proposal, evaluation, cause/effect, speculation, or interpretation); argue the assertion, giving reasons and support; develop counterarguments, acknowledging and accommodating the reader’s concerns, and refuting the reader’s objections. It also tests your ability to properly integrate material into a text by quoting, paraphrasing, and crediting a source.

You are directed to read a text presented in the prompt and to construct an argumentative essay which includes an introduction (with thesis statement), supporting arguments, counterarguments, and conclusion. You may either side with the argument in the presented text or take an opposing position. You are expected to include at least one quote and paraphrase from the text presented in the prompt and to use a standard system of citation (APA, Chicago, or MLA style).

Here is a good opportunity to review invention strategies such as listing and outlining (found in the SMG chapter on Invention Strategies) that do not require you to write on a copy of the text.

Read the following prompt and note the key words.

As you will be taking the examination at a Pearson VUE Testing Center, it is important to understand that the question and the text will be presented on a computer screen, and you will write your answer using a simple word processor. You will also be provided scratch paper for notes. Therefore, you should practice jotting down key words from the question on scratch paper. This strategy will enable you to look back quickly to find key information while taking the test.
Sample Argumentation Prompt 1

Argumentation

Using the text that follows—by Walter S. Minot, an English professor, writing in the Christian Science Monitor (November 22, 1988)—construct an argumentative essay. In your essay, respond to the issue of the degree to which high school students work to earn money for what Minot considers luxuries, decreasing their time available for study.

You will need to:

• summarize the arguments so that an educated audience will understand them (you should assume your audience does not have access to the text);

• assert a thesis (a position, proposal, evaluation, speculation, or interpretation);

• argue the thesis by giving reasons;

• identify and respond to counterarguments;

• integrate material from the sample text into your own essay by quoting and paraphrasing;

• cite each quotation and paraphrase using a standard system of citation (APA, Chicago, or MLA style).
“Students Who Push Burgers”

A college freshman squirms anxiously on a chair in my office, his eyes avoiding mine, those of his English professor, as he explains that he hasn’t finished his paper, which was due two days ago. “I just haven’t had the time,” he says.

“Are you carrying a heavy course load?”
“Fifteen hours,” he says—a normal load.
“Are you working a lot?”
“No, sir, not much. About 30 hours a week.”
“That’s a lot. Do you have to work that much?”
“Yeah, I have to pay for my car.”
“Do you really need a car?”
“Yeah, I need it to get to work.”

This student isn’t unusual. Indeed, he probably typifies today’s college and high school students. Yet in all the lengthy analysis of what’s wrong with American education, I have not heard employment by students being blamed.

But such employment is a major cause of educational decline. To argue my case, I will rely on memories of my own high school days and contrast them with what I see today. Though I do have some statistical evidence, my argument depends on what anyone over 40 can test through memory and direct observation.

When I was in high school in the 1950s, students seldom held jobs. Some of us babysat, shoveled snow, mowed lawns, and delivered papers, and some of us got jobs in department stores around Christmas. But most of us had no regular source of income other than the generosity of our parents.

I attended a public high school, while [my daughter] attended a Roman Catholic preparatory school whose students were mainly middle class. By the standards of my day, her classmates did not “have to” work. Yet many of them were working 20 to 30 hours a week. Why?

They worked so that they could spend $60 to $100 a week on designer jeans, rock concerts, stereo and video systems, and, of course, cars. They were living lives of luxury, buying items on which their parents refused to throw their hard-earned money away. Though the parents would not buy such tripe for their kids, the parents somehow convinced themselves that the kids were learning the value of money.

How students spend their money is their business, not mine. But as a teacher, I have witnessed the effects of employment. I know that students who work all evening aren’t ready for studying when they get home from work. Moreover, because they work so hard and have ready cash, they feel that they deserve to have fun — instead of spending all their free time studying.

Clearly individual students will pay the price for lack of adequate time studying, but the problem goes beyond the individual. It extends to schools and colleges that are finding it difficult to demand quantity or quality of work from students.

Perhaps the reason American education has declined so markedly is because America has raised a generation of part-time students. And perhaps our economy will continue to decline as full-time students from Japan and Europe continue to out-perform our part-time students.

Reprinted with permission from Walter S. Minot, “Students Who Push Burgers,”
The structure of this sample question is typical of this type of examination prompt in that it is divided into two sections. The first section asks you to read a text, provides you with source information, and contributes any background information you might need to understand the text. The second section directs you to address a particular audience and specifies what must be included in your response, often offering you a choice of ways in which you might approach the issue.

Now that you have carefully read the question and noted the key words, you can assess your choices. Compare the words you noted with the key words or phrases listed in the following chart. While your choices may differ in a few instances, you should have selected most of these words and phrases as they represent the essential aspects of the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph</th>
<th>Key Words or Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>college freshman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hasn’t finished paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hasn’t had time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>course load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fifteen hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>normal load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>work 30 hours a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>not unusual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>what’s wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>employment of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>major cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>educational decline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>argue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>memories</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>statistical evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1950s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>students seldom held jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no regular source income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>generosity of parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>public high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>preparatory school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>did not “have to” work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20–30 hours a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$60–$100 a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jeans, concerts, stereo, video, cars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lives of luxury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>parents refused throw money away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tripe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>value of money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph</td>
<td>Key Words or Phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8         | • effects of employment  
            • not ready for studying  
            • work so hard  
            • have ready cash  
            • feel deserve to have fun  
            • spend free time studying? |
| 9         | • students pay price  
            • lack of adequate study time  
            • schools, colleges find it difficult to demand quantity or quality from students |
| 10        | • part-time students  
            • decline American education  
            • full-time students  
            • Japanese and Europeans out-perform Americans |

**The Assignment**

**Practice Examination Essay 1**

You should not consider yourself fully prepared for the argumentation examination question on the UExcel exam in English Composition until you can write a solid argumentative essay in response to a sample examination question under examination conditions. This assignment guides you through the process. Your assignment is to write an essay response to Sample Argumentation Prompt I (pp. 130–131). Before you begin writing, proceed to the next section of this unit, “Prepare to Write.”

**Prepare to Write**

Even though this is your first examination practice session, try to match the conditions you must face during the actual examination. Isolate yourself in a quiet area where you will not be interrupted or distracted, and allow yourself no more than one hour to complete this essay. You should complete it in one sitting; do not use any notes, books, or other aids that you will not have available during the examination.

You will be using a computer to write out your essay during the examination. Students who are used to preparing their answers using one mode often find it difficult to write an essay using a different mode during an examination. It is better to address this difficulty during an examination practice session than during the actual examination.

**Learning Tip**

Remember, your goal is to produce a college-level essay of 500–600 words.

**Learning Tip**

As you write your essay by hand, skip lines so that you can add or change words when you re-read and proofread.
When you have established examination conditions and are ready to begin, write down the starting time and the time you must end (one hour later). As you prepare your response to “Sample Argumentation Prompt 1,” you will be asked to record the time you complete each stage of your writing process. This information will help you adjust the time-management plan you prepared in Unit 11.

Before proceeding to “Stage 1: Thinking, Pre-writing, Planning,” write down the time in the space provided: ________ (Time).

Stage 1: Thinking, Pre-writing, Planning (10 minutes)
The steps in the following chart will guide you through each stage of your writing process as you prepare and write your response to “Sample Argumentation Prompt 1.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Read and analyze the question.</td>
<td>Read Sample Argumentation Prompt I (pp. 130–131), noting the words you circled. Try to get a clear picture of the conflict in the reading. Jot down this picture in your words to clarify it in your mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Write down your purpose.</td>
<td>Your purpose is to respond to the choice or choices described (or implied) in the examination question and to try to persuade the audience to accept the side of the conflict you will choose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Describe your audience.</td>
<td>Your audience is the college English teachers who will read and evaluate your essay. Referring, if necessary, to Unit 11, jot down a few characteristics that you must take into account. How are these readers likely to be persuaded? What tone would be appropriate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Prepare a scratch outline that organizes your ideas.</td>
<td>Decide which ideas you will include and how you will organize them; will you use the standard method for organizing an argumentative essay—introduction with thesis; arguments in favor of thesis; counterarguments and answers to these; conclusion? Or will you modify this pattern in some respect? How will you begin? With a rhetorical question? A scenario or anecdote? A statement of your opinion? Might you state the counterarguments first and explain why they have merit but are not convincing in a current environment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Review your chosen quotation and documentation style (APA, MLA, Chicago).</td>
<td>Add a brief summary, paraphrase, or quotation from the text included in the “Sample Argumentation Prompt 1” next to each outline item where such a reference would improve your argument. Use quotation marks carefully (review Unit 4, if necessary) and include the correct reference for each summary, paraphrase, or quotation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After you have completed Stage 1 of your writing process, write down the time before proceeding to the next stage: _______ (Time)

Write

Stage 2: Drafting (35–40 minutes)
Since you have spent about 10 minutes planning your answer (probably more for this practice run), and you will probably need to reserve about 10 minutes to revise, edit and proofread your essay, you will have about 35–40 minutes to complete your draft. Write your draft now.

After you have drafted your essay, write down the time before proceeding to the next stage: _______ (Time)

Revise, Edit and Proofread

Stage 3: Revising, Editing, and Proofreading (10 minutes)
Because of the constraints of a testing situation, you will not have time to revise drafts or to recopy your essay, nor will you be able to obtain feedback from a reader as you should normally do. However, keep in mind that all test-takers deal with these conditions and that examination raters are fully aware of the constraints imposed on your writing process by the testing situation.

Try out the editing and proofreading plan you developed in Unit 11. You might find it useful to:

• Try to hear the words in your head as you read.
• Read for your chronic trouble spots.
• Read backwards to spot word-level problems.

After you have revised, edited, and proofread your essay, write down the time: _______ (Time).

Check back to see what time it was when you started preparing your essay. Did you stay within the hour? If you did not, you should not be overly concerned if you ran over 10 or 15 minutes as this is your first attempt at trying to write a response to a sample examination question.
Evaluation

The Rating Scale (Appendix G) and the sample essay answers below will help you develop your ability to distinguish strong argumentative essays from weak argumentative essays. The Rating Scale is the same one that faculty raters will use to evaluate your essay when you take the examination. It has six levels, with 6 being the highest score. Your essay will be assigned one of these numbers and this number will form the basis for your grade.

As you carefully read the Rating Scale, try to gain a sense of how the features associated with the higher scores differ from those associated with the lower scores. Keep in mind that when you finish reviewing the Rating Scale, you will be asked to assign a score to the essay you wrote in response to “Sample Argumentation Prompt 1.”

To fully understand the criteria for rating your answer, you must learn to apply them in a fair, objective manner. Try to adopt the perspective of an examination rater and use the Rating Scale to rate the essay you wrote in response to “Sample Argumentation Prompt 1.”

Circle the number that indicates how you rated your essay: 6 5 4 3 2 1

Now you will have a chance to assess and develop further your ability to use the Rating Scale by rating three sample student essays and comparing your ratings with the ratings assigned by a team of faculty raters. After each of the following student essays, you will find an explanation for the rating assigned to it by the faculty raters. Read these explanations carefully. They will give you ideas of what to do and what not to do the next time you write this kind of essay.

Try to adopt the perspective of an examination rater who must objectively and fairly apply the Rating Scale, and carefully read and rate the following sample student essay answer. (Writing errors have been reproduced from the student paper.)

Sample Student Response 1

Argumentation Response 1
There can be no argument that education SHOULD BE the primary focus of a high school or college student. In a perfect world it would be wonderful if no student HAD to work. However, the reality is that there will always be a socio–economic divide, that some people have more than others. And so, it becomes a given that many young people NEED to work—if not to pay (or help pay) for their education, to pay for many of the extras that are so much a part of the experience of high school and college.
Not all students work to buy books or school supplies, but not all work for the frivolous purchases mentioned by Minot (1988) either. The of the debate, I believe, relates to the amount of time spent working, not the fact than an individual works at all.

My own children all had part-time jobs as high school and college students. The money they earned went toward activity fees at school, purchase of school supplies, records (remember those??), books, etc. Once they reached college, money became even more essential to help with school expenses, books, etc.

I believe very strongly that the fact that they were working—and contributing directly—toward their educational expenses—made them more aware of and appreciative of their education. In addition to money earned, they learned how to manage their time and how to budget their earnings. The fact that they were actively contributing toward their education made them work all the harder to achieve good grades.

My observation of my children’s experiences and that of their friends was that working—in moderation—only enhanced their learning experience. Of course there are always exceptions to be noted. There are always none who work solely for “fun” money and have no responsibility toward paying for their educational expenses. This proved to be the exception rather than the rule in my view.

It is clear that the author does not approve of students’ working, that if a student is employed, his time for study is diminished (Minot 1988). However, I see employment as a potential for learning skills that will only enhance the educational process. The key is moderation, and motivation.


Rate this answer by circling the appropriate number: 6 5 4 3 2 1

Examination Rater Evaluation
The student writer completes nearly all the requirements of this argumentative assignment in a well organized, focused, and clearly developed essay. In her opening paragraphs, she indicates the essential issue as more complex than Minot’s argument suggests, without, however, referring to Minot, and she establishes a thesis that allows her to argue that part-time work can actually enhance students’ academic achievements by encouraging them to use time and resources wisely.
Arguing from personal experience as a parent of students who worked to the benefit of their educational goals, this writer provides useful details and supporting examples as she develops her argument point by point. Her references to the Minot text occur directly only twice, but in both instances the references are gracefully integrated as paraphrases or summaries and are appropriately presented as points to be refuted. This writer has an excellent command of diction, syntax, and tone. She writes with a confident skill that generates reader confidence and makes no errors of consequence great enough to impede meaning.

The essay falls short of a “6” only because the writer does not summarize Minot’s arguments nor even refer to them until the second and sixth paragraphs. The writer clearly expects the reader to have access to the text, thus missing the intent of the first of the prompt’s instructions. Exemplifying skill in language, argumentation, and style, the essay is rated as a 5.

Compare your rating of “Sample Student Response 1” with the rating given by the faculty rater. Is your rating higher? Lower? The same? If your rating was different from that assigned by the faculty rater, re-read the “Scoring Key” descriptions on the Rating Scale (Appendix G), particularly the description for a level 5 response, and review the explanation for why this essay received a level 5 rating.

Carefully read and rate the next sample student essay according to the Rating Scale. Once again, try to adopt the perspective of an examination rater who must objectively and fairly apply the Rating Scale. (Writing errors have been reproduced from the student paper.)

Sample Student Response 2

Argumentation Response 2

“Students who push Burgers” is a piece written by Walter S. Minot regarding how students are too busy working for expensive toys to spend Quality time studying and preparing for school work, affecting the American economy compared to Asian and European countries.

I agree with Minot’s conclusion. High school and College students are so preoccupied with “keeping up with the Jones” that the work 20 – 40 hours per week just to afford Cell phones, Cars, DVDs, CDs, designer clothes and what ever else is new on the market In some cases the reasoning is different. Some college students may need to work to pay for their tuition. This was the case for me my choice was to work and go to college or just work. My parents made too much for I to receive Financial aid, never the less I dropped out of college twice and now I work full time and schooling part time. I could have been one of Minot’s examples.
What's wrong with American education, I have not heard employment by students being blamed (Minot, S. Walter, November 22, 1988). That is exactly what is wrong. Along with parents encouraging students to work. Parents need to teach kids responsibility by having them succeed in school rather than making them get a paper Route at age twelve. Kids need encouragement from their parents with rewards. Kids are rewarding themselves by working for what they want.

References


Rate “Student Sample Response 2” by circling the appropriate number:

6 5 4 3 2 1

Examination Rater Evaluation

This essay makes a real effort to respond to the prompt, yet, in nearly every case, falls short. The writer does “summarize the argument from the text” but does not integrate this summary into the essay. The writer also asserts a thesis yet does not phrase it clearly to express the central claim that some students must work. The writer also quotes from the text but does not integrate the quotations nor use a standard citation style. Likewise, he or she uses the concepts “want” and “need” but does not refer to the American educational deficit, which forms an important argument in the text.

Organization, style, and mechanics are somewhat weaker than the essay’s content. The essay consists of only three paragraphs; the first two are well unified but not coherent; the last is neither. The writer uses a clear voice and appropriate tone in relating personal experience, but, when he or she is trying to manipulate abstractions, the voice becomes hesitant and the language garbled.

Mechanics are weakest of all: mistakes of grammar (“I” for “me” and “schooling” for “school”), faults in punctuation (missing commas, periods, and quotation marks), and errors in spelling (eleven) all impede meaning. Ineffective organization, errors that impede meaning, and arguments that are not convincingly or coherently developed indicate that the essay earns a rating of 2.

Compare your rating of “Sample Student Response 2” with the rating given by the faculty rater. Is your rating higher? Lower? The same? If your rating was different from that assigned by the faculty rater, re-read the “Scoring Key” descriptions on the Rating Scale (Appendix G), particularly the description for a level-2 response, and review the explanation for why this essay received a level-2 rating.
The next section of this Course Guide contains the last sample student essay in this unit. Try to adopt the perspective of an examination rater who must objectively and fairly apply the Scoring Guide, and carefully read and rate “Sample Student Response 3.” (Writing errors have been reproduced from the student paper.)

Sample Student Response 3

Argumentation Response 3


In his article, Professor Minot maintains that in the 1950s both college and high school students, for the most part, did not hold regular jobs. When they did work, these students usually did occasional work such as babysitting, newspaper delivery and seasonal jobs, which allowed them to be full-time students.

Today’s students are employed at fast-food restaurants and retail stores. It is not only working 20 to 30 hours per week that restricts time for studying, it is also having ready cash to spend.

Professor Minot sums up his position best when he states that the decline in American education is because we are raising “a generation of part-time students.”

His article, although written more than 10 years ago, still applies today. The problem of students having regular employment is an indication of our societal values; We have become a very materialistic Nation in which many Americans seem to equate their worth with what they own. These values can be seen in our schools and in our families.

Most students do not need to work; their parents provide for all their needs and many of their wants. A large segment of the student population feels the need to work because they want things their parents won’t spend their own money for. These items serve to feed the American notion that only the best will do because I deserve it, and I deserve it now.
If these students work in order to buy non-necessities, they aren’t learning the value of money, because this money can be spent on whatever he or she wants. They are not learning to be financially responsible unless some restrictions are applied to how the money is spent and they are required to save some of it.

Being a responsible student is just as valuable, if not more valuable, as learning to be a responsible store clerk. Students can learn the value of money by having a set allowance, and responsibility can be learned at home by having tasks that are his or her sole responsibility.

Having assignments done and handed in on time is an excellent example of being responsible, yet many students are chronically late turning assignments in to their teaches.

It seems that the only condition to be considered in determining whether or not a student is allowed to hold a job should be how he or she is doing academically. Questions a parent might want to ask in order to make this decision are: is the student alert in class, keeping current with assignments, and is my student achieving the best grades he or she is capable of attaining.

Keeping these criteria in mind, I will give an example of how to apply these principles.

Doug and Lynda are siblings who have differing academic abilities. Doug struggles through each assignment and Lynda is a natural student. Doug spends much time and energy studying, where Lynda spends little time studying and is consistently an honors student.

For Doug, school work is an onerous task, which takes much of his out-of-school time. His energies should be focused on learning, while Lynda, who breezes through each course, may be able to maintain her academic standing while working part-time.

Rate “Student Sample Response 3” by circling the appropriate number:
6 5 4 3 2 1
Examination Rater Evaluation
Writing with a firm grasp of the issue set forth in the prompt essay by Minot, the writer clearly sets forth Minot’s position and presents a supporting thesis. Additionally, she states and explains concepts underlying the issue of part-time work such as materialism, inflated self-images, and changing family values.

Most of the detailed evidence offered to prove that students earn money mainly to buy luxury items comes from general observation rather than from personal experience and, thus, is less persuasive than it might be. In addition, the essay shifts focus from “materialism” to “weak academic ability,” concluding the essay with that consideration without any reference to the original argument. The illustration that ends the essay is left dangling whereas it might have served as evidence earlier in the essay.

While the argument is, with the exception of the argumentative shift from “materialism” to “weak academic ability,” coherently and comprehensively advanced, the writer does not show equal skill in paragraph development. Several short, incomplete paragraphs might have been effectively combined with suitable linking phrases. Similarly, the tone is strong and persuasive, but the language sometimes appears stiff and stilted.

After the initial reference to the prompt text, the writer quotes once from the article but does not supply the required citation. Other than the problems with paragraph development, few errors occur in mechanics, spelling, or syntax, and the meaning is clear throughout. Faculty rated “Student Response 3” at level 4.

Compare your rating of “Sample Student Response 3” with the rating given by the faculty rater. Is your rating higher? Lower? The same? If your rating was different from that assigned by the faculty rater, re-read the “Scoring Key” descriptions on the Rating Scale (Appendix G), particularly the description for a level-4 response, and review the explanation for why this essay received a level-4 rating.

Learning Tip
Review your argumentation guidelines before beginning the practice examination.
Evaluate Your Work

Which of the three sample student essays most resembles yours? Or does your essay seem to fall between two of them in quality? Now that you have had practice using the Rating Scale, re-read your essay as though you were a faculty rater and rate your essay again.

If you are not satisfied with your essay, a good learning strategy is to revise it. Even though you will not have time to rewrite the whole essay during the examination, rewriting now will help you start at a higher level of proficiency the next time. You will have solved some of the problems writers must face when they write in new situations. Rate your revision, and ask another person to rate it as well.

Reflect on Your Writing Process

Now that you have written a response to a sample examination question and rated your work, you should reflect on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered as you planned, wrote, revised, and edited your essay. Describe in your journal a significant problem you experienced during this process; identify the cause(s), and try to come up with an appropriate solution. How will you deal with the problem the next time?

Review the set of tentative guidelines you prepared earlier in this unit to help you write an effective argumentative essay. Keeping in mind all that you have learned during this unit, revise your guidelines and format them so that they are on one page. You should also revise your time-management plan and note on the same page as your guidelines the amount of time you plan to spend on each writing stage.

The Assignment

Practice Examination Essay 2

You will find another sample examination question, “Sample Argumentation Prompt 2,” on the next page. Your assignment is to write an essay response to Prompt 2. Do not turn the page and look at Prompt 2 before you have established the following examination conditions.

- No notes, textbooks, dictionaries, or other printed matter (except for the examination prompt) within sight.
- A period of quiet, uninterrupted time (one hour).
- A computer with a word processor or pen, lined paper, and scrap paper.

When you have established examination conditions, move to “Sample Argumentation Prompt 2” and begin.
Sample Argumentation Prompt 2

Using the following OpEd piece by Michael L. Probst that originally appeared in the Wall Street Journal, and your personal knowledge, write a persuasive argument in which you either side with the argument presented in the text or take an opposing position.

You will need to:

- summarize the arguments so that an educated audience will understand them (you should assume your audience does not have access to these texts);
- assert a thesis (a position, proposal, evaluation, speculation, or interpretation);
- argue the thesis by giving reasons;
- identify and respond to counterarguments;
- integrate material from the sample text into your own essay by quoting and paraphrasing;
- cite each quotation and paraphrase using a standard system of citation (APA, Chicago, or MLA style).

Learning Tip

Review your argumentation guidelines before beginning the practice examination.
Michael L. Probst’s OpEd Text

The proponents of the modern American welfare state have tried to develop an effective economic “safety net,” but most admit that the current state of affairs has proved disappointing. Not only does poverty persist, but many of the poor increasingly fail to develop constructive social habits.

It is easy to despair when contemplating this situation, but before the advent of the welfare state, Americans practiced a tradition of mutual aid, the most common form being a type of voluntary association known as the benefit, or benevolent society. The names of some of these societies (the Masons, the Odd-Fellows) are still commonly recognized. The societies were often formed along the lines of religious affiliation, occupation or ethnicity, and were especially popular among blacks and immigrants.

The benevolent societies were attractive for a variety of reasons, but their primary appeal was with the provision of mutual insurance. The members of a benevolent society paid a small weekly fee and in return were guaranteed sick benefits, a proper funeral and financial support for their widows and children. The benefits were not viewed as a handout, because they had been earned by virtue of paying the modest weekly dues. This self-supporting aspect also worked to engender a sense of pride and solidarity.

The benevolent societies were probably displaced by the modern welfare state. After being taxed to support the welfare state, people could hardly be expected to pay into a voluntary system that offered only redundant benefits. But while the welfare state may be able to replace the monetary payments of the benevolent societies, the central planners have not been able to replace pride, self-responsibility, prudence and self-esteem. Real improvement in dealing with the plight of the poor will require wholesale change, which means getting the state entirely out of the poverty business. Only then will Americans fill the material and spiritual vacuum by resuming the tradition of mutual aid, and only then can the poor hope for a better life.

Evaluate Your Work

When you have finished writing your response to the practice examination question, set it aside for a day or two. Meanwhile, describe in your journal any problems you experienced as you planned, wrote, revised, and edited your essay. Identify the causes and try to come up with appropriate solutions. Revise your argumentation guidelines (including time allocations) if necessary.

Use the Rating Scale (Appendix G) to rate your essay. Ask your reader or someone in your writing group to read “Sample Argumentation Prompt 2,” your essay, the Rating Scale, and the three sample student essays, and then rate your essay. Ask your reader(s) to explain the rating to you.

If you are not satisfied with your essay, you may want to revise it. However, if you have serious concerns about your ability to successfully answer this examination question, consider the suggestions in Appendix F of this Course Guide.

Reflect on Your Writing Process

Now that you have written a response to a sample examination question and rated your work, you should reflect on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered as you planned, wrote, revised, and edited your essay. Describe in your journal a significant problem you experienced during this process; identify the cause(s), and try to come up with an appropriate solution. How will you deal with the problem the next time?

Review the set of tentative guidelines you prepared earlier in this unit to help you write an effective argumentative essay. Keeping in mind all that you have learned during this unit, revise your guidelines and format them so that they are on one page. You should also revise your time-management plan and note on the same page as your guidelines the amount of time you plan to spend on each writing stage.
In This Unit

The purpose of this unit is to help you to prepare for the analysis and response essay question you will answer on the UExcel exam in English Composition. In this unit, you will analyze a sample examination question, write a response to it, evaluate your response according to official examination scoring guidelines, examine sample student responses to the same question, and develop your own set of guidelines for answering this type of question.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

► Write an essay that appropriately responds to a sample analysis and response examination question.

► Analyze a sample analysis and response examination question concerning a literary text.

► Analyze and interpret a literary text.

► Specify a set of guidelines that you plan to follow in responding to an analysis and response examination question.

► Use the Rating Scale to differentiate strong from weak answers written in response to a sample analysis and response examination question.
**Search Your Memory**

In Unit 12 of this Course Guide, you developed a set of guidelines to help you prepare for the argumentation examination prompt. In this unit, you will develop a set of guidelines that will help you prepare for the analysis and response prompt.

The knowledge and skills you learned in Units 7–10 of this Course Guide provide the foundation required to write an effective response to the analysis and response question. However, before you attempt to write a practice analysis and response essay, you need to review and consolidate your prior learning in light of the writing skills required for the task at hand. Then you can organize this information into a tentative set of guidelines.

The following chart will help you focus your review of Units 7–10 on the concepts and skills most relevant to the analysis and response examination question.

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<tr>
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<th>Write in Your Journal</th>
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<td><strong>Evaluating an Essay</strong></td>
<td>• Analyzing an essay’s logic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Guide, journal</td>
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<td>notes, Barnet chapter</td>
<td>• Summarizing an essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>on Reading and Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>about Essays, your “Glossary of Literary Terms,” and your own essay</td>
<td>• Supporting your evaluation of an essay with sound arguments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting source; integrating source</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 8:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interpreting a Story</strong></td>
<td>• Summarizing chief features of a story, using such concepts as irony, imagery,</td>
</tr>
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<td>Course Guide, journal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>notes, your “Glossary</td>
<td>• Interpreting a story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Literary Terms,” and</td>
<td>• Supporting your interpretation of a story with sound arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your own essay</td>
<td>• Organizing arguments and considering counterarguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting source; integrating source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Citing source</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Read and Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 9: Interpreting a Poem</th>
<th>The key points to remember in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Guide, journal notes, Barnet chapter on Reading and Writing about Poems, your “Glossary of Literary Terms,” and your own essay</td>
<td>• Summarizing chief features of a poem, using such concepts as irony, imagery, rhyme scheme, stanzaic pattern, genre, and symbolism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interpreting a poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supporting your interpretation of a poem with sound arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Organizing arguments and considering counterarguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting source; integrating source</td>
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<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 10: Interpreting a Play</th>
<th>The key points to remember in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Guide, journal notes, Barnet chapter on Reading and Writing about Plays, your “Glossary of Literary Terms,” and your own essay</td>
<td>• Summarizing chief features of a play, using such concepts as genre, characterization, setting, and plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interpreting a play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supporting your interpretation of a play with sound arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Organizing arguments and considering counterarguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting source; integrating source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Citing source</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your review of Units 7–10 probably generated more information than you could possibly include on a one-page set of guidelines designed to help you answer an analysis and response examination question. The next section of this Course Guide will help you organize and streamline this information by focusing your attention more closely on the examination task.

### Read and Respond

You will now examine a “Sample Analysis and Response” writing prompt similar in format to the type of prompt you will find on your examination. Read the prompt through slowly and carefully, focusing on the specific tasks on which you will be evaluated.
When you take the examination at a Pearson VUE Testing Center, it is important to understand that the question and text will be presented on a computer screen, and you will write your answer by using a simple word processor. You will also be provided scratch paper for notes. Therefore, you should practice jotting down key words from the question on scratch paper. This strategy will enable you to look back quickly to find key information while taking the test.

Read the following prompt and note the key words (Note: you do not need to read the poem at this time).

Sample Analysis and Response Writing Prompt 1

Closely read the poem on page 152: “Musée des Beaux Arts,” written by W. H. Auden.

Your written response to this poem requires 1) pre-writing and 2) a formal essay. Each is explained below.

1) Pre-writing

The pre-writing portion requires you to use the tools of close reading and explication in order to prepare for the formal essay. Your pre-writing need not be in complete sentences; you may compose an outline, notes, or exploratory (journal) writing. Please make sure your writing is legible.

In this portion of your response, you must:

- identify the subject of the poem;
- note the poem’s relationship to the painting by Brueghel (Do the poem and the referenced painting treat the same subject?);
- consider the structure of this two-stanza poem (How does the first stanza prepare the reader for the second stanza?);
• comment on the relationship of stanza/line with sentence/punctuation;
• note the poem’s diction and imagery;
• identify the tone of the poem (What is the speaker’s attitude toward the subject?);
• consider the moral or philosophical stand the speaker takes;
• consider what type of religious or philosophical belief, if any, underlies the poem.

2) Formal Essay

Write an essay in which you describe and comment upon Auden’s depiction of the certainty the speaker finds in the art of the Old Masters regarding human suffering. Use your pre-writing response to support your ideas in the essay. Be careful that the essay is not simply a summary of the work or merely a personal narrative of your own experiences. Your essay may refer to your personal insights or to related issues in other literary works, but the focus should be on the ideas and experiences suggested by Auden’s poem. In your formal essay, be sure to do the following:

• refer to the author and title of the work early in your essay;
• assume that your audience is composed of educated people who have not read this poem;
• present a clear thesis;
• choose an organizational plan appropriate to your ideas;
• include, as support for your ideas, aspects of the poem identified in your pre-writing;
• include concrete supporting details such as examples of the literary concepts you discuss and specific references to the text of the poem;
• cite each quotation and paraphrase using a standard system of citation (APA, Chicago, or MLA style).
Musée des Beaux Arts

Lines on Pieter Brueghel the Elder's painting, “Landscape with the Fall of Icarus”

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer’s horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Brueghel’s Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.


Now that you have carefully read the question and noted the key words, you can reflect on your choices. Compare the words you chose with the key words or phrases listed in the following chart. While your choices may differ in a few instances, you should have selected many of these words and phrases as they represent the essential aspects of the question.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Key Words or Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>- Closely read the text below. (Note, however, that you might postpone this “close reading” until you have read the rest of the question.)&lt;br&gt;- “Musée des Beaux Arts”&lt;br&gt;- W. H. Auden&lt;br&gt;In the “Prepare to Write” section that follows “The Assignment,” we will ask you to circle or jot down key words and phrases from the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>- pre-writing&lt;br&gt;- tools of close reading or explication&lt;br&gt;- formal essay&lt;br&gt;- subject of poem&lt;br&gt;- relationship to painting: same subject?&lt;br&gt;- stanza one/stanza two&lt;br&gt;- stanza and line/sentence and punctuation: how different?&lt;br&gt;- diction&lt;br&gt;- imagery&lt;br&gt;- tone&lt;br&gt;- speaker’s attitude toward subject&lt;br&gt;- moral/philosophical stand?&lt;br&gt;- religious/philosophical belief?&lt;br&gt;In the “Evaluate Your Work” section, we will give you a list of suggested words and phrases that respond to the instructions for (2) Pre-writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>- complexity of ideas, human experiences&lt;br&gt;- certainty: “Old Masters” about human suffering&lt;br&gt;- avoid long summary of poem: short summary ok&lt;br&gt;- avoid mere personal narrative: brief personal references ok&lt;br&gt;- personal insights: brief&lt;br&gt;- related issues in other literary works: brief&lt;br&gt;- focus: on Auden’s poem&lt;br&gt;- author/title: mention early&lt;br&gt;- clear thesis or controlling idea&lt;br&gt;- organizational plan&lt;br&gt;- interests, needs of audience&lt;br&gt;- comment on, or use as support, aspects of poem from pre-writing&lt;br&gt;- accurate citations: [check Hacker (sections on MLA and APA/CMS citation styles) for citation format]&lt;br&gt;- supporting details: examples of literary concepts; references to text of poem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Assignment

Practice Examination Essay 1
The assignment for this unit is to write an essay response to “Sample Analysis and Response Writing Prompt 1.” Before you begin the essay assignment, proceed to the next section of this unit, “Prepare to Write.”

Prepare to Write

Because this is an examination practice session, try as much as possible to match the conditions you must face during the actual examination. Isolate yourself in a quiet area where you will not be interrupted or distracted and allow yourself no more than one hour and ten minutes to complete this essay. You should complete it in one sitting and not use any notes, books, or other aids that you will not have available during the examination.

If you are taking your examination at a Pearson Professional Center, you will be using a computer to write out your essay during the examination. Students who are used to preparing their answers using one mode often find it difficult to write an essay using a different mode during an examination. It is better to address this difficulty during an examination practice session than during the actual examination.

When you have established examination conditions, and you are ready to begin, write down the time you start and the time you must finish (1 hour and 10 minutes later). As you prepare your response to “Sample Analysis and Response Writing Prompt 1,” you will be asked to record the time you start or complete each stage of your writing process. This information will help you adjust the time-management plan you developed in Unit 12.

Before proceeding to “Stage 1: Thinking, Pre-writing, Planning,” write down the time in the space provided: _________ (Time).

Stage 1: Thinking, Analyzing, Planning (30 minutes)

The steps in the following chart will guide you through each stage of your writing process as you prepare and write your response to “Sample Analysis and Response Writing Prompt 1.”
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Read and analyze the question.</td>
<td>Read the examination question, noting the words you circled or jotted down. Try to get a clear picture of what the question is asking. Jot down this picture in your own words to clarify it in your mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Write down your purpose.</td>
<td>Your purpose is to analyze and respond to the text, following the instructions under (1) Pre-writing and (2) Formal Essay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Read and analyze the text.</td>
<td>As you read the sample text, follow the instructions under (1) Pre-writing in order to identify key words and phrases in the text. Jot the responses to (1) Pre-writing instructions on scrap paper; then, write them clearly in your examination book. This step is the most important one in your process; be sure to give adequate time to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Decide on your thesis.</td>
<td>Review the notes you have made, and decide on a controlling idea that you can use to unify the essay you will write for (2) Formal Essay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5       | Plan your essay.             | Decide how you will organize your essay, and make a scratch outline. Will you start  
• With an introduction to the essay, including title, author, a brief summary of the text, and your thesis?  
• by beginning with a brief discussion of the human complexity the text treats, followed by the title, author, and brief summary of the text, concluding the introduction with your thesis?  
• By making a point of a special characteristic of this poem, not unique but unusual (the way in which one work of art—a poem—comments on another—a painting), then relating this characteristic to your thesis?  
Any of these beginnings could be promising, but avoid merely answering the questions the prompt presents in the order in which they appear in (1) Pre-writing. They are intended to guide you, but the organization must be your own. Be alert to counterarguments—how might another reader disagree with your interpretation? And how might you defend it? Be sure to dedicate at least one paragraph to “counterarguments.” |
| 6       | Describe your audience.      | Who is your audience? Jot down characteristics that you must take into account. How are they likely to be persuaded? Review Unit 11 if necessary.                                                             |
After you have completed Stage 1 of your writing process, write down the time before proceeding to the next stage: ________ (Time)

**Write**

**Stage 2: Drafting Formal Essay (30 minutes)**

Because you will need 30 minutes to read the prompt, respond to the instructions in (1) Pre-writing, and plan your answer to (2) Formal Essay; you should plan to spend 30 minutes on your answer. Leave 5–10 minutes to revise, edit, and proofread.

After you have drafted your formal essay, write down the time before proceeding to the next stage: ________ (Time)

**Revise, Edit and Proofread**

**Stage 3: Revising, Editing, and Proofreading (5–10 minutes)**

Keep in mind that the constraints of a testing situation will not enable you to revise or recopy your first draft. Nor will you be able to obtain feedback from a reader as you would normally do. However, keep in mind that all test-takers deal with these conditions and that examination raters are fully aware of the constraints imposed on your writing process by the testing situation.

Try to refine the editing and proofreading plan you developed in Unit 11. Select from the following techniques as necessary.

- Try to hear the words in your head as you read.
- Read for your chronic trouble spots.
- Read backwards to spot word-level problems.

After you have revised, edited, and proofread your essay, write down the time: ________ (Time).
Calculate the total time you spent preparing this essay. Did you complete it within one hour and ten minutes? If not, review the amount of time you spent on each of the three writing stages and make the needed adjustments on your guidelines for answering analysis and response examination questions. However, do not be overly concerned if you did run over the time limit, because this is your first attempt at writing a response to an analysis and response examination question.

Evaluate Your Work

The Rating Scale (Appendix G) and the sample essay answers will help you develop your ability to distinguish strong analysis and response essays from weak analysis and response essays. The Rating Scale is the same one that faculty raters will use to evaluate your essay when you take the examination. It has six levels, with 6 being the highest score. Your essay will be assigned one of these numbers, numbers which will form the basis for your grade.

As you carefully read the Rating Scale, try to gain a sense of how the features associated with the higher scores differ from those associated with the lower scores. Keep in mind that when you finish reviewing the Rating Scale, you will be asked to assign a score to the essay you wrote in response to “Sample Analysis and Response Prompt 1.”

To fully understand the criteria that examination raters will use to score your examination essay, you should learn to apply them in a fair, objective manner. Try to adopt the perspective of an examination rater, and use the Scoring Guide to rate the essay you wrote in response to “Sample Analysis and Response Writing Prompt 1.”

Circle the level you think your essay would be rated: 6 5 4 3 2 1

Now you will have a chance to assess your ability to use the Rating Scale by rating three sample student essays and comparing your ratings with the ratings assigned by a team of faculty raters. After each of the following student essays, you will find an explanation for the rating assigned to it by the faculty team and the rating they assigned to the essay. Read the explanations carefully. They will give you ideas for what to do and what not to do the next time you write this kind of essay.

Try to adopt the perspective of an examination rater who must objectively and fairly apply the Rating Scale, and carefully read and rate the following sample student essay answer. (Writing errors have been reproduced from the student paper.)
Sample Student Response 1

- death, life keeps going

- poem & painting do treat the same subject -- that people go on with their lives even when death is happening around them

- first stanza's theme & tone is reflected in the 2nd stanza which is about the fall of Icarus

- the relationship of stanza/line w/sent./punct is that Auden (1938) make his point clearer w/his use of comma's, semi colon's, and colons.

- Poem's diction & imagery are dreary because of the subject he's trying to portray

- Tone is dark -- speakers attitude is observatory

- Moral tone is that people can turn a blind eye to even death when it doesn't effect them.

- I think there is a religious belief in this poem when the author refers to the "miraculous birth." I think he's talking about going on after death. (Auden, 1938).

In W.H. Auden's poem "Musée des Beaux Arts", I believe that the author is talking about death and that life is happening right around it and that people turn a "blind eye" to it. Auden refers to Brueghel's "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus", to help show this clearer to the reader. (Auden, 1938).

Auden's tone and imagery are dark and dreary which is shown in the first stanza, line, "That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course", this line adds to his theme of death. I believe that the most important revealing part of this poem, the part that let's us know what it's about is in the first stanza. The second stanza is merely a different way of what Auden says in the first stanza. (Auden, 1938).

The tone and theme of this poem is clearly dark. The author uses descriptive words like "dully, old, dreadful, and forsaken" to help get this theme across to the readers. I think it is a sad poem and that the fact that someone is dying or waiting for their "miraculous birth"; which to me means passing on to the afterlife, clearly shows that this poem is about death and that life is continuing to happen. (Auden, 1938). The second stanza also shows his theme and dark tone, they turn away or keep on sailing because "for him it was not an important failure." (Auden, 1938). This part of the second stanza clearly reiterates what my
point is life is going on while death happens. People turn a “blind eye” when it
doesn’t concern them.

All in all, I liked this poem, I thought the theme was sad and dark, but Auden
clearly put his point across to me and the way he used the reference to the
painting “Landscape w/the Fall of Icarus” by Brueghel, help to put it visually for
the reader.

Rate “Sample Student Response 1”
by circling the appropriate number: 6 5 4 3 2 1

Examination Rater Evaluation
Instructed to analyze the poem, “Musée des Beaux Arts” as a pre-writing exer-
cise and to use this analysis to write an essay describing and commenting on the
certainty the poem’s speaker finds in the art of Old Masters regarding human
suffering, this writer briefly notes several characteristics of the poem such as the
subject, the essential connection between the two stanzas, and the poem’s tone.
Had she included an examination of the visual imagery, the speaker’s relationship
to his subject, and the connection between the “Old Masters” in stanza one and
the particular Master, Pieter Brueghel, in stanza two, she might have recognized
the irony of situation and tone and have seen more subtle implications in the
mentioning of the particular deaths of martyrs and mythic heroes.

The essay’s organization is clear, beginning with an introduction to the poem and
its subject and proceeding to explanations of tone, diction, and theme, ending with
a concluding statement. In explaining these elements of the poem, the student
writer chooses apt quotations to illustrate and support her points. Paragraphs,
however, do not exhibit sentence variety, adequate and appropriate transitions,
and consistency in point of view and tone. The essay’s language suggests that the
writer does recognize the importance of diction in advancing points and establish-
ing tone.

The writer minimally identifies the poem’s subject, organizational pattern, and
tone, but does not successfully convey the relationship of speaker to subject, the
ironic implications of the contexts of both stanzas, and the significance of imagery
and other elements of poetic form. The essay earns a rating of 2.

Compare your rating of “Sample Student Response 1” with the rating given by the
faculty rater. Is your rating higher? Lower? The same? If your rating was different
from that assigned by the faculty rater, re-read the Rating Scale (Appendix G),
particularly the description for a level-2 response, and review the explanation for
why this essay received a level-2 rating.
Carefully read and rate the next sample student essay according to the Rating Scale. Once again, try to adopt the perspective of an examination rater who must objectively and fairly apply the Rating Scale. (Writing errors have been reproduced from the student paper.)

Sample Student Response 2

1) Pre-Writing

1) death & human suffering

2) The poem & the painting do treat the same subject, which is death & human suffering

3) 1st stanza: talks about human suffering. 2nd stanza: how people handle other peoples misfortune.

4)

5) Imagery: torturer’s horse, forsaken cry, white legs, expensive delicate ship, green water

Diction: How will the old masters understood about suffering in its human position.

6) Tone: sad, disbelief

7) Philosophical: life goes on & people do not care about other peoples suffering

8) None

2) Formal Essay

In the poem “Musée des Beaux Arts” (Auden, 1938) the speaker writes about death & human suffering. The poem is based on a painting by Pieter Brueghel. Auden tells how the older people understood suffering and pain. But for some people death is non-eventful and life just goes on. For in the poem it is noted how the plough man just keeps working even after hearing the splash & cry of the boy as he fell from the sky. Or how the ship sailed calmly on. In his first stanza Auden notes how the older people understood about suffering & how it takes place, but that other younger people continue on with life and do not understand about suffering.

I believe that the speaker is sad that no one notices what has happened to the little boy. In the second stanza he states how everything turns away from the
disaster at hand, like it does not exist. And that life goes on. Even for the animals life is not affected, as stated in the "Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer’s horse scratches its innocent behind on a tree."

Even with all the death & human suffering in the world, life goes on. People all deal with it in a different way.

Rate “Sample Student Response 2”
by circling the appropriate number: 6 5 4 3 2 1

Examination Rater Evaluation
The writer responds to the prompt’s instructions to analyze the poem “Musée des Beaux Art” by writing first a pre-writing exercise, then using the results of this exercise to write an essay “describing and commenting on the certainty the poem’s speaker finds in the art of ‘Old Masters’ regarding human suffering.” This response accurately identifies the subject of the poem as well as its relationship to the painting by Pieter Brueghel, “The Fall of Icarus.” The response, however, shows a weak grasp of such poetic techniques as tone and stanzaic structure although it displays a fair understanding of overall structure and an adequate comprehension of diction and imagery.

The essay’s thesis is confusingly stated, its arguments not focused on the thesis, and its development of key concepts altogether lacking. “Speaker” is the only concept mentioned, and it is not developed. The writer does not use her pre-writing as support for arguments in her essay. Only one citation appears in the essay, and none appears following the quotations. These quotations are not well integrated into the argument of the essay.

Although the writer tries to support her thesis by discussing, first, stanza one, then, stanza two, organization falters when paragraph four loops back to stanza one. Style is weakened by frequency of “I believe” and “tells how” as well as by the essay’s lack of individual voice. The essay is also quite brief. This characteristic is typical of weaker essays.

Spelling and grammar are generally competent until the latter disintegrates in paragraph four, where sentences become fragmentary and confusing. The response’s adequate grasp of some poetic techniques and its efforts and some degree of success in organizing an essay earns it a rating of 3.

Compare your rating of “Sample Student Response 2” with the rating given by the faculty team. If your rating was different from that assigned by the faculty team, re-read the Rating Scale (Appendix G) particularly the description for a level-3 response, and review the explanation for why this essay received a level-3 rating.
Carefully read and rate the next sample student essay according to the Rating Scale. Once again, try to adopt the perspective of an examination rater who must objectively and fairly apply the Rating Scale. (Writing errors have been reproduced from the student paper.)

Sample Student Response 3

1) Pre-writing

   (1). The subject of the poem is based on a meditation based on a piece of art located in the Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels.

   (2). Both the poem and the painting treat the same subject and focus on human suffering.

   (3). The first stanza tells about how the Old Masters can look back upon their experiences in life and truly understand the human condition of suffering.

      The second stanza uses the painting as an example of the people as they experience momentous events, yet simply look and then go about their daily activities (because the event doesn’t pertain to them).

      The poem is written in free verse. The lines are of irregular length and the punctuation becomes stronger as the stanza goes along.

      The poem’s diction is colloquial and technical, and it portrays what is going on in the painting.

      The tone is somber, contemplative, and slightly ironic.

      The philosophical stand is based on the human condition of suffering that no one ever escapes.

      The poem may possibly have a religious belief as it mentions martyrs and the miraculous birth.

2) Formal Essay

   The poem, Musée des Beaux Arts, was written by W.H. Auden in 1938. Auden is one of the most respected English poets of the twentieth century.

   The imagery of this poem is based on a painting by Pieter Brueghel the Elder called Landscape with the Fall of Icarus.
As Auden (1938) meditates about this painting, he expresses himself honestly in this complex poem about suffering. The opening line to the poem is very powerful as it states "About suffering they were never wrong" (Auden, 1938).

I think Auden (1938) shows a unique understanding of how the old masters experienced great pain in their lives in order to dedicate themselves to pursuing their creative art.

Auden (1938) expressed himself very honestly on how humans deal with suffering in the line that states "While someone is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along." In my own experience, I can relate to this line very well. Experiencing the loss of loved ones and the great suffering that occurred made me stop often and observe how in my suffering, life continued on for others, as well as myself. I'm sure that most of us can relate to an experience like this.

Auden (1938) uses the painting "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus" as another example to show the apathy of human beings in events that do not effect them directly. Even a momentous event such as "Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky" did not keep the people from going about their business as usual (Auden, 1938). Auden also used animals to symbolize human behavior in his line "Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse scratches its innocent behind on a tree." (Auden, 1938).

I felt a sense of religion in the poem "Musée des Beaux Arts" when Auden (1938) remarked "That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course." Also the sentence "For the miraculous birth their must always be" may possibly be alluding to Christmas (Auden, 1938).

Auden's (1938) philosophy on the human condition of suffering is expressed very well and honestly. I enjoyed the poem very much, and I'm looking forward to reading additional works of Auden in the future.

Rate “Sample Student Response 3”
by circling the appropriate number: 6 5 4 3 2 1
Examination Rater Evaluation

In responding to the pre-writing suggestions for analysis and in the development of the essay on W. H. Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts,” the writer offers insight, sound analysis with specific evidence, explanation of relationships among the elements of the poem and an accurate interpretation of the link between the Old Masters in stanza one and Pieter Brueghel’s painting in stanza two. She develops an original thesis regarding the speaker’s response to suffering and art, and she writes convincingly of the speaker’s philosophical stand.

Sophisticated in analysis, organization, and tone, the writer shows somewhat less skill in forming sentences, but compensates by offering ample quotations and explanations in support of each point. Few if any errors in mechanics and spelling impede meaning. Original in interpretation and convincing in analysis, this essay misses being a six mainly because the sentences do not reflect the degree of sophistication and fluency associated with the six essay. This essay earns a rating of 5.

Compare your rating of “Sample Student Response 3” with the rating given by the faculty rater. If your rating was different from that assigned by the faculty rater, re-read the Rating Scale (Appendix G), particularly the description for a level-5 response, and review the explanation for why this essay received a level-5 rating.

Evaluate Your Work

Which of the three sample student essays most resembles yours? Or does your essay seem to fall between two of them in quality? Now that you have had more practice using the scoring guide, re-read your essay as though you were an examination rater and rate your essay again.

Rate your essay by circling the appropriate number: 6 5 4 3 2 1

If possible, ask your reader or someone in your writing group to read “Sample Writing Prompt 1,” your essay, the Rating Scale and the three sample student essays, and then rate your essay. Ask your reader(s) to explain their rating to you. Probably there will be things you did not see that another person can notice and tell you about.

If you are not satisfied with your essay, a good learning strategy is to revise it. Even though you will not have time to rewrite the whole essay during the examination, rewriting now will help you start at a higher level of proficiency the next time. (Following, you will find a chart suggesting key words and phrases you might have used to respond to the (1) Pre-writing Requirements.) Once you have finished revising, you will have solved some of the problems writers must face when they write in timed situations. Rate your revision, and ask another person to rate it as well.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-writing Requirement</th>
<th>Suggested Words or Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Subject of poem | • “Suffering” (1)  
• “Human position” (2), attitude toward suffering. |
| Relationship to painting: do both poem and painting treat same subject? | Here, you have a choice: the main requirement will be to defend that choice as you have learned to do in argumentation. Examples:  
• “Yes”: both are about indifference to suffering.  
• “No”: the poem is about indifference to suffering, but it uses a painting to illustrate such indifference even though the painting might be interpreted in many other ways, such as “pride goes before a fall.” Either answer would be acceptable, but you would have to offer support for the one you chose. You might also choose a different subject. For example, you might point to the discomfort we often feel in the face of indifference to suffering: indifference does exist, and we feel it should be otherwise, yet we are part of the (usually) indifferent universe the poem describes. |
| Structure | • First stanza, focusing on humans and animals, refers to figures in several paintings as examples of indifference: “[Suffering] takes place/While someone else is eating... or just walking dully along” (4). While the Crucifixion takes place, “dogs go on with their doggy life” (12).  
• Second stanza zooms in on a single painting to mention “ploughman” (15), “sun” (17), and “ship” (19), indicating, perhaps, that not only intelligent beings (“ploughman”) but also inanimate objects (“ship”) and cosmic bodies (“sun”) ignore human suffering. |
| Stanza/line—Sentence/punctuation | • Ten of thirteen lines in Stanza 1 “run over” from one line to the next, continuing the sentence in the next line; five of seven do the same in Stanza 2; each stanza is punctuated as one long sentence. These long, leisurely sentences create a sense of the mind at work, making new discoveries.  
• Most of these run-over lines rhyme with other lines, the rhymes often dramatizing a concept or contrast (“waiting” and “skating”). |
Reflect on Your Writing Process

Now that you have written a response to a sample analysis and response examination question and rated your work, you should reflect on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered as you planned, wrote, revised, and edited your essay. Describe in your journal a significant problem you experienced during this process; identify the cause(s), and try to come up with an appropriate solution. How will you deal with problem the next time?

Review the set of tentative guidelines you prepared earlier in this unit to help you write an effective analysis and response essay. Keeping in mind all that you have learned during this unit, revise your guidelines and format them so that they are on one page. You should also adjust your time-management plan, and note the amount of time you should spend on each writing stage on the same page as your guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-writing Requirement</th>
<th>Suggested Words or Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diction</td>
<td>• Diction is simple, even childlike—“behind” (13) or somewhat slangy—“doggy” (12) or “get to” (21); this emphasizes how commonplace suffering and indifference are. The diction also helps to create a low-key tone of resignation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagery</td>
<td>• “Images” from paintings illustrate indifference to suffering. The “ship’s” (19) “decision” to ignore the drowning boy is an example of personification, a type of metaphor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
<td>• The speaker sounds sadly resigned, rather flat: “This is how it is,” he implies. No reason to call upon human beings, animals, inanimate objects, or the cosmos to take notice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral or philosophical stand</td>
<td>• Stoical: we’re stuck with this situation, so why complain? Suffering often occurs as the result of natural processes: “The sun shone/As it had to...” (17–18).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious or philosophical belief</td>
<td>• Agnostic: for most people, the speaker says, suffering is not a means to improve the self or reach heaven; it has no significance, except for the sufferer: “For him [the ploughman] it [Icarus’ fall] was not an important failure” (17).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: the analysis and response examination question may present an extract from any one of four different genres: essays, stories, poems, or plays. By reviewing your readings, your journal notes, your “Glossary of Literary Terms,” and your own essays from Units 7–10 of this Course Guide, you can design guidelines that will prepare you to analyze any of these genres. In all cases, familiarity with the literary techniques and analytic tools represented by “Literary Terms” will give you confidence in approaching the requirements for (1) Pre-writing and will also give you key concepts to help organize your (2) Formal Essay.

**The Assignment**

**Practice Examination Essay 2**

You should not consider yourself fully prepared for the analysis and response examination question of the UExcel exam in English Composition until you can write a solid essay in response to a sample analysis and response examination question under examination conditions. You will now have an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to do this.

You will find another sample examination question, “Sample Analysis and Response Prompt 2,” on the next page. Do not turn the page and look at Prompt 2 before you have established the following examination conditions.

- No notes, textbooks, dictionaries, or other printed matter (except for the examination prompt) within sight
- A period of quiet, uninterrupted time (one hour and ten minutes)
- A computer with a word processor or pen, lined paper, and scrap paper

When you have established examination conditions, and you are ready to begin, turn the page to “Sample Analysis and Response Prompt 2” and begin.
Closely read the poem by Julia Alvarez, "Woman’s Work."

Your written response to this poem requires (1) pre-writing and (2) a formal essay. Each is explained below.

1) Pre-writing

The pre-writing portion requires you to use the tools of close reading and explanation in order to prepare for the formal essay. Your pre-writing need not be in complete sentences; you may compose an outline, notes, or exploratory (journal) writing. Please make sure your writing is legible.

In this portion of your response, you must:

- state the poem’s subject;
- consider the ways in which the speaker reveals conflict in the poem;
- consider the structure of the six-stanza poem (How do the stanzas outline the problem?);
- identify the rhyme scheme and rhythm of the poem;
- identify the tone of the poem (What is the speaker’s attitude toward her subject?);
- consider what type of moral belief, if any, underlies the mother’s actions in the poem;
- consider what moral stand, if any, the speaker takes;
- note the poem’s imagery;
- note the poem’s diction.

2) Formal Essay

Write an essay in which you describe and comment upon Alvarez’s portrayal of the speaker’s memory of her mother, especially on the mother’s attitude toward housekeeping. Use your pre-writing response in Part One to support your ideas in the essay. Be careful that the essay is not simply a summary of the work or merely a personal narrative of your own experiences. Your essay may refer to your personal insights or to related issues in other literary works, but the focus should be on the ideas and experiences suggested by Alvarez’s poem.

Write a formal essay in which you:

- refer to the author and title of the work early in your essay;
- assume that your audience is composed of educated people who have not read this poem;
• present a clear thesis;
• choose an organizational plan appropriate to your ideas;
• include, as support for your ideas, aspects of the poem identified in your pre-writing;
• include concrete supporting details such as examples of the literary concepts you discuss and specific references to the text of the poem;
• cite each quotation and paraphrasing using a standard system of citation (APA, Chicago, or MLA style).

Woman's Work

Who says a woman’s work isn’t high art?
She’d challenge as she scrubbed the bathroom tiles.
Keep the house as if the address were your heart.

We’d clean the whole upstairs before we’d start downstairs. I’d sigh, hearing my friends outside.
Doing her woman’s work was a hard art
to practice when the summer sun would bar
the floor I swept till she was satisfied.
She kept me prisoner in her housebound heart.

She’d shine the tines of forks, the wheels of carts,
cut lacy lattices for all her pies.
Her woman’s work was nothing less than art.

And I, her masterpiece since I was smart,
was primed, praised, polished, scolded and advised
to keep a house much better than my heart.

I did not want to be her counterpart!
I struck out...But became my mother’s child:
a woman working at home on her art,
housekeeping paper as if it were her heart.

**Evaluate Your Work**

Use the Rating Scale (Appendix G) to rate your essay. Ask your reader or someone in your writing group to read “Sample Analysis and Response Writing Prompt 2,” your essay, the Rating Scale, and the three sample student essays, and then rate your essay. Ask your reader(s) to explain the rating to you.

If you are not satisfied with your essay, you may want to revise it. However, if you have serious concerns about your ability to successfully answer this examination question, consider the suggestions in Appendix F of this Course Guide.

**Reflect on Your Writing Process**

Now that you have written responses to a sample analysis response examination question and rated your work, you should reflect on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered as you planned, wrote, revised, and edited your second essay. Describe in your journal any significant problems (if any) you experienced during this process; identify the cause(s), and try to come up with an appropriate solution. How will you deal with problem during the actual exam?

Review the set of tentative guidelines you prepared earlier in this unit to help you write an effective analysis and response essay. Keeping in mind all that you have learned during this unit, revise your guidelines (including time allocations), and format them so that they are on one page.

**Learning Tip**

Set your practice essay aside for a day or two before evaluating it.
Unit 14
Revision Strategies

In This Unit

The purpose of this unit is to help you to prepare for the “Revision Strategies” essay question you will answer on the UExcel exam in English Composition. In this unit, you will analyze two sample examination questions, write a response to them, evaluate your response according to official examination rating guidelines, examine sample student responses to the same questions, and develop your own set of guidelines for answering this type of question.

Unit Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

► Write an essay that appropriately responds to a sample “Revision Strategies” examination question.

► Analyze a practice “Revision Strategies” examination question.

► Evaluate a draft and suggest revisions that will help a writer revise the draft.

► Specify a set of guidelines that you plan to follow in answering a “Revision Strategies” examination question.

► Use the Rating Scale to differentiate strong from weak student essays that answer a “Revision Strategies” examination question.
Search Your Memory

In Units 12 and 13 of this Course Guide, you developed a set of guidelines to help you prepare for two examination prompts. In this unit, you will develop a set of guidelines that will help you address a third: the “Revision Strategies” prompt.

The knowledge and skills you learned in prior units of this Course Guide provide the foundation required to write an effective response to this examination question. However, before you attempt to write a practice essay, you need to review and consolidate your prior learning in light of the writing skills required by this prompt. Then you can organize this information into a tentative set of guidelines.

First, review the notes you made in your journal and on your drafts of unit assignments when you were planning revisions. Notice the comments others made about your writing. Mark those comments that seemed most helpful when you revised your essays.

Then, in your journal, group the best of these comments under headings that seem useful to you. You might try the suggested headings below, and add others you find helpful.

- adding and deleting
- clarity
- effective detail (information, arguments)
- explaining key concepts
- focus (has a significant point, stays on topic)
- interest, liveliness
- organizing
- paying attention to audience
- presenting a strong voice
- presenting an effective tone
- word choice

Choose one of the essays you wrote at least a month ago, and freewrite in your journal for five to seven minutes about the strengths and weaknesses you can identify in your writing. Then freewrite for another five minutes, noting what you think you would now change, and why.

Read and Respond

You will now examine a sample “Revision Strategies” examination prompt similar in format to the type of prompt you will find on your examination. Read the prompt through slowly and carefully, focusing on the specific tasks on which you will be evaluated.
A college is considering a graduation requirement mandating a minimum number of unpaid community service hours for all undergraduates. The community service hours would be devoted to helping individuals, organizations, and agencies in the community. While the school has not determined details such as the number of required hours, the amount of school supervision, the necessary relevance to academic majors, etc., it looks as if the administration and most of the faculty are in favor of instituting some type of community service requirement.

Some students are against required service hours and have drafted a letter to the school's administration providing reasons why the requirement should not be adopted.

Write an essay in which you critique the letter. In your essay, be sure to:

- offer an overall assessment of the strengths, from large-scale arrangement and selection of ideas to the fine points of editing and polishing;

- next, offer an overall assessment of the weaknesses, from large-scale arrangement and selection of ideas to the fine points of editing and polishing;

- assess the appropriateness of the form of writing chosen for the audience and purpose;

- identify patterns of error in punctuation, spelling, word form, usage, sentence structure, etc., and provide examples of each kind of error you identify;
• comment on any other matters that you think the writer should consider as he or she revises the letter;

• offer specific advice for revising the letter that you think would make it a more effective piece of writing.

Now that you have carefully read “Sample Revision Strategies Prompt 1” and identified the key words, you can reflect on the structure of the prompt and your choices. The first two paragraphs give you background information on the situation to which the authors of “Writing Sample 1” are responding. The remaining paragraphs tell you what to do in your own essay and contain the main points on which your essay will be evaluated. Do the key words that you identified capture these points?

The key words that you wrote down should have included “critique the letter.” These three words indicate that you must judge the positive and negative qualities of “Writing Sample 1.” In addition, “Overall assessment” and “specific” indicate that you have to make general judgments, but give examples of “strengths and weaknesses.” However, since you will not have enough time to give examples of every point, your writing will have to be focused and organized.

Other key words tell you that you must discuss how well the writer handled the “rhetorical situation”—the purpose, situation, and audience. “Identify patterns” tells you not to list all of the errors but rather point out the kinds of errors the writer has made.

The last two items ask you to “comment” on what the writer would need to think about in revising and to “offer advice” toward a “more effective” revision. These are also key points on which your essay will be evaluated.

Now you are ready to examine “Writing Sample 1” that forms part of this writing prompt. This is the piece of writing that you must critique. As you read “Writing Sample 1,” use your scratch paper to make concise notes identifying errors, so that you will be able to access quickly the strengths and weaknesses.

Read “Writing Sample 1,” page 175, and make notes.
Writing Sample 1

Dear Administrators:

We, a group of students here want to urge you not to add a community service requirement. Their are many reasons why community service should not be mandatory: college students are already too busy, community service is a waist of time, your unfairly making us, community service is only valuable if it is provided voluntarily, and, because we're so busy, many of us will do a bad job.

We aren’t obligated to help the community, and it really doesn’t even need help from us. And requiring community service lessons the meaning and the benefit to the student. Its useful only if its voluntary.

If you make college students volunteer in the community some of us will do a good job, but many of them will fail to show up. Or will do work poorly. This will reflect badly on the school. It will provide negative P.R.

Community service seems pointless for us. Our job is to get an education, and thats what we’re paying for, not to help others, thats what we pay taxes for. And we’re not yet ready to help others – we don’t have the skills or knowledge. Once we graduate and get jobs, we’ll be able to help if we want to.

Now students are too busy. Their in class at least fifteen hours a week, and many of them have long labs, too. Their involved in collegiate and intramural athletics and many of them work to. They need time to relax and unwind to watch TV and refresh themselves. We’ve also got to have time for social activities. Belonging to organizations, parties to go to, and having dates are among the most important parts of college life. This is there time to have fun – to relax and socialize. To still be kids before we go out into the real world. We need to develop our social skill’s. We should be allowed to take advantage of this time and enjoy ourselves and should not be made to work at community service.

Community service is slave labor. We cant be made to work without pay its unAmerican. It’s also unfair because those who run the school don’t do community service. An the faculty doesn’t do community service, so we shouldn’t either.

In conclusion, we should be concentrating on our studies to prepare for life in today’s society. A community service requirement would make it harder to do that. For that reason we urge you not to make community service a requirement.

Sincerely,

Outraged students
The Assignment

Practice Examination Essay 1
The first assignment for this unit is to write an essay response to “Sample Revision Strategies Prompt 1.” Before you begin, read the next section of this unit, “Prepare to Write.”

Prepare to Write

Once again, try as much as possible to match the conditions you must face during the actual examination. Isolate yourself in a quiet area where you will not be interrupted or distracted and allow yourself no more than 50 minutes to complete this essay. You should complete it in one sitting and not use any notes, books, or other aids that you will not have available during the examination.

When you have established examination conditions, and you are ready to begin, write down the time you start and the time you must finish (50 minutes later). As you prepare your response to “Sample Revision Strategies Prompt 1,” you will again be asked to record the time you start and complete each stage of your writing process. This information will help you adjust your time-management plan.

Before proceeding to “Stage 1: Thinking, Pre-writing, Planning,” write down the time in the space provided: ________ (Time).
Stage I: Thinking, Pre-writing, Planning (5 minutes)

The steps in the following chart will guide you through each stage of your writing process as you complete this stage of your writing process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Read and analyze the question part of the prompt.</td>
<td>Read the examination question noting the words you circled. Try to get a clear picture of the situation and the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Write down your purpose.</td>
<td>For this type of examination question, your purpose is to critique a writing sample.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Read and analyze “Writing Sample 1.”</td>
<td>List the strengths and number them by order of importance. Then do the same for weaknesses. Finally, list your comments and advice for revision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Plan your essay.</td>
<td>Decide what you will include in your essay and in what order (first, second, etc.) you will present your ideas. Use one or more of the invention strategies you have learned to help you assemble and organize your ideas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After you have completed Stage 1 of your writing process, write down the time before proceeding to the next stage: _________ (Time)

Stage 2: Drafting (40 minutes)

Since you have used five to ten minutes for Stage 1 of your writing process, you will probably need to plan on spending 40 minutes drafting your essay. That will leave about five to ten minutes for you to revise, edit, and proofread your response.

After you have drafted your essay, write down the time before proceeding to the next stage: _________ (Time)
Revise, Edit, and Proofread

Stage 3: Revising, Editing, and Proofreading (5 minutes)

Once again, keep in mind that the constraints of a testing situation will not enable you to revise or recopy your first draft. Nor will you be able to obtain feedback from a reader as you would normally do.

Try to refine the editing and proofreading plan you developed in Units 12 and 13. Select from the following techniques as necessary.

- Try to hear the words in your head as you read.
- Read for your chronic trouble spots.
- Read backwards to spot word-level problems.

After you have revised, edited, and proofread your essay, write down the time: _________ (Time).

Calculate the total time you spent preparing this essay. Did you complete it within 50 minutes? If not, review the amount of time you spent on each of the three writing stages and make the needed adjustments on your guidelines for answering analysis and response examination questions. However, do not be overly concerned if you did run over the time limit because this is your first attempt at writing a response to a sample “Revision Strategies” examination question.
Evaluate Your Work

The Rating Scale (Appendix G) and the sample essay answers (below) will help you develop your ability to distinguish a strong response to a writing sample essay from a weak response to a writing sample essay. The Rating Scale is the same one that faculty raters will use to evaluate your essay when you take the examination. It has six levels, with 6 being the highest score. Your essay will be assigned one of these numbers, which will form the basis for your grade.

As you carefully examine the Rating Scale, try to gain a sense of how the features associated with the higher scores differ from those associated with the lower scores. Keep in mind that when you finish reviewing the Rating Scale, you will be asked to assign a score to the essay you wrote in response to “Sample Revision Strategies Prompt 1.”

To fully understand the criteria that examination raters will use to score your examination essay, you should practice applying them in a fair, objective manner. Try to adopt the perspective of an examination rater and use the Rating Scale to rate the essay you wrote in response to “Revision Strategies.”

Circle the level you think your essay would be rated: 6 5 4 3 2 1

Now you will have a chance to assess your ability to use the “Revision Strategies Scoring Guide” by rating three sample student essays and comparing your ratings with the ratings assigned by a team of faculty raters. After each of the following student essays, you will find an explanation for the rating assigned to it by the faculty team and the rating they assigned to the essay. Read the explanations carefully. They will give you ideas for what to do and what not to do the next time you write this kind of essay.

Try to adopt the perspective of an examination rater who must objectively and fairly apply the Scoring Guide, and carefully read and rate the following sample student essay answer. (Writing errors have been reproduced from the student paper.)
Sample Student Response 1

The writer’s opposition to community service as a school requirement is obvious, but it is not stated in the most effective manner. My initial and honest reaction to this letter is that it would not hold much ground with the administration. A better worded and thought out revision is necessary to arouse the desired reaction from the administration.

The first sentence (lines 1 and 2) of the letter is undoubtedly the strongest aspect. By starting off directly with an exclamation of the writer’s objective gives the reader a clear idea of the student’s position. The introduction is also effective in outlining the letter’s body, although, corresponding order of ideas and a more effective sentence structure as well as wording would enhance the paper.

The development is, in general, good in establishing reasons not to add a community service requirement, but lacks sufficient support. Many of the writer’s ideas would not be considered by the administration because the either lack support or are unclear and even false at times. For example, the writer argues that community service is “useful only if it is voluntary.” (line 10). This argument is not sufficiently supported and would be easily revealed as untrue by the administration. Also, the writer asserts that “[community service is slave labor” (line 29). This is ludicrous and his or her support has no foundation whatsoever. Overall, the development must be more clearly thought out and supported.

A smaller yet equally important aspect that hinders the letter’s effectiveness is the abundancy of structural and spelling errors. Structuring sentences in a more rhetorical manner is essential to get the reader’s respect and interest. Spelling and punctuation errors side track the reader and make the letter seem choppy and careless.

I sincerely doubt that the administration would take this letter seriously. It’s poor development and structure make the letter unclear and uneffective. A better thought out and organized revision is most definitely necessary to have the administration take the student’s position into account.

Rate “Sample Student Response 1”
by circling the appropriate number: 6 5 4 3 2 1
Examination Rater Evaluation
This writer offers a clear overall assessment of the prompt letter in the opening paragraph, even providing a statement of his purpose—to give advice for revision—that is directed toward the prompt letter’s goal of persuading its specific audience. The writer continues with this effective beginning to organize his ideas well and order them appropriately. The second paragraph points out the prompt letter’s strongest point, and mentions that, despite the promising opening ideas, the letter does not fulfill the expectations the introduction sets forth. The third paragraph considers the strengths and weaknesses in the letter’s development—insufficient reasons to support each argument, frequent lapses in clarity and truthfulness, failure to consider counterarguments, and overstatement. The writer even ends this paragraph with a summarizing sentence.

The third paragraph then takes up the inadequacies in sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, and tone, and notes that these problems are so severe as to “sidetrack the reader” by interfering with readability and ethos (the writers seem inept and careless). The essay’s closing paragraph restates the main point in terms of the purpose—that the present form of the letter is ineffective and needs revision if it to have persuasive force.

However good these characteristics are, the writing suffers from a number of inadequacies of its own. The style is rather flat: it does the job, but lacks interest and variety. More importantly, only once does the writer offer any specific examples of strengths and inadequacies to illustrate what he means by his general claims. In addition, there are a number of spelling errors and some missing words, both of which interfere with ease of reading and make the writer seem careless himself.

Faculty rated “Sample Student Response 1” at level 4.

Compare your rating of “Sample Student Response 1” with the rating given by the faculty rater. If your rating was different from that assigned by the faculty rater, re-read the Rating Scale in Appendix G, particularly the description for a level-4 response, and review the explanation for why this essay received a level-4 rating.

Carefully read and rate the next sample student essay according to the Rating Scale. Once again try to adopt the perspective of an examination rater who must objectively and fairly apply the Scoring Guide. (Writing errors have been reproduced from the student paper.)
Sample Student Response 2

“Our job is to get an education”, the statement that was written by a student must be really understandable and flexible for students, because almost all the students who are getting an education want to be proud of being a student. This is a nice advantage for students. However, actually, the reason why this student is protesting against administrators is probably that she just does not like to work for the people. That is why there are many selfish responses about a community service. Besides these reasons are kind of matter of course, everybody feels like this, even though the people who are not students.

On the contrast, this student’s aggressive letter against administrators is a wonderful. Each reason is like a child’s opinion, but he is trying to persuade the administrators. Moreover, this letter is really easy to understand, each significant factors are shown very well. He could express very well about that it is impossible for him to work for society, because he is a child. I can agree with his reasons why students are not able to spare time for working, because of they are busy and so on. Nevertheless, it is difficult to consent his statements which blame a community service and tax. These are just factors to justify his own opinions to complain about society.

Rate “Sample Student Response 2”
by circling the appropriate number: 6 5 4 3 2 1

Examination Rater Evaluation
This essay has little to recommend. Its best points are the insights that the tone and many of the arguments are childish. Yet these two points are not well-expressed, organized, or developed. They are phrased and rephrased as generalities and scattered throughout the essay. Nor does the writer take up the important matter about whether this letter—its presentation, tone, arguments, and style—is likely to persuade its audience or not. Nor is any advice for revision offered.

There are also many serious impediments to meaning: for example, the first sentence is not only structurally flawed; it doesn’t make sense. Because it doesn’t, the sentence following it, though a well-formed sentence, makes no sense either. Likewise, the first sentence of the second paragraph is an enigma. No amount of re-reading can decode what the writer had in mind to say. The writer does notice that the prompt letter is easy to understand, but, unfortunately, the writer’s own essay is not. In addition there are other errors in spelling and punctuation, and some of these contribute to the difficulty the reader has in making sense of the writer’s meaning.
Faculty rated “Sample Student Response 2” at level 2.

Compare your rating of “Sample Student Response 2” with the rating given by the faculty rater. Is your rating higher? Lower? The same? If your rating was different from that assigned by the faculty rater, re-read the Rating Scale (Appendix G), particularly the description for a level-2 response, and review the explanation for why this essay received a level-2 rating.

Carefully read and rate the next sample student essay according to the Rating Scale. Once again, try to adopt the perspective of an examination rater who must objectively and fairly apply the Rating Scale. (Writing errors have been reproduced from the student paper.)

Sample Student Response 3
This letter gets right to the point with a clear, direct, and well-phrased sentence that states who is writing and why. This strong beginning is followed up with a list of reasons that could effectively organize the letter if each point were developed in a separate paragraph in the order listed. But the authors do not follow through, and the some of the reasons sound childish and whining—not good if they are hoping to be taken seriously by college administrators. This inappropriate tone continues through the letter, detracting from even the good arguments they raise. After reading the letter, one is led to question whether the administrators at the college would pay any attention to it since it has so many serious problems. The letter is in need of serious revision.

Besides the opening sentence, the strength of this letter is that it has several points to back up the opening statement. The outraged students list several reasons why they shouldn't have to fulfill a community service requirement. These reasons are clearly stated in the introduction. Then the authors proceed to explain each idea in more detail in the body of the letter, giving a paragraph to support each reason. So, it's easy to discern the authors' viewpoint and how they are going to support it. But the letter lacks organization. A general organization is apparent, even though it would be better to follow the order presented in the opening paragraph, or better still in the order of strongest to least strong reasons. Within paragraphs the organization is very weak. For example, in the second paragraph, the authors open with a claim that the community doesn't need students' service, but does not explain why not. This point could be easily dismissed, and the authors should have thought about that and given their own reasons why their claim is true. If the claim is not true, it is simply a bad reason and should be left out.
Some of the reasons supporting the ideas are adequate. The authors make several good points. They point out how busy college students are today, and how this may affect their service. If college students are so busy, it’s logical to conclude that they may not try their hardest, or be able to give their best effort if they are forced to do community service. They mention that this would only serve to hurt the university’s reputation. The author’s also correctly point out that some students forced to do community service won’t appreciate this, and their work will suffer.

However, other reasons are likely to give the impression that the authors are childish and illogical. The statement that community service is slave labor is a bit drastic. This exaggeration at the end tends to make the authors seem like they are whining and just trying to find any excuse not to do community service. Also, it’s a poor argument to say that college students should be concentrating on their studies to prepare them for the real world, when community service would only help them get involved in the real world.

The punctuation, sentence structure, and pronoun usage also detract greatly from the impression the letter would make. There are many punctuation errors, such as in line 2 where there should be a comma after “here.” Many sentences are incomplete, just fragments of sentences that need to be combined with another part in order to be a whole sentence. In line 12, there should be a comma instead of a period so these two sentences are combined. In line 10, there needs to be a comma, not a period, after “up” and no capital on “or” so that the fragment is joined to the previous sentence. There are other errors like this in lines 15, 25, and 29. As for pronouns, the authors constantly misuse the pronoun “they’re,” the contraction for “they are,” by using the possessive form “their.” This occurrence happens in lines 2, 19, and 20, and in 24, where “there” is used instead of “they’re.” Also, several times the apostrophe is left out when using a contraction, such as in line 10 and 30 with “it’s,” line 29 with “can’t,” and twice in line 15 with “that’s.” A few words are misspelled, such as “waist” instead of “waste” in line 5. The use of verbs is good, but there is a mistake in the series in line 23: two elements using forms, so the second element should match it by changing it to “going to parties.”
If the authors are going to revise the paper, it would be a good idea for them to focus on a couple of things. One is that they need to organize and elaborate the ideas better. Another is that they need to take a more mature tone, both in language and reasons. Finally, they need to be sure they write in complete sentences and spell correctly. A good proofreading would also be beneficial. Paying attention to these things would greatly improve the essay.

Rate “Sample Student Response 3” by circling the appropriate number: 6 5 4 3 2 1

Examination Rater Evaluation
This essay reflects an excellent understanding of what makes writing effective. The writer discusses the prompt letter in terms of the likelihood of achieving its purpose with the audience. The writer addresses first, and at greatest length, the letter’s appropriateness, organization, and development of the arguments made and reasons given, and highlights these with respect to the impression the letter is likely to have on an audience of college administrators. The writer recognizes what is strong about the letter and gives examples, and equally knows what the weaknesses are and gives specific examples for each characteristic and error. Furthermore, the writer orders points from most important to least important, taking up purpose, audience, and organization before style and correctness of words and sentences. The writer is also careful to bring up strengths before launching into the many weaknesses, or treating weaknesses to the exclusion of strengths.

The complete identification of kinds of errors in paragraph 5 shows that the writer knows most of the rules for correct sentence structure, punctuation, and style. The writer even catches the error in parallelism in the gerund series in line 23. However, the writer does make one mistake with the “there” in line 24, which should be “their,” not “they’re” as stated. But except for this one small error, judgments about what is strong and what is weak or incorrect are accurate.

The essay itself shows that the writer has a good command of the elements of good writing. It is clearly written and moves along quickly and carefully through its points without distraction by details that do not fit the topic being discussed. The sentence structure and vocabulary also show good variety and a high level of writing competence, and it is mostly free of errors. The writer makes only one error, in putting an apostrophe in “authors” where the word is plural, not possessive, in paragraph 3. But this error does not detract from the meaning—we understand what the writer is saying. (A careful proofreading might have caught this error, as the writer seems to know the rules for apostrophes.)

Faculty rated “Sample Student Response 3” at level 6.
Compare your rating of “Sample Student Response 1” with the rating given by the faculty rater. If your rating was different from that assigned by the faculty rater, re-read the Rating Scale (Appendix G), particularly the description for a level-6 response, and review the explanation for why this essay received a level-6 rating.

**Evaluate Your Work**

Which of the three sample essays most resembles yours? Would you rate your essay differently than you did before? Why? Re-read your essay as though you were an examination rater, and rate your essay again.

Rate your essay by circling the appropriate number: 6 5 4 3 2 1

If possible, ask your reader or someone in your writing group to read “Sample Revision Strategies Prompt 1,” your essay, the “Revision Strategies Scoring Guide,” and the three sample student essays, and then rate your essay. Ask your reader(s) to explain their rating to you.

If you are not satisfied with your essay, revise it. Even though you will not have time to rewrite the whole essay during the examination, rewriting now will help you start at a higher level of proficiency the next time. You will have solved some of the problems writers must face when they write in timed situations. Then rate your revision, and ask another person to rate it as well.

**Reflect on Your Writing Process**

Now that you have written a response to a sample “Revision Strategies” question and rated your work, you should reflect on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered as you planned, wrote, revised, and edited your essay. Describe in your journal a significant problem you experienced during this process; identify the cause(s), and try to come up with an appropriate solution. How will you prevent this problem from becoming an obstacle the next time?

Review the set of tentative guidelines you prepared earlier in this unit to help you write an effective analysis and response essay. Keeping in mind all that you have learned during this unit, revise your guidelines and format them so that they are on one page. You should also adjust your time-management plan and note the amount of time you should spend on each writing stage on the same page as your guidelines.
The Assignment

Practice Examination Essay 2
You should not consider yourself fully prepared to successfully answer the “Revision Strategies” question of the UExcel exam in English Composition until you can write a solid essay in response to a sample “Revision Strategies” question under examination conditions. You will now have an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to do this.

You will find another sample examination question, “Revision Strategies Prompt 2,” on the next page. Do not turn the page and look at Prompt 2 before you have established the following examination conditions.

- No notes, textbooks, dictionaries, or other printed matter (except for the examination prompt) within sight.
- A period of quiet, uninterrupted time (50 minutes)
- A computer with a word processor or pen, lined paper, and scrap paper.

When you have established examination conditions and you are ready to begin, turn the page, read “Sample Revision Strategies Prompt 2,” and begin writing.

Learning Tip
Review your Revision Strategies guidelines before beginning the practice examination.
Sample Revision Strategies Prompt 2

The letter that follows was written to the producers of a national TV cartoon program called “Rip & Spanky.” The letter writer is a mother of three young children, and she objects to the violent nature of the cartoon.

Write an essay in which you critique the letter. In your essay, be sure to:

- offer an overall assessment of the strengths, from large-scale arrangement and selection of ideas to the fine points of editing and polishing;
- next, offer an overall assessment of the weaknesses, from large-scale arrangement and selection of ideas to the fine points of editing and polishing;
- assess the appropriateness of the form of writing chosen for the audience and purpose;
- identify patterns of error in punctuation, spelling, word form, usage, sentence structure, etc., and provide examples of each kind of error you identify;
- comment on any other matters that you think the writer should consider as he or she revises the letter;
- offer specific advice for revising the letter that you think would make it a more effective piece of writing.
Sample Student Response Letter

Dear Sirs:

I just saw an episode of “Rip and Spanky” which was shown on November 2, 1995, and I object to the violence of this episode. It gives children all the wrong messages. Kids get ideas, you know. Through the half-hour, Rip searched around his house considering different weapons with which to punish his dog. He picks up a knife, an iron, a rope, and even stands thoughtfully holding his mother’s lipstick. (Just what I need is to buy lipstick for my sons to waste.) If we teach children to use weapons every time they’re angry, what will happen to thoughts of peace in our world?

As a mother of three, it is very hard to keep an eye on what my children are doing all of the time. I have two sons who are 2 and 4 years old and one daughter who is 6. At their different ages, they all have different interests, so while I’m playing toy soldiers with Johnny, I can’t worry about whether Eric is turning on your program. Only Marie likes to play with her stuffed animals better than TV; it keeps her the quieter of my children. In my opinion, if “Rip and Spanky” were shown later at night, kids who will not know how to understand it wouldn’t watch it, they would be in bed.

Violence causes violence. My children like to watch Sesame Street. Why can’t you put more good shows like that on TV. Shows that teach children how to treat people right and learn their alphabet. Some rich person may have the money to buy their children those TV channel protectors but I don’t. You hear the same story all the time: a child, separated from their parents, watch a television show in which a character does something violent, perhaps he hurts himself. Or his friend. Then that child, that TV watcher, goes and does the same thing to himself or his friend. People like you should think of people like me. Stop putting inappropriate shows on day-time TV. Remember the children of today are the adults of tomorrow.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Robin Johnson
Evaluate Your Work

Use the Rating Scale (Appendix G), to rate your essay. Ask your reader or someone in your writing group to read “Revision Strategies Prompt 2,” your essay, and the Rating Scale, and then to rate your essay. Ask your reader(s) to explain the rating to you.

If you are not satisfied with your essay, you may want to revise it. However, if you have serious concerns about your ability to successfully answer this examination question, consider the suggestions in Appendix F of this Course Guide.

Reflect on Your Writing Process

Now that you have written a response to sample “Revision Strategies 2” and rated your work, you should reflect on the process you followed and the problems and successes you encountered as you planned, wrote, revised, and edited your second essay. Describe in your journal any significant problems (if any) that remain for you to address. Try to identify the cause(s) and come up with a solution. How can you minimize or prevent this problem from occurring during the actual exam?

Review the set of tentative guidelines you prepared earlier in this unit to help you write an effective response to writing sample essay. Keeping in mind all that you have learned during this unit, revise your guidelines (including time allocations) and format them so that they are on one page.
Feedback Form:
Part III: Preparing for the Examination

Please give us your feedback on Part II so that we can use your comments to improve our course guides. We want to design the best possible materials and resources for you. However, we need your help to do this. Please complete this form and mail or fax it to us at the address below.

Mailing address:
Center for Online Education
Learning and Academic Services
Excelsior College
7 Columbia Circle
Albany, New York 12203

Fax: (518) 464-8777
Web: www.excelsior.edu
Email: learn@excelsior.edu

Directions: Please answer the questions as indicated.

1. About how many hours did you spend on each of the following units of this Course Guide? (Write the number of hours on the appropriate line for each unit.)

   Unit 11: __  Unit 12: __  Unit 13: __  Unit 14: __

2. How difficult were these units?
   - easy  - average  - difficult  - very difficult

3. What did you like about the units in Part III?

4. What did you dislike about the units in Part III?

5. What suggestions do you have for improving Units 11–14?
   (Please attach additional paper as needed.)

Name ____________________________ Date __________ Social Security # ______________________
   (Optional)  (Optional)

(All information reported on this form will be kept confidential.) THANK YOU.
Now that you have completed all of the units of this Course Guide and prepared yourself for the examination, this is a good time to review and appreciate what you have accomplished. Through guided learning, you have designed and carried out a study plan that has enabled you to develop your own individual writing process and improve your writing skills. You know how to analyze new writing situations and prepare an essay that effectively addresses the key elements of the rhetorical context: your purpose, the audience, and the text (essay). As your writing skills continue to improve, you will find that you have increased your power to affect others. You will be able to apply these skills in a number of ways: you might, for example, influence people in your community on a controversial public issue or propose a solution to a problem at work.

When you receive the results of your examination, you may find that you have met or exceeded the standards you have set for yourself. If so, you will experience a sense of personal fulfillment and satisfaction. If, on the other hand, you find that you have not met your standards, don’t become discouraged. Remember that only your performance on the examination was evaluated, not you personally. Review any diagnostic information you have received. Critically evaluate your approach to independent study. Did you accurately assess your readiness to begin study? Did you formulate an appropriate personal study plan and spend enough time studying? Did you use the complete package of recommended learning materials and use effective study and examination preparation techniques? What will you do differently the next time? By asking yourself these questions, you will be well on your way to developing the skills that you will need as a lifelong learner.
Appendix A

Course Reading List

Literary excerpts for the Argumentation and Analysis/Response prompts may be drawn from the specific readings listed below. You are encouraged to be thoroughly familiar with these works and with the types of literary analysis that might be applied to each. In addition, you may be expected to use these excerpts to support analysis or themes of similar works that are not in the below list.

from the Barnet, et al. text:

**Essays**
- Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail
- Brent Staples, Black Men and Public Space

**Fiction**
- Toni Cade Bambara, The Lesson
- Kate Chopin, The Story of an Hour
- William Faulkner, A Rose for Emily
- Nathaniel Hawthorne, Young Goodman Brown
- James Joyce, Araby
- Flannery O’Connor, A Good Man is Hard to Find
- James Thurber, The Secret Life of Walter Mitty
- John Updike, A&P
- Eudora Welty, A Worn Path

**Poetry**
- Sherman Alexie, On the Amtrak
- Julia Alvarez, Woman’s Work
- W. H. Auden, Musée des Beaux Arts
- Matthew Arnold, In Harmony with Nature
- William Blake, Infant Joy; Infant Sorrow; The Sick Rose; The Tyger
- Gwendolyn Brooks, We Real Cool
- Robert Browning, My Last Duchess
- e.e. cummings, in Just-
- Emily Dickinson, I Heard a Fly buzz—when I died; The Soul selects her own Society; There’s a certain Slant of light
- John Donne, A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning
- T. S. Eliot, The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock
- Robert Frost, Design; Mending Wall
- Allan Ginsberg, In a Supermarket in California
- Louise Gluck, The School Children
- Robert Hayden, Those Winter Sundays
- Seamus Heaney, Digging
- Robert Herrick, Upon Julia’s Clothes
- Gerard Manley Hopkins, Spring and Fall
• Langston Hughes, Theme for English B
• Yusef Komunyakaa, Facing It
• Christopher Marlowe, The Passionate Shepherd to His Love
• Andrew Marvell, To His Coy Mistress
• Pat Mora, Immigrants
• Mary Oliver, The Black Walnut Tree
• Sylvia Plath, Daddy
• Sir Walter Raleigh, The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd
• William Shakespeare, Sonnet 29; Sonnet 73; Sonnet 116
• Walt Whitman, A Noiseless Patient Spider; I Hear America Singing
• William Wordsworth, The Solitary Reaper

Drama
• Susan Glaspell, Trifles
• Lorraine Hansberry, A Raisin in the Sun

—from the Axelrod & Cooper text:

Chapter 4:
• Anastasia Toufexis, Love: The Right Chemistry

Chapter 6:
• Jessica Statsky, Children Need to Play, Not Compete
• Amitai Etzioni, Working at McDonald’s

Chapter 7:
• Patrick O’Malley, More Testing, More Learning

Chapter 9:
• Stephen King, Why We Crave Horror Movies
• Sheila McClain, The Fitness Culture

Chapter 12:
• Martin Luther King, Jr., An Annotated Sample from “Letter from Birmingham Jail”
Appendix B

Sample Error Log

Design an Error Log in your journal to record the errors you find as you edit each essay. Tracking these problem areas will help you to identify your most common errors so that you can develop a personal editing strategy for your writing. An example is done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay</th>
<th>Type of Error</th>
<th>Number of Errors</th>
<th>Correction Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>sentence fragment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>combine w/ previous sent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Sample Spelling Log

Design a Spelling Log in your journal to record the spelling errors that you discover in each essay as you edit and proofread. Tracking your most common spelling errors will help you to develop a list of personal “trouble words.” If you use a computerized spell checker, record each word that the computer identifies, along with your incorrect spelling and the correction. An example is done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay</th>
<th>Word Misspelled (as spelled in essay)</th>
<th>Number of Occurrences</th>
<th>Correct Spelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>Paralell</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Parallel</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix D

### Sample Completed Time-Use Chart

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 am</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Rise, Eat</td>
<td>Rise, Eat</td>
<td>Rise, Eat</td>
<td>Rise, Eat</td>
<td>Rise, Eat</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 am</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Commute</td>
<td>Commute</td>
<td>Commute</td>
<td>Commute</td>
<td>Commute</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 am</td>
<td>Rise, Eat</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Rise, Eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 am</td>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 am</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Chores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>&quot;</td>
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<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 pm</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 pm</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Chores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Commute</td>
<td>Commute</td>
<td>Commute</td>
<td>Commute</td>
<td>Commute</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 pm</td>
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<td>Dinner</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 pm</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Workout</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 pm</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 pm</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
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<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
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<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Appendix E

Time-Use Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 am</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F

If You Are Having Difficulty

If you are having difficulty improving your writing, you may find the following suggestions helpful.

1. **Review your approach to guided learning.** Did you accurately assess your readiness level and take corrective action to strengthen your weaknesses? Were you able to formulate an appropriate personal study plan and spend enough time studying? Did you complete all of the assignments and exercises in this Course Guide as directed? If you answered “no” to any of these questions, you may benefit from redoing units to which you may not have devoted enough time.

2. **Critically evaluate your strengths and weaknesses.** Work with your reader to review all of the assignments you have done (each draft) to identify areas that consistently caused difficulty. Use the subject index of each of your textbooks to find additional exercises that focus on your weaknesses and do them. Then revise your assignments to address each weakness. Ask your reader to evaluate your revised assignments.

3. **Join a writing group.** Joining a writing group is an excellent way to find people who will be willing and able to help you with your writing. You may be able to join a writing group in your community that meets face to face, or you may be able to join a group that meets online. (The MyExcelsior Community Discussion Board [see p. 11] includes a study group for English Composition.)

4. **Join MyExcelsior Community.** MyExcelsior Community is a Web-based resource that will help you to contact other Excelsior College students who may be willing to help you with your writing. (Check the Excelsior College Website for MyExcelsior Community at www.excelsior.edu.)

5. **Seek the help of an acquaintance who is an experienced writer.** If you know someone who has had some experience as a professional writer or who writes regularly on the job, ask this person for help.
## Appendix G

### Rating Scale

#### Official Rating Scale for English Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating Dimension</th>
<th>Scoring Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Use of Written Language | 1 | □ No response*  
  □ Response cannot be evaluated due to lack of content or off topic.* |
| | 2 | □ Organization is lacking or ineffective.  
  □ Weak or confusing style  
  □ Many major grammatical and syntactical errors that impede meaning  
  □ Many major mechanical errors that impede meaning |
| | 3 | □ Attempt at organization is evident.  
  □ Weak or confusing style  
  □ A few grammatical and syntactical errors that impede meaning  
  □ A few mechanical errors that impede meaning |
| | 4 | □ Competent organization  
  □ Competent style  
  □ Grammatical and syntactical errors that do not impede meaning  
  □ Mechanical errors that do not impede meaning |
| | 5 | □ Clear organization  
  □ Skillful style  
  □ Few grammatical and syntactical errors, and they do not impede meaning  
  □ Few mechanical errors, and they do not impede meaning |
| | 6 | □ Creative, clear organization  
  □ Sophisticated style  
  □ Few grammatical and syntactical errors, and they do not impede meaning  
  □ Few, if any, mechanical errors, and they do not impede meaning |

*If rating is one (1), please grid one of the following on the scoring sheet:  
□ No response (a blank or nearly blank paper).  
□ Did not address the question asked or off topic.
### Official Rating Scale for English Composition (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating Dimension</th>
<th>Scoring Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No response*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response cannot be evaluated due to logical contradiction, failure to make a coherent statement, or off topic.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Arguments and supporting evidence are attempted, but are neither convincing nor coherent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thesis (stated or implied) may be attempted but fails to do several of the following: make writer’s opinion clear; focus on prompt’s requirements; appear near beginning and/or end of essay; qualify its language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arguments and supporting evidence are present, but either or both may be weak and poorly sequenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some arguments may be fallacious or ill considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thesis (stated or implied) appears near beginning and/or end of essay, makes writer’s opinion fairly clear but fails to some extent to address prompt’s requirements or fails to qualify, in several cases, its language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Arguments and supporting evidence are appropriate and adequately sequenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thesis (stated or implied) appears near beginning and/or end of essay, makes writer’s opinion adequately clear, addresses adequately the prompt’s requirements, but may fail, in a few cases, to qualify its language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Arguments and supporting evidence are well chosen and well sequenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thesis (stated or implied) appears near beginning and/or end of essay, makes writer’s opinion very clear and addresses thoroughly prompt’s requirements, but may fail, in one or two cases, to qualify its language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Arguments and supporting evidence are well chosen, well sequenced, and sophisticated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thesis (stated or implied) appears near beginning and/or end of essay, makes writer’s opinion completely clear, addresses thoroughly and inventively the prompt’s requirements, qualifies language in all cases carefully and deftly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If rating is one (1), please grid one of the following on the scoring sheet:
- No response (a blank or nearly blank paper).
- Did not address the question asked or off topic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating Dimension</th>
<th>Scoring Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Understanding Concepts | 1 | - No response*  
- No understanding of the key concepts* |
|                   | 2 | - Thesis (stated or implied) does not mention required key concepts.  
- Understanding of key concepts is minimal.  
- Development does not consistently follow the required key concepts. |
|                   | 3 | - Key concepts either do not appear in thesis (stated or implied) or are misunderstood.  
- Key concepts are partially developed, but unfocused. |
|                   | 4 | - Key concepts are clearly and adequately understood and developed. |
|                   | 5 | - Understanding is clear and insightful; key concepts are developed. |
|                   | 6 | - Understanding is sophisticated and complex; key concepts are well developed. |

*If rating is one (1), please grid one of the following on the scoring sheet:  
☐ No response (a blank or nearly blank paper).  
☐ Did not address the question asked or off topic.
Week 1: Getting the Most Out of Your Course Guide

1. To prepare for this course
   b. Set up a notebook or computer folder for a Journal. Add a section called How to Study and a second section called Pre-Reading.
   c. Be sure you have all the books and other materials you need to begin.
   d. Choose a reader, a person or a group willing to read your writing and offer feedback. (See Course Guide p. 22 for suggestions about choosing a reader.)
   e. Preview the essays, fiction, poetry, and drama on the Course Reading List (Course Guide, Appendix A). Note in your journal Pre-Reading section comments or questions that you may want to address when you reach Units 7–10, which focus on these works of literature. Space these pre-readings over Weeks 1–7.

2. To begin to manage your time
   a. Read the suggested allocations of study time in Appendix A of this syllabus. Compare these with the time you have available when you prepare your Long-Term Study Plan.
   b. Read the instructions and prepare your Plan. Once your Plan is complete, copy or paste it into the How to Study section of your Journal.
   c. Post a copy of your Plan near your calendar.

3. To begin analyzing the test questions
   a. Read the descriptions of the questions in the UExcel exam Content Guide for English Composition (not the Course Guide).
   c. Outline in your How to Study journal section what each question described in the Content Guide asks you to do. Leave generous space after each requirement: you will be adding information as you discover ways to respond to these requirements.
   d. Read through the sample questions in your Content Guide and add any additional requirements that you notice to your outlines.

4. To begin to study
   Preview the sections of the Course Guide that give you specific help with answering each of the exam questions.
   a. Read through Unit 11: Writing Essay Examinations carefully in order to see what preparations you will need to make to take the English Composition exam. Make a note to yourself on p. 121 to refer back to the How to Study section of your journal when you reach Unit 11. You will find the outlines very useful.
   b. Unit 12: Question One–Argumentation
      • See Course Guide, p. 130: the Sample Argumentation Prompt 1. As you work your way through Units 2–7, you will become familiar with the concepts of thesis, counterargument, and
system of citation. You will apply them under examination conditions.

- **See** Course Guide, pp. 134–135: this section of Unit 12 proposes that you follow three stages of writing when you are working under examination conditions. These condense the standard steps of the writing process that you will study in Unit 1. Units 2–3 and 5–10 give you essay assignments to practice on until the writing process becomes second nature. You will then be able, under the pressure of an examination, to follow the steps quickly and confidently.

- **Read** the rest of Unit 12 to see how you will later prepare to answer Question One: Argumentation.

c. **Unit 13: Question Two–Analysis and Response**

- **See** Course Guide, pp. 148–149: The chart focuses on the four types of literature that you will be asked to analyze. As you work your way through Units 7–10, you will become familiar with the concepts of tone, irony, and genre. You will be prepared to apply them under examination conditions.

- **Read** through the rest of Unit 12 to see how you will later prepare to answer Question Two: Analysis and Response.

d. **Unit 14: Question Three–Revision Strategies**

- **See** Course Guide, p. 172. Read the instructions, noticing references to the notes you made in your journal and on your drafts and to helpful comments others made about your writing. Knowing that you will later write a response that offers another student a plan for revision will suggest the importance of practicing with such plans (described under Revising in *St. Martin’s Guide to Writing*) as you revise your own essays in Units 2–3 and 5–10. In addition, you will find that the aids included under “edit and proofread” at the ends of Units 2–3 and 4–6 will help you spot errors of sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation in the writing sample to which you will respond under exam conditions.

- **Read** the rest of Unit 14 to see how you will later prepare to answer Question Three – Revision Strategies.

**Complete this week’s study by carefully reading the introduction to Part II: Course Guide, pp. 19–26. Note, especially, that:**

- An English Composition course does not require you to master a large body of knowledge.
- An English Composition course does require you to read with understanding.
- An English Composition course does require you to write in response to this reading with logic and clarity.

Congratulations! You've finished your first week of study. Now, you are ready to begin Unit 1, where you will focus on the skills you will need to answer the essay questions on the English Composition examination.

**Week 2: Course Guide Unit 1**

We offer the following suggestions for getting the most out of the Unit 1 assignments. Most of these suggestions will apply to later units as well.

1. **Unit Objectives/Self-Testing:** Each unit begins with a list of Unit Objectives. These are abilities you need to master before going on to the next unit. A valuable introduction to each unit is to enter the list of Unit Objectives in your journal, leaving space to fill in comments as you work through the unit. As you complete the unit, use the list on the unit’s title page to see if you are ready to go on.
2. **Write the letter** assigned on *Course Guide* p. 32 early in the week and send it to your reader so you will get it back in plenty of time.

3. **Compare the list** of stages of the learning process you followed in your letter to your reader with the list of stages described in the *Guide*. Are there any changes you might make in your personal writing process or are you fairly satisfied with your way of working?

4. **List** in your journal some invention strategies (ways of getting ideas for writing) that you think might help when you are planning an essay for an examination.

5. **Consider the responses** when your letter comes back from your reader. Do they suggest ways that you might have assessed your audience more thoughtfully or made your topic more interesting and detailed? Do the responses suggest ways in which your personal writing process needs revision? Answer the reader in your journal. Were the responses from your reader too vague to help? If so, ask your reader for more detail. (If you have not received your letter yet, remember to return to a thoughtful analysis of your letter while you are studying Unit 2).

6. **Administer a self-test** at the end of every unit, using the unit objectives on the title page. If you are not sure that you have mastered each unit objective, review the relevant pages in *St. Martin's Guide to Writing* and other texts used in the particular unit. It is important to recognize that each unit builds on the previous unit, so learning everything you need to learn in one unit before going on to the next will help you be successful. File your self-tests for future study.

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**Weeks 3 and 4: Course Guide**

**Units 2–3**

Units 2–3 focus on the basic writing you will need to master in order to answer all three questions on the *English Composition exam*. At the beginning of your study period on each of these units:

- Review your outlines of requirements for answering the questions. As you work your way through the units, note in the space after each requirement skills that you have gained that will help you write well-informed, well-phrased answers.

Unit 2 guides you through the steps leading to an essay based on personal experience. Writing this essay will give you familiarity with a lively, detailed writing style that you can use in order to respond to the requirements of Question One. For Question One, you will need to offer evidence for your claims and personal experience often gives very persuasive evidence. (For an example of an essay that puts such experience to good use, see *Guide* p. 83.)

**Units 2–3 require careful time management:**

1. **Let your reader know** before you begin your first study session that you will be sending a draft. Make sure the reader will be available.

2. **Allocate an hour or two** to each step in the first part of the writing process from *Search Your Memory* to *Prepare to Write*.

3. **Set aside a multi-hour block** of time to draft your essay when you reach the *Write* step (*Guide*, p. 38).

4. **Let your draft rest** a day or two before beginning to revise.

**Units 2–3 require careful revision based on your reader’s comments:**

1. **Outline** your reader’s comments briefly in your journal. If your reader seems too critical, remember that the criticism is directed at your draft, not at you. Use suggestions that help and set aside the rest.
2. **Revise your drafts**, following the plans for revision on the assigned pages in *St. Martin's Guide to Writing*. When you have finished, file the drafts in a separate section of your journal. They will be useful later when you practice essay answers, especially for Question Three–**Revision Strategies**.

Units 2–3 offer good opportunities to review grammar and punctuation. These exercises will improve your own writing and will help you offer suggestions for revision when you answer Question Three–**Revision Strategies**.

Units 2–3 require careful self-evaluation of your essays and of your grasp of unit objectives:

1. **Fill out the chart** on the final page of each unit. Consider what you have learned and make further revisions to your essays before filing them for future reference.

2. **Administer a self-test** at the end of each unit. File your self-test for future study.

**Week 5: Course Guide Unit 4**

Unit 4 focuses on the research and documentation skills you will need to answer Questions One and Two on the exam. At the beginning of your study session for this unit, review your outlines of the requirements for these essays:

1. **Note** that these two questions ask you to always “cite each quotation and paraphrase using a standard system of citation (APA, Chicago, or MLA style).” If you have not already done so, add this requirement to your outline.

2. **Become familiar** with the citation format of the style you choose (*Guide*, p. 49).

3. **Recognize that the English Composition exam requires** only in-text citations (APA and MLA) or footnotes (Chicago). It does not ask you to furnish the bibliographical entries that come at the end of an essay or research paper.

**Unit 4 requires careful time management:**

1. **Begin ahead of your first actual study session** to choose a topic for research (see *Guide*, pp. 58 and 66).

2. **Plan a trip to a physical library.** Call ahead for hours and check to see if a librarian might be available to help you navigate through both the physical books and periodicals and the library’s electronic resources. Also orient yourself to the Excelsior College Library, especially if you are unable to visit a physical library.

3. **Unit 4 gives you a good opportunity to become comfortable with your chosen citation style**. After working through the unit, practice your citation style on quotations and paraphrases until the style becomes second nature.

4. **Self-Test**: As you have done in previous units, give yourself a test to make sure you have mastered the learning objectives on the title page of Unit 4. Review any information or skills about which you are uncertain.

**Weeks 6 to 8: Course Guide Units 5–7**

Units 5–7 focus on the skills you will need to master in order to answer, in particular, *English Composition exam* Question One - Argumentation. At the beginning of your study period on each of these units:

**Review your outline** of requirements for answering Question One. As you work your way through the units, note in the space after the requirement, skills you have gained that will help you write well-informed, well-phrased answers.

For example, Unit 5 guides you through the steps leading to an essay in which you explain a concept, while Unit 6 guides you through the steps leading to an essay in which you argue a position. Writing these two essays will give you familiarity with two types of argumentative writing often required for Question One on the examination. For Question One, you will need to master all the skills listed in Sample
Argumentation Prompt 1 (Course Guide, p. 130). For an example of an essay that puts such skills to good use, see Sample Student Response 1 on Guide, pp. 136–137.

Units 5–7 offer good opportunities to practice documenting sources and to master editing strategies, especially effective word choice and sentence style. These exercises will improve your writing and will help you respond to all three types of questions on the examination. Both Question One–Argumentation and Question Two–Analysis and Response, for example, require documentation of sources, while Question Three–Revision Strategies, requires you to recommend editing strategies to another writer. As you notice skills you acquire related to the examination requirements, add these to your outlines.

Unit 7 is a good transition to later units. This unit asks you to analyze an argumentative essay, summarize the essay’s chief features, evaluate and critique the essay, and support your judgment about the essay. As you can see from reading Sample Argumentation Prompt 1 (Guide, p. 130), this Unit will be of great assistance in answering Question One. In addition, it will help you with Questions Two and Three:

1. Question Two asks you to analyze and interpret a literary text. Because an essay is one type of literary text, Unit 8 gives you your first experience with the kind of analysis and response required for Question Two. Review your journal notes on essays that you encountered in your pre-reading and re-read the essays on the Course Reading List.

2. Question Two requires documentation of sources, a skill also required for the essay assignment in Unit 7.

3. Question Three requires you to analyze, evaluate, critique, and support your judgment about the work of another student. This work may not always be an essay. The sample question in Unit 14, for example, presents an argumentative letter (Guide, pp. 173–174). But you will need the same skills to criticize and evaluate this genre as you will be practicing on essays in Unit 7.

Units 5–7 require careful self-evaluation of your essays and of your grasp of unit objectives:

1. Fill out the chart on the final page of each unit.

2. Administer a self-test at the end of each unit.

Note: You may now be eager to test your skills by writing a practice answer to English Composition exam Question One.

In order to test yourself:

• Turn to Unit 11 and work through the general instructions for writing the answer to an essay question.

• Answer the first sample question in Unit 12 (Course Guide, pp. 127–143). Save the second prompt for Question One until you have completed all the units through 11.

• Study the rating scale (Course Guide, Appendix G) and, with the help of your reader, rate your essay and compare your score with those assigned by a faculty rater to the sample responses (Course Guide, pp. 136–142).

If you are not satisfied with your rating, and are not sure how to improve it, consult Course Guide, Appendix F.

• Diagnose your areas of strength and weakness by using the Rating Scale.

• Consider how you might improve areas of weakness, perhaps by reviewing parts of Units 2–7.

• Consider working with a tutor.

The advantage of giving yourself a pre-test at the end of Unit 7 is to boost your confidence and to give yourself several weeks to improve your basic writing skills—perhaps by finding a tutor—well before you take the English Composition exam.
Weeks 9 to 11: Course Guide
Units 8–10

Units 8–10 focus on your skills as a reader of short stories, poems, and plays, skills you will need to master in order to answer Question Two–Analysis and Response. At the beginning of your study period on each of these units:

Review your outline of requirements for answering Question Two and read Sample Analysis and Response Prompt 1 (Course Guide, pp. 150–152). Note that Question Two never asks you to know either authors or texts from memory. It does require you to be familiar with literary terms and to be able to discuss, for example, a poem’s diction and imagery. You will have a copy of the poem in front of you on the examination. As you work your way through the units, use your outline, noting in the space after the requirements, skills that you have gained that will help you write well-informed, well-phrased answers.

Unit 8 guides you through the steps leading to an essay in which you interpret a story; Unit 9 guides you through the steps leading to an essay in which you interpret a poem; and Unit 10 guides you through the steps leading to an essay in which you interpret a play. Writing these three essays will help you become familiar with three literary genres in addition to the essay you studied in Unit 7. It will also help you become familiar with the concepts of literary analysis required for Question Two. For Question Two, you will need to master all the concepts listed in Sample Analysis and Response Prompt 1 (Course Guide, p. 150). For an example of an essay that puts such skills to good use, see Sample Student Response 3 (Course Guide, pp. 162–163).

As you begin studying each unit from 8 to 10, refer to your journal’s pre-reading notes on the literary genre the unit addresses. The reading assignments for each unit will walk you through the items on the Course Reading List, any of which may appear on the examination.

Some students find these literary units more difficult than the earlier units. You need to take advantage of the assignments in St. Martin’s Guide to Writing and Barnet, et al. to help you understand, interpret, and appreciate the readings you have been assigned.

Units 8–10 offer good opportunities to practice identifying and distinguishing key terms that express important literary concepts. You should list these in a separate part of your journal, Glossary of Literary Terms. These exercises will improve your own writing and will help you respond to Question Two–Analysis and Response. As you notice literary skills and concepts you are acquiring that relate to Question Two, add these to your outline.

Units 8–10 require careful self-evaluation of your essays and of your grasp of unit objectives:

1. Fill out the chart on the final page of each unit.
2. Administer a self-test at the end of each unit

Weeks 12 to 15: Course Guide
Units 11–14

Units 11–14 focus on test-taking skills you will need to master in order to do well on the English Composition exam. To get the most out of these units, follow the guidelines below.

Unit 11: Taking your academic audience (Course Guide, p. 122) into account, review

1. Use of supporting evidence (reasons) to make your claims convincing
   a. Review your own essays, looking for examples of reasons and listing these examples.
   b. Remember always to include reasons for every claim or opinion.
2. Use of correct grammar and mechanics
   a. **Review** your error and spelling logs.
   b. **Look up** in *St. Martin’s Guide to Writing* and *A Writer’s Reference* any errors that seem to occur frequently and learn how to correct or avoid them.

3. Use of correct citation style: see notes from Unit 4.

4. **Take the examination time limits into account.** Design a personalized Time Management Plan (*Course Guide*, pp. 123–125), being sure to leave time to edit and proofread. **Administer a self-test** at the end of Unit 11.

**Unit 12: Argumentation**

1. **Work** from your outline for Question One and follow Unit 12’s instructions carefully.

2. If you have already done a pre-test for this question at the end of Unit 7, review and note points you need to focus on to do well on Question One.

3. **On Question One: Argumentation,** faculty raters will look especially for well-supported arguments. Do not forget that personal experience may form good support.

**Unit 13: Analysis and Response**

1. **Work** from your outline for Question Two and follow Unit 13’s instructions carefully.

2. **When pre-planning your answer for Question Two,** notice that this question always takes the form illustrated by Sample Analysis and Response Writing Prompt 1. **This means that both pre-writing and a formal essay are essential and that you need to base the formal essay on the pre-writing.** To do so may seem repetitious to some test takers, but faculty raters will be looking for a close connection between pre-writing and a formal essay.

**Unit 14: Revision Strategies**

1. **Work** from your outline for Question Three and follow Unit 14’s instructions carefully.

2. **Organize** your lists of the weaknesses and strengths that you find in the Writing Sample. Plan an essay that would be helpful for a student writer who wanted to revise her/his work.

3. **Start with the questions that affect the whole writing sample** (for example, confusing organization) and work your way down to local problems (for example, diction that is too informal for the writer’s audience or frequent spelling errors).

4. **Organize each topic of your critique, using paragraphs to develop your main points such as organization, audience, and grammar and spelling.**

5. **Edit and proofread your critique, making legible changes where needed.**

**Week 16: Wrap-Up and Review**

**Congratulations!** You have finished your long course of study and are probably ready to take the UExcel exam in English Composition. If you are still concerned about particular difficulties with your writing, consult Appendix F for suggestions to improve your writing before taking your exam. Spend your final week clearing up minor questions, reviewing the literature on the Course Reading List, writing practice essays of the type asked on the UExcel exam in English Composition, and boosting your confidence.
Notes
Materials
Feedback Form

Feedback Form
The Excelsior College Office of Academic Services would like feedback on your experience using the learning materials and resources for English Composition. We will use your comments to improve our materials.

Please complete this form and return it to the Center for Online Education Learning and Academic Services, Excelsior College, 7 Columbia Circle, Albany, New York 12203 (Fax: 518-464-8777) or send your comments via email to: learn@excelsior.edu.

Directions: Please answer the questions as indicated.

1. How strong was your background in writing when you began this course of study?
   - Weak
   - Average
   - Strong

2. Check the study materials and resources you used for English Composition and rate each in terms of quality (1=lowest quality…10=highest quality) by circling a number.

    | Study Materials and Resources | Rating (circle) |
    |------------------------------|-----------------|
    | Axelrod, Rise B., & Charles R. Cooper. *Sticks and Stones and Other Student Essays,* 6th ed. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
    | Barnet, Sylvan, William Burto, & William E. Cain, eds. *Literature for Composition: An Introduction to Literature.* | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
    | Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference.* | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
    | Interactive exercises on publisher's website: Hacker, Diana. *Exercises to Accompany A Writer's Reference & Answers.* http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/writersref7e | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
    | Excelsior College. *Course Guide for English Composition.* (this book) | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
    | MyExcelsior Community Discussion Board for English Composition | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
    | Excelsior College Online Tutoring Service | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
    | Other (list) | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

3. Did you take the UExcel exam in English Composition?
   - Yes—What grade did you receive? __________
   - No

4. What suggestions do you have for improving the learning materials and resources?
   (Attach additional paper if necessary.)

   Name __________________________ SSN __________________________ Date ____________
   (optional) (optional) (optional)

   (All information reported on this form will be kept confidential.) THANK YOU!