



# Elements of Writing Instruction

Part II



# Purposes of This Session

- Encourage you: there are many basic elements of writing you can grade
- Learn to grade paragraphs
- Focus: analyzing and grading essays

# Quick Review: Writing Session I

**Four key elements to teach. These were:**

1. Strong sentences
2. Solid paragraphs
3. Skillful transitions
4. General structure and style

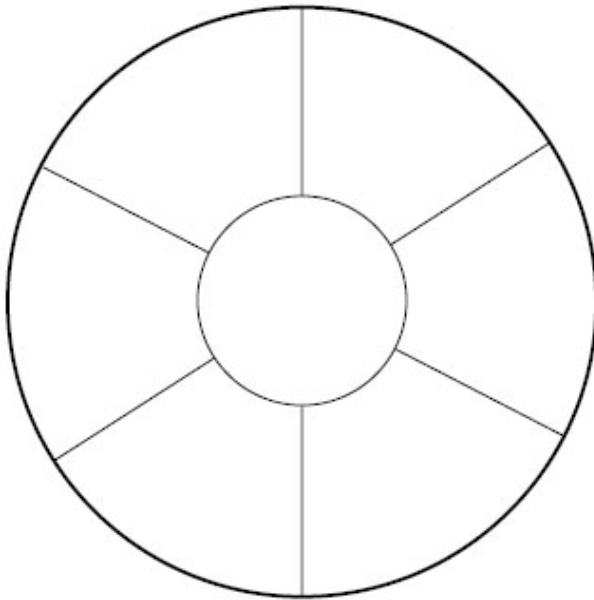
# General Aspects of Grading Writing

**Give enough instruction & goals when assigning work**

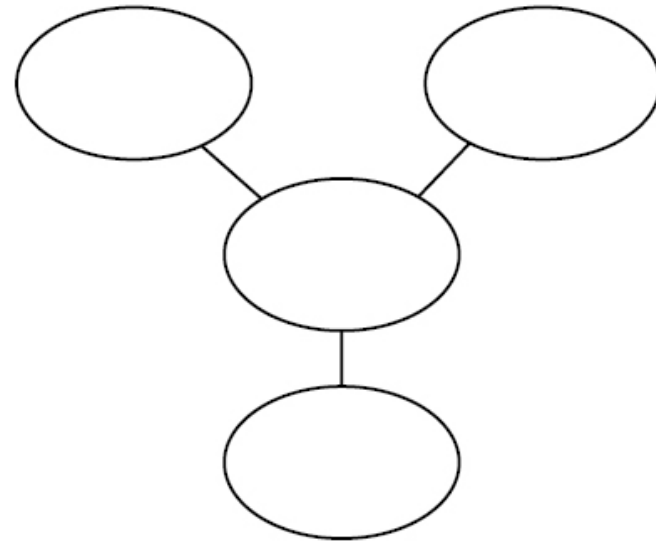
- **Rubrics** are helpful for setting goals
- Require the entire **writing process** each time:
  - Prewriting
  - Drafting
  - Self-proofing
  - Teacher input
  - Polishing
  - Presenting

# Prewriting: Graphic Organizers

Describing Wheel

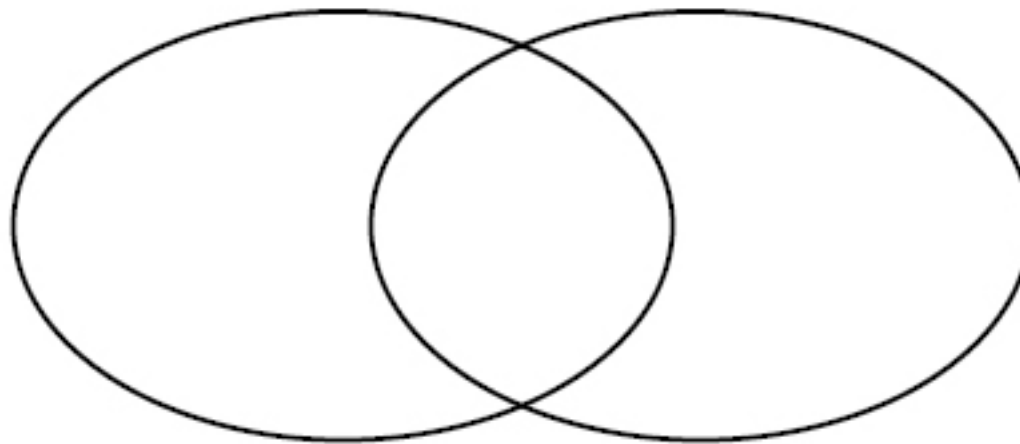


Mind Map/cluster



# Prewriting: Graphic Organizers

Venn Diagram



# Prewriting: Graphic Organizers

Five W's Chart

SEE	SMELL	TOUCH	TASTE	HEAR

# Prewriting: Graphic Organizers

Sequence Chart

ORDER	WHAT HAPPENED?
FIRST	
NEXT	
NEXT	
NEXT	
LAST	

# Self-Proof

## Level 3 Proofing Sheet

- Capital letters start each sentence.
- Proper punctuation ends each sentence.
- Capitalize all proper nouns.

# Self Proof

## Level 9 Essay SELF-Proofing Sheet

- Sentence capitalization
- Strong, concrete words used throughout
- Comma, semi-colon, colon, quotation mark, apostrophe correct
- End punctuation correct on each sentence
- Spelling check
- Strong thesis?
- Three strong supportive categories
- Fact check: check mark over each fact (pencil).
- Paragraphs each contain information that supports the topic sentence
- Summary paragraph
- Summary statement ends the piece

# Teacher Input

- Mark up his draft
- Teach him to love reproof!
- Only pride resists this step, so address the heart as needed.
- Make sure you are consistent

# Polishing and Presenting

- Polishing: final edits are inserted
- Presenting: find venues for responses!
  - Dad
  - Local homeschooling newsletter
  - Online magazines
  - Published journals

**Nice opening, but not properly indented**

## Alfred the Great

Alfred the Great reigned over the west Saxons in South West England from about AD 871-901. Alfred became king when his brother died fighting Danish Vikings that were currently attacking England. Right away, Alfred had to defend his kingdom from the Danish Vikings. To be able to fight against the Vikings on the water, Alfred made the first English Navy. Alfred's Navy won a victory, but a few years later the Danes came pouring into England. After many months the Danes were finally defeated. Alfred the Great repaired his kingdom and started a revival of literature and learning. Because Alfred was such a great leader in peace and in war, he became the only English king known as "the Great."

**This sentence has too many ideas.  
Break it into two sentences.**

**Good conclusion**

**Better word needed. Try:  
"created or commissioned"?**

**Nice opening, with proper indentation**

## Justinian's Code

What is the Justinian Code? The Justinian Code is a code of laws put together by a ruler of Eastern Rome, named Justinian I, who ruled from AD 527-565. Justinian made his law code by collecting all the laws of all the different cultures in his empire, such as the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Jewish, Christians, Arabs and so forth. He hired ten men to compile all the different laws into one simple complete law for everyone. The useless laws of their time were extinguished. The useful laws, that were helpful for the people, were implemented. The Justinian Law Code was made in four parts. The first part is called the Institutes, which was used as learning material for students especially those entering a legal profession. The Digest, which is the second part of The Justinian Code, teaches about trials and decisions. The third part is the Codex; it covers statutes and principles. Novels is the last section, it is for proposed new laws. The Justinian Code is a wonderful concise law that is helpful and even used in our present day!

**Names of sections should be italicized.**

**Not the best word choice.**

**Good conclusion**

**Note the variety of sentence structures.**

# Teacher's Purpose in Assigning Analytical Essays

**Essays show teachers 2 important things:**

- Content: what does the student know?
- Structure: how well can he say it?

# Essay Content

## **Did she know the lesson content?**

- Thesis statement: sound and strong
- Three good, supportive categories
- Lots of facts that support her position
- Correct selection of facts—stick to the question
- Solid reasoning: how she uses her facts
- Conclusions that hit home

# Essay Structure

How well can he express what he knows?

- Strong sentences
- Solid paragraphs
- Skillful use of transition words/sentences
  - that join paragraphs
  - that lead the reader
- General structure—arranging paragraphs in the proper order for the genre
- Style: is it appropriate for the piece?

# Essay: Opening Paragraph

## Opening paragraph always...

- Has a **thesis & supportive categories**
- What, exactly, is a thesis statement?
  - A statement of **opinion**
  - A **debatable** statement
  - Is **proven** by the end of the essay
  - Not a summary of the argument to be

# Essay: Opening Paragraph

## **Finding three supportive categories:**

- Often in the question/topic offered by the teacher
- If not, the student must create them
- In an analysis of leadership, one might look at
  - an individual's successes
  - his character
  - and the recorded opinions of others
- A nation's actions might be analyzed in terms of their goals, tactics, and outcomes of their actions

# Essay: Body Paragraphs

## **Students must learn to select facts!**

- This is one of the benefits of essay writing
- Essay writing trains minds for sound thinking
- Average a new fact every sentence or two
- Pepper with facts, not long-winded opinions
- Facts don't deaden essays—bad style or clumsy arrangements of facts do

# Essay: Body Paragraphs

## How can you help with drafts?

- Ask, “Do facts directly support the argument?”
- Ask the student to highlight (circle) his facts
- Questions about the facts? Student should explain or point out his source.
- Make sure students adequately cite their facts (i.e. teach MLA formatting)

# Essay: Grading Content

## What to look for in a draft:

- Strong thesis statement
- Balanced, strong, & supportive categories
- Lots of good, important, supportive facts
- Correct *selection* of facts—sticks to the question
- Solid reasoning displayed throughout?
- Conclusion that hits home

# Essay: Structures

**There are 5 basic kinds of analytical essays:**

- Expository
- Compare/contrast
- Persuasive
- Descriptive
- Narrative

# Essay: Structures

**In all essays, teach students to...**

1. Tell them what you're going to say.
2. Say it.
3. Tell them what you said.

# Essay: Structures

## **Introductory paragraph:**

**Tell them what you're going to say.**

- Construct a debatable thesis statement
- List three supportive categories of facts that will prove the thesis
- Include one concluding/transitional sentence to end this first, topic paragraph

# Essay: Structures

## Three body paragraphs:

### Say it!

- With facts, expand 3 categories into 3 paragraphs.
- Parallelism is key.
- Stylistically, this is where strong writing shines!
- Transition words and phrases within and between paragraphs enhance the argument (and grade! 😊)

# Essay: Structures

## Concluding paragraph:

### Tell them what you said (and more)!

- Simply restate the thesis and three categories.
- End with a sentence that tells the reader the argument is finished and the analysis complete.
- Great essays add synthesis: a twist!

# Grading Practicum

- “Nationalism is a force that can greatly strengthen a nation, but it can also be very dangerous when it is not controlled.”
- Assess this statement with regard to issues during the presidency of John Quincy Adams.

## Basic Expository Essay

### Dangers of Nationalism

One of the major political issues during the presidency of John Quincy Adams was the rise of nationalism. Nationalism is a force that can greatly strengthen a nation, but it can also be very dangerous when it is not controlled. There are three major ways in which this can happen: it can cause sectionalism, national unrest, and racial divisions.

First, nationalism, when taken too far, can lead to sectionalism within a nation. It is sometimes good for an ethnic group or area to form its own nation, but often the nation will not be able to stand. During the presidency of John Quincy Adams, sectionalism was rising in the ~~U.S.A.~~ <sup>America</sup> between the North, the South, and the West. All three groups <sup>needed</sup> each other, but they <sup>refused</sup> to concede demands, and this eventually <sup>led</sup> to civil war between the North and the South. If this rise of sectionalism had come during the Revolutionary War period, the U.S. ~~would~~ <sup>might</sup> not have been strong enough to defeat Britain.

Secondly, nationalism can cause unrest and war, often leading to extremist movements such as communism and fascism. Two great examples of this are the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and the fascist dictatorship established by Mussolini in Italy. Some say that nationalism is synonymous with patriotism, but patriotism implies loyalty to one's country. These were not examples of loyalty, but of unbridled lust for personal power.

Lastly, nationalism can cause serious division between cultures and ethnic groups, and often encourages racism. An argument in favor of nationalism says that people of common cultures and ethnic groups can better identify with each other, and thus, they would benefit from being their own nation. While this is partially true, it shouldn't be that way. In the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson writes, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." Humans are still just as human, in spite of lingual, cultural, and ethnic differences. We cannot ignore this.

In all this, nationalism can still be good. If it is not taken too far, it can strengthen the loyalty and patriotism of citizens. But when it is left to go out of control, the results are disastrous.



Good conclusion

# Grading This Sample Essay

- Understand expository essay grading
- Use your rubric to arrive at a grade for this sample essay with me



**Questions?**