

Ideas and Content

As you begin your paper you generate ideas. Your ideas and content are the reasons for writing a paper. Every paper should convey a message and be easy to follow. Some thoughts to get you going:

- ◆ What is my message and is it focused and clear?
- ◆ Did I include important details relevant to my topic?
- ◆ Did the reader learn something new?
- ◆ Is my paper interesting and easy to understand?

Organization

Organizing your ideas helps a reader move through your paper in a meaningful way. Here are some things to keep in mind as you write your paper:

- ◆ Does my beginning hook my reader?
- ◆ Is my paper easy to follow? Did I choose the best way to organize my story?
- ◆ Do my ideas link to a main message?
- ◆ Do I have a strong conclusion that wraps up the story?

Voice

Your voice is what gives your writing personality, flavor and style. Questions to think about as you write your paper:

- ◆ Can you tell I am enthusiastic about my topic?
- ◆ Does this writing sound like me?
- ◆ How do I want my readers to feel?
- ◆ Will my story hold readers' attention? Will they want to hear more?

Sentence Fluency

Fluent writing has rhythm. Sentences vary in length and structure. It is easy and pleasurable to read aloud:

It is important to think about:

- ◆ Is my story easy to read?
- ◆ Do my sentences begin in different ways?
- ◆ Did I use some long and some short sentences?
- ◆ Does my paper sound smooth as I read it aloud?

Word Choice

The specific words that you choose create images, capture a reader's attention and make your story memorable.

Look at your paper and decide:

- ◆ Have I used some strong verbs or colorful phrases that grab my reader?
- ◆ Have I chosen the most precise word?
- ◆ Have I used any unique words?
- ◆ Did I repeat common words too many times?

Conventions

You've finished your first draft. Now it is time to start editing for conventions. These include spelling, punctuation, grammar, capitalization and paragraphing. Proper use of conventions make your story easy for others to read.

To begin editing ask yourself:

- ◆ Did I leave spaces between words and sentences?
- ◆ Did I use a title?
- ◆ Did I use correct punctuation?
- ◆ Did I use capital letters in the right places?
- ◆ Have I proofread for correct spelling and grammar?
- ◆ Have I indented any new paragraphs?

WRITING TRAIT OF IDEAS

Read the two passages.

Passage #1

I went on a summer vacation this summer. It was a lot of fun. We camped at night and hiked during the day. It was exciting to be in the woods, and I hope that I go again next year.

Passage #2

This past July my friend James and I hopped into my Honda to Glacier National Park in Montana. We had such an exciting time camping in our new tents. The best part was looking up into the night sky at the stars. There were many trails to hike, so we started with the easier ones and worked our way to the harder ones. This meant that they were farther in length and that they had more hills. The best trail was the one that we saw a baby bear walking down. Other exciting things about the woods was looking for berries and trying to name the different trees we found. It was the best vacation by far that I have ever experienced. We are already planning a trip for next summer!

1. What do you notice is the main difference in the two passages?

2. Write down any questions that you have for the author from-
Passage #1 -

Passage #2 -

4. Which one was more interesting and why?

WRITING TRAIT OF ORGANIZATION

Read the story below. Then number the sentences to make the passage better organized.

Jack used the money from the golden eggs to help his family. He crept inside only to find a scowling giant holding a hen that laid golden eggs. A huge beanstalk grew to the sky. Luckily, Jack reached the bottom first. They all lived happily ever after. When Jack got to the top, he spotted a beautiful castle. He started chasing after Jack. He waited until the giant took a nap and then snatched the magic bird. Jack raced to the beanstalk and began to scurry down to safety. The giant climbed down after him. The giant woke up! Jack decided to steal the hen. Jack grabbed an ax and chopped down the beanstalk. Once upon a time Jack planted some magic beans. The giant fell and was never heard from again.

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Now read these two passages:

Passage #1

I went to the mall. I saw my friend at my favorite store. We ate hamburgers at the food court. We watched a movie.

Passage #2

After school, I went to the mall. When I arrived, I saw my friend at my favorite store. We decided to eat hamburgers at

the food court. When our bellies were full, we decided to go and watch a movie.

1. What is the difference in the two passages?

2. Highlight the transition words or phrases in passage #2.

WRITING TRAIT OF VOICE

Give at least two examples from "Our Good Day" that demonstrates the author's use of voice.

How does this affect the story?

Write a paragraph about a funny experience you had at school. Highlight your examples of voice.

WRITING TRAIT OF SENTENCE FLUENCY

Read the two passages.

Passage #1

My horse is white. He has one blue eye and one brown eye. He is friendly. He likes when we brush him. He snuggles his nose into us when we brush him. He is fun to ride. He is my horse. I am glad.

Passage #2

My friendly horse, Flash, has one blue eye and one brown eye. This majestic white creature loves when I brush his soft coat. I can tell because he snuggles his nose into me and whinnies. He also loves to race through the cornfields behind our barn. Whoosh! Flash gallops through the stalks like a Nascar flying around a speedway. I clutch his mane and shriek with laughter. He is such a wonderful horse!

1. What is the main difference between Passage #1 and Passage #2.

2. Now help this paragraph by rewriting it. Revise the passage so it contains more sentence fluency. Think about transitions that might help it flow more smoothly.

My dog is so funny. He likes to sit at my feet. He sits there when I eat. He likes to wait for crumbs to hit the floor. He really likes it when the baby eats. The baby drops a lot of crumbs. The baby makes a mess. I do, too. I make a mess when I eat. This is his favorite part of the day. I can see why!

TYPES AND EXAMPLES OF TRANSITIONS

Without transitions, your writing does not flow smoothly. Transitions are words and phrases that serve as bridges from one idea to the next, one sentence to the next, or one paragraph to the next. They keep the reader from having to find his or her way and possibly getting lost or confused in the reading.

Transitions can also be looked at as the glue that holds your ideas together. They are very important. However, too many transitions can cause as much confusion as too few. Therefore, you don't necessarily need a transition between every idea or every sentence, but it is a good idea to use a transition between each paragraph.

Below are several ways transitions can be used. Also included are sample transitions that fit the category. Not every transition is listed.

TRANSITIONS TO EMPHASIZE A POINT			
Again	Another key point	First	
thing to remember			
For this reason	Frequently		
Important to realize			
Indeed	In fact	Key	
point			
Most compelling evidence	Most important information	Must	
be remembered			
On the negative side	On the positive side	Point	
often overlooked			
Significant that	Surprising		
Surprisingly			
To emphasize	To point out	To	
repeat			
Truly	With this in mind		
TRANSITIONS TO SHOW LOCATION			
Above	Against	Alongside	
Beside			
Around	Back of	Below	In
the middle of			
Between	By	In front of	Over
Inside	Near	On top of	
Throughout	To the right	Up	
Across	Along	Amid	
Away from	Behind	Beneath	
Beyond	Down	In the center of	
Into	Off	Outside	
To the left	Under	Among	

TRANSITIONS TO COMPARE ITEMS

Accordingly	As
In the same way	In conjunction with
Like	Similarly
Also	Comparable to
In the same manner	Just as
Likewise	Sometimes

TRANSITIONS TO CONTRAST ITEMS

Although	But
Even so	However
Nevertheless	On the other hand
Still	Conversely
As opposed to	In spite of this
Event though	Otherwise
On the contrary	Counter to
Yet	In the meantime
Sometimes	

TRANSITIONS TO SHOW TIME

About	Next week	Until
At the same time	Soon	As soon as
Immediately	Tomorrow	Finally
Next	Afterward	Last
Today	During	Next year
After	Later	Third
Before	Next time	When
In the meantime	First	Meanwhile
Then	At	Prior to
Till	Yesterday	

TRANSITIONS TO CLARIFY

For example	In other words
Seems clear from this	Stated differently
To clarify	Put another way
For instance	That is
Simply stated	
To illustrate	

TRANSITIONS TO ADD INFORMATION

Additionally	Along with	
Furthermore		
Another	Besides	Together
with		
For example	Further	And
Likewise	Next	Finally
Again	Also	In addition

As well	Equally important
For instance	Moreover
TRANSITIONS TO CONCLUDE OR SUMMARIZE	
Accordingly	As a result
Due to	In closing
In short	In the last analysis
Logical conclusion is	Thus
All in all	Consequently
Finally	In conclusion
In summary	Lastly
Therefore	To conclude

WRITING TRAIT OF WORD CHOICE

Read the two stories below and decide which author grabs and holds your attention the best.

Passage #1

I went canoeing with my friends. They brought their dog. It was hot. The water felt good. The dog liked to play in the water with us. We all got wet. It was fun!

Passage #2

One sizzling August afternoon, my friends and I cruised down the Wisconsin River in a bright red canoe. Their energetic golden retriever, Paddington, rode along with us. Whenever one of us would shout, "Switch sides," Paddington would jump up and dance around. One time he leaped so high, he tipped the bouncing boat. We all flopped into the water splashing and laughing like baby seals. What fun!

Which one is better? Why? Highlight the vivid choices.

Read the following paragraph. Then rewrite it below with more vivid word choice. Replace the underlined words with more vivid word choices. You may add one word or phrases.

The big bear stood by the water. He looked at his shadow in the big lake. He thought he looked nice. He went to take a drink of water. A fish went by. The bear wanted to eat the big fish. He ate the fish and went away.

Explain the phrase "Show don't tell."

What does the phrase "Paint a picture with words" mean?

VIVID AND DESCRIPTIVE WORD CHOICE

LAUGH - chortle, chuckle, grin, guffaw, crow, titter, cackle, hoot, giggle, snicker

SAD - pitiable, downhearted, woebegone, forlorn, dispirited, miserable, wretched, disheartened, depressed, miserable

LOOK - peer, gaze, peek, stare, glance, peep, glimpse

EAT - nibble, crunch, gobble, wolf, munch, chomp, devour, gorge, gnaw, chew, bite, smack

SAID - whispered, cried, screamed, hollered, shrieked, bellowed, weeped, howled, wailed, blubbered, shouted, exclaimed, called, yelped, yelled, screeched

GOOD - nice, pleasant, well-behaved, excellent, gracious, phenomenal, extraordinary, unique, fantastic, awesome, super, fabulous, wonderful, amazing, exceptional

BIG - large, huge, enormous, gigantic, gargantuan, immense, whopping, extensive, massive

SMALL - tiny, miniature, teeny, little, microscopic, petite, undersized, minute

WENT - traveled, meandered, scurried, trotted, hurried, scuttled, rushed, darted, dashed, busted, crept, crawled, edged, strolled, roamed, wandered, ambled, scampered

NICE - pleasant, good, nice, polite, satisfying, enjoyable, pleasing, pleasurable, lovely, amusing, cheery

HAPPY - tickled, elated, thrilled, lighthearted, delighted, ecstatic, blissful, jovial, overjoyed, jubilant

YOUR TURN -

PRETTY -

MEAN -

HARD -

WRITING TRAIT OF CONVENTIONS

Read the paragraph below.

i went to the beech this summer with my friends? we brout our towls and piknik lunch we had fun swimming to the dok and makeing sand castles the best part of the day was wen we saw the ice cream cart we all got an ice creem samwich. it was a great day at the beach

1. What makes this paragraph difficult to read and follow?
2. Circle the words and spaces in the paragraph with mistakes.
3. Now rewrite this paragraph editing it for spelling, punctuation, spacing, grammar, and capitalization.