

# ENGLISH

## **Language skills for first year undergraduate students**



Department of English

Faculty of Education

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

# English

## Language skills

### for first year undergraduate students

Course code: EDI 1101

Chapter 8 – 11



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# **Introduction to the course**

## Language for Communication

Welcome to "English Language Skills for First-Year Undergraduate Students"!

This comprehensive course book is specifically designed to help you, as first-year undergraduate students and adult learners, to apply English for effective communication. We understand the importance of being able to use English confidently in your daily life and academic pursuits.

Throughout this course, you'll develop all four essential language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. We've packed each unit with practical, engaging, and relevant topics to make your learning experience enjoyable and impactful.

Each unit in this book offers a balanced, step-by-step approach to build your communicative competence. You'll engage in activities that practice all aspects of language, including gestures, to help you understand and convey meaning effectively. We've designed the learning management within each unit to foster your development in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

# Objectives of the course

The primary goal of the course is to equip the students with the confidence and ability to use English for communication in the daily routines and academic studies. Upon successful completion of the course, the students will be able to:

- Apply English effectively in everyday situations.
- Perform various language functions such as asking and answering questions, looking for confirmation, agreeing or disagreeing, asking for permission and expressing appreciation and gratitude, etc.
- Practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing for various contexts.
- Read for specific purposes by skimming and scanning the texts, identifying main ideas and supporting details.
- Seek general information for broader, up-to-date self-development and keep up with new information and changes.
- Communicate with appropriate etiquette by using creative language and peaceful language.

# Chapter 8

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## Listening

## **Chapter 8: Listening Skills**

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the Chapter 8, the students will be able to,

- Recognize the importance of listening skill.
- Identify the various purpose of listening.
- Summarize spoken information concisely and accurately.
- Take effective notes during lectures, presentations, or meetings.

## **8.1 Introduction**

Listening is an incredibly necessary skill in our daily lives, far more so than we often realize. Think about it: we generally spend more time listening than we do speaking, reading, or writing. Therefore, listening comprehension is actually the foundational skill for developing strong speaking, reading, and writing abilities.

The ability to listen effectively is crucial because a significant portion of our learning process begins with what we hear. As a student, you're constantly engaged in listening – to your lecturers, to instructions, to conversations, and to the diverse views expressed in group discussions and other communication activities. As a professional, you would have to listen to your boss, peer group, subordinates, seminar presentations and views discussed in various forums. Mastering this skill will undoubtedly enhance your entire educational journey.

### **8.1.1 Effective Listening Skills**

- Make you understand concepts clearly.
- Help you to understand the views of your co-workers.
- Assist you to establish rapport with co-workers quickly.
- Improve your intellectual ability to understand and evaluate the views and opinions expressed by
- others.
- Enable you to gather views, opinions and feelings of others on a particular concept or a problem.
- Enable you to gather proper and accurate information.
- Help the speaker to express his views clearly in dyadic and group communication situations.



- Hence, it is necessary to cultivate the habit of listening skill with high concentration.

### **8.1.2 Hearing and Listening**

The common notion is that listening and hearing are same but there is a significant difference between them. Hearing is a psychological process in which vibration of sound waves carry through the eardrums to reach the central auditory system of the brain. The brain transmits this into sounds that we hear. The process is automatic and fast. So, hearing means that sound is going on around us and our ears catch it.

But listening is something more than what your ears permit you to hear. It is simply a sound but our mind enables to recognize these sounds as words and expressions and interprets them into thoughts or ideas. Your interpretation ability helps you to react to that hearing. For hearing, you do not require physical cues but for listening you consider physical cues such as eye contact, gestures and body language in order to get the message effectively. You may not have considered the physical cues to be important tools in understanding the message while listening. Yet, what you see when a person is speaking, contributes to its meaning. All the facial expressions, hand and body movements and mannerisms of a speaker may alter the meaning of the message.

Thus, we can define 'listening is a process of hearing with understanding, interpreting and responding'. Listening is a five-stage self-generated activity. The first stage is the reception of sound waves through ears.

The second stage is relating the sound-to-sound system of language. The third stage is comprehending the utterances. The fourth stage is interpreting the message in the context. The fifth stage is the reaction to the message. We can present this interpretation as follows:

**Listening = Hearing + Relating + Comprehending + Interpreting + Responding.**

## **8.2. Types of Activities for Listening with a Purpose**

### **Lesson Objectives**

At the end of the lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify at least five distinct types of listening activities.
- Apply appropriate listening strategies to effectively engage with different purposeful listening tasks based on familiarity of the topics and level of difficulty.

### **Types of Activities for Listening with a Purpose**

In this section, we'll categorize and explore seven main types of activities for listening with a purpose. Understanding these different types will help you become a more strategic and effective listener in various situations.

Effective listening isn't just about hearing; it requires intensive concentration and a conscious effort. This means actively paying attention and making a careful attempt to grasp the essence of what's being communicated. When we listen, we listen for a purpose and with certain expectations.

Let us now categorize the different activities for listening with a purpose. They are as follows,

1. Listening for the Main Idea
2. Listening for Detail
3. Listening for a Sequence
4. Listening for Specific Vocabulary
5. Listening for Cultural Interest
6. Listening for Attitude and Opinions
7. Listening for Functional Language

Out of these seven activities, our focus will be on examining listening for the main idea and listening for detail in greater depth.

#### **8.2.1. Listening for the Main Idea**

The purpose of this type of listening is to train students to grasp the main points or general information presented in the audio. To listen for the main idea, focus on identifying the central topic and the speaker's primary message about that topic. Pay attention to repeated words or phrases, as they often highlight important points. Additionally, listen for phrases that indicate the

beginning or end of a topic, and note any information delivered in a louder or slower tone, as these can signal key information.

### **What are Main Ideas?**

A main idea is the most important information the speaker wants the listener to understand. Because this information is so important, the speaker usually clearly says the main idea. We call this an explicit main idea, meaning that the idea should be clear and obvious to anyone listening. This is especially important in a professional setting, such as an office, hospital, or classroom. These are places where the speaker and listener can have serious problems if they don't understand each other completely.

To check to make sure you have identified the true main idea, ask yourself this simple question: Do the other ideas support this main idea? In a more formal speaking situation, like a classroom or presentation, the information should be organized clearly. The main idea will be the point that everything else connects to. If something the speaker says does not connect to the main idea, it is off-topic.

A main idea question asks you to identify the general gist, or main ideas, of a lecture or conversation. In order to correctly answer a main idea question, you must be able to:

- listen for the most important ideas in the passage
- distinguish between main ideas and minor details
- generalize the information presented in the entire lecture or conversation.

You should listen for main idea signpost words:

**“What I want to talk about today is .....”**

**“Today, we'll be discussing .....”**

**“Today's lecture will focus on .....”**

**“The point we'll be addressing today is .....”**

**“So today, we'll look into .....”**

## Listening Exercise:

1, Listen to part of a lecture in a history class.



Listening for main idea 1.mp3

What is the main idea of the lecture?

- A. Some problems and solutions associated with exploration
- B. The positive impact of exchanges between cultures
- C. How Europe was influenced by the Columbian Exchange
- D. The exchange of animals that resulted from the Columbian Exchange

2, Listen to part of a discussion in a music class.



Listening for main idea 2.mp3

What aspect of pianos does the professor mainly discuss in the lecture?

- A. The role of the piano in European society
- B. The importance of the piano in Western music
- C. Differences between early and modern pianos
- D. Reasons for the high cost of early pianos

### 8.2.2 Listening for Detail

The purpose is to train students to grasp specific information, details that are relevant, important or necessary. The goal is to help students obtain the detailed information they may need like hours, dates, names, etc...

Listening for specific information involves focusing on particular details while disregarding irrelevant information. This skill is crucial in various situations, from everyday conversations to academic settings. To improve this skill, it's helpful to identify keywords, predict potential answers, and focus on extracting the exact information needed.

Before listening, clarify what information you need to find. This could involve reading questions, looking at a form, or simply knowing the purpose of the listening activity. For example, if you're listening to a train

announcement, you might focus on the train number, destination, and departure time, ignoring other details.

Pay attention to keywords or phrases in the questions or instructions. These words can guide you to the relevant information. For instance, if a question asks "When did the event happen?", you'd listen for words related to time or dates. Once you've identified keywords, focus your attention on those specific areas of the audio. Try to anticipate the type of information that might be presented. This will make it easier to recognize the answer when you hear it.

Listen carefully for the specific details you need. Be prepared to hear synonyms or paraphrased information, as speakers may not always use the exact same words as the question. For example, if the question asks about the "cost," you might hear "price" or "how much it is".

Regularly practice listening for specific information in different contexts, such as news reports, lectures, or conversations. Use techniques like note-taking or rephrasing to help solidify your understanding and improve your recall.

In summary, listening for specific information requires active engagement, focused attention, and a clear understanding of the task at hand. By identifying keywords, predicting potential answers, and practicing regularly, you can significantly enhance your ability to extract the information you need.

### **Listening Exercise:**

Listen to the recording and answer the questions below.



Listening for Detail.mp3

1. According to the professor, what is true about early pianos?
  - A. They did not have keyboards.
  - B. They were extremely expensive.
  - C. They replaced the harpsichord.
  - D. They were meant to be played by royalty.

2. According to the professor, what change led to the increased popularity of pianos in the 1800s?

- A. The price of the materials used to make pianos decreased.
- B. People stopped regarding pianos as luxury items.
- C. Individuals in Europe were becoming wealthier.
- D. Royals encouraged people to learn how to play the piano.

3. According to the professor, what role did pianos play in European society? Choose 2 answers.

- A. They indicated a family's level of wealth.
- B. They led to music education in schools.
- C. They provided a recreational activity for families
- D. They helped talented individuals gain wealth.

4. What was an advantage of four-hands piano?

- A. It allowed family members to play the piano together.
- B. It let piano players perform complicated pieces.
- C. It could be played by musicians with different skill levels.
- D. It made playing the piano more affordable for families.

### **8.3 Guidelines for Improving Listening Skill**

Listening effectively is not as easy as one may have supposed. Therefore, listening requires a positive attitude, concentration and willingness. If you bring all these requirements to the listening situation, you will gain much more in classes, in your job and in everyday communication. To become a better listener, focus on these essential areas:

- Face the speaker and maintain eye contact to show engagement.
- Be attentive, but relaxed
- Keep an open mind and be flexible in your views
- Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying
- Don't interrupt and don't impose your "solutions"
- Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions
- Concentrate on subject while listening and ask questions only to ensure understanding

- Listen for main points as well as for facts, and know the difference between the fact and principle, idea
- and example, and evidence and argument.
- Make meaningful notes which should be brief and to the point.
- Pay attention to speaker's non-verbal skills which help you to comprehend the message.
- Evaluate and criticize the content, not the speaker.
- Distinguish the important points from the unimportant points.
- Try to accept other's views that will build understanding and mutual respect.
- Practice your listening skill by attending lectures, public speeches and T.V. programs.

Willingness to make a sincere and consistent effort, along with the techniques discussed here, will result in better listening and help you to gain information. Cultivating the habit of efficient listening contributes to one's success at all levels of life. The student must listen to the teacher in order to understand the subject. The telephone operator must listen carefully in order to handle the requests of hundreds of calls. Professionals must listen carefully to carry on their professional work. Hence, the habits of good listening are very important, so there is a need to check your listening skill.

## **Review Questions**

1. Discuss the importance of listening skill.

2. What are the benefits of effective listening skill?

3. Describe the psychological aspects of the process of listening.

4. Can you give 4 guidelines for improving listening skill?



# Chapter 9

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## Speaking

## **Chapter 9: Speaking Skills**

### **9.1. What is speaking?**

Speaking is the skill that makes a human different and better than the other types of living creatures. It is a complex, subjective, and linguistic ability. A child figures out how to talk through interacting with the individuals around him/her in their local language.

Each ordinary grown-up can talk in his/her local language without effort and this expertise is a characteristic one. But, speaking in an unknown language isn't regular and it requires conscious struggle through the entire procedure.

Speaking is a verbal ability that includes words and sounds. It likewise includes:

**Meaning: implication, signification, grammar**

**Sociality, Relationship, Affect: formal, casual, slang, turn-taking**

**Social Issues: class, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sex, vernacular**

**Execution: pronunciation, projection, speech**

Sound Elements: how volume, pitch, pace, and nature of sound supplement

Speaking is a creative aptitude that includes listening ability. Without tuning in, talking is unimaginable and the connection between these two abilities is relating.

Great speakers and linguists state that you should always think before you speak. They encourage the fact of having an ability to quickly analyze and understand the conversation and then share your thoughts with others.

#### **9.1.1 Strategies for Speaking Skills Development**

The capacity to communicate in a language is the result of speaking Skill Development, however, talking is additionally a vital piece of the language learning process.

Speaking English confidently is an important goal for many. Often, we hesitate because we are afraid of making mistakes or embarrassing ourselves in front of others. Sometimes mistakes are unavoidable. But like any other skill,

you can improve your spoken English if you practice regularly and follow these simple techniques.

**1. Listen:** The first step in improving your speaking skills is actually working on your listening.

**2. Imitate:** Now that you have listened to lots of English conversations, it's time for some imitation. Imitating or copying someone is a wonderful to improve your speaking skills. Another benefit of imitation is that it will help you become more accurate in English without having to learn grammar rules.

**3. Read:** Reading is yet another important skill to have when learning a language. Reading a few minutes every day will help you acquire new vocabulary.

**4. Reflect:** Reflection is a very useful step in improving your speaking skills. Reflection is nothing but asking questions to think about what you learnt, how you learnt, what progress you see, what could be done differently, and how to change the way you learn to allow progress.

**5. Prepare:** A lot of us hesitate to speak or take part in conversations in English because we are nervous about what to say. We are anxious that what we say may not be appropriate or we may make mistakes. We can easily fix this problem by preparing ahead.

**6. Speak:** There is no magic pill that would help you speak better. You must put yourself in situations where you are forced to speak in English to get better at

**7. Practice:** We cannot stress this enough. Regular and consistent practice is the key to success when it comes to speaking English. Start small.

Finally, don't forget to have fun. It's easier to learn something new and commit to learning when you're having fun. Practice English by singing along to popular songs.

## **9.2 Speaking in different ways**

Speaking and listening skills are important in all aspects of your life. It is through them that you get by in everyday situations, connect with other people, and build and maintain relationships. They can influence people's judgements about you. People are influenced by what you say and you need to make sure that you are easily understood by others.

## Everyday speaking and listening

This applies to your working life as well as your personal life. Being able to listen and to speak clearly and confidently are skills that are highly valued whatever your job.

It is important that you use the correct language for the context. You should adapt your style and approach to suit your audience.

For example, the way you would describe your symptoms to the doctor is likely to be different from describing the same illness to a friend. Or, if you were collecting money for a good cause, you would persuade your friends to contribute using different language from what you would use with a stranger.

The language and style you use when you are speaking will depend on:

- who you are talking to
- the situation
- what you expect or hope to happen as a result.

### 9.2.1 Adapting your style

You can adapt your language to the listener and the situation by keeping these questions in mind as you plan what you are going to say:

- Who ...?
- Why ...?
- What ...?
- How ...?

For example:

- **Who** am I speaking to?
- **Why** am I giving this explanation?
- **What** do I want to achieve?
- **How** can I achieve that?

Your own experience tells you that you speak in different ways depending on the people and the situation. The main difference, which helps to decide on your form of language, is whether the situation is **formal** or **informal**.

Formality usually depends on who you are speaking to and in what context. For example, you may use more formal English to speak to your boss and less formal slang to speak to your friends.

### 9.2.2 Formal and informal language

Now that you have identified different formal and informal situations, it is time to look at formal and informal language. Formal and informal language styles differ in tone, vocabulary, and sentence structure, impacting how messages are received in different contexts. Formal language is used in professional, academic, and official settings, employing proper grammar, specific vocabulary, and avoiding contractions and slang. Informal language, used with friends and family, is more casual, spontaneous, and may include contractions, colloquialisms, and simpler sentence structures.

- **Formal** language is a style of speech used when you are speaking to someone you don't know or on whom you want to make a good impression.
- **Informal** language is a style of speech where choice of words and grammar tends to be familiar rather than formal. It is used when you know, or want to get to know, the person you are speaking to.
- **Slang** is very informal language that is usually spoken rather than written. It is commonly used among friends when speaking or sending text messages.

Formal language is more likely to be grammatically correct. For example, you would say 'I have not' rather than the grammatically incorrect 'I aren't'.

When speaking and listening, you should think about three important questions:

- Who am I speaking to?
- What is the purpose?
- Is this a formal or an informal situation?

Here's a table with more examples of formal and informal phrases commonly used in speaking:

<b>Informal Phrase</b>	<b>Formal Phrase</b>
Nice to meet you.	It's a pleasure to meet you.
Worried about you.	Concerned about you.
Just a note to say...	I'm writing to inform you...
I have a creative mind.	I'm highly innovative.
Thanks a lot.	I appreciate your assistance/help.
How's it going?	How are you doing today? / How do you do?
What's up?	Hello. / Good morning/afternoon/evening.
Catch you later.	Goodbye. / I look forward to our next meeting.
Give me a hand.	Could you please assist me?
I need to talk to you.	I would like to discuss something with you.
Got it.	I understand. / I comprehend.
No problem.	You're welcome. / It was my pleasure.
I think...	In my opinion... / I believe...
Anyway...	Moving on... / In any case...
Get in touch with.	Contact. / Communicate with.
Look into.	Investigate. / Examine.
Point out.	Indicate. / Highlight.
Deal with.	Handle. / Address.
Make sure.	Ensure. / Verify.

Come up with.	Devise. / Propose.
Go ahead.	Proceed. / Begin.
Look forward to.	Anticipate with pleasure. / Await eagerly.
Write down.	Record. / Note.
Get along with.	Have a good relationship with. / Harmonize with.

### Exercise 1

Match each formal phrase to its more informal equivalent.

[Skip to accessible version of matching question](#)

I received your email.

I am unable to attend tomorrow.

He returned the item to the shop.

Would you like anything else?

I am ringing to enquire about the job.

The manager will return your call.

Drag each answer (above) into the correct slot (below).

I can't come tomorrow.

Anything else?

I'm ringing to ask about the job.

The manager will phone you back.

I got your email.

He took back the item to the shop.

## Exercise 2

Can you match each formal phrase to its slang equivalent?

[Skip to accessible version of matching question](#)

She went shopping with her friends.

She was devastated when the team lost.

I'm feeling hungry.

They were intoxicated on Saturday night.

He had his wallet stolen.

His son can be outspoken at times.

Drag each answer (above) into the correct slot (below).

She was gutted when the team lost.

He had his wallet nicked.

They were legless on Saturday night.

She went shopping with her mates.

His son can be gobby at times.

I'm feeling peckish.



### **Exercise 3: Identifying Register**

Read the following sentences and determine whether they are primarily formal or informal. Then, explain your reasoning, pointing out specific words or phrases that indicate the register.

"The quarterly earnings report indicates a substantial increase in profitability."

"What's up? Want to grab some coffee later?"

"This endeavor presents a unique opportunity for collaborative growth."

"I'm totally swamped with work right now, so I can't make it."

"Participants are advised to familiarize themselves with the safety protocols."

# Chapter 10

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## Reading

## Chapter 10: Reading Skills

### 10.1 Developing Reading and Comprehension Skills

Reading is fundamental to acquiring knowledge; it's not just for enjoyment but a crucial educational tool. It's a complex process because readers must interpret a text from the writer's perspective. According to Ur, reading involves both interpreting and comprehension. She suggests that to read words, we must first recognize individual letters. Furthermore, understanding the meaning of a text hinges on understanding all the words within it. Consequently, texts with more symbols (letters and words) generally take longer to read. Ultimately, we extract meaning from what we read, and our comprehension of a text is built upon our understanding of its constituent words.

Understanding what you read or hear, or **comprehension**, is all about grasping the intended meaning, as Richards puts it. It's the process of making sense of words, sentences, and entire texts.

Catherine Snow highlights three key components involved in comprehension:

- **The reader** doing the comprehending
- **The text** being comprehended
- **The activity** in which comprehension takes place

Reading comprehension is an active "**construction process**" where all elements of reading work together to build a mental representation of the text in the reader's mind. It's an interaction between the reader and the text, where the reader constructs meaning.

Smith, as cited by Westwood, identifies four levels of reading comprehension, each with increasing complexity:

- **Literal comprehension:** This involves understanding and recalling information directly stated in the text.
- **Inferential comprehension:** Here, you go beyond what's explicitly stated, using your experience and intuition to infer meaning.
- **Critical or evaluative comprehension:** This level requires you to compare the information in the text with your own knowledge and values.

- **Appreciative comprehension:** At this deepest level, reading evokes an emotional or other valued response from the text.

You don't need to memorize the dictionary to understand vocabulary. If you have an average working vocabulary (the number of words you use daily), you know the meaning of about 15,000 to 20,000 words. However, your reading vocabulary is probably much higher. In other words, you probably understand many more words when reading than the limited number you use daily. The reason you understand more words than you use is that you have the ability to infer the meanings of words from context—from how the words is used in a sentence. The surrounding text contains clues to the meaning of unknown words. Here's an example:

*The teacher's brusque manner that evening irritated most parents, who were used to longer discussions about their children.*

From the context of the sentence, you know that brusque refers to the teacher's behavior toward parents. If you expect more, then brusque must mean harsh or rude in some way. In this case, it means abrupt or dismissive. You can work out other vocabulary the same way.

### **10.1.1 Balancing Speed and Comprehension**

Reading quickly and comprehending what you read aren't mutually exclusive; however, you need to find your comfort level. Practice reading newspapers to see how much you retain from a very quick skim of an article. Skim an article and write down all the key points you remember. Then reread the article carefully to see what you missed. Skim a different article and try again. Slow your pace to a point where you pick out most of key points without reading every single word. When you reach a comfortable speed and comprehension level, increase your comprehension.

Most reading tests include passages for both short answer and extended response questions. Take a different approach depending on the test section. Short answer items consist of a stimulus text (the passage on which the question is based) and answer options. If you are looking for a specific answer in the brief passage. Consider this approach:

1. Read the question-and-answer options very carefully.
2. Skim the stimulus passage.
3. Isolate the key terms.

4. Reread those sections carefully for answer matches.

Reading the question-and-answer choices identifies what you're looking for. Skimming helps you find it in the passage. For the extended response requires a different approach:

1. Read the first and last paragraph carefully to identify the thesis statement.
2. Skim the remaining paragraphs to identify key points or premises.
3. Read the remaining paragraphs more closely to note the evidence presented to support each premise.

If you're worried you missed something, you can always go back and reread more slowly.

## **10.2 Skills Required for reading component**

Reading skills are built on five separate components: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. These components work together to create strong, rich, and reliable reading abilities, but they're often taught separately or in uneven distribution. Here's how you comprehensively teach the 5 components of reading skills and make them a regular feature of your classroom.

### **Phonics**

Phonics is the relationship between the letters (or letter combinations) in written language and the individual sounds in spoken language. Phonics instruction teaches students how to use these relationships to read and spell words. The National Reading Panel indicated that systematic phonics instruction enhances children's success in learning to read, and it is significantly more effective than instruction that teaches little or no phonics.

A simple sequence of phonics elements for teaching sound-out words that moves from the easiest sound/spelling patterns to the most difficult:

1. Consonants & short vowel sounds
2. Consonant digraphs and blends
3. Long vowel/final e
4. Long vowel digraphs
5. Other vowel patterns
6. Syllable patterns
7. Affixes

## **Phonemic Awareness**

Phonemic awareness is the understanding that spoken language words can be broken into individual phonemes—the smallest unit of spoken language. Effective instruction guides students through the various levels of phonemic awareness, progressing from simple skills like recognizing sounds to more complex tasks such as blending sounds to form words and segmenting words into their constituent phonemes. Developing strong phonemic awareness enables students to blend sounds smoothly and segment words accurately, skills that directly support phonics learning and improve decoding and spelling. By systematically addressing these levels of phonemic awareness, educators can help close reading gaps and build essential early literacy skills that are proven predictors of long-term reading success.

Phonemic awareness performance is a strong predictor of long-term reading and spelling success (Put Reading First, 1998). Students with strong phonological awareness are likely to become good readers, but students with weak phonological skills will likely become poor readers (Blachman, 2000). It is estimated that the vast majority—more than 90 percent—of students with significant reading problems have a core deficit in their ability to process phonological information (Blachman, 1995).

## **Fluency**

Fluency is the ability to read "like you speak." Fluent readers are able to read orally with appropriate speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Fluency is the ability to read as well as we speak and to make sense of the text without having to stop and decode each word. The National Reading Panel's research findings concluded that guided oral reading and repeated oral reading had a significant and positive impact on word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension in students of all ages. "Reading fluency is made up of at least three key elements: accurate reading of connected text at a conversational rate with appropriate prosody or expression." Non-fluent readers suffer in at least one of these aspects of reading: they make many mistakes, they read slowly, or they don't read with appropriate expression and phrasing.

## **Vocabulary**

Vocabulary development is closely connected to comprehension. The larger the reader's vocabulary (either oral or print), the easier it is to make sense of the text. According to the National Reading Panel, vocabulary can be learned incidentally through storybook reading or listening to others, and vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly. Students should be actively engaged in instruction that includes learning words before reading, repetition and multiple exposures, learning in rich contexts, incidental learning, and use of computer technology.

According to Steven Stahl (2005), "Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world." We continue to develop vocabulary throughout our lives. Words are powerful. Words open up possibilities, and of course, that's what we want for all of our students.

Why do some students have a limited, inadequate vocabulary compared to most of their classmates?

- Speaking/vocabulary not encouraged at home
- Limited experiences outside of home
- Limited exposure to books
- Reluctant reader
- Second language—English language learners

From the research, we know that vocabulary supports reading development and increases comprehension. Students with low vocabulary scores tend to have low comprehension and students with satisfactory or high vocabulary scores tend to have satisfactory or high comprehension scores.

## **Comprehension**

Comprehension is the complex cognitive process readers use to understand what they have read. Vocabulary development and instruction play a critical role in comprehension. The National Reading Panel determined that young readers develop text comprehension through a variety of techniques, including answering questions (quizzes) and summarization (retelling the story).

Comprehension, or extracting meaning from what you read, is the ultimate goal of reading. Experienced readers take this for granted and may not appreciate the reading comprehension skills required. The process of comprehension is both

interactive and strategic. Rather than passively reading text, readers must analyze it, internalize it and make it their own.

In order to read with comprehension, developing readers must be able to read with some proficiency and then receive explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies (Tierney, 1982).

### ***Five Tips for Improving Reading Comprehension***

**Skim First.** Read quickly through the passage to get the gist of what the passage is about. Doing so helps you identify the main point and gives you a framework on which to hang the details.

**Silently ask questions as you read.** What's the point? What's the writer's purpose? Why am I reading this? Well-written passages often raise questions and answer them. As you read a passage, what questions arise? How are they answered?

**Take notes.** As you read, jot down the main idea and a list of supporting details.

**Use context to construe the meaning of unfamiliar words.** If you don't know the meaning of a word, you can often guess its definition by the context in which it's used.

**Reread.** If you read some text that doesn't make sense to you at first, read it again with a greater focus.

**Keep track of time.** You're going to be taking a time-limited test, so you need to balance skimming versus reading in depth so that you have sufficient time to finish.



### **10.3 Author's View: Identify an author's tone, point of view and purpose**

To fully understand what we read, we need to be able to figure out why the passage was written. An author always has a reason, or purpose, for writing. The author's purpose for writing a passage is usually one of the following:

- To entertain
- To inform
- To persuade

Understanding the author's reason for writing can help you better understand what you read. Different types of texts usually have different purposes. Many stories, plays, magazines articles, poems, novels, and comic strips are written to entertain. They may be fiction or nonfiction and may include facts, opinions, or both.

Textbooks, encyclopedias, many newspaper articles are written to inform. Their purpose is to give the reader information or teach about a subject. Such passages will usually contain mostly facts and may include charts, diagrams, or drawings to help explain the information.

Other material, such as commercials, advertisements, letters to the editor, and the political speeches, are written to persuade readers to share a belief, agree with an opinion, or support an idea. Such writing may include some facts or statements from experts, but it will most likely include the author's opinions about the topic. You probably learned the difference between fact and opinion when you were younger. A fact is a true statement that can be proven. An opinion is a statement that reflects someone's personal views. Not everyone will agree with an opinion. Writers often use a combination of facts and opinions to share their ideas. Being able to distinguish between these statements can help you gain a complete understanding of the passage. Strong readers are able to interpret the information in a passage and form their own opinions. Facts and opinions are both useful. They not only help writers get their point across; they can be useful to readers as well. Understanding the author's purpose is critical to understanding the text itself.

- If the author's purpose is to inform, the text is likely to contain mostly facts.
- If the author's purpose is to entertain, a combination of facts and opinions will be included.

- If the author's purpose is to persuade, you can definitely expect to find opinions. However, facts that support or promote the author's opinion may also be included.

As we read, we look for and try to understand the messages and information that the author wants to share. Sometimes, the author's message is various. Other times, we have to look a little harder to find it. The theme of a story is its underlying message. In a fable, the moral of the story is the theme. The theme often leaves you with ideas, a conclusion, or a lesson that the writer wants you to take away from the story. Often this lesson relates to life, society, or human nature. Think about the story of the three little pigs. One could say that the theme of this story is that it is best to do a job the right way at the first time. The author does not directly state this message, but this is a lesson or opinion that readers might take away from the story. Common themes you may find in reading might include:

- Crime does not pay.
- It is important to be honest.
- Be happy with what you have.
- Money cannot buy happiness.
- Keep going when things get tough.
- Do not be afraid to try something new.

Example: Look for the theme as you read the following passage.

*Camilla usually looked forward to Friday nights, but this week was the definite exception. Instead of going to the movies with her friends, she would be stuck at home, helping Mom get ready for tomorrow's garage sale. As she walked into the house, Camilla could see that Mom was already prepared for the long night ahead of them.*

*"Hey, get that scowl off your face and throw on your overalls," Mom called out cheerfully. "It won't be that bad."*

*Camilla changed clothes and headed to the garage, dragging her feet the whole way. Mom was elbow deep in an old cardboard box. She pulled out a raggedy, old stuffed dog.*

*"Mr. Floppy!" Camilla cried, excited to see her old friend. "I haven't seen him in years!"*

*"Your very first soft friend," Mom reminisced. "I'm assuming you'll be keeping him? Or would you like a 25-cent price tag to stick on his ear?"*

*Camilla set the old dog aside. She would definitely keep him. She helped Mom empty the rest of the box, sticking price tags on other old toys and books. They continue through the boxes, stopping to look through old photo albums together, telling funny stories about some of the useless gifts they'd collected, laughing at the hand-made down clothes that had arrived at their house over the years, and modeling the silliest of them*

*After a few hours, Mom looked at her watch. "Wow! It's nearly 8:00 already. Should we order a pizza?"*

*Camilla couldn't believe how late it was. She looked to her mom -who was wearing dusty overalls, five strands of Aunt Edna's old beads, and Granny's wide-brimmed Sunday bonnet – and couldn't help but laugh out loud. This was the best Friday night she could remember.*

What is the theme of the story?

- a. Memories are a special part of life.
- b. It is important to get rid of old items.
- c. Families should spend weekends together.
- d. Sometimes things turn out to be better than expected.

At the beginning of the story, Camilla did not want to spend the evening helping her mom. By the end, she was having a great time. Choice d is the theme of this story. Some of the other answer choices represent ideas that were represented in the story, but the underlying message that the author wanted to portray is that things can turn out to be more fun than we think they will be.


In fiction, this overall message is usually implied, rather than being directly stated, and may involve the following:

- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Opinions
- Perceptions

Points of view refers to how the author brings you into the story. Usually authors write in one of two forms, first-person and third-person. In a first-person story, the narrator will say "I did this" or "I felt that." You get a direct look at the narrator's feelings, motivations, and reactions. More commonly, authors write in the third-person. The characters in the story, including the main characters, are all presented as he, she, they, or, it. Also, the narrator often knows the thoughts and feelings of every character.

Some writing is aimed at persuading the reader or presenting different points of view. Sometimes the points of view are very clear in opening statements; other times the point(s) of view are less obvious. When reading, ask yourself, “What is the author trying to accomplish?” or “What side of this issue is the author trying to convince me to agree with?”

Tone is the AUTHOR’S attitude towards the audience, the subject, or the character. Tone refers to the author’s use of words and writing style to convey his or her attitude towards a topic. If you misinterpret the tone (such as sarcasm), you may misinterpret the message. Tone and purpose go together. Ask yourself what the author’s voice would sound like if he or she had spoken the words rather than written them. Tone is shown through Dialogue - talking Descriptions – author’s diction [word choice]. Words that describe Tones



❧ Amused	❧ Informal	❧ Playful
❧ Angry	❧ Ironical	❧ Pompous
❧ Cheerful	❧ Light	❧ Sad
❧ Critical	❧ Matter-of-fact	❧ Serious
❧ Clear	❧ Mocking	❧ Sincere
❧ Formal	❧ Resigned	❧ Suspicious
❧ Gloomy	❧ Optimistic	❧ Quizzical
❧ Humorous	❧ Pessimistic	❧ Witty

Words have specific meanings, but authors often use words in a way that alters their meaning. This tendency is especially true in humorous, satirical writings and persuasive writings. Authors can use exaggeration or overuse words to create a different meaning or tone (overall point of view) in a written passage. The tone of a passage can be described in many ways, from sarcastic to confident, arrogant to simplistic. To determine the tone and meaning of a passage, you need to read it carefully because meaning is often implied rather than stated. Tone isn’t the same as mood. Tone is the character of or attitude toward the subject or situation. Mood is how the passage makes the reader feel about the subject or situation. TONE IS NOT MOOD. The tone could be serious but the mood could be ridiculous.

Mood is the feeling the reader gets from a story. Mood is shown through setting and atmosphere.



EXAMPLE: He approached the task with **sheer determination**. He had studied his plans **carefully**, spent hours **preparing** and was sure of his approach. The hours he spent **practicing** were **grueling** and **exhausting** but he was **ready**. This was the year he would win **the pie eating contest at school**.

According to the author's descriptions,

Questions: What is the tone?

Ans: Serious, Intense, Formal, Focused

According to the setting,

Questions: what is the mood?

Ans: Playful, informal, silly, exciting

Reading for detail is the intense version of reading. You read every word and keep asking yourself how what you read relates to the task required of you. If you're looking at a grammar question, try to remember which grammar rule applies as you read. If the question is about mood or style of a passage, keep the appropriate tools and approaches in the back of your mind.

## Reading Exercise

**Directions: Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.**

Did you know that some people don't do their reading assignments? It's shocking, but it's true. Some students don't even read short texts that they are assigned in class. There are many reasons for this. They may be distracted or bored. They may be unwilling to focus. They may be unconfident readers. Whatever the reason, it has to stop today. Here's why.

Reading stimulates your mind. It is like a workout for your brain. When people get old, their muscles begin to deteriorate. They get weaker and their strength leaves them. Exercise can prevent this loss. The same thing happens to people's brains when they get older. Brain power and speed decline with age. Reading strengthens your brain and prevents these declines.

You can benefit from reading in the near-term too. Reading provides knowledge. Knowledge is power. Therefore, reading can make you a more powerful person. You can learn to do new things by reading. Do you want to make video games? Do you want to design clothing? Reading can teach you all this and more. But you have to get good at reading, and the only way to get good at something is to practice.

Read everything that you can at school, regardless of whether you find it interesting. Reading expands your vocabulary. Even a "boring" text can teach you some new words. Having a larger vocabulary will help you better express yourself. You will be able to speak, write, and think more intelligently. What's boring about that?

Do not just discount a text because it is unfamiliar to you. Each time you read, you are exposed to new ideas and perspectives. Reading can change the way that you understand the world. It can give you a broader perspective on things. It can make you worldlier. You can learn how people live in faraway places. You can learn about cultures different from your own.

Reading is good for your state of mind. It has a calming effect. It can lower your stress levels and help you relax. You can escape from your troubles for a moment when you read, and it's a positive escape. The benefits of reading far outweigh those of acting like a doofus. So do yourself a favor: the next time you get a

reading assignment, take as much as you can from it. Squeeze it for every drop of knowledge that it contains. Then move on to the next one.

1. Which best expresses the main idea of the second paragraph?
  - a. Reading is exciting.
  - b. Reading strengthens your mind.
  - c. Age affects the body in many ways.
  - d. Working out keeps your body in shape.
  
2. Why does the author think that you should read books that are boring?
  - a. You will eventually grow to love them if you read them enough.
  - b. You will get better grades in reading class.
  - c. You will make your teacher very happy.
  - d. You will learn new words.
  
3. Which best expresses the main idea of the third paragraph?
  - a. Reading can benefit you.
  - b. You can learn to program video games or design clothing by reading.
  - c. You can learn amazing things and become a better person by reading.
  - d. Knowledge is power.
  
4. Which is not a reason given by the author why students fail to complete reading assignments?
  - a. Students may be bored.
  - b. Students may be distracted.
  - c. Students may be unwilling to focus.
  - d. Students may be tired.
  
5. Which best expresses the author's main purpose in writing this text?
  - a. He is trying to persuade students to do their reading work.
  - b. He is teaching people how to become better readers.

- c. He is explaining why people don't do their reading work.
- d. He is entertaining readers with facts about the mind and body.

6. Which best describes the author's tone in the first three sentences?

- a. Surprised              b. Sarcastic              c. Informative              d. Irrate

7. Which of the following is not one of the author's main points?

- a. Reading broadens your perspective and makes you a better person.
- b. Reading is a relaxing activity with positive mental side effects.
- c. Reading helps you perform on tests and get into selective schools.
- d. Reading keeps your mind in shape and prevents losses due to age.

8. Which is not one of the author's arguments in the fifth paragraph?

- a. Reading gives you a broader perspective on the world.
- b. Reading changes the way that you understand the world.
- c. Reading helps prepare you for your job in the real world.
- d. Reading teaches you about distant lands and cultures.

9. Why does the author believe that reading is good for your mind state?

- a. It has a calming effect.              b. It can lower your stress levels.
- c. It can help you relax.              d. All of these

10. Which title best expresses the main idea of this text?

- a. Reading: Good for the Mind in Many Ways
- b. Reading: The Key to a Successful Academic Future
- c. Reading: Improve Your Vocabulary While Being Entertained
- d. Reading: The Best Way to Improve Your Writing Skills



Exercise 2:

1. Questions: What is the tone of the passages? What relays the tone?

There is no one that can be better because you are brilliant.

There is nothing that you cannot do because you are unbeatable.

There is no place that you cannot go because you are always welcomed.

There is no person that can hold you back because you are unstoppable.

Answer: The TONE of the passage is \_\_\_\_\_. The author's \_\_\_\_\_ relays the tone.

2. Questions: What is the mood of the passages? What relays the mood?

"The door swings open to reveal all of my family members standing around the Christmas tree. The lights are twinkling and the fireplace is roaring with a warm fire. Everyone is singing Christmas carols as the snow falls quietly outside the window."

Answer: The MOOD of the passage is \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ relays the MOOD.

3. Questions: What is the mood of the passages? What relays the mood?

"The door swings open to reveal a Christmas tree, alone in the middle of the room, sparkling with hundreds of lights. Silence greets me as I glance around the room. The fireplace is empty and the snow storm howls outside the window. My family has gone and I am left alone with my thoughts.

Answer: The MOOD of the passage is \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ relays the MOOD.

4. Questions: What is the tone of the passages? What relays the tone?

We're contacting you today to let you know about the Special Olympics annual fund drive. You have been kind enough to support us generously in the past, and we'd like to ask for your help again, as we send our athletes with special needs to compete at the national level. Please fill out the form below and return it in the enclosed envelope with your donation. It will make a child's day if you do.

Answer: The TONE of the passage is \_\_\_\_\_. The author's \_\_\_\_\_ relays the tone.

5. Questions: What is the tone of the passages? What relays the tone?

Lola sat on the old, lumpy couch crying. She could let it all out here, alone in her mother's small, quiet apartment in Galesburg, Illinois. The familiar walls were covered in rose pink wallpaper. Goldie, her mother's eleventh fish, seemed to stare sympathetically at Lola through the fishbowl sitting on the counter. The smell of her mother's vanilla candles comforted her aching heart.

Answer: The TONE of the passage is \_\_\_\_\_. The author's \_\_\_\_\_ relays the tone.

# Chapter 11

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## Writing

## **Chapter 11: Writing Skills**

### **11.1 Looking at the skills the grammar and writing component covers**

The grammar and writing component evaluate you on the following types of skills related to grammar. In this part, we focus on basic grammar and writing skills. The topics covered include:

- sentence structure
- usage
- mechanics
- organization

#### **Sentence Structure**

Every language has rules about the order in which words should appear in a sentence. You get a chance to improve sentences through your understanding of what makes a good sentence. Extensive reading before the test can give you a good idea of how good sentences are structured and put together. The advice here is read, read, and read some more. Sentence structure basically refers to the order and use of words in sentences. The simple sentence “He eats a burger.” is written with good structure; all the words are in order and the sentence makes sense. The sentence, “A he burger eats.” contains the same words, but does not display good structure. There are rules in English which govern where words should be placed in a sentence and how they are used. It’s important for you to know what these rules are.

#### **Usage**

This broad category covers a lot of topics. Grammar has a wide variety of rules, and writing tests assess your knowledge and understanding. Subjects and verbs must agree. Verbs have tenses (for example, present and future) that must be consistent. Pronouns must refer to nouns properly. If the last three sentences sound like Greek to you, make sure you review grammatical usage rules. Usage also covers vocabulary and acceptable Standard English usage. People have become very comfortable with short forms used in texting, but “LOL” and “C U L8R” aren’t acceptable in formal writing.

## Mechanics

In reference to writing, the term mechanics refers to the little things that make your writing look like it should: **capitalization, spelling, and punctuation**. Using correct mechanics may not change the substance of your writing; that is, a word may mean the same thing whether it's capitalized or not. Correct mechanics will change how your writing is perceived.

**Capitalization:** You have to recognize which words should start with a capital letter and which words shouldn't. All sentences start with a capital letter, but so do titles, like *Miss*, *President*, and *Senator*, when they're followed by a person's name. Names of cities, states, and countries are also capitalized.

**Spelling:** You don't have to spot a lot of misspelled words, but you do have to know how to spell contractions and possessives and understand the different spellings of *homonyms* — words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings, like *their* and *there*. Good spelling skills are a lifelong pursuit. There is no fixed set of rules that you can memorize in order to know how to spell every word in the English language

**Punctuation:** Much more than spelling, punctuation in English tends to follow a fixed set of rules. The problem is that the list of rules is half a mile long. However, you will only need to know what each punctuation mark means and a few basic rules for how it is used.

A **comma** (,) indicates a brief pause. Example: *Jackie, my oldest sister, got a job yesterday.*

A **semicolon** (;) is used to divide two complete sentences with a pause shorter than a period. Example: *Jackie is my oldest sister; I don't get along with her.*

A **colon** (:) introduces a list or an explanation. Example: *I have three sisters: Jackie, Celia, and Amber.*

A **dash** (—) is used to indicate a long break for emphasis. Example: *My oldest sister and I used to fight—a lot.*

A **period** (.) stops a sentence at the end of a complete thought. Example: *Jackie is my oldest sister.*

An **exclamation point** (!) stops a sentence with emphasis. Example: *I'm sick of fighting!*

A **question mark** (?) is used to indicate a question. Example: *Do you fight with your sisters?*

## 11.2 Turning your ideas into written arguments

A written argument is a piece of writing that presents a specific viewpoint on a topic and supports it with evidence and reasoning. It's a form of communication where the writer aims to persuade the reader to accept their claim or position. This can be found in various contexts, from academic essays to legal briefs.

Effective argumentative writing can be a great way to communicate concepts, convince others of an idea or make a case for or against a position. Whether you're writing a piece for work, school, as an artistic endeavor or to get published, structuring your point of view correctly can be the key to writing a compelling argument. Learning more about argument writing can also help you develop the skills you need to present your ideas in a clear and engaging manner.

### 11.2.1 Types of arguments

You can present your argument in a written piece of work in several ways. These five types of argument claims can form the structure of your essay:

- **Facts:** Factual arguments claim something is true or false.
- **Causes and effects:** Cause and effect writing aims to answer what causes a problem and what the effect of that problem is.
- **Definitions:** In these arguments, you might make an assertion about the underlying meaning or perception of a topic or idea.
- **Values:** Value arguments make a claim for something's importance.
- **Policies:** Policy arguments attempt to convince the reader that they should care about a policy or process. Policy arguments often include calls to action that tell readers what they can do after they finish reading your writing.

To prepare for the writing task, you need to analyze and brainstorm different essay topics so that you have a range of ideas. You should start by introducing the topic and the points for discussion in your own words. Your ideas need to be presented in a logical sequence. This is done through the use of

paragraphing. You should state a clear, convincing argument that supports your position and leads to a logical conclusion.

### **11.2.2 How to write an argument**

If you're interested in writing an effective argument, here are eight steps you can take:

#### **1. Decide what you're arguing**

Before you begin your writing, take a moment to formalize your ideas. Decide what you're going to write about and think of reasons you can use to prove your point. From here, you can draft a thesis statement that clearly articulates what you're arguing. The thesis can be one of the most important parts of your written argument. Even though it's usually only one sentence long, an effective thesis statement can engage readers, communicate your key ideas clearly and introduce the rest of your paper. You can complete your thesis after you've completed your outline once you know the supporting points you plan to use.

#### **2. Outline your ideas**

While optional, an outline can help you organize your thoughts and decide the most effective way to structure your argument. Begin with your thesis or main argument and think of at least two convincing reasons readers should agree with your claims. In your outline, don't worry about writing full sentences or a whole intro or conclusion. Identify any supporting arguments you would like to use and find outside sources that reinforce your ideas. Data, quotes and anecdotes can all help convince readers to see things from your point of view. In your outline, select the evidence you're going to use for each of your points. Narrow down your strongest ideas with the best-supporting evidence and use these as the starting points for your body paragraphs. Be sure to consider any counterclaims or rebuttals you'd like to include as well. Order your points so they effectively support your thesis.

#### **2. Write an introductory paragraph**

When writing your introductory paragraph, try to introduce your reader to your idea and topic gradually. Provide any background information or additional context they may need to understand your argument. Consider putting your thesis statement at the end of your introductory paragraph. This way, you've

provided background and context for your argument, and now you're ready to expand on your primary assertion.

### **3. Construct your body paragraphs**

Your body paragraphs contain your supporting ideas and evidence. Consider structuring your argumentative paragraphs using the point, evidence and analysis (PEA) format. This can help you keep your writing focused and clear and help readers better understand your argument. Here are the elements of a PEA body paragraph:

- **Point:** Your points are your supporting arguments. Include them in the first sentence of each of your body paragraphs to introduce reasons the reader should believe your ideas.
- **Evidence:** Evidence is your sources that support your points. You can use statistical data, survey results, anecdotal evidence or quotes to prove your points and reinforce their validity.
- **Analysis:** Conclude each of your body paragraphs with a sentence or two that explains the relevance of your evidence to your supporting points and your thesis. Explain why your audience should care about the evidence you provided.

### **4. Include additional information to support your argument**

If you'd like to include a counterclaim or a rebuttal in your argumentative writing, describe the concepts behind each idea within your project. Presenting the other side can be a good choice if you're trying to convince an audience of something within a polarizing topic. After defining the counterargument, you can describe why it's incorrect or misleading to demonstrate that you've considered other points of view. This can allow readers to consider all sides of a topic before deciding to support yours.

### **5. Produce a thoughtful conclusion**

In your conclusion, reiterate your thesis and restate the most important aspects of your argument. Make one last call to action where you urge readers to take your side or get excited about a cause. If your argument concerns policy or procedural changes, list steps you would take to solve the issue and tell others how they can get involved.



## **6. Cite your sources**

If you used data or evidence from outside sources, be sure to credit where you got your information. This is good practice in writing, but it can also be important for your audience if they want to do additional research after hearing your argument. How you cite your sources depends on your writing subject and your audience. There are specific style guides for different genres of writing that can provide direction for how best to list your citations.

## **7. Analyze the effectiveness of your argument's structure**

The goal of your writing is to convince an audience of your argument. Review your paper to evaluate how well your body paragraphs or key points support your thesis. Rearrange parts of your writing if needed to better support your ideas and persuade readers. A good way to check the effectiveness of your argument is to ask someone who's unfamiliar with the topic to read your paper and describe how convincing your ideas are.

## **8. Revise your writing**

Error-free, clear writing can bolster your audience's confidence in your authority to speak on a subject. Review your argument for grammatical errors, flow, formatting and voice. Be sure your voice and tenses are consistent throughout.

### ***Distinguishing between supported and unsupported claims***

Assessing the validity of evidence is a critical skill. Newspapers, speeches, and other media constantly bombard people with information and opinions. To formulate a thoughtful opinion on any issue, you must be able to distinguish between supported and unsupported claims. Evidence needs to be more than just a list of statements — it must be clear, detailed, and proven.

### ***Analyzing the evidence***

You need to be able to analyze the evidence presented to support an argument. A passage can claim anything in the form of a premise, but unless that premise is generally accepted as being true, the passage needs to present evidence that proves it.

### ***Is the evidence relevant?***

For evidence to count as proof, it must be relevant to the claim. Writers may use irrelevant evidence intentionally (to mislead the audience) or unintentionally (in the case of poorly written passages). Either way, irrelevant evidence doesn't count.

### ***Analyze data, graphs, and pictures used as evidence***

You have to be able to extract and analyze information from data, graphs, and pictures. This analysis involves making deductions or inferences from these sources. (A *deduction* is a logical conclusion that follows from a given set of data. An *inference* is a generalization that describes a set of data.) Numerical data is often presented in a table, followed by a question that challenges your ability to extract or interpret data presented in the table.

### ***Synthesizing***

Synthesis is the opposite of analysis. When you analyze, you break a whole into its parts and examine how the parts relate to one another in order to judge the quality of the whole. When you synthesize, you start with different, unrelated parts, and search out relationships in order to put the parts together to make a new whole. You synthesize automatically when you read, as you relate “new” text information to previous knowledge and create the new “whole” of your knowledge in a field. Synthesis becomes more of a conscious act when you write, since you have to actively select pieces of information that make sense together.

## **11.3 Linking your ideas**

Linking ideas in writing means using words and phrases (linking words) to connect sentences and paragraphs, creating a logical flow and making your writing easier to understand. These words help the reader follow your train of thought and grasp the relationships between different ideas. You need to ensure that you can get your meaning across to the reader. Good writing relies on the ability to be coherent -to use the right linking and reference words in complex sentence forms. Linking words and phrases are used to add supporting points and examples to your main ideas. You need to signpost these clearly so that it is easy to follow your arguments.

There are many ways in which you can link your main idea supporting arguments. It is important to try to vary the words and structures you use.

**Here are some useful expressions.**

For example/For instance.....	In fact /Indeed .....
Of course .....	If this is/were the case.....
Firstly/For one thing.....	Naturally/Understandably...
A good example of this is .....	In my experience.....

**Link the following arguments using an appropriate expression from the box above. Use a different expression in each gap.**

1. It is impossible to predict what type of holidays people will be taking in 100 years' time. It is possible, a ....., that space travel will be a realistic option in the future. B....., it would completely transform out traditional view of a holiday.
2. I would argue that supermarkets are a good thing. a..... in some countries they can offer so many products that it's hardly necessary to shop anywhere else. b..... there are something instances of local opposition, but this is usually short-lived.
3. Statistics show that the worst drivers in the world are young men. ...., if you look closely at any car that is going too fast, overtaking in the wrong place or driving too close to the car in front, there will be a young man in the driver's seat.
4. I strongly approve of the preservation of historic buildings. a....., they are a part of our heritage and secondly, they are often very beautiful. Too many have already been destroyed. b..... my home town, where whole streets of lovely houses were knocked down in order to build high-rise flats.

Let's explore linking words by looking at two short sentences that could be connected through appropriate linking words:

This theory could be applied to many contexts. The theory is most useful when analyzing practical situations.

We can connect these sentences in a number of ways by using linking words to show specifically what kind of connection we are making. Here are some examples of how we can make them into one sentence in a variety of ways:

- This theory could be applied to many contexts, however / although it is most useful when analyzing practical situations.
- This theory could be applied to many contexts because it is most useful when analyzing practical situations.
- This theory could be applied to many contexts, particularly when analysing practical situations.

We can also link these ideas but keep them as two connected sentences by using appropriate linking language:

- This theory could be applied to many contexts. However, it is most useful when analyzing practical situations because .....
- This theory could be applied to many contexts. In particular, it is most useful when analyzing practical situations.
- This theory could be applied to many contexts. Despite this, it is most useful when analyzing practical situations.

All of these examples have the same two ideas, but the links or connections between the ideas add subtle differences to the meaning in each case. There are four main categories of connective devices used extensively in academic writing:

- Adding information: and, furthermore, in addition, also
- Chronology: previously, subsequently, firstly
- Cause and effect: if, therefore, thus, consequently
- Compare and contrast: similarly, in contrast, however

#### **GENERAL NOTES – CONNECTIVES OR LINKING DEVICES:**

- Avoid over-using linking words and phrases. It is not necessary to begin every sentence with a linking device. This can make your writing seem mechanical or formulaic.
- If you think you are over-using linking devices, take them out and read the sentence / paragraph / section without them. Do your ideas still hold together effectively? Is your message clear without overt connective devices?
- Avoid using the same linking word or phrase repeatedly throughout your writing. 'However' and 'furthermore' are commonly over-used linking words by many students. Try to use a variety of connective language in your academic writing.

Typical Linking Words			
Type of link	Within a sentence	Between sentences or paragraphs	Hints, tips and examples
<b>Adding similar information</b>	and, also, another, too	In addition, moreover, furthermore, further, likewise, additionally, another, indeed, what is more	Never use 'and' at the start of a sentence.
<b>Showing comparison and contrast</b>	but, like, similarly, equally, whereas, however, although, though, while, compared with, is comparable to, unlike, yet, instead, still, notwithstanding, nonetheless, nevertheless, albeit	While, however, in contrast, by contrast, on the other hand, alternatively, compared with, correspondingly, similarly, unlike, nonetheless, nevertheless, on the contrary, conversely	Never use 'but' at the start of a sentence. When using a contrasting or comparing linking device to start a sentence, follow it with a comma (However, ... Similarly, ... On the other hand, ...).
<b>Showing cause and effect/ consequence</b>	so, because, if, thus, hence, therefore, consequently, may cause, can lead to, can result in, owing to, as a result of, as a consequence of, thereby, accordingly, otherwise, in that, in view of	Despite this, even so, as a result, for this reason, with this in mind, thus, therefore, accordingly, consequently, as a consequence, as a result, owing to, that being the case, in that case, in view of	Commas are generally used after these linking devices when they introduce a sentence (Therefore, ... Despite this, ...).
<b>Showing condition</b>	if, even then, even if, unless, after, once, until, whether, yet, provided, providing, since, when, on the condition that, whenever, wherever	As a result of, provided, providing, if, once, even then, even if, when, whenever, wherever	
<b>Chronology</b>	then, when, after, before, while, first, second, third, next, later, latter, former, finally	First, second, ... firstly, secondly, ... initially, to begin, at first, first of all, next, before, subsequently, previously, eventually, after, then, finally, to conclude, lastly, in summary, in short, to sum up, overall, in conclusion, in sum	Use ordinal sequencing devices sparingly in your writing. Find other ways to sequence ideas rather than repeatedly using 'firstly, ... secondly, ... thirdly, ...'.
<b>Providing examples</b>	such as, for instance, for example, including, evidenced by, exemplified by, illustrated by, demonstrated by, by way of example, notably	An example of this, for example, for instance, this is evidenced / demonstrated / illustrated by, a case in point, to illustrate, to demonstrate, notably	When introducing a long or complex list of examples, use a colon to introduce the list and semi-colons between the items in the list ( ... including: W; X; Y; and Z).
<b>Referring to</b>	regarding, considering, with regard to, with respect to, specifically, namely	Regarding, in terms of, in the case of, as regards, with regard to, with respect to, on the question of, on the subject of	
<b>Cautious, tentative academic language</b>	may, might, could, likely, probably, probable, possibly, possible, suggest, appear to, almost certain, may be due to, could be attributed to, cannot be ruled out, often, generally, usually, frequently, most, almost all, the majority of, certain types of, tends to	It is thought that, it is believed, a widely held view is, it has been suggested, it may be, it is likely, it is probable, it is possible, there is some evidence to suggest, a likely / possible / probable explanation, in general, in general terms	It is important in academic writing to avoid expressing absolute certainty. 'Hedging devices' or modal expressions are used to reduce the strength of a statement or claim to allow for exceptions and to avoid over-generalising.

## Writing Exercise

**Direction: Take 40 minutes to write an essay of at least 250 words on the following task.**

Disruptive school students have a negative influence on others. Students who are noisy and disobedient should be grouped together and taught separately.

Do you agree or disagree?

Give your reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

[illegible]

## Writing Exercise

**Write about the following topic:**

**Young people are better qualified than they were in the past. Some people argue that this is because competition for jobs is greater than it used to be. Other say that people only continue their education because the opportunities exist for them to do so.**

**Discuss both these views and give your opinion.**

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience. Write at least 250 words.


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