

RECIPE FOR A WOULD-BE WRITER

THE COMPOSITION: FROM TOP TO BOTTOM

I. The Title Mirrors the Dominant Idea of the Paper

A. Appropriate

B. Integration: An outgrowth of the paper. Hint-wait until you have finished your composition to title it

II. Opening: First Paragraph

A. Make Your First Sentence Forceful, Alive, Imaginative, and on Target

1. The initial sentence is analogous to the handshake exchange of an introduction

a) when you meet a stranger, you want to make a good impression; the same holds true for your introduction to the reader

b) make your first sentence broad enough in its implications to introduce subject in a general fashion

2. Second sentence: here the analogy of a firm handshake and a good impression continues to hold true - after the introduction, the tenor of the remarks that follow is very important

3. From the first sentence to the last in the opening paragraph, go from the general to the specific.

a) thus: sentence #2 should be somewhat more specific than #1; #3 than #2; #4 than #3; #5 than #4, and so forth until the final sentence of the paragraph, with which you can do several things. Here are at least two suggestions: 1) state the thesis of your paper directly; 2) phrase the last sentence in such a way as to indicate strongly and clearly the content and direction of your paper.

III. Second Paragraph: What to Consider

A. In your opening paragraph, you stated the major idea in your paper (at least you made it clear what it is to be); now get to the problem at hand — development of your idea

B. Make a clear, effective transition between paragraphs

1. How to make clear, effective transitions

- a) repetition of keywords, phrases, or ideas
- b) contrastive adverbial conjunctions: however, on the other hand, etc.
- c) use of a clear pronoun reference: it, that, who (any of the personal pronouns)

C. Use transitions between sentences within paragraph

Samples of different types of transitions:

Addition: again, also, and, besides, finally, first, in addition, last, second, next, still, too, further

Comparison: also, in the same way, likewise, similarly

Concession: granted, naturally, of course

Contrast: although, but, despite that, even so, even though, however, in contrast, in spite of, instead, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, otherwise, regardless, still, though, yet

Emphasis: certainly, indeed, in fact, of course

Example: for example, for instance, namely, specifically, in other words

Summary: finally, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in short, in summary, on the whole, therefore, to summarize

Time

Sequence: again, also, before, besides, earlier, eventually, finally, formerly, further, in addition, in the first place, last, meanwhile, moreover, next, now, presently, second, shortly, since, so far, soon, still, then, too, until, now, when

D. Sentence Variety

1. length
2. structure

E. When to paragraph

1. a particular segment in the flow of thought is exhausted
2. different perspective is necessary

F. Points to consider for your paragraphs:

Your paragraph will be clear and enjoyable to read if you follow the following directions. First, remember that the paragraph should be neither too short nor too long; make it approximately eight to twelve sentences in length. Second, organize and develop your paragraph carefully. Remember that the paragraph should contain one central idea only, that it should have unity, coherence, continuity, and adequate development. Finally, listen to the sound of your prose and be the reader over your shoulder.

IV. Points to consider when writing composition:

- A. Development
- B. Diction
- C. Organization
- D. Unity
- E. Coherence
- H. Sentence Structure
- I. Mechanics

V. Closing Paragraph

The closing should include the following:

- A. Restatement of thesis
- B. Restatement of main ideas

The closing paragraph could also include the following:

- A. A call to action
- B. A reference back to the introductory paragraph

Just make sure you let the reader know the paper is coming to an end, but **DO NOT** begin the final paragraph with “In conclusion.”

Also, do not add new information in the closing paragraph.

VI. Major Rhetorical Modes

- A. Narration
- B. Description
- C. Process
- D. Comparison/Contrast
- E. Explanation
- F. Analysis
 - 1. classification
 - 2. definition
- G. Argumentative

PARAGRAPH EVALUATION

1. Is the topic sentence clearly stated?
2. Is the paragraph well developed and organized?
 - a. Does the paragraph contain one central idea only?
 - b. Is the topic adequately developed or supported?
 - c. Is the paragraph unified and coherent?
 - d. Does the paragraph have continuity or smooth transitions?
3. Does the paragraph contain good sentence structure?
4. Is the word choice effective?
5. Is the paragraph free of errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling?
6. Is the treatment of the subject matter imaginative and thought—provoking?

COMPOSITION EVALUATION

1. Is the thesis sentence clear and well supported?
2. Is the composition well organized and developed?
 - a. Is the order or arrangement of the material in the composition as a whole correct, clear, and easy to follow?
 - b. Does the discussion part of the composition (body) keep a balance and support the purpose of the composition as promised in the thesis?
 - c. Is there sufficient use of specific, concrete details to support any generalizations made in the composition?

- d. Is each of the paragraphs well organized and developed, and is there continuity between each?
3. Is the word choice effective, and does the composition avoid wordiness?
4. Is the composition free of errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, sentence construction, etc.?
5. Is the title appropriate and effective?
6. Does the composition as a whole reflect thought? Is it both logical and imaginative?

THE WRITING PROCESS

1. Prewriting
2. Drafting
3. Revising
4. Proofreading
5. Publishing