

JENSEN'S **FORMAT WRITING**

thumb
e-up (rit'up)
ce, esp. a favorable
of a corporation's assets.
writhe (rī'h) v. writhed, writhe-
or squirm, as in pain, struggle
move with a twisting or
acutely. —tr. To cause to twist
act or instance of writhing.
writhe n. —writhe
writ·ing (rī'ting) n. 1. Written
guage symbols or characters
face; readable matter. 3. A
composition. 4. The activity,
5. Writings. Hagiographa.
on the wall. A usually ominous
saw the writing on the wall and
soon.
writing paper n. Paper for writing on, esp.
writ of election n. A writ ordering that a
writ of election to fill a vacancy
esp. a special election to fill a vacancy
writ of error n. Law. A writ commis-
to review the proceedings of another
court given if deemed neces-
sary.



MASTERBOOKS
SECOND EDITION

how to write easily and well

FRODE JENSEN

JENSEN'S FORMAT WRITING



First printing: September 2016

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Dedication

I am personally indebted to my own high school English teacher, Thaddeus Muradian, who forced me to master punctuation. May this book benefit you as his teaching of these rules did me so many years ago.

— Frode Jensen

Using This Workbook

Features: The suggested weekly schedule enclosed has easy-to-manage lessons that guide the reading, worksheets, and all assessments. The pages of this guide are perforated and three-hole punched so materials are easy to tear out, hand out, grade, and store. Teachers are encouraged to adjust the schedule and materials needed in order to best work within their unique educational program.

Lesson Scheduling: Students are instructed to read the pages in their book and then complete the corresponding section provided by the teacher. Assessments that may include worksheets, activities, quizzes, and tests are given at regular intervals with space to record each grade. Space is provided on the weekly schedule for assignment dates, and flexibility in scheduling is encouraged. Teachers may adapt the scheduled days per each unique student situation. As the student completes each assignment, this can be marked with an “X” in the box.



Approximately 30 to 45 minutes per lesson, three to four days a week



Includes answer keys for worksheets and tests



Worksheets for each chapter



Tests are included to help reinforce learning and provide assessment opportunities



Designed for grades 9 to 12 in a one-year course

Course Description

This book is concerned with developing expository writing skills. Other types of writing, such as poetry, narrative or story telling, and certain types of business writing, are not covered in this book. The skills taught here may have some carryover into other types of writing, but expository writing is the particular focus.

Expository writing is writing that exposes, puts forth, explains, reveals, or exhibits in detail about something. It has a purpose to inform, clarify, and perhaps even to persuade. Such writing may simply describe, or it may give a series of reasons. In any case, there is a fundamental point that is made. How that point is made may often determine whether the piece is accepted or rejected. The purpose of this book is to give experience in various formats or organizational patterns so that whatever the point of a piece of writing, it will come across in a logical fashion and make the point as strongly as possible.

Course Objectives and Course Introduction

content
style
organization
mechanics

Students completing this course should be aware of the following:

1. Writing can generally be broken down into four basic components: content, style, organization, and mechanics. Let's briefly review each of them.
 - Content is what is said, the subject of the writing, and the various information given in the writing. Content is the sum and substance of the writing, the set of facts, and the conclusion. It varies from paper to paper. Each new assignment generally means new content. Content is important. It is very difficult to write a good paper with poor content. The old saying, "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear," applies quite well. The lesson to be learned here is that the subject of good writing must be one of recognizable worth, not something foolish or degrading. Content, as such, is not taught; however, your teacher will grade on it in some fashion. This book will give you some ideas about gathering information in useable form.
 - Style is the manner or expression of language. It is how something is said, the turns of phrase used by each writer. Style is something that is personal; it grows out of the writer and the writer's experience. Style is somewhat fluid or organic in that it changes as the writer matures. Some aspects of style can be taught; conciseness of expression and logical progression of thought are given some attention in this book. Because style is personal, different styles appeal to different readers and teachers. The grading of style is subjective and will vary somewhat according to each teacher.
 - Organization is how the material is put together; this book identifies a variety of formats or ways of organizing material. It is very teachable, but unfortunately it is generally not found in most books on writing. Every writing assignment carries with it two fundamental tasks: figuring out what to say and then organizing how it will be said. Mastering the procedures in this book will cut the work of future writing tasks in half. The first task is really getting the content together; the second task is primarily an organizational task, although style and mechanics also have their part. This book deals with how to organize material into a cogent presentation. If the reader is able to follow an argument, then the reader is more likely to make a valid judgment on the content. Poorly organized thoughts convey negatives to the reader; this generally causes the reader to reject the argumentation of the writer. Incoherency in presentation not only distracts the reader; it detracts from the point the writer is attempting to make. The formats presented in this book provide ready-made templates into which content can be placed.

- Mechanics comprise the technical aspects of writing: spelling, punctuation, and usage. Although not taught in this book, these areas are graded. Writing that is full of mechanical mistakes distracts the reader; any distractions to the reader weaken the paper. For help in punctuation see *Jensen's Punctuation*, another book by this author. Even neatness counts; a messy paper with erasures or a crumpled title page with stains on it makes a poor impression. Remember, what is written must stand by itself since the author is not there to help it along. With apologies to Hallmark Cards, "Care enough to write and turn in the very best."

Your hard work
will pay off.

2. This brief section is to encourage you. This book is a lot of work for you and your teacher, but it will pay off if you continue to give it good effort. Anyone can become a more effective writer; it simply takes some work. Do not be discouraged if the first few papers are marked up somewhat. Certain errors can be corrected with minor instruction. As mentioned above, each time you write you have two jobs to do: gathering the information and organizing it in the written form. You will learn how to do both in this course. The nice thing is that once you have mastered the organizational patterns, your work on all future writing assignments has literally been cut in half. The various formats are found throughout the book. That's why the book is called *Jensen's Format Writing*. Learn those formats now and use them for a lifetime.

Learn from your
mistakes.

3. Learn from your mistakes. Look carefully at your returned papers, and ask questions if you do not understand why something was marked. Becoming a good writer is a process, not a single event. Good instruction, practice, and mastery of form all contribute to good writing. Good writing is clear writing that is generally free of mechanical difficulties. It should also be interesting and to the point and have something of value to say.

Pay attention to
the examples.

4. Pay attention to the examples. They are given for your benefit. The examples are meant to teach you and further explain by example what the text has already told you. Read and study the examples before you do an assignment. As mentioned above, once you master the format, your only job is really just to dump your information into the format. The organization is mostly taken care of by the format itself.

Hang in there
and learn.

5. Save some of your early papers and look at them after a number of weeks. You will be amazed at your improvement. Many of my students literally gasped when I told them they would be producing 1,500-word papers with documentation in just over a week. Some later confided that they thought they could never do it. They all did and were thankful for the experience. Hang in there and learn. Read the section for the teacher that follows. It will help you understand how you will be graded.

Teacher Notes

The purpose of this section is to give you some ideas regarding this book. How you use the book will ultimately be up to you; the ideas given here are simply some ways, methods, and time frames that you might utilize.

The book falls naturally into seven basic sections. To do all of them in one year is possible, but both you and your students will be hard at work. We have provided a schedule for a one-year plan and a two-year plan. The seven sections naturally align themselves into groups. The first section on single paragraphs can easily stand by itself. The next two sections both deal with the five-paragraph essay and should be taught consecutively. The book reports and essay answers put the five-paragraph formats to use. The business writing section is somewhat independent of the others. It uses formats, but they are of a different sort. You can use it at any point after the single paragraph section. The last two sections of the book also have a natural affinity in that the condensation principles are helpful practice for doing the research that often occurs when writing a paper of any length.

Daily Schedules are provided, but instructors are encouraged to use this course in a way that meets the needs of their situation. It is my contention that for the s, the student should write at least three and perhaps five of each type of paragraph in order to instill the format. If the student is in class every day, a paragraph three times a week is good. That allows the teacher time to correct the writing and gives the student immediate feedback so improvements can be made while the student is in the process of learning the format. The Monday, Wednesday, Friday routine works well for this section. Such a plan keeps the students writing on a regular basis. As a for instance, a new format can be covered on a Monday with the first paragraph to be handed in at the end of the day. You need some time to read the students' papers before they write their next paragraph. On Wednesday, the first activity regarding writing should be to make some general comments about their writing; a mix of positives and negatives is generally the case. (In a class situation, one or two papers might be read to highlight the remarks.) The papers with the check sheets are then turned back; some individual conferencing is often appropriate.

The sections dealing with elements of five-paragraph essays through the principle of condensation can simply be treated as individual assignments, with one due per scheduled writing day. The non-writing days can be given over to literature or other activities.

Literature generates many topics to write about, particularly ones assigned by the teacher. Up to an additional half credit may be earned by assigning literature and other activities on non-writing days.

In the five-paragraph essay section, students write one essay per week. That gave me a couple of days to read them and have them ready for comment and return the next Wednesday. If the students are going through the whole book in one year, it will be difficult for them to write more than one five-paragraph essay of each type. My personal thought is that each type of essay should be practiced at least twice, and three times would be better.

When introducing a new format, it is good to walk through the process with the students and answer any questions. The procedure as given in the book is quite easy to follow, but students benefit from some oral interchange. As before, some individual conferencing with a student, using the check sheet as a guide, is often profitable.

The major paper section is the last teaching portion of the book. I use the terms *major paper*, *research paper*, and *position paper* somewhat interchangeably. This section is really quite open-ended. The first four papers are a building process in that a new element is added each time. There is no need to quit after the fourth paper if time permits others to be written. My philosophy is that the student will learn with practice, not with one big assignment. Permit me a personal observation at this point. The pattern in all the schools in which I was employed was to have the students write a research paper. It was a six- to nine-week ordeal with the grade being largely based on the final product. I opted for a new approach — a series of short papers that allowed practice in the various elements of paper writing. This, by the way, is simply applying a biblical principle of learning, spaced repetition. The benefits are great. The students have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes; they can get it right the second or third time and be rewarded for doing so. They practice

the procedures many times instead of just going through them once, so researching and organizing material becomes a familiar process and is mastered. Many students have come back while in college and thanked me for the edge they had over many of their classmates when it came to producing a written piece.

What about time frames for these larger papers? Two weeks is the maximum I would allow between papers. The length of the paper is somewhat immaterial; longer papers simply mean a longer time between papers. A good length is 1200–1500 words. It is long enough to require a bit of research and short enough that a clear argument can be presented and evaluated readily. Additionally, each paper that is completed requires using all the skills of preparing a paper.

As the teacher, you should provide the students with an overview at the beginning of course. The Daily Schedule is a good tool to use for the overview. The overview should cover the topics of each paper, the deadlines for each paper, the specific inclusions for each paper, and some general guidelines such as double-spaced type, one side only, and other such things as you may require. That way everyone knows just what to expect.

Now it is time to discuss the analytical keys, the check sheets found at the back of the book. These can be duplicated as you see fit. You can use them directly or modify them for your own purposes. I have found these sheets quite valuable in establishing a grade and as tools for discussing a paper with a student. (If you have a class situation with multiple students, the check sheets provide you with a set of quick notes in an organized form regarding your evaluation of any given paper.) A student is also able to see the strengths and weaknesses regarding his or her paper in an easy and readable format.

First let's look at the paragraph parameter check sheet. It would be good to have a copy of the check sheet in front of you as I go through it.

Please Note: Grading is subjective. These are our recommendations. Instructors should grade according to their own style and needs.

Under ORGANIZATION there are three entries. As you read a paragraph, check the blank if you believe the student has met the requirement. With me it is a check or a minus. A check means the student did the job; a minus means I am not satisfied. The first and last blanks only involve one sentence each. The

middle blank covers the body of the paragraph; that may be as many as five or six sentences.

- What about partial credit? I never give it; the parameter says subsidiary sentences — that means all of them to me — fit the format; they all have to fit to get the check.

The second section is labeled MECHANICS. You will note that I have broken it into three areas: spelling, punctuation, and usage. In these blanks I put the actual number of mistakes of each type I find.

- On the student's paper, I circle a misspelled word or write SP in the margin.
- Punctuation marks left out or incorrectly placed are circled or checked in the margin.
- Usage errors I mark in the margin with a U or make some other appropriate notation such as REF for improper reference. Any simple notation is fine so long as you and the student know what you are talking about. Usage errors always merit some comment during the personal conference time.

After the number of errors is entered into the blanks, add them up. That number determines the total mechanics portion of the grade as given in the NOTE for the mechanics section. For instance, a paragraph with two spelling errors, a usage error, and a punctuation error makes a total of four mistakes in mechanics. That translates to a -1 when adding up the points for the grade.

The third section is STYLE. Some of this is subjective. This is where the teacher can make a difference in the final grade. As in the first section, a check means the student merits your satisfaction. Each check is ultimately worth one point on the final grade scale. The last item in this section is called balance in presentation. This means two things: the length of the body sentences should be similar, and the level of ideas presented should be of near equal value. Many students grasp this very readily, but some seem to struggle with it constantly. It could be argued that this item should go under ORGANIZATION since it involves logic of a sort. Move it if you like.

The last section is CONTENT. In single paragraphs, the first two items are almost a repeat of those found under ORGANIZATION. There are differences, however. You will see it as you go along. Again, a check is rewarded if the student satisfies you that he or she met

the requirement. Sometimes students will leave out a fact that should be included. Sometimes a student misuse or confuse ideas, and at times they will include sentences that are irrelevant or are totally off the wall. The second and third blanks take care of these errors.

Finally, it is time to give the grade. Simply add up the items in sections one, three, and four. Put that total with the mechanics total of +1, 0, or -1. The resulting number will yield a letter grade. Under this system it is difficult for students to fail if they turn in the paper and make a decent effort. On the other hand, they must do nearly everything right in order to get the A. The general pattern for my students is they improve and become more careful over time. With each new paragraph type, there is some early tendency to err in having the subsidiary sentences fit the format; this is because the format is new.

The COMMENT section is where you can say nice things, make notes to yourself and the student, and perhaps give a rewrite of part of a sentence to illustrate a point. The back of the check sheet is blank, so you can easily turn it over if you need the space. I always try to write something.

- Examples might be “great topic sentence, conference necessary, good job, 4th sentence doesn’t fit,” and so on.

Type 1 is more subjective than Type 2. I favor Type 2 since it stresses organization, and that is what the book is really teaching.

The first section is ORGANIZATION. It has five blanks to fill. They are self explanatory. The first blank identifies the number of sentences wanted in the paragraph. You can vary the number as needed. 8 would be better for a paragraph based on Pattern #2 on page 14. Use the same system described in the Type 1 check sheet. Add up the points and circle the proper numbers.

MECHANICS is scored as it was in the Type 1 check sheet as are CONTENT and STYLE. You will note that these last two have fewer blanks to fill. Score the entire paper as with Type 1. For a more thorough explanation of this, watch lecture #2 on the Jensen’s Format Writing DVD supplement. Now it is time to look at the 5-paragraph essay check sheet. The basic idea is the same as the paragraph parameter check sheet, but the setup is a bit different.

The ORGANIZATION section is the longest, and

it counts for half of the final grade. Organization, however, is what this book is all about, and it is what we are trying to teach; therefore, it forms a significant portion of the grade. The checklist is easy to follow since it moves from beginning to end through the essay. Award a check if the item is done to your satisfaction. Each item is pretty much a yes/no situation.

- Do they have an opening statement that is appropriate, ties in with the subject, and gets your attention?
- Does the introductory paragraph follow the general to specific pattern of organization?
- Is the purpose clearly stated in the thesis?
- Is the outline of the paper given in the thesis statement?
- Does the topic sentence of the first body paragraph come at the beginning of the paragraph and introduce the first item as stated in the thesis?
- Is there a proper transition between the introduction and the first body paragraph?
- And so goes the rest of it. Count up the check marks and circle the appropriate numbers in the scale on the right hand side of the sheet under ORGANIZATION.

The MECHANICS section is somewhat reduced in size on this sheet. You could easily redesign it to break out the three or four basic types of errors. With the existing form, it is necessary to count up the errors on the student’s paper and then circle the appropriate set of numbers on the scale. When I had lots of papers to read, I would only mark errors to the sixth error. After the sixth error, I did not mark further errors simply to save time. If you only have one or a very few students, marking all the errors in the paper may be a better policy.

The EXPRESSION/CONTENT/READABILITY section is the subjective section; some might call it the teacher fudge faction. It is value judgment, pure and simple. It is entirely up to each teacher as to how he/she uses this section. For me it means how the paper comes across in general, whether it lives up to my expectation of what the student is capable of, how clearly and forceful the argument is expressed, and whether the reasons are complete and proper. A comment is in order here. At times, an essay that is technically perfect

still falls short of the mark. Other times a paper may make some marvelous statements and be quite superior except for some spelling or punctuation mistakes. This section allows the teacher some maneuvering territory when deciding the final grade. Use it wisely.

The COMMENT section is self-explanatory. The final grade is the sum of the three sections on the right of the check sheet. Another form, the organizational format: student assessment form, utilizes groups of three students to evaluate other student papers for a classroom setting. You will find it among the check sheets. It is also helpful in understanding the 5-paragraph essay check sheet. Both of these forms are reproducible for multiple use.

I've provided you with a check sheet for one book report style, one for the business letters, and one for the resume. The idea is the same no matter what the assignment. You are looking for particular things in the work produced by the students, and how well they do determines the grade. The check sheets I have provided are models; they are not set in stone. You can make up your own. Once you grasp the beauty of the check sheet or analytical key, you should become sold on it. You can tailor these for almost any assignment.

The major paper check sheets have three variations and are sequential. The third check sheet should be used for all papers after the second paper. The FORM area is expanded to include each new item as it is introduced. That is the only difference between the three check sheets. Annotated works cited are simply included under the works cited section. All items on this check sheet except the FORM section are replicated from the earlier check sheets, so I will not review them again. The FORM section is new, however. You will note that by each item there is a series of numbers: 0 1 2.

My standard for assigning these numbers is as follows:

- 2 means the student has completed that item with no mistakes.
- 1 means the student has completed the item, but it needs some improvement.
- 0 means either it was not done or was done so poorly that no credit can be given.

Obviously, some value judgments will have to be made regarding these items. As time goes on, the student will have more time to practice; thus, the standards can be raised over time.

Tests and keys are provided as well as grading scales where appropriate.

Directly after the 5-paragraph essay check sheet you will find a student assessment form regarding organizational structure.

For Classrooms: After the third or fourth five-paragraph essay, you can begin to have your students critique the essays of others using this form. I put the students in groups of three or four and had them evaluate a set of papers. Each student in the group had to read every paper. I encouraged them to compare and discuss their evaluations after they finished. This form will help them see the organizational patterns in writing; it really is a teaching tool. You will have to decide if the student evaluations will be a part of the grade on the essay or not.

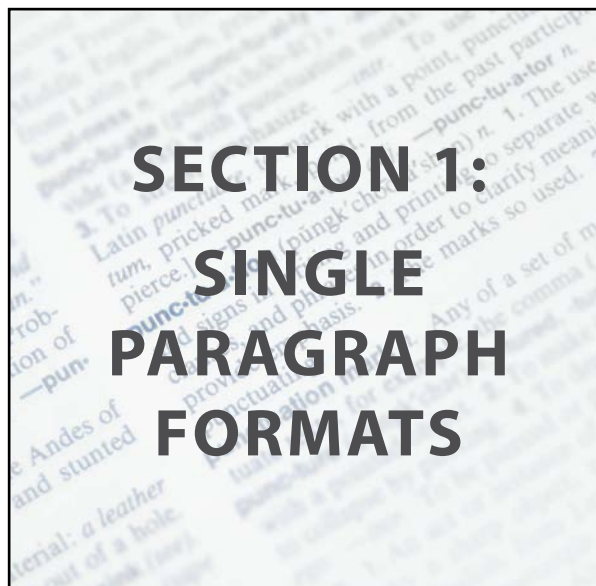
Also at the end of the book you will find a couple of sample schedules I used on two different occasions. Use them as guides for constructing something similar for your students.

This has been a rather long section to read, but it is very important that some method of consistent grading be adopted for student writing. The method employed should also point out the strengths and weaknesses in each student's writing. The check sheet method does both. The added benefit is that it is easy for the teacher to use once you understand it. In fact, a good check sheet system should reduce the time you have to spend grading papers unless you just give a student paper a cursory read and plop a grade on it. Surely you are more conscientious than that. May you use the check sheets along with this book to improve the writing of your student or students as the case may be. To God be the glory.

Special note: There is now a supplemental DVD which goes with this book. It gives overviews of the sections and teaches certain practices; it also motivates the students to do well through stories of former students' successes and encouragements by the author.

First Semester Suggested Daily Schedule

Date	Day	Assignment	Due Date	✓	Grade
First Semester-First Quarter					
Week 1	Day 1	Jensen's Format Writing • To The Student • To the Teacher and Student • Read Pages 4-10 • Jensen's Format Writing (DVD) Introduction			
	Day 2	Watch DVD with Parent • Analytical Keys • Section 1 • <i>Single Paragraph Formats</i> • Paragraphs • Essential of Good Paragraphs Good Paragraph Practices • Read Pages 19-24			
	Day 3	Watch DVD • <i>Single Paragraph Formats</i> • Section 1 • Continuity on Writing • Read Pages 25-26 • Complete Continuity Exercises: Worksheet 1 • Pages 25-26			
	Day 4	Section 1 • Paragraph Parameter Checks • The Example Paragraph Read Pages 27-29 • Complete Worksheet 2 • Page 31			
	Day 5	Section 1 • Complete Worksheet 3 • Page 32			
Week 2	Day 6	Section 1 • The Classification Paragraph • Read Pages 33-34 Complete Worksheet 4 • Page 35			
	Day 7	Section 1 • The Definition Paragraph • Read Pages 37-38 Complete Worksheet 5 • Page 39			
	Day 8	Section 1 • The Process Paragraph • Read Pages 41-42 Complete Worksheet 6 • Page 43			
	Day 9	Section 1 • The Analogy Paragraph • Read Pages 45-46 Complete Worksheet 7 • Page 47			
	Day 10	Section 1 • The Cause and Effect Paragraph • Read Pages 49-50 Complete Worksheet 8 • Page 51			
Week 3	Day 11	Section 1 • The Comparison Paragraph • Read Pages 53-54 Complete Worksheet 9 • Page 55			
	Day 12	Test 1 • Paragraph Writing Test • Pages 221-222			
	Day 13	Section 2 • <i>Five Paragraph Essays</i> • Elements of a Five Paragraph Essay • Thesis Statements • Read Pages 57-61 • Watch DVD Five Paragraph Elements I			
	Day 14	Section 2 • Thesis Statements • Complete Thesis Statements 1 Worksheet 1 • Pages 63-64			
	Day 15	Section 2 • Thesis Statements • Complete Thesis Statements 2 Worksheet 2 • Pages 65-66			
Week 4	Day 16	Section 2 • Thesis Statements • Complete Thesis Statements 3 Worksheet 3 • Pages 67-68			
	Day 17	Section 2 • Introductory Paragraphs • Read Pages 69-70 Complete Intro Paragraph #1 Worksheet 4 • Page 71			
	Day 18	Section 2 • Introductory Paragraphs Complete Intro Paragraph #2 Worksheet 5 • Pages 73-74			
	Day 19	Section 2 • Introductory Paragraphs Complete Intro Paragraph #3 Worksheet 6 • Pages 75-76			
	Day 20	Section 2 • Concluding Paragraphs • Read Pages 77-78 Watch DVD • Five Paragraph Elements II			

A square graphic with a thin black border. The background is a light gray with a faint, repeating pattern of the word "punctuate" in various orientations. Overlaid on this background is the text "SECTION 1:" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font, followed by "SINGLE" in a slightly smaller bold font, and "PARAGRAPH FORMATS" in the same large bold font as the first line.

SECTION 1: SINGLE PARAGRAPH FORMATS

This section of the book will deal with paragraphs. The first two pages have some general information you should read and digest; then there is a short section on continuity in writing. You will also find a page dealing with how the paragraphs will be evaluated. Following that you will find information on seven basic formats or organizational patterns that expository paragraphs follow. Those formats are what you will practice and turn in. They represent the meat of this particular section.

Single paragraphs are usually written in school or as brief descriptions in catalogues. Most of the rest of the time paragraphs are linked with one another to form some sort of lengthier piece. In school you are often asked to write a paragraph on this or that subject; sometimes you are asked to respond with a paragraph for an answer on a test. Being able to write a tight paragraph that expresses your ideas well is a good skill to have. After practicing the paragraph formats in this book, you should be able to produce a paragraph on demand with minimal effort and still have it come across well to the reader.

The seven basic formats you will find in this book are time-honored methods of organization; they are not something that this author made up. On the other hand, most students never have these organizational patterns identified by their teachers and are left to shift for themselves as to how to put their ideas together. Each of the patterns you will learn is unique and serves a particular purpose. However, most subjects can be organized in a variety of ways, so there is some overlap. Your job after you finish this book will be to decide which pattern to use when faced with writing about a given subject. You will know the basic formats, and one or two of them will always fit a given subject. You will find that some subjects lend themselves to one particular format while others can be organized in a variety of fashions.

Does everyone use patterns in their writing? Yes, almost everyone organizes their thoughts on paper to some degree; at times, however, the patterns may not be readily discernible. Does everyone consciously sit down and decide what format to follow? No, very few people spend much time in deciding a particular format to follow; they just write as the information and inspiration come. Such writing is generally somewhat loose in its structure. Those who consciously outline their ideas according to a given pattern are often rewarded with a more tightly organized piece of writing and one that is more effective in its impact.

For each of the formats that follow, you will write a number of paragraphs that conform to the organizational pattern. The subject matter will vary. Each format is presented with a set of ideas, a series of steps to produce such a paragraph, an example, an assignment your teacher might modify, and some sample topics. Read the format pages carefully and follow the instructions given both in the book and any additional ones imposed by your teacher. Some practice in each format will familiarize you with each type and help you understand the process of organizing ideas according to that format as well as in general.

Some practice in each format will familiarize you with each type and help you understand the process of organizing ideas according to that format as well as in general.

ESSENTIALS OF GOOD PARAGRAPHS

LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION: Structure and development of the paragraph

Unless a piece of writing is extremely short, it is usually divided into parts called paragraphs consisting of several sentences and offset from the rest of the materials by

indentation or spacing. A paragraph is not only a physical division; it also is a unit of the writer's thought used to show which sentences are closely related. Additionally, it is a series of sentences developing only one topic, a new paragraph being used for each new topic.

The important parts of paragraph development are listed below. This information applies to paragraphs that stand alone without reference to any other writing and to body paragraphs of any multiple-paragraph essay.

1. Topic Sentences
 - A. usually at the beginning of the paragraph, introduces the topic
 - B. tells the reader what the paragraph is about, states the purpose
 - C. gives unity to the paragraph
2. Body
 - A. a series of supporting sentences explaining the topic sentence
 - B. contains details, examples, incidents, facts, and reasons which support the topic sentence
 - C. generally developed by any of seven common methods
 - D. has unity and coherence
 - 1) clear, logical sequence of events
 - a) chronological order of time
 - b) spatial order (by position)
 - c) order of importance
 - 2) transitional devices
 - a) chronological words: *first, second, meanwhile, later, afterward, finally*, etc.
 - b) spatial words: *next to, in front of, beside, between, behind*, etc.
 - c) other words expressing relationships of ideas: *however, nevertheless, in fact, yet, because*, etc.
 - 3) completeness
 - a) free of mechanical and spelling errors
 - b) correct grammar usage
 - c) correct sentence structure
3. Conclusion or clincher
 - A. end of the paragraph
 - B. restates or sums up the topic sentence in different words

1. Topic Sentences
2. Body
3. Conclusion or Clincher

GOOD PARAGRAPH PRACTICES

The following information is to be applied particularly to paragraphs but has application to longer works. Once a point of view or tense is adopted, it should be retained throughout the exposition, be it a paragraph or a lengthier piece. Subordination of ideas also applies albeit in a more expanded manner. Sentences within a paragraph are akin to paragraphs within an essay; in other words, there is a hierarchy of ideas and their organization; these are replicated from the paragraph to the essay as a whole.

POINT OF VIEW: Point of view is perspective, the person in which the writing is expressed. There are three persons: first, second, and third. First person is the person speaking. In this case the sentences use pronouns such as *I, me, my, our, and we*. Use of the first person when writing generally lends a highly personal tone to the work. Second person is the person being spoken to, you and its associated pronouns. Use of the second person in writing gives the work an exhortative tone; the writer is telling the audience directly. Third person is the person being spoken about; pronouns such as *he, her, him, it, they, their, and his* are used in this situation. Using the third person in writing lends a somewhat objective or impersonal tone to the writing. The rule is to be consistent. A writer can pick any of the three perspectives. In fact, different objectives and topics in the writing lend themselves to particular perspectives. Once a perspective is adopted, however, that perspective should not be shifted. The key here is to monitor the subjects of sentences and check to see that each and every subject follows suit. Not following suit is an error; it commonly falls under improper usage and is often marked as *person shift*.

Pattern #1

Topic sentence
sub-point 1
sub-point 2
sub-point 3
sub-point 4
Conclusion

TENSE: Tense is a grammatical category; there are two tenses: past and present. The first verb in any verb combination shows the tense. The rule is to remain in the same tense during the entire paragraph or essay. Shifting around is cause for confusion and is regarded as a usage error. It is often marked as *tense shift*. Such an error is easy to make but also easy to correct with a careful proofreading. Just monitor the first verbs in the sentences and see if they agree in tense.

Pattern #2

Topic sentence
sub-point 1
elaboration
sub-point 2
elaboration
Conclusion

SUBORDINATION OF IDEAS: The topic sentence in a paragraph typically makes a statement that needs support. That support comes in the rest of the paragraph via the other sentences. All sentences in the paragraph should be subordinate to the main idea expressed in the topic sentence. Two general organizational patterns are acceptable. The first is that all sentences are equally balanced sub-points. For instance, each sentence may contain a different example that supports the topic sentence. The second method is that each sentence that makes a sub-point also has a sentence which follows that further elaborates on that particular sub-point. In essence a second level of subordination in the paragraph exists. Both methods are given in outline form on the left. Note that each sentence on a given level should have a rough equality in importance to other sentences on that level.

CONTINUITY IN WRITING

One problem found in student writing, particularly that of younger students, is the lack of continuity. By that, I mean the sentences do not flow well together; they don't tie well to one another.

The difficulty for the reader is to put it together in a reasonable fashion. This should not be the reader's job; it is the job of the writer to make an organized presentation. In fact, the better the organization, the more able the reader is absorb the content, which is generally the writer's purpose.

Many people often write as they think; this is especially true with younger children. The problem is that thoughts are often scattered instead of logically ordered. I remember my mother saying to me numerous times, "What has that got to do with the price of tea in China?" Of course, she was telling me in her elliptical fashion that my most recent statement had no relation to what I had previously said.

So, how do you know if you have a logical progression of thought in your writing? I maintain you can see it through the structure of the writing. Below you will find a series of ideas that are simple and can be easily followed by all students. I'm only making one assumption — that the students can recognize a noun when they see it. That's pretty basic, and almost all students can do so.

What follows will be obvious when I explain it. Unfortunately, many times the obvious is not taught; instead it is assumed. That's a common problem with teaching. Experience has shown me that explaining the obvious pays big dividends. Not all students know the things their teachers assume they know.

The key to having continuity in writing is repetition. Something from the previous sentence needs to be repeated in some fashion. Here are a few of the obvious ways of making reference from one sentence to another.

First, all writing must begin somewhere. Thus, the first sentence will make some statement about something. A general idea or a main idea will be identified. Subsequent sentences will build on or explain this idea in some way. Therefore, those subsequent sentences need ties to previous sentences. Here's how it works.

repeat the subject

1. The easiest method is to simply repeat the subject. Two successive sentences share the same subject.

Joe went to town. Joe met Sally.

In the above, we have *Joe* as the subject. First he goes to town, a simple action. Then he meets Sally, another simple action, but we have moved the writing forward and kept our continuity.

repeat the subject but use a pronoun

2. The second method, and one which is really a variant on the first, is to repeat the subject but use a pronoun reference instead of repeating the actual noun. This lends variety and efficiency to the writing.

Joe went to town. He met Sally.

use a synonym instead of the original noun

3. A third variant would be to repeat the subject but use a synonym instead of the original noun. Not all subjects lend themselves to this method, but enough do so that it can be used rather often.

Joe and his brothers went to town. The boys met Sally.

repeat one of the
other nouns from the
previous sentence

4. Thus far, we have kept our repetition to the subject, but things wouldn't get very far were we to stay on that tack. The fourth method, not a variant of the others, is to repeat one of the other nouns from the previous sentence.

Joe went to town. Going to town was a major event.

Obviously in the above town is repeated. I am using very simple sentences. Think of all the possibilities in the following sentence.

Joe met Sally on his way to town after the ball game on Saturday.

Look at all the nouns in the above sentence. Any one of them could be repeated. Of course, each noun would probably move the discourse in a new direction. Picking *Sally* instead of *ball game* as the new subject would certainly shift the emphasis.

instead of repeating
the noun as a noun,
use a pronoun

5. This is a variant on the previous method. Instead of repeating the noun as a noun, use a pronoun.

Joe went to town. It was the only place to get supplies.

substitute a pronoun
for a summary of
some part of the
previous sentence

6. The sixth method is to substitute a pronoun for a summary of some part of the previous sentence.

Joe went to town. It was an all-day affair.

Here we see that the second sentence is referring to the whole idea of Joe going to town.

You will note that all substitutions or references in the second sentence thus far are in the subject position. This is the logical place for the repeated or referenced item to appear since it becomes the focus of attention for the new sentence. Other possibilities exist.

repetition

7. The seventh method requires the repetition of some other part of the sentence, usually the predicate, often with a noun in it.

Joe went to town. We also went to town.

Joe ran around the house. We ran around the garage.

In the above we have the actions being repeated, either directly or in a slightly different manner.

Joe ran over to the slide. We walked over to the swings.

Here we see the action being contrasted. It is still a repetition of structure; it mimics the action but does it with different words.

transitional words

8. The eighth method is use transitional words such as *first*, *next*, *then*, and others like them. This method is usually found when explaining a process.

First go outside. Then look up in the sky.

Of course, as some of you would rightly point out, the above example has the same subject for both sentences. It just isn't stated, but *you* is understood as the subject.



Continuity Exercises

DIRECTIONS: Write a second sentence following the directions given. Your sentences must tie in to the sentence given previous to the instruction. This may be done below or on a separate sheet of paper.

John brought home a rose for his mother.

1. repeat the subject
2. repeat the subject as a pronoun
3. repeat home as the new subject
4. repeat rose as the new subject
5. repeat mother as the new subject
6. use mother as the new subject but as a pronoun

My dog likes to chase rabbits in the field by our house.

7. use a synonym of dog for the subject
8. repeat rabbits as the new subject
9. repeat field as the new subject
10. repeat house as the new subject

Alfred drove the bus to the local church.

11. repeat the subject
12. repeat the subject as a pronoun
13. use a transitional word and use children as the new subject
14. use bus as the new subject
15. use church as the new subject
16. repeat a part of the predicate with a new subject
17. use a repetition of action in some way
18. use a summary of part of the sentence

PARAGRAPH PARAMETER CHECKS

LESSON 2

Be careful of mechanics. If there are too many problems in that area, it detracts greatly from your writing and leaves a bad impression on the reader. According to the check sheets in the back, poor mechanics can cost you up to a full grade.

Pay attention to what the teacher has marked on the check sheets and any remarks in the comment section. Your performance in the various areas determines your final grade. Most of the areas are fairly cut and dried; that is, you either did or did not perform the task. A few do call for some judgment on the part of the teacher. As a student, you will have to determine what the teacher's preferences are and adjust accordingly. Each teacher is somewhat different. Those sections, however, should not count for more than a single step in the final grade.

it helps you to both digest and retain the information. In effect, it helps your study in your other courses. It goes without saying that the subjects you do write upon should be in good taste and should reflect your best efforts. Last-minute efforts and improper or inane subject material are examples of shoddy craftsmanship and are not acceptable. Do your best.

After you have written your paragraph, it is best to let it rest a day or two if you have the time; then proofread it for mistakes. You should even read it out loud; that helps to catch certain errors. Be sure to read what you have actually written, not just what you want it to say. The advantage of the time delay between writing and proof reading is that you will be more inclined to read it as it is instead of reading into it what you want since it is not as fresh in your mind as when you had just written it. If possible, it is to your advantage to have someone else read your paragraph and make comment. He/she is limited to what you have written and will read the piece for what it actually says. You should reciprocate by reading the other person's work if he/she is a fellow student.

Please note that the check sheets have four basic areas: organization, mechanics, style, and content. Each one of these areas contributes to or detracts from your overall grade. The purpose of the check sheet is to give you and your teacher specific information regarding your strengths and weaknesses. This allows you to concentrate on improving the areas that need work. Over time this will allow you and your teacher to see a pattern in your errors. That will then further help your concentration on those areas of identified weaknesses.

You will find parameter check sheets for all of your writing. They will change to include other items as the writing assignments become longer and more complicated. The check sheets will also provide you and your teacher a common ground for discussing your writing.

Pay particular attention to whatever specifics are given on any particular assignment. Those specifics often make or break a paragraph. Good writing requires some attention to detail. You have been forewarned.

Now just an advance note of warning. The first two formats seem to be alike, but they are not. The example format asks for examples. If the topic were pickup trucks, the examples might be Ford, Toyota, Datsun, and Dodge. The classification model says to put the pickup in a series of categories: manufacturers, typical users, the various sizes of pickups, and perhaps the uses of a pickup. This model is not a rehash of examples.

THE EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH

The example paragraph is used to provide a better understanding of a subject by seeing various examples of it. The subjects can vary from physical objects to concepts. Horses, chairs, honesty, and dictatorships could all be topics of an example paragraph.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) All examples should be relevant to the subject.
- 2) The examples should be familiar to most people.

OTHER ITEMS OF IMPORTANCE:

- 1) Be sure the examples are clear and appropriate to your point.
- 2) Look for a natural order if any among your examples.
- 3) For each example, provide some extra information in the sentence.
- 4) Avoid complicated subjects for a single paragraph; such topics are better suited for multi-paragraph essays.

METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION:

- 1) pick a topic
- 2) brainstorm for examples
- 3) pick best examples; eliminate repetitions and unsuitable ideas
- 4) arrange the order of the examples
- 5) generate a topic sentence
- 6) utilize the examples in the body of the paragraph
- 7) write a concluding sentence

WORKING IT THROUGH:

- 1) The topic will be root crops.
- 2) Here are some examples of root crops: beets, carrots, radishes, parsnips, onions, turnips, sugar beets, potatoes, and peanuts.
- 3) Let's pick beets, carrots, radishes, turnips, and potatoes; they are well known and all have some different characteristics. The number of examples we need to pick is dependent on the number of sentences required in the body paragraph. Remember, we always need an introduction and conclusion as well. There are two ways we could do this paragraph. First, we could have a different example for each body sentence. Second, we could have two sentences for each example if we had enough to say about each example. We'll use the first type this time.
- 4) We need to arrange the order for these items. Perhaps it could be by size of the root; maybe it could be by popularity. Perhaps it could be length of time from planting to harvest. We should always have

some logical order to our examples. For this example, let's use size of the root, and let's arrange it from smallest to largest. The probable order would be radish, carrot, beet, turnip, and potato. We are talking average size here.

- 5) Now we need to generate a topic sentence, something about roots in general and hopefully something that reflects our order of arrangement.

Root crops, which are found in most home gardens, vary in size and use.

- 6) We need to write a sentence about each root in the order we have placed them. See the example.

- 7) The concluding sentence should make some summary or motivational statement about our subject.

EXAMPLE #1:

Root Crops for the Household Garden

Root crops, which are found in most home gardens, vary in size and use. Many people grow radishes since they are rather small and grow very quickly. Carrots are a long root and require loose soil to do well. Beets vary in size from golf ball size to baseball size and are best before they get woody. Turnips are about the same size as beets, but now they are not nearly as popular as they once were. Perhaps the best known root crop is the potato; it takes lots of room to grow, but it yields a nice harvest most people enjoy. From the marble sized radish to the large baking potato, root crops are an important part of our diets which can easily be grown at home in a household garden.

EXAMPLE #2:

Here's another paragraph about root crops, but it is organized according to the second method mentioned previously on page 22. It will have two sentences about each example instead of one. We'll just use radishes, beets, and potatoes to get our six internal sentences.

Root Crops for the Household Garden

Root crops, which are found in most home gardens, vary in size and use. Radishes are generally the smallest of the root crops except for some of the large Japanese radishes. Most home gardeners use the small red radishes since they are quick and easy to grow and take very little space. Beets are also red in color, but they are larger than radishes, more like golf ball to baseball size. Home gardeners like beets since they provide both a root and a leaf crop. Potatoes can get quite large, many being bigger than softballs, but they do take up lots of space in the garden. If the household garden has plenty of space, home-grown potatoes can produce a big harvest that can be used over a period of time. Root crops, which can easily be grown at home in a household garden, are an important part of our diets, and they are often tastier than what you can buy in the store.



Write an Example Paragraph:

DIRECTIONS: Write an example paragraph composed of seven sentences. The first sentence will be the topic sentence; the five body sentences will provide five different examples, and the last sentence will provide a conclusion of some sort.

SAMPLE TOPICS: types of horses, computer games, board games, card games, household pets, favorite dinners, historical novels, baseball players or teams, Bible characters, game birds, football plays, all-terrain vehicles, types of cars, hymns or songs, flower types, trees, and so forth. These are just samples. You can make up your own topics, or your teacher can assign different ones. Be creative.



Write an Example Paragraph:

DIRECTIONS: Write an example paragraph composed of eight sentences. The first sentence will be the topic sentence. Use two sentences for each example in the body paragraph as was done in Example #2. The last sentence should be a concluding sentence.

SAMPLE TOPICS: types of horses, computer games, board games, card games, household pets, favorite dinners, historical novels, baseball players or teams, Bible characters, game birds, football plays, all-terrain vehicles, types of cars, hymns or songs, flower types, trees, and so forth. These are just samples. You can make up your own topics, or your teacher can assign different ones. Be creative.

FORMAT WRITING TESTS



Paragraph Writing

DIRECTIONS: Answer all questions to the best of your ability. Write the answers in complete sentences, #5 excepted, and use good grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

1. What position in a paragraph should the topic sentence occupy?
2. Give the two functions of a topic sentence.
3. If you had four points to include in a comparison paragraph, briefly explain how you would order them.
4. Briefly explain the rule regarding tense and point of view as applied to paragraph writing.
5. List the seven different methods of organizing a paragraph that we have studied.

6. Arrange the following into the proper order; use the numbers 1–7.

_____ brainstorm

_____ proofread

_____ write conclusion

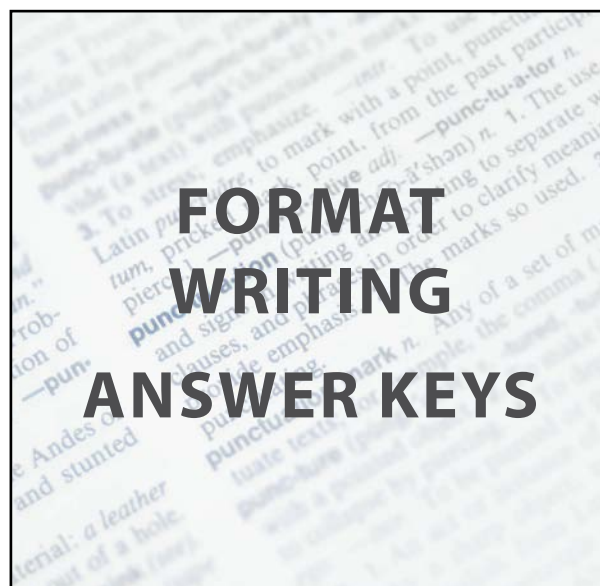
_____ write topic sentence

_____ write body sentences

_____ organize ideas

_____ decide on topic

7. On a separate sheet of paper or below write a seven sentence paragraph using SONGBIRDS as your topic. Identify in the blank the type of organization you will be using.



CONTINUITY EXERCISES

What follows are sample answers. Use good judgment.

1. John did something else.
2. He was a nice boy.
3. Their home was a place of love and contentment.
4. The rose was a fine gift.
5. His mother was quite frail these days.
6. She always liked flowers.
7. The little terrier runs hard but never catches them.
8. Those rabbits are thick in the spring.
9. The field is planted in alfalfa.
10. Our house is also next to a forest on the other side.
11. Alfred has a chauffeur's license.
12. He has driven for the church a long time.
13. Then the children waited patiently to be let off.
14. That bus was brand spanking new this year.
15. The church was where Sunday school was held.
16. Mrs. Grace drove another church bus.
17. Other folks drove their cars to church.
18. It was part of his service each week.

THESIS STATEMENTS #1

Check to see if common sense is executed in the thesis statements. General parameters are as follows: 1) only one sentence, 2) both purpose and outline occur, 3) the outline contains three items only, 4) the outline follows a logical pattern according to time, space, or argument, and 5) the three items in the outline are grammatically parallel. Below you will find an example or two as well as some comments. The examples are just that; other answers will be equally acceptable.

1. *This paper will review willow, fir, and oak firewoods to decide which is best to burn for fuel.* Note the order; it goes from worst to best fuel wood.
2. Here look for only three items; four are given in the problem, and the student must combine two of them.
3. In this one *lack of dams* should probably be last in the order since the other two reasons could be mitigated or even canceled by dams.
4. Note the order on this one; it should be obvious.
5. *The Honda Prelude and the Ford Taurus will be compared according to appearance, mileage, and price in order to pick the best deal.*

Here the two cars should be specific. The order will vary depending on what the student deems important.

WORD ECONOMY #1

The following answers are examples of correct responses; they are not the only possible response.

1. Turn right at State Street.
2. He worked carelessly.
3. The Chihuahua is a hairless dog.
4. Bluebeard was a heartless, soulless monster.
5. He approaches his problems childishy.
6. The tiny kitten is a sight.
7. The car snailed up the hill.
8. Speak with emphasis on important ideas and words.
9. Cut unnecessary words from your writing.
10. Dutifully correct wrong statements.
11. They bought an unmanageable horse.
12. The red-hatted girl is my cousin.
13. Your dance conduct was shocking.
14. It was a warm, romantic, moonlit evening.
15. If it could talk, the 92nd Street house might reveal many secrets.
16. We entered the darkened house noiselessly.
17. He opened the door with a welcoming smile.
18. He was always cheerful.
19. The penniless, old man refused my gift.
20. This tool is multiuse.
21. I overnighed in a rat-infested warehouse.
22. The startling news abruptly changed our plans.
23. He likes unsweetened coffee.
24. This test is beautiful.
25. Though he is a recent immigrant, he speaks unaccented English.

WORD ECONOMY #2

1. Good company requires the best manners.
2. He spoke repetitiously.
3. Last night was sleepless for me.
4. Consensus is we should rehearse daily for two weeks.
5. The play's premiere broadcast was December 16 at 10 p.m.
6. Evidently we must operate immediately.
7. Unfortunately we arrived in the rainy season.
8. Tony is a talented pianist.
9. He was awarded the medal posthumously.
10. She faced me sadly and spoke drearily.

PARAGRAPH WRITING TEST

NOTE: The answers given are correct but are not written in the form required on this test.

1. the first one
2. a) identify the topic
b) give the purpose or direction
3. least to strongest
4. once adopted must remain constant
5. example, classification, definition, process, analogy, cause and effect, comparison
6. order top to bottom, left column first 2, 6, 5, 1, 7, 4, 3
7. 1 pt for seven sentences
3 pts for form, 1@ for topic sentence, body, and conclusion
1 pt for general content
mechanics: +1 = 0-2 errors, 0 = 3-6 errors, -1 = 7+ errors
6 total points possible for this question

TEST GRADING SCALE

A = 11-13
B = 9-10
C = 6-8
D = 3-5
F = 2 or less

TEST - ELEMENTS OF FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY

NOTE: the points per answer will be given along with the essence of the answer only.

1. (3 pts)
 - a) function: bridge the gap, smooth the flow, help reader stay with argument
 - b) placement: 1st sentence of paragraph or end of preceding paragraph and first sentence of next
 - c) type: connectives - first, next, finally reference: pronouns, repeats, synonyms that tie
2. (3 pts)
 - a) placement: is 1st sentence of paragraph
 - b) function: introduces topic of paragraph
 - c) references one of the subjects of the thesis
3. (3 pts)
 - a) structure: general to specific, eye-catcher to thesis
 - b) purpose: gets reader's attention focuses the point of discussion
4. (4 pts)
 - a) purpose: wraps up the essay
 - b) structure: 1st sentence restates thesis
2nd-4th sentences summarize body paragraphs
5th sentence makes an appeal or final statement
5. the seven-sentence section, page 2 (21 pts)
1pt for the name of each sentence eye-catcher, thesis, topic sentence BP#1, topic sentence BP#2, topic sentence BP#3, thesis restatement, conclusion/final statement
2pts for each sentence itself: grade on mechanics and appropriate content, transition, etc.
6. (1pt) expression, mechanics, etc.

TEST GRADING SCALE

A = 32-35
B = 28-31
C = 23-27
D = 18-22
F = 17 or less