

Unit 3:

A. Types of writing

INTRODUCTION

When you are trying to decide what type of writing you want to do, you need to think about a couple of things. You are going to want to think about what you want to say and who you are saying it to. Your specific topic affects what type of writing fits, and your audience also plays a major role in how you deliver what you want to say.

Think of your piece of writing as a road trip. On this road trip you've decided which way you want to go, how you are going to get there, and with whom you are traveling. Where you're going is your topic, how you're getting there is your type of writing, and who you're going with is your audience. Whether it be fiction or non-fiction, once you have chosen what you want to talk about and who you are writing for, you need to decide which of the four writing avenues to take.

Narrative Writing	Descriptive Writing	Expository Writing	Persuasive Writing
<p>1. Narrative writing is a type of writing in which the author places himself as a character, or not, and narrates the story.</p> <p>2. Novels, short stories, poetry and biographies can all fall into the narrative writing category.</p> <p>3. Narrative writing often has situations like disputes, conflicts, action, motivational events, problems and solutions.</p>	<p>1. Descriptive writing is a style of writing which focuses on describing a character, an event or a place in great detail.</p> <p>2. It is sometimes poetic in nature in which the author is specifying the details of the event rather than just the information of what happened.</p> <p>3. The author visualizes to you what he sees, hears, tastes, smells and feels. (5 senses)</p>	<p>1. Expository writing is a subject-oriented writing style, in which the main focus of the author is to tell you about a given topic or subject, and leaves out their opinions.</p> <p>2. This is one of the most common types of writing styles, which you always see in textbooks and "How To" articles.</p> <p>3. Expository writing is usually in a logical order and sequence.</p>	<p>1. Persuasive writing, unlike expository writing, contains the opinions, biasness and justification of the author.</p> <p>2. Persuasive writing is a type of writing which contains justifications and reasons to make someone believe in what the author believes in.</p> <p>3. In persuasive writing, the author takes a stand and asks you to believe their point of view.</p>

Writing can broadly be classified into five major types:

1. **Expository writing or explanatory writing** is usually written with the intent to inform and describe, it serves the purpose of conveying information. Many texts written using this type of writing include key words like first, after, then, next and last. While writing this text one must assume that the reader has no prior knowledge of the subject and hence do his/her best to describe the matter at hand. Most of the answers students write in their tests should be written using this type of writing.

Key Points:

- Usually explains something in a process.



- Is often equipped with facts and figures.
- Is usually in a logical order and sequence.
- **When You Would Use Expository Writing:**
 - Textbook writing.
 - How-to articles.
 - Recipes.
 - News stories (not including opinion or editorial pieces).
 - Business, technical, or scientific writing. Example:

Many people associate the taste of pumpkins with fall. In October, companies from Starbucks to McDonalds roll out their pumpkin-flavored lattes and desserts. Here is how to make an easy pumpkin pie using only five ingredients.

First, make sure you have all of the ingredients.

This writing is expository because it is explaining. In this case, you can already tell that the piece will be about how to make a pumpkin pie.

Non-example:

Everyone knows that the best part about fall is all of the pumpkin-flavored desserts. Pumpkin pie is the best fall treat because it is not only delicious but also nutritious. Pumpkin is filled with vitamin A, which is essential for a healthy, immune system and good vision.

This is not expository because several opinions are stated, such as “Pumpkin pie is the best fall treat...” Although this excerpt contains a fact about pumpkin containing vitamin A, that fact is used as evidence to support the opinion. These opinions make this an example of persuasive writing.

2. Descriptive Writing: If one has to describe a topic or has to ‘paint a picture’, the type of writing to be used should be **descriptive writing**. This type of writing usually includes a variety of supporting information like colors smells and other sensory details used to make the reader completely indulged in the scenario. A good descriptive text should move smoothly from one point to the next. This type of text creates an impression, an overall effect and a feeling or image about the topic. It also has concrete and specific details to support the main impression and includes sensory details like sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. Most short stories and novels are written with the intent to paint a picture and hence use this type.



Key Points:

- It is often poetic in nature
- It describes places, people, events, situations, or locations in a highly-detailed manner.
- The author visualizes what he or she sees, hears, tastes, smells, and feels.

When You Would Use Descriptive Writing:

- Poetry
- Journal or diary writing
- Nature writing
- Descriptive passages in Fiction

Example:

The iPhone 6 is unexpectedly light. While size of its screen is bigger than those of the iPhones that came before, it is thinner, and its smooth, rounded body is made of aluminum, stainless steel, and glass. The casing comes in a whitish silver, gold, or a color the company calls “space gray,” the color of the lead of a pencil, with darker gray accents.

This is an example because it describes aspects of the phone. It includes details such as the size, weight, and material.

Non-example:

So, you just brought home a shiny new smartphone with a smooth glass screen the size of your palm. The first thing you will want to do when purchasing a new cell is buy a case. Cracking your screen is an awful feeling, and protection is inexpensive when you compare it to the costs of a new phone.

Even though this example uses adjectives, you can tell that this is not an example of descriptive writing because the purpose is not to describe the phone—it's to persuade you to buy a case.

3. Persuasive Writing: The type of writing used to give personal opinions is called **Persuasive writing**, here the writer tries to convince the reader/listeners with reasons and examples. This type of writing is meant to be perceived in a rather hysteric way as it contains strong emotions. Most debates are written in this form, it is essential to ensure that the writer has a strong opinion about the topic before he/she starts writing, one also has to survey other opinions and inspect their legitimacy, the final step before one can type out a draft is to ensure that find examples and evidences to support the expressed views. The steps to writing an argumentative essay is to give a brief introduction to the topic followed by the notion the writer wants to follow, the next step is to tell people why the writer believes in that notion, this should be done by giving examples, ideas and opinions. The writer should also counter different opinions that opposes the notion that he/she follows. The last part of the essay should be a brief conclusion. A good practice is to revisit and revise your essay before submitting it so that the various spelling and grammatical errors can be corrected.



Key Points:

- Persuasive writing is equipped with reasons, arguments, and justifications.
- In persuasive writing, the author takes a stand and asks you to agree with his or her point of view.
- It often asks for readers to do something about the situation (this is called a call-to-action).

When You Would Use Persuasive Writing:

- Opinion and editorial newspaper pieces.
- Advertisements.
- Reviews (of books, music, movie, restaurants, etc.).
- Letter of recommendation.
- Letter of complaint.
- Cover letters

Example:

Following the 2012 Olympic Games hosted in London, the UK Trade and Investment department reported a £9.9 billion boost to the economy. Although it is expensive to host the Olympics, if done right, they can provide real jobs and economic growth. This city should consider placing a bid to host the Olympics.

This is persuasive writing because the author has a belief—that “this city should consider placing a bid to host the Olympics”—and is trying to convince others to agree.

Non-example:

According to legend, the Olympics were founded by Hercules. Now almost 100 countries participate in the Games, with over two million people attending. So, cities from Boston to Hamburg begin considering their bid to be a host city more than 10 years in advance.

All of these statements are facts. Therefore, it's expository. To be persuasive writing, you must have an opinion that you're trying to persuade people of—then, of course, you will support that opinion with evidence.

3. Narrative Writing:

Narrative writing, used to describe an event or tell a story. This type of writing is the most emotionally extensive and engaging. It usually contains specific details and dialogue and makes the reader want to know what comes next. It follows a flow of ideas and uses transitions to link different events. A good narrative essay includes specific details to make the incident come to life for the reader and focuses on creating a mental picture for the reader.

Key Points:

- A person tells a story or event.
- Has characters and dialogue.
- Has definite and logical beginnings, intervals, and endings.
- Often has situations like actions, motivational events, and disputes or conflicts with their eventual solutions.

Examples of When You Would Use Narrative Writing:

- Novels
- Short stories
- Novellas
- Poetry
- Autobiographies or biographies
- Anecdotes
- Oral histories

Example:

“I don't think that's a good idea,” said Jaelyn.

“You never used to be such a girl!” retorted Orin, pushing open the door.

Reluctantly, Jaelyn followed.

This is a narrative because it's telling a story. There are different characters conversing, and a plot is unravelling.

Non-example:

Cutting Edge Haunted House holds the Guinness World Record for the largest haunted house on earth. It's located in a district in Fort Worth, Texas known as "Hell's Half Acre" in a century-old abandoned meat-packing plant. The haunted house takes an hour to complete, winding through horrific scenes incorporating the factory's original meat-packing equipment.

While this would serve as a worthy setting for a story, it would need a plot before it could be called a narrative.

4. Analytical writing:

The writer should have extensive knowledge of the subject as this includes a critical analysis of the topic, the main purpose of this writing is to inform the reader about the topic as well as tell him/her about the writer's opinion on the topic. A good analytical essay has clarity of thought and adopts a rather persuasive style of writing. The texts we read on a daily basis are a combination of the above-mentioned styles, for example, a novel is usually written in a descriptive and narrative manner as it has to paint a picture and tell a story as well as indulge the reader. A newspaper article can be written in argumentative, explanatory and analytical way or a combination of these.

CONCLUSION

These are the five different types of writing that are generally used. There are many sub-types of writing that may fall in any of those categories. A writer must know all these styles in order to identify the purpose of his or her own writing and make sure it's something the audience wants to read.

B. TOPIC: PARAGRAPH WRITING

INTRODUCTION -

A paragraph means a number of sentences grouped together and relating to one topic. It is a group of related sentences that pertain to a single theme. A paragraph is a small unit of composition. All the sentences in a paragraph reflect the same idea. A paragraph may be short or long depending upon the amount of matter to be expressed.

A paragraph may contain an opinion, a description of something, a story or some information. It helps the reader to assimilate the contents easily provided the paragraph is well-structured.

Essays, chapters and other prose compositions are broken into paragraphs to make the reading of them easier. Generally, a new paragraph makes a change of topic. Any essay or chapter when divided properly into paragraphs looks interesting and is easy to read.

How to write a paragraph:

These four essential elements can change a normal paragraph into a graceful paragraph:

1: UNITY – Every paragraph has one single, controlling idea that is expressed in its topic sentence, which is typically the first sentence of the paragraph. Decide which point drives the rest and then write it as your topic sentence.

2: ORDER - Order refers to the way you organise your supporting sentences. In a well organised paragraph, the readers follow along easily, aided by the pattern you have established. Order helps the reader group your meaning and avoid confusion.

3: COHERENCE - Coherence is the quality that makes your writing understandable. One of the best ways to achieve coherence is to use transition words. These words create bridges from one sentence to the next. A point of view is an important ingredient for coherency.

4: COMPLETENESS - Completeness means paragraph is well-developed. If all sentences clearly and sufficiently support the main idea, then your paragraph is complete.

5. Usually, **three supporting sentences**, in addition to a topic sentence and concluding sentence, are needed for a paragraph to be complete.

6. The **concluding sentence** or the last sentence of the paragraph should summarize your main idea by reinforcing your topic sentence.

PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

A basic paragraph structure usually consists of five sentences:

- The topic sentence
- Three supporting sentences
- The concluding sentences

Principles of Paragraph Structure:

1. UNITY

The first and most important principle to be observed in constructing a paragraph is that of unity. Just as each sentence deals with one thought, each paragraph must deal with one topic or idea and with no more than one. In writing an essay, for example, every head, and every sub-head, should have its own paragraph to itself and every sentence in the paragraph must be closely connected with the main topic of the paragraph itself. The paragraph and every part of it must be the expression of one theme or topic.

2. ORDER

The second principle of paragraph construction is order — that is, logical sequence of thought or development of the subject. Events must be related in the order of their occurrence, and all ideas should be connected with the leading idea and arranged according to their importance or order.

3. VARIETY

A third principle of paragraph construction is variety; by which is meant that, to avoid monotony, the paragraph of composition should be of different lengths, and not always of the same sentence construction.

A useful way of understanding paragraph structure is to think of it as a block that is divided into three sections: the beginning, the middle, and the end.

A basic paragraph follows this structure:

Topic Sentence (TS) - the beginning

- Needs to state one idea clearly •

Useful Tip: Always put the most important information first! Supporting Sentences (SS) - the middle

- Elaborates and explains the idea introduced in the topic sentence
- Provides evidence and examples
- Explains the evidence or example included - why is irrelevant?

TOPIC SENTENCE

“

By the grammar of a language is meant either the relations born by the words of a sentence and by

sentences themselves one to another, or the systematized exposition of these.”

In expository writing, a **topic sentence** is a sentence that summarizes the main idea of a paragraph. It is usually the first sentence in a paragraph. Also known as a focus sentence, it encapsulates or organizes an entire paragraph. Although topic sentences may appear anywhere in a paragraph, unacademic essays they often appear at the beginning. The topic sentence acts as a kind of summary, and offers the reader an insightful view of the writer’s main ideas for the following paragraph. More than just being ampere summary, however, a topic sentence often provides a claim or an insight directly or indirectly related to the thesis. It adds cohesion to a paper and helps organize ideas both within the paragraph and the whole body of work at large. As the topic sentence encapsulates the idea of the paragraph, serving as a sub-thesis, it remains general enough to cover the support given in the body paragraph while being more direct than the thesis of the paper.

TIPS FOR TOPIC SENTENCE -

1. Make It Clear

A strong topic sentence includes clear, specific language and avoids the use of vague, empty words.

For example, "Blueberries are good for you" is a weak topic sentence that says very little, while "Blueberries provide essential nutrients" clarifies what makes blueberries good for you and lets the reader know that those essential nutrients will be explored in further detail.

2. Keep It Concise

Readers often find wordy topic sentences confusing and difficult to read, but a tightly written topic sentence succinctly conveys its message.

For example, writing that "Boston is a cosmopolitan city" maintains reader attention more easily than "Boston is a city with people from many parts of the world," because it uses fewer words to express the same meaning.

3. Don't Be Boring

A compelling topic sentence captures the reader's attention and encourages him to read further. Including interesting or surprising facts within the topic sentence can spark readers' interest, as can unusual grammatical structure, such as framing the topic sentence into a rhetorical question.

4. Be Emphatic

Within persuasive paragraphs, effective topic sentences strongly indicate the writer's position.

For example, the delivery of "Individuals should consider decreasing their sugar consumption since it could lead to health problems" proves weak and sterile.

Conversely, "Individuals should limit their sugar consumption to avoid health complications" comes across as more authoritative and confident in expressing the health risks associated with sugar consumption.

5. Use Active Voice

William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White explain in "The Elements of Style" that active voice, as opposed to passive voice, is more direct and forceful.

For example, "Discount travel search engines are used by travellers as an efficient way to plan vacations" -- a topic sentence in passive voice -- has less impact than "Travellers use discount travel search engines to efficiently plan vacations," which is written in active voice. To check if your sentence uses active voice rather than passive, make sure that the subject of the sentence performs the action.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TOPIC SENTENCE:

1. A good topic sentence provides an accurate indication of what will follow in the rest of the paragraph.

Weak example - People rarely give fire-fighters the credit they deserve for such a physically and emotionally demanding job. (The paragraph is about a specific incident that involved fire-fighters; therefore, this topic sentence is too general.)

Stronger example - During the October riots, Unit 3B went beyond the call of duty. (This topic sentence is more specific and indicates that the paragraph will contain information about a particular incident involving a topic)

2. A good topic sentence contains both idea or opinion.

Weak example - In this paper, I am going to discuss the rising suicide rate among young professionals. (This topic sentence provides a main idea, but it does not present a controlling idea, or thesis.)

Stronger example - The rising suicide rate among young professionals is a cause for immediate concern. (This topic sentence presents the writer's opinion on the subject of rising suicide rates among young professionals.)

3. A good topic sentence is clear and easy to follow.

Weak example - In general, writing an essay, thesis, or other academic or non-academic document is considerably easier and of much higher quality if you first construct an outline, of which there are many different types. (This topic sentence includes a main idea and a controlling thesis, but both are buried beneath the confusing sentence structure and unnecessary vocabulary. These obstacles make it difficult for the reader to follow.)

Stronger example - Most forms of writing can be improved by first creating an outline. (This topic sentence cuts out unnecessary verbiage)

and simplifies the previous statement, making it easier for the reader to follow.)

4. A good topic sentence does not include supporting details.

Weak example- Salaries should be capped in baseball for many reasons, most importantly so we don't allow the same team to win year after year. (This topic sentence includes a supporting detail that should be included later in the paragraph to back up the main point.)

Stronger example - Introducing a salary cap would improve the game of baseball for many reasons. (This topic sentence omits the additional supporting detail so that it can be expanded upon later in the paragraph.)

5. A good topic sentence engages the reader by using interesting vocabulary.

Weak example- The military deserves better equipment. (This topic sentence includes a main idea and a controlling thesis, but the language is bland and unexciting.)

Stronger example- The appalling lack of resources provided to the military is outrageous and requires our immediate attention. (This topic sentence reiterates the same idea and controlling thesis, but adjectives such as *appalling* and *immediate* better engage the reader. These words also indicate the writer's tone.)

CONCLUDING SENTENCE

This final sentence often summarizes the paragraph and re-states the topic sentence. The conclusion is the end of the essay, and it is what the reader will remember most. Since the conclusion paragraph is the last part of the essay, writers must make a strong statement to leave a positive and memorable impression.

Your conclusion should not :

- add a new idea just because you have thought of it at the end.
- repeat the exact same words.
- be a simple summary—avoid repeating what you have already said.
 - A brief summary of your argument may be useful, but shorter essays do not require a restatement of your main ideas.
- use phrases like “in conclusion,” “to conclude,” “in summary,” and “to sum up.”
 - Avoid being formulaic
 - Readers can see that the essay is about to end
 - Do not state the obvious
- apologize—do not undercut your authority

Your conclusion should :

- finish the essay and tell the reader where the writer has brought them
- convey a sense of completeness and closure
- be direct and confident
- creatively restate the main idea/thesis of the essay
- remind your reader about the most important aspects of your essay
- contain echoes of the introduction and body paragraphs without listing the points covered in the essay
- create a broader implication of the ideas discussed
- leave your reader even more interested in your topic and Ideas

FEW EXAMPLES ON PARAGRAPH WRITING:

Example 1

The most important problem in our city is its poor public transportation system (Topic Sentence). Thousands of residents rely on the city's buses and taxis to travel throughout this large city, while the metro transportation system's daily schedules are totally reliable. A bus or taxi that should arrive at 7:45 may not arrive until 8:00 or later. Moreover, it is not unusual for a bus driver to pass up group of people waiting for the bus because he wants to make up for lost time. Unfortunately, people often end up going to work late or missing important appointments **(Supporting Sentence).** **In order for people to get to their destinations on time, people must allow for waiting time at the bus and taxis stop (Concluding Sentence).**

Example 2

I've learned from experience that good friendships are based on a delicate balance (Topic Sentence). When friends are on par, personally and professionally, it's easier for them to root for one another. It's taken me a long time to realize that not all my friends wish me well. Someone who wants what you have and may not be able to handle your good fortune. If you find yourself apologizing for your hard-earned raise or soft-peddling your long-awaited promotion, it's a sure sign that a friendship is off balance **(Supporting Details).** **Real friends are secure enough in their own lives to share each other's successes - not begrudge them (Conclusion).**

Example 3

There are several possible reasons why my father is in excellent health, even though he is over seventy years of age (Topic statement). First, he is in excellent condition because he has stopped smoking cigarettes. He quit smoking cigarettes since whenever he climbed stairs, he would quickly stop several times and cough loudly. He also has good health as a result of stopping eating the wrong kind of foods. For example, whereas before he would eat fatty red meat and deep-fried dishes several times a week. Nowadays he seldom does so. He is also in good physical shape, for he exercises a lot. He swims three times a week at the local gym, and on sunny days he prefers to walk rather than take the bus **(Supporting statement).** **In conclusion, my father is in better shape than some of his children (Conclusion).**

TIPS FOR WRITING A PARAGRAPH

1. Demonstrate your point.
2. The paragraph should be concise. It should focus on one central idea.
3. Try to make the ideas flow neatly in the paragraph.
4. Give your paragraph meaning.
5. Brainstorm supporting ideas. Choose 2-6 supporting ideas that do a good job supporting your topic.
6. Put your ideas in a logical order.
7. Make a draft first, then revise your draft and then submit the final piece.
8. Make sure your ideas in the paragraph are presented in a coherent manner.
9. Use linking words often to achieve the effect of continuity.
10. Use varied sentence patterns in the sentence. For example, put a short paragraph before a long one.
11. Always try to conclude your paragraph for completeness.

5 Mistakes in Writing a Paragraph

1. Too short.

Many students write too short paragraphs of 1-3 sentences. However, it is wrong since a paragraph is an accomplished idea and it is impossible to conclude something in 2-3 sentences. This volume can be used to

state some problem or idea and to accomplish it one needs to expand a paragraph to at least 4-5 full complicated sentences. Short sentences are not counted.

2. Too long.

Hence, writing too long paragraphs is also a mistake. Writing an essay, students should remember that someone is going to read it. Usually, after 8-9 sentences a reader loses the focus and fails to follow the idea. Too long sentences frustrate a reader from the main point of the paragraph and reading becomes boring and uninteresting.

3. No structure.

Absence of the structure can also become a problem. Students can consider a paragraph as a very focused short essay, devoted to one small idea. Therefore, the introductory sentence, several main body sentences and the conclusive sentence are to be present in each paragraph.

4. Absence of a topic sentence.

Writing a paragraph, each student should think of one specific idea he/she is going to discuss. A topic sentence in a paragraph is like a thesis statement in the essay. It depicts the main idea of a unit. Students should remember about it and make their essays focused on the topic sentences. In such case, the paragraphs will be focused.

5. No focus.

Absence of a focus is another problem in writing a paragraph procedure. If students do not structure the essay and do not follow this plan, each paragraph can be a collection of some ideas, which are not related to each other. However, if students create paragraphs of the required length, have a topic sentence and structure their paragraphs appropriately, the paragraph will be focused on some particular idea automatically.

3.TOPIC: READING COMPREHENSION

What Is Reading Comprehension?

Reading comprehension is about understanding what you read. Of course, there's more to it than that. When you comprehend what you are reading, you're not only understanding the words and their meanings, but you are also understanding them enough to form opinions, thoughts and reflections about what the words mean together.

Reading comprehension is like having a conversation with someone. If you do not understand what the other person is saying, you will have no idea what they are talking about and have nothing to say in return. No one wants to have that conversation! So, in order to understand what you're reading, you have to follow certain steps.

Types of Reading Comprehension

Reading Comprehension is the ability to easily and efficiently read text for meaning. It is the last step of the reading process taught to children, after they've learned phonics, fluency, and vocabulary.

Five levels of reading comprehension can be taught to students.

1. Lexical Comprehension
2. Literal Comprehension
3. Interpretive Comprehension
4. Applied Comprehension
5. Affective Comprehension

To really understand these different levels, let's take a familiar text and see how different types of questions probe different understandings of the same story.

The fairy tale Cinderella tells the story of a young girl, whose evil stepmother won't let her go to the ball. Cinderella's fairy godmother, however, magically whisks her off for the night and Cinderella eventually marries her Prince Charming.

Why Reading Comprehension Is Important

Proper reading comprehension can be difficult, so why bother? **Even though learning how to properly read and comprehend texts is a complicated process, it is a necessary skill to master, both for work and for pleasure.**

You will need to know how to read and interpret all kinds of different texts—both on the basic, literal level and on a more in-depth level—throughout your schooling, in college, and in the working world (as well as in your recreation time!). If we think about "reading" just as a literal or surface understanding of a piece and "reading comprehension" as the complete understanding, a person can only get by in the world on pure "reading" for so long.

Reading comprehension is essential for many significant aspects of daily life, such as:

- Reading, understanding, and analyzing literature in your English classes
- Reading and understanding texts from your other class subjects, such as history, math, or science
- Doing well on *both* the written and math sections of the SAT (or all five sections of the ACT)
- Understanding and engaging with current events presented in written form, such as news reports
- Properly understanding and responding to any and all other workplace correspondence, such as essays, reports, memos, and analyses
- Simply taking pleasure in written work on your own leisure time

How to Improve Reading Comprehension: 3 Steps

Because reading comprehension is a skill that improves like any other, you can improve your understanding with practice and a game plan.

Dedicate yourself to engaging in a combination of both "guided" and "relaxed" reading practice for at least two to three hours a week. Guided practice will involve structure and focused attention, like learning new vocabulary words and testing yourself on them, while relaxed practice will involve merely letting yourself read and enjoy reading without pressure for at least one to two hours a week. (Note: if you already read for pleasure, add at least one more hour of pleasure-reading per week.)

By combining reading-for-studying and reading-for-pleasure, you'll be able to improve your reading skill without relegating reading time to the realm of "work" alone. Reading is a huge part of our daily lives, and improving your comprehension should never come at the cost of depriving yourself of the pleasure of the activity.

So, what are some of the first steps for improving your reading comprehension level?

Step 1: Understand and Reevaluate How You're Currently Reading

Before you can improve your reading comprehension, you must first understand how you're currently reading and what your limitations are.

Start by selecting excerpts from different texts with which you are unfamiliar—text books, essays, novels, news reports, or any *kind* of text you feel you particularly struggle to understand—and read them as you would normally. **As you read, see if you can notice when your attention, energy, or comprehension of the material begins to flag.**

If your comprehension or concentration tends to lag after a period of time, start to slowly build up your stamina. For instance, if you continually lose focus at the 20-minute mark every time you read, acknowledge this and push yourself to *slowly* increase that time, rather than trying to sit and concentrate on reading for an hour or two at a stretch. Begin by reading for your maximum amount of focused time (in this case, twenty minutes), then give yourself a break. Next time, try for 22 minutes. Once you've mastered that, try for 25 and see if you can still maintain focus. If you can, then try for thirty.

If you find that your concentration or comprehension starts to lag again, **take a step back on your timing before pushing yourself for more.** Improvement comes with time, and it'll only cause frustration if you try to rush it all at once.

Alternatively, you may find that your issues with reading comprehension have less to do with the time spent reading than with the source material itself. Perhaps you struggle to comprehend the essential elements of a text, the context of a piece, character arcs or motivation, books or textbooks with densely packed information, or material that is heavily symbolic. If this is the case, then be sure to follow the tips below to improve these areas of reading comprehension weakness.

Improving your reading comprehension level takes time and practice, but understanding where your strengths and weaknesses stand now is the first step towards progress.

Step 2: Improve Your Vocabulary

Reading and comprehension rely on a combination of vocabulary, context, and the interaction of words. So, you must be able to understand each moving piece before you can understand the text as a whole.

If you struggle to understand specific vocabulary, it's sometimes possible to pick up meaning through context clues (how the words are used in the sentence or in the passage), but it's always a good idea to look up the definitions of words with which you aren't familiar. **As you read, make sure to keep a running list of words you don't readily recognize and make yourself a set of flashcards**

with the words and their definitions. Dedicate fifteen minutes two or three times a week to and quizzing yourself on your vocab flashcards.

To get started, you'll need some blank index cards and a system to keep them organized. These basic cards are an affordable option that are also available in fun colours. You can keep them organized with plastic baggies or rubber bands, or you can get an organizer. Alternatively, try these easy-flip flashcards that include binder clips. Though we strongly recommend making your own flashcards, you can also buy pre-made ones —the best option is Barron's 1100 Words You Need to Know, a series of exercises to master key words and idioms.

In order to retain your vocabulary knowledge, you must practice a combination of practiced memorization (like studying your flashcards) and make a point of *using* these new words in your verbal and written communication. Guided vocabulary practice like this will give you access to new words and their meanings as well as allow you to properly retain them.

Step 3: Read for Pleasure

The best way to improve your reading comprehension level is through practice. And the best way to practice is to have fun with it!

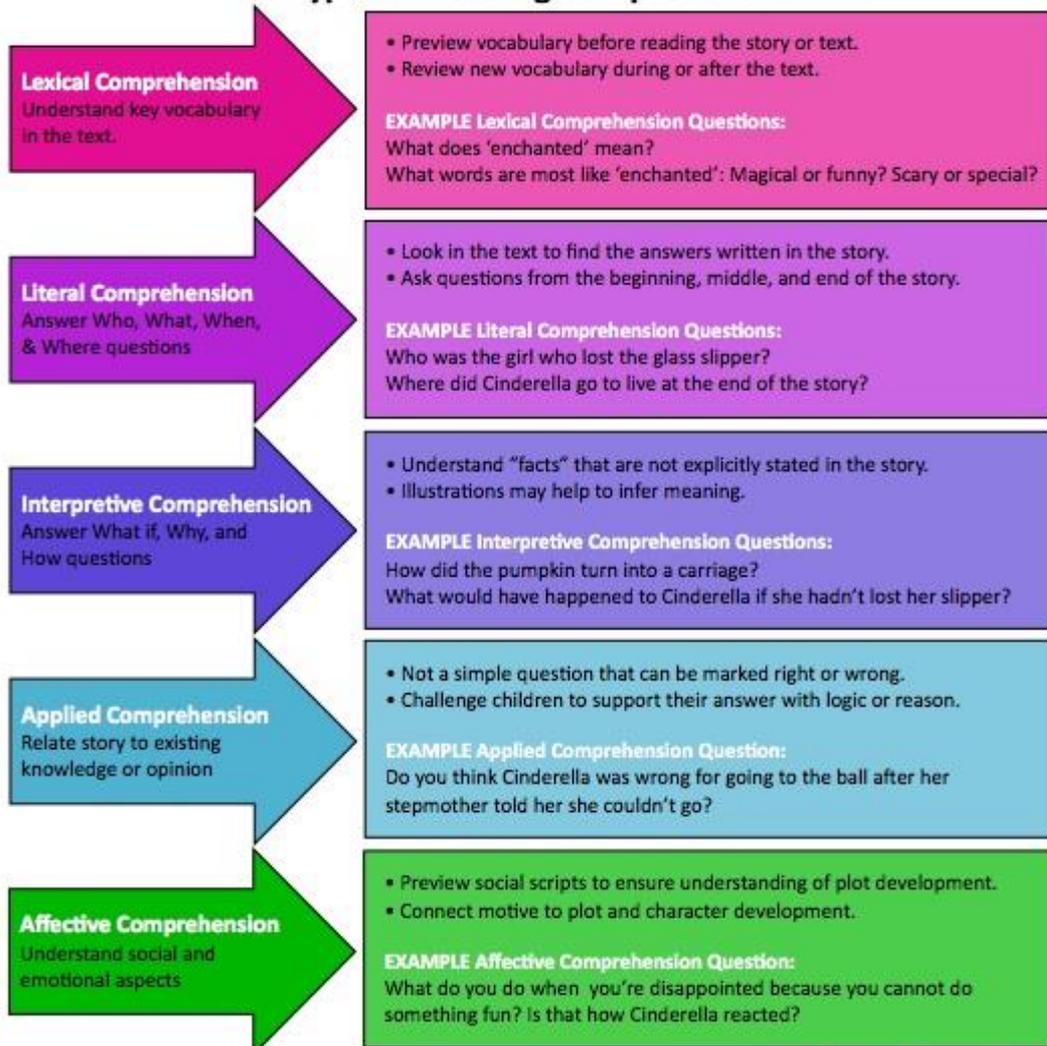
Make reading a fun activity, at least on occasion, rather than a constant chore. This will motivate you to engage with the text and embrace the activity as part of your daily life (rather than just your study/work life). As you practice and truly engage with your reading material, improvement will come naturally.

Begin by reading texts that are slightly below your age and grade level (especially if reading is frustrating or difficult for you). This will take pressure off of you and allow you to relax and enjoy the story.

- *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *Aru Shah and the End of Time* by Roksani Chokshi
- *Ghost* by Jason Reynolds
- *The Westing Game* by Ellen Rankin
- *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E.L. Konigsburg
- *The Parker Inheritance* by Varian Johnson
- *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai
- *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J. K. Rowling

Once you feel more comfortable reading and practicing your comprehension strategies (tips in the next section), go ahead and allow yourself to read at whatever reading or age level you feel like. Even if you feel that you don't understand some of the text right now—or even a large portion of it! —if you enjoy yourself and give it your best shot, you'll find that your reading comprehension levels will improve over time.

5 Types of Reading Comprehension



4. TOPIC: PRECIS WRITING

Precis (pray-see, pl. pray-seez) writing is a basic and very useful skill. It has been variously referred to as 'abbreviation', 'subtraction', 'abstract', 'summary', and 'condensation'. The French gave it the name 'precis' - the pruning away of all that is inessential. Definition: "A precis is a brief, original summary of the important ideas given in a long selection. Its aim is to give the general effect created by the original selection." It is a concise and lucid summary that forsakes all unnecessary details (including illustrations, amplifications, and embellishments) in favor of reproducing the logic, development, organization and emphasis of the original. Retaining the substance of a fuller statement, it seeks to articulate other authors thoughts by extracting the maximum amount of information and carefully conveying it in a minimum number of words.

The Purpose:

Precis writing aims at intelligent reading and clear, accurate writing. It is a skill of both analysis and genesis that critically questions every thought included and excluded, each **word used to express those thoughts, and the proportions and arrangements of those thoughts** - both in the original and in the precis. In its exaction it mercilessly reveals an author's wordiness and looseness or thinness of thought and construction. It should strengthen our style, our sense of proportion and emphasis, and our sensitivity to word meanings and an author's viewpoint,

Guide to a Successful Precis:

1. Understand the essential facts or dominating idea of the passage
2. . 2. In your opening sentence express what the passage tends to show.
3. 3. With as few sentences as possible enlarge on the essential shown in the opening sentence.
4. 4. Summarize only what the author says; do not add your own opinions.
5. As far as possible, use your own words.
6. 6. Ask whether the precis is clear to one who has not seen the original.

A precis is usually reduced to at least one-fourth of its original length and frequently much more. How long it is will be determined by its purpose and

by the nature of the original.

PRELIMINARY TO PRECIS WRITING:

1. An abstract is a condensation of a passage, the important words, phrases, and sentences containing the essential thoughts being worked as simply as possible into sentences. It simply requires the ability to pick out essential facts. Exercises in abstracting will involve underscoring the essential facts in a passage and combining them into a single whole. (N.b.: Here 'abstract' is used in its narrow sense to mean a digest or running summary.)

2. A paraphrase is a restatement of a difficult passage, stating clearly and fully in language of the simplest sort just what the passage means. Because it clarifies hidden meanings and obscure passages, it is usually longer than the original." Precis writing involves the ability to paraphrase, but adds to it concision, all the while being careful to not to lose or distort the original meaning Exercising in paraphrasing might involve transposing poetry to prose, explaining the meaning of proverbs, etc.

3. In precis writing it is necessary to say as much as possible in as few words as possible." A word may substitute for a phrase and a phrase for a clause. The concern is for the precise meaning or connotation of a word.

4. The proper use of the colon and semicolon in punctuation is an aid to good precis writing.

5. Generally a precis should be written in reported or indirect speech. This means a precis will be in third person, in the past tense. Exercises will involve the change of direct speech to indirect speech.

6. A precis title must be cold and matter of fact, not attractive to the imaginative mind. It is a precis of the precis.

Ask of your precis:

1. Are the opening sentences brief and to the point? Which is best?
2. Which opening sentence tends to show best what the passage expresses?
3. Do the sentence following the opening sentence amplify the essentials shown in the opening sentence?
4. Which precis clarifies the author's best thoughts? Have additional thoughts been added?

5. Is the precis clear to one who has not seen the original?

METHOD:

"It will be well to remember the object of precis writing: a brief and clear summary - or precis - of what you have first carefully read. No words, phrases, clauses, or sentences which are unessential to the thought of the selection, are considered. Every unnecessary word is discarded until all that you have left is the thought, the dominating idea of what you have read. Then in your own words, give this thought as briefly and clearly as possible. Your sentences must be carefully constructed. Do

not omit any essential articles, prepositions, or conjunctions.

First Reading:

1. Read every word slowly and carefully until you clearly understand the sense of the passage.
2. Look up all unfamiliar words, phrases, and allusions
3. Identify the dominating idea the essential thought, of the passage. Ask if this idea were omitted, would the fundamental meaning of the passage be changed?
4. Determine what emphasis and space to give the thought in each section; write a heading for each section.

Second Reading:

1. Underscore with a pencil the important facts containing the essential thoughts. This is a process of differentiation between what is essential and what is not. Generally, you will omit examples, illustrations, conversations, and repetitions.
2. Reread your selections to see that they are wise and adequate.
3. Determine if your underscoring expresses the main ideas.

Final Reading:

Rapidly and intensely reread the origin, dwelling on the important facts selected for a precis.

First Copy:

1. Close the book/original.
2. Write a summary of the thoughts as you remember them.
3. Compare with the original and correct, asking:

Did you retain the logical order and development of these thoughts?

Did you emphasize the dominant thought or erroneously emphasize a minor thought?

Did you omit any necessary facts? names? dates? places?

Is your precis clear to one who has not seen the original?

Are your sentences clear and well-constructed?

Did you use third person and the past tense?

Did you punctuate and spell correctly?

Did you make any grammatical or rhetorical errors?

Final Copy:

1. Read your first copy through carefully.
2. Condense wherever you can, substituting single words for phrases and phrases for longer clauses.
3. Use only simple figures of speech.
4. Clearly and concisely express the essential points.
5. Reduce verbiage while still making the point and retaining some of the flavor and spirit of the original.
6. Be fair to the sentiments expressed, even if you don't agree with them.

7. Rewrite neatly.

Do's of Precis Writing

- Start your precis with the main idea so that reader can quickly understand the essence of the precis
- He/she will know beforehand as to what should they expect in the written precis
- While writing a precis, make a suitable environment where all the points can be described and discussed equally.
- As the main idea or the essence is established, you can follow it up with some methods, facts, points, etc
- As a precis is concise, compress it and make sure that the length is available for you to retain the important data, keywords, and the concept
- Removing the irrelevant data or sentence is as important as writing the relevant points
- Thus, identify the superfluous data and facts and keep the core idea of the work only in the precis
- If you are mentioning anything related to history or any historical data than make sure that it is written in the past tense only
- Also, remember to put the purpose as to why you are writing a precis in the writing piece
- This will help the reader understand what you wrote in the precis

Don'ts of Precis Writing

- A precis writing is a formal way of writing a shorter form of the given paragraph
- So, even though you have read and understood the Precis well, do not form your own opinions
- You cannot insert your own remarks and criticism in a precis
- Always take the fact and data that is given in the paragraph only

- Also, during a precis writing, you cannot insert a question. If for any reason you need to insert make it in the form of a statement.
- For a precis writing, avoid using contractions and abbreviations
- Write the full form of any given words only
- Avoid being jerky. This will show that you have not understood the passage properly and have started writing a precis.