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## Lesson Objective

The student shall be able to understand the key points in developing effective writing skills, including how to write office correspondence and academic papers

## Section One

### 1. The Basics for Writing an Email in English

Here are a few quick basics about writing emails:

- Emails are usually shorter than letters but longer than texts.
- Emails are not as *urgent* (important, requires immediate attention) as speaking to someone in person or calling them on the phone.
- An email will look differently depending on who you're writing to. Just like when you speak, emails use different language for different recipients.

### 2. Writing an Email in English to Your Work Colleague/Boss

Emails at work are often used to set up meetings, since it's easy to see all the information written down in one place. It's also easier to get everyone's attention and responses through email than in person.

Work emails are also useful when you want to ask a question that doesn't need to be answered right away, or to send a quick note to someone who is busy, so they can see it later. Always be clear and keep it concise (short).

### 3. Possible parts to include

A work email looks a lot like a business letter, with a few changes.

Your email should have:

- **A greeting:** Say hello, and address the person you're writing to by name.
- **An introduction:** If the person you're emailing doesn't know who you are, include a quick introduction.
- **The purpose of your email:** Get to the point quickly and explain why you're writing the email.
- **The details:** Include only the details the recipient needs to know about the reason you're emailing. If the recipient needs to take any action after reading the email, include that here too.
- **A signature:** Sign your name at the end of the email.

### 4. Common phrases

- **"I hope you're doing well."** — You can include this optional phrase at the beginning of an email, after your greeting.
- **"I hope this email finds you well."** — This sentence is similar to the one above, but it's much more formal.
- **"I just wanted to update you on..."** or **"I just wanted to let you know that..."** — These are both great ways to start an email if you're sending a quick note about something that the recipient already knows about.
- **"Thank you for your time."** — It's a good idea to thank people for their time and help at the end of an email, right before your signature.
- **"Sincerely,"** — This word is often used before your name in a signature, usually only in formal letters (like one to your boss). Being sincere means that you really mean what you're saying.



## 5. Sample work email

Here's what an email to a coworker might look like:

**Subject:** Friday Lunch Meeting Time Changed to 11:30 a.m.

Hello Sally,

I hope you're doing well today. This is [Your Name], from the marketing department. I wanted to update you on the lunch meeting we are having on Friday. The Friday lunch meeting has been moved from 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Please let me know if you will be able to attend the meeting at this new time.

Thank you for your time and I hope to see you there.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

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## Section Two

### 1. How to Write a Personal Narrative

The personal narrative essay can be the most enjoyable type of assignment to write, because it provides you with an opportunity to share a meaningful event from your life

#### THINK OF A MEMORABLE EVENT

A personal narrative can focus on any event, whether it is one that lasted a few seconds or it spanned a few years.

Your topic can reflect your personality, or it can reveal an event that shaped your outlooks and opinions. But your story should have a clear *point*.

### 2. HOW TO PLAN YOUR NARRATIVE

You can start this process with a brainstorming session, taking a few moments to scribble down several memorable events from your life. Remember, this doesn't have to be high drama: your event could be anything from blowing your first bubble gum bubble to getting lost in the woods.

If you think your life doesn't have that many interesting events, try to come up with one or more examples for each of the following.

- times you laughed the hardest
- times you felt sorry for your actions
- painful memories
- times you were surprised
- scariest moments

A funny story might represent irony in life or a lesson learned in a comical way; a scary story might demonstrate how you learned from a mistake.

### 3. SHOW DON'T TELL

Your story should be written in first person point of view. In a narrative, the writer is the storyteller, so you can write this through your own eyes and ears. You want to make the reader *experience* what you experienced - not just *read* what you experienced.



You can go about this by imagining that you are re-living your event. As you think about your story, describe on paper what you see, hear, smell, and feel.

**Describing actions:**

Don't say "My sister ran off."

Instead, say "My sister jumped a foot in the air and disappeared behind the closest tree."

**Describing moods:**

Don't say "Everyone felt on edge."

Instead, say "We were all afraid to breathe. Nobody made a sound."

#### 4. ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE

Your story should be written in chronological order, so you should make a brief outline showing the sequence of events before you begin to write the narrative. This will keep you on track.

Your story should include the following:

**Characters** - Who are the people involved in your story?

What are their significant character traits?

**Tense** - Your story already happened, so you should probably write in the past tense. Some writers are effective telling stories in the present tense - but that is tricky! And it probably isn't a good idea.

**Voice** - Are you attempting to be funny, somber, or serious? Are you telling the story from your five year-old self? Keep this in mind at all times.

**Conflict** - Any good story should have conflict of some kind, but conflict can come in many forms. Conflict can be between you and your neighbor's dog, or it can be two feelings you are experiencing at one time, like guilt and the need to be popular.

**Descriptive language** - You must make an effort to broaden your vocabulary and use expressions, techniques, and words that you don't normally use. This will make your paper more entertaining and interesting, and it will make you a better writer.

**Make your point** - The story you write should come to a satisfying or interesting end. You should not attempt to write out an obvious lesson directly - the lesson should come from observations and discoveries. In other words:

Don't say: "I learned not to make judgments about people based on their appearances."

Instead, say "Maybe the next time I bump into an elderly lady with greenish skin and a large, crooked nose, I'll greet her with a smile. Even if she is clutching a warped and twisted broomstick."

#### 5. Examples

The Funny Dance

I remember when my dog Murphy was really little. She was only two or three years old. It was on Christmas. My dad put on some Christmas music, and Murphy put her paws up in the air and started swirling around in circles. Then she put her paws on my dad's hands, and they started dancing together. It was very funny, and my dad thought that Murphy was a good dancer!

Ann

Do you have a friend who loves you? Well, I did. Her name was Ann. She was a very close friend of mine. She was almost like family to me. Ann was very kind, and she had bright blue eyes and curly gray hair. I loved her very much.



She invited me to go swimming every summer. We had a lot of fun all those summers. But she could not get in the water most of the time because she was sick. Sometimes my sisters would come swimming, too. But it was better with just Ann and me because I just wanted to spend time with her.

Ann always listened to me when I had a problem. She was always there for me when I needed help on homework or had problems at school. Sometimes she would let me come in her house, and she would give me something to eat. Most of the time it would be an orange and a soft drink.

Last summer that all changed. Ann was diagnosed with cancer. Two weeks after Ann was diagnosed with cancer, she died. Her funeral was not too long after that. My mom did not let me go to the visitation at the funeral home or to the funeral ceremony.

My heart broke. Ann was no longer there with me. Now, it's been a year since Ann's death, but I still dream about her. Now it's hard without her. My whole life has changed without Ann, and I really miss her. I know that everywhere I go there will always be a spot in my heart for Ann!

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## Section Three

### 1. How to Write an Essay

Throughout your academic career, you will often be asked to write essays. You may have to work on an assigned essay for class, enter an essay contest or write essays for college admissions. This article will show you how to write, and then revise, all types of essays

#### Research the topic.

This step is especially important if your paper is a research paper. Go online, head to the library, search an academic database, or read newspapers. You can also ask a reference librarian.

- Know which sources are acceptable to your teacher. Does your teacher want a certain number of primary sources and secondary sources? Is your teacher picky about what's considered reliable sources?

### 2. The Basics of Effective Essay Writing

Throughout your academic career, you will often be asked to write essays. You may have to work on an assigned essay for class, enter an essay contest or write essays for college admissions.

An essay is a written composition where you express a specific idea and then support it with facts, statements, analysis and explanations. The basic format for an essay is known as the five-paragraph essay – but an essay may have as many paragraphs as needed. A five paragraph essay contains five paragraphs. However, the essay itself consists of three sections: an introduction, a body and a conclusion.

Below we'll explore the basics of writing an essay.

### 3. Pick a topic.

You may have your topic assigned, or you may be given free reign to write on the subject of your choice. If you are given the topic, you should think about the type of paper that you want to produce. Should it be a general overview of the subject or a specific analysis? Narrow your focus if necessary.

If you have not been assigned a topic, you have a little more work to do. However, this opportunity also gives you the advantage to choose a subject that is interesting or relevant to you. First, define your purpose. Is your essay to inform or persuade?



Once you have determined the purpose, you will need to do some research on topics that you find intriguing. Think about your life. What is it that interests you? Jot these subjects down.

Finally, evaluate your options. If your goal is to educate, choose a subject that you have already studied. If your goal is to persuade, choose a subject that you are passionate about. Whatever the mission of the essay, make sure that you are interested in your topic.

#### **4. Prepare an outline or diagram of your ideas.**

In order to write a successful essay, you must organize your thoughts. By taking what's already in your head and putting it to paper, you are able to see connections and links between ideas more clearly. This structure serves as a foundation for your paper. Use either an outline or a diagram to jot down your ideas and organize them.

To create a diagram, write your topic in the middle of your page. Draw three to five lines branching off from this topic and write down your main ideas at the ends of these lines. Draw more lines off these main ideas and include any thoughts you may have on these ideas.

If you prefer to create an outline, write your topic at the top of the page. From there, begin to list your main ideas, leaving space under each one. In this space, make sure to list other smaller ideas that relate to each main idea. Doing this will allow you to see connections and will help you to write a more organized essay.

#### **5. Write your thesis statement.**

Now that you have chosen a topic and sorted your ideas into relevant categories, you must create a thesis statement. Your thesis statement tells the reader the point of your essay. Look at your outline or diagram. What are the main ideas?

Your thesis statement will have two parts. The first part states the topic, and the second part states the point of the essay. For instance, if you were writing about Bill Clinton and his impact on the United States, an appropriate thesis statement would be, "Bill Clinton has impacted the future of our country through his two consecutive terms as United States President."

Another example of a thesis statement is this one for the "Winning Characteristics" Scholarship essay: "During my high school career, I have exhibited several of the "Winning Characteristics," including Communication Skills, Leadership Skills and Organization Skills, through my involvement in Student Government, National Honor Society, and a part-time job at Macy's Department Store."

#### **6. Write the body.**

The body of your essay argues, explains or describes your topic. Each main idea that you wrote in your diagram or outline will become a separate section within the body of your essay.

Each body paragraph will have the same basic structure. Begin by writing one of your main ideas as the introductory sentence. Next, write each of your supporting ideas in sentence format, but leave three or four lines in between each point to come back and give detailed examples to back up your position. Fill in these spaces with relative information that will help link smaller ideas together.

#### **7. Write the introduction.**

Now that you have developed your thesis and the overall body of your essay, you must write an introduction. The introduction should attract the reader's attention and show the focus of your essay.



Begin with an attention grabber. You can use shocking information, dialogue, a story, a quote, or a simple summary of your topic. Whichever angle you choose, make sure that it ties in with your thesis statement, which will be included as the last sentence of your introduction.

## **8. Write the conclusion.**

The conclusion brings closure of the topic and sums up your overall ideas while providing a final perspective on your topic. Your conclusion should consist of three to five strong sentences. Simply review your main points and provide reinforcement of your thesis.

## **9. Add the finishing touches.**

After writing your conclusion, you might think that you have completed your essay. Wrong. Before you consider this a finished work, you must pay attention to all the small details.

Check the order of your paragraphs. Your strongest points should be the first and last paragraphs within the body, with the others falling in the middle. Also, make sure that your paragraph order makes sense. If your essay is describing a process, such as how to make a great chocolate cake, make sure that your paragraphs fall in the correct order.

Review the instructions for your essay, if applicable. Many teachers and scholarship forms follow different formats, and you must double check instructions to ensure that your essay is in the desired format.

Finally, review what you have written. Reread your paper and check to see if it makes sense. Make sure that sentence flow is smooth and add phrases to help connect thoughts or ideas. Check your essay for grammar and spelling mistakes.