

Teacher's Notes
for
Great Writing 5: From Great Essays to Research, 3rd Edition

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UNIT 1 What Is an Essay?

OVERVIEW

Unit 1 introduces students to writing and editing academic essays. By first reading, analyzing, and then discussing the expectations for academic essays, teachers can help prepare students for writing assignments. A variety of pre-writing and grammar exercises will help students to understand how to improve their writing and how to structure their essays.

Unit 1 introduces students to the Building Better Vocabulary, which is found throughout the text (Units 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7). For further support, you may use the *Great Writing 5* Assessment CD-ROM with ExamView® to produce quizzes on the grammar, vocabulary, editing, or writing that is covered in this unit.

OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the definition of an essay and how it is organized. (p. 4)
2. Learn about the structure of a five-paragraph essay. (pp. 4–5)
3. Practice determining meaning from context. (pp. 8, 14, 20, 23)
4. Learn how to write an introduction. (pp. 9–17)
5. Learn ways to write an effective hook. (pp. 10–14)
6. Understand the difference between the topic and the thesis statement. (pp. 15–17)
7. Learn how to write the body of an essay. (pp. 17–22)
8. Understand how to use connectors and transitions (pp. 20–22)
9. Learn how to write a conclusion of an essay. (pp. 23–26)
10. Follow the seven steps in the writing process. (pp. 27–31)

TEACHING NOTES

It is important to understand that the purpose of the short written composition is to express the writer's views about a topic. Students learn that an essay must have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

This unit in particular presents students with chunks of foundational information on essay-writing as well as follow-up activities to help solidify those concepts.

Unit Opener

Each unit begins with a two-page opening spread featuring a photo, a set of objectives, and a culminating writing task.

Direct students' attention to the photo and ask them to tell you what they see. This photo shows an artist completing a mural of Nelson Mandela in Cape Town, South Africa.

Go over the objectives on the top of page 3. Explain that students should accomplish the objectives in the unit. Have students look at the question at the bottom of page 3. Tell them you will come back to this question at the end of the unit.

How Is an Essay Organized? p. 4

This introduction to the essay gives a brief definition of the term *essay*. Once you present this information to students, continue with a discussion about essays and writings that the students have read prior to taking this course. Discuss the ways in which these writings match the description of essays as outlined here. Ask them to share any prior experience they may have had with writing essays.

Display *introduction*, *body*, and *conclusion* on the board or screen and emphasize that essays are typically organized with an introduction (Paragraph 1), body paragraphs (Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, and more, if needed), and a conclusion (Paragraph 5). Point out that the most common form of essay is the five-paragraph essay.

Common Essay Forms, p. 5

Emphasize the benefits of the five-paragraph essay, including that it provides a strong structure of introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs. Depending on the overall level of your class, consider addressing the limitations of the five-paragraph essay as well, particularly when students have too much information to address comprehensively within the five-paragraph structure. Students will also learn to write research papers later in the book.

Activity 1: Studying an Example Essay, pp. 5–8

This example essay gives students an overview of the essay form and a model for them to emulate in their writing. The essay in this activity focuses on a timely topic for student discussion and debate: the effects of computer technologies on voting and democracy. Work together as a class and have students identify the introduction, body, and conclusion. Tell them that identifying the specific parts in this way will help them learn the essential structure of essay writing.

Building Better Vocabulary - Activity 2: Practicing Three Kinds of Vocabulary from Context, p. 8

Review the meanings of *synonym*, *antonym*, and *collocation*. Have students find the first word in each category (e.g., *accomplish*, *crucial*, ___ *people's lives easier*) and circle the answer. Then, have students complete the activity individually. Tell students that they can find the word in the text to help them understand its context. Suggest that students check their answers against the text. For example, they might substitute a synonym, or *not* + an antonym, as they read the sentences.

How Do You Write an Introduction? p. 9

Create a chart (based on the box on page 9) that can be displayed in the classroom for future reference. Write *INTRODUCTION* in the left hand column, and the four objectives listed on page 9. Have students copy the chart onto an index card to use for reference when writing

their own introductions. Have students use these objectives as a checklist to double check that they have included all four points in the introductions that they write.

Activity 3: Comparing Introductions of Essays, p. 9

Direct students to pages 18 and 19. Read the introduction aloud. Ask questions to highlight similarities or differences between that introduction and the example they just read on pages 6 and 7: *Which introduction refers to a problem? Which gives background? Which essay will categorize? Which makes an argument?*

The Hook, p. 10

Clarify the purpose of a hook by explaining that writers should not assume that a reader will want to read the writer's essay. If the first part is boring, the reader may stop reading. Explain that a good hook whets the reader's appetite and cultivates an interest in reading further. Encourage students to ask themselves the question *Would I want to read the rest of the essay based on the hook?* when working on the hook for their writing.

Activity 4: Studying Hooks, p. 11

Have students work in pairs to compare their answers before they move on to Activity 5. This will help them clarify their ideas.

Activity 5: Comparing Hooks, p. 12

Lead a discussion with students to elicit their opinions of the hooks. Point out that it's important to try a variety of hooks, as some will work better than others with certain content.

Activity 6: Writing a Hook, pp. 12–14

Check comprehension after students have read the essay by asking questions: *What kind of essay is this? What is the topic? What is the thesis? What do you find interesting about this essay? What is the most memorable part of the essay?* After you've had the class discussion, ask students to write their own hook for the essay. Have a few students share their hook and identify what type of hook it is.

Building Better Vocabulary - Activity 7: Practicing Three Kinds of Vocabulary from Context, p. 14

Review the meanings of *synonym*, *antonym*, and *collocation*. Have students find the first word in each category (e.g., *tiny*, *rural*, *a ___ of*) and circle the answer. Then, have students complete the activity individually. Tell students that they can find the word in the text to help them understand its context. Suggest that students check their answers against the text. For example, they might substitute a *synonym*, or *not* + an antonym as they read the sentences.

What Is the Role of the Thesis Statement? p. 15

Display on the board or the screen, a chart (based on the chart on page 15). Write *TOPIC* and *THESIS STATEMENT* in the left-hand column. Ask students to dictate the definition of each, based on the definition in the book, and write their responses in the right-hand column. Then to the right of each definition, brainstorm and write examples of a topic and thesis statement. Emphasize that the most important sentence in an essay is the thesis statement.

Thesis Statements and Controlling Ideas, p. 15

Strong thesis statements present both the writer's position about a topic and information to support that position. These reasons, or supporting elements, are called *controlling ideas*.

Activity 8: Studying Examples of Thesis Statements, pp. 15–16

Suggest that students circle the topic and underline the controlling ideas in each thesis statement after they write them in the chart.

Activity 9: Comparing Thesis Statements, p. 16

Have students compare their answers in small groups. Call on students to share their ideas with the class, and ask them to defend their ideas by identifying the qualities that make a thesis statement strong (i.e., identifies topic, gives specific details, provides an outline or blueprint of organization).

Activity 10, Finding Thesis Statements and Other Information about Essays, p. 17

For homework, students should use different resources (the Internet, books, journals, etc.) to find three essays. They should read the essay in its entirety and write down the title, author, thesis statement, and source. Students should come prepared to class to discuss their investigations. This is a great opportunity for students to learn using real-world material.

What Is in the Body of an Essay? p. 17

Expand the chart you started in the *How Do You Write an Introduction?* section. Write *BODY* in the left-hand column and have students dictate items 1 and 2 from the right-hand column. Record their responses and discuss examples of how the body of an essay should explain and support the thesis statement.

Activity 11: Organizing the Body Paragraphs of an Essay, pp. 18–19

Explain that the paragraphs on page 19 are out of order. Have students identify the sentence that provides the organizational structure of the essay (*The four primary strategies...*).

Building Better Vocabulary - Activity 12: Practicing Three Kinds of Vocabulary from Context, p. 14

Review the meanings of *synonym*, *antonym*, and *collocation*. Have students find the first word in each category (e.g., *a factor*, *conceal*, *accomplish a ___*) and circle the answer. Then, have students complete the activity individually. Tell students that they can find the word in the text to help them understand its context. Suggest that students check their answers against the text. For example, they might substitute a synonym, or *not* + an antonym as they read the sentences.

Connectors and Transition Words, p. 20

Connectors and transitions allow readers to make connections between ideas. Elicit examples of words that bridge ideas such as causes or effects, examples, comparison, addition, and contrast.

Activity 13: Identifying Connectors and Transition Words, pp. 20–23

Suggest that students list the connecting words by function in their notebooks. Using connecting words and transitions effectively will make their writing sound more sophisticated. In addition to creating more advanced writing, using variety when bridging ideas will allow their writing to flow more smoothly.

Building Better Vocabulary - Activity 14: Practicing Three Kinds of Vocabulary from Context, p. 23

Review the meanings of *synonym*, *antonym*, and *collocation*. Have students find the first word in each category (e.g., *utilize*, *key*, *save precious ___*) and circle the answer. Then, have students complete the activity individually. Tell students that they can find the word in the text to help them understand its context. Suggest that students check their answers against the text. For example, they might substitute a synonym, or *not* + an antonym, as they read the sentences.

What Does the Conclusion of an Essay Do? p. 23

Expand the chart you started in the *How Do You Write an Introduction?* section. Under the *BODY* section, write *CONCLUSION* in the left-hand column and have students dictate the three items from the right-hand column. Record their responses and discuss examples of how a conclusion can summarize the writer's thesis statement.

Activity 15: Comparing Conclusions of Essays, p. 24

Suggest that students look at the introduction and conclusion of each essay (2, 6, 13, 14, 16, 18) and highlight key vocabulary that is repeated. Remind students that sometimes writers use different word forms or synonyms when they repeat or rephrase ideas.

Activity 16: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph, pp. 25–26

Have students exchange their conclusion paragraphs with a partner to get feedback. Each partner should comment on the elements that make a good conclusion.

Building Better Vocabulary - Activity 17: Practicing Three Kinds of Vocabulary from Context, p. 27

Review the meanings of *synonym*, *antonym*, and *collocation*. Have students find the first word in each category (e.g., *a component*, *dread*, *over the ___ of a year*) and circle the answer. Then, have students complete the activity individually. Tell students that they can find the word in the text to help them understand its context. Suggest that students check their answers against the text. For example, they might substitute a synonym, or *not* + an antonym, as they read the sentences.

Original Student Writing: Practicing the Steps, p. 27

Display the chart with the seven steps of the writing process as it appears on page 34 on the board, screen, or chart paper. Have students copy the chart onto a large index card to use for reference and as a guide as they write the various kinds of essays throughout the text. Tell students that these steps should be used as a checklist to guide them through writing and editing their essays.

Activity 18: Step 1: Choose a Topic, pp. 27–28

Have students look at the list on page 28. Elicit specific ideas for each general topic (e.g., *the steam engine; kangaroo, wallaby, platypus*). Pair students who are interested in the same topic to complete the task together.

Activity 19: Step 2: Brainstorm, p. 28

Have students brainstorm on the selected topic. Tell them that by comparing their ideas with those of another student, they should be able to see how generating many ideas on a given topic will allow a writer greater freedom to write a convincing essay. Repeat this exercise with additional prompts as needed.

Activity 20: Step 3: Outline, pp. 29–30

Emphasize the importance of the outline for organizing how students will present their information. Encourage students to make their outlines as detailed as possible as this will ease the writing of their first draft. Have students follow the directions for the peer editing of their outlines using the questions provided. Remind students of the value of peer editing even in the outlining stage. Point out that even professional writers use editors to review their work. Encourage students to seek feedback for their drafts, specifically for hooks, thesis statements, brainstorming, and overall organization.

Activity 21: Step 4: Write the First Draft

Make sure students use their revised outlines (based on feedback from a peer) to write their first draft. Encourage students to write spontaneously in order to get all their ideas on paper. Point out that writing an essay is not a linear process and that they should expect to make multiple changes and rewrites as they edit and revise their work.

Activity 22: Step 5: Get Feedback from a Peer

Emphasize the critical role that peer editing plays when revising and polishing an essay. Remind students that it provides them with a new point of view which can help them identify the areas of their writing that need to be improved or further developed. Also remind them of the importance of providing constructive criticism and recommend that they practice giving feedback using the peer editing sheets as a model.

Students should use the peer editing sheets for each original writing assignment. Remind students to download and print Peer Editing Sheet 1 from NGL.Cengage.com/GW5 before completing this activity. Have students exchange papers with a partner and use the sheet to edit each other's work.

Activity 23: Step 6: Revise the First Draft

Have students use the feedback they received from peer editing to revise their drafts. Point out that they have four choices for responding to the feedback: no change, add information, edit, or cut information. Listing their improvements will help them to focus on their revisions.

Activity 24: Step 7: Proofread the Final Draft

Encourage students to keep a list of items to check for in the proofreading stage. Point out that they can still make minor changes at this stage such as adding or changing words that will make the essay stronger and more comprehensible.

Additional Topics for Writing, p. 31

Included in this section is a list of essay writing prompts. Point out that in order to become better writers, they need to write as much as possible. You may choose to assign these topics on a daily, weekly, bimonthly, or voluntary basis.

Timed Writing, p. 31

Timed writing is a valuable skill for students to master since many standardized tests include a timed-writing section. Students might feel varying levels of anxiety due to this time limit, which can result in a greater number of errors than they normally make. Explain to students that timed-writing practice can help them feel more comfortable and confident in other timed-writing situations where they will need to write quickly and effectively. Before beginning the writing task, review the writing prompt and the essay guidelines provided. If necessary, teach the term *writing prompt*.

EXPANSION ACTIVITIES

Help students recognize both strong and weak thesis statements displaying topic examples that you have brainstormed before class on the board or screen. Work with students to brainstorm and narrow each topic. Then decide as a group if the thesis or main idea is too general or too specific for an essay. Some example topics may include pollution, sustainability, health and exercise, global events, etc.

For additional practice, provide students with high-interest essays from outside sources. As needed, have students work in small groups or as a whole class to find and analyze the thesis statement, body, and conclusion.

VOCABULARY ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Because vocabulary is such an important point in moving to a higher proficiency level, it is strongly recommended that instructors require students to maintain a vocabulary journal. Whether or not this particular strategy is employed, it is imperative that students acquire a large amount of appropriate vocabulary in this course.

Making a Vocabulary Journal

An easy way to accomplish this is to do the following:

1. Ask students to divide a piece of paper vertically into two sections. The column on the left should be approximately 2 inches wide.
2. In the left column, students will write the vocabulary word and its part of speech.
3. In the right column, students will write either a definition for each word. Students may also benefit from including a synonym or a native language translation of each word.
4. Underneath the definition in the right column, the student will create a sample sentence using the word, but should leave a blank space in place of the vocabulary word.

Using the Vocabulary Journal

Explain to the students that this type of vocabulary journal can be used in different ways:

- a. By covering up the vocabulary word, students must look at the clues (definition and sample sentence) and recall the vocabulary word.
- b. By covering up the vocabulary word and the definition (across both columns), students must use the sample sentence with context clues to recall the vocabulary word.
- c. By covering up the vocabulary word and the sample sentence, students must recall the vocabulary word by using its definition as a clue.

Sample Vocabulary Journal

<i>vocabulary word, part of speech</i>	<i>definition/synonym/translation + sample sentence</i>
1. routine, n.	custom; habit My daily _____ is getting up, going to work, and coming home to make dinner.
2. glamorous, adj.	exciting; attractive; stylish Movie stars usually have _____ lifestyles.
3. task, n.	assignment; job The student did not finish his _____ before lunch.

Suggested Words for the Vocabulary Journal

Below is a list of vocabulary words from the essays in the unit. We suggest that students begin with these words and add other words to their vocabulary journals as necessary.

Essay 1, pp. 6–7

a threat
to accomplish
an innovation
a ballot
a dispute
tedious
to verify
a deviation
crucial
an outcome
to enhance
significantly
subsequent
vastly

Essay 2 pp. 12–14

rural
in particular
to stand out
due to
a lack

a commodity
a crumb
elderly
a task
an ingredient
a pumpkin
a chrysanthemum
puzzled
to specify
to occur to (someone)
to underestimate

Essay 3, pp. 18–19

a predator
camouflage
to conceal
disruptive
mimicry
evolutionary
to blend
to flee
conspicuous
a foe
kin
a stripe
distinctive
vulnerable
a fluctuation
prey

Essay 4, pp. 20–22

such
a sphere
a lecture
to utilize
to risk
to highlight
the advent of
precious
dynamic

Essay 5, pp. 25–26

to dread

integral

coherent

ultimately

mnemonic

an acronym

to advocate

the context

to retain

to cram

to pace

Self-Assessment

Have students refer back to the opening spread on pages 2 and 3. Direct their attention to the objectives. Ask them to put a check mark by the objective(s) they achieved. Then ask students the question at the bottom of the page. Ask: *Would you be able to write an essay using this prompt?* Students can raise hands to answer the question.